ПРИНОСИ
КЪМ БЪЛГАРСКАТА АРХЕОЛОГИЯ

Том XI

CONTRIBUTIONS
TO BULGARIAN ARCHAEOLOGY

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БЪЛГАРСКА АКАДЕМИЯ НА НАУКИТЕ
НАЦИОНАЛЕН АРХЕОЛОГИЧЕСКИ ИНСТИТУТ С МУЗЕЙ
BULGARIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES
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AN INTERESTING EARLY BYZANTINE LEAD SEAL

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ABSTRACT

The paper presents an Early Byzantine lead seal, belonging to Theodor, Prefect of the islands, who was in charge of the Quaestura exercitus sometime between 536 and 575.

Key words: bulla, Quaestor exercitus, Praefectus insularum, Quaestura Iustiniana exercitus, Theodor, 6th c.

The topic of this paper is an interesting Early Byzantine lead seal (bulla). It was exported illegally from Bulgaria to Canada together with a large number of other antique and medieval items. After they were confiscated by the police there, under the provisions of the existing international agreements, the materials in question were returned to Bulgaria and submitted to the National Museum of History – Sofia.

Description of the bulla (fig. 1):
Obverse: Inscription in three lines (Fig. 2: 1).
Reverse: Inscription in three lines (Fig. 2: 2).
Material: Lead.
Condition: Well-preserved specimen.
Dimensions: Diameter 18 – 22 mm. Weight 13.92 gr.

The complete reading of the Latin inscription on the two sides is as follows: Theodoro, pr(a)efecto insul(ari)s. Inscription translation: Theodor, Prefect of the islands.

From this Theodor, Prefect of the islands, six bullae are known until now, struck with two different boulloterions (Gkoutzioukostas 2008, 111 – 112). From these, two



Fig. 1. Lead seal of Theodor, Prefect of the islands. Obverse and reverse

Обр. 1. Моливдовул на Теодор, префект на островите. Лице и опако

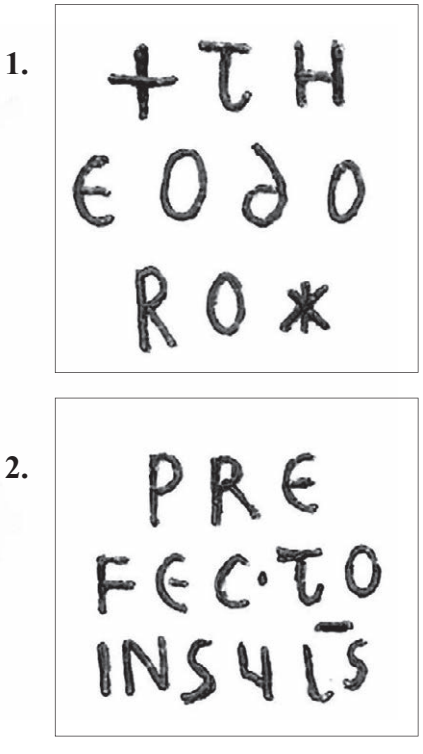


Fig. 2. Inscriptions on the obverse and the reverse of the lead seal of Theodor, Prefect of the islands

Обр. 2. Надписи върху лицето и опакото на моливдовула на Теодор, префект на островите

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specimens originate from the present-day territory of Bulgaria (Jordanov 2009, 442 – 443, Nos. 1280 – 1281). The third bulla, which is the subject of this paper, originates from Bulgaria, and was struck with the same boulloterion as one of the other two "Bulgarian" specimens (Jordanov 2009, 443, No. 1281).

G. Zacos established that the Latin "praefectus insularum" is equivalent to the Greek "ἔπαρχος τῶν νήσων" (Zacos, Veglery 1972, 1659, № 2928). An Early Byzantine legal document (Nov. Iust. LXIX, Epil.) dated to 538 makes it clear that "ἔπαρχος τῶν νήσων" is the Greek equivalent of the Latin "quaestor exercitus" (Gkoutzioukostas 2008, 112). Thus, "praefectus insularum" and "quaestor exercitus" refer to the same position. This is confirmed by another Early Byzantine written source from the 6th c. (Iuliani Epitome XXXVIII, 166), which explicitly states that "De quaestoribus, id est praefectus insularum" (Gkoutzioukostas 2008, 113). Currently this identification is accepted as established with complete certainty by all scholars working on the topic.

Quaestura Iustiniana exercitus was established with a special legislative act (Nov. Iust. XLI), dating from 18th of May 536 (Gkoutzioukostas 2008, 110). We will not discuss in detail the purpose, structure and functions of this institution here since this has been done many times in other studies, including Bulgarian ones (Torbatov 1997, 78 – 87). However, some facts need to be mentioned.

The Quaestura exercitus was a newly established administrative unit which included five provinces: Moesia Inferior, Scythia, Caria, Cyprus and the Cyclades. The seat of this provincial union was in Odessos. The main purpose of establishing the Quaestura was to support, both financially and with food and other supplies, the two northern provinces of Moesia Inferior and Scythia, which had been devastated by barbarian raids. Part of the *annona militaris* given out annually to the Byzantine military units stationed in Moesia Inferior and Scythia was delivered from the rich southern provinces, part of the Quaestura exercitus. The annona included different types of supplies (mainly food) and money for the salaries of the military. The capital of the Quaestura, Odessos, was the main distribution center for the supplies (Torbatov 1997, 80). This was also the city where the Quaestor resided and managed the functioning of the specialised administrative unit in question (Torbatov 1997, 79). The selection of Odessos as the capital of the Quaestura exercitus was not accidental. Water transport played a very significant role in delivering the supplies. This was due to a number of factors: the insecurity of land communications due to frequent barbarian raids; the total maritime superiority of Byzantium; the well-developed port system, both along the western Black Sea coast, and in the Danube delta and along the southern coast of the Lower Danube (Torbatov 1997, 80).

The bullae of Theodor, Prefect of the islands (Quaestor exercitus), were probably used to seal documents, which accompanied the supplies sent from Odessos to various garrisons in the provinces Moesia Inferior and Scythia. It is also possible that some of the seals in question were used to seal pouches containing certain monetary amounts, and packages with more expensive goods.

We do not know the exact time period in which this Theodor was in charge of the Quaestura. This, of course, was sometime after 536, the year when the administrative unit was established. Most probably, the dating of his quaestorship should take into consideration the long period until the end of the reign of Emperor Justinian I (565), or the first decade from the reign of his heir, Justin II, since the last mention of the Quaestura is from 575 (Nov. Iust. CLXIII) (Torbatov 1997, 85).

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ЕДИН ИНТЕРЕСЕН РАННОВИЗАНТИЙСКИ ОЛОВЕН ПЕЧАТ

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РЕЗЮМЕ

Предмет на настоящата публикация е един любопитен ранновизантийски оловен печат (моливдовул). От латинския надпис върху двете страни се разбира, че издателят му е някой си „Теодор, префект на островите“. Въз основа на категорични данни от писмените извори е отдавна установено, че длъжността “praefectus insularum” е една и съща с длъжността “quaestor exercitus”. Следователно, това са моливдовули на управляващия Quaestura Iustiniana exercitus.

Тази важна институция, която е учредена през 536 г., е имала за главна задача да подпомага както във финансово отношение, така и с хранителни и други припаси, двете северни провинции – Втора Мизия и Скития, които били разорени от варварските набези. Главната квартира на квестурата се намирала в град Одесос, който бил основният разпределителен център на доставките.

С моливдовулите на Теодор, префект на островите (квестор ексерцитус), вероятно са били скрепявани някакви документи, придружаващи изпращани от Одесос доставки към различни гарнизони в провинциите Втора Мизия и Скития. Не е изключена възможността с някой от въпросните печати да са били запечатвани и кесии, съдържащи определени парични суми, както и денкове с по-скъпи стоки.

Не знаем по кое време точно е ръководил квестурата въпросният Теодор. Това, разбира се, е било някъде след 536 г., когато споменатата административна единица е била учредена. Най-вероятно неговото управление трябва да се търси в дългия период до края на царуването на император Юстиниан I (565 г.) или през първото десетилетие от царуването на неговия приемник Юстин II, тъй като последното упоменаване на квестурата е в 575 г.

Ключови думи: моливдовул, Quaestor exercitus, Praefectus insularum, Quaestura Iustiniana exercitus, Теодор, VI в.

CERAMIC VESSELS FROM THE BIRITUAL NECROPOLEIS AND THEIR METAL PARALLELS

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ABSTRACT

The present paper aims at presenting some ceramic vessels found in the earliest biritual necropoleis in present-day Northeastern Bulgaria, which can be said to resemble metal prototypes. The vessels come from sites near the town of Balchik, the town of Novi Pazar, the vilage of Kyulevcha, and the village of Topola. These vessels are similar in shapes to Sasanian and post-Sasanian vessels, vessels from the Pereshchepina treasure, from the rich Avar graves in Hungary, from the treasures found near Vrap in Albania and Nagyszentmiklós in Transylvania. The number of vessels which can be connected with prototypes made not only of metal, but of glass and even wood, is significant. These are tablewares – jugs, amphora-like pitchers, bowls, sphero-conical cups, bucket pail cups, as well as pots and cauldrons with inner lugs.

The vessels from the biritual necropoleis in Bulgaria are early forms, brought here and reproduced through the years and decades after the settlement of the Asparuh Bulgarians, and especially in the first half and to around the middle of the 8th c. Later on, towards the end of the 8th c., they decreased in number, and after the first half of the 9th c., these forms are not found. The logical question arises therefore, whether some of them did not reproduce established specimens from the initial territories – prototypes which were passed on from one generation of potters to the next. There is no doubt that they are the work of Bulgarian potters (thrown on a tournette), whose ceramic workshops were located in the settlements to which the necropoleis belonged. An example for this are the four pottery kilns from the Early Medieval settlement near the village of Topola.

Keywords: biritual necropoleis, Early Medieval pottery, Late Avar period, metal vessels, Nagyszentmiklós treasure

The discovery of the biritual necropoleis helped to clarify a number of questions regarding the history and culture of Early Medieval Bulgaria. These necropoleis offer previously unknown data about the spiritual world (beliefs, burial practices and rituals) and the everyday life of the common people, the Proto-Bulgarians who settled here with Khan Asparuh and their direct descendants. In these necropoleis, with the exception of the two found in the neighbourhood of Divdyadovo, city of Shumen, which are far away from each other and are insufficiently studied (Атанасов и др. 2007, 57 – 66; Atanasov et al. 2008, 59 – 80), there are no graves of members of the affluent class, nor expensive metal objects. Ceramic vessels, whose genesis researchers are trying to find, are predominant in them. Some of these vessels are close to the Byzantine ceramic, metal and glass specimens from the 6th – 7th c., which in turn inherited many earlier forms from Greek and Roman ceramics and glass. Others are connected with specimens mainly from Sasanian Iran, Caucasus and Central Asia.

In contrast to Hungary, where Avar graves with rich inventory from the 7th c. have been unearthed in Kunbábony, Bócsa, Kunágota, Ozora-Tótipuszta, Kiskőrös-Vágóhíd and others, related to leaders,

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princes, and aristocrats, in Bulgaria graves of Bulgarian khans or high state officials – kavhans, ichirgu-Boila, župan, kolobar – have not been found, neither in the first state centres, nor in the auls. It is assumed that they were buried deep and in secret.

According to the Byzantine chronicler Theophanes the Confessor, the Byzantine Empire was forced to sign the first treaty with the new state on the Balkans, (in 681) and to pay them tribute for the "disgrace of the Romans". Byzantine chronicles speak of the rich gifts received by Khan Tervel for his help to return Emperor Justinian II to the throne in 705, and of the silver vessels acquired after the victory over the Romans at Anchialos in 708. They report the new, humiliating treaty for the Byzantine Empire, signed between Khan Tervel and Emperor Theodosius III in 716, and the tribute amounting to over 30 *litrae* of gold, the trophies acquired by the Bulgarians under Khan Kardam after the victory over Emperor Constantine VI in 792 at Markeli, and especially under Khan Krum in 809 – in the Struma region, in 812 – at Mesembria, in 813 – at Edirne, and the events at Constantinople (Божилов, Гюзелев 1999, 92, 106, 109, 122, 127, 133, 135, 136). Sources report not only victories, treaties and acquired trophies, but also the pillage of Pliska and its being burnt down by Nicephorus I Genicus in 811 (ГИБИ 1961, 12), the great trophies taken by John I Tzimiskes when he captured Preslav in 971 (ГИБИ 1964, 274) and in 1018 by Basil II in Ohrid (ГИБИ 1965, 103). Perhaps that is why in the present-day territory of Bulgaria, no glass or expensive vessels of non-ferrous metals are known, but most probably, as it is assumed, the quantity of such vessels was small. In the territory of Bulgaria, with the exception of the accidentally discovered silver cup of Župan Sivin (Тотев 1964, 5 – 15), these few specimens number a fragmented bronze silvered jug from a building along the inner side of the southern fortress wall in Veliki Preslav with representation of the "tree of life" (Витлянов 2000, 57 – 61), a copper cauldron, kept at the Veliki Preslav Museum, and the gold plate from a room next to the southern gate of Veliki Preslav (Иванова 1955, 83 – 84; Иванова 1959, 147 – 148, обр. 15). No other metal vessels from the Early Bulgarian Middle Ages are known.

In the earliest necropoleis excavated here, however, near the town of Balchik, the town of Novi Pazar, the vilage of Kyulevcha, Shumen district, and the village of Topola, Kavarna region – ceramic vessels have been found, some of which can be said to resemble metal prototypes. The shapes of the ceramic vessels discovered in these necropoleis resemble Sasanian and post-Sasanian vessels, vessels from the Pereshchepina treasure, from the rich Avar graves in Hungary, from the treasures near Vrap in Albania and Nagyszentmiklós in Transylvania. The number of vessels which can be connected with prototypes made not only of metal, but of glass and even wood, is significant. These are tablewares – jugs, amphora-like pitchers, bowls, sphero-conical cups, bucket pail cups, as well as pots and cauldrons with inner lugs.

The influence of medieval toreutics on ceramic vessels and, more specifically, on the Sogdian examples from the 7th c., found in the vicinity of Samarkand – in Kafir-kala and Tali Barzu – was pointed out by the Russian scholar V. G. Grigorjev as early as the 1940s (Григорьев 1940, 96 – 99, обр. $6_{в, с, ж}$). Later on (in the 1960s and the early 1970s), it was studied in detail (for jugs and cups) by B. I. Marshak (Маршак 1961, 177 – 201; Маршак 1971, 13 – 15, обр. 13). In the publication of the "yellow" Avar ceramics, Slovak and Hungarian scholars also looked for connections with the vessels made of non-ferrous metals (Bialeková 1967, obr. $4_{2, 5}$; Bialeková 1968, Abb. 1_{7}; Garam 1969, 240 – 241; Vida 1999, 127, Abb. 48). In the last study dedicated to the Nagyszentmiklós treasure, which Hungarian archaeologists define as Avar, É. Garam pointed out the similarities of vessels from the treasure with finds from Avar graves. She selected ceramic samples which imitate glass and mainly metal vessels from the rich Avar graves, as well as various other objects (belt ornaments) unearthed in necropoleis of the common people (Garam 2002, Abb. 15, Abb. 16, Abb. 19, Abb. 21). Such parallels, also in relation to the Nagyszentmiklós treasure, are also highlighted by Cs. Bálint (Balint 2010, 313 – 322, Abb. 122 – 124).

In the publication of the first biritual necropolis from Bulgaria – the necropolis near the town of Novi Pazar – St. Vaklinov was the first in the country to point out "resemblances to metal vessels" (Станчев, Иванов 1958, 89). Similarities between the ceramic bowls unearthed up to 1994 in the necropolis near the village of Topola, Kavarna region, and vessels from Avar graves, from the Vrap and Martinovka treasures, were also pointed out by the team researching the necropolis (Ангелова и др. 1997, 146, note 8). Some of the jugs from the 'secret passage' near the palace of Khan Krum in Pliska are unquestionable imitations of metal vessels. This fact was emphasised by their discoverer (Рашев 2004, 73 – 74). Connections between ceramic vessels from the 'secret passage' with metal specimens and examples from the necropolis near Topola and the jug with the two eagles from Pliska are also discussed by St. Stanilov (Станилов 2006, 146, обр. 24, обр. 25, 306, обр. 15, 2А – 2В, обр. 16).

The present study comprises ceramic vessels known until now, as well as new ones, unearthed in the last two decades (mainly from the biritual necropoleis near Balchik and Topola), which very probably imitate vessels from non-ferrous metals. They are presented by types.[1] It is assumed that the ceramics of fine fabric made from purified (well levigated) clay, with its burnished surface and decoration of vertical and criss-crossed burnished lines, appeared under the influence of metal vessels.

Jugs are one of the characteristic finds in the necropoleis. They were thrown, like the other types, on a tournette (manually propelled potter's wheel). Thirteen jugs are known from the necropolis near Novi Pazar. One of them – from Grave No. 33 (fig. 1: 1) has a sphero-conical shape of the body (its widest part is towards the base), with an elongated spout coming from the funnel-like rim, and a precisely implemented decoration of indented zigzag vertical lines resembling hammering on metal (Станчев, Иванов 1958, кат. № 13, таблица $XVII_3$). This jug undoubtedly copies vessels from toreutics, even though parallels are not known to date. Another jug from the necropolis is similar in shape, but it has a trefoil rim and is decorated with vertical burnished stripes (Станчев, Иванов 1958, кат. № 9, таблица XVI_3).

In the Balchik necropolis, jugs are the most numerous from all vessels made with purified clay. They are 53 in number (or 36.30 % of the vessels). Several sphero-conical jugs have been uncovered in this necropolis (in Graves Nos. 110, 114, 172), resembling the ones from Novi Pazar in shape. Their walls are entirely burnished or decorated with burnished vertical stripes, with a grid ornament, which is the main decoration of Proto-Bulgarian ceramics (fig. 1: 2 – 4). Individual examples of similar jugs are known from the necropoleis near the village of Bdintsi, Dobrich district (Въжарова 1981, табл. $XIII_4$) and Kapul Viilor-Istria in North Dobrudzha, Romania (Зиррa 1963, обр. 25_9). In the largest necropolis near the village of Topola, where 625 graves have been excavated so far, the number of jugs is not large. Such have been documented in 38 graves with cremations, four have not been restored, and two different vessels have been placed in Grave No. 33. So far, no sphero-conical jugs have been unearthed in this necropolis. In terms of the shape of the body, the sphero-conical early jugs from Novi Pazar and Balchik come close to the silver Byzantine jug with gilding from the Vrap treasure, Albania (fig. 1: 5), but they have different necks, rims and bases (Werner 1989, 14 – 15, Taf. 11, Taf. 12_3). The bodies of the jugs from the Nagyszentmiklós treasure are sphero-conical, but they also have different necks, rims, and bases (fig. 1: 6, 7) (Gschwantler 2002, 19 – 20). Tracing the influence of toreutics on Sogdian ceramics from the 7th – 8th c., B. I. Marschak points out ceramic jugs from different settlements and mainly from Kafir-kala and Panjakent, which resemble metal vessels. In terms of the shape of the body, they come close to our jugs, but the rims and handles are different (Маршак 1961, 185, 191, обр. 1, табл. $8_{1, 2, 5, 6}$). Russian researchers

[1] I apologise that the presented specimens are without scale. They were discovered in different time periods and the photos were taken by different authors, most of them without scale.



Fig. 1: 1. Jug from Grave No. 33 from the necropolis near the town of Novi Pazar (Photo: R. Staneva); 2 – 4. Jugs from the necropolis near the town of Balchik, Graves Nos. 110, 114, 195 (Photo: L. Doncheva-Petkova); 5. Silver jug from the Vrap treasure, Albania (after Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York – https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/464113); 6, 7. Gold jugs Nos. 1 and 2 from the Nagyszentmiklós treasure (after Gschwantler 2002, 14, 16)

Обр. 1: 1. Кана от гроб № 33 от некропола при гр. Нови пазар (Снимка: Р. Станева); 2 – 4. Кани от некропола при гр. Балчик, гробове № 110, 114, 195 (Снимка: Л. Дончева-Петкова); 5. Сребърна кана от съкровището при Врап, Албания (по Метрополитен музей, Ню Йорк – https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/464113); 6, 7. Златни кани № 1 и 2 от Надсентмиклошкото съкровище (по Gschwantler 2002, 14, 16)

of medieval artistic metal provide examples of silver jugs kept at the State Hermitage Museum, like the ones in fig. 2 – from Yagoshur, Pokrovskoye, Sedyar (Маршак 1961, 191, табл. $8_{9, 11}$; Даркевич 1976, 8 – 9, таблица 20; Marschak 1986, Abb. 71, $427_{11, 22}$). Their shape is close to that of the ceramic ones – "pear-shaped", smooth body, without decoration, and their base is flat or with a short pedestal. Two of the jugs (fig. 2: 1 – 4) have their handle attached to the body ending in a trefoil palmette, and there is a Turkic runic inscription incised on the handle of the vessel from Sedyar (fig. 2: 5). Their origin is connected with the eastern regions of Central Asia, where Sogdian and Semirechyan ceramic jugs with similar shape were common in the 7th – 8th c.

Other metal jugs, silver and, rarely, golden, earlier Sasanian, or crafted in the Sasanian traditions, have a similar sphero-conical (piriform) shape. In the case of the golden jug from the Pereshchepina treasure (fig. 3: 2), the body is smooth, polished, and without decoration. The base is carefully shaped, it has a high profiled pedestal with a ring, and the rim has a very elongated spout (Вернер 1988, приложение $9_{21a, 6}$; Marschak 1986, 72, Abb. 89; Залеская и др. 2006, № 21). The silver jug from Pavlovka, Kharkov region, with the image of Simurgh and the "tree of life" is like this as well (fig. 3: 4) (Орбели, Тревер 1935, № 48; Даркевич 1976, 68 – 69, обр. 4_1; Marschak 1986, № 199). V. Darkevich, like K. Trever and V. Lukonin (Тревер, Луконин 1987, 88, № 21), date this jug to no

later than the 7th c., by analogy with the one from Pereshchepina. On the silver gilded jug with a winged camel from Maltseva, Perm region (fig. 3: 3), which according to B. Marschak was made in the 7th – 8th c. in Sogdia, the body is ovoid, the base is an ordinary conical pedestal with a wide base, and the handle ends with a palmette at the joint with the body (Marschak 1986, 53, 83, 430, Abb. 55, Abb. 56; Даркевич 1976, 23 – 24, табл. 10). The body is sphero-conical, and the conical pedestals have relief rings and star-shaped stilts like those of bronze jugs from Dagestan, like the one in fig. 3: 5 with images of flutists and monsters, dated to the 8th – 9th c. and defined as Islamic (Early Abbasid) imitation of Sasanian vessels (Орбели, Тревер 1935, № 70 – 71; Marschak 1986, 120, № 50; Тревер, Луконин 1987, № 50).[2] The shape of some of the ceramic jugs of light colour thrown on a potter's kick wheel from the 'secret passage' at the Palace of Khan Krum in Pliska is similar. The base of two of them is a high profiled pedestal, and their handles, at the joint with the body, end with bifoliate palmettes, like the other jugs with a flat base (fig. 3: 1). It is these jugs which R. Rashev relates most directly with the aforementioned expensive metal vessels from the Sasanian and post-Sasanian toreutics – the Pereshchepina treasure, Pavlovka, Maltseva, Dagestan (Рашев 2004, обр. 16, табл. IA, табл. $IB_{2, 3}$). In contrast to the metal vessels and two of the jugs from the 'secret passage' in Pliska, the bases of the ceramic jugs from the necropoleis are flat, they do not have high profiled (with rings) pedestals, and they are not low, truncated cones like some of the post-Sasanian vessels, the jug from Vrap and the jugs from the Nagyszentmiklós treasure. Throwing pots on a tournette made it difficult to shape such bases, which is why they are not very common. To date, only two vessels from the necropolis near Topola have pedestal bases, but they are ordinary, truncated conical ones. On some of the ceramic jugs (fig. 1: 4) (jug from Grave No. 195 near Balchik), there is a clearly outlined convex ring, not at the base, but on the lower end of the neck, at the transition to the body. It resembles the rings (hoops) characteristic of the aforementioned metal vessels.



Fig. 2. Silver vessels: 1, 2. Yagoshur; 3, 4. Pokrovskoye; 5, 6. Sedyar (after Даркевич 1976, 8 – 9, таблица 20)

Обр. 2. Сребърни съдове: 1, 2. Ягошур; 3, 4. Покровское; 5, 6. Седяр (по Даркевич 1976, 8 – 9, таблица 20)

[2] Metal sphero-conical jugs are known and kept at a number of other museums – the State Historical Museum in Moscow, the Georgian National Museum in Tbilisi, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, etc.



Fig. 3: 1. Ceramic jug from the 'secret passage' at the Palace of Khan Krum, Pliska (Photo: L. Doncheva-Petkova); 2. Gold jug from the Pereshchepina treasure (after Залеская и др. 2006, № 21); 3. Silver jug from Maltseva (after Даркевич 1976, 23 – 24, табл. 10); 4. Silver jug from Pavlovka (after Тревер, Луконин 1987, 88, № 21); 5. Bronze jug from Dagestan (after Marschak 1986, 120, № 50)

Обр. 3: 1. Керамична кана от тайния ходник при Крумовия дворец, Плиска (Снимка: Л. Дончева-Петкова); 2. Златна кана от Перешчепинското съкровище (по Залеская и др. 2006, № 21); 3. Сребърна кана от Малцева (по Даркевич 1976, 23 – 24, табл. 10); 4. Сребърна кана от Павловка (по Тревер, Луконин 1987, 88, № 21); 5. Бронзова кана от Дагестан (по Marschak 1986, 120, № 50)

Several other interesting jugs have been found in the Balchik necropolis, originating from graves with cremations (Nos. 139, 165) or from richer graves with inhumations, in which were also placed large animals (Nos. 164, 208, 261). In terms of shape and ornaments, they resemble metal vessels. While there are no known parallels from the field of toreutics, similarities can be found among the ceramic vessels from the Kuban-Black Sea region.

The jug broken over the grave with cremation No. 165, which has been restored, is beautiful (fig. 4: 1). The spheroid body, the elongated, slightly furrowed neck, the trefoil rim and the relief ring at the beginning of the shoulders, in particular, connect it with metal forms. There is an unusual resemblance between this jug and a vessel from Grave No. 357 (with more, and deeper grooves on the neck) of the necropolis near Dyurso – from the area with graves with inhumations, which are referred to the second stage, dated to the second half of the 6th – the end of the 7th c. (Дмитриев 2003, 202, табл. 84_3). In terms of the features mentioned, the vessel from Balchik is also related to a jug from the far-away Kaybel necropolis (Tumulus No. 2, Grave No. 3), dated to the 8th c., "located on the main territory on which the Bulgarian tribes settled near Volga" (Сташенков 2003, 335, 339, обр. 5_3; Сташенков 2007, 428, обр. 5_3).

The body of the vessel from a female's grave with inhumation No. 164 is spherical (fig. 4: 2). The narrow neck, the wide trefoil rim and the round body make the jug interesting and it is impressive although its black walls have no ornaments, but are entirely burnished. The burnishing is strong, producing an extremely shiny surface, as in polished metal vessels.

The vessel from a male's grave with inhumation No. 208 stands out with its diligent craftsmanship, large size, wide biconical (but round in the middle) body (fig. 4: 3). The convex body, high neck and furrowed surface bring the jug from Balchik close to the one from Tumulus No. XXXIII in Pliska, which was published a long time ago (fig. 4: 4). The jug from Pliska, however, has a strongly protruding rim, like in the metal Sasanian and post-Sasanian jugs, and in the upper end of the handle and two other places (one opposite the other), small clay balls have been placed, resem-



Fig. 4: 1 – 3. Ceramic jugs from the necropolis near Balchik, Graves Nos. 165, 164, 208 (Photo: L. Doncheva-Petkova); 4. Jug from Tumulus No. XXXIII, Pliska (Photo: R. Staneva); 5, 6. Jugs from the necropolis near Balchik, Graves Nos. 139, 261 (Photo: L. Doncheva-Petkova); 7. Jug from the necropolis near Topola, Grave No. 33 (Photo: A. Ismail); 8. Silver vessel from Afanasievo (after Даркевич 1976, обр. $19_{3,4}$); 9. Jug from Plachi Dol (after Йотов 2007, 127, обр. 4)

Обр. 4: 1 – 3. Керамични кани от некропола при Балчик, гробове № 165, 164, 208 (Снимка: Л. Дончева-Петкова); 4. Кана от могила XXXIII, Плиска (Снимка: Р. Станева); 5, 6. Кани от некропола при Балчик, гробове № 139, 261 (Снимка: Л. Дончева-Петкова); 7. Кана от некропола при Топола, гроб № 33 (Снимка: А. Исмаил); 8. Сребърен съд от Афанасиево (по Даркевич 1976, обр. $19_{3,4}$); 9. Кана от Плачи дол (по Йотов 2007, 127, обр. 4)

bling metal nails/rivets, which bring it even closer to metal prototypes (Дончева-Петкова 1977, обр. 19, кат. № 239 and references).

The jug from grave with cremation No. 139 (fig. 4: 5) stands out with its bigger size (height 19.8 cm, max. diam. 21 cm), the pronounced and proportionately wide biconical shape of the body, the short, slightly furrowed neck, and not particularly prominent trefoil rim. The black surface, furrowed neck and grid of polished rhombuses along nearly the whole body of this vessel also make it similar to metal forms. Biconical jugs are rare among Early Medieval ceramic vessels. A smaller jug, similar to the one from Balchik, is the one known for a long time from the necropolis near Razdelna – unearthed in Grave No. 29, together with a bronze buckle with beveled walls and pinched prong (Димитров 1959, 58, обр. 43; Fiedler 1992, Taf. $61_{2,3}$) with analogues among the artefacts from the Vrap-Ersekë group, from the aristocratic graves near Divdyadovo, Kabiyuk, Gledachevo (Рашев и др. 2014, обр. 10), as well as from the necropolis near Balchik (Дончева-Петкова и др. 2016, обр. 59_{212}). The buckle mentioned helps the dating of the vessel from the Balchik necropolis – to the beginning or first half of the 8th c. Taking into account this specific shape, one cannot omit Alanian ceramics from the 7th – 9th c. in the North Caucasus, where one of the jugs presented by V. Kuznetsov from Verkhniy Arkun is closest to the interesting vessel from Grave No. 139 near Balchik (Кузнецов 1962, обр. 3_{24}). Whether this is just a formal resemblance or a preserved tradition is hard to determine. It seems that the shape is related to rather old traditions, because differently decorated biconical jugs, often with a grid of burnished lines, and a sharp edge at the joint of the two cones are known among the ceramics of the Chernyakhov culture (Археология 1986, 88, обр. 12_{10}; Айбабин 1990, обр. 6_{1-5}; Магомедов 2001, обр. 42, обр. 43).

The jug placed above the head of the man buried in Grave No. 261 is also interesting (fig. 4: 6). The upper half of the body is decorated with four relief arched strips, which reach the barely visible groove in the most convex part. Slightly above it, two opposing lug handles are attached. The yellow-pink fabric is relatively refined, with fine sand and white limestone particles visible in some places. Jugs with lug handles, some with relief ornaments, have been documented in other biritual necropoleis – near Novi Pazar (Станчев, Иванов 1958, табл. XVI$_1$), Bdintsi (Вължарова 1976, обр. 102$_6$; Вължарова 1981, табл. XII$_4$, табл. XIII$_1$), the village of Kyulevcha (Вължарова 1976, 116 – 118 et seq., обр. 69$_2$, обр. 73$_1$, обр. 75$_2$), and the village of Varbyane, Shumen district (Рашев 2008, 69, табл. XXIV$_1$). Some of the jugs from these necropoleis (with an ovoid body) have been found together with datable metal finds, which places them in the first decades of the founding of the state – the jug from Grave No. 36 of the necropolis near Novi Pazar was found with a copper casing of a wooden vessel, and two of the jugs from Kyulevcha (from Graves Nos. 55 and 66) were found with an axe head and a bridle with S-shaped bit shanks, determined as early types (Йотов 2004, 101, 135). Such jugs were also crafted towards the end of the 8th – the very beginning of the 9th c. in the production centre of Pliska, which was located to the west of the stone fortress wall – behind Tumulus No. XXXIV, near the river of Assar Dere, multiple waste from its function having been found in the test trenches of the Bulgarian-German expedition (Dončeva-Petkova 2007, fig. 10$_{19-25}$). The relief strips and the lug handles of the vessel from Balchik bring it close to jugs from the pottery centres Kantsirka and Machuha, where T. Minaeva and V. Malashev look for relationships with vessels from the North Caucasus, and explain their presence in the Dnieper workshops with the influx of a southern (Alanian-Bulgarian) population (Мінаева 1961, 123 – 128, обр. 1$_{6,7}$, обр. 2$_1$; Гавритухин, Обломский 1996, 123).

A jug which is original in shape and craftsmanship was found in the necropolis near Topola, unearthed in a grave with cremation No. 33 (fig. 4: 7), where another one was placed as well, of a different type. Its body is highly convex, the neck is short with two small dimples, and the rim is wider, with a rounded lip and irregular traces of spinning. Wide bands are formed on the surface (seemingly as a result of taking off clay horizontally or the individual coils, which form the body), resembling metal convexities, on which burnished stripes descend vertically from the neck. The vessel was made by a master craftsman. It is close to vessels with "Turkic shapes", more precisely, to the silver jug decorated with two rows of vertical grooves, dated to the 8th c. and originating from the eastern regions of Central Asia – from the village of Afanasievo, on the banks of the Kama river, now in the museum in Nizhny Novgorod (former Gorky) (fig. 4: 8). V. P. Darkevich relates this and similar vessels to the region of the Semirechye – Ferghana, and notes that in the 7th – 8th c., Sogdian-speaking settlers lived on the territory of the Western Turkic Khaganate besides Turks (Даркевич 1976, 35, 91, обр. 19$_{3,4}$).

A jug found in the necropolis near the village of Plachi Dol, Dobrich district, also impresses with its decoration (fig. 4: 9). Along the neck, and on the widest part of its ovoid body, between incised straight lines, arc-shaped ornaments curl, formed by separate incised short slashes, similar to ones hammered on metal (Йотов 2007, 127, обр. 4).

The comparisons made show that the jugs are early forms. They are predominant in the first biritual necropoleis – near the town of Balchik, the town of Novi Pazar, the village of Kyulevcha, Kapul Viilor-Istria. In the later necropoleis such as in Hitovo-2 and 3, Dobrich district (Йотов 1997, таблица III, таблица IV$_{1,2}$), in those from the Varna region – Varna-1, Devnya-1 and 3 (Димитров, 1973, 82 – 84), and in the one used for a long time near the village of Topola, where amphora-like pitchers appear, their number is smaller. It seems they were placed, as an exception, in graves in the necropoleis beyond the Danube, also dated as later. One jug each was found in Obârşia-Olt (Toropu, Stoica 1972, fig. 14$_1$), in Frăteşti (Dolinescu-Ferche, Ionescu 1970, fig. 5$_1$)

and in Staţia de salvare near Alba Iulia in Transylvania (Cosma 2011, Pl. 25_{104}), two – in Izvoru (Mitrea 1989, 46, Abb. 285_2, 52, Abb. 340_1), and three in Sultana (Mitrea 1988, fig. $2/18_1$, fig. $8/64_2$, fig. $9/72_1$). In the necropoleis of the Saltovo-Mayaki culture, on the other hand, this type of vessel was widespread throughout the 9th c., until its end – the beginning of the 10th c.

Amphora-like pitchers are found in necropoleis, which appeared later (towards the end of the 8th – beginning of the 9th c.) at Devnya-1, Devnya-3, Varna-1, the village of Nozharevo, Silistra district, the village of Karamanite, Varna district, the village of Nikolovo and that of Trastenik, Ruse district, Sultana and Obârşia-Olt in Romania, or those, which like the ones near Topola and the neighbourhood of Troshevo in Varna, continued to be used for a long time. The earliest ones assumed (end of the 8th c.) are the vessel from Grave No. 3 in the neighbourhood of Divdyadovo near Shumen (Атанасов и др. 2007, 59, обр. 1_3; Atanasov et al. 2008, fig. 8) and the only amphora-like pitcher from the necropolis near Balchik (Дончева-Петкова и др. 2016, обр. 26_{150}, табло $XLIV_{150}$).

The light coloured fabric, slipped pitchers are also earlier, but they were thrown on a potter's kick wheel. They are dated to the end of the 8th – beginning of the 9th c. They are not from necropoleis, but from the first Bulgarian capital – Pliska. One of the vessels (preserved height 30 cm) was discovered during excavations at the Huge Reservoir (Дончева-Петкова и др. 1999, кат. № 118). Plastic pyramidal bumps are formed at the connection between the handles and the walls (fig. 5: 1). Fragments of such vessels have been unearthed at various places in Pliska. The largest (height 45 cm) among the restored vessels from the burnt down 'secret passage' under the palace of Khan Krum is an amphora-like pitcher, impressive with its bent handles with plastic bumps, decorated with trefoils (fig. 5: 2) (Рашев 2004, 84, кат. № 1, таблица IA, IB). Another large (42 cm) restored amphora-like pitched was unearthed in Pliska – during excavations at the Small Wooden Fortification (fig. 5: 3) (Георгиев 2011, обр. 2). In terms of shape and size, it is related to the vessel from the 'secret passage' , but its handles, with pyramidal bumps, are without ornaments. The form of the handles approximates handles of vessels from toreutics, like the above-mentioned jugs from Yagoshur and Pokrovskoye.

Amphora-like pitchers were widespread in the settlements and necropoleis throughout the 9th c., especially around the middle of the century. Among them, one can find vessels like the ones from Pliska, whose handles at the joint with the body end with an elongated relief pyramidal part. Such pitchers have been unearthed in the necropoleis Devnya-3 (fig. 5: 4) (Българите и техните съседи 2004, 47, кат. № 23_3), in the necropoleis near the village of Dolni Lukovit-1, Pleven district (fig. 5: 5) (Вăжарова 1976, 200, обр. 124_7), in the neighbourhood of Troshevo – Varna-2 (Българите и техните съседи 2004, 50 – 51, кат. № $27_{5,6}$), in Nikolovo, Ruse district (fig. 5: 6) (Христова 2018, кат. № 16, обр. 2_8) and others. As can be seen, the tradition to place relief handles, which first began in Pliska, was taken on and applied in other settlements, and it continued later on in Pliska, as is demonstrated by vessels from the pit in the 'secret passage', which was destroyed around the 860s (Григоров 2015, обр. 11, обр. 11а), it also continued in Preslav in the 10th c., even among glazed vessels (Дончева-Петкова 1977, кат. № 312, табл. $XXVI_{312}$). Probably not only the handles, but the predominant yellow colour in various shades of the fabric as well, are attempts to imitate vessels made of gold.

Bowls. After the pots from the necropolis near Topola, bowls take the second place in terms of numbers, and they were crafted in the ceramic workshops of the settlement. There is no other necropolis with so many vessels of this type (in the biritual necropoleis – two have been found near Novi Pazar, three – in Kyulevcha, two whole and several fragments – in Devnya-3, two in the necropolis with cremation at Castelu near Mangalia in Romania, one – near Razdelna). Whole ones, destroyed ones and fragments of ritually broken ones have been unearthed in 89 graves of the



Fig. 5. Amphora-like pitchers: 1. Pliska, the Huge Reservoir (Photo: K. Georgiev); 2. Pliska, 'secret passage' at the Palace of Khan Krum (Photo: L. Doncheva-Petkova); 3. Pliska, the Small Wooden Fortification (Photo: P. Georgiev); 4. Devnya-3 (Photo: R. Kostadinova); 5. Dolni Lukovit-1 (after Вължарова 1976, 200, обр. 124); 6. Nikolovo (Photo: M. Hristova)

Обр. 5. Амфоровидни стомни: 1. Плиска, Голямото водохранилище (Снимка: К. Георгиев); 2. Плиска, таен ходник при Крумовия дворец (Снимка: Л. Дончева-Петкова); 3. Плиска, Малко дървено укрепление (Снимка: П. Георгиев); 4. Девня-3 (Снимка: Р. Костадинова); 5. Долни Луковит-1 (по Вължарова 1976, 200, обр. 124); 6. Николово (Снимка: М. Христова)

necropolis near Topola. They were placed as grave gifts with food, in graves with inhumations, and in cremations they were usually smashed in ritual actions over or inside the graves. These are vessels with a low and wide, variously shaped body, unified in several types. Predominant are those with wide, rounded shoulders, occupying the upper one-third of the body, from where the walls narrow down to the base. In some, the slightly inward rims end with a rounded lip attached to the walls (fig. 6: 1), while in others, a neck is formed under the rim (fig. 6: 2). The fabric of these vessels is also refined, and generally brown, orange, orange-brown in colour, but the surface in most cases is grey-black. They are probably a continuation of ancient ceramic traditions, which is why it is difficult to claim that they copied certain vessels made of non-ferrous metals, since such metal forms are known from Rome and the Byzantine Empire. In one of them, however – from Grave No. 173 at Topola (fig. 6: 3, 3a) – copying of metal specimens is quite probable. This vessel resembles a metal tray. Its craftsmanship is precise and it is diligently polished. On the inside of the bottom, seven concentric circles are incised at an almost equal distance (0.4 – 0.5 cm) on the wet clay, probably with a tool resembling a set of drafting compasses. Copper bowls, close in shape (with a more rounded body) and size, have been unearthed in Corinth, and are kept there in the Archaeological museum. One of them had a handle (fig. 6: 4). They are dated to the Middle Byzantine period (Papanikola-Bakirtzi 2002, Nos. 372, 373).

Two deep bowls were discovered in the necropolis near Topola, in neighbouring graves – No. 4 with an inhumation (fig. 7: 1) and No. 29 with a cremation (fig. 7: 2). A vessel from the grave with cremation No. 182 in the necropolis near Balchik is similar to them (fig. 7: 3). In contrast to the other types, these bowls are not so wide, but are higher and deeper, respectively, with an almost biconical rounded body, more elongated in the upper half, widening above the bottom, and with a shorter and narrower lower part. There are no necks. The rims are turned inward. The walls are burnished. There are three straight incised lines, at an equal distance from each other, on the vessel from Balchik. Under the neck of the bowl from Grave No. 4 from Topola, linked circles are arranged, and under them – a horizontal line. This decoration, resembling hammering on metal forms, relates it to the fragmented bowl from Grave No. 25 and the restored one from Grave No. 11 (fig. 7: 4), which belong to another type. It is quite probable that, despite their different shape, the three vessels are the work of one and the same potter. Connections with toreutics are also observed in a bowl from Grave No. 8, also with a cremation (fig. 7: 5). T. Vida included a similar vessel from Budakalász-Dunapart in the types, where Late Antiquity influence is assumed (Vida 1999, 96 – 97, Kat. № 351, Taf. 46_3). In terms of shape, the three bowls from Topola (Graves Nos. 4 and 29) and Balchik (No. 182) approximate a Late Avar ceramic vessel of yellow fabric from Szebény (Garam 2002, Abb. 21), but they are more commonly related to the widely discussed golden vessel No. 19 (fig. 7: 6) from the Nagyszentmiklós treasure (Gschwantler 2002, 38 – 39, № 19).



Fig. 6. Bowls from the necropolis near Topola: 1. Grave No. 569; 2, 2a. Grave No. 204; 3, 3a. Grave No. 173 (Photo: T. Dimov); 4. Copper bowls from Corinth (Papanikola-Bakirtzi 2002, Nos. 372, 373)

Обр. 6. Паници от некропола при Топола: 1. Гроб № 569; 2, 2а. Гроб № 204; 3, 3а. Гроб № 173 (Снимка: Т. Димов); 4. Медни паници от Коринт (Papanikola-Bakirtzi 2002, Nos. 372, 373)

The bowl from a grave with an inhumation No. 486, Topola, is unique in its form among the biritual necropoleis from Bulgaria (fig. 8: 1). It is lower and wider. The walls narrow down to the base from the high rounded shoulders, the neck is short, and the rim is slightly curved. Its base stands out following a low, hollow conical stem only 1.6 cm high. In the lower half, slight burnishing



Fig. 7. Bowls: 1, 2, 4, 5. The necropolis near Topola, Graves Nos. 4, 29, 11, 8 (Photo: A. Ismail); 3. Bowl from the necropolis near Balchik, Grave No. 182 (Photo: L. Doncheva-Petkova); 6. Gold vessel No. 19, the Nagyszentmiklós treasure (after Gschwantler 2002, 38, 39, No. 19)

Обр. 7. Паници (купи): 1, 2, 4, 5. Некропол при с. Топола, гробове № 4, 29, 11, 8 (Снимка: А. Исмаил); 3. Паница от некропола при Балчик, гроб № 182 (Снимка: Л. Дончева-Петкова); 6. Златно съдче № 19, Надсентмиклошкото съкровище (по Gschwantler 2002, 38, 39, No. 19)

in a vertical direction is visible. The fabric is refined, and light brown in colour. This bowl also resembles vessels from the toreutics of the 7th c., different opinions having been expressed about their origin. It is hard to establish how the potters at Topola created or imitated this form. The shoulders of the vessel are rounded, but in terms of its pedestal base, it is related to the one defined by J. Werner as "Sasanian gold bowl" from the Pereshchepina treasure (fig. 8: 2) (Вернер 1988, приложение 10_{22}). According to B. Marschak, however, "the rough craftsmanship does not allow it to be referred to the true Sasanian crafted items". He makes the supposition that it is the work of a "Barbarian master", not in Iran, not on the steppes, but "in the Eastern Transcaucasia" plundered by the Turks and Khazars (Залеская и др. 2006, 173, № 24). The base of the bowl from Grave No. 486 resembles another metal (bronze) vessel with two handles, discovered in Grave No. 244 of the big necropolis near Zamárdi, Hungary (fig. 8: 3). Its discoverers, E. Bárdos and É. Garam believe that this vessel is not connected with Constantinople and instead they relate it to the production of Egyptian and Alexandrian workshops. They point out such "Coptic" vessels, coming from Egypt, from Langobardian graves in Italy, and from graves in France and England (Garam 2001, 174, Taf. 131_2, Taf. XL_2; Bárdos, Garam 2009, 43, 244, Taf. 236_1, Taf. 260_1). This form is found in the silver, so-called "Khorezm cups", dated to the 7th – beginning of the 8th c., with different scenes on the walls and bases (Даркевич 1976, 17 – 18, таблица 25_2, таблица $26_{2,6}$), and continued much later in the Byzantine toreutics from the times of the Komnenos dynasty (Даркевич 1975, cups 1, 2). The form is also documented in later ceramic vessels from the end of the 10th – first half of the 11th c. from the Byzantine Empire and from Pliska (Дончева-Петкова 2015, 181 – 182 and references).

Looking for parallels between ceramic and metal vessels, É. Garam presents reconstructions of wooden bowls with metal fittings from rich Avar graves from the 7th c. – Kunbábony, Želovce/Zsély, Andocs-Újhalastó, Környe (fig. 8: 4). The fittings of one of them – from Želovce/Zsély (Garam 2002, 94, Abb. 19_4) seem to be identical to the ones unearthed in graves from the Balchik



Fig. 8: 1. Ceramic bowl from the necropolis near Topola, Grave No. 486 (Photo: A. Ismail); 2. Gold "tray" from the Pereshchepina treasure (after Залеская и др. 2006, 173, № 24); 3. Bowl from Grave No. 244, the necropolis near Zamárdi (after Bárdos, Garam 2009, 43, 244, Taf. 236$_1$, Taf. 260$_1$); 4. Reconstruction of wooden bowls with metal fittings from Avar graves (after Garam 2002, 94, Abb. 19$_4$); 5. Silver fittings with rivets from a wooden vessel from the necropolis near Balchik, Grave No. 148 (Photo: L. Doncheva-Petkova); 6. Silver fittings with rivets from the necropolis near Balchik, Grave No. 205 (Photo: L. Doncheva-Petkova); 7. Copper (Graves Nos. 99, 205) and silver (Grave No. 148) fittings of wooden vessels, necropolis near Balchik (Drawing: L. Petrova)

Обр. 8: 1. Керамична паница от некропола при Топола, гроб № 486 (Снимка: А. Исмаил); 2. Златно „тасче" от Перешчепинското съкровище (по Залеская и др. 2006, 173, № 24); 3. Паница от гроб № 244, некропола при Замарди (по Bárdos, Garam 2009, 43, 244, Taf. 236$_1$, Taf. 260$_1$); 4. Реконструкция на дървени паници с метални обкови от аварски гробове (по Garam 2002, 94, Abb. 19$_4$); 5. Сребърни обкови с нитове на дървен съд от некропола при Балчик, гроб № 148 (Снимка: Л. Дончева-Петкова); 6. Меден обков с нитове от некропола при Балчик, гроб № 205 (Снимка: Л. Дончева-Петкова); 7. Медни (гробове № 99, 205) и сребърни (гроб № 148) обкови на дървени съдове, некропола при Балчик (Рисунка: Л. Петрова)

necropolis. From two graves with cremations there – Nos. 99 and 205 (fig. 8: 6, 7) – originate thin copper bent plates, with preserved nails and rivets with semi-circular decorative heads. The plates from Grave No. 148, where a 10 – 11 year-old child was buried through inhumation (fig. 8: 5, 7) were of special interest. Above the head of the child in this "richest of graves", a pot of sandy fabric with incised decoration was placed, and some of the most valuable finds were discovered in it – four bent plates, holding wooden parts from a coniferous tree, each equipped with two rivets with semi-hemispherical heads with a diameter of 0.5 cm. In contrast to the other two bent plates, these are made of silver alloy. It can be supposed that the plates from the Balchik necropolis decorated or cased the rims of some wooden vessels or objects, as is shown by the remains of a coniferous wood in those from Grave No. 148. The plates in question are very important, since they support the dating of the grave and the pot. A similar bent plate was found in Grave No. 36 from the necropolis near Novi Pazar. A small part of a willow tree has been preserved in it, which is why St. Stanchev defines it as a fitting of a wooden cup-bowl (Станчев, Иванов 1958, таблица XXXIII$_1$). Among the biritual necropoleis from the pagan period of the First Bulgarian Kingdom, in addition to the Balchik and Novi Pazar necropoleis, a bent plate with rivets has been uncovered in the necropolis near



Fig. 9: 1. Pedestal cup (bowl), Grave No. 56 in Topola (Photo: A. Ismail); 2. Silver chalice from Nova Nadezhda (Photo: K. Georgiev); 3. Bronze vessel from Várpalota-Gymnázium (after Garam 2001, 173 – 174, Taf. 131$_1$, Taf. XL$_1$); 4. Silver "bucket" from the Vrap treasure, Albania (after Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York – https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/464115)

Обр. 9: 1. Чаша (купа) със столче, гроб № 56 в Топола (Снимка: А. Исмаил); 2. Сребърен потир от Нова Надежда (Снимка: К. Георгиев); 3. Бронзов съд от Варпалота-Гимназиум (по Garam 2001, 173 – 174, Taf. 131$_1$, Taf. XL$_1$); 4. Сребърна „кофа" от съкровището при Врап, Албания (по Метрополитен музей, Ню Йорк – https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/464115)

Topola (grave with cremation No. 167), but the rivets' heads are small (0.1 – 0.2 cm) and are not decorative. Such are not known from other necropoleis and later monuments, most probably because the production of vessels with such fittings was abandoned.

Cups. These vessels are not so common finds in necropoleis. They are found mainly in Topola. There are different types. Next to the head of the adolescent buried in Grave No. 56, a vessel of unusual shape was placed (fig. 9: 1). When it was discovered, it was defined as a pedestal bowl. Although its function is not entirely clear (for eating, drinking or even ritual activities), at present we would rather categorise it among the vessels collectively known as cups. The conical base relates it only to the bowl from Grave No. 486 from the necropolis near Topola. This vessel is higher (14.8 cm), with a spheroid body, without a neck. The rim is slightly curved with a rounded lip. The base is a high hollow 4-cm pedestal in the shape of a reversed truncated cone. Outside, in the widest part of the body and under it, the smooth walls are decorated with two bands of thin incised lines. The whole surface is burnished. The fabric is refined – brown in colour, and the surface – black. It reminds one of metal vessels defined as buckets, pails, cups or Eucharistic cups, from the Martinovka and Vrap treasures (fig. 9: 4) (Ангелова и др. 1997, 146, note 8; Станилов 2006, 24, обр. 1, 150, обр. 24), from the grave of a man – No. 204 at Várpalota-Gymnázium, Hungary (fig. 9: 3), from Grave No. 32 at Nocera Umbra, Italy (Garam 2001, 173 – 174, Taf. 131$_1$, Taf. XL$_1$; Vida 2002, 115 – 116, Abb. 4). The pedestal cup (bowl) from Grave No. 56 is, for now, a unique vessel among the ceramic forms from pagan necropoleis, which is why one cannot speak of traditions in its production within our lands. Similar Avar vessels, defined as pedestal cups, crafted by hand or on a tournette, are known from Hungary and Slovakia (Vida 1999, 156 – 157, Taf. 90$_{1-3}$). They are smaller in size (height 7.8 – 11.2 cm). In Grave No. 167 of the necropolis of Tatabánya-Alsógalla, Hungary, an Early Avar vessel has been found, close in shape, but with a rather everted rim, very diligently shaped on a potter's kick wheel and decorated with straight and wavy lines (Vida 1999, 75 – 76, Abb 17$_{ID/d}$, Taf. 28.3). It is more important to note that in a female's grave, No. 116 of the necropolis near Nové Zámky,

a similar, smaller (height 10 cm) cup has been discovered. It was thrown on a tournette, the fabric is grey and the decoration consists of incised wavy and straight lines. An earring was also found in the grave, thanks to which the vessel was dated to the beginning of the 8th c. (Čilinská 1966, Taf. XXIX/116_3, Taf. LXXXII$_{10}$; Vida 1999, Kat. № 884). The vessel from Grave No. 56 in Topola probably also dates to that time.

Looking for parallels and establishing relationships with the grey burnished ceramics, one gets to the Tarki Sarmatian necropolis in Dagestan, from which similar bowls were published in the middle of the last century (Крупнов 1951, 225, обр. 11_7; Смирнов 1951, обр. $20_{2, 7}$). Similar features (in the lower half of the body and the pedestal) are observed in a Central Asian ceramic vessel (with a different rim), unearthed in a layer from the first half of the 7th c. in Balalyk Tepe, Tokharistan (Христова 2010, 530, табло II$_3$ and references). As for chronologically close metal forms of the vessel from the necropolis near Topola, it most generally resembles the silver church Byzantine chalices from the 6th – 7th c., but their pedestals are higher and usually with hoops, and some have relief ornaments (Mundell Mango 2000, fig. 5_2, fig. 6_1). The Early Byzantine (from the time of Emperor Justinian) silver chalice with an inscription from the village of Nova Nadezhda, Haskovo district is very well-preserved (fig. 9: 2), and is kept at the RMH – Haskovo (Gerassimova-Tomova 1987, 307 – 312; Аладжов 1997, 193 – 196; Даскалов, Думанов 2003, 200 – 201, фиг. 4). Another glazed ceramic chalice with a different shape, not earlier than the end of the 10th – beginning of the 11th c., was found in Pliska, in Church No. 36 (Михайлов 1955, 52, обр. 3; Дончева-Петкова 1977, кат. № 335, табл. XXVII$_{335}$). Of course, this is just a formal resemblance, as such function of the vessel from pagan Grave No. 56 of the necropolis near Topola is inadmissible.

Bucket pail cups. The very first excavations of the necropolis near Topola made it famous with the cups in the form of wooden pails, which were unearthed in the graves. So far, they have been discovered in 15 graves, mainly with cremations. Four pails are known from the Balchik necropolis – three from graves with inhumations and one from a grave with cremation (Дончева-Петкова и др. 2016, 101 – 104, обр. $29_{212, 247}$, табло XLVI). Such a cup has been unearthed in a grave with a cremation in the necropolis near Bdintsi (Въжарова 1976, обр. 101_3). These vessels differ in size – their height varies from 7.4 to about 19 – 20 cm. The differences in shape allow dividing them into two types – most resemble a reversed truncated cone (fig. 10: 1, 2) and only one, ritually smashed and restored, from grave No. 6 (fig. 10: 3), and several fragments from other graves in Topola, are cylindrical. Round openings have been indented at two opposite places under the rims, with a diameter of 0.5 – 0.7 cm, for suspending the vessels. The craftsmanship of the ceramic pails is precise – refined fabric of yellow-brown and brown colour, usually with black reduction firing. The walls are burnished very well. The decoration was applied with care. One or two straight lines are incised at intervals in some of them. On most vessels, wavy lines are applied between these lines, in separate bands with comb-shaped tools with different teeth.

