

ПРИНОСИ
КЪМ БЪЛГАРСКАТА АРХЕОЛОГИЯ

Том XII

CONTRIBUTIONS
TO BULGARIAN ARCHAEOLOGY

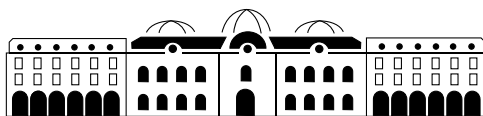
Volume XII

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Volume XII



1892 - 1921 - 1948

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Редакционна колегия: Валери Григоров, Евгения Коматарова-Балинова, Петър Димитров, Методи Златков, Георги Сенгалевич, Дочка Аладжова, Николай Марков, Мария Манолова-Войкова, Фалко Дайм, Весна Бикич, Валерий Фльоров, Ярослав Володарец-Урбанович

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ул. „Съборна“ № 2, София 1000; Главен редактор: evatodorova79@gmail.com

Contact/Address: National Archaeological Institute with Museum

2 Saborna Str., BG – 1000 Sofia; Editor-in-Chief: evatodorova79@gmail.com

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WHERE HAVE ALL THE AVARS GONE? A VIEW FROM EASTERN EUROPE

Florin Curta

Department of History, University of Florida; Gainesville, FL 32611, United States; fcurta@ufl.edu

ABSTRACT

The presence of the Avars in Eastern Europe, particularly in the lands between the Carpathian Mountains and the river Dnieper, has so far been a matter of concern for historians. Archaeologists are skeptical: except for a couple of finds from Budureasca, there are no Early Avar belt fittings anywhere to the north, east, and south from the Carpathian Mountains. In Poland, Avar-age finds cluster in the south (Silesia and Lesser Poland) and are dated after AD 700. The vast majority of those finds, however, are from the very end of the 8th or even the early decades of the 9th century. The sudden interest in Avar things in the lands north of the Sudeten and Carpathian Mountains may signal a desire of local elites to employ the modes of status (and, supposedly, power) representation inside the Avar Qaganate. It is however truly surprising that such an interest coincides in time with what historians believe to be a period of decline of the Avar polity. The symbolism of the Avar belt fittings was also harnessed by members of communities who buried their dead in cemeteries excavated in southern Romania. By contrast, there are no Avar-age belt fittings anywhere in the lands to the east from the Carpathian Mountains. During the second half of the 8th and the early 9th century, this region experienced something of a demographic boom, as indicated by the large number of settlement sites. There are also hillforts, but a true concern with marking social status in the material culture cannot be dated before the mid-9th century. When such markers of social prominence became necessary, the language of representation was completely different from that employed earlier by elites in southern Poland who wanted to emulate the Avars. In Eastern Europe, after 850, elites emulated the Khazars, not the Avars.

Keywords: Avars, Khazars, belt fittings, social elites, hillforts

Taking at face value the information in the *Short History* of Patriarch Nicephorus, the Austrian historian Walter Pohl maintained until recently that the Avar rule over the lands extending to the east from the Carpathian Mountains beyond the river Dnieper ended with Kuvrat's revolt. He was the nephew of Organa and the chieftain of the Onogundurs who, according to Nicephorus, chased all Avars from his country (Pohl 2018, 325, on the basis of Nicephorus 1990, 70).¹ Before Pohl, several other historians have declared themselves in favor of the Avar power extending to the lands east from the Carpathian Mountains during the first third of the 7th century (Szádeczky-Kardoss 1975; Curta 2001, 209; see also the map published in Bollók 2021, 67 fig. 37). Archaeologists, however,

¹Pohl denies the possibility of the final battle between Avars and Onogundurs taking place somewhere to the east from the river Dnieper and is convinced that the information got to Nicephorus from a written source based on the accounts of the Roman hostages returning from the Avars at the time of the negotiations between the qagan of the Avars and Maria, Emperor Heraclius's sister, who obtained the release of her son, Stephen (hostage in Avaria between 623 and 630 or 635).

have been much more cautious. On one hand, according to some of them, a group of cemeteries and isolated burials in eastern Hungary must be attributed to immigrants from the steppe lands north of the Black Sea. This conclusion was drawn on the basis of analogies with burials of the so-called Sivashyvka group on the eastern shore of the Sea of Azov (Lőrinczy 2001; Gulyás 2015; Gulyás 2016; Gulyás 2018; Гүяш и др. 2019; Гүяш и др. 2021. For the Sivashyvka group, see Рашев 1998; Комар и др. 2006; Комар 2008, 197 – 212. For a critique of the attribution, see Bálint 2019, 70 – 76). On the other hand, missing from the said region, as well as from the entire area of the steppe lands in Eastern Europe, is the evidence of contacts with, or cultural influences from the Carpathian Basin, where the Avars had already established themselves by 600. A belt mount and a strap end, both found in Budureasca (near Vadul Săpat, in the municipality of Fântânele, Prahova County, Romania) are dated to the first half of the 7th century on the basis of analogies from burial assemblages in Hungary (Măgureanu 2005, 189, 191, 196 fig. 1; Măgureanu 2012, 313, 314, 317, and 315 fig. 1/2). No such artefacts are known from the entire, vast area between the Carpathian Mountains to the west and the Volga River to the east.²

Artefacts dated to the Early or Middle Avar age (ca. 570 to ca. 680) are also rare in the lands to the north from the Carpathian Mountains. Out of 26 Avar-age finds from Poland known until 2000, only two could be dated before 700 (Zoll-Adamikowa 1992, 303 – 307). Only one of those finds is associated to the typically Avar symbolism of the belt with side straps.³ Despite the increasing number of finds during the last few years, Early or Middle Avar specimens are still rare.⁴ Rare also are the finds dated to the first two phases of the Late Avar age. The strap ends from Damice near Cracow and Pelczyska near Pinczów, in the same region of Lesser Poland, are the only finds that could be dated to the first phase of the Late Avar age (680 – 720) (Poleski 2009, 3 and 28; Rudnicki 2009, 242 with fig. 11).⁵ Both strap ends are specimens of Zábójník's type 8. Three other artefacts – two strap ends of Zábójník's type 47 from Swaryczów near Lublin, in eastern Poland, and a fragment of a hinged belt mount of Zábójník's type 240 found in Chorula near Opole (in Silesia) – belong chronologically to the second phase of the Late Avar age (720 – 760) (Poleski 2009, 29; Szydłowski 1959, 53 and 57 pl. VIII/2; see also Zábójník 1991, 93 pl. 14 and 318 pl. 39).⁶

Most Avar-age finds from the lands to the north and to the south of the Carpathian Mountains are dated to the last two phases of that age, i.e., to the last third of the 8th and the first decades of the 9th century (see Table 1). The propeller-shaped belt mount of Zábójník's type 156, which was found in Cracow is most typical for phase III of the Late Avar age (Jamka 1965, 217 with

²Erdélyi 1981, 58, treated as Avar the arrow heads with three edges found in 7th-century settlement sites excavated in what is now the Republic of Moldova. Leaving aside the problem of the ethnic attribution of arrow heads, those artefacts do not necessarily signal contacts with the Carpathian Basin, as such weapons appear everywhere else in Eastern Europe.

³Namely, the bronze model for belt mounts found in Jakuszowice, near Kazimierza Wielka, in the voivodship of Świętokrzyskie (Zoll-Adamikowa 1992, 303; 299 fig. 1d). The model was dated to the Middle Avar age (ca. 630 – ca. 680). However, the dating to the (Early) Avar age of the lance head from Gródek near Gorlice (Lesser Poland) has been disputed (Kokowski, Kokowska 1995; Szymański 1995, 137).

⁴One of the most interesting among those rare specimens is the circular pendant with open-work ornament from Kielary near Olsztyn (in the voivodship of Warmia-Mazuria), for which see Rudnicki 2009 – 2010. This is most likely a Middle, not Early Avar artefact (see Garam 2018, 169 and 173). For bridle bits with bone side-bars believed to be Avar, see also Kontny et al. 2009, 181 and 181 fig. 12e.

⁵Another find from Pelczyska is a fragmentary buckle with rectangular mount decorated with scrollwork (Rudnicki 2009, 244 fig. 12). The strap end is a specimen of type 8 after Zábójník (Zábójník 1991, 82 pl. 3). For the chronology of the Avar age, see Stadler 2008, 59.

⁶Poleski 2009, 5 wrongly dates the artefacts from Dobrzeń Mały and Gilów to the second phase of the Late Avar age. As already noted by Zoll-Adamikowa 1990, they are in fact typical for the next phase, which is commonly dated after 760.

fig. 20; Zoll-Adamikowa 1992, 302 and 299 fig. 1e; Zábojník 1991, 309 pl. 30). The same may be said about the strap ends of Zábojník's type 113 from Dobrzeń Mały near Opole and Gilów near Wrocław, the strap end of Zábojník's type 116 from Nowa Huta, as well as the belt mounts of Zábojník's types 170 and 171 from Naszacowice near Nowy Sącz and Trepcza near Sanok, respectively (Hachulska-Ledwos 1976; Kosmala, Tomczak 1991, 244 with fig.; Poleski 1991; Zoll-Adamikowa 1992, 303 and 290 fig. 1g; Jaworski 2005, 81 – 82 and fig. 26c; Poleski 2009, 29; see also Zábojník 1991, 303 pl. 24, 311 pl. 32 and 312 pl. 33). To phase III of the Late Avar age one can also date the finds in southern Romania, particularly the belt buckle of Zábojník's type 132 from Târgșor, the strap ends of Zábojník's types 113 and 62 from graves 61 and 104 of the cemetery excavated in Sultana, the strap end from an unknown location in Walachia, as well as the belt mount of Zábojník's type 170 from grave 304 of the cemetery in Izvoru (Pârvan 1926, 28 and fig. 18; Diaconu, Diaconu 1962, fig. 2/2; Mitrea 1988, 115, 117 – 118, 130 pl. 7/T61.3 and 134 pl. 13/T104.4; Mitrea 1989, 207 and 208 fig. 48/304.1; see Zábojník 1991, 296 pl. 17, 298 pl. 19, 303 pl. 24, 306 pl. 27 and 312 pl. 32). The only find from the lands to the east from the river Dnieper – the strap end of Zábojník's type 87 discovered in Velyka Krucha, in the Poltava region of Ukraine – may be dated to the same phase of the Late Avar age (ГОЛОВКО 2010a, 175 and 176 fig. 1; ГОЛОВКО 2010b, 104 – 107 and 105 fig. 2/5; Zábojník 1991, 301 pl. 2). By contrast, the strap end of Zábojník's type 51 discovered in Ripniv near L'viv, in western Ukraine is typical for the last phase which may be dated shortly before and shortly after the year 800 (Аулих 1963, 366 – 367 and 377 fig. 9/16; Zábojník 1991, 294 pl. 15). To that phase may also be dated a number of other finds from Poland: the strap ends of Zábojník's types 51 and 357 from the environs of Warsaw and from Nowa Huta, respectively; the belt mounts of Zábojník's type 172 from Biskupin near Żnin and from Naszacowice near Nowy Sącz, as well as the belt mount of Zábojník's type 337 from Wyciąże (Rajewski 1939, 343 and pl. LXV/2; Szymański 1962, 304 – 305 and 306 fig. 14; Hachulska-Ledwos 1986, 119 fig. 15; Poleski 1996b, 257 and fig. 1a; Poleski 2003, 215 – 216 and 216 fig. 1a; Zábojník 1991, 294 pl. 15 and 312 pl. 33). Two other belt mounts of his types 172 and 337 have been found in graves 7 in Izvoru and grave 52 in Obârșia Nouă, both in southern Romania (Mitrea 1967, fig. 8; Toropu, Stoica 1972, 181 and 185; fig. 8/1; Mitrea 1989, 148 and 147 fig. 4/7.3; Zábojník 1991, 312 pl. 33).

Although the finds from southern Romania have clear analogies in Late Avar assemblages from the Carpathian Basin, they have recently been interpreted in association with the elites in early medieval Bulgaria, which during the second half of the 8th century were desperately trying to survive the onslaught of the Byzantine armies under Emperor Constantine V.⁷ It is important to note in this respect the finds from southern Romania, given that they have been found in burial assemblages. In some cases, it is difficult to deny a practical function, even if no evidence exists that belts with side straps, so typical for the Avar milieu, were in fashion in Bulgaria. For example, the belt buckle from Târgșor was found on the ilium of a man who died at 30 to 40 years of age. There was no strap end in or around the hip bone, and no belt mount has been found in the grave, but there was a second buckle, which suggests the deposition of two belts (Diaconu, Diaconu 1962; for the sexing and aging of the skeleton, see Nicolaescu-Plopșor, Paul-Bolomey 1962). A similar situation has been

⁷Teodor 1999, 75 – 76 (reprinted in Teodor 2003, 495 – 509) treats the burial in Târgșor as Avar, but wrongly dates it to the late 7th century, and thus almost a century too early. He also attributes to the Avars a number of belt fittings with no analogies in Avar-assemblages, such as the mount found in Șirna. By contrast, to Станилов 2009, 147, the belt buckle found in Târgșor has good analogies in the burial assemblages from Gledachevo, Divdyadovo and Kabiuk; it must therefore be attributed to Bulgars, not Avars. The number of finds of belt fittings with clear analogies in Avar-age assemblages has increased lately, and some Bulgarian archaeologists do not hesitate to attribute them to a cultural influence from the Carpathian Basin. See Станилов, Атанасов 1993; Плетьов 1995; Fiedler 1996; Инкова 1997; Иванов 1997; Инкова 2005; Szenthe 2014.

observed in grave 104 of the cemetery excavated in Sultana: a strap end of Zábójník's type 62 was found on the hip bone of an adult individual of about 50 years of age, together with another belt fitting (wrongly interpreted as "pseudo-buckle") (Mitrea 1988, 117). However, in other cases, one can raise doubts about the practical function. Despite being found in the region of the abdomen of a new-born baby, the belt mount of Zábójník's type 170 in grave 304 from the Izvoru cemetery was not accompanied either by other mounts and strap ends or by a buckle (Mitrea 1989, 207). Similarly, in grave 7 of that same cemetery, there were no other belt fittings besides a belt mount of Zábójník's type 172, which was found on the hip bone of the male skeleton (50 years of age). Both cases strongly suggest a symbolic deposition of the belt mount, which therefore had absolutely no practical function in relation to the clothes in which the child and the man were supposedly buried. A symbolic deposition results also from the position of the strap end from grave 61 in Sultana – next to the northern side of the grave pit, away from the body of the 35-year old man who was buried there (Mitrea 1988, 115).

Unlike the belt fittings in southern Romania, those from Poland are either stray finds or discoveries from Early Medieval strongholds (Poleski 2009, 9). Some of those strongholds were undoubtedly occupied in the 9th century, as indicated, among other things, by the dress accessories or the hoard of iron implements and weapons from Trepcza, all categories of artefacts with analogies in Moravia (Ginalski 1997; Jaworski 1997; Jaworski 2012; Kotowicz et al. 2019; for 9th-century hoards of iron implements and weapons from Moravia, see Curta 2011; Kouřil 2013; Müllerová 2020).⁸ The presence of Late Avar belt fittings in strongholds from Poland and their association with Carolingian materials reminds one of a perfectly symmetrical situations elsewhere outside the Carpathian Basin. In both Slovenia and Bohemia, for example, most Avar-age belt fittings have been found inside strongholds (Karo et al. 2011, 132 – 136 and 155 pl. I/1, 3 – 5, 8; for Bohemia, see Bubeník 1968; Justová 1985; Boháčová et al. 1983; Profantová 2020a; Profantová 2020b). Naďa Profantová, the first archaeologist who had the idea of a comparative approach to Avar-age finds from the territories located to the north, north-west and north-east from the Carpathian Basin, seems to have missed an important difference between Bohemia and Moravia, on one hand, and Poland, on the other hand (Profantová 1992). The largest number of Late Avar belt fittings found anywhere in the Czech Republic are from the Tismice stronghold. The constituent parts of at least 13 or 14 belts have been discovered by means of a metal detector in that stronghold, almost all dated to the third phase of the Late Avar age (Profantová et al. 2020, 264 – 265). Besides the considerable number of specimens, with no parallel in Poland, the stronghold in Tismice also produced miscasts, crucibles, and casting drops – all indications of local production of Avar-age belt fittings.⁹ One cannot exclude the possibility of something similar coming to light in Poland at some point in the future. However, on the basis of the existing evidence, one can conclude that the belt fittings found in Poland were not produced locally, but came from the Carpathian Basin. A careful study of the distribution map of all finds of Avar-age belt fittings in the lands to the north, east and south from the Carpathian Mountains (fig. 1) confirms that conclusion. In Poland, Avar-age finds cluster in two specific regions, both in the southern part of the country, next to the Carpathian Mountains – Silesia and Lesser Poland (Poleski 2009, 5: out of 26 Avar-age finds from

⁸There are also finds from Trepcza that indicate a later occupation phase (11th to 12th century). See Ginalski 1999 – 2000; Ginalski 2001; Ginalski 2003; Ginalski 2012. For another 9th-century stronghold that produced Avar-age belt fittings, see Szydłowski, Pierzyna 1970. For a hinged belt mount of Zábójník's type 245 dated to the third phase of the Late Avar age and found in the rampart of a late 10th-century stronghold in Czeremno, see Wołoszyn et al. 2016, 697 and 698 fig. 4.

⁹Another production center has been recently discovered in Moravia (Macháček et al. 2021).

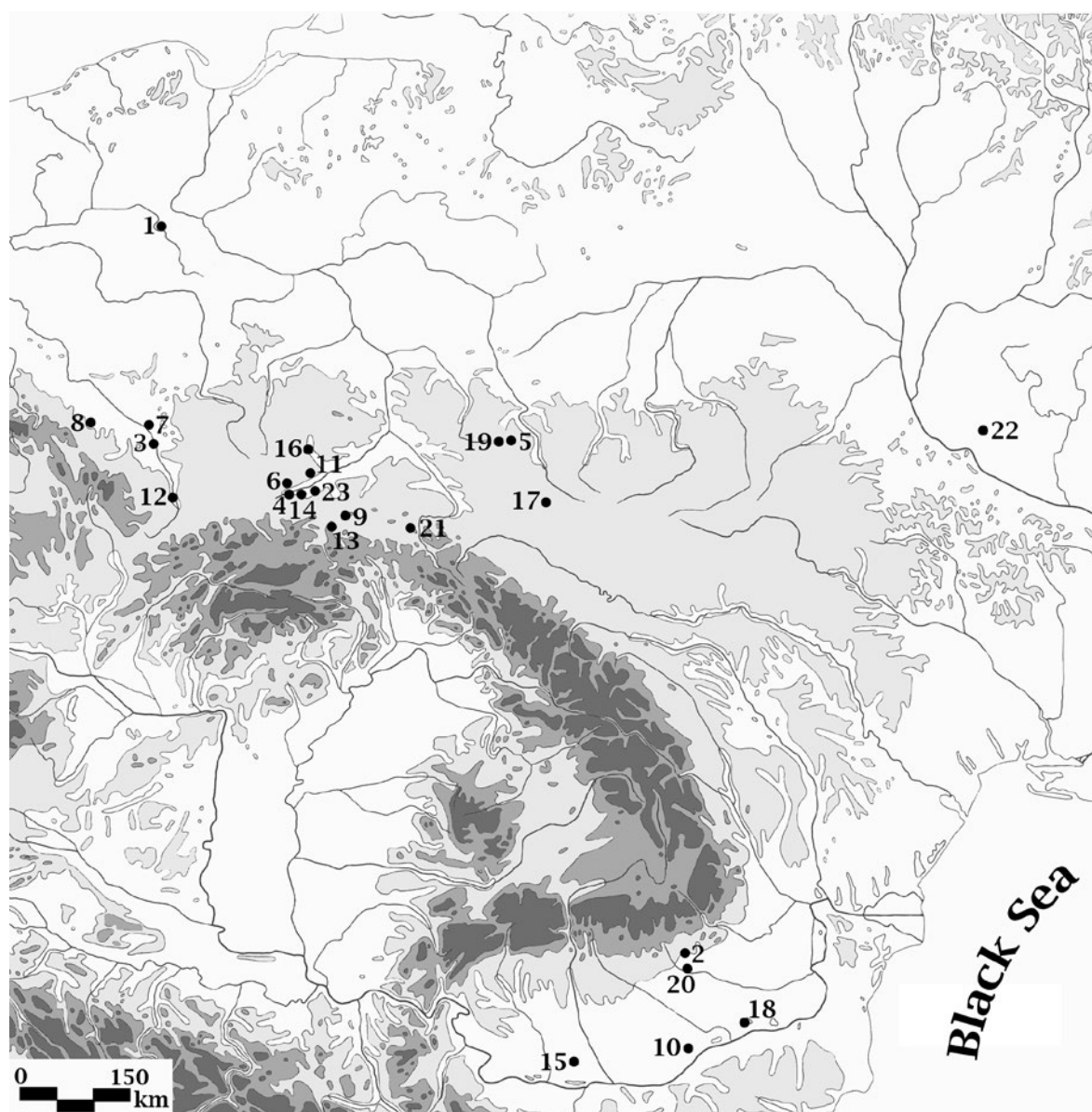


Fig. 1. The main sites mentioned in the text: 1 – Biskupin; 2 – Budureasca; 3 – Chorula; 4 – Cracovia; 5 – Czeremo; 6 – Damice; 7 – Dobrzeń Mały; 8 – Gilów; 9 – Gródek; 10 – Izvoru; 11 – Jakuszowice; 12 – Lubomia; 13 – Naszacowice; 14 – Nowa Huta; 15 – Obârşia Nouă; 16 – Pełczyska; 17 – Ripniv; 18 – Sultana; 19 – Swaryczów; 20 – Târgşor; 21 – Trepca; 22 – Velyka Krucha; 23 – Wyciąże. Sites inside the Carpathian Basin and in the Northern Balkans (south of the river Danube) have not been plotted on the map

Обр. 1. Основните обекти, споменати в текста: 1 – Бискупин; 2 – Будуряска; 3 – Хорула; 4 – Краковия; 5 – Чермно; 6 – Дамице; 7 – Добжен Мали; 8 – Гилов; 9 – Грудек; 10 – Извору; 11 – Якушовице; 12 – Любомия; 13 – Нашаковице; 14 – Нова Хута; 15 – Обършия Ноуа; 16 – Пелчиска; 17 – Рипнив; 18 – Султана; 19 – Сваричов; 20 – Търгшор; 21 – Тречпа; 22 – Велика Круча; 23 – Вицяже. Обектите от Карпатския басейн и от Северните Балкани (южно от р. Дунав) не са нанесени на картата

Poland, 17 are from Lesser Poland. For finds from Silesia, see Szydlowski 1960b. For distribution maps of Avar-age finds in Poland, see Szymański 1960, 42 fig. 5; Zoll-Adamikowa 1992, 306 fig. 6. For gazetteers, see Szymański 1982, 254 – 257; Poleski 2009, 27 – 30). In both regions, the belt fittings may have been used by local elites, or at least by those members of the local elites who used strongholds as seats of power.¹⁰ Because most Late Avar finds cluster in those two regions, and because most were found in strongholds, some have gone as far as to establish a direct connection between the cultural influences from the Carpathian Basin and the rise of the Polish state (Szydlowski 1960a). Others, more concerned with the ethnic attribution of those finds, preferred to accept the cultural influences from the Carpathian Basin, but not the presence of the Avars in Poland (Rajewski 1974). Both attitudes are now outdated. Nonetheless, one still has the impression that some in southern Poland (Silesia and Lesser Poland) developed a sudden interest in Avar elite models. Why exactly were symbols of social rank from the Late Avar society chosen and borrowed to mark, supposedly, the elevated status of some members of communities located north of the Sudeten and the Carpathians is a question still without answer. This question is even more intriguing when one takes into consideration that, judging from the chronology of belt fittings, the cultural transfer took place during the last years of the Avar polity, a period during which that polity is said to have been in rapid decline, on the point of collapse.¹¹ Leaving aside the obvious need to abandon historiographic stereotypes concerning the Avars, such observations are of great value because they match those made in relation to other territories beyond the Carpathian Basin, for example Dalmatia or Moravia (Curta 2022). In both regions, much like in Poland, local elites suddenly began during the second half or even last third of the 8th century to display belt fittings imitating those in Avaria. This phenomenon coincides in time, at least in the case of Dalmatia, with the beginnings of the Frankish encroachment in South-Eastern Europe. The link between these two political and cultural phenomena has not been sufficiently studied yet, much like the relations between Avaria and Bulgaria during the 8th century. Suffice to note, for the moment, that there are no analogies in Transylvania for any of the belt fittings found in southern Romania, an indication that their origin is either local or in the central parts of the Carpathian Basin.

Most surprising is that on taking a quick glimpse at the distribution map of Avar-age belt fittings, one notes their complete absence in the regions to the east of the Carpathian Mountains. Unlike southern Romania, the lands between the Carpathian Mountains and the river Dniester are completely devoid of such finds. Moreover, there are no Avar-age belt fittings in the lands between the rivers Dniester and Dnieper.¹² Except the specimen from Velyka Krucha, there are no such finds in Left-Bank Ukraine either. Specimens that can be compared to those from Avar age assemblages in Central Europe have been found only in the Volga-Don region, where they are coin-dated to

¹⁰The social and/or political interpretation of the numerous strongholds found in Poland and dated to the 8th and 9th centuries is a thorny issue of the medieval archaeology in that country. However, all archaeologists who dealt with this problem agree that strongholds were associated with local elites, irrespective of the specific function that each one of them may have had (Poleski 1996a; Kurnatowska 2005; Parczewski 2006). For a good survey of the debates up to 2000, see Buko 2008, 84 – 99.

¹¹According to Pohl 2018, 401, the economic and political decline of the Avar Qaganate began in the mid-8th century. The idea that the Late Avar age was one of decline has been recently and forcefully rejected by Szenthe 2021.

¹²Without belt fittings, Vékony 1986 believed that the so-called “sacrificial” knives with handles decorated with volutes, which have been found in Moldova, must have come from the Carpathian Basin. In reality, the widespread distribution of such artefacts in East-Central and Eastern Europe raises serious doubts about Vékony’s interpretation. Instead of an influence from the Carpathian Basin, the „sacrificial” knives are most likely the result of an East European influence upon the Late Avar culture (Szymański 1987; Королькова 1996; Ковалевский 1998; Рабинович 2010; Мисько, Пивоваров 2010).

the 8th century (Gavritukhin 2008, 81 – 82 and 85 – 86).¹³ No such burial assemblages, nor any cultural element associated with them has so far been found in the lands between the Carpathian Mountains and the river Dnieper. At least for the 8th century, it is therefore wrong to advance the idea of a *pax Chazarica* in those lands, for that century represented anything but peace for the Khazars, whose power could not have reached Right-Bank Ukraine, much less the lands beyond it, to the west (Тентюк 1999, 226; Musteață 2018, 230). It is equally wrong to maintain the idea of the power of the Avars extending to the east from the Carpathian Mountains (Teodor 1999, 76). In the absence of belt fittings, one cannot even argue in favour of a cultural or political influence.

Many settlements have so far been discovered in the lands between the Carpathians and the Dnieper, which may be dated to the 8th and 9th centuries (Musteață 2018, 23 and map 3, with several clusters in the lands between the Carpathians and the Dniester; see also Musteață 2005; Михайлина 2007, 45 – 57).¹⁴ There are also strongholds dated to those same centuries (Teodor 1978, 319 map 3; Musteață 2005, 40 – 41). To be sure, the dating of those open settlements and strongholds from Eastern Europe must be treated with caution, given that it is primarily based on the dating of the pottery, itself without verification through independent dating methods (such as radiocarbon) (Рабинович, Рябцева 2016 raise the question of the chronological differences between open settlements and strongholds. The latter, according to the two authors, must be later than the open settlements, at least those dated on the basis of the pottery of the Luka-Raykovets-kaya group). However, there can be no doubt that at least some of those settlements may be dated to the second half of the 8th and the early 9th century. Conspicuously absent are any elements of material culture that could signal social differences or local elites. That the latter are invisible archaeologically results not only from the analysis of settlements, but also from that of cemeteries (Postică 1999; Musteață 2005, 131 – 136 uses the archaeological evidence to argue in favour of a social organization based on village communities [*obști sătești*], but admits that “local leaders” did not appear before the 9th century). The absence of Late Avar belt fittings must therefore be explained in terms of the lack of interest in symbols of social status and claims to power. This, however, is not just cultural difference; missing are not only Avar-age belt fittings, but *any* other, equivalent elements derived from other, different cultures.¹⁵

Ion Tentiuc has attributed to the Alans the wheel-made pottery with burnished ornamentation, such as found on the 8th – to 9th-century settlement site in Durlești (Republic of Moldova) (Tentiuc 2012, 92). Leaving aside the problems of ethnic attribution in archaeology, this ceramic category raises interesting questions regarding its function and the possibility of its ceremonial use. This pottery would thus be the only indication of preferential consumption, perhaps of spe-

¹³Given that those assemblages are dated to the period of the Arab-Khazar wars, they could be interpreted as „compensatory” monuments meant to prop the claims of local elites in their desperate attempt to preserve their social and political prominence. Such an interpretation may in turn explain the use of „exotic” symbols borrowed from distant culture – either Byzantine metal vessels or Late Avar belt fittings (e.g., Ильюков, Косьяненко 2007). For Byzantine metal vessels, see Naumenko, Bezuglov 1996. Barrows with square ditches, another category of funerary monuments in the Volga-Don region, may equally be interpreted as commemorative, at a time of great political and social tumult caused by the wars with the Arabs, which ended with the military disaster of 737 (e.g., Аксёнов 2005). For the Arab-Khazar wars, see Семёнов 2008 – 2009; Makó 2010. For the military disaster of 737, see Новосельцев 1990, 184 – 186.

¹⁴Тентюк 1999, 225 notes that the 8th century was a period of demographic growth and relative prosperity in the lands between the rivers Prut and Dniester, for the number of settlements recorded so far rose to 600 from only 240 for the 5th to 7th centuries.

¹⁵The horseman-shaped amulets, which some have attributed to the Alans and dated to the 8th and 9th centuries, turned out to be of a much later date (10th to 11th, or even 11th to 12th centuries) (Postică, Tentiuc 2014; Валериев 2015; Komatarova-Balinova 2019). Some still insist on an 8th – to 9th-century date (Bilavski, Berzovan 2020).

cial beverages and foods, and therefore of the existence of local elites preoccupied with marking social differences by means of rituals. The context in which fragments of wheel-made pottery have been found seems to substantiate that interpretation. Besides wheel-made pottery, house 14/25 in Durlești also produced five amphora fragments, unfortunately too small for classification (Tentiuc 2012, 49 and 93). Globular amphorae, however, were produced in the 8th and 9th centuries in the Crimea for the transportation of cheap wine, often mixed with spices (Сазанов 2020; such amphorae have recently been found on sites along the Black Sea coast of Bulgaria, for which see Todorova 2012, 13 – 14 and 28). Those two ceramic categories could in principle be interpreted as the material culture correlates of feasts organized by community leaders with ‘big man’ qualities. Such a scenario may explain in turn the absence of any interest for the Avar-age belt fittings, which are typically associated with an aristocracy well entrenched in a society that was substantially different from that of the ‘big men’ in Durlești. In order to be accepted, such an interpretation, however, will need first to be confirmed by the analysis of other assemblages with wheel-made pottery. Amphora fragments are known from other sites in the Republic of Moldova, but only from contexts dated to the 9th century, at the earliest (Musteață 2005, 83). In other words, the dating of the assemblage in house 14/25 in Durlești will need to be confirmed.

Out of four houses in Durlești in which wheel-made pottery has been found, three stand out through the associated finds of clay figurines in the shape of bulls, dogs, horses, birds, boards or saddles (Tentiuc 2012, 38 – 41 and 48; 65 fig. 29/1, 3, 5, 6, 8; 66 fig. 30/1, 2, 4, 5, 6; 67 fig. 31/9, 11, 15, 17, 18; 68 fig. 32/3 – 7, 9, 11, 12, 14, 16 – 18; 69 fig. 33/6, 7, 10). Tentiuc has interpreted the animal-shaped figurines as the result of an influence from eastern nomads (Tentiuc 2012, 66)¹⁶. Such figurines have indeed been found on sites of the Saltovo-Mayaki culture, on which they supposedly played a religious or magic role (Гриб 2019). The ritual interpretation of the deposition of clay figurines is confirmed by finds from Moldova: most specimens have been found in special pits dug underneath ovens or have been embedded into the walls of ovens inside dwellings (Тентюк 1990). Not all dwellings have such ritual deposits, which raises again the question of social differentiation, this time based on religious criteria. Be that as it may, the social structure of communities in Eastern Europe, such as derived from the archaeological evidence, lacked a well-established hierarchy and therefore the need for rank symbols, such as belt fittings.

The first signs in the lands to the east from the Carpathian Mountains of political leaders with a social status derived from economic privileges cannot be dated before the second half of the 9th century. The silver torc, the finger-ring with “stone” bezel, the gilded silver buckle and belt mounts from the Răducăneni hoard are all symbols of elevated social status, which was most likely based on wealth differentials, as suggested by the associated coins and silver ingots (Teodor 1980, 403 – 417 and figs. 4/4 – 13, 5/4 – 13, 6/1, 7/3 – 11, 8/3 – 11 [reprinted in Teodor 2003, 176 – 195]). The latest coins in the assemblage have been struck in the name of the Abbasid caliph Abu Djafar Harun al-Rashid ibn al-Mahdi (786 – 806), but two of them are pierced. It is important to note in this context that Riabceva 2002 has linked the Răducăneni hoard to the first strongholds in Moldova). None of those symbols, however, has anything to do with Avaria, and some of them have very good analogies in those territories which were part of the Khazar Qaganate during the 9th century¹⁷. Some have even attributed them to the Magyars (Рябцева, Рабинович 2018, 432 and 453). Irrespective of their attribution, simple torcs like that in the Răducăneni hoard appear in 9th-century burial as-

¹⁶ The earliest animal-shaped, clay figurines in Eastern Europe are those from assemblages attributed to the Imen’kovo culture in the Middle Volga region (Руденко 2021, 99 – 100).

¹⁷ Most analogies for the finger-ring with “stone” bezel are from assemblages of the Saltovo-Mayaki culture (Шпилев 2017, 177 – 179; Колода 2021).

semblages such as the barrows with cremations discovered in Alcedar (Рябцева, Рабинович 2018, 441 and 443 fig. 3/5). At the time such symbols were put on display, the Avar social models from the Carpathian Basin were already history. In Eastern Europe, the Avars were forgotten, long before they perished.¹⁸

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¹⁸ According to the Russian Primary Chronicle, “there is to this day a proverb in Rus’, which runs, ‘They perished like the Avars’. Neither race nor heir of them remains.” (Chronicle 1953, p. 56). The proverb in question was most likely taken from a letter of Patriarch Nicholas I Mystikos, who was writing in the early 10th century to Symeon of Bulgaria, to remind him that even the Avars disappeared without a trace (Mystikos 1973, p. 70).

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КЪДЕ СЕ ИЗГУБИХА ВСИЧКИ АВАРИ? ПОГЛЕД ОТ ИЗТОЧНА ЕВРОПА

Флорин Курта

Департамент „История“, Университет на Флорида, FL 32611, САЩ; fcurta@ufl.edu

РЕЗЮМЕ

Присъствието на аварите в Източна Европа, особено в земите между Карпатите и река Днестър, до момента притеснява историците. Валтер Пол например твърди, че до въстанието на Кубрат, вероятно срещу тях, аварите са управлявали земите, простиращи се източно от Карпатите, отвъд река Днестър. Археолозите са скептични – с изключение на няколко находки от Будуряска ранноаварски коланни обкови не са открити никъде на север, изток и юг от Карпатите. Такива няма и в земите на север от Карпатите, които попадат в границите на Полша. Повечето находки от аварската епоха там са датирани в последната третина на VIII и първите десетилетия на IX век и са групирани на юг (Силезия и Малополша). Към края на късния аварски период могат да бъдат датирани и находките в Южна Румъния, особено тези от редица некрополи, разкопани във Влашко – в Султана, Извору и Обършия Ноуа. Със същата дата е и единствената находка от земите на изток от река Днестър (накрайникът, открит във Велика Круча, Полтавска област, Украйна). Находките от Румъния наскоро бяха

интерпретирани във връзка с елитите на ранносредновековните българи, но някои от тях имат явна символична роля в рамките на съответните гробни комплекси. Коланната апликация от гроб 304 в Извору например не е придружена нито от други елементи и крайници, нито от тока. За разлика от коланните обкови в Южна Румъния, тези от Полша са или случайни находки, или са намерени в ранносредновековни крепости, някои от които несъмнено са били обитавани през IX в. В такива случаи те понякога са придружени от каролингски материали – ситуация, напояща за крепостите в Словения и Бохемия. Големият брой бракувани отливки, както и находките от поти и леярски капки от крепости в Бохемия, като Тишмице, предполагат много силно местно производство на коланни обкови от аварската епоха. Същото не е валидно за Полша, където внезапната поява на аварски предмети в земите на север от Судетите и Карпатите може би показва желанието на местните елити да използват механизмите за демонстриране на статуса (и, предполага се, на властта) в Аварския хаганат. Въпреки това е наистина изненадващо, че такъв интерес съвпада във времето с това, което историците смятат за период на упадък на аварското държавно устройство. В това отношение ситуацията в Полша е пряко сравнима с тази в Далмация, където местните елити започват да употребяват коланни гарнитури, имитиращи тези в Аварския хаганат през втората половина или дори последната третина на VIII в.

Символиката на аварските коланни обкови е използвана и от членовете на общности, които са погребвали мъртвите си в проучените некрополи в Южна Румъния. В контраст с тях никъде в земите на изток от Карпатите няма коланни апликации от аварската епоха. През втората половина на VIII и началото на IX в. този регион преживява нещо като демографски бум, както се вижда от големия брой селища. Има и укрепения, но реален стремеж за отбелязване на социален статус в материалната култура не може да бъде датиран преди средата на IX век. Следователно липсата на късноаварски коланни обкови трябва да се обясни с липсата на интерес към знаците на социален статус и претенции за власт. Разбира се, има ясни признаци на видимо потребление – изработена на колело керамика с излъскана украса и амфори, които може да са индикация за празненства, организирани от високопоставени лидери на общността. Първите признаци в земите на изток от Карпатите за политически водачи със социален статус, произтичащ от икономически привилегии, не могат да бъдат датирани преди втората половина на IX век. Колективната находка, която най-ясно се свързва с това явление, е съкровището от Радуканен, което съдържа сребърна торква, пръстен с „каменно“ гнездо и позлатена сребърна тока с коланни апликации – всички символи на висок социален статус. Нито един от тях няма нищо общо с аварската култура от миналия век, а някои от тях имат добри аналогии в териториите, които са част от Хазарския хаганат по това време. Някои дори са приписвани на маджарите. Когато знаците, маркиращи високо социално положение, стават необходими, езикът на представянето им е напълно различен от онзи, използван по-рано от елитите в Южна Полша, които подражават на аварите. В Източна Европа след 850 г. елитите подражават на хазарите, а не на аварите.

Ключови думи: авари, хазари, коланни обкови, социални елити, укрепления

THE “KHAN” AND HIS “KUMIHRS” (NEW DETAILS FROM THE DOCUMENTATION OF A GRAFFITO FROM STANCHO VAKLINOV’S EXCAVATIONS NORTH OF PLISKA’S CITADEL)

*Evgenia Komatarova-Balinova**, *Pantelis Charalampakis***,
*Miglena Raykovska****

* National Archaeological Institute with Museum, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, 2 Saborna Str., 1000 Sofia, Bulgaria;
e_komatarova@abv.bg

** National Archaeological Institute with Museum, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, 2 Saborna Str., 1000 Sofia, Bulgaria;
pantelcha@gmail.com

*** Institute of Information and Communication Technologies – Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Block 2, 2 Acad. Georgi
Bonchev Str., 1113 Sofia; miglena.raykovska@iict.bas.bg

ABSTRACT

The photographic documentation conducted by the current research team is the third such documentation to be made on a stone block with a graffito, found by Stancho Stanchev (Vaklinov). The purpose of the documentation was to juxtapose a number of techniques in order to choose the most efficient from among them, i.e. one where subjective visual perception is minimized, and at the same time, one that renders the greatest number of details that had remained unnoticed despite previous scientific observation. The chosen techniques were: Reflectance Transformation Imaging and 3D Laser Scanning. The rendered results, as it became apparent during data processing, complement each other in an excellent way.

The new details from the latest photographic documentation of the graffito can be divided into: one fully unknown figure and details of already known figures; letter characters, most of which in front, above and behind the figure of the rider.

Key words: Pliska, Graffiti, Contemporary techniques of documentation

Introduction

The present paper is the first in a publication cycle dedicated to the promulgation of the results from the scientific project “The Round Stone Platform in Pliska: Construction Materials, Graffiti, Marks and Inscriptions”.¹ The purpose of the article is to present the methods and contemporary techniques used for graffiti documentation, as well as the results from their application. The same

¹The project started in 2021 and is conducted with the financial help of NAIM – BAS (Scientific Council Protocol № 24/25.03.2021). The team consists of: Evgenia Komatarova-Balinova (head of the project), Andrey Aladzhov, Pantelis Charalampakis and Miglena Raykovska. The processing of materials from the monasteries at Ravna and Murfatlar was carried out with the knowledge, consent and cooperation of Prof. Kazimir Popkonstantinov (Veliko Tarnovo University “St. St. Cyril and Methodius”) and Dr. Aurel Mototolea, Director of the Museum of National History and Archaeology in Constanța. I would like to express my gratitude to both of them (E. K.).

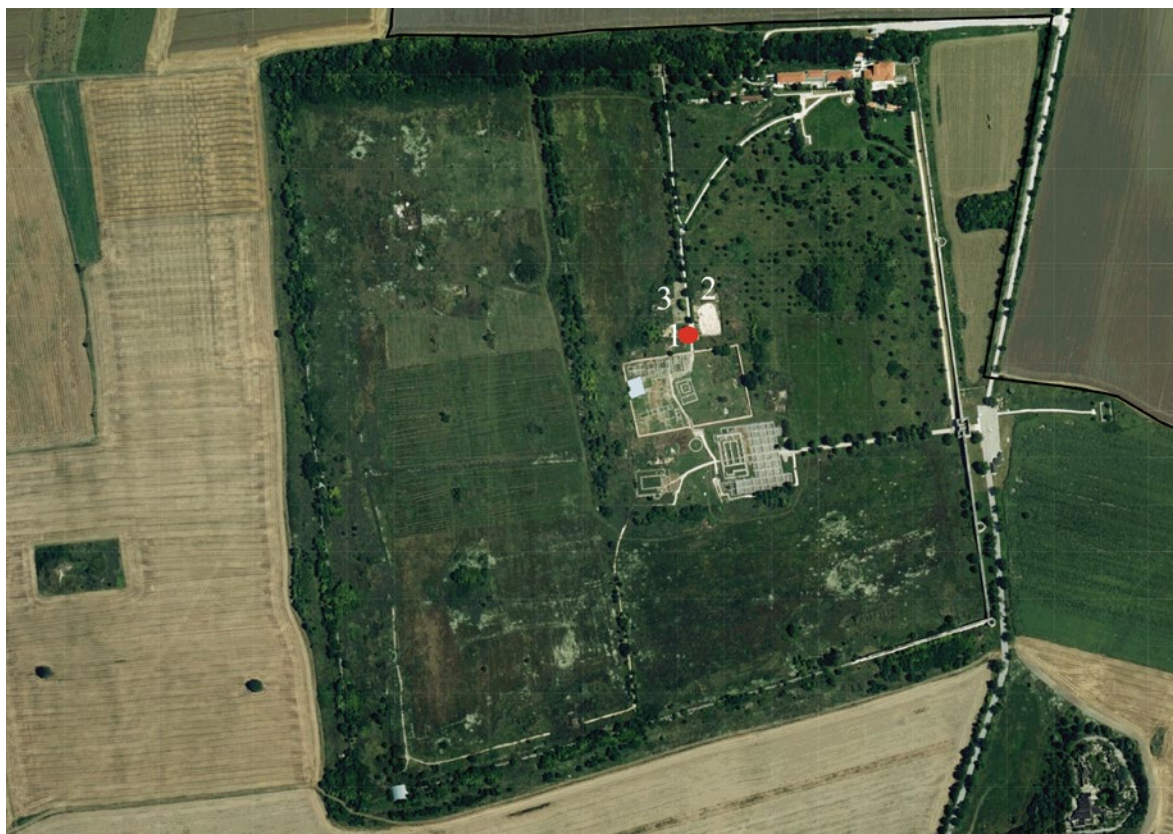


Fig. 1. Aerial photograph of the Inner town of Pliska (photo: Stanimir Stoychev): 1. Approximate localization of the tripartite building and "late" stone pavement, found in 1948 by Stancho Vaklinov; 2. The Round stone platform; 3. Boyar residence

Обр. 1. Въздушна снимка на Вътрешния град на Плиска (снимка: Станмир Стойчев): 1. Предполагаемо местоположение на триделната гражданска постройка с „късната“ каменна настилка от разкопките на Станчо Ваклинов през 1948 г.; 2. Кръглата каменна площадка; 3. Болярското жилище

techniques were employed not only in the process of the documentation of the drawings, inscriptions and wall-painting fragments from the Platform in Pliska (72 in total), but also in the comparative database collected for our research – the graffiti from the monasteries in Ravna, Provadiya municipality, and Basarabi-Murfatlar (Churches Nos. 1 – 4, Gallery E), Constanța region, Romania. The monuments documented within the framework of the project exceed 300 objects.

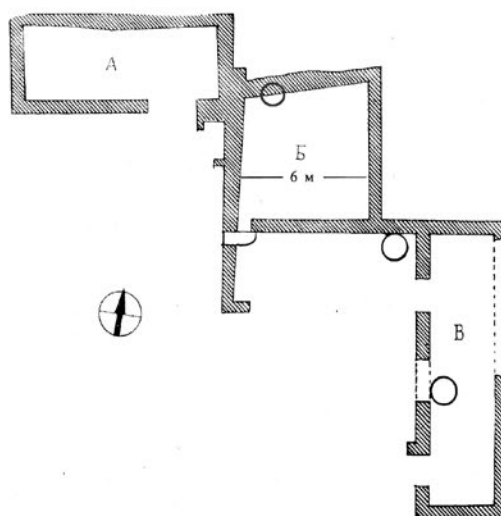
The decision to illustrate the team's chosen methodology particularly through the graffito drawing on a limestone block discovered north of Pliska's Citadel, is not an unconsidered one. On the one hand, this graffito is among the most recognizable of this type of artefact known to the broader academic audience, and to a certain extent is considered one of the emblems of Bulgarian "pagan" culture. On the other hand, it was, just like the other graffiti from the blocks in the Stone Platform, embedded – secondarily or for the third time – as a spolium in a building in the west periphery of the platform (fig. 1, fig. 2: 2). The block was unearthed in 1948 by Stancho Stanchev (Vaklinov) during the investigation of a "civil" structure featuring a row of three rooms, to the "north-east of the Small Palace" (Станчев 1955, обр. 10).² The absence of a situational plan and a preserved scientific archive from that time allows only the approximate localization of this building to the north of the Citadel's north entrance, under the contemporary visitors' path (fig. 1). A number of the

² Currently the monument is part of the permanent exhibition of the National Archaeological Museum in Sofia (Inv. No. 3936).



Обр. 4. Каменна настилка в западния край на изследваното пространство

1



Обр. 10. Гражданска сграда. План

2



3

Fig. 2. 1, 2. The stone pavement and the tripartite building, found by Stancho Vaklinov (after: Станчев 1955, fig. 4, 10); 3. Extension to the west of the stone pavement and a section of a secret passage which ends under the Round stone platform (photo: Mariela Inkova)

Обр. 2. 1, 2. Каменната настилка и триделната сграда, разкрити от Станчо Ваклинов (по: Станчев 1955, обр. 4, 10); 3. Западно разширение на каменната настилка с участък от таен ходник, с изход под Кръглата каменна площадка (снимка: Мариела Инкова)

trenches worked by Stancho Vaklinov were then rediscovered in 2012 – 2013 (unpublished data from the excavations), during the process of the clearing of the “late” stone pavement found by him (fig. 2: 1) (see Станчев 1955, с. 187, обр. 4). Its extension to the west and north (at elevation of 183.22 – 183.26 m) was documented during the investigation of the sites labelled “Courtyard with Wooden Fence North of the Citadel” (fig. 2: 3) (Станилов и др. 2016, 648, обр. 2.1) and “Round Stone Platform” (Аладжов и др. 2016, 650). The upper chronological border of the structures discovered by the aforementioned archaeologist – the tripartite building and the stone pavement – was determined by the coins discovered in the stratum, the latest among which were of Empress Theodora (1055 – 1056) (Станчев 1955, 194). Chronologically close to them were seven gold coins (from the same nominal) of Constantine X Doukas (1059 – 1067) (Аладжов и др. 2014, 443), which originated from the northern areas of the pavement partially unearthed in 1948 (in square 7/3 of the grid of the “Round Stone Platform” site, field journal of 21.10.2013).

The limestone block (measuring 0.48 x 0.28 x 0.25 m) (fig. 3: 1, 2) from the tripartite building, found together with other spolia (building ceramics that also feature engraved drawings and a Greek inscription) was embedded in the inner face of the north wall of the “residential” precinct Б (fig. 2: 2), so that the images on it were turned upside down (Станчев 1955, 192, 209, 212). According to Vaklinov, this stone block had been reused several times and used still later as an animal trough before it ended up built into (for possibly the third time) the tripartite building. The place of its original provenance is considered to be among the monumental structures in the Palace complex in Pliska (Станчев 1955, 212).

In the following decades, the artefact was included in several publications penned by Veselin Beshevliev (Бешевлиев 1992, 252 – 253), Dimitar Ovcharov (Овчаров 1982, 51 – 55), Pavel Georgiev (Георгиев 1991, 198 – 208), Stamen Mihailov (Mihailov 1998), and Rasho Rashev (Рашев 2008, 227 – 228). The interpretations of the depicted elaborate scene, rich in detail, mainly fall into two groups of hypotheses. According to the first, the scene is of triumphal character, the most solid argument in favor of which is the obvious similarity of the rendition of the central mounted figure to that of the Madara Horseman (Станчев 1955, 211–218; Овчаров 1982; Рашев, Димитров 1999, 45). According to the other group of hypotheses, the scene represents a “cult ceremony in the Bulgarian capital of the first half of the 9th century”, which gives grounds for a “precise and convincing reconstruction” of the “cultic-religious ceremonials in the pre-Christianisation era” (Георгиев 1991, 198).

The main reason for the existence of multiple interpretations of the scene, are the missing or barely visible details on the stone surface – especially in its left half – which has created a wide open field for the imagination and has generated various interpretations, many of which are entirely conjectural. For the period since the discovery of the block ca. 75 years ago until today, the stone has been photographically documented twice. The first time it was recorded by its discoverer (fig. 3: 1) and the facsimiles of his graphic documentation have been reprinted with some additions by Veselin Beshevliev and Dimitar Ovcharov (Бешевлиев 1992, 253; Овчаров 1982, фиг. 1). In 1991, Pavel Georgiev documented it again (fig. 3: 2), which gave him a reason for a new interpretation, different from that of Vaklinov. According to Pavel Georgiev, the key role for the understanding of the drawing is played by the word inscribed between the standing human figure on the left and the rider in the centre, read by him as КОУМІР instead of ПОУМІР, as per Vaklinov and Beshevliev. From this starting point, the entire scene is interpreted as a moment captured from a ceremony related to the ancestors’ cult, “well-known among the Turkic people”. In the so presented scene, the standing figure is identified as a statue of a *kumihir* (idol), symbolizing one or more dead ancestors (Георгиев 1991, 205). The same author argues that to the left of the standing



1



2

1955 г.

1991 г.

2022 г.



3

Fig. 3. 1, 2. The images on the stone block, documented by Stancho Stanchev (Vaklinov) and Pavel Georgiev in 1955 and 1991; 3. Juxtaposition between previous documentation and the new one, in 2022

Обр. 3. 1, 2. Документация от заснемането на изображенията върху блока от Станчо Станчев (Ваклинов) и Павел Георгиев през 1955 и 1991 г.; 3. Съпоставка между по-старата документация с осъществената през 2022 г.

human figure there is another one – a second *kumih*r which, together with the first one and the remaining personages, depict a moment from a consecration ritual of a Khan's memorial or burial ensemble (Георгиев 1991, 205). The full reading of the inscription on the right as “the very strong khan descendant (grandson)” allows the suggestion that the central figure represents the young Khan Malamir (Георгиев 1991, 207). The author elaborates his hypothesis decades later, in 2018, in his comprehensive study “Pliska, the Pagan Centre of Bulgaria”. He does so in the context of the problem of the construction history of the Great *kapish*te (pagan sanctuary), where he suggests a possible reconstruction of the temple and derives its “inherent connection” to “Turkic memorial temples dedicated to the higher aristocracy”, one of which is the temple of Kul Tigin in Mongolia. In support of this statement is the same “*kumih*r” from the graffito discovered by Stancho Vaklinov, which should have been placed inside an alcove in the broadest (eastern) wall of the inner rectangle of the Great *kapish*te in Pliska (Георгиев 2018, 41).

The photographic documentation

The photographic documentation conducted by the current team is, as mentioned previously, the third for this stone block (fig. 4). The work was carried out in March 2022, immediately after the last cleaning and conservation of the monument with regards to the inclusion of the graffito in the exhibition “Mounted Nomads in Europe” (Schallaburg, Austria, 09.04. – 06.11.2022). The purpose of the documentation was to juxtapose a number of techniques in order to choose the most efficient from among them, i.e. one where subjective visual perception is minimized, and at the same time, one that renders the greatest number of details that had remained unnoticed despite the previous decades of scientific observation. The chosen techniques were: Reflectance Transformation Imaging and 3D laser scanning, whose results, as it became apparent during data processing, complement each other in an excellent way.

Reflectance Transformation Imaging (RTI) is a technique used for the documentation of very fine surface details – often invisible to the naked human eye, and difficult or even impossible to capture through other photographic or 3D methods – on a wide spectrum of materials (Raykovska et. al. 2015, 140). The method uses the algorithms of Polynomial Texture Mapping (PTM) and Hemispherical Harmonics (HSH) developed in 2001 at Hewlett-Packard Labs by Tom Malzbender



Fig. 4. Contemporary condition of the monument (photo: Miglena Raykovska)

Обр. 4. Сегашно състояние на паметника (снимка: Миглена Райковска)

(Warda 2011, 125; Bevan et al. 2013, 221). In contrast to laser scanning and photogrammetry, RTI does not result in 3D data in a point cloud with concrete dimensions in the x, y and z axes. Instead, the obtained data contains information about the normal vector for each pixel of the area photographed. That means that each pixel can be positioned correctly in space and in relation to one another, thus forming a 2D representation that is of a 3D character.

RTI is a flexible technique, and easy to use. The necessary equipment consists of a photo camera of good resolution, a stable tripod, a flashlight, a black reflective sphere and synchronizers. The technique entails a sequence of standard captures of a given object, each taken with the help of a fixed camera under directional lighting (flashlight). The object is illuminated from no less than 24 evenly distributed lighting positions (Mudge et al. 2010, 115) (fig. 5). The purpose of this is to calculate the normal for each separate pixel of the image with the help of the data stored in the capture (fig. 6). The RTI algorithm calculates the reflection for each pixel according to each lighting position coming from the illuminant (Gabov, Bevan 2011, 4). Along with that, the pixel also preserves the data of the colour coordinates within the colour dimension used. This information is sufficient in order to reproduce the direction of the normal and, based on that, the relief of the object's surface, as well as its texture. Taken together, the "normals" trace the shape of the surface in the so called "normal map" (fig. 6), and with the help of the respective software (RTI Viewer) and computer-simulated light sources and filters, the end user can manipulate the lighting positions and reflections of the studied object, thus discerning different areas of the surface (fig. 7). When a camera of high resolution is used, the ground sample size for each normal measurement can be less than 50 microns (Raykovska et al. 2015, 142), and as a result, some very thin and shallow incisions can be identified.

The RTI documentation of the graffiti from the tripartite building north of the Citadel was carried out using a Nikon D500 camera and a macro lens Nikkor 105mm. One RTI sphere was used, together with a GodoxTT685n flashlight. The photographic documentation was completed in 69 captures, with the use of one RTI sphere (fig. 5). The tentative aspects of the scene's interpretation in the publications cited above were used for orientation when the data was processed in RTI Viewer. Lighting positions that reveal missing or unclear elements of the drawing and parts of inscriptions were deliberately sought (fig. 9). Finally, the vector graphic image was traced upon the normal map



Fig. 5. 69 frames of the graffiti with 1 RTI sphere and different positions of the light source

Обр. 5. 69 кадъра на графитите с различна позиция на светлинния поток и 1 бр. RTI сфера

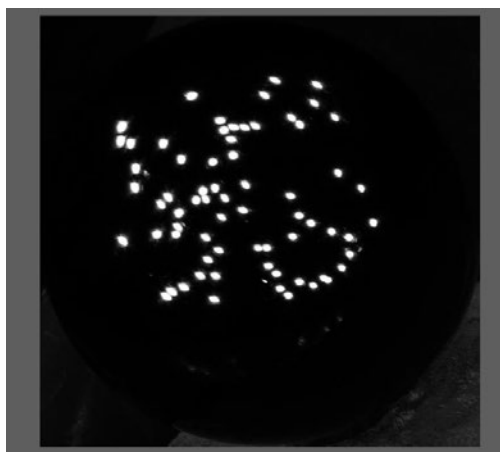


Fig. 6. A snapshot of the stored light positions on the RTI sphere

Обр. 6. Общ кадър на съхранените позиции на светлинния поток върху RTI сферата

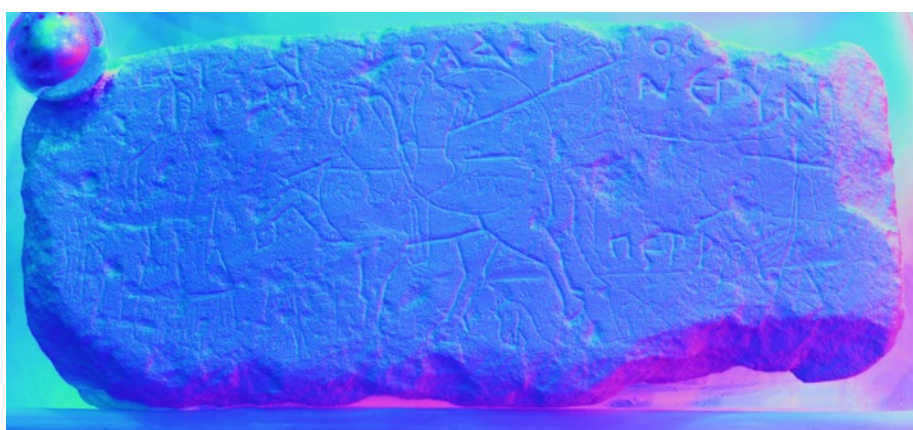


Fig. 7. A normal map derived from the RTI Viewer

Обр. 7. „Карта на нормалите“ от RTI Viewer



Fig. 8. Detail of the graffiti surface, with reduced saturation and a sharp angle of the light source, revealing details of fine incisions

Обр. 8. Детайл от повърхността на графита, с намалена сатурация и остър ъгъл на светлинния поток, разкриващ детайли от фини врязвания



Fig. 9. Graffiti's detail demonstrated through the Specular Enhancement filter

Обр. 9. Детайли от графита, демонстрирани чрез Specular Enhancement филтър

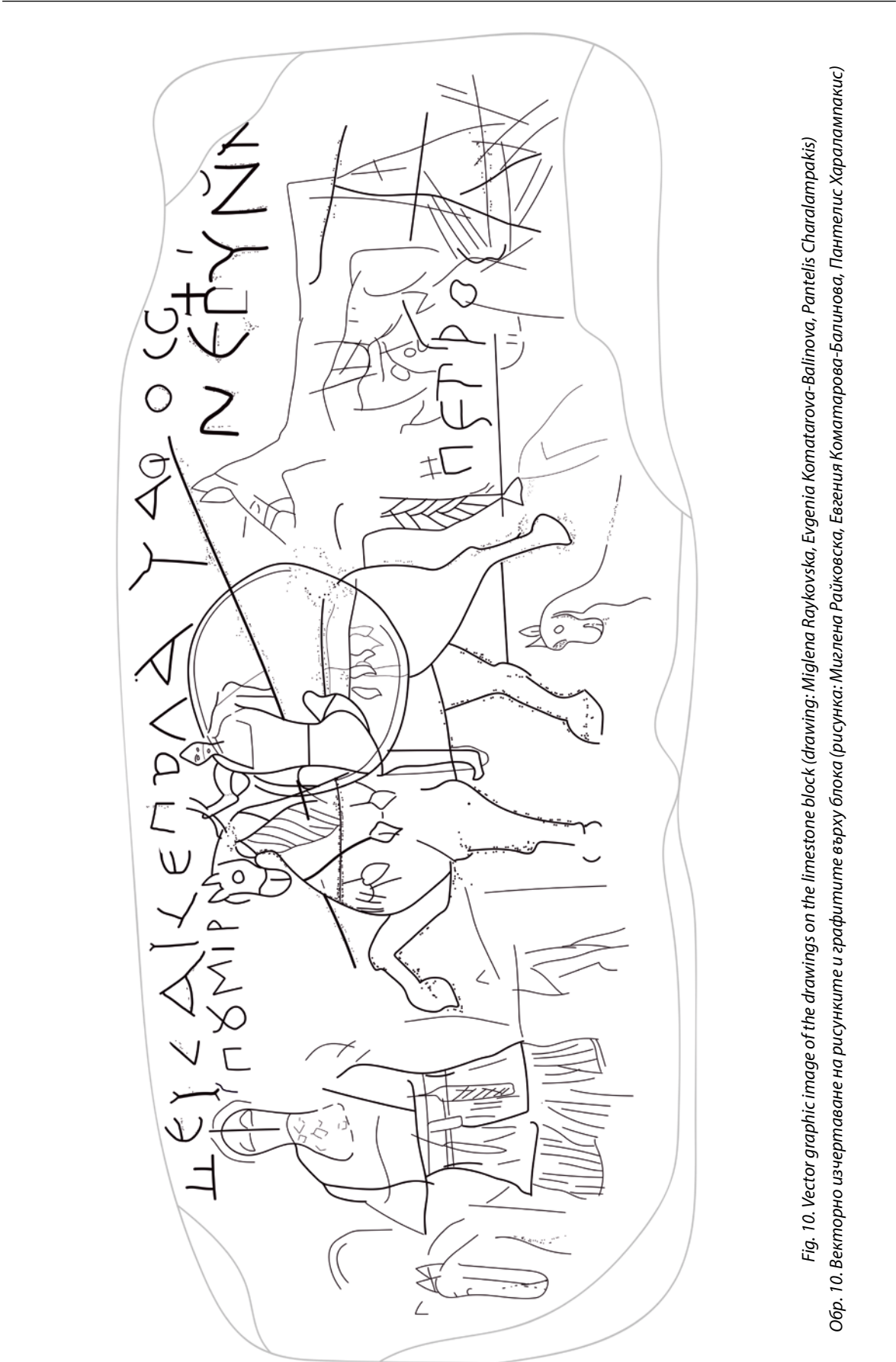


Fig. 10. Vector graphic image of the drawings on the limestone block (drawing: Miglena Raykova, Evgenia Komatarova-Balinova, Pantelis Charalampakis)

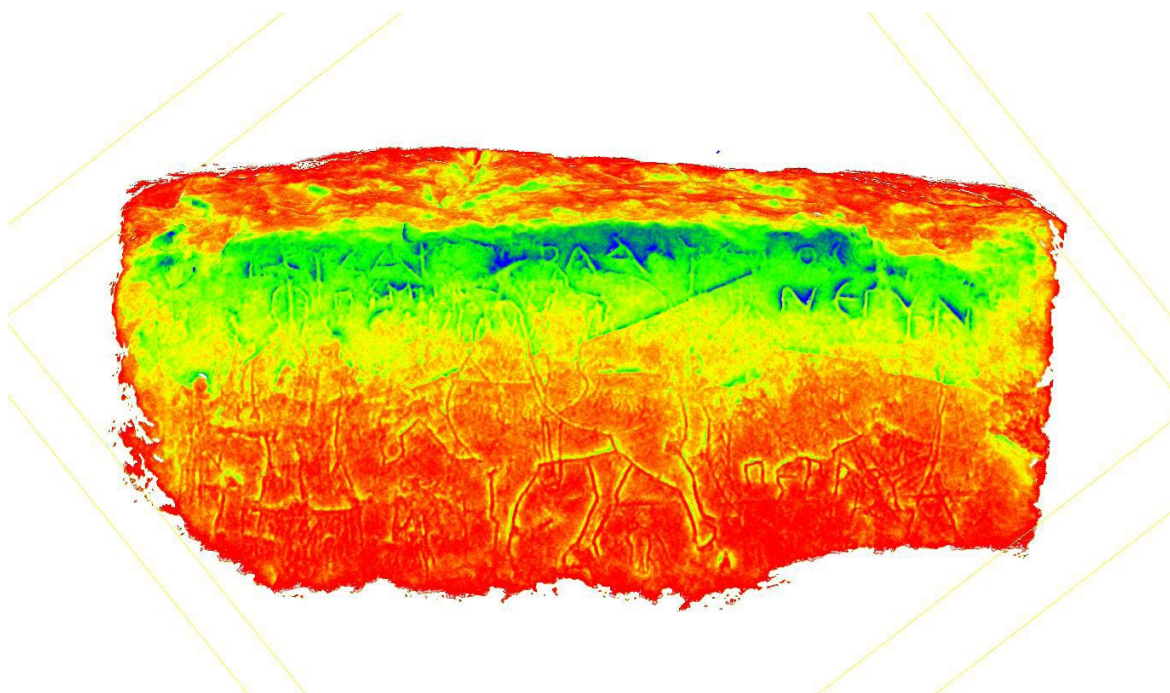


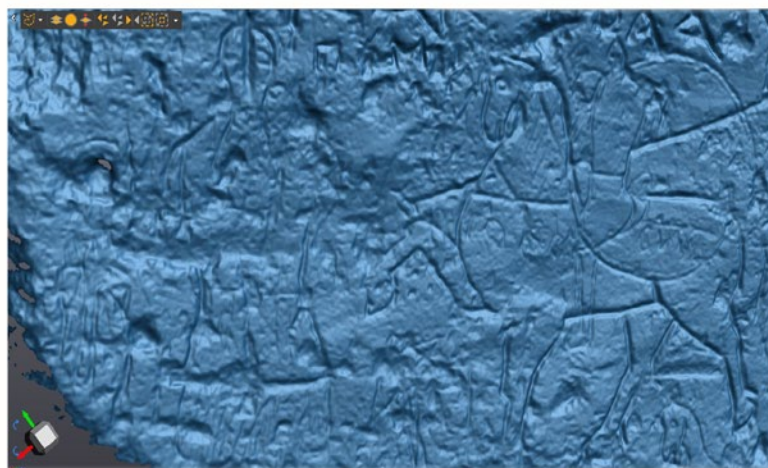
Fig. 11. Snapshot of the 3D segmentation in CloudCompare v.2.12.1

Обр. 11. Общ кадър от триизмерна сегментация в CloudCompare v.2.12.1

and the selected views from RTI Viewer, which in fact were used as its base and therefore reflect the objective condition of the monument (fig. 10).

The laser scanning was performed using a CREAFORM Handy SCAN 3D – scanners of the latest generation. The precision is 0.025 mm with a resolution of 0.050 mm. It works with 7 laser crosses and 1 additional laser line. This scanner type does not generate texture but in this particular case, in the presence of detailed photographic documentation, that is not necessary. The visual study of the 3D model clearly demonstrates the existence of images and graphic elements that were not noted in earlier publications. In order to confirm that, and to facilitate the comparison with the results of RTI photography, the so-called process of segmentation was conducted (fig. 12: 3). This is, broadly speaking, a mathematical algorithm for the recognition of images from a certain picture. It is often used in medicine and is a known tool in epigraphy. The 3D segmentation is a derivative approach based on a mathematical analysis of 3D databases, instead of 2D photographic images. The process permits the “mapping” of depths of artificial incisions upon a given surface. For the purpose, a 3D point cloud of high resolution is used, to which an additional plane can be mounted and serve as a reference point for the measurement of distance between the two surfaces (Longo 2016, 30).

The Cloud Compare software is among the most preferred packages for the conducting of such research. For the purpose of the project was used the so-called Poisson surface reconstruction – a method for the calculation of depths and distances, in which, with the aid of an additionally mounted smoothed surface, a coloured map is produced, which reflects the extent of deviation between the planes. This is often represented in two colours: red-yellow, black-white etc., where the darkest colour denotes the most extreme negative deviation of the depth towards the light, which in turn illustrates the most positive deviation of the depth. Examples for the segmentation of the 3D model of the graffito in Cloud Compare 2.12.1. are presented in Figure 12: 1, 3.



1



2



3



4

Fig. 12. Snapshots of the 3D laser scan model and the point cloud segmentation

Обр. 12. Общи кадри на 3D модела от лазерното сканиране и сегментацията на облака от точки

Results from the new documentation

The new details from the latest photographic documentation of the graffito can be divided into: one fully unknown figure and details of already known figures; letter characters, most of which in front, above and behind the figure of the rider.

The graffiti drawings

The details which are most problematic and challenging to interpret regarding the previous documentation campaigns in 1955 and 1991 appear as follows, when compared to the results of 3D scanning and RTI (fig. 3: 3, fig. 12). The incisions that have been interpreted as a second “*kumih*” figure in the left part of the block are, in fact, the head, neck and part of the chest of a horse. His head is rather bent downwards, disproportionately elongated, and some of its components are rendered both facing and in profile: the ears, the eye and the jaw. The back, the hind limbs and the tail of the animal are shown in a similar way as the horse figure in the right half of the block. At the same time, the line drawing of the head emulates almost thoroughly that of the figure under the horseman, from which (in reverse perspective) are depicted only the front body parts. It could be therefore considered that all three horse figures were drawn synchronously and by the same hand, which is also shown by the same pressure applied on the sharp tool that left a very shallow incision.

The standing human figure – the so called first *kumih*, is in fact a depiction of a warrior in armour, presented facing, disproportionate, especially his torso. Part of the upper half of his body is covered by a helmet. The way the helmet is rendered suggests that it comprised a solid component and a plastic one. The former is spherical on top and engulfs completely the head, with cutouts for the eyes. The second part covers the neck and some of the chest, and was made of fine small chains which the “artist” depicted rather unskilfully. A deeply incised line – possibly also an opening – slices the helmet into two symmetrical vertical parts, ending on top with plumage of two stripes descending symmetrically downwards. An entirely new detail revealed in the latest photographic documentation is the belt of the figure (fig. 3: 3, fig. 9, fig. 12). It wraps tightly around the waist and is fastened with a rectangular buckle, much wider than the band. The shape of the buckle was traced not by incision but by scraping off the surface, and because of that does not feature a tongue. To the right and to the left of the belt, symmetrical to each other, are attached a scabbard for a sword (or sabre) and a single-blade knife, but it would be premature to claim whether they render concrete weaponry since they are drawn too schematically, without any type-determining characteristics like the hilt, the guard and the point of the wedge. Entirely conjectural in this case would be the suggestion that the right arm folded in the elbow is holding this sabre or sword with a “tip” pointed upwards, because its length does not correspond to that of the scabbard.

The lower half of the body of the standing figure is presented up to the knees. It is dressed in a flared garment, of which two frontal parts are visible. They are clearly visible in the area of the skirt, slightly open in front and presented by a thickened line. The folds and the model of the garment are rendered without skill, but they nonetheless allow the observation that this flared piece of clothing ended with a narrow band or cuff.

Due to the scarcity of historical, archaeological and visual art evidence from the period of the Early Middle Ages – here we have in mind the information from the so called aristocratic graves and those collected in Valeri Yotov’s monograph “Arms and Armour in the Bulgarian Middle Ages (7th – 11th century)” (Њотов 2004, 37 – 77, 115 – 120) – as perhaps the most certain analogy of our depiction we can point out the warrior figure on the round medallion of the bone amulet from Harlets, Vratsa Municipality. The similarity in details in this case are: the two-part helmet to which

plumage is added on top, the undecorated belt, the flared garment, and the sabre suspended to the left of the belt (Stanilov, Komatarova-Balinova 2018, abb. 2, 3). At the same time, the round shield of the rider from this graffito, despite shown without an umbo, so far corresponds only to the shields from the right branch of the Harlets bone amulet, which has been also noted in Valeri Yotov’s monograph (Йотов 2004, 117, обр. 66, обр. 77).

No doubt, scholarly attention has been drawn so far mainly to the central figure of the composition – that of the rider (fig. 8, fig. 10). He is presented in profile to the left, and part of his upper body half and face are turned towards the viewer. He is depicted with similar artistic methods as the Madara Horseman, and they share several details in common. The most obvious among them are: the pose of the rider, the proportions of the human figure, the “ceremonial pose” and the ratio in the rendition of the horse, and even minute details like the movement of the beast, the ankles and the hooves. Among the newly documented details one can see the high front curve of the saddle, similar to that of the Madara Horseman, the round chest piece of the horse similar to the Madara relief, and the braided tail made of three strands of hair. The static pose of the rider is supported also by the stirrup and the horse reins which he holds in his right arm raised high. The new element in this figure is the pectoral that covers the upper half of the torso and its contour merging with that of the stiff-tipped helmet. To the limited number of analogies, with a degree of certainty, we can mention the human figure with a pointy two-part helmet engraved to the west of the Church 1 in Murfatlar that have so far remained in the periphery of scientific interest (fig. 13).

The textual graffiti

Apart from the drawings, the stone block from Pliska includes textual graffiti that covers five segments of the surface, above the drawings and between them. In four out of five, the characters are scratched with thick sharp instrument and are of large size in regard of the stone’s overall dimensions, while in the fifth the characters are small in size, and consist of very thin lines. Despite the vast scholarly literature on this stone, the small-size letters appear only in the drawing by Pavel Georgiev (fig. 3: 2) (Георгиев 1991, 203; Георгиев 2018, 40, обр. 14). Of the four clearly visible



Fig. 13. A graffito drawing west of the entrance of Church 1 in Murfatlar (photo: E. Komatarova-Balinova)

Обр. 13. Рисунка-графит, врязана западно от входа на Църква № 1 в Мурфатлар (снимка: Е. Коматарова-Балинова)

texts, one is a continuous line at the upper part of the stone, with possible traces of another line broken off above, while the other three are single words appearing at different parts of the surface. Whether all these texts are related to each other or to the drawings on the same stone block, is an issue difficult to interpret. The following commentary touches upon the large-size characters only, because the small ones are extremely faded and no longer visible even in the high quality RTI photos. The multiple and varying interpretations and explanations of the text, provided by previous scholars can be found in the cited literature. Before proceeding to the commentary, it must be emphasized that the textual content of this stone can hardly be of a monumental, official character: the overall size of the figures and the letters, the medium of execution, as well as the fact that they have been scratched as graffiti probably mean that these were spontaneous in nature, created on personal initiative (by more than one person) and were definitely not the outcome of a commissioned artwork or inscription.

The inscription was first read by Stancho Stanchev (Vaklinov) (fig. 14: 1) as: [...]ΔΕΖΑΝ[.] ΠΟΛΑ ΔΥΑ ΓΟC[ΤΟΥΝ? ΚΕ] ΝΕΓΥΝ – ΠΟΥΜΙΡ – ΠΕΤΡΟC, without providing a translation or a clear explanation for this reading (Станчев 1955, 211 – 217). It was later complemented by Veselin Beshevliev as: [ΕΝΘΑ]ΔΕ ΙCΑΝ ΠΟΛΑ ΔΥ<Ν>ΑΤΟC ΠΟΥΜΙΡ ΝΕΓΥΝ ΠΕΤΡΟC, translated as: “Here were: the very strong Poumir, (as well as) Negyn, Petros” (Бешевлиев 1992, no. 89, обр. 189 – 190). In this interpretation, only Poumir was “very strong”, and he was accompanied by the other two persons. Dimitar Ovcharov, on the other hand, suggested the following reading: [ΕΝΘΑ]ΔΕ ΚΑΝ ΠΟΛΑ ΔΥ<Ν>ΑΤΟC ΠΟΥΜΙΡ ΝΕΓΥΝ ΠΕΤΡΟC, translated as: “Here (are depicted) the most powerful khan, (as well as) Poumir, Negyn, (and) Petros” (Овчаров 1983; id., 1982, 56 – 58, 145, обр. 24, табл. LXXX; the reading of the word “khan” was accepted by and repeated in: Пашев 2008, 227). According to this – third – reading, only the “khan” was “very strong”, and he was accompanied by the other three. Yet another reading was proposed by Pavel Georgiev, who split the text in two parts, to the left and to the right of the shielded horseman, as two inscriptions in two lines: ΙΔΕ ΚΑΝ – ΚΟΥΜΙΡ / ΠΟΛΑ ΔΥ(Ν)ΑΤΟC ΚΑΝ[ΑC] ΝΕΓΥΝ[ΟC], translated as: “This is Khan – koumir” / “the very strong khan – descendant (grandson)” (fig. 14: 2) (Георгиев 1991, 200 – 205. See also: Георгиев 2018, 39 – 42). A few years later, Stamen Mihailov suggested the reading: ΙΖΑΚ ΠΟΛΑ Ο ΑΓΟC, translated as: “Isak, the very guilty” (Mihailov 1998). According to Mihailov, the inscription refers to the Bulgar bolyars Isak, Poumir, Negyn, as well as the Slav Petros, who were punished for opposing Boris’ plans to Christianise the population of his state.

Although the three “names” pose no problem, the continuous text is hardly legible, for the upper part of the stone is damaged. The new methods of photography applied to this stone revealed much evidence regarding the pictorial graffiti and very little, yet significant, information regarding the textual graffiti. In fact, each of the previous scholars who tried to read the text was right about something, adding small pieces to a bigger puzzle. The following is the proposed new reading of the inscriptions on the stone, based on the letters visualized through RTI and laser scanning.

On the continuous text in the upper part of the stone block:

[...]ΔΕΚΑΚΕΠΟΛΑ[.Τ or Υ]Α[Φ or Ι]Ο[С or Ι]C[...]

[...] ten (?) and many ... [...]

The sixteen visible characters deserve to be commented upon, one by one (fig. 14: 3, 4): The

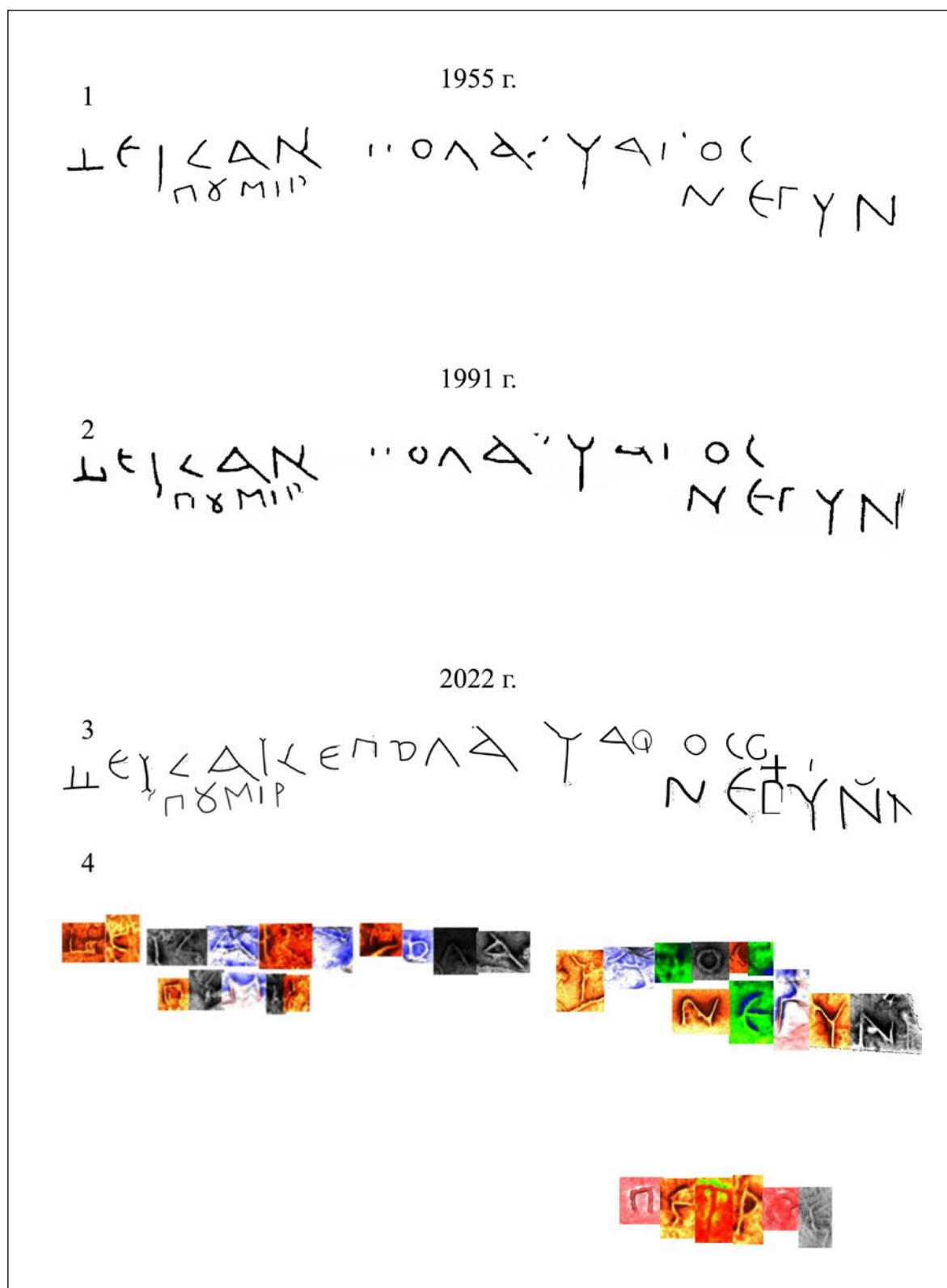


Fig. 14. 1 – 3. Documentation of the inscriptions on the block in 1955 (by Stancho Vaklinov), 1991 (by Pavel Georgiev) and in 2022 (by the team of the project); 4. 3D Laser scanning of the inscriptions on the block

Обр. 14. 1 – 3. Заснемане на надписите върху блока през 1955 (на Станчо Ваклинов), 1991 (на Павел Георгиев) и 2022 (от екипа по проекта); 4. 3D лазерно сканиране на надписите от 2022 г.

first visible character, at the upper left part of the stone, consists of a horizontal bar below with two vertical hastas springing up from it (resembling an upside-down Greek *pi*). It can be compared with the peculiar *delta* attested in a graffiti at the church no. 2 at Avradaka, near Preslav, dated in the late 9th – early 10th c. (Иванова 1949, 60; Иванова 1955, 80, 130, обр. 22; Овчаров 1979, 190. Станчев 1955, 215, also saw a *delta* on the stone presented here, without, however, being able to provide its exact shape or any parallel). The difference between these two characters – the one from Pliska and that from Avradaka/Preslav – is that the second one, according to Vera Ivanova who excavated the site and published the graffiti, bears a small line which cuts diagonally the left vertical arm (Dimitar Ovcharov has omitted this line). If this small, diagonal line is not an accidental scratch or damage, it could have been an element added by the person who wrote these words, perhaps in order to form a cross, given that the text is of religious, Christian character. This type of *delta*, not attested elsewhere, must have been a local variety, perhaps developed by locals who had been schooled in the Greek language. It is not attested in inscriptions known so far which were commissioned by khans or other official and funeral inscriptions on stone. The possibility of a connection with the Runic characters that according to scholars correspond to the phoneme (?) ΔΑ and similar ones (on these Runes see Йончев, Йончева 1982, 56, обр. 81, 63, обр. 87, 65, обр. 92) needs further investigation. Hopefully, future discovery of more samples will help scholars to map the finds and trace the origins of this peculiar character.

Next, the second letter is an *epsilon*, whose upper half is shorter than the lower part, and the angle formed between the upper line and the middle bar is sharper than usual. Moreover, the ending of the lower tip is curving upwards. It resembles neither the *epsilon* of ΝΕΓΥΝ, nor that of ΠΕΤΡΟΣ, scratched on the same stone.

The third and fifth visible letters of the inscriptions are *kappas* and it is worth analysing them together. The *kappa* following the *epsilon* consists of two separate lines, one is a vertical hasta and the other resembles a C or <. This shape was common in that period (see, for example: Овчаров 1982, табл. LXXXIII and CXXIV; Бешевлиев 1992, no. 28, with обр. 91; also in inscriptions from Ravna: the establishment or restoration inscription – Попконстантинов 1986, 10, обр. 2; the so-called inscription of Pope Clement – e.g. Георгиев 2017, 226; and in unpublished graffiti from this same monastery). Sometimes, a small horizontal line connects the two main parts, but it is so faint that is barely visible (Бешевлиев 1992, no. 31, with обр. 94). Occasionally, two different types of *kappa* – with connected and separate lines – were included in the same inscription (see, for example, Иванова 1955, 90, 138, обр. 34; Бешевлиев 1992, 158, no. 26, with обр. 89). Stancho Vaklinov and Stamen Mihailov (Станчев 1955, 215 – 216; Mihailov 1998) read the first *kappa* as IZ, YZ, or K, showing preference for the Z. In the next *kappa*, there is, indeed, the trace of a connecting line. On both *kappas*, curved feet (“serifs”) terminate the vertical hastas’ upper parts. The second *kappa* had not been detected by previous scholars, who interpreted the lines either as IC (ιϛ) or N (ν). It must be admitted that IC / I< is, more than frequently, simply the sequence of the two letters (ιϛ) (as, for example, in: Овчаров 1992, 259 – 260, обр. 1, the IC standing for I(H)C(OYC) [ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ]). In this case, if one accepts the reading ιϛ, the δεκαισεπολα would not make sense, even if the first part is interpreted as [ενθα]δε (the preposition σε used in modern Greek was still εις at that time). However, the connecting line, the curved feet, the overall resemblance between the two characters, as well as the vowel (*epsilon*) that follows, all point to a *kappa*.

Between the two *kappas*, the fourth discernible letter is an *alpha*, of similar type with the other two *alphas* attested further in the same line – the tenth and the twelfth visible characters. The only difference is that the left bar looks more vertical than usual; nonetheless, this character cannot be mistaken for a *delta*.

After the second *kappa*, in the sixth position, there is an *epsilon*, no longer visible to the naked eye but detectable with the help of the 3D laser scanning photo (fig. 14: 3, 4). It is similar to the *epsilon* attested previously in the same line: same angles and curved ending of the lower tip.

The next, seventh character, already noted by previous scholars, is a *pi*. The left vertical line is longer than the right, and the horizontal bar has been scratched slightly diagonally, falling from left to right. There are no serifs visible, only plain, straight lines.

The *pi* is followed by what looks like an *omicron*. Although this letter placed here fits perfectly with the previous and following ones to form a word, one cannot but notice the unusual shape of this character: its left half is not curving, but rather seems to be a vertical, straight line, whose lower part ends projecting leftwards; another straight line, this time horizontal, is attached to the lower – curving – part of the character. Moreover, the vertical line on the left is projected a little higher than the letter’s upper curve, and it ends with a serif to the left, making the character similar to the Old Cyrillic letter *yer* – strong (on this letter, see also below, about the chronology).³ It must be noted, however, that despite the existence of several bilingual inscriptions with text in Greek and Bulgarian (written in Cyrillic), so far no Greek text in Greek mixed with Cyrillic characters has been discovered. For this reason, it seems that it is an *omicron*, and that the character’s shape is not circular due to the scribe’s slipping hand.

The ninth visible character can be confused for an *alpha* when seen with naked eye, but is in fact a *lambda*, as the RTI image convincingly shows. It has a standard form, without serifs or other special features.

Then follows an *alpha*, again of a common type.

After this *alpha* follows something that has been interpreted as a *delta*. In fact, what we see is a break on the stone, roughly in the shape of a standard *delta*, and not the letter *delta* itself (the absence of a letter here has been already noted by Stamen Mihailov 1998, 5). Moreover, judging by the neighbouring letters *alpha* and *lambda*, which have a shape similar to the standard *delta*, their lines are stretched much more than the damaged area, meaning either the *delta* was too small compared to the other letters, or it was not a *delta*. Last but not least, even if the spot was occupied by a character that was a *delta*, it should have been similar to the one attested previously – the first visible letter in the same line (see above). The use of two different *alphas*, *betas* or *kappas*, for example, in one and the same inscription would not be a surprise, because of the close similarity between the types of characters; but using two very different *deltas* (if assumed that the first visible letter of this inscription is certainly a *delta*), such as the standard type and the rare one that resembles an upside-down Greek *pi*, is rather unlikely.

³Despite the fact that the overall image of the text shows that it is in Greek and, therefore, the letter is *omicron*, it is worth commenting on this peculiar character: if the word is correctly read and understood as $\pi\omicron\lambda<\lambda>\acute{\alpha}$, then the – hypothetical – spelling ΠΒΛΑ instead of ΠΟΛΑ might be yet another indication (aside from the *delta* mentioned above) that the person who scratched this text was perhaps not a Greek: it is possible that the phone /o/ was written with a (strong) *yer*. This may happen for several reasons, for example because the receiver heard the word pronounced like $\pi\omicron\lambda(\lambda)\acute{\alpha}$. Unstressed /o/ is pronounced /u/ in most idioms of North and many of Central Greece. To my knowledge, there is no systematic study on evidence of this change in everyday speech through inscriptions and manuscripts (P. C.); among the earliest medieval literary sources is the 15th c. manuscript of the so-called Chronicle of Ioannina, where the scribe has repeatedly written ΟΥ instead of Ο or Ω – see: Osswald 2021, 25. This phenomenon is attested already in Late Antiquity, for example the name Dometius/Domitius appears both as ΔΟΥΜΕΤΙΟC and ΔΟΜΗΤΙΟC in inscriptions from Nikopolis, but scholars attributed the different spellings to the meter used in these texts – see: Χαλκιά 2017, 683). In Proto-Bulgarian inscriptions, this phenomenon is attested, according to Veselin Beshevliev, in a couple of nouns, as well as in some Bulgar names and titles (Бешевлиев 1926, 385 – 386; Бешевлиев 1992, 51, 60 – 61). A second example of an *omicron* resembling a *yer* is attested in the word ΔΟΥΛΩ in a Greek inscription in Murfatlar church B4. It is possible that the person initially wanted to write either a *yer* or a Greek ΟΥ ligature, to which he then added the *upsilon* (see Барня 1962, 314 – 315, fig. 22; Barnea, Stefanescu 1971, 218, fig. 65; Barnea 1981, 68, plate 20. Barnea did not notice the letter’s shape).

Although the lines of the letters after the damaged spot are visible, they are so close to each other that it is difficult to tell the characters apart. The only clearly detectable letter is an *alpha* in the twelfth position. Its left edge is almost touching the eleventh character which resembles a Cyrillic *che*, or, more likely, a *tau* or *upsilon* (and less likely a *rho*), or even a ligature of two letters. Be that as it may, the main, vertical line of this character or ligature stretches far too long downwards. There is no satisfactory explanation for this eleventh character (or ligature). If it is a *tau*, the horizontal line is not straight at all, and does not match any other forms of *tau* from inscriptions and graffiti in Bulgaria; if it is an *upsilon*, it certainly does not resemble the *upsilon* in ΝΕΓΥΝ, which suggests it was scratched by a different hand. Again, this form of *upsilon* is not attested elsewhere. In fact, this character's shape resembles the Cyrillic *che* from inscriptions of that era, but its place here would not make sense (see also above, the comments on the Cyrillic *yer*).

After the *alpha*, there is a vertical line which could or could not be attached to a barely visible circle around it (detectable only with RTI photos), thus forming the thirteenth character, a *phi*, or, less likely, a *iota*, if one does not consider the circle. This character has been traditionally perceived in literature to be a *tau* or a *gamma*, because of the upper part of the circle which was thought to be a horizontal line.

Identification of the fourteenth visible letter in this line is beyond dispute: it is an *omicron*. As for the last two, the first could be a *sigma* or, perhaps, a *iota* scratched with curved, not straight line, and the second is again a *sigma* (visible mostly in the high quality RTI photos).

The sequence of these letters gives two certain words, one almost certain (either this exact word or a composite), and several characters that cannot be interpreted without speculation.

The first four legible characters give the almost certain word: δέκα ("ten") (see also Mihailov 1998, 3). It is possible, of course, that this is only the second part of a composite word containing the numeral δέκα, for example ἑνδεκα ("eleven"), δώδεκα ("twelve"), πεντεκαίδεκα ("fifteen"). Numerals appear quite often in early Bulgarian inscriptions, for instance, in the inventory lists of equipment (Бешевлиев 1992, 193 – 205, where, however, numerals are indicated with Greek digits – letters) and other official inscriptions (Бешевлиев 1992, 207 ff., No. 56; 215 ff., No. 57, where they are either indicated with Greek digits, or written in full), as well as in texts related to calendars and time-keeping (for example, Бешевлиев 1992, No. 91, with commentary).

Next, the letters *kappa* and *epsilon* form the conjunction κε – a misspelled καὶ ("and") – a very common mistake encountered even in the works of experienced scribes, throughout the Middle Ages.

The following four letters give the word πολλὰ ("many", "numerous"), a reading with which all scholars agree so far. This word is repeatedly attested in Proto-Bulgarian inscriptions spelled with one *lambda*, instead of πολλὰ (Бешевлиев 1992, Nos. 14.41, 41.6, and also 14.1, 57.20). There is one circumstance, however, that deserves attention: in the other Proto-Bulgarian inscriptions, πολλὰ matches nouns or names and, moreover, as Jannaris explained (Jannaris 1897, 151; cited by Бешевлиев 1992, 252), πολλὰ can also match with adverbs; the scholars who tried to interpret the inscription on the Pliska stone examined here matched πολλὰ with an adjective. This word could also be a substantivized adjective, but since the context remains unknown it is not possible to define its use within a sentence.

Be that as it may, neither the following characters form the word δυνατός (a word suggested by Beshevliev and Ovcharov), nor it is clear what word was written there. There is no *delta* or *nu*, and the reading of some of the other characters is still questionable. The reading of the word τὰφος

(“tomb”, “grave”, in singular, nominative) or τάφοις (in plural, dative) is possible, but tentative. Alternatively – and most likely –, the *omicron* is followed by two *sigmas*, probably belonging to two different words. After the last visible *sigma*, there are traces of at least two more letters: one vertical line (hasta) and part of what could be an *omicron*. It is not possible to connect them to the visible letters, because this part of the stone is very damaged and nothing else can be seen.

On the three one-word captions:

ΠΟΥΜΙΡ / ΝΕΓΥΝ / ΠΕΤΡΟΣ

Poumir / Negyn / Petros

Apart from the continuous text in the upper part of the stone block, there are three more words inscribed in different parts of the surface, surrounding the drawings. These have generally been accepted by scholars to be proper names – Poumir, Negyn, Petros.

Stanchev (Станчев 1955, 215) assumed that the “name” Poumir corresponds to the (allegedly) standing figure to the left, and the name Petros to the central figure of a horse-rider. According to the same author, both Poumir and Petros were inhabitants of Pliska and the text above was about them and/or their deeds. A similar interpretation was provided by Stamen Mihailov, who assumed that the depicted figures show Boris I (or someone close to him) and his enemies within the state. In general, all scholars have linked in one way or another the figures on the stone with the names (and the text above them). Only Rasho Rashev suggested that not all the graffiti depicted on this stone belong to one and the same layer (Рашев 2008, 228). Pavel Georgiev, on the other hand, proposed the reading KOYMIP and suggested that this is not a proper name, but a noun meaning “idol” (Георгиев 1991, 204). The summarization of the data from RTI and laser scanning shows clearly, however, that the first letter from the word should be read as a *pi*, since its vertical right hasta is not a result of “an accidental sliding of the sharp tool” and / or a natural crevice of the stone (compare: Георгиев 1991, 202). Against these arguments is the uniform depth of the incision, as well as the fact that the hasta in question, specifically in its upper part, connects at a right angle with the horizontal bar of the letter, and that can hardly be accidental (fig. 12: 1, 3, 4; fig. 14: 4).⁴

The personal name Petros suggests a Christian background. It is commonly attested in medieval Bulgaria, and its spreading is, perhaps, related to the popularity of the Apostle’s figure among the newly converted. Alternatively, it could be related to the activity of Papal missions in the country. Finally, it is possible that this Petros was a Christian (Byzantine, Bulgar or other), who visited Pliska either before or after the Christianisation of the Bulgars. A different meaning of the word “petros” in this stone was put forward by Georgiev, who does not consider it a proper name (Георгиев 2018, 42).

The word Poumir (with the OY written in ligature, which was very common) is a hapax: it is not attested in any other source, at least not in a spelling that can be linked to it. It is, most likely, a personal name of Turkic origin, but due to the lack of a parallel within a context, which would allow scholars to interpret it, it might as well have been a noun. Although several Proto-Bulgarian

⁴If Georgiev’s reading, who considered the *pi* to be a *gamma*-shaped part of a *kappa*, was correct, one might suggest yet another, more plausible interpretation of this word: with the first letter perceived not as a *pi* but as a *gamma*, the word reads ΓΟΥΜΙΡ. Goumir could have been a personal name, and for this there is direct evidence of a Byzantine style lead seal with Christian elements and invocation, issued by a certain Khoumer (ΧΟΥΜΗΡ) in the first half of the 8th c. (Zacos, Vegler 1972, 1701, No. 3010. On the possible etymologies of this name see: Симеонов 2008, 188). Nevertheless, since the first letter is a *pi*, the reading Poumir is beyond doubt.

names show similarities to this one (e.g. the ending), the exact provenance and / or etymology of this name should be noted with a question mark until new evidence is brought forward⁵ (see also Alev 1983, 105, who mentioned this name, as well as Negyn, as still unexplained ones).

The next word or name to be discussed is ΝΕΓΥΝ. The new photographic documentation revealed that the *nu* was followed by a letter which looks like yet another *nu*, of which only the left vertical and diagonal hastas are visible. It is of exactly the same size as the letters before it, but since the rest of the word or text is missing, one cannot say whether this letter was part of ΝΕΓΥΝ or a following word. Due to this uncertainty, the reading should be restrained to ΝΕΓΥΝ without considering the second *nu*.

The word or name ΝΕΓΥΝ was considered by Stancho Stanchev (Станчев 1955, 216 – 217) to be the last part of the text inscribed at the top of the stone, while the other two “names” (Poumir and Petros) refer to the figures. According to all other scholars, all three names should be linked to the inscription. In fact, the characters forming the word or name ΝΕΓΥΝ have been carved with a different instrument (or at least one with a thicker point, which is visible even to the naked eye) compared to the others on this stone. Unfortunately, ΝΕΓΥΝ contains only one letter – the *epsilon* – which is repeated in another word. Comparison of the *epsilons* shows three different types: the two used in the long text are very similar to each other, while the ones used in ΝΕΓΥΝ and ΠΕΤΡΟΣ vary. Moreover, if the character in the upper line is an *upsilon*, then it differs considerably from the form of the *upsilon* in ΝΕΓΥΝ. Similarly, if it is a *tau*, it varies from the form of the *tau* in ΠΕΤΡΟΣ. This evidence, along with the fact that ΝΕΓΥΝ has been written with another instrument, as well as the large size of the letters compared to all the others on this block, point to the conclusion that, most likely, the word ΝΕΓΥΝ was written by a different person. It is not clear whether it was written at a different time, or whether it is related to the other words or the images.

There is little doubt that the word ΝΕΓΥΝ – again a hapax – is a personal name, probably of Turkic origin; alternatively, it could be a noun (it was considered a noun by Георгиев 1991, 204 – 205. On the use of *upsilon* for /ou/ and the sound between “i” and “u” in Greek in the middle period, see Lauritzen 2009). Stanchev was the first to associate the initial letters NE- with the beginning of other names such as ΝΕΒΟΥΛΟΣ, ΝΕΑΝΤΖΗC etc. (Станчев 1955, 217; the Bulgarian / Turkic etymology and origin of some of these names has been contested with serious arguments in scholarly literature, but for the sake of brevity we shall not discuss it further here).

In the high quality RTI photos of the stone, it becomes evident that two straight lines have been added to the *gamma*, connecting and making it look like a rectangle. These lines have been scratched with a very thin instrument. Moreover, on top of the same character, a cross has been added, this time with a thicker instrument. It remains unknown why one would decide to insert a Christian element in this name (or noun). If it was the person who carved the word Negyn, then the scratches would have been made with the same instrument, unless the thinner lines suggest that the letter *gamma* should remain recognizable. The same applies to the cross, which was carved with a thick instrument, yet different from the one used for the character *gamma* and the rest of the letters.

The research team are unaware of the exact original place of this block and the density of graffiti around it. If it was part of a wall full of graffiti, it is not impossible that somebody simply wrote their name wherever there was free space. This, most likely, seems to be the case with ΝΕΓΥΝ, considering the way it clearly stands out from the other writings. The name Petros might also have been

⁵Khazar names (aside from Germanic and Slavic) also feature endings in -ir. It is important to consider the possibility that Bulgar and Khazar may belong to the same group of languages, and the appearance of this name may suggest there were shared names.

added by yet another person because of the different lettering, especially the *epsilon* (and, perhaps, the Christian name). This, however, is not so clear in the case of ΠΟΥΜΙΡ, because of the letters used – the form of the *pi* is very simple and common in that period, and for this reason it cannot help to distinguish a different hand from the one that inscribed the upper continuous text.

Interpretation

Last but not least, some remarks on the date of the textual graffiti in question:

Stancho Stanchev dated the figures (and the text) on the block to the 9th c., possibly in the first half (Станчев 1955, 217), a view adopted by later scholars (e.g. Георгиев 1991, 198. See also: Karadimitrova 2017, 113). The date provided by Stanchev is based on the evidence of archaeology: this type of scene with horse-riders could have been drawn on a wall of the palaces in the citadel of Pliska. Since the final stage of monumental construction in Pliska is dated in the first half of the 9th c., the graffiti should belong to this same period. However, recent research has shown that this is not the case: this type of stone may not have come from a monumental palace building of the citadel. One argument against this is the considerably smaller size of the block as compared to those from the superstructure of the Small Palace, the Small *kapishte* or Krums's Palace and the Throne Hall. It is highly unlikely for it to originate from the wall of the Citadel as well, as it was thoroughly made of bricks and so far there is no data for dismantling its stone plinth. It is not to be excluded that the primary location of the block was the rows of rooms, north of the Bolyar residence (fig. 1: 3), which are close to the north of the tripartite building excavated by Stancho Stanchev (Vaklinov). Epigraphic criteria and lettering do not allow for a precise date: the types of characters featured on the block are attested in the first half of the 9th c., but also in the second half, as well as in the early 10th c. A similar possible dating – in the broad borders of the 10th century – was suggested also by the discoverer, Stancho Stanchev (Vaklinov), based on some "Magyar" analogies from the decoration of the chest piece of the horse in the centre, as well as the strongly curved outwards back frame of the saddle (Станчев 1955, 212, 214). Graffiti and inscriptions in Greek language (or Bulgarian written with Greek characters) appear throughout this period. Nonetheless, there is at least one element on the stone that might be dated, even approximately: the Christian element – the cross (and, perhaps, the name Petros). If one accepts that Negyn and Poumir are personal names, then they could have been in use by Bulgars either before or after the Christianisation; the name Petros, though, suggests Christian background.⁶ This name – Petros – is attested several times in graffiti and other inscriptions from Pliska and Ravna, usually on stones with other textual and pictorial graffiti directly or indirectly related to Christianity (a study of this material is under preparation). For this reason, it is difficult to explain how and why the name Petros would be included in a pre- or non-Christian graffiti, unless this person – a Christian – happened to be in Pliska, for whatever reason, before the Christianisation of the Bulgars.

In fact, as mentioned above, there can be certain doubts whether the name Petros is related to the rest of the graffiti on the stone, either textual or visual: aside from the lettering and the Christian element, the name Petros has been inscribed over a presumably older, faded graffiti of a horse, which was following the horse and the shielded horse-rider at the centre. If the name Petros was in anyway associated to the horses and/or the human figures, it would have been placed in a clean, empty area of the stone, perhaps with smaller letters, like the name Poumir. The fact that it is on top of a faintly seen horse means that the pictorial graffiti had already started fading, thus creating the area for more graffiti; the person who added Petros (perhaps himself?) took the opportunity and

⁶ In Mihailov 1998, 4, 6, Petros is mentioned as being of Slavic origin. There is nothing to suggest such an assumption.

scratched the name. Besides, the half-preserved figure of yet another horse under the name Petros shows that, most probably, the entire scene with horses and horse riders occupied a larger area than the one preserved today.

The second Christian element on this stone is the cross added on top of the *gamma* in Negyn. Again, the time of its appearance on the block cannot be dated for certain but more probably after the Christianisation of Bulgaria. It could not have been carved while the stone was upside down, and it must have been added after the word Negyn was inscribed (dated probably after the pictorial graffiti), but before the final use of the stone (see also below).⁷

The pictorial graffiti and the textual graffiti on the stone under examination are not necessarily connected. It is possible that the scene with the horse riders predated the continuous text above and the names and/or nouns scratched between the figures. Besides, the pictorial graffiti must have been made on the stone before any accompanying text or captions were added, even if they were related to the images. In this way, by differentiating the visual from the textual, it is easier to accept the date which would otherwise not make sense (Rashev also wrote about two different layers of graffiti on this stone. See: Пашев 2008, 227 – 228, 304). Moreover, the textual graffiti on the stone seem to be of more than one chronological layers, meaning they were scratched with different instruments, at different times, most probably by different people. Still, there are some questions left to be answered: if the scene with the horse-riders was carved when the stone was in its original position, possibly on the wall of a monumental building,⁸ where was this stone placed when other people scratched the text and the names? And when did this happen? According to Stancho Vakinov, the stone was discovered placed upside down, but still the graffiti were facing outwards, so they were visible. If the stone was upside down, it is impossible that anyone would have written any words there. And since it is very likely that the text was put there after the stone was moved from its very original position, it means that between the original position and the place where it was discovered, it was used somewhere else, perhaps even multiple times (see also: Mihailov 1998, 3). This is certainly a hypothesis worth exploring, but challenging to prove, due to the lack of information on the use and re-use of this kind of stones in general, and, of course, of this exact stone in Pliska.

The updates and visualisations obtained in the latest photographic documentation of the drawings and inscriptions on the limestone block found in 1948 north of the Citadel in Pliska are a first step towards the promulgation of the results from the documentation of the graffiti drawings and inscriptions from the Round Stone Platform. The application of contemporary techniques for photographic and graphic documentation presented here allows an entirely new approach in the work with graffiti drawings and epigraphic monuments. Despite the fact that so far they have remained beyond the periphery of “superior” academia, their significance will increase from now on. Certainly, the greatest challenge still remains the goal of the research team – a full report of the graffiti from the Round Stone Platform and their meaning for the clarification of the relative chronology of the structures north of Pliska’s Citadel, and how the stone platform corresponds to them.

⁷Yet another element that potentially perplexes the date of this graffiti, or at least the upper text line, is the character Ъ, which – if read correctly – means that the inscription could not have been placed on the stone before the creation of the Cyrillic alphabet. It must be admitted, though, that even in high quality photos, the exact form of this character is not certain and, more likely, it is an imperfect *omicron*.

⁸Although the stone’s and the figures’ small size does not indicate that this pictorial graffiti – even partially preserved today – was itself of a monumental or official character.

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„ХАНЪТ“ И НЕГОВИТЕ „КУМИРИ“ (НОВИ ДЕТАЙЛИ ОТ ЗАСНЕМАНЕТО НА ГРАФИТИ ОТ РАЗКОПКИ НА СТАНЧО ВАКЛИНОВ СЕВЕРНО ОТ ЦИТАДЕЛАТА В ПЛИСКА)

Евгения Коматарова-Балинова, Пантелис Харалампакис**, Миглена Райковска****

*Национален археологически институт с музей, Българска академия на науките,
ул. „Съборна“ № 2, София 1000; e_komatarova@abv.bg

** Национален археологически институт с музей, Българска академия на науките,
ул. „Съборна“ № 2, София 1000; pantelcha@gmail.com

*** Институт по информационни и комуникационни технологии при Българската академия на науките,
блок 2, ул. „Акад. Георги Бончев“ № 2, София 1113; miglena.raykovska@iict.bas.bg

РЕЗЮМЕ

Настоящата статия е първа в публикационната програма по оповестяването на резултатите от научноизследователския проект „Кръглата каменна площадка в Плиска: строителни материали, графити, знаци и надписи“. Целта ѝ е да представи методиката и съвременните техники за документиране на графити, както и резултатите от тяхното приложение. Същите техники бяха използвани освен при заснемането на рисунки, надписи, фрагменти от стенописи (общо 72) от площадката в Плиска, още и при документирането на сравнителната база на нашето изследване – графитите от манастирите в Равна, община Провадия и Басараби-Мурфатлар (Базилики № 1 – 4, Галерия Е), област Констанца, Република Румъния. Броят на заснетите по проекта паметници е над 300.

Изборът на рисунката-графит с надписи от варовиковия блок, намерен северно от Цитаделата в Плиска, за онагледяване на приетата от екипа методика на документиране, не е случаен. От една страна, този графит е сред най-разпознаваемите за широката научна аудитория и в известна степен една от емблемите на българската „езическа“ култура, от друга – той, също както и графитите от блоковете от Кръглата каменна площадка, е вграден – вторично или третично – като сполия в сграда, разположена в западната периферия на площадката. Блокът е намерен през 1948 г. от Станчо Станчев (Ваклинов) при проучването на „гражданска“ постройка с верижен план, с три помещения, „североизточно от Малкия дворец“ (обр. 1, обр. 2: 2).

Основна причина за няколко „прочита“ на тази така богата на детайли сцена са липсващите или слабо различни подробности по повърхността на камъка, особено в лявата му половина. За периода от откриването на паметника преди около 75 години досега са осъществени две заснемания, първото от които е извършено от неговия откривател (обр. 3: 1). През 1991 г. Павел Георгиев прави второ заснемане (обр. 3: 2) и именно то му дава основание за ново тълкуване, различно от това на

откривателя. Според Павел Георгиев ключова за осмислянето на рисунката е думата, врязана между правата човешка фигура вляво и ездача, която той разчита като КОУМІР, вместо ПОУМІР, какъвто е прочитът на Ваклинов и Бешевлиев. Оттук цялата сцена се интерпретира като момент от церемония, свързана с „добре известния у турците“ култ към предците. В така представената сцена правата фигура се идентифицира като статуя на идол, символизиращ някои или повече от мъртвите предци (Георгиев 1991, 205).

Извършеното от екипа по проекта заснемане на паметника се явява трето поред (обр. 4). То се осъществи през март 2022 г., непосредствено след последното почистване и консервация във връзка с включването на рисунката в изложбата „Конните номади в Европа“ (Шалабург, Австрия, 09.04 – 06.11.2022 г.). Целта беше да се съпоставят няколко техники, от които да се избере максимално ефективната, тоест тази, в която субективното зрително възприятие е сведено до минимум и същевременно такава, която отчита най-много детайли, останали незабелязани при изследователското наблюдение в последните десетилетия. Избраните техники са рефлексно-преобразователна фотография (RTI) и 3D лазерно сканиране, чиито резултати, както се оказа при обработката на данните, са отлично допълващи се един друг.

RTI представлява серия от стандартни кадри на даден обект, всеки един заснет с помощта на стационарна камера и насочен светлинен поток. Обектът трябва да е осветен от поне 24 (в нашия случай те са 69) равномерно разпределени позиции, които се онагледяват чрез т. нар. „Карта на нормалите“. Тя, съответно, с помощта на софтуера RTI Viewer и компютърно симулирани светлинни източници и филтри може да бъде манипулирана чрез светлинните позиции и отражения върху изследвания обект, откроявайки различни участъци от повърхността. На финала векторното графично изображение се изчертава върху „Картата на нормалите“ и избраните изгледи от RTI Viewer, които всъщност служат за негова подложка и по този начин отразяват обективното състояние на паметника.

Лазерното сканиране се осъществи с помощта на последно поколение лазерни скенери с прецизност до 0,025 мм и с резолюция от 0,050 мм. Уредът работи със 7 лазерни кръста и една допълнителна лазерна линия. Визуалното изследване на 3D модела (обр. 11, 12) ясно показва наличието на изображения и графични детайли, които не са отбелязани в досегашните публикации. За да бъдат потвърдени и за да се улесни сравнението с резултатите от RTI, се извърши т. нар. сегментация. Тя представлява математически алгоритъм за разпознаване на образи от дадено по-сложно изображение. 3D сегментацията се опира на математически анализ на триизмерни бази данни вместо на двуизмерно фотографско изображение. Процесът позволява да бъдат „картографирани“ дълбочините на изкуствените врязвания по повърхността, като за целта е необходим 3D облак от точки с висока резолюция, върху който може да бъде монтирана допълнителна равнина, която да служи като референтна точка за измерване на разстояния между двете повърхности (Longo 2016, 30).

Новите подробности от последното документиране на графита биха могли да се разделят така: една напълно неизвестна фигура и детайли към вече известните персонажи, както и буквени знаци, повечето от които са пред, над и зад фигурата на ездача.

Най-проблематичните и трудни за идентификация детайли от предходните заснемания от 1955 и 1991 г. изглеждат по този начин, сравнени с резултатите от 3D сканирането и RTI – обр. 3: 3, обр. 12. Интерпретираните като втора фигура на „кумир“ врязвания в лявата половина на блока представляват всъщност глава, шия и част от гърдите на кон. Правата човешка фигура – т. нар. първи кумир, представлява изображение на воин с предпазно въоръжение, представен анфас, с несъразмерни пропорции, особено на торса. Части от горната половина на тялото му са покрити с шлем. Начинът, по който той е предаден, предполага, че е бил от две части – твърда и пластична. Напълно нов детайл от последното заснемане е коланът (обр. 3: 3, обр. 9, обр. 12). Той обхваща плътно кръста и се закопчава с правоъгълна тока, значително по-широка от ремъка. Симетрично един на друг – вдясно и вляво – към колана са закрепени кания на меч (или сабя) и еднолезвиен нож, но би било прибързано да се твърди дали те възпроизвеждат конкретно оръжие, защото са нарисувани твърде схематично и без някои типопределящи характеристики, каквито са ръкохватката, предпазителят и върхът на клина.

Блокът съдържа и текстови графити в пет различни зони над и между рисунките. При четири от

тях буквите са врязани с дебел остър инструмент и са по-едри по размер, в петата буквите са от фини линии и нечетими. Четирите видими текста са: гръцки надпис в един ред в горната част на блока със следи от отчупен ред над него и три единични думи. Предложеното ново четене на едноредовия текст след визуализацията чрез RTI и лазерното сканиране (обр. 14: 3, 4): [...]ΔΕΚΑΚΕΠΟΛΑ[.Τ или Υ] Α[Φ или Ι]Ο[С или Ι]С[...] – “[...] десети много... [...]”. Поредицата налични букви дава числителното *δέκα* (десет) или негово производно; съюза *κε* – погрешно изписано *κι* (и); наречието *πολλή*, вместо *πολλά* (много). Възможно, но несигурно е разчитането на *τάφος* (гробница, гроб в им. падеж, ед.ч.) или *τάφοις* (дат. падеж, мн.ч.).

Трите единични думи се разчитат, както следва: ΠΟΥΜΙΡ / ΝΕΓΥΝ / ΠΕΤΡΟΣ – Пумир / Негин / Петрос. Личното име Петрос предполага християнско влияние. Пумир е хапакс и вероятно представлява лично име с тюркски корени. Третата дума или име, отново хапакс и навярно също от тюркски произход, е Негин. След нея се наблюдава още една буква Ν (?), възможно част от следваща дума. Името (?) е врязано с инструмент с по-дебел връх. Две прави фини линии са добавени към гамата, оформяйки правоъгълник. Върху същата буква е добавен и кръст с по-груб инструмент.

Станчо Станчев (Ваклинов) датира паметника в първата половина на IX в., като мнението му е възприето и от други. Заснемането показва, че епиграфските данни не позволяват прецизна датировка, а християнските елементи (Петрос, кръст) се датират по-късно от предложената епоха. Рисунките и надписите не са непременно свързани. Възможно е сцената с конниците да е по-ранна. Надписите от своя страна са врязани с различни инструменти, по различно време и вероятно от различни хора.

Ключови думи: Плиска, графити, съвременни техники на документиране

THE EARLY MEDIEVAL ASSEMBLAGE OF IRON AXE-LIKE BAR FRAGMENTS FOUND IN THE VALLEY OF THE SZKLARKA STREAM NEAR CRACOW IN POLAND

*Bartłomiej Szymon Szmoniewski**, *Dariusz Rozmus***

* Centre for Archaeology of the Mountains and Uplands of the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology, Polish Academy of Sciences, Cracow, Poland; bartheque@yahoo.fr

** The City Museum "Szttygarka", Dąbrowa-Górnica, Poland; rozmusd@poczta.onet.pl

ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to present the assemblage of 40 intentionally cut elements of iron axe-like bars and one iron small plate donated to the Archaeological Department of the Szttygarka City Museum in Dąbrowa Górnicza. According to the donor, this deposit was found buried in a small pit located in the lower part of the valley of the Szklarka Stream near Cracow. The characteristic shape of the preserved fragments allows for them to be included in the so-called Lesser Poland's (Vistulan) axe-like bars. The geographic spread of such axe-like bars across the areas of Poland is limited to the basin of the Upper Vistula. Therefore, the iron axe-shaped bars are more numerous from sites located to the south of the Carpathians (mostly area of the Great Moravia). In the comparative material available, no analogous find could be traced which parallels such intentionally cut-off fragments of the bars. The differentiation of sizes and the location of their cuts indicates that they had been prepared (collected from various places) to be further processed, or maybe to be forged anew into new axe-like bars – a task which certainly required proper skills. The fact that they were found about 10 km distant from, and over several dozen kilometres (about 65 km) from the area of Early Medieval Cracow, confirms that this town was a special place in the Vistulan's settlement network and revenue sharing system. The discussed assembly can be dated only approximately within certain frames, i.e. between the beginning of the 9th century and the middle of the 10th century.

Key words: axe-like bar, Early Middle Ages, Central Europe, iron production

In the year 2010, an assemblage consisting of 41 fragments of some iron artefacts was donated to the Archaeological department of the Municipal Museum "Szttygarka" in Dąbrowa Górnicza. According to the description left by the anonymous donor, the iron fragments, together with two stirrups made of copper alloy, were found in a small pit located in the lower part of the valley of the Szklarka Stream. Unfortunately, the fate of the stirrups remains now unknown. A reconnaissance carried out by the authors in the location of the find as it had been indicated by the donor did not contribute anything new or informative to this issue.

The valley of the Szklarka is located about 20 km north-west of Cracow, within the Ojców Upland made of Jurassic limestone, which is part of the southern part of the Kraków-Częstochowa

Upland (Kondracki 1998, 255 – 256). The stream has its sources nearby the small village of Jerzmanowice, where the rocky ridges of the plateau create slight waves and are strewn with multiple karst rocks, whilst in the lower part of the valley and at the spot where it flows into the stream called Raclawka, hillsides are steep and overgrown with woody species typical for the region, such as the Carpathian beech (fig. 1 – 2).

The iron artefacts analysed here number 40 parts of axe-like bars forged in iron; these parts could be identified as hinder parts of the sockets, butts, and butts with small articulated caps (Table 1; fig. 3 – 8). The bars as a whole resembled narrow axes of the length of a few dozen centimetres and the weight reaching 2 kg. One end was formed as a long leaf-shaped blade and the other end was supplied with a small hole. In one case, it is a small iron plate with a rivet (?) (fig. 5: 17; fig. 8: 17).

Table 1. Dimensions and weight of the iron objects found in the valley of the Szklarka Stream
Таблица 1. Размер и тежест на железните предмети, намерени в долината на потока Шкларка

ITEM NUMBER	DIMENSIONS (cm)			WEIGHT (g)	FIGURE
	LENGTH	WIDTH	HEIGHT		
1	3.6	2.2	3.5	51.52	3:1; 6:1
2	1.8	2.1	3.8	31.50	3:2; 6:2
3	2.8	2.2	4.1	50.67	3:3; 6:3
4	1.9	1.7	2.6	36.60	3:4; 6:4
5	1.9	3.4	3.1	30.74	3:5; 6:5
6	1.9	2.7	3.5	24.07	3:6; 6:6
7	0.9	2.2	4	28.71	3:7; 6:7
8	1.6	3.8	3	57.27	3:8; 6:8
9	1.8	3.7	3.1	30.76	3:9; 6:9
10	1.8	3.5	3	37.98	3:10; 6:10
11	1.8	2.4	4	37.40	3:11; 6:11
12	1.4	4.2	2.8	42.65	3:12; 6:12
13	1.7	1.7	2.7	20.54	4:1; 7:1
14	1.8	1.5	3	22.92	4:2; 7:2
15	2.1	1.1	2.6	13.49	4:3; 7:3
16	1.3	2.9	2.5	19.33	4:4; 7:4
17	2.2	1.4	3.1	19.71	4:5; 7:5
18	1.6	3	3	18.10	4:6; 7:6
19	1.7	3	2.5	26.04	4:7; 7:7
20	1.8	3	2.5	24.40	4:8; 7:8
21	2	2.7	3.6	32.47	4:9; 7:9
22	1.7	2.4	3	30.36	4:10; 7:10
23	2	2.7	2.6	20.26	4:11; 7:11
24	2.3	1.6	3.2	34.39	4:12; 7:12
25	2.6	3.8	3.2	45.61	5:1; 8:1
26	1.7	3.5	2.7	33.74	5:2; 8:2
27	3	2.7	1.7	35.15	5:3; 8:3
28	1.9	3.8	3.7	46.40	5:4; 8:4
29	2	3	3.5	32.10	5:5; 8:5
30	1.2	3.7	3.4	53.17	5:6; 8:6
31	4.8	1.2	4.6	36.98	5:7; 8:7

32	3.8	2.8	0.9	46.31	5:8; 8:8
33	4.8	0.3	2.6	24.89	5:9; 8:9
34	1.8	0.4	2.5	9.12	5:10; 8:10
35	1.8	0.4	2.6	10.88	5:11; 8:11
36	1.6	0.3	3	5.30	5:12; 8:12
37	2.4	0.4	2.7	13.15	5:13; 8:13
38	3.2	0.6	2.4	19.57	5:14; 8:14
39	2.8	0.9	2.3	13.88	5:15; 8:15
40	2.5	0.5	1.9	13.56	5:16; 8: 16
41	1.1	0.2/0.8	4.3	3.60	5:17; 8:17

Axe-like shaped artefacts are found across Central Europe in three different contexts: as singular finds, as deposits, and as belonging to inventories of grave goods (Hájnik 2019, 114 – 118). They are dated in the period from the end of the 8th c. to the end of the 10th c., while their most frequent usage fell into the 9th c. to the half of the 10th c. (Hájnik 2019, 119 – 120). Within the Polish territories, axe-like bars are discovered as singular finds or in deposits and their chronology is established mainly as 9th c. (Zaitz 1990, 145, 171 – 17, Liwoch 2013, 149).

The use of such axe-like bars is a phenomenon in no way limited to the territories of Central Europe. For earlier periods, they are documented in two other regions, namely in Scandinavia (Denmark and Norway) (Resi 1995; Høst-Madsen, Buchwald 1999; Szmoniewski 2010) and along the middle flow of the Volga River, as well as the lower flow of Kama (Szmoniewski 2022), where they appeared several centuries earlier than those in Central Europe.

The characteristic shape of the preserved fragments allows them to be included in the so-called Lesser Poland's/Vistulan axe-like bars (fig. 9), in two variants: A and B in E. Zaitz' classification (Zaitz 1988; Zaitz 1990, 147 – 153, fig. 5 – 12) and type IB according to D. Bialeková's and V. Turčan's classification (Bialeková, Turčan 2007, 155, il. 9) (fig. 10: IB), in which they are differentiated from the Great-Moravian type and from Piotrawin type (Rozmus et al. 2006, 109, fig. 6). The parameters of the axe-like bars found in South Poland are as follows: a) the length is from 27 to 41 cm, b) the weight ranges from 270 to 2200 g (Zaitz 1990, 161, fig. 14).

The geographic spread of such axe-like bars of Lesser Poland/Vistulan type across the areas of Poland is limited to the basin of the upper Vistula River (fig. 1 and 2). In regard to the quantity of finds, especially interesting is their agglomeration on the area of today's Cracow found within the fortified suburbium called Okół. This deposit was placed in a rectangular pit of the parameters 108 x 210 cm and at the depth of about 100 cm, the pit having been dug in the untouched soil. It was then covered with the soil that was part of the fortification raised at the end of the 9th c. About 510 bundles of axe-like bars were buried in this soil, each bundle containing usually 3 to 15 samples and mostly 7 to 9 of them. The whole deposit consisted of 4212 axe-like bars of the total weight about 3630 kg (fig. 11 A and B). Most of the samples were forged out of one piece of metal and one third of them was made of two parts of deepslate iron ore of different size. In some cases, they were formed out of a dozen of metal lobes (Zaitz 1990, 145 – 147, fig. 3).

Isolated specimens were discovered in Cracow's Nowa Huta-Mogiła (Hachulska-Ledwos 1971, 26 – 27, 48, 51, 106, tab. XXVI: 1, LXI: 4; Zaitz 1990, fig. 1: 5 and 13: 2) and, possibly, also Zwierzyniec, a district of Cracow which is indirectly indicated by information about "strange iron objects" found in the year 1845 during the road construction works toward the Mountain of St. Bronisława (Zaitz 1990, 162 – 163, fn. 24; Liwoch 2013, 149). Another axe-like bar was discovered as an isolated find a dozen kilometres north of the location of Early Medieval Cracow,

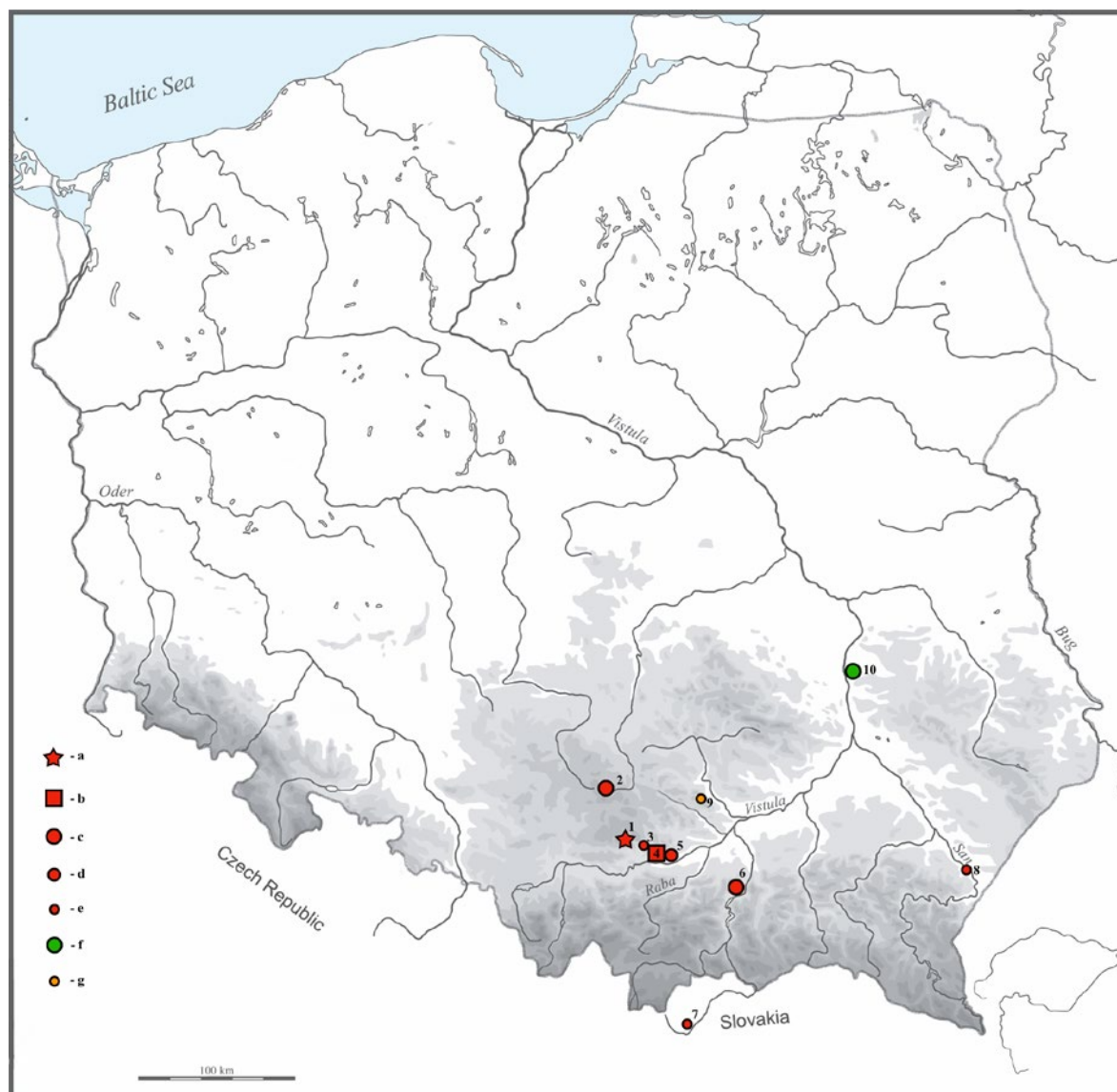


Fig. 1. Iron axe-like bars from Vistula Basin.

Numbers: 1. Szklarka Stream valley, Cracow County, Poland; 2. Kostkowice, Site 2, Góra Słupsko, Zawiercie County, Poland; 3. Modlnica, Cracow County, Poland; 4. Cracow, suburbium Okół, Cracow County, Poland; 5. Cracow, Nowa-Huta – Mogiła, site 1, Cracow County, Poland; 6. Zawada Lanckorońska, Tarnów County, Poland; 7. Veľká Lomnica, Kežmarok District, Slovakia; 8. Radymno, Jarosław County, Poland; 9. Stradów, Kazimierza County, Poland; 10. Piotrawin, Lublin County, Poland.

Letters: a – d. Lesser Poland/Vistulan type: assemblage of intentionally cut axe-shaped bars; b. Hoards of 4212 axe-like bars; c – d. Individual finds or deposits of iron axe-shaped bars – more than: c. 5 pcs; d. 2 pcs; e. 1 pc.; f. Piotrawin type; g. Great Moravian type (drawings: J. Ożóg and B. Sz. Szmoniewski)

Обр. 1. Бравдоподобни слитъци от басейна на Висла.

С цифри: 1. долината на потока Шкларка, окръг Краков, Полша; 2. Гора Слупско, окръг Заверче, Полша; 3. Модлница, окръг Краков, Полша; 4. Краков, предградие Окул, окръг Краков, Полша; 5. Краков, Нова-Хута – Могила, обект 1, окръг Краков, Полша; 6. Завада Ланцкоронска, окръг Тарнов, Полша; 7. Велька Ломница, окръг Кежмарок, Полша; 8. Радимно, окръг Ярослав, Полша; 9. Страдов, окръг Казимеж, Полша; 10. Пиотравин, окръг Люблин, Полша.

С букви: a – d. Малополски/Висленски тип: група от умишлено отсечени бравдоподобни слитъци; b. съкровище от 4212 бравдоподобни слитъци; c – d. индивидуални находки или депозити на бравдоподобни слитъци – повечето, от които са от по около пет фрагмента; d. 2 фрагмента; e. 1 фрагмента; f. Пиотравин тип; g. Великоморавски тип (изработили: Й. Ожог и Б. Шмониевски)

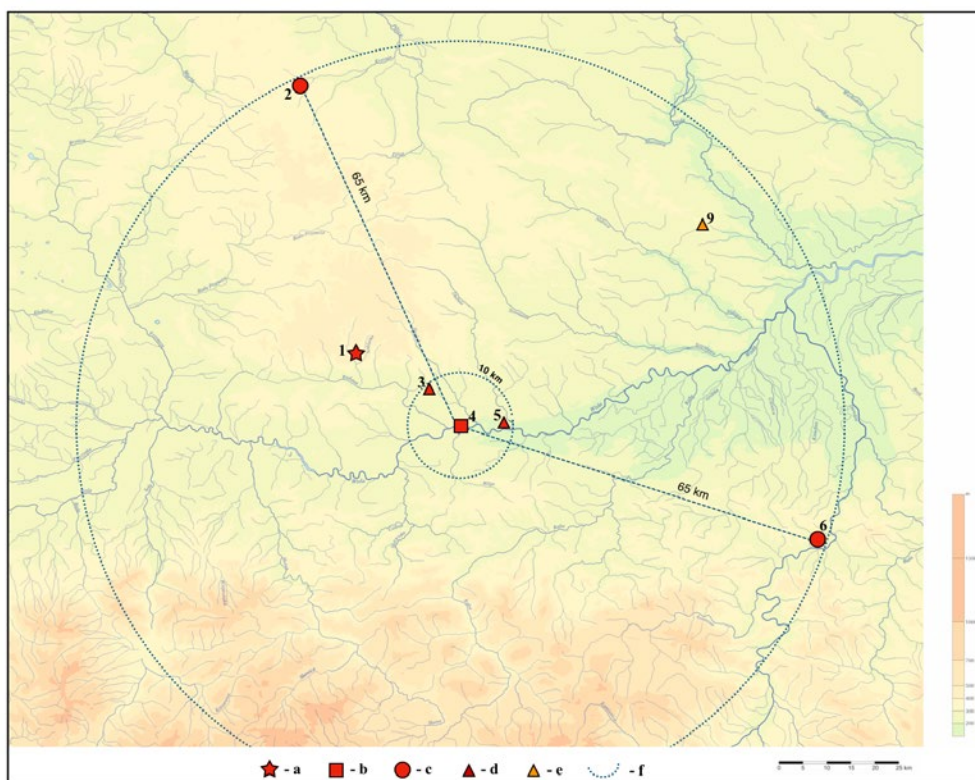


Fig. 2. Iron axe-shaped bars from Lesser Poland (Numbers as Fig. 1):

a. Assemblage of intentionally cut axe-shaped bars; b. Hoard of 4212 axe-like bars; c. Deposits; d – e. Individual finds; f. Distance circles with axe-like bars finds from Cracow as central place. a – d. Lesser Poland/Vistulan type; e. Great Moravian type (drawing by B. Sz. Szmoniewski)

Обр. 2. Железни брадвоподобни слитъци от Малополша (номерата са като на обр. 1):

a. група от умишлено отсечени брадвоподобни слитъци; b. съкровище от 4212 брадвоподобни слитъци; c. Депозити; d – e. индивидуални находки; f. кръгове с разстоянията на находките на брадвоподобни слитъци от централното място, Краков; a – d. Малополски/Висленски тип; e. Великоморавски тип (изработил: Б. Ш. Шмониевски)

and about 10 km east of the valley of the Szklarka Stream, another isolated find of this kind was made in Modlnica (Liwoch 2013).

Outside the area of Poland, the iron axe-like bars of Lesser Poland/Vistulan type are known mainly from Slovakia: Veľká Lomnica from the Upper Vistula basin, Ličartovce, Šarišské Solovce, Čebovce and one from Mutěnice in Moravia (Béres 2002; Rozmus et al. 2006, 108; Hájnik 2019, 142, 144, 146).

In the comparative material available, no analogous find could be traced which would present such intentionally cut-off fragments of the bars. However, such cutting operations must have been practiced then, as it is indicated by the axe-like bars from the deposit in Zawada Lanckorońska (fig. 9: 1). Some¹ of them display characteristic trims on their socket. Parts of the bars which are missing can be related to the fragments found at valley of the Szklarka Stream. In several cases it was possible to observe traces of joints indicating that they must have been made from two separate pieces.

Considering the number of fragments found, it is most outstanding for the evidence from Lesser Poland, since iron axe-like bars, apart from the deposit in Cracow's suburbium Okół, are

¹It is difficult to determine how many of the axe-shaped bars were intentionally cut due to various information about them in the literature and sampling for metallographic analyses.