Fragments from conical bucket pail cups have also been discovered in the medieval settlement to which the necropolis near Topola belongs (Бобчева 1977, табл. VII$_1$), from where one restored vessel is kept at RMH – Dobrich.[3] Such vessels have been unearthed in other settlements in Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine, and have been dated differently – from the 8th to the beginning of the 10th c. (Дончева-Петкова и др. 2016, 104 and references). The bucket pail cup from Kapul Viilor-Istria is different, with adhering outer lugs for suspension (Зирра 1963, обр. 24_7; Fiedler 1992, Taf. 34_7). The vessel from Blandiana-Brod in Transylvania, where the openings for suspension are formed in the two opposite lugs protruding above the rim, is different (Cosma 2011, Pl. 31$_{129}$).

[3] Inv. No. Ac 1915



Fig. 10. Bucket pail cups: 1 – 3. The necropolis near Topola, Graves Nos. 6, 19, 6 (Photo: A. Ismail, K. Georgiev); 4. Bucket pail cup from the village of Vokil (Photo: K. Georgiev); 5. Silver vessel from the Sasanian collection of the State Hermitage Museum (after Тревер, Луконин 1987, № 38); 6. Gold cup No. 11 from the Nagyszentmiklós treasure (after Gschwantler 2002, 31, No. 11); 7, 8. Wooden pails with metal fittings, Graves Nos. 453 and 641 from the necropolis near Zamárdi (after Bárdos, Garam 2009, 67, 92, Taf. 253$_{3, 4}$)

Обр. 10. Чаши-ведра: 1 – 3. Некропола при Топола, гробове № 6, 19, 6 (Снимка: А. Исмаил, К. Георгиев); 4. Чаша-ведро от с. Вокил (Снимка: К. Георгиев); 5. Сребърен съд от сасанидската колекция на Ермитажа (по Тревер, Луконин 1987, № 38); 6. Златна чаша № 11 от Надсентмиклошкото съкровище (по Gschwantler 2002, 31, No. 11); 7, 8. Дървени ведра с метални обкови, гробове № 453 и 641 от некропола при Замарди (по Bárdos, Garam 2009, 67, 92, Taf. 253$_{3, 4}$)

Vessels with the shape of a reversed truncated cone have also been found in several Late Avar necropoleis, and categorised as bowls. They were thrown on a kick wheel. The holes for suspension are missing, and their walls are smooth, very rarely with incised straight lines on them. D. Bialeková reports of such "bowls" from the necropoleis of Kiskőrös-Városalatt and Vrbas (Bialeková 1967, fig. 17$_1$), and É. Garam (Garam 1975, Pl. XVIII$_4$) and T. Vida (Vida 2015, Abb. 1$_1$) present a vessel from the necropolis near Szebény and another from Kővágószőlős (Garam 2002, 96, Abb. 21). They are dated, like the vessels from Bulgaria, to the 8th – the last third/end of the 8th – beginning of the 9th c. A conical vessel without holes for suspension, similar to the Avar ones, was also found in the necropolis near Izvoru, in the Wallachian Plain (Mitrea 1989, Abb. 10$_{42, 1}$).

S. Angelova established similarities between these cups and Late Germanic vessels (Ангелова 1982, 61, note 192). It is very probable that the ceramic pails copied metal vessels, and, even more certainly, wooden ones with metal fittings. The bands, into which they are divided, imitate the iron hoops in wooden pails discovered in the necropoleis near Topola (Graves Nos. 98, 566, 600), Bdintsi (Вължарова 1976, обр. 102$_{2, 3}$), Hitovo-3 (Йотов 1991, 105), Nozharevo (Рашев, Станилов 1989, 218), Devnya-1 (Димитров 1971, 67 – 68, обр. 13) and others, as well as the much more precisely crafted copper decorated hoops and handle from Grave No. 3 in the second, earlier ne-

cropolis in the neighbourhood of Divdyadovo near Shumen (Атанасов и др. 2007, 59, обр. 1_2; Atanasov et al. 2008, 70, fig. 7). These ones, with the shape of a truncated cone, resemble the richly decorated silver vessel dated to the end of the 6th – 7th c. from the Sasanian collection in the State Hermitage Museum. In the middle band of this vessel, plants and wild goats are depicted in medallions (fig. 10: 5) (Тревер, Луконин 1987, № 38). Another ceramic pail is similar, discovered in Bulgaria near the village of Vokil, Silistra region (fig. 10: 4). It is later (from the end of the 9th – 10th c.), covered in yellow-green glaze, and the surface is divided into bands by three relief "hoops". A rhomboid grid is incised on the hoops and the lugs attached outside next to the rim (their upper part is broken). A tree, a bird, five horses and a stag are drawn in the upper band, and in the lower – a zigzag line (Дончева-Петкова 1977, 94, кат. № 336, табл. XXVIII and references). The shape of a truncated cone is also that of Cups Nos. 11 (fig. 10: 6) and 12 of the Nagyszentmiklós treasure (they had a handle), decorated with beaded decorative strips along the inner and outer rim edge and at the base (Gschwantler 2002, 31, № 11, 12). The cylindrical ceramic pail from Grave No. 6 near Topola bears striking resemblance with the wooden pails with metal fittings from the Late Avar period found in two graves (Nos. 453 and 641) from the necropolis near Zamárdi, Hungary (fig. 10: 7, 8). One of the pails has fittings from copper alloys with punched decoration, and the other one – with metal hoops and fittings made from copper alloy with depicted griffons (Báros, Garam 2009, 67, 92, Taf. $253_{3,4}$).

Sphero-conical cups. This even more rarely found type of cup deserves attention, belonging to the so-called 'goblet-like' type under the definition of J. Werner. These interesting vessels were discovered in seven graves in Topola – in three with inhumations and four with cremations, two of them played the role of urns, and other two were ritually broken. Another broken one was found next to Grave No. 178. The vessels are wide and deep. Their body comprises two parts, the lower one – rounded, spheroid, ending with a flat base, and the upper, resembling a wide reversed truncated cone, whose rim is rounded. The walls are smooth and, rarely (the cups from Graves Nos. 257 and 488), decorated with vertically burnished lines. At the bases, irregular circles from the spinning of the tournette and the junction with the walls can be seen. Some of the vessels show defects during firing such as cracks (fig. 11: 1– 4, 6).

In addition to Topola, where they were most probably produced, single items of sphero-conical cups are known from Rogachevo, Dobrich district (fig. 11: 5) (Бобчева 1974, обр. 56) and from a grave with an inhumation No. 208 of the necropolis near Balchik, where the cup was ritually broken (Дончева-Петкова и др. 2016, 104, обр. 29_{208}).

M. Hristova notes the wide distribution of sphero-conical cups from the Byzantine Empire and the Avar Khaganate to Sogdia and China. Researching these vessels, she finds good parallels in the Tokharistanian fresco from the end of the 6th – first half of the 7th c. in Balalyk Tepe, as well as among the gold and silver vessels from the Pereshchepina treasure, and from Avar graves (Христова 2010, табло II_{1-3} and references). In relation to vessels from the Nagyszentmiklós treasure, É. Garam points out parallels among the pedestal glasses from Avar graves, from which two are closer to the ceramic cups from Topola – from Keszthely-Fenékpuszta and Zamárdi, dated to the 7th c. (Garam 2002, Abb. $22A_{1,2}$). É. Garam also discusses metal pedestal vessels from Bócsa, Tépe, Kunágota, Szeged-Átokháza, Kiskőrös-Vágóhíd, Igar (Garam 2002, Abb. 22B). They are also mentioned by Cs. Bálint (Bálint 2010, Abb. 123B). É. Garam, as well as Cs. Bálint, review other metal vessels with and without a handle from the 7th c., among which the silver one from Budapest-Rákos (Garam 2002, Abb. 13, Abb. 14_9; Bálint 2010, Abb. $123A_9$, Abb. 124_1) deserves attention. It is this vessel from Budapest-Rákos that is closest to the ceramic cups from Bulgaria (fig. 11: 7). It will also be highlighted here that the shape of the cups from Topola is close to that of the gold vessels from the Pereshchepina treasure (except for the pedestals) (Вернер 1988, приложение 7_{9-13}, 10_{23-25}, 22_{1-4}),



Fig. 11. Spheroconical cups: 1 – 4. The necropolis near Topola, Graves Nos. 232, 257, 500, 488 (Photo: A. Ismail); 5. Rogachevo (Photo: T. Dimov); 6. Cup from Grave No. 488, Topola, at the moment of discovery (Photo: L. Doncheva-Petkova); 7. Silver cup from Budapest-Rákos (after Garam 2002, Abb. 13); 8. Gold cup from Bócsa (after Garam 2002, Abb. 4); 9. Gold cup from the Pereshchepina treasure (after Залеская и др. 2006, 286, № 72)

Обр. 11. Сфероконични чаши: 1 – 4. Некропола при Топола, гробове № 232, 257, 500, 488 (Снимка: А. Исмаил); 5. Рогачево (Снимка: Т. Димов); 6. Чаша от Топола по време на откриването в гроб № 488 (Снимка: Л. Дончева-Петкова); 7. Сребърна чаша от Будапеща-Ракош (по Garam 2002, Abb. 13); 8. Златна чаша от Боча (по Garam 2002, Abb. 4); 9. Златна чаша от Перешчепинското съкровище (по Залеская и др. 2006, 286, № 72)

defined as goblets, chalices, or as "cups with feet" (Залеская и др. 2006, 286, 292, № 72 – 76), and to the glass and metal vessels from Avar graves (fig. 11: 8, 9).

The cup with a handle from Grave No. 178 is a unique specimen among the vessels not only from the necropolis near Topola, but also from the biritual necropoleis (fig. 12: 1). Its body shape relates it to the described sphero-conical cups. Its upper part is lower and wide. The lower part is slightly trapezoid. The walls are rounded towards the base, but the base itself was probably flat, like in the other cups. The vessel stands out with its handle attached to the lower part of the body. It has a square cross-section. The opening is round, the vertical stem is like a zigzag, while the upper and lower ones are straight. The fabric is refined, and orange-red in colour. Ceramic cups, but with ordinary rounded handles, dated to the second half of the 7th – 8th c., are known from Central Asia – from Panjakent (Маршак 1961, табл. $2_{5, 9, 13, 15}$; Бентович 1964, обр. 22_5, обр. 23_5). B. Marshak looked for analogues among metal vessels and traced the route of ceramic cups among those of nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes in the last centuries BC and the first centuries AD (Маршак 1961, табл. 4, табл. 5). The cup from Topola is of special importance, since its handle partially resembles handles (with a round opening and topped with a horizontal plate) of works of the toreutics from Eastern Iran and Central Asia (fig. 12: 3, 4) (Орбели, Тревер 1935, № 52 – 54, № 57 I, № 57 II; Маршак 1961, табл. $4_{11 - 13}$; Даркевич 1976, таблици $8_{6, 8}$, $9_{5, 7}$, $16_{4 - 7}$, $17_{5 - 7}$). These cups are dated

differently – to the 8th c., the second half of the 8th – beginning/first half of the 9th c., and the cup of Župan Sivin is similar to them (fig. 12: 2). However, this type of vessels with their handles have a far earlier history. The exquisite silver kantharoi and skyphoi (1st c. BC – 1st c. AD), hidden in a Roman villa near Boscoreale, Italy are impressive (Сребро от Лувъра 2015, Nos. 19 – 23). The handle of the cup from Topola also resembles the handles of a glass from Grave No. 88 of the Meoto-Sarmatian necropolis No. 2 in Ust'-Labinsky District (Анфимов 1951, обр. 17_{12}). The development of these forms (ceramic and silver vessels) from the Roman age, through the Byzantine Empire to Central Asia and China is also discussed by M. Mundell Mango (Mundell Mango 2000, fig. 7).



Fig. 12: 1. Ceramic cup with a handle, found next to Grave No. 178 in Topola (Photo: A. Ismail); 2. Silver cup of Župan Sivin (Photo: K. Georgiev); 3, 4. Silver cups from Central Asia (after Даркевич 1976, таблици 8_6, 16_5)

Обр. 12: 1. Керамична сфероконична чаша с дръжка, открита до гроб № 178 в Топола (Снимка: А. Исмаил); 2. Сребърна чаша на жупан Сивин (Снимка: К. Георгиев); 3, 4. Сребърни чаши от Централна Азия (по Даркевич 1976, таблици 8_6, 16_5)

Pots are the most common vessels in pagan necropoleis, and in some of them (Novi Pazar, Balchik, Topola), those of refined fabric are predominant. Many of these vessels approximate the shine of metal with their burnished walls. All of them, with their diversity of shapes and decoration, were used in daily life, placed in graves as "sacrificial vessels" or "grave gifts" with food, and their size is not large (from 8.7 to 10 – 13 cm, rarely – up to 15 cm). The larger vessels in Topola (height 19.4 to 27 cm), like those from Graves Nos. 155, 188, 195, 220, 232, 237, served as urns (fig. 13: 1, 2). It is difficult to find relationships among them with similar metal forms, since pots are rare among the works of toreutics. Similar in size, but different in shape – narrower rims, pedestal bases and handles in the middle of the body – are one gold and two silver polished, without decoration "nomadic" vessels from the Pereshchepina treasure (fig. 13: 3) (Орбели, Тревер 1935, № 62), defined as jugs (Вернер 1988, приложение $9_{1,2}$, приложение $21_{1,2}$) or as cups-jugs (Залеская и др. 2006, 275 – 276, № 69, 284 – 285, № 71).

In several of the necropoleis from Bulgaria, there are about ten pots belonging to types which most probably approximate the metal ones. They have an elongated body, its widest part being under the middle, which makes they look more lumpy or squat, in the sense this term is used for similar forms. In the upper part towards the shoulders, the walls narrow gradually. The necks are narrow, the rims – short, sloped with a rounded edge. Their surface is burnished, grey-black in colour in places, and in some cases one or two lines are casually incised with a thin blade under the widest part. The fabric is almost identical in colour – light brown, brown to brick red. They differ in size (their height varies from 6 to 15.5 cm). They originate from two graves with cremations – Nos. 80 and 95 (fig. 13: 4) of the Balchik necropolis, four with inhumations – Nos. 120, 315 (fig. 13: 6), 322, 379 – of the necropolis near Topola, from Grave No. 3 with an inhumation of the necropolis near Kyulevcha (Вължарова 1976, обр. 481) and from Grave No. 22 of the necropolis



Fig. 13. Ceramic pots from the necropolis near Topola: 1, 2. Graves Nos. 155, 188 (Photo: A. Ismail); 3. Silver vessel from the Pereshchepina treasure (after Залеская и др. 2006, 284, № 71); 4. Pot from the necropolis near Balchik, Grave No. 95 (Photo: L. Doncheva-Petkova); 5. Wooden cup, gold leaf casing, Pereshchepina treasure (after Залеская и др. 2006, 277 – 283, кат. № 70); 6, 7. Pots from the necropolis near Topola, Graves Nos. 315, 297 (Photo: A. Ismail)
Обр. 13. Керамични гърнета от некропола при Топола: 1, 2. Гробове № 155, 188 (Снимка: А. Исмаил); 3. Сребърен съд от Перешчепинското съкровище (по Залеская и др. 2006, 284, № 71); 4. Гърне от некропола при Балчик, гроб № 95 (Снимка: Л. Дончева-Петкова); 5. Дървена чаша, обкована със златен лист, Перешчепинското съкровище (по Залеская и др. 2006, 277 – 283, кат. № 70); 6, 7. Гърнета от некропола при Топола, гробове № 315, 297 (Снимка: А. Исмаил)

with cremations near Razdelna (Димитров 1978, табл. V_{10}). One such pot from the village of Rosenovo, Dobrich district, is kept at RMH – Dobrich. A similar vessel has also been identified at the Starokorsunskaya necropolis near the Kuban (Каминский 1987, обр. 448). It might seem a bit exaggerated, but the shape is related to that of the wooden "nomadic" cup, with gold-leaf casing, from the Pereshchepina treasure (fig. 13: 5), but the ceramic vessels lack a handle (Вернер 1988, приложение 21_4; Залеская и др. 2006, 277 – 283, кат. № 70). However, in two graves with cremations – Nos. 252 and 297 (fig. 13: 7) of the necropolis near Topola, and in Grave No. 10 in Novi Pazar (Станчев, Иванов 1958, таблица XV_2) pots with handles which are not in the middle part of the body, but between the neck and shoulders, were found.

Cauldrons made from ceramic should also be listed as kitchenware ceramics, although various functions have been attributed to them. Whole vessels of this type were not placed in graves, but only in Topola, fragments, broken during ritual activities, have been found in two-three places among the marking stones and above a grave with a cremation No. 396. In terms of colour, fabric composition (with a lot of sand inclusion), and decoration of incised lines, they resemble the pots with sandy fabric, which is why their presence is established only when parts of the rims or lugs are found. There is no doubt that the parts of ceramic cauldrons originate from the settlement, where, according to the researcher L. Bobcheva, over 350 fragments have been found. Pottery kiln No. 4 was stocked with such cauldrons, and seven vessels have been restored from it (fig. 14: 1, 2) (Бобчева 1980, 126 – 131, табл. I – VII). The vessels from Topola are large in size – their capacity, according

to L. Bobcheva, was between 8 and 10 litres, which is why it is justified to assume that they were used "for transporting liquids and food products" (Бобчева 1980, 126), in addition to being used for preparing food over the fire. The multi-functional role of cauldrons, even used for ritual or religious purposes, is also mentioned by V. Nahapetyan-Flyorova and V. Flyorov, who trace the distribution of these vessels "in Eastern Europe in the era of the Khazar Khaganate" (Нахапетян-Флёрова, Флёров 1997, 63 – 67). A cauldron unearthed in an oven in Dugout No. 5 of the Popina-Blagodeasca settlement in Romania is very close to the vessels from Topola. E. Corbu dates it to the 9th c., but at the same time defines it inaccurately as Pecheng (Corbu 2013, 57, Pl. LII$_1$, Pl. LV$_1$). Other similar ceramic cauldrons have not been found in medieval settlements or necropoleis from Bulgaria. The cauldron from the Early Medieval settlement near the town of Devnya (near necropoleis Devnya-1 and 3) is different (Димитров 1975, 37, табл. I$_{1, 2}$).



Fig. 14: 1, 2. Ceramic cauldrons from the medieval settlement near Topola (Photo: D. Aleksiev); 3. Silver cauldron, 6th – 7th c., the State Hermitage Museum (after Тревер, Луконин 1987, № 45, 46); 4. Silver cauldrons from Klimovsk and Redikor, 8th – 9th c. (after Даркевич 1976, таблица 12$_{4, 5}$); 5. Bronze cauldron from Veliki Preslav (Photo: Kr. Stoeva)

Обр. 14: 1, 2. Керамични котли от средновековното селище при Топола (Снимка: Д. Алексиев); 3. Сребърен котел, VI – VII в., Ермитажа (по Тревер, Луконин 1987, № 45, 46); 4. Сребърни котли от Климовск и Редикор, VIII – IX в. (по Даркевич 1976, таблица 12$_{4, 5}$); 5. Бронзов котел от Велики Преслав (Снимка: Кр. Стоева)

Several restored vessels from Kiln No. 4 in the settlement near Topola are similar in shape to the silver Sasanian "pails" from the State Hermitage Museum collection, dated to the 6th – 7th c. (fig. 14: 3) (Тревер, Луконин 1987, № 45, 46), and to the silver "pails" from the Klimovsk and Redikor treasures, which have been related to the eastern regions of Central Asia, and dated to the second half of the 8th – first half of the 9th c. (fig. 14: 4) (Даркевич 1976, таблица 12$_{4, 5}$). The copper cauldron with a height of 20 cm from the museum in Veliki Preslav, which was unearthed in 1961 in the area of Selishte, probably during excavations of Y. Changova (fig. 14: 5) is similar to them.[4] Some of the ceramic cauldrons in the Caucasus region are also of this type (Алексеева 1963, 16 – 31).

The examples mentioned uncover imitations of, and relationships between some ceramic and metal vessels. Cursory observations show that the main forms originate from Antiquity – from Greek and Roman ceramic and glass vessels, Gothic, Sarmatian oenochoes, bowls, sphero-conical cups, pails, pots, cauldrons, and also from Sasanian, Alanian and Early Byzantine jugs, bowls, chalices. The studied vessels from the biritual necropoleis in Bulgaria are early forms, brought and reproduced through the years and decades after the settlement of the Asparuh Bulgarians, and especially in the first half and up to around the middle of the 8th c. Later on, towards the end of the 8th c., they decreased in number, and after the first half of the 9th c. these forms are not found, because there were changes in ceramic forms. From where and how they were borrowed from remains a

[4] I would like to thank my colleague, Kremena Stoeva, for the data and the photograph.

mystery. In contrast to V. G. Grigorjev and B. I. Marshak, who had direct observations on the metal and ceramic vessels produced in Sogdia, such observations and relationships here are not possible. Our colleagues from Hungary and Slovakia working on Late Avar "yellow" ceramics encounter the same difficulties. They also relate it to metal specimens, but the problem of its appearance remains unsolved to this day. As had been already pointed out, the reviewed ceramic vessels from the biritual necropoleis are early forms, and the logical question arises whether some of them did not reproduce established specimens from the initial territories – prototypes which were passed on from one generation of potters to the next.

In contrast to the vessels from the 'secret passage' in Pliska, which are the most prominent manifestation of metal imitations, thrown on a kick wheel, the vessels from the biritual necropoleis were made on a tournette. And while different opinions have been expressed about the masters who made the vessels from the 'secret passage' in Pliska, there is no doubt that the vessels from the biritual necropoleis are the work of Bulgarian potters. They, like all of the Early Medieval pottery, were made on a tournette and from the same fabric as the other ceramics. They were produced in centres like Pliska and Topola, where pottery kilns have been discovered (Милчев 1960, 35 – 53; Бобчева 1977, 172 – 176).

We should note that ceramic vessels imitating the gold ones from the Nagyszentmiklós treasure have been established not only among the Avar necropoleis. The mentioned jugs with a spheroconical body from Novi Pazar and Balchik, as well as the ceramic bowls from Balchik and Topola, and the conical bucket pail cups from Topola, Balchik and Bdintsi are comparable to vessels Nos. 1 – 7, 11, 12 and 19 of the treasure.

The appearance, patterns, and further development of the forms are part of the wide range of questions – about preserved traditions, influences – questions which have been the interest of scientists since the first biritual necropolis near Novi Pazar was discovered more than 60 years ago; questions which remain to be answered in the future.

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КЕРАМИЧНИ СЪДОВЕ В БИРИТУАЛНИТЕ НЕКРОПОЛИ И ТЕХНИТЕ МЕТАЛНИ ПАРАЛЕЛИ

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РЕЗЮМЕ

За разлика от Унгария, на чиято територия са открити богати аварски гробове от VII в., свързвани с предводители, князе, аристократи, на територията на днешна България нито в първите държавни центрове, нито в аулите са намерени гробове на български ханове или на висши държавни служители. Затова пък в най-ранните наши некрополи – при гр. Балчик, гр. Нови пазар, с. Кюлевча, Шуменско и с. Топола, Каварненско – са открити керамични съдове, за някои от които най-общо може да се каже, че наподобяват метални първообрази. Значителен е броят на съдовете, които могат да се свържат с прототипи, изработени не само от метал, но и от стъкло, дори от дърво. Това са трапезни съдове – кани, амфоровидни стомни, паници, сфероконични чаши, чаши-ведра, както и гърнета и котли с вътрешни уши. В изследването са събрани освен известните досега керамични съдове и нови, открити през последните две десетилетия, предимно от биритуалните некрополи при Балчик и Топола. Към тях са прибавени и няколко съда от първата българска столица Плиска. Те са представени по видове.

Каните са едни от най-интересните находки в некрополите. Изработени са, както и останалите видове, на ръчно грънчарско колело. Една от каните от некропола при Нови пазар – от гроб № 33 (обр. 1: 1) освен с формата си, впечатлява с прецизно изпълнената украса и безспорно копира съдове от торевтиката. В Балчишкия некропол каните заемат първо по количество място сред съдовете от пречистена глина и някои по форма са близки на новопазарската, но са украсени с излъскани вертикални ивици или с мрежест орнамент (обр. 1: 2 – 4). По форма на тялото каните от Нови пазар и Балчик се приближават до сребърната, с позлата, византийска кана от съкровището във Врап, Албания (обр. 1: 5) до каните от съкровището от Надсентмиклош, които са с различни шийки, устия, дъна (обр. 1: 6, 7), до сребърните кани, съхранявани в Ермитажа от Ягошур, Покровское, Седяр (обр. 2).

И други метални, сребърни и рядко златни, сасанидски или изпълнени в сасанидски традиции кани имат подобна сфероконична форма – златната кана от Перешчепинското съкровище (обр. 3: 2), сребърната позлатена кана от Малцева (обр. 3: 3), сребърната от Павловка (обр. 3: 4), както и бронзовите кани от Дагестан (обр. 3: 5), определяни като ислямско (ранноабасидско) подражание на сасанидски съдове. Подобна е формата на някои от формуваните на крачно колело светлоглинени кани от тайния ходник при Крумовия дворец в Плиска. Дъното на две от тях е с високо профилирано столче, а дръжките им при съединяването с тялото завършват, както и на останалите кани, които са с плоско дъно, с двулистни палмети (обр. 3: 1). Точно тези кани се свързват най-пряко с посочените метални съдове от сасанидската и постсасанидската торевтика. За разлика от металните съдове и две от каните от тайния ходник в Плиска, дъната на керамичните кани от некрополите са плоски. Работата на ръчно колело е затруднявала оформянето на такива дъна и затова те не са често срещани. В Балчишкия некропол са открити още няколко интересни кани, които по форма и орнамент приличат на метални съдове (обр. 4: 1 – 3, 5, 6). Оригинална по форма и направа кана е намерена в гроб № 33 в Топола (обр. 4: 7). Доближава се до сребърна кана от източните райони на Средна Азия – от с. Афанасиево, на брега на Кама (обр. 4: 8).

Амфоровидни стомни се откриват в некрополи, които са възникнали по-късно или са продължили да се използват дълго време. Изключение прави по-ранният съд (края на VIII в.) от гроб № 3 в кв. Дивдядово при Шумен, както и единственият съд от некропола при Балчик. Изключение правят и светлоглинени ангобирани съдове от Плиска, които са формувани на крачно колело (обр. 5: 1 – 3). Дръжките им при съединяването с тялото завършват с издължена пластична пирамидална част, която при съда от тайния ходник при Крумовия дворец е украсена с трилистници. Те наподобяват дръжките при някои метални съдове. Амфоровидните стомни са широко разпространени около средата – 60-те години на IX в, срещат се и през X в. При много от тях дръжките са с пластични издатъци (обр. 5: 4 – 6). Вероятно тези дръжки и преобладаващите жълти цветове са опити за имитиране на изработени от злато съдове.

Паници. След гърнетата от некропола при Топола, паниците заемат второ по количество място, тъй като са изработвани в керамичните работилници на селището. Преобладават такива с широки заоблени рамена, от които към дъното стените постепенно се стесняват (обр. 6: 1 – 3). Близки по форма и размери медни паници са намерени в Коринт (обр. 7: 4). В некропола при Топола в гробове № 4 и 29 (обр. 7: 1, 2) и № 182 на Балчишкия некропол (обр. 7: 3) са открити дълбоки паници. По форма се свързват с широко коментираното златно съдче № 19 (обр. 7: 6) от Надсентмиклошкото съкровище. Единствена със своята форма от нашите биритуални некрополи е паницата от гроб с инхумация № 486 от Топола (обр. 8: 1). Отличава я дъното – ниско, кухо конусовидно столче, по което се доближава до „сасанидска златна купичка“ от Перешчепинското съкровище (обр. 8: 2). Дъното на паницата от гроб № 486 се свързва и с това на бронзов съд с две дръжки от гроб № 244 на некропол при Замарди в Унгария (обр. 8: 3).

При търсене на паралели между керамичните и металните съдове унгарски археолози представят реконструирани дървени паници с метални обкови от аварски гробове от VII в. (обр. 8: 4). Пластините на една от Желовче/Зели са близки с откритите медни огънати пластини от гробове № 99 и 205 (обр. 8: 6, 7) и сребърни от № 148 (обр. 8: 5, 7) на некропола при Балчик. Може да се предположи, че с пластинките от Балчишкия некропол също са били украсени или обковани устията на дървени съдове или предмети, както показват останките от иглолистно дърво при тези от гроб № 148.

Чаши. Тези съдове се срещат рядко. Представени са предимно в Топола. До главата на погребания юноша в гроб № 56 е поставен съд с необичайна форма (обр. 9: 1). Сфероидното тяло без шийка, дъното и изцяло излъсканата повърхност го доближават до метални форми от съкровищата от Мартиновка и Врап (обр. 9: 4), от гроб № 204 при Варпалота-Гимназиум в Унгария (обр. 9: 3), от гроб № 32 при Носера Умбра в Италия. Съдът от Топола наподобява и на сребърните църковни византийски потири от VI – VII в., като този от с. Нова Надежда, Хасковско (обр. 9: 2).

Чаши-ведра. Още с първите разкопки некрополът при с. Топола стана известен с откриваните чаши с форма на дървени ведра. Намерени са в 15 гроба. Известни са и от некрополите при Балчик и с. Бдинци. По формата си повечето наподобяват обърнат пресечен конус (обр. 10: 1, 2) и само една от гроб № 6 (обр. 10: 3), както и няколко фрагмента от Топола, са цилиндрични. По тялото им на интервали са врязани прави линии или между правите линии са нанасяни вълнисти ленти. Твърде вероятно е керамичните ведра да копират метални съдове и още по-сигурно дървени с метални обкови. Тези с форма на пресечен конус напомнят на сребърния съд от сасанидската колекция в Ермитажа (обр. 10: 5). До него се доближава глазираното керамично ведро от с. Вокил, Силистренско (обр. 10: 4). С форма на пресечен конус са чашите № 11 (обр. 10: 6) и 12 от Надсентмиклошкото съкровище. Цилиндричното ведро от Топола намира прилика с дървените ведра с метални обкови от началото на късноаварския период от гробове № 453 и 641 на големия некропол при Замарди в Унгария (обр. 10: 7, 8).

Сфероконични чаши. Заслужава внимание този още по-рядко срещан тип чаши, който принадлежи към т.нар. бокаловидни, открити в седем гроба в Топола (обр. 11: 1 – 4, 6). Тялото им се състои от две части, като долната е закръглена, сфероидна и завършва с плоско дъно, а горната наподобява широк обърнат пресечен конус. Посочени са паралели със стъклени и метални съдове от аварски гробове от VII в., от които внимание заслужава сребърният от Будапеща-Ракош (обр. 11: 7), както и златните съдове от Боча (обр. 11: 8) и Перешчепинското съкровище (без столчетата) (обр. 11: 9). Чашата с дръжка, открита до гроб № 178, е единствен екземпляр сред съдовете от биритуалните некрополи (обр. 12: 1). По форма се свързва с описаните сфероконични чаши. Дръжката ѝ напомня на дръжки от произведения на торевтиката от Източен Иран и Средна Азия, датирани в VIII в., втората половина на VIII – началото/първата половина на IX в. (обр. 12: 3, 4), доближава се и до чашата на жупан Сивин от Преслав (обр. 12: 2).

Гърнетата са най-често срещаните съдове в езическите некрополи, като в някои от тях (Нови пазар, Балчик, Топола – обр. 13: 1, 2) преобладават направените от пречистена глина. При тях връзки с подобни метални форми трудно се откриват, тъй като сред произведенията на торевтиката гърнета се срещат рядко. Подобни по размери, но различни по форма – с по-тесни устия, с дъна-столчета и дръжка в средата на тялото – са един златен и два сребърни, излъскани, без орнаменти „номадски“ съда от Перешчепинското съкровище, определяни като кани или като чаши-кани (обр. 13: 3). Десетината гърнета от Топола, Балчик, Кюлевча принадлежат към тип, който с по-голяма вероятност се доближава до металните (обр. 13: 4, 6). Може да изглежда пресилено, но формата им се свързва с тази на дървената „номадска“ чаша, обкована със златни листове от Перешчепинското съкровище (обр. 13: 5), само че при керамичните съдове липсва дръжка. Но в два гроба на некропола при Топла и в гроб в Нови пазар са намерени гърнета с две дръжки, които не са в средната част на тялото, а между шийката и раменета (обр. 13: 7).

Към кухненската керамика или с приписваните им разнообразни функции принадлежат керамичните **котли**. В гробовете цели съдове от този вид не са поставяни, но единствено в Топола сред маркиращите камъни на няколко места са открити фрагменти, начупвани при ритуални действия. Частите от керамични котли произлизат от селището, с такива котли е била заредена грънчарска пещ № 4 (обр. 14: 1, 2). Тези съдове приличат на сребърните сасанидски „ведра“ от колекцията на Ермитажа (обр. 14: 3), на „ведрата“ в състава на Климовското и Редикорското съкровища (обр. 14: 4). До тях се доближава медният котел от музея във Велики Преслав (обр. 14: 5).

Посочените примери разкриват подражания и връзки на някои керамични с метални съдове. Беглите наблюдения показват, че основните форми водят своя произход от Античността – от гръцки и римски керамични и стъклени съдове, от готски, сарматски ойнохоета, паници, сфероконични чаши, ведра, гърнета, котли, от сасанидски, алански и ранновизантийски кани,

паници, потири. Коментираните съдове от нашите биритуални некрополи са ранни форми, донесени и възпроизвеждани в годините и десетилетията след настаняването на Аспаруховите българи и особено през първата половина и около средата на VIII в. По-късно към края на VIII в. те намаляват, а след първата половина на IX в. тези форми не се срещат, тъй като настъпват изменения в керамичните форми. Откъде и как са заимствани – остава загадка. Както се посочи, разгледаните керамични съдове от биритуалните некрополи са ранни форми и логично възниква въпросът дали някои от тях не възпроизвеждат утвърдени образци от изходните територии, образци, които са препредавани от поколение на поколение грънчари. За разлика от съдовете от тайния ходник при Плиска, които са най-ярка проява на метални имитации и са формувани на крачно колело, съдовете от биритуалните некрополи са изработени на ръчно колело. И докато за плисковските от тайния ходник са изказани различни мнения относно майсторите, които са ги правили, няма съмнение, че съдовете от биритуалните некрополи са дело на български грънчари. Те, както цялата ранносредновековна керамика, са изработени не само на ръчно колело, но и от същите глини, от каквито е правена и останалата керамика. Произвеждани са в центрове като Плиска и Топола, където са открити грънчарски пещи.

Трябва да отбележим, че не само сред аварските некрополи са засвидетелствани керамични съдове, които имитират златните от Надсентмиклошкото съкровище. Посочените кани със сфероконично тяло от Нови пазар и Балчик, както и керамичните купи от Балчик и Топола, конусовидните чаши-ведра от Топола, Балчик и Бдинци са съпоставими със съдове № 1 – 7, 11, 12 и 19 от съкровището.

Ключови думи: биритуални некрополи, ранносредновековна керамика, късноаварски период, метални съдове, съкровището от Надсентмиклош

COMPARATIVE MINERALOGICAL-PETROGRAPHIC STUDY OF POTTERY FROM THE EARLY MEDIEVAL NECROPOLIS WITH CREMATIONS NEAR THE VILLAGE OF RAZDELNA, BELOSLAV MUNICIPALITY AND THE EARLY MEDIEVAL SETTLEMENT NEAR THE VILLAGE OF TOPOLA (KOVANLAKA LOCALITY), KAVARNA MUNICIPALITY

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ABSTRACT

The current study presents the results of mineralogical-petrographic analysis performed on pottery sherds from two Early Medieval sites – the necropolis with cremations near the village of Razdelna and the medieval settlement near the village of Topola. The analyzed pottery sherds represent the two most common technological groups of pottery in the considered period – vessels of well-refined fabric with burnished surface and ornament and vessels of sandy fabric with incised ornament.

The study focuses mainly on the mineral composition of the fabric from which the vessels were formed. The analyzed sherds from the necropolis of Razdelna are divided in two main groups – the first one being rich in natural inclusions – mainly quartz, feldspars and mica, while the second group being scarce or even lacks inclusions. The pottery sherds from the Early Medieval settlement near the village of Topola show similar mineral composition, with the additional presence of grinded mussel shells.

In addition to the mineral composition, other interesting observations were made about the presence of slip-like coating of the vessels of sandy fabric from Razdelna, and observations about the outer layer of the burnished pottery from both sites, including the registered traces of organics on the surface of the vessels, which presumably helps with the typical coloration of the burnished pottery. The difference between the pottery from the two sites is the better quality of the vessels from Topola, which suggests more specialized pottery production.

Key words: Early Middle Ages, pottery, mineralogical-petrographic study

The current paper presents the results of the mineralogical and petrographic analyses of 16 pottery sherds from two Early Medieval sites – the Early Medieval necropolis with cremations near the village of Razdelna, Beloslav municipality (Димитров 1959, 56 – 60; Димитров 1978, 120 – 152; Fiedler 1992, 463 – 484, Taf. 57 – 91) and the settlement in Kovanlaka locality near the village of Topola, Kavarna municipality (Бобчева 1976, 122 – 130; Бобчева 1977, 172 – 177; Бобчева 1980, 126

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Fig. 1. Location of the two sites
Обр. 1. Местоположение на двата обекта

– 130; Бобчева 1981, 198 – 201).[1] The study was conducted in 2020 – 2021 at the University of Mining and Geology "St. Ivan Rilski" and its basic attempt is to compare the ceramic assemblages of both sites.

The composition of the clay from which the vessels were made, as well as some of the observations the authors made about the alleged presence of an additionally applied slip coating on some of the vessels, determined the need for further analysis. Such studies are essential for the determination of various elements of the technology of ceramic production. It is hoped that this paper will supplement the scarce at this stage database in terms of raw materials used, tempers and approximate firing temperature.

Materials and methods of the study

Mainly pottery sherds from one technological group are included in the present study. They were parts of vessels, mainly pots, of well-refined fabric of gray to gray-black color (after firing), and displaying burnished decoration. In order to make a comparison in terms of mineral composition and approximate firing temperature, two sherds from the group of vessels with a sandy fabric were also studied. The selection of the pottery sherds of refined fabric and with burnished decoration was based on the presence of a gray, gray-black surface and a finer fraction of inclusions compared to the fabric of the main body. This layer with small inclusions appears at first glance to be an additional coating of diluted clay or more precisely a slip.

The included sherds derive from vessels thrown on a slow potter's wheel (more specifically a tournette). The slow rotation of the potter's wheel can be perceived in the asymmetry of the walls, the traces left on the outer surface of the bases by the thin layer of sand used to ease removal of the finished pot when cutting it free of the wheel, and the presence of relief signs on the bases. In most cases, especially with the materials from the necropolis near the village of Razdelna, during the restoration the vessels were plastered on the inside with gypsum, which made it difficult to determine more precisely the technology used for making the pot. Another obstacle for more accurate identification of the technology applied is the additional smoothing in a vertical direction of the walls of the vessels made by the potter.

From the necropolis near the village of Razdelna are included samples from nine pots used as burrial urns, and from a jug from Grave No. 29, which are stored in RMH – Varna (fig. 2, fig. 3, fig. 4; Table 1: 1 – 10; Cat. Nos. 1 – 10). The pots made from a purified fabric are 20 cm in height, have spherical bodies, and are with maximum diameters around the middle part of the body. The

[1] The authors would like to especially thank colleagues from RMH – Varna: Assistant Prof. Dr. I. Lazarenko, Assistant Prof. Dr. M. Manolova-Voykova, St. Lazarenko, Assistant Prof. Dr. V. Tenekedzhiev, and the colleagues from RMH – Dobrich: D. Dobrev, Dr. B. Totev and N. Nikolova – for providing access to the materials from both sites, as well as for allowing to subject some of the sherds to analysis.

pottery from the settlement near the village of Topola is represented by pottery sherds from four pots and two bowls which are stored in RMH – Dobrich (fig. 5, fig. 6; Table 2: 1 – 6; Cat. Nos. 11 – 16). Unfortunately, the authors were unable to include sherds from structures belonging to the settlement, but this, it is hoped, will be possible in the future.

The laboratory methods applied include optical (macro- and microscopic methods), X-ray diffraction (XRD) and Scanning Electron Microscopy and Energy Dispersive X-Ray Analysis (SEM-EDX).

Petrographic thin sections from the pottery sherds were prepared and microscopic (petrographic) analyses were performed. The observations were made with a petrographic microscope (*Nikon*) in order to characterize their microscopic features. Through these analyses, information was obtained about the natural inclusions (minerals and rocks) and the added material known as tempers, and about the micro-structure of the ceramic body which is determined by size, shape, orientation of the inclusions, their quantitative presence, the presence of cracks and cavities, treatment of the outer and/or the inner surface of the ceramic body. All examined pottery sherds were photo documented with an *OLIMPUS 5060* digital camera.

X-ray Powder Diffraction (XRD) has been used to detect crystal mineral phases that are optically indeterminate, and the presence of some of them helps in some cases to predict the firing temperature range of the ceramic items. The research was performed in the Laboratory of X-ray Diffraction at the Faculty of Geology and Research (FGR) of the University of Mining and Geology "St. Ivan Rilski" with BRUKER D2 Phaser instrument, equipped with Cu tube and PSD detector. The experiments were performed under the following conditions: Ni filtered Cu radiation with wave length $\lambda = 1.542$ in the range of $2\Theta = 2 – 70°$, 30 kV voltage with scanning step – 0.04o2Θ and exposure duration in step 1.5s. The results were interpreted with EVA software with COD (Crystallography Open Database).

Scanning Electron Microscopy (SEM-EDX) – the method is used to determine the structure of the pottery, composition and distribution of certain mineral phases in the ceramics and its chemical composition. The equipment used to perform the analyses is JEOL JSM-6010 PLUS/LA with EDS type analyzer (energy-dispersion-spectrometer). The analyses are semi-quantitative and the standards are by default. The analyses were performed in the Scientific Research Laboratory of Scanning Electron Microscopy at the FGR of the University of Mining and Geology "St. Ivan Rilski".

Results of mineralogical-petrographic research

Sherds from the necropolis near the village of Razdelna, Beloslav municipality
(fig. 2, fig. 3, fig. 4; Table 1: 1 – 10; Cat. Nos. 1 – 10)

The majority of the studied pottery sherds comprise material with a similar mineral composition, which suggests a common source from which they were made. Depending on the presence of mineral and rock inclusions, two groups are distinguishable: the first group comprises pottery sherds rich in natural inclusions – mainly quartz, feldspars and mica (Cat. Nos. 1, 3, 4, 7, 9), rarely grog (Cat. No. 7), while the second group (Cat. Nos. 2, 5, 8, 10) is lacking in inclusions. The sherds from the second group are highly friable and the size of the natural inclusions is below 0.05 mm.

The groundmass (matrix) of the studied sherds has a hydromica composition varying in color – from brown-red in the periphery to black and dark brown in the central parts of the ceramic body, optically isotropic. *The inclusions* are mainly mineral with size below 0.1 to 0.01 mm and are represented by quartz (mainly), mica – muscovite, biotite, ore minerals (ilmenite) and sporadic grains of feldspar (plagioclase and K-feldspar), epidote, amphibole and others. In pottery sherds

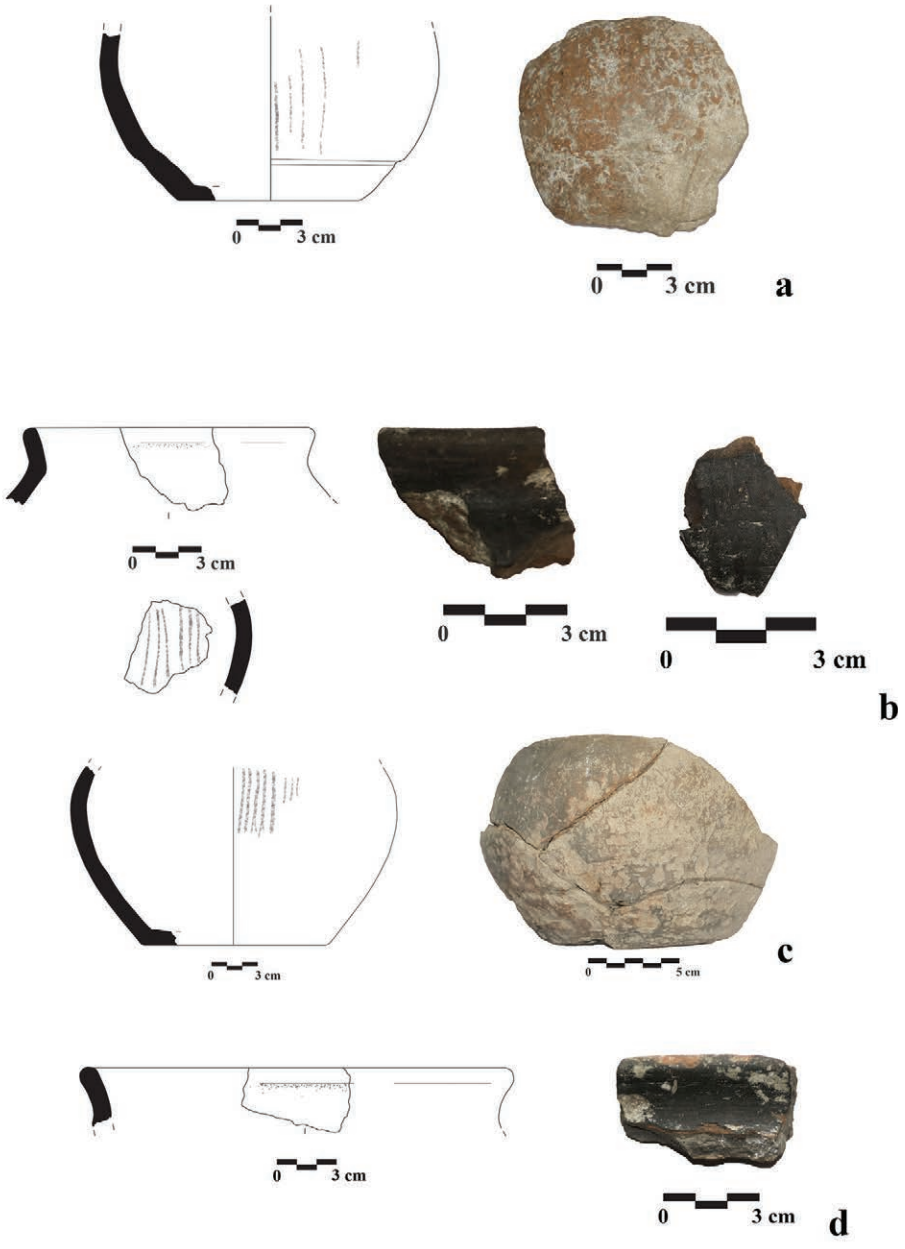


Fig. 2. Pottery from the necropolis near the village of Razdelna: a. Grave No. 183; b. Pot – urn from Grave No. 183; c. Grave No. 185; d. Pot – urn from Grave No. 24

Обр. 2. Керамика от некропола при с. Разделна: a. Гроб № 183; b. Гърне – урна от гроб № 183; c. Гроб № 185; d. Гърне – урна от гроб № 24

from the first group, the quartz inclusions predominate quantitatively and they are characterized by a pronounced angular shape, which could suggest that they were manually crushed from their source rock and used as temper. Rock inclusions of quartzites, chalcedony aggregates and limestones (Table 1: 5, 6, 8) have a limited presence in the pottery sherds.

In the studied cross-sections of the pottery sherds different layers were established, which resulted from: change in the size of the mineral inclusions sharply decreasing in their outer peripheral surface (Table 1: 1, 4, 8); change in the color of the main body – black in its central parts and light brown in the peripheral areas.

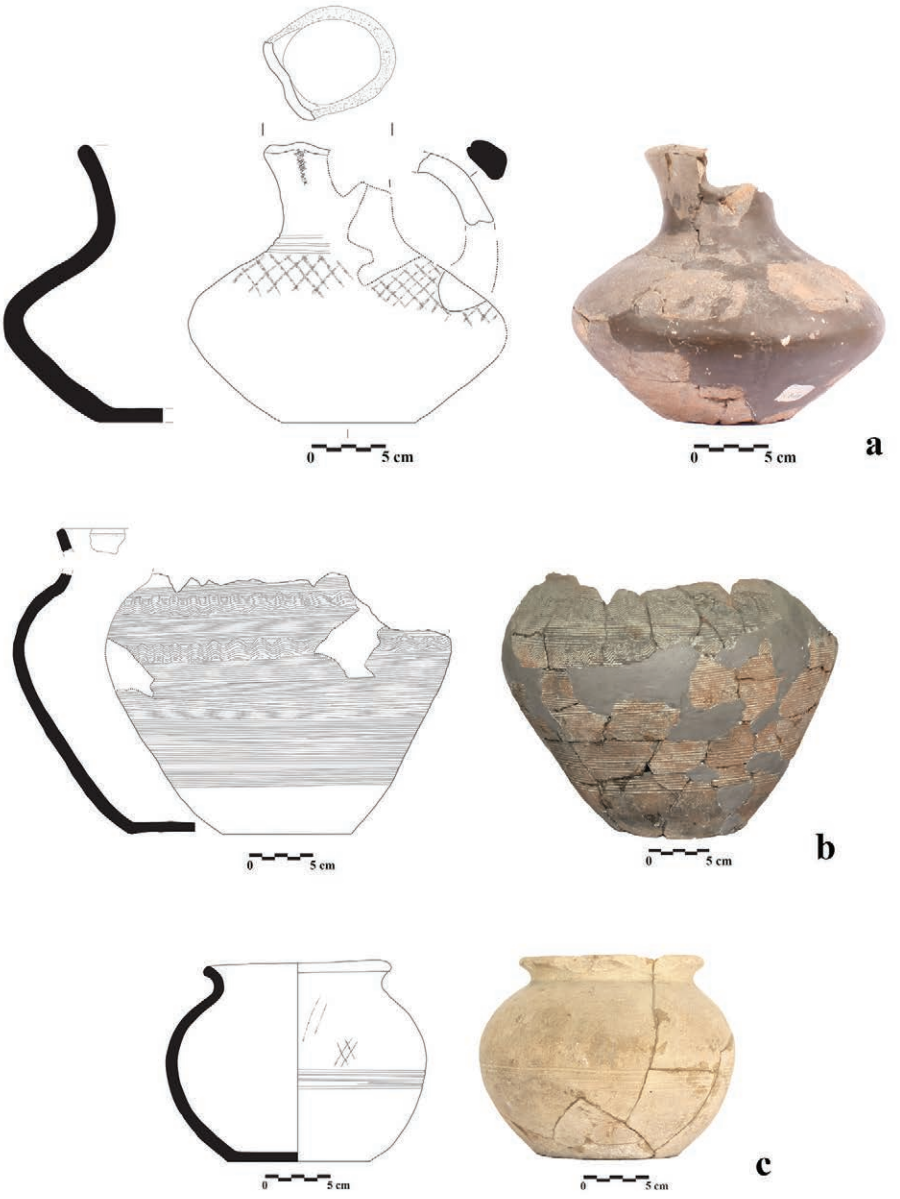


Fig. 3. Pottery from the necropolis near the village of Razdelna: a. Jug – grave offering in Grave No. 29; b. Pot – urn from Grave No. 50; c. Pot – urn from Grave No. 89

Обр. 3. Керамика от некропола при с. Разделна: a. Кана – гробен дар в гроб № 29; b. Гърне – урна от гроб № 50; c. Гърне – урна от гроб № 89

Sherds from the Early Medieval settlement near the village of Topola, Kavarna municipality
(fig. 5, fig. 6 ; Table 2: 1 – 6 ; Cat. Nos. 11 – 16)

The studied group of pottery sherds has a similar composition and similar technological features. It is made of hydromica-based groundmass with varying color – brown-red, light to dark brown and black and is optically isotropic. The inclusions are represented by the following minerals: quartz (mainly), white and brown mica, ore grains (ilmenite, titanomagnetite), feldspar, epidote, amphibole, tourmaline, zircon. The size of most of them are below 0.01 to 0.005 mm. There are

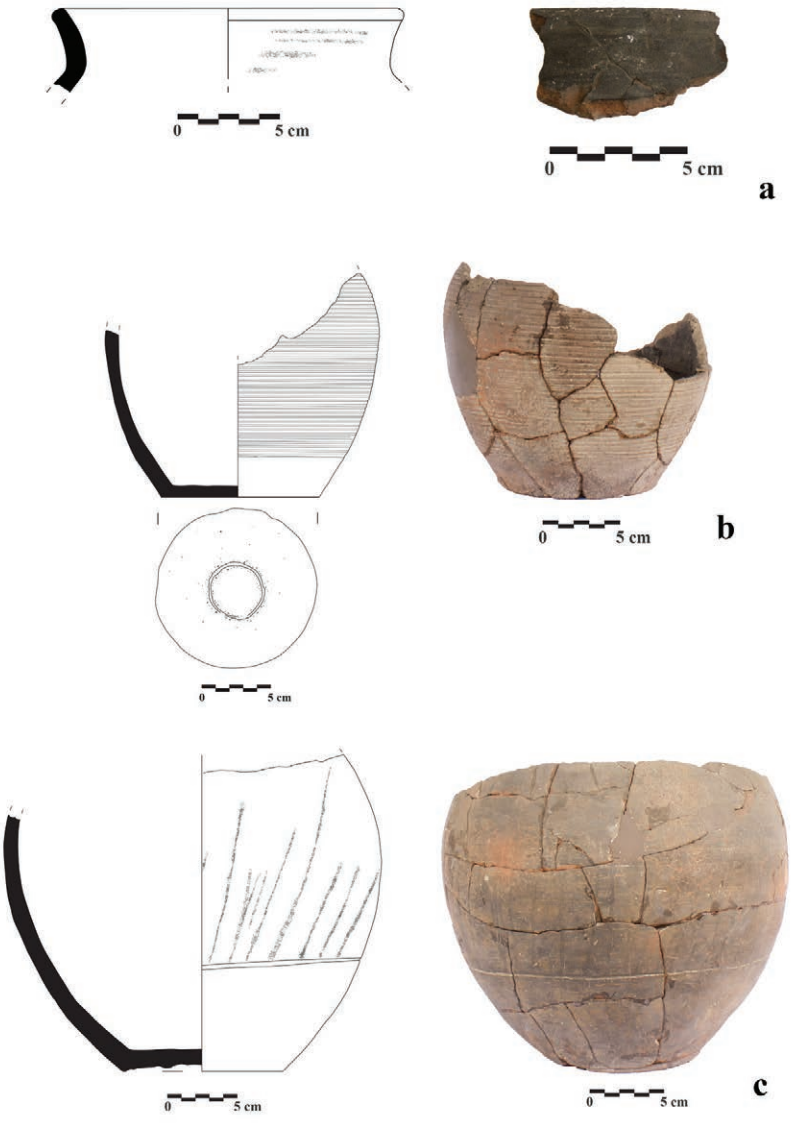


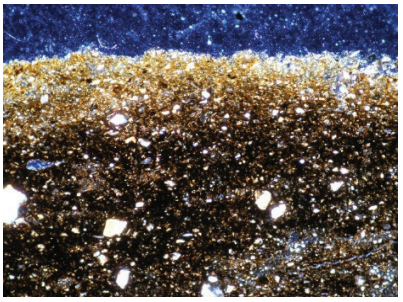
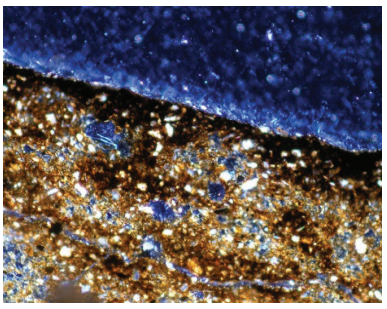
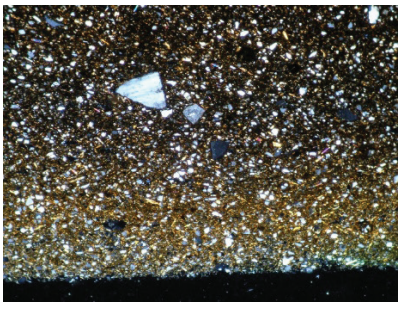
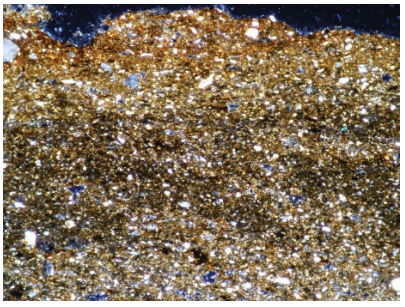
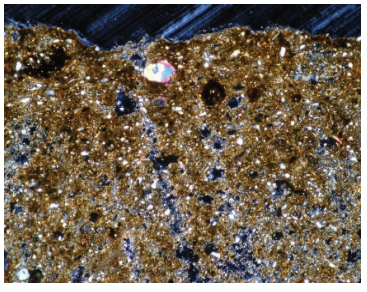
Fig. 4. Pottery from the necropolis near the village of Razdelna: a. Pot – urn from Grave No. 136; Pot – urn from Grave No. 140; c. Pot – urn from Grave No. 142

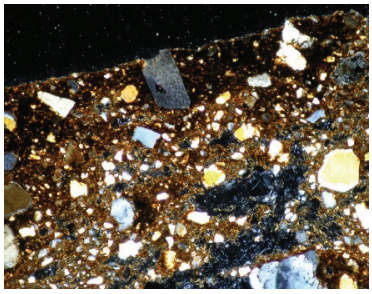
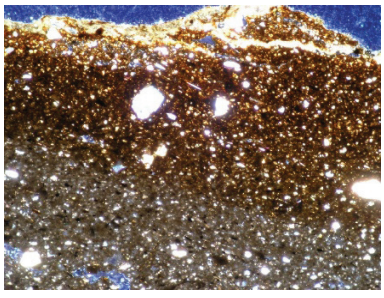
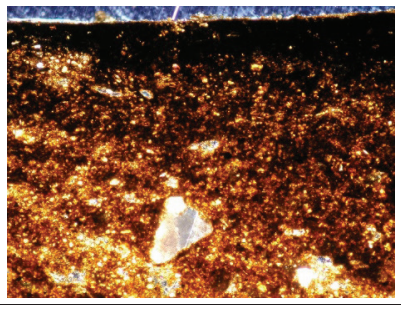
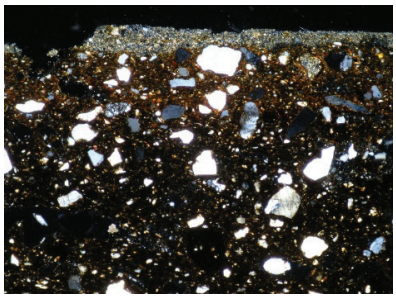
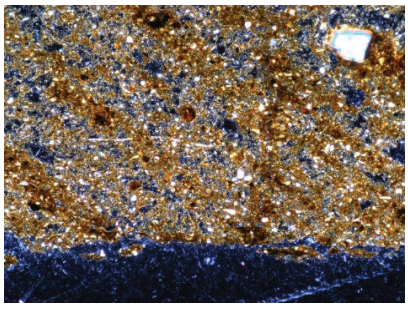
Обр. 4. Керамика от некропола при с. Разделна: a. Гърне – урна от гроб № 136; b. Гърне – урна от гроб № 140; c. Гърне – урна от гроб № 142

inclusions of micritic limestones and pieces of bivalves (mussels) in the fabric of most of the pottery sherds from this site (Table 2: 2, 3, 7). The presence of crushed mussel shells distinguishes the vessels under consideration from the ceramic assemblage of the Early Medieval biritural necropolis near Balchik, where no such inclusions were documented (Дончева-Петкова и др. 2016, 113).