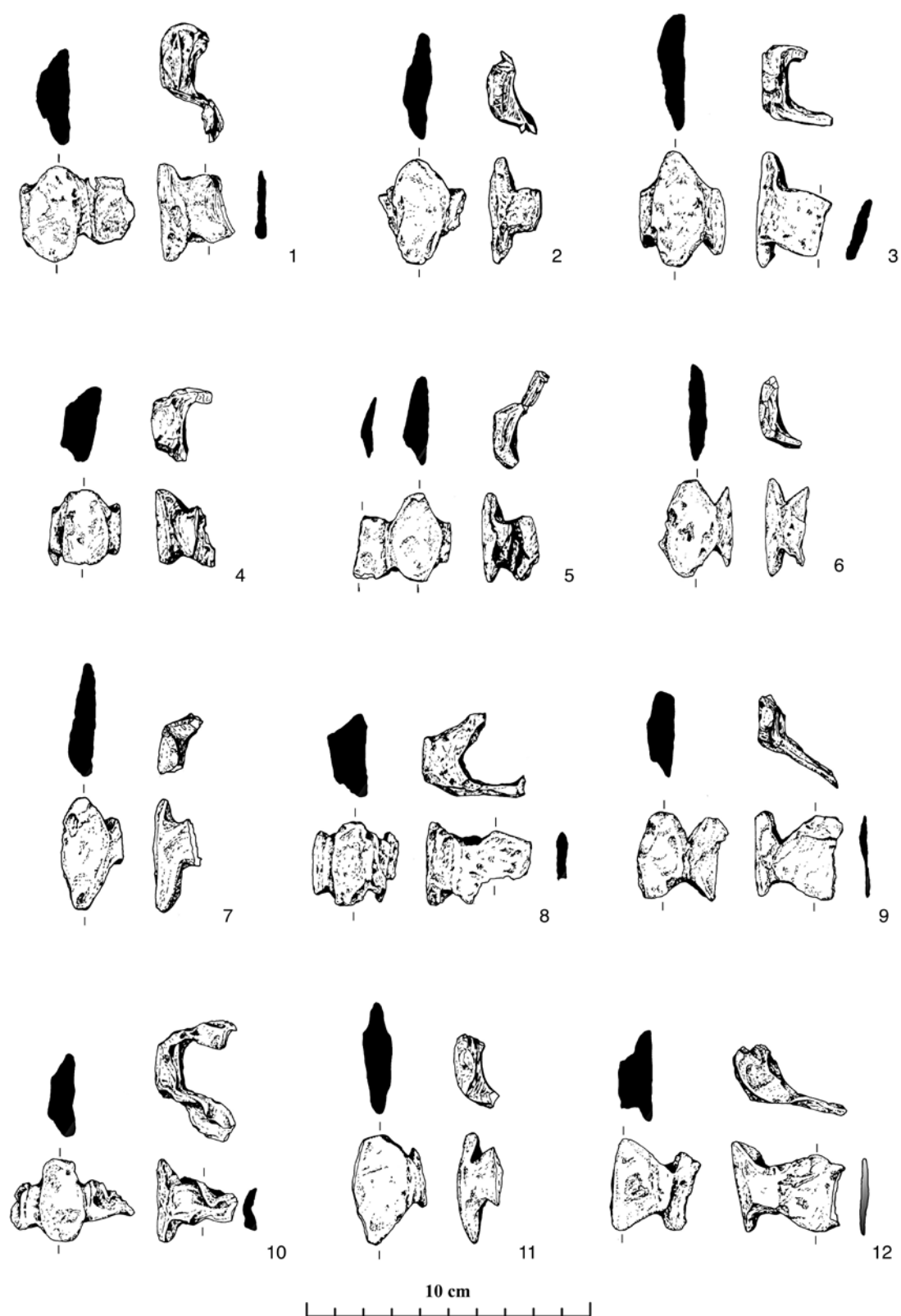


Fig. 3. Iron parts of axe-like bars (drawings: J. Ożóg and B. Sz. Szmoniewski)

Обр. 3. Железни фрагменти от брадвоподобни слитъци (рисунки: Й. Ожог и Б. Шмониевски)

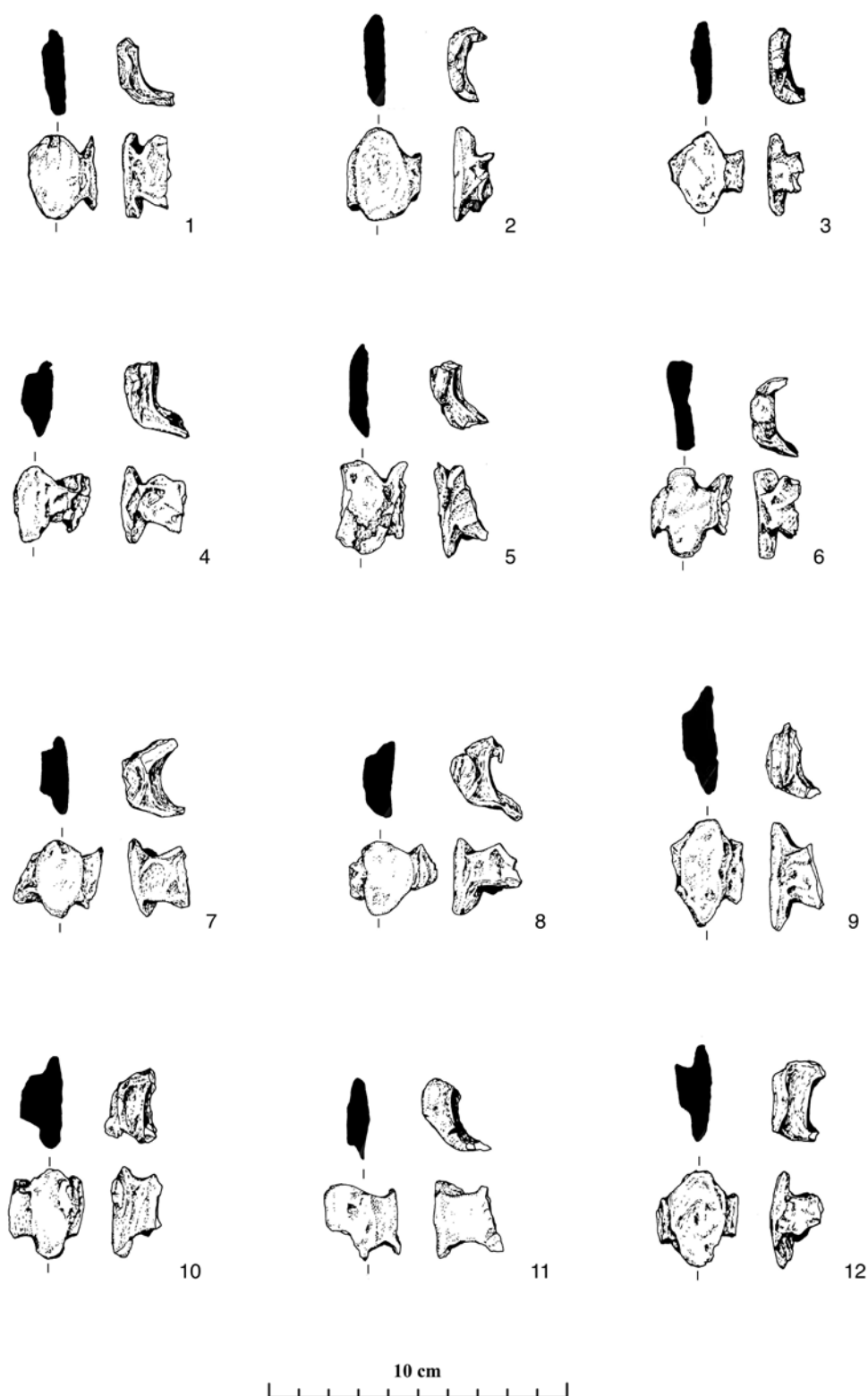


Fig. 4. Iron parts of axe-like bars (drawings: J. Ožóg and B. Sz. Szmoniewski)

Обр. 4. Железни фрагменти от брадвоподобни слитъци (рисунки: Й. Ожог и Б. Шмониевски)

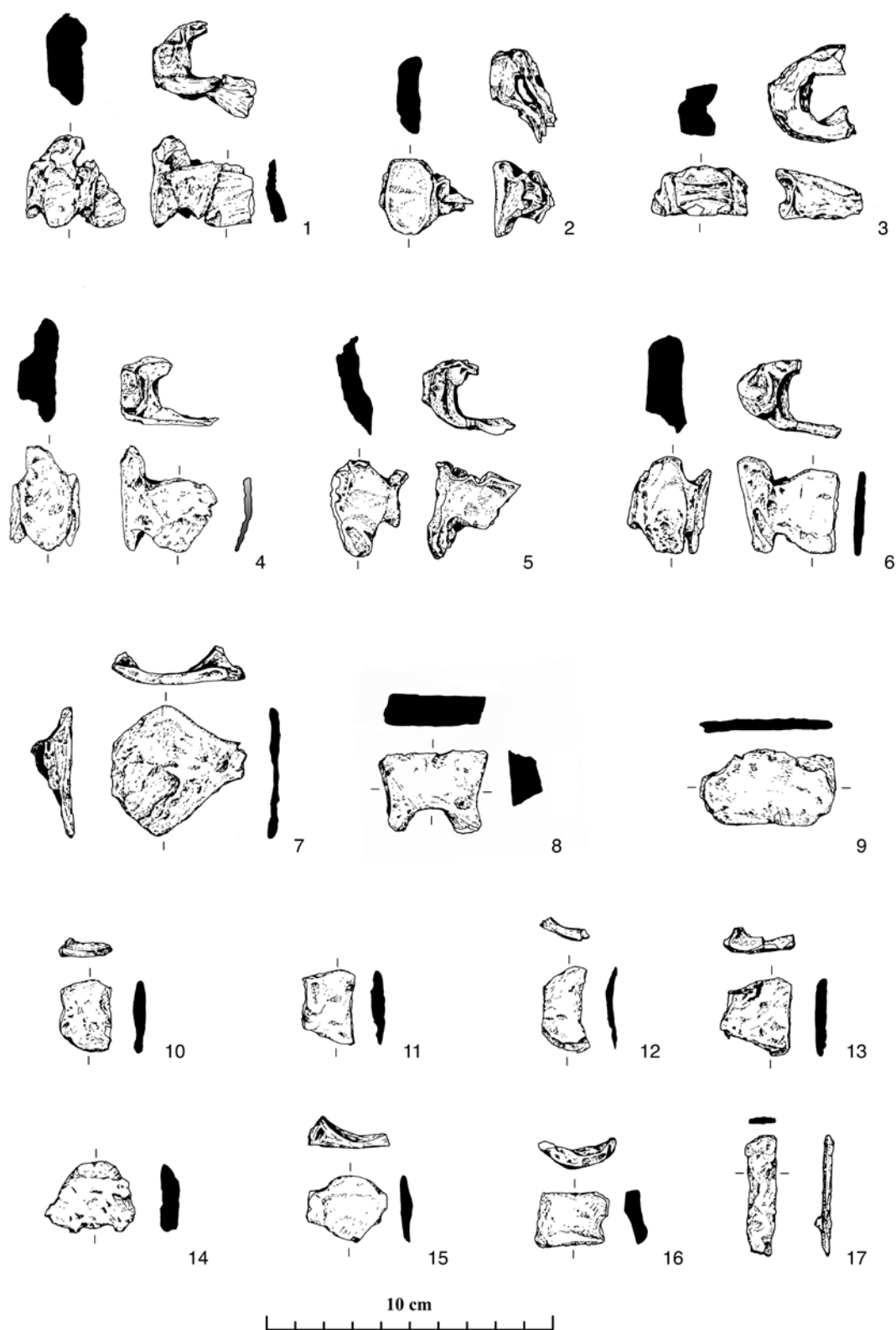


Fig. 5. Iron parts of axe-like bars and iron plate (drawings: J. Ożóg and B. Sz. Szmoniewski)

Обр. 5. Железни фрагменти от брадвоподобни слитъци и железни пластини (рисунки: Й. Ожог и Б. Шмониевски)



Fig. 6. Iron parts of axe-like bars (photos: B. Sz. Szmoniewski)

Обр. 6. Железни фрагменти от брадвоподобни слитъци (снимки: Б. Ш. Шмониевски)



Fig. 7. Iron parts of axe-like bars (photos: B. Sz. Szmoniewski)

Обр. 7. Железни фрагменти от брадвоподобни слитъци (снимки: Б. Ш. Шмониевски)

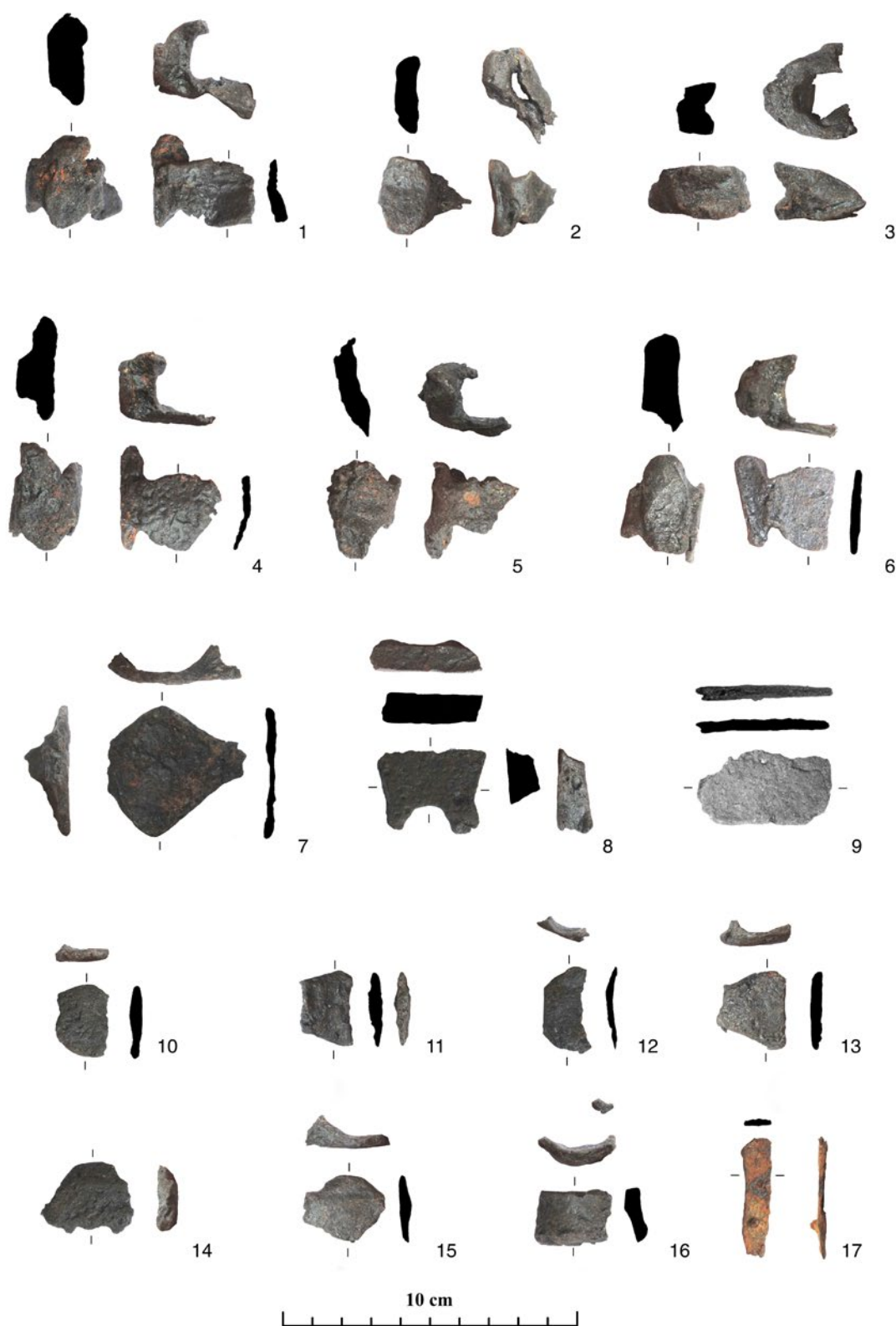


Fig. 8. Iron parts of axe-like bars and iron plate (photos: B. Sz. Szmoniewski)

Обр. 8. Железни фрагменти от брадвоподобни слитъци и железни пластини (снимки: Б. Ш. Шмониевски)



Fig. 9. Examples of axe-like bars of Lesser Poland/Vistulan type: 1 – 2. Zawada Lanckorońska, Tarnów County, Poland; 3 – 4. Kostkowice, Góra Słupsko, Zawiercie County, Poland (photos: B. Sz. Szmoniewski)

Обр. 9. Образци на брадвоподобни слитъци от Малополски/Висленски тип: 1 – 2. Завада Ланцкоронска, окръг Тарнов, Полша; 3 – 4. Костковице, Гора Слупско, окръг Заверче, Полша (снимки: Б. Ш. Шмониевски)

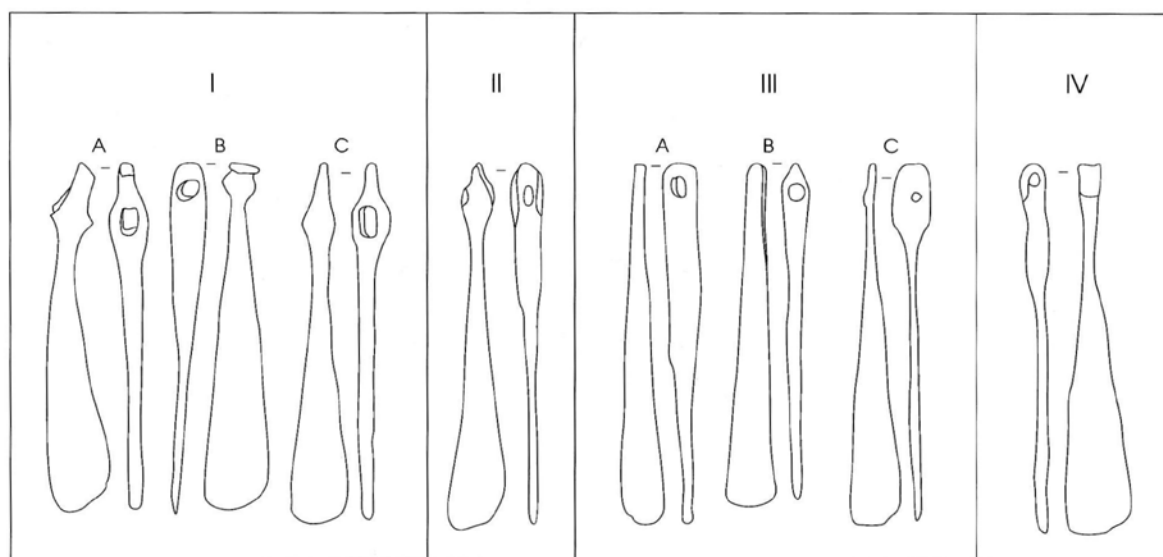


Fig. 10. Basic types of the axe-like bars from Central Europe (Bialeková, Turčan 2007)

Обр. 10. Основните типове на брадвоподобни слитъци от Централна Европа (Bialeková, Turčan 2007)

being found in the quantities from 1 to 12 specimens per site (Rozmus et al. 2006, 108; Liwoch 2013, 149).

There is an ongoing discussion concerning the provenance of such axe-like shaped bars, or currency bars, especially their Central European variant (Hájnik 2019). Not going into further details which would exceed the frame of this article, the author will focus only on some most important proposals referring to the Polish areas. In older literature, it was suggested that the bars were the result of contacts between Great Moravia and Northern Europe where they were supposed to originate from (Adamczyk 2004, 221). The evidence for such supposition was maintained to be this very hoard in Cracow's suburbium Okół, whose location could be established as the midway of the Norman-Moravian route running between Early Medieval Scandinavia, a potentate in the export of iron, and the state of Moravia at that time. Alongside the export of iron, the adaptation of Scandinavian axe-like currency bars was considered to occur in the territories of Central Europe (Wachowski 1981, 172 – 173). In more updated literature, the role of the Norman element has been denied and instead, it has been maintained that the currency bars came into circulation in those two areas independently from each other, as the two stood on a similar economic level in their development (Adamczyk 2004, 222).

The role of iron axe-like shaped bars in the Early Medieval economy is interpreted in many different ways. They are ascribed functions of homestead tools (for example as used to spread clay) (Hrubý 1955, 276 – 278), or as objects of everyday use with magical qualities (Novotný 1973, 275 – 280), as a kind of obol for the dead (Sejbal 1960, 73 – 82), or the role of semi-finished products used to manufacture tools (Piaskowski 1964, 133 – 140), or of blanks being simultaneously used as currency (Sejbal 1960, 73 – 82; Pleiner 1961, 405 – 446; Adamczyk 2004). In the most comprehensive work on the subject of the axe-like bars, J. Hájnik (Hájnik 2019) is limiting the range of their possible roles to semi-finished products, obols and votive objects.

A certain compromise could be to maintain that the axe-like shaped bar originated in the course of transformation of an axe into a metal bar playing the double role of half-finished product and a currency (Adamczyk 2004, 220). Especially the first function in the context of the find from

the valley of the Szklarka Stream deserves our attention. Therefore, we cannot reject P. Urbańczyk's suggestion that the iron axe-like bars, next to iron bowls and blades, were a traditional form in which iron as raw material was sold (Urbańczyk 2000, 52).

Remaining with this problem, one should ask the question where axe-like shaped bars of the Lesser Poland type might have been produced. As specialist examinations have shown, the axe-like bars from the Cracow's suburbium Okół were manufactured in various forges and smithies, and for their production, ores with high shares of phosphate were used (Mazur, Nosek 1990, 188). In the tribal period, bog iron was presumably obtained in the valley of the Rudawa River, which can be indirectly indicated by the very name of the river (meaning ore). On the other hand, the role of the river valley Dłubnia remains unclear, though according to some researchers (Zaitz 2006, 233) was to be the base for bog iron deposits used in the production of axe-like shaped bars. It is possible that during the Middle Ages small deposits of ores were to be found there, but this has not been proven

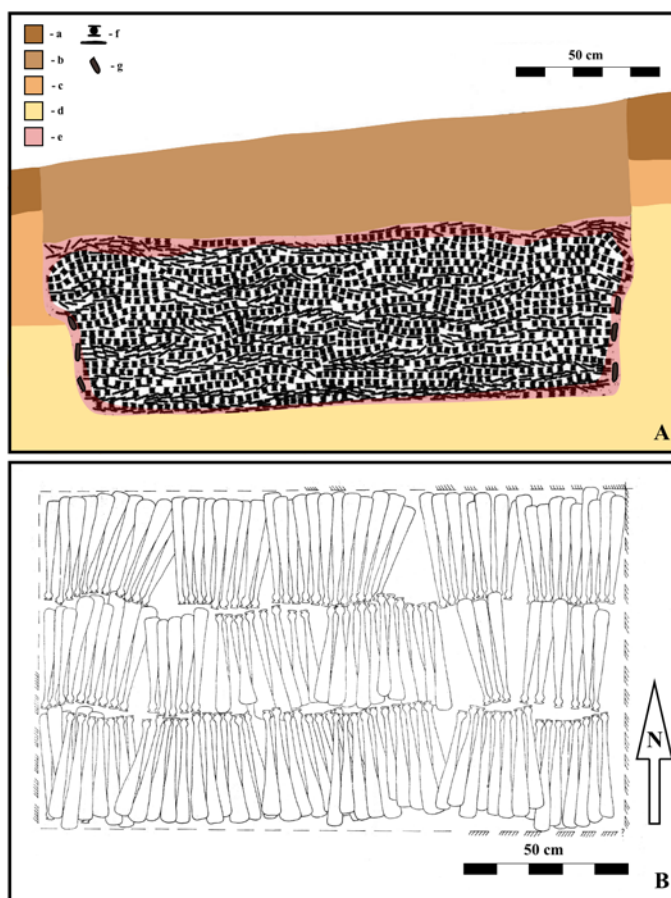


Fig. 11. Hoard of axe-like bars from Cracow's Okół (after Zaitz 1990, drawing B. Sz. Szmoniewski): A. Reconstructed cross section of the hoard (stylized drawing): a. Level IIIc; b. Sand; c. Upper part of untouched soil with level IIIc traces; d. Untouched soil; e. Sand with iron oxide traces; f. Axe-like bars in different positions (blade or butt); g. Remains of wooden construction. B. Reconstructed plan view of the hoard

Обр. 11. Съкровище от брадвоподобни слитъци от краковския Окул (по Zaitz 1990, рисунка: Б. Ш. Шмониевски): А. Реконструиран напречен разрез на съкровището (стилизирана рисунка): а. пласт IIIc; б. пясък; в. горната част на недокоснатата пръст със следи от пласт IIIc; д. недокоснатата пръст; е. пясък със следи от железен окис; ф. брадвоподобни слитъци в различни позиции (острие или тил); г. останки от дървени конструкции. В. Реконструиран хоризонтален план на съкровището

(Ratajczak, Skoczylas 1999, 32, fig. 10). We should turn again to the basin of the Rudawa, within which the Szklarka Stream is located. Traces of alkali oxides on the axe-like bars from Cracow's Okół point to the use of beech wood in the process of smelting the iron (Mazur, Nosek 1990, 188). Using this raw material as the basis for their production indicates that they originated outside the valley of the Vistula River (Dobrzańska et al. 2009, 165 – 166). The valley of the Szklarka Stream, as it was mentioned in the introduction, and especially its lower part, is rich in fertile Carpathian beech woodland, where the dominant species is the European beech (*Fagus silvatica*). Due to this fact, these areas along the Rudawa River and particularly its left bank, were ideal for such a production because of the frequent occurrence of the ores and wood necessary to obtain charcoal which in turn was necessary for the smelting process. In the valley of the Szklarka Stream, however, there have been neither any traces documented which would prove the activities of iron processing, nor any rests of possible settlements from the times of the analysed assemblage, namely the beginning of the 9th to the middle of the 10th c. (Poleski 1995, 139). Based on the archaeological surface survey three Early Medieval settlements (end of the 10th – half of the 13th c.) have been identified (Poleski 1995, 144, fig. 46). However, the earliest evidence found there, during archaeological excavations comes from the 13th c., yet this in no way excludes the future possibility of such discoveries (Wojenka et al. 2012, 88; Wojenka 2016, 670). A good example for this assumption is the recent discovery of a medieval fortress in the nearby settlement of Jerzmanowice, in spite of the previous relatively exact archaeological reconnaissance (Wojenka 2016). Undoubtedly, another finds of standardized iron axe-like bars and their intentionally cut-off fragments are proof of a big potential for iron processing in Lesser Poland, by the tribe of Vistulans (?) during the tribal period. If we assume the interpretation that the hoard from Cracow's Okół was not any kind of tribute which might have been prepared for the rulers of Great Moravia (Zaitz 1990, 172 – 174), and instead, it must have been a deposit collected by one representative of the local tribal elite or by the whole tribe, then the understanding of this hoard becomes different (Radwański 2000; Radwański 2003; Poleski 2013, 193 – 194). Therefore, applying a slightly modified model of central place redistribution (Renfrew, Bahn 1996, 352) we could propose the following interpretation of the phenomenon of axe-like bars in Lesser Poland. The production of the standardized axe-like currency bars must have been carried out under a strict surveillance by a person holding power in a central place, but the work itself could have been done in various forges localized along the upper flow of the Vistula River (fig. 2). The production of 3.5 tons of iron corresponds to 19 – 20 tons of iron slag (Pleiner 1989, 86). Next, around Cracow, on the territories rich in bog iron (like the valley of the Rudawa) as well as in woodlands providing charcoal necessary for iron smelting, the delivered material was processed further (for example axe-like bars modified according to their desired weight and proper shape and after this they were modified and forged anew – hence we can find the rests of their sockets being cut off. Another step was to take the axe-like bars to the central place of power – which Cracow undoubtedly was at that time – and they were stored in a special wooden construction. Representatives of smaller centres took a certain product to a hub as a tribute for a person holding power, receiving something in exchange – and in the case at hand – it must have been an axe-like bar or several such bars. This may be indicated by the arrangement of axe-shaped bars in the deposit from Okół, where they were arranged in several layers in bundles, most often from 7 to 9 items (fig. 11: B). It is worth mentioning here a calculation carried out by R. Pleiner, according to which 5300 blades for swords could be obtained out of the iron contained in the hoard from the Cracow's Okół (calculated for 3500 kilograms), or 4600 colters and as many as 23000 knives (Pleiner 1989, 86). Therefore, the axe-like bars received, apart from their prestige and symbolic values as a gift from a ruler, could also present concrete material resources and riches. Such an axe-like currency could be

reshaped as an iron object or tool needed at a time, or it could be used as a currency in the process of trade. When we consider the map of geographical spread of the axe-like bars around the upper flow of the Vistula River, some concentration around Cracow can be observed, completed with the analysed discovery of 40 fragments or cut-offs of the bars (fig. 2). Interesting is also the fact that in the distance of 65 km in a straight line from the central spot, almost in the opposite positions from the location of the deposit of the bars, they were found in the hillforts of Zawada Lanckorońska (7th – 10th c.; cf. Poleski 2013, cat. No. 55 CD, 142) and of Góra Słupsko in Kostkowice (9th – 10th c.; cf. Krajcarz et al. 2014, 26). Maybe they are just the hoarded axe-like bars or a part of them was received in the central place of power. It is worth mentioning that from the hillfort of Zawada Lanckorońska, further trade route could lead southward along the Dunajec River, perhaps only of the production and trade significance, which can be indicated by the finds of two axe-like bars from Vel'ka Ľomnica in Slovakia on the Poprad River, which is a tributary of the previously mentioned current (fig. 1).

It can be neither excluded that the discussed fragments came into being as the result of an intentional cutting operation in the course of reshaping the bar into some other object by a smith. However, the differentiation of sizes and the spots of their cuts indicates that they had been prepared (collected from various places) to be further processed or maybe to be forged anew into new axe-like bars which certainly required proper skills.

The assemblage of metal objects from the valley of the Szklarka Stream as presented here is a stray find. Accordingly, its dating is possible exclusively as based on the chronology of analogical artefacts, and such have been basically not documented, apart from the axe-like bars preserved in whole. Therefore, the discussed assembly can be dated only within certain frames, i.e. between the beginning of the 9th century and the middle of the 10th c. (Poleski 2013).

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank Anna Tyniec from the Archaeological Museum in Cracow for the opportunity to investigate the iron axe-like bars from Zawada Lanckorońska.

CATALOGUE

of iron axe-like bars found in Vistula River basin
(sites numbers correspond with maps on fig. 1 and 2)

I. Lesser Poland/Vistulan type:

1. Szklarka Stream valley, Cracow County, Poland, stray find, 40 fragments of axe-like iron bars. Incorrect location given in Hájnik 2019, 147, fig. 2.

2. Kostkowice, Site 2, Góra Słupsko, Zawiercie County, Poland, hillfort, 2 deposits with 6 and 9 axe-like bars (Zagórska-Telega, Bochnak 2001; Rozmus et al. 2006).

3. Modlnica, Cracow County, Poland, stray find, 1 axe-like bar (Liwoch 2013).

4. Cracow, suburbium Okół, Cracow County, Poland, 4212 axe-like bars (Zaitz 1981; Zaitz 1988, 261 – 276; Zaitz 1990, 143 – 160, 173).

5. Cracow, Nowa-Huta – Mogiła, site 1, Cracow County, Poland, settlement. Half of the axe-like bar from deposit of iron tools found in pit M-z 61/58 and 1 axe-like bar from pit M-c 57/54 (Hachulska-Ledwos 1959, 257, LXV: 1; Hachulska-Ledwos 1971, 48, 106, 205, tab. XXVI: 1, LXI: 4; Zaitz 1990, 162 – 163, fig. 1:5, fig. 13:2).

6. Zawada Lanckorońska, Tarnów County, Poland, hillfort. Deposit of 10 axe-like bars (Piaskowski

1956; Žaki 1961, 223 – 228, fig. 3 – 4; Žaki 1974, 303 – 307, fig. 253, 254; Zaitz 1990, fig. 1: 1 – 4, 6 – 7).

7. **Veľká Lomnica**, Kežmarok District, Slovakia, stray find, 1 axe-like bar (Béreš 2002, 139 – 140, Abb 1: 1).

8. **Radymno**, Jarosław County, Poland, oxbow lake of San River, 1 axe like bar (Koperski 1980, 99, fig. 24).

II. Great Moravian type

9. **Stradów**, Kazimierza County, Poland, hillfort, stray find, 1 axe-like bar (Gajewski 1963, 29/1 z.1, s. 83, fig. 1).

III. Piotrawin type:

10. **Piotrawin**, Lublin County, Poland, settlement, 11 or 12 axe-like bars or hammer-axe heads (Sułowska 1984, 58 – 59, fig. 8; Pisarek-Małyszczek 2010, 11–14; Kotowicz 2018, 105 – 107).

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РАННОСРЕДНОВЕКОВНА КОЛЕКТИВНА НАХОДКА НА ЖЕЛЕЗНИ ФРАГМЕНТИ ОТ БРАДВОПОДОБНИ СЛИТЪЦИ, ОТКРИТА В ДОЛИНАТА НА ПОТОКА ШКЛАРКА БЛИЗО ДО КРАКОВ, ПОЛША

Бартоломей Шимон Шмониевски, Дариуш Розмус

** Център за археология на планините и възвишенията, Институт по археология и етнология, Полска
академия на науките, Краков, Полша; bartheque@yahoo.fr*

*** Градски музей „Щигарка“, Домброва Гурничка, Полша; rozmusd@poczta.onet.pl*

РЕЗЮМЕ

През 2010 г. на Археологическия отдел на общинския музей „Щигарка“ в Домброва Гурничка, Полша, беше дарена колективна находка, състояща се от 41 фрагмента от железни артефакти. Находката е била открита в долината на потока Шкларка, която е разположена на около 20 км северозападно от Краков, в Ойцовските възвишения, които се намират в южната част на Краковско-Ченстоховските възвишения.

Анализираните тук 40 на брой железни артефакти са части от слитъци, подобни на изковани от желязо брадви. Тези фрагменти могат да бъдат идентифицирани като: 1) част от ушите; 2) тилната част и 3) тилната част със слабо издадени израстъци (табл. 1; обр. 3 – 8). Когато са цели, слитъците приличат на тесни брадви с дължина няколко десетки сантиметра и тегло, достигащо до 2 кг (обр. 9 – 10). Единият край е оформен като дълго листовидно острие, а другият край е снабден с малка дупка. В един случай представлява малка желязна пластина с нит (?).

Брадвоподобни артефакти се откриват в Централна Европа в три различни контекста: като единични находки, като колективни находки и като част от гробен инвентар. Те се датират в периода от края на VIII до края на X в., като най-честата им употреба е през IX до средата на X в. На територията на Полша брадвоподобни слитъци се откриват като единични или колективни находки и се отнасят предимно към IX в. Ролята им в ранносредновековната икономика се тълкува по много различни начини: от полуфабрикати, през оболи и вотивни предмети, до обменни средства.

Характерната форма на запазените фрагменти позволява включването им към Малополски/Висленски тип брадвоподобни слитъци. Географското разпространение на този тип на територията на Полша е ограничено до басейна на р. Горна Висла (обр. 1 – 2). Сред наличния сравнителен материал не може да се проследи аналогична находка, която да представя такива умишлено отрязани фрагменти от слитъци. Подобни действия на отсичане на отделни части обаче трябва да са били практикувани, както показват брадвоподобните слитъци от находището в Завада Ланцкоронска (обр. 9: 1). Извън района на Полша Малополският/Висленски тип е известен най-вече от Словакия и Моравия (по един екземпляр) (обр. 1). По отношение на количеството находки особено интересна е концентрацията им в района на днешен Краков (Нова Хута-Могила) и извън него (Модлница, Костковице, Завада Ланцкоронска), както и открити в границите на укрепеното предградие, наречено Окул. Колективната находка от Окул е най-голямото откритие на брадвоподобни слитъци в Европа и се състои от 4212 образци с общо тегло около 3630 кг (обр. 11).

Несъмнено находките на стандартизирани железни слитъци, подобни на брадва, и техните умишлено отсечени части са доказателство за големия потенциал на обработка на желязо в Малополша от племето висленци през племенния период. Производството на стандартизирани слитъци, циркулирали като домонетни форми, трябва да е било извършвано под строгия надзор на официално лице – представител на централизирана власт, но самата изработка може да е била извършвана в различни ковашки работилници, локализиращи по горното течение на р. Висла. Следващата стъпка ще

да е било пренасянето на брадвоподобните слитъци във властови център, какъвто Краков несъмнено е бил по това време, и съхраняването им в специална дървена сграда. Представители на по-малки центрове са отнасяли определени продукти в центъра като налог към дадена овластена личност, получавайки нещо в замяна – в конкретния случай това трябва да е бил един или няколко брадвоподобни слитъци. Това може да се предположи от подредбата на слитъците в находката от Окул, където те са аранжирани на няколко слоя в снопове, най-често от 7 до 9 екземпляра (обр. 11). Заслужава да се спомене тук изчислението, извършено от Р. Плейнер, според което от колективната находка от краковския Окул (сметнато въз основа на 3500 килограма) могат да бъдат направени или 5300 остриета за мечове, или 4600 лемежа, или 23 000 ножа. Следователно брадвоподобните слитъци, получени като подарък от владетел, освен престижа и символичната си стойност могат да представляват и конкретни материални ресурси и богатства. Такава „валута“ може да бъде трансформирана в железни предмети или инструменти, необходими в даден момент, или пък да се използва като разменно средство в процеса на търговия. Картата на географското разпространение на брадвоподобните слитъци около горното течение на р. Висла (обр. 1, 2) показва известна концентрация около Краков, допълнена от представеното тук откритие на 40 фрагмента от слитъци. Интересен е и фактът, че на разстояние от 65 км по права линия от централната точка, почти на противоположната страна от местоположението на изследваната находка, такива са открити в градищата на Завада Ланцкоронска, окръг Тарнов и Костковице, окръг Заверче (обр. 2, 9). Може би те са просто част от колективната находка слитъци или част от тях са получени в центъра на властта.

Групата метални предмети от долината на потока Шкларка, представена тук, е случайна находка. Съответно датировката ѝ е възможна изключително въз основа на хронологията на аналогични артефакти, а такива като цяло не са документирани с изключение на запазените цялостно брадвоподобни слитъци. Следователно разглежданата колективна находка може да бъде датирана само в определени рамки, т.е. между началото на IX и средата на X в.

WHAT THE COINS FROM THE PRES LAV TREASURE CAN TELL US ABOUT THE SOCIAL STATUS OF ITS OWNER

Vladimir Penchev

National Museum of History – Sofia, 16 Vitoshko lale str., 1404 Boyana, Sofia, Bulgaria; vl.m.penchev@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This paper reviews the potential reason why the fifteen silver Byzantine coins (miliarensia) of Constantine VII with his son and co-Emperor Romanos II (945 – 959), part of the famous Preslav gold treasure buried in 971, could have found their way as a compact sum of money in the medieval Bulgarian capital of Preslav. Arguments are provided in support of the assumption that they were a monetary gift (or part of such a gift) bestowed by the Byzantine government to a Bulgarian aristocrat who was a member of an official Bulgarian delegation which visited Constantinople at some date between 945 and 959. The traditional diplomacy practice of the Byzantine government in that era (described in the treatise of Emperor Constantine VII “On Ceremonies”) to present the members of official foreign delegations to Constantinople with monetary gifts, the amounts of which corresponded to the ranks of the delegation members, is well-known.

Key words: Preslav Treasure, miliarensia, Constantine VII with Romanos II (945 – 959), social status.

The numismatic material, part of the famous Preslav Treasure discovered in 1978 in the Kastana area near Veliki Preslav, comprises fifteen silver Byzantine coins (miliarensia) from the 10th c. They are all of the same type, bearing the names of Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus and his son Romanos II (Grierson 1973, 557 – 558, Pl. XXXVII, 21). The introduction of this type of miliarensia into the coin production of Byzantium is related to Constantine VII crowning his son, Roman II as coemperor and the official coronation held on Easter day, 6th April, 945 (Grierson 1973, 529, 537).

The coins from the Preslav Treasure were published in detail and discussed by Iv. Iordanov as early as 1983 (Йорданов 1983, 8 – 11). A description of this type, together with an illustration of one of the specimens from the Preslav Treasure (Fig. 1), will be provided here for illustrative purposes:

Constantine VII and Romanos II (945 – 959). Miliarensia

Obverse: A large cross with a long vertical arm, on three steps, to front. The ends of its arms are crossed and decorated with prominent dots (precious stones). In the centre, where the vertical and horizontal arms cross, there is an X forming an eight-point star with the arms. A cross of this shape

is interpreted as a depiction of the Cross of Golgotha. Inscriptions on the circumference (Table I, 1). The inscription and the image are encircled by three granular circles inscribed in each other, on which sixteen large heads of grain are depicted at equal distances.

Reverse: Five-line inscription (Table I, 2). The inscription is encircled by three granular circles inscribed in each other, on which sixteen heads of grain are depicted at equal distances.

Table 1. Inscriptions on the miliarensia of Constantine VII and Romanos II
Таблица 1. Надписите върху милиаренсиите на Константин VII и Роман II

1. IH SCS XRISTYS NICA

2. + C O N S T, T,
P O R F Y R O C,
C E R O M A N O
E N X W E V C E B,
b, R W M E O H

Silver. Diameters are between 22 – 23 mm. Weights vary between 2.50 – 2.80 g.



Fig. 1. Silver Byzantine coin (miliarensia) of Constantine VII with his son and co-Emperor, Romanos II (945 – 959), from the Preslav Gold Treasure (photo: Iv. Iordanov)

Обр. 1. Сребърна византийска монета (милиаренсия) на Константин VII с неговия син и съуправител Роман II (945 – 959 г.) от Преславското златно съкровище (снимка: Ив. Йорданов)

The silver miliarensia from that era were minted exclusively for propaganda purposes, and in smaller amounts than the gold coins (nomismas) and the copper alloy coins (folles). They were practically not used in circulation, although in theory twelve miliarensia were equal in value to a gold nomisma. For the purposes of clarity, the author will oversimplify things by providing an example from modern times. In the past 5 – 6 decades BNB has put in circulation numerous issuances of the so-called “commemorative” coins, mainly minted from silver, propagandizing various important events from Bulgarian history and in recent days. Although these coins have their nominal value expressed in leva, they are never part of daily circulation, but are kept by the people who have somehow acquired them.

The silver miliarensia of Constantine VII with Romanos II are practically not found in present-day Bulgarian territory. Apart from the fifteen specimens from the Preslav Treasure reviewed

here, only two such coins are kept in Bulgarian museums. One is part of the numismatic collection of NAIM – Sofia, and was probably purchased abroad (Йорданов 1983, 11, бел. 2). The second one is a fragment from a miliarensis of the type in question, discovered during the archaeological excavations of the Medieval Bulgarian production centre for artistic metal near the village of Novosel, Shumen region (Бонев, Дончева, 2011, 202, № 194). Therefore, as Iv. Iordanov established categorically in his time, the miliarensia of Constantine VII with Romanos II “are not widespread on our lands” (Йорданов 1983, 8).

The only significant exception, for the time being, is undoubtedly the Preslav Treasure. The date of the burial of this treasure has not been disputed by the scholars who have commented upon it. They all connect this burial with the conquest of the Bulgarian capital Preslav by the Byzantine armies led by Emperor John Tzimiskes in 971 (Тотев 1993, 12; Йорданов 1983, 9; Алладжов 2019, 132). The opinions about what kind of owner it had are more diverse. T. Totev believes that the find should be connected with “the palace or the family of a close boyar or dignitary” (Тотев 1993, 14). Iv. Iordanov tries to be more specific and states that “the owner of the treasure at the time it was buried was probably one of the daughters of the Bulgarian tsaritsa [meaning Tsaritsa Maria, the wife of Tsar Petar I]” (Йорданов 1983, 11). A. Aladzhov, however, states unequivocally: “The jewels from the Preslav Treasure can belong only to the Bulgarian tsar and his family... Some could have been part of the ceremonial dress of the ruler, and others – from that of his wife in the Bulgarian royal court” (Алладжов 2019, 134).

As was pointed out above, all fifteen coins (silver miliarensia) that form part of the Preslav Treasure are of the same type, a type which was first minted for the coronation of Romanos II on the 6th April 945. However, this does not mean that they were minted only on this occasion. Their production was undoubtedly longer, probably until the death of Constantine VII in 959. This is evidenced by the fact that the fifteen specimens from the treasure were struck with “15 different pairs of coin dies” (Йорданов 1983, 8). It is evident that all fifteen miliarensia from the treasure were not in circulation and are entirely preserved (Димитров 2019, 161). They were most probably held for safekeeping in the imperial treasury in Constantinople until they somehow found their way to Preslav – without having been in circulation.

In the treatise “On Ceremonies” (book II, chapter 15) by Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, there is an extremely interesting description of the welcoming of the famous Russian Knyaginya Olga in Constantinople, which most probably took place in 946. We will quote some passages from the description which we have used from their Russian translation (Голубинский 1901, 99 – 102), a translation generally believed to be extremely accurate:

“On Wednesday, 9th September [946], a reception was held... on the occasion of the arrival of the Russian Archontissa [Knyaginya] Olga. The archontissa entered with her relatives archontissas [knyaginyas] and the most prominent of her servants. She marched in front, all the other women walking in a row after her. She stopped at that spot where the logothete usually asks his questions...”

Then follows a description of the different ceremonies related to the viewing of the imperial palace and the lunch Knyaginya Olga had with the imperial family. What is of interest in this case is the following: “Another ceremonial lunch took place in the Gold Hall. It was there that all apocrisarii of the Russian princes [i.e., the members of the Russian diplomatic mission who accompanied Knyaginya Olga] were served lunch. The people and relatives of the knyaginya, as well as the [Russian] merchants, [who accompanied her] received [as follows]: her nephew – 30 miliarensia; 8 of her entourage – 20 miliarensia each; 20 apocrisarii – 12 miliarensia each; 43 merchants – 12 miliarensia each; the priest, Gregory – 8 miliarensia; Svetoslav’s entourage – 5 miliarensia each; 6 of the apocrisarii entourage – 3 miliarensia each; the knyaginya’s interpreter – 15 miliarensia.”

At the same time, Knyaginya Olga and her closest people had lunch with the emperor and his family in Justinian's triclinium. After the emperor left the table, dessert was served in another hall. There, the knyaginya was presented with a "gold tray decorated with precious stones", on which there were "500 miliarensia". And "six of her female escorts were given 20 miliarensia each, and 18 of her maids – 8 miliarensia each".

On the 18th October, 946, another ceremonial lunch took place in the Gold Hall of the palace, where the emperor dined together with the Russians, while the empress, together with her "porphyrogenitus" children dined in another hall with Knyaginya Olga and some of the Russian aristocrats accompanying her. Monetary gifts were bestowed once again after that: to Olga – "200 miliarensia; to her nephew – 20 miliarensia; to the priest, Gregory – 8 miliarensia; to 16 of her entourage – 12 miliarensia each; to 18 of her female slaves – 6 miliarensia each; to 22 apocrisarii – 12 miliarensia each; to 44 merchants – 6 miliarensia each, and to two interpreters – 12 miliarensia each."

It should be noted that we believe it is absolutely certain that all these miliarensia, handed out so generously by the Byzantine emperor to the Russian knyaginya and different members of her entourage on this visit, which took place in 946, were of the type "Constantine VII with Romanos II", whose production had begun only about a year and a half earlier. In other words, they are of the same type as that of the fifteen coins from the Preslav Treasure. The conclusion which can be made is self-evident. The coins from the treasure were most probably a gift to a member of a Bulgarian delegation that visited Constantinople in the period 945 – 959. Obviously at that time, during official receptions of foreign delegations in the imperial palace, it was a tradition to present the different members of these delegations (according to their ranks) with different amounts of commemorative Byzantine silver coins (miliarensia).

The Preslav Treasure, whose make-up clearly shows that it is of the type "family treasures", must have belonged to a Bulgarian aristocrat (even a Bulgarian female aristocrat) who, at least once in their life, took part in an official Bulgarian mission that visited Constantinople in, or more probably, not much later than 945. The number of the miliarensia – fifteen, – even if we assume that some of them were given away before its burial or were just not discovered by the archaeologists due to their scattering in the ploughed land, in the author's opinion, is unequivocal evidence that its owner could not have been a member of the Bulgarian royal family. The amount is such that it would have corresponded to the rank of an interpreter or the "court ladies" from the delegation of the Russian Knyaginya Olga. There are no grounds to doubt that the principle of bestowing monetary gifts to the different members of official Bulgarian delegations visiting Constantinople at the time was different from that applied in the case of the Russian delegation led by Knyaginya Olga.

In 927, a lasting "thirty-year" peace, which actually continued uninterrupted for forty years until 967, was established between Bulgaria and Byzantium (Златарски 1971, 501 – 512). One of the clauses of the peace treaty stated that the empire is obliged to pay annual tribute to the Bulgarian Tsardom (Златарски 1971, 504). An official Bulgarian delegation visited Constantinople to receive this tribute and take it to Preslav. The last time such a delegation arrived in the Byzantine capital was in the spring of 967 (Тъпкова-Займова 1981, 389).

There is no doubt that these annual official Bulgarian state delegations to Constantinople were met by representatives of the Byzantine imperial government, observing all traditional rules of the Byzantine ceremonial practice. In particular, the members of the Bulgarian delegations were also given monetary gifts, similar to those presented to the Russian Knyaginya Olga and her entourage. Most probably, the miliarensia which are part of the Preslav Treasure were such a gift (or part of such a gift), presented to its owner or, perhaps, the father of this owner, who was a member of one of the official Bulgarian delegations visiting Constantinople each year.

The miliarensia were gifted either in the year 945, or not much later. In addition to everything else (for example, creating sympathy and goodwill towards the Byzantine Empire and its rulers in the particular Bulgarian aristocrats who received the gifts, i.e., bribing them), these coins had to promote among the Bulgarian aristocracy the newly created situation in the ruling imperial family. What we mean is the complete removal of the Lekapenoi family from power, which took place in the very beginning of 945, and the complete overtake of supreme power by Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, supported by his son and co-Emperor, Romanos II.

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КАКВО МОГАТ ДА НИ ПОДСКАЖАТ МОНЕТИТЕ, ВЛИЗАЩИ В СЪСТАВА НА ПРЕСЛАВСКОТО СЪКРОВИЩЕ, ЗА СОЦИАЛНИЯ СТАТУТ НА НЕГОВИЯ СОБСТВЕНИК

Владимир Пенчев

Национален исторически музей – София, ул. „Витошко лале“ № 16, Бояна 1404, София; vl.m.penchev@gmail.com

РЕЗЮМЕ

Нумизматичният материал, влизащ в състава на известното Преславско съкровище, се състои от 15 милиаренсии от Х в. Те всичките са от един и същи тип и са с имената на Константин VII Багренородни и сина му Роман II.

Всички изследователи свързват укриването на Преславското съкровище с превземането на Преслав от войските на Йоан Цимисхи в 971 г. По-разнообразни са мненията относно неговия собственик. Докато Тотев смята, че находката трябва да се свърже „с двореца или със семейство на някой от приближените нему боляри“, Йорданов свързва съкровището с „...някоя от дъщерите на българската царица“, а Аладжов отсича категорично, че може да принадлежи „...само на българския цар и семейството му...“.

В съчинението „За церемониите“ на император Константин VII Багренородни има описание на посрещането на руската княгиня Олга в Константинопол (вероятно 946 г.), в което подробно е разказано за различните суми в сребърни монети, дарявани на членовете на придружаващата я делегация според техните рангове.

Според нас е напълно сигурно, че всички тези милиаренсии, раздавани от името на византийския император на руската княгиня и придружаващите я лица, са били от същия тип, от който са и 15 екземпляра от Преславското съкровище. Изводът, който се налага, е, че монетите от съкровището най-вероятно са били подарени на някой член на българска делегация, посетила Константинопол някъде в периода 945 – 959 г.

Преславското съкровище е от вида на т. нар. „семеини съкровища“ и трябва да е принадлежало на някой български аристократ, участвал в състава на официална мисия, посетила Цариград през или скоро след 945 г. Броят на съдържащите се в него милиаренсии категорично свидетелства, че собственикът му не може да е бил член на българското владетелско семейство. Сумата по-скоро съответства на някой от ранга на преводачите или на „придворните дами“ от състава на делегацията на княгиня Олга.

Ключови думи: Преславско съкровище, милиаренсии, Константин VII с Роман II (945 – 959 г.), социален статут на собственика на съкровището

AMPHORAE FOUND DURING EXCAVATIONS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF THE NAIM – BAS BASE IN PLISKA, BULGARIA¹

Evelina Todorova

*National Archaeological Institute with Museum, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, 2 Saborna Str., 1000 Sofia, Bulgaria;
evatodorova79@gmail.com*

ABSTRACT

This paper presents the results of the analysis of amphorae found during excavations for construction of the new archaeological base of NAIM – BAS in Pliska. Significant quantities of amphorae from the Günsenin I and II classes that are datable to the second half of the 10th – the beginning of the 11th c. show that in this period Pliska grew as a large consumer center of food products. The variety of amphora profiles suggests that contacts were maintained with different, either synchronously or diachronically existing production centers in the Eastern Mediterranean basin. The food supplies were distributed through a well-organized and efficient trade network.

Key words: Günsenin I and II amphorae, stoppers, amphora stamps, dipinti, graffiti, Byzantine economy

In 2007 – 2008, emergency and rescue excavations were carried out at Pliska National Historical and Archaeological Reserve by a team directed by P. Georgiev, Ya. Dimitrov, St. Ivanov (from the Branch of NAIM – BAS in Shumen), and Radoslav Vasilev (NAIM – BAS). An area of 1700 m² was excavated along the inner face of the Inner City's northern fortress wall. This plot was intended for the construction of the new archaeological base of NAIM in Pliska. Remains from the metropolitan and post-metropolitan periods have been documented.

The most active habitation in this part of the city was during the last quarter of the 10th c. and the first four decades of the 11th c., when a residential and industrial district was developed here. This district consisted of semi-dug out dwellings, workshops, household and foundry furnaces, and garbage pits (Георгиев и др. 2008, 597 – 600; Георгиев и др. 2009, 566 – 570). Among the numerous finds were significant amounts of broken amphorae found in layers, dwellings, and garbage pits dated from the end of the 10th to the middle of the 11th c. The attendant discovery of anonymous foleis of classes A1, A2, B, C and D was also striking.²

The total number of documented amphora fragments (rims, necks, handles, walls from shoulders, lower parts, and bottoms) is 2972. To these should be added one completely preserved

¹The author worked with the material in 2008 as a part of her PhD thesis "Byzantine Amphorae from the Present-day Bulgarian Lands (7th – 14th c.)". I would like to express my gratitude to the dig directors – Assoc. Prof. P. Georgiev, PhD and Assist. Prof. Ya. Dimitrov, PhD for providing me with access to the materials and allowing me to use them in my doctoral thesis.

²This information was provided by Assoc. Prof. P. Georgiev, PhD, to whom I would again like to express my gratitude.

vessel (fragmented and restored) and fragments of ten other, partially-preserved amphorae. The most numerous and characteristic fragments were found in: Dwelling No. 54, Pit No. 30 with a furnace in Grid sq. No. 30, Pit No. 57, Pit No. 61, Pit No. 69, Pit No. 14, the Pit in Dwelling No. 87, Dwelling No. 14, Pit No. 1 in Grid sq. No. 8, Grid sq. No. 2/1, Grid sq. No. 10-west, and Grid sq. No. 23.

Günsenin I Amphorae

The amphora known in scholarly literature as the Günsenin I “type” is best represented (Günsenin 1989, 269 – 271, fig. 2 – 4; Günsenin 1990, 21 – 24, fig. 4 – 10, Pl. I – XXIX, Pl. LXXVII – LXXXII, Pl. LXXXIX). J. Hayes also identified this amphora as type 54 (Hayes 1992, 73 – 75, fig. 24.1 – 11, Pl. 12i, Pl. 15h), A. Romanchuk et al. as class 42 (Романчук и др. 1995, 66 – 68, Табл. 28¹⁴⁶, Табл. 33^{144, 145}), and A. Sazanov as type 45 (Sazanov 1997, 97, fig. 4₄₅). This type is dated generally to the 10th – early 12th c. and was distributed throughout the Mediterranean world (Тодорова 2012, 48 – 57 and the respective references). From the excavations for the construction of NAIM’s archaeological base, 1,489 fragments of amphora bottoms, walls, rims and handles; one completely preserved amphora (Cat. No. 1, fig. 1: 1); one amphora body without neck and handles (Cat. No. 2, fig. 1: 2); three upper halves of amphorae (Cat. Nos. 3 and 4, fig. 1: 3, 4); three more vessels in a poorly preserved state can be listed in this group.

The Günsenin I amphorae from the Pliska site were made on a kick-wheel. The fabric is well-purified and contains significant amounts of fine sand and mica. After firing, the fabric turned to a beige-orange, orange, or pink-orange color while the outer surface is covered with a dense cream-colored slip. With the exception of slight shading in the fabric’s color, which is a result of temperature conditions during firing, no significant differences in fabric composition are evident. Common to all vessels is the strongly bulging pear-shaped body with a rounded bottom. The vessel body is covered with shallow, horizontal relief ribs, which are narrower and set more closely together on the vessel’s shoulders and wider and farther apart on the lower part of the vessel. Regarding the shape of the rim, the height and ribbing of the neck, and handle placement, the Günsenin I amphorae provisionally can be divided into two groups.

The first (Cat. Nos. 1, 3 and 4, fig. 1: 1, 3, 4, fig. 2: 1 – 8) consists of amphorae with a cylindrical neck 8 – 10 cm high that bears three or four faint relief ribs. The thick round rim is curved outwards, and sometimes droops slightly, and forms a shallow groove between its lower edge and the wall of the neck. The handles are Γ-shaped with an irregular elliptical cross-section. They are attached to the neck below the rim, do not rise above the rim level, curve down to join the shoulders of the vessel. The diameter of the rim, in cases where it can be measured, is 9.4 – 11 cm.

The vessels in the second group (Cat. Nos. 5 – 8, fig. 1: 5 – 8, fig. 2: 9 – 17) have a short cylindrical or biconical neck (height 4 – 7 cm) most often with one and less commonly with two clearly shaped relief ribs. The rim is straight, thin, and slightly beveled inwards. The solid arched handles have an irregular elliptical cross-section. They are attached to the rim and rise up slightly to almost reach the rim level. There are many cases where the handles slightly surpass the rim level. The diameter of the rim is 7.5 – 9 cm.

As for what these features mean for dating, a 10-year-old study of medieval amphorae from the present-day territory of Bulgaria showed that there is a chronological relationship between the height of the neck and the place of handle attachment. The tendency is for the neck to become shorter and the handles to be elevated gradually above the rim level. Amphorae with high necks were dated to the second half of the 10th c. until the middle of the 11th c. Those with short necks date from the late 10th /early 11th c. to the end of the 11th c. (Тодорова 2012, 48 – 58).



Fig. 1. Günsenin I amphorae (Author: E. Todorova)

Обр. 1. Амфори Гюнсенин I (Автор: Е. Тодорова)

When it comes to applying this finding to the Günsenin I amphorae from the Pliska site, it should be noted that, with the exception of the fully preserved amphora (Cat. No. 1, fig. 1: 1) and the two partially preserved upper halves (Cat. Nos. 3 and 4, fig. 1: 3, 4), it is very rare to find well-preserved portions of amphorae among the remaining 52 documented fragments of rims and rims with handles in which the rim profile and the ribbing of the neck are clearly visible. In most cases, fragments have highly unrecognizable features or are very small in size, which also make it difficult to accurately measure rim diameter and neck height. Usually the amphorae broke where the handle was attached to the vessel body. This made it impossible to graphically document vessel profiles correctly since in order to attach handles to the vessel, potters used an additional amount of clay. This additional clay very often disfigures the rims and fills the depressions between the relief ribs of the neck. Despite the apparent predominance of fragments of amphorae with short necks (25 pieces) over those with long ones (12 pieces), conclusions based on the quantitative ratio between

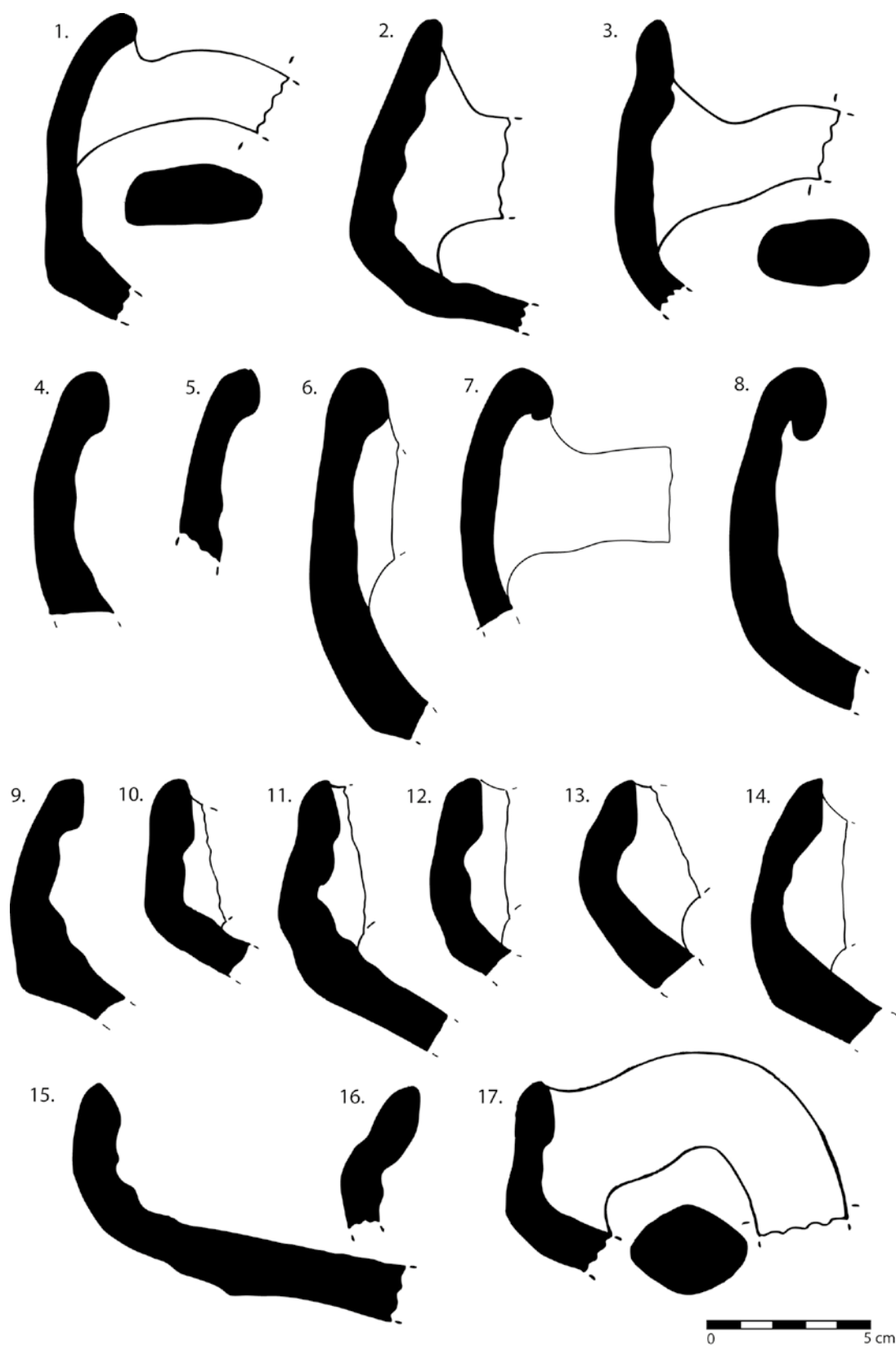


Fig. 2. Rim profiles of Günsenin I amphorae (Author: E. Todorova)
Обр. 2. Профили на амфори Гюнсенин I (Автор: Е. Тодорова)

the two groups should be considered relative and subject to corrections.

Regardless of the difficulties involved in documenting fragments of Günsenin I rims from the excavations in Pliska, it is striking that behind their apparent homogeneity lies a wide variety of profiles. This observation raises two very important questions. The answers to these would significantly change our understanding of the way the medieval Mediterranean economy was organized and functioned.

The first question is theoretical and concerns the amphorae's morphology. Variability in the shaping of the rim, the ribbing of the neck, and the position of the handles indicate that the Günsenin I amphorae should no longer be regarded as a single 'type'. They should instead be regarded from now on as one large "class" that unites many different types. The question of the species affiliation ("type" or "class") of the Günsenin I amphorae was first raised by F. van Doorninck Jr. based on his observations of the profiles of amphorae from the Serçe Limanı shipwreck (1030s) and their comparison with the profiles of already published amphorae (van Doorninck Jr. (forthcoming)).³ Only A. Romanchuk et al. use "class" as term in relation to the amphorae from the port area of Chersonesus. However, they only divide this class of amphorae into two types according to whether the rim edge is rounded or pointed (Романчук и др. 1995, 66 – 68), without considering other specific characteristics.

The second question concerns the Günsenin I amphorae's origin. It is logical to assume that if the ceramic containers in question are to be perceived as a "type," they should be characteristic of a single production center/area. The variety of species and the sheer number (several hundreds of thousands) of Günsenin I amphorae found worldwide suggest more than one production center. During his many years of meticulous work with the materials from Serçe Limanı, F. van Doorninck Jr. came to the important conclusion that Günsenin I amphorae were subject to high standardization during production. This was in terms not only of their capacity (van Doorninck, Jr. 1993; van Doorninck, Jr. 2015) but also of their formal characteristics. He finds that the rim profile and number of relief ribs on the neck are not arbitrary but are strictly defined in shape and number and so are indicative of a particular production area for any given amphora.⁴

To date, only one Günsenin I amphora production center is known. It is located on the northern coast of the Sea of Marmara near ancient Ganos in the vicinity of the modern villages of Şarköy, Hoşköy and Gaziköy. The area has been known since Antiquity for the cultivation of vines and production of wine. From the 10th c. onwards, it appears in written sources as the seat of a large monastic complex (Günsenin 1990, 47 – 56; Günsenin 1993; Günsenin 2002, 127). Two other workshops for the production of amphorae are located directly opposite Ganos – on the largest island in the Sea of Marmara near Topağaç and Saraylar. Near one of these workshops were found the remains of buildings, probably a metochion of the aforementioned monastery at Ganos (Günsenin 1999, 127, fig. 1; Günsenin 2002, 132 – 133). Although these three workshops belong to the same production center, chemical analyses of the clays of the amphorae produced at Ganos show that these clays differ in composition from those produced on the island. There are also differences in the rim profiles of the amphorae produced at Ganos and on the island (Günsenin, Hatcher 1997, 256, fig. 2b, fig. 5b).

Unfortunately, as was already noted, the amphorae considered in this article were highly fragmented. This did not allow any conclusions to be drawn regarding their capacities, the kinds

³ This is the place to express my immense gratitude to F. van Doorninck Jr. for sharing his as yet unpublished manuscript with me, as well as for the time spent discussing the typology of Byzantine amphorae.

⁴ This observation was shared in personal correspondence dated June 1st, 2017 and is to be included in Chapter 5 "The Transport Amphoras" of Volume III of the "Serçe Limanı" series. Here again I would like to thank him for his attention and the time devoted to discussing the matter.

of product they carried (white, red or sweet wine, grain products) (van Doorninck, Jr. 1993; van Doorninck, Jr. 2015, 35 – 48; Garver 1993, 162 – 173), or their origin.

It is still difficult to say whether or not the Günsenin I amphorae found in Pliska and in Bulgaria were produced at Ganos. Under macroscopic observation, the fabrics of almost all of the amphorae look the same. It is possible that some of the amphorae with short necks (the second group) were produced in Ganos (Günsenin 1993, fig. 9, fig. 10; Günsenin 1995, fig. 13). Therefore, it is necessary to carry out chemical and petrographic analyses of the clays so that the results can confirm/reject this assumption. Still, when considering the dating of the Günsenin I amphorae from the Pliska site, it should be emphasized that amphorae began to be produced at Ganos from the beginning of the 11th c. (Günsenin 1993, 194, 196; Günsenin 1999, 125). However, the amphorae from the shipwreck Yenikapı 12 from the Harbor of Theodosius in Istanbul (Kocabaş 2008, fig. 7; Kocabaş, Kocabaş 2008, p. 114, fig. 11 – 13; Shipwrecks of Yeni Kapı 2013, 205 – 209, Cat. Nos. 239 – 244, 246 – 254), as well as some materials from Bulgaria (Todorova 2018, Cat. Nos. 19 – 23, fig. 3₃₋₇), show that the earliest Günsenin I types should be dated to the 9th – 10th c. They differ from those produced at Ganos not only in their profiles but also in their fabrics and the absence of the cream-colored slip.