Spectrometric analyses with JEOL JSM-6010 PLUS/LA and analyzer type EDS (energy-dispersion-spectrometer) were performed on the ceramics from both sites in order to define the structure of the ceramics and to determine the composition and distribution of some main elements and mineral phases. Some of the obtained results are shown in fig. 7. By making images of the distribution of the basic chemical elements (X-ray mapping) a uniform distribution of the main chemical elements in the fabric of the pottery sherds (in cross sections of the ceramic body) was established. This suggests that they were made of homogeneous material, and the observed layers of different color in the cross-sections results from the firing conditions (oxidation-reduction).

Table 1. Sherds from the necropolis near the village of Razdelna, Beloslav municipality
Таблица 1. Материали от некропола при с. Разделна, общ. Белослав

Cat. No.	Archaeological context	Photo of the pottery sherd	Microscopic photo*
1	Necropolis near the village of Razdelna Grave No. 183 *No Inv. No.* *RMH – Varna*		
2	Necropolis near the village of Razdelna Grave No. *183* *No Inv. No.* *RMH – Varna*		
3	Necropolis near the village of Razdelna Grave No. 185 *No Inv. No.* *RMH – Varna*		
4	Necropolis near the village of Razdelna Grave No. 24 *Inv. No. IV 798* *RMH – Varna*		
5	Necropolis near the village of Razdelna Grave No. 29 *Inv. No. IV 804* *RMH – Varna*		

6	Necropolis near the village of Razdelna Grave No. 50 *Inv. No. IV 808* *RMH – Varna*		
7	Necropolis near the village of Razdelna Grave No. 89 *Inv. No. IV 848* *RMH – Varna*		
8	Necropolis near the village of Razdelna Grave No. 136 *Inv. No. IV 885* *RMH – Varna*		
9	Necropolis near the village of Razdelna Grave No. 140 *Inv. No. IV 888* *RMH – Varna*		
10	Necropolis near the village of Razdelna Grave No. 142 *Inv. No. IV 891* *RMH – Varna*		

* All photos of the thin sections have a field of view = 3980 μm, samples Nos. 2, 3, 7 were taken in cross-polarized light; samples Nos. 4, 5, 6 – in parallel polarized light.

The conducted analyses of crushed material from the sherds with X-ray powder diffraction confirmed the already optically identified main part of the mineral phases (fig. 8a, b). Based on the registered clay mineral montmorillonite in the fabric of the pots from the necropolis near the village of Razdelna, we can assume that the firing temperature during their production did not exceed 550 °C. At higher temperatures, this mineral would decompose into another mineral phase. No clay mineral is registered in the fabric of the pottery from the settlement near the village of Topola, which suggests a higher firing temperature, but the considerable amount of carbonate phases in it suggests a firing temperature not higher than 700 – 750 °C.

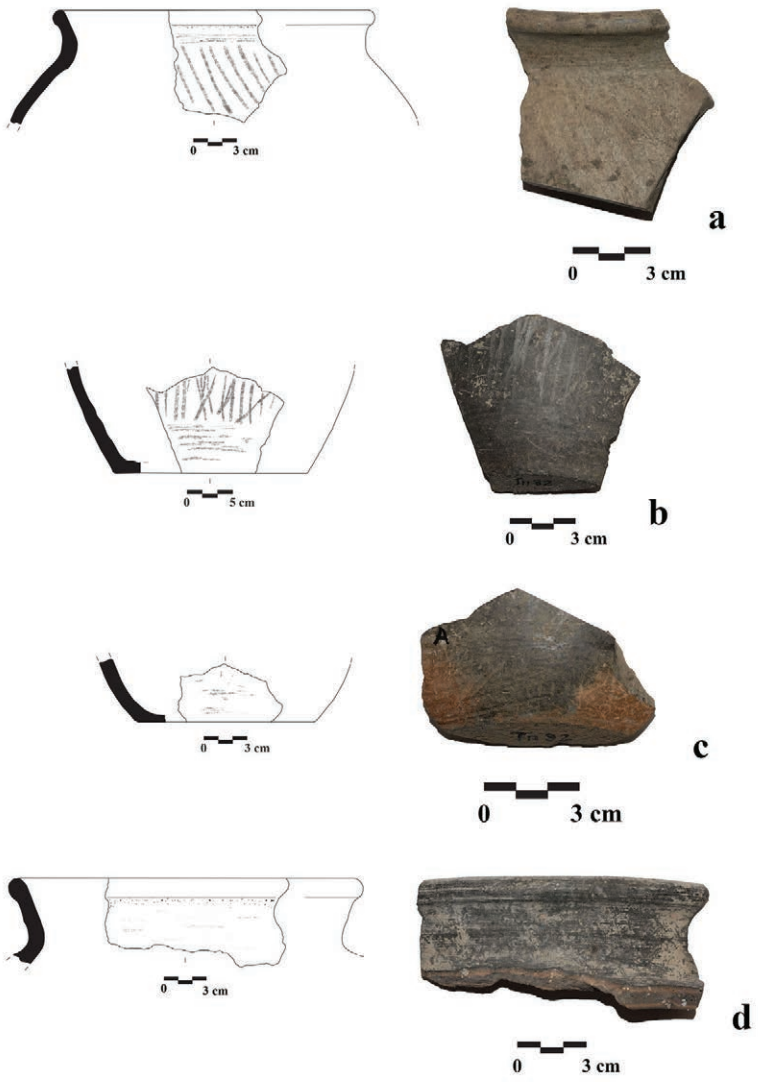


Fig. 5. Pottery from the Early Medieval settlement in Kovanlaka locality near the village of Topola: a. Pottery sherd from the rim of a pot with refined fabric (1982 excavation campaign, Grid sq. 13); b. Pottery sherd from the base of a vessel with refined fabric (1982 excavation campaign, Grid sq. 2); c. Pottery sherd from the base of a vessel with refined fabric (1982 excavation campaign, Grid sq. У); d. Pottery sherd from the rim of a pot with refined fabric (1982 excavation campaign, Grid sq. 14)

Обр. 5. Керамика от ранносредновековното селище в м. Кованлъка при с. Топола: a. Фрагмент от устие на гърне от пречистена глина (разкопки от 1982 г., кв. 13); b. Фрагмент от дъно на съд от пречистена глина (разкопки от 1982 г., кв. 2); c. Фрагмент от дъно на съд от пречистена глина (разкопки от 1982 г., кв. У); d. Фрагмент от устие на гърне от пречистена глина (разкопки от 1982 г., кв. 14)

In the present study, attention was paid to ceramic vessels and pottery sherds with dark gray to black in color outer and, in some cases, inner surfaces, in which a thin layer of clay with a finer fraction of inclusions is observed (Table 1[2]: 2, 4 , 8; Table 2: 2, 3, 6). This layer visually resembles an additionally applied clay solution (slip) on the surface of the vessels. This prompted the authors to perform additional research on this thin less than 0.5 mm layer. The ceramics in question are made of extremely well-refined clay and are characterized by the presence of mineral inclusions with predominant size below 0.01 mm. The structure of the presented items from the necropolis near the village of Razdelna is highly porous, and crumbly and the microscopically shows the presence of a grid of

[2] The layer in question could not be detected on the photos of the pottery sherds from Graves Nos. 24 and 29 that were taken under a microscope. Due to the thinness of this layer, as well as the fact that it could be easily chipped away, there was a danger of desintegration when sampling. This necessitated further analyses of the pottery sherds in question.

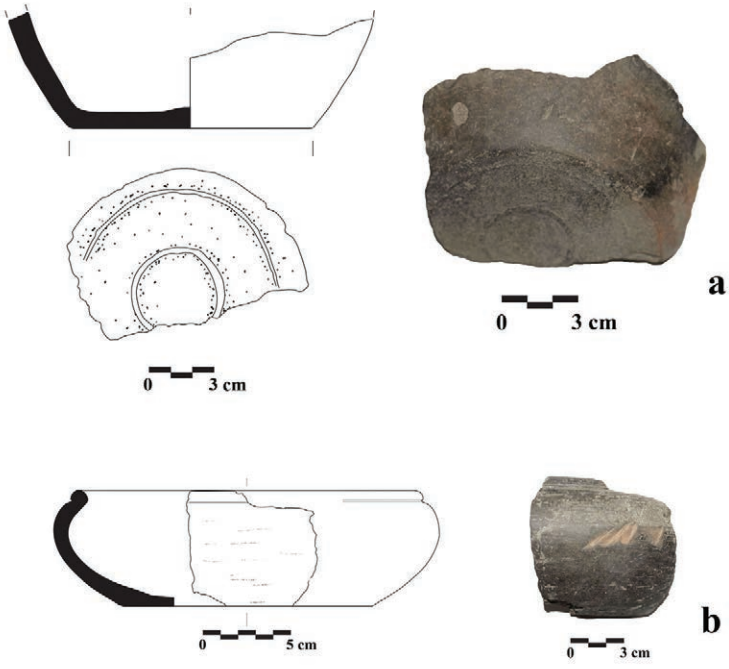


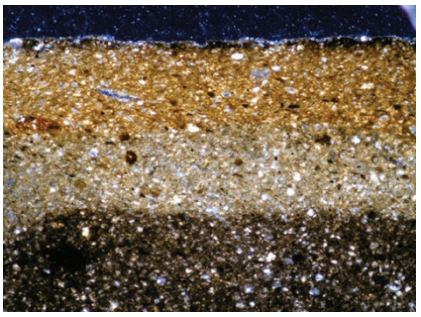
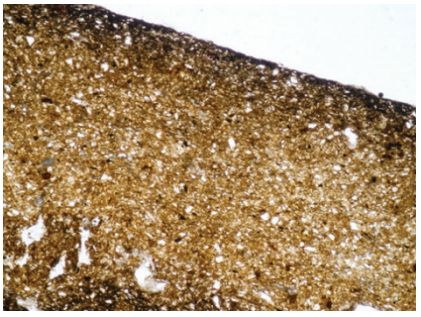
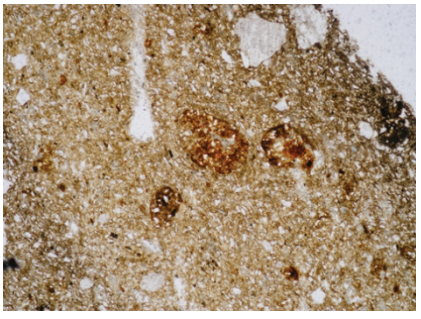
Fig. 6. Pottery from the Early Medieval settlement in Kovanlaka locality near the village of Topola: a. Pottery sherd from the base of a pot with refined fabric (1969 excavation campaign); b. Bowl with refined fabric (1972 excavation campaign, Trench I)

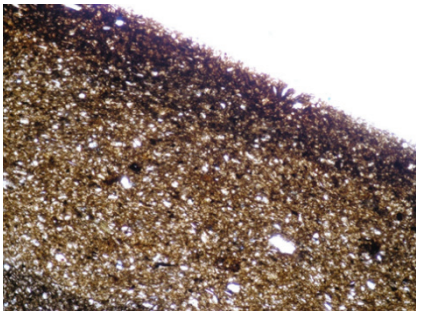
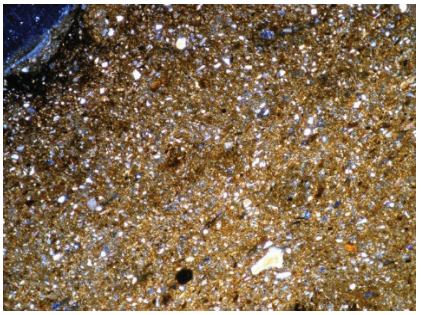
Обр. 6. Керамика от ранносредновековното селище в м. Кованлъка при с. Топола: а. Фрагмент от дъно на гърне от пречистена глина (разкопки от 1969 г.); b. Купа от пречистена глина (разкопки от 1972 г., сондаж I)

fine cracks (fig. 7a). The structure of the pottery from the Early Medieval settlement near the village of Topola is dense, slightly porous (fig. 7b) and compared to the fabric from the necropolis near the village of Razdelna it is stronger.

Optical examination of the cross-sections of the ceramic body of these pottery sherds revealed that this outer surface black layer has no sharp boundary with the main ceramic body and contains a fine fraction of mineral inclusions in it (fig. 9). The composition of these mineral inclusions is analogous to that of the inner part of the ceramic body, differing only in its smaller size and strongly rounded shapes (Table 1: 2, 8; Table 2: 2, 3, 6; fig. 9). The fabric along the entire thickness of the pottery sherds has a completely homogeneous composition (see data from spectrometric studies above), with only the size of the inclusions being reduced. In addition, none of the pottery sherds examined showed a sharp boundary in the 'layer' in question, a feature which is characteristic of vessels coated with slip. In this case it is probably the so-called "self-slip" (Shepard 1956, 191 – 192), which is the result of additional smoothing and polishing of the surface of the vessels before they fully dry. The analyses of fabric from the surface of the pottery sherds from the necropolis near the village of Razdelna – treatment and active reaction with hydrogen peroxide (H_2O_2) suggest that an organic substance is present in the fabric's composition. This was also confirmed by the results of the X-ray powder diffraction (fig. 8c), which registered the presence of an X-ray amorphous phase. This in itself is an interesting result, as until now the gray-black and black color in the considered category of vessels was mainly attributed to the reduction conditions when firing the vessels or as the result of 'carbon trap' when inserting deliberately, or allowing a build-up of smoke into the kiln at the end of firing (Дончева-Петкова 1969, 22; Дончева-Петкова 1977, 31 – 32; Станчев, Иванов 1958, 55). According to L. Doncheva-Petkova, fabrics colored in gray or gray-bluish contain charred organic substances (Дончева-Петкова 1969, 11). Here the authors would like to add that the presence of an organic substance is registered only in the surface layer of the studied vessels. This excludes the possibility that the color of the ceramics in question is due to organic substance added to the fabric of the vessel, but rather to additional vegetation applied to the surface or added to the kiln's fuel, which in a reduced firing mode gives the characteristic gray-black color (Gillies, Urch 1983, 29; Rye 1980, 40 – 44). When an organic substance is applied directly to the surface of the vessel, it is highly likely to burn and separate from the surface (Shepard 1956, 31 – 32). Here we can ask the question – is it possible that the porosity of the vessels mentioned above helped to preserve the organic matter deep inside the fabric? Perhaps

Table 2. Sherds from the Early Medieval settlement near the village of Topola, Kavarna municipality
Таблица 2. Материали от ранносредновековното селище при с. Топола, общ. Каварна

Cat. No.	Archaeological context	Photo of the pottery sherd	Microscopic photo*
11	Early Medieval settlement near the village of Topola 1982 excavation campaign Grid sq. 13, elevation 0.40 m *No Inv. No.* *RMH – Dobrich*		
12	Early Medieval settlement near the village of Topola 1982 excavation campaign Grid sq. 2, elevation 0.80 m *No Inv. No.* *RMH – Dobrich*		
13	Early Medieval settlement near the village of Topola 1982 excavation campaign Grid sq. У, elevation 0.60 m *No Inv. No.* *RMH – Dobrich*		
14	Early Medieval settlement near the village of Topola 1982 excavation campaign Grid sq. 14, elevation 0.60 m *No Inv. No.* *RMH – Dobrich*		

15	Early Medieval settlement near the village of Topola 1969 excavation campaign No context of discovery *RMH – Dobrich*		
16	Early Medieval settlement near the village of Topola 1972 excavation campaign Trench I, elevation 0.80 m *No Inv. No.* *RMH – Dobrich*		

* All photos of the thin sections have a field of view = 3980 μm, samples Nos. 2, 3, 7 were taken in cross-polarized light; samples Nos. 4, 5, 6 – in parallel polarized light.

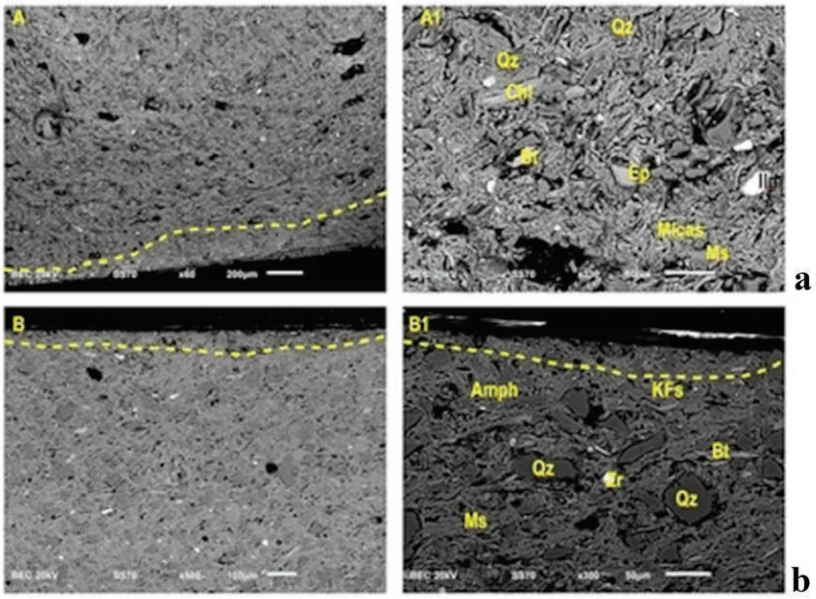


Fig. 7. Backscatter images of the cross-sections of the pottery by scanning electron microscopy with determined mineral phases: a. A/A1. Pot – urn from Grave No. 24 (necropolis near the village of Razdelna); b. B/B1. Pottery sherd from the base of a vessel with refined fabric (Early Medieval settlement near the village of Topola, Cat. No. 12). Abbreviation of the minerals: Qz – quartz; Amph – amphibole; Bt – biotite; Ms – muscovite; Micas; Chl – chlorite; KFs – K-feldspar; Ilm – ilmenite; dotted line – boundary of the layer of fine fraction of the inclusions

Обр. 7. Снимки на напречни разрези на керамичното тяло от сканиращ електронен микроскоп с определени минерални фази: a. A/A1. Гърне – урна от гроб № 24 (некропол при с. Разделна); b. B/B1. Фрагмент от дъно на съд от пречистена глина (ранносредновековно селище при с. Топола, кат. № 12). Означения на определени минерали: Qz – кварц; Amph – амфибол; Bt – биотит; Ms – мусковит; Micas – слюда; Chl – хлорит; KFs – K-фелдшпат; Ilm – илменит; пунктирана линия – граница с пласта от фина фракция на примесите

this should explain the different thickness and depth of the coloring border. The weakly represented X-ray amorphous phase in the sherds from the settlement near the village of Topola (fig. 8b) leads the authors to conclude that most of the pottery sherds belong rather to the second variant, in which the additional use of fresh vegetation in the kiln's fuel had contributed to the coloring of the vessels. For now, it is difficult to answer why in some of the studied materials the X-ray amorphous phase is more readily detectible, as can be seen from the results of the X-ray powder diffraction of the sherds from Graves Nos. 24 and 29 from the necropolis near the village of Razdelna (fig. 8a, c). In any case, it is clear from the analyses performed that no additional layer of clay was registered on the surface of the vessels under consideration. According to this feature, the vessels from the two sites differ from the burnished ceramics from the area of the so-called Saltovo-Mayaki culture, in which the presence of such a layer was identified by V. Flerov[3] (Флёров 1980, 56; Флёров 2000, 111).

Another interesting result that should be noted here, is the presence of an additionally applied layer of diluted clay with a thickness of less than 0.5 mm, that showed no traces of being fired, and that was most likely applied after the firing. This layer was documented on a pottery sherd from the urn in Grave No. 140 from Razdelna (pot of sandy fabric decorated with incised decoration) (Cat. No. 9; fig. 4b, fig. 10). There are no traces of deposits on the surface of the pot as a result of a mineral-forming process due to the fact that it stayed burried in the soil. About 60 similar vessels are known from the necropolis near Razdelna, in which such a coating was applied only on pots of sandy fabric with incised decoration (fig. 11). In most cases, the surface layer is poorly preserved or almost completely destroyed during the cleaning of the vessels and their restoration. No such examples are known in Bulgarian scholarly literature at this stage. In the publication of the medieval settlement in Grindur locality near Antimovo village, Vidin district, it is mentioned that there are vessels of sandy fabric with incised decoration whose outer surface was additionally smoothed with a coating of diluted clay (slip?) (Лалов 2012, 104). Whether and to what extent the two sites can be compared so far is difficult to say.

In conclusion, the following can be resumed:

1. The pottery sherds of both sites have a similar composition of the fabric from which they are made with predominant size of natural inclusions below 0.1 mm. A peculiarity of the pottery from the settlement near the village of Topola is the presence of crushed mussel shells in the fabric. For both sites, in some of the analysed sherds, a limited presence of grog added as temper, was documented.

2. The presented materials from the necropolis at Razdelna can be divided into two groups: first – rich in mineral inclusions (mainly quartz, feldspar and mica) and second – poor or almost free of inclusions. Due to the limited amount of studied pottery sherds, it is difficult to draw more general conclusions regarding the ceramic complex of the necropolis.

3. The studied ceramic artifacts are fired at low – to medium temperature – up to 550 °C for the necropolis near the village of Razdelna and up to 700 °C for the sherds from the settlement near the village of Topola.

4. The sherds from the Early Medieval settlement from Kovanlaka locality near the village of Topola demonstrated higher density of the fabric used and a higher and relatively more uniform firing temperature in comparison with those from Razdelna, thus pointing out to a specialized production.

[3] During his study on burnished pottery from the area of the Saltovo-Mayaki culture, the Russian archaeologist V. Flerov documented the presence of a layer of diluted clay on which the burnishing was applied. The vessels were coated with this diluted clay both on the outside and on the inside (Флёров 1980, 56; Флёров 2000, 111). According to him, this coating should not be confused with the term "slip". Judging by the jugs with trefoil rim (the so-called Baklin type) and amphorae of Crimean origin on the surface of which the slip was laid, he notes that the slip is of insignificant thickness and differs in composition and color from the fabric of the vessel itself. For this coating, he proposes to use the term „слой под лощение" or translated from Russian – "layer under the burnishing". This definition is also accepted by V. V. Mayko (Майко 2020, 44). We do not currently know of any published mineralogical-petrographic or chemical analyses that would help clarifying the nature of the coating in question.

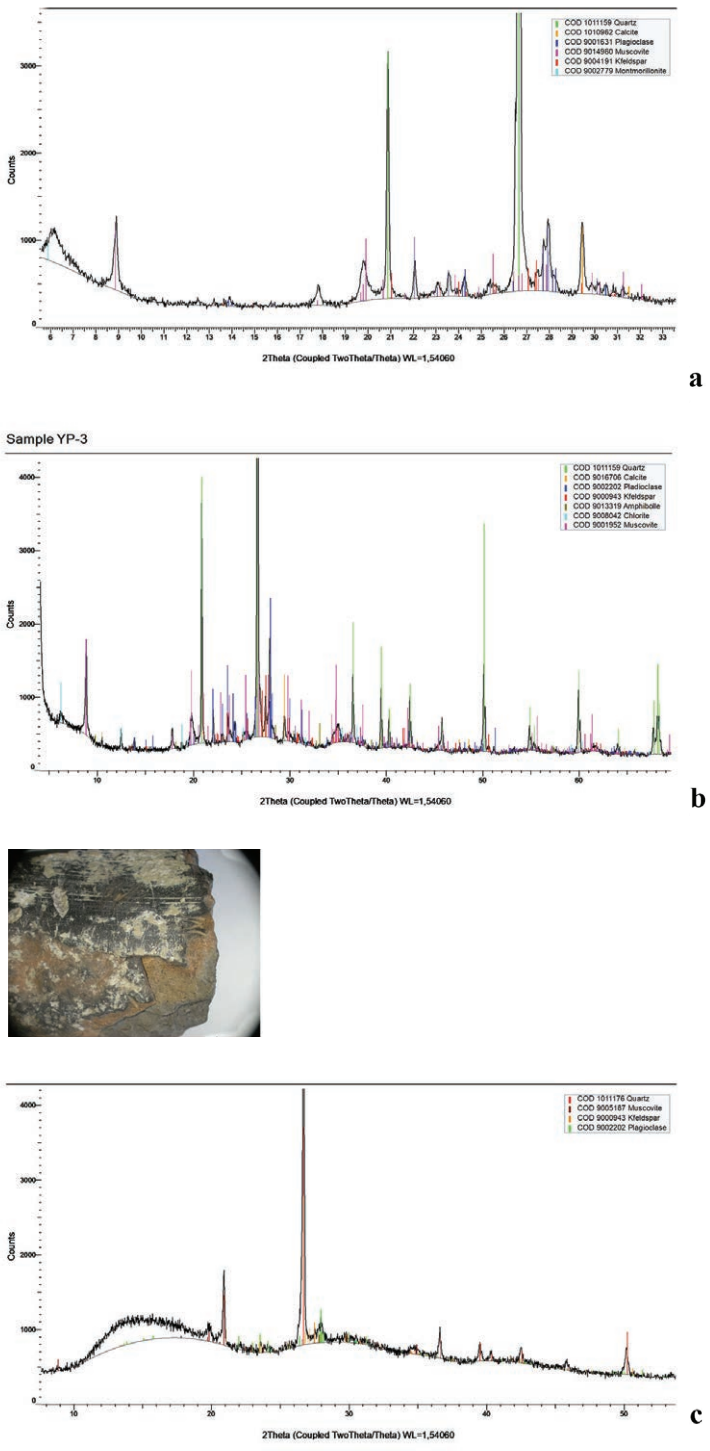


Fig. 8. Representative results of the powder XRD analyses of the pottery sherds: a. Jug – grave offering in Grave No. 29 (necropolis near the village of Razdelna); b. Pottery sherd from the base of a vessel (the Early Medieval settlement near Topola, fig. 5b, Cat. No. 12); c. Pot – urn from Grave No. 24 (necropolis near the village of Razdelna)

Обр. 8. Представителни резултати от прахова рентгенова дифракция на изследвани фрагменти: а. Кана – гробен дар от гроб № 29 (некропол при с. Разделна); b. Фрагмент от дъно на съд (ранносредновековно селище при с. Топола, обр. 5b, кат. № 12); с. Гърне – урна от гроб № 24 (некропол при с. Разделна)

5. In the case of the studied ceramics made of refined fabric with burnished decoration, no additionally applied coating of clay was registered. The finer surface fraction can be explained by the smoothing and burnishing of the vessels, which further grinds the inclusions into smaller fractions. This distinguishes the studied ceramics from the burnished pottery from the area of the so-called Saltovo-Mayaki culture, for which is characteristic the additional application of a coating of diluted clay – the so-called "Layer under the burnishing" (Флёров 1980, 56; Флёров 2000, 111).

6. In the case of some of the ceramic artifacts with refined fabric and burnished decoration, the presence of an X-ray amorphous phase related to the application of an organic substance on the surface or the addition of organics (probably fresh vegetation) to the kiln's fuel was registered. As a result of the firing, performed under reduction mode the vessels attained their characteristic gray, gray-black to pitch-black color.

7. Some of the vessels of sandy fabric and with incised decoration from the necropolis near the village of Razdelna, were coated with diluted clay, which was applied after the firing of the vessel – probably intending to additionally smooth the surface.

The comprehensive study of pottery sherds from the two sites allowed further information to be obtained about their mineral composition, structural features, approximate firing temperature and composition of the surface layer of some of the vessels. The obtained results allow correlation between the two sites regarding the technology of the production of the studied ceramics.

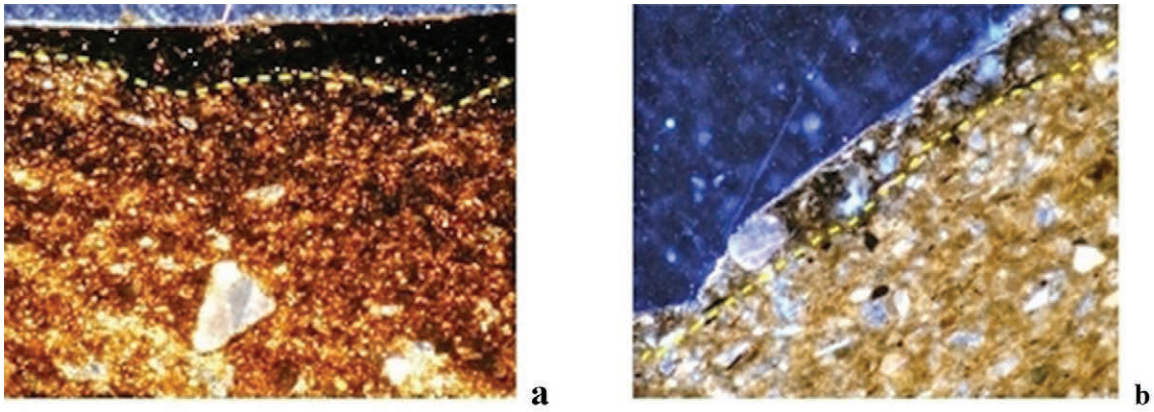


Fig. 9. Microscopic photos of pottery sherds: a. Pot – urn from Grave No. 136 (necropolis near the village of Razdelna); b. Pottery sherd from the base of a vessel (Early Medieval settlement near the village of Topola, fig. 5b, Cat. No. 12)

Обр. 9. Микроскопски снимки на фрагменти: a. Гърне – урна от гроб № 136 (некропол при с. Разделна); b. Фрагмент от дъно на съд (ранносредновековно селище при с. Топола, обр. 5b, кат. № 12)

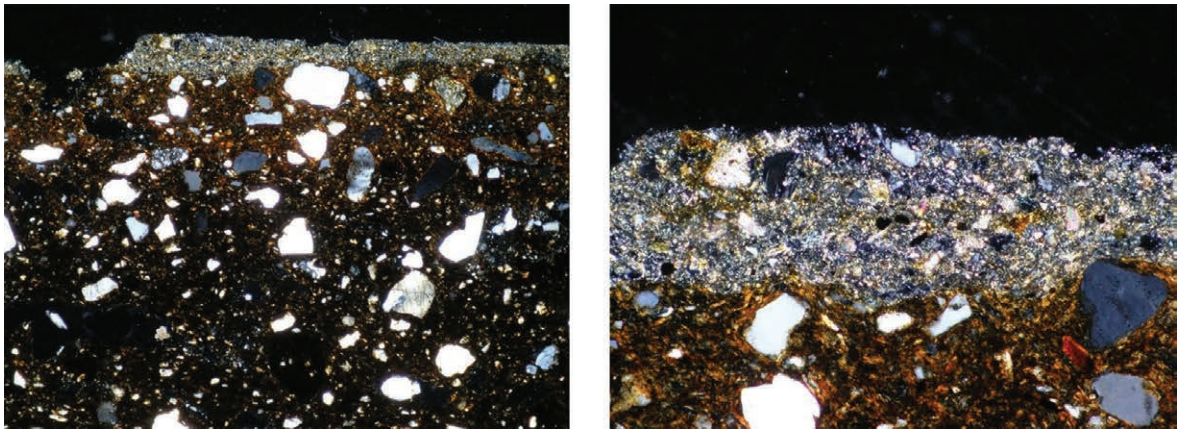


Fig. 10. Microscopic photo of a pottery sherd from a pot from Grave No. 140

Обр. 10. Микроскопска снимка на фрагмент от гърнето от гроб № 140

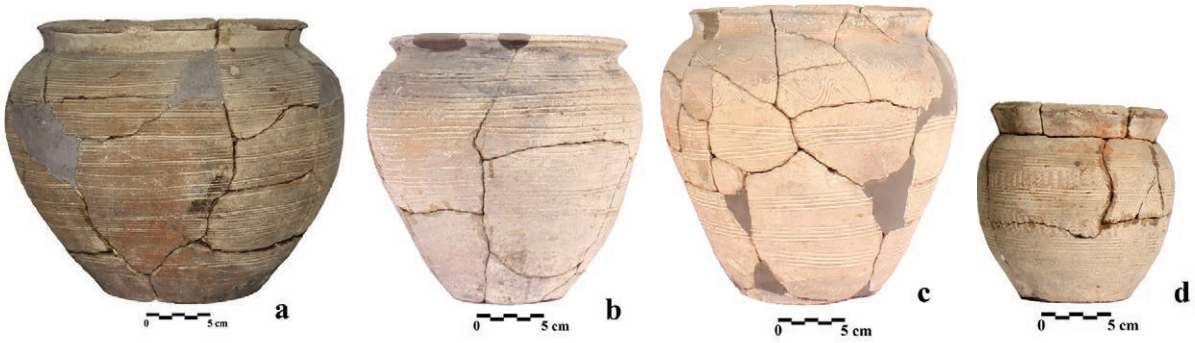


Fig. 11. Examples of vessels from the necropolis near the village of Razdelna with similar coating as the pot from Grave No. 140: a. Grave No. 44 (Inv. No. 817 – RMH – Varna); b. Pot – urn from Grave No. 161 (Inv. No. 909 – RMH – Varna); c. Pot – urn from Grave No. 135 (Inv. No. IV 884 – RMH – Varna); d. Pot – urn from Grave No. 126 (Inv. No. IV 879 – RMH – Varna)

Обр. 11. Примери на съдове от некропола при с. Разделна със сходно покритие като гърнето от гроб № 140: a. Гроб № 44 (инв. № IV 817 – РИМ – Варна); b. Гърне – урна от гроб № 161 (инв. № IV 909 – РИМ – Варна); c. Гърне – урна от гроб № 135 (инв. № IV 884 – РИМ – Варна); d. Гърне – урна от гроб № 126 (инв. № IV 879 – РИМ – Варна)

CATALOGUE

Necropolis near the village of Razdelna
Димитров 1978, 128 – 151; Fiedler 1992, 463 – 485

1. Lower part of a pot – Grave No. 183 (Table 1: 1, fig. 2a)

Pottery sherd from a vessel with refined fabric thrown on a tournette. Sherds from the base and parts of the walls from the same pot have been preserved. The body is most probably globular. The outer surface is orange in color and is covered by oblique burnished strips. A horizontal line is incised bellow them.
No inventory number.
RMH – Varna

- Results from the petrographic analysis (microscopic description):

Matrix: Hydromica mass with brownish-red color in the periphery and central part – dark brown to black in color, optically isotropic.
Proportion of matrix/clasts: ca. 35 – 40 / 55 – 60 %
***Clastic component*:** It is represented only by mineral inclusions with size below 0.1 – 0.2 mm. Single quartz grains reach sizes up to 0.4 mm. They all have an angular shape, which suggests that they were added to the fabric as temper (?). Mica is also present – muscovite, biotite, ore minerals and sporadic grains of feldspar and epidote.
Characteristic features: Fabric rich in quartz inclusions with silt-size that are unevenly distributed in it.

2. Pot – urn from Grave No. 183 (Table 1: 2, fig. 2b)

Sherds of rim, walls and base from the same vessel. Most probably this is the urn from Grave No. 183, described by D. Il. Dimitrov.[4]
The surface is gray-black in color and is covered with vertical burnished stripes. The rim is slightly turned outwards and the lip is rounded.
No inventory number.
RMH – Varna

- Results from the petrographic analysis (microscopic description):

Matrix: Brown-black in color, optically isotropic, cryptocrystalline hydromica mass.
Proportion of matrix/clasts: 60 – 70 / 40 – 30 %
***Clastic component*:** Represented by mineral inclusions of quartz (mainly) and mica – biotite and muscovite and rock quartzite. Quartz inclusions are clearly divided into two fractions – less than 0.1 – 0.05 mm (predominant quantitatively) and 0.2 – 0.4 mm, represented by single grains.
Characteristic features: Presence of a fine fraction of inclusions, which is documented as a layer on the outer periphery of the pottery sherd.

3. Lower part of a pot of refined fabric from Grave No. 185 (Table 1: 3, fig. 2c)

Sherd from the wall of a vessel made from purified fabric from Grave No. 185 (urn placed in a well-built brick-stone chamber). The vessel has no inventory number. From the descriptions in the publication, as well as from the available field documentation, it is clear that the urn in which the human remains were placed (a pot of sandy fabric with incised decoration) was placed in the lower half of a pot of gray purified fabric.
No inventory number.
RMH – Varna

- Results from the petrographic analysis (microscopic description):

Matrix: Cryptocrystalline hydromica mass, optically isotropic, light to dark brown, gray in the central parts of the pottery sherd.
Proportion of matrix/clasts: 45 – 50 / 55 – 60 %
***Clastic component*:** Mineral inclusions of quartz, white and brown mica with subparallel orientation, feldspar (plagioclase with lamellar structure and K-feldspar), epidote, titanite, ore minerals. The size of the inclusions is less than 0.1 mm and sporadic quartz and feldspar grains reach 0.3 – 0.4 mm.

[4] Pottery sherds of two vessels with no inventory numbers were found in the depot of RMH – Varna. The note with which they were found indicates the date of discovery and the number of the grave from which they originated. The pottery sherds have a different fabric, as well as a different color due to firing. The only description given by D. Il. Dimitrov for Grave No. 183 is that there was a highly fragmented urn whose fabric was dark gray in color and refined (Димитров 1978, 147). No additional information was found from the researcher's field diary.

Characteristic features: Pottery rich in mineral inclusions of mica. The presence of fresh feldspars of magmatic rocks, epidote and titanite is also characteristic. Evenly distributed mineral inclusions (tempers?).

4. Pot – urn from Grave No. 24 (Table. 1: 4, fig. 2d)

Only one pottery sherd of the rim has been preserved. According to the publication of D. Il. Dimitrov, there were two urns in the grave – one of sandy fabric and incised decoration, and another – a pot of gray refined fabric decorated with vertical burnished stripes (Димитров 1978, 130). Probably the pottery sherd in question is part of the urn of refined fabric. The rim is short and slightly turned outwards, the lip is rounded.

- Diameter of the rim: 21 cm

Inv. No. IV 798
RMH – Varna

- Results from the petrographic analysis (microscopic description):

Matrix: Light brown in color, fine crystalline hydromica mass.
Proportion of matrix/clasts: 60 / 40 %
***Clastic component*:** Mineral inclusions of quartz, white and brown mica with no distinct orientation, epidote, titanite, ore minerals. The size of the inclusions is below 0.05 mm and sporadic quartz grains reach 0.3 mm.
Characteristic features: Pottery rich in mineral inclusions of quartz and mica. As a composition it is very close to the sherd from Grave No. 185, except for a smaller quantity of feldspars. An even distribution of quartz mineral inclusions, with a pronounced angular shape, most likely used as temper.

5. Jug – used as grave offering in Grave No. 29 (Table 1: 5, fig. 3a)

Biconical body with a high cylindrical neck and trefoil rim. The lip is slightly thickened and rounded. The handle (individual pottery sherds are preserved) has an elliptical cross-section and it is not clear how it was attached to the rim of the jug. The well-refined fabric is of dark gray color after firing. The surface is well-smoothed and is covered with intersecting burnished stripes forming a diamond grid pattern. There are three incised lines immediately below the neck. The decoration is preserved mainly in the upper half of the vessel.

- Height: 18.8 cm
- Diameter of the rim: impossible to be measured
- Diameter of the base: 9 cm
- Maximum diameter: 21.3 cm

Inv. No. IV 804
RMH – Varna

- Results from the petrographic analysis (microscopic description):

Matrix: Light brown to reddish-brown hydromica mass.
Proportion of matrix/clasts: 80 / 20 %
***Clastic component*:** Mineral inclusions of quartz, white and brown mica with no distinct orientation, epidote, ore minerals and grog. The size of the inclusions is less than 0.05 mm and sporadic quartz grains reach 0.2 mm.
Characteristic features: Pottery poor in mineral inclusions of quartz and mica. As a composition it is very close to that of the vessels from Graves Nos. 185 and 24, except for the significantly smaller quantity of mineral inclusions. Distinct presence of two fractions of different size, those below 0.05 mm being predominant. Probably the same source of raw materials was used, but the quantity of temper added is smaller (?).

6. Pot – urn from Grave No. 50 (Table 1: 6, fig. 3b)

Conical body with bulging shoulders. The rim is not preserved. The pot is thrown on a tournette (improved hand propelled wheel) of sandy fabric with brown color after firing. The surface is covered with densely applied horizontal incised lines. Above them, on the shoulders, there are are two bands of wavy lines.

- Height (preserved): 20.7 cm
- Diameter of the base: 10.8 cm
- Maximum diameter (as measured at the shoulders): 27.6 cm

Inv. No. IV 808
RMH – Varna

- Results from the petrographic analysis (microscopic description):

Matrix: Red-brown, cryptocrystalline hydromica mass.
Proportion of matrix/clasts: 60 / 40 %
***Clastic component*:** Mainly quartz, quartz aggregates, feldspars and a limited amount of fine white and brown mica and epidote grains. The presence of quartzites and aggregates of chalcedony type quartz is characteristic.

Characteristic features: This is the coarsest pottery included in the present study, in which the size of the inclusions reaches 1 mm and is also the only one with the presence of inclusions from chalcedony aggregates.

7. Pot – urn from Grave No. 89 (Table 1: 7, fig. 3c)

Spherical body with short neck, curved outwards, and rounded lip at the rim. The surface is well-smoothed and decorated with intersecting burnished stripes forming a grid of diamonds. There is a band of incised lines in the middle part of the vessel. At the base there is a relief sign – a circle with an "X" inscribed in it. The pot is thrown on a tournette. The fabric is refined and turned to dark gray color after firing.

- Height: 14.7 cm
- Diameter of the tim: 13.2 cm
- Diameter of the base: 10.6 cm
- Maximum diameter: 19.2 cm

Inv. No. IV 848
RMH – Varna

- Results from the petrographic analysis (microscopic description):

Matrix: Cryptocrystalline hydromica mass, from dark brown to deep gray in color in the central areas.
Proportion of matrix/clasts: 60 / 40 %
***Clastic component*:** Mineral inclusions of quartz and ore mineral – basic, subordinate presence of mica flakes (muscovite and biotite), epidote, brown-green amphibole, feldspar. The predominant size of the inclusions is below 0.1 and 0.05 mm and single quartz and feldspar grains reach 0.3 – 0.4 mm. There are also single inclusions of quartz aggregates and grog.
Characteristic features: Pottery rich in evenly distributed mineral inclusions of quartz fine with zonation in the color of the matrix (probably the result of different oxygen saturation during firing). Presence of late carbonate deposits.

8. Pot – urn from Grave No. 136 (Table 1: 8, fig. 4a)

Sherds of the rim and walls have been preserved. Spherical body. The rim is funnel-shaped and slightly turned outward, with a high neck ending with a rounded rim. The surface is smoothed, with traces of burnishing in the horizontal direction. Thin horizontal burnished stripes are also visible on the neck. The pot is thrown on a tournette. The fabric is well-refined and has turned to gray-black color after firing.

- Diameter of the rim: 17 cm

Inv. No. IV 885
RMH – Varna

- Results from the petrographic analysis (microscopic description):

Matrix: Brown to reddish-brown cryptocrystalline hydromica mass, optically isotropic.
Proportion of matrix/clasts: 80 / 20 %
***Clastic component*:** Mineral inclusions of quartz, white and brown mica without a distinct orientation, feldspars, ore minerals. The size of the inclusions is below 0.05 mm and sporadic quartz grains reach 0.2 – 0.3 mm, and single up to 2 mm.
***Characteristic features*:** Pottery poor in mineral inclusions of quartz and mica. As a structure it is very close to that of the jug from Grave No. 29 (Inv. No. IV 804 – RMH – Varna). Distinct presence of two fractions of different size, those below 0.05 mm are predominant.

9. Pot – urn from Grave No. 140 (Table 1: 9, fig. 4b)

Only part of the walls and the base are preserved. Ovoid body. There is a relief sign on the base of the vessel – a circle, as well as traces of sand grains. The entire surface of the vessel is decorated with horizontal incised lines applied with a comb tool. The sandy fabric has turned to ocher-red color after firing.

- Height (preserved): 16.2 cm
- Diameter of the base: 11.3 cm
- Maximum diameter: 19.8 cm

Inv. No. IV 888
RMH – Varna

- Results from the petrographic analysis (microscopic description):

Matrix: Pale brownish, reddish-brown to black, cryptocrystalline hydromica mass, optically isotropic.
Proportion of matrix/clasts: 60 / 40 %
***Clastic component*:** Mainly mineral inclusions of angular quartz grains, feldspar grains (plagioclase and microcline), fine flakes of fine white and brown mica and epidote grains. There are also rock inclusions of quartzite and grog. It is similar in composition to the pot from Grave No. 50 (Cat. No. 6). The size of the inclusions vary from 1 – 1.5 mm to 0.1 mm.

Characteristic features: This is the only studied artifact with a well-defined subparallel order of the inclusions, the result of its production. The outer surface of the artifact is covered with a layer of diluted clay with the same composition as the main body, but is colorless and there are signs that it was not subjected to heating (fig. 10).

10. Pot – urn from Grave No. 142 (Table 1: 10, fig. 4c)

Spherical body. The rim is not preserved. The surface is smoothed and covered with sloping burnished stripes. At the lower part of the vessel, there is a single horizontal incised line at ca. 8 cm from the base. The fabric is well-refined with gray color after firing.

- Height: 22.6 cm
- Diameter of the base: 11.5 cm
- Maximum diameter: 27 cm

Inv. No. 891
RMH – Varna

- Results from the petrographic analysis (microscopic description):

Matrix: Brown to reddish-brown cryptocrystalline hydromica mass, optically isotropic.
Proportion of matrix/clasts: 80 / 20 %
***Clastic component*:** Mineral inclusions of quartz, white and brown mica with no distinct orientation, feldspars, epidote, titanite, ore minerals, single grains of amphibole and grog. The size of the inclusions is below 0.05 mm and sporadic quartz grains reach 0.2 – 0.3 mm.
***Characteristic features*:** Pottery poor in mineral inclusions of quartz and mica. As a composition and manufacturing technology it is very close to the jug from Grave No. 29 (Cat. No. 5) and the pot used as an urn from Grave No. 136 (Cat. No. 8). Quartz mineral inclusions with dimensions below 0.05 mm are predominant.

Early Medieval settlement near the village of Topola, Kavarna municipality
The items are from the Research and Secondary Depot of RMH – Dobrich.[5]

11. Pottery sherd from the rim of a pot of refined fabric – 1982 excavation campaign, Grid sq. 13, elevation 0.40 m (Table 2: 1, fig. 5a)

The rim is slightly thickened and rounded. The neck is short and cylindrical. The fabric is refined, turned to gray color after firing. The surface is smoothed and covered with sloping burnished stripes that start just below the neck. Above them, i.e. on the neck – there are traces of horizontal burnished stripes.

- Diameter of the rim: 21 cm
- Results from the petrographic analysis (microscopic description):

Matrix: Black in color cryptocrystalline hydromica mass, optically isotropic central part and peripheral – pale brown with a sharp border between the areas.
Proportion of matrix/clasts: 50 / 50 %
***Clastic component*:** Represented by mineral inclusions of quartz (mainly) and mica – biotite and muscovite, epidote, tourmaline, amphibole and a distinct presence of inclusions of micritic limestone and pieces of bivalves (mussels). All inclusions are less than 0.01 mm in size.
Characteristic features: Presence of distinct areas with a sharp border between them. Presence of limestone and pieces of bivalve shells.

12. Pottery sherd from the base of a vessel of refined fabric – 1982 excavation campaign, Grid sq. 2, elevation 0.80 m (Table 2: 2, fig. 5b)

The surface is black, well-smoothed; with traces of burnishing in the horizontal direction (this is best noticeable just above the base). The decoration consists of sloping burnished stripes, and in places there is a criss-crossing of the stripes (a grid of rhombuses?). The base is flat with traces of sand lining. On the inside there are traces of smoothing with a textile in the vertical direction.

- Diameter of the base: 13 cm
- Results from the petrographic analysis (microscopic description):

Matrix: Cryptocrystalline hydromica mass, optically isotropic, with three differently colored area (central – black, intermediate – brown, outer – red).
Proportion of matrix/clasts: 55 – 60 / 45 – 40 %

[5] Information about the context in which the pottery sherds were discovered is available only on the museum tags. The information comprises only the year of the excavation campaign, the location in relation to the grid-square plan and the approximate elevation measured from the modern ground level.

***Clastic component*:** Mineral inclusions of quartz, white and brown mica with subparallel orientation, feldspars, epidote, amphibole, titanite, ore minerals and many pieces of micrite limestone and mussel shells. The size of the inclusions is less than 0.01 mm and sporadic limestone pieces and pieces of shells reach 0.05 – 0.1 mm. Single inclusions of grog are also observed.
Characteristic features: Pottery rich in mineral inclusions of quartz, mica and carbonate. The mineral inclusions (temper?) are evenly distributed. The areas of different color resulted probably of the firing conditions.

13. Pottery sherd from the base of a vessel with refined fabric – 1982 excavation campaign, Grid sq. Y, elevation 0.60 m (Table 2: 3, fig. 5c)

The walls at the base are rounded. The surface is dark gray in color and burnished. Lighter color areas are observed as a result of the uneven firing environment. The walls are decorated with oblique burnished stripes.

- Diameter of the base: 18 cm
- Results from the petrographic analysis (microscopic description):

The composition and the characteristic features are similar to those of sherd No. 12 (Cat. No. 12).
Matrix: Cryptocrystalline hydromica mass, optically isotropic, with three differently colored areas (central – black, intermediate – brown, outer – red).
Proportion of matrix/clasts: 55 – 60 / 45 – 40 %
***Clastic component*:** Mineral inclusions of quartz, white and brown mica with subparallel orientation, feldspars, epidote, amphibole, titanite, ore minerals and pieces of limestone. The size of the inclusions is below 0.01 mm.
Characteristic features: Pottery rich in mineral inclusions of quartz, mica and carbonate. The mineral inclusions (temper?) are evenly distributed. The areas of different color resulted probably of the firing conditions. Unlike the pottery sherd from the rim of a pot with refined fabric (Cat. No. 14), mussel shells and grog were not used as tempers.

14. Pottery sherd from the rim of a pot with refined fabric – 1982 campaign, Grid sq. 14, elevation 0.60 m (Table 2: 4, fig. 5d)

Rim slightly curved outwards. The lip is slightly thickened and rounded. The surface is gray-black in color and burnished in a horizontal direction. On the inside of the rim, the horizontal traces from the throwing on a potter's wheel are clearly visible.

- Diameter of the rim: 23 cm
- Results from the petrographic analysis (microscopic description):

Matrix: Light brown to reddish-brown hydromica mass.
Proportion of matrix/clasts: 80 / 20 %
***Clastic component*:** Mineral inclusions of quartz, feldspar, white and brown mica with no distinct orientation, ore minerals (highly oxidized) and rock pieces of quartzite and limestone. The size of the inclusions strongly varies from 2.5 mm to less than 0.05 mm and sporadic quartz grains reach 0.02 mm.
Characteristic features: Differs from the previous samples in composition and structure. Distinct presence of two fractions of different size, those below 0.05 mm are predominant. From the inclusions of the larger fraction there are isometric in shape crystals of feldspars as well as ones with strongly rounded contours.

15. Pottery sherd from the base of a pot with refined fabric – 1969 excavation campaign. No context of discovery available. (Table 2: 5, fig. 6a)

The walls towards the base are rounded. The surface is burnished, with a gray-beige color. In some places there are areas with a lighter color, which are the result of the uneven firing conditions. There is a relief sign on the base – two concentric circles, as well as traces of sand lining. On the inside of the vessel, on the base and on the walls, there are traces of the rotation of the potter's wheel, which are interrupted in places.

- Diameter of the base: 11 cm
- Results from the petrographic analysis (microscopic description):

Matrix: Red-brown to black-brown in color, cryptocrystalline hydromica mass.
Proportion of matrix/clasts: ca. 35 – 40 / 65 – 60 %
***Clastic component*:** It is represented only by mineral inclusions with size below 0.01 mm, mainly of quartz, white mica, biotite and ore grains. Single quartz grains up to 0.2 mm in size are present. Along with these minerals, sporadic grains of feldspar, epidote, amphibole, and tourmaline are also documented.
Characteristic features: Extremely fine pottery, rich in quartz inclusions with silt to pelite size. They are evenly distributed, with no distinct orientation. The observed areas of different color are most likely the result of the oxidation conditions under which it was fired.

16. Entirely preserved profile of a bowl – 1972 campaign, Trench I, elevation 0.80 m (Table 2: 6, fig. 6b)

The bowl has a short and wide body, with high and rounded shoulders and walls tapering to the base. The vessel has a

narrow short neck, with a wide rim with a comma-shaped curved and thickened lip. There are traces of sand lining on the base. Traces of slow rotation can be seen on the inside. The surface is gray-beige in color, with traces of burnishing in the horizontal direction.

- Diameter of the rim: 18.8 cm
- Diameter of the base: 14 cm
- Height: 6.7 cm
- Maximum diameter: 21.6 cm
- Results from the petrographic analysis (microscopic description):

In composition and characteristics it is similar to pottery sherds Nos. 13 and 14 (Cat. Nos. 13, 14).
Matrix: Cryptocrystalline hydromica mass, optically isotropic, with differently colored areas (central – red-brown, outer – red).
Proportion of matrix/clasts: 55 – 60 / 45 – 40 %
***Clastic component*:** Mineral inclusions of quartz, white and brown mica with no distinct orientation, feldspars, epidote, amphibole, ore minerals and very rare pieces of limestone. The size of the inclusions is below 0.01 mm.
Characteristic features: Pottery rich in mineral inclusions of quartz and mica. The mineral inclusions (tempers?) are evenly distributed. The areas of different color resulted probably of the application of a hematite component.