Günsenin II Amphorae

Fragments of the Günsenin II “type” amphorae are the second most prominent ceramic finds among the material from the Pliska excavations (Günsenin 1989, 271, fig. 5 – 7; Günsenin 1990, 26 – 27, 44, fig. 13 – 14, Pl. XXXIII – XXXVII, Pl. LIII_{2c}, Pl. LXXXIII, Pl. LXXXVII₂, Pl. XCI₁). This “type” has also been identified as type 60 by J. Hayes (Hayes 1992, 75 – 76, fig. 26.4), class 43 by A. Romanchuk et al. (Романчук и др. 1995, 68 – 70, Табл. 34₁₄₇₋₁₄₉), type XXI by I. Antonova et al. (Антонова и др. 1971, 93, рис. 22 – 23), and type 52 by A. Sazanov (Sazanov 1997, 98, fig. 4₅₂). These amphorae are generally dated to the end of the 10th – 11th c. They are widespread throughout the Eastern Mediterranean world, where they are always found together with Günsenin I amphorae (Todorova 2012, 63 – 67 and the respective references). A total of 1475 fragments of rims, handles, bottoms, and walls; two fragments of the upper and lower halves of the same amphora (Cat. No. 12, fig. 3: 4); and three upper halves of amphorae (Cat. Nos. 9 – 11, fig. 3: 1 – 3) were processed and documented. It is obvious that the quantitative advantage in favor of the Günsenin I amphora’s greater prevalence is insignificant and can be attributed to a negligible statistical error.

Common to the Günsenin II amphorae are a high conical neck and a strongly bulging but slightly pear-shaped body with a rounded bottom. Four to six shallowly incised horizontal lines, which form slightly pronounced relief ribs, are located on the vessel shoulders, where the handles are attached to the body, and on the lower half of the body near the bottom of the vessel. The diameter of the rim varies from 9 to 11.5 cm. There is great variability in terms of the rim’s shape, the position of the handles in relation to the rim level, and the composition, characteristics, and color of the vessel fabric. In general, however, the Günsenin II amphorae can be divided into two groups.

The first group (Cat. No. 9, fig. 3: 1, fig. 4: 1 – 28) includes vessels with a funnel-shaped rim and thick rim edge that strongly curves outwards. The handles are wide bands with a flattened elliptical cross-section. They are attached to the middle of the neck and join the belly of the vessel at its widest part. In some examples there is a tendency for the handles to rise in the direction of the rim, and often the lower part of the rim touches or flattens against the handles – a transitional variant to the second group (fig. 5: 1 – 9). Amphorae of this group sometimes show a decoration on the vessel’s shoulders that was incised before firing and consists of a single row of connected arches.

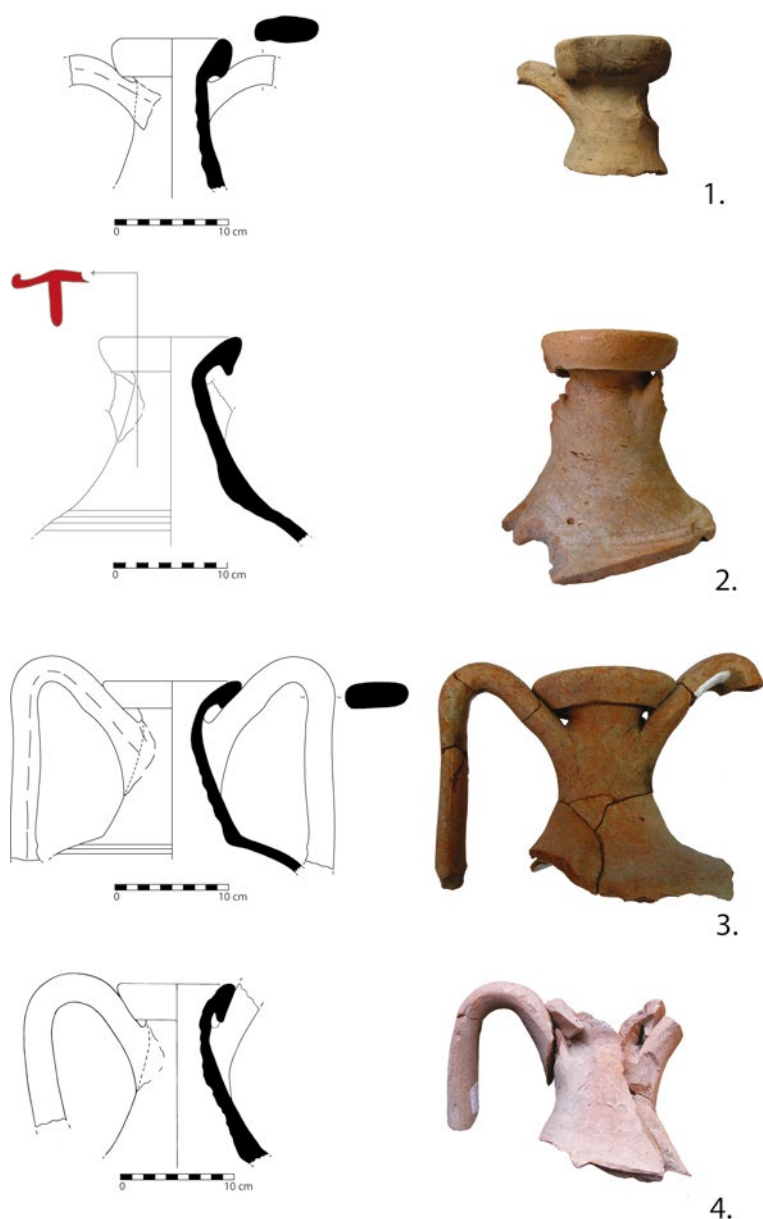


Fig. 3. Günsenin II amphorae (Author: E. Todorova)

Обр. 3. Амфори Гюнсенин II (Автор: Е. Тодорова)

The fabric, hard or softer in touch, has acquired a red, pinkish-orange, light orange, or pale yellow-orange color after firing. It is mixed with a large amount of coarse sand and single large limestone particles. There is no slip.

The second group (Cat. Nos. 10 – 12, fig. 3: 2 – 4, fig. 5: 19 – 31) includes vessels with a funnel-shaped rim. The rim edge, which curves strongly outward, forms a “collar” that is squeezed between band-like handles with an elliptical cross-section, which start from the neck and rise above the rim level. Sometimes the rim is highly deformed and so it is difficult to determine its profile. The characteristic fabric is either hard or chalky soft but it always contains large amounts of organic matter and large limestone particles. The color after firing varies from pale yellow and light orange

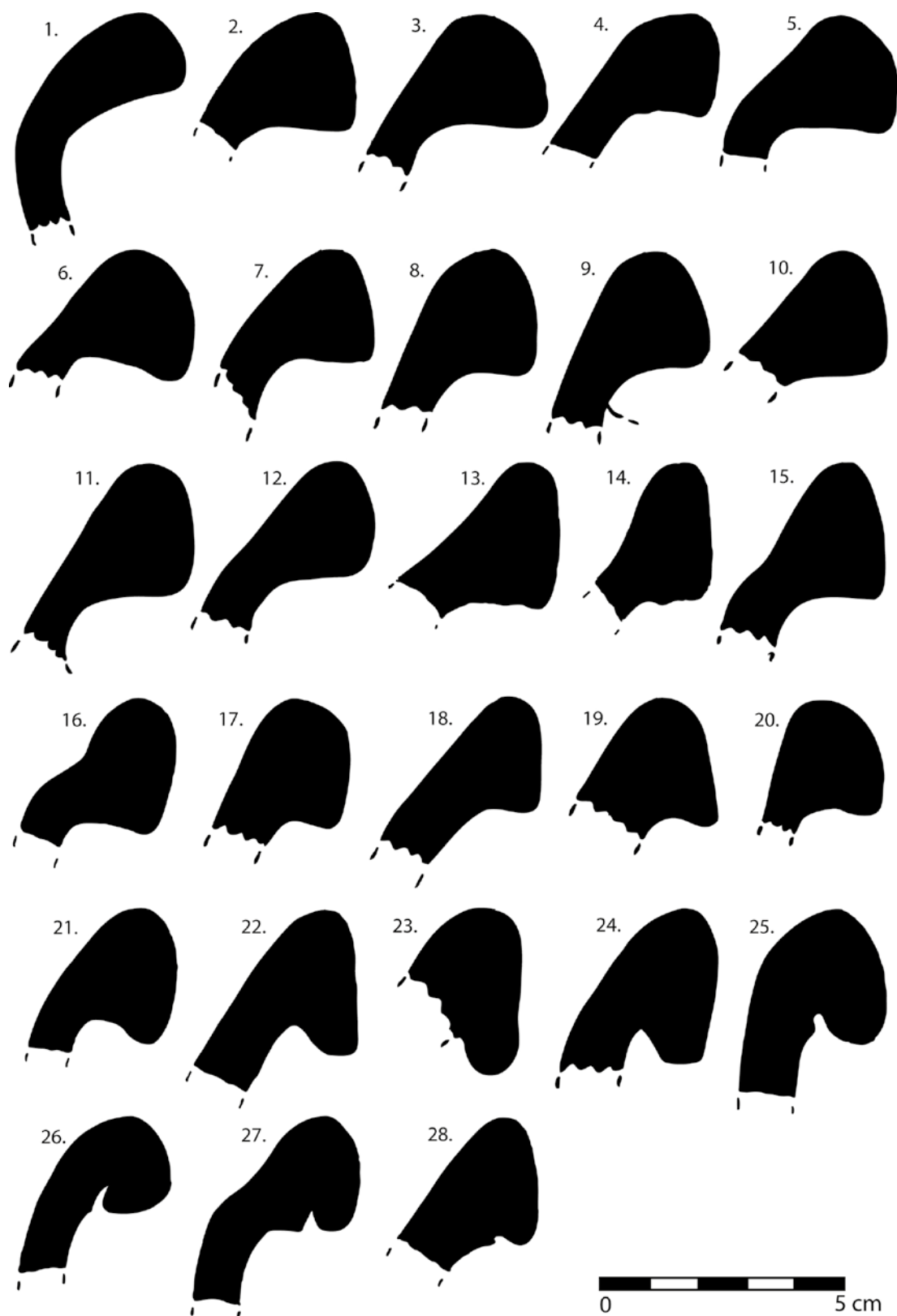


Fig. 4. Rim profiles of Günsenin II amphorae (Author: E. Todorova)
Обр. 4. Профили на амфори Гюнсенин II (Автор: Е. Тодорова)

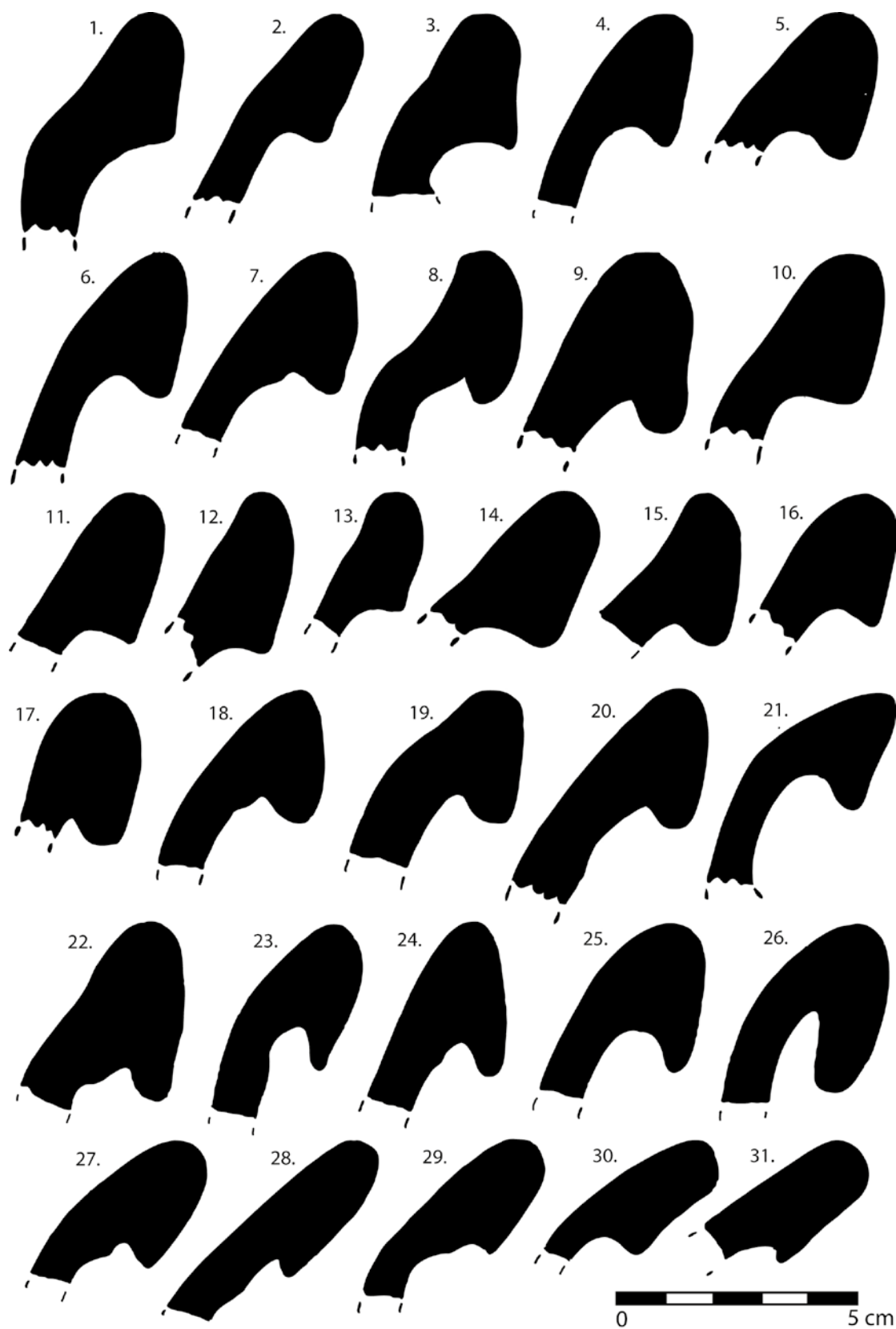


Fig. 5. Rim profiles of Günsenin II amphorae (Author: E. Todorova)
Обр. 5. Профили на амфори Гюнсенин II (Автор: Е. Тодорова)

to dark pink. There is no slip coating, as in the first group of Günsenin II amphorae.

Compared to the Günsenin I amphorae, the Günsenin II show even more diversity not only in rim profiles but also in fabric. As with the Günsenin I amphorae, then, the questions about their classification and the relationship between their form and origin are also of great interest here. It is obvious that the Günsenin II “type” unites heterogeneous but formally similar vessels. The “type” should therefore be named a “class,” within which types combining morphological characteristics with a certain chemical composition in their fabrics should be included.

Based on chemical analysis of the clay used in the Günsenin II amphorae, one production center has been identified for them and at least two additional, unidentified ones have been posited. The identified center is located in the vicinity of Chalcis on the Island of Euboea, Greece, where, in addition to Günsenin II vessels from the second group, Günsenin III containers were also produced. Transitional Günsenin II/III variants were seemingly manufactured here as well (Waksman et al. 2018; Todorova et al. (forthcoming)). During the primary processing of the amphorae from Chalcis, it proved impossible to relate the morphological characteristics of the vessel (rim profile and handle position) to the macroscopic observations of the fabric (color, composition, hardness). Even the results of the chemical analyses did not support such a correlation. Amphorae with the same fabric composition presented a wide variety of rim profiles (Waksman et al. 2018, fig. 1). Possibly, in the case of the Günsenin II amphorae, the rim profile and the position of the handles could be related to the transport of certain products or to a certain capacity of the vessel (Todorova et al. (forthcoming)), as was done for the Günsenin I containers (van Doorninck, Jr. 1993; van Doorninck, Jr. 2015). Unfortunately, no one has done such a study so far.

There are also no fully explored shipwrecks loaded with Günsenin II amphorae whose capacity can be investigated. The cargo of one of the sunken ships in Sudak Bay did contain Günsenin II amphorae (Зеленко 2001, 91), but they are all fragmented. This author’s personal observations during the processing of the materials from the territory of Bulgaria and from the shipwreck near Novy Svet⁵ show that the well-defined chronological tendency among Günsenin I amphorae towards shorter necks and handles elevated higher above the rim is not valid for Günsenin II vessels (Тодорова 2012, 60; Todorova et al. (forthcoming)). Although such an evolutionary development seems logical when it comes to the gradual thickening of the rim and the sagging of its lower end like a “hook” and the raising of the handles until they surpass the rim level to flatten the rim “collar,” the discovery of amphorae with different formal characteristics in the same complexes rejects this assumption.⁶ The situation can only be explained by the fact that the amphorae originated from different but contemporary production centers (Todorova et al. (forthcoming)).

The statistical comparison between the two groups of Günsenin II amphorae from the excavations in Pliska also leads to disputed results given the strong fragmentation of the material. A total of 63 rims have been preserved, most of which are very small in size. Of these rims, 35 sherds belong to the first group (Cat. No. 9, fig. 3: 1, fig. 4: 1 – 28), 19 sherds – to the second group (Cat. Nos. 10 – 12, fig. 3: 2 – 4, fig. 5: 19 – 31), and nine sherds – to the transitional variant between the two groups (fig. 5: 1 – 9), in which the lower edge of the rim touches the handles and is slightly flattened by them. Nine rim sherds remain undetermined (fig. 5: 10 – 18). Regarding the handles, 21 sherds belong to the first group, 28 sherds to the second, and 17 sherds to the transitional version while 81 sherds cannot be attributed with certainty. Again, as with the ratio between the Günsenin

⁵ Here I would like to express my gratitude to S. Zelenko and Y. Morozova from the Center for Underwater Archeology at Taras Shevchenko University of Kyiv for giving me the opportunity to work with the materials from Novy svet.

⁶ The amphora material from Pliska published here fully supports this observation.

I and II amphorae, the ratio between the two groups of Günsenin II sherds is quite close, and the differences in the number of fragments are minimal.

Unidentified amphorae

In addition to the widespread Günsenin I and II amphorae, fragments of two as yet unidentified types were also documented among the examined materials. The first type includes fragments of the body and bottom of a vessel (Cat. No. 13, fig. 6: 1). They were made on a potter's wheel. The fabric turned to brown color after firing and contains large amount of mica and fine sand. No slip on the vessel's exterior was recorded. The body of this type of amphora is covered with wide (1 – 1.5 cm) horizontal relief ribs. Given that so little of the vessel has been preserved, it is difficult to say what its overall shape and height are. In all probability it had an elongated, spindle-shaped body, such as

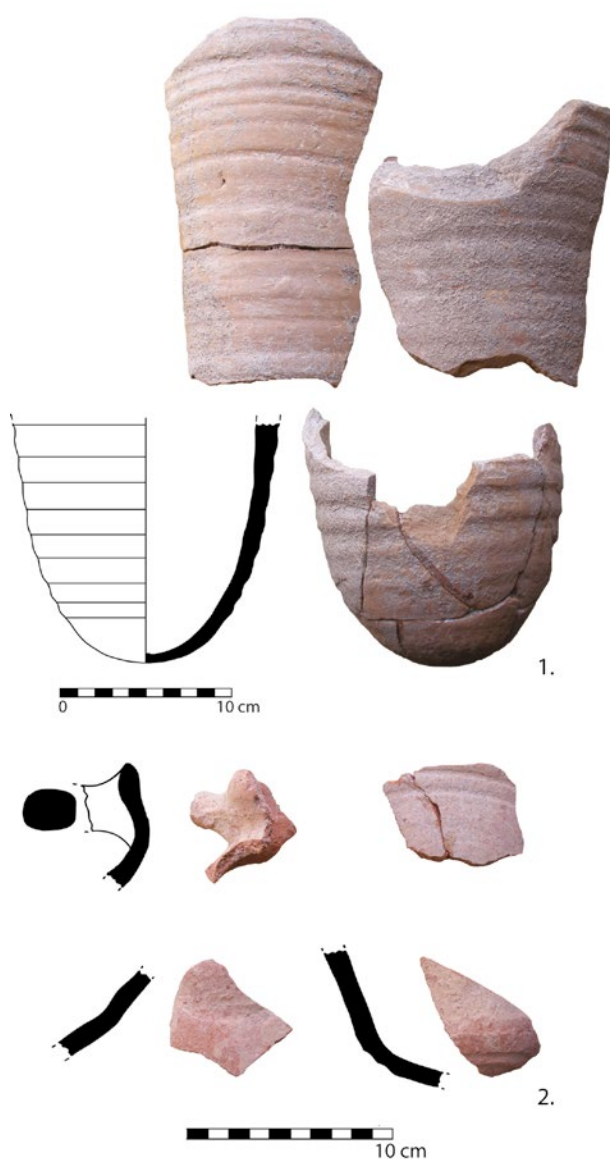


Fig. 6. Unidentified amphorae (Author: E. Todorova)

Обр. 6. Амфори – неидентифицирани типове (Автор: Е. Тодорова)

those known from various locations from this period (Тодорова 2012, 70 – 71 and the respective references, Табл. XXXIII 200 – 202, Табл. XCIII 200 – 201, Табл. XCIV 202).

Four fragments of one vessel belong to the second type – a rim with a handle, a part of the shoulders, the lower half of the body, and a sherd from the bottom (Cat. No. 14, fig. 6: 2). This vessel was made on a kick wheel. The fabric is extremely coarse, mixed with a large amount of coarse sand, and overfired, yielding a brick red color. The thin walls and small size of the vessel's fragments give reason to conclude that it is a small-sized amphora with a pear-shaped body and a rounded bottom. The neck is short, the rim is bevelled and curves slightly inward, the handles start from the rim and most likely reach the rim level without exceeding it. The vessel's fragmentary state does not allow exact parallels to be identified.

Stoppers

Among the amphora fragments, 5 “stoppers” with an irregular round shape were also found. Three of them are secondarily cut from clay putty (Cat. Nos. 15, 16, 18, fig. 7: 1, 2, 4). Their light yellow fabric is coarse and contains a large amount of organic matter and coarse sand. The remaining two stoppers (Cat. Nos. 17, 19, fig. 7: 3, 5) were carved from the walls of Günsenin II amphorae. Their diameter varies between 4.8 and 6.2 cm and their thickness from 1.6 to 3.5 cm. The stoppers were originally stuck in the necks of amphorae and were coated with resin so they would not fall out. They are very often found *in situ* in the necks of or inside amphorae from sunken ships of all eras (Bass, van Doorninck, Jr. 1982, 160 – 161, fig. 8 – 7; Hocker, Scafuri 1996, 6, fig. 6; Hocker 2005, 104; Günsenin 2001, 118; Günsenin 2003, 367, fig. 8). According to personally-obtained, unpublished information from F. van Doornink Jr., specially produced amphora stoppers were also subject to certain standardization. Stoppers of a certain diameter and thickness were supposed to close the rims of amphorae of a certain capacity.

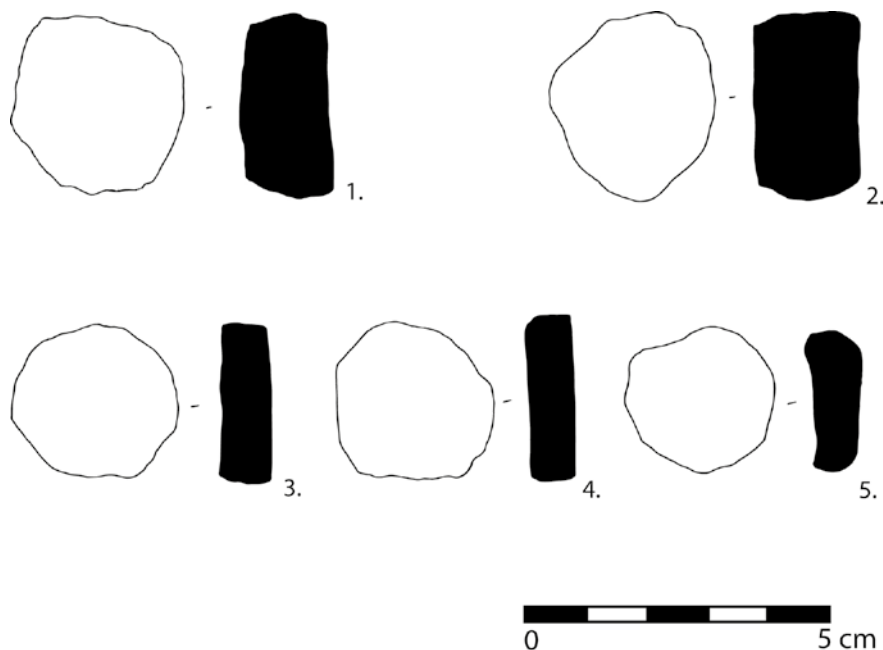


Fig. 7. Amphora stoppers (Author: E. Todorova)
Обр. 7. Запушалки за амфори (Автор: Е. Тодорова)

Amphora marks

Very often, different signs (stamps, dipinti or graffiti) are found by themselves or in combination on amphorae's handles, shoulders, and bodies. They are placed either before or after the vessel was fired.

Stamps

Only one stamp was documented among the examined materials from the excavations in Pliska (Cat. No. 20, fig. 8). It is located on the upper horizontal surface of a Günsenin I amphora handle, very close to where the handle curves to join the shoulders. The stamp is a negative one and was placed using a metal matrix before the vessel was fired. It shows four small circles with a dot in the center that are arranged in a diamond-shaped pattern. It was found out-of-context in Grid sq. No. 23. Among the more than 100 amphora stamps and matrices for stamping amphorae known to date worldwide, there is no exact parallel to the one from Pliska, which makes its interpretation and dating difficult. A detailed analysis of the location of the stamps on Günsenin I amphorae showed that those located on the upper surface of the handles usually belong to vessels with a high neck, in which the handles do not rise above the rim level. Therefore, the stamp can be dated in general to the second half of the 10th – the first half of the 11th c. (Тодорова 2012, 96).

The topic of the interpretation of amphora stamps – their meaning, who had the right to stamp amphorae, etc. – is extremely extensive and full of debate (Тодорова 2012, 102 – 109 and the respective references) so it will not be reviewed here. In light of recent discoveries (van Doorninck, Jr. 2015, van Doorninck Jr. (forthcoming), however, it can be assumed that in order for a high level of standardization and unification in amphora production to exist, it was necessary

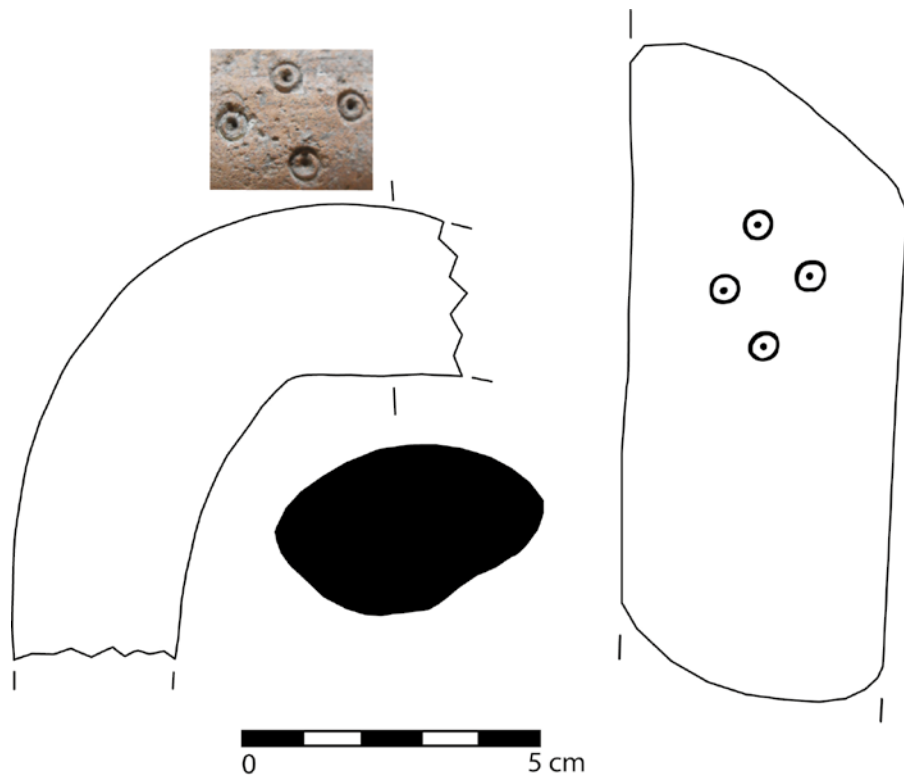


Fig. 8. Amphora stamp (Author: E. Todorova)

Обр. 8. Амфорен печат (Автор: Е. Тодорова)

to carry out strict control. Therefore, amphora stamps can often be interpreted, as in the case of the stamp from the Pliska site, as a sign of the workshop that belonged to a certain estate. This stamp guarantees that, after it has been inspected by a controlling authority, the manufactured batch of ceramic vessels meets quality and capacity expectations. At the same time, by representing a particular manufacturer, a stamp could provide information on the origin of and qualities of the goods in vessels to those who transported them.

Dipinti

Unlike Günsenin I amphorae, Günsenin II vessels were not stamped. Dipinti are found on them instead – letter abbreviations, signs, and even entire inscriptions that are applied with black or dark red organic paint on the neck of a vessel after it is fired. From the excavations for the construction of the archaeological base in Pliska, the upper half of an amphora (Cat. No. 10, fig. 3: 2) with handles squeezing the rim and a fragment of an amphora neck (Cat. No. 21, fig. 9) were found on which dipinti were applied with red paint. In the first case, the sign resembles the Greek letter “T” while in the second case, it is most likely a ligature containing the Greek letter “H”. Unfortunately, the latter dipinto has not been fully preserved.

Dipinti cannot always be read because of their brevity. In this case they were intended to be used only by people who were familiar with their meaning. In cases where it is possible to decipher them, it becomes clear that they carry additional information about: the contents of the amphora; the quality or origin of these contents; their volume or weight; the volume or weight of the empty amphora; the name of a vessel’s manufacturer, owner, seller, end customer, or customs magistrate; etc. (Stolba 2002, 237 – 238 and the respective references; Karagiorgou 2001, 138 – 139, 149 – 150; Demangel, Mamboury 1939, 149 – 152, fig. 200 – 201; Papanikola-Bakirtzi 2002, 146). Whatever the interpretation of the dipinti, they attest to administratively well-organized services dealing with the transport and distribution of various essential commodities.

Graffiti

Graffiti are marks incised/scratched with a sharp object onto the surface of ceramic vessels after they have been fired. Like dipinti, they carry coded information intended for a certain range of users, which is why their decryption is not always possible. Graffiti very often have nothing to do with the maker of the amphorae and are considered to be a sign of their repeated reuse, as evidenced by numerous, sometimes overlapping incised marks on the same vessel. They can be an invaluable tool for tracing trade routes, mapping distribution networks, and elucidating how the medieval economy was organized in different periods.

From the excavations in Pliska, graffiti were found on handles and walls (sherds from the shoulders, from the base of the neck or near the handles) of both Günsenin I and II amphorae⁷ (Cat. Nos. 3, 4 and 8, fig. 1: 3, 4, 8, fig. 10: 1 – 25). From the point of view of functionality, the places where the graffiti were located were the only visible after ceramic vessels were stacked in ships or storage rooms. The majority of graffiti are straight parallel or intersecting lines without clearly discernible forms and meanings. The reason must be sought in the size and degree of preservation of the sherds bearing graffiti. Some of the graffiti are a combination of letters (Cyrillic or Greek) (Cat. No. 8, fig. 1: 8, fig. 10: 1, 2). They should be interpreted as an abbreviation of the name of the owner/trader or consignee of the goods.

Two graffiti deserve attention: one is incised on the upper surface of one handle of a Günsenin I amphora (Cat. No. 3, fig. 1: 3) while the other is incised into the base of a Günsenin II amphora’s

⁷ Graffiti were not recorded on the other two types of studied amphorae due to the insignificant number of sherds.



Fig. 9. *Dipinti* (Author: E. Todorova)
Обр. 9. Дипинти (Автор: Е. Тодорова)

handle (fig. 10: 24). Although at first glance the two graffiti have nothing in common, they actually represent stylized versions of the emblem of the Rurik family. Similar emblems on amphora fragments from Bulgaria originate from Preslav (Тодорова 2012, Табл. LX/G58; Манолева-Войкова 2015, обр. 2₁₄) and Silistra (Тодорова 2012, Табл. LX/G59). They should be connected to the period of the Rus' presence in administrative key centers south of the Danube in the last third of the 10th c.

Others

A curious find was also discovered among the many broken amphorae from the excavations at Pliska. It is a sherd of a handle of a Günsenin II amphora from the second group. On its upper, relatively horizontal surface are two paw prints of a small predator that were left on the moist clay before the vessel was fired (Cat. No. 22, fig. 11). Similar traces of animals are often found, especially on building ceramics. They show that the finished but still unfired products were left unattended in an open place accessible to animals until the water contained in them evaporated and they were ready to be fired. Analysis of the prints by a zoologist could show whether the prints belong to a domestic (cat?) or wild animal.⁸ This information can help researchers to reconstruct the location and organizational policies of pottery workshops. Were these workshops built on the estates to which they belonged and so had a direct connection with other buildings of the complex or were they located in remote and sparsely populated places? Did workshops only function in certain seasons or year-round? To what extent did pottery production coexist with other production and economic activities (e.g. raising domestic animals, etc.)? One could also ask, based on the fauna of the places where the workshops were located, if it is possible to make assumptions about the topography and climate of the area in which workshops were located.

⁸ According to Forest Engineer Stiliyan Geraskov from the National Hunting and Fishing Association "Union of Hunters and Fishermen in Bulgaria", to whom I would like to thank for the information provided, the paw prints were most probably those of a domestic cat.

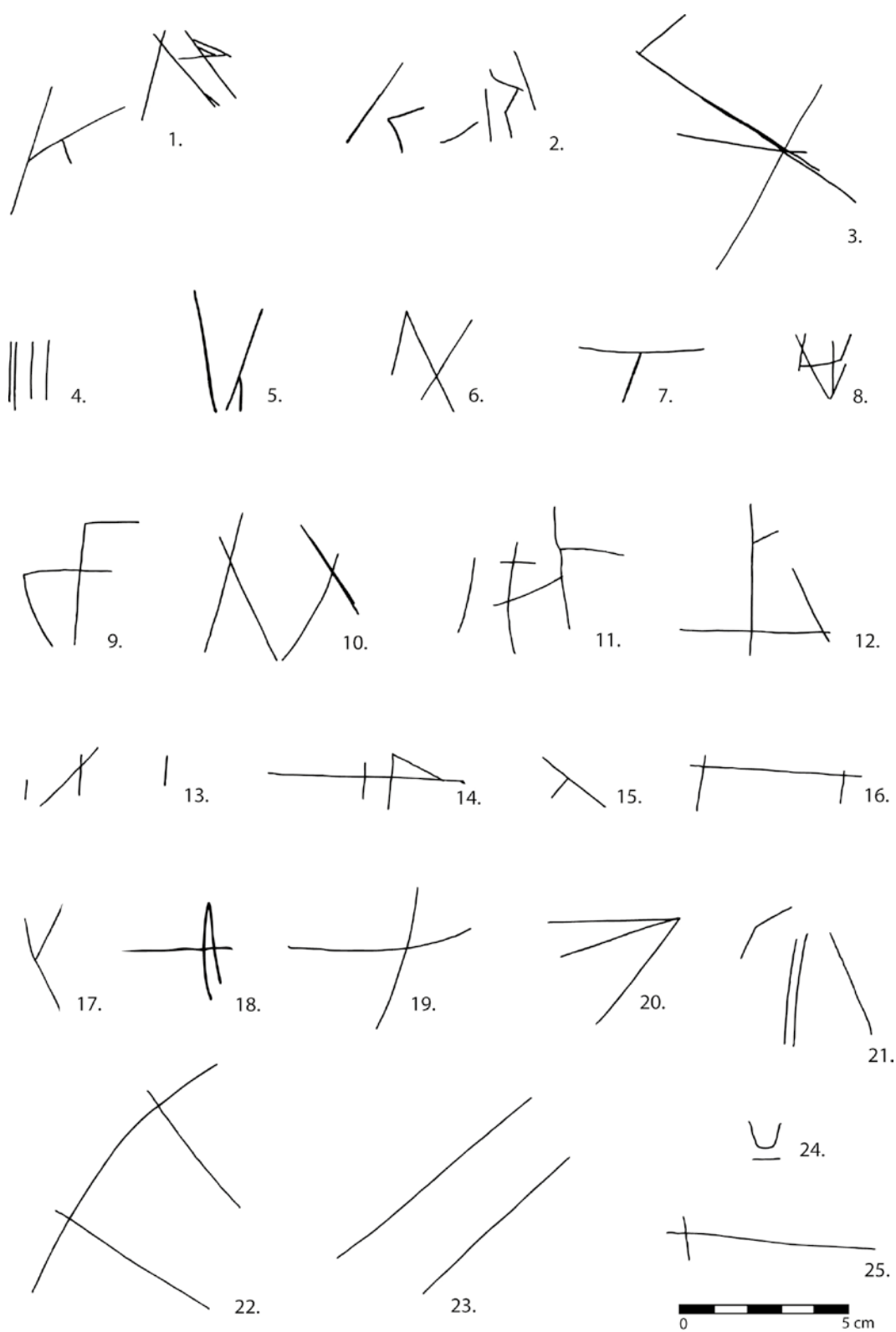


Fig. 10. Partially preserved graffiti on Günsenin I and II amphorae (Author: E. Todorova)
Обр. 10. Частично запазени графити върху амфори Гюнсенин I и II (Автор: Е. Тодорова)



Fig. 11. Günsenin II amphora handle with animal paw print (Author: E. Todorova)

Обр. 11. Дръжка от амфора Гюнсенин II със следи от животински лапи (Автор: Е. Тодорова)

Conclusion

Although at first glance the amphora material from the excavations for the construction of NAIM's new archaeological base of NAIM at Pliska seems highly fragmented, its detailed analysis allows valuable conclusions to be drawn. Significant quantities of amphorae from the Günsenin I and II classes that are datable to the second half of the 10th – the beginning of the 11th c. show that in this period Pliska grew as a large consumer center of food products, mainly wine and olive oil. The variety of amphora profiles suggests that contacts were maintained with different, either synchronously or diachronically existing production centers in the Eastern Mediterranean basin. These contacts were abruptly cut around the mid-11th c. The fact that vessels different in origin but produced according to the same standard reached Pliska means that their transport took place in a well-organized and efficient trade network. The forthcoming detailed treatment of the remaining finds and ceramics from the excavations for the construction of NAIM's base at Pliska will help to narrow the chronological boundaries of the individual amphora-containing structures. These analyses will also indicate whether or not ceramic vessels from different production centers arrived at the same time. If they did not, these analyses could shed light on the intervals of time in which did arrive and with what frequency they arrived.

Seen in the light of historical events, what has been concluded so far finds a logical explanation. The appearance of the Byzantines in the last third of the 10th c., the subsequent absorption of the lands south of the Danube into the Byzantine *thema* Paristrion, and the rise of Pliska as the seat of a high military administrator in the region all necessitated the implementation of centrally organized food supplies for the needs of the army and the civilian population of the city, the so-called *annona*. This would explain how, with the *annona*, amphorae from various production

centers reached Pliska. What products were supplied – whether only wine or olive oil and other goods – is still difficult to say. The different status of Pliska compared to that of other settlements in the *thema* is confirmed by both unidentified amphora types. Their small quantity and absence elsewhere should be interpreted as incidental supplies of less common or even rare and valuable goods (e.g. a special type of wine, essential oils, etc.). In all probability, their delivery was not part of the *annona* but was carried out in parallel with it by independent merchants trading goods in small quantities and volumes. The graffiti on the amphorae, which resulted from the reuse of the shipping containers, can be used to support this claim. The existence of a demand for goods of a certain quality by high dignitaries or people with a higher social status is evidenced by two of the graffiti with the emblem of the Rurik dynasty. They clearly show that for the Kiev prince Svetoslav and his associates, there were special supplies of food in the late 960s and early 970s. The sudden disappearance of amphorae after the mid-11th c. is explained by the cessation of life in Pliska as a result of attacks by the Pechenegs and the site's subsequent abandonment as an important strategic point in its larger administrative region.

CATALOGUE OF FINDS

Cat. No. 1

Fig. 1: 1

Location: Grid sq. No. 2/1, depth 0.00 – 0.40 m from ground level.

State of preservation: Part of the rim and one handle of the vessel are missing. The outer surface is covered with a thick layer of residues. Highly fragmented. Restored.

Size: H – 39 cm; Rim diameter – 9.4 cm; Maximum diameter – 32.5 cm.

Fabric: Fabric with beige-orange color after firing, containing fine sand. Due to the coating of residues, it is not possible to tell if a slip was applied on the outer surface.

Cat. No. 2

Fig. 1: 2

Location: Grid sq. No. 14, Dwelling No. 14, depth 0.90 m from ground level.

State of preservation: The rim, neck, two handles and bottom are missing. Highly fragmented. Partially restored.

Size: H – 26 cm (preserved); Maximum diameter – 28.3 cm.

Fabric: Fabric with pinkish-orange color after firing, containing large quantity of fine sand. Cream-colored slip covering the outer surface.

Cat. No. 3

Fig. 1: 3

Location: Grid sq. No. 30, Pit No. 30 with furnace, depth 1.30 – 1.80 m from ground level, found together with

Cat. No. 4.

State of preservation: Fragment from the upper half of an amphora. Parts of the rim, neck, handles and shoulders are preserved. Highly fragmented. Partially restored.

Size: H – 16.6 cm (preserved); Rim diameter – 10.5 cm.

Fabric: Fabric with beige-orange color after firing, containing mica and fine sand. Dense creamish slip covering the outer surface. Some sherds have stayed in a fire.

Graffiti: Rurik emblem on the handle curve, incised after firing.

Cat. No. 4

Fig. 1: 4

Location: Grid sq. No. 30, Pit No. 30 with furnace, depth 1.30 – 1.80 m from ground level, found together with

Cat. No. 3.

State of preservation: Some parts of the rim, the neck, handles, and shoulders of the vessel are preserved. Highly fragmented. Partially restored.

Size: H – 17.7 cm (preserved); Rim diameter – 10.4 x 11 cm; Maximum diameter – 34.5 cm.

Fabric: Fabric with orange color after firing, containing mica and fine sand. Dense cream-colored slip covering the outer surface. Some sherds have stayed in a fire.

Graffiti: Marks incised after firing on both sides of the shoulders and at the base of the neck. The marks are not completely preserved due to the fragmentary state of the vessel.

Cat. No. 5

Fig. 1: 5

Location: Trench No. III, Grid sq. No. 5/6, Pit No. 69, depth 0.60 – 1.90 m from ground level.

State of preservation: Parts of the rim and neck, one handle, and the shoulders are preserved. Graphically reconstructed.

Size: H – 15 cm (preserved); Rim diameter – ca. 8 cm.

Fabric: Fabric with orange color after firing, containing considerable amount of fine sand. Dense cream-colored slip covering the outer surface.

Cat. No. 6

Fig. 1: 6

Location: Grid sq. No. 26A, depth 0.40 – 0.60 m.

State of preservation: Sherd from the upper part of an amphora. Parts of the rim, the neck, and the shoulders are preserved.

Size: H – 11.8 cm (preserved); Rim diameter – 8 cm.

Fabric: Fabric with orange-beige color after firing, containing large amount of coarse sand. Cream-colored slip covering the outer surface.

Cat. No. 7

Fig. 1: 7

Location: Trench No. III/2-East, Dwelling No. 54, depth 0.60 – 0.90 from ground level.

State of preservation: Sherd from an amphora neck. Parts of the rim, the neck and the handle are preserved. Graphically reconstructed.

Size: H – 8.6 cm (preserved); Rim diameter – ca. 8 cm.

Fabric: Fabric with orange color after firing, containing considerable amount of fine sand. Cream-colored slip covering the outer surface.

Cat. No. 8

Fig. 1: 8

Location: Trench No. III/5, 6, depth 0.00 – 0.60 m from ground level.

State of preservation: Half from an upper part of an amphora. Parts of the rim, the neck, the shoulders, and the handles are preserved.

Size: H – 19 cm (preserved).

Fabric: Fabric with beige-orange color after firing, inclusions of mica and sand. Cream-colored slip covering the outer surface.

Graffiti: Two letter-like marks incised after firing – one on the shoulders and the other at the base of the handle.

Cat. No. 9

Fig. 3: 1

Location: Trench No. V/1–3, Pit No. 57, depth 0.80 – 2.30 m from ground level.

State of preservation: Part of an upper part of an amphora. The rim, the neck, and one handle are preserved.

Size: H – 12.7 cm (preserved); Rim diameter – 9 cm.

Fabric: Hard fabric with light orange color after firing, containing large amount of organic matter and large lime particles.

Cat. No. 10

Fig. 3: 2

Location: Trench No. V/1, Pit No. 61, depth 1 – 1.70 m from ground level.

State of preservation: Upper part of an amphora. The rim, the neck, and part of the shoulders are preserved. The joint between the neck and the body is clearly visible.

Size: H – 17.4 cm (preserved); Rim diameter – 10.7 x 11.5 cm.

Fabric: Hard fabric with light orange color after firing, containing large amount of organics and large lime particles.

Dipinti: A poorly preserved mark painted in red on the neck of the vessel, close to one handle.

Cat. No. 11

Fig. 3: 3

Location: Grid sq. No. 30, depth 1.60 m from ground level.

State of preservation: Upper part of an amphora. Parts of one handle and the shoulders are missing.

Size: H – 19 cm (preserved); Rim diameter – 11.3 cm.

Fabric: Hard fabric with light orange color after firing, containing large amount of organic matter and large lime particles.

Cat. No. 12

Fig. 3: 4

Location: Grid sq. No. 16, Pit No. 14, depth 0.60 – 2.20 m from ground level.

State of preservation: Part of an amphora. The neck, parts of the rim, a big part of one of the handles, large sherds from the body and the lower part of the vessel are preserved.

Size: H of neck – 19 cm (preserved); Rim diameter – 11.3 cm.

Fabric: Hard fabric with light pinkish-orange color after firing, containing coarse sand and single large stones.

Cat. No. 13

Fig. 6: 1

Location: Grid sq. No. 23, depth 1.10 – 1.20 m from ground level.

State of preservation: Sherds from the lower part of an amphora (fragmented and restored). Two more wall sherds from the body of the same vessel with no connection to the bottom.

Size: H of bottom – 14.2 cm (preserved).

Fabric: Hard fabric with beige-brown color after firing, containing large amount of mica and fine sand. No slip on the outer surface.

Cat. No. 14

Fig. 6: 2

Location: Grid sq. No. 26/28, Pit No. 20, depth 0.80 – 1.80 m from ground level.

State of preservation: Four small sherds from the same vessel: a sherd of the neck of an amphora with a rim and part of a handle; sherd from the transition between the neck and the shoulders; body sherd with two shallow horizontal relief ribs; a wall sherd from the lower half with a transition to the bottom with shallow horizontal relief ribs.

Size: H of the sherd with rim and neck – 6 cm (preserved).

Fabric: Coarse fabric containing large amount of coarse sand. It was overfired, and the sherds are light in weight. Brick red color after firing. The outer surface has a cream color, but this is not a slip.

Cat. No. 15

Fig. 7: 1

Location: Trench No. V, depth 1.40 m from ground level.

State of preservation: Amphora stopper. Secondary cut from clay putty.

Size: Diameter – 5.8 cm; Thickness – 2.9 cm.

Fabric: Very coarse fabric with light orange color after firing, containing large size lime particles and large chunks of organic material (straw).

Cat. No. 16

Fig. 7: 2

Location: Trench No. III/3, depth 0.00 – 2 m from ground level.

State of preservation: Amphora stopper. Secondary cut from clay putty.

Size: Diameter – 5.5 x 6.2 cm; Thickness – 3.5 cm.

Fabric: Whitish fabric containing large amount of sand and organic material.

Cat. No. 17

Fig. 7: 3

Location: Trench No. II/1B, depth 0.00 – 1 m from ground level.

State of preservation: Amphora stopper. Secondary cut from Günsenin II amphora sherd.

Size: Diameter – 5 x 5.6 cm; Thickness – 1.7 cm.

Fabric: Soft fabric with light orange color after firing, containing large amount of organic material and sand.

Cat. No. 18

Fig. 7: 4

Location: Trench No. III/6, Pit No. 73, depth 1 – 1.60 m from ground level.

State of preservation: Amphora stopper. Secondary cut from clay putty.

Size: Diameter – 5.2 cm; Thickness – 1.6 cm.

Fabric: Fabric with light orange color after firing, containing organic material and lime particles.

Cat. No. 19

Fig. 7: 5

Location: Trench No. I/5/6, depth 0.00 – 1 m from ground level.

State of preservation: Amphora stopper. Secondary cut from Günsenin II amphora sherd.

Size: Diameter – 5 cm; Thickness – 1.9 cm.

Fabric: Chalky soft fabric with light beige color after firing, containing large amount of organic matter.

Cat. No. 20

Fig. 8

Location: Grid sq. No. 23, depth 0.20 – 0.50 m from ground level.

State of preservation: Günsenin I amphora handle. A negative stamp was placed on the upper horizontal surface, near the break, before the vessel was fired. The stamp consists of four small circles with a dot in the center arranged in the shape of a rhombus.

Size: Diameter – 0.5 cm (of each circle with a dot ornament), 2 x 2.6 cm (of the stamp).

Fabric: Fabric with orange color after firing, containing large amount of coarse sand.

Cat. No. 21

Fig. 9

Location: Trench No. III/6, Pit No. 73, depth 1 – 1.60 m from ground level.

State of preservation: Sherd from a Günsenin II amphora neck with small size.

Size: 9.5 x 10 cm (preserved).

Fabric: Hard fabric with light orange color after firing, containing large amount of sand and single large size lime particles.

Dipinti: A partially preserved mark made with red paint on the neck of the vessel. Probably a letter ligature – H, K (?).

Cat. No. 22

Fig. 11

Location: Trench No. III/2A, Dwelling No. 54, depth 0.80 – 1.20 m from ground level.

State of preservation: Fragment of a handle from a Günsenin II amphora with a break curve and an imprint of the collar of the rim. There are two animal paw prints on the upper horizontal surface.

Size: 6.9 x 8.8 cm (preserved).

Fabric: Soft fabric with light orange color after firing, containing sand and small quantity of organic matter.

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АМФОРЕН МАТЕРИАЛ ОТ РАЗКОПКИТЕ ЗА СТРОЕЖА НА БАЗАТА НА НАИМ В ПЛИСКА

Евелина Тодорова

*Национален археологически институт с музей, Българска академия на науките, ул. „Съборна“ № 2, София 1000;
evatodorova79@gmail.com*

РЕЗЮМЕ

През 2007 – 2008 г. в НИАР – Плиска се провеждат аварийно-спасителни разкопки на парцел, предназначен за строежа на новата археологическа база на НАИМ в Плиска. Проучена е площ от 1700 кв. м пред вътрешното лице на северната крепостна стена на Вътрешния град. Документирани са останки от столичния и следстоличния период. Най-активно е обитаването в този сектор през последната четвърт на X в. и първите четири десетилетия на XI в., когато тук се развива жилищно-производствен квартал, състоящ се от полуземлянки, работилници, битови и леярски пещи, стопански ями. Документирани са 2972 фрагмента от амфори, един изцяло запазен съд, както и още 10 частично запазени амфори.

Над 50% от фрагментите са от амфори Гюнсенин I (обр. 1, обр. 2). Амфорите са изработени на бързо грънчарско колело от добре пречистена глина с примесени в нея значително количество ситен пясък и слюда. След изпичането си глината е придобила бежово-оранжев, оранжев или розово-оранжев цвят. Външната повърхност е покрита с плътна беззникава ангоба. По отношение на оформянето на устийния ръб, височината и оребвяването на шийката, както и на разположението на дръжките амфорите Гюнсенин I са разделени условно на две групи: 1) съдове с висока шия с три или четири слабоизразени релефни ребра по нея, извито навън, удебелено и заоблено устие, дръжки, започващи от шията, под устийния ръб, без да го надвишават (обр. 1: 1, 3, 4, обр. 2: 1 – 8); и 2), съдове с къса шийка, най-често с едно, по-рядко с две ясно изразени релефни ребра, прав, изтънен и леко скосен навътре устиен ръб, масивни арковидни дръжки, които започват от устийния ръб, като леко се издигат нагоре, изравнявайки се почти или леко надвишавайки нивото му (обр. 1: 5 – 8, обр. 2: 9 – 17). Въз основа на относително наскоро завършилото изследване на автора върху средновековните амфори от територията на България е установена хронологическа зависимост между височината на шията и разположението на дръжките, като тенденцията е към скъсяване на шията и постепенното издигане

на дръжките над нивото на устието. Амфорите с висока шия са датирани във втората половина и края на Х в. до средата на ХІ в. Тези с къса шия се датират от края на Х/началото на ХІ в. до края на ХІ в.

Размерът на запазените фрагменти, както и тяхното състояние възпрепятстваха точното документиране, идентифицирането на профилите на устията и броя на релефните ребра по шията на някои от фрагментите. Все пак може да се каже, че амфорите Гюнсенин І с къса шия преобладават над тези с висока шия.

В терминологично отношение, въз основа на голямото разнообразие от устийни профили и орebrяване на шийката при амфорите Гюнсенин І, е необходимо да се подчертае, че те вече не трябва да се разглеждат като тип, а по-скоро като клас амфори, съставени от множество типове с различен произход и форма. Тъй като не са извършени химични анализи на състава на глинено то тесто на амфорите Гюнсенин І от Плиска, е невъзможно да се прецени дали някои от тези с къса шия са произведени в Ганос, или не.

Амфорите Гюнсенин ІІ представляват втората по големина група, почти 50 % от всички фрагменти, съперничейки по брой на фрагментите от амфори Гюнсенин І (обр. 3 – 5). При тях е документирано още по-голямо разнообразие по отношение на формата на устието, позицията на дръжките и глинено то тесто. Те също са разделени условно на две групи. В първата група (обр. 3: 1, обр. 4) попадат съдове с фуниевидно устие и силно извит навън и удебелен устийн ръб. Дръжките са широки, лентести, с приплеснато елипсовидно сечение. Започват от средата на шията и се прикрепят към търбуха на съда при най-широката му част. При някои екземпляри се наблюдава тенденция към издигане на дръжките по посока на устието, като нерядко долната част на устието докосва или се приплесква към дръжките – преходен вариант към втората група (обр. 5: 1 – 9). При амфорите от тази група понякога се наблюдава украса, врязана преди изпичането върху плещите на съда, състояща се от един ред свързани арковидни елементи. Глината, твърда или по-мека, е придобила след изпичането си червен, розово-оранжев, светлооранжев или блед жълто-оранжев цвят. Примесена е с голямо количество едър пясък и отделни едри варовикови частички. Няма ангоба. Във втората група (обр. 3: 2 – 4, обр. 5: 19 – 31) попадат съдове с фуниевидно устие със силно извит навън устийн ръб, оформящ „якичка“, който се заплесква в започващите от шията и издигащите се над него лентести дръжки с елипсовидно сечение. Понякога устието е силно деформирано и е трудно да се определи неговият профил. Характерната глина е два вида – твърда или тебеширено мека, но винаги е примесена с огромно количество органика и едри варовикови частици. Цветът след изпичането варира от бледожълт и светлооранжев до тъмнорозов. Няма покритие с ангоба.

За разлика от амфорите Гюнсенин І при съдовете Гюнсенин ІІ не се установява еволюционно развитие във формата на устийния ръб и позицията на дръжките спрямо тялото и нивото на устието, което да бъде обвързано с определени хронологически граници. Откриването на амфори с различни формални характеристики в едни и същи комплекси опровергава това предположение. Ситуацията може да се обясни единствено с това, че амфорите произхождат от различни, но едновременно съществуващи производствени центрове. Заради това, подобно на амфорите Гюнсенин І, съдовете Гюнсенин ІІ също трябва да бъдат разглеждани като клас, а не като тип.

Сред разглежданите материали са документирані фрагменти и от два все още неидентифицирани типа. Към първия тип се отнасят парчета от тяло и дъно от един съд (обр. 6: 1), изработен на грънчарско колело от изпечена до кафяво глина с примесено в нея голямо количество слюда и ситен пясък. Няма покритие от ангоба. Тялото на този тип амфори е покрито с широки хоризонтални релефни ребра. Към втория тип принадлежат четири фрагмента от един и същ съд (обр. 6: 2). Изработени са на бързо колело. Глината е изключително груба, примесена е с голямо количество едър пясък. Препечена е и е добила керемиденочервен цвят. Тънките стени и малките размери на фрагментите дават основание да се заключи, че става въпрос за амфора с малки размери с крушовидно тяло и заоблено дъно. Шията е къса, устийният ръб – леко завит навътре и скосен, дръжките започват от устието и най-вероятно се изравняват с нивото му, без да го надвишават.

Сред фрагментите от амфори са открити и 5 „запушалки“. Имат неправилна кръгла форма. Три от тях са вторично изрязани от глинени замазки (обр. 7: 1, 2, 4), а останалите са изрязани от стени на амфори Гюнсенин ІІ (обр. 7: 3, 5).

Върху горната повърхност на дръжката на амфора Гюнсенин I е документиран негативен печат (обр. 8). Поставен е преди изпичането на съда с помощта на метална матрица. Представлява четири малки, ромбовидно разположени кръгчета с точка в средата. Сред известните до момента в световен мащаб амфорни печати и матрици за полагането им няма точен паралел на този от Плиска, което затруднява тълкуването и датирането му. Детайлен анализ на разположението на печатите върху амфори Гюнсенин I показва, че тези, разположени върху горната повърхност на дръжките, обикновено принадлежат на съдове с висока шия, при които дръжките не се издигат и не надминават нивото на устието. Следователно печатът може да бъде датиран най-общо във втората половина и края на X – първата половина на XI в.

Изхождайки от резултатите на последните изследвания, засягащи високото ниво на стандартизация и унификация при производството на амфорите в средновековна Византия, предполагаме, че амфорните печати могат да се тълкуват като знак на ателието производител, принадлежащо към определено поземлено имение. С този знак се гарантира, че произведената партида керамични контейнери отговаря на определените изисквания за качество и вместимост, след като съдовете са били подложени на проверка от страна на контролен орган. Едновременно с това, показвайки производителя, т.е. произхода на амфорите, са давали информация за произхода и качествата на превозваните в тях стоки.

От разкопките за строежа на археологическата база в Плиска са намерени една горна половина от амфора Гюнсенин II (обр. 3: 2) с дръжки, приплескващи устието и един фрагмент от шия на амфора Гюнсенин II (обр. 9), върху които са нанесени дипинти с червена боя. В първия случай знакът наподобява гръцката буква „Т“, докато във втория случай най-вероятно става дума за лигатура, съдържаща гръцката буква „Н“. За съжаление дешифрирането им беше невъзможно и така не можа да се определи дали са свързани със съдържанието на амфората, произхода и качеството на съдържанието, вместимостта на амфората, името на производителя, собственика, търговеца или клиента и т.н.

Върху част от дръжките и стените на амфорните фрагменти има графити (обр. 1: 3, 4, 8, обр. 10: 1 – 25). Повечето графити са прави – успоредни или пресичащи се линии, без ясно различима форма и смисъл. Причината трябва да бъде потърсена в размера и степента на запазеност на фрагментите с графити. Някои от графитите представляват комбинация от букви (кирилски или гръцки) (обр. 1: 8, обр. 10: 1, 2). Те трябва да се тълкуват като съкращение на името на собственика/търговеца или получателя на стоката. Вниманието заслужава да се обърне на два графита, представляващи стилизирани варианти на емблемата на Рюриковичите – единият е врязан върху горната повърхност на едната дръжка на амфора Гюнсенин I (обр. 1: 3), другият е врязан в основата на дръжка от амфора Гюнсенин II (обр. 10: 24). Те трябва да се свържат с присъствието на киевския княз Светослав и варягите в Плиска в края на 60-те и началото на 70-те години на X в.

Върху горната повърхност на дръжка от амфора Гюнсенин II има два отпечатъка от лапи на дребен хищник (вероятно котка), оставени върху влажната глина преди изпичането на съда (обр. 11). Подобни следи от животни се срещат често и показват, че готовите, но все още неизпечени съдове са били оставяни без специален надзор на открито и достъпно за животните място, докато съдържащата се в тях вода се изпари и станат готови за опалване в грънчарските пещи.

Появата на значителни количества амфори от класовете Гюнсенин I и II във втората половина на X в. – началото на XI в. показва, че в този период Плиска израства като голям потребителски център на хранителни продукти (основно вино и дървено масло). Разнообразието в профилите на амфорите подсказва, че са били поддържани контакти и са осъществявани доставки от различни, синхронно или диахронно съществуващи, производствени центрове в Източносредиземноморския басейн, които са прекратени рязко около средата на XI в. Фактът, че различни по произход, но произведени съгласно единни стандарти съдове са достигали до Плиска, означава, че транспортът им се е осъществявал в рамките на една много добре организирана и безпроблемно функционираща търговска мрежа.

Ключови думи: амфори Гюнсенин I и II, запушалки, амфорни печати, дипинти, графити, византийска икономика

GRAVES FROM THE PALACE CENTRE – EAST SITE: AN ATTEMPT AT ETHNIC CULTURAL IDENTIFICATION OF BURIALS *INTRA MUROS* IN PLISKA

*Valeri Grigorov**, *Victoria Russeva***, *Nadezhda Atanassova****

** National Archaeological Institute with Museum, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, 2 Saborna Str., 1000 Sofia, Bulgaria;
valerig@abv.bg*

*** Institute of Experimental Morphology, Pathology and Anthropology with Museum, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Acad.
G. Bonchev Str., bl. 25, 1113 Sofia, Bulgaria; victoria_russeva@yahoo.com*

**** Institute of Experimental Morphology, Pathology and Anthropology with Museum, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences,
Acad. G. Bonchev Str., bl. 25, 1113 Sofia, Bulgaria; naditimeva@gmail.com*

ABSTRACT

This study presents five graves discovered east of the Palace Centre in Pliska (fig. 1). They represent individual burials located in the inter-dwelling area (fig. 2). The graves' contexts were studied interdisciplinarily. The archaeological study provided data on the stratigraphy of the graves and detailed documentation of the burial pits and skeletal remains. The anthropological study provided information about the sex, age and height of the buried individuals, also their anatomical and anthropological features, disease (pathologies), traumas and medical manipulations that left traces on the bone remains.

Stratigraphically, the graves date to the last phase of habitation of the medieval city (between the 30s/40s of the 11th c. and the 60s of the 11th c.). The newly studied graves can be placed in the context of the other intramural graves in the Inner City of Pliska, which makes it possible to clarify and summarize a wide range of issues related to the stratigraphy and chronology of the intramural graves and their connection with the demographic and ethnic cultural changes in the medieval city.

Keywords: Pliska, graves, anthropological research, trepanation

Introduction

This study presents five graves discovered east of the Palace Centre in Pliska (fig. 1). They were studied during the 2011 – 2016 period, and represent single burials situated in the inter-dwelling area (fig. 2). Stratigraphically, the graves date to the last phase of inhabitation of the medieval city (between the 30s/40s of the 11th c. and the 60s of the 11th c.). An individual was placed in each of the graves, lying on their back, with the head to the west.

The graves' contexts were studied interdisciplinarily. The archaeological study provided data on the stratigraphy of the graves and detailed documentation of the burial pits and skeletal remains. The anthropological study provided information about the sex, age, and height of the buried indi-



Fig. 1. Orthophotograph of the Inner city of Pliska. Location of the "Palace Centre – East" site is marked
Обр. 1. Ортофотография на Вътрешния град на Плиска. Отбелязано е местоположението на обект „Дворцов център – изток“

viduals, anatomical and anthropological features, diseases, traumas and medical manipulations that left traces on the osteological remains.

Description of the graves

The graves from the Palace Centre – East site will be reviewed in the order of their discovery. First, information will be provided on the archaeological context, the stratigraphy and characteristics of the burial pit, the position of the body and the *in situ* measurements of the skeleton. Then, the results of the laboratory anthropological analyses of the bone remains will be presented.¹

¹Sex, age, height of the buried individuals, anthropological features, diseases and medical manipulations that left traces on the bone remains were examined. The anthropological study was carried out using a macroscopic method in

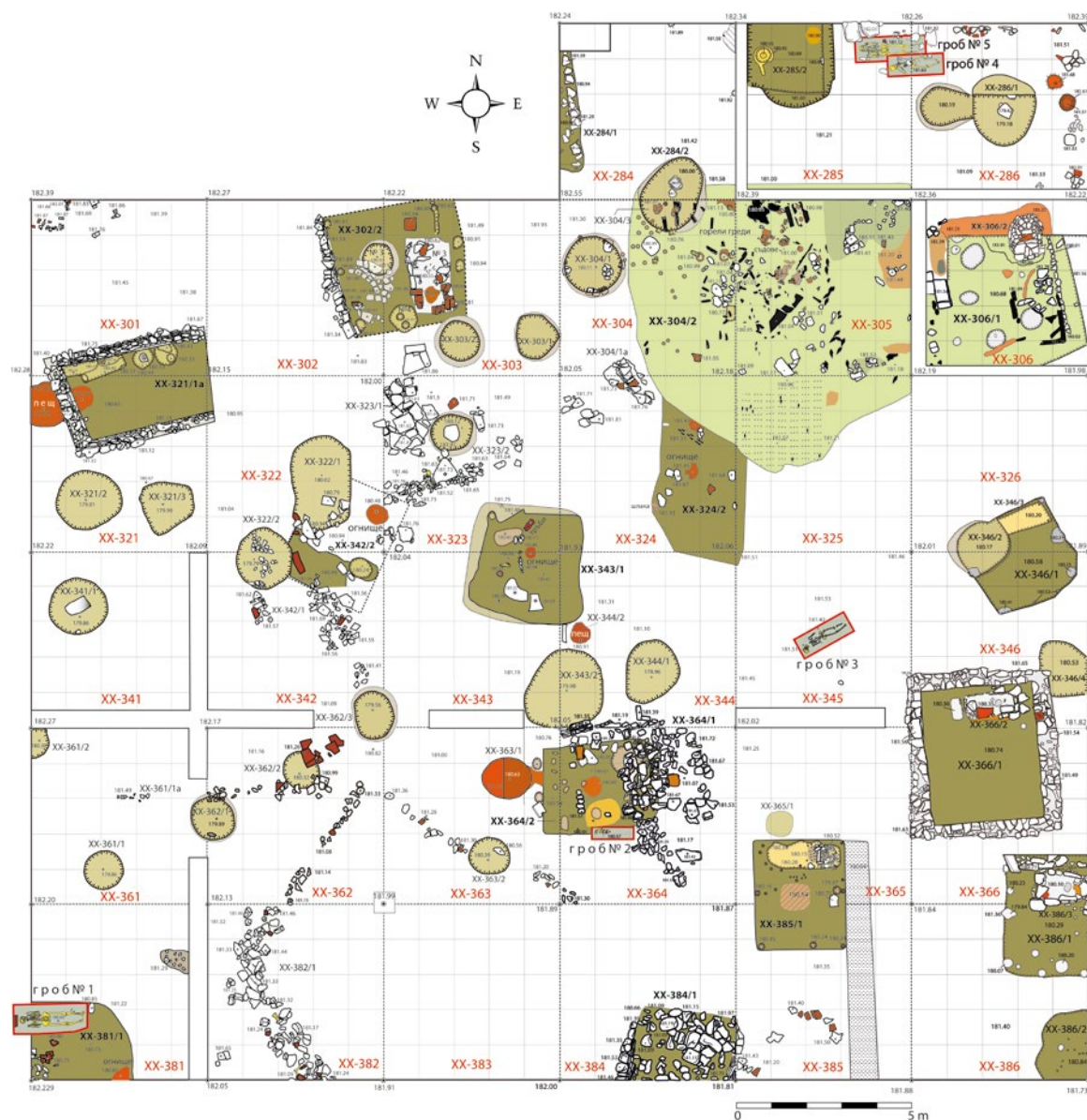


Fig. 2. Plan of the studied area of the "Palace Centre – East" site during 2011 – 2016 in Pliska

Обр. 2. План на проучената през 2011 – 2016 г. площ на обект „Дворцов център – изток“ в Плиска

laboratory conditions. Measurements were carried out via standard methods (Martin, Saller 1959). Estimation of the sex and age at the time of death was overall, based on available fragments. In adolescent individuals, priority was given to the development of the dentition, assessed by the methods of Zubov (1968), compared with the table of Ubelaker (1989). The sizes of the long bones of the limbs were used as an additional feature, compared with the table of Maresb (1970) and Black, Scheuer (1996).

Postcranial skeleton bone development was evaluated by the methods of Schwartz (1995), Alexeev (1966) and Bass (1971). Age of the grown individuals was estimated using the degree of obliteration of the cranial sutures, evaluated by the Olivier-Simpson scales (Алексеев-Дебев 1964, 37), the relief of the pubic symphysis surface, evaluated by the Todd scale (Schwartz 1995) and the relief on the auricular surface of the iliac bone, evaluated by the Lovejoy *et al.* table. (1985).

Sex was determined by evaluating the features of the cranial and postcranial skeleton of the grown individuals using the methods described in Acsádi, Nemeskéri (1970), and the traits of sexual dimorphism of the cranial bones summarized by Buikstra и Ubelaker (Walrath *et al.* 2004). Height was reconstructed based on the Pearson-Lee and Trotter-Glaeser (Алексеев 1966, 226, 232) formulas for grown individuals.

Grave No. 1 was discovered in grid square XX-381 (fig. 2). The burial level of the grave was documented in the western profile of the square. The following were recorded there: The embankment remaining from the excavations of the Palace of Khan Krum; the authentic level of contemporary terrain (elevation 181.90 m) and the burial level of the grave pit (elevation 181.60 m) (fig. 3). The grave was dug into the loose embankment of an earlier dwelling (XX-381/1), used until the end of the 10th c. Due to the mixed nature of the embankment, the outlines of the burial pit were not well defined except from the north, where they coincided with the northern boundary of the dwelling. The grave had a rectangular shape, with approximate dimensions being 220 x 80 cm, oriented along the west-east axis (azimuth 267°). The bottom of the pit was at an elevation of 180.60 m, i.e., the original depth of the grave was 1 m. The grave was marked with stones placed high in the fill of the pit in no particular order.

One individual was laid in the grave, placed in a stretched position on his back, with his head to the west (fig. 4). The skull was turned to the left, and it is likely that the head was placed in this position during the burial, and not as a consequence of the subsidence of the embankment. The



Fig. 3. Stratigraphy of the grave No. 1

Обр. 3. Стратиграфия на гроб № 1



Fig. 4. Grave No. 1. Stages of the archaeological investigation
Обр. 4. Гроб № 1. Етапи на археологическото проучване

upper limbs were strongly flexed at the elbows, with the phalanges exposed at the humerus. This unusual position of the hands required special binding and securing. The lower limbs were stretched parallel to each other. The overall measured length of the skeleton was 171 cm, the width of the pelvic girdle was 37 cm, and the width of the shoulders was 38 cm. A brick was placed on the bottom of the grave, behind the head. It stood almost vertically and marked the western wall of the grave. There was also “under-gradation” at the feet, where two stones were placed on top of each other, marking the end of the burial pit from the east. After lifting the skeletal remains, a defect from a trepanation treatment of the skull roof was found (fig. 6, arrow). There is no inventory in the grave.

The anthropological analysis of the skeletal remains established a 45 – 50-year-old man, buried in grave No. 1. The cranial and postcranial skeletal remains are incompletely represented (tables 1.1 – 1.3), the dentition is relatively completely preserved (fig. 5: 4):

Dentition:

X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
X	X	X	5	4	3	2	-	-	X	3	4	5	6	X	X		

1 – a tooth from the permanent dentition:

- – lost tooth *post mortem*;

X – lost tooth *ante mortem*.

The sex of the individual was determined by the features of pelvic bones, sacrum and the skull and measurements of the long bones of limbs (tables 2 and 3). Age was estimated by the cranial sutures obliteration and the state of abrasion of the chewing surface of the teeth (table 2). Height is in the category “tall”, estimated by the two used formulas of *Pearson-Lee* (170.91 cm) and *Trotter-Glaeser* (175.06 – 177.78 cm) (table 3).

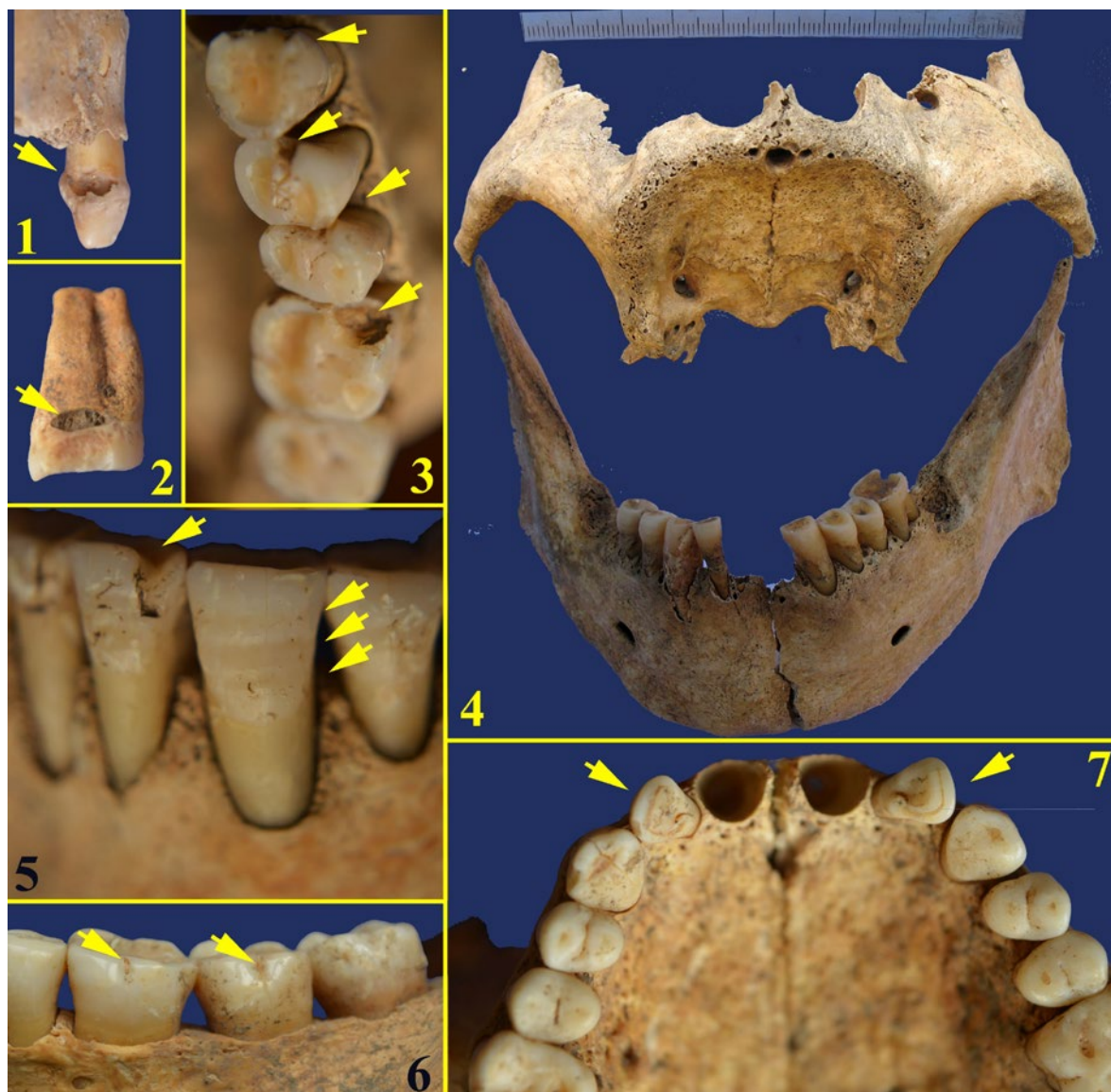


Fig. 5. Pathological changes on the dentition. 1. Grave No. 2, child, Infans I, 2 – 3 years, arrow – caries on the neck of the upper right central incisor; 2, 3. Grave No. 4, female, 18 – 20 up to 25 years. 2. Caries on the neck of the upper left first molar – arrow; 3. Carious changes on the upper left canine, premolars and first molar – arrows; defects from mechanical destruction on the canine – arrow; 4. Grave No. 1, male, 45 – 50 years, antemortal tooth loss of the upper, and advanced tooth loss on the lower jaw; 5. Grave No. 4, female, 18 – 20 up to 25 years, lower left canine, defects from linear enamel hypoplasia, arrows, defect from mechanical destruction and development of caries on the lateral left incisor – arrow; 6. Grave No. 5, male, 25 – 30 years, lower left molars – development of the buccal pit, arrow. 7. Grave No. 5, male, 25 – 30 years, upper lateral incisors, mesio-buccal rotation – arrows

Обр. 5. Патологични изменения на зъбно-челюстния апарат. 1. Гроб № 2, дете, Infans I, 2 – 3 г., стрелка – кариес на шийката на горен десен централен инцизив; 2 – 3. Гроб № 4, жена, 18 – 20 до 25 г.; 2. Кариес на шийката на горен ляв първи премолар – стрелка; 3. Кариозни изменения на горни леви кучешки зъб, премолари и първи молар – стрелки; механични дефекти на кучешкия зъб – стрелка; 4. Гроб № 1, мъж, 45 – 50 г. интравитално обеззъбяване на горната и напреднало на долната челюсти; 5. Гроб № 4, жена, 18 – 20 до 25 г., долен ляв канин, дефекти от линейна хипоплазия на емайла, стрелки, механичен дефект и развитие на кариозен процес на латерален ляв инцизив – стрелка; 6. Гроб № 5, мъж, 25 – 30 г., долни леви молари, развитие на букални ямички – стрелки; 7. Гроб № 5, мъж, 25 – 30 г., горни латерални инцизиви, уининг – стрелки



Fig. 6. Grave No. 1, male, 45 – 50 years at death. Skull, preservation: calvaria, vertical and occipital view; arrow – defect on the frontal and partially right parietal bones, located on the coronal suture

Обр. 6. Гроб № 1, мъж, 4 – 50 г. Череп, съхранена calvaria, вертикален и окципитален изглед; стрелка – дефект на челната и отчасти дясна теменна кост, разположен на венечния шев

Data on the anthropological type are scarce. The skull shows a rhomboidal vertical and vaulted occipital norm (fig. 6), the occipital bone has a prominent relief, strongly convex; the mastoid processes are moderately massive, with a strong relief, downward and inward. The frontal bone is moderately inclined, with small height, but large width, a moderately pronounced glabella (grade II – III according to *Broca*), the superciliary arches are grade 1 according to *Broca*; the superior orbital margin is rounded; the temporal lines and forehead ridges are moderately pronounced. The parietal elevations are distinct; the occipital relief and *protuberantia occipitalis externa* show strong development; the lower margin of piriform aperture is formed as *anthropina*; the canine fossa is moderately deep with weak relief. The mandible has the characteristic male shape in basal view, the jaw is large, very massive and with a prominent relief; the chin has a triangular shape, without a hollow, slightly convex. The skull is of tall height (hypsicrane, acrocrane), with an average value of the main cranial index (mesocrane) and with small values of the transverse fronto-parietal and transverse parieto-occipital indices.

Some pathological alterations can be established: on the dentition, carious lesions of the crown were registered on the second lower right premolar and the first lower left molar; deep periradicular cyst in the area of the alveolus of the second lower left molar; periodontal alterations of the mandible; the upper jaw bone is completely ante mortem toothless, and the lower jaw – partially; the alveolar process of the upper jaw is resorbed (fig. 5: 4); on the preserved teeth, calculus accumulation and advanced dental abrasion were found on the single teeth, preserved during life.

Anatomical peculiarities can be observed on the skull – additional intersutural bones in the region of the lambdoid suture (fig. 6). A defect is also found – a pit with an oval shape and dimensions – 21 mm long, 16 mm wide and 5 mm deep, located on the right half of the frontal bone near the *bregma* point (the intersection of the coronal and sagittal sutures), affecting the coronal suture and a very small part of the right parietal bone (fig. 6, arrow).

Alterations from osteochondrosis, spondyloarthrosis and spondylosis were found on the vertebrae from all areas of the spine, with the lumbar sector being the most affected with a proliferative bone reaction (fig. 7). The bones of the limbs showed initial arthritic alterations on the articular surfaces of the upper limbs, as well as in the area of the hip joint. At the distal end of the left fibula, periosteal formation of hyperostoses is established.

Grave No. 2 was discovered in square XX-364, immediately next to the remains of a dwelling (structure XX-364/1) (fig. 8). The burial pit was dug high into the cultural layer of the latest stratigraphic horizon, but due to the mixed nature of the embankment, its exact outlines have not been established. The bottom of the grave was at an elevation of 180.97 m, and its original depth was about 70 cm. One individual was laid in the grave, the skeleton being partially preserved. The body was oriented with the head to the west (azimuth 270°). The skull was turned to the left. There was no inventory in the grave.

The anthropological analysis of the skeletal remains established a child was buried in grave No. 2, about 2 – 3 years of age at the time of death. The cranial and postcranial skeletal remains are fragmented and incomplete (tables 1.1 – 1.3). The explanation for the missing fragments is natural destruction.

Dentition:

V	IV	-	II	I	-	-	-	IV	V
V	IV	-	-	-	-	-	-	IV	V

I – a tooth from the deciduous dentition:

- – lost tooth *post mortem*.



Fig. 7. Grave No. 1, male, 45 – 50 years. Bone reaction and spondyloarthrosal changes of the vertebral bodies. 1. Thoracic vertebra, herniation of the upper body margin; 2. Fourth and fifth lumbar vertebrae, distal view, proliferative bone reaction of the shafts, osteochondrosis and bone reaction of articulation surface of the body of the fifth lumbar vertebra

Обр. 7. Гроб № 1, мъж, 45 – 50 г. Костна реакция и спондилоартрозни изменения на прешлените на гръбначния стълб. 1. Торакален прешлен, херниация на горен ръб на тялото; 2. Четвърти и пети лумбални прешлени, дистален изглед, пролиферативна костна реакция на стените на тялото, остеохондроза и костна реакция на ставната повърхност на тялото на пети лумбален прешлен

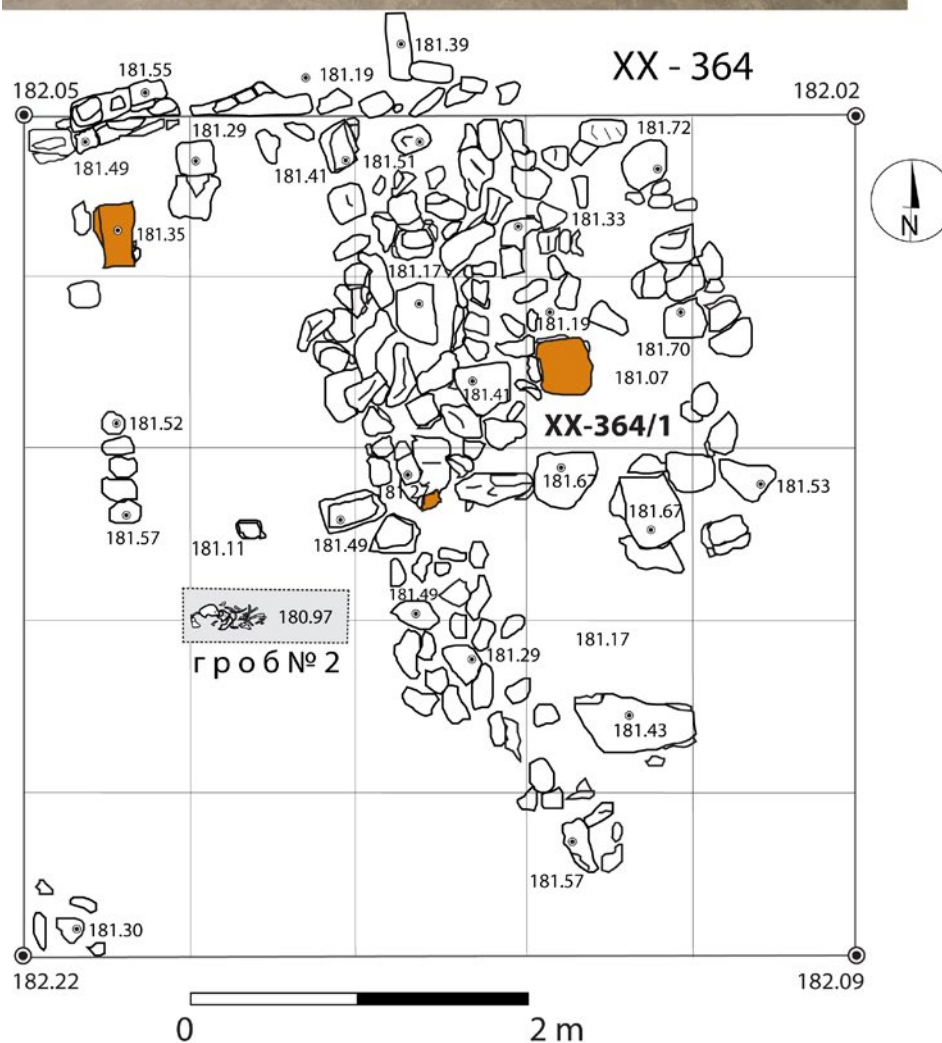


Fig. 8. Location of grave No. 2
Обр. 8. Местоположение на гроб № 2

The age of the individual was estimated by the development of the dentition and the postcranial skeleton and the length dimensions of the diaphyses of the long bones of the limbs (tables 2 and 4).

The following pathological alterations can be established: upper right central incisor is affected by cervical caries located towards the lateral incisor (fig. 5: 1); the orbital roof is affected by an advanced, trabecular form of *cribra orbitalia* (fig. 9: 2). On the occipital scale, a deformation is found, parallel to the *linea nuchae superior* – a pronounced depression (fig. 9: 3), while the remaining bones of the skull do not show traces of artificial deformation and no premature synostosis of the cranial sutures is observed. Areas of periosteal reaction with accumulation of porous bone formations following a proliferative bone reaction were found on the diaphyses of the tibia, distally-laterally, and on the diaphysis of the ulna, proximally (fig. 10: 1).

Grave No. 3 was discovered in grid square XX-345 (fig. 2). It was shallowly dug into a mixed cultural layer of the latest stratigraphic horizon. The outlines of the burial pit were not well defined. The bottom of the grave was at an elevation of 181.42 m, and its original depth was about 30 – 40 cm. The burial pit was oriented to the west-southwest (azimuth 242°).

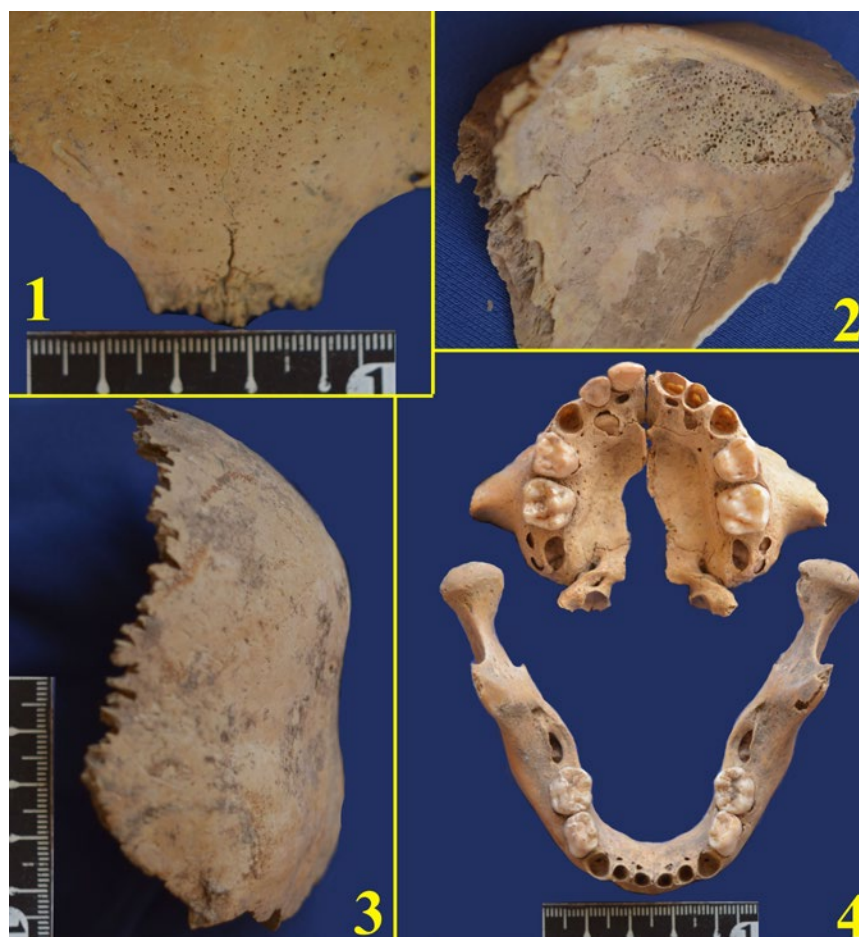


Fig. 9. Grave No. 2, child, *Infans I*, 2 – 3 years at death. 1. Frontal bone, fragment, detail, porous changes; 2. *Cribralia orbitalia*: advanced, trabecular form; 3. Fragment of the occipital bone – the occipital squamma, lateral view, deformation; 4. Maxilla and mandible

Обр. 9. Гроб № 2, дете, *Infans I*, 2 – 3 г. 1. Фрагмент от челната кост, детайл, порьозни изменения; 2. *Cribralia orbitalia*: напреднала, трабекуларна форма; 3. Фрагмент от тилната кост, тилна люспа, латерален изглед, деформация; 4. Горно и долно-челюстни кости



Fig. 10. Porotic hyperostosis of diaphyses of the long bones of limbs. 1. Grave No. 2, child, Infans I, 2 – 3 years at death, diaphyses of the right and left tibiae, diaphysis of the left ulna; 1.a. Left tibia, detail; 1.b. Left ulna, detail; 2. Grave No. 4, female, 18 – 20 up to 25 years, right and left tibiae; 2.a – b. Distal medial shafts, detail

Обр. 10. Поротична хиперостоза на диафизите на дългите кости на крайниците. 1. Гроб № 2, дете, Infans I, 2 – 3 г. Диафизи на дясна и лява голямомициални кости, диафиза на лява лакътна кост; 1а. Лява голямомициална кост, детайл; 1б. Лява лакътна кост, детайл; 2. Гроб № 4, жена, 18 – 20 до 25 г., дясна и лява голямомициални кости; 2а – б. Дистална медиална повърхност на стената, детайл

One individual was laid in the grave, placed in a stretched position on his back, with his head to the west (fig. 11). The cervical vertebrae were slightly curved to the right, the skull was slightly raised relative to the body, which is an indication that a pad was formed under the head in advance. The right arm was bent at the elbow and placed on the abdominal area. The position of the left arm was probably the same, but the forearm bones were not preserved. The lower limbs were stretched parallel to each other. The total measured length of the skeleton was 132 cm.

The anthropological analysis of the skeletal remains established a child, buried in grave No. 3, about 10 – 12 years of age at the time of death. The cranial (fig. 12) and postcranial skeletal remains are relatively well represented (tables 1.1 – 1.3).

Dentition:

-	6	-	4	-	2	1		1	2	3	-	-	6	-
7	6	5	4	3	2	1		1	2	3	4	5	6	7

1 – a tooth from the permanent dentition;

3 – tooth in eruption;

- – lost tooth *post mortem*.

The age of the individual was estimated by the development of the dentition and the postcranial skeleton, the length dimensions of the diaphyses of the long bones of the limbs show a slightly lower age, of about 8 – 9 years (tables 2 and 4).

On the skull, the presence of an *os incaie* in the lambdoid suture at the *lambda* point (an anatomical feature) was found, and the shape was defined as *os occipitale tripartite* (fig. 12). Initial development of an active form of *cribra orbitalia* was found on the orbital roofs. The sagittal cranial suture shows premature obliteration.

Development of the supratrochlear tubercle is registered on the left humerus (fig. 13: 1), combined with septal foramen of *fossa olecrani* of both humeri.

Pathological changes of the dentition were established: linear enamel hypoplasia, seen on lower canines, with lines corresponding to 2nd and 3rd years of the individual's development.

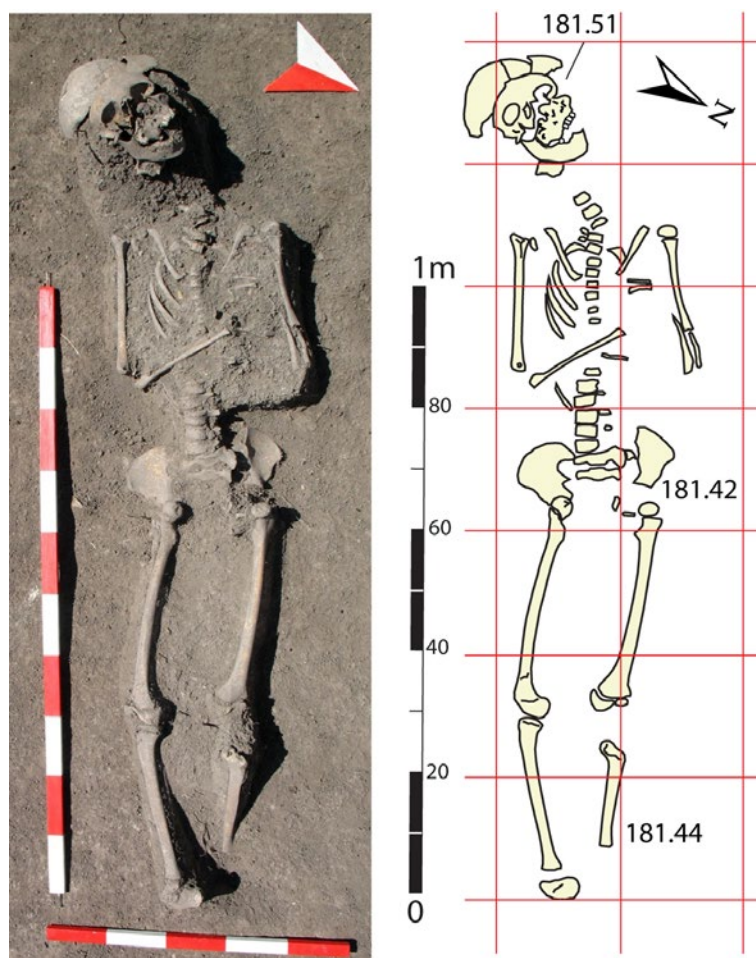


Fig. 11. Grave No. 3

Обр. 11. Гроб № 3



Fig. 12. Grave No. 3, child, *Infans II*, 10 – 12 years at death. Skull fragments, reconstructed calva. 1. Fragments of frontal bone and maxilla, frontal view; fragment of mandible, proximal view; 2. Occipital view: Inca bones in the lambdoid suture, located at point lambda

Обр. 12. Гроб № 3, дете, *Infans II*, 10 – 12 г. Фрагменти от череп, реконструирана calva. 1. Фрагменти от челна и горночелюстна кост, фронтален изглед, фрагмент от долночелюстна кост, проксимален изглед; 2. Окципитален изглед, инкови кости в ламбдовиден шев при точка lambda



Fig. 13. 1. Grave No. 3, child, *Infans II*, 10 – 12 years at death. Left humeral bone, development of supratrochlear tubercle, arrow, septal foramen of the fossa olecrani; 2. Grave No. 5, male, 25 – 30 years. Right femur. Myositis ossificans, located distally on the posterior shaft, lateral lip of the linea aspera, arrow

Обр. 13. 1. Гроб № 3, дете, *Infans II*, 10 – 12 г. Лява раменна кост, развитие на супратрохлеарен туберкул, стрелка, септален форамен на fossa olecrani; 2. Гроб № 5, мъж, 25 – 30 г. Дясна бедрена кост. Осифициращ миозит, дистално на постериорната стена на диафизата, на латералната страна на linea aspera, стрелка

Grave No. 4 was situated on the border between grid squares XX-285 and XX-286 (fig. 2). The burial facility was registered at an elevation of 182.00 m, and the bottom was at an elevation of 181.63 m. The original depth of the burial pit was only 37 cm. On the surface, on the west side, the grave was marked with a stone. The burial pit was oriented to the west-east (azimuth 255°).

One individual was laid in the grave, placed in a stretched position on his back, with his head to the west (fig. 14). The skull was slightly raised, resting on the sloping western wall of the burial pit. The lower and upper jaws, together with the teeth, are well preserved. The bones from the spine were preserved *in situ*. The upper right limb was strongly bent at the elbow joint, with the phalanges exposed to the clavicle. The upper left limb was bent at the elbow joint at an almost right angle and was laid on the abdominal region. The lower limbs were stretched parallel to each other. The total measured length of the skeleton, in the slightly bent posture of the body, was 148 cm. There was no inventory in the grave.

When the burial pit was filled, a medium-sized slab stone was placed on the abdominal area. Immediately next to the skull, to the west, several human bones (phalanges) were found, which seem to have been scattered by an animal. Fragments of scattered ribs were also found 30 cm to the left of the pelvis.

The anthropological analysis of the skeletal remains established a woman, buried in grave No. 4, about 18 – 20 to 25 years of age at the time of death. The cranial and postcranial skeletal remains are relatively well represented (tables 1.1 – 1.3).

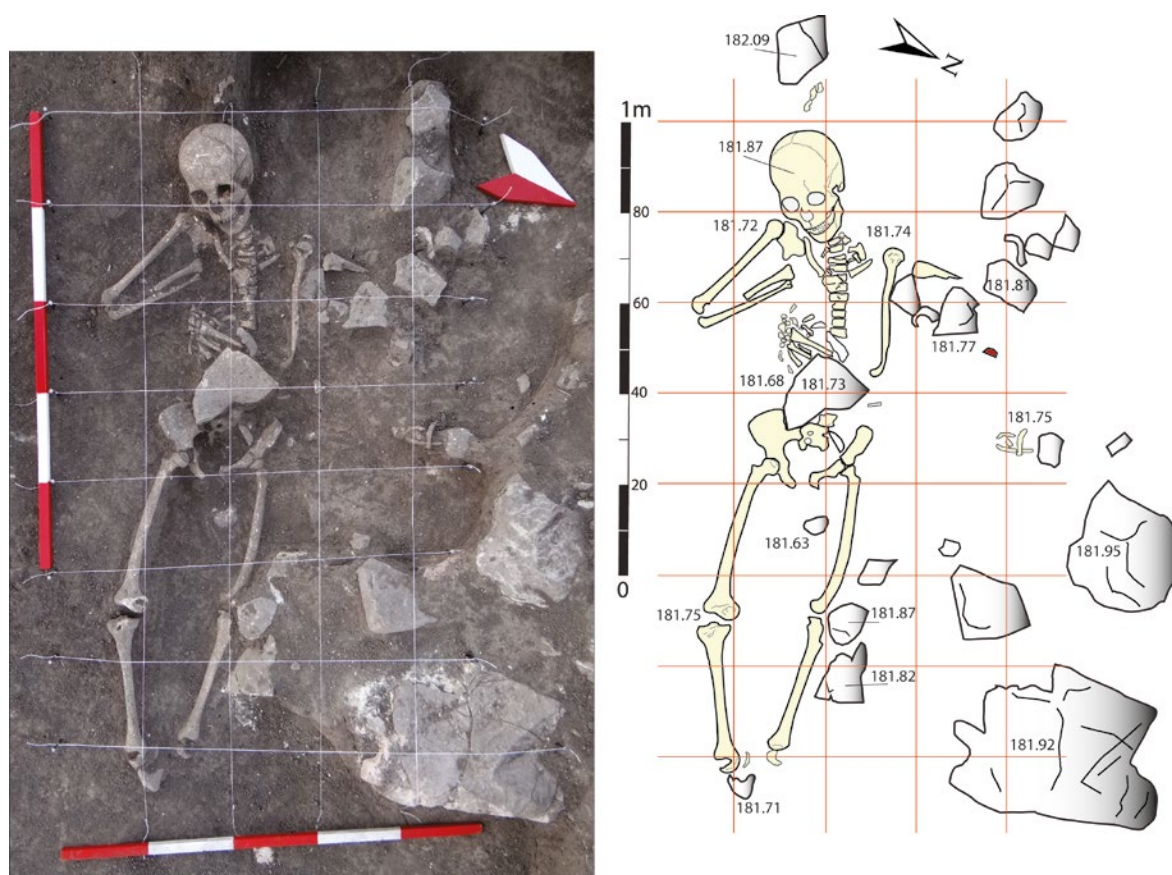


Fig. 14. Grave No. 4

Обр. 14. Гроб № 4

Dentition:

8	7	6	5	4	3	2	-	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

1 – a tooth from the permanent dentition:

- – lost tooth *post mortem*.

The sex of the individual was determined by the features of a reconstructed pelvic girdle and the skull, the size of the long bones of the limbs confirm the result (tables 2 and 3). Age was estimated by the degree of obliteration of the cranial sutures and the synostosis of the epiphyses to the diaphyses. Height is in the category “short” according to the two used formulas of *Pearson-Lee* (152.46 cm) and *Trotter-Glaeser* (157.14 cm) (table 3).

The skull (fig. 15) allowed some basic dimensions to be taken following reconstruction (table 5). It is described as ultrabrachykrane, i.e., width strongly predominates; the both height-width indices, estimated with the *basion-bregma* and with the *porion-bregma* height, place the skull in the tapeinocranium rubric; the length-height indices, again with the two heights, place the skull in the



Fig. 15. Grave No. 4, female, 18 – 20 up to 25 years. Skull, preserved cranium, frontal, left lateral, vertical and occipital view; arrow – opening from lost *post mortem* inca bone in the lambdoid suture at the lambda point

Обр. 15. Гроб № 4, жена, 18 – 20 до 25 г. Череп, почти пълно съхранен скраниум, фациален, ляв латерален, вертикален и окципитален изглед; стрелка – отвор от изгубена *post mortem* инкова кост в ламбдовиден шев при точка lambda

hypsicranium rubric, i.e., with predominant height measurement. The facial part of the skull allows some measurements. The orbits have a rectangular form, described as relatively high – hypsiconh, the horizontal profile, described by the nasomalar and zygomaxillary angles as relatively flat. The vertical profile, without the possibility of measurements, visually determined, describes the skull as slightly prognathic. In this complex the nose can be described as a relatively narrow with nasal index in the lower border of the mesorrhin rubrication, the lower edge of the piriform aperture is shaped as *anthropina*; the mandible is relatively wide and long, falling under the rubric dolichostenomandibular; the frontal, parietal, temporal, and occipital bones show weak relief, characteristic of the female sex.

In general, the skull presents features of both Mongoloid and Caucasian types, with descriptive traits more characteristic for the Caucasian but most of measurements and indexes, like pronounced brachyrania, big horizontal angles and orbital proportion more characteristic for Mongoloid type. Presence of *os incaie* is restored in the lambdoid suture at point *lambda*, and the bone is not currently detected in the material.

The postcranial skeleton shows defects on the inner surface of the pubic bone, which can be interpreted as traces of a parturition process.

Pathological changes in the bones of the cranial and postcranial skeletal remains can be established. On the dentition, development of carious changes was registered on the left first molars and upper left first premolar, apparently provoked by mechanical defects, as also observed on the upper right premolars and first molar; the development of surface occlusive caries is already established on the upper right second molar and cervical caries, medially, on the upper left third molar (fig. 5: 2, 3, 5); linear enamel hypoplasia is seen on lower canines, with lines corresponding to 2nd – 2 ½ and 3rd years of the individual's development (fig. 5: 5); alveolar processes show advanced periodontal changes; the teeth have advanced dental abrasion.

A defect can be found on the frontal bone, representing a pit with an elliptical shape and dimensions – 16 x 9.5 mm, not quite regular contour, located in the left part of the bone, towards the left craniometric point *frontotemporale* (fig. 19: 1). A similar one is also found on the left parietal bone, representing a pit with an elliptical shape, dimensions – 15 x 10.3 mm, not quite regular contour, located almost in the middle of the bone (fig. 19: 2).

The left and right tibiae present a periosteal accumulation of porous bone substance, located medial-distal to the diaphysis, following a proliferative bone reaction (fig. 10: 2).

Grave No. 5 was situated immediately next to grave No. 4, on its north side (fig. 2). The grave was studied in two stages, in two different archaeological seasons. In the first stage the excavators uncovered the lower part of the skeleton (fig. 16). This made it possible to make a cross-section of the burial pit, in which the outline of its longitudinal walls was documented. The grave was registered at a level of 181.97 m and its bottom was at an elevation of 181.12 m, i.e., the original depth of the pit was about 85 cm. The burial pit was oriented to the west-east (azimuth 266°). The burial facility was a simple burial pit with a width of 80 cm and a length of about 190 cm. North of the grave two massive stones were preserved from a pavement which marked the daily walking level of the terrain in the middle of the 11th c. (fig. 17). There is no information as to whether the pavement was cut when the grave was excavated or if it was installed afterwards.

One individual was laid in the grave, placed in a stretched position on his back, with his head to the west. The head was slightly turned to the left, the mouth was open and the teeth are perfectly preserved. The upper limbs were bent at the elbows and crossed on the chest, with the right hand placed on top of the left. The lower limbs were stretched parallel to each other. Two stones were



Fig. 16. Grave No. 5. Stages of archaeological investigation
Обр. 16. Гроб № 5. Етапи на археологическото проучване



Fig. 17. Grave No. 5, South view
Обр. 17. Гроб № 5, поглед от юг

placed by the right shoulder, on the bottom of the pit, marking the south-western corner of the grave. The total preserved length of the skeleton was 172 cm, the width at the pelvic girdle was 31 cm, and the width at the shoulders was 41 cm. There was no grave inventory.

The two graves, No. 4 and No. 5, were in stratigraphic superposition. The pit of grave No. 4 partially overlapped the pit of grave No. 5 (fig. 18). The partial overlap of the two graves and the close placement of the two individuals is hardly accidental. The excessively shallow excavation of grave No. 4 also points to a deliberate act, with the aim of not affecting the individual buried earlier in grave No. 5. Stratigraphic information and field observations for the two graves confirm that the time difference between the two burials was small. Archaeoastronomical calculations of the orientation of the two skeletons suggest that the earlier buried male individual probably died in April or early September, and the later buried female died in late May or mid-July. The deliberate burial of the two individuals next to each other does not exclude the possibility that they were close relatives or that they were family-related in their lifetime. A similar case of partial overlapping of two graves

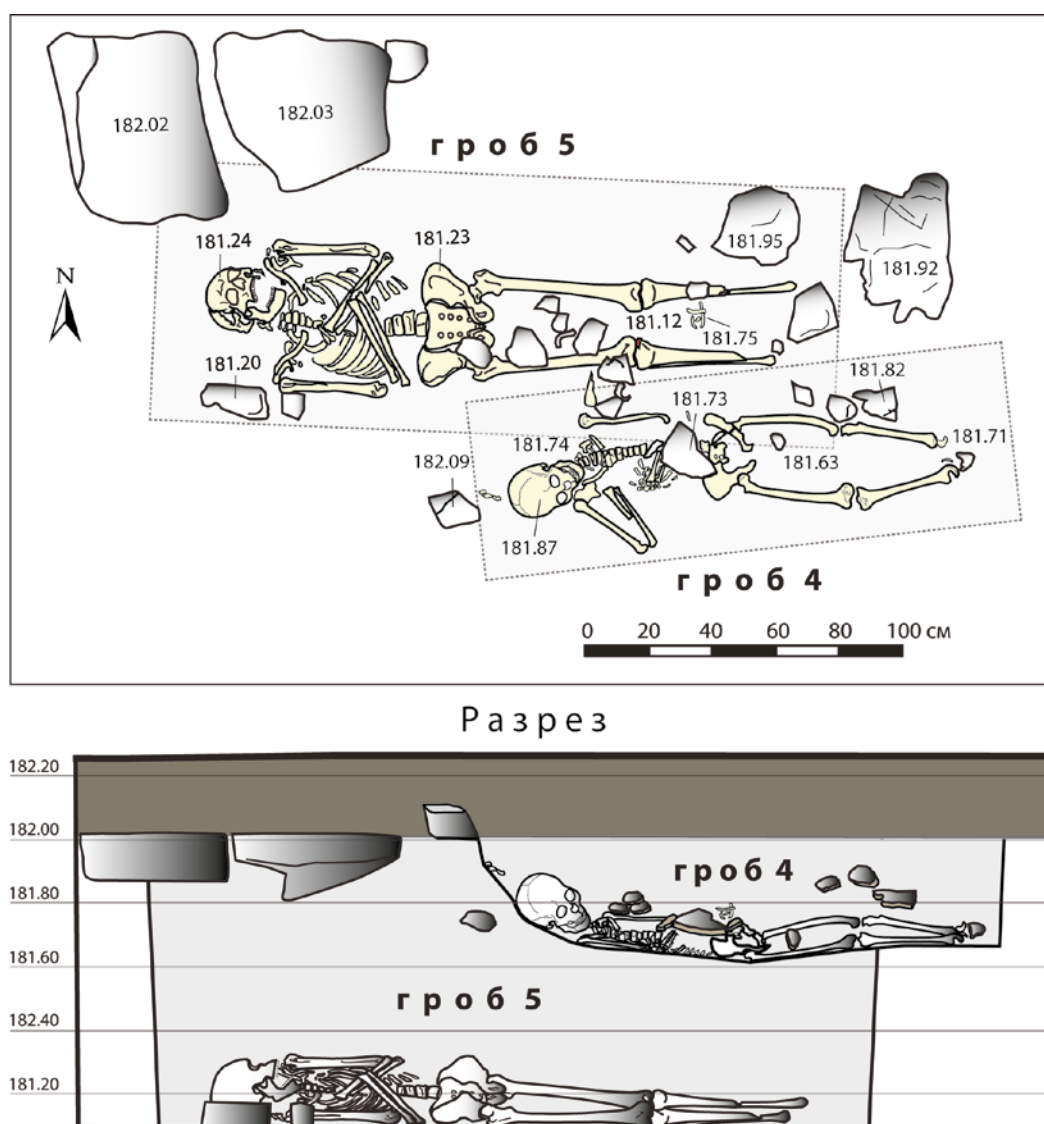


Fig. 18. Graves Nos. 4 and 5 – plan and section

Обр. 18. Гробове № 4 и 5 – план и разрез

(20 and 21) was documented next to the southern sector of the western fortress wall of Pliska, where the later buried individual was laid about 15 cm higher (Дончева-Петкова 1984, 181). L. Doncheva-Petkova interprets them as a mother and child buried at different times.

The anthropological analysis of the skeletal remains established a 25 – 30-year-old man, buried in grave No. 5. The skull is highly fragmented; the postcranial skeleton is incompletely represented (tables 1.1 – 1.3).

Dentition:

8	7	6	5	4	3	2		-	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
8	7	6	5	4	3	2		-	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

1 – a tooth from the permanent dentition:

- – lost tooth *post mortem*.

The sex of the individual was determined by reconstructed pelvic girdle, features of the skull, and the size of the long bones of the limbs (tables 2 and 3). Age was estimated by the relief of the symphyseal surface of the pubic bone and the sternal epiphyses of the two clavicles, which had synostosed shortly before death occurred. The height of the individual is in the category “tall”, estimated by the two used formulas of *Pearson-Lee* (172.07 cm) and *Trotter-Glaeser* (177.78 cm) (table 3).

Restoration of the skull was impossible (fig. 20) for conducting measurements. However, some conclusions can be made: the forehead is medium wide, sloping and with strongly pronounced temple lines, rounded supraorbital ridge and browbone – score 1, glabella – score 2 – 3 (according to Broca); mastoid processes are large, with prominent relief and forward direction; the occipital

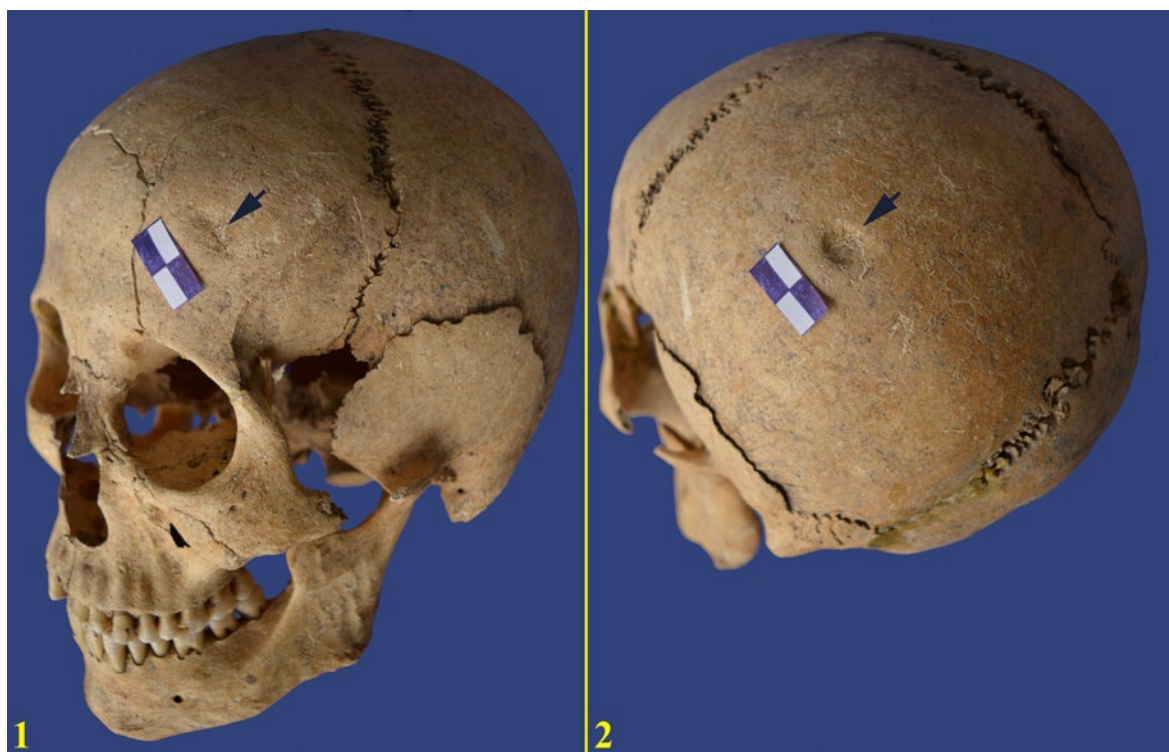


Fig. 19. Grave No. 4, female, 18 – 20 up to 25 years. Skull. 1. Arrow – defect on the frontal bone; 2. Arrow – defect on the temporal bone

Обр. 19. Гроб № 4, жена, 18 – 20 до 25 г. Череп; 1. Стрелка – дефект на челна кост; 2. Стрелка – дефект на темenna кост



Fig. 20. Grave No. 5, male, 25 – 30 years. Skull, fragments. Arrow pointing occipital – area with porous changes on outer table; arrow to the maxilla – mesio Buccal rotation of upper lateral incisors

Обр. 20. Гроб № 5, мъж, 25 – 30 г. Череп, фрагменти. Стрелка към тилна кост, площ с порьозни изменения на ектокраниалната повърхност; стрелка към горночелюстна кост – уининг на горни латерални инцизиви

relief is moderately pronounced; *tuberculum marginale ossis zygomatici* is moderately developed; the lower edge of the piriform aperture is shaped as *anthropina*; canine fossa moderately deep, with weak to moderate relief; the mandible is described as large and massive, with a prominent relief, with the characteristic male shape of the basal view; the chin is triangular in shape, on a broad base, moderately convex and with a hollow.

Some pathological alterations can be established. The dentition shows slight abrasion of the chewing surface of the teeth (*abrasio*) (grade 1 – 2), corresponding to the estimated age; a buccal fossa is developed on all lower molars (fig. 5: 6), the upper lateral incisors have pronounced bilateral mesiobuccal rotation (fig. 5: 7).

The skull shows pronounced porotic alterations on the ectocranial surface of the occipital squama (fig. 20). The right femur is affected by ossifying myositis, localized distally on the posterior wall of the diaphysis, on the lateral side of *linea aspera* (fig. 10: 2). On the left fibula, a periosteal formation of hyperostoses (atypical accumulation of bone substance) was found, identified on the proximal end of the bone.

Summary of the results of the anthropological analysis

The osteological remains of five human individuals were examined – two men aged 45 – 50 years (grave No. 1) and 25 – 30 (grave No. 5), a woman aged 18 – 20 to 25 years (grave No. 4) and two children, aged 2 – 3 years (grave No. 2) and 10 – 12 years old (grave No. 3). The small number of individuals does not allow demographic analysis, and the information on the anthropological types of the buried individuals is also relatively poor.

The men in graves No. 1 and No. 5 are tall, on average 175.06 cm and 176.75 cm, respectively, by the *Trotter-Glaeser* formula and 170.92 cm and 172.07 cm by the *Pearson-Lee* formula, respectively (table 3). The long bones of the limbs are massive, with moderate to prominent relief and great length, which is an indicator of good physical condition during life, and also of abundant physical activity.

The woman from grave No. 4 is short – 150.75 cm or 157.14 cm according to the two formulas used (table 3). The bones of the limbs are gracile, show a weak relief, indicating underdeveloped musculature.

The small series of three full-grown individuals presents fragmentary skulls, making racial identification difficult. The male skulls (fig. 6, 20) do not provide opportunities for measurements to be taken of the facial part, with the exception of the lower jaw bones. Craniometric data were partially taken from the skull of the man from grave No. 1, and the woman from grave No. 4 (fig. 15), and from the jaw area of the fragments from grave No. 5 (table 5).

The two skulls where measurement was possible (from graves No. 1 and 4) show sizes that placed them according to the cranial index in the rubric mesocrane, grave No. 1, and ultrabrachy-crane, grave No. 4, respectively (table 6). Both skulls are of relatively tall height and fall under the rubric of hypsicranes. According to the height-width index, the skull from grave No. 1 is again described as having a predominantly high size, i.e., an acrocrane, while that from grave No. 4 falls under the rubric tapeinocrane, which is explained by its very large width size, which also affects the cranial index. Transverse indices tracing the relations of least width of forehead, greatest width of skull, and greatest width of the occiput describes the two skulls as stenometopes.

The facial area was partially restorable only for the skull from grave No. 4. The woman has a relatively narrow nose, high orbits; the horizontal profiling described by the values of the nasomalar and zygomaxillary angles fall in the rubric of 'large'. Vertical profiling, without it being possible to measure it, describes the skull as slightly prognathic.

All three skulls of the fully-grown individuals from graves Nos. 1, 4 and 5 provide some possibility for measurements of the jaw area. The maxillary index of the skulls from graves Nos. 4 and 5 falls under the brachycran rubric with a predominant width size.

The mandible in the same individuals is described as relatively wide and long, falling under the rubric dolichosteno-mandibular. The formation and relief of the cranial bones show pronounced sexual dimorphism of the bones of the neurocranium (relief of the frontal, parietal, temporal and occipital bones) and the facial lobe (formation of the glabella and super ciliary arcs, the formation of the zygomatic bone), including the mandible (relief of the angle, formation of the basilar view).

The lower border of piriform aperture in all three skulls can be described as distinctly *anthropina*. Overall, the scarce data present an admixture between both Caucasian and Mongoloid features, the latter mostly expressed in the skull from grave No. 4. It is not clear how the latter result should be interpreted – as an individual peculiarity, influence of the Mongoloid race, or a characteristic of the population. On three of the skulls (from graves Nos. 1, 3 and 4), the presence of *os incae* in the lambdoid suture was established. In two of the cases (graves Nos. 3 and 4), they are located in point *lambda* (fig. 12, 15). In the male individual from grave No. 1, small *inca* bones are located bilaterally in the region of the lambdoid suture (fig. 6).

The data on the anthropological type of the population fit into what is known from earlier studies of graves in the Inner City of Pliska (Боев, Чолаков 1992, 302 – 311; Русева 2013, 215 – 228). In thirteen adult individuals examined from the necropolis next to the western fortress wall, the anthropological data show a mixed anthropological type between Caucasian and Mongoloid types.

The individuals studied from the “Palace Centre – East” site show a variety of pathological changes with a high prevalence of scars interpreted as traumatic lesions. On the skull of the skeleton from grave No. 1 (male, 45 – 50 years old), signs of trauma with a subsequent infectious process on the inner cranial plate (*lamina interna*), as well as post-traumatic trepanation, is visible. The trepanation is localized in the area of trauma, on the right half of the frontal bone, near the *bregma* point, affecting the coronal suture and a very small part of the right parietal bone (fig. 6, arrow). The trauma and the subsequent trepanation should have been survived, and most likely the manipulation was carried out as treatment. This find complements the picture of the high incidence of cranial trauma in the population, as well as the attempts to treat such conditions by cranial trepanation.

In the female individual from grave No. 4 (18 – 20 to 25 years old), defects can be found on the frontal and parietal bones, which are pits with an elliptical shape, located on the frontal (fig. 19: 1) and round – on the parietal bone (fig. 19: 2). Their origin can be defined as traumatic, with an injury experienced on the scalp, affecting the upper cortical layer of the cranial bones. The destruction of this layer may also have been caused by infection following complications in the healing of the scalp, and the bone was not affected by the trauma itself. The irregular contour of the frontal bone defect and its asymmetric position in the left half of the skull roof makes its interpretation as more possibly acquired after an accidental injury. The defect of the parietal bone is also located to the side of the central sagittal plane of the skull, but its regular round shape is more reminiscent of an incomplete artificial trepanation of the skull (fig. 15, arrow). This type of manipulation is characteristic of the period and is associated with the influence of steppe tribes who settled in the region of North-eastern Bulgaria (Боев 1964, 289 – 298; Боев 1965, 113 – 127; Йорданов, Димитрова 2005, 415 – 460; Йорданов и др. 2010, 43 – 60; Russeva 2012, 77 – 95).

The bone defects found on the inner side of the pubic bones of the woman from grave No. 4 are of special interest. Many authors interpret this feature as a trace of the birthing process (Bergfelder, Herrmann 1980, 611 – 613, Conzato et al. 2010, 237 – 254). This implies that the woman had at least one child.

The skeleton of the same individual also provides evidence of a long-term disease – a periosteal reaction with the accumulation of proliferative, porous bone substance on both tibiae (fig. 10: 2). These alterations can be interpreted in different ways: as a condition resulting from an early stage of development of several kinds of severe chronic diseases – ones with an infectious cause (Ortner 2003, 206 – 215, Ortner 2008, 196 – 199), development of hypertrophic osteoarthropathy – a condition involving a reaction of the periosteal layer of the bone to toxins in the blood, most often the result of an oncological disease (Ortner 2003, 354 – 357), or as a consequence of nutritional deficiency following improper/poor nutrition, especially with a lack of important vitamins and /or minerals, or caused by disorders of the metabolic functions of the body (Ortner 2003, 354 – 357 Aufderheide, Rodriguez-Martin 1998, 310 – 311). These alterations also go some way to explain the premature death of the individual.

The skeleton of the child from grave No. 2 (about 2 – 3 years old at death) also shows periosteal reaction in the limb bones, located distal-laterally to the diaphyses of the tibiae and proximal to the diaphysis of the present left ulna (fig. 10: 1). It is possible that a similar process took place in both individuals. For individuals in childhood, these alterations are more often explained by metabolic disorders, as a result of illness or improper nutrition (Ortner 2003, 383 – 393). Similar disorders were also found in previous studies of the population in Pliska (Pyceva 2013, 221). They should rather be explained by insufficient nutrition in the children of the population from the period.

Despite the young age of the individuals from graves Nos. 2 and 4, alterations are to be found in their dentition as a result of the development of dental caries. In the woman from grave No. 4, the permanent dentition is affected with carious changes in the left first (upper and lower) and upper right second molars and upper left first premolar (fig. 5: 2, 3, 5). The alterations seem to have developed at the places affected by mechanical defects, as the ones observed on the upper right premolars and first molar.

The deciduous dentition of the individual from grave No. 2, a child of about 2 – 3 years at the time of death, is also affected by dental caries (fig. 5: 1). Here the neck of the upper right central incisor is affected. The development of carious changes at this early age is indirect evidence of deteriorated health, and the possible unhealthy diet of the affected individuals. The development of periodontal alterations and the advanced abrasion of the tooth enamel of the woman from grave No. 4, as well as the initial periodontal alterations in the man from grave No. 5, point to a similar conclusion.

The dentition from grave No. 1 shows a high number of pathological changes in the dental-jaw apparatus (fig. 5: 4), which is explained by the advanced age of the buried individual (45 – 50 years) and probably, again, by an unbalanced diet and the low level of oral hygiene during the period. The combined influence of these factors led to the complete intravital tooth loss of the upper, and partially of the lower jaw, with a corresponding strong deformation and resorption of the alveolar processes of the maxilla and pronounced periodontal alterations of the mandible. The advanced dental pathology made the chewing process and nutrition very difficult, which ultimately should have strongly deteriorated the quality of life and health of the person (Anelloes et al. 2010, 1 – 11). Carious alterations were found on the few preserved teeth – on ones identified as the second lower right premolar and the first lower left molar. The second lower left molar had been lost shortly before death, and in the same area of the mandible an inflammatory odontogenic cyst had developed around the root of the lost tooth. Such cysts result from bacterial infection in acute pulpitis causing an abscess (Aufderheide, Rodriguez-Martin 1998, 408). On the rest of the teeth preserved during the life of the individual, on the same dentition, an accumulation of calculus is registered.

The observed defects of linear hypoplasia of the tooth enamel are also interpreted as a consequence of periods of unfavourable conditions for development (Starling, Stock 2007, 520 – 528;

Goodman et al. 1980, 515 – 528; Goodman, Rose 1990, 59 – 110; Skinner, Goodman 1992, 153 – 174), explained by long periods of illness (Sarnat, Schour 1941, 1989 – 2000; Kreshover 1940, 1083 – 1101) or nutritional deficiency (Rose et al. 1985, 281 – 306). Such are found on both dentitions in which permanent teeth are represented – from grave No. 4, where the lines correspond to 2 – 2 ½ and 3 years of development (fig. 5: 5) and from grave No. 3 with lines, corresponding to a similar age. The age of formation of these defects matches the age at which the individual from grave No. 2 died.

These results identify the period as high risk in terms of health for people from the population. It seems that the age between two and three years was transitional and marked the end of the weaning process of the child from breastfeeding and transition to the solid food. The change in diet is an indication that around 2 – 3 years of age the child was placed in a new social position that reduced the close relationship with the mother and the breastfeeding process, as the mother probably had a new child of breastfeeding age.

The dentition from grave No. 1 is not informative for enamel hypoplasia defects due to its destruction during life. A similar feature, a buccal pit (foramen cecum), is found on the molars from the dentition from grave No. 5 (fig. 5: 6). The reasons for acquiring this defect, according to the researchers, are close to those leading to the linear hypoplasia of the enamel, but some argue that in the case of the foramen cecum, the congenital predisposition seems to have a greater influence. Recognition of the feature again could point to a possible unfavourable period in the individual's development between his second and third year (affected first molars). However, a later similar period between the 10th and 13th year of growth, when the feature was formed on the third molar, is also registered here.

The distortion (messiobuccal rotation) of the two upper lateral incisors of the dentition of the young man from grave No. 5 is also explained by irregular development of the dentition (fig. 5: 7, arrows). Most often, the change is a consequence of insufficiently developed size of the alveolar process of the jaw during tooth eruption or in cases of delayed tooth eruption, following advanced development of adjacent teeth. Another reason could be a child's bad teething habit or a non-specific (unrelated to the normal chewing process when eating) activity performed with the teeth in everyday life.

Development of *cribra orbitalia* was found in both individuals in infancy from graves Nos. 2 and 3, and in both cases the bone structure shows an active reaction at the onset of death. While in the older child from grave No. 3, the alteration is weakly manifested, in the younger child from grave No. 2, it shows an advanced trabecular form (fig. 9: 2). In the latter case, it is combined with a pronounced deformation of the occipital bone (fig. 9: 3), which cannot be explained by artificial deformation or premature obliteration of any of the cranial sutures. The advanced form of the alteration in this individual could point to sickle cell anaemia (Stuart-Macadam 1989, 201 – 222; Aufderheide, Rodriguez-Martin 1998, 348; Walker et al. 2009, 109 – 129) and development of thalassemia.

In the individual from grave No. 3, *cribra orbitalia* remains as a sign of the presence of an anaemic condition, its etiology not being clear – nutritional deficiency, presence of internal parasites which favour such a condition, or other causes (Marcsik 1973, 191 – 197; Holland, O'Brien 1997, 183 – 193). However, development of the inherited sickle cell (hemolytic) anaemia cannot be excluded, as it is supposed for the individual from grave No. 2, the latter pointing to a spreading of the condition in the population. In such cases, where individuals whose skeletal remains show advanced forms of skeletal deformities, lower affectation in other population members could be explained with the inherited hemolitic anaemia (HersHKovitz et al. 1991, 7 – 13).

The skull of the adult individual from grave No. 5 (male, 25 – 30 years old) shows signs of recombined *cribra orbitalia*. State of recombination indicates an overcame period of defect

formation, probably experienced in childhood. Such cases are explained by diet and past illnesses and often present in paleopopulations.

In both male skeletons, enthesopathic alterations were identified on the left fibula. Entheses are the places where tendons, ligaments, fascia and joint capsules attach to bones, providing a reduction in mechanical tension at the border of tissues with different stiffness and elasticity. Inflammation (enthesitis) is a pathological change in the entheses. It is believed that the process can develop in the course of spondyloarthropathy, metabolic or endocrine diseases and secondarily, in (micro) injury (Sudoł-Szopińska et al. 2015, 72 – 84).

No periosteal formation of hyperostoses was observed on the right fibulae in the studied male skeletons from Pliska. For this reason, we can hypothesize that the enthesopathies on the left fibulae are more likely due to trauma or possibly chronic trauma from a specific activity performed by both men that overloaded the left leg muscles.

The alteration of the skeleton of the individual from grave No. 1 is combined with highly pronounced degenerative-dystrophic changes (osteocondrosis, spondyloarthrosis and spondylosis) (Aufderheide, Rodriguez-Martin 1998, 96 – 97; Ortner 2003, 549 – 550) in all areas of the spine. One explanation for the alterations can be related to abundant physical activity that intensively loaded this part of the skeleton – such as lifting and carrying heavy loads, improper compulsory postures and strong vibrations of the whole body.

The lumbar area is most affected, where large-sized osteophytes formed (Seidler et al. 2001, 735 – 746). The strong proliferative reaction of the walls of the bodies of the lumbar vertebrae (fig. 7: 2), the herniation of the upper edge of the body of one of the thoracic vertebrae (fig. 7: 1) and the reaction of the articular surfaces of the vertebral bodies point the interpretation to the assumption of a skeletal reaction to an infectious bacterial agent. It is possible that the complex could be a result of the development of a brucellosis infection, characteristic for populations with diets based on consuming unpasteurised milk and products made from it (Aufderheide, Rodriguez-Martin 1998, 192 – 193, Ortner 2003, 215 – 221).

Initial arthrosis alterations were also registered on the articular surfaces of the bones of the upper limbs, as well as in the area of the hip joint (coxarthrosis), due to the advanced age of the individual. A complication that is again associated with accidental trauma or chronic, traumatic overload of the skeletal-muscular apparatus, similar to enthesopathies, is ossifying myositis, which is a benign condition of heterotopic bone formation within the muscle (Cushner, Morwessel 1992, 1319 – 1326; Mevio et al. 2001, 345 – 347). This pathological condition can be identified on the distal dorsal end of the body of the right femur of the man from grave No. 5, on the lateral line of the linea aspera at the place of attachment of the muscles on the back of the thigh (fig. 13: 2). The affected muscle could be one of the adductors, namely *adductor magnus*. It seems more likely, that the condition developed on the attachment zone of one of the heads of the quadriceps muscle, namely *vastus lateralis*.

Such alterations can be associated with chronic trauma (overload) of the adductor muscle group in equestrians (Molleson 2007, 19, 28 – 29). In these cases, in contrast to the studied series, the alterations due to horse riding are manifested bilaterally (Molleson 2007, 28 – 29; Jones, Ward 1980, 506 – 507). The defect in the skeletal remains of the man from grave No. 5 is unilaterally located, so it should have been caused by asymmetric physical load, different from the usual manner of locomotion experienced by a horse rider. One possible explanation is that the injury was acquired while standing in an asymmetrical position on one side of the horse, used in some hunting riding styles and combat techniques. A similar riding posture may also be the reason for the alterations of the bones of the left leg (of the fibulae in the two male skeletons).

Clearly manifested porotic alterations on the ectocranial surface of the occipital scale were registered in the young man from grave No. 5 (fig. 20).

The registered bilateral asymmetry in the bone length of the limbs of the individual from grave No. 3 (table 4) is also of interest, evident in the humerus, where it reaches 7.5 mm in favour of the right side. Such an asymmetry is very rare at such a young age. The bilateral asymmetry is additionally manifested in the developed supratrochlear tubercle of the left humerus (fig. 13: 1), combined with subtrochlear foramen on *fossa olecrani* on both humeri. It is possible that the individual was exposed to heavy physical exertion associated with active training in an activity with marked development of the right side of the upper limbs from an earlier age, about 6-7 years of the individual's development.

A subtrochlear foramen on the left humerus was also found in the male skeleton from grave No. 1. The described finding may be the result of accidental trauma or chronic load on the left upper limb. Excessive extension (hyperextension) of the elbow joint is observed in individuals with this anatomical variation (De Wilde et al. 2004, 77 – 84). In the literature, data on the frequency of occurrence of the specified anatomical variation in European populations are scarce, but studies show a high rate in Japanese, African and Native American populations (18.1 %, 21.7 % and 58 %, respectively), while in white Americans of European descent the frequency is low – only 4.2 % (Benfer, McKern 1966, 247 – 252; Ozturk et al. 2000, 72 – 76; Akabori 1934, 395 – 400). The quoted data clearly show that the subtrochlear foramen is more common in Negroids and Mongoloids and much less common in the Caucasian racial group. In the studied series of a total of five skeletons from Pliska, perforation of the articular fossa of the elbow joint was established in two of them.

Both in the newly studied series and in previous studies of graves from Pliska, there is a notable increase in the incidence of lesions, which point to development of diseases such as anaemia caused by intestinal parasites, brucellosis and tuberculosis. Accordingly, some of the alterations can be explained by zoonoses – diseases transmitted by animals to humans. Their high incidence rate shows that in the studied period there was a close, shared environment between humans and domestic animals. The observed morbidity may also be caused by the methods of processing meat, milk and dairy products for consumption, associated with insufficient heat treatment/cooking.

On the other hand, the indirect data on metabolic disorders in the studied series and the clearer signs of such disorders associated with a deficiency of vitamin C in the previously studied material (Pyceba 2013, 216) again points the interpretation to a diet deficient in products of botanical origin. Such a nutrition strategy shows the insufficient ability of the population to use the natural resources of the environment as efficiently as possible.

Discussion of the chronology of the intramural graves at Pliska and the characteristics of the burial ritual

During archaeological studies in the Inner City of Pliska, hundreds of similar graves have been discovered, scattered in small groups or as single burials. The practice of placing burials in an urbanized environment, without clear regulation, is a topic that has not yet been fully analysed. In the context of the newly studied graves, examples from other sections of the Inner City of Pliska are also drawn, which provide an opportunity to discuss a wide range of issues related to the stratigraphy and chronology of the intramural graves and their relationship with demographic and ethnic cultural changes in the medieval city.

The large-scale archaeological excavations in Pliska from the last three decades of the 20th c. provided data on 176 graves, situated individually or grouped in small necropoleis along the inside face of the fortress walls (Захариев 1979, 129 – 137; Василев 1979, 99 – 100; Дончева-Петкова 1984, 181 – 191; Антонова, Витлянов 1985, 61 – 66, обр. 18, 19, табло VIII; Милчев 1992, 191

– 192, обр. 13, 195 – 196, обр. 23; Димитров 1996, 87 – 88; Балабанов 2000, 93 – 102). The burial ritual described by the researchers indicates a relatively poor “Christianized” population. Inventory is rarely found in the graves, and when it is, it is mainly in the form of jewellery. The grave pits were dug relatively shallowly, without special care taken to shape them. Individual cases of grave marking, for example with stones, and partial enclosure of the dead have been documented. I. Zahariev suggested that graves Nos. 10 and 20 at the southern fortress wall are pagan, without providing more complex arguments (Захариев 1979, 129 – 137). T. Balabanov speaks of “deviations” from the Christian ritual or, rather, great variety in the position of the body, limbs and head, which in his opinion provide evidence for not entirely Christianized population (Балабанов 2000, 93 – 94). In the section near the Northern Gate T. Balabanov uncovered four graves with orientation to the north-south, placed in a common trench, which he defined as Pecheneg.