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СРАВНИТЕЛНО МИНЕРАЛОГО-ПЕТРОГРАФСКО ИЗСЛЕДВАНЕ НА КЕРАМИКА ОТ РАННОСРЕДНОВЕКОВНИЯ НЕКРОПОЛ С ТРУПОИЗГАРЯНЕ ПРИ С. РАЗДЕЛНА, ОБЩ. БЕЛОСЛАВ И РАННОСРЕДНОВЕКОВНОТО СЕЛИЩЕ ПРИ С. ТОПОЛА (М. КОВАНЛЪКА), ОБЩ. КАВАРНА

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РЕЗЮМЕ

Настоящата статия представя резултати от проведено комплексно минералого-петрографско изследване на керамични фрагменти от 16 съда: десет от ранносредновековния некропол с трупоизгаряне при с. Разделна, Варненско и шест фрагмента от ранносредновековното селище при с. Топола, общ. Каварна. Тези резултати позволиха извършване на корелация между двата обекта относно технологията при изработването на изследваната керамика.

Приложените методи в представеното изследване включват: петрографски анализи за характеризиране на микроструктурата на керамичното тяло, определяне състава на природните включения (минерали и скали) и добавени опостнители, тяхното количествено присъствие, наличие на пукнатини и каверни, третиране на външна или вътрешна повърхност на керамичното тяло; прахова рентгенова дифракция (XRD), приложена с цел установяване на кристални минерални фази, които са неопределими оптически, а присъствието на някои от тях подпомага определяне на температурния интервал на изпичане на керамичния материал; електронна микроскопия (SEM-EDX) за определяне на структурата на керамиката, химичен и минерален състав и разпределението му в керамичното тяло.

Керамичните съдове от двата обекта имат сходен състав на глината, от която са изработени, с преобладаващи размери на природните включения под 0,1 мм. При част от фрагментите от двата обекта се регистрира ограничено присъствие на шамот, добавян като опостнител.

Изследваните образци от некропола при с. Разделна се делят основно на две групи според състава

на глината: първа – богата на минерални включения (основно кварц, фелдшпати и слюди) (Кат. № 1, 3, 4, 7, 9) и втора – бедна или почти несъдържаща включения (Кат. № 2, 5, 8, 10).

Изследваните фрагменти от селището в м. Кованлъка при с. Топола са с близък състав на глината и сходни технологични особености. Изследваната група от фрагменти е изградена от хидрослюдена по състав основна маса с вариращ цвят – кафяво-червен, светло до тъмно-кафяв, черен и оптически е изотропна. Включенията са представени от минералите: кварц (основно), бяла и кафява слюда, рудни зърна (илменит, титаномагнетит), фелдшпати, епидот, амфибол, турмалин, циркон. Размерите на повечето от тях са под 0,01 до 0,005 мм. Особеност в състава на глината при някои от образците е наличието на стрити черупки от миди. Съдовете се характеризират с по-висока плътност на глинестия материал, използван за изработката им, и по-висока и сравнително по-равномерна температура на изпичане в сравнение с материалите от Разделна, което предполага по-специализирано производство.

По регистрирания глинест минерал монтморилонит при съдовете от некропола при с. Разделна можем да предположим, че температурата на изпичане при направата им не надвишава 550 °C. В керамиката от селището при с. Топола не се регистрира глинест минерал, което предполага по-висока температура, но масовото присъствие на карбонатни фази в нея предполага температура на изпичане не по-висока от 700 – 750 °C.

Установен бе характерът на външната, а при някои образци и вътрешна повърхност на съдовете от пречистена глина с излъскана украса, която наподобява допълнително нанесен слой от разводнена глина. От направените изследвания стана ясно, че по повърхността се регистрира по-фина фракция от примеси, която по-скоро може да се обясни с допълнителното оглаждане и излъскване на съдовете.

При част от керамичните съдове от пречистена глина с излъскана украса е регистрирано наличието на рентгено-аморфна фаза, свързана с нанасянето на органика по повърхността или с добавяне на органичен материал (вероятно свежа растителност) в горивото на пещта, който при редукционен режим на изпичане придава на съдовете характерния сив, сиво-черен до катраненочерен цвят.

При един от изследваните образци от некропола при с. Разделна – гърне изработено от песъчлива глина с врязана украса (Кат. № 9, обр. 10), се регистрира нанесен след изпичането на съда слой от разводнена глина. Това покритие е със същия състав като основното тяло, но без белези на термична обработка. Съдовете с подобно покритие от некропола при с. Разделна са поне 60 (гърнета от песъчлива глина с врязана украса), но поради лошата степен на запазеност на този слой, техният точен брой трудно може да се установи.

Ключови думи: Ранно средновековие, керамика, минералого-петрографско изследване

THE WESTERN FORTRESS WALL OF THE INNER CITY OF VELIKI PRESLAV IN LIGHT OF CONTEMPORARY STUDIES

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ABSTRACT

This paper is a new attempt to shed more light on the problem posed by the only section of the fortification system of the inner fortress of Veliki Preslav that is still completely unknown. In 2011 a remote survey using aero-LiDAR enabled the team to make digital 3D surface (DSM) and terrain (DTM) models that reliably traced both the route of the unknown sections of the western wall of the inner fortress and revealed the existence of some elements of it, which until now were unknown such as the southwestern corner tower of the fortification and its western gate. The high-contrast images generated show perfectly that the western fortress wall is founded on the periphery of the fourth/underneath the fifth terrace of the Zabui hill. Finally, the absence of any indications of the presence of intermediate towers on the front of the *curtina* – not only on the early wall, but also in its northern extension (expansion) – should be noted.

Keywords: Veliki Preslav, fortification, LiDAR

The fortification system of Veliki Preslav has attracted the attention of several generations of both foreign and Bulgarian scholars. This attention is completely logical, not only due to the fact that it is one of the largest-scale and grandest (in terms of length and construction) fortification structures for its time in Europe, but also because of its topographic specifics – covering a terrain which is extremely diverse in relief and features. At the same time, these circumstances cause a number of serious difficulties, mainly of a practical nature, and have turned out to be a true challenge for researchers.

This paper is a new attempt to shed more light on the problem posed by the only section of the fortification system of the inner fortress of the second Bulgarian capital that is still completely unknown. To date, we have no reliable archaeological data, nor sufficiently satisfactory (nor convincing) answers, to the questions about its main parameters – location, specific route and length, or the presence of potential fortification components relating to it, such as gates, towers, etc. The reasons for this are both the lack of targeted and large-scale field surveys and excavations, and the lack of any accidental uncovering or identifying of its remains during the excavation of sites in the western half of the Inner City. A number of plans and schemes have been published over the years (fig. 1: 1), different assumptions have been made about its location, but to date they are all based on unconfirmed, often free, interpretations which remain hypothetical.

In the first plan of the city, developed by K. Škorpil in the period 1887 – 1905, and officially published in 1914, the relief of the area was represented approximately – the Inner City, the badly visible southern half of the western wall and the whole of the southern one (represented with a

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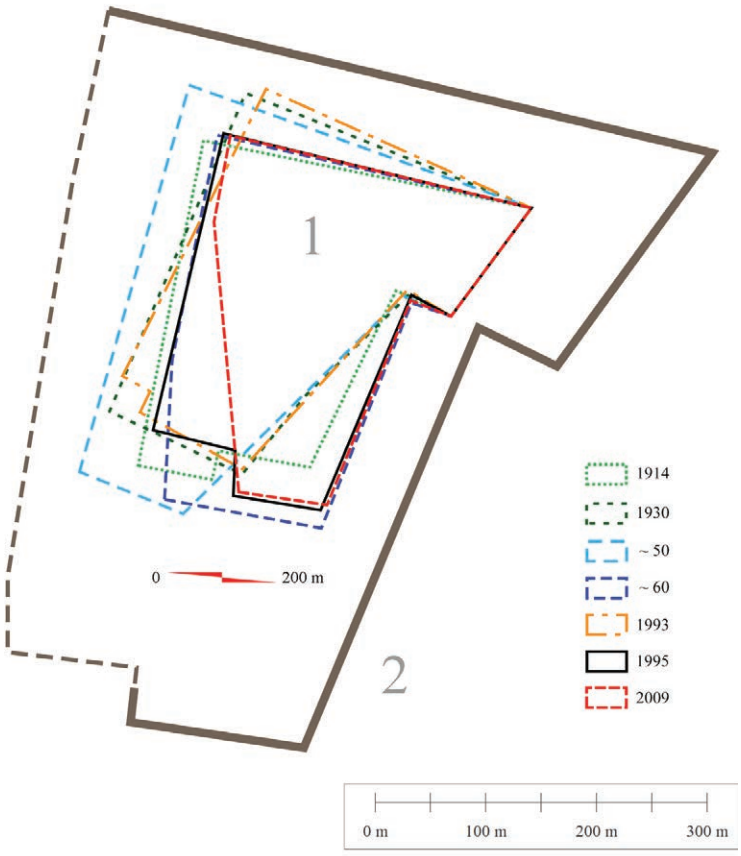


Fig. 1: 1. Comparison of most of the published plans of the Inner City (their scale and orientation are correlated according to the construction of the eastern fortress wall of the extension of the Inner City which is clearly visible on the surface and fully preserved in length; 2. The outlines of the Inner City as a result of the three-dimensional DSM and DTM made

Обр. 1: 1. Съпоставка на повечето от влезлите в научно обращение планове на Вътрешния град (мащабът и ориентацията им са корелирани според добре видимия на повърхността и напълно запазен в дължина градеж на източната крепостна стена на разширението на Вътрешния град); 2. Очертанията на Вътрешния град в резултат на направените триизмерни DSM и DTM

single broken line) are situated at the foot of the first (from east to west) terrace of the Zabui hill and, according to the height lines, seem to be located on a plain terrain (Шкорпил 1914, обр. 93). It is interesting that at the southern *curtina*, a "bend" from the south, has been assumed to be a near "mirror-image" of the one we know about today, and it does not "recede" to the north, but "expands" the fortification to the south. In the significantly revised 1930 version, the location of the inner fortress relative to the landscape was corrected, and the route of the western wall passes (in double broken line) along the fourth (again from east to west) main terrace of the hill (Шкорпил 1930, табл. I). A significant change was also made at the southern wall, whose initial "bend" was "removed" and replaced by an entirely straight line. This "survey" remains valid and has been preserved in publications at the beginning of the 21st c., although quite a large number of other versions appeared after it, more or less schematic (Рашев 1982, табл. LIV/2), and sometimes entirely formal or focusing mainly on the architectural remains uncovered during archaeological excavations (Мавродинов 1959, 136 – 137, обр. 131; Ваклинов 1977, 181).

In 1993, R. Rashev, on reviewing the results of the field surveys he carried out in the reserve, rehabilitated the idea of a "bend" in the southwestern part of the inner fortress. The outlines of the two fortification rings presented then more or less repeat the accurate and precise calculations of K. Škorpil, according to which its southern half (the territory of the former *aul*) has the shape of a trapeze, elongated along the north – south axis. The only difference is that a small, almost symbolic "bend" was added in its southwestern corner, whose position was developed to the most logical (with view of the terrain relief) direction – north (Рашев 1993, 49 – 55, обр. 1). This solution was continued and confirmed in the two main plans of the second capital published in "Materials on the Map of the Medieval Bulgarian State – the Territory of Present-day Northeast Bulgaria" (Бонев 1995, 175 – 189). An especially interesting fact is that in it, the individually presented and relatively detailed drawing of the Inner City (Бонев 1995, 177) is completely different from the same

one presented within the outer fortress (Бонев 1995, 181). The serious discrepancies observed are obviously due to the parallel use of two plans which were close in time, but very different in layout. While the general one is based on the sketch by R. Rashev mentioned above, a new sketch is put forward for the fortification in the detailed plan, with relatively proportionate, almost square proportions, and a significantly longer southern wall divided into two equally long parts by a "bend".

A newer study of the subject (carried out in relation to an attempt for GPS-mapping of the inner fortification) makes the supposition that the wall in question connects the southwestern and northeastern corners of the fortification in a straight line (Аладжов 2009, 159 – 162, обр. 1). Such a direct connection, however, is impossible for two main reasons. The first one is that if its route follows steadily the orientation of the actual construction with a length of 20 m, which has already been uncovered to the north of the southwestern corner tower, then, first, it would appear in a number of plots which have been excavated to present date, where we know for certain it is absent (Балабанов и др. 2010, 461 – 464, обр. 2; Балабанов, Славов 2012, 396 – 398, обр. 2; Бонев, Георгиева 2017, 545 – 548, обр. 1; Ваклинова, Щерева 1995, 81 – 91, обр. 2), and second, without a significant correction in the direction, it would pass a few dozen meters east of the early northwestern corner tower. A serious, but not insurmountable, challenge is also presented by the configuration of the terrain in this section, which does not allow the thus suggested direct route, due to the need for a gradual "transition" between the different levels of the terraces where the western and southern walls are situated. With view of the above, the possibility for the existence

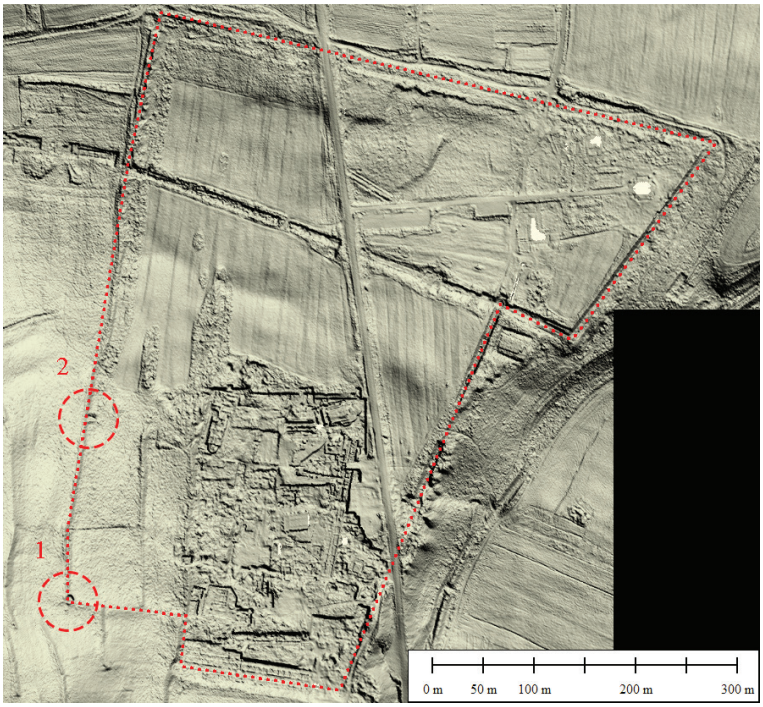


Fig. 2. Topographic situation of the western fortress wall of the Inner City (plan view): 1. Southwestern corner tower; 2. Western Gate

Обр. 2. Топографска ситуация на западната крепостна стена на Вътрешния град (изглед в план): 1. Югозападна ъглова кула; 2. Западна порта

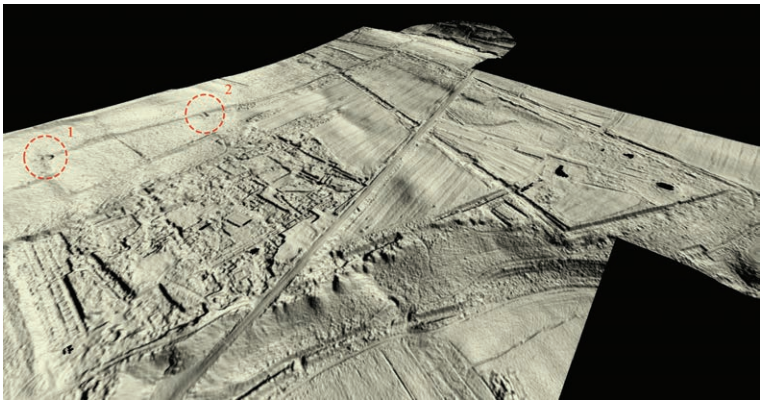


Fig. 3. Topographic situation of the western fortress wall of the Inner City (view to the Northwest): 1. Southwestern corner tower; 2. Western Gate

Обр. 3. Топографска ситуация на западната крепостна стена на Вътрешния град (поглед на северозапад): 1. Югозападна ъглова кула; 2. Западна порта

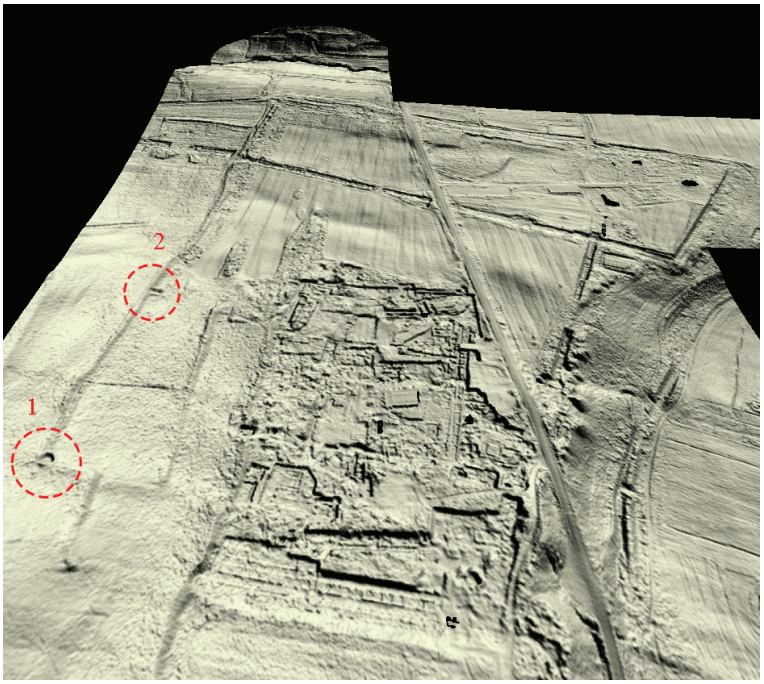


Fig. 4. Topographic situation of the western fortress wall of the Inner City (view to the North): 1. Southwestern corner tower; 2. Western Gate

Обр. 4. Топографска ситуация на западната крепостна стена на Вътрешния град (поглед на север): 1. Югозападна ъглова кула; 2. Западна порта

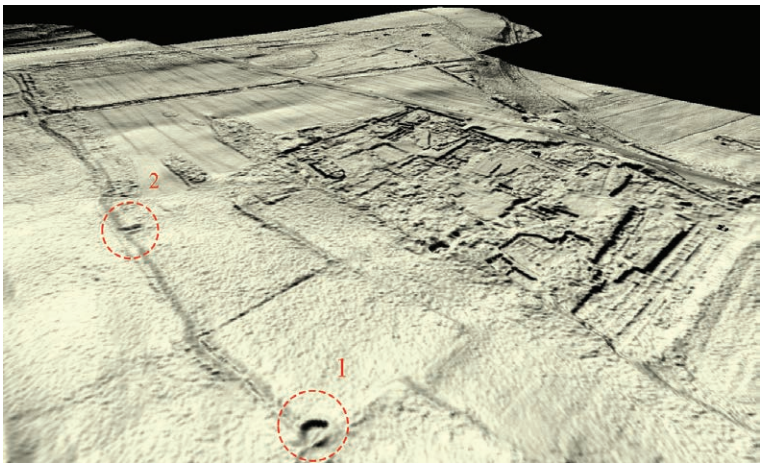


Fig. 5. Topographic situation of the western fortress wall of the Inner City (view to the Northeast): 1. Southwestern corner tower; 2. Western Gate

Обр. 5. Топографска ситуация на западната крепостна стена на Вътрешния град (поглед на североизток): 1. Югозападна ъглова кула; 2. Западна порта

of a "bend" connecting the two routes remains the only acceptable engineering solution, and the most probable interpretation of the development and implementation (Рашев 1990, 71) of this key point of the fortifications in the southwestern end of the *aul*, at least until this is clarified archaeologically.

In the period 2009 – 2011, for the purposes of the project (under OP "Regional Development" 2007 – 2013) of Veliki Preslav Municipality, "The Age of Tsar Simeon Comes to Life", the last (for now) complex geodesic mapping of the terrain and the uncovered and conserved archaeological artefacts was carried out.[1] Quite understandably, it included only the clearly visible and reliably traceable constructions on the surface, and the border strip of low vegetation along the eastern periphery of the terrace along which the wall also passes, is relatively outlined.

At present, only part of the eastern end of this terrace is marked on the public large-scale topographic maps in the National Cadastral Map of Bulgaria available at the Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre Agency (LSTM 1:5000 – https://kais.cadastre.bg) and MRDPW (LSTM 7-18 and LSTM 1:50000 – http://gis.mrrb.government.bg/).

A phased remote survey of the Inner City of Veliki Preslav was performed in 2011, as part of the scientific project at the Bulgarian National Science Fund (BNSF) – "Old Bulgarian Capitals and Their Surroundings", using

[1] I would like to thank eng. A. Kamenov and architect V. Pandzharova for the information.

aero-LiDAR[2] (Blom company). The resulting digital 3D surface (DSM)[3] and terrain (DTM) models[4] reliably traced both the route of the unknown sections of the western wall of the inner fortress and the existence of some elements of it, which until now were only assumed but not confirmed. The southwestern corner tower of the fortification (fig. 2: 1, fig. 3: 1, fig. 4: 1, fig. 5: 1) and its western gate (fig. 2: 2, fig. 3: 2, fig. 4: 2, fig. 5: 2), which were unknown until now, were located. The high-contrast images generated show perfectly that the western fortress wall is founded on the periphery of the fourth/underneath the fifth terrace of the Zabui hill. Thus measured, the length of its initial (southern) section amounts to ~ 430 m, and the sections of the (already) indisputably established southwestern "bend" have the following lengths: 1) North – South ~ 50 m; 2) East – West ~ 115 m. To the west, the latter ends with a massive round corner tower, with a diameter of ~ 8.50 – 9.50 m, completely analogous to the other six discovered so far. Approximately 180 m (along the line of the wall), north of it, there is a large, obviously main (western) gate – at this stage it cannot be said with certainty whether it is of the typical "Pliska – Preslav" type, or a simpler one – e.g., inner "double-winged." Its dimensions of about 12 x 12 m point rather to the first assumption, possibly in a smaller or abbreviated version. Finally, the absence of any indications of the presence of intermediate towers on the front of the *curtina* – not only on the early wall, but also in its northern extension (expansion) – should be noted. The first fact is entirely logical and to be expected, in view of our knowledge about the fortification plan of the *aul*, while the second is somewhat surprising. In conclusion, we can say that the new data obtained undoubtedly shed light on a number of unclear and contradictory issues that have accumulated over the years regarding this extremely important topic. They also demonstrate, once again, not only the need for and advantages of, using modern information technologies and non-destructive geophysical methods, but also their impressive potential for solving certain problems in archaeology and, most of all, for acquiring primary and basic information about large sites and areas. This is especially valid in cases where large-scale and long-term archaeological studies are definitely unrealistic on the one hand, due to their dependence on serious and regular financing and decades of field work, and so not to be recommended, while on the other hand the impossibility of carrying out expedient and high-quality conservation and protection of the entirely uncovered large constructions (like this one) dooms them to certain destruction. Nevertheless, archaeological excavations will remain (at least for the foreseeable future) indispensable as the only reliable means of obtaining, albeit limited, but almost always sufficiently representative samples of the overall picture, providing detailed information on the characteristics of documented structures – their construction, masonry and most of all – their chronology. Therefore, we must emphasize that only additional and targeted sampling surveys could provide detailed and satisfactory answers if not to all, to most of the important questions related to the fortification system of the second Bulgarian capital.

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[2] Light Detection and Ranging.

[3] Digital Surface Model.

[4] Digital Terrain Model.

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ЗАПАДНАТА КРЕПОСТНА СТЕНА НА ВЪТРЕШНИЯ ГРАД НА ВЕЛИКИ ПРЕСЛАВ В СВЕТЛИНАТА НА СЪВРЕМЕННИТЕ ПРОУЧВАНИЯ

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РЕЗЮМЕ

Укрепителната система на Велики Преслав привлича вниманието на няколко поколения чужди и български учени. Интерес, който е напълно закономерен и се дължи не само на факта, че тя се явява едно от най-мащабните и грандиозни (като дължина и градеж) фортификационни съоръжения за времето си в Европа, а и не само там, но и топографските ѝ специфики – обхваща изключително разнообразен като релеф и особености терен. Същевременно тези обстоятелства предпоставят редица сериозни трудности, най-вече от практическо естество, и се оказват истинско предизвикателство за изследователите ѝ.

Настоящата статия е нов опит да се хвърли допълнителна яснота върху проблема за единствения останал все още напълно неизвестен участък от укрепителната система на вътрешната крепост

на втората българска столица. До момента не разполагаме със сигурни археологически данни и съответно достатъчно задоволителни (и убедителни) отговори на въпросите относно нейните основни параметри – местоположение, конкретно трасе и протежение, а също така и за наличието на възможни фортификационни елементи към нея, като порти, кули и др. Причини за това са както отсъствието на целенасочени и мащабни теренни издирвания и проучвания в тази посока, така и липсата на каквито и да е случайни регистрации на останките ѝ при разкопките на обекти в западната половина на Вътрешния град. През годините са обнародвани множество планове и схеми (обр. 1: 1), изказвани са различни предположения за локализацията ѝ, но и до днес всички те са плод на непотвърдени, често свободни тълкувания и остават силно хипотетични.

През 2011 г., в рамките на научния проект към ФНИ „Старите български столици и техните околности", бе извършено поетапно дистанционно сканиране на Вътрешния град на Велики Преслав посредством аеро-LiDAR (фирма "Blom"). Създадените в резултат цифрови 3D модели на повърхността (DSM) и на терена (DTM) достоверно очертаха както трасето на неизвестните до момента участъци от западната стена на вътрешната крепост, така и съществуването на някои досега само предполагаеми и непотвърдени елементи от нея. С висока степен на сигурност бяха локализирани неизвестните до момента крайна югозападна ъглова кула на укреплението (обр. 2: 1, обр. 3: 1, обр. 4: 1, обр. 5: 1) и западната му порта (обр. 2: 2, обр. 3: 2, обр. 4: 2, обр. 5: 2). Генерираните висококонтрастни изображения отлично показват, че западният крепостен зид е фундиран в периферията на четвъртата/„подножието" на петата тераса на „Зъбуите". Така измерено протежението на първоначалния му (южен) участък възлиза на ~ 430 м, а отсечките на (вече) безспорно установената югозападна „чупка" имат следните дължини: 1) север – юг ~ 50 м; 2) изток – запад ~ 115 м. На запад последната завършва с масивна кръгла ъглова кула, с диаметър ~ 8,50 – 9,50 м, напълно аналогична на разкритите до момента шест такива. На приблизително 180 м (по линията на зида) северно от нея се очертава и една голяма, очевидно главна (западна) порта, за която на този етап не може със сигурност да се каже дали е от характерния „плисковско-преславски" тип или от по-опростен такъв – напр. вътрешна двукрила. Размерите ѝ от около 12 х 12 м насочват по-скоро към първото предположение, възможно в по-малък или съкратен вариант. Накрая трябва да се отбележи и липсата на каквито и да било индикации за наличието на междинни кули по фронта на куртината – не само на ранната стена, но и при северното ѝ продължение/разширение.

Независимо от големите възможности и предимства на ГИС технологиите, археологическите разкопки остават (поне в обозримо бъдеще) незаменими като единственото надеждно средство за добиване на макар и ограничена, но почти винаги достатъчно представителна извадка за общата картина, предоставяща детайлна информация за характеристиките на регистрираните структури – тяхната конструкция, градеж и най-вече хронология. Затова трябва да подчертаем, че само допълнителни и целенасочени сондажни проучвания биха могли да дадат подробни и задоволителни отговори ако не на всички, то на повечето от най-важните въпроси, свързани с укрепителната система на втората българска столица.

Ключови думи: Велики Преслав, укрепителна система, ЛИДАР

BONE AND HORN ARTEFACTS FROM THE MEDIEVAL SETTLEMENT IN PETROVA NIVA LOCALITY, SBORYANOVO ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESERVE

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ABSTRACT

The paper aims to present the bone (82) and horn (4) artefacts, found during the excavations of the medieval settlement in Petrova Niva Locality, Sboryanovo Archaeological Reserve during the 2005 – 2019 campaigns. All artefacts were subjected to osteological and trasological analysis.

Observations have been made regarding the location of the studied artefacts, the preferences for a certain raw material, the stages of processing, as well as the traces of use, allowing functional determination of the bone tools. The identification leads to the conclusion that a wide range of activities is evidenced by bone tools, most of which are related to home crafts (mainly leather processing and textile production).

The conclusions resulting from the analysis are compared with data from a number of studied medieval sites in the region, as well as with specialised studies on medieval bone and horn artefacts.

Key words: bone and horn artefacts, Early Medieval settlements, osteological and trasological analysis

The subjects of this study are the bone, antler and horn artefacts unearthed during the 2005 – 2019 archaeological excavations of the medieval settlement in Petrova Niva Locality, Sboryanovo Archaeological Reserve (Пенчева, Николаева 2006, 357 – 359; Пенчева, Николаева 2007, 551 – 552; Пенчева, Николаева 2008, 643 – 645; Пенчева, Николаева 2009, 691 – 693; Пенчева, Николаева 2010, 569 – 570; Пенчева, Николаева 2013, 490 – 492; Пенчева, Николаева 2014, 577 – 579; Пенчева, Николаева 2016, 657 – 660; Пенчева, Николаева 2017, 606 – 608; Пенчева, Николаева 2019, 546 – 549; Пенчева и др. 2018, 537 – 539). All artefacts originate from within the boundaries of the yard space excavated during these campaigns (fig. 1), which is fenced off with its own walls and called provisionally a "household". More than 80 artefacts are discussed here, which allows several observations to be made about the role of bone tools in the everyday life and customs of the medieval residents of this place.

Bone artefacts are one of the most common finds among the inventory unearthed so far in the households of 13 excavated dwellings. Our observations show that the largest number of the dwellings related to different (by which the authors mean stratigraphically distinguishable) phases of inhabitation within the 9th – 10th c. period, were abandoned by their inhabitants and the valuable household

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inventory was carefully collected and taken by the inhabitants. Thus, the artefacts originating from the excavated residential buildings were rarely found *in situ* at, and on, the floor level. The majority of the finds, including bone, antler and horn artefacts, are found in the fill of the dwelling pits, or in the cultural layer on the surface of the inhabited area. The numerous artefacts from this category suggest that they were used on a large scale. Their modest size and the possibility to craft them with conveniently obtainable materials and simple skills place these artefacts among the not especially valuable household tools and objects, which can be easily acquired or replaced in case of need.

The material studied comprises 86 artefacts, the majority of which, 82 are made of bone, and only 4 are made of hartshorn (the antler material from male red deer).

Location

A total of 72 (83.72 %) of the unearthed artefacts originate from the studied residential structures, and the remaining 14 (16.28 %) are from the cultural layer (fig. 1). The majority of the artefacts reviewed here – 58 (or 67.44 %) were unearthed in the fill of the dwelling pits, i.e., they probably became incorporated at a time when the dwellings were no longer used and their pits were filled in. It should be noted that an insignificant number of the artefacts (a total of 3, or about 3.49 %) were discovered on the floor level of the residential buildings and can be connected directly to the functioning of the dwellings (Cat. Nos. 50, 54 and 85).[1] The others (11, or 12.79 %) were unearthed in the fill of pits, documented at the floor level of the researched dwellings[2] and, with a high degree of probability, can be related to the time of inhabitation of the residential structures.

Among the complexes researched, Dwelling No. 4 stands out, where 23 (26.74 %) of the artefacts discussed here were found. Two of them were found on the floor level (Cat. Nos. 50, 54), and 7 others (Cat. Nos. 12, 16, 17, 37, 57, 72 and 86) originated from the fill of a pit in the southern part of the dwelling. The large number of crafted bone objects in this dwelling allows the supposition of specialised activities related to their use, or perhaps suggests there was a potential workshop on site for leather and textile processing.

Second in terms of number of bone artefacts among the researched residential structures, is Dwelling No. 5, from which a total of 14 items originate,[3] four of which (Cat. Nos. 32, 38, 40 and 73) are from a pit at floor level.

In the other dwellings, the bone and hartshorn items found are usually from 1 to 6,[4] and in the above-ground building in the western part of the complex, a total of 9 of the discussed artefacts were found.[5]

Raw materials

The set of objects reviewed here comprises a total of 86 artefacts, 82 of which (Cat. Nos. 1 – 82) (95.34 %) are made of bone. Only four artefacts (or 4.65 %) are made from horn, 3 from them – hartshorn (Cat. Nos. 83, 85, 86), and one – roe deer horn (Cat. No. 84).

[1] The numbers of the artefacts in the catalogue correspond to the numbering of the images in the plates appended to this paper, and to the numbering of the general plan with the locations where they were found.

[2] The percentage ratios relative to the finds originating from a residential context are 4.17 % at floor level, 13.89 % in pits and 81.94 % in the fill of the dwelling pits, respectively.

[3] Cat. Nos. 8, 9, 22, 24, 32, 35, 38, 40, 48, 68, 70, 73, 74 and 77.

[4] Dwelling No. 1 (Cat. Nos. 36, 42), Dwellings Nos. 2 and 2a (Cat. Nos. 10, 15, 51, 55, 60, 85), Dwelling No. 4a (Cat. Nos. 14, 25, 30, 46, 62, 63), Dwelling No. 6 (Cat. Nos. 31, 44, 61, 80), Dwelling No. 7 (Cat. Nos. 26, 64, 75, 79), Dwelling No. 8 (Cat. No. 66), Dwelling No. 9 (Cat. No. 6, 33), utility building (Cat. No. 18).

[5] Cat. Nos. 1, 5, 11, 21, 41, 47, 49, 65 and 84 were found within the outlines of a ground building.

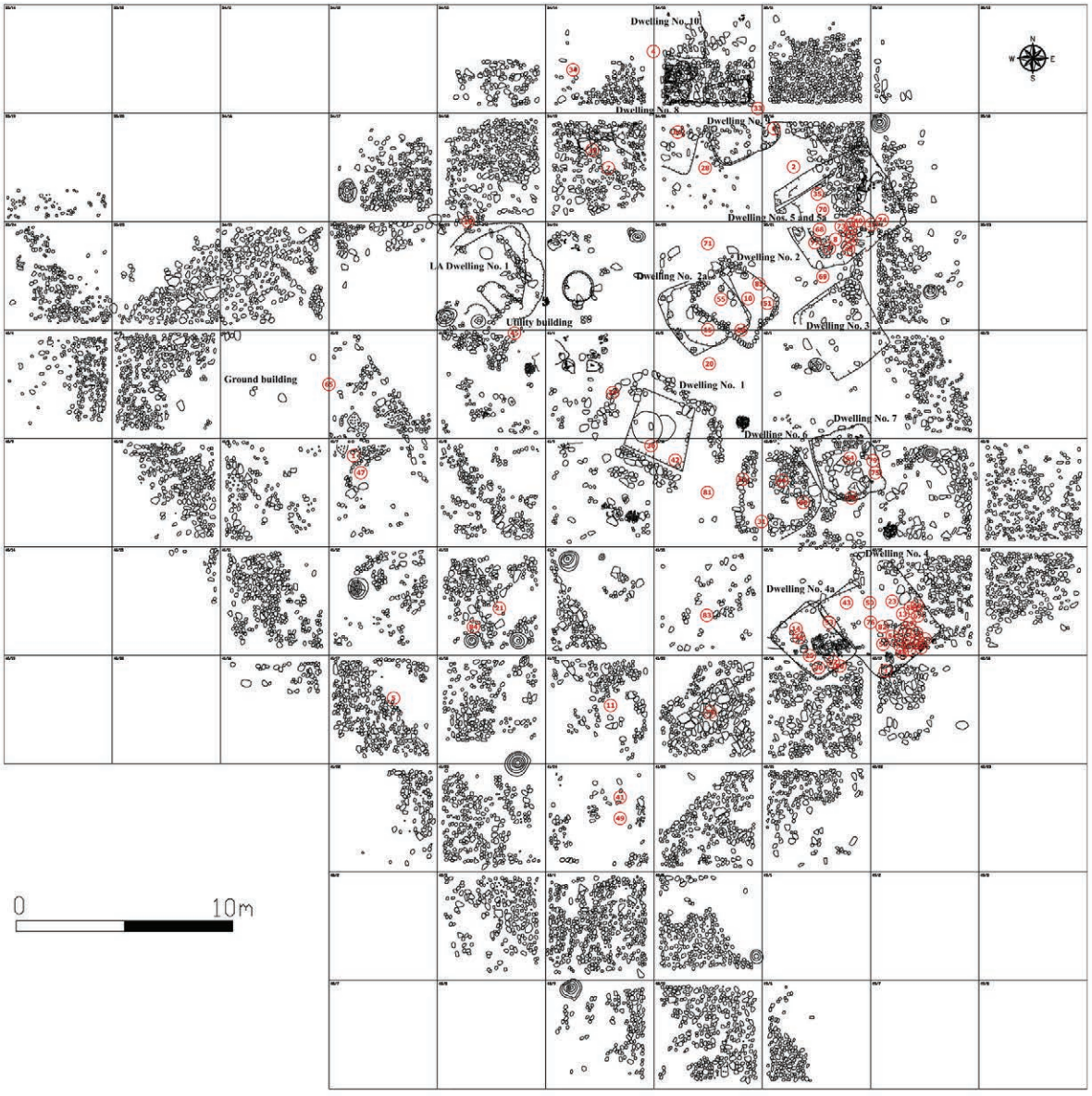


Fig. 1. General plan of the studied household from the settlement in Petrova Niva Locality, Sboryanovo Archaeological Reserve, with marked locations of discovery of bone and horn artefacts (the numbering corresponds to the one in the catalogue and the appended plates)

Обр. 1. Общ план на проучваното домакинство от селището в м. „Петрова нива", АР „Сборяново" с отбелязани местата на откриване на изделия от кост и рог (номерацията съответства на тази в каталога и приложените табла)

The most preferred raw material for the crafting of various artefacts (Appendices Nos. 1 and 1a) are the bones of small ruminants (sheep and goats) – a total of 58, or 65.12 % of all artefacts discussed. This preference for the bones of these small animals could be attributed first to the availability of the raw material, and, second, to their anatomical specifics, allowing the crafting of everyday tools without much effort or special skills. In addition to all artefacts presented here, from the group of astragali, the main part of the awls, and one of the bone tubes, probably used as a needle case, are also made of sheep/goat bones.

The group of artefacts made from cattle bone is significantly smaller – 9 (10.47 % of all, or

10.98 % of bone artefacts). The share of these tools (mainly awls), is relatively small, despite the significant quantity of large cattle bones found in the settlement, evidencing regular consumption of large animals. The reasons for this can be sought in several directions. The massive bones from large cattle, on the one hand, presuppose more effort for crafting everyday tools, and on the other, even if shaped in the necessary way, they have a lot of sharp edges and require additional smoothing, or the attachment of a handle is required so that the person using them is not hurt.

Dog bones are almost equal in number to large cattle bones as a raw material used for crafting domestic tools – a total of 7 artefacts (8.14 % and 8.54 % of bone artefacts). In this case, we could not comment on the extent to which their use was related to intentional efforts in relation to certain preferred qualities of dog bones, or whether it is a matter of an animal often used as food. One of the specifics of the bone as a raw material for the crafting of various artefacts, and a disadvantage, compared to horn for example, is the content of a certain percentage of fats, which have to be removed during processing. The usual removal technique is through continuous boiling. This is a production stage which was usually naturally "bypassed" in the use of animal bones, as the material is a byproduct of the diet of the population, and therefore the bones are thermally treated together with the meat during cooking. Poor processing in this initial production stage, meaning incomplete removal of the fat content, creates conditions for the development of bone decay (Тотев 1963, 85; Манојловић-Николић 2012, 53) and lowers the quality of the end product. To the extent that no evident examples of the development of such decay can be seen among the artefacts from the settlement in Petrova Niva Locality, we could assume that in all artefacts, the bone underwent the respective preparation stages, including in those made of dog bone.

Horse and pig bones are represented by one artefact each, an awl (Cat. No. 33) and a needle case (Cat. No. 5), respectively, comprising a minimum percentage of all analysed artefacts (Appendices Nos. 1 and 1a). While the rare use of horse bones could be explained by the above-mentioned arguments related to large cattle bones, the sporadic use of pig bones in the crafting of bone tools probably has another explanation. Taking into account the proliferation of pig bone finds in all medieval contexts of the site, evidencing not only regular consumption of pork, but also availability of this raw material, we can definitely assume that they were not a preferred raw material for making tools. The only artefact evidenced here is a sort of storage container, and not a tool related to applying force of impact on a certain material. The fact that pig bones were neglected as a raw material for crafting everyday tools is probably due to the low quality of these bones in terms of bone processing. One main quality of the bone, which is intentionally sought when used as a raw material for crafting tools, is high bone density, guaranteeing the durability of the end product, on the one hand, and its relatively easy processing, facilitated by preliminary softening (usually through boiling the bone), on the other. One possible explanation for the minimum use of pig bones in toolmaking could be based on the direct correlation between the age of the slaughtered animal and the density of its bones. The relatively short lifespan of pigs (rarely more than an year) results directly in much more fragile bones and therefore rendering them unfit for making durable tools.[6]

Artefacts made from the bones of game animals are relatively rare among the materials from the medieval settlement in Petrova Niva Locality. Apart from the uncertain identification of the bone in one of the artefacts (Cat. No. 8), about which there are doubts that it was made of deer bone, among the set of items discussed here, there are 6 tools made from rabbit bones (Appendices Nos. 1 and 1a).

The identification of one of the awls (Cat. No. 66), made from a split rib, is problematic.

Items made from bird and fish bones are completely absent among the artefacts from the settle-

[6] We would like to express our sincere gratitude to Prof. G. Georgiev from the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Trakia University, city of Stara Zagora, for the consultations.

ment in Petrova Niva Locality. This observation should probably be related to the minimal quantity of bird and fish bones found in the settlement as a whole, which raises questions not only about preferences for one type of bone or another for the purpose of tool-making, but also about the accessibility to certain raw materials.

Medieval sites where bone tools have been subjected to specialised analysis show similar preferences and ratios in terms of the raw materials. In the settlement near the village of Huma, Razgrad district, for example, the main resource for crafting bone tools are the tubular sections from sheep and goat bones (88.6 %), and the insignificant number of tools made from pig and horse bones are defined rather as an exception (Рашев, Станилов 1987, 75). Similar results are seen in the settlement near Odartsi, where, besides the usual sheep and goat bones, use of horse foot bones has been established, and the sharpest awls were made from fish and bird bones (Дончева-Петкова и др. 1999, 82). The analysis of the bone artefacts from the settlement near the Trajan's bridge (Trajanov most) shows similar preferences and insignificant use of pig, cattle and bird bones (Манојловић-Николић 2012, 52 and note 3). Evidence for the use of dog bones for crafting awls has also been established at the settlement near Garvan, Silistra district (Вължарова 1986, 47). In addition to the predominant use of sheep and goat bones, use of rabbit and dog bones for crafting such artefacts has also been established in Early Medieval sites from Croatia (Sekelj Ivančan 2016, 292). The most numerous and completely studied material from Mikulčice shows the greatest diversity, again with predominant use of sheep/goat bones, but there are also pig, dog, rabbit, deer, bird (goose, hen) and fish bones, as well as fragmented tools made from large animal bones, such as horse and cattle (Kavánová 1995, 162).

The comparison with other medieval sites shows that the choice of raw materials for crafting bone tools follows several general regularities, the determinant being availability and quality of the material, although the preferences and skills of the respective master probably also have an impact.

The bone objects from the medieval settlement in Petrova Niva Locality are mostly made of long tubular bones from small and large cattle (Appendices Nos. 2 and 2a). The preferred ones are definitely large shinbones (tibia), with 47 (or 57.31 % of the bone artefacts) made from such. We should probably add to them 8 more artefacts (9.75 %) made from long tubular cattle bones. Other long tubular bones were used much more rarely – femur in 2 cases (2.44 %), ulna – 4 (4.88 %), radius – 5 (6.1 %), respectively. The share of artefacts, where foot bones were used, is relatively small – metatarsus 4 (4.88 %), metacarpus 5 (6.1 %). Those made from rib bones (Cat. No. 66) are the exception. The expressed preference for hind limb animal bones is most probably due to the strength and density of the bone structure, as well as its anatomical specifics, which make it easy to hold.

Antler items are made from the end pointed parts of red deer (hartshorn) or roe deer antlers. They, as was already mentioned, comprise a mere 4.65 % of all artefacts analysed here.

All bone objects (with the exception of the four astragali, Cat. Nos. 1 – 4) and those of horn, we can assume to be tools, parts of tools, or blanks for such.

Processing

All bone, antler and horn tools, with the exception of Cat. No. 83 (semi-finished), are well-polished – some as a result of preliminary polishing (27, or 32.92 % of the bone artefacts, and 3, or 75 %, of the horn ones). The remaining 55 specimens – 77.08 % of the bone artefacts, were polished (utilisation sheen) in the process of utilisation, when the tool was held in the user's hand without a handle, or was in contact with the treated material. As a result of these actions, the traces of previous processing stages have been partially or entirely obliterated. In the case of most of the bone tools (67), there are partial traces of processing with coarse and/or fine abrasive (fig. 2), most of which are to be seen on the blade area, but in five of the cases (Cat. Nos. 8, 30, 41, 45 and 51), the epiphysis of the bone, which serves for holding, was also smoothed. Traces of abrasive are also

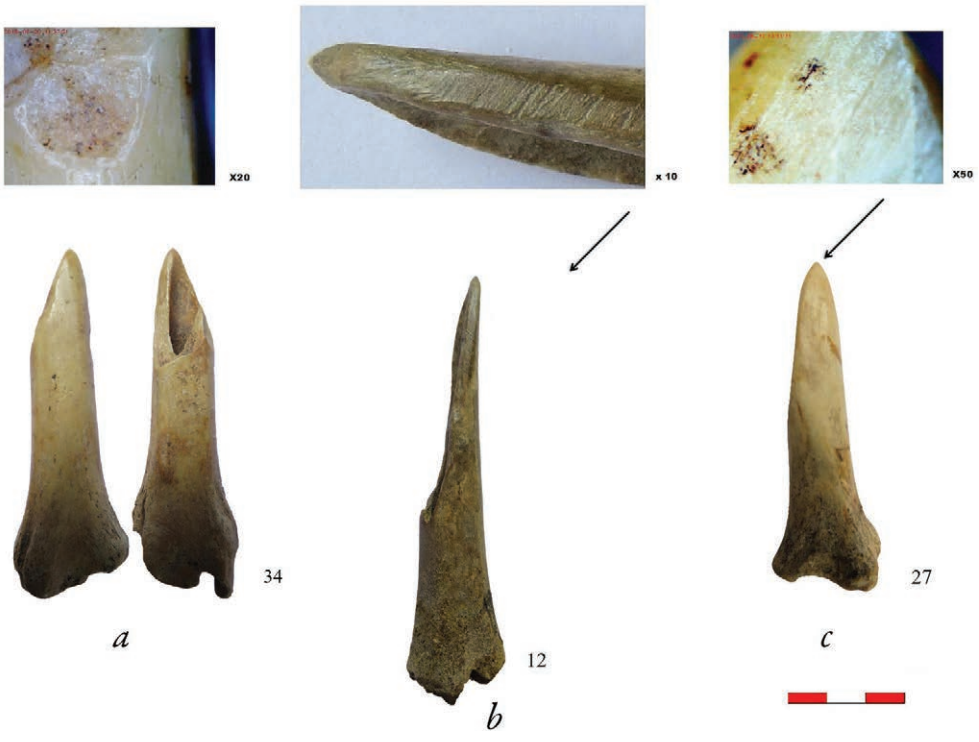


Fig. 2. Types of processing: a. Chipping and marking; b. Coarse abrasive; c. Fine abrasive with polishing from use
Обр. 2. Видове обработка: а. Дялане и маркировка; b. Груб абразив; с. Фин абразив с излъскване от използване

visible on two of the horn artefacts (Cat. Nos. 85 and 86). In 51 of the awls, prior to processing with an abrasive, the blade was formed by chipping with a metal tool, which left two or three facets (fig. 2a). Most probably, the tool used for this purpose was a sharp, short knife. On eight bone objects (Cat. Nos. 21, 34, 42, 44, 45, 49, 52 and 67), a cross notch made with a metal blade (probably a knife) has been partially preserved, marking the spot where chipping should begin. Incised marking can also be seen on the blank of hartshorn (Cat. No. 83), but taking into account the hardness of the material, it is more probable that this marking was made with a saw. On the same blank, there are clear traces of chipping with a small axe or adz.

On two of the objects (Cat. Nos. 8 and 83), traces have been preserved that imply cutting with a saw with small teeth. It is possible that on other objects with evenly cut off edges (Cat. Nos. 5, 6, 12, 14, 39, 40, 50, 51, 52, 59, 72, 80, 81, 84, 85 and 86) a very sharp axe, adz,[7] small saw or very sharp knife was used, and the traces were eliminated by additional processing and use. Traces of cutting and splitting with a heavy knife or chisel are observed on a total of 15 bone objects (Cat. Nos. 9, 14, 15, 17, 18, 23, 28, 30, 48, 58, 63, 65, 70, 76 and 81). On one bone (Cat. No. 10) and two horn artefacts (Cat. Nos. 85 and 86), there was burning with a heated metal blade. In the first case, this was done to repair the object, and in the other two – for decoration purposes.

On six bone and three horn objects, holes were bored. All four astragali were pierced with a thin auger, on Cat. Nos. 3 and 4 – unilaterally, and on Cat. No. 1 – bilaterally. The type of piercing on Cat. No. 2 is impossible to determine due to the subsequent breakage at the opening. At the distal part of the diaphysis of two of the awls (Cat. Nos. 29 and 82), there are openings with uneven ends, probably bored through pressure with a sharp object, different from an auger. It is possible that this

[7] Despite the absence of such tools among the tools from the archaeologically excavated bone carving workshops (Тотев 1993, 109 – 110), all researchers of the subject point out the proximity between carpentry and bone carving in terms of tools, techniques, etc. (Щерева и др. 1995, 55 – 59).

was done in order to attach a handle, or the metal part of a tool (for example, a metal awl tang). Bilateral boring with a thin auger is also observed on Cat. No. 84, and on Cat. Nos. 85 and 86, a thin auger was also used, but unilaterally, which led to fragmentation of the opposite openings in the process of work.

The main technological chain in the crafting of the awls also includes marking, two- or three-faceted chipping, coarse and fine abrasive, and in individual cases – polishing.[8] With some specimens, processing was preceded by splitting the bone, followed by abrasive processing, which shaped the blade.

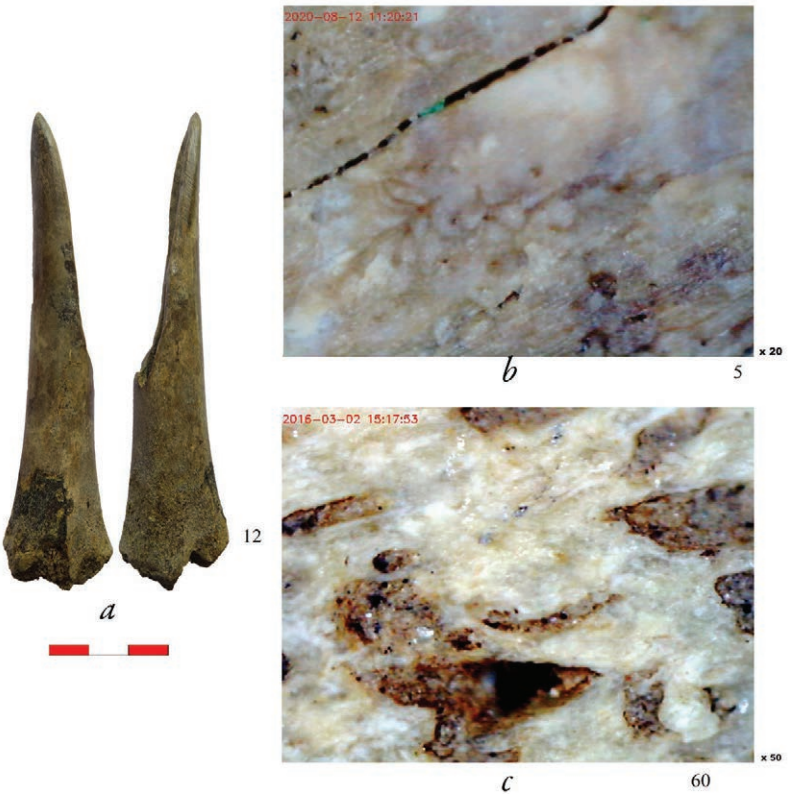


Fig. 3. Traces of contact with: a. Decaying organics; b. Copper/copper compounds; c. Corroded iron

Обр. 3. Следи от контакт с: а. Гниеща органика; b. Мед/медни съединения; с. Корозирало желязо

In the processing of horn artefacts, the technological chain is more difficult to trace due to the fact that the traces of the initial operations were destroyed by subsequent activities. Taking into account the traces on the only available blank (Cat. No. 83), it can be assumed that polishing and decorating were preceded by cutting with a saw, chipping with an axe or adz, then the application of coarse and fine abrasive. The absence of specific traces on the other objects makes these assumptions hypothetical.

On two of the tools (Cat. Nos. 9 and 85), there are traces of wrapping with a thread or wire. Furrows were incised for this purpose, probably with a heated metal blade.

The review of the traces from processing points towards a wide range of tools used for crafting the bone artefacts from Petrova Niva Locality, namely, axe, chisel, adz, knife, saw, thin auger, different types of abrasive, etc. The set of tools is quite similar to the kind used in wood working, as has been discussed many times in publications (Тотев 1963, 85; Димов 1989, 249; Манојловић-Николић 2012, 53).

All awls made from tubular bones have sheen, including on the non-working surfaces, because they were held in hand without a handle.

Two of the bone artefacts (Cat. Nos. 30 and 60) show traces of contact with corroded iron, which hinders the establishment of traces of use, and on nine others (Cat. Nos. 7, 12, 19, 20, 52, 57, 59, 76 and 82), there are traces of contact with decomposing organics in the soil, which, however, do not hinder the establishment of their functions (fig. 3).

[8] The written instructions for bone processing that have survived (e.g., in the work of Presbiter Theophilus, dated by most researchers to the 12th c. (Шаренков 1988, 278), whose author is thought to have belonged to the Byzantine cultural circle (Шаренков 1988, 307, note 16, 372), show clear consistency and sustainable traditions (Шаренков 1988, 369 – 370).

Astragali

Among the artefacts with traces of processing presented here, we should point out four astragali[9] (Cat. Nos. 1 – 4). They are all from small animals (sheep/goat) and have additionally pierced openings. They comprise 4.65 % of all reviewed artefacts (4.88 % of the bone artefacts) (Appendix No. 3). On one of them (Cat. No. 1), the opening is positioned centrally, and bored bilaterally with a thin auger. Due to the fact that the artefact was subjected to very high temperatures, where the surface was deformed and obtained a number of smaller and deeper cracks, there are no visible traces of additional processing. On Cat. No. 2, the opening was bored from the front part, which is why the thinned part of the bone broke off and was not preserved. This is the only astragalus on whose plantar surface a mesh of intersecting lines has been engraved, and there are traces of additional colouring with ochre. The opposite surface has been worn out to such an extent that it has suffered the loss of its original shape. On the other two astragali (Cat. Nos. 3 and 4), the traces of impact are slight and comprise bored holes in the front left end of the bone.

The fact that all astragali discussed here were pierced, and the concave surfaces bear traces of friction from a soft material (leather, textile) allows the supposition that the piercing was related to them being threaded to be worn. In other words, regardless of the interpretations of their functions, they can definitely be interpreted as personal belongings.

In the studied Early Medieval settlement, such artefacts are common (Ваклинов, Станилов 1981, 79, обр. 64; Вължарова 1965, 20, обр. 8, 5; 40, обр. 23, 2; Вължарова 1986, 48 – 49, обр. 46, 6 – 10; Георгиев 1981, 195, обр. 1; Григоров 2016, 83, обр. 26; Димов 1989, 258, Табло IV, 260 Табло VI; Димова 1993, 73; Дончева-Петкова 1992, 134, 137, обр. 30; Дончева-Петкова и др. 1999, 88, 153, Т. XXXIX/380 – 382; Рашев, Станилов 1987, 76). In addition to the methods of impact discussed for the specimens from Petrova Niva, on some of the taluses the holes were filled in with lead and more than one hole was bored (Вължарова 1986, 49). They have been discussed mainly as gaming items (Рашев 2008, 174). In confirmation of this, the examples of hoards (sets) of astragali can be given[10] (Дончева-Петкова 1992, 134; Manojlović-Nikolić 2016, 203 – 206), as well as the intentional scrubbing of one of the surfaces with the aim of 'weighting' the bones – redistributing the weight so that they would fall down with the winning (marked) side upwards (Рашев 2008, 174). Similar to dice, one specimen from the fortress near Tsar Asen village has 12 indented dots on the concave wide side (Димова 1993, 73). The astragali originating from Mikulčice have also been interpreted as gaming items, and there they were usually levelled additionally and filled with lead (Kavánová 1995, 176 – 177; 319, Abb. XXVI, 1 – 4, 9; 361, Taf. 20, 13 – 20). The prohibitions imposed by the church on what were labelled as "illegal games" (Грашева 1982, 79; Тотев 1972, 35 – 36) could be the explanation for the lack of preserved medieval sources on the issue. Arguments for the use of astragali in games and their popularity in the Early Middle Ages are usually evidence from previous eras, on the one hand, and ethnographic evidence, on the other (Тотев 1972, 39 – 40, note 43; Manojlović-Nikolić 2016, 203 – 206).

In support of the supposition that the pierced astragali were personal belongings, we can mention the numerous finds unearthed in grave contexts. The originate both from monoritual, and

[9] It should be noted that for the other astragali found in the settlement, due to the absence of visible traces of additional impact, we have assumed that they are bones which remained as a byproduct of the use of meat as food, without, of course, excluding the possibility that they were used as bones for gaming, divination or amulets, to the extent that their use as such does not necessarily require them to be pierced and does not leave definite traces, visible in trasological studies.

[10] The major part of the astragali obtained during the study of the medieval settlement (9th – 11th c.) near Trajan's Bridge (in present-day Serbia) are made of hartshorn, and almost all of them have a mesh of lines engraved on the plantar surface (Manojlović-Nikolić 2016, 203 – 206), similar to the one described under Cat. No. 2 here.

biritual necropoleis (Въжарова 1976, 15, обр. 4, 5 – 6; 27, обр. 13, 6; 49, обр. 28, 6; 92, обр. 47, 8 – 9; 95, обр. 49, 3 – 7; 154, обр. 96, 3; 163, обр. 103, 4; 15, обр. 4, 5 – 6; 186, обр. 112, 12; 192, обр. 117, 4; 253, обр. 158, 4; Йотов 1989, 220, 228; Дончева-Петкова 2005, 302, Т. LII/61; 302, Т. CXXXII/366; Дончева-Петкова и др. 1989, 193; Дончева-Петкова и др. 2016, 144; Fiedler 1992, 213 – 215). The opinion has been expressed that the pierced ones were worn by the deceased as amulets (Станилов 1983, 128), but grave finds of both pierced and unpierced astragali allows the supposition that the latter ones had the same function, but were probably carried in a pouch attached to the belt, i.e., the piercing was for purely practical purposes (Fiedler 1992, 214).

Among the few written sources that have reached us which mention the practice of wearing amulets among Bulgarians from those times, we should mention the 79th Response of Pope Nicholas I (ЛИБИ 1960, 113). He mentions that "there is a custom for those weak of health to take a pendent and wear it suspended under their neck..." (ЛИБИ 1960, 113), but he does not mention anything about the type of objects worn as protection. In this sense, the possibility cannot be excluded that the astragali from the settlement in Petrova Niva Locality presented here, being pierced and probably worn suspended, had the function of an amulet.

Sources are also not detailed in relation to the use of astragali in divination and fortune telling, although such a possibility is not excluded by some researchers (Manojlović-Nikolić 2016, 203 – 206), who point out ethnographic evidence from the region as an argument. Hoards of similar artefacts, as well as the signs additionally incised on them, do not contradict such a supposition. Divination as a magical practice was well-known in pagan Bulgaria, as is shown by the information commented on by Pope Nicholas I, but there is no evidence of the way in which it was performed (ЛИБИ 1960, 89), so the supposition that taluses were used for this purpose is possible only as a hypothesis. We should note that among the numerous preserved apocryphal divination books that have reached us, there are none that describe divination with bones (Милтенова 1992, 197 – 328).

The remaining 82 (95.34 %) bone, antler and horn artefacts found during the excavation of the Early Medieval settlement in Sboryanovo Archaeological Reserve can be defined most generally as tools or blanks for tools.

Bone tubes (needle cases?)

Two of the artefacts presented here are made from tubular shaped bones and can most generally be defined as bone tubes (Cat. Nos. 5 and 6). As a percentage, they comprise a mere 2.32 % of all artefacts discussed here and 2.44 % of the bone items (Appendices Nos. 3 and 4).

A pig's femur was used for crafting the first one (Cat. No. 5), and for the second (Cat. No. 6) – a sheep/goat tibia.

The two tubes presented here have lengths varying between 70 – 75 mm, and inner diameters within the 13 – 17 mm range. The surfaces of both have been polished by use, which makes the traces of preceding processing almost invisible. The edges of the holes are rounded, polished to a sheen, and perpendicular linear traces are clearly visible on the edges (fig. 3). One of the items is entirely preserved (Cat. No. 5), which is why the inside is not very accessible for microscopic observations, but in the places accessible for review, the inner surface is very diligently smoothed. Small sections with polishing are visible, probably as a result of its use. In the cracks, at the two flat sides, small particles of a substance with a bright green colour are visible, probably copper compounds deposed as a result of contact with copper or copper alloy objects (fig. 3). The second item (Cat. No. 6) is broken on one side, so its inside is accessible for observation and allows the tracing of longitudinal and transverse linear traces, as well as a slight sheen. The subsequent breakage of the object led to its being transformed into a tool for working with a soft material, but the strong, almost mirror-like polishing of the outer surface does not allow any definite conclusions about its new function.

Trasological observations allow the supposition that both objects were used as needle cases.[11] In this sense, the observations showing longitudinal and transverse linear traces on the inside, as well as the copper corrosion products deposed in the cracks, could be the result of contact with needles kept in them, and the polishing of the inner surface could be due to continuous friction with textile (in which the needles were wrapped?) or stored together with the thread for sewing.[12] Neither bone tube is decorated on the outside.

Such finds are known from a number of medieval settlements, like Pliska (Балабанов 1992, 161, Табл. VIII), Garvan (Въжарова 1986, 48 – 49, обр. 49; 118, обр. 114, 6; 120, обр. 116, 3; 122, обр. 119, 7), Durankulak (Димов 1989, 257, Табло III), Odartsi (Дончева-Петкова и др. 1999, 153, Табло XXXVIII/348), Shumen fortress (Антонова 1995, 105, обр. 108), the medieval settlement above the ancient Abritus (Георгиева 1961, 15), etc. Due to the lack of sufficient data, some researchers use the non-specific definition "bone tubes" (Антонова 1995, 105), or cautiously suggest their use as bone handles from metal objects (Георгиева 1961, 15). Their number in all studied sites is usually several times less than that of bone awls.

The data from necropoleis are much more definite, systematised and summarised (Fiedler 1992, 211 – 213; Григоров 2007, 87 – 97). The use of these artefacts as containers for storing and carrying needles is unequivocally evidenced in a number of grave complexes, where iron, bronze and bone needles have been found (Григоров 2007, 88 – 89). Observations on the bone remains of the buried show that they were used by all age and gender groups, but percentage ratios lead to the conclusion that they were mainly used by women (Григоров 2007, 88). In terms of decoration, some researchers believe that its presence depends on the nature of the bone, and those made of more fragile material, like bird bones, are usually undecorated (Рашев 2008, 172). The specimens from the settlement in Petrova Niva Locality reviewed here are representative of the fact that the presence or absence of decoration is not unambiguously determined by the type of material. The thesis assuming decoration as a chronological feature is much more justified, providing arguments for its absence among the materials from early necropoleis like Novi Pazar and Kyulevcha (Григоров 2007, 90). Actually, with the change in burial practices related to the Christianisation of the population, needle cases disappeared from grave complexes (Григоров 2007, 90) and are hard to date in settlements. In this sense, the small share of bone tubes (needle cases) among the materials from Sboryanovo could be viewed as indicative of the relatively late date of the studied structures. The chronological conditionality in the use of these artefacts is also documented in sites from Great Moravia. Stratigraphic observations in Mikulčice (Czech Republic), for example, show that bone needle cases are found mainly in the early layers of habitation, and decrease significantly in later ones (Kavánová 1995, 174 – 175), with examples made from horn and bronze present in addition to bone items[13] (Kavánová 1995, 318, Abb. XXV).

Some of the few trasological observations known to us are based on artefacts from this site (Ka-

[11] In another cultural environment and archaeological context, such artefacts have been discussed as handles (Allain et al. 1993, 63 – 68), but the absence of definite evidence of such use from medieval sites allow us to assume their identification as bone tubes/needle cases.

[12] In our excavations in the settlement so far, nine needles have been found (FIN 4/2009, FIN 2/2012 (A ОФ 3054), FIN 14/2012 (A ОФ 3056), FIN 51/2012 (A НСФ 257), FIN 10/2013 (A НСФ 323), FIN 14/2013, FIN 33/2015, FIN 24/2016 (A НСФ 396), FIN 17/2017), which shows their widespread use in daily life. Eight of them are made of iron, and only one of copper alloy (FIN 14/2012, A ОФ 3056), which does not preclude the possibility for the copper oxides in one of the presented objects to be related to the storage of similar artefacts. Only one of the needles is entirely preserved (FIN 10/2013, A НСФ 323), which allows the conclusion that their size varied, like those of present-day examples, probably in relation to their different purpose, but they are comparable to those of the bone tubes in which they were probably kept.

[13] Needle cases with a metal casing, and ones made of lead are also known in the Lower Danube region (Григоров 2007, 88; Fiedler 1992, 212).

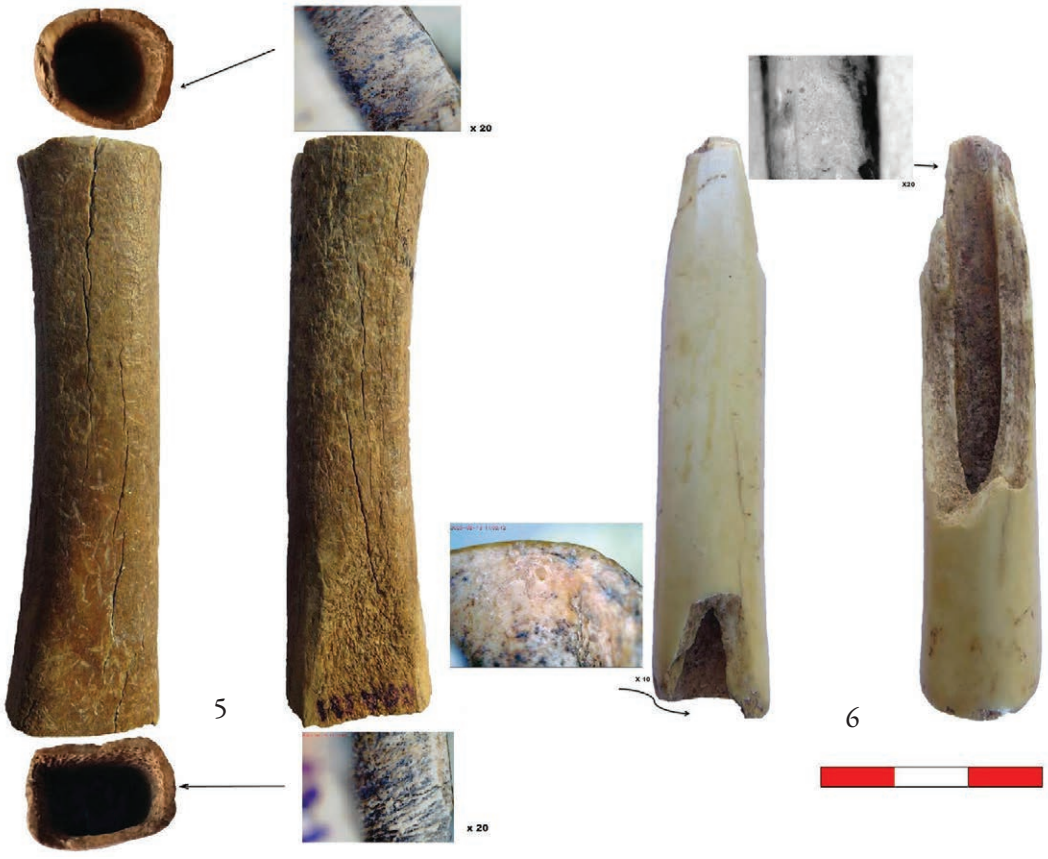


Fig. 4. Needle cases
Обр. 4. Игленици

ványová 1995, 171 – 176). The traces on the inside of the containers are also taken as indicative, to the extent that the polishing of the outer surface as a result of use does not show any specifics, and does not preclude the possibility that they were used as bone handles[14] (Kavánová 1995, 175). The observations of Bl. Kavánová show linear traces in the inner part of the containers accessible for observation, and particularly strong smoothing and polishing at the inner edges, which she takes as a sure indicator that they were closed objects (Kavánová 1995, 176). In support of such a supposition, we could point out a find from Garvan, where the bone tube has a preserved plug – a second short bone tube with a closed end, inserted into the mouth of the first one (Вължарова 1986, 48 – 49, 131, обр. 45, 5).

Similar trasological observations on the artefacts from the settlement in Sboryanovo Archaeological Reserve support their identification as needle cases.

Awls

The largest number of bone items originating from Petrova Niva (78) (95.12 %) are typologically part of the tool group (Appendix No. 3), 76 of them (92.68 %) being awls.

Most of them were made from the bones of small animals – sheep/goat, rabbit, deer (?) and dog, with those of sheep/goat being predominant, mainly using long tubular bones, as has been discussed above.

[14] The knife with a bone handle originating from the same site, however, shows a rather different method of crafting (Kavánová 1995, 176).

The different morphology of the tools was most probably determined by the different production operations for which they were intended. To the extent that most of these bone tools were held in the hand without additional handles, as is shown by trasological observations, the longer bones seem to have provided a better grip for the tool, and better opportunities for impact on the processed material, respectively.

The sizes of the awls from the settlement in Petrova Niva Locality vary greatly – from 145 to 53 mm (in the entirely preserved ones).[15] This allows us to assume certain differences in their use. The biggest ones (Cat. Nos. 7 – 10) and perhaps some of those next greatest in length, were most probably held tight with the fingers of one hand, which ensured stability of the tool during work, on the one hand, and the possibility for applying more force of impact on the processed material, on the other. Another group of artefacts made mainly of metatarsal and metacarpal bones (Cat. Nos. 31, 33, 45, 47, 48, 50 and 51) have a massive structure and much shorter length. To the extent that, as is commented by a number of researchers concerned with medieval bone tools (Михайлов 1955, 150; Тотев 1963, 85), the raw material (mainly bones of animals used for food) exceeded many times the use of bones for tool making, we can assume that the preferences for using foot bones were predetermined by the desired qualities of the tool and the result of conscious choice. In these cases it seems more probable that the main force came from palm pressure, and that only control and direction of impact were achieved by gripping the awl with the fingers on all sides or mainly with the thumb and forefinger. There is a third group of artefacts (Cat. Nos. 53 – 55) where the joint curve of the bone was intentionally preserved. It seems very probable that in working with such a tool, the forefinger was placed in this curve, providing control on the direction of impact, and the pressure was applied with the palm. These assumptions could be confirmed or rejected through the means of experimental archaeology, but we are not aware of such studies on similar artefacts to date. Some awls (Cat. Nos. 56 – 58) are made of tubular bones, split longitudinally (some of which together with the epiphysis). In this case it can be supposed that they were used by gripping them with the fingers of one hand, or that they were mounted in a wooden (?) handle.

Another "group" of awls (Cat. Nos. 69 – 79), the largest number of which are made from tubular cattle bones, stand out with significantly smaller sizes (53 – 30 mm). It is possible that they were broken in the process of work, or were just not preserved. However, the formation of facets at the opposite end of the working part also implies the possibility that they were deliberately shaped in this way in order to be mounted in a wooden handle, which did not survive over the centuries. Such an assumption is also admissible based on observations of some of the other artefacts reviewed here (Cat. Nos. 39, 43, 51), where deliberate cutting of the epiphysis can be traced in certain areas, and a sheen resulting from strong friction in the opposite end of the working part.

Two of the tools discussed here (Cat. Nos. 29 and 82) have an irregular vertical opening bored in the side opposite the blade (the distal part of the diaphysis). It is difficult to say for certain what exactly the function of this opening was – for mounting a handle or attaching an additional tool (e.g., a metal awl). It is possible that at a certain stage of the use of these tools, they had to be transformed, which led to a change in function.

Awls and awl-expanders are the largest functional group of bone tools from Petrova Niva Locality (Appendix No. 4). The functional analysis of the finds from the settlement confirms that the most of them were used for boring and/or expanding openings, with some specifics.

39 specimens were used as awls for leather, and 23 – as awls and expanders. Traces of use (polish-

[15] Sites where there are metric data about the bone tools show variations in similar ranges – 120 – 70 mm in one of the sites in Pliska (Михайлов, Милчев 1959, 283); 135 – 65 mm in the village of Kladentsi (Ваклинов, Станилов 1981, 80) and 150 – 60 mm in Odartsi (Дончева-Петкова и др. 1999, 82). In the classification of materials from Mikulčice, the length 120 – 70 mm is adopted as standard, the tools with length 66 – 45 mm are defined as "short", and those with length 184 – 121 mm – as "long" (Kavánová 1995, 163).



Fig. 5. Awls for working on hard leather and/or hard pad – traces on the tip
Обр. 5. Шила за работа по твърда кожа и/или твърда подложка – следи по върха

ing and linear traces) are well visible in 50 of them, and 11 are less used and have partial traces or a sheen located only on the working tip. Two of the awls are reprocessed, one (Cat. No. 10) was repaired, and the other (Cat. No. 45) – transformed, probably into a handle for another tool. Six of the awls (Cat. Nos. 22, 28, 36, 40, 61, 79) and one of the expanders (Cat. No. 21) show traces of work with thick, hard leather (fig. 5), and Cat. No. 22 was used on a hard pad. Only one awl (Cat. No. 65) was processed with soft material on a hard base, which is why the blades are blunted and chipped. It seems that the major part of the artefacts presented here are related to leather processing as a domestic craft (in its multiple, various, and specific activities, such as saddlery, shoemaking, furriery, etc.)

Observations on the awls from the settlement in Sboryanovo Archaeological Reserve come very close to those on the materials from Mikulčice, where the unearthed "sharpened bones" are classified according to two main critera – length of the artefact and length of the sharpened part (Kavánová 1995, 161 – 171, Taf. 13 – 19).

Bone awls originate without exception from all studied Early Medieval settlements (Антонова 1995, 105, обр. 108; Балабанов 1992, 159 – 161, Табл. VII, Табл. VIII; Ваклинов, Станилов 1981, 80, обр. 65; Въжарова 1986, 46 – 47, обр. 44; Гергова, Атанасов 2009, 209, обр. 11; Григоров 2016, 83, обр. 26; Димов 1989, 255, Табло I; Димова 1993, 73; Дончева-Петкова и др. 1999, 82; Йотов, Атанасов 1998, Табло LXXXIII; Милчев, Ангелова 1971, 98 – 100, табл. XLVI; Михайлов 1955, 150, 153, обр. 94; Михайлов, Милчев 1959, 283 – 284; Огненова, Георгиева 1955, 408, обр. 52; Рашев, Станилов 1987, 75 – 77; Рашев 2008, 171; Чангова 1957, 251 – 252; Hensel 1980, Tabl. I/133, Tabl. VI/621, Tabl. VII/116, Tabl. XX/839, Tabl. XXXI/1036, Tabl. XXXIV/834, 707, 825, Tabl. L/1026, Tabl. LX/1060, 1239 etc.; Gomolka-Fuchs 1986, 220 – 221, Taf. 79). Most often they are defined as awls without additional arguments

or specialised studies. Some researchers assume use not only as tools for boring holes, but also for weaving nets and decorating ceramics (Manojlović-Nikolić 2016, 202; Михайлов, Милчев 1959, 283). Others are certain that they were used mainly for working with leather (Станчев 1955, 207).

It is impressive that, having in mind the huge number of finds in a settlement context, such tools are found in the necropoleis from the same period as an exception, some of the examples being from commemorative structures (Preslav-1) and only a few have been unearthed as grave goods (Вължарова 1976, 251 – 252). One possible explanation of this phenomenon could lie in the supposition that such artefacts are not personal tools, but more probably, professional inventory related to the performance of certain professional activities. An indicative observation is the fact that none of the specimens found in Petrova Niva Locality were pierced in order to be worn, in contrast to the astragali discussed above or the small horns originating from the same site. In contrast to the other artefacts mentioned, there are no attempts at decoration or special marking on these ones. Thus, they can be viewed as professional tools used in relation to certain activities, mostly concerning domestic craft, which is why they are found in places where these crafts were carried out – in dwellings or around them. The numerous "sharpened bones" originating from Mikulčice are discussed as related to processing of wool felt (also known here as *plasti* – thick non-woven fabric), thick textile and leather (Kavánová 1995, 167 – 168).

Three objects which are typologically awls, but utilisation traces show different use, are of special interest. Two of them (Cat. Nos. 80 and 81) have pronounced straight cut blades, where traces of contact with the processed material are observed to about 4 mm from the tip (fig. 6). In addition to the strong sheen, at the working end there are pronounced linear traces, perpendicular to the working end, and on one (Cat. No. 81), one side of the working end is heavily worn down. It is possible that these tools were used as tools for decorating ceramics (ornamenting tools).[16]

One of the tools reviewed here (Cat. No. 82) has a slightly curved shape, strong sheen at the tip, and polishing along the whole arc-shaped curve, the result of friction with a soft material. Its function is difficult to determine precisely, but the supposition can be made that it was used as tool in the production of textiles (in weaving, knitting?). It is possible that the tool under Cat. No. 24 was used in a similar way, its whole surface being polished from use, but without visible linear traces. Such utilisation changes could be attributed to continuous friction from a soft material (probably a textile).

A similar assumption was made about a number of the bone tools originating from Early Medieval sites in North Croatia, mostly based on their joint use with spindle whorls (Sekelj Ivančan 2016, 292). According to this study, one group of bone tools is clearly distinguished, probably used as needles (awls?), and others, about which a use is assumed which is related to the crafting of various straw, wicker (*Salix purpurea*), etc. products, including for "lacing" straw roofs (Sekelj Ivančan 2016, 292). Since archaeological records about this ancient craft are scarce and uncertain, such a possibility should not be rejected without justification.[17] A similar use has also been assumed in relation to the sharpened ribs originating from Mikulčice, without, however, precluding the possibility that they were used for piercing leather or textiles (Kavánová 1995, 170 – 171). Ethnographic evidence does not indicate the explicit use of specialised tools, and the traditional knitting of such items is normally described as "by hand".

Similar to the item discussed here (Cat. No. 82), but made of wood, is the main tool in goat's hair craftsmanship, used for weaving various fur/hair/felt products (caparisons, bags, etc.) (Вакарелски 2007, 307, 309) (fig. 7). Ethnographic parallels allow us to assume such use not only for this spe-

[16] Use of similar tools, including ones made from bone, has been evidenced at a number of sites (Глушков 1996, 292, рис. 143, 299, рис. 150).

[17] The widespread use in different areas of everyday life of various basketware, made from the above-mentioned materials, as well as hazel (*Corylus*), old man's beard (*Clematis vitalba*), reed, bulrush (*Tipha latifolia*), raffia, etc., has been documented in a number of ethnographic studies (Вакарелски 2007, 311, 313, 321 – 322).

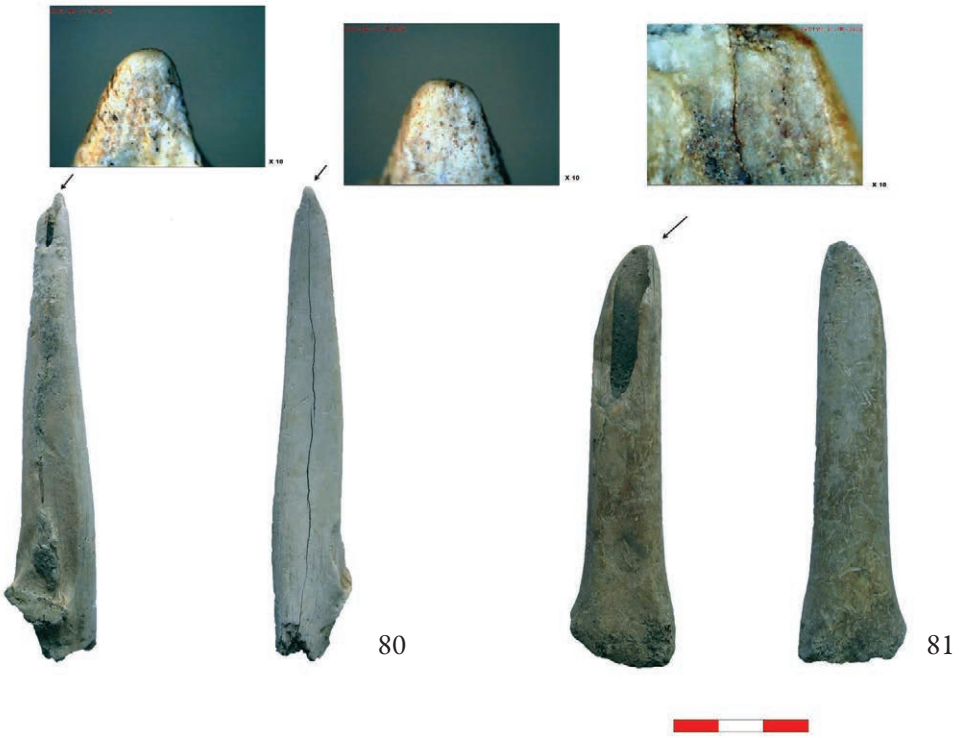


Fig. 6. Ornamenting tools – working parts
Обр. 6. Орнаментири – работни части

cific artefact from the settlement in Petrova Niva (and probably some of the other items published here), but also for some of the items published as awls originating from other sites which were not subjected to trasological analysis.

As the observations discussed above show, in a trasological analysis, typologically similar tools show different applications and traces of work conducted with different materials.

We would like to mention here one more observation related to bone "awls". All researchers working on the subject have noted that they are extremely widespread in Early Medieval sites which existed up until the first decades of the 11th c. In later settlements such artefacts are seen sporadically, or are completely absent. The situation is similar for the settlement structures which immediately preceded them chronologically. The large group of bone artefacts related mainly to textile and/or leather processing, originating from Early Medieval sites, allow interpretation in two main directions. The first is related to the role which these areas of economic activity played in the life of the population at the time. The general impression is that the production of textiles and leather products, as well as, it seems, livestock breeding, whose byproduct they are in part, were a priority in the daily life of the residents in the region. The predominant use of bone tools over metal ones raises the second important question related to the organisation of the activities in question, as domestic crafts rather than well-organised market-oriented production. It is probably in these two directions, specifically or more generally, and in the cultural traditions, that the reasons for the proliferation of bone leather and/or textile tools should be sought in settlement sites dated to the 9th – 11th c.

Horn and Antler

The horn and antler artefacts unearthed during the excavations of the settlement in Petrova Niva Locality are only four in number (Cat. Nos. 83 – 86), which comprises 4.65 % of all items discussed here. To the extent that red deer and roe deer artefacts (Cat. No. 86) make up an insignifi-



Fig. 7. Awl (Cat. No. 82), used in textile production(?): a. Traces of fine abrasive on the tip and polishing from work over it; b. Traces of polishing and fine concentric traces of use on the body of the awl; c. Ethnographic wooden analogue of the bone tool and the method of use

Обр. 7. Шило (Кат. № 82) използвано в текстилно производство(?): а. Следи от фин абразив по върха и излъскване от работа над него; b. Следи от излъскване и фини концентрични следи от използване по тялото на шилото; с. Етнографски дървен аналог на костения инструмент и начин на използването му

cant percentage of the artefacts under review (Appendices Nos. 1 and 1a), we could assume that access to this type of raw material was relatively limited for the inhabitants of the studied settlement.

Horn items represent independent groups of tools, which is an indicator of the good knowledge of the qualities of the material and their intentional use.

The hartshorn blank (Cat. No. 83) allows some observations regarding the processing approach. The bilateral, divergent cutting traces show that in this case the material was cut on two opposite sides, probably with a saw. Some of the natural irregularities on the surface have been chipped off. The preserved deep trace, 17 mm away from the saw cutting traces, is probably an attempt at splitting with an axe. Several incisions visible on the opposite end probably mark the parameters of the intended future product. There are no traces of use on the object. We can assume that all these methods of processing – cutting, splitting, chipping, abrasive processing and polishing – were used in the crafting of all the other items made from this raw material, but all traces from these operations were obliterated in the subsequent polishing.

Two of the items which have survived can most generally be called processed tines of hartshorn (Cat. Nos. 85 and 86). The first one (Cat. No. 85) was discovered on the floor level of Dwelling No. 2 (Пенчева, Николаева (под печат)) and the second (Cat. No. 86) originates from the fill of a pit whose opening was at the floor level of Dwelling No. 4, so these are two of the few artefacts reviewed here, which we can relate directly with the time of the occupation of these dwellings. These are also some of

the few artefacts with a hole bored through them for suspension,[18] which is a direct indication of them being personal belongings. The signs which were additionally incised with a heated blade should probably also be viewed in this way, although they seem to have no direct relation to the use of the artefacts.

The first of the two horn objects discussed here (Cat. No. 85) was made from the tine of a hartshorn making the best use of its natural arc-shaped curve. The tool is well and entirely preserved. The surface of the item was processed in order to remove the natural irregularities completely, first chipped, treated with a coarse, then with a fine abrasive, and polished. An annular thickening was formed in the widest part of the horn, and below it, on the two opposite sides, small holes have been bored, at an angle of 45°. A metal ring made of iron wire in which the tip is inserted is preserved in the front part of the horn (at 36 mm from the tip) and represents an interesting detail. Traces of use can be seen in the form of a strong sheen along the whole front sharpened part of the tool, on the outer concave part of the arc, and around the relief ring and place for suspension. These are probably the result of continuous contact and friction from a soft material. No other utilisation traces are observed besides this polishing resulting from continuous use.

The second tool of this type (Cat. No. 86) is smaller in size. The processing is analogous to the one described above – with complete removal of the irregular surface. In the front (working) end, this led to reaching the spongy core of the horn, and in the opposite end – to the formation of an almost square section. The diligent polishing of the whole surface has obliterated the traces of preceding production stages. At the wide end, approximately 6 mm from the edge, a stringing hole was formed with a fine blade. This was bored after the four sides of the hind part of the horn were decorated with X-shaped ornaments. On one side, the thinned end between the hole and the end edge broke off. It is possible that this happened during the boring of the hole, or when pressure was applied afterwards. The working end is extremely sharp and deep linear transverse traces can be observed with a microscope.

One specific processing technique can be traced in this artefact. It is a decoration applied through burning (based on the pyrography principle). The traces are especially clearly visible in the X-shaped ornaments (fig. 8) as dark coloured indentations, different in depth, with clear borders and without traces of additional impact. Similar examples from medieval sites are not known to us,[19] although this technique was well-known in Antiquity, as is demonstrated by references in publications and written sources (Борисова-Кацарова (под печат); Clair 1996, 373).

The shape of these horns and the traces of use place them very close to the bone artefacts discussed as awls. However, the diligent processing of both objects, the preference for hartshorn as a raw material, the suspension holes and marking through signs, are all indicators of the more special significance of these objects in comparison to the awls.

Similar objects are known from a number of Early Medieval settlements, like Pliska, Preslav and Drastar (Атанасов 1987, 101 – 113; Георгиев 1984, 16 – 19; Димитров 2009, 165 – 170; Михайлов 1955, 65 – 68, обр. 19 – 20; Огненова, Георгиева 1955, 408, обр. 52; Станчев 1955, 207 – 208; Чангова 1957, 240), as well as Popina, Garvan (Въжарова 1965, 18, обр. 6; Въжарова 1986, 48 – 49, обр. 46), the settlement on the ruins of ancient Abritus (Георгиева 1961, 15, обр. 9), the one on the remains of Seuthopolis (Чангова 1972, 103 – 104, обр. 83в), Durankulak (Димов 1989, 250, табло II/3 – 4, табло III/5 – 6), Nova Cherna (Милчев, Ангелова 1971, 94 – 95, таблица XLVII), Odartsi (Дончева-Петкова и др. 1999, 84 – 88, Т. XXXVII/327 – 328) Shumen fortress (Антонова 1995, 105, обр. 108), Starmen (Hensel 1980, 190, Tabl. XI/172, 173; 228, Tabl. XLIX/975; 235, Tabl. LVII/1317; 236, Tabl. LVIII/1307), Krivina (Gomolka-Fuchs 1986,

[18] In both horns, part of the spongy core of the horn has been removed in the wide end, after which the transverse holes were bored there. We suppose that this was done to facilitate piercing the functional side holes.

[19] It is very possible that some of the horns known to us were decorated through burning, especially those decorated with the circle with a dot pattern (e.g., from Durankulak) (Димов 1989, 256, Табло II/3), but there are no similar observations and explicit indications in literature about most of them.

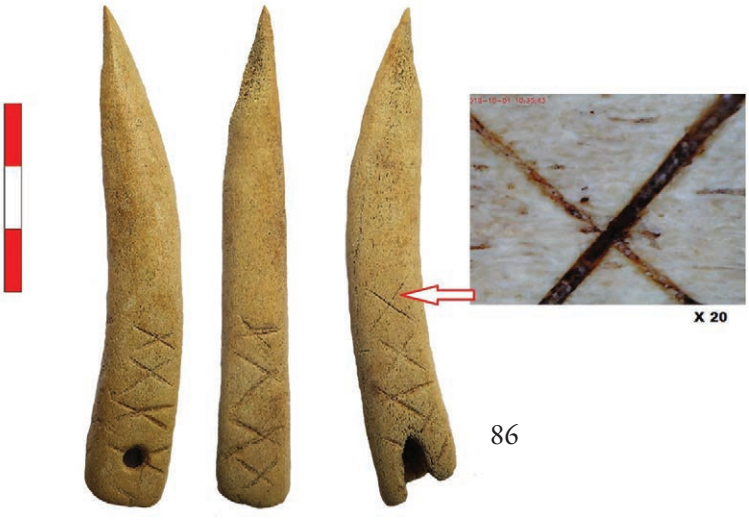


Fig. 8. Decoration applied with a heated metal blade, Cat. No. 86
Обр. 8. Орнамент, нанесен с нажежено метално острие, Кат. № 86

220 – 221, Tafel 79: 79, 87, 88), Kladentsi (Ваклинов, Станилов 1981, 78 – 79, обр. 64), and others, which demonstrates their use in the period of the First Bulgarian Kingdom and the 11th c.

Data from necropoleis outline a more definite picture regarding their use. They originate (with few exceptions) from biritual necropoleis and are mainly found in the graves of males, most often in the pelvic area or in the right hand, next to a knife, a flint and an iron ring (Ангелова 1995, 5 – 6; Fiedler 1992, 210). The finds unearthed *in situ* indicate that they were carried suspended on the belt, similar to the way depicted in the image of a Bulgarian warrior in the Menologion of Basil II (История на България 1981, 126, 143).

In terms of their functions, different and often contradictory opinions have been expressed in our scholarly literature. Some authors make the supposition that they were amulets (Станчев 1955, 207 – 208; Чангова 1972, 104). An additional argument in this respect are the examples of specially decorated specimens originating from Pliska and Preslav (Михайлов 1955, 65 – 68, обр. 19 – 20; Георгиев 1984, 16 – 19). A specimen with special decoration has also been interpreted as an "attribute of a high-ranked warrior" (Димитров 2009, 169). Utilitarian application as medical tools has been assumed[20] (Вържарова 1976, 411, note 6), as awls (Станчев, Иванов 1958, 107; Дончева-Петкова и др. 1999, 87, note 163), whip handles (Плетнёва 1967, 148; Атанасов 1987, 109), tools for stretching bowstrings (Fiedler 1992, 210, Anm. 641; Димитров 2009, 169), cattle prods (Barnea 1967a, 91), dibbles (Манојловић-Николић 2012, 54), tools for weaving ropes or fishing nets, or for decorating clay vessels (Wendel 1986, 161).[21]

Traditional Bulgarian culture does not preclude for apotropaic functions to be implemented by objects with a utilitarian purpose (Маринов 1994, 191 – 192, 195, 203, 208 – 210, etc.). On the contrary, the action itself enhances the apotropaic force of the tool. In this sense, the assumed protective and magical properties of the horns hardly exclude their practical application in everyday life. Moreover, they are found together with knives and flints whose functionality cannot be questioned. Observa-

[20] According to ethnographic evidence, hartshorn was attributed with magical and healing properties. Some of the common practices are related to ingesting small quantities of it (Маринов 1994, 140). "Lekovnitsi" ["Healers"] – a book describing traditional healing practices, which is believed to have been written in the Middle Ages, although the copies that have survived are from the 17th – 18th c., describes different applications of hartshorn as a remedy – through poultices of grated horn, or smoking the sore spot with a burning hartshorn (Милтенова 1992, 274, 276, 471), but there are no explicit instructions of its use as a medical tool.

[21] Counter arguments can be provided for almost all of the suggested identifications: Its application as a medical tool for extracting arrows presupposes specialised medical knowledge, which contradicts the widespread nature of these artefacts; the shape and relatively small size presuppose easy slipping of the handle if the whip is swung rapidly (Атанасов 1987, 109); in contradiction to the use in archery, it has been noted that they are found mainly in graves without any remains from bows (Fiedler 1992, 210); their being found mainly in the graves of males contradicts the use as knitting tools, which are usually used by women (Fiedler 1992, 210); and the absence of metal and bone "combs" for decorating ceramics among the grave inventory challenges such a use of the artefacts discussed here, as well.

tions on the objects from Petrova Niva Locality confirm traces of intensive use, very similar, as was already mentioned, to those in awls. This observation, showing friction of the sharpened part of the horns from a soft material (plant fibres or leather), the polishing along the arc-shaped curve, and the presence of these objects among a set of essential personal tools for male warriors allow us to make the supposition that they were used for disentangling (Bugarski 2016, 86 – 87), and not for tying knots („Knüpfer“ (German)) (Fiedler 1992, 210), („Knotenknüpfer“ (German)) (Kavánová 1995, 218). Such a hypothesis does not contradict the known archaeological contexts and is supported by Avar graves of horsemen, where processed deer horns have been found (Eisner 1952, 377, obr. 12, 8, 10, obr. 85, 13, obr. 94, 5; Bugarski 2016, 86 – 97).



Fig. 9. Traces of red paint on the top-most tine of a roe deer antler, Cat. No. 84

Обр. 9. Следи от червена боя по върхно разклонение от рог на срндак, Кат. № 84

The artefact from Dwelling No. 2 (Cat. No. 85) allows hypothetical reconstruction of the way it was carried by its owner. The pierced wide end was probably firmly attached to the belt with a strap or cord, as is shown in the much discussed (even if from a later period) miniature from the Menologion of Basil II (История на България 1981, 126, 143), and the sharpened end was probably inserted into the preserved iron hoop, which was in turn also firmly attached to the belt, thus providing comfort in carrying and convenience in use. The thin iron hoop onto which the horn object was mounted when found, however, allows for a horizontal suspension to the belt, in contrast to the method presented in the Menologion. Probably the smaller specimens (like the one described here under Cat. No. 86) could have hung freely, without causing discomfort to their owner.

The last horn artefact (Cat. No. 84) is a top-most tine of a roe deer antler. Similar to the ones described above, in the wide part at the cutting point, part of the spongy core of the horn was removed and holes were bored from two opposite sides (transverse to the branches) near the cut. There are no visible traces of abrasion resulting from stringing a suspension cord or strap through the holes, so such a possibility does not seem very probable.[22] It is possible that the small hole served as a prong for attachment to the wooden part, but the diameter of the holes does not imply great load. The natural irregularities on the outer surface of the horn have been carefully removed and it has been polished. Intensive sheen as a result of use can be traced along the tips and part of the inner arc. It is impossible to define the function of this item expressly for the time being, but the traces of contact with a soft material (wool or plant fibres, like flax and hemp), allow a supposed use as part of a distaff or nostepinne. In support of such a hypothesis, we should note the visible spots of yellow-red pigment at the tines, probably from contact with coloured material, as well as the filamentous imprint coloured in red, probably from fibre or thread (fig. 9) at the outer surface of the small branch.

Similar artefacts, known from excavated Early Medieval sites, have been interpreted as related to textile production (Дончева-Петкова и др. 1999, 82; Barnea 1967b, 119, fig. 50, 10, 14).

[22] Similar artefacts from Mikulčice have been defined as “Anhänger” (German) – pendant (Kavánová 1995, 231, 338, Abb. XLVII/10, 11, 373, Taf. 32/11, 12), without any further comments on their functions.

Conclusion

The review made of the bone, horn and antler artefacts originating from the settlement in Petrova Niva Locality, Sboryanovo Archaeological Reserve, raise several questions that the authors cannot provide answers to at present. Nevertheless, the analysis of the reviewed artefacts allows some preliminary conclusions.

Bones of small ruminants (sheep and goats) were mainly used as raw materials. Bones of large animals and game were used to a significantly lesser degree. There are individual artefacts made from pig bones, and no items made from bird or fish bones have been established. There is sporadic use of dog and horse bones. The preference for long bones from hind limbs is probably related to the higher bone density and the resulting increased durability and endurance of the artefacts.

Horn/antler artefacts are much fewer, and this raw material was used for crafting specific types of tools, it being a less accessible, but a higher quality material.

The set of tools used in the processing of bone tools and the traces of impact on them demonstrate a number of similarities with wood processing. Based on the quality and type of artefacts, the conclusion can be made that these are home-made tools, and not the work of experienced masters. In other words, medieval households depended on their own skills and abilities to acquire the tools they needed.

The variety of daily activities supplied with bone items crafted on site, such as piercing leather, expanding openings, disentangling knots, decorating ceramic artefacts, textile production (weaving/knitting, needle storage, spinning, etc.), is impressive.

The abundance of leather processing tools is probably evidence of the priority role of livestock breeding and related crafts in the economy of the researched settlement structure, for which hunting seems to have been an important, but secondary, activity.

The majority of the artefacts originating from the settlement are tools related to domestic production, although the numerous tools and the traces of intensive use could probably be explained by production not only for satisfying own needs, but also market-oriented.

The astragali, whose functions are impossible to determine unambiguously for now, like those of the horns, most probably were used for disentangling knots, can be viewed as personal belongings.

It is possible that one of the studied dwellings (No. 4), which stands out with its much bigger size than that of the rest, as well as the large number of bone awl finds (22), functioned as a workshop related to leather and textile processing.

The ongoing studies of the settlement in Petrova Niva Locality could contribute to and enrich the observations presented here, which are of a pre-release nature.

CATALOGUE OF FINDS

No.	Year	FIN	Inventory No.	Type of artefact	Material	Traces of processing and use	Function	Dimensions	Location	Figure
1	2009	1	А ОФ 2959	Astragalus	Sheep astragalus (talus dex.).	Subjected to a very high temperature, deformed surface, multiple smaller and larger cracks, greyish in colour, which makes the detection of traces of processing or use impossible. A hole was made in the middle of the object through bilateral boring with a thin auger.	Function unestablished.	GLl – 29.7 mm GLm – 28.3 mm Bd – 17.6 mm Td – 15.2 mm Hole diameter – 3 mm	From the interior of the ground building Grid Sq. 41/7 0.80 m from N 1.27 m from W Depth 232.32	Plate I: 1
2	2013	22	А ОФ 3105	Astragalus	Sheep astragalus (talus dex.).	A hole was pierced in the front part. Part of the bone is missing. A mesh of intersecting lines engraved with a fine blade on the plantar surface. Traces of colouring with ochre(?). The opposite side has been worn out to loss of shape.	Possible – gaming item.	GLl – 29.3 mm GLm – 26.3 mm Bd – 18.5 mm Td – 15.2 mm Hole diameter – 2.5 – 3.5 mm	Grid sq. 35/16 Depth 233.87 – 233.28	Plate I: 2
3	2017	38	А ОФ 3278	Astragalus	Sheep astragalus (talus dex.).	A hole was made in one end through unilateral boring with a thin auger. Insofar as the hole is accessible for review, traces of friction are visible on one side, probably from being worn on a cord. On the concave parts of the surface, there is polishing from friction in a soft material.	Amulet (?).	GLl – 29.3 mm GLm – 26.3 mm Bd – 18.5 mm Td – 15.2 mm Hole diameter – 3 – 4 mm	Grid sq. 42/17 From a layer during demounting of the stones from the enclosure wall above the S corner of Dwelling No. 4 Depth 233.2 – 232.66	Plate I: 3
4	2019	33	А ОФ 3329	Astragalus	Sheep astragalus (talus dex.).	A hole was made in one end through unilateral boring with a thin auger. Insofar as the hole is accessible for review, traces of friction are visible on one side, probably from being worn on a cord, but much slighter than in No. 3. There are two peelings on the outer bone surface, probably accidental damage and not intentionally created. On the concave parts of the surface, there is polishing from friction in a soft material.	Amulet (?).	GLl – 29.3 mm GLm – 26.5 mm Bd. – 15.2 mm Hole diameter – 2.5 mm	Baulk between Grid sq. 34/14 and 34/15 From layer with Depth 233.46 – 233.19	Plate I: 4
5	2007	34	А НСФ 131	Bone tube (Needle case?)	Femur sin. of a pig. The diaphysis of the bone was used.	The bone was cut transversely and additionally shaped on the outside and inside. Very diligently crafted. The inside was carved, wall thickness varies from 1 to 1.5 mm. The opening on one side is rectangular, and on the other – round. In the places accessible for review, the inner surface is very diligently smoothed. Small sections of polishing are visible, probably the result of use. The surface is polished, which destroyed the traces of preceding processing. Small particles of a bright green substance are visible in the cracks on the two flat sides.	Needle case.	Length – 70 mm Section in the middle – 13 – 19 mm Rectangular opening – 15 x 9 mm Diameter of round opening – 12.5 mm	From the interior of the ground building Grid Sq. 41/17 Depth 232.23 – 232.03	Plate I: 5, Fig. 4

No.	Year	FIN	Inventory No.	Type of artefact	Material	Traces of processing and use	Function	Dimensions	Location	Figure
6	2018	12	А ОФ 3299	Bone tube (Needle case?)	Tibia of sheep/goat.	Fragment, cut out from the middle part of the bone. The whole surface is diligently polished and additionally glossed from being held in hand. The back part is carefully cut off and rounded, a slight sheen and transverse and longitudinal linear traces are visible in the inner part of the bone There is breakage in this part, but the presence of a slight sheen implies use after it happened. Probably as a result of the breakage, the tool was transformed – the working part was shaped through oblique splitting and a cross-cut. The working edge has a sheen and transverse linear traces on the ventral and dorsal parts, like traces of work on a soft material. The end edge is rounded in profile, its corners as well. Despite the breakage on one side of the "blade", the object was used afterwards, as is evidenced by the sheen on the side part.	Needle case. Unclear purpose after the additional processing. Probably after the second breakage in this part, the object served as a handle for some tool made of another material.	Preserved length – 75 mm Width max. – 25 mm Diameter max. – 14.5 mm Blade width – 8 mm Kd – 14 mm	Dwelling No. 9 Grid sq. 35/16 0.76 m from N 0.64 m from E Depth 233.15	Plate I: 6, Fig. 4
7	2015	45	А ОФ 3152	Awl	Tibia sin. of sheep/goat. The blade is formed in the proximal part of the bone, to the right.	Bone with a preserved epiphysis. The blade is formed by one oblique cut and two lateral chippings. The tip is thinned and its edges are smoothed through abrasive processing. Almost at the very tip, there is a contemporary micro-fracture. The whole surface of the artefact is polished, probably held in hand without a handle. Grey-beige colour with multiple light grey spots and dashes, probably from its stay in the soil. Micro linear traces uncovered on the very tip, especially on its ventral part.	Awl for leather. Well-preserved.	Length – 145 mm Width max. – 25 x 18 mm Tip – 2 mm Kd – 13.5 mm Bd – 24 mm	Grid sq. 34/19 Next to the fireplace on the surface, but at a lower level. 2.55 m from N 2.16 m from E Depth 233.32	Plate II: 7
8	2013	32	А ОФ 3114	Awl	Tibia sin. of sheep/goat/deer. The proximal and middle part of a young individual was used.	Bone with an evenly cut off end. The cut is smooth, probably hacked with an axe, or with a saw with small teeth. The edges of the cut are slightly rounded, probably the result of use. The handle is in the proximal part of the bone, additionally smoothed on all sides. The blade is formed in the dorsal part of the bone. It was crafted by the oblique longitudinal chippings with a metal blade, later levelled with abrasive and polishing. The blade is thinned with a coarse and a fine abrasive, the tip is very pointed, without damages. The whole surface of the tool is polished, it is hard to distinguish technological from utilisation traces. More intensive sheen can be established 10 mm from the tip to the epiphysis.	Awl for leather.	Length – 123 mm Width max. – 24 x 21 mm Tip – 0.5 mm	Dwelling No. 5 Grid sq. 35/21 Depth 233.44 – 232.65	Plate II: 8
9	2015	55	А ОФ 3155	Awl	Tibia of sheep/goat.	Bone with a preserved epiphysis. The blade was crafter by one oblique longitudinal hack, the resulting veneer is levelled through abrasive processing and polishing. The edges of the split upwards bone are processed with coarse abrasive, afterwards polished (technologically or by use). Utilisation traces in the form of a sheen and fine linear traces are visible towards the tip. The whole surface of the artefact is polished, the result of being held in hand without a handle. On one side, starting at 28 mm from the epiphysis and ending at 34 mm from the tip, there is a row of transverse incisions at irregular 3 – 4 mm intervals, made with a heated needle.	Awl and expander for a soft material (leather?).	Length – 120 mm Width max. – 15 x 23.5 mm Tip – 3 mm	Dwelling No. 5 Grid sq. 35/21 1.80 m from E 1.20 m from N Depth 232.56	Plate II: 9

No.	Year	FIN	Inventory No.	Type of artefact	Material	Traces of processing and use	Function	Dimensions	Location	Figure
10	2008	36	А НСФ 139	Awl	Diaphysis of tibia dex. of sheep/goat. The distal epiphysis fell off – young animal, before the beginning of the second year. The awl blade is close to crista tibiae.	The whole surface is polished, no distinguishable traces of preceding processing, except for some small sections. Traces of coarse abrasive near the beginning of the blade. The blade was formed by three longitudinal hacks, the veneers of two of them are clearly visible, and the third one has been obliterated by polishing. The tool was repaired, because it had been cracked at the blade. The area around the crack was chipped, two incisions were made (possibly with a heated metal awl), through which a binding thread went in order to close the crack and extend the use of the awl. The tool was used without an additional handle, which is clear from its whole surface being polished. The most intensive polishing is up to 10 mm from the tip, which implies that this was the most frequently used depth of penetration of the tool.	Awl on a soft material – possibly leather, or textile.	Length – 119 mm Thickness – 10 – 13 mm Width max. – 20 x 15 mm Tip length – 25 mm Tip – 2 mm	Probably from the fill of Dwelling No. 2 Grid sq. 34/25 1.50 m from S 0.70 m from E Depth 233.47	Plate II: 10
11	2009	68		Awl	Diaphysis of tibia dex. of a sheep/goat.	Bone with a cutoff epiphysis and chipping at the end, where it is supposed to be. The blade was formed by two-stage hacking, from which a two-stage veneer, smoothed by polishing, remained. The tip was shaped with abrasive and thorough polishing. The surface of the whole tool is also polished, possibly held in hand, without a handle. The polishing of the whole surface makes it difficult to distinguish technological from utilisation traces. A slight sheen and single linear traces are visible on the working tip.	Awl-expander for leather, little used.	Length – 112 mm Diameter – 12 mm Tip – 1.5 mm	From the interior of the ground building Grid Sq. 41/19 Depth 233.80 – 233.60	Plate III: 11
12	2016	56	А ОФ 3230	Awl	Tibia dex. of sheep/goat. The distal epiphysis fell of – young individual (aged younger than 15 – 20 months).	The surface is oxidised to a grey colour, probably from contact with organic compounds in the soil. Traces of processing (coarse abrasive and polishing along the whole artefact, cutting, hacking and coarse abrasive on the cut part). Sheen and slight traces of use.	Awl for soft material, probably leather, little used.	Length – 107 mm Width max. – 35 mm Tip – 9 mm	Dwelling No. 4 Grid sq. 42/12 From the pit at the S profile of the Grid square 0.66 m from S 2.10 m from W Depth 231.59	Plate III: 12, Fig. 2, Fig. 3
13	2016	59	А ОФ 3228	Awl	Radius sin. of sheep/goat. The distal half of the bone was used.	Bone with a preserved epiphysis. The tip is in the diaphysis area, and the distal epiphysis was used as a handle. The blade was formed through oblique hacking with two veneers, shaped with abrasive.	Awl for leather.	Length – 107 mm Width max. – 28 mm Tip – 9 mm Kd – 14 mm Bd – 28.5 mm	Dwelling No. 4 Grid sq. 42/12 From the fill of the dwelling pit	Plate III: 13
14	2015	42	А ОФ 3150	Awl	Tibia dex. of a goat. The distal half was used. Exostoses in the distal epiphysis.	Bone with a preserved epiphysis. The tip was formed by oblique cutting and longitudinal splitting of the bone, with one additional hacking on one side. Additionally shaped with abrasive from the cut part. The whole surface of the object is polished. The tip broke off in the Middle Ages, which precludes any tracing of use.	Possible – awl-expander.	Length – 105 mm Width max. – 16 x 40 mm Tip – 4 mm Kd – 15.3 mm Bd – 25.3 mm	Probably from the pit of Dwelling No. 4a Grid sq. 42/11 3.45 m from E 1.48 m from S Depth 232.2	Plate III: 14

No.	Year	FIN	Inventory No.	Type of artefact	Material	Traces of processing and use	Function	Dimensions	Location	Figure
15	2013	20	А ОФ 3111	Awl	Distal part of the diaphysis of tibia sin. of sheep/goat.	The pointed part is around the middle part of the bone, the handle is in the distal end. The blade was formed through oblique cutting of the bone to the middle, subsequent longitudinal split, with additional thinning with abrasive and polishing. The tip is slightly blunted. The whole tool is polished, the result of being held in hand without a handle. It is difficult to distinguish technological from utilisation traces.	Awl for leather or another soft material.	Length – 104 mm Width max. – 19 x 24 mm Tip – 2 mm Kd – 13.5 mm Bd – 24.5 mm	Probably from the pit of Dwelling No. 2 or 2a Grid sq. 41/5 baulk with 34/25 Depth 233.29 – 232.94	Plate IV: 15
16	2016	58	А ОФ 3229	Awl	Tibia sin. of a rabbit.	Bone with preserved epiphysis. The blade is formed at the diaphysis and the epiphysis was used as a handle. Traces of processing (coarse abrasive and polishing) along the whole artefact, sheen, including on parts of the epiphysis – held in hand during work. Slight linear and concentric threadlike traces along the blade, very well-poslished cut, the result of use.	Awl-expander for leather.	Length – 102 mm Width max. – 11 x 13.5 mm Tip – 9 mm Kd – 9.4 mm Bd – 20.7 mm	Dwelling No. 4 Grid sq. 42/12 From the pit at the S profile of the Grid square 0.66 m from S 2.10 m from W Depth 231.59	Plate IV: 16
17	2016	63	А ОФ 3244	Awl	Tibia sin. of sheep/goat. The distal half of the bone was used.	Bone with a preserved epiphysis. Traces from attempts at splitting with a sharp object, possibly metal. Big veneers from hacking. The thinned part towards the blade was processed with abrasive and polished. The remaining part is only slightly polished, possibly from work by hand.	Awl-expander for leather.	Length – 100 mm Width max. – 26 mm Tip – 6 mm Kd – 16 mm Bd – 26.2 mm	Dwelling No. 4 Grid sq. 42/12 From the pit at the S profile of the Grid square 1.64 m from W 1.10 m from S Depth 231.22	Plate IV: 17
18	2013	39	А ОФ 3116	Awl	Tibia sin. of sheep/goat. The distal half of the bone was used.	Bone with a preserved epiphysis. The blade is formed by cross section, followed by longitudinal split plus two longitudinal chisels, whose veneers are levelled by the polishing and probable work by hand. The whole surface is polished, in individual parts to the point, pre-treatment with abrasive can be traced. The tip is blunted. There are slight linear traces and enhanced sheen near the tip.	Awl for leather, little used.	Length – 98 mm Width max. – 19 x 22 mm Tip – 3 mm Kd – 13.5 mm Bd – 24.5 mm	Utility building Grid sq. 34/23 3.70 m from E On the N line of the Grid square Depth 233.00	Plate IV: 18
19	2016	36	А ОФ 3239	Awl	Femur dex. of a dog.	Massive bone with a preserved epiphysis. The distal epiphysis was used for gripping and pressure. The surface is with a dark patine, probably the result of exposure to fire or decay. The blade was shaped with abrasive. Traces from splitting are covered by the cipher cartouche. Polished surface to the beginning of the epiphysis.	Little used awl for leather (?).	Length – 97 mm Width max. – 29 mm Tip – 13 mm Bd – 29 mm	Dwelling No. 4 Grid sq. 42/12 1.50 m from S 1.97 m from W Depth 231.86	Plate V: 19
20	2012	42	А ОФ 3060	Awl	Tibia sin. of sheep/goat. The distal half of the bone was used.	Bone with a preserved epiphysis. The distal end was used as a handle. The surface is greyish, probably due to contact with decaying organics which permeated the pores and the small cracks. Part of the epiphysis is missing (freshly broken off, the result of a blow with a sharp tool). The part fitting the blade cut was broken off in the Middle Ages. There is hacking on one side of the same cut. Traces of abrasive processing visible under the polishing. The tip is rounded, slight beating is visible, as from work on soft material on a hard base.	Awl for leather. Slight traces of use.	Length – 96 mm Width max. – 19 mm Tip – 2 mm Kd – 14.5 mm Bd – 26 mm	Grid sq. 41/5 2.60 m from W 1.62 m from N Depth 233.37 South of Dwelling 2a and higher than the level, where its digging is registered	Plate V: 20