All the researchers have dated the graves to the latest Pliska period, referring them exclusively after the 30s/40s of the 11th c., or most generally around the middle and even after the middle of the 11th c. Publications, however, lack detailed graphic and/or photo documentation adequately presenting the stratigraphic levels of registration of the grave pits. The authors provide more general observations of the terrain situation. According to T. Balabanov, the graves near the northern fortress wall were dug “on dwellings and workshops from the Byzantine period, and two coins dated 1035/42 were found on the pelvis of one of the buried individuals (Балабанов 1985, 120 – 121; Балабанов 2000, 95). The appearance of graves on top of previously destroyed dwellings and ironsmith workshops determines the date of the necropolis to the 30s of the 11th c. at the earliest (Балабанов 2000, 95).

Similar descriptive information is also provided on the graves along the western fortress wall, which, according to V. Antonova, were dug into a layer formed by the ruins of the wall (Антонова, Витаянов 1985, 65). L. Doncheva-Petkova also notes that the initial date of the graves next to the southern section of the western fortress wall is defined by the fact that they break up the masonry belonging to craft-trade premises dated to the second half of the 10th and beginning of the 11th c. (Дончева-Петкова 1984, 188). Stratigraphic observations and the analysis of the finds provide grounds to refer the chronology of the graves to the period after the 40s/50s of the 11th c. (Дончева-Петкова 1984, 189). Several graves have also been found near the eastern fortress wall. In grave No. 4, under the skeleton, a coin of Basil II and Constantine (976 – 1025) was found (Василев 1979, 100).

In 1980, archaeological excavations were carried out in the Palace Centre of Pliska, where three more single graves were found, defined as Late Nomadic (Pecheneg) (Михайлова 2003, 259 – 266). The bodies were laid in facilities abandoned in the 30s/40s of the 11th c. (a pit and kilns). In general, most researchers agree on the chronology of the graves discovered in the Inner City, referring them to the latest stratigraphic horizon of post-capital Pliska.

In the last two decades, during excavations in various sections of the Inner City of Pliska, quite a number of graves have been discovered, about which there are no detailed publications.² Brief descriptive information, often without illustrations of the grave contexts, is noted only in the annual archaeological reports (Георгиев, Василев 2006, 312; Станилов и др. 2006, 380; Станилов и др. 2007, 583; Георгиев, Василев 2008, 586; Георгиев и др. 2008, 598 – 599; Георгиев и др. 2012, 373; Иванов 2012, 384; Станилов, Инкова 2012, 381; Георгиев и др. 2013, 351; Георгиев и др. 2014, 435; Аладжов и др. 2016, 652). With the new data, the number of graves in the Inner City

² One of the drawbacks of contemporary archaeological studies in Pliska is that they are carried out by independent teams excavating large sections over decades. This significantly delays the processing and publishing of the results and the possibility for them to be fully used for overview studies.

of Pliska has grown significantly, and the topography of the burials has been complemented. It is noteworthy that the graves (single or grouped in small, probably family necropoleis) are scattered throughout the territory of the Inner City, and in addition to the space next to the fortress walls, dozens of graves have also been found around the Palace Centre.

The burial of the dead in the inhabited area, in the Inner City of Pliska, is a phenomenon that has not yet found a satisfactory explanation. The opinion that the graves are the result of the increased number of city residents (Димитров 1996, 91) is not based on sufficiently convincing evidence.³ Only the burials around the Palace Basilica can be attributed to the period of the most significant demographic growth (at the end of the 10th and the first third of the 11th century) (Иванов 2008, 595 – 596; Иванов 2013, 362; Иванов 2015, 596). At that time, the large city necropoleis were formed in front of the Eastern Gate (Димитров 1995, 42 – 70) and around Mound XXXIV (Димитров 1998, 69, 73), which were located on the main roads leading out of the city (Димитров 1996, 89). The organization of the inner-city space and the dense building-up of the space have rather limited and excluded the possibilities for unregulated burial in the Inner City.

An attempt at ethnic cultural identification of the intramural graves in Pliska

Despite many years of archaeological excavations, information about the latest stage of life in medieval Pliska remains incomplete. One of the reasons is that studies so far have always prioritized uncovering the monumental architecture and fortification of the capital period, while the post-capital period and especially the latest stratigraphic horizon have been greatly underinvestigated, which is partly the reason for the limited number of well-published monuments.

Current archaeological data on the stratigraphy of post-capital Pliska allow us to date with great confidence most of the intramural graves after the 30s/40s of the 11th c. They were preceded by widespread abandonment of “Byzantine-period” dwellings, and specific examples of burnt buildings from that time have also been published (Дончева-Петкова 1993, 80, обр. 1; Григоров, Тодорова 2018, 179 – 206). There are also data on the abandonment of dwellings from other studied sections – next to the northern and eastern fortress walls (Балабанов 1985, 120, 130). This process testifies to the changes that occurred in demography, the urban planning scheme and the organization of life in the city.

Byzantine chronicles describing the events around this time speak of a tense military and political situation in the region. Skylitzes, Joannes Zonaras, Michael Attaleiates, Michael Psellos and Anna Comnena mention multiple attacks to the south of the Danube carried out by the Pecheneg people (ГИБИ 1965, 111 – 115; 298 – 301; 312 – 317, 324). Massive Pecheneg raids were noted in 1027, attacks intensified in 1032, 1034, 1035 and 1036 to reach their peak in 1048. A consequence of these events was the permanent settlement of Pechenegs south of the Danube, in the province of Paristrion (Дончева-Петкова 2003, 244; Григоров 2016, 288 – 289). In 1053, the Pechenegs defeated the Byzantine army at Ioannopolis (Preslav), resulting in a 30-year peace (Рашев 1983, 244).

Located at the epicentre of military events, Pliska and the Pliska field probably became one of the main centres of Pecheneg presence and settlement. This was determined by the favourable geographical location and the developed urban and fortification infrastructure. According to R. Rashev, the “headquarters of the Pecheneg leader and the clan headed by him” was in Pliska (Рашев 1983, 245). Anna Comnena also provides information indicating that the Pliska field was a Pecheneg centre. During the campaign against the Pechenegs in 1088, emperor Alexius I Comnenus

³ According to Yanko Dimitrov, intramural burials in Pliska had probably already started in the second half of the 10th c. in connection with the uncontrolled settlement of certain sections of the Inner City with “common” people who seem to have buried their dead not far from their dwellings.

arrived in Pliska and from there climbed a hillside called Simeonovo, which the local population also called “Skitsko Saveshtalishte” [Scythian Council] (Златарски 1972, 192).

As early as the first excavations of the Palace Centre, in the uppermost layers, the researchers found materials and buildings that can be connected with the Pechenegs who settled in Pliska (Дончева-Петкова 1993, 246). There are data about the settlement of a newly arrived population in the Outer City of Pliska and the area of the Great Basilica (Дончева-Петкова 1993, 249 – 250), as well as in the north-eastern end of the village of Voyvoda (Антонова 1964, 49 – 52).

Archaeological studies have documented multiple traces of military conflicts in Pliska. Traces of fires can be found everywhere on the fortress walls, dated to the first third of the 11th c. The two gates – the Northern and the Southern – were fenced off at that time, and significant repairs and reconstructions of the fortress towers were carried out (Иванов 2004, 212 – 228).

Anthropological studies of both the present series of individuals and period-related materials examined earlier show an increased incidence of traumatic lesions, including cranial trauma, which can be directly interpreted as the result of the population’s combat activity (Рыцева 2013, 215 – 228; Георгиев и др. 2012, 373). These conclusions are also supported by the type of weaponry found at the “Palace Centre – East” site. In the last stratigraphic horizon, mostly small arrows are found, of a type suitable for striking soldiers who were equipped with light protective gear. Everything indicates that light gear was common in this period. It, however, did not sufficiently protect the soldiers from injuries and combat trauma.

What is new at the “Palace Centre – East” site is the appearance of buildings with a light wooden ground structure in the last stratigraphic horizon. Wall layers (fig. 21) from adobe buildings have been found. Another important archaeological fact are the remains of stone pavements (fig. 22), which mark the existence of specific ground-level facilities, which probably served as floors for light structures with a rectangular or rounded (yurt-like) shape.

One of the most visible archaeological phenomena pointing to the demographic and ethnic cultural changes in Pliska after the 30s/40s of the 11th century is related to the mass practice of burying the dead inside the inhabited area. It is complemented by the observations of researchers, who notice a number of specifics and “deviations” in the burial ritual.

Among the main archaeological finds identifying this population, researchers point out: clay cauldrons with interior lugs, hand-made clay vessels, sphero-conical vessels. Some new metal finds are also brought to attention. More specifically, the newly discovered round applications in graves No. 7 and No. 21 next to the western fortress wall of Pliska (Дончева-Петкова 1984, 184 – 185, обр. 21; 188, обр. 8). Similar applications are known from a number of fortresses and settlements in North-east Bulgaria (Veliki Preslav, Skala, Vetren, Okorsh, Odartsi) (Станилов 1993, 148, обр. 7; Дончева-Петкова 1999; Дончева-Петкова 2005), where Pecheneg presence is visible. Bronze padlocks in the shape of a dog are also associated with a newly arrived, probably Pecheneg population (Григоров, Димитров 2014, 94 – 105).

According to R. Rashev, the burial of two horses and a dog in one of the pits discovered in 1978 in the layer above the Palace of Khan Krum is evidence of Pechenegs in Pliska (Въжарова 1981, 55, обр. 28). Two burials of dogs, one decapitated, were also found in the latest stratigraphic layer, above the stone square, north of the Citadel (Станилов и др. 2007, 583). Data on the settlement of Pechenegs in Pliska are also provided by the discovered hand-made ceramic vessels and cauldrons with interior lugs (Дончева-Петкова 1993, 83, обр. 7; Станилов, Инкова 2012, 381, обр. 2). V. Yotov associated the leaf-shaped openwork “amulets” found in various places in Pliska with the Pechenegs (Йотов 2000, 242 – 246). Among the artifacts that mark the presence of Late Nomads in Pliska is a bronze tinderbox (Василев 2007, 348 – 361; Григоров 2007, 79 – 89), as well as



Fig. 21. Clay wall plasters, "Palace Centre – East" site in Pliska, square XX-384

Обр. 21. Глинени стенни мазилки от обект „Дворцов център – изток“ в Плиска, квадрат XX-384

bronze figurines of a horseman found in room 6 next to the Southern Gate of Pliska (Милчев 1979, 144 – 145, 149, обр. 22) and south of the grave of Karel Shkorpil (Милчев 1983, 223, обр. 18). The research of D. Yosifov on the spread and chronology of spherо-conical vessels in Bulgaria is also connected with Pecheneg presence (Йосифов 2018, 225 – 242), and Pliska is one of the sites with the highest number of finds (Станчев 1955, 202, обр. 19: 4; Михайлова 1987, 15 – 23).

Interesting information about the economic structure and dietary habits of the population in Pliska has also been provided by the zooarchaeological studies of the "Palace Centre – East" site. A substantial increase in the relative proportion of bones from horses and wild animals, which were mainly used for food, is registered in the last stratigraphic horizon, to which the five graves belong.⁴ The data on the diet of the population in Pliska from the second third of the 11th c. show significant consumption of meat.

The anthropological study identified metabolic disorders and diseases that are associated with a diet poor in plant products, and various other nutritional deficiencies. The numerous diseases

⁴The zooarchaeological analyses of materials from the "Palace Centre – East" site were carried out by L. Ninov and N. Karastoyanova.



Fig. 22. Stone pavements, "Palace Centre – East" site in Pliska, squares XX-302 u XX-323

Обр. 22. Каменни настилки от обект „Дворцов център – изток“ в Плиска, квадрати XX-302 и XX-323

caused by this unbalanced diet are an indication that the inhabitants had difficulty in diversifying their food sources, and under the conditions of constant military activity, they continued to follow their nomadic eating habits.

Conclusion

The publication of the graves discovered east of the Citadel aims to bring five more well-documented examples into scientific circulation. They show common features with hundreds of other burials that have been uncovered at various locations in the Inner City of Pliska. This fact provoked the authors to broaden the topic, summarizing the data on the intramural graves in Pliska. The available stratigraphic information determines that the burials were carried out after the 30s/40s of the 11th c., when significant changes occurred in the demography and ethnic cultural environment of the city. For most researchers, there is no doubt that a new ethnic group settled in Pliska at that time. Among the main archaeological finds identifying this population, researchers point out: the clay cauldrons with interior lugs, hand-made clay vessels, and sphero-conical vessels. Some of the new metal finds in Pliska, like the round applications, leaf-like open-work pendants, bronze figurines of a horseman, the bronze padlocks in the shape of a dog, and the bronze tinderboxes, are also brought to attention.

Connecting the graves from the “Palace Centre – East” site with the Pechenegs who settled in Pliska is only one hypothetical possibility that fits well with known archaeological and historical data. The specifics of the racial appearance of the individuals, their diseases, combat traumas and medical manipulations noted in the anthropological study can also be considered as characteristic of the Late Nomadic tribes in Bulgaria.

Table 1.1. Material. Skull and postcranial axial skeleton, pectoral and pelvic girdle

Таблица 1.1. Материал. Череп, аксиален скелет, раменен и тазов пояс

Grave N	Skull				Vertebrae						Clavicula						Scapula		Pelvis	
	Brain case	Facial part	Dentition		Cervical	Thoracic	Lumbar				Right			Left			Right	Left	Right	Left
			Upper	Lower							Sternal end	Diaphysis	Acromial end	Sternal end	Diaphysis	Acromial end				
1	C	F	0	8	7	F	2+3F	F	F	17F	C	C	C	x	C	C	F	F	F	F
2	F	F	6	4	F	S	S	S	x	21F	x	x	x	-	C	-	x	F	F	C
3	F	F	8	Tt	6	11	5	F	F	43F	C	C	C	C	C	C	F	F	F	C
4	C	F	17	Tt	7	7F	2+2F	C	F	26F	C	C	F	C	C	C	F	F	F	C
5	F	F	16	15	6	S	S	S	F	13F	C	C	C	C	C	C	F	F	C	C

x – no fragments; F – fragment; 8F – number of fragments found; P – premolar; M – molar; C – complete; S – single fragments

x – фрагмент липсва; F – фрагмент; 8F – брой фрагменти; C – цялостно съхранен; S – единични фрагменти

Table 1.2. Material. Upper limb

Таблица 1.2. Материал. Горен крайник

Grave N	Humerus						Ulna						Radius						Carpus, metacarpus, phalanges	
	Right			Left			Right			Left			Right			Left			Right	Left
	Proximal end	Diaphysis	Distal end	Proximal end	Diaphysis	Distal end	Proximal end	Diaphysis	Distal end	Proximal end	Diaphysis	Distal end	Proximal end	Diaphysis	Distal end	Proximal end	Diaphysis	Distal end		
1	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	F	F
2	-	F	-	-	C	-	-	x	-	-	C	-	-	x	-	-	F	-	S	S
3	x	C	x	x	C	x	x	C	x	x	F	x	x	C	x	x	F	x	F	F
4	C	C	C	F	F	x	C	C	C	F	F	F	C	C	C	C	C	C	F	F
5	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	S	S

Table 1.3. Material. Lower limb

Таблица 1.3. Материал. Долен крайник

Grave N	Femur						Tibia						Fibula						Tarsus, metatarsus, phalanges	
	Right			Left			Right			Left			Right			Left			Right	Left
	Proximal end	Diaphysis	Distal end	Proximal end	Diaphysis	Distal end	Proximal end	Diaphysis	Distal end	Proximal end	Diaphysis	Distal end	Proximal end	Diaphysis	Distal end	Proximal end	Diaphysis	Distal end		
1	C	C	C	C	C	C	x	F	x	C	C	x	C	C	C	F	C	C	S	S
2	-	C	-	-	F	-	-	C	-	-	F	-	-	F	-	-	F	-	x	x
3	F	C	F	x	C	F	x	C	F	x	C	F	x	F	x	x	C	x	F	F
4	C	C	C	F	F	x	C	C	C	x	F	F	x	x	x	x	F	x	F	F
5	F	F	C	F	F	F	C	F	x	F	F	x	F	C	C	C	F	C	F	F

Table 2. Features, used in age and sex identification
Таблица 2. Използвани белези за възрастово и полово определяне

Grave N	Age, sex	Pelvic girdle, reconstructed	<i>Incisura ischiadica major</i>	Skull	Dimensions	Relief and robusticity	Dental development	Dimensions of long bones of limbs	Development of bones of cranial and postcranial skeleton	Synostosis of diaphysis with epiphyses	Cranial sutures obliteration	Dental attrition	Pubis symphyseal surface relief	Iliac auricular surface relief
1	M, 45 – 50 y.		v	v	v	v					v	v		v
2	2 – 3 y.	–	–		–	–	v	v						
3	10 – 11 y.	–	–		–	–	v	?	v	v				
4	F, 18 – 20 to 25 y.	v	v	v	v	v	v			v	v		v	v
5	M, 25 – 26 y.	v	v	v	v	v				v	v	v	v	v

M – male; F – female; y. – years; v – presence of trait; ? – results from the trait controvert to the result from the feature, regarded with priority in identification

M (male) – мъж; F (female) – жена; y. – години при настъпване на смъртта; v – наличие на белега; ? – данните от белега не съвпадат с данните от признака, приет за водещ при определяне на пол/възраст

Table 3. Dimensions of long bones of limbs, stature in centimeters. Adults
Таблица 3. Размери на дългите кости на крайниците, см. Израснали индивиди

Grave N	Bone	L	D	B	Stature	
					T-G	P-L
1	Fm dx	47,7	5,25	8,6	175,06 (171,79 ÷ 178,33)* 177,78 (173,9 ÷ 181,66)	170,92
	Fm sn	47,8	5,30	8,6		
	Fb dx	40,4				
	Hm dx	34,6	4,8/4,6	6,9		
	Hm sn	34,6	4,8/4,4	6,8		
	Rd dx	27,1	2,5			
	Rd sn	27,0	2,5			
	Ul dx	30,1				
4	Ul sn	29,9			150,75 (147,21 ÷ 154,29)* 157,14 (153,09 ÷ 161,20)	152,46
	Fm dx	38,5	4,35			
	Fm sn		4,35			
	Tb dx	31,3				
	Hm dx	30,2	4,3/4,1	5,9		
	Hm sn			5,8		
	Rd dx	22,2				
	Rd sn	22,4				
5	Ul dx	24,1			176,90 (172,71 ÷ 181,09)	172,07
	Fm dx		5,20	8,30		
	Fm sn		5,30			
	Fb sn	39,5				
	Hm dx	35,2	4,80	6,20		
	Hm sn	34,9	4,85	6,15		
	Rd dx	25,6	2,4			
	Rd sn	25,4	2,3			
	Ul dx	27,3				
	Ul sn	27,0				

L – length; D – head diameter, in humerals – vertical head diameter; B – bicondylar breadth; Hm – humerus; Rd – radius; Ul – ulna; Fm – femur; Tb – tibia; Fb – fibula; dx (dexter) – right; Sn (sinister) – left

* only lengths of lower limbs taken into account

L (length) – дължина; D (diameter) – диаметър на главата, при раменните кости – вертикален диаметър; B (breadth) – бикондиларна ширина; Hm (humerus) – раменна кост; Rd (radius) – лъчева кост; Ul (ulna) – лакътна кост; Fm (femur) – бедрена кост; Tb (tibia) – голям пищял; Fb (fibula) – малък пищял; dx (dexter) – дясна страна; Sn (sinister) – лява страна.

* взети са под внимание само дължинните размери на кости на долни крайници

Table 4. Dimensions of long bones of limbs, in centimeters. Sub adults
Таблица 4. Размери на дългите кости на крайниците, см. Подрастващи

2	Fm dx	17,2	Hm sn	13,18	Cl sn	6,92
	Tb dx	13,6	Ul sn	10,9		
3	Fm dx	31,7	Fb sn	24,4	Rd dx	16,4
	Fm sn	31,8	Hm dx	22,6	Ul dx	18,2
	Tb dx	25,6	Hm sn	21,85	Cl dx	10,5
	Tb sn	25,2			Cl sn	10,6

L – diaphyseal length; Cl – clavicle

L – дължина; K – кост

Table 5. Metrical characteristics of skulls in millimeters
Таблица 5. Краниометрични характеристики, мм

Measurement		N 1	Grave N		
			4	5	
Length		8	198,0	16,8	-
Breadth		1	153,0	15,7	-
Height		17	150,0	13,5	-
Height (po)		-	-	11,45*	-
Cranial base, length		5	111,4	9,9	-
Smallest breadth of frontal bone		9	99,0	9,5	95
Occipital breadth		12	111,7	11,28	104
Skull perimeter through glabella		23	550	51,5	-
Breadth of upper face section		43	-	9,7	-
Breadth of middle face section		46	-	10,55	-
Upper face height		48	-	7	-
Face height		47	-	11,3	-
Horizontal angle, nasomalar			-	147	-
Horizontal angle, zygo-maxillary			-	137	-
Orbital breadth		51	-	3,97	-
Orbital height		52	-	3,43	-
Nasal height		55	-	5,3	-
Breadth of piriform aperture		54	-	2,5R	-
Alveolar process height		48,1	-	1,77	21,5
Palatine breadth		63	-	3,9	38,4
Palatine length		62	40	-	-
Anterior palatine length		62,1*		3,7	44
Alveolar process breadth		61	-	6,35	65
Alveolar process length		60	-	4,28	51,7
Lower jaw	Lenght	68	-	7,9	82
	Bicondilar breadth	65	-	12,5	130
	Bigonial breadth	66	-	9,7	116
	Coronal breadth		-	10	-
	Anterior breadth	67	50	4,3	48,7
	Symphyseal height	69	35	3,09	33,4
	Body height on place of mental foramen	69 ₍₁₎	39,0	2,9	33
	Body breadth on place of mental foramen	69 ₍₃₎	11,5	1,38	10,6
	Height of the ramus	70	-	5,5	72,5
	Smallest breadth of the ramus	71	-	3,5	35,5
	Mandible angle	79	-	122	129

N – Number by Martin-Saller (1959)

N – номер по Martin-Saller (1959)

Table 6. Craniometrical indexes
Таблица 6. Краниометрични индекси

Measurement	N	Grave N		
		1	4	5
Cranial index	8:1	77,27	93,45	-
Height-length index	17:1	75,76	80,36	-
Height-breadth index	17:8	98,04	85,99	-
Height-length (po) index	20:1	-	68,15	-
Height-breadth (po) index	20:8	-	72,93	-
Face index (after Virhov)	47:46	-	107,11	-
Upperface index (after Virhov)	48:46	-	66,35	-
Fronto-parietal index	9:8	64,71	56,55	
Parieto-occipital index	12:8	73,01	67,14	
Orbital index	52:51	-	86,40	-
Nasal index	54:55	-	47,17	-
Upper jaw index	61:60	-	148,36	125,73
Length-breadth index of lower jaw	68:65	-	63,2	63,08
Breadth index of lower jaw	66:65	-	77,6	89,23
Height-breadth index of body of the lower jaw	69 ₍₃₎ :69 ₍₁₎	29,49	47,59	32,12

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ГРОБОВЕ ОТ ОБЕКТ „ДВОРЦОВ ЦЕНТЪР – ИЗТОК“. ОПИТ ЗА ЕТНОКУЛТУРНА ИДЕНТИФИКАЦИЯ НА ПОГРЕБЕНИЯТА *INTRA MUROS* В ПЛИСКА

Валери Григоров*, Виктория Русева**, Надежда Атанасова***

* Национален археологически институт с музей, Българска академия на науките, ул. „Съборна“ № 2, София 1000; valerig@abv.bg

** Институт по експериментална морфология, патология и антропология с музей, Българска академия на науките, ул. „Акад. Георги Бончев“, бл. 25, София 1113; victoria_russeva@yahoo.com

*** Институт по експериментална морфология, патология и антропология с музей, Българска академия на науките, ул. „Акад. Георги Бончев“, бл. 25, София 1113; naditimeva@gmail.com

РЕЗЮМЕ

В настоящото изследване представяме 5 гроба, открити източно от Дворцовия център в Плиска (обр. 1). Те са проучени в периода 2011 – 2016 г. и представляват единични погребения, разположени в междужилищното пространство (обр. 2). Стратиграфски гробовете се датират в последната фаза от обитаване на средновековния град (между 30-те/40-те години на XI век и 60-те години на XI в.). Във

всеки от гробовете е положен по един индивид, по гръб, с глава на запад.

При археологически проучвания във Вътрешния град на Плиска са разкрити стотици подобни гробове, разпръснати на малки групи или като единични погребения. Практиката да се погребва в урбанизирана среда, без ясна регулация, е тема, която все още не е анализирана цялостно. В контекста на новопроучените гробове са привлечени примери и от други сектори на Вътрешния град на Плиска, които дават възможност да поставим на дискусия широк кръг проблеми, свързани със стратиграфията и хронологията на интрамуралните гробове и връзката им с демографските и етнокултурните промени в средновековния град.

Гробните контексти са изследвани интердисциплинарно. Археологическото проучване предоставя данни за стратиграфията на гробовете и подробно документиране на гробните ями и скелетните останки. А антропологичното изследване предоставя информация за пола, възрастта, ръста на погребаните индивиди, анатомичните и антропологичните особености, болестни патологии, травми и лечебни манипулации, оставили следи по костните останки.

Резултатите от антропологичното изследване са обобщени. Изследвани са човешките костни останки на пет индивида – двама мъже на възраст 45 – 50 г. (гроб № 1) и 25 – 30 г. (гроб № 5), жена на възраст 18 – 20 до 25 г. (гроб № 4) и две деца на възраст 2 – 3 г. (гроб № 2) и 10 – 12 г. (гроб № 3). Мъжете в гробове № 1 и 5 са били с висок ръст – около 171 cm и 172 cm (таблица 3), имали са и добре развита мускулатура. Жената от гроб № 4 е с нисък ръст – около 152 cm, с грацилни кости и слабо развита мускулатура.

Изследваните индивиди показват разнообразни патологични изменения на черепните кости, съзъбията и посткраниалния скелет. Върху черепа на мъжа от гроб № 1 е установена следа от травма, както и посттравматична трепанация (обр. 6, стрелка). Дефекти, вероятно с травматичен произход, се установяват и на черепа на жената от гроб № 4 (обр. 19). Специален интерес представляват дефектите на костта, установени на вътрешната страна на пубисните кости на жената от гроб № 4, които много автори интерпретират като белег от родилен процес.

Съзъбието от гроб № 1 показва голям брой патологични изменения на зъбно-челюстния апарат (обр. 5: 4). Установени са пародонтозни изменения и напреднало абразиво на емайла на съзъбието на жената от гроб № 4 (обр. 5: 2, 3, 5), както и начални пародонтозни изменения при мъжа от гроб № 5 (обр. 5: 6, 7). Като следствие от периоди на неблагоприятни условия за развитието се интерпретират и дефектите от линейна хипоплазия на емайла на зъбите, обяснявани с прекарани дълги периоди на заболяване или с диетичен дефицит. Такива се откриват и на двете съзъбия, в които са представени постоянните зъби – от гроб № 4, където линиите отговарят на 2 – 2½ и 3 г. от развитието (обр. 5: 5), и от гроб № 3 с линии, отговарящи на подобна възраст. Възрастта на образуване на тези дефекти съпада с възрастта, на която е починал индивидът от гроб № 2. Тези резултати идентифицират периода като рисков за хората от популацията. Изглежда възрастта между две и три години е била преходна и бележи отбиването на детето от кърменето и преминаването му към общо хранене. Промяната на хранителния режим е индикация, че около 2 – 3-годишна възраст детето е поставено в нова социална позиция, която намалява тясната връзка с майката и процеса на кърмене, като майката вероятно е придобивала ново дете в кърмаческа възраст.

Развитие на *cribra orbitalia* се открива и при двата индивида в детска възраст от гробове № 2 и 3, като и в двата случая костната структура показва активна реакция при настъпване на смъртта. Деформацията на тилната кост на по-малкото дете, от гроб № 2, би могла да се свърже със сърповидно-клетъчна анемия, като не е изключено и развитие на таласемия. При индивида от гроб № 3 е възможно да става въпрос за анемично състояние, като не става ясна етиологията му – дефицит в храненето или наличие на вътрешни паразити. Възможно е обаче белегът и при този индивид да се обясни с унаследена сърповидно-клетъчна (хемолитична) анемия.

Черепът на израсналия индивид от гроб № 5 (мъж на 25 – 30 години) показва белези на рекомбинирана *cribra orbitalia*, форма, показваща преодоляване на периода на образуването ѝ, вероятно преживян в детска възраст, състояние, обяснимо с хранителния режим и прекарани заболявания.

И при двата мъжки скелета се идентифицират ентезопатични изменения върху лявата малко-

пищялна кост. Върху дясната малкопищялна кост при изследваните мъжки скелети от Плиска не се наблюдава периостално формиране на хиперостози. Поради тази причина можем да предположим, че ентезопатиите върху левите малкопищялни кости се дължат по-скоро на получена травма или възможно хронично травмиране при определена дейност, претоварваща мускулите на подбедрицата на левия крак. Изменението на скелета на индивида от гроб № 1 се комбинира със силно изразени дегенеративно-дистрофични промени (остеохондроза, спондилоартроза и спондилоза) във всички области на гръбначния стълб. Едно обяснение на измененията може да се свърже с активна физическа дейност, натоварваща интензивно именно тази част от скелета – напр. повдигане и пренасяне на тежки товари, неудобна поза и силни вибрации на цялото тяло. При мъжкия скелет от гроб № 1 също се установи субтрохлеарен форамен на лявата раменна кост. Описаната находка може да е резултат от инцидентна травма или хронично натоварване на левия горен крайник.

Данните за антропологичния тип на индивидите са непълни. Трите черепа на израсналите индивиди могат да се определят като европеидни. Единствено черепът от гроб № 4 показва много висока стойност на черепния индекс (от категория утрабрахикран), което поставя монголоидния примес като едно от възможните обяснения. Според черепния индекс мъжът от гроб № 1 е определен като мезокран (таблица 6). И двата черепа са с относително голяма височина и попадат в рубриката на хипсикран. Горночелюстният индекс на черепите от гробовете № 4 и 5 попада в рубриката брахикран. Долната челюст при същите индивиди е относително дълга, попадаща в рубриката долихостеномандибулар. Жената е с относително тесен нос, ниски, правоъгълни орбити; хоризонталната профилировка може да се опише като изразена със стойности на измерените назомаларен и зигомаксиларни ъгли, попадащи в рубриката на големите. Вертикалната профилировка, без да може да се измери, описва черепа като ортогнат.

Данните за антропологичния тип на популацията се вписват в познатото от по-ранни изследвания на гробовете във Вътрешния град на Плиска. При изследвани 13 израснали индивиди от некропола до Западната крепостна стена антропологичните данни показват смесен антропологичен тип. Расовите белези ги определят като европеиди с монголоидни примеси. Европеидните белези се отнасят до северната раса, но се срещат и примеси от примитивни белези на андроновския расов тип. Монголоидните белези са проявени от южносибирската или туранската раса, памиро-ферганския расов тип или расата на Средноазиатското междуречие и от уралската раса.

Както в новопроучената серия, така и в предходни изследвания на гробовете от Плиска се наблюдава увеличение на честотата на заболявания като анемия, причинена от интестинални паразити, бруцелоза и туберкулоза. Високата им честота показва, че в изследвания период има споделена среда на обитаване на хората с домашните животни. Наблюдаваната заболяемост може да е предизвикана и от начините на обработка на месото, млякото и млечните продукти за консумация, свързани с недостатъчна топлинна обработка. Индиректните данни за метаболитни нарушения в изследваната серия и по-ясните белези на такива нарушения, свързани с недостиг на витамин С в по-рано изследвания материал, насочват към диетичен режим, беден на продукти от растителен произход.

Гробовете от обект „Дворцов център – изток“ са поставени в контекста на останалите интрамурални гробовете във Вътрешния град на Плиска. Практиката да се погребва в урбанизирана среда, без ясна регулация, е тема, която все още не е анализирана цялостно. В контекста на новопроучените гробовете са привлечени примери и от други сектори на Вътрешния град на Плиска, които дават възможност да поставим на дискусия широк кръг проблеми, свързани със стратиграфията и хронологията на интрамуралните гробовете и връзката им с демографските и етнокултурните промени в средновековния град.

Описаният от проучвателите погребален обред представя едно сравнително бедно „християнизирано“ население. В гробовете рядко се открива инвентар, основно накити. Гробните ями са вкопани сравнително плитко, без да е влагана особена грижа за оформянето им. Документирани са отделни случаи на маркиране на гроба с камъни и частично ограждане на мъртвия. За гробовете № 10 и 20 при южната крепостна стена И. Захариев е изказал предположение, че са езически, без да дава по-комплексни аргументи. Т. Балабанов говори за „отклонения“ от християнския обред или по-скоро за

голямо разнообразие в позицията на тялото, крайниците и главата, които според него свидетелстват за непълно християнизирано население. В сектора при северната порта Т. Балабанов разкрива четири гроба с ориентация север – юг, положени в обща траншея, които определя за печенежки.

Всички проучватели датират гробовете в най-късния период на Плиска, отнасят ги изключително след 30-те/40-те години на XI век или най-общо около средата и дори след средата на XI в. Те са предшествани от повсеместно изоставяне на жилищата от „византийския период“ (70-те години на X в. – 30-те/40-те години на XI в.), публикувани са и конкретни примери на опожарени постройки от това време. Данни за изоставяне на жилища има и от други проучени сектори – до северната и до източната крепостни стени. Този процес свидетелства за настъпилите промени в демографията, градоустройствената схема и организацията на живот в града. Археологическите проучвания са документирали многобройни следи от военни стълкновения в Плиска. Навсякъде по крепостните стени се откриват следи от пожари, които се датират след първата трета на XI в. По това време са преградени двете порти – северната и южната, извършени са и значителни ремонти и преустройства на крепостните кули.

Византийските хроники на Скилица, Йоан Зонара, Михаил Аталиат, Михаил Псел и Анна Комнина описват напрегната военно-политическа ситуация в региона. Масирани печенежки нападения са отбелязани през 1027 г., атаките се засилват през 1032, 1034, 1035 и 1036 г., за да достигнат своя апогей през 1048 г. Резултатът от тази инвазия е трайното настаняване на печенеги на юг от Дунав, в тема Паристрион, а Плиска и Плисковското поле вероятно се превръщат в един от основните центрове на печенежко заселване. Това се определя от благоприятното географско положение на Плиска и развитата градска и фортификационна инфраструктура.

Още при първите разкопки на Дворцовия център, в най-горните пластове проучвателите са откривали материали и градежи, които свързват с настанилите се в Плиска печенеги. Данни за обитаване от новодошло население има и за Външния град на Плиска, в района на Голямата базилика, както и в североизточния край на с. Войвода. Свидетелство за печенеги в Плиска е погребението на два коня и куче в една от ямите, открита през 1978 г. в пласта над „Крумовия дворец“. Две погребения на кучета, едното обезглавено, са открити и в най-късния стратиграфски пласт, над каменния площад, северно от Цитаделата.

Новото, което се наблюдава на обект „Дворцов център – изток“, е появата в последния стратиграфски хоризонт на постройки с лека дървена наземна конструкция. Открити са стенни мазилки (обр. 21) от глинобитни постройки. Друг важен археологически факт са останките от каменни настилки (обр. 22), които отбелязват съществуването на специфични наземни съоръжения, които вероятно са служели за подове на леки постройки с правоъгълна или заоблена (юртообразна) форма.

Едно от най-видимите археологически явления, насочващи ни към демографските и етнокултурните промени в Плиска след 30-те/40-те години на XI в., е свързано с масовата практика мъртвите да се погребват в обитаемото пространство. Към него трябва да се добавят и наблюденията на проучвателите, които забелязват редица специфики и „отклонения“ в погребалния обред.

Сред основните археологически находки, идентифициращи това население, проучвателите посочват глинени котли с вътрешни уши, глинени съдове, изработени на ръка, сфероконусните съдове. Обръща се внимание също на някои новопоявили се в Плиска метални находки като кръглите апликации, листовидните ажурни висулки, бронзовите фигурки на конник, бронзовите катинарчета с форма на куче, бронзовите огнива.

Интересна информация за стопанската структура и хранителните навици на населението в Плиска предоставиха и зооархеологическите изследвания на обект „Дворцов център – изток“. В последния стратиграфски хоризонт, към който принадлежат петте гроба, е отчетено съществено увеличение на относителния дял на костите от коне и диви животни, които са използвани основно за храна. Данните за хранителното меню на населението в Плиска от втората трета на XI в. показват значителна консумация на месо.

Антропологичното изследване установи метаболитни нарушения и заболявания, които се свързват с бедна на продукти от растителен произход кухня и различни дефицити в хранителното меню. Многобройните заболявания, причинени от небалансирания хранителен режим, са индикация, че

обитателите са изпитвали затруднения да разнообразят менюто си и в условията на постоянна военна активност са продължили да следват номадските си хранителни навици.

Свързването на гробовете от обект „Дворцов център – изток“ с настанилите се в Плиска печенеги е само една хипотетична възможност, която се вписва добре в известните ни археологически и исторически данни. Отбелязаните в антропологичното изследване особености на расовия вид на индивидите, заболявания, бойни травми и лечебни манипулации също могат да се разглеждат като характерни за къснономадските племена у нас.

Ключови думи: Плиска, гробове, антропологично изследване, трепанация

THE FORTIFICATION SYSTEM OF MEDIEVAL PHILIPPOPOLIS

Kamen Stanev

*Cyrillo-Methodian Research Center, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Moskovska 13, 1000 Sofia, Bulgaria;
kamen_stratiot@abv.bg*

ABSTRACT

Medieval Philippopolis (present-day Plovdiv) inherited the fortification system constructed in the 1st – 6th c. It consists of three “belts”. There are no data about changes up to the 12th c., with the exception of a ditch which protected the populated territories north of the fortress wall but has not yet been registered archaeologically. At the end of the 12th – beginning of the 13th c., there are data concerning several additions and later instances of destruction. Traces of those can be found at several places along the wall enclosing the high part of the Three Hills (Trimontium). It was at this time that significant changes took place – the vast area in the plain was abandoned, and a citadel was set up in the northern part of the Three Hills, in which a capacious water reservoir was built. At a later time, in the 13th – 14th c., a second wall was built, which fenced off the furthest northern part of the citadel. The latest information about the use of the Philippopolis fortifications is from 1410, and after their being badly damaged in the wars between the sons of the Ottoman sultan Bayezid I, their maintenance was abandoned.

Key words: Philippopolis, Middle Ages, fortification system

As with every other ancient and medieval city, the most important part of the urban infrastructure of Philippopolis was its fortification system. It is mentioned in several sources from the Middle Ages, as well as by a number of foreign travellers who passed through the country during the period of Ottoman rule. The fortifications of the city have always attracted researchers' interest (Боспачиева, Коларова 2014, 12 – 19), and there is specific research for the Middle Ages – (Цончев 1938, 33 – 72; Джамбов 1959, 165 – 174; Морева 1988, 129 – 141; Данчева-Василева 2011, 219 – 227; Боспачиева, Коларова 2014, 296 – 300; Станев, Божинова 2014б, 359 – 375; Иванов, Иванов 2015, 5 – 16). The aim of this paper is to clarify the planning and follow the development of the fortification system through the Middle Ages by using both archaeological and written data. Thus, technical data such as dimensions, research history, plans, restoration activities and current state of the individual structures will, to a large extent, be spared since they have already been published in the literature referenced for each structure. The chronological scope of the study is from the beginning of the 7th c. to 1410, i.e., this is the period of the Middle Ages and the first decades of Ottoman rule according to the classical periodization for Bulgarian historiography. The end of this period has been determined based on the last written source about the use of the fortifications during the war between the sons of the Ottoman sultan Bayezid (Бойков 2012, 47). Two decades later, in 1433, the French traveller Bertrandon

de la Broquière visited the area and described the fortress as “destroyed” (ЧПБ 1975, 54 – 55). This information is confirmed by the other travelers who passed through the area after him.

Despite many years of research, the history of the fortification system of ancient and medieval Philippopolis is still full of unclarified circumstances. This even concerns such important questions as the routes of some of the fortress walls and their dating. This is due to the fact that after they were abandoned, they became a source of stones and bricks for new constructions, which led to their complete destruction in some places, or the survival only of the foundations, so it is impossible to say whether any given section of the wall or tower had medieval additions in height. Another problem is the fact that ancient and medieval Philippopolis is in the centre of present-day Plovdiv (fig. 2), which limits the opportunity for archaeological excavations only to terrains, usually small in area, where there is new construction. This territory was actively inhabited in the 15th – 20th c., as a result of which the archaeological structures and layers have been severely disturbed by a number of various types of dug-in structures – pits, wells, foundations, cellars, etc. A significant problem concerning many of the studied sites is that the information published is extremely brief, mainly focusing on Antiquity. The fortification facilities are mentioned in a number of medieval written sources, as well as by travellers who visited the city in the 15th – 18th c. Most of them are too general and do not contribute to clarifying the planning of the fortress, which is why they are not referenced here, others contain valuable information which complements the archaeological data. The recorded memories of local residents, which mentioned gates that are non-existent today, are the most valuable. These gates were preserved until the middle of the 19th c., and part of the main streets passed through them. The latest source of information is observations on preserved medieval repairs and additions to the fortress system, which have not been the subject of archaeological studies, or there have been studies, but the data on the Middle Ages have not been published. In these cases, dating can be determined only on the basis of the construction technique used. Combining different sources of information allows us to construct an up-to-date picture of the planning and development of the fortification system of Philippopolis in the Middle Ages, even though due to the problems mentioned above there are still a number of questions that remain unanswered.

Similarly to many other cities, at the beginning of the Middle Ages, Philippopolis had a very well-preserved fortification system, constructed in the period between the 1st – 6th c. Even today, despite the fact that at the beginning of the 15th c. the fortification walls ceased to be used and their destruction began – both under the impact of natural forces, and (mainly) due to the removal of stones and bricks for new constructions, there are sections where the Roman and Late Antique walls have been preserved in height up to 4 – 8 m (Боспачиева, Коларова 2014, 44, 50 и 87) (fig. 3: 2 – 4; fig. 4; fig. 22: 1, 2). The fortification system at the beginning of the Middle Ages comprised 3 “belts” (fig. 1; fig. 2).¹

1. It covers the Trimontium massif, which comprises three connected hills – Nebet Tepe to the north, Taksim Tepe to the south-west, and Dzhabaz Tepe to the south-east. This wall is about 1,650 m long and encloses an area of 82.5 acres (Цончев 1938, 34).²

2. It covers the area between the Trimontium and the ridge of Sahat Tepe hill. The length of the wall (without the one on the Trimontium) is about 900 m, and the fortified area is about 106

¹ The map has been developed on the basis of map 5000 and cadastre, published on the site of the Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre Agency – <https://kais.cadastre.bg/>, the plans provided in the book by M. Bospachieva and V. Kolarova with some additions.

² The data are approximate since the wall has not been traced everywhere, but the unknown sections are few and cannot have a significant effect.

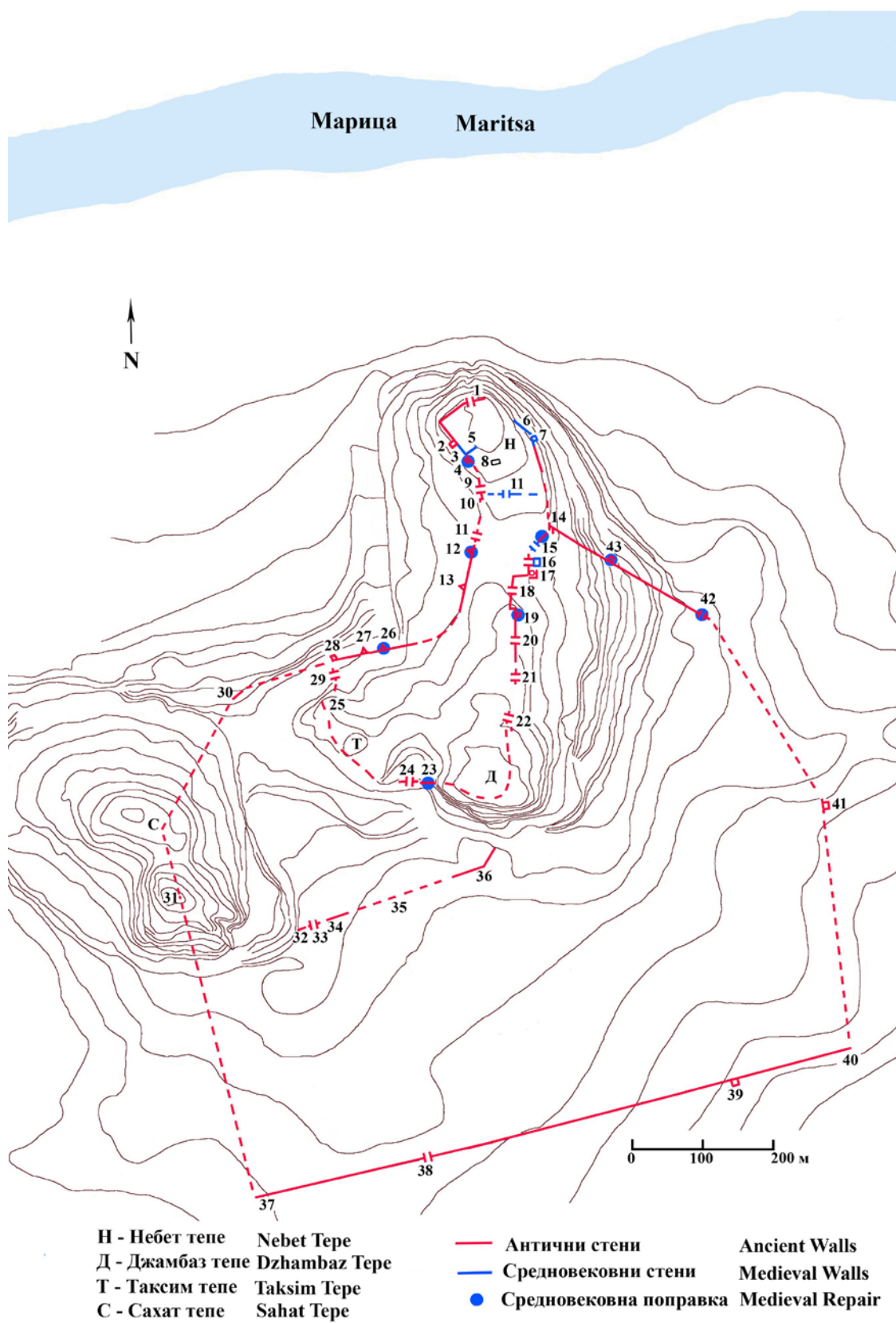


Fig. 1. Plan of the fortress walls
Обр. 1. План на крепостните стени



Fig. 2. Fortress walls in the background of the present-day city
Обр. 2. Крепостните стени на фона на съвременния град

decares.³

3. It covers the plain south of Sahat Tepe and the Trimontium, and east of Dzhambaz Tepe and its eastern slope. The wall (without the one fencing it on the north) is 2300 m long and covers an area of about 500 decares.

This triple fortified system was not constructed all at once, but was the result of several construction campaigns, distant from one another in time.

The earliest registered fortress walls are on Nebet Tepe. They are from the pre-Roman period, but the exact dating is still disputed (Боспачиева, Коларова 2014, 31). Until recently it was accepted that the western fortress wall is part of these pre-Roman fortification facilities (Боспачиева, Коларова 2014, 26), but new studies have shown that it was constructed in 46 A.D. when the city was conquered by the Romans (Христева и др. 2018, 278 – 280). This earliest Roman wall can be traced from the northern end of Nebet Tepe to point 9 of fig. 1 (Боспачиева, Коларова 2014, 78 – 79). In its lower part, it is constructed of big, slightly processed syenite blocks, followed by a levelling plinth of flat river stones; in height the faces are of processed syenite blocks and spolia from different types of stone, and the emplecton is from small river stones compounded with clay

³ The data on the second and third fortified belts are to a certain degree relative, since significant sections have not been studied. The estimations are based on what is provided on the site of the Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre Agency – <https://kais.cadastre.bg/>.



Fig. 3. Different types of masonry from the 1st – 6th c.

Обр. 3. Различни типове зидария от I – VI в.

(fig. 3: 1). This wall has not been registered in other parts of the Trimontium, and most probably in this earliest Roman period, the fortification covered only Nebet Tepe.⁴

In 172 A.D., the fortification system was expanded significantly, and the so-called wall of Marcus Aurelius was constructed (Топалилов 2012, 158 – 163; Боспачиева, Коларова 2014, 144 – 148). In its lower part, the wall is constructed mainly from very large syenite blocks, in individual cases – sandstone quadrae, and it is revetted with small syenite blocks and rows of bricks in height (fig. 3: 2). The furthest north part of the wall is on 4th January Str. (to the immediate north of point 11 of fig. 1). From there, it continues along the high part of the western slope of Dzhambaz Tepe, turns to the west along the northern slope of Taksim Tepe, passes to the immediate north of the Roman stadium (fig. 1: 30), goes up the northern slope of Sahat Tepe, goes along its ridge, then goes down to the south. In the section west of the Roman stadium, its remains have been registered only on the peak of Sahat Tepe, next to the present-day TV tower (fig. 1: 31). The eastern route has not been detected yet. The southern route of the wall of Marcus Aurelius is entirely in the plain, it has been registered at a number of places and can be assumed to be certain. The furthest

⁴ Such a wall probably also existed along the eastern slope of Nebet Tepe, but later a Late Antique wall was constructed in front of it, which is why it is not visible. Excavations have not been carried out in this section, but at point 7 of fig. 1, a construction of flat grey-blue river stones joined with white mortar, characteristic of the Early Roman wall, is visible under the Late Antique wall and medieval repairs.

west part studied to date is on 3 Ivan Vazov Str. (fig. 1: 37) (Боспачиева, Коларова 2014, 109), and in 2019, its furthest east point to date was registered (fig. 1: 40) (Божинова, Станев 2019а, 792).⁵ The eastern route of this wall has, to date, been registered only in a very small section, to the immediate east of the so-called Small Basilica (Боспачиева, Коларова 2014, 69 – 73). The next section where the wall of Marcus Aurelius has been uncovered is at the Eastern Gate (fig. 1: 42, fig. 2: 42) (Боспачиева, Коларова, 2014, 64 – 68). Here, it turns to the north-west, climbing up the eastern slope of the Trimontium and reaching the present-day Ethnographic Museum. The route here has been studied at several places (Боспачиева, Коларова, 2014, 58 – 63) and can be accepted as definitely established.

In Late Antiquity, the Roman walls along the western and north-eastern slopes of the Trimontium were thickened, and a new wall was abutted to them, and along the eastern and southern high parts (from p. 14 to p. 29 of fig. 1) a new route was constructed (Боспачиева, Коларова 2014, 191 – 197). There are no registered remains of the fortress wall on the high part of Taksim Tepe (no excavations have been carried out here). There are such on its northern rocky slope, east of Rilski Metoh Str. (Former “Elbrus”) and behind the house museum Hristo G. Danov (fig. 1: 25) (Ботушарова, Танкова 1982, 49).⁶ This new Late Antique⁷ wall is constructed in opus mixtum (fig. 3: 3). With its construction, the high part of the Trimontium was differentiated as an internal fortress.

Again in Late Antiquity, a proteichisma was constructed on the eastern slope of Dzhambaz Tepe, 6 metres east of this Late Antique wall, registered in two places (fig. 1: 14, 17) (Боспачиева, Коларова 2014, 44, 50). It is not clear whether it functioned in the Middle Ages.

Chronologically, the latest fortress wall fenced the area between Sahat Tepe and Dzhambaz Tepe from the south (fig. 1: 32 – 36). It is mainly constructed from spolia (fig. 3: 4) and up to the 30s of the 20th c., well preserved, tall sections of it existed (Цончев 1938, 59 – 61) (fig. 1: 35 – 36). The wall has been studied at three places – under the former Balkan cinema, the present-day McDonalds on 42 Knyaz Alexander I Str. (fig. 1: 32) (Цончев 1938, 141 – 142), under Bulgaria Hotel, now The Stay Hotel, located opposite the previous site (Колев 1977, 116) (fig. 1: 34) and the third, largest section, is between Tzar Boris Obeditel Blvd and the Monday Market (Боспачиева, Коларова 2014, 110 – 113) (обр 1: 36; fig. 2: 26). This wall is dated “post 5th c.” (Боспачиева, Коларова 2014, 113) and “the end of the 6th, beginning of the 7th c.” (Кесякова 2001, 59). The fact that large sections of it were well preserved up to the 30s of the 20th c. shows that in the Middle Ages it was much better preserved and most probably functioned as such. In older studies this wall is mentioned as continuing east, circling around Dzhambaz Tepe and moving on to the East Gate, but, as M. Bospachieva and V. Kolarova note, to present date there are no data on this (Боспачиева, Коларова, 2014, 113). In reality, the furthest northern part of the wall studied is only metres away from the vertical rock of Dzhambaz Tepe and goes straight towards it, which shows that the wall did not circle the hill, but ended in the rock.

The following elements are known to date in the aforementioned three circles of fortress walls – towers, gates, and posterns.

Towers and gates along the fortress wall fencing the high part of the Trimontium:

– Postern in the northern wall of Nebet Tepe (fig. 1: 1). It was constructed in Late Antiquity

⁵ In the report of the excavations that followed, the researchers refuted this hypothesis and stated that there was a “Roman road station” here (Коркутова, Давидова 2019, 796).

⁶ This section has not been studied and at present there is no access to it, but it can be seen from below – from Saborna Str., and from the peak of the hill.

⁷ Although the wall has been studied at many places, publications do not provide specific arguments supporting the proposed different datings.



Fig. 4. Late Antique wall near the Ancient Theatre with a medieval addition

Обр. 4. Късноантична стена при Античния театър със средновековна преправка

and led to the foot of the hill through a vaulted corridor and steps hewn into the rock. The opinion has been expressed that it also functioned during the Middle Ages (Мопева 1988, 135), but according to the researcher, a layer of destruction debris has been uncovered on the inside of the corridor, and above it – medieval Bulgarian ceramics (Ботушарова 1963, 95, 114, табл. XIII, 115, табл. XIV). This shows that in the early Middle Ages this postern was no longer functioning.

– Rectangular tower to the Early Roman wall (fig. 1: 2; fig. 2: 2; fig. 16: 2). Dimensions: 9.30 by 9.70 m. The layers to it have not been published (Боспачиева, Коларова 2014, 26), but the eastern part of the tower is well preserved, and to its immediate south there is a Late Medieval repair of the fortress wall (fig. 16: 6) (on it, below), which shows that the tower was functioning during the Middle Ages.

– Rectangular tower constructed together with the Early Roman wall in 46 A.D. (fig. 1: 4; fig. 2: 4; fig. 5: 2; fig. 6: 1; fig. 16: 3), dimensions 4.95 x 5.30 m. During a trench study in 1997, M. Bospachieva came across the western wall of the tower, but due to the limited scope of the excavations, she did not recognize it as such and assumed it to be the fortress wall (Боспачиева, Коларова 2014, 74 – 76). In 2017 it was uncovered completely, together with part of the fortress walls north and south of it (Христева и др. 2018, 280). During the construction of the Late Antique wall (fig. 5: 3; fig. 16: 4), which is abutted to the Late Roman one (fig. 5: 1; fig. 16: 1), the tower was no longer functioning and the new construction oversteps its western wall.⁸ At the end of the 12th, or beginning of the 13th c., the fortification facilities in this section were destroyed intentionally. At a later point in time, they were restored, following the route of the Early Roman wall, but in the area of the

⁸ This can be seen from the layer of mortar with crushed brick, identical to the one belonging to the Late Antique wall, which oversteps the north-western corner of the tower. In height, the construction was entirely destroyed by Ottoman dug-ins.



Fig. 5. Stratigraphic situation of the western wall on Nebet Tepe. Legend: 1. and 2. Wall and tower from 46 A.C.; 3. Late Antique wall; 4. Layer of destructions from the end of the 12th – beginning of the 13th c.; 5. and 6. Additions from the 13th – 14th c.

Обр. 5. Стратиграфска ситуация на западната стена на Небет тепе. Легенда:
1. и 2. Стена и кула от 46 г. от н. е.; 3. Късноантична стена;
4. Пласт деструкции от края на XII – началото на XIII в.; 5. и 6. Преправки от XIII – XIV в.

tower they follow its western wall, which can be seen clearly from the additions (on them below). Thus a bend/bastion was formed here.

- Postern (fig. 1: 9) (Боспачиева, Коларова 2014, 78 – 79). It was constructed in the Early Roman wall and continued functioning after the wall was thickened in Late Antiquity. There are no data whether it continued to be used during the Middle Ages.

- Rectangular tower to the immediate south of the above postern (fig. 1: 10). It has been partially studied, no data whether it functioned during the Middle Ages (Боспачиева, Коларова 2014, 79).

- Gate (fig. 1: 11; fig. 2: 11). It was situated on 4th January Str., and the street passed through it. The gate was preserved up to the first half of the 19th c. (Цончев 1938, 55). Studies have not been carried out. The fact that the gate was well-preserved and the street passed through it shows that regardless of when it was constructed, it was functioning in the Middle Ages.

- Triangular towers, four in number, situated south of the above-mentioned gate (fig. 1: 12, 13, 26, 27). They were constructed together with the thickening of the fortress wall in Late Antiquity. The towers are preserved at a very low level; it is not clear whether they were functioning during the Middle Ages (Боспачиева, Коларова 2014, 192).

- Rectangular tower (fig. 1: 28), inside dimensions 5.60 x 3/3.40 m. Dated to the 2nd – 6th c. (Боспачиева, Коларова 2014, 91 – 96). The layers to it have not been published, but it is well preserved, which implies that it was functioning during the Middle Ages (Молева 1988, 132).

- Gate on Saborna Str., in the area where the steps of the Church of The Holy Mother of God are today (fig. 1: 29; fig. 2: 29). It was preserved until 1843 (Цончев 1938, 56 – 57). It has not been studied and it cannot be said when it was built, but the fact that the main street leading to the Old



Fig. 6. Stratigraphic state of the western wall on Nebet Tepe. Legend: 1. Roman wall and tower from 46 A.D.; 2. Late Antique wall. 3.1. Corner between the second partition wall and a medieval upgrade of the western wall from the 13th – 14th c. 3.2. Buttress from the 13th – 14th c.

Обр. 6. Стратиграфска ситуация на западната стена на Небет тепе. Легенда: 1. Римска стена и кула от 46 г. от н. е. 2. Късноантична стена. 3.1. Ъгъл между втората презградна стена и средновековно надграждане на западната стена XIII – XIV в. 3.2. Контрафорс от XIII – XIV в.

Town goes through it shows that it was functioning in the Middle Ages.

– Hisar Kapia Gate, to the immediate south of the Ethnographic Museum (fig. 1: 15; fig. 2: 15). Although it is entirely preserved, it has not been the object of a detailed study. The gate is on the route of the Late Antique fortress wall, but its connection to it – whether it was built synchronously or later – is not clear since to its north the wall has a number of medieval and Ottoman additions, and the original masonry is not visible, and to the south it lies below revivalist constructions. Different opinions have been expressed about its dating – Early Byzantine (Кесякова 2001, 54), Late Medieval and even Ottoman (Цончев 1938, 54; Боспачиева, Коларова 2014, 46 и 299). In its present state, the gate dates back to the Middle Ages and is discussed below.

– Postern under the apse of the Church of St Constantine and Helena (fig. 1: 16) (Джамбов 1959, 165 – 174; Боспачиева, Коларова 2014, 46). In the Middle Ages, a tower was added here, on it – below.

– Round tower south of the church of St Constantine and Helena (fig. 1: 17). Outside diameter – 8.7 m, no data whether it functioned during the Middle Ages (Боспачиева, Коларова 2014, 48– 50).

– Postern under Zlatyu Boyadzhiev Gallery (fig. 1: 18) (Боспачиева, Коларова 2014, 51 – 52). It is not clear whether it functioned in the Middle Ages.

– Rectangular tower, (fig. 1: 19; fig. 2: 19). Although it is well preserved,⁹ it has not been the object of a detailed study. The tower was built in Late Antiquity (Боспачиева, Коларова 2014, 52 – 53), but it definitely functioned during the Middle Ages, which is evidenced by its good state of preservation and the repairs on its faces (Морева 1988, 130 – 132).

⁹ At present, the tower is highly overgrown, which is why a photo is not enclosed.

– Probable postern under the Mevlevi Hane (present-day Paldin restaurant) (fig. 1: 20). There are no data whether it functioned during the Middle Ages (Боспачиева, Коларова 2014, 53).

– Postern on 11 Knyaz Tseretelev Str. (fig. 1: 21). There are no data whether it functioned during the Middle Ages (Боспачиева, Коларова 2014, 54).

– Probable postern on 17 Knyaz Tseretelev Str. (fig. 1: 22). There are no data whether it functioned during the Middle Ages (Боспачиева, Коларова 2014, 55).

– Gate in the wall at the Ancient Theatre, on the route of the former Ivaylo Str.¹⁰ (fig. 1: 24; fig. 2: 24). Information about this gate has been preserved only in the memories of residents, recorded in the 19th c., and the street which passed under it led to the St Marina Church (Цончев 1938, 56). Nowadays the fortress wall in this section is not preserved.

The high number of posterns along the Late Antique wall enclosing Dzhambaz Tepe from the east is notable. The presence of so many posterns lacks logic. Probably, some of the posterns in question are actually entrances to towers, which have not been registered, since they fall outside of the excavated sections. The presence of towers here is logical since the hillside is more sloping than the other parts of the Trimontium and, respectively, the wall is easier to attack.

Only one gate is known along the wall fencing off the plain between Dzhambaz Tepe and Sahat Tepe:

– Gate on Knyaz Alexander I Str. (fig. 1: 33; fig. 2: 33). It is known only from memories of local residents recorded in the 19th c. It was called “Stanimashka” (i.e., leading to Stanimaka, present-day Asenovgrad city) (Цончев 1938, 64). The fact that it was preserved until recent times shows that it functioned during the Middle Ages.

Wall enclosing the eastern part of Sahat Tepe and the town in the plain:

– Rectangular tower with postern (fig. 1: 38), north of the former Trimontium Hotel, present-day Ramada Plovdiv Trimontium Hotel. Dated 2nd – 4th c., no published data about the Middle Ages (Боспачиева, Коларова 2014, 106 – 107).

– Rectangular tower, on Kapitan Raycho Str., between blocks No. 59 and 61 (fig. 1: 39). Rectangular, dated to the 4th c., no published data about the Middle Ages (Боспачиева, Коларова 2014, 100 – 102).

– Rectangular tower to the immediate east of the so-called Small Basilica (fig. 1: 41; fig. 2: 41). Dated to the 4th – 5th c. (Боспачиева, Коларова, 2014, 69 – 73). About the fortress wall connected to the tower, the researcher M. Bospachieva says that it was dismantled during the Middle Ages for re-use of the construction material (Боспачиева, Коларова, 2014, 69), which means that the tower was also not functioning.

– Eastern Gate, Alexander Malinov Square (fig. 1: 42; fig. 2: 41). This is the main gate of Roman and Late Antique Philippopolis (Боспачиева, Коларова, 2014, 64 – 68). Medieval additions have been established on the gate, namely, a narrowing of the corridor with masonry from stones joined with white mortar, which have not been published (Морева 1988, 130 и 136) and are not visible at present. Studies have been renewed in recent years and the published data on whether the gate and the wall were functioning during the Middle Ages are contradictory (Мартинова 2018, 269; Мартинова 2019, 297).¹¹ The memory of this gate, called “Stambol Kapusu”, was preserved until two centuries ago (Цончев 1938, 64).

– Rectangular tower next to St Nedelya Church (fig. 1: 43; fig. 2: 43) (Боспачиева, Коларова

¹⁰ In this section, the street was removed during the excavations of the theatre.

¹¹ The information provided by M. Martinova is not very clear, because in one case she speaks of materials which “prove the use of the fortification during the Middle Ages”, and in the other – the materials from the 7th – 13th c. are on the ruins of the wall.

2014, 59 – 62). It is mentioned about this tower, that there are medieval additions (Морева 1988, 132), but they have not been published.

The review of available archaeological data shows that it is very difficult, based just on them, to answer the question whether the fortification system in the plain functioned during the Middle Ages. The same applies to a number of towers and posterns along the wall enclosing the high part of the Trimontium. The reason for this is not the lack of studies, but the lack of publications. Where there are publications on the Middle Ages, they are sometimes contradictory. For example, the wall of Marcus Aurelius, which encloses the town in the plain, is severely destroyed, and excavations usually uncover only the lowest rows of quadrae which, due to their large size, were not taken out for re-use in later constructions. According to M. Bospachieva, in the section near the Small Basilica (fig. 1: 41), the wall was destroyed during the Middle Ages for re-use of the construction material (Босачиева, Коларова 2014, 69), but it is not specified when exactly this happened. The situation is more complicated with the Eastern Gate (fig. 1: 43), where in part of the publication it is stated that there are medieval additions, and in others – that there are materials from the 7th – 13th c. on its ruins. Medieval additions are also mentioned on the tower to the north-west of the gate (fig. 1: 43). So, the question arises – was the wall functioning? Some indirect data contribute to the solution of this problem. First, it is hard to accept that it was significantly destroyed during an earthquake, since there are well preserved sections of the Roman and Late Antique wall on the Trimontium to present day. We could assume that it was damaged during the Avar-Slavic invasions, or the conquest of the town by the Rus led by Sviatoslav in 970 (Станев 2009, 190 – 199), but key places should have been damaged during those – gates and towers, or individual sections. The withdrawal of the Rus was followed by the conquest of the town by the Byzantines, who colonized it with Asian population on two occasions – Paulicians and Orthodox Armenians (Станев 2009, 196 – 198). Later, Bulgarians and Byzantines settled here, and in the 11th – beginning of the 13th c., the town was described as very big. Archaeological studies show that in this period the populated territory fully occupied the area outlined by the wall of Marcus Aurelius, and in places even went beyond the wall. This is valid of the western slope of the Trimontium and the area north of the Eastern Gate. Recently, the data available on the middle of the 12th – beginning of the 13th c. were mapped, and this “jump” over the wall of Marcus Aurelius is clearly visible (Станев 2021, 141 – 168). This raises the question whether the wall of Marcus Aurelius, even if damaged by enemy attacks, earthquakes, or the lack of maintenance, in the previous centuries, was not restored during the Byzantine rule? It should be noted that in the 11th c. the Upper Thracian Valley was subject to Pecheneg raids, and the most attractive prospect for looting was the biggest and richest city, so its vast parts in the plain needed protection. The most categorical evidence of the functioning of the wall during this period are the data from Anna Komnene, who visited the city at the beginning of the 12th c. – “XIV. 8. *But this great Phillip made it the most famous among the cities of Thrace, by expanding it and fencing it with walls. In addition, he built in it a huge hippodrome and some other buildings deserving of awe, whose remains I saw with my own eyes when I somehow visited the city with the autocrat. The city is built on three hills, and each hill is enclosed with a big and high wall. And where the city goes into an open field, it is enclosed by a ditch which passes by Evros*” (ГИБИ 1972, 135). This description begins with a most general mention of fortress walls, then speaks of a hippodrome inside the city, finally describing the fortress walls on the Trimontium. The hippodrome in question is the so-called Roman stadium, whose northern part has been researched and exposed immediately south of p. 30 of fig. 1 and fig. 2.¹² Consequently, the first walls mentioned by Anna Komnene are different from those that enclose the Trimontium. Another very important piece of information is that of the

¹² Two other parts of it have been researched and exhibited in the underground parts of modern buildings.

presence of a ditch protecting the part of the city located in the direction of Maritsa river. This is the territory north of the Eastern Gate (fig. 1: 42). To present date, the ditch in question has not been registered.