No.	Year	FIN	Inventory No.	Type of artefact	Material	Traces of processing and use	Function	Dimensions	Location	Figure
21	2009	25	A OΦ 2967	Awl	Tibia dex. of a sheep – adult.	Bone with a preserved epiphysis. The lower half of the diaphysis and the lower epiphysis were used. The blade was formed by three veneers of longitudinal hacking, the first beginning from a nooch with a thin metal blade. The whole surface is polished, which obliterated the traces of preceding processing. Coarse abrasive can be traced only towards the tip, from the dorsal side and along the edges from chipping the blade. The awl tip has been beaten by use on hard material (oxhide, dry leather) or soft material on a hard pad (wood). The polishing on the whole surface makes it difficult to distinguish technological from utilisation traces, but on the very tip of the blade, characteristic thread-like traces are observed.	Awl-expander for hard leather.	Length – 95 mm Width max. – 15 x 22 mm Tip – 1.5 mm	From the interior of the ground building Grid Sq. 41/13 Depth 232.83 – 232.65	Plate V: 21
22	2013	30	A OΦ 3108	Awl	Tibia dex. of a sheep. The distal epiphysis is broken off.	Bone with the epiphysis broken off. One veneer from a cutting tool has been preserved, the breakage is probably a result of processing. The blade was additionally shaped via abrasive processing. The tip is beaten (micro-fracture), probably during work with a hard material (dry thick leather, oxhide), or on a hard pad. The whole surface, with the exception of a small section around the breakage of the epiphysis, is polished.	Awl for thick leather (oxhide?).	Length – 94 mm Tip – 1 mm Bd – 24 mm Kd – 14 mm	Dwelling No. 5 Grid sq: 35/21 0.90 m from E 0.50 m from N Depth 232.77	Plate V: 22
23	2013	33	A OΦ 3113	Awl	Metatarsus sin. of sheep/goat. The upper and middle parts of the bone were used.	Bone, split in two lengthwise. The epiphysis is also split, but was additionally processed. The tip was additionally shaped through chipping on one side and abrasive processing. The whole surface of the item has an intensive sheen. Individual traces characteristic of awl for leather are observed around the tip.	Awl for leather, little used.	Length – 94 mm Width max. – 18 mm Tip – 2 mm	Probably from the pit of Dwelling No. 4 Grid sq: 42/12 Depth 231.94 – 231.64 (NE) 231.72 – 231.51 (SW)	Plate V: 23
24	2015	44	A OΦ 3151	Awl	Distal half of tibia sin. of sheep/goat.	Bone with a preserved epiphysis. The blade was formed with one oblique longitudinal hack and a second, short, auxiliary, on one side at 20 mm under the tip. The tip and the whole surface of the item are very well-polished, which levelled even the abrasive processing, traceable only in individual sections, for the tip.	Awl (expander?) for soft material (leather or textile).	Length – 93 mm Width max. – 14 x 23.5 mm Tip – 3 mm Kd – 14.2 mm Bd – 24 mm	Dwelling No. 5 Grid sq. 35/21 0.90 m from N 0.85 m from E Depth 232.92	Plate VI: 24
25	2017	3	A OΦ 3268	Awl	Distal half of tibia dex. of sheep/goat. The distal epiphysis fell off, which means that the animal was young.	Bone with the epiphysis fallen off. The tip is in the middle part of the bone, the distal end of the diaphysis was used as a handle. The tip was formed by single-veneer hacking, followed by two oblique, slightly asymmetric cuts, processed with coarse and fine abrasive and partially polished. The surface of the item has partial spotted polishing, probably the result of work by hand. The awl tip is preserved, slight traces of work in the form of partial polishing.	Awl for leather, little used.	Length – 92 mm Width max. – 23 mm Tip diameter – 1 mm	Dwelling No. 4a Baulk between Grid sq. 42/11 and 42/16	Plate VI: 25

No.	Year	FIN	Inventory No.	Type of artefact	Material	Traces of processing and use	Function	Dimensions	Location	Figure
26	2012	48	А ОФ 3063	Awl	Tibia dex. of a dog. The distal part of the bone is broken.	The blade was formed by one main and one additional oblique longitudinal hack with a metal blade. The tip is rounded (about 60 degrees). The whole surface is polished. The tool was probably held in hand, without a handle. The edges of the blade are rounded and polished to 10 mm from the tip. The tool entered the processed material up to about 40 mm, insofar as the polishing of the edges can be used to judge, but the most intensive sheen is up to 25 mm from the tip. Slight concentric linear traces and strong sheen.	Awl for leather, little used.	Length – 87 mm Width max. – 19 mm Tip – 2 mm	Probably from the fill of Dwelling No. 7 Grid sq. 42/6 0.84 m from E 2.20 m from S Depth 233.24	Plate VI: 26
27	2017	52	А ОФ 3277	Awl	Tibia sin. of sheep/goat. The distal part of the bone was used.	Bone with a preserved epiphysis. The blade was formed by one main and one additional oblique longitudinal hack with a metal blade. Preserved traces of abrasive processing in the formation of the blade. The whole surface is polished. The tool was probably held in hand, without a handle. The edges of the blade are rounded and polished to 24 mm from the tip. Slight concentric linear traces and strong sheen.	Awl-expander for a soft material (leather).	Length – 87 mm Width max. – 19 – 26 mm Tip – 2 mm Bd – 26 mm	Dwelling No. 4 Grid sq. 42/12 3.30 m from E 0.20 m from S Depth 231.70	Plate VI: 27, Fig. 2
28	2015	50	А ОФ 3154	Awl	Tibia dex. of sheep/goat.	Bone with a preserved epiphysis. The blade was formed with two oblique hacks lengthwise, with follow-up abrasive processing. One of the side edges was damaged in antiquity. The tip is broken and beaten, obviously used to process very hard material, or on a hard pad (wood). The whole surface of the artefact is polished, the result of being held in hand without a handle. Few utilisation traces.	Awl for work with a hard material (leather, oxhide?), little used.	Length – 86 mm Width max. – 16 x 28 mm Tip – 4 mm Kd – 15 mm Bd – 27 mm	Grid sq. 34/20 Depth 233.65 – 233.31	Plate VI: 28
29	2008	16	А НСФ 166	Awl	Distal part of the diaphysis of tibia sin. of sheep/goat. The distal epiphysis did not fuse with the rest of the bone and fell off. Consequently, the animal was young – less than 15 – 20 months old. The bone is more massive and obviously from a bigger individual (probably male).	Bone without a preserved epiphysis. A hole in the shape of an irregular circle was bored in the middle of the epiphysis, probably for attaching a handle. The blade was formed with several longitudinal hacks with a blunt metal blade. The whole surface of the bone, with the exception of small sections under the epiphysis, is well-polished. The tip, as a whole, was rounded, later on in the work process, dents and short deep scratches were formed. Scratches are also observed on the side parts of the blade, individual on the round part of the bone.	Function unestablished.	Length – 85 mm Length of working part – 33 mm Thickness – 26 – 18 – 3 mm Width max. – 25 x 21 mm Hole width max. diameter – 11 – 10 mm Thickness tip – 3.5 mm Length blade – 25 mm	Grid sq. 41/4 From the outer side of the north stones of Dwelling No. 1 2.90 m from N 3.10 m from W Depth 232.44	Plate VII: 29

No.	Year	FIN	Inventory No.	Type of artefact	Material	Traces of processing and use	Function	Dimensions	Location	Figure
30	2015	34	A OФ 3149	Awl	Radius sin. of a dog.	Bone with a preserved epiphysis. The tip was formed with one oblique cutting and splitting, two additional side hacks and completed with abrasive. Part of the epiphysis was also processed with abrasive, probably to facilitate work. The whole surface of the object is polished. The tip is stained with a hard brownish matter – rust or organics. As a result, no utilisation traces are distinguished.	Function unestablished.	Length – 85 mm Width max. – 16 x 11 mm Tip – 2 mm Bd – 17.5 mm	Dwelling No. 4a Grid sq. 42/16 2.40 m from E 0.55 m from N Depth 231.32	Plate VII: 30
31	2016	65	A OФ 3242	Awl	Front metacarpus sin. of a sheep. The distal part of the bone was used.	Bone with a preserved epiphysis. On the outer surface – pits, probably the result of environmental impact. The blade was formed by oblique hacking, damaged by contemporary breakage. The blade was shaped with abrasive. The edges of the cut are rounded and polished. The tip, which was probably sharper, is broken off.	Awl-piercer for leather.	Length – 85 mm Width max. – 24 mm Tip – 9 mm Kd – 25 mm Bd – 14 mm	Dwelling No. 6 Grid sq. 41/10 0.05 m from E 3.90 m from N Depth 232.69	Plate VII: 31
32	2019	9	A OФ 3327	Awl	Tibia dex. of a sheep.	Bone with a preserved epiphysis. The blade was formed by two long veneers of hacking and completed with abrasive, the traces of which are almost entirely obliterated on the tip and the back part of the subsequent utilisation sheen, but they are very clear on the ventral edges of the blade. The whole tool is polished, probably held in hand, without a handle.	Awl for leather.	Length – 83 mm Width max. – 20 – 20 mm Tip – 2 mm Kd – 24 mm	Dwellings No. 5 and 5a Grid sq. 35/22 From the fill of a pit in the SE part of the dwelling 0.10 m from W 0.10 m from N Depth 232.63	Plate VII: 32
33	2019	8	A OФ 3326	Awl	Metacarpus sin. of a horse.	Bone with a preserved epiphysis. The blade was shaped with abrasive, no veneers from hacking. Traces of the abrasive are clearly visible under the utilisation polishing. In the opposite end – the bone irregularities are chipped and additionally smoothed. Slight sheen visible along the whole body of the tool, probably as a result of being held in hand, without a handle.	Awl for leather.	Length – 82 mm Width max. – 18 – 25.5 mm Tip – 2 mm	Probably from the pit of Dwelling No. 9 Grid sq. 34/15 0.35 m from S 0.20 m from E Depth 233.53	Plate VII: 33
34	2019	6	A OФ 3325	Awl	Tibia dex. of a sheep/goat.	Bone with a preserved epiphysis. The blade was formed by two hacking veneers, the larger one beginning with a cross-cut. They were additionaly shaped with abrasive, the traces of which are almost entirely obliterated by the subsequent polishing. The whole tool is polished, probably the result of being held in hand without a handle. Traces of utilisation polishing on the ventral edges.	Awl for leather.	Length – 81 mm Width max. – 20 – 26 mm Tip – 2 mm Kd – 14.5 mm Bd – 25 mm	Grid sq. 34/14 Under the layer of stones from the enclosure wall 2 m from S 1.76 m from W Depth 233.50	Plate VIII: 34, Fig. 2
35	2015	73	A OФ 3156	Awl	Tibia sin. of sheep/goat. The distal part of the bone was used.	Bone with a preserved epiphysis. Part of the epiphysis fell off with a contemporary breakage. The working end is formed from the middle part of the bone. The tip was formed by one oblique longitudinal hack at 25 mm from the epiphysis. At 15 mm from the tip, there is a second, smaller hack for additional sharpening, visible traces of additional abrasive processing. The whole surface of the tool artefact is polished, the result of being held in hand.	Awl for leather.	Length – 80 mm Width max. – 19 x 23 mm Tip – 3 mm	Dwelling No. 5 Grid sq. 35/16 Depth 233.57 – 233.21 (NE) 233.33 – 232.99 (SW)	Plate VIII: 35

No.	Year	FIN	Inventory No.	Type of artefact	Material	Traces of processing and use	Function	Dimensions	Location	Figure
36	2006	2	А НСФ 123	Awl	Tibia sin. of sheep/goat. The distal epiphysis is completely fused with the diaphysis. It is from a grown-up individual. The parts of the bone which are fit for measurement are few.	Bone with a preserved epiphysis, the distal part of the bone was used. The blade was formed by one longitudinal hack and completed with several lateral ones. The tip was additionally sharpened in the same way, probably after breakage in the process of work. The whole surface of the bone and, partially, the epiphysis is polished due to intensive use and work without a handle, so almost no preceding processing is visible, nearly obliterated traces of abrasive are visible in individual places. The tool was used on a wood or another hard pad. On one side of the working tip, there are linear traces showing that the material processed was hard (oxhide or dry leather). Near the tip there is a small dark stain, the result of contact with burnt organic matter.	Awl for work with a hard material (leather, oxhide?).	Length – 80 mm Width max. – 20 x 25 mm Diameter under the notch forming the working part – 15 mm Bd – 25.5 mm Kd – 14.3 mm	Dwelling No. 1 Grid sq. 41/9 0.40 m from E 0.30 m from N Depth 232.81	Plate VIII: 36, Fig. 5
37	2016	57	А ОФ 3243	Awl	Distal part of tibia sin. of a rabbit.	The blade was formed by oblique two-faceted hacking and abrasive processing. The whole surface is polished. Linear traces on the blade.	Awl for leather.	Length – 80 mm Width max. – 15 mm Tip – 9 mm Kd – 12 mm Bd – 8.5 mm	Dwelling No. 4 Grid sq. 42/12 From the pit at the S profile of the Grid square 0.66 m from S 2.10 m from W Depth 231.59	Plate VIII: 37
38	2017	9	А ОФ 3269	Awl	Distal half of tibia sin. of sheep/goat. Part of the distal epiphysis fell off – a young animal.	The surface of the bone is not processed, but polishing is visible, probably the result of work by hand. The tip of the awl is towards the middle part of the bone. The blade was formed by one oblique hack with a metal blade and the edges were additionally levelled and smoothed with abrasive. The blade entered the processed material up to 15 mm, but most often not more than 5 mm. Concentric linear traces visible on the working part.	Awl for leather.	Length – 80 mm Width max. – 25 mm Tip – 1.5 mm	Dwelling No. 5 Grid sq. 35/21 Pit next to the E profile 0.30 m from N 0.90 m from E Depth 232.62	Plate VIII: 38
39	2017	21	А ОФ 3266	Awl	Tibia dex. of sheep/goat. The distal half of the bone was used.	Bone with the epiphysis broken off. The blade was formed by two-faceted hacking and additional cutting to form a shoulder on the tip of one side. Additional abrasive processing and polishing traces are visible, probably the result of the work process. The surface of the bone is polished, on the area around the cut epiphysis, there are traces implying probable use with a handle.	Awl for leather, little used.	Length – 80 mm Width max. – 23 mm Tip – 2 mm	Grid sq. 34/19 2.25 m from W 1.75 m from N Depth 233.76	Plate VIII: 39
40	2017	12	А ОФ 3270	Awl	Distal half of tibia sin. of sheep/goat.	Bone with a preserved epiphysis. The surface of the item is greyish, due to contact with decaying organic matter, spotted polishing due to being held in hand. The tip of the awl is towards the middle part of the bone. The blade was formed by step-hacking and two oblique cuts, then processed with coarse abrasive. The tool was used intensively and utilisation polishing levelled the deep furrows from the abrasive in places. The tip is beaten and blunted, which implies it was used closely on a hard surface and processed (potentially) harder material, which it entered to about 8 mm.	Awl for work with a hard material (leather, oxhide?).	Length – 78 mm Width max. – 31 mm Tip – 2 mm Bd – 32 mm	Dwelling No. 5 Grid sq. 35/16 Pit next to the E profile 0.60 m from E On the S line of the Grid square Depth 232.47	Plate IX: 40, Fig. 5

No.	Year	FIN	Inventory No.	Type of artefact	Material	Traces of processing and use	Function	Dimensions	Location	Figure
41	2012	46	A OФ 3062	Awl	Tibia dex. of sheep/goat. The distal part of the bone was used.	Bone with a preserved epiphysis. The blade was formed by two oblique longitudinal hacks with a metal blade. The tip is rounded (about 60 degrees) and processed to the required shape with abrasive prior to polishing. The tool was probably held in hand, without a handle. The distal epiphysis is rubbed off transversely to provide comfort for pressure with the palm. The edges of the blade are rounded and polished to 13 mm from the tip. The tip is rounded, but not beaten, and has a vertical pointed sheen. The blade entered the processed soft material to a depth of about 40 – 50 mm, but the most intensive sheen is observed up to about 25 mm from the tip in the direction of the epiphysis.	Awl for leather or another soft material.	Length – 79 mm Width max. – 20 x 27 mm Tip – 2 mm Bd – 27 mm	From the interior of the ground building Grid Sq. 41/24 1.58 m from E 1.54 m from N Depth 231.85	Plate IX: 41
42	2006	1	A HCФ 122	Awl	Tibia dex. of a rabbit. Well-preserved lower part. The distal epiphysis is completely fused with the diaphysis. It is from an adult individual. The distal part of the shin was used as a handle. The parts of the bone which are fit for measurement are few.	Bone with a preserved epiphysis. The blade was formed by two longitudinal hacks, preceded by a cross notch marking the starting point. They were made with a thin metal blade. The tip was completed with an abrasive – longitudinally and transversely, partially along the epiphysis as well. The whole surface of the artefact is polished, probably the result of being held in hand. Traces of work in the form of stronger polishing close to the tip and thin linear traces. The tip broke off in the process of work, but the awl was used after that.	Awl for leather.	Length – 77.5 mm Width max. – 1.1 x 1.6 mm Diameter bone – 8 mm Tip – 0.9 mm Bd – 25.5 mm	Dwelling No. 1 Grid sq. 41/10 1 m from W 1 m from N Depth 232.25	Plate IX: 42
43	2016	10	A OФ 3234	Awl	Radius of sheep/goat. The tip is in the diaphysis area, and the proximal epiphysis was used as a handle.	Bone with a partially preserved epiphysis. The blade was formed by oblique hacking and shaped with abrasive. The epiphysis was laterally cut and in places, a slight sheen is visible, the tool was probably held with a handle.	Awl and expander for leather.	Length – 76 mm Width max. – 17 mm Tip – 7 mm	Dwelling No. 4 Grid sq. 42/11 1.21 m from E 2.55 m from S Depth 232.17	Plate IX: 43
44	2016	23	A OФ 3227	Awl	Tibia dex. of sheep/goat. The distal half was used.	Bone with a preserved epiphysis. The blade was formed the same way as in most awls – two veneers from hacking, the notches are visible, most probably made with a metal blade. The awl blade was processed with two types of abrasive and polished, the surface is polished up to 15 mm under the epiphysis.	Awl for leather, or another soft material.	Length – 76 mm Width max. – 27 mm Tip – 9 mm Kd – 16.5 mm Bd – 28 mm	Dwelling No. 6 Grid sq. 42/6 3.10 m from S 0.95 m from W Depth 232.69	Plate IX: 44

No.	Year	FIN	Inventory No.	Type of artefact	Material	Traces of processing and use	Function	Dimensions	Location	Figure
45	2015	29		Awl	Metatarsus sin. of sheep/goat. The upper proximal half was used.	The epiphysis was processed and levelled along the perimeter with abrasive. The tip part was formed with a single veneer oblique hack lengthwise. The edges were processed with abrasive and polished. The whole surface of the object is polished. The preliminary marking on the notch is visible. The place where a tip is to be expected, there is an oblique transverse cut and slight concentric traces are visible on the inside. A large crack goes through the whole tool lengthwise.	It is possible that after the awl was damaged, it was cut in the right place and used as a handle for another tool.	Length – 75 mm Width max. – 20 Width min. – 9 mm Bp – 21 mm	Grid sq. 41/3 0.20 m from N 1.40 m from E Depth 232.72	Plate X: 45
46	2016	1	A ОФ 3233	Awl	Tibia sin. of sheep/goat.	Bone with a preserved epiphysis. The blade was formed by a clean oblique cut. Two chamfers from the hacking are visible, edges smoothed by use. The surface was processed with coarse and finer abrasive. Traces of use are visible around the blade.	Awl-expander for leather.	Length – 74 mm Width max. – 26 mm Tip – 9 mm Bd – 24.5 mm	Dwelling No. 4a Grid sq. 42/11 4.10 m from N 3.35 m from E Depth 232.39 From the cultural layer under the stones demounted from the enclosure wall	Plate X: 46
47	2013	21	A ОФ 3109	Awl	Distal fragment from metacarpus sin. of a ram. The blade is in the middle part of the diaphysis.	Bone with missing epiphysis. The cut is uneven and unsmoothed. The blade was formed by two longitudinal chippings with a metal blade. The sides at the tip form an angle of about 60 degrees. Additionally shaped with abrasive. Slight traces of use. The whole surface of the tool is polished.	Awl-expander for leather or another soft material.	Length – 74 mm Width max. – 14 x 27 mm Tip – 2 mm	From the interior of the ground building Grid Sq. 41/7 Depth 232.08 – 231.97 (N) 232.06 – 231.91 (S)	Plate X: 47
48	2015	48	A ОФ 3153	Awl	Metatarsus dex. of sheep/goat. The blade is in the middle part of the diaphysis.	Bone with a preserved epiphysis. The blade was formed by one oblique cross and longitudinal hack. The tip and adjacent edges were processed with coarse abrasive – the traces are visible under the polishing. The whole surface is polished, the awl was used directly by hand, without a handle. The part connecting the bone with the joint is intact.	Awl and expander for leather.	Length – 71 mm Width max. – 16 x 24 mm Tip – 2 mm	Dwelling No. 5 Grid sq. 35/21 0.93 m from E 1.30 m from N Depth 232.77	Plate X: 48
49	2012	54	A НСФ 273	Awl	Tibia dex. of sheep/goat, subsequently broken in the area of the distal epiphysis.	The blade was formed by oblique longitudinal hacking, from which one big veneer remained, probably a few smaller ones, too, but only the incisions marking the spot remained from the latter. The whole tool is polished to the degree that technological traces cannot be distinguished from utilisation ones. A large crack passing through the tip.	Function unestablished.	Length – 71 mm Width max. – 18 mm Tip – 3 mm	From the interior of the ground building Grid Sq. 41/24 Depth 232.23 – 231.80	Plate XI: 49

No.	Year	FIN	Inventory No.	Type of artefact	Material	Traces of processing and use	Function	Dimensions	Location	Figure
50	2017	33	А ОФ 3267	Awl	Distal fragment from metacarpus sin. of a ram. The blade is in the middle part of the diaphysis.	Bone with a preserved epiphysis. The working part was formed by a oblique cut with a large and an additional veneer made with a metal tool. Part of the surface, working tip and both sides of the cut were processed with coarse and fine abrasive and polished. The tool was held in hand and entered the processed material to about 30 mm. The tip is rounded, sheen on all sides. Concentric thread-like traces visible on the dorsal part.	Awl-expander for leather.	Length – 69 mm Epiphysis – 39 mm Tip – 1 mm Bd – 32 mm	Dwelling No. 4 Baulk between Grid sq. 42/11 and 42/12 Depth from 232.71 (N) and from 232.65 (S), to floor level	Plate XI: 50
51	2012	40	А ОФ 3059	Awl	Metatarsus sin. of sheep/goat.	Bone with a preserved epiphysis. The blade was formed by an oblique longitudinal cut, probably two-faceted. The bone is slightly crushed at this place. The edges of the hole forming the blade were additionally smoothed with fine abrasive and polished. Traces of preceding processing are visible on the epiphysis, which was processed with abrasive on the side (probably for inserting into a handle) and towards the blade tip on the dorsal side, also from abrasive. The whole surface is polished. Part of the polishing is probably utilisation, but these sections are hard to separate. The tip is rounded, enhanced sheen traces at places.	Little used awl for soft material (leather?).	Length – 68 mm Width max. – 20 x 21 mm Tip – 2 mm Bp – 20 mm	Dwelling No. 2 Grid sq. 35/21 Depth 233.15 – 232.44	Plate XI: 51
52	2016	11	А ОФ 3235	Awl	Tibia sin. of sheep/goat. Part of the diaphysis and the sharp tip are present.	Bone, cut obliquely. The epiphysis is missing. The surface has darkened from staying in the soil. The blade was formed with one cross notch and oblique splitting of the bone, the ventral side was levelled with coarse abrasive. No traces of use visible, except for a very slight polishing on the dorsal side, it is possible that the awl was in acidic soil, which has an adverse effect on bone material, or it was just used very little.	No traces of use.	Length – 66 mm Width max. – 21 mm Tip – 9 mm	Dwelling No. 4 Grid sq. 42/12 0.65 m from W 1.50 m from S Depth 232.47	Plate XI: 52
53	2015	14	А ОФ 3146	Awl	Ulna sin. of a dog. The blade was formed in the distal part of the bone.	The blade was formed by one oblique hack lengthwise and shaped with abrasive. The olecranon is cut and rounded to form a handle, easy to grip and apply pressure. The whole surface is polished, characteristic traces visible on the tip.	Awl for leather.	Length – 127 mm Width max. – 2 x 13 mm Tip – 2 mm	Dwelling No. 4 Grid sq. 42/11 2.08 m from E 1.51 m from S Depth 232.48	Plate XII: 53
54	2019	22	А ОФ 3328	Awl	Proximal half of ulna sin. of a dog.	Bone with a preserved joint fossa. The blade was formed by two oblique step-veneers and shaped with abrasive. Utilisation polishing on the tip and side edges, not so prominent polishing along the body.	Awl for leather, little used.	Length – 94 mm Width max. – 25 mm Tip – 2 mm	Dwelling No. 4 Floor level Grid sq. 42/12 0.85 m from S 4 m from E Depth 231.70	Plate XII: 54
55	2013	38	А ОФ 3115	Awl	Ulna sin. of a dog. The upper half of the bone was used.	The blade was formed by breaking the bone longitudinally and processed with coarse and fine abrasive. The tip is very sharp, traces of blunting and wear. The whole item is polished, as a result of which utilisation traces are slightly distinguishable from technological ones.	Awl for leather, little used.	Length – 84 mm Width max. – 22 mm Tip – 1 mm Kto – 22 mm Tra – 26 mm	Dwelling No. 2 Grid sq. 34/25 Depth 233.17 – 232.52	Plate XII: 55

No.	Year	FIN	Inventory No.	Type of artefact	Material	Traces of processing and use	Function	Dimensions	Location	Figure
56	2016	29	А ОФ 3240	Awl	Fragment of a diaphysis of long tubular bone of a large mammal.	The blade was processed with coarse and finer abrasive. The opposite part on one side was intentionally narrowed with two-veneer chipping, and on the other – broken in modern times. Clear traces of use – perpendicular at the tip and longitudinal in the remaining part.	Awl for leather. The tool was used with a handle.	Length – 117 mm Width max. – 20 mm Tip – 11 mm	Dwelling No. 4 Grid sq. 42/12 2.30 m from S 1.80 m from W Depth 231.90	Plate XIII: 56
57	2016	50	А ОФ 3245	Awl	Proximal part of metatarsal bone (metatarsus) of cattle, split longitudinally.	Bone with preserved part of epiphysis. The blade was shaped with abrasive. The surface is polished to about 15 mm from the edge of the remaining epiphysis. The surface is with a dark patine, probably the result of exposure to fire or decay.	Awl and expander for leather.	Length – 105 mm Width max. – 3 mm Tip – 10 mm	Dwelling No. 4 Grid sq. 42/12 Pit near the S profile 1.45 m from S 3.32 m from E Depth 231.72	Plate XIII: 57
58	2016	37	А ОФ 3232	Awl	Radius sin. of sheep.	Fragment of a massive bone. The blade was formed by oblique cutting and longitudinal splitting, which formed uneven edges, towards the tip of the blade processed and beveled by abrasive. On the opposite side, modern breakage is visible, so it cannot be said how it ended. The whole object was polished in the process of work. Standard traces of use as an awl and expander for leather visible on the blade.	Awl and expander for leather.	Length – 94 mm Width max. – 17.5 mm Tip – 10 mm Kd – 17.5 mm	Dwelling No. 4 Grid sq. 42/12 2.44 m from S 2.18 m from W Depth 231.77	Plate XIII: 58
59	2016	13	А ОФ 3236	Awl	Middle part of a tibia of sheep/goat.	Fragment of a massive bone. The surface is patinated, probably as a result of staying in decaying organic matter. The blade was formed by an oblique cut (chipping) of the bone. Two visible veneers. Where there are no stains on the surface, polishing is visible. Several fresh notches from a metal tool, probably made in modern times. The blade was processed with coarse and fine abrasive and polished. The reverse was carefully and evenly cut, the edges are posished and rounded. It is possible that the opening of the bone was used to attach a metal blade – awl.	Awl for leather.	Length – 93 mm Width max. – 11 mm Tip – 10 mm Kd – 14 mm	Dwelling No. 4 Grid sq. 42/12 2.32 m from W 0.70 m from S Depth 232.47	Plate XIII: 59
60	2013	45	А ОФ 3118	Awl	Distal half of tibia sin. of sheep/goat.	Bone with a preserved epiphysis. The blade was formed by two longitudinal hacks, whose veneers were levelled by abrasive processing and polishing. Towards the tip, in individual areas, traces of processing with coarse and fine abrasive are visible. The whole surface is polished, the result of being held in hand without a handle. The tip is blunted (about 60 degrees). On it and along the whole surface, there are stains from a rusty-brown matter, which is why no traces of use can be established.	Function unestablished.	Length – 92 mm Width max. – 16 x 22 mm Tip – 3 mm Kd – 13.5 mm Bd – 24 mm	Dwelling No. 2 Grid sq. 34/25 4.03 m from W On S line of the Grid square Depth 232.62	Plate XIII: 60

No.	Year	FIN	Inventory No.	Type of artefact	Material	Traces of processing and use	Function	Dimensions	Location	Figure
61	2008	25	A OФ 2916	Awl	Diaphysis of long tubular bone of large rumminant (cattle).	The bone is massive and split lengthwise. The whole surface is polished, no distinguishable traces of preceding processing, except for some small sections. Near the tip, on one of the lateral sides and on the back of the tool, there are several veneers from hacking and slight traces of abrasive processing, aimed to improve the shape. Polishing is more intensive towards the tip, which implies intensive use, but the technological traces are hard to distinguish from the utilisation ones due to the overall sheen of the object. The tip of the tool was not sharpened or blunted from use, it was made this way, which challenges its use as an awl.	Function unestablished.	Length – 90 mm Width Max. – 16 mm Thickness – 15 – 11 mm Thickness tip – 2 mm	Probably from the fill of Dwelling No. 6 Grid sq. 41/10 1.90 m from N 0.90 m from E Depth 233.19	Plate XIII: 61
62	2017	46	A HCФ 406	Awl	Awl made from the middle part of a tibia of sheep/goat.	Bone fragment. The blade was formed by two opposite asymmetric hacks with subsequent processing with fine abrasive, which is almost obliterated by the polishing resulting from the process of work. The bone surface was not processed. The back part is also sharpened with two hacks, but not used for work. The working tip entered the material to a depth of about 20 mm, but most often – up to 7 mm, where it is almost polished. Close to the end, the typical concentric and vertical thread-like traces are visible.	Awl for leather.	Length – 84 mm Width max. – 15 mm Tip – 2 mm Kd – 16 mm	Dwelling No. 4a Grid sq. 42/16 From the fill of the dwelling pit Depth 232.84 (E) – 232.66 (W)	Plate XIV: 62
63	2015	15	A OФ 3147	Awl	Diaphysis of tubular bone of a large ruminant (metapodium).	Bone fragment. The tip and the lateral edges of the split were processed with coarse and fine abrasive, if there was preceding processing, it was obliterated. The back part was formed by an oblique cut as a prong (probably for attachment to a handle). The surface is polished.	Awl for leather.	Length – 84 mm Width max. – 14 mm Tip – 3 mm	Dwelling No. 4 Grid sq. 42/16 0.86 m from N 1.41 m from E Depth 232.56	Plate XIV: 63
64	2015	74	A OФ 3157	Awl	Diaphysis of long tubular bone of large ruminant.	Bone fragment. The tip was processed with abrasive, which together with the subsequent polishing eliminated any potential preceding actions. Partial utilisation traces.	Awl-expander for a soft material (leather).	Length – 71 mm Width max. – 18 mm Tip – 3 mm	Dwelling No. 7 Grid sq. 42/6 NE quarter of the Grid square Depth 233.21 – 232.88	Plate XIV: 64
65	2013	15	A OФ 3110	Awl	Radius of sheep/goat. The sharpened working part is in the middle of the bone. The end opposit the working one is from the proximal part of the bone.	Bone split longitudinally. The proximal part was also processed with abrasive, probably in order to place in a handle, or for greater convenience in work (partial sheen). The surface of the whole tool was processed with abrasive and polished. The tip is slightly beaten from work on a hard material, or soft material on a hard pad.	Awl for leather.	Length – 70 mm Width max. – 16 mm Tip – 2 mm	From the interior of the ground building Baulk between Grid Sq. 41/1 and 41/2 Depth 232.68 – 232.56 (S) 232.45 – 232.38 (N)	Plate XIV: 65

No.	Year	FIN	Inventory No.	Type of artefact	Material	Traces of processing and use	Function	Dimensions	Location	Figure
66	2015	1	А ОФ 3145	Awl	From a split rib.	The tip underwent slight abrasive processing. The back part is in the shape of a triangle with a blunt tip, not used for work. The surface is polished.	Awl for leather. Little used.	Length – 66 mm Width max. – 14 mm Tip – 1.5 mm	Probably from the fill of Dwelling No. 8 Grid sq. 34/20 0.95 m from N 1.24 m from W Depth 233.42	Plate XIV: 66
67	2016	2	А НСФ 393	Awl	Cattle bone.	Bone fragment. The blade was formed by processing with coarse, and subsequently, fine abrasive. Incisions on the opposite side, probably made with a metal blade. Judging by the chipping, the awl was used in a handle. Preserved partial traces of use.	Awl for leather.	Length – 66 mm Width max. – 13.5 mm Thickness bone – 10 mm Tip – 7 mm	Dwelling No. 4 Grid sq. 42/12 1.73 m from S 2.75 m from E Depth 232.59	Plate XIV: 67
68	2015	59		Awl	Diaphysis from long tubular bone of sheep/goat.	Bone fragment. The blade was processed with coarse abrasive. The whole surface is polished.	Awl-expander for leather.	Length – 65 mm Width max. – 13 mm Tip – 1.5 mm	Dwelling No. 5 Grid sq. 35/21 Depth 232.70 – 232.68	Plate XIV: 68
69	2009	51		Awl	Diaphysis from long tubular bone of a rabbit.	Bone fragment. The blade is preserved, shaped as an equilateral triangle, its edges are rounded and smoothed so that the preceding types of processing are levelled.	No traces of use.	Length (preserved) – 53 mm Width – 9 mm Tip – 1.5 mm	Grid sq. 35/21 Depth 232.70 – 232.48	Plate XV: 69
70	2018	14	А ОФ 3301	Awl	Fragment of a diaphysis of a bone from a small mammal (rabbit).	Bone split longitudinally. The surface was processed with abrasive and polished. Polishing as a result of the working process.	Awl for leather or another soft material.	Length (preserved) – 52 mm Width max. – 8 mm Tip – 1 mm	Dwelling No. 5 Grid sq. 35/16 Cleaning of the pit of Dwelling No. 5	Plate XV: 70
71	2012	1	А НСФ 253	Awl	Part of diaphysis and the distal part of a tibia of sheep/goat.	Only the tip is preserved, secondary processing was levelled by polishing. The surface is greyish-beige. Due to diligent polishing, technological traces cannot be distinguished from utilisation ones. Short-term or no use at all possible.	No visible traces of use.	Length (preserved) – 47 mm Width max. – 14 mm Tip – 1 mm	Grid sq. 34/25 Depth 233.12	Plate XV: 71
72	2016	61	А ОФ 3237	Awl	Diaphysis of a tibia of sheep/goat.	Bone fragment. Traces of processing – abrasive and polishing on the whole object. The cut was also well processed with abrasive and polishing. On the tip – thin thread-like linear traces of use – mainly concentric. Polishing as a result of the working process. The reverse was formed by two short oblique cuts, probably with the purpose of placing in a handle.	Awl-expander for leather.	Length (preserved) – 46 mm Width max. – 11 mm Tip – 6 mm	Dwelling No. 4 Grid sq. 42/12 From the pit at the S profile of the Grid square 3.05 m from E 0.75 m from S Depth 231.42	Plate XV: 72
73	2017	6	А НСФ 407	Awl	Middle part of the diaphysis of a tibia of sheep/goat.	Bone fragment. Carefully and symmetrically processed on all sides with coarse abrasive and subsequent polishing. About the latter, it is difficult to trace whether intentional or the result of work, but it is on the whole surface of the object. The tip is very sharp, slight concentric thread-like traces and rougher vertical ones.	Awl for leather.	Length (preserved) – 45 mm Width max. – 11 mm Tip – 1 mm	Dwelling No. 5 Grid sq. 35/21 Pit next to the E profile 0.35 m from N 1.20 m from E Depth 232.64	Plate XV: 73

No.	Year	FIN	Inventory No.	Type of artefact	Material	Traces of processing and use	Function	Dimensions	Location	Figure
74	2017	53	А НСФ 408	Awl	Diaphysis of long tubular bone from the limb of large cattle.	Bone fragment. Carefully and symmetrically processed on all sides with coarse abrasive and subsequent polishing, due to which it is difficult to trace whether intentional or the result of work. Half of the surface has multiple irregularities (peeling or breaking). The tip is very sharp, slight concentric thread-like traces and rougher vertical and oblique ones.	Awl for leather.	Length (preserved) – 45 mm Width max. – 11 mm Tip – 1 mm	Dwelling No. 5 Grid sq. 35/17 0.50 m from W 0.05 m from S Depth 233.10	Plate XV: 74
75	2016	70	А НСФ 394	Awl	Diaphysis of long tubular bone of sheep/goat.	Bone fragment. Blade processed with coarse abrasive and subsequent polishing. Polishing from use on the ventral and dorsal part of the tip to about 10 mm and clear concentric linear traces. No visible vertical traces, the tip is sharp and unblunted.	Awl for leather, little used.	Length (preserved) – 41 mm Width max. – 10 mm Tip – 7 mm	Dwelling No. 7 Grid sq. 42/7 Depth 233.20 – 232.80	Plate XV: 75
76	2018	15	А ОФ 3302	Awl	Fragment of a diaphysis of a bone from a small mammal (rabbit?).	Bone split longitudinally. Greyish colouring of the surface, the result of contact with decaying organic matter. Processed with fine abrasive. Pointed polishing and thin linear traces as a result of working processes.	Awl for leather or another soft material.	Length (preserved) – 40 mm Width max. – 7 mm Tip – 1 mm	Dwelling No. 4 Grid sq. 42/11, 12, 16 Cleaning of the pit of Dwelling No. 4	Plate XV: 76
77	2015	46		Awl	Diaphysis of long tubular bone of sheep/goat.	Bone fragment. Processed with fine abrasive and polished. Exposure to high temperature.	Awl-expander for leather.	Length (preserved) – 32 mm Width max. – 11 mm Tip – 2 mm	Dwelling No. 5 Grid sq. 35/21 Depth 232.90	Plate XV: 77
78	2012	39	А НСФ 272	Awl	Bone of a large ruminant.	Bone fragment. Two long veneers from hacking visible, the rest of the processing is levelled by polishing. At the very end of the tip, linear traces characteristic of awls and pointed polishing visible.	Awl-expander for leather.	Length (preserved) – 30 mm Width max. – 12 mm Tip – 1 mm	Grid sq. 41/20 Depth 232.60 – 232.27	Plate XV: 78
79	2016	69	А НСФ 395	Awl	Fragment of a diaphysis of long tubular bone of a cattle.	Bone fragment. Rough intersecting linear traces – vertical and horizontal on the polishing. The tip is blunted and thread-like vertical linear traces are clearly visible along the edge of the blunting. Polishing along the edges of splitting and the whole length of the object as a result of the working process.	Possible use as an awl for thick raw leather or rougher material.	Length (preserved) – 30 mm Width max. – 11 mm Tip – 7 mm	Dwelling No. 7 Grid sq. 42/7 Depth 233.20 – 232.80	Plate XV: 79
80	2013	16	А ОФ 3112	Ornamenting tool for ceramics(?)	Ulna sin. of a dog. The handle is in the proximal part of the bone.	Tool. Bone with part of the joint fossa. The tip was processed with coarse abrasive, if there were notches, they were obliterated by the abrasive. A blade with two shoulders, restricting the depth of penetration of the tool into the processed material, was similarly formed. The very tip is evenly cut and forms something like a mini scoop, polished, with transverse linear traces. The surface is polished. The tool was probably held in hand, without a handle.	Possible use as an ornamenting tool for ceramics.	Length – 107 mm Width max. – 20 mm Length blade – 5 mm Tip – 2 mm	Probably from the fill of Dwelling No. 6 Grid sq. 42/6 2.90 m from N 3.10 m from E Depth 233.08	Plate XVI: 80, Fig. 6

No.	Year	FIN	Inventory No.	Type of artefact	Material	Traces of processing and use	Function	Dimensions	Location	Figure
81	2013	43	А ОФ 3117	Ornamenting tool for ceramics(?)	Distal half of tibia dex. of sheep/goat.	Bone without a preserved epiphysis. The dystal part of the bone is cut on top and aligned with an abrasive along the perimeter at about 5 mm. The blade was formed by one oblique cut and a subsequent longitudinal split of the bone. The blade was processed with abrasive. The tip is wide, evenly cut and additionally thinned through a single hack, slightly levelled by use. The working part of the tip is rounded and polished, one corner is worn out due to use, and parallel thread-like linear traces are visible on the ventral part to 4 mm.	Possible use as an ornamenting tool for ceramics.	Length – 92 mm Width max. – 15 x 23 mm Tip – 4.5 mm	Grid sq. 41/10 Depth 233.20 – 232.85	Plate XVI: 81, Fig. 6
82	2016	30	А ОФ 3241	Tool for textile production (knitting, weaving?)	Tool made from the distal part of tibia dex. of sheep/goat. The distal epiphysis fell off – a young individual (in its second year of age).	Bone without a preserved epiphysis. The surface is with a dark patine, probably the result of exposure to fire or decay. The blade was formed by oblique two-faceted hacking and abrasive processing. The polishing of the surface reaches 15 mm under the distal end of the bone. Vertical and concentric thread-like traces of work on the blade, concentric traces and pointed sheen along the whole body, with the exception of the distal end. An opening in the back part, where, insofar as it is accessible for review, slight smoothing is visible (used as a handle?) The tool was used for rotary-reciprocating movements on soft material (leather, textile).	Possible use as a tool for textile production (knitting, weaving?).	Length – 75 mm Width max. – 22 mm Tip – 12 mm	Dwelling No. 4 Grid sq. 42/12 1.40 m from S 0.50 m from W Depth 231.90	Plate XVI: 82, Fig. 7
83	2012	18	А НСФ 274	Blank	Hartshorn.	The horn was cut off with a metal blade (saw?). Cutting was done from several sides. A small axe might have been used as well. The uneven surface of the horn is hewn, at about 17 mm from the cut there is a deep notch with an axe (?). Several marking (?) cuts in the opposite end.	No traces of use.	Length – 97 mm Width max. – 48 x 53 mm Width min. – 44 x 55 mm	Grid sq. 41/15 1.74 m from S 2.46 m from W Depth 232.68	Plate XVII: 83
84	2013	3	А ОФ 3107	Tool	Tip from roe deer antler, two points. Cut under the points.	The edge of the cut has rounded and smoothed edges. In depth of the horn, at the place of the cut, a conical opening was carved, one of the sides was broken in the Middle Ages. Transverse to that, 3 mm from the end of the tool, a small opening was drilled by bilateral boring with an auger, protruding from both sides of the horn (one small hole is partially damaged when a small piece broke off). No traces of long-term use of a suspension cord are visible, it is possible that the small opening served as a prong for attachment of the handle. The whole surface of the object is polished and the transverse furrows of the horn are completely levelled. More intensive sheen is visible on the tips, but this could be a natural characteristic of the horn. It is difficult to determine if this was a rather inconvenient object to hold, and therefore if it was used as the handle, but it is not impossible.	Function unestablished. Possible use as part of a distaff or nostepinne.	Length – 95 mm Width max. – 18 mm Diameter big opening – 1 mm Depth big opening – 25 mm Diameter small opening – 4 mm	From the interior of the ground building Grid Sq. 41/13 1.40 m from S 1.60 m from W Depth 231.98	Plate XVIII: 84, Fig. 9

No.	Year	FIN	Inventory No.	Type of artefact	Material	Traces of processing and use	Function	Dimensions	Location	Figure
85	2015	21	А ОФ 3148	Disentangling tool (?)	Hartshorn.	Processed tine of hartshorn. Entirely preserved. In the depth of the horn, at the place of the cut, a conical opening was carved. In the widest part parallel to the cut, a wide 3 – 5 mm ring was incised, protruding 1 mm above the general surface of the object. Exactly under the ring, transversely to the opening mentioned, two small holes were pierced at an angle of about 45 degrees. Sections with levelling of the spongy surface are visible in the parts of the opening which are accessible for review. It is impossible to determine whether that was the result of processing or inserting something. The surface of the whole object was processed by hacking, coarse and fine abrasive and, subsequently, strong polishing, which completely obliterated the rough parts on the natural surface of the horn. At 36 mm from the horn tip, part of a metal hoop was attached. At 16 mm under the hoop, a cross with dimensions 15 x 6 mm was incised with a heated blade. There are areas with enhanced sheen on the concave part of the arc of the horn under the hoop, near the tip and next to the incised ring, resembling work on soft material, but it is difficult to determine whether these are technological or utilisation traces.	Possible function – disentangling knots.	Length – 112 mm Diameter max. – 16 x 19 mm Diameter under metal hoop – 11 mm Tip – 3 mm Diameter opening – 9 mm Depth of the opening on the inside – 25 mm Diameter holes – 2.5 mm Thickness hoop – 2 mm	Dwelling No. 2 Floor level Grid sq. 34/25 2.72 m from N 0.23 m from E Depth 232.66	Plate XVIII: 85
86	2016	64	А ОФ 3231	Disentangling tool (?)	Hartshorn.	Processed tine of hartshorn. In the depth of the horn, at the place of the cut, a conical opening was carved. The horn surface was processed to complete removal of the irregularities and obtaining a nearly square section of half the length. The whole surface was processed with fine abrasive and polished, which removed any other possible traces of processing. The working part was processed in the same way, to the extent that on one side, the inner spongy part of the horn was uncovered. The tip is very sharp, slight polishing and transverse deep linear traces are visible at high magnification. In the opposite end, processing led to a square section. In this part, a decoration of notches forming X-shaped ornaments was applied with a heated metal blade. At about 6 mm from the edge of the cut, a stringing opening was bored with a thin auger or awl, at an angle of about 5 degrees. The boring was done after the notch decoration was applied. On one side, the thinned end between the hole and the end edge broke off. It is possible that this happened during the boring of the hole, or when pressure was applied afterwards. On one side of the intact opening, intensive polishing is visible along the whole object, resembling friction in a soft fabric. The object was not used much.	Possible function – disentangling knots.	Length – 77 mm Width max. – 13 mm Thickness max. – 11 mm Diameter opening – 3 mm Tip – 1.2 mm	Dwelling No. 4 Grid sq. 42/12 From the pit at S profile of the Grid square 1.70 m from W 0.70 m from S Depth 231.35	Plate XVIII: 86, Fig. 8



Plate I/Табло I



Plate II/Табло II



Plate III/Табло III

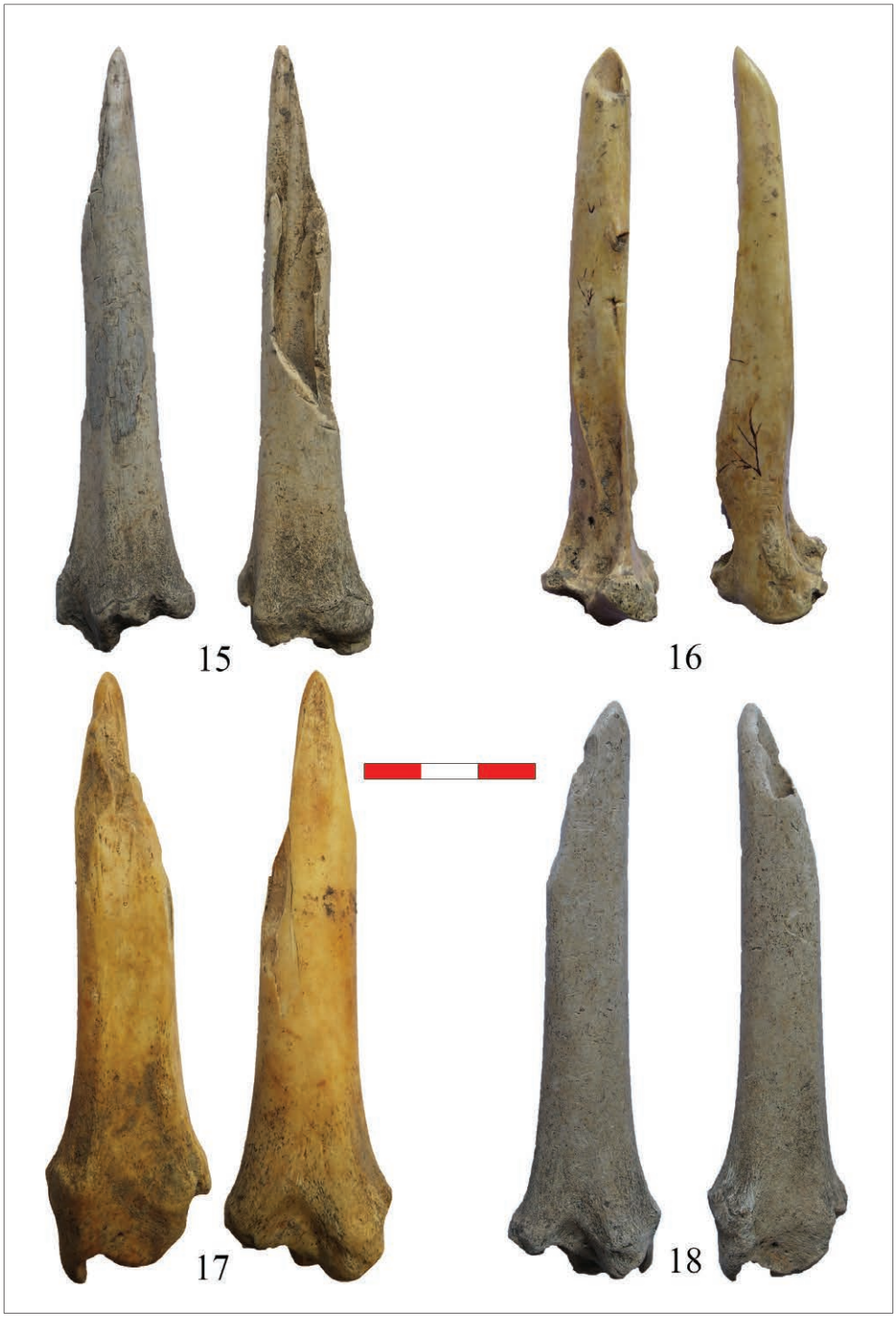


Plate IV/Табло IV



Plate V/Табло V



Plate VI/Табло VI



Plate VII/Табло VII



Plate VIII/Табло VIII



Plate IX/Табло IX



Plate X/Табло X



Plate XI/Табло XI



Plate XII/Табло XII



Plate XIII/Табло XIII



Plate XIV/Табло XIV



Plate XV/Табло XV



Plate XVI/Табло XVI



Plate XVII/Табло XVII



Plate XVIII/Табло XVIII

APPENDIX No. 1

Animal bone	Astragali (knucklebones)	Needle cases	Awls	Horns	Amount
Sheep/Goat	4	1	51		56
Sheep/Goat/Deer			1		1
Cattle			9		9
Dog			7		7
Rabbit			6		6
Horse			1		1
Pig		1			1
Uncertain identification			1		1
Horn/antler					
Hartshorn (Red deer)				3	3
Roe deer				1	1
Amount	4	2	76	4	86

APPENDIX No. 1A

Animal bone	Number	% of the total number	% of the type of material	% relative to knuckle-bones	% relative to needle cases	% relative to awls	% relative to horns
Sheep/Goat	56	65.12	68.29	100	50	67.11	
Sheep/Goat/Deer	1	1.16	1.22			1.32	
Cattle	9	10.47	10.98			11.83	
Dog	7	8.14	8.54			9.21	
Rabbit	6	6.98	7.31			7.89	
Horse	1	1.16	1.22			1.32	
Pig	1	1.16	1.22		50		
Uncertain identification	1	1.16	1.22			1.32	
Horn/antler							
Hartshorn (Red deer)	3	3.49	75				75
Roe deer	1	1.16	25				25

APPENDIX No. 2

Animal bone	Astragali (knucklebones)	Needle cases	Awls	Horns	Amount
Astragalus	4				4
Tibia		1	46		47
Ulna			4		4
Radius			5		5
Femur		1	1		2
Metatarsus			4		4
Metacarpus			5		5
Long tubular bone of cattle			8		8
Rib			1		1
Uncertain identification			2		
Horn/antler					
Hartshorn (Red deer)				3	3
Roe deer				1	1
Amount	4	2	76	4	84

APPENDIX No. 2A

Animal bone	Number	% of the total number	% of the type of material	% relative to astragali	% relative to needle cases	% relative to awls	% relative to horns
Astragalus	4	4.65	4.88	100			
Tibia	47	54.65	57.31		50	60.53	
Ulna	4	4.65	4.88			5.26	
Radius	5	5.81	6.1			6.58	
Femur	2	2.33	2.44		50	1.32	
Metatarsus	4	4.65	4.88			5.26	
Metacarpus	5	5.81	6.1			6.58	
Long tubular bone of cattle	8	9.30	9.75			10.52	
Rib	1	1.16	1.22			1.32	
Uncertain identification	2	2.33	2.44			2.63	
Horn/antler							
Hartshorn (Red deer)	3	3.50	75				75
Roe deer	1	1.16	25				25

APPENDIX No. 3

Material	Object Type	Number	% of the total number	% of the type of material	% of class	% of group
Total		86	100	-	-	-
I. Bone		82	95.34	100	-	-
A.	Tools	78	90.69	95.12	100	-
1.	Needle cases	2	2.32	2.44	2.56	100
2.	Awls	76	88.37	92.68	97.44	100
a.	Bone (with or without epiphysis)	56	65.12	68.29	71.80	73.68
b.	Bone fragment	20	23.25	24.39	25.64	26.32
B.	Astragali	4	4.65	4.88	100	-
II. Horn		4	4.65	100	100	-
A.	Tools	4	4.65	100	100	-
1.	Disentangling tool	2	2.33	50	50	100
2.	Top-most tine from a roe deer antler	1	1.165	25	25	100
3.	Blank	1	1.165	25	25	100

Appendix No. 3. Typological characteristics of the bone and horn artefacts from the settlement in Petrova Niva Locality, Sboryanovo Archaeological Reserve
Приложение № 3. Типологическа характеристика на предметите от кост и рог от селището в м. „Петрова нива“, АР „Сборяново“

APPENDIX No. 4

			Name	Number	% of total	% of class	% of group
I.			Tools	78	95.12	100	-
	1.		Awls	42	51.22	53.84	100
		a.	Leather	23	28.04	29.47	54.77
		b.	Hard leather (oxhide)	6	7.32	7.69	14.28
		c.	Little used	11	13.41	14.1	26.19
		d.	Re-processed	2	2.44	2.56	4.76
	2.		Awl-expanders	23	28.05	29.48	100
		a.	Leather	22	26.83	28.2	95.65
		b.	Hard leather (oxhide)	1	1.22	1.28	4.54
	3.		For soft material (textile, fibres?)	2	2.44	2.56	100
	4.		Ornamenting tools	2	2.44	2.56	100
	5.		Needle cases	2	2.44	2.56	100
	6.		Function unestablished	4	4.88	5.12	100
	7.		Without traces of use	3	3.66	3.85	100
II.	1.		Personal belongings (astragali)	4	4.88	100	100
		a.	Amulets (?)	2	2.44	50	-
		b.	Bone objects related to games	1	1.22	25	-
		c.	Function unestablished	1	1.22	25	-
Total:				82	100	-	-

Appendix No. 4. Functional characteristics of the bone artefacts from the settlement in Petrova Niva Locality, Sboryanovo Archaeological Reserve
Приложение № 4. Функционална характеристика на предметите от кост от селището в м. „Петрова нива“, АР „Сборяново“

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ИЗДЕЛИЯ ОТ КОСТ И РОГ ОТ СРЕДНОВЕКОВНОТО СЕЛИЩЕ В М. „ПЕТРОВА НИВА“, АР „СБОРЯНОВО“

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РЕЗЮМЕ

В статията са анализирани изделията от кост и рог, добити от досегашните проучвания на селището в м. „Петрова нива“, АР „Сборяново“ (2005 – 2019 г.).

Анализирани са общо 86 артефакта, 82 от които изработени от кост и 4 от рог. На всички тях е направен остеологичен и трасологичен анализ. Направените наблюдения са съпоставени с данни от редица проучени средновековни обекти от региона, както и със специализирани изследвания върху средновековни изделия от кост и рог.

По-голямата част от анализираните изделия произхождат от запълнителите на жилищните ями (72), така че може да се допусне попадането им в жилищата на относително по-късен етап, в резултат от запълването на жилищните ями. Значително по-малко (14) произхождат от културния пласт на повърхността на обитавания терен в проучваното домакинство. Трябва да отбележим, че незначителна част от разглежданите тук паметници (3) са открити на подовото ниво на жилищните структури или в запълнители на ями (11) и могат да се свържат непосредствено с функционирането на жилищата.

Като суровина са използвани предимно кости от дребен рогат добитък (овце и кози), които съставляват основен продукт за направа на разглежданите артефакти. В значително по-малка степен са използвани кости от едри животни и дивеч. Единични са изделията от свинска кост, а такива от птичи и рибени кости не са установени. Спорадична е употребата на кучешки и конски кости. Предпочитанията към дълги кости от задни крайници вероятно стоят във връзка с по-голямата костна плътност и произтичащите от това здравина и устойчивост на изделията.

Далеч по-малко са изделията от рог, който като по-трудно достъпна, но по-качествена суровина е използван за направата на специфични видове инструменти.

Направеният преглед на следите от обработка, насочва към широк набор инструменти, използвани за направата на костените изделия от м. „Петрова нива“, а именно – брадва, длето, тесла, нож, трион, тънък свредел, различни видове абразив и пр. Наборът от сечива е доста сходен с тези, използвани при обработка на дърво.

Основната технологична верига при изработването на шилата включва маркировка, дву- или трифасетъчно дялане, груб и фин абразив, в отделни случаи – полиране. При някои екземпляри обработката е предшествана от разцепване на костта, последвана от абразивна обработка, оформяща острието.

При обработката на предметите от рог технологичната верига се проследява по-трудно, предвид факта, че следите от първоначалните операции са унищожени от следващите действия.

Съдейки по качеството на изделията и вида на артефактите, може да се направи изводът, че това са домашно направени инструменти, а не произведения на опитни майстори. Или – средновековните домакинства са разчитали на собствени умения и сили при набавяне на нужните им инструменти от кост и рог.

Прави впечатление разнообразието от ежедневни дейности, обезпечавани с изготвяни на място костени изделия, като пробиване на кожа, разширяване на отвори, тъкане или плетене, развързване на възли, съхранение на игли, декориране на керамични изделия, предене и пр.

Изобилието на инструменти за обработка на кожа вероятно е свидетелство за приоритетната роля на скотовъдството и свързаните с него занаятчийски дейности в стопанството на проучваната селищна структура, за която ловът се очертава като важна, но второстепенна дейност.

Основната част от произхождащите от селището артефакти са инструментариум, свързан с домашни производства, въпреки че многобройните инструменти, както и следите от усилена употреба, вероятно могат да намерят обяснение в производство насочено не само за задоволяване на собствените нужди, но и ориентирано към пазара.

Трасологичните наблюдения позволяват да се допусне употребата на две костени тръбички като игленици. В този смисъл наблюденията, показващи надлъжни и напречни линейни следи във вътрешността, както и медни корозионни продукти, отложени в пукнатините, биха могли да са резултат от съприкосновение със съхранявани в тях игли, а полирането на вътрешната повърхност да е следствие от продължително триене с текстил (в който са омотавани ?) или съхранявани съвместно с нишките за шиене. И двете костени тръбички не са декорирани отвън.

Като лични вещи могат да се разглеждат астрагалите, еднозначното определяне на функциите на които засега е невъзможно, и рогчетата, използвани най-вероятно за развързване на възли. Рогчето от жилище № 2 (Кат. № 85) позволява хипотетична реконструкция на начина, по който то е носено от притежателя си. Пробитият широк край вероятно е бил устойчиво прикрепен към колана посредством ремък или връв, така, както това е показано в многократно коментираната, макар и по-късна, миниатюра от Менологията на император Василий II, а заостреният край вероятно е втъкван в запазената на място желязна халка, на свой ред също устойчиво прикрепена към колана, като по този начин се осигурява удобство при носене и употреба.

Възможно е едно от проучваните жилища (№ 4), отличаващо се с доста по-големи размери от останалите, както и с голям брой находки на костени шила (22), да е функционирало и като работилница, свързана с обработката на кожа и текстил.

Продължаващите проучвания на селището в м. „Петрова нива“ биха могли да допълнят и обогатят представените наблюдения, които имат характер на предварително съобщение.

Ключови думи: изделия от кост и рог, ранносредновековни селища, остеологичен и трасологичен анализ

MEDIEVAL JEWELRY AT THE "PALACE CENTER – EAST" SITE IN PLISKA

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents jewelry falling into two categories, divided by their material composition – a group of metal items, and a group made from glass. They were found during archaeological excavations of the "Palace Center – East" site in Pliska. The metal jewelry group comprises seven rings, one earring, two pendants, three bracelets, two metal buttons, and one fibula. The second large group of jewelry is comprised of glass bracelets, where 24 fragments are presented, illustrating their typological diversity.

The systematization of the stratigraphic data allowed us to group the finds into three chronological periods. In the earliest stratigraphic horizon, horizon I (ca. 900 – 976), a small number of metal jewelry items were found, and the absence of glass bracelets is noticeable. The largest number of finds are from stratigraphic horizons II (970 – 1030/35) and III (1030/35 – ca. 1064), the peak being in horizon II.

A quantitative analysis of the materials by stratigraphic levels complements the picture of life during different periods from the development of post-metropolitan Pliska. The results show that in horizon I, defined as the "Bulgarian" post-metropolitan period, the number of finds is relatively small. The most significant increase in the quantity of jewelry is in horizon II, defined as the "Byzantine" period of Pliska – this is the time of the most significant demographic growth of the city. The number of finds in the last horizon, III, is also relatively high, and it is defined as "post-Byzantine" or "Pecheneg" period in Pliska, but it should be noted here that the majority of the finds were probably crafted in the earlier period and used in the following two-three decades.

Keywords: Pliska, medieval jewelry, rings, earrings, pendants, bracelets

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to present metal and glass jewelry found during the archaeological excavations of the "Palace Center – East" site in Pliska (fig. 1). One of the main priorities of the excavations in this part of the Inner City is to clarify the stratigraphy and chronology in post-metropolitan Pliska (10th – middle of the 11th c.), which have been reviewed in detail in several preliminary publications (Григоров, Тодорова 2014, 5; Григоров 2016, 256 – 293; Григоров 2017, 193 – 194, 197 – 199). Here the author will note only the basic information. The cultural layer is between 0.80 and 1.20 m thick, and three stratigraphic horizons can be distinguished within it. The main chronological indicator used for separating the stratigraphic horizons are the anonymous Byzantine folles of class A1 (970 – 976), A2 (976 – 1030/35) and class B (1030/35 – 1042), which serve as *terminus post quem*. Horizon I contains materials from the 10th c. – pottery thrown on a slow potter's wheel. A coin of Leo VI (886 – 912) (Григоров 2017, 210, кат. No. 3) and a seal of "Theoktistos, Patrician and Logothete of the Drome", dated to the second third of the 10th c., were also found in the layer (Григоров, Жекова 2015, 158, табло XIX: 1 – 2). The lack of anonymous folles is an indication for dating the first horizon before the 970s. In the second stratigraphic horizon, a sig-

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Fig. 1. Satellite image of the Inner City of Pliska with the location of the "Palace Center – East" site

Обр. 1. Сателитна снимка на Вътрешния град на Плиска, отбелязано е мястото на обект „Дворцов център – изток"

nificant number of folles of class A2 were found, and in the third stratigraphic horizon, folles of class B appear. The latest coin found on site is of class D (1050 – 1060), which ends the chronology of the medieval layer.

All jewelry was found in well-documented stratigraphic environments, and the context in which the objects appeared determines their *terminus ante quem*, fixing the end date of their use. Taking into account the relatively fragile nature of most of the items, and the risks of frequent damage and loss during everyday activities, it can be assumed that this jewelry was among the objects which were used only for a short time. This facilitates the opportunities to reconstruct, with a high degree of reliability, the chronology of their use before they were incorporated in a specific stratigraphic context.

Metal jewelry

The metal jewelry group comprises seven rings, one earring, two pendants, three bracelets, two metal buttons, and one fibula (fig. 2). The finds selected are indicative, relatively well-preserved and have secure typological characteristics.

Rings (Cat. Nos. 1 – 7)

I will begin their presentation with an entirely preserved ring (Cat. No. 1) found on the floor of a burnt-down room (Structure XX-306/1). A conical cassette is soldered on a hoop, decorated with granules, with a bud in the middle (fig. 2: 1). The base of the hoop, on both sides of the cassette, is also decorated with three granules each, in the form of a raceme. During the conservation of the ring, it was established that the surface is smoked and scorched by the high temperature, but traces of silver plating or tinning are preserved in a few places. The thermal damage of the ring is an indication that the jewelry was in the room during the fire. The large number of datable finds uncovered in the burnt-down building allows us to date the fire to somewhere around the 1030s. After the 1040s, the building no longer existed, and the ground was leveled.

Under the classification of Early Medieval jewelry developed in Bulgaria, the ring is type IX (Григоров 2007, 62 – 63, 199, обр. 69: 10 – 12). The genesis of this type of ring springs from the Byzantine jewelry tradition, and the earliest finds are from the second half of the 9th and 10th c. To the north of the Stara Planina Mountain, such rings appeared as late as the middle of the 10th and beginning of the 11th c. Close analogues of the ring are known from the production center near the

village of Novosel (Бонев, Дончева 2011, 293, таблица LI_{519}), the Odartsi necropolis (Дончева-Петкова 2005, 284, табло $XXXIV_{326}$) the necropolis next to the Eastern gate in Pliska (Димитров 1998, 79, обр. 3г).

Only the conical bezel and the "shoulders" to which the missing hoop was soldered have been preserved from the next ring (Cat. No. 2) (fig. 2: 2). The ring was found between two dug-in dwellings close to each other, which belong to stratigraphic layer II. The stratigraphic level of the ring is immediately under the ground level formed between the two dwellings. This is a definite indication for the find to be dated before the 970s.

Under the classification of Early Medieval jewelry, the ring is type VI.2 (Григоров 2007, 60, 197, обр. 67). A similar ring was found in the production center near the village of Novosel, dated to the middle of the 10th c. (Бонев, Дончева 2011, 292, табло L_{573}). Rings of the same type are known from the necropoleis at Durankulak (Меламед 1989, 137, табл. V_{7}), Nikolovo, Batin-2 (Станчев 2004, табл. XVIII), Tabachka train station (Станчев 1984, обр. 4а), in graves dated to the end of the 9th and 10th c., as well as in the fortresses Odartsi (Дончева-Петкова и др. 1999, табло $XLVII_{631}$), Silistra, Okorsh, Ruino-Kartal kale, Balik, Skala (Йотов, Атанасов 1999, 114, 158, 306, табло $CVII_{375}$), in layers from the 10th and the first half of the 11th c.

The third ring (Cat. No. 3) is also fragmented. An empty bezel setting for a stone or glass inset, and part of the hoop have been preserved (fig. 2: 3). The ring was found immediately next to a dwelling (Structure XX-343/1), in the layer which leveled the terrain of the dwelling. The stratigraphic position determines the end date of the ring (976 – 1030/35).

Under the classification of Early Medieval jewelry, the ring is closest to type VII.2 (Григоров 2007, 61, 198, обр. 68: 15). Similar rings are known from the fortresses Skala (Йотов, Атанасов 1999, 116, 159, 307, табло $CVIII_{390, 391}$), Odartsi (Дончева-Петкова и др. 1999, табло $XLVIII_{632}$), and Pernik (Чангова 1992, 131, обр. 122: 5). A close analogue was also found in the production center near the village of Novosel, Shumen district (Бонев, Дончева 2011, 293, таблица LI_{519}), and dated to the middle of the 10th c.

The next ring (Cat. No. 4) is entirely preserved. The hoop and the bezel were cast together, and a X-shaped sign was engraved on the square bezel (fig. 2: 4). The ring was found in a pit (Structure XX-322/1), which belongs to the second stratigraphic horizon (976 – 1030/35). A ring with an identical shape is known from Odartsi (Дончева-Петкова и др. 1999, 284, табло $XXXIV_{357}$), dated to the second half of the 11th c.

The next ring (Cat. No. 5) also is entirely preserved, but the hoop is deformed. The ring is cast, and a pentagram is engraved on the elliptical bezel (fig. 2: 5). Dots are engraved in the central field of the pentagram and the fields between the rays. The ring was found in a dug-in dwelling (Structure XX-302/2), which was used in the first third of the 11th c. Around the 1030s/1040s, the dwelling was filled in and the terrain was leveled and a stone pavement, which formed a new ground level, was laid on top.

Under the classification of Early Medieval jewelry, the ring belongs to type III.4 (Григоров 2007, 54 – 55, 192, обр. 62). This type of ring was widespread on the Balkans at the end of the 9th – 11th c. Numerous finds are known from the necropoleis at Batin-1 (Станчев 1985, табл. VI, обр. 1а, 2б), Devnia-2 (Димитров 1970, 30, обр. 13: 1), Galiche (Вължарова 1976, 242, обр. 151: 2), Yakimovo (Милчев 1963, 31, обр. 10), Nova Cherna (Милчев, Ангелова 1971, 204, табл. $XLII_{2}$), Odartsi (Дончева-Петкова 2005, 283, табло $XXXIII_{286}$), Durankulak (Меламед 1989, 137, табл. V_{23}, 146), Kragulevo (Бобчева 1984, 54), as well as from a number of fortresses, like Skala (Йотов, Атанасов 1999, 114, 158, 306, табло $CVII_{372}$), Păcuiul lui Soare (Diaconu, Vilceanu 1972, 140, fig. 56: 3), Odartsi (Дончева-Петкова и др. 1999, табло $XLII_{616 - 620}$) and from the city center of Pliska (Балабанов 1992, 161, табл.$VIII_{A2}$) and Veliki Preslav (Чангова 1969, обр. 20). Rings



Fig. 2. Metal jewelry from the "Palace Center – East" site (Cat. Nos. 1 – 16): 1 – 7. Finger rings; 8. Earring; 9. Crescent moon pendant; 10. Conically shaped pendant; 11 – 12. Buttons; 13. Fibula; 14 – 16. Bracelets

Обр. 2. Метални накити от обект „Дворцов център – изток" (Кат. № 1 – 16): 1–7. Пръстени; 8. Обеца; 9. Висулка-луница; 10. Висулка с конусовидна форма; 11 – 12. Копчета; 13. Фибула; 14 – 16. Гривни

with an engraved pentagram were also crafted in the production center near the village of Novosel (Бонев, Дончева 2011, 290, таблица L_{576}).

The next ring (Cat. No. 6) is fragmented, only the bezel and part of the hoop have been preserved. The ring is cast, and a bird (pheasant), in profile to the left, is engraved on the elliptical bezel (fig. 2: 6). The body of the bird is dotted. The ring was found in Grid square XX-361, in a stratigraphic context which contains materials from the latest stratigraphic horizon (1040s – 1060s).

Under the classification of Early Medieval jewelry, the ring belongs to type III.6 (Григоров 2007, 56 – 57, 194, обр. 64), which spread widely in the Eastern Balkans in the 10th – 11th c. Numerous finds are known from the necropoleis of Mishevsko (Евтимова 1992, 300, табло I, обр. 4 – 6) and Yakimovo (Милчев 1963, 31, обр. 11), from the fortresses of Okorsh, Ruino-Kartal kale (Григоров 2007, 56), Odartsi (Дончева-Петкова 1986, 167, обр. 3), Vetren (Атанасов, Йорданов 1994, 23, 56, табл. IV_{45}), Skala (Йотов, Атанасов 1999, 114, 158, 306, табло $CVII_{373}$), and from Veliki Preslav (Тотев 2004, 239, обр. 8 – 16).

The last ring (Cat. No. 7) is fragmented, only part of the silver hoop decorated with granular, small wires, has been preserved (fig. 2: 7). The ring was found in the arable layer, where materials from the third stratigraphic horizon (1040s – 1060s) were scattered.

Earring (Cat. No. 8)

During the excavations an earring was found, which is a "racemose" pendant cast together with the lower part of the hoop (fig. 2: 8). On one end, the hoop for fastening has been preserved. The earring was found on the floor of a dug-in dwelling (Structure XX-381/1), which is dated to the 10th c. The stratigraphic position of the earring determines its dating before the 970s.

Under the classification of Early Medieval jewelry, the earring belongs to type II.4 (Григоров 2007, 19 – 20, 143, обр. 6), which is among the most widely spread on the Balkans from the middle of the 9th to the second half of the11th c. The origin of the earrings is sought in the Byzantine production tradition (Dostal 1966, 36), which introduced the technology of casting jewelry in two-sided moulds. Identical earrings were crafted in the middle of the 10th c. in the production center near the village of Novosel (Бонев, Дончева 2011, 291, таблица $XLIX_{556-558}$).

Crescent moon pendant (Cat. No. 9)

One crescent moon pendant was found on the site. It was cast in a one-sided mould, and the obverse is adorned with three rows of pseudo-beaded wire (fig. 2: 9). The crescent moon pendant was found in a dwelling (Structure XX-342/2), which is dated to horizon I (before the 970s). Identical dating (mid-10th c.) can be ascribed to a similar crescent moon pendant, found in the production center near the village of Novosel (Бонев, Дончева 2011, 295, таблица $LIII_{630}$).

Crescent moon pendants are relatively rare finds during archaeological excavations, which is why any new find in an archaeological context is especially valuable not only for the clarification of chronology, but also for acquiring a better understanding of the function and significance of this specific piece of jewelry/amulet. A limited number of crescent moon pendants originate from pagan and Christian necropoleis dated to the 9th – first half of the 11th c., but most finds are accidental and without a clarified archaeological context (Григоров 2007, 85 – 86).

Conically shaped pendant (Cat. No. 10)

A conically shaped pendant also originates from the site (fig. 2: 10). It is made of copper alloy, and the individual elements are welded without any attempt to hide the joints. The body is decorated with a circle made from thin, curved wire, and hooks for suspension are soldered on both

ends. The pendant was found in the leveled layer which is immediately above a dug-in dwelling (Structure XX-302/2), which belongs to stratigraphic layer II. This provides a certain *terminus post quem* for the find – after the 1030s.

Pendants, even if single finds, have been uncovered at many archaeological sites (Григоров 2007, 85, 251, обр. 132, 252, обр. 133). In publications, the information about them is still limited and incomplete. Pendants do not have a special standardization, a diversity of shapes and decoration is observed, they were used independently or as a component of necklaces, diadems, or earrings. The significance of pendants is to enhance the aesthetic impact of the jewelry, and in some cases it can be assumed that they were also used as amulets.

Buttons (Cat. Nos. 11 – 12)

Two halves of buttons were found on the site (fig. 2: 11 – 12). The first one (Cat. No. 11) was cast, with an incised decoration, and the second button (Cat. No. 12) was made by stamping. Both buttons were found in a stratigraphic context which is dated to the period from the 970s to the 1030s.

Fibula (Cat. No. 13)

The discovery of a piece of a Roman fibula is of special interest, only part of the bow with a bud in one end, has been preserved from it (fig. 2: 13). The fibula was found in a stratigraphic context which contains materials from the 970s to the 1030s. Under the classification of E. Gencheva, the fibula belongs to the so-called "bulbous" fibulae (crossbow fibulae with finials), whose origin and dissemination began from the Balkans in the 3rd and the 4th c. (Генчева 2004, 61 – 64).

The discovery of single finds from the Late Roman era in medieval layers is not a precedent for Pliska. Late Antique objects have been found during archaeological excavations in various sections of the medieval city (Станчев 1960, 29, обр. 3 А16), as well as a significant number of Roman coins (Йорданов 2000, 136 – 137; Григоров 2017, 193 – 208). It is unclear whether the medieval people found the objects in nearby Late Antique fortresses and settlements by accident, and whether they used them as they were meant to be used. In this regard, two Late Antique fibulae found in the pagan necropolis at Blaskovo are of interest (Рашев 2008, 168, 539, табло $LXXXVI_{46-47}$). In Pliska in particular, all well-documented Late Antique finds and coins originate from stratigraphic contexts dated to the end of the 10th and the first half of the 11th c. This is an important indication that the objects were probably not discovered in the vicinity, but were probably brought as family relics by the Byzantine administration and garrison that came to Pliska at that time.

Bracelets (Cat. Nos. 14 – 16)

Fragments from three metal bracelets were found on the site. Two of the bracelets are the same type, with open, zoomorphically shaped ends (fig. 2: 14 – 15). In the first case, the end resembles a snake's head, or the head of a seahorse; and in the second, a stylized animal with a long muzzle and small ears protruding upwards. One of the bracelets (Cat. No. 14) was found in a pit (Structure XX-303/2) which belongs to stratigraphic layer III. The second bracelet (Cat. No. 15) was found in a burnt room (Structure XX-304/2) which was destroyed around the 1030s/1040s.

Under the classification of Early Medieval jewelry, the two bracelets belong to type II.4 (Григоров 2007, 69, 218, обр. 92). This type of bracelet is widespread to the south of the Stara Planina Mountain (Григоров 2007, 236, обр. 116), but they are a common find in Pliska (Димитров 1995, 57, обр. 8 – 13, 59, обр. 9: 14 – 16) and Odartsi (Дончева-Петкова 2005, 109, обр. 11, 113, обр. 13 – 327), in graves dated to the second half of the 11th c.

The third bracelet (Cat. No. 16) is cast, with open, flattened, widened ends, adorned with a "circle with a dot" pattern (fig. 2: 16) The bracelet was discovered in the arable layer, in Grid square XX-286, with materials which belong to horizon III (1040s – 1060s). The bracelet belongs to type III (Григоров 2007, 70 –71, 220, обр. 94), widespread on the Balkans in the 11th – 12th c. A similar bracelet was found in Grave No. 42, in the necropolis next to the Eastern gate in Pliska (Димитров 1995, 57, обр. 8 – 13) and in the Odartsi necropolis (Дончева-Петкова 2005, 113, обр. 13 – 327), where the finds are dated to the second half of the 11th c.

Glass bracelets

Glass bracelets are among the most common finds in a number of medieval necropoleis and settlements. The data from the necropoleis, where the bracelets are better preserved, are especially informative. A large number of glass bracelets are known from settlement sites as well, but due to their fragmented state, they are usually viewed as mass archaeological material and are rarely subject of similar publications.

During the excavations of the "Palace Center – East" site, about 50 fragments of glass bracelets were discovered. In most cases, these are small pieces, from which we selected 24 more informative specimens (Cat. Nos. 17 – 40) illustrating the typological diversity of this type of jewelry.

Glass bracelets were usually crafted with a stick, which was heated, stretched and bent until the desired shape and size were obtained, after which the two ends were pressed and stuck together. Depending on the cross-section, glass bracelets can be classified into several types: with a square one (fig. 3: 17), with a rectangular one (fig. 3: 18 – 22), with an elliptical one (fig. 3: 23), and with a round section (fig. 3: 24 – 28). There are also twisted bracelets (fig. 3: 29 – 33), bracelets with painted decoration (fig. 3: 34 – 38) and bracelets with a fluted profile (fig. 3: 39 – 40). Most often, the bracelets are of one color, the preferred one being blue, with different shades of dark blue and navy blue. There are individual cases of bluish purple or brownish red.

Numerous exact analogues have been found during excavations in various areas in Pliska: in the Palace center (Станчев 1960, 27, обр. 2), along the Southern fortress wall (Плетнёва 1992, 61, обр. 32: 2 – 3), south of the grave of Karel Škorpil (Григоров 2013, 62, обр. 5: 10 – 11, 64, обр. 7: 4 – 8, 69), in the necropolis near the Western fortress wall (Дончева-Петкова 1984, 184, обр. 4, 185, обр. 5, 186, обр. 6, 187, обр. 7), and in the necropolis near the Eastern gate in Pliska (Димитров 1995, 54). Close analogues are also known from Odartsi (Дончева-Петкова и др. 1999, табло $XLVI_{609}$; Дончева-Петкова 2005, 279, табло XXIX, 280, табло XXX), Veliki Preslav (Манолова-Войкова 2013, 225 – 236), Skala (Йотов, Атанасов 1999, 117, табл. CXVII), Kovachevo (Гатев 1977, 41; Гатев 1985, 127 – 128, фиг. 11 – 16, 147, таблица 9, 149, обр. 65), the medieval settlement above the Thracian city of Seuthopolis (Чангова 1972, 122 – 125, обр. 98), and in the Lovech fortress (Чангова 2006, 145, обр. 159).

Painted bracelets are of special interest in archaeological literature, with a variety of motifs observed: spiral, wavy lines, pearl row, "pseudo-kufic". In older studies, the production of glass bracelets, and painted ones in particular, is connected to the Byzantine Empire and they are mainly dated to the 11th c. (Чангова 1961, 185; Михайлова 1992, 176). P. Gatev also believes that painted bracelets are characteristic of the 11th c. and are rare in the 12th c., which he attributes to the change in the trade and markets in the Byzantine Empire (Гатев 1977, 41; Гатев 1985, 147). The dating of the bracelets with painted decoration from the "Palace Center – East" site, which were found in the second and third stratigraphic horizon and dated to the end of the 10th c. – middle of the 11th c., also supports the above.



Fig. 3. Glass bracelets from the "Palace Center – East" site (Cat. Nos. 17 – 40)
Обр. 3. Стъклени гривни от обект „Дворцов център – изток" (Кат. № 17 – 40)

Conclusion

Jewelry is an important part of the culture of medieval Pliska, which is why one of the tasks of archaeological excavations is to systematize and promulgate all the information about the finds. Quite often, this material is ignored by researchers. One of the reasons is that the finds are often damaged or fragmented, which imposes the need for an additional costly and laborious conservation process. On the other hand, most finds are the product of serial production, and they rarely impress researchers with some special artistic features. Nevertheless, this material, even if "more ordinary", is part of the material culture of the population in Pliska and deserves due attention.

In contrast to the necropoleis, where the jewelry is found in its functional places and carries more specific information about the social status, symbolism, gender and age of the individuals, in settlements jewelry is found in diverse archaeological contexts, including as disposed waste. The advantage of settlement sites is that stratigraphic levels with a relatively "short chronology" of deposition can be differentiated in the cultural layer, which is important for precise dating of the jewelry. An important highlight in the excavations of the "Palace Center – East" site is the detailed clarification of stratigraphy in the Inner City of post-metropolitan Pliska. The modern methods of documenting and the microstratigraphic approach of excavating the archaeological contexts introduced in the past decade provide us with much more precise data for dating the finds "first-hand" and not by analogy with finds from other sites, which is a frequent practice in older studies.

The systematization of the stratigraphic data allowed us to group the finds in three chronological periods (fig. 4, fig. 5). In the earliest stratigraphic horizon I (ca. 900 – 976), a small number of metal jewelry items were found, and the absence of glass bracelets is noticeable. The largest number

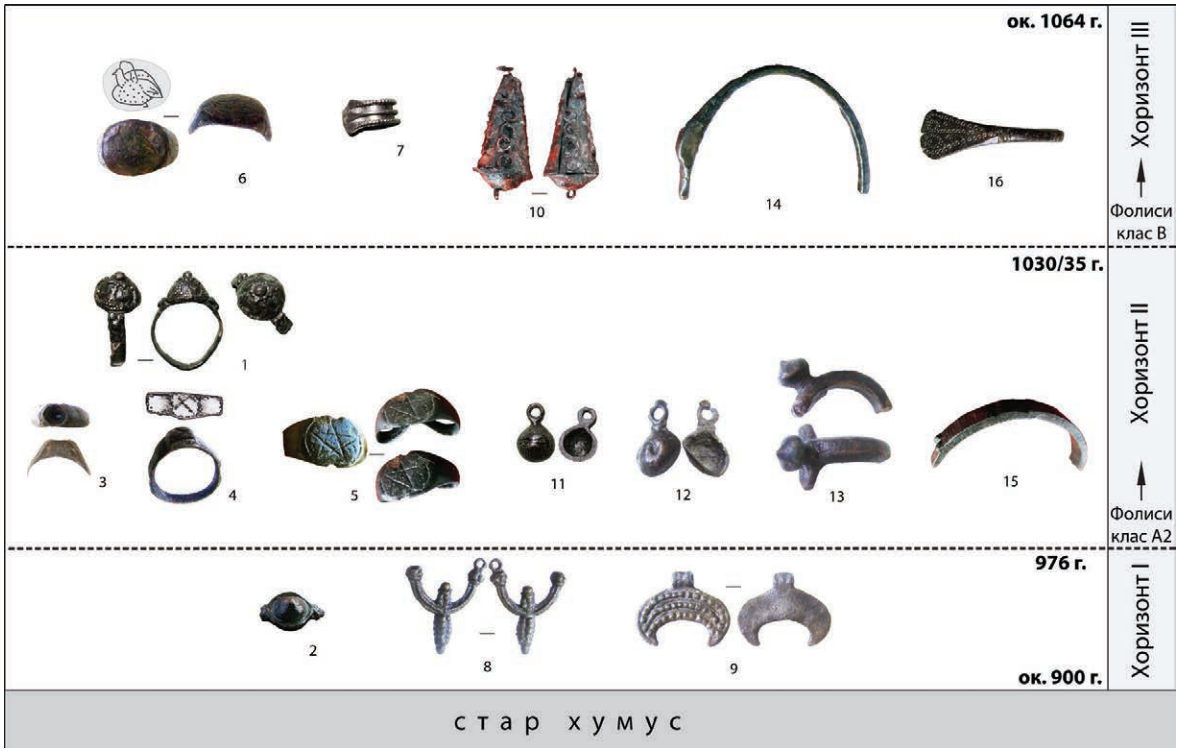


Fig. 4. Stratigraphy of the metal jewelry from the "Palace Center – East" site. Stratigraphic horizon I (ca. 900 – 976); stratigraphic horizon II (970 – 1030/35); stratigraphic horizon III (1030/35 – ca. 1064)

Обр. 4. Стратиграфия на металните накити от обект „Дворцов център – изток". Стратиграфски хоризонт I (ок. 900 – 976); стратиграфски хоризонт II (970 – 1030/35); стратиграфски хоризонт III (1030/35 – ок. 1064)



Fig. 5. Stratigraphy of the glass bracelets from the "Palace Center – East" site. Stratigraphic horizon I (ca. 900 – 976); stratigraphic horizon II (970 – 1030/35); stratigraphic horizon III (1030/35 – ca. 1064)

Обр. 5. Стратиграфия на стъклените гривни от обект „Дворцов център – изток". Стратиграфски хоризонт I (ок. 900 – 976); стратиграфски хоризонт II (970 – 1030/35); стратиграфски хоризонт III (1030/35 – ок. 1064)

of finds is in stratigraphic horizons II (970 – 1030/35) and III (1030/35 – ca. 1064), the peak being in horizon II.

A quantitative analysis of the archaeological materials by stratigraphic levels complements the picture of life in different periods from the development of post-metropolitan Pliska. The results show that in horizon I, defined as "Bulgarian" post-metropolitan period, the number of finds is relatively small. The archaeological excavations of the "Palace Center – East" site in Pliska confirm that until the middle of the 10th c., the population in this part of the Inner City was small in number. The most significant quantitative increase of jewelry is in horizon II, defined as the "Byzantine" period of Pliska – this is the time of the most significant demographic growth of the city. The number of finds in the last horizon III is also relatively high, and it is defined as a "post-Byzantine" or "Pecheneg" period in Pliska, but it should be noted here that the majority of the finds was probably crafted in the earlier period and used in the following two to three decades.

CATALOGUE OF FINDS

1. Ring, bronze with silvering. A conical cassette is soldered onto a flat hoop, decorated with granules, with a bud in the middle. The base of the hoop, on both sides of the cassette, is decorated with three granules each, in the form of a raceme. The ring is scorched by the high temperature. Dimensions: Diameter – 1.9 cm, diameter of the bezel – 1.2 cm, total height – 3 cm. Location: Grid square XX-306, Structure XX-306/1 (burnt room), NE – 2.90 m, SE – 4.60 m, elevation 180.88 m. Dating: Stratigraphic horizon II (976 – 1030/35). FIN 14/68 (fig. 2: 1).
2. Ring, bronze, fragment. The bezel, which is in the shape of a cone, and the "shoulders" to which the missing hoop was soldered, are preserved. Dimensions: Bezel – 1.8 x 1.2 x 1.5 cm. Location: Grid square XX-385, SW – 1.90 m, SE – 4.70 m, elevation 180.86 m. Dating: Stratigraphic horizon I (ca. 900 – 976). FIN 12/71 (fig. 2: 2).
3. Ring, bronze, fragment. Preserved upper half – an empty bezel setting for a stone or glass 'gem', and part of the hoop remain. Dimensions: Bezel – 1.7 x 0.9 cm. Location: Grid square XX-343, S – 2.82 m, E – 1.48 m, elevation 181.38 m. Dating: Stratigraphic horizon II (976 – 1030/35). FIN 11/19 (fig. 2: 3).
4. Ring, bronze. Flat hoop with a small square bezel on which a X-shaped sign is engraved. Dimensions: Diameter of the hoop – 2.1 cm, thickness – 0.3 cm, bezel – 1.8 x 1.8 cm. Location: Grid square XX-322, Structure XX-322/1, Pit, N – 3.30 m, E – 1.40 m, elevation 180.45 m. Dating: Stratigraphic horizon II (976 – 1030/35). FIN 11/42 (fig. 2: 4).
5. Ring, bronze. Flat hoop, deformed, with an elliptical bezel. A pentagram is engraved on the bezel. Dots are engraved in the central field of the pentagram and the fields between the rays. Dimensions: Diameter of the hoop – 2.5 cm, thickness – 0.2 cm, bezel – 2.3 x 1.3 cm. Location: Grid square XX-302, Structure XX-302/2 (dwelling), NW – 2.85 m, NE – 4.76 m, elevation 181.05 m. Dating: Stratigraphic horizon II (976 – 1030/35). FIN 12/45 (fig. 2: 5).
6. Ring, bronze, fragment. Preserved bezel and part of the hoop. A bird (pheasant), in profile to the left, is engraved on the bezel. Dimensions: Diameter of the bezel – 2.3 x 1.4 cm, thickness – 0.3 cm. Location: Grid square XX-361, N – 1.65 m, E – 1.40 m, elevation 181.82 m. Dating: Stratigraphic horizon III (1030/35 – 1064). FIN 11/7 (fig. 2: 6).
7. Ring, silver, fragment. Preserved part of a flat hoop adorned with beaded wires. Dimensions: Width of hoop – 0.7 cm. Location: Grid square XX-286, NE – 3.75 m, SE – 2.97 m, elevation 182.07 m. Dating: Stratigraphic horizon III (1030/35 – 1064). FIN 14/32 (fig. 2: 7).
8. Earring, bronze. Cast together with the lower arc of the hoop and the "racemose" pendant. A small hoop for fastening is preserved on one end. Dimensions: 2.8 x 1.9 cm. Location: Grid square XX-381, Structure XX-381/1 (dwelling), S – 0.95 m, W – 0.50 m, elevation 181.30 m. Dating: Stratigraphic horizon I (ca. 900 – 976) FIN 11/50 (fig. 2: 8).
9. Crescent moon pendant, bronze. The crescent moon was cast in a one-sided mould, and the obverse is adorned with three rows of pseudo-beaded wire. Dimensions: 2.6 x 2 x 0.9 cm, thickness – 0.2 cm. Location: Grid square XX-342, Structure XX-342/2 (dwelling), N – 0.40 m, E – 2.15 m, elevation 181 m. Dating: Stratigraphic horizon I (ca. 900 – 976). FIN 11/44 (fig. 2: 9).
10. Pendant, copper. Pendant with a conical shape, the body is adorned with thin wires, curved in a circle. Dimensions: 4.4 x 1.6 cm. Location: Grid square XX-303, SE – 3.20 m, SW –2.50 m, elevation 181.57 m. Dating: Stratigraphic horizon III (1030/35 – 1064). FIN 12/13 (fig. 2: 10).
11. Button, bronze, half. The button was cast, the surface is decorated with incised lines. Dimensions: 1.6 x 1 cm. Location: Grid square XX-284, NE – 3.10 m, NW – 3.26 m, elevation 182.07 m. Dating: Stratigraphic horizon II (976 – 1030/35). FIN 14/19 (fig. 2: 11).
12. Button, copper, half. The button was stamped. Dimensions: 2.1 x 1.2 cm. Location: Grid square XX-321, N – 1.30 m, E – 0.30 m, elevation 181.63 m. Dating: Stratigraphic horizon II (976 – 1030/35). FIN 11/45 (fig. 2: 12).
13. Fibula, bronze, fragment. Only part of the bow, with a bud in one end, is preserved. Dimensions: Diameter of the bud – 1 cm, section – 0.6 x 0.8 cm. Location: Grid square XX-361, N – 2.70 m, E – 1.30 m, elevation 181.69 m. Dating: Stratigraphic horizon II (976 – 1030/35). FIN 11/8 (fig. 2: 13).
14. Bracelet, bronze, fragment. The section is rectangular, one of the ends is zoomorphically shaped (probably a snake's head or the head of a seahorse). Dimensions: Diameter of 5.7 cm, section – 0.4 cm. Location: Grid square XX-303, Structure XX-303/2 (pit). Dating: Stratigraphic horizon III (1030/35 – 1064). FIN 12/43 (fig. 2: 14).
15. Bracelet, bronze, fragment. The section is rectangular, one zoomorphically shaped end. Dimensions: Preserved length – 4 cm, section – 0.4 cm. Location: Grid square XX-304, Structure XX-304/2 (burnt room), elevation 181 m. Dating: Stratigraphic horizon II (976 – 1030/35). FIN 12/44 (fig. 2: 15).
16. Bracelet, bronze, fragment. The section is rectangular, rounded, one end is widened and adorned with a "circle with a dot" pattern. Dimensions: Preserved length – 4.6 cm, section – 0.5 cm, width – 1.5 cm. Location: Grid square XX-286, NE – 3.65 m, SW – 3.10 m, elevation 182.03 m. Dating: Stratigraphic horizon III (1030/35 – 1064). FIN 14/31 (fig. 2: 16).
17. Bracelet, glass, fragment. Black, square section. Dimensions: Diameter – 6.3 cm, section – 0.7 cm. Location: Grid square XX-323, S – 0.25 m, W – 0.60 m, elevation 182.12 m. Dating: Stratigraphic horizon III (1030/35 – 1064). FIN 11/1 (fig. 3: 17).

18. Bracelet, glass, fragment. Blue, rectangular section. Dimensions: Preserved length – 4 cm, section – 0.3 x 0.4 cm. Location: Grid square XX-345, elevation 181.38 m. Dating: Stratigraphic horizon II (976 – 1030/35) (fig. 3: 18).
19. Bracelet, glass, fragment. Patinated, rectangular section. Dimensions: Preserved length – 5 cm, section – 0.4 x 0.5 cm. Location: Grid square XX-286, SE – 1.60 m, NE – 4.40 m, elevation 181.83 m. Dating: Stratigraphic horizon II (976 – 1030/35) (fig. 3: 19).
20. Bracelet, glass, fragment. Patinated, rectangular section. Dimensions: Diameter – 2.6 cm, section – 0.4 x 0.5 cm. Location: Grid square XX-305, Structure XX-304/2 (burnt room), N – 0.80 m, W – 0.10 m, elevation 181.30 m. Dating: Stratigraphic horizon II (976 – 1030/35) (fig. 3: 20).
21. Bracelet, glass, fragment. Patinated, rectangular section. Dimensions: Preserved length – 3.1 cm, section – 0.5 x 0.6 cm. Location: Grid square XX-385, NE – 5.70 m, NW – 4.10 m, elevation 182 m. Dating: Stratigraphic horizon III (1030/35 – 1064) (fig. 3: 21).
22. Bracelet, glass, fragment. Patinated, rectangular section. Dimensions: Diameter – 4.2 cm, section – 0.4 x 0.5 cm. Location: Grid square XX-286, layer 7. Dating: Stratigraphic horizon II (976 – 1030/35) (fig. 3: 22).
23. Bracelet, glass, fragment. Blue, elliptical section. Dimensions: Preserved length – 5.8 cm, section – 0.7 x 0.3 cm. Location: Grid square XX-303, Structure XX-303/1 (pit). Dating: Stratigraphic horizon III (1030/35 – 1064) (fig. 3: 23).
24. Bracelet, glass, fragment. Blue, round section. Dimensions: Preserved length – 5.9 cm, section – 0.6 cm. Location: Grid square XX-344, layer 2. Dating: Stratigraphic horizon III (1030/35 – 1064) (fig. 3: 24).
25. Bracelet, glass, fragment. Blue, round section. Dimensions: Preserved length – 3.6 cm, section – 0.8 cm. Location: Grid square XX-286, Structure XX-286/1 (pit). Dating: Stratigraphic horizon II (976 – 1030/35) (fig. 3: 25).
26. Bracelet, glass, fragment. Blue, patinated, round section. Dimensions: Diameter – 4 cm, section – 0.7 cm. Location: Grid square XX-344, Structure XX-344/1. Dating: Stratigraphic horizon II (976 – 1030/35) (fig. 3: 26).
27. Bracelet, glass, fragment. Blue, patinated, round section. Dimensions: Preserved length – 6.6 cm, section – 0.7 cm. Location: Grid square XX-344, Structure XX-344/1. Dating: Stratigraphic horizon II (976 – 1030/35) (fig. 3: 27).
28. Bracelet, glass, fragment. Blue, round section. Dimensions: Preserved length – 3 cm, section – 0.6 cm. Location: Grid square XX-305, Structure XX-304/2 (burnt room), layer 8. Dating: Stratigraphic horizon II (976 – 1030/35) (fig. 3: 28).
29. Bracelet, glass, fragment. Patinated, twisted, round section. Dimensions: Preserved length – 5.9 cm, section – 0.9 cm. Location: Grid square XX-304, Structure XX-304/2 (burnt room). Dating: Stratigraphic horizon II (976 – 1030/35) (fig. 3: 29).
30. Bracelet, glass, fragment. Blue, twisted, round section. Dimensions: Preserved length – 2.9 cm, section – 0.7 cm. Location: Grid square XX-344, Structure XX-344/1. Dating: Stratigraphic horizon II (976 – 1030/35) (fig. 3: 30).
31. Bracelet, glass, fragment. Blue, twisted, round section. Dimensions: Preserved length – 3 cm, section – 0.7 cm. Location: Grid square XX-344, layer 5. Dating: Stratigraphic horizon II (976 – 1030/35) (fig. 3: 31).
32. Bracelet, glass, fragment. Patinated, twisted, round section. Dimensions: Preserved length – 3 cm, section – 0.8 cm. Location: Grid square XX-344, Structure XX-344/1. Dating: Stratigraphic horizon II (976 – 1030/35) (fig. 3: 32).
33. Bracelet, glass, fragment. Blue, twisted, round section. Dimensions: Preserved length – 3.9 cm, section – 0.6 cm. Location: Grid square XX-366, Structure XX-366/1 (dwelling), elevation 181.08 – 181.30 m. Dating: Stratigraphic horizon II (976 – 1030/35) (fig. 3: 33).
34. Bracelet, glass, fragment. Blue, round section, decorated with a yellow painting. Dimensions: Preserved length – 2.9 cm, section – 0.8 cm. Location: Grid square XX-344, Structure XX-344/1. Dating: Stratigraphic horizon II (976 – 1030/35) (fig. 3: 34).
35. Bracelet, glass, fragment. Brownish-red, square section, decorated with a yellow painting. Dimensions: 7.9 x 0.7 cm. Location: Grid square XX-304, Structure XX-304/1 (pit). Dating: Stratigraphic horizon II (976 – 1030/35) (fig. 3: 35).
36. Bracelet, glass, fragment. Brownish-red, elliptical section, decorated with yellowish white painting. Dimensions: 4.5 x 0.6 cm. Location: Grid square XX-284, Structure XX-284/2 (pit), NW – 5.50 m, NE – 5.20 m, elevation 181.94 m. Dating: Stratigraphic horizon III (1030/35 – 1064) (fig. 3: 36).
37. Bracelet, glass, fragment. Bluish-black, patinated, elliptical section, decorated with a yellow-white painting. Dimensions: Preserved length – 2.4 cm, section – 1 x 0.4 cm. Location: Grid square XX-325, Structure XX-304/2 (burnt room), N – 0.10 m, E – 1.64 m, elevation 181.39 m. Dating: Stratigraphic horizon II (976 – 1030/35) (fig. 3: 37).
38. Bracelet, glass, fragment. Brownish-red, elliptical section, decorated with a yellow-white painting. Dimensions: Preserved length – 2 cm, section – 0.5 x 0.4 cm. Location: Grid square XX-342, Structure XX-362/3 (pit). Dating: Stratigraphic horizon III (1030/35 – 1064) (fig. 3: 38).
39. Bracelet, glass, fragment. Bluish-red, fluted section. Dimensions: Preserved length – 4.9 cm, section – 0.7 x 0.4 cm. Location: Grid square XX-323, layer 2. Dating: Stratigraphic horizon III (1030/35 – 1064) (fig. 3: 39).
40. Bracelet, glass, fragment. Blue, fluted section. Dimensions: Preserved length – 3.7 cm, section – 1.2 x 0.4 cm. Location: Grid square XX-305, Structure XX-304/2 (burnt room), elevation 180.86 m. Dating: Stratigraphic horizon II (976 – 1030/35) (fig. 3: 40).

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СРЕДНОВЕКОВНИ НАКИТИ ОТ ОБЕКТ „ДВОРЦОВ ЦЕНТЪР – ИЗТОК" В ПЛИСКА

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РЕЗЮМЕ

В настоящата статия са представени две групи накити – метални и стъклени. Те са открити при археологическото проучване на обект „Дворцов център – изток" в Плиска (обр. 1). Накитите са намерени в добре документирана стратиграфска среда. Контекстът, в който са попаднали предметите, определя техния *terminus ante quem*, фиксиращ крайната им дата на употреба. Имайки предвид сравнително „крехкия" вид на повечето изделия и рисковете за често повреждане и загубване при ежедневни дейности може да се приеме, че накитите са сред предметите, които са използвани кратковременно. Това улеснява възможностите да реконструираме, с висока степен на достоверност, хронологията на тяхното използване преди попадането на предметите в конкретен стратиграфски контекст. Представени са две групи накити – метални и стъклени.

В групата на металните накити са включени 7 пръстена, 1 обеца, 2 висулки, 3 гривни, 2 метални копчета и 1 фибула (обр. 2). Дадена е подробна информация за стратиграфската среда на откриване на накитите и са анализирани типо-хронологическите им характеристики. Посочени са многобройни аналогии от близки като хронология селища и некрополи.

Втората голяма група накити са стъклените гривни. При разкопките на обект „Дворцов център – изток" са открити над 50 фрагмента. В повечето случаи става въпрос за малки парченца, от които сме избрали 24 по-информативни фрагмента, илюстриращи типологическото разнообразие на този вид накит (обр. 3). В зависимост от сечението стъклените гривни могат да се класифицират в няколко типа: с квадратно (обр. 3: 1), с правоъгълно (обр. 3: 2 – 6), с елипсовидно (обр. 3: 7) и с кръгло сечение (обр. 3: 8 – 12). Откриват се също така усукани гривни (обр. 3: 13 – 17), гривни с рисувана украса (обр. 3: 18 – 22) и гривни с канелиран профил (обр. 3: 23 – 24). Най-често гривните са едноцветни, особено предпочитан е синият цвят, с различни нюанси на тъмносиньо и морско синьо. В отделни случаи се среща синьо-виолетов или кафяво-червен цвят.

За разлика от некрополите, в които накитите се намират на функционалните им места и носят по-конкретна социална, символна или полово-възрастова информация, то в селищните обекти накити се откриват в разнообразни археологически контексти, включително и като депониран отпадък. Предимството при селищните обекти е, че в културния пласт могат да се диференцират стратиграфски

нива със сравнително „къса хронология“, което е важно за прецизиране датировката на накитите. Въведените в последното десетилетие модерни методи на документиране и микростратиграфският подход на разкопаване на археологическите контексти ни предоставят много по-прецизни данни за датиране на находките от „първо лице“, а не по аналогии с находки от други обекти, каквато е честата практика.

Систематизирането на стратиграфските данни позволява да групираме находките в три хронологически периода (обр. 4, обр. 5). В най-ранния стратиграфски хоризонт I (ок. 900 – 976) са открити малък брой метални накити, прави впечатление липсата на стъклени гривни. Най-много находки присъстват в стратиграфски хоризонти II (970 – 1030/35) и III (1030/35 – ок. 1064), като пикът е в хоризонт II.

Количественият анализ на археологическите материали по стратиграфски нива допълва картината за динамиката на живот в различни периоди от развитието на следстолична Плиска. Резултатите показват, че в хоризонт I, определен като „български“ следстоличен период, находките са сравнително малобройни. Археологическите проучвания на обект „Дворцов център – изток“ в Плиска потвърждават, че до средата на X в. населението в тази част на Вътрешния град е било малобройно. Най-съществен е количественият ръст на накити в хоризонт II, определен като „византийски“ период на Плиска – това е времето на най-значимо демографско нарастване на града. Сравнително висок е броят на накитите и в последния хоризонт III, определен като „поствизантийски или печенежки“ период в Плиска, но тук трябва да се отбележи, че основна част от находките вероятно са били произведени в по-ранния период, а са използвани и в следващите две-три десетилетия.

Ключови думи: Плиска, средновековни накити, пръстени, обеци, висулки, гривни

CHURCH NO. 16 IN THE WESTERN CONFINES OF THE OUTER TOWN OF MEDIEVAL CHERVEN

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ABSTRACT

The newly uncovered Church No. 16 is situated on the western part of the Cherven hill. The church comprises a narthex, nave area and a single three-walled apse. The building has four entrances – two in the narthex and two in the nave. The walls were constructed of two-faced masonry – stone blocks with yellow-white non-crumbling mortar, and between them – a fill of small rocks and brick fragments, compounded with mortar.

Together with the large number of fragmented mural paintings from the embankment inside the temple, parts of a fresco layer from the socle area on the walls were also uncovered.

Seven burial chambers have been documented in the nave area. Outside the walls of the church the necropolis developed in south and east. The borders of the necropolis are to be determined since the excavations are not over yet. The jewellery found inside the graves consists mainly of silver and gilt earrings and a gold finger ring.

We relate the dating of the church's establishment to the 1320s – 1330s, and the end of its existence – with the march of Ali Pasha in 1388.

Key words: church, fresco decoration, necropolis, jewellery, Cherven

Archaeological research in the medieval part of Cherven has been underway, with short interruptions, for more than a century. As a result, the town's citadel has been fully researched, while in the western part of the hill there are some unstudied areas.[1]

The main reason to direct our interest to this new section of the fortress is the small amount of data we have on the western part of the medieval town. At the beginning of the 20th c., Karel Škorpil surveyed this territory and published his findings in „Опис на старините по течението на река Русенски Лом" ["Description of the antiquities along the Rusenski Lom River"] (Шкорпил 1914, 30 – 31) (fig. 1). In his observations, he mentions the presence of two fortified areas – fortresses – located to the northeast and southwest along the rock ridge, protecting the middle unfortified part of Cherven. Today we know that the structures he described formed a fortress with a citadel to the east. In the "Description", the southwestern part of the hill is presented with the following components: a fortress wall in the form of a stone embankment (XVIII under Škorpil), whose route

[1] See Шкорпил 1914; Георгиев 1955, 65 – 73; Георгиева, Димова 1963, 71 – 85; Георгиева, Димова 1967, 5 – 26; Димова, Георгиева 1967, 5 – 11; Димова 1980, 261 – 266; Димова 1981, 193 – 206; Димова и др. 1985; Димова 1987, 29 – 36; Йорданов 2006, 78 – 88; Димова 2008; Йорданов 2011, 10 – 29; Йорданов 2014, 220 – 231; Йорданов 2019).

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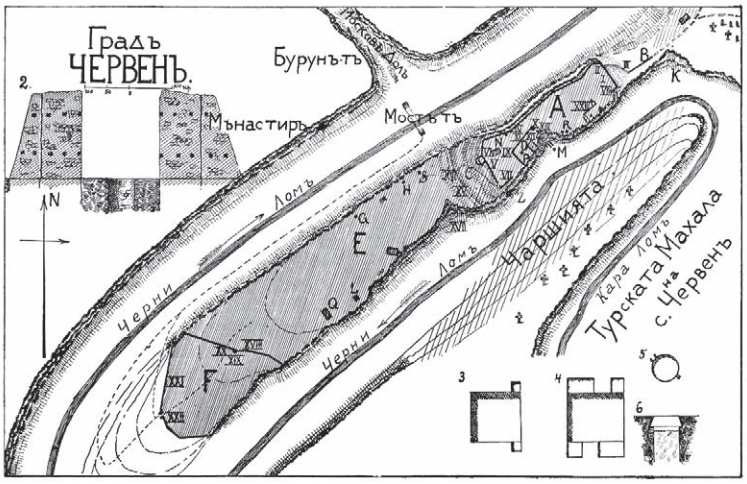


Fig. 1. Map of the rocky hill of Cherven (after Шкорпил 1914, фиг. 20, 27)
Обр. 1. Карта на Червенския скален рид (по Шкорпил 1914, фиг. 20, 27)

can be traced linearly along the width of the rock ridge; a tower-like building in the middle part of the fortress wall (XIX under Škorpil) and a fortress gate (XX under Škorpil) next to it. One more fortress wall was described, arch-shaped and following the contour of the cape (XXI under Škorpil). A fortress gate with two side towers (XXII under Škorpil) was then registered at the curve of its route.

The description of the structure, defined by the prominent scholar as a fortress tower, is the starting point at the beginning of the excavations in this area. The current team began the excavations in this section with the main aim of studying the fortress structures described. The selected site is located on the left-hand side of the supposed fortress gate and represented a well outlined rectangular structure under an embankment layer. After the initial uncovering of part of the first wall, it became clear that this was a Christian temple. It was subsequently designated as Church No. 16.[2] Archaeological research around the newly uncovered temple began in 2017, and the excavations of the necropolis and the preserved constructions around the church are still ongoing.[3]

[2] The number of excavated churches in the medieval town of Cherven is 16, and they are numbered as follows: Church No. 1 – the biggest temple, a cathedral church (13th – 14th c.), built on a high hill in the western part nearest the citadel; Church No. 2 – a cathedral temple (15th – 16th c.), located in the citadel, west of the ruler's residence; Church No. 3 – in the yard of the ruler's residence; Church No. 4 – located southwest immediately next to the ruler's residence; Church No. 5 – on the territory of the Inner town, west of Church No. 1; Church No. 6 – it was situated near the eastern Early Byzantine wall, constructed on an embankment, partially preserved and removed during excavations; Church No. 6A – situated northwest of the main eastern entrance of the fortress, near Church No. 6; Church No. 7 – built in the northern fortress wall of the citadel; Church No. 8 – the only triconch church in Cherven to present date, situated on a plateau east of the citadel; Church No. 9 – in the highest part of the citadel, east of the ruler's residence, not preserved; Church No. 9A – erected partially on the remains of Church No. 9; Church No. 10 – situated in the Inner town, west of the saddle; Church No. 11 – in the western part of the Inner town, near the newly uncovered temple, part of the Episcopal residence in the 15th – 16th c.; Church No. 12 – in the western part of the hill, north of Church No. 5; Church No. 13 – located in the saddle between the citadel and the Inner town; and Church No. 16 – topic of this paper.