The first, albeit indirect, archaeological data about repairs to the fortress walls on the Trimon-tium are also from the end of the 11th c. During excavations of 4th Stramna Str. (to the immediate north of point 14 of fig. 1), destruction debris of the Late Antique wall, which is west of the site, were found. In them, a hoard of coins of Alexius I Komnenus minted in the period 1081 – 1085 was discovered, which dates the collapse in question (Дочев, Топалилов 2004, 254 – 255, 258). The reason for the collapse is not clear, but in any case, having in mind the restless times, repairs of the damaged section followed.¹³

At the end of the 12th – beginning of the 13th c., there are several information sources regarding the destruction and repairs of the fortress walls. The first one is from 1189. It was left to us by the eminent Byzantine historian Niketas Choniates, who was at the time ruler of the city. The writing is related to the fear of the Byzantine emperor of the approaching Crusading army led by Frederick I Barbarossa: *“We would receive an order from the emperor to re-erect the ring protective belt of Philippopolis and surround it with a ditch, and [then] when we did this in these troublesome and dangerous times, shortly after we were commanded with a letter to destroy it, so that the city would not become a sanctuary for the king”* (ГИБИ 1983, 37). The fact that in 1189 the fortification facilities were neglected comes as no surprise, since after the defeat of the Pechenegs at Levounion in 1091, came a long period of peace for the Upper Thracian Valley and the region of Philippopolis, in particular. What is strange, however, is that the restoration did not take place several years earlier – when the Uprising of Asen and Peter broke out, moreover, it is Niketas Choniates who said that the Bulgarians ravaged the suburbs of the city (ГИБИ 1983, 35). Apparently, in the first years of the uprising, the Bulgarians were not viewed as a threat to the city itself – It was bigger a bite than they could chew. The scope of these repairs and later destructions carried out by Niketas Choniates cannot be estimated. According to A. Dancheva-Vassileva, the destruction affected the fortifications in the plain (Данчева-Василева 2011, 225). In this respect, it is interesting what the fate of the Late Antique ditch in front of the wall of Marcus Aurelius came to be. It has been studied in several sections and according to the data from the Small Basilica (fig. 1: 41; fig. 2: 41), it was backfilled in the 11th – 12th c. (Боспачиева, Коларова 2014, 289 – 290). This backfilling could have been the result of the neglect of the maintenance of the fortification facilities, which Niketas Choniates speaks of, but it could also have been intentional.¹⁴

It seems that the destructions of the fortification facilities, which Niketas Choniates carried out, were not great. In the summer of 1189, the Crusaders reached the city and, as Ansbert said, found it *“too well protected, both from nature and from humans”* (ЛИБИ 1965, 262). Several months later, when the Crusaders left Philippopolis, according to Ansbert and a letter related to the death of the German Emperor Frederick, destructions took place once again (ЛИБИ 1965, 220 и 283). Since this was carried out by the garrison that was left behind and hastily, the damage could not have been great. In 1205, in relation to its conquest by Tsar Kaloyan, in the letters of Emperor Heinrich Philippopolis is once again described as *“a very big and very well fortified city”* (ЛИБИ 1981, 14). The withdrawal of the Bulgarians took place together with the destruction of the city

¹³ This is a period in which the local Paulicians allied with the Pechenegs and created serious problems in the Upper Thracian Valley. It is in the battle with them in 1086, somewhere around Philippopolis, that the commander general of the Byzantine armies on the Balkans, Gregory Pakourianos, perished (Златарски 1934, 181, 184 – 185; Тъпкова-Заимова 1976, 98).

¹⁴ Since the materials have not been published, it cannot be determined when exactly this backfill took place. If we assume that it was intentional, it would be normal to expect earlier materials from the 12th c. in the soil for the backfill.

and its fortification facilities, information about which is provided by Geoffrey of Villehardouin: *“and he ordered all the rest to be taken away in chains, and the city – to be demolished entirely – the towers and walls, and the high palaces and rich houses – to be burnt down and destroyed. Thus was the noble city of Philippopolis destroyed, which was one of the three most beautiful [cities] of the Constantinople empire”* (Божиллов 2000, 128), the letters of Emperor Heinrich: *“he took to his country all non-noblemen, both men and women, and he razed the city to the ground...”* (ЛИБИ 1981, 15), Niketas Choniates: *“It was razed to the ground and turned to rubble”* (ГИБИ 1983, 84) and George Akropolites: *“And so he razed Philippopolis to the ground, too remarkable a city, which is situated by Evros”* (ГИБИ 1972, 156).

Information about the complete destruction of the fortress walls during the conquest of the city by Tsar Kaloyan in 1205 should not be taken literally. The total length of the three fortress walls – along the high part of the Trimontium, the one fencing the area between the Trimontium and Sahat Tepe, and the wall in the plain, is about 4900 m¹⁵ and their complete destruction required engaging a huge number of people for a long time. This is supported by the fact that large sections of the Roman and Late Antique walls on the Trimontium, as well as the wall of spolia between Dzhambaz Tepe and Sahat Tepe, have been preserved to date in great height. Obviously this intentional destruction covered only key places – gates, towers, crenels and individual sections – so that the walls became functionally unfit.

The situation with the fortress wall along the western slope of the Trimontium is of particular interest. Here, from the furthest northern end of the wall next to p. 26 of fig. 1 and fig. 2, the Late Antique wall which is abutted to the Early Roman one of 46 A.D., and the wall of Marcus Aurelius of 172, is mostly destroyed, while the Roman walls are preserved to a much greater height. Probably this was the consequence of destructions which occurred for different reasons and at different times that we can only wonder about, but it is interesting that the medieval additions are found on the Roman walls and not on the Late Antique one. An exception is presented only in the section west of the tower, shown on p. 26 of fig. 1. This shows that as early as the 13th – 14th c., the Late Antique wall was destroyed to such an extent that during the restoration of the fortification system, repairs were on the Roman walls, which were evidently less damaged. The excavations of Nebet Tepe in the past years, in the section of the tower shown on p. 4 of fig. 1 and 2, show one of the possible reasons for the destruction. Here, in 1997, M. Bospachieva made a small trench and in front of the western face of the tower and on its south-western corner, she established a thick layer of crushed mortar, pieces of bricks and stones, which she relates to the Late Antique wall but does not date the destruction (Боспачиева, Коларова 2014, 74). In 2017, the section was studied on a much larger area (Христева и др. 2018, 278 – 281), and the Roman wall was uncovered (fig. 5: 1; fig. 6: 1), the adjacent tower (fig. 5: 2; fig. 6: 1), and the Late Antique wall abutted to the Roman one (fig. 5: 3; fig. 6: 2). The Late Antique wall is severely damaged and only the part abutted to the Early Roman one is more well preserved. The layer with destructions on and in front of it is of mortar rubble, stones and bricks (fig. 6: 4), but there are no large pieces of masonry, which shows that the destruction was not caused by an earthquake. The presence of a large amount of stones and bricks shows that the destruction was not the result of removal of construction material for new constructions. The ceramics discovered in the destructions is from the second half of the 12th – beginning of the 13th c. This allows the destruction to be related, with a high degree of probability, to the destruction of the fortress by Tsar Kaloyan in 1205 described in the sources. When the fortification facilities were

¹⁵ The number is approximate since, as was mentioned, the exact route of the wall in the plain has not been established yet.



Fig. 7. Modification and unspecified facility in the northern part of the eastern wall on Nebet Tepe, end of the 12th – beginning of the 13th c.

Обр. 7. Преправка и неясно съоръжение в северната част на източната стена на Небет тене, края на XII – началото на XIII в.

later restored, this took place on the remains of the Roman, and not on the Late Antique wall.¹⁶

The conquest of Philippopolis by Tsar Kaloyan and the withdrawal that followed was accompanied by a deportation of the population of the city to the lands north of the Balkan.¹⁷ As a result, the populated territory in the next almost two centuries sharply decreased, shrinking to the Trimontium and its periphery (Джамбов 1980, 93 – 94). Materials and structures from the 13th – 14th c. are mentioned in relation to several sites in the plain. (Морева-Арабова 2001, 102 – 105), but, unfortunately, they have not been published. In this period, in the plain area south of the Trimontium and Sahat Tepe and east of the Trimontium, separate isolated boroughs probably existed, with vast unpopulated areas in between. This means that there was no longer any need to maintain the wall of Marcus Aurelius in the valley, between p. 31 and 14 of fig. 1, key elements of which were destroyed by Tsar Kaloyan. This section of the fortress walls was abandoned for good, and in the next centuries, nature and, most of all, its use as a source of stones and bricks for new constructions, led to its complete defacement.

The question of the territory between the Trimontium and Sahat Tepe, fenced on the north and west by the wall of Marcus Aurelius (p. 28 – 31 of fig. 1), and on the south – by the wall of spolia (p. 32 – 36 of fig. 1) is much more complex. As was mentioned, the wall of spolia was well preserved up to the 30s of the 20th c., but whether it functioned as a fortification facility depends

¹⁶ This upgrade of the Roman wall is not preserved here, but can be seen very clearly in the section marked as p. 3 on fig. 1, several meters north (fig. 6: 3.1). On it below.

¹⁷ This deportation was not an isolated event, but part of a large-scale, systematically applied policy of the brothers Asen, Peter, and especially Kaloyan, which covered huge territories south of the Balkan (Станев 2013, 207 – 226).

on whether this vast territory – about 106 decares – was populated. No clear answer can be given to this question at present, since this territory is in the very centre of present-day Plovdiv (fig. 2), densely built up with cultural monuments, and excavations are carried out very rarely here, and on a very limited area.¹⁸ Larger-scale excavations have been carried out at the Roman stadium (immediately south of p. 30 of fig. 1 and fig. 2), but no data about the Middle Ages have been published, and at the south foot of the Trimontium – during the repairs of Tsar Boris III Obedinitel Blvd and the “Museum” site located in its immediate vicinity (fig. 1: 36; fig. 2: 36). In relation to the last two sites, publications mention most generally inhabitation in the 13th – 14th c. (Морева-Арабова 2001, 102; Танкова 2011, 338). At the western foot of Taksim Tepe, on 3 Rilski Metoh Str., west of p. 25 of fig. 1, a necropolis has been studied, whose lower dating is 14th c. (Божинова, Станев 2015, 744 – 747).¹⁹ This necropolis indicates the existence of a populated territory in the region, but its scope cannot be determined.²⁰

In 1433 – 1436, the Ottomans built Dzhumaya Mosque (Бойков 2012, 52), located on the fortress wall in the section to the immediate east of p. 30 of fig. 1 and fig. 2. This shows that the wall had already been destroyed, since the demolition of an intact fortress wall at a moment when the Balkans had not been entirely conquered, so it might be needed at any moment, is devoid of logic. When this demolition took place – whether during one of the wars in the 13th – 14th c., or in 1410 during the riots in the Ottoman empire when the city was severely damaged (Бойков 2012, 47) – is a question that cannot be answered.

The review made shows that due to the lack of written sources and the extreme scarcity of archaeological data, until even the present day the question of whether in the period 1205 – 1410 the fortification system between the Trimontium and Sahat Tepe (from p. 28 to p. 36 of fig. 1 and fig. 2) was functioning cannot be answered. In contrast, the wall enclosing the high part of the Trimontium most certainly continued to function after 1205, which is evidenced by a number of modifications and additions.

At the beginning of the 13th c. Nebet Tepe was set up as a citadel. This was implemented by the construction of a fortification wall which fenced it off from the south (fig. 1: 11, fig. 2: 11). Since one more partition wall was built later on, this wall shall be called the first, or south partition wall. The wall was not known until 2012. In that year, it was studied on 5 Dr. Stoyan Chomakov Str. Along a course of 15 m, and there is a gate and stairs to it²¹ (fig. 9; fig. 10). In 2019, during excavations of the street related to sewage renovation, 1.8 m more of the northern part of the wall and its staircase were uncovered at 3 m to the east (Христева, Станев 2019, 317 – 319). Since the data about the wall have already been published (Станев, Божинова 2014б, 359 – 375), it is presented here very briefly. Before its construction, the terrain was built up with massive houses, which, based on the materials discovered, were burnt at the end of the 12th – beginning of the 13th c. As mentioned above, the city was set on fire in 1190 and 1205. The two events are too close together and the materials discovered cannot determine when the registered fire took place. The wall was constructed very soon afterwards, since there are no intermediate structures and the layers related to the construction did not yield any later materials. The foundation is not dug in, but constructed

¹⁸ For example, in the southern part of the area protected by this wall, during the surveys on 16 Dr Valkovich Str. (immediately north of p. 35 on fig. 1), active inhabitation in the 11th – beginning of the 13th c., and then during the Ottoman period was registered, but not in the 13th – 14th c. (Божинова, Станев 2019б, 302 – 304). The data from this small site cannot be taken as representative for the whole territory.

¹⁹ Since the periphery of the necropolis was studied, it is quite possible that its initial date is much earlier.

²⁰ This necropolis is very close to the gate shown on p. 29 of fig. 1, which leads to the Trimontium, where life after 1205 did not cease and it might have serviced its population.

²¹ Initially, a tower was planned, but it was abandoned in the process of construction.

on the levelled terrain. In parallel with the construction of the foundation and the superstructure, the terrain was backfilled to the level of the plinth dividing the substructure and the superstructure.²² The wall is 2.6 m thick, and the maximum preserved height of the superstructure is 0.75 m. It is built of mid-sized stones and bricks, joined with very strong white mortar. The emplecton is of small stones and fragments of construction ceramics. No traces of levelling beams are visible.²³ The door is double-winged, and the two axle stones are preserved (fig. 10). The width of the gate in the southern part at the axle protectors is 2.65 m, behind them – 3.6 m, and in the northern part – 3.71 m. In front of the western gate frame, a large syenite block from an ancient building was placed during the construction. Its synchronicity with the fortress wall is evidenced by the mortar which fills the space between it and the wall, and which fell down during masonry construction. The purpose of this block remains unclear. In the eastern part, by the northern face, abutting masonry of large stones joined with identical mortar has been constructed (fig. 9). It is 1.8 m wide, studied length of 1.9 m, and continues into the unstudied part to the east,²⁴ destroyed to the west by later dug ins. Most probably, this is a staircase to the wall. Two techniques were used in the construction of the wall. Along the northern face and the gate sides, there is a row of bricks, a row of stones (fig. 10; fig. 11). This technique is known as alternating brick. In Constantinople, it can be seen in sections of the fortress walls constructed, based on the inscriptions, in 1197 and 1261 – 1281 (Foss 1986, 76). The gate axle protectors and the southern face of the wall, east of the gate, are of brick masonry, and every other row of bricks is deeper inside from the face and pasted over, which creates the illusion of a thick joint (fig. 11; fig. 12). This technique, known as recessed brick, appeared in the second half of the 10th c. (Ousterhout 2008, 174). It could be found up to the 13th – 14th c., but in this period the recessed row is no longer of whole bricks, but of fragments. (Ousterhout 2008).

The later history of the fortress wall cannot be traced due to its low preservation,²⁵ and a number of Ottoman and contemporary dug-ins on both its sides have practically destroyed the layers related to its functioning. The gate and the areas north and south of it were enclosed in the cellar of a house in the 17th – 18th c., and the whole layer up to the walking layer was removed. What can be said with certainty is that at a later time the gate was on fire, which is clearly visible from the severely burnt sides, after which the level was raised and new axle stones were put in. Today they are absent, but the mortar putty which joined the upper part of the western stone with the frame and the axle protector is preserved (fig. 11).

The construction of this wall, which fenced Nebet Tepe from the south, completed the layout of the citadel with an area of 10.8 decares. This contributed to the improvement of the fortress defences, but separated the rulers from the other citizens. At this time the population of Philippopolis was heterogeneous and, respectively, regardless of who ruled it – Bulgarians, Byzantines/Epirians or Latins, in the city there were groups of the population hostile to the rulers.

It is interesting why it was Nebet Tepe that was chosen for setting up the citadel. The reasons are probably four. The first is that, in contrast to Dzhambaz and Teksim Tepe, the high part of Nebet Tepe is significantly bigger. The second is that a shorter wall had to be constructed for its enclosure, compared to Dzhambaz and Taksim Tepe, i.e., this could be done more quickly and using less resources. The third reason is that it is closest to Maritsa and, respectively, water supply from the river or wells at its foot was easier. The fourth, and maybe the most important, one is that a much

²² This backfill is clearly seen from the alternation of thick layers and thinner ones of mortar, which fell down during masonry construction.

²³ The hole which can be seen on fig. 10 is most probably from the construction scaffold.

²⁴ Part of it was uncovered during the sewage renovation on the street in 2018.

²⁵ In reality, the southern face is almost entirely destroyed.



Fig. 8. Newly built route in the northern part of the eastern wall on Nebet Tepe, end of the 12th – beginning of the 13th c.

*Обр. 8. Новоизградено трасе в северната част на източната стена на Небет тепе.
Края на XII – началото на XIII в.*

broader view is available here to the west, north, east and south,²⁶ whereas at Dzhambaz and Taksim Tepe, the view is significantly more limited than on the other hills. This means that an approaching enemy could be seen much better, and there was a visual connection with the other fortresses. It was because of the strategic advantages of Nebet Tepe that the Thracian, Hellenic and early Roman fortresses were situated here.

The setup of Nebet Tepe as a citadel is also related to the construction of a very large water reservoir (fig. 1: 8),²⁷ dated most generally as post-12th c. (Джамбов 1968, 80). A hypothesis has recently been put forward that this water reservoir was actually the lower part of a keep (Иванов, Иванов 2015, 10 – 11). Since the groundlessness of this assertion has already been discussed elsewhere (Сраниев 2015, 73 – 76), we will not review it here.

In addition to the setup of Nebet Tepe as a citadel, several repairs on the wall fencing the Trimontium can be referred to the end of the 12th – 13th c.²⁸ The first one is in the northern part of the eastern Late Antique wall of Nebet Tepe (fig. 1: 7; fig. 2: 7; fig. 7). No surveys have been carried out in this section. The crumbled face of the wall here was restored with cloisonné masonry. It is

²⁶ When the weather is good, a large part of the Upper Thracian valley is visible from here, to Sredna Gora, Ovchi halmove, Besseparski Hills, the Rhodope Mountains, Dragoina Peak and Chirpan Heights.

²⁷ This is the only Late Medieval water reservoir known to date in Plovdiv. The other water reservoirs, which are sometimes defined as medieval (Молева-Арабова 2001, 102), are Ottoman. Such water reservoirs can be found in every backyard in the Old Town.

²⁸ As mentioned above, according to the express information by Niketas Choniates, in 1189 the fortification facilities of Philippopolis showed visible signs of neglect and had to be repaired. This information is very valuable since he was ruler of the city at the time. This long period of neglect of the fortification's maintenance can be explained by the long period of peace that came to the region after the victory over the Pechenegs in 1091.



Обр. 9. Първа преградна стена на Небет тепе, края на XII – началото на XIII в.

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Fig. 10. The gate of the first partition wall on Nebet Tepe, view from the north
 Обр. 10. Портата на първата преградна стена на Небет тене, поглед от север



Fig. 11. Western side of the gate of the first partition wall
 Обр. 11. Западна страница на портата на първата преградна стена



*Fig. 12. East side of the gate of the first partition wall.
 View from the south*
 Обр. 12. Източна страница на портата на първата преградна стена. Поглед от юг

were constructed at the same time. This construction method is characteristic of the 12th – 13th c.,²⁹ and in Plovdiv it can also be seen in domestic architecture, positively dated to the end of the 12th – beginning of the 13th c. (Станев, Божинова 2014а, 320, 323, 349, обр. 16, 353, обр. 30).

The situation of Hisar Kapia gate is very interesting (fig. 1: 15; fig. 2: 15). It cannot be determined whether it existed in Late Antiquity, or if the wall was broken and respectively, the gate was constructed in the Middle Ages, since the face of the Late Antique wall here is completely covered by medieval and Ottoman repairs. The same applies to the gate itself, there being repairs from the first half of the 20th c., which can be traced very well by comparing photos from different times.³⁰ Such modern additions are the reconstruction of the lower part of the western arch, the interior

²⁹ For example, the church of St. Panteleimon in the village of Gorno Nerezi, North Macedonia, is dated to 1164 by an inscription (Николова 2002, 143 – 145).

³⁰ Since the gate has always been an attractive site, there are many photos of it from the first half of the 20th c., the majority of which are of its eastern facade.

of the two sides and the addition of the crenels.³¹ What is important in this case is that the details discussed below are present in the oldest photos from the 20th c., which excludes the possibility for them to be the result of repairs during modern times. The gate has not been subjected to a detailed study yet. Only D. Tsonchev provides its dimensions – 5 m high, measured from the present-day level of the cobblestones, and 3.2 m wide (Цончев 1938, 55). Different assumptions have been made about its dating. E. Kesyakova (Кесякова 2001, 54) assumes that it is Early Byzantine, for D. Tsonchev “in its present state, it is from the Late Byzantine or Bulgarian times, or even Turkish” (Цончев 1938, 54), R. Moreva only mentions it, without any comments (Морева 1988, 133), and M. Bospachieva notes that the dating is unclarified, possible Late Middle Ages (Боспачиева, Коларова 2014, 46 и 299). The opinion has even been expressed that it was not a gate at all, but that the wall was broken through in the 19th c. (Матеев 2004, 79). What is interesting about the gate is that the arch at the two facades is shaped in different ways. On the western face, immediately above the bricks forming the arch, there is a row of transversely placed bricks (fig. 14), while at the eastern face, this row is missing (fig. 13). This shows that they were constructed at different times. We have come across no information whether this framing of the arches in the Middle Ages has been the subject of a dedicated study, but for Constantinople it has been pointed out that it exists only in places with later repairs (Ousterhout 2008: 198 – 199). Such framing is missing at the church Panagia Chalkeon in Thessaloniki, which, according to the donor inscription, was built in 1028 (Tsitouridou 1985). The situation is the same with the churches of St George in Kolusha (Kyustendil) and St Nicholas in Sapareva Banya, which have been dated to the 11th – 12th c. (Николова 2002, 134 и 175), and the Church of St Nicholas in Toplica, Serbia, built in 1166 – 1168 (Popović 2001, 175).³² In contrast to the examples mentioned, in the Church of St Panteleimon in Gorno Nerezi, North Macedonia, built in 1164 (Николова 2002, 143 – 144), the arches are framed. When exactly this framing of the arches began in the Middle Ages is a question outside the scope of the present study, not to mention that there are certainly local specifics, but based on the examples mentioned, it can most generally be assumed that it became common practice after the 12th c. In addition to the lack of framing, there is one more specificity at the eastern arch of the gate, namely, that it is made with one row of bricks, while the Late Antique ones have at least two rows. Such are the arches of the steps of the postern shown on p. 1 of fig. 1, the tower on p. 17 of fig. 1, which is in the immediate vicinity of Hisar Kapia, and of the tower on p. 28 of fig. 1. This fact shows that the eastern arch of the gate is not a Late Antique one. Along the northern side of the eastern facade of Hisar Kapia, there is an Ottoman repair comprising well-hewn stones made from sandstone forming an arch, and above them, right next to the arch, the masonry is made of very thin bricks. The materials used – and the bricks in particular – show this repair is from the 18th – 19th c.³³ and is related to the construction of the house to its north (the present-day Ethnographic Museum).³⁴

Along the eastern facade of the gate, immediately to the north and above the arch, the masonry technique used is one row of stones, one row of bricks (alternating brick). The same technique can

³¹ This strengthening was initially made with modern bricks in the 20s – 30s of the 20th c., which were later replaced with Late Antique bricks.

³² There is a hypothesis that the church is from the 11th c. Ibidem.

³³ This is evidenced by the bricks used, which are smaller than the Late Antique ones. In the first centuries of Ottoman rule, Late Antique bricks were re-used in masonry in Plovdiv. Such are present in huge numbers in the preserved buildings from this period – Dzhumaya Mosque, Imaret Mosque, and Chifte Banya. Towards the 18th c., the potential of the ancient ruins as a source of bricks was depleted and production of much smaller bricks began. Such can be seen on the preserved buildings and water reservoirs from the 18th – 19th c. The bricks used in the above strengthening are the same.

³⁴ Before the construction of this house in 1847, there was another building here from the Ottoman period, and the repair in question might also be related to it, which in this case is irrelevant.

be seen on the eastern facade of the Ethnographic Museum, which is immediately north of Hisar Kapia (fig. 15). The Ethnographic Museum was built in 1847 on the fortress wall. At the time of the construction of the house, the face of the fortress wall was in very bad condition, and was built anew, and the original wall face with the medieval addition was preserved only in a small section. In this case there can barely be any doubt that the two additions (on the eastern face of the gate and on the facade of the Ethnographic Museum) are synchronous. An addition with identical masonry can be found immediately north of the tower shown on p. 19 of fig. 1.³⁵ Such masonry is also present at the furthest east part of the Late Antique wall, which abuts the rock of Dzhambaz Tepe at the Ancient Theatre (fig. 1: 23; fig. 2: 23; fig. 4). Here the southern face of the wall has been restored and the original level is marked with a lead strip. In the original masonry in the furthest eastern part, where the wall abuts the rock, alternating rows of stones and bricks can be seen, and the restored face is in opus mixtum.³⁶

In the 13th – 14th c., without a specific date being clear, a second partition wall, which fences off the highest part of Nebet Tepe, was erected 80 m north of the first one (fig. 1: 5; fig. 2: 5; fig. 6: 3.1; fig. 16: 5; fig. 17: 2). It connects at a right angle with the western fortress wall and has been uncovered along a course of about 20 m,³⁷ continuing to the east in an unstudied area. In this section, the western wall was also constructed in the 13th – 14th c. (fig. 1: 3; fig. 2: 3; fig. 6: 3.1; fig. 16: 6; fig. 17: 1; fig. 18: 3), set on the Early Roman one (fig. 6: 1; fig. 18: 1), and partially on the Late Antique wall (fig. 18: 2). The second partition wall was visible before studies began. This is supported by the statement made by H. Dzhambov in the publication on the medieval water reservoir (fig. 1: 8; fig. 2: 8) that “the fortress wall masonry passes at about 12 m to the north” (Джамбов 1968, 72).³⁸ In 1969, the terrain between the second partition wall and the western one was studied, but the publication does not mention them, only marking them respectively on the enclosed plan as “Late Antique defensive wall” (Детев 1975, 18, обр. 1). The terrain to their west and south was studied in 1971 by L. Botusharova, but the results have not been published (Боспачиева, Коларова 2014, 296). The Register of the Excavations (Ботушарова 1971) does not provide materials to date them. Subsequently, the terrain south of the second partition wall was backfilled with a large amount of stones, removed during the excavations of A. Peikov in the high part of Nebet Tepe in the 80s of the 20th c.³⁹ When the excavations were renewed in 2016 and 2017 (Христева и др. 2017, 155 – 159; Христева и др. 2018, 278 – 281), after the removal of this stone depot, it was established that L. Botusharova had reached the Late Antique layers and there were no preserved levels next to the wall. This is why there are no data from the new studies that allow more precise dating of the wall. The only possibility for dating the second partition wall and the western wall remains the masonry. Both are constructed mainly of medium sized and small syenite stones, single river stones and marbles. Brick fragments were also used. White, very strong mortar was used in both walls, and there are levelling beams. In the second partition wall the levelling beams are completely hidden,⁴⁰ and in the western one, the ends of the transverse levelling beams reach the faces of the masonry. The

³⁵ A photo is not included since the section is heavily overgrown.

³⁶ The addition was just a mending of the southern face. The northern face has very well preserved original masonry and there are no medieval additions there.

³⁷ The eastern end of the uncovered section was subsequently backfilled with stones.

³⁸ Actually, it is at about 25 m.

³⁹ The lack of publications on these studied sections of the fortress walls and the subsequent backfill of the terrain south of the southern wall misled R. Moreva in her study and she interpreted the corner as a tower (Морева 1988, 130, 132, фиг. 2).

⁴⁰ It should be expressly emphasized, however, that the southern face of the wall is completely destroyed, and it is preserved to a slightly higher level only in a small section, i.e., it cannot be definitely stated whether the transverse levelling beams reached the masonry faces.



Fig. 13. Hisar Kapia Gate. View from the east
Обр. 13. Портата Хисар капия. Поглед от изток



Fig. 14. Hisar Kapia Gate. View from the west
Обр. 14. Портата Хисар капия. Поглед от запад



Fig. 15. Medieval additions on Hisar Kapia and the fortress wall under the Ethnographic Museum
Обр. 15. Средновековни преправки на Хисар капия и крепостната стена под Етнографския музей

masonry of the two walls differs in the details, and in both there are later additions, i.e., the section has a complex construction history.

The second partition wall (fig. 19: 1) is 2.6 m thick, the base is wider and protrudes to the north and south by 0.25 – 0.3 m. Brick fragments were used in the construction, and in places the stones are surrounded by 2 – 3 very small fragments placed horizontally, imitating very roughly the nice masonry of the eastern wall of Nebet Tepe (fig. 7 and 8). In its western end, in the course of 4 m, the wall was destroyed and re-built (fig. 19: 2). This reconstruction stands out clearly – there is no plinth, but there are outside levelling beams, mortar was used sparingly and the brick fragments are significantly fewer. This addition reaches the western wall and abuts it. This is why the original connection between the two walls was damaged and it cannot be determined which is the earlier one. The reason for this addition can hardly be destruction during enemy attacks. The slope here is very steep and inconvenient for attack. The reason is more probably the fact that in this section the Late Antique wall, as mentioned above, was destroyed at the end of the 12th – beginning of the 13th c., and the medieval constructions are on the Early Roman wall. This Early Roman wall has faces of large stone blocks joined with mortar, but the emplecton is of medium sized and small river stones compounded with clay. Taking this into account, it can be assumed that in this section, the Early Roman wall yielded under the pressure of the medieval constructions, which led to its collapse, and an earthquake could have also contributed to that.

The western wall (fig. 18: 3; fig. 20) reaches the second partition wall to the south, and to the north – the Roman tower shown on fig. 1: 2 and has a length of 13 m. To the north of the tower,



Fig. 16. Western wall of Nebet Tepe. Legend: 1. Roman wall from 46 A.D.; 2 and 3. Towers to the Roman wall; 4. Late Antique wall; 5. Second partition wall on Nebet Tepe, 13th – 14th c.; 6. Upgrade of the Roman wall in the 13th – 14th c.; 7. Buttress from the 13th – 14th c.

Обр. 16. Западната стена на Небет тепе. Легенда: 1. Римска стена от 46 г. от н.е.; 2. и 3. Кули към римската стена; 4. Късноантична стена; 5. Втора преградна стена на Небет тепе, XIII – XIV в.; 6. Надграждане на римската стена през XIII – XIV в.; 7. Контрафорс от XIII – XIV в.



Fig. 17. Corner between the western (1) and the second partition wall (2) on Nebet Tepe, 13th – 14th c., view from the east

Обр. 17. Ъгъл между западната (1) и втората преградна стена (2) на Небет тепе, XIII – XIV в., поглед от изток



Fig. 18. Western wall on Nebet Tepe. Legend: 1. Roman wall from 46 A.D.; 2. Late Antique wall;
3. Upgrade from the 13th – 14th c.

Обр. 18. Западна стена на Небет тепе. Легенда: 1. Римска стена от 46 г. от н. е.; 2. Късноантична стена;
3. Надграждане от XIII – XIV в.

and to the south of the second partition wall, the western wall is completely destroyed to the level of the Early Roman wall. The western wall, in contrast to the second partition one, is without a plinth, or it is deeper and not visible at present. Much more very small fragments of construction ceramics are used in it for filling the joints (fig. 20: 1), and at places levelling via a row of bricks is visible. The openings for the levelling beams on the face are square, covered with flat stone. In the northern half of the eastern (inside face) of the wall, the masonry is different (fig. 20: 2). Less mortar has been used and much fewer small brick fragments to fill the joints, and the beds for the levelling beams are smaller, irregular and not covered with flat stones.

The construction of the second partition wall completed the set up of the furthest northern part of the hill as the interior of the citadel, with an area of about 4.2 decares. When this happened cannot be determined, but it was definitely later than the construction of the first partition wall and the larger-scale improvements on the northern part of the eastern wall on Nebet Tepe and Hisar Kapia. This, last fortress wall enclosing the furthest north part of Nebet Tepe and the water reservoir south of it raises the question whether the story described by John Kantakouzenos in relation to the siege of the city by the Byzantines in 1323⁴¹ did not take place here. We are talking about the mobile wooden tower made by the Byzantines, which almost reached the fortress wall, but fell into an old water reservoir, which was covered with beams and soil and whose existence was unknown even to the locals (ГИБИ 1980, 224 – 225). This interpretation, however, is impeded by the fact that according to Kantakouzenos, there were 3000 Bulgarian soldiers in the fortress, and

⁴¹ On this war, see: Димитров 2018, 281 – 291.



Fig. 19. Second partition wall on Nebet Tepe, 13th – 14th c., view from the north
Обр. 19. Втората преградна стена на Небет тене, XIII – XIV в., поглед от север



Fig. 20. Medieval upgrade of the western wall on Nebet Tepe, 13th – 14th c. View from the east
Обр. 20. Средновековно надграждане на западната стена на Небет тене, XIII – XIV в. Поглед от изток

this place cannot accommodate so many.

The last information about the fortifications of medieval Philippopolis functioning is from Constantine of Kostenets and is related to the war between the sons of sultan Bayezid I in 1410: *“And because they wanted to preserve the city, the notables closed the gate and went up in the tower. And the tsar himself shouted to His Eminence Metropolitan Damian “Surrender the fortress!” And he replied: “Those who closed the fortress are in the tower.” And he ordered the city to be looted and then, after butchering the reverend in the church, threw his body outside the fortress walls”* (Тотоманова 1993, 174). In this period the word “tower” meant “citadel” (Иречек 1974, 195; Овчаров 1995, 35 – 38; Попов 2011, 69 – 70). And the fact that this citadel was on Nebet Tepe is confirmed not only by the archaeological data, but also by the name of the hill, which in Turkish means “the Hill of the Guards” (Рудолф-Хиле, Рудолф 1934, 415, бел. 5).

South of the second partition wall on Nebet Tepe (fig. 1: 4; fig. 2: 4), medieval upgrades on the Early Roman wall have not been preserved. (fig. 5; fig. 6). Here, as mentioned above, the Late Antique wall (fig. 5: 3; fig. 6: 2) was destroyed intentionally, and a thick layer of destruction material was deposited (fig. 5: 4). During this destruction, the Early Roman tower was most affected. The ceramics discovered in the destructions is from the second half of the 12th – beginning of the 13th c. At a later time, the tower was restored. Since the layers were completely destroyed in height



Fig. 21. Fortress wall on Vitosha Str. Legend: 1. Roman wall from 172 A.D.; 2. Late Antique wall.
3. Late Antique triangular tower 4. Addition from the 13th – 14th c.

Обр. 21. Крепостна стена на ул. „Витоша“. Легенда: 1. Римска стена от 172 г. от н. е. 2. Късноантична стена.
3. Късноантична триъгълна кула. 4. Преправка XIII – XIV в.



Fig. 22. Fortress wall on Konstantin Stoilov Str. 1. Roman wall from 46 A.D.; 2. Late Antique wall; 3. Medieval additions
Обр. 22. Крепостна стена на ул. „Константин Стоилов“. 1. Римска стена от 172 г. от н. е.;
2. Късноантична стена; 3. Средновековни преправки

in the 19th c., it is not clear whether during its restoration the tower was an authentic tower, or a solid bastion projecting in front of the fortress wall. This restoration is visible from the addition on its western face, where the knocked down blocks were replaced by masonry of stones and bricks, joined with crumbling mortar (fig. 5: 6). A buttress was constructed in the north-western corner (fig. 5: 5), also of stones and bricks, joined with white mortar. The buttress sits on the Late Antique wall and the layer of destructions, and right under it in the layer of destructions, a pit was dug in, which yielded several ceramic fragments, which can most generally be dated to the 13th – 14th c.⁴²

There is a large medieval upgrade on Vitosha Str., and in the section of the triangular tower marked by point 12 on fig. 1 and fig. 2. Here the Late Antique wall (fig. 21: 2) was nearly razed to the ground. The wall of Marcus Aurelius is preserved much higher, to the quadrae level (fig. 21: 1), and the medieval upgrade is on it (fig. 21: 4). During the construction of the medieval wall, the triangular Late Antique tower (fig. 21: 3) was not restored, which is shown by the smooth face of the wall. The masonry is very close to the second partition wall on Nebet Tepe, and to the adjacent western tower reviewed above. Medium sized – mainly syenite – stones and bricks were used. The bricks are mainly fragments used to level the masonry, and in places there is attempt to observe the sequence of a row of stones and a row of bricks alternating. In places, openings from transverse levelling beams are visible. This modification can be dated most generally to the 13th – 14th c. based on the construction method.

The situation on Konstantin Stoilov Str. is much more complicated. Here in the eastern part of the section shown on p. 26 of fig. 1 and 2, the wall of Marcus Aurelius is well preserved (fig. 3: 2; fig. 22: 1), and in the western part, the Late Antique wall which abutted the one of Marcus Aurelius is well preserved. Nowadays the original face of the Late Antique wall is not visible, because in the Middle Ages, and probably in more modern times,⁴³ it was reconstructed (fig. 22: 3), but in places these later inlays fell off and the original Late Antique masonry is visible (fig. 22: 2). In places, holes from transverse levelling beams are visible, with thick beams with a square section, and the openings are covered with bricks. There are also levelling belts of a row of bricks and individual enclosures of the stones with horizontal brick fragments, i.e., techniques used in the other additions on the fortress walls.

Late Medieval additions are also present on the rectangular tower shown on fig. 1: 19 (Молева 1988, 130 – 132). There, the two visible facades – northern and eastern were entirely re-built, without any specificity of the construction technique.⁴⁴

South of Hisar Kapia, under the apse of the Church of St Constantine and Helena, an Early Byzantine postern with an abutting later, probably rectangular, tower has been studied (fig. 1: 16). This, as well as the use of white mortar and, most of all, the fragments of household ceramics with glaze uncovered on the floor, shows that the tower is medieval (Джамбов 1959, 170; Молева 1988, 133 – 135). The presence of glazed ceramics shows that its construction took place after the middle of the 12th c. The assumption has been put forward that such a tower existed on the northern side of the gate, but without specific arguments (Джамбов 1959, 168; Молева 1988, 135).

The study of the fortification facilities of medieval Philippopolis is related to a number of difficulties. They are situated in the centre of modern Plovdiv, which limits the studies to rescue excavations, usually on a small area. After the beginning of the 15th c., the fortification system ceased to function and its systematic destruction began with the view of removing the construction material

⁴² Such a pot has been published from Thessaloniki (Motsianos 2002, 571, fig. 803).

⁴³ Up to the middle of the 20th c., buildings abutted this wall, which implies partial interference on it.

⁴⁴ The tower is currently heavily overgrown, which is why a photo is not provided.

which was fit for re-use, or freeing up terrains for new construction. As a result, large sections are either entirely destroyed or survived only in their lowest parts. Another serious problem is the lack of publications, especially on the medieval layers and structures of many sites which have been studied. Despite these difficulties, the data available allow us to construct a most general picture. Medieval Philippopolis inherited the fortification system constructed in the 1st – 6th c., which is made up of three belts. The first one covers the high part of the Trimontium and has an area of 82.5 decares, the second one encloses the area between the Trimontium and the ridge of Sahat Tepe, which has an area of 106 decares, and the third one fences the valley south of the Trimontium and Sahat Tepe and east of the Trimontium, an area of 500 decares. Until the 11th c., there are no preserved data about additions. In the 11th – beginning of the 13th c., the populated territory covered the fortified area fully, and archaeological data show that it continued north of it as well. This implies that the fortress wall in the valley was functioning in the 11th c. The Upper Thracian Valley was the object of continuous Pecheneg raids, and at the end of the century the Paulicians also caused serious problems. During the archaeological studies, medieval additions have been established at two places, but without details. The functioning of the wall at the beginning of the 12th c. was explicitly mentioned by Anna Komnene. She also mentions a ditch protecting the populated territory north of it, which has not yet been registered during archaeological excavations. At the end of the 12th – beginning of the 13th c., there are written data of several destructions and restorations, respectively. Intentional destruction from that time has been established at the western wall on Nebet Tepe, and probably along this wall on the western slope of Dzhabaz Tepe and north slope of Taksim Tepe. Based on the construction technique used, the modifications in the northern end of the eastern wall on Nebet Tepe, the gate Hisar Kapia, and the eastern and southern wall of Dzhabaz Tepe can be referred to the same period. In this period – the very end of the 12th or beginning of the 13th c., a wall was constructed which fenced Nebet Tepe from the south and established it as a citadel with an area of 10.8 decares. The construction of a large water reservoir is also related to the establishment of the citadel. At the beginning of the 13th c., another important change took place. In 1205, Tsar Kaloyan not only destroyed the city, but also took its population north of the Balkan Mountains. As a result, in the 13th – 14th c., the populated territory sharply decreased, shrinking to the Trimontium and isolated boroughs in the plain. This means that there was no longer any need to maintain the wall in the plain, key parts of which were intentionally destroyed in 1205. The question of the territory between the Trimontium and Sahat Tepe remains unclear. This is due to the small number of studied sites here, which does not allow tracking the intensity of life. In contrast to the fortifications in the valley, those on the Trimontium definitely continued to function after 1205, which can be seen from the additions. An interesting specificity of wall along the western slope is that the restored sections there after the destruction at the end of the 12th – beginning of the 13th c., are on the Roman walls, and not the abutting Late Antique wall. In this period, without it being clear exactly when, at the citadel on Nebet Tepe, a second partition wall was built which enclosed the highest northern part. Thus the territory laid out had an area of 4.2 decares. The last written information from 1410 on the fortifications of Philippopolis as functioning is also related to it.

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УКРЕПИТЕЛНАТА СИСТЕМА НА СРЕДНОВЕКОВНИЯ ФИЛИПОПОЛ

Камен Станев

Кирило-Методиевски научен център, Българска академия на науките,
ул. „Московска“ № 13, София 1000, България; kamen_stratit@abv.bg

РЕЗЮМЕ

Средновековният Филипопол (дн. Пловдив) наследява укрепителната система от I – VI в. Тя е изградена поетапно (обр. 2), като в крайния си вид се състои от три пояса (обр. 1 и 2). Първият обхваща високата част на масива Трихълмие, който се състои от три свързани хълма – Небет тепе, Таксим тепе и Джамбаз тепе. Тази стена загражда площ от 82,5 дка. Вторият пояс обхваща територията между Трихълмието и билото на Сахат тепе и защитава площ от 106 дка. Третият пояс обхваща равнинната територия южно от Трихълмието и Сахат тепе, както и източния склон на Трихълмието и равнината източно от него и загражда площ от около 500 дка. Въпреки че укрепителната система на Филипопол, включително и в периода на Средновековието, е била обект на редица изследвания, все още има редица неизяснени въпроси. Изследването на укрепителната система на Филипопол е свързано с редица проблеми. На първо място, античният и средновековният град попадат в самия център на съвременния Пловдив (обр. 2), което силно ограничава възможностите за археологически проучвания само в рамките на терени, предвидени за ново строителство. Тази територия е активно обитавана през XV – XX в., в резултат на което археологическите пластове и струк-

тури са силно нарушени от различни вкопавания. Много тежко поражение върху крепостните стени, особено в равнината и на Сахат тепе, е нанесло продължилото векове наред вадене на камъни и тухли за нови строежи. В резултат на това цели сектори са напълно унищожени и това не позволява да бъдат констатирани средновековни преправки по тях. Друг много сериозен проблем е, че голяма част от проучените обекти не са публикувани. В писмените извори от Средновековието има ограничени сведения, но те все пак позволяват да се допълнят археологическите данни. Поради посочените проблеми, на редица въпроси не могат да се дадат категорични отговори.

За периода до края на XI в. нямаме данни за ремонтни дейности. Това не означава, че таква не е имало, тъй като макар и високо запазени, крепостните съоръжения от I – VI в. през VII – XI в. със сигурност са пострадали от военните действия и природните сили. Предвид факта, че през XI в. Горнотракийската равнина е обект на постоянни печенежки набези, може да се приеме, че крепостните съоръжения са били поддържани в добро състояние. Археологическите данни показват, че през XI – началото XIII в. обитаваната територия е прехвърляла в северна посока крепостните стени. Това, както и регистрираните преправки на Източната порта (обр. 1: 42) и кулата североизточно от нея (обр. 1: 43), показват, че стената в равнината е функционирала. Категорично в това отношение е сведението на Анна Комнина, която посетила града в началото на XII в. Тя описва и ров, който защитава заселената територия извън крепостните стени в посока р. Марица. Този ров за момента все още не е регистриран по археологически път. В края на XII – началото XIII в. в изворите има описани няколко случая на възстановяване и разрушаване на крепостните съоръжения. През 1189 г. Никита Хонят получил заповед от византийския император да ремонтира укрепителната система на града във връзка с напредването на кръстоносците начело с Фридрих I Барбароса, а после с друго писмо императорът му заповядал да ги разруши. През 1190 г. при оттеглянето си кръстоносците също разрушили укрепленията. И в двата случая изглежда, че разрушенията не са били големи, тъй като през 1205 г. градът отново е описан като много добре укрепен. През 1205 г. Филипопол е бил превзет от българите начело с цар Калоян, който при оттеглянето си отново заповядал разрушаване на крепостните съоръжения. От това разрушаване били засегнати само ключови елементи – порти, кули и отделни сектори, тъй като и до момента части от римските и късноантичните стени са високо запазени. При разкопки на западната стена на Небет тепе се констатира целенасочено разрушаване в края на XII – началото на XIII в. (обр. 5: 4), което засегнало основно късноантичната стена (обр. 5: 3; обр. 6: 2), залепена за римската (обр. 5: 1; обр. 6: 1). В един по-късен момент стената била възстановена, но тя следвала трасето на римската, а не на късноантичната стена (обр. 6: 3.1; обр. 16: 6). Идентична е картината при сектора, маркиран с точка 12 (обр. 1). И тук възстановената през XIII – XIV в. стена (обр. 21: 4) е върху римската стена (обр. 21: 1), а не върху късноантичната, която е залепена за римската (обр. 21: 2). В края на XII – началото на XIII в. Небет тепе било преградено от юг (обр. 1: 11; обр. 2: 11; обр. 9 – 12) и така се обособило като цитадела с площ 10,2 дка. Тази нова стена стратиграфски застъпва къщи, опожарени през 1190 или 1205 г. и е изградена непосредствено след това. Портата на тази стена в един по-късен момент е горяла и осовите камъни са повдигнати, но това събитие не може да се датира, тъй като през османския период е попаднала изцяло в мазе на къща и пластовете към нея били изгребани. Във връзка с обособяването на цитаделата е била изградена и голяма щерна вътре в нея (обр. 1: 8; обр. 2: 8). Преправки, които като начин на градеж са близки до преградената стена и могат да се датират най-общо в края XII – XIII в., има на още няколко сектора по крепостните стени, ограждащи Трихълмието (обр. 1: 6, 7, 15, 19 и 23;

обр. 4, 13, 15). През XIII – XIV в. най-високата северна част на Небет тепе била преградена с още една преградна стена (обр. 1: 5; обр. 2: 5; обр. 6: 3.1; обр. 16: 5; обр. 19). Този сектор е проучван през 60-те и 70-те години на XX в., като данните за Средновековието не са подробно публикувани и поради тази причина това второ преграждане може да се датира само по начина на градеж. Така обособената най-вътрешна част на крепостта е с площ 4,2 дка. С цитаделата на Небет тепе е и последното сведение за укрепителната система на Филипопол като действаща. То е от 1410 г. и е свързано с войната между синовете на османския султан Баязид I. Изглежда, че при тези военни действия укрепителните съоръжения са сериозно пострадали и след това не са възстановявани, тъй като през 1433 г. вече са описани като изоставени руини.

За разлика от крепостните стени, заграждащи високата част на Трихълмието, картината със стените между него и Сахат тепе и тези в равнината е много по-неясна. Превземането на града от цар Калоян през 1205 г. освен с целенасочено разрушаване на ключови сектори от крепостните съоръжения било съпътствано и с отвеждането на голяма част от населението му в земите на север от Стара планина. Археологическите данни показват, че равнинната част през XIII – XIV в. е била слабо населена, което предполага, че отпаднала нуждата от възстановяване и поддържане на стените тук. За разлика от този район за територията между Трихълмието и Сахат тепе поради ограничените проучвания не може да се каже до каква степен е била населена. За отделни обекти се споменава обитаване през XIII – XIV в. и това, както и фактът, че стената, която загражда тази територия от юг (обр. 1: 32 – 36) до 30-те години на XX в. в отделни сектори е била високо запазена, показва, че укрепленията тук са продължили да функционират.

Ключови думи: Филипопол, Средновековие, укрепителна система

LATE BYZANTINE BRONZE CENSER FROM THE MUSEUM IN SEVLIEVO

Nadezhda Boteva

Sevlievo Historical Museum, 10 Skobelev Str., Sevlievo 5400; nadezhdaboteva71@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The aim of this publication is to introduce into scientific circulation another specimen of the well-known Late Byzantine censers of the “katzion” type originating from Bulgaria. The find that is the subject of this publication has no recorded archaeological provenance, but the author believes that the existence of sufficiently accurate parallels allows it to be dated to the 13th – 14th c. period.

Keywords: bronze censers, katzion, Late Byzantine, Sevlievo, Bulgaria

The aim of this publication is to present one more specimen of the well-known Late Byzantine censers of the “katzion” type originating from Bulgaria. Censers of this type consist of a shallow bowl with a hemispherical, and less often, conical shape which has a low pedestal (Ирошев 2015, 109; Μπαρμπάριτσα 2010, 228). Sometimes there is a removable lid, usually hinged, which is added to the bowl, and which is always perforated multiple times to allow the smoke to escape. To facilitate the use of the censer, it was often extended with a handle contemporary with the object or added later.

Description

The censer from the Museum of History in Sevlievo is recorded as Inv. No. 1989/ 2/7/1972 (fig. 1). It is entered into the museum inventory book as a bronze bowl. The object originates from the Sevlievo village of Ryahovtsite, found in a private home during excavation works.¹

The censer found in the territory of Ryahovtsite village consists of two parts: a bowl and a disc-shaped panel (fig. 1). The bowl is quite solid, with a hemispherical shape and a low cylindrical pedestal. Along the periphery there is a wide, flat brim with a shallow incised circle decoration which has worn away in places. Its diameter together with the brim is 8.4 cm, and that of the bowl only – 5 – 6 cm. Its depth is 2.2 cm. The bottom has a concave centre and two shallowly incised circles around it. The inner circle is 1.5 cm in diameter, the outer circle is 3.5 cm in diameter. The

¹The village is situated 7 km to the west of the town of Sevlievo, and occupies the furthest west part of the fertile Sevlievo field. The territory of Ryahovtsite village is mostly known for its tumuli from the Thracian-Roman period (Ботева 2016, 323 – 338). The local historian Mihail Platikanov lists several settlements from the 12th – 14th c. period (Платиканов 2007, 16 – 21). Information about them comes mainly from preserved local legends, as well as the ruins still visible on the terrain. Inhabitation of the area during the Second Bulgarian Tsardom is also evidenced by a hoard of 13 tools of labour (inv. No. 4979 – 4991), and a hoard of 311 coins from the 3rd and 4th billon coinage emissions of the Byzantine emperor Manuel I Comnenus (1143 – 1180).

bowl sits on a cylindrical pedestal, which is 0.5 cm high and 3.5 cm in diameter. In its centre, there is a distinct round bud-like appendage with a concave centre (fig. 1).

The disc-shaped panel was cast together with the bowl and is an integral part of it. It has a diameter of 9.2 cm. There are 8 “circle-and-dot” ornaments along the brim. In the middle of the disc is a concave centre around which three shallow incised circles of 2 cm, 3 cm and 4.2 cm in diameter are visible. The description of the object in the inventory book notes that *“the panel has a hole and traces of iron rust – an iron plate that was involved in the construction and an iron nail on the periphery”*. Part of the small iron rivet still remains, firmly attached to the main body (fig. 1). There is a rusted area around it with an approximately round shape and a diameter of 1.5 – 1.7 cm. The rivet forms a line with a square opening, the dimensions of which are 0.5 x 0.5 cm, with the opening being 1 cm from the brim of the pan. On the reverse of the object (fig. 1), along the entire length of the disc there is a 1.9 x 7.4 cm rusty band-like imprint from the attachment of a long handle, which has not been preserved.

The censer was cast from bronze and, despite its relatively small size, 17 x 9 cm, it is quite solid, its current weight being 340 gr. An attempt to thin the disc periphery was made. As a result, a small crack appeared along its end and the round shape of its edge was disrupted. The disc is decorated with “circle-and-dot” ornaments. The workmanship is not distinguished by particular precision, despite the obvious attempt to distribute them evenly and for them to have a kind of decorative function.



Fig. 1. The censer from MH – Sevlievo: Front and back (photo: N. Boteva)
Обр. 1. Кадилницата от ИМ – Севлиево: лице и гръб (снимка: Н. Ботева)

The censer from the museum in Sevlievo is well-preserved. The iron handle that was soldered on the reverse side of the disc and ran along its entire length is missing. Judging by the rusty imprint left by it, it was most likely 1.8 – 1.9 cm wide. If we use the parallels we have (Минчев 2019, 275), the handle protruded 10 – 12 cm outside the disc and probably had a foot to stabilize it when placed on a flat surface.

Parallels and dating

Two censers of this type and several fragments from Bulgaria are known. One “katzion” censer originates from Ahtopol was discovered in 2011 during excavations of the medieval metropolitan church in the centre of the city (Минчев 2019, 273). It is dated to the 14th c. (fig. 2: 1). The second is from the Medieval fortress of Asara, near the Zvezdel mine, Kardzhali region (Минчев 2019, 275) (fig. 2: 2). Two fragmentary bowls and a lid are known from the medieval fortress of Kastritsi. They were all discovered during studies of medieval dwellings. They are dated to the end of the 14th – 15th c. (Минчев 2019, 267 – 288). Another lid originates from the northern section of the Palace on Tsarevets hill in Tarnovo (Николова 1974, 364).

From the katzia discovered in Bulgaria, only one was discovered inside a church building. The rest are related to civic buildings. The Chersonese censers were also found in residential areas (fig. 2: 3) (Византийский Херсон 1991, 208, обр. 222), as well as the one, discovered during excavations of a dwelling in Arta. The latter was walled in a house dated to the 13th c. (fig. 2: 4) (Papadopoulou 2002, 550, № 752; *Μπαρμπάριτσα* 2010, кат. № 14, фиг. 14).

Written sources describe the censers being included as normal Byzantine household items and served for burning incense in Christian rituals practiced at home. There is information that they also had practical applications related to the protection and aromatization of clothes (*Μπαρμπάριτσα* 2010, 234). Their widespread use in domestic conditions does not exclude their use in churches and monasteries. In Greek and Russian monastery statutes, the type of censer to be used in a certain place during a service is often specifically indicated. For example, “...at the beginning of the Matins, the great Archimandrite burns incense with a katzion” (Игошев 2015, 113, бел. 24). This type of censer is associated with monasticism and thus survives in church treasure collections (Тотев и др. 2022). In addition to standing in front of patron and miracle-working icons, they were also used in burial rituals, as evidenced by the discovery of a katzion during the excavations of a tomb in Mystras, Greece in 1951. (Drandaki 2004, 128) (fig. 2: 5). Their wide use in memorial rituals is also indicated by the fact that the most images of katzia are in the scene of the Myrrh-bearers (fig. 3) (Radojčić 1963, table IX; Грозданов 2015, 55, 224). The find presented here has an unclear archaeological context and it is difficult for us to determine what its function was – whether it was used for domestic needs or for service in a Christian temple.

The typology of the katzia is determined based on the widened decorative part of the handle. According to its type, they are categorized in two groups. The first category is more widespread and includes specimens with handles perforated in different shapes. They are cast from copper alloys, decorated with birds, mythical creatures, and geometric and plant designs (fig. 2: 5) (*Μπαρμπάριτσα* 2010, 227). The second group, to which the one presented here also belongs, has a thick semi-circular decorative part of the handle. It has relatively large dimensions and provides a wide image field. The decoration can either be very simplified, or characterized by high artistic mastery (fig. 2: 6). The most common decoration on the solid parts of the handles are concentric circles drawn using a lathe (*Μπαρμπάριτσα* 2010, 233). They can be deeper or more shallow. Concentric circles decorate two of the censers discovered in Chersonese (*Μπαρμπάριτσα* 2010, 235, обр. 14 – 15), as well as the two well-preserved katzia from Bulgaria (fig. 2: 1 – 2). The find from Sevlievo presented

here shows an attempt to make this decoration more sophisticated and to strive for symmetry, originality and aesthetic impact. The “circle-and-dot” ornaments are not known from other items from this group. The Sevlievo find has the closest parallel to a 13th century katzion found in Chersonese, the handle of which is decorated with large concentric, convex circles in relief, with a concave centre (fig. 2: 3) (Византийский Херсон 1991, 208, обр. 222). Such a decoration, made of round elements with a concave centre, is also depicted on the katzion in the scene with the Holy Myrrh-bearing Women from the church in Kurbinovo (fig. 3).



Fig. 2. Bronze censers “katzion” from 13th – 15th c. Legend: 1. Censer from Ahtopol, 14th c. (Минчев 2019, 273, обр. а – б); 2. Censer from the Asara fortress, Karzdjali region (Минчев 2019, 275); 3. Censer from Chersonese, 13th c. (Византийский Херсон 1991, 208, обр. 222); 4. Censer from Arta, Greece, 14th – 15th c. (Μπαρμπαρίτσα 2010, 235, № 14, fig. 14); 5. Censer from Mystras, Greece, 14th – 15th c. (Ραπαδοπούλου 2002, 550); 6. Katzion with military saints (Theodore and Demetrios) from the collection of Benaki Museum, Athens, Greece, 13th c. (Hedrick, Ergin 2015, 338, fig. 10)

Обр. 2. Бронзови кадилници „кацион“ от XIII – XV в. Легенда: 1. Кадилница от Ахтопол, XIV в. (Минчев 2019, 273, обр. а – б); 2. Кадилница от крепостта „Асара“, област Кърджали (Минчев 2019, 275); 3. Кадилница от Херсонес, XIII в. (Византийский Херсон 1991, 208, обр. 222); 4. Кадилница от Арта, Гърция, XIV – XV в. (по Μπαρμπαρίτσα 2010, 235, № 14, fig. 14); 5. Кадилница от Мистра, Гърция, XV в. (Ραπαδοπούλου 2002, 550); 6. Кадилница с изображение светци (Теодор и Димитър), от колекцията на музея Бенаки, Атина, Гърция, XIII в. (Hedrick, Ergin 2015, 338, fig. 10)



Fig. 3. Depiction of the Holy Myrr-bearing Women. Fresco from the "St. George" church in the village of Kurbinovo, North Macedonia, from 1191 (Грозданов 2015, 55, 224) (photo: M. Zlatkov)

Обр. 3. Изображение на „Светите жените мироносици“. Стенопис от църквата „Св. Георги“ в с. Курбиново, Северна Македония, от 1191 г. (Грозданов 2015, 55, 224) (снимка: М. Златков)

In the Late Byzantine period the surviving examples of censers of this type come mainly from the Balkan Peninsula and Crimea (Византийский Херсон 1991). According to some researchers, the workshops for their production were in Thessaloniki (Μπαρμπάριτσα 2010, 233). The written sources mention *katzia* made from precious metals. In the life of St. Euphrosyne of Polotsk, it is mentioned that she brought "incense and a golden *katzion*" from Constantinople (Ирошев 2015, 109). A ceramic censer is also known (Inkova 2019, 162). Most of the surviving specimens are made of copper alloys. So is the one presented here.

Almost all archaeologically discovered censers of the "*katzion*" type date to the Late Byzantine period. Such is the dating of the specimens discovered in Bulgaria (Минчев 2019, 267 – 288). They are also known from monastery statutes dated after the 11th c. (Hedrick, Ergin 2015, 336). One of the earliest pieces of evidence of the use of this type of censers can be found in the Ipatiev Chronicle from 1146. In it, among the items looted from the Kiev temples, *katzia* are also listed (Ирошев 2015, 109). Their depiction in frescoes is dated after the middle of the 12th c. (fig. 3).

Conclusion

The find that is the subject of this publication originates from an unclear archaeological provenance, but the existing accurate parallels allow it to be dated to the 13th – 14th c. period. This is the time of the most widespread use of this type of censer (Ballian 2004, 116 – 124). Despite their common application in the Late Byzantine period, the censers of the "*katzion*" type never outnumbered, nor were more widely used than the suspended ones. *Katzia* are observed much more rarely in the written, pictorial and archaeological sources, as well as in museum depots.

The publication of the *katzion* kept in Sevlievo broadens the understanding of these rare and highly valuable objects of the Christian ritual practice in the Late Byzantine period.

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КЪСНОВИЗАНТИЙСКА БРОНЗОВА КАДИЛНИЦА ОТ МУЗЕЯ В СЕВЛИЕВО

Надежда Ботева

Исторически музей – Севлиево, ул. „Скобелев“ № 10, Севлиево 5400; nadezhdboteva71@gmail.com

РЕЗЮМЕ

Целта на настоящото съобщение е да влезе в научно обращение още един екземпляр от известните къснОВИЗАНТИЙСКИ кадилници тип „кацион“, произхождащи от България. Кадилниците от този тип се състоят от плитка паничка с полусферична и по-рядко с полуконична форма, която има ниско столче. Понякога към паничката, обикновено свързано с шарнир, се добавя подвижно капаче, което винаги е с множество отвори, за да може да излиза димът. Към паничката има плоска декоративна част. За да се улеснява употребата ѝ, тя често се удължава с дръжка, съвременна с предмета или поставена по-късно.

Кадилницата от музея в Севлиево е с инв. № 1989/7.02.1972 г. (обр. 1). Предметът произхожда от севлиевското село Ряховците, намерена е в частен дом при изкопни работи.

Откритите по археологически път кадилници тип „кацион“ се датират в къснОВИЗАНТИЙСКИЯ период. Такава е датировката и на откритите в България екземпляри (Минчев 2019, 267 – 288).

Находката, която е обект на настоящата публикация, произлиза от неясна археологическа среда, но съществуващите точни паралели позволяват да се датира в периода XIII – XIV в. Това е времето на най-масовото разпространение на този тип кадилници. Въпреки широкото им приложение в къснОВИЗАНТИЙСКИЯ период кадилниците тип „кацион“ никога не превъзхождат по численост и употреба висящите. „Каците“ се срещат много по-рядко в писмените, живописните и археологическите извори, както и в музейните фондове.

Ключови думи: къснОВИЗАНТИЙСКА кадилница, тип „кацион“, Севлиево

NOTES ON KRONDIRS, AN INTERESTING TYPE OF LATE MEDIEVAL TIN-AND-LEAD VESSELS

Nikolay Markov

*National Museum of History, 16, Vitoshko lale Str., 1618 Sofia;
markovn@abv.bg*

ABSTRACT

The paper presents and analyses the earliest evidence available to date about a specific type of tin-and-lead vessel used to store water and wine, and perhaps myrrh, known as “krondirs”. The conclusion is made that krondirs were most probably a product of Byzantine society, where they appeared as early as the Palaiologan Period. The hypothesis is rejected that the roots of this type of vessel lie in the East, in Central Asia, or even Egypt. The assumption is made that the centres where they were created were the Large Balkan Byzantine cities – Constantinople, Thessaloniki and Adrianople, from where their type not only spread, but in the early centuries of the Ottoman rule, their production blossomed to an extent.

Keywords: krondir, tin, water and wine vessels, Balkans, Byzantium, Palaiologos

Reason for writing the notes

At the beginning of this year, the author was shown several photos of a “lead”¹ vessel, offered for re-purchase to the National History Museum by its owner, a German resident.² During the preparation of a report requested by the Museum’s director on the vessel, the origin of the vessel was disclosed by the owner. He acquired the vessel from an antiques market in Germany (he did not provide further details), as a “powder keg from the 19th c.” The unsoundness of this definition provoked him to conduct his own modest research which ended, at least for the time being, with his request for help from the museum and, in the event of the museum experts expressing interest towards the vessel – an offer to re-purchase it. What is the vessel’s appearance? Here follows a brief description.

¹ Wherever the author has called the material the vessels of interest are made of “lead”, the definitions of the authors who have reviewed those vessels have been followed. The specimen extant in the collections of the National Museum of History (without an inventory No.) is the only one whose metal has been analysed. The author would like to express his sincere gratitude to Al. Vatov, restorer at the National Museum of History, for these analyses. The averaged calibration for heavy metals, are the following: tin (Sn) – 74.3 %, lead (Pb) – 25.3 %, and traces of copper, results for the composition of the alloy this krondir is made of, from several samples from the XRF analysis with cadmium and platinum, or, as a craftsman would say – 3 parts tin and 1 part lead. In what proportion these metals are found in other similar items of the period remains to be determined. The author believes that the amount of tin will exceed that of lead in the alloy they are made of. This is why, when discussing them below, the definition “tin-and-lead vessels” has been used.

² The author would like to express his sincere gratitude to the owner, Christian Stopperich, for the photos and information he provided. The author has personally not had the opportunity to hold the vessel in his own hands.

It comprises a hollow, flattened spheroidal body resting on a low, hollow, oval base, tapering slightly towards the junction with the body (fig. 1a, 1b). An elongated neck is formed at the upper end of the vessel, opening slightly towards the mouth to obtain an inverted bell-shaped form. Immediately below the mouth is a thickened ring with recumbent linear decoration, as is also present at the base just above its connection with the body.

Two opposite-facing handles are joined under the upper ring, with a specific type of decorative shape. They are almost horizontal at their upper ends, then curve downward almost at right angles to connect with the shoulders of the vessel. One of them has an opening at the top and must have served as a spout (fig. 1c). The dimensions of this particular vessel, according to the owner, are the following: height – 17 cm, diameter – 14 cm, thickness – 7 cm, weight – 954 gr. This vessel, undoubtedly made by casting its parts individually, which were then subsequently soldered together, impresses with its decoration. On both sides of the body, in circular fields enclosed in a thin frame with transverse incisions along its length, are presented the same type of images of a saintly rider mounted on a horse, moving to the right, with his head facing the opposite direction. His nimbus is incised with fine lines. His right hand is extended backwards, and a flower, presented frontally, is formed above, the same as the one in front of his head. A similar flower-like ornament is also present in front of the horse's chest. The image is interrupted in the middle by a wide, round and flat "bud", giving the impression of a circular shield, but which is rather a technological feature of the mould in which the sides of the vessel were cast. As a whole, the images from the scene are modelled extremely clumsily, even primitively, but with a marked aspiration to respect the proportions of the rider and the horse, which was certainly aided by conforming to some re-used model from another product, perhaps a mural image. The field outside the frame is decorated by a circular band running almost to the outer edge of the vessel, again made up of short recumbent lines. The edge formed at the junction of the two halves of the body is decorated with numerous larger buds (fig. 1d). On the sides, the handles are decorated with two groups of V-shaped protrusions, and their shoulders with a triangular widening, in which incomplete holes can be seen (fig. 1e). The corners of the handles are shaped like massive columns projecting upwards, and on their faces you can see the outlines of some ornaments which came out of the casting badly. The quality of the casting itself is not good, apparently due to some wear and tear on the moulds, no doubt the result of long use. The vessel thus represented has wonderful parallels from Egypt, which will be discussed further in the review.

The vessel, however, impresses primarily with its obvious similarity to the tin-and-lead *kronchirs* from the Ottoman period, which are well-known in Bulgaria. This raises questions about the connection between them, the time when they were created, the ways they were used, their names, and a number of other poorly studied questions about their production. Along the following lines the subsequent discussion will attempt to provide answers to all of them.

Background

Before turning to the subject in substance, the author considers it necessary to provide some explanatory notes of a more general nature, which he believes will contribute to a better understanding of the problem.

To date, interest in the study of the tin-and-lead vessels in Bulgaria has been expressed mainly by ethnographers. This is understandable in part because finding them on archaeological sites is extremely rare,³ and at least to the author's knowledge, there has been no such find from Bulgaria. In addition, even if such have been found here, they were most likely in such a destroyed and

³ On this, see the notes of their Hungarian researcher, Imre Holl (Holl 1996, 241).

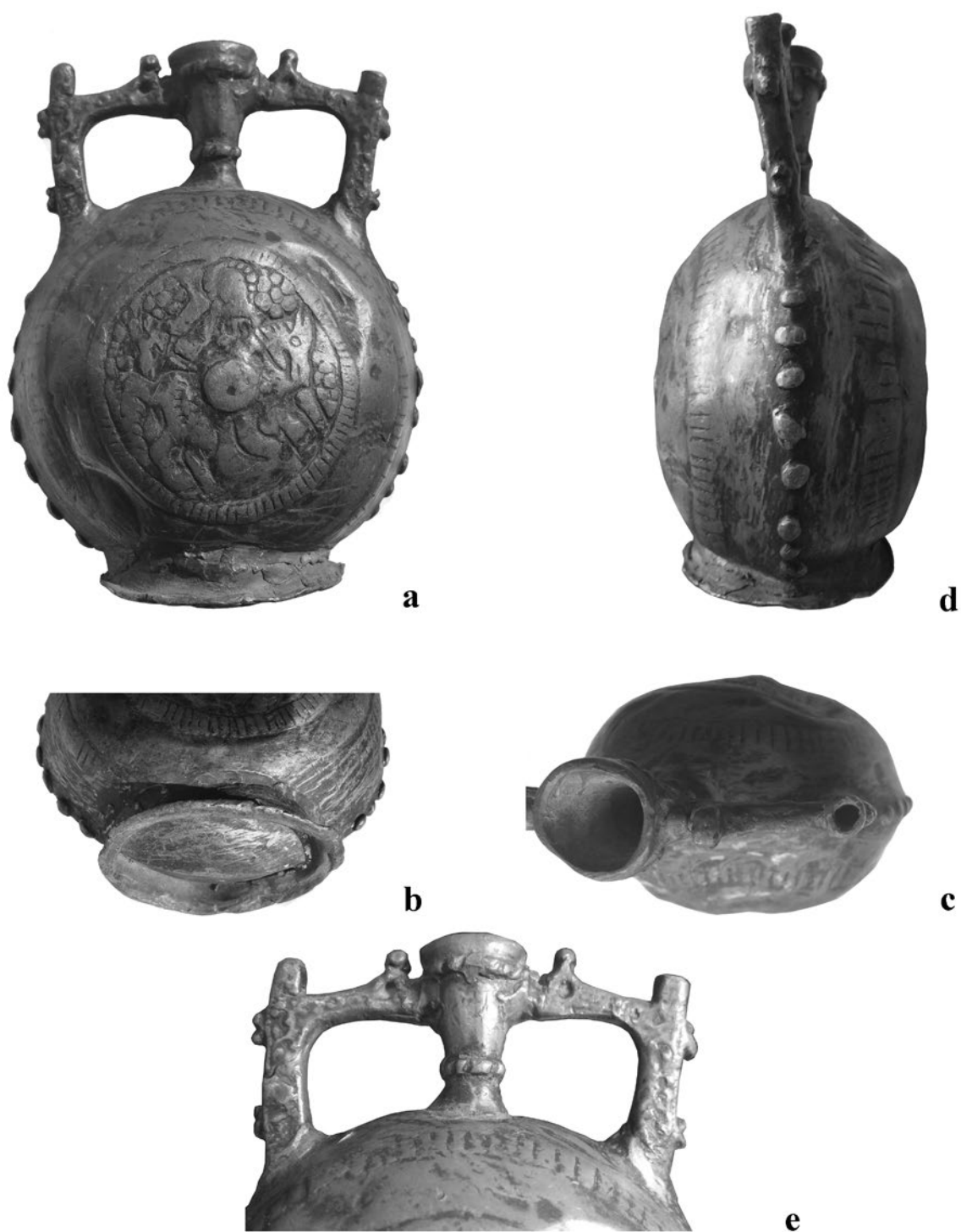


Fig. 1. The krondir purchased in Germany (photos: Christian Stopperich)
Обр. 1. Крондирът, закупен в Германия (снимки: Christian Stopperich)

fragmentary form that they remained unseen and unstudied by researchers. Moreover, even when fragments of such were found, and they may have been publicised (mostly in the summary statistics of finds), the material was invariably referred to as lead. And there can hardly be any doubt that tin-and-lead vessels were used in the Balkans during the Late Middle Ages. It is sufficient to recall a text from “The History of the Romans” by Nicephorus Gregoras, in which, when describing the crisis in Byzantium from the end of the 40s of the 14th century, it is said: “*At that time, there was such poverty in the palace that there was not a single cup or goblet of gold or silver – some were tin, and all the rest were ceramic and clay vessels*” (Никифор Григора 2014, XV, § 11, 183). There are also numerous entries, from the beginning of the next century (1436 – 1440), in the account book of the Venetian merchant Giacomo Badoer, residing at that time in Constantinople, from which we learn that the import of tin products and tin into the City at the beginning of the 15th c. was already commonplace (Bertelè 1956, 100 – 101, 216 – 217 and others). Most curious from the point of view of the aims of the present study, however, is an entry from 1438, which makes it clear that on February 10th, Badoer purchased 110 bars of tin for the amount of 107 hyperpyrons, needed for the production of 2 krondirs (Bertelè 1956, 280). (we will return to this entry later). Let us also recall the dramatic episode of the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, when, according to the Byzantine historian Doukas: “*Three days after the fall [of the City, Sultan Mehmed] permitted his ships to sail, each to its land and to its city. They were loaded to the point of sinking. But with what cargo? These were precious clothes, silver, gold, bronze and tin objects, countless books and captives: priests, laymen, nuns and monks.*” (Doukas 2016, 178). Although Doukas was not a direct eyewitness to the event, the accounts of the survivors, mostly Genoese but also Turks, lend enough historical weight to what he shared. Furthermore, even if the looters did not carry away tin vessels and books, apparently in Doukas’s mind they represented significant valuables, which is why they were specifically mentioned among the looted items. From this brief review of the written sources known to the author, it is well understood that certainly by the 14th and 15th centuries in Byzantium, and most likely throughout other vast territories of the Balkans, tin-ware, imported or locally produced, was already well known.

Such evidence from the previous centuries, however, is missing. Most probably, if tin-and-lead vessels were at all used in the Balkans at that time, the main reason for their low distribution was the limited quantities of tin that Byzantium (and medieval Bulgaria, respectively) had at its disposal. The first larger quantities of this metal to appear on Balkan markets seem to have been supplied by Venetian merchants from the 13th century onwards (Capitulare Nauticum 1792, 364, § CXV). From the middle of the 14th century, we already have reliable information about such supplies, both in Constantinople (Pegolotti 1936, 33), and along the Northern Black Sea coast (Tana) (Pegolotti 1936, 24). The tin supplied to the East came exclusively from Cornwall in England and was sold in marked bars which cost about ten times more than lead (Pegolotti 1936, 205). As for lead, it was not lacking on the Balkans. During this period, Serbian silver mines were particularly active, in which, in addition to silver, a significant amount of lead was mined.⁴ In Constantinople, similar to iron and tin, it was sold in bulk (Pegolotti 1936, 33). However, the author does not have any information showing that specialised producers of tin and lead products appeared in Byzantium or elsewhere in the Balkans at that time, such as the ones that had existed in Western Europe since the 13th century, organized in independent guilds (e.g., *veisseliers et beniers* in France).

⁴ See brief notes on this in Kovačević 1960, 257. Scattered notes on lead mining are also present in the whole work of Динић 1955, 1962.

On the name and shape of the krondirs

Although somewhat unusual for an archaeological study, the author will begin these subsequent remarks by determining the name of the vessels in question. This is considered necessary in order to be able to make full use of the written sources which mention them, as far as it has been possible to collect them.

It seems that in the Bulgarian environment the old name of this specific vessel, for which in our country today the descriptive lead-and-tin wine vessel⁵ is almost invariably used, was *krondir* (with the variant *kondir*).⁶ In Bulgarian, and the other Balkan languages, the name is a borrowing from the Modern Greek κροντήρι (*krontiri*) (БЕР 1986, 19).⁷ This is also the definition provided in the older Greek dictionaries that the author is familiar with. Confirmation that the name is very old can also be found in an entry from the trade book of Giacomo Badoer, which is mentioned above. The form there is *crondilli* (Bertelè 1956, 280).⁸ To date, this seems to be the oldest definite mention of the vessels under review. The next entry of interest is in the posthumously published (1709) work of the French Catholic missionary and curator of all the Catholic Capuchin missions in Greece, Alexis de Sommevoir (Alessio da Somavera), the first large dictionary of the Modern Greek language, reflecting the vocabulary of the second half of the 17th century. There, under the feature κροντήρι, τὸ (with variants κρεντήρι, τὸ and κριοντήρι, τὸ), it is written that this is “a tin or lead wine vessel” (Somavera 1709, 202).

With few exceptions, linguists seem to agree on the origin of the name. It is usually derived from the Middle Greek form κρυω(ν)τήριον, a vessel for cold drinks (Μπαμπινιώτης 2010, 737).⁹ This lexical form is found, for example, in Pseudo-Kodin’s compilative work “treatise on precedence”, probably created between 1350 and 1360 – “ὡσαύτως καὶ οἱ τὰ κρυοτήρια φέροντες παροινοχόοι ἔφιπποι καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐντὸς τοῦ παλατίου εἰσέρχονται”, translated by Jean Verpeaux as: “Thus the assistant cup bearers, carrying refreshments, also enter the palace on horseback” (Verpeaux 1966, 287), and by Joseph Munitiz “In like fashion the helpers of the wine suppliers who deliver the cooling containers also enter the palace riding a horse” (Macrides et al. 2013, 268 – 269).

The earliest use of the form κροντήρι known to the author is found in the work of the archbishop of Thessaloniki Symeon “On the Holy Ritual of Myrrh”, created between the years 1416 – 1429. At the beginning of the third chapter of this work it is said: “On the next day, which is Holy and Great Thursday, this myrrh is carried into the Church in a separate crontire, which is called an alabaster ...” (Συμεὼν ἀρχιεπισκόπου Θεσσαλονίκης 1863, 90).¹⁰ This shows that the krondir, in addition to a vessel keeping drinks cold,¹¹ was also used as a vessel for storing holy myrrh.

It is also necessary to say that the non-Greek speaking population of the Balkans adopted the name relatively early. Here, however, due to the probable ignorance of the specific type of

⁵ This definition was given by Vyara Kovacheva-Kostadinova; Todor Gerasimov calls them tin vessels. In the end, both definitions of the metal they are made of are inaccurate.

⁶ On the different local names for this type of vessels in Bulgaria, see Ковачева-Костадинова 2000, 51.

⁷ St. Mladenov supposes that it is “some modification of the Greek *kántharos* (Μλαδένωφ 1941, 258), on which the authors of the Bulgarian Etymology Dictionary have very tactfully commented that it is “not very likely”.

⁸ On p. 246 Tommaso Bertelè wrote that these are “*unidentifiable tin objects for household use*”.

⁹ The form κρωντήρι is given as a more correct spelling of the lexeme. See also Kretschmer 1905, 118, and maybe for most detail – Таховски 1950, 158. For other forms of the name, see Κριαράς 1985, 19 – 20.

¹⁰ The Paris edition gives *κρατήρι* instead of *κροντήρι* (Symeon Archiepiscopus Thessalonica 1866, 240).

¹¹ The author cannot understand the reason for this concept. One can suppose, however, that due to the fact that no one kept wine in lead-and-tin vessels, because its quality deteriorated, the drinks poured into them had to be drunk quickly and so there was no time for them to become warm.



Fig. 2. Miniature from a Late Byzantine calendar from 1461 (Eideneier 1979, 402)

Обр. 2. Миниатюра от къснoвизантийски календар от 1461 г. (no Eideneier 1979, 402)

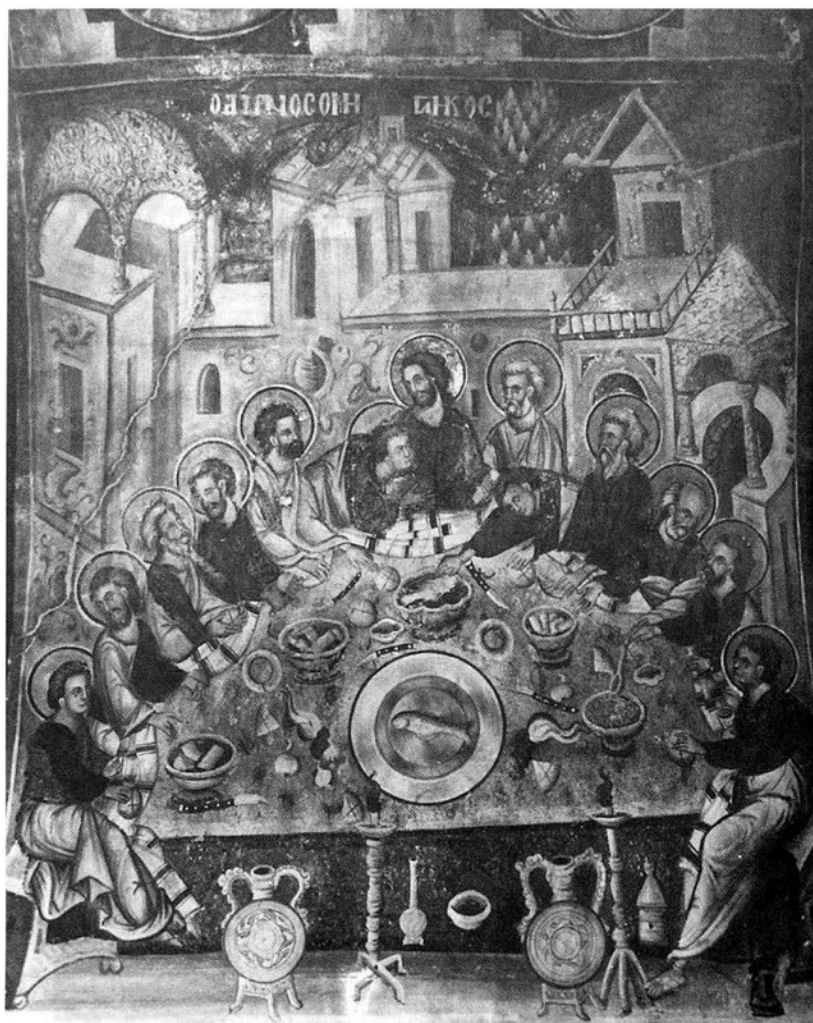


Fig. 3. Two krondirs depicted at the front of the table from the Last Supper scene, fresco from the old church of the Holy Monastery of the Transfiguration of Jesus ("Great Meteoron") at Kalambaka in Thessaly, dated to 1483 (Georgitsoyanni 1992, 125)

Обр. 3. Два крондира, изобразени пред масата от сцената „Тайната вечеря“, стенопис от старата църква на манастира „Преображение Господне“ („Големия Метеор“) при Каламбака в Тесалия, датиран към 1483 г. (no Georgitsoyanni 1992, 125)

vessel, and to a large extent due to the natural expansion of the lexical meaning of the word in any linguistic development, in the oldest record known to the author (from May 4th, 1406) where it is mentioned (in the form “кондѣръ”), the name seems to be used to denote a deep cup, a bowl (Пуцић 1862, 56).¹² Subsequently, it was also adopted in the Balkans to denote a certain volume for liquids, mostly for wine (Schweigger 1608, 227).¹³

However, what was the form of this specific vessel in Byzantium during this relatively early period, the written sources do not tell us. We get some idea of its appearance thanks to the miniature accompanying the verses dedicated to the month of July from a Late Byzantine calendar dated to 1461, preserved today in the library of the Topkapı Palace Museum in Constantinople under No. 35 (fig. 2) (Eideneier 1979, 402). The scene depicted in it – a young man lying down drinking wine, illustrates the short poetic story, in which it is mentioned that the young man, warmed up after visiting the bath, wished to drink cold wine, as a result of which he fell ill. To represent the cold drink, the miniaturist depicted the specific vessel above the young man – a wine cooler, undoubtedly the κροντήρι (krondir) known to us from the sources. Its flattened spheroidal body stands on four feet, its neck is elongated, and from the edge of its neck to the vessel's shoulders descend two jagged ornamented handles. In the middle of the body is marked a circular pictorial field, filled with some kind of pattern, which is not clearly visible from the illustration. It is also impossible to recognize the material from which the vessel depicted in the miniature was made. However, it is easily recognizable in the depictions of two similar vessels from a fresco in the old church of the Holy Monastery of the Transfiguration of Jesus (“Great Meteoron”) near Kalambaka in Thessaly, dated to 1483. In the foreground of the Last Supper scene, its creator, an icon painter from Kastoria, depicted them painted light grey, thus representing the tin-and-lead alloy of which they were actually made (fig. 3). In these depictions, the handles of the vessels are represented as florid, with wavy ornamentation running along their upper edges, which leaves no doubt that the painter thus reproduced the specific decoration of the handles of krondirs. The four feet they usually stand upon were also represented. The placement of the vessels, on the floor next to the table, their layout and their relatively large dimensions, gave reason to the researcher of the fresco, Evangelia Georgitsoyanni, to define them without hesitation as “water vessels” (Georgitsoyanni 1992, 125).

In exactly the same place, on the ground in front of the table, again in a fresco depicting the same scene, such a vessel was also depicted by the painter who decorated the church of the Poganovo Monastery of St John the Theologian (fig. 4). The pedestal of this vessel is shaped like a truncated pyramid, and a small trapezoidal window is incised in each of the walls of the pyramid. This vessel was identified by fresco researcher André Grabar as a “water jug” (Грабар 1927, 205, Табл. XXXVI, 1).

An idea of the use of this specific vessel is provided by a miniature created in 1574 by the Flemish traveller and diplomatic agent in the service of the Habsburgs in Constantinople, Lambert de Vos, in his “Book of Turkish Costumes”, kept today in the university library in Bremen under No. Ms. Or. 9. Jesters from the palace are represented in this life-painted miniature, eating. In the hands of the central character is undoubtedly a krondir, from which he is pouring himself wine, easily recognizable by the red colour of the liquid depicted by the miniaturist (fig. 5). The grey

¹² On p. 125 of the same collection (legacy from 1465) mentions two other krondirs (кондѣра) made of other materials. In a document dated July 26, 1441, we have there is a record of nine large silver goblets (кондиери) and two small cups (кондирька) (Miklosich 1858, 407, 408).

¹³ “... *Weinwachs ein Maß so sie nennen Crondir* ...”. The Great Dictionary of Geography of La Martinière of 1736 states: “[In *Negropont*] you buy a *krondir* of wine for three aspers, which makes [the price of] *Pot Lyonnais* for one sol.” (Martinière 1736, 78) (*Pot, mesure de Lyon*, synonym of *pinte*, at the time had a volume of a little over 1 litre; for more details, see Vial 1906, 13 – 15).



Fig. 4. Krondir depicted at the front of the table from the Last Supper scene, fresco from the church in the Poganovo Monastery (Грабар 1927, Табл. XXXVI, 1)

Обр. 4. Крондир, изобразен пред масата от сцената „Тайната вечеря“, стенопис от църквата в Погановския манастир (Грабар 1927, Табл. XXXVI, 1)

colour of the vessel is an indication of the material from which it was made, most likely tin-and-lead alloy. By the way, that is the colour of the cup that the jester is holding. The image shows that krondirs were held as jugs and, obviously, that they were also used in a Muslim environment.

So, we see that the oldest known texts and images of the vessel type we are interested in from the second half of the 14th and 15th centuries define them as “coolers” for wine or water, made of tin-and-lead alloy (or of silver) and even as vessels for myrrh, made of a currently unclear material.

On the origin of krondirs

What, however, was their origin? The few researchers who have studied the topic do not provide a satisfactory answer. For Bojana Radojković, the type appeared in the Balkans as an influence of Late Antique ceramic pilgrim ampullae (Радойковић 1956, 39 – 41) and vessels, some of which it actually resembles,¹⁴ and as a specific production of Armenian craftsmen (Радойковић 1956, 39). Todor Gerasimov assumes that they were “*produced in some specialized workshops in Eastern Asia and distributed as a commercial product in the lands of the Balkan Peninsula as well*”, and “*the city of Damascus should be considered as a probable centre where they were made ...*” (Герасимов 1983, c. 75). Without going too deep into the problem, the Greek researcher Charalambos Bakirtzis

¹⁴ See for example, Late Antique Egyptian ampullae kept in the Louvre collection, with dimensions: 27 x 17.5 x 7 cm (Metzger 1981, 39, 64, 103, fig. 80) (fig. 6).

makes a connection between the finds of ceramic wine vessels from the 10th – 14th c., known from archaeological studies in the Balkans (more on them in Алексиев 2000, 191 – 198) and the more luxurious metal vessels, but does not undertake to answer the question of their origin, nevertheless suggesting that the ceramic vessels were made as imitations of the metal vessels (Μπακιρτζής 2003, 102 – 103). Vyara Kovacheva-Kostadinova also makes such a connection, but for her the process was reversed – from the ceramic medieval prototypes to the more massive metal “wine vessels” (Ковачева-Костадинова 2000, 55 – 56). As can be seen from this brief review of what has been achieved so far, to date, there is no generally accepted answer to the question of the origin of the vessels of interest to us.

More data is available on their distribution area. The specimens known to the author give reason to outline its borders from the Balkans to the Middle East. The single finds from Egypt and from Anatolia (Pergamon) are good evidence for their use by the local Christian population in these areas as well. Unlike the Balkans, however, where we have abundant material, pictorial and written artefacts, which are a good indication of their existence since the 14th century, if not earlier, in the lands of the Middle East they are actually so rare that too little is known about them.



Fig. 5. Miniature from “The Book of Turkish Costumes” by Lambert de Vos, 1574 (Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Bremen, Ms. Or. 9, Lambert de Vos. *Türkisches Kostümbuch*, Fol. 33)

Обр. 5. Миниатюра от „Книга на турските костюми“ от Ламберт де Вос, 1574 г. (Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Bremen, Ms. Or. 9, Lambert de Vos. *Türkisches Kostümbuch*, Fol. 33)



Fig. 6. Late Antique ceramic ampulla from the Louvre collection (Metzger 1981, fig. 80)
Обр. 6. Късноантична керамична ампула от сбирката на Лувъра (Metzger 1981, fig. 80)

The vessels from Egypt which are closest to the Balkan krondirs have been of interest to researchers since the beginning of the 20th century. The first publication of such a vessel, kept at that time in the museum in Cairo, is due to the French scholar of Coptic art, Albert Gayet. In 1902, he made a very artistic description of a krondir, though it was lacking any metric data.¹⁵ It was made of bronze, which he frivolously attributed to the time preceding the Arab conquest of Egypt (fig. 7) (Gayet 1902, 295 – 296). Only two years later, however, another notable researcher of Early Christian art, the Austrian Joseph Strzygowski, declared Gayet's published vessel a forgery, without any argument provided, and in turn announced the existence of another completely identical vessel made of lead (Strzygowski 1904, 330, № 7021). This vessel had the following dimensions: height – 16.5 cm, width – 12.5 cm, depth – 9.5 cm. Unfortunately, like the vessel published by Gayet, its lead counterpart also had no clear origin. It was also acquired by the Cairo Museum as a re-purchase. Their dating was much broader than the one Gayet committed to – “*Coptic or Arabic period*”. Again from Cairo came a third identical specimen, acquired through re-purchase by the Berlin Museum in 1905, lost during the Second World War. Strzygowski's student, Oskar Wulf, who published it in 1911, dated it to the Late Middle Ages, more precisely to “*the Late Byzantine lead production*” (Wulf 1911, 94, № 1988 und Taf. VIII).¹⁶ The dimensions of this vessel were as follows: 17.5 x 11.5 cm. The fourth similar object is the one with whose description the present notes began which, although purchased from the antiquarian in Germany, at least to the author, is certainly of Egyptian origin.

¹⁵ The author has given it this name, Gayet only speaks of a vessel (*vase*).

¹⁶ See also the note at the annotation of the previous vessel (No. 1987).



Fig. 7. The bronze krondir from the Cairo Museum collection (Gayet 1902, 296)

Обр. 7. Бронзовият крондир от сбирката на музея в Кайро (Gayet 1902, 296)



Fig. 8. The "lead" krondir from Pergamon (Wulf 1911, № 1988, Taf. VIII)

Обр. 8. „Оловният“ крондир от Пергам (no Wulf 1911, № 1988, Taf. VIII)

Another lead vessel is of special interest in view of the current work – one owned until the Second World War by two Berlin museums – first the Pergamon Museum and subsequently the Museum of Byzantine Art (part of the Bode Museum) (fig. 8) (Wulf 1911, 94, № 1987 und Taf. VIII). Actually, this vessel so closely resembles these krondirs that there can be no doubt of their connection – the same material, the same structure, the same feet, the same decorated handles, one of which is shaped more like a spout than the more usual nipple-like protrusion used for drinking, the same central fields filled with a Christian scene, in this case – the “Fountain of Life”, which the author has termed as such on account of the nature of the object on which it is represented – a vessel for wine or water. However, unlike almost all the other Balkan examples, this vessel has the advantage of its known origin – Pergamon. Although historical studies conducted at the time when the vessel was acquired by these German colleagues, showed that at the beginning of the 14th century the Byzantine city came under the rule of the emirs of Karasi, and two or three decades later – under the rule of the Ottomans,¹⁷ the fact that it was poorly studied archaeologically seems to have given Oskar Wulf grounds to boldly date this larger vessel (27.5 x 16 cm) to the Early Middle Ages. However, the argument he put forward in his annotation for this dating cannot withstand even the weakest criticism – “*The device differs in shape and in the archaic style of its decoration*

¹⁷ The years in which Pergamon first came under the rule of the Karasi emirs and subsequently under that of the Ottomans are not well known. There are serious differences between historians' studies. More on the problem, see, for example, in: Gelzer 1903, 1 – 102; Zachariadou 1993, 225 – 236; Parry 1986, 1187 and bibliography.

from the mass of later Byzantine lead vessels,¹⁸ like the one here under No. 1988”.¹⁹ Today, this vessel, known only from the publication by O. Wulf, can be seen on the website of the Berlin Museum of Byzantine Art, where its dating is indicated as “*from an undefined period*” (unbestimmte Zeit).²⁰ However, the author has two strong reasons for accepting this vessel as the earliest known of the vessel type reviewed here. They are as follows: First, the vessel was most probably used in a Christian environment, and second, after the capture of Pergamon by the troops of the emir o Karasi around the beginning of the 14th century, the city remained deserted. We have good evidence of this from the record of the Arab traveller Ibn Battoutah who passed through Pergamon in 1332/1333: “... we arrived in Bergama, a city in ruins, which has a large and strong fortress situated on the top of a mountain.” (Ibn Battoutah 1854, 315). The fortress was at the time in the hands of the Muslims, and moreover, as is understood from Ibn Battoutah’s record (and also from modern archaeological surveys), it was remote from the ruins of the city. These circumstances lead the author to think that if the vessel was not later taken to the ruins of Byzantine Pergamon, located a few kilometres from the modern city of Bergama, which is unlikely, then it should be dated no later than the end of the 13th – the first years of the 14th c. Unfortunately, all attempts to learn of the circumstances under which it was found were futile. The documentation surrounding its acquisition by the German museums appears to have been lost.

The images of the scene depicted on the vessel, identified by O. Wulf as a palm tree (Palmettenbaumes) or bowl with a low foot, the two doves standing opposite on either side of it, the palm branches saturating the background fields, as well as the unexplained elements represented at the base of the scene, are modelled too primitively in the spirit of provincial art and cannot contribute much to determining the time when the vessel was made. The trefoil frame enclosing the scene, placed in the round pictorial field, is also strange – in fact, a very atypical composition for Byzantine art.²¹ In reality, the “ambiguities” surrounding this image can be explained relatively easily. By all accounts, it seems that the master, not particularly skilled in the field of Christian art, had at hand a clumsily made drawing of the “Fountain of Life” scene, the prototype of which was most likely a miniature from a Byzantine manuscript (Bible or Gospel) or some older monumental image from a church. Moreover, he did not interpret the water jets flowing in parabolas from the fountain as such, but rearranged them and raised them higher to obtain the special trefoil frame according to his own aesthetic perceptions. In the same way, he transformed the cone from the Dionysian thyrsus into a palm tree,²² presented most often in the centre of the kantharos from which the water flowed in the scene in question. By way of illustration, the author will mention a mosaic from the 11th or 12th century from the Church of the Assumption in Daphne near Athens with the scene “The Prayer of Joachim and Anna” in which the fountain is clearly visible (fig. 9), as well as two miniatures from a Gospel of the same time kept in the National Library of France (Ms. gr. 64) (fig. 10). Although it had been known since Late Antiquity, the scene regained some popularity in the 11th – 12th centuries, but at that time it was mainly reproduced in miniatures

¹⁸ It is noteworthy that O. Wulf defined these late Coptic vessels as Byzantine.

¹⁹ By the way, O. Wulf presents no arguments for the late dating of these vessels.

²⁰ <https://recherche.smb.museum/detail/1372053/>.

²¹ Trefoils are extremely rare in Byzantine art. Several examples of vessels decorated in the sgraffito technique, dated to the 13th century, can be misleading because the trefoils in them do not form frames. Their researcher, Demetra Papanikola-Bakirtzi, usually interprets them as a “stylized star motif” (Papanikola-Bakirtzi 1999, 55 – 56, 148 – 149, 248, 250).

²² It is curious that in modern times some researchers of the Dionysian thyrsus suggest that it was based on the Turkish sorghum, which very closely resembles its depiction, represented on the krondir under review (See, for example, in Olszewski 2019, 160 – 161).



Fig. 9. Fountain in a mosaic from the late 11th or early 12th c., from the Church of the Assumption in Daphne near Athens, with the scene "The Prayer of Joachim and Anna" (Millet 1899, Pl. XIX.1)

Обр. 9. Фонтан в мозайка от XI или XII в. от църквата „Успение Богородично“ в Дафни до Атина със сцената „Молитвата на Йоаким и Анна“ (по Millet 1899, Pl. XIX.1)

and stone sculptures.²³ In the 14th century, it was depicted again, including in church frescoes, but in a much altered form (Velmans 1968, 122, sqq). Although indirect, this clue could guide us in determining the lower chronological threshold for the dating of the vessel from Pergamon after the 11th – 12th century. If the vessel was a product of the Early Middle Ages, as Oscar Wulf suggests, then the scene would hardly have been so clumsily represented, not least because the craftsman who made the vessel would have been familiar with the symbol from its many depictions which he most certainly encountered daily, and therefore he would not have depicted it in this almost incomprehensible way. If correct in such reasoning, it means that this vessel is currently the oldest of the type reviewed here, and its dating could most likely be the end of the 13th – beginning of the 14th century.

Notes on the inscriptions on the krondirs

There is another aspect of the research conducted on the tin-and-lead krondirs until now that has not been clarified sufficiently – the date inscriptions which are found on a significant number

²³ From the 9th century onwards, until the 14th century, the scene was not frescoed in churches in the form known from Late Antiquity (Velmans 1968, 119); instead, it was often represented on stone reliefs, especially in the 11th – 12th c. period (See numerous examples in Grabar 1976).

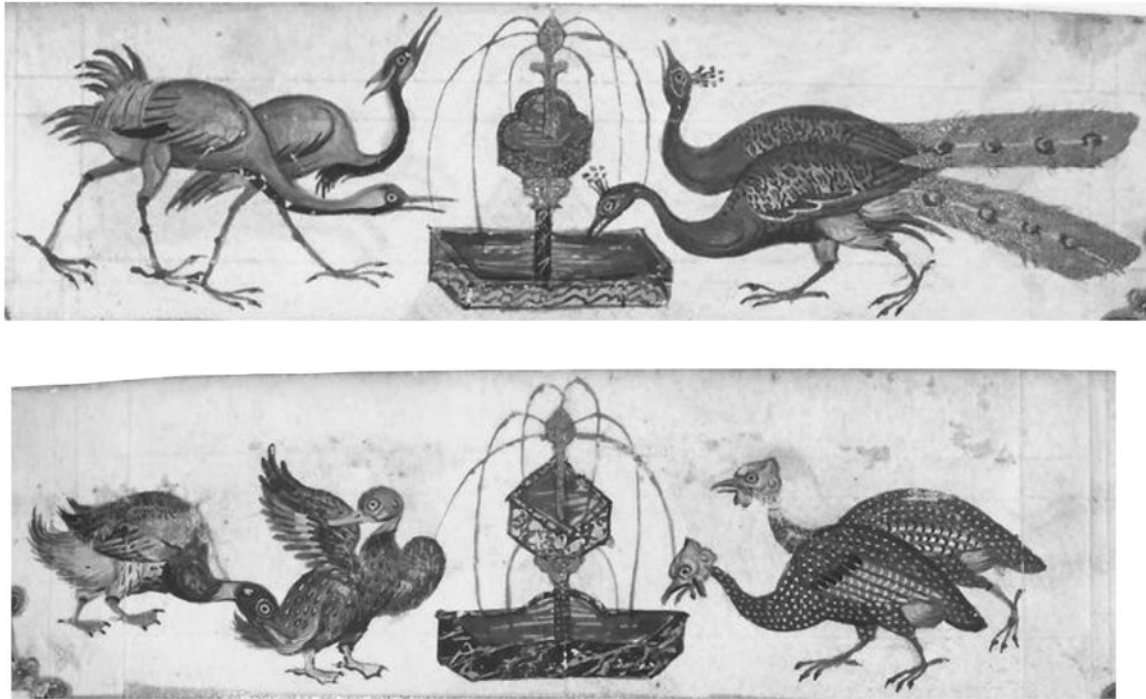


Fig. 10. Miniatures from a Gospel from the end of the 11th c., kept in the National Library of France (BNF, Ms. gr. 64, Fol. 6v, 7r)

Обр. 10. Миниатюри от Евангелие от края на XI в., съхранявано в Националната библиотека на Франция (BNF, Ms. gr. 64, Fol. 6v, 7r)

of them. Researchers who have studied them, including ethnographers, assume that those reflect the time of their creation. However, is this really the case? Most of these inscriptions are scratched extremely shallowly with a sharp chisel, usually at the upper end of the body, immediately above one of the circular medallions. In some cases, however, we find a different composition. For example, on a vessel kept in the Ethnographic Museum in Sofia (Inv. No. 1036) this most general scheme is violated. On one side of the vessel, the following inscription can be read: “КРСТАНА 1760 NANO MITP XLI”, and on the other – only the name “МИТАРЪ”, without the title “Haji”. Logic suggests that the name Mitar (derived from Dimitar) is the name of Nano’s father,²⁴ whose name is near the year 1760. It appears that the vessel is older than the date written on it, but exactly how much older is unclear. Moreover, it seems next to incredible that new vessels were bought for every wedding ceremony, where, according to Bulgarian ethnographers, such vessels were used. If it were so, they would be one of the most common vessels in the country, and this is not the case at all. It is more logical that for such cases the same vessel was used in the family, on which, depending on the circumstances, only the names and dates were changed. Erasing the old inscriptions was not a problem and could have been done even at home. In order to confirm this supposition, however, it is necessary to make microscopic observations of all the inscribed vessels known to date, for some traces of such intervention would surely be detected during such a careful examination. In addition, the moulds in which the krondirs, or rather their individual elements, were cast, were used for generations, naturally, with a little retouching and the necessary corrections. This is undoubtedly the case of the krondir from Malko Tarnovo, dated through scratching to “1891” (NEM, Inv. No. 44771) and the krondir from RMH – Burgas, dated in a similar way to 1866 (Inv. No. E 390).

²⁴Under the Ottoman naming system used during the period, there were no surnames, and people were identified by their given and patronymic names, in this case Nano (son of) Mitar.

Krondirs in the church

The author has not found written records about the use of these vessels in church rituals. However, some images on the frescoes and icons from the Ottoman period give reason to assume that they played a certain role in them as well. For example, such a vessel is depicted on the table placed in front of St. Anna in the “Nativity” scene depicted on an Arbanassi icon dated to the 17th – 18th c. (fig. 11) (Пандурски 1977, 396, № 204 и ил.). This position transforms it from a simple water jug into a vessel with a certain ceremonial-liturgical function. Although tentatively, in her study of the krondirs, V. Kovacheva-Kostadinova also suggested the idea, based on iconic images of the scene “Women in front of the empty tomb” (“Myrrh bearers”), that they also had the functions of vessels for myrrh (Ковачева-Костадинова 2000, 57).



Fig. 11. The krondir depicted on the table in front of St Anna in the “Nativity” scene, icon from Arbanassi dated to 17th – 18th c. (Пандурски 1977, 396, № 204)

Обр. 11. Крондирът, изобразен върху масата пред св. Анна в сцената „Рождество Богородично“, икона от Арбанаси, датирана към XVII – XVIII в. (по Пандурски 1977, 396, № 204)



Fig. 12. A Thessaloniki ampulla from the National Museum of History collections (photo by the author)
 Обр. 12. Солунска ампула от сбирките на Националния исторически музей (снимка на автора)

However, were the krondirs for water and wine and those for myrrh the same? The attentive reader has probably already noticed the considerable differences in the dimensions of some of the vessels described here. The summarized data for the specimens known make it possible to distinguish two groups based on the formal feature of size. First, the larger ones were on average about 30 cm high and had volumes of about 2.5 – 3 L, and the smaller ones were usually about 17 cm high and their volumes did not exceed 0.5 L. It seems that the large ones were used as vessels for wine and water, and the smaller ones for carrying myrrh, in this latter case they performed functions close to those of the well-known Late Medieval Thessaloniki lead myrrh ampullae – *κουτρούβια*²⁵ (fig. 12), as all bulky clay or glass vessels with two handles were also called during the Middle Byzantine period (Koukoulès 1955, 459). By the way, in addition to the similarity of the material from which the two types of vessels were made, there is also the similarity of their shapes – the same flattened spheroidal bodies, the same elongated necks connected to the shoulders of the bodies by two handles. The small, portable ampullae, however, did not have pedestals because their purpose was related to the satisfaction of personal needs, and they were apparently worn around the necks of their owners.

The scenes depicted on the tin-and-lead krondirs, like those on the portable personal ampullae, are mostly Christian (Fountain of Life, double-headed eagles, St. George on horseback (?), Samson Rending Open the Lion's jaws, lions, etc.), with the exception, as far as information can be found regarding two krondirs – one from the Ethnographic Museum in Sofia (Inv. No. 24973) and the other from RMH – Burgas (Inv. No. E 391), on whose faces, blue and yellow, respectively blue and green beads, both of which undoubtedly performed magical-apotropaic functions, are mounted onto protruding thin wedges.

²⁵ For other forms of the name see in Κριαράς 1982, 350. On these ampullae and their purpose, see more details in Markov 2018, 122 – 135.

The tradition

The shape of the krondirs seems to have not changed for centuries. However, this should come as no surprise. The phenomenon is not isolated. The author had the opportunity to establish the same phenomenon in a number of other cases – once established and widely accepted, the shape of a product could be reproduced for centuries. This makes it extremely difficult to date the specific objects precisely, especially if their origin is not established. Attempting to compensate for this by analysing secondary elements, such as their decorations, usually leads to wrong conclusions. This is because the decorative elements, like the shapes, are no less inert in their development, and moreover, often the makers of the vessels reproduced scenes and images borrowed from much older examples. This lack of firm support in the dating of tin-and-lead krondirs is the reason why an undoubtedly relatively late-produced vessel, such as the specimen in the collection of the Düsseldorf Art Museum, is dated to the 16th century (Zinn 1981, 47 f., Nr. 55), the two completely identical krondirs, one from Janjevo, Kosovo, and the other from the region of the village of Ugljare near Gnjilane, to receive different dating – the first to the 16th – 17th c. (Церовић 2017, 246 – 247), and the second – to the 15th – 16th c. (Српско златарство 1981, 33, № 72, сл. 77), in Bulgarian museums all specimens are invariably dated to the 18th or 19th c. (See in Герасимов 1983 and in Ковачева-Костадинова 2000), and it is still unclear when the vessels from Egypt were made – in Late Antiquity or in the Late Middle Ages.

Development

There is another point of interest concerning the vessels under review that is worth mentioning. At the beginning of this paper, it was already noted that in the earliest dictionary of spoken Greek, that of the Catholic missionary Alexis de Sommevoir, krontirs (krondirs) were defined as *tin or lead wine vessels*. Later dictionaries, however, invariably define them as pottery. As an example, in the 1790 dictionary entry of Georgios Ventotis it states: “*κρυοντήρι, κρεοντήρι, κροντήρι, και κλοντήρι*, earthen (i.e., of clay) vessel with a handle (*vase de terre à manche, vaso di terra con manico*)” (Βεντότης 1790, 304). It certainly reflected the changes of the period that affected this type of specific vessels, the material from which they were already mass-produced at the time,²⁶ as well as the fact that the handle, which was used in tin-and-lead vessels as a spout or as a nipple-like protrusion for drinking, had already become a real spout on the ceramic vessels, still usually connected to the neck of the vessel via a transverse decorative beam, in which the handle actually remained as one piece.

Ethnographic museums in the Balkans abound with such later vessels from the 18th and 19th c. Of course, the process of transformation of tin-and-lead krondirs into ceramic ones was not clear-cut, which was actually normal, because during that period centuries-old traditions usually died out slowly. It seems that both the old and the new types of vessels were used for some time in parallel, perhaps even until the middle of the 19th century, and at the beginning of the next century, the civilizational processes of the Balkans, expressed in a large-scale Europeanization, finally threw these curious ritual vessels out of use.

²⁶ Certainly the ceramic vessels defined as krondirs existed in the previous centuries as well, at least in connection with the name for the volume of wine, which was mentioned at the beginning of the paper. However, they were undoubtedly not ritual vessels.

Concluding remarks

In conclusion, it is possible to give an, if still uncertain, summary of this research. At the current level of the author's knowledge of these specific vessels, it can be suggested that they were most likely a product of Byzantine society,²⁷ where they seem to have emerged as early as the Palaiologan Period. Looking for their roots in the East, in Central Asia or even in Egypt, where they are either completely absent or known only by a few singly-discovered, completely identical specimens, cannot be accepted as viable. The centres of their creation were apparently the large Balkan Byzantine cities – Constantinople, Thessaloniki and Adrianople – from where the type not only spread, but in the early centuries of the Ottoman rule, their production bloomed to an extent, expressed above all in the significant variety of the images or other decoration present on the krondirs. However until the shovel of the archaeologist brings to light actual remains of specimens of really early vessels, these remarks will have the weight only of a pleasing hypothesis, albeit unsupported by anything sufficiently solid.

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²⁷Still, I do not exclude the possibility that the production of krondirs began under certain Latin influence. However, there were no such vessels in the West. The tin vessels used there for pouring wine (cimarre, cimaise) also had two handles, but they were placed at right angles to each other, and their spouts were shaped into their mouths (Gay 1887, 380 – 381).

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БЕЛЕЖКИ ЗА КРОНДИРИТЕ, ЕДИН ИНТЕРЕСЕН ТИП КЪСНОСРЕДНОВЕКОВНИ КАЛАЕНО-ОЛОВНИ СЪДОВЕ

Николай Марков

Национален исторически музей, ул. „Витошко лале“ № 16, София 1618; markovn@abv.bg

РЕЗЮМЕ

В статията са представени най-ранните сведения, с които за момента се разполага, за употребата на един специфичен тип калаено-оловни съдове, познати под названието крондири. Събрани са сведения за търговията с калай във Византия, както и такива, в които се говори за употребата на калаено-оловни съдове на Балканите през периода на Късното средновековие. Уточнено е названието „крондир“ за тези специфични съдове, за които в българската литература се употребява по традиция и досега описателното определение „оловно-калаени бъклици“. Уточнени са функциите им като съдове за вино и вода (по-големите) и вероятно за миро (по-малките). Анализирани са изображенията по най-старите познати образци. Изказано е предположение за някои специфики при употребата им от късносредновековните балкански общества и за евентуалното им развитие през периода на Възраждането.

В резултат от работата е достигнато до заключението, че на сегашното ниво на познанията ни крондирият най-вероятно са били продукт на византийското общество, в което те възникнали още през периода на Палеолозите. Отхвърля се тезата, според която корените на този тип съдове са на Изток, в Централна Азия или дори в Египет, където те или изобщо липсват, или са познати едва в няколко единични, при това напълно идентични екземпляра. Предположено е, че центровете им на създаване били големите балкански византийски градове – Константинопол, Тесалоники и Адрианопол, откъдето типът не само се разпространил, но и в ранните векове на османското владичество производството им достигнало до известен разцвет, изразяващ се преди всичко в значителното разнообразие на представяните върху крондирият изображения или друга декорация.

Ключови думи: крондир, калай, съдове за вода и вино, Балкани, Византия, Палеолози

РЕЦЕНЗИИ/REVIEWS

НОВ ПРИНОС В БЪЛГАРСКАТА И БАЛКАНСКАТА МЕДИЕВИСТИКА:

ВИОЛЕТА НЕШЕВА. МЕЛНИК. МАНАСТИР
„СВ. БОГОРОДИЦА ПАНТАНАСА“. ПОСЛЕДЕН ПРИСТАН И
МЕМОРИАЛ НА ДЕСПОТ СЛАВ ОТ БЪЛГАРСКАТА ЦАРСКА
ДИНАСТИЯ НА АСЕНЕВЦИ

И. К. ГУТЕНБЕРГ. СОФИЯ 2020

Миляна Каймакова

*Исторически факултет, Софийски университет „Св. Климент Охридски“, бул. „Цар Освободител“ № 15,
София 1504; kaimakova@abv.bg*



Добре известно е, че проучването на средновековния град Мелник с прилежащата му околност твърде отдавна се превръща в център на научноизследователската дейност на проф. д.и.н. Виолета Нешева. Особено големи са нейните заслуги в проучването на църковната архитектура на града, както и на неговото значение като престолнина на деспот Алексей Слав. В подкрепа на казаното идва и нейната най-нова монография, в която предмет на изследване е манастирът „Св. Богородица Пантанаса/Всецарица, Всевлдичица“.

Обр. 1. Предната корица на книгата на проф. д.и.н. В. Нешева, посветена на манастира „Св. Богородица Пантанаса“ в Мелник

Fig. 1. The front cover of the book of prof. DSc V. Nesheva dedicated to Holy Virgin Pantanassa Monastery in Melnik

В структурно отношение изследването се състои от увод, три глави, заключение и подробно резюме на английски език. Трудът е съпроводен с богат илюстративен материал, който включва сателитни и панорамни снимки, карти, схеми и планове на града, изображения на негови археологически обекти. Те отразяват поетапно проведените проучвания на манастира „Св. Богородица Пантанаса“ от В. Нешева и нейния основен екип от археолозите ас. Ц. Комитова, О. Миланова, д-р З. Коркутова, Владимир Петков, доц. д-р С. Попов и гл. ас. д-р Методи Златков. Тук е мястото да посочим, че издателство „Гутенберг“ има голяма заслуга за откриването на тези образци и достигането им до по-широк читателски кръг.

В **увода**, наред с историко-географското описание на гр. Мелник, се разглежда въпросът за локализирането на горепосочения манастир. Неговият отговор е потърсен въз основа на данните в писмените и устните извори, които го ситуират в източната периферия на средновековния и възрожденски мелнишки квартал „Мурдзу“. Става ясно, че манастирът е функционирал докъм края на XIX в., когато е разрушен в резултат на земетресение, а двете му църкви „Св. Богородица“ и „Св. Троица“ са били запазени цялостно и през първите десетилетия на XX в. Припомнят се ценни сведения, които удостоверяват значението му като свято място и едър поземлен собственик в неговите български и балкански измерения. Отразен е интересът на редица учени към двата манастира на деспот Слав и съмненията на някои от тях в изграждането на манастира „Св. Богородица Пантанаса“ от него въпреки преките данни за прокриторството му в дарствената грамота на деспот Константин Драгаш от 1393 г. Отбелязва се, че резултатите от археологическите разкопки, проведени в периода 2005 – 2012 г., потвърждават данните от споменатия дарителския акт за основаването на манастира „Св. Богородица Пантанаса“ от Алексей Слав. Уточнява се, че стенописите са само по-късен етап в благоустройството на монашеската обител. В нейното цялостно проучване участват още нумизмати, инженери, архитекти, геодезисти, реставратори, антрополози. Извършено е изследване на ДНК/DNA на проби от костния материал от фамилната ктиторска гробница, разкрита при разкопките, както и дендрохронологическо изследване на дървения материал.

Първа глава, озаглавена „Исторически извори“, е посветена на изворите за историята на манастира „Св. Богородица Пантанаса“. Те са обединени в няколко групи, а именно: документи от светогорския манастир „Ватопед“, приписки в църковни ръкописи, архивни карти на Мелник, описания на манастира и ктиторските надписи от учени в края на XIX – началото на XX в. В своята цялост те отразяват важната роля на манастира в духовния живот на Мелник през Средновековието и Възраждането и израстването му като крупен поземлен собственик.

Основно място при анализа на изворите се отделя на споменатата по-горе дарствена грамота на деспот Константин Драгаш, защото тя има носещо значение за съпоставка с данните от археологическите проучвания (с. 15 – 18). В. Нешева публикува паралелно нейния гръцки текст по препис, откриван през 1947 г. от френския византолог В. Лоран, както и българския му превод, осъществен от д-р Николай Шаранков. Така отпадат възможностите за каквито и да е съмнения относно изграждането на манастира „Св. Богородица Пантанаса“ от деспот Алексей Слав. Според В. Нешева употребата на умалителното определение „манастирче“ за обителта в грамотата на Константин Драгаш вероятно е било дипломатичен ход по отношение на султан Баязид (1389 – 1402), произтичащ от позицията му на негов васал и от деловите отношения между султана и атонските монаси. Авторката изтъква, че въпросното определение не отговаря на действителните размери на манастира, който е бил значително по-голям от „Св. Богородица Спилеотиса“ (с. 18). Посочва се, че грамотата създава ясна представа за „Пантанаса“ като крупен поземлен собственик, който е имал необходимите

приходи, за да поддържа притежаваната от него и единствена в града болница. В. Нешева обръща специално внимание на сведението в грамотата за местоположението на манастира „край града“, останало незабелязано от В. Лоран.

Останалите документи от архива на манастира „Ватопед“, коментирани от В. Нешева, допълват данните от грамотата на деспот Константин Драгаш за увеличаване на имотното състояние на „Пантанаса“ и придобиването му от монашеското братство на споменатата атонска обител. Става дума най-напред за един акт от 1344 г. за продажба на орна земя, представляваща част от пронията на местния византийски чиновник Димитър Дука Сулуберт. На второ място това са документи, свързани с манастира „Св. Богородица Спилеотиса“, издадени през втората половина на XIV в. и такива от османската епоха, главно от XV – началото на XVIII в., според които манастирът „Св. Богородица Пантанаса“ е принадлежал към метоха „Св. Богородица Спилеотиса“.

Тук бих искала да обърна внимание, че при коментара на приписките по страниците на различни църковни ръкописи В. Нешева обръща специално внимание на прочутата светогорска чудотворна икона на света Богородица Пантанаса, притежание на „Ватопед“. Основателно е направеното от нея предположение, че някога тя е принадлежала на мелнишкия манастир „Св. Богородица Пантанаса“ (с. 20). Значението на манастирската обител като един от центровете на духовния живот на града през периода на Възраждането е представено в светлината на военния план на Мелник от 1832 г., съхраняван в Австрийския военен архив, списъка на мелнишките църкви от края на XIX в., съставен от френския учен П. Пердризе, схемата на града, публикувана от Т. Влахос и актуализирана от арх. А. Препис с известни уточнения от самата В. Нешева. Прегледът на изворите завършва с описанията на манастира и двата живописни ктиторски надписа от 1287 и 1289 г., принадлежащи съответно на неговите църкви „Св. Троица“ и „Св. Богородица Пантанаса“. Тези описания са направени в самия край на XIX – началото на XX в. от български и чужди учени. В. Нешева стига до важния извод, че двата надписа, възхваляващи като ктитори византийския император Андроник II Палеолог (1282 – 1328), прочут като отявляващ защитник на източното православие, и неговата съпруга Ирина, отразяват грижата на владетеля и някогашен управител на града за благоустройство чрез изографисване на манастира „Св. Богородица Пантанаса“.

Във **втора глава**, озаглавена „Ктиторът деспот Алексей Слав (1208 – 1230)“ В. Нешева се насочва към проследяване на неговата роля и място в българската и балканската политика през началните десетилетия на XIII в. Прочитът на нейното съдържание ни дава основание да изтъкнем, че авторката е обогатила просопографията на този именит представител на Асеневската династия в светлината на по-малко използвани в досегашната литература извори.

Тук В. Нешева достига до редица важни наблюдения, констатации и изводи, които за пореден път показват нейната компетентност като вещ познавач на средновековния град в българските земи. Поради ограничения обем, с който разполагаме, ще си позволим изреждането им в систематизиран порядък: 1) според нея във вътрешното си пространство Мелник е бил съпоставим с българската столица Търново и роден град на Алексей Слав; 2) в този исторически и археологически контекст се обяснява значението на изградените от българския деспот митрополитска (катедрална) църква „Св. Никола“ и двата манастира – „Св. Богородица Спилеотиса“ и „Св. Богородица Пантанаса“; 3) посочва се приносът на Алексей Слав за утвърждаване на Богородичния култ в Мелник; 4) изтъква се историческата му заслуга за по-нататъшното издигане и утвърждаване на града през следващите столетия като една от най-известните християнски твърдини в региона, определян в изворите от XIV в. като „богопазен“, „богославен град“, „богоизидан град“ (с. 26 – 33).

Бихме искали да отбележим, че препратките към столицата на Българското царство, които авторката прави, не само допълват характеристиката на Алексей Слав като импозантна личност с царствен манталитет, но те имат важно значение и за осмисляне на културните процеси, които са протичали на Балканите през първата половина на XIII в. и българската връзка в тях.

По-нататък се дава отговор на въпроса за смисловото значение на прозвищата на построяните от Алексей Слав два манастира. По отношение на прозвището **Спилеотиса** се посочва откритият при разкопките по-стар монашески скит, устроен в издълбана в скалния бряг пещера, а по отношение на второто – **Пантанаса (Всецарица/Всеволодичица)**, се изразява предположението, че то може да е свързано със здравословен проблем в семейството на деспот Слав и по-конкретно, че се касае за душевно или физическо здраве на дете. То е подкрепено с няколко съществени факта: 1) манастирът е основан като фамилен; 2) изображението на св. Богородица на трон с детето Исус пред нея в дъговидната фреска над западната врата на католікона; 3) славата на Божията майка като покровителка и изцелителка на хора, страдащи от душевни мъки, недъзи и особено на такива, които са тежко болни; 4) намереният в деспотската резиденция двустранен оловен медальон с изображения на св. Никола и св. Стилиан Детепазител (с. 34).

След тези необходими уточнения В. Нешева се насочва към въпроса за времевите граници, в които е станало изграждането на манастира „Св. Богородица Пантанаса“. Намирам за основателно нейното твърдение, че то е било продиктувано най-вече от опасения на деспот Алексей Слав за сигурността му, породени от няколко събития, случили се на Балканите в периода 1215 – 1218 г. Това според нея са създаването на Епирската държава от деспот Теодор Комнин (1215 – 1230) и настъплението му към Източна Македония, смъртта на император Анри д'Ено († 1216) – тъст на родопския владетел, и възцаряването на Иван Асен II (1218 – 1241) в Търново. Към тях В. Нешева добавя и загубата на императорската закрила, смъртта на съпругата му, починала наскоро след баща си Анри д'Ено, която юридически лишила родопския владетел от правата над Филипополската област, дадена му от императора като фиеф през 1208 г.

Стремжът на В. Нешева към изчерпателност на изворите, съдържащи данни за Алексей Слав, проличава и от включването в нейния анализ на две писма на папа Хонорий III (1216 – 1237) от 1217 и 1218 г., въведени наскоро в по-активно обращение от К. Йорданов. Те са адресирани до високопоставени функционери на Римската курия в Латинска Романия и в тях родопският владетел е обвинен като поръчител на жестокото убийство на латинския архиепископ на гр. Филипи в Солунското кралство – Гийом. Според авторката Гийом се е опитвал да постави под юрисдикцията си православни земи от съседни диоцези, които попадали в обсега на Славовото владение. В писмата се оповестявало и наказанието на Слав, което се изразявало в отлъчване от Църквата и поставяне на земите му под интердикт (запрещение). В този исторически контекст В. Нешева стига до следните съществени изводи: 1) наказанието, наложено на Алексей Слав по повод убийството на Гийом, практически го превръщало в *persona non grata* в границите на Латинската империя; 2) при това положение той трябвало да легитимира и защити както владенията си, така и сигурността на семейството си; 3) с изграждането на манастира „Св. Богородица Пантанаса“ в личен план деспотът е замислил да се подсили с едно по-надеждно убежище за укриване или бягство от града в случай на необходимост; 4) като *terminus ante quem* за началото на неговото строителство и за смъртта на първата му съпруга се определя датата на издаване на сигилия на деспот Алексей Слав за манастира „Св. Богородица Спилеотиса“ – м. януари 1220 г.; 5) победата на цар Иван

Асен II над Теодор Комнин при Клокотница през 1230 г. се явява логично *terminus ante quem* за завършването на строителните дейности в манастира „Пантанаса“; 5) бързината, с която се извършило построяването на владетелския мавзолей – мортуалния и комемориален параклис „Св. Троица“, издигнат извън манастирските стени, може да се обясни с тревога от страна на Алексей Слав за съдбата му във връзка с усложнената обстановка на Балканите около 1228 – 1229 г. с апогей Клокотнишката битка от 1230 г.

След солидната историческа аргументация за значението на манастира „Св. Богородица Пантанаса“ и на неговия първи ктитор деспот Алексей Слав, осъществена в първите две глави от монографията, В. Нешева преминава към подробното разкриване на резултатите от археологическите разкопки и проучвания. Те са предмет на обстоен анализ в **трета глава**, озаглавена „Археологически разкрития“ (с. 38 – 136). В нея най-напред се прави характеристика на местоположението и структурата на манастира „Пантанаса“. Изборът на мястото за неговото изграждане се оценява като изключително сполучливо и имащо пряка пътна и визуална връзка с първия манастир на деспот Алексей Слав – „Св. Богородица Спилеотиса“. Посочва се, че за разлика от първия деспотски манастир при проектирането на втория са били взети допълнителни мерки за сигурност, видно от тайния ходник (с. 71 – 73), прокопан в скалата, който е служел и за скривалище. Съобщава се и за откриването на култова площадка за ритуала „Възлияние“, изсечена вероятно през римската епоха (I – IV в.), която е индикация за това, че при избора на мястото на манастира „Пантанаса“ също е била спазена традицията за „старото свято място“. От направените проучвания се установява, че това забележително откритие е било част от култов комплекс в тракийско селище с ядро светилището под старата митрополитска църква „Св. Никола“ (с. 61).

Уточнява се, че манастирът „Св. Богородица Пантанаса“ се е състоял от укрепен архитектурен ансамбъл, некропол и споменатия по-горе мортуален и комемориален параклис „Св. Троица“, които са били свързани помежду си пространствено и функционално. По-нататък в монографията се прави подробна аналитична характеристика на всеки един от тези обекти, която допълнително е обогатена с много подробен илюстративен материал (сателитни снимки, планове, геодезично заснемане на манастирската структура, строителни профили, снимки на отделните съоръжения и на артефакти). Установява се, че част от композиционните елементи в структурата на „Пантанаса“ са значително по-големи в сравнение с тези, открити в други известни досега градски манастири. Такива са църквата-католикон „Св. Богородица Пантанаса“, домът на ктитора, болницата, подземният таен ходник, винарската изба и игуменарницата. Наблюденията и изводите на В. Нешева и нейния екип относно техните характеристики са от голямо значение. Те допринасят за разширяване на представата за монолитния характер на укрепения архитектурен комплекс и дават възможност за неговата съизмеримост с други паметници на манастирското строителство във византийско-славянския свят.

Теренните проучвания показват, че укрепеният архитектурен ансамбъл е бил с площ от около 2500 кв. м, която е значително по-голяма от тази на манастира „Св. Богородица Спилеотиса“ (около 1650 кв. м). При описанието на строителната история на оградните стени на „Пантанаса“ и на останалите структурни елементи на ансамбъла се посочват редица техни специфични и общи черти с останалите мелнишки манастири и къщи, а някои от тях – ходникът и владетелският дом, са без аналог. Анализът им показва единство в строителния материал (камък, суров кирпич и дърво), в техниката на градеж и в хронологията. Въз основа на свързващите каменната зидария смеси и на находките В. Нешева разграничава **два строителни периода** в историята на манастира. Първият се датира към края на второ – тре-

то десетилетие на XIII в. и се отнася към най-големия разцвет на средновековния Мелник при деспот Алексей Слав. Вторият обхваща края на XVI – началото на XVII в. и е свързан с реконструкцията на манастира, извършена веднага след голямо разрушение, причинено от земетресение.

Тук бихме искали да изтъкнем, че с датировката на първия период колегата Нешева дава безспорно доказателство за достоверността на данните от грамотата на деспот Константин Драгаш (1393 г.) относно построяването на манастира „Св. Богородица Пантанаса“ от деспот Алексей Слав, а не от император Андроник II Палеолог (1283 – 1328), с което се слага окончателно край на стария спор, битуваш сред научните среди, по въпроса за първооснователя на „Пантанаса“. От историческа гледна точка е важно и обобщението на В. Нешева, че родопският владетел е изградил своята последна резиденция в духа на владетелската идеология, характерна за епохата, отразена от него в сигилия за „Св. Богородица Спилеотиса“.

Ценни доказателства за посочената по-горе хронология на строителната история на „Пантанаса“ предоставят и **артефактите**, открити в хода на археологическите разкопки. Установява се, че, с изключение на малки участъци, липсват ясно обособени стратиграфски хоризонти. От първия период са открити фрагменти или цели съдове от обикновена битова керамика, луксозна керамика с червена и златиста ангоба, фрагменти или отделни съдове от глазирана и сграфито керамика, елементи от стъклени гривни, монети и др. Сред забележителните артефакти са оловна ампула за елсей, късче от пурпурна тъкан и др. По отношение на втория период намерените артефакти включват сграфито и рисувана керамика, керамични съдове, фрагменти от фаянсови съдове – внос от Италия и Дамаск, метални предмети и др.

В тази глава се посочва, че манастирът „Пантанаса“ е имал отделен некропол. Той се намирал срещу укрепения архитектурен ансамбъл, на левия бряг на Баданишкото дере. Изтъква се, че със сигурност в него са били погребани много поколения монаси, дарители на манастира, а вероятно и пациенти на манастирската болница. Местонахождението на некропола въвн от укрепения център се обяснява с плътната му застроеност. В подкрепа на своите наблюдения и изводи авторката привежда редица примери във византийската погребална практика, следвана на Балканите от България и Сърбия, и прави сравнително обстоен коментар на спорните въпроси в сферата на ктиторското право. От значение за науката е изводът, обоснован с важни аргументи, че в манастира „Св. Богородица Пантанаса“ Алексей Слав е предвидил храма „Св. Троица“ за свой „вечен дом“, като мавзолей от монархически тип – поклонническо място за увековечаване на владетелския култ.

В тази част от изследването са систематизирани и подробно анализирани резултатите от археологическите разкопки и проучвания, извършени в пространството на посочения по-горе **параклис „Св. Троица“**. В своята цялост те не само обогатяват и прецизират описанията на храма, направени от учените в началото на XX в., но същевременно с това създават възможно най-пълна представа за неговите конструктивни елементи, функции и уникалност. Особено важни за интерпретацията на храма са артефактите (дребни фрагменти от глазирани и сграфито купички и от червеноангобирана луксозна керамика, монети и др.), които наред със стратиграфските данни и архитектурния анализ показват, че църквата „Св. Троица“ има два основни строителни периода, които по време съвпадат с тези на самия манастир „Пантанаса“. Въз основа на изследването на останките от храма се стига до един основен извод, а именно, че неговият строеж е бил форсиран под натиска на конкретни събития, застрашаващи сигурността на българския деспот като самостоятелен владетел. Сред тях като най-драстични В. Нешева посочва проектодоговора от 1228 и договора от 1229 г. между латинските барони и бившия йерусалимски крал Йоан дьо Бриен, в който се предвиждала конфискация

на земята на родопския владетел и се официализирало изпълнението на папската присъда от 1217 г. над българския велможа. От историческа гледна точка тези наблюдения и констатации са съвсем правдоподобни. Посочва се още, че след това в изворите няма данни за него.

Както изтъква и самата авторка, мълчанието на изворите за по-нататъшната съдба на Алексий Слав се нарушава от данните, които ни предоставя археологията. Безспорно е, че най-значителното откритие в пространството на църковния храм „Св. Троица“ представлява **фамилната ктиторска гробница**, която в най-голяма степен потвърждава уникалния характер на манастирския комплекс „Пантанаса“. Тя е разположена на мортуална площадка в източния двор на храма, където според погребалната практика са могли да бъдат единствено гробовете на ктитора и на семейството му. Според антропологическите изследвания в четирите камери на гробницата са били погребани 3 – 4-годишно момче, 40 – 45-годишен мъж с ръст 1,75 м, над 20-годишна жена и 20 – 25-годишен мъж с ръст 1,72 м, които са били очевидно в семейна връзка. Много важно е уточнението, че гробовете не са били отваряни до разкопките. Анализираните стратиграфски данни дават основание те да се датират в периода между построяването на църквата „Св. Троица“ с *terminus ante quem* 1230 г. и нейното разрушаване около средата на XIII в., предизвикано от пожар. Важен за идентификацията на покойниците е и фактът, че мортуалната площадка с гробовете се обгрижвала и поддържала до разрушаването на манастира през XVI в. Той говори за нейната значимост като култово място и за дълготрайната народна историческа памет, съхранила спомена за такава емблематична личност като деспот Слав, видно от топонимията и преданията във владяната от него област. Наред с това се изтъква, че други гробове в параклиса не са открити за седемвековното му функциониране.

Идентификацията на покойниците с основателя на „Пантанаса“ и семейството му – неговата втора съпруга На Петралифина, тяхното малко дете и голям син от покойната му първа съпруга – се осъществява на базата на подробния, прецизен анализ на гробните камери, находките в гробовете, железните предмети върху скелетите и керамичната посуда, принесена като погребален дар. Той е подкрепен с аналогии от други известни на науката гробни съоръжения, с примери за изображения на смъртни ложета в средновековни миниатюри на различни (главно български) ръкописни книги. Като се опира на комплексното изследване на находките от гробницата и на определеното глобално потекло на тримата мъжки индивиди от гробовете на основата на установената за всеки един от тях митохондриална ДНК, В. Нешева определя откритието на гробницата като „малък триумф за науката, като се има предвид колко много и почти безнадеждно времето е заличило следите от „вечните домове“ не само на българските, но и на византийските владетели“. Същевременно тя посочва, че „това откритие остава в рамките на една научна хипотеза, каквито принципно са всички интерпретации и възстановки на миналото...“ (с. 135).

Ако си позволим да това подробно представяне на изследването, то е, защото неговите достижения имат особено важно значение за очертаване на нови хоризонти в проучването на редица научни области. Преди всичко тук бихме искали да изтъкнем, че В. Нешева и нейният екип са преодолели всички предизвикателства, пред които са били изправени при провеждането на археологическите разкопки и проучвания на един труден обект, какъвто несъмнено е манастирът „Св. Богородица Пантанаса“. В резултат на това те са успели да създадат възможно най-пълноценна представа за тази мелнишка обител. Сумарно достиженията на този труд са свързани с разкриване на някои специфични черти на църковно-манастирската и дворцовата култура както в България, така и в останалите средновековни балкански държави; причисляване на манастира „Св. Богородица Пантанаса“ към частните аристокра-

тични фамилни монашески обители, явяващи се господстващ тип в градското манастирско строителство в православния Изток през XI – XIV в., което го прави съизмерим с редица паметници в столичните центрове на Балканите; посочване на манастирите „Св. Харалампий/Св. Архангели“, „Св. Богородица Спилеотиса“ и „Св. Богородица Пантанаса“ като част от сакралната мрежа на Мелник, изградена от деспот Алексей Слав, в която се възпроизвеждал структурният модел на неговия роден град и столица на Българското царство – Търново; допълване на представата за него като ревностен блюстител на Православието подобно на своите родственици и български царе от Асеновската династия; даване на солидни археологически доказателства за основаването на манастира „Пантанаса“ от родопския владетел и за определянето му като най-голямата средновековна и възрожденска мелнишка обител; допълване на представата за едрото манастирско владение и неговите специфични характеристики; публикуваните открития хвърлят допълнителна светлина върху личността на Алексей Слав и историята на неговия последен пристан и мемориал – манастира „Св. Богородица Пантанаса“. Всички тези и някои други постижения ни дават основание да определим напълно заслужено монографията на В. Нешева като нов важен принос в българската и балканската медиевистика.

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