[3] Excavations of the site began in 2017 with uncovering the narthex and a small part of the nave. In the next season, the interior of the nave and altar areas of the temple were studied. In 2019, the exterior façades of the church were investigated, and in 2020 – the area in the immediate southwest of the church, where the borders of the "yard space" are formed by a building or buildings (Йорданов и др. 2018, 486 – 489; Великова и др. 2019, 519 – 521; Великова, Жекунова 2020, 1180 – 1184). The excavations were financed by the Ministry of Culture and the Regional Museum of History – Ruse. The following people took part: Varbin Varbanov, PhD, Nikola Rusev, PhD, Iskren Velikov, PhD, Svetlana Todorova, Ivan Ivanov (Museum of History – Klisura), Metodi Dimitrov, Petar Digranov, Hristo Hristov. Dig director of the excavations – Svetlana Velikova, deputy-dig director – Velina Zhekunova, scientific consultant – Assoc. Prof. Deyan Rabovyanov, PhD (NAIM – BAS). Students from the UK also took part in the first two seasons under the Erasmus+ programme. School and university students and volunteers take part in the excavations every year.

The excavations in this new zone took place thanks to our colleague Stoyan Yordanov. He passed away in the summer of 2019, writing his work dedicated to the medieval town of Cherven until his very last breath (Йорданов 2019). He took great interest in everything going on in Cherven and the Ruse museum. May his memory live forever!

Several sites have been excavated near Church No. 16 through the years, thanks to which we have information on the town's development in this part of medieval Cherven (fig. 2).

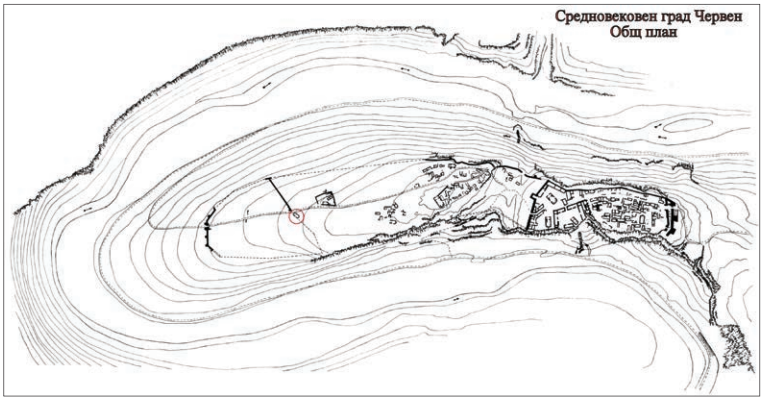


Fig. 2. General plan of the medieval town of Cherven
Обр. 2. Общ план на средновековния град Червен

In 1952, Prof. Georgi K. Georgiev and Nikola Angelov investigated the blacksmith's workshop and several furnaces for melting iron and working with iron ore situated next to it (Георгиев 1955, 67; Йорданов 2019, 19 – 20). The building comprises three rooms, the first housing the furnaces, the second, designated as a blacksmith workshop, and the third has been interpreted by the researcher as a dwelling (Георгиев 1955, 68 – 69).

In 1986, part of the curve of the fortress wall in the lowest western part of the Cherven ridge with a length of 76 m was studied. The studied wall segment included the gate, which is flanked by two semi-circular towers. A rectangular tower was uncovered to the north along the wall route, and to the south – another three semi-circular towers (Йорданов 2014, 220).

To the east of the newly uncovered Church No. 16, an Episcopal residence from the Early Ottoman period has been researched. The architectural complex comprises Church No. 11, which was built in the first decades of the 14th c. Around it, in the middle or the second quarter of the 15th c., an enclosure wall which encloses the yard space, the church and three buildings was erected (Йорданов 2006, 80; Йорданов 2019, 63).

Despite the individual structures uncovered through the years, we do not yet have an overall concept of the town's development in the western region. The newly uncovered temple marks the dense population of the town in this part, but only further excavations can show in detail the nature of the buildings around it.

Architecture of the Church

The newly uncovered Church No. 16 is situated on the western part of the Cherven hill. Its location is on a terrain with natural relief amplitude to the south of about 1.15 m and growing in the same direction. Rock terraces were formed and additionally levelled. The northern wall of the building sits on a higher rock foundation, into which wall thresholds and foundations were cut. The southern wall of the temple has more layers of stone construction. This is visible in the narthex area, where the entrance was constructed at the northern end with a hewn-in step, and in the southern part the drop in level was compensated by thick mortar putty.[4]

The church comprises a narthex, nave area, and a single three-wall apse (fig. 3, fig. 4). It had two entrances in the narthex area and two more in the main room. The church building has a deviation of 40^0 to the southeast. The comprehensive excavation of the building allowed us to determine its exact

[4] In its upper part, the mortar putty comprises a compacted mortar layer with a thickness of 2 – 6 cm. Under it, there is a layer of loose sandy soil, mortar and small stones. Several brick fragments, a small number of ceramic sherds, and a small quantity of bones, including human ones, have been found. Two holes from a wooden structure were outlined on the cleared rock foundation.



Fig. 3. Church No. 16 – view from the west
Обр. 3. Църква № 16 – поглед от запад



Fig. 4. Aerial photography of the newly discovered temple
Обр. 4. Аерофотография на новооткрития храм

dimensions. The western façade is 7 m long, and the southern and northern walls have a length of 11.70 m. The total length of the church on the east – west axis is 12.80 m (fig. 5).

The narthex has interior dimensions of 5.10 x 2.70 m. Its floor is a levelled rock, covered by mortar putty. In the north-western corner, next to the hewn-in step, a rock bench was uncovered – 0.25 m high, 0.50 m wide, and 0.70 m long. It was also painted with frescoes, and traces of a fire can be observed on the frescoes. The preserved length of the walls reaches 1.50 m in the narthex area, and the wall thickness is 0.80/0.90 m.

The nave is rectangular in shape and with interior dimensions of 5.10 x 5.33 m. Its floor is a levelled rock covered with mortar putty. Its floor level is elevated relative to the narthex by about 0.20 m. The difference between the two levels is overcome by a step hewn in the rock foundation, which is situated in the narthex area. Along the whole northern wall, a rock bench was uncovered, with a height of about 0.35 – 0.40 m from the church floor. It is divided approximately in the middle by a pilaster. Its width varies between 0.32 m and 0.40 m, and there is a section (at the northern entrance of the nave), where it was additionally coated and constructed with mortar in order to even its width along its whole length. Above Grave No. 10 on the rock bench, the route of a canal was registered, whose functions remain unclear (fig. 6). Based on the positions of the pilasters in the main room, we have established the type of the church as single-nave, with a semi-cylindrical vault, over which a gable roof was constructed.

The altar area of the temple has interior dimensions of: 3.20 m (north – south) x 2.20 m (east – west) (fig. 6). The apse is single, polygonal, with a semi-circular 0.75-metre-high stone socle, protruding at about 0.20 m. The length of the walls on the outside is 1.90 x 1.70 x 1.90 m. Its northern half has the best-preserved wall, reaching 1.80 m from floor level. There is no change in the level between the altar and nave areas. The altar screen was probably a wooden structure. Grooves were registered on the two opposite walls, next to floor level, which connect to it. The situation in the altar area repeats that in the southern half of the narthex. Mortar filling was again required to overcome the natural lowering of the terrain. As a result, the place of the altar pillar is outlined in the mortar bedding. The opening has an almost square shape, and its sides are 0.36 m long. In the

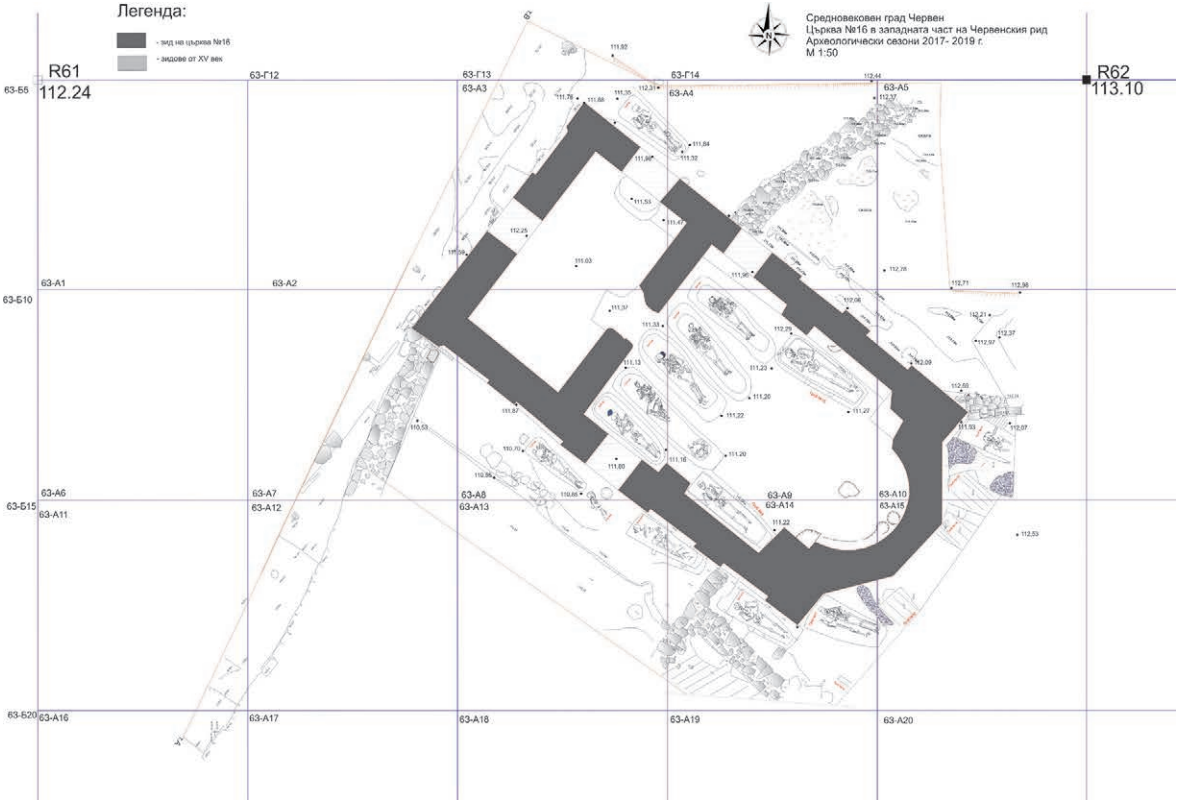


Fig. 5. Plan of the archaeological structures (Authors: Eng. Ivan Grigorov and Velina Zhekunova)
Обр. 5. План на археологическите структури (Автори: инж. Иван Григоров и Велина Жекунова)

northeastern part of the opening for the altar table, a canal has been cleared with a length of 0.30 m and height of 0.28 m, which is registered under the level of the mortar floor and is oriented to the east. The altar table and its base are missing. There is a probability that the cleared empty space next to the throne base was used to store relics. The custom of putting them up for the consecration of a temple is very significant. Through archaeological means, relics have been uncovered at various places in the altar area of churches from the 13th – 14th c., including under the pillar of the altar table (Тотев, Ботева 2019, 254). In the immediate vicinity of the inside curve of the apse, again on the mortar bedding, round and oblong holes were registered, which we cannot relate to specific functions at this stage. To the left of the altar, part of the prosthesis niche is preserved. Its dimensions are: 0.69 m wide, 0.57 m deep, at a height of 1.30 m from the church floor. Most probably, the diaconicon was a similar symmetric niche. Due to the poor state of preservation of the south wall construction, no traces of it have been confirmed.

Four outside entrances were uncovered during the excavations. The western entrance to the narthex is 0.90 m wide and situated in the middle of the western wall. Its walking level is at 0.40 m above the narthex floor. It has been walled in and the construction traces are the same as those of the wall. The northern entrance to the narthex has the same width and its level is at about 0.90 m above the narthex floor. On the inside, two steps have been hewn in the rock foundation, plastered over with mortar. They have irregular trapezoidal shape with sloping sides, with a width of about 1 m next to the wall, total height of 0.70 m, and the lower step protrudes at 0.70 m from the wall. In the main area of the church, two entrances have also been uncovered, positioned nearly opposite each other. The width of the third entrance, which is on the northern wall, is also 0.90 m, and it is at about 0.40 m from the dividing wall between the narthex and the nave. Its level is at 0.40 m

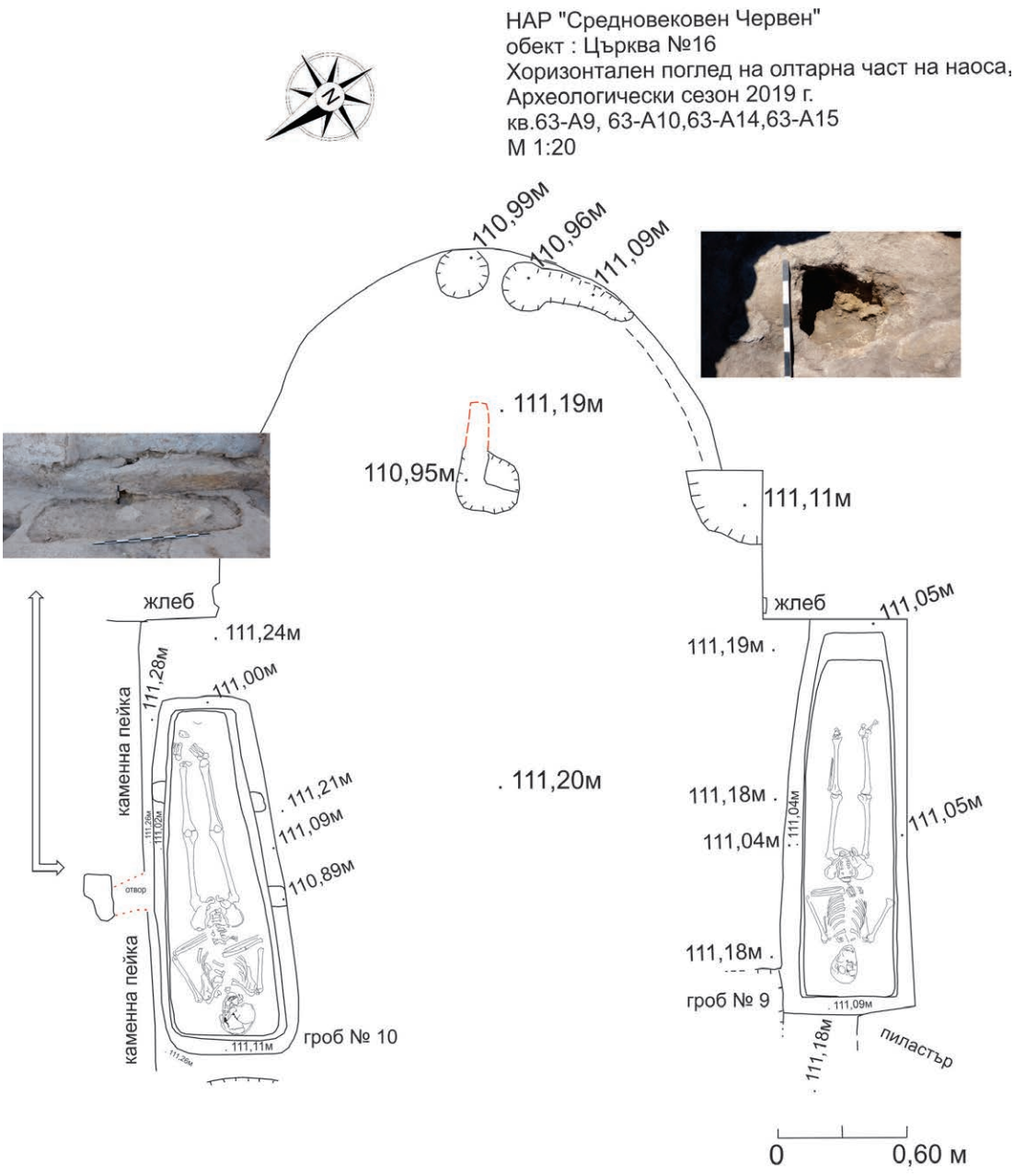


Fig. 6. Graphic documentation of the interior of the altar part of the church and part of the nave (Author: Svetlana Todorova)
Обр. 6. Вътрешно заснемане на олтарната част на храма и част от наоса (Автор: Светлана Тодорова)

above the floor, and a carved rock bench is situated in its foot. The last entrance is situated in the southern wall, at about 0.90 m from the dividing wall between the two rooms. Its width and height are the same as those of the north entrance.

The entrance between the narthex and the nave is also 0.90 m wide and situated in the middle of the wall, on the same axis as the walled-in western entrance of the church. In order to overcome the difference in the walking level, a step has been carved in the floor of the narthex, of irregular trapezoidal shape, protruding at 0.53 m from the north and 0.40 m from the south. In its front, it is 0.80 m wide and 0.20 m high. This height determines the difference in the floor levels of the narthex and nave.

The walls were constructed with two-faced masonry – stone blocks with yellow-white non-crumbling mortar, and between them – a fill of small stones and brick fragments, compounded with mortar. In the preserved part of the temple walls, no presence of a levelling wooden beam system has been observed. The brick courses registered on the temple's façade are single-row and irregular. Preserved two-row and three-row courses are observed only at the apse. No ceramoplastic decoration has been uncovered. The church façades are decorated by single-step pseudo constructive blind arcades, 1.30 m wide and 0.10 m deep, and the pilasters between them are 0.80 m wide. Traces of fire can be observed on the whole inside surface of the church construction. We have no data on the presence of a dome or bell tower.

The construction method of the church approximates the one categorized by Violeta Dimova as *semi-opus mixtum*, which she dates to the first half of the 14th c. (Димова 2008, 41). The thickness of the temple walls is 0.90 m, and on the outside front, uneven decorative brick rows are registered. Between the two fronts, a fill of small crushed stones and brick fragments compounded with mortar can be observed.

Two of the church buildings uncovered to date within the medieval town of Cherven were constructed using the same method – Church No. 5 and Church No. 11. Both are situated in the western part of the town, relatively close to each other and to the newly uncovered temple. Their dating is based on the numismatic material discovered – coins of the rulers Tsar Mihail III Shishman (1323 – 1330) and Tsar Ivan Alexander (1331 – 1371). Fragments of wall painting were found in Church No. 11, which can be dated to the first two decades of the 14th c. (Димова 2008, 271 – 276). Another temple, dated to the beginning of the 14th c., is the church of the monastery near Sliven. The building has the same construction specifics as the newly uncovered church in Cherven (Димова 2008, 284).

We should also point out the similarities between the newly uncovered temple and Church No. 7, which is situated within the citadel of Cherven. Church No. 7 is dated to the middle of the 14th c., and the architectural plans of the two temples share a number of similarities – semi-cylindrical arches and the positions of the pairs of pilasters in the nave areas (Димова 1981, 205; Димова 2008, 300; Йорданов 2019, 187 – 188). The location of Church No. 7 is more specific – it is built in the northern fortress wall of the citadel. It is possible that the newly uncovered church also had a similar position in the planning of the medieval town, but at this stage the question remains unclear. Church No. 7 also stands out with the assumption for ktetorship from the Constantinople patriarch Kallistos I (1350 – 1353, 1354 – 1363), made on the basis of the reading of a monogram on a small decorative bowl from the ceramoplastic decoration (Сенгалевич 2019, 127). Taking into account the strong relationship between the medieval town of Cherven and the capital Tarnovgrad, as well as the growing influence of hesychasm, such a hypothesis sounds convincing.

Parallels with churches from the same period, which also have similar architectural plans, i.e., single-nave churches with a narthex, one apse and semi-cylindrical arch, can also be observed in other medieval towns. In the capital Tarnovgrad, on the hill of Tsarevets, Church No. 16 has similar characteristics, despite its badly preserved architecture (Димова 2008, 319). Trapezitsa hill provides the example of Church No. 10, dated by some researchers to the 13th c., while others have accepted the beginning of the 14th c. as the period of its construction (Димова 2008, 304). Church No. 22 on the hill Trapezitsa is dated to the 1340s, underwent a reconstruction, and existed to its end (Рабовянов 2019, 478). The architectural plan of the church "St. Nicholas" in the village of Kalotina (Димова 2008, 323) is similar, despite the simplified façade without disjointed parts.

The examples from neighbouring countries like Northern Macedonia, Greece and Serbia, include temples dated to the 13th – 14th c. In the village of Radošiće, Raška municipality, the church "St. Petka" has been dated to the 14th c. based on the studied wall paintings and archaeological

material. It is part of a number of temples with similar features and size (single-nave with a single apse, semi-cylindrical arch), typical of the 13th – 14th c. in the Raška region. This group also comprises the churches "St. Nicholas" in the village of Šumnik, "St. Nicholas" in the village of Ušće, "St. Nicholas" and "Sts. Joachim and Anna" from the monastery complex Studenica (Булић 2015, 105 – 106). The resemblance to Cherven Church No. 16 is expressed in the similar architecture and dimensions, the differences lie in the homogenous stone construction of the Serbian temples, without brick courses.

Research conducted on the medieval church in the town of Strumica, Northern Macedonia, began in 2015. The temple was dated to the first half of the 13th c. and functioned until the end of the 13th – beginning of the 14th c., and the necropolis which formed east of it includes burials from the 13th c. to the beginning of the 20th c. (Cvetanov 2017, 194). Taking into account the same similarities in the architectural solutions, we will also point out the churches "St. John the Precursor" in Kastoria (dated to the second half of the 14th c.) and "St. Nicholas" in Prilep (dated to the end of the 13th c.) (Ćurčić 2010, 694).

Mural decoration

Together with the large number of fragmented mural paintings from the embankment inside the temple found during the excavations the excavators uncovered parts of a fresco layer on the walls.[5] The uncovered fresco fragments in the narthex area represent ornaments from the socle area. Next to the northern entrance of the narthex, above the rock bench, the mural paintings represent square panels, divided by wide red edgings (fig. 7). The ornaments within the square spaces comprise rhombuses, triangles and floral patterns. They were painted with dark blue paint on white background. The rock bench also has a preserved painted red edging in the base, and the putty bears traces of a fire. Among the uncovered fresco fragments, there are some containing letters that were part of inscriptions.

Another part of the narthex area with preserved fresco fragments is located on the southern wall. It also presents elements of the lowest pictorial level – frames in red and blue colour against a white background, which form semi-circular spaces filled with floral patterns in red and blue.

Fragments of the pictorial decoration around the two entrances have been preserved in the nave. The preserved fragments by the entrance at the southern wall are again floral patterns painted in red against a white background. Near the northern entrance, there is a depiction of drapery.

The best-preserved part of the uncovered frescoes is also a painted example of drapery (fig. 8). They are at the altar apse and have an area of 12 m^2. Their height reaches up to 1.40 m. In the lower part, the same double frame is observed, comprising a red wide line with a dark blue wavy line on it. Floral patterns are painted on the folds of the drapery. The upper border is marked by a double wide edging of red paint, followed by the band with human images, which has not been preserved at full height.

On the southern wall, a small part of the ground and feet of the figures from the first register are preserved, where figures of military saints were probably depicted (fig. 9).

The fragments from mural paintings uncovered on the walls of the Cherven churches are not

[5] The poor condition of the mural decoration made it necessary to take urgent measures for their preservation. They were taken down by Assoc. Prof. Miglena Prashkova, PhD and Prof. Simeon Zahariev, PhD at the Department of Church Art, University of Veliko Tarnovo "St. Cyril and St. Methodius". They strengthened some of the other frescoes on site. Their conservation is ongoing in a laboratory setting at present, and future plans envisage that they take their place in the permanent exhibition at the Regional Museum of History – Ruse.

In 2020, the earthly path of Prof. Simeon Zahariev came to an end. An exceptional professional and an honourable man. May his memory live forever!

many, which is why every new piece of medieval fresco is extremely valuable. We will present briefly the main examples, which, with the exception of cathedral temple No. 1, have the stylistic specifics of pictorial art from the 14th c. These examples are the closest parallels on the territory of the medieval town of Cherven to the presented frescoes from Church No. 16.

During the excavations of metropolitan temple No. 1, the most richly decorated and best-preserved fresco decoration was uncovered. Unfortunately, these murals have been lost forever. Only the photographs taken during the surveys of Karel Škorpil give us an idea of the degree of preservation of the mural paintings (Шкорпил 1914, Табл. XXIV, фиг. 137) (fig. 10). The socle is decorated with rectangular fields, marked by double frames and with circles in the middle. Above this base, images of saints and religious scenes followed, and a large part of the figures were preserved (Димова, Георгиева 1967, 2).

Church No. 5 and the adjacent residential area were excavated in 1971 – 1973. The mural paintings from the church were taken down and housed at the depot of the Regional Museum of History – Ruse. According to the description of the researchers, the temple had a rich pictorial decoration. It included the preserved parts of a cornice with a painted pattern of white palmettes against a dark blue background (Димова 2008, 272, обр. 90).



Fig. 7. Frescoes on the rock bench in the narthex of the church

Обр. 7. Стенописи върху скалната пейка в притворната част на църквата



Fig. 8. Frescoes on the curve of the altar part of the temple

Обр. 8. Стенописи върху извивката на олтарната част на храма



Fig. 9. The lower section of the figures of military saints on the south wall of the church

Обр. 9. Долната част от фигурите на светци войни върху южната стена на църквата



Fig. 10. The interior of Church No. 1 (after Шкорпил 1914, Табл. XXIV, фиг. 137)
Обр. 10. Вътрешното пространство на църква № 1(по Шкорпил 1914, Табл. XXIV, фиг. 137)

Church No. 11 was excavated in 1979. The church walls were covered with mural paintings, which were taken down and housed at the depot of the National Museum of History – Sofia. The socle decoration included a geometric pattern and full length figures above it (Димова 2008, 275). Near the altar area, on the southern wall of the temple, two images have been preserved – of Christ or Apostle Peter, and of John the Baptist – depicted to the front with a tray which holds his decapitated head. The iconographic plot is rare, and the fresco fragment from Cherven is a representative example of the Palaeologan style and the art of the Tarnovo School (Косева 1993, 380; Матакиева-Лилкова 2001, 65). After these figures, there were military saints, and a lion was depicted on the shield of one of them (Димова 2008, 275). The image of Archangel Michael in military attire is positioned on the northern wall, west of the side church entrance (Димова 2008, 275).

Rock monasteries are an important element of the Second Bulgarian Kingdom (12th – 14th c.) and are characteristic for the area of Rusenski Lom River. Besides the big rock-hewn Lavra monastery near the village of Ivanovo, two compounds were formed around the medieval town of Cherven, which include a Catholicon connected to nearby located smaller premises (Йорданов 1992, 86 – 87). Fragments of mural paintings dated to the beginning of the 14th c. are preserved in the main church of one of the monasteries, located west of the "Moskov Dol" area (Панайотова 1965, 13; Йорданов 2019, 199). The temples in the nearby rocks and the churches researched to date, form the spiritual integrity of medieval Cherven. The churches hewn into the rocks are part of the overall town development and occupy a territory next to the unexplored suburbs around the rock plateau.

The stylistic and iconographic features of the frescoes from the newly uncovered temple in Cherven approximate those of Churches No. 4 and No. 11 in Trapezitsa, as well as the pictorial art at the so-called Old Transfiguration Monastery (Косева-Тотева 2016, 8.1,15.1, 15.7, 24.1, 24.2, 24.3). The comparison is mainly based on the socle decoration, which in the sites in question is dated to the 14th c. The analysis of the main characteristics shows similarities with monuments of the Palaeologan style, which became widely popular in the Eastern Christian world at the time (Косева-Тотева 2016, 143). The socle bands of Church No. 16, which also decorate the sides of arches, archways and the altar area, consist of geometric patterns, palmettes, imitation of marble inlay of the type *opus sectile,* the so-called "wallpaper" type of compositions of geometric and floral elements (Косева-Тотева 2016, 143). All this makes them close to the monuments from the capital Tarnovo and the main features of Palaeologan art.

Necropolis

Necropoleis of different sizes usually form around churches and temples. Church No. 16 is no exception. The documented graves were located both in the interior and the area around the temple.

Seven burial chambers have been documented in the nave area, hewn into the rock foundation. They occupy the entrance area of the nave, arranged in a row which covers the whole width of

the floor area, and two are situated in a second row in the northeastern and southeastern corners of the main room. Mixed bones of different individuals have been uncovered in the fill of the burial chambers, and on the bottom there was a skeleton in anatomical order. All burial chambers were hewn into the rock foundation in two levels, the upper being formed by a ledge, which supports the covering stone slab. According to the anthropological analysis, the buried individuals are women, children, and men from different age groups.[6] Under the skulls of three of the skeletons, bricks were uncovered, which were used as a pillow to lift the head. The nature of the grave chambers, the quantity and the type of bone material from them show that they were used and opened multiple times. The full characteristics of the necropolis can be analysed when all adjacent graves are excavated.

Burial chambers hewn into the rock are not something unknown on the territory of the medieval town of Cherven. The nature of the necropoleis established around the churches is affected by circumstances which include the location of the specific church building, i.e., how it relates to the building-up around it, the street network, the square areas, the relief of the rock surface, the period of erection. The temples from Cherven which have hewn-in burial chambers in their interior and surroundings are: Church No. 1 – narthex – 2, nave – 3, outside the church – hewn-in chambers next to the southern wall; Church No. 5 – narthex – 2, outside the church – hewn-in chambers next to the southern wall; Church No. 7 – narthex – 1, nave – 3, and church No. 11 – nave – 6, outside the church – 4, from the northern side (Димова и др. 1985, 103 – 122; Ward 2006, 349 – 366; Димова 2008; Йорданов 2019, 167 – 228). In terms of the concentration of burials in the main room of the temple, only Church No. 11 comes close to the situation uncovered at Church No. 16. Similar examples can be seen in a number of medieval towns. The churches in the medieval towns of Lovech and Shumen also have graves hewn in the rock foundation, situated in the interior and exterior parts of the buildings (Антонова 1995, 79; Чангова 2006, 110). Most temples in Cherven, Lovech and Shumen are related to separate necropoleis with graves not hewn into the rock foundation. On Trapezitsa hill in Veliko Tarnovo, graves hewn into the rock foundation (in the narthex and nave area) have been uncovered at Churches Nos. 3, 5, 6, 10, 11, 19. At Churches No. 3 and No. 14, there are tombs built with bricks (Димов 1915, 112 – 176; Генова 1994, 105; Робов, Дочев 2008, 688 – 689; Тотев и др. 2011, 240). On Tsarevets hill, most examples include temples with graves in the nave: at Church No. 4, Church No. 17, Church No. 23 (Овчаров 2006, 332 – 335; Тотев и др. 2011, 240).

The people buried in Church No. 16 in Cherven – men, women, and children, were part of a typical urban population. A practice characteristic of the Tarnovo temples for the 13th – 14th c. is that donors were buried in the narthex and nave areas of the churches (Тотев и др. 2011, 241). Such a possibility is not excluded for the newly uncovered Cherven church. The origin and development of the necropolis is probably closely related to the chronology of the church building.

A large number of spherical buttons of different diameters, made of copper and copper alloy, some of them silvered, were found in the excavated graves. The jewellery found consists mainly of earrings and a finger ring. Based on the shape, three groups of earrings were established.

The first group includes two silver earrings with gilt (Plate I: 1, 2). The hoop is made of thick wire. In its lower part, in the middle, there is an open-work cube, made of granules welded in fours on each side. On both sides of the cube, there are wire coils ending with a fixing ring. Identical items have been found in a number of medieval necropoleis dated to the 12th – 14th c. (Георгиева,

[6] The anthropological analysis was carried out by Assist. Prof. Nadezhda Atanasova-Timeva, PhD, Department of Anthropology and Anatomy, Institute of Experimental Morphology, Pathology and Anthropology with Museum (IEMPAM – BAS).



Plate I. Jewellery from the necropolis of Church no. 16
Табло I. Накити от некропола на Църква № 16

Пешева, 542, обр. 39_5; Джамбов 1988, 159, фиг. 6; Бъчваров 1993, 33, обр. 23; Raikova 2019, fig. 2, 18, 317). A different version of this type of earring (with two cubes) are the specimens found in the necropolis in Pleven (Генова 1981, 89, обр. 31_1) and the necropolis near the village of Negovantsi (Митова-Джонова 1958, 41, фиг. 1д, е). The same earrings, found in the Yantra necropoleis, are dated with coins to the 14th c. In the same necropoleis, there are more intricate variants of this type of earrings, either with three cubes, or a combination of one central ovoid bead and two side cubes. These variants have also been found with coins – a hoard from the 14th c., coins of Tsar Ivan Alexander with his son Mihail Asen (1331 – 1371) (Бъчваров 1993, 37, обр. 29). Examples of this

type of jewellery are also known from the territory of Romania – in Drobeta and Gruia (Dimitriu 2001, Taf. 37 – 4, 17, 18).

The most numerous is the group of earrings consisting of one or two hollow spherical beads, strung onto the hoop. It is also the most diverse group. The spherical bead comprises two hemispheres – solid or open-work, welded together. The earrings with such a shape are dated after the 10th c., and they are very common finds in various sites dated to the 12th – 14th c. Both intricately made spherical elements and simple, solid spheres are documented (Павлова 2002, 288).

The first subtype of this group represents two open-work spheres made of two six-leaf rosettes with filigree, soldered to each other (Plate I: 3). The spheres are fixed in place by a spirally coiled silver wire on their two sides. The earring is made of silver. Some of the earrings of this type found in Serbia have been dated to the 13th c. (Бајаловић-ХаџиПешић 1984, Т. IV, 3). In the necropolis near the village of Yantra, there are variants which represent a single sphere crafted in the same way (Бъчваров 1993, 26, обр.13). Various finds from the 14th c. originate from the fortress near the village of Vetren, including this type of earring (Атанасов 2009, 252, обр. 96).

The second subtype is an earring made of silver with gilt (Plate I: 4). It comprises a single open-work bead, the two halves of which are seven-leaf rosettes, welded in the middle. There is a resemblance to earrings from the Pleven necropolis (Генова 1981, 89, обр. 30_1) and the necropolis from the village of Negovantsi (Митова-Джонова 1958, 41, фиг. 16).

East of the church apse, two earrings were uncovered (Plate I: 5, 6), which represent the third and fourth subtype. The first one is silver, with an open-work sphere made of six-leaf rosettes, decorated with granules. The item from the necropolis near the village of Negovantsi is identical, and it has been dated to the second half of the 14th c. based on the numismatic material (Митова-Джонова 1958, 41, фиг. 1ж). At the necropolis from Kavarna, dated within the second half of the 13th c. to the second half of the 14th c., an earring of this type has also been uncovered (Бобчева 1978, Табл. XI, 211, Табл. XV, 305). Such an earring is also present in the jewellery collection of the Varna Archaeological Museum, but its site of origin has not been established (Павлова 2002, 287, Табло I.5), as well as from the medieval fortress in the village of Debnevo (Моева 2008, 103, обр. 2). A similar earring, but with a more complicated structure, originates from the necropolis in Lovech (Георгиева, Пешева, 542, обр. 39_5). This type also made up part of the treasures from the villages of Dolishte and Krumovo, Varna district, as well as near the village of Baniska, Ruse district, where the earrings stand out with their lavish decoration (Павлова 2007, 48, 6.1; 55, 10.2; 65, 13.1.1). The fourth subtype is a silver earring with a solid sphere, comprising two welded parts (Plate I: 6). It is fixed on both sides with wire coils. An exact parallel has been found at the Yantra necropoleis, where is listed as Type X under the researcher's typology (Бъчваров 1993, 24, обр. 11), as well as among the jewellery from Balchik, dated to the 14th c. (Атанасов 2009, 235, обр. 68). We can also find parallels at the necropolis from the village of Negovantsi (Митова-Джонова 1958, 41, фиг. 1к), the medieval fortress in the village of Debnevo (Моева 2008, 103, обр. 2), Kaliakra (Raikova 2019, fig. 2, 9), and in neighbouring countries – Northern Macedonia and Romania (Манева 1992, Pl.19, Pl. 58/6, Pl. 63/7; Oţa 2012, Pl. 7, 1 – 10; Dimitriu 2001, Taf. 16 – 1, 11, Taf. 37 – 2, Taf. 81 – 24, 25, Taf. 90 – 3, Taf. 97 – 2, 3).

The last group includes a silver earring with gilt coating, preserved hoop, curved in the form of a question mark, which turns into a vertical axis decorated with a cube-like ending. Examples of various shapes are known, and the one described here is a simplified model by comparison. The dating of such earrings is within the 13th – 14th c. range. Examples from Northern Bulgaria are predominant, and specimens from Northern Macedonia, Serbia and Romania are also known (Йосифова 2001, 78 – 80; Манева 1992, Pl. 17; Oţa 2012, Pl. 8, 1 – 12; Dimitriu 2001, Taf. 37 – 26, 34, Taf. 47– 7).

In Grave No. 9, situated in the nave, a gold finger ring was uncovered. The hoop is with a square cross-section and has a soldered conical bezel with a semi-precious stone/blue glass gem, secured by four small prongs. It was found next to the skull of the only individual in anatomical order in the grave. Analysis of the bones showed that the skeleton is that of a woman aged 50 – 55. The ring is identical to the two specimens uncovered in the graves of local female aristocrats from the necropolis of Church No. 2 in Silistra (Павлова 2007, 32, 3.3, 3.4; Атанасов 2009, Табл. VII/8 – 9). They are skillfully crafted, with inlaid amethysts, and their manufacture can be referred to the Constantinople workshops (Атанасов 2009, 265). Earrings with an incised two-headed eagle and a monogram of the ruling Terter family were found in the same grave in Silistra (Павлова 2007, 31, 3.1). They have been dated to the end of the 14th c.

Numismatic data[7]

A total of 564 coins were found during the four archaeological campaigns. Only four of them are silver, the rest are copper alloy. The number of the unidentifiable coins at this stage is 37.

There are 44 coins from the 13th c., including the Latin imitative coinage. A small group of coins (26) have been determined within the wide range of the 13th – 14th c. due to their fragmented state. Bulgarian coinage is represented by the following examples: Mihail III Shishman Asen (1323 – 1330) – 22 coins, Ivan Alexander (1331 – 1371) – 13, Ivan Sratsimir (1355 – 1396) – 2, Ivan Shishman (1371 – 1395) – 13, Ioan Terter (1385 – 1399) – 1, imitative Bulgarian coins from the second half of the 14th – first half of the 15th c. – 17 (Tables 1 – 3).

Foreign coins are represented by: Andronicus II Palaeologus (1282 – 1295) – 3 coins, Andronicus II and Michael IX (1295 – 1320) – 2, John II Orsini (1323 – 1335) – 8, Mircea I (1386 – 1418) – 6, Bayezid I (1389 – 1402) – 1, Mehmed II (1451–1481) – 1.

In the layers from the interior of the temple, several coins were found: Latin imitation (1208 – 1241) – 1, a Byzantine coin from the first half of the 14th c. – 1, John II Orsini (1323 – 1335) – 1, Ivan Shishman (1371 – 1395) – 1, imitative Bulgarian coins from the second half of the 14th – first half of the 15th c. – 1. The following coins were found in the interior of the burial chambers in the

Table 1. Coins from the initial layer, dark soil with roots

Таблица 1. Монети от начален пласт, тъмна пръст с корени

Minted	Dating	Field Inventory No.	Number (cut/ fragments)
Mihail III Shishman Asen	1323 – 1330	165/2019	1(0)
John II Orsini	1323 – 1335	4/2017	1(0)
Ivan Alexander	1331 – 1371	37/2018, 150/2018, 164/2019, 176/2019	4(1)
Ivan Shishman	1371 – 1395	1/2017, 26/2017, 35/2018	3(2)
Mircea I	1386 – 1394/95	17/2017, 18/2017, 19/2017	3(0)
Bulgarian imitation, Cherven mint	Second half of the 14th – first half of the 15th c.	3/2017	1(0)
Unidentifiable coins		2/2018	1(0)

[7] The numismatic material was categorised and analysed by Assoc. Prof. Zhenya Zhekova, PhD, Regional Museum of History – Shumen, for which we express our gratitude. The attached tables are based on this analysis (Tables 1 – 3). In 2017 – 2018, 96 coins were found, in 2019 – 157 coins and a hoard of 196 coins, and during the last campaign – 115. The presented results cover mainly the first three archaeological campaigns. The hoard from 2019 and the coins from the latest excavations in 2020 are undergoing conservation and analysis. Separate studies with precise numismatic information are to be published.

Table 2. Coins from brown layer (1320s – 1330s – beginning of the 15th c.)
Таблица 2. Монети от кафяв пласт (20-те – 30-те години на XIV – началото на XV в.)

Minted	Dating	Field Inventory No.	Number (cut, fragments)
Coins from the first half of the 13th c.		16/2018, 26/2018, 29/2018, 43/2018, 122/2018, 118/18, 1/2019, 2/2019, 14/2019, 44/2019, 47/2019, 49/2019, 53/2019, 157/2019, 160/2019, 186/2019, 251/2019	17(16)
Coins from the second half of the 13th c.		9/2017, 5/2018, 121/2018, 16/2019, 19/2019, 27/2019, 30/2019, 31/2019, 32/2019, 33/2019, 36/2019, 37/2019, 40/2019, 43/2019, 55/2019, 64/2019, 66/2019, 69/2019, 88/2019, 89/2019, 91/2019, 92/2019, 181/2019	23(23)
Latin imitative	1208 – 1241	7/2018, 20/2018, 21/2018	3(3)
Andronicus II Palaeologus and Michael IX Palaeologus	1282 – 1328	13/2018, 30/2018, 90/2018, 194/2019	4(3)
Mihail III Shishman Asen	1323 – 1330	20/2017, 6/2018, 18/2018, 80/2018, 88/2018, 95/2018, 112/2018, 3/2019, 10/2019, 11/2019, 34/2019, 35/2019, 85/2019, 149/2019, 150/2019, 153/2019, 169/2019, 182/2019, 249/2019, 250/2019	20(11)
John II Orsini	1323 – 1335	11/2018, 44/2018, 45/2018, 103/2018, 105/2018	5(4)
Ivan Alexander	1331 – 1371	8/2018, 51/2018, 125/2018, 154/2018, 84/2019, 190/2019, 201/2019, 206/2019	8(3)
Ivan Sratsimir	1355 – 1396	42/2018, 195/2019	2(0)
Ivan Shishman	1371 – 1395	10/2018, 87/2018, 83/2019, 178/2018, 189/2019, 203/2019	6(3)
Ioan Terter (?)	1385 – 1399	119/ 2018	1(0)
Mircea I	1386 – 1394/5	25/2017, 116/2019, 140/2019	3(0)
Coins from the 13th –14th c.		7/2019, 9/2019, 21/2019, 23/2019, 38/2019, 42/2019, 58/2019, 87/2019, 90/2019, 139/2019, 141/2019, 142/2019, 143/2019, 146/2019, 148/2019, 151/2019, 152/2019, 156/2019, 158/2019, 161/2019, 162/2019, 167/2019, 168/2019, 171/2019, 199/2019, 207/2019	26(20)
Bulgarian imitations, Cherven mint	Second half of the 14th – first half of the 15th c.	25/2018, 38/2018, 41/2018, 50/2018, 101/2018, 156/2018, 160/2018, 8/2019, 28/2019, 50/2019, 51/2019, 52/2019, 54/2019, 57/2019	14(4)
Mehmed II	1451 – 1481	237/ 2019	1(0)
Unidentifiable coins		22/2018, 28/2018, 39/2018, 40/2018, 54/2018, 102/2018, 104/2018, 111/2018, 115/2018, 116/2018, 146/2018, 147/2018, 159/2018, 4/2019, 12/2019, 13/2019, 29/2019, 46/2019, 48/2019, 113/2019, 114/2019	21(17)

Table 2a. Coins from structures
Таблица 2а. Монети от структури

Structure	Minted	Dating	Field Inventory No.	Number (cut fragments)
Interior of the church	Latin imitation	1208 – 1241	93/2018	1(1)
	John II Orsini	1323 – 1335	134/2018	1(1)
	Byzantine coin	first half of the 14th c.	24/2018	1(0)
	Ivan Shishman	1371 – 1395	151/2018	1(0)
	Bulgarian imitations, Cherven mint	Second half of the 14th – first half of the 15th c.	71/2018	1(1)
Burial Chamber No. 2	Ivan Shishman	1371 – 1395	71/2018	1(1)
Burial Chamber No. 3	Unidentifiable coin		59/2018	1(1)
Burial Chamber No. 4	Unidentifiable coin		86/2018	1(0)
	Unidentifiable coin		91/2018	1(1)
Burial Chamber No. 6	Bayezid I	1389 – 1402	64/2018	1(1)
Burial Chamber No. 7	Unidentifiable coin		66/2018	1(1)
Burial Chamber No. 9	John II Orsini	1323 – 1335	137/2019	1(1)
Burial Chamber No. 10	Andronicus II Palaeologus	1282 – 1323	129/2019	1(1)

church: a coin of Andronicus II Palaeologus (1282 – 1323) (Burial chamber No. 10) – 1, a coin of the ruler of Epirus John II Orsini (1323 – 1335) (Burial chamber No. 9) – 1, a coin of Ivan Shishman (1371 – 1395) (Burial chamber No. 2) – 1, a copper manghir of Bayezid I (1389 – 1402) (Burial chamber No. 6) – 1, (Table 2a).

The coin evidence is illustrative of the coin circulation in the northeastern Bulgarian lands in the 13th – 14th c. Low-value copper alloy nominals are predominant, mainly Bulgarian ones. All coins bear traces of secondary cutting of the periphery, which marks the crisis in the Bulgarian economy, and their lengthy circulation. This is also evidenced by the extremely unidentifiable coins, cut into two and more pieces, which continued to circulate in the town.

Summary, chronology and dating

Church No. 16 is situated in the western territory, which gradually declines to the south. The excavated archaeological layer reaches up to 2 m in depth in the interior of the temple, and around it – within 1 – 1.50 m. The construction of the temple building is related to the initial clearing of the bedrock. Above the rock, a light brown layer was registered, which was formed during the periods of functioning and destruction of the building. In its upper part, this layer contains more building materials from the church (stones, bricks and tiles). In depth, destructions decrease and at places the soil layer on the rock is dark brown and greyish (fig. 11). To the northeast of the church, a stone cluster of unclear nature and functions was registered. To the north and east of the building, walls were partially uncovered, related to a later period of inhabitation of the medieval town (15th – 16th c.). The surface black layer has a thickness of 0.10 – 0.20 m, and both modern materials and finds from the 14th – 16th c. are present in it.

Fifty-three coins from the 13th c., as well as a group of twenty-six coins from within the broad range of the 13th – 16th c., were found in the main brown layer (Table 2). The cores of all of them are clipped, halves or quarters, and they could hardly be used for precise dating. The following

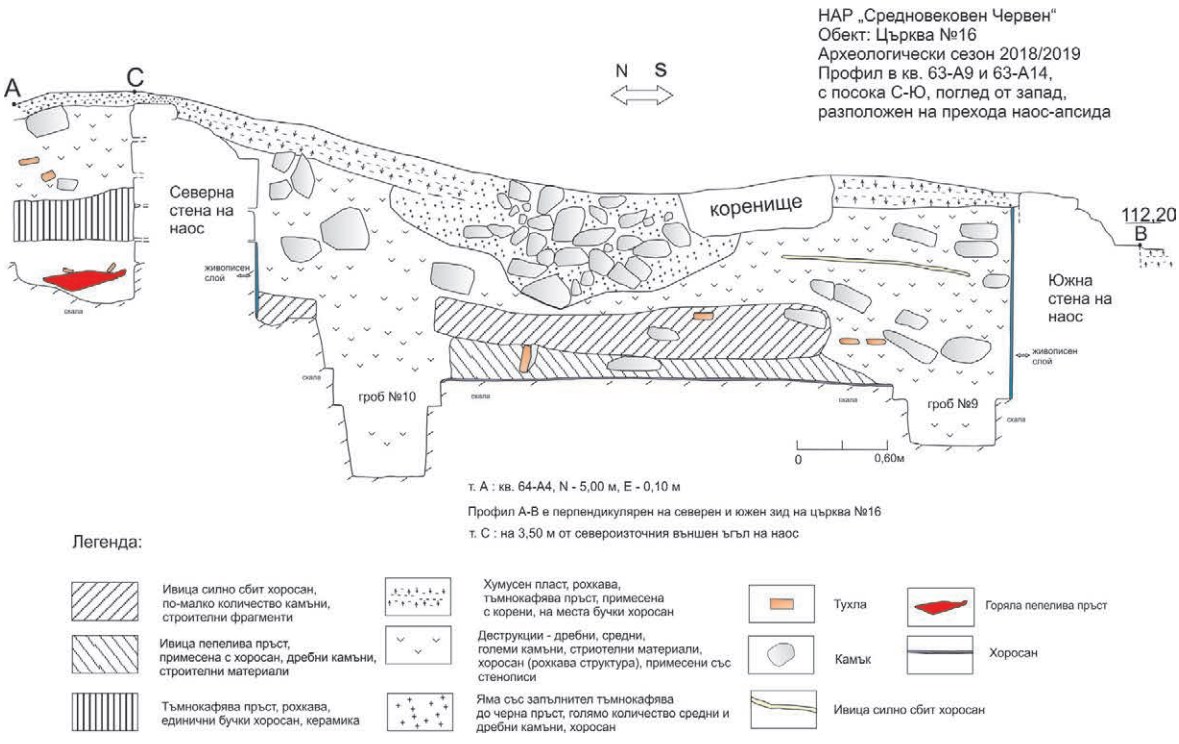


Fig. 11. Cross-section from the interior of the church (Author: Svetlana Todorova)
Обр. 11. Профил от вътрешността на храма (Автор: Светлана Тодорова)

coins were found right on the rock foundation around the external walls of the temple: coins with clipped cores from the 13th and the 14th c. – 10 (Nos. 7/2018, 118/2018, 121/2018, 122/2018, 156/2019, 157/2019, 158/2019, 160/2019, 161/2019, 162/2019); Mihail III Shishman Asen (1323 – 1330) – 4 (Nos. 80/2019, 88/2018, 95/2018, 6/2019); Ivan Alexander (1331 – 1371) – 4 (Nos. 125/2018, 154/2018, 8/2019, 201/2019); Ivan Shishman (1371 – 1395) – 3 (Nos. 10/2019, 87/2019, 203/2019), Ioan Terter (?) (1385 – 1399) – 1 (No. 119/2018). The numismatic situation in the interior of the temple practically repeats the results (Table 2a). Despite the slight predominance of coins from the beginning of the 14th c., the same layer yielded single specimens from the beginning of the 13th c. and second half of the 14th – beginning of the 15th c., the coin from the latest period found being a copper manghir of Bayezid I (1389 – 1402). In the burnt layer of the altar area, a silver coin of Ivan Shishman (1371 – 1395) (No. 150/2018) was found. The presence of a wide range of coins in the homogenous layer filling the burial chambers provides *terminus ante quem* for the use and destruction of the building. Despite the mixing of coins from the 13th and the 14th c., the coins of the rulers Mihail III Shishman Asen (1323 – 1330), John II Orsini (1323 – 1335) and Ivan Alexander (1331 – 1371) are indicative for the dating. The data from the initial black layer have complementary functions for the chronology of the researched area, without reflecting a different dating (Table 1). The results from the coins found in the spoil heaps are also relevant (Table 3).

A large percentage of the pottery found is fragmented.[8] It includes kitchen wares and more artistic, fine ceramics, with predominant forms characteristic of the 14th c. There are also some which we can relate to the Early Ottoman period (15th – 16th c.) Right on the church floor and in the burial chambers, ceramic sherds characteristic of the second half of the 14th c. were uncovered.

[8] The pottery from Church No. 16 will be the subject of a separate paper.

Table 3. Unstratified coins
Таблица 3. Нестратифицирани монети

Minted	Dating	Field Inventory No.	Number (cut, fragments)
Imitative coin	1260s	5/2019	1(0)
Mihail III Shishman Asen	1323 – 1330	231/2019	1(0)
Ivan Alexander	1331 – 1371	113/2018	1(1)
Ivan Shishman	1371 – 1395	149/2019, 152/2019	2(2)
	14th c.	115/2019	1(1)
Bulgarian imitation, Cherven mint	Second half of the 14th – first half of the 15th c.	9/2019	1(1)
Unidentifiable coins		123/2018, 133/2018, 141/2018	4(4)



Fig. 12. Reconstruction of Church No. 16 (Author: Iskren Velikov)
Обр. 12. Възстановка на църква № 16 (Автор: Искрен Великов)

After the destruction of the church, the plot continued to be inhabited. Routes of walls were uncovered to the north, northeast and south. They have not been comprehensively excavated, but their characteristics are different from those of the church construction. The wall north of the church steps on and blocks its entrance to the nave. It is preserved on a low level and constructed from variously sized stones bound with mud. Architectural details from Church No. 16 were uncovered in its structure and ruins. The wall does not sit on the cleared rock foundation, but on a layer of grey soil and charcoal. The latest coin at this stage of research was found in the masonry ruins – a coin of Mehmed II (1451 – 1481).

The wall which is right next to the temple to the south has a similar characteristic. It is also bound with mud, but its construction is more precise and the foundation is a grey ash layer with numerous charcoal fragments. Its construction having occurred at a later stage than the church is also illustrated by its route, which is not a natural continuation of the direction of the western wall of the church. Coins were discovered in the grey layer west of the wall and under it. These are numerous coins of Mihail III Shishman Asen (1323 – 1330), Ivan Shishman (1371 – 1395), and imitative Bulgarian coins from the second half of the 14th – beginning of the 15th c.

The partially studied structures are probably from residential and utilitarian buildings. They form spaces contiguous to the foundations of the destroyed church, using the non-functioning church as a stone quarry for construction materials. The tightly rammed level[9] registered in the

[9] The rammed level has been registered in the narthex and nave areas of the church, at 0.55 – 0.70 m above the temple's floor level.

interior of the temple is related to them, and a fireplace was uncovered at the same level in the area next to the northern entrance.

The embankment of crushed stones which continues to the end of the rock ridge is situated next to the northeastern corner of the church; it has been interpreted as a fortress wall since Škorpil's survey. Future research of this area will try to clarify the question whether this is part of a destroyed fortification, a partially implemented attempt to construct one, or is another structure altogether.

In construction and architectural terms, the closest examples from the territory of medieval Cherven are related to dating to the early and mid-14th c., while examples from neighbouring countries show parallels within the wider range of the 13th – 14th c. In the 14th c., the fortress of Cherven was in its prime. This is the time when three new churches were erected on the western part of the hill. Their construction points towards the establishment of new residential areas. The settlement of the rock ridge began from the east and continued west. Archaeological excavations in the sections from the Inner town support these statements. The discovered materials relate mainly to the 14th c. The explored part of the fortification also shows that the construction of the furthest western fortress wall took place in the second half of the 14th c. (Йорданов 2019, 307).

The data guiding the dating are the preserved frescoes, which bear the characteristics of Palaeologan art. At this stage, they point us towards the 14th c., without making an additional commitment of exact decades. The jewellery from the adjacent necropolis cannot be used for a precise dating of the church either. They are dated within the broad range of the 12th – 14th c., but combined with the stratigraphic observation and coins, they complement a monolithic context which we relate to the 14th c.

Conclusion

We relate the dating of the church's establishment to the 1320s – 1330s, and the end of its existence – with the march of Ali Pasha in 1388. After the conquest of Cherven, the area continued to be inhabited, and residential and utilitarian buildings were constructed around the ruins of the church building (15th – 16th c.) The main street connecting the outer town with the citadel passes in front of the western façade of the church. The observations of the architectural specifics of the church, mural paintings and stratigraphic observations point towards its active functioning almost throughout the 14th c. This conclusion is also supported by the emergence and development of the adjacent necropolis, where the positioning of the burial structures shows that they are synchronous with the church building. Its final characteristics will be specified when the excavations are completed. It is not yet possible to present exact data on the architectural build-up around the church.

The archaeological research of Church No. 16 (fig. 12) complements the information on the historical processes in the medieval town of Cherven during its prime – the 14th c. The architectural specifics of the church, its frescoes, and the finds uncovered in the burial chambers of the adjacent necropolis show that this area of the hill was not a poor periphery of the town, but a full-fledged part of the town infrastructure. Further research of the territory around the church will provide additional information regarding the fate of this part of the town during the Early Ottoman period.

CATALOGUE OF THE JEWELLERY

1. Silver earring with gilt (Plate I: 1)
With a hoop of thick wire with round cross-section. One main element is strung onto the lower part, in the shape of a cube made up of four welded granules per side, the element is secured by a filigree coil with fixing small rings on both ends.
Size: Diam. 2 cm; Size of the cube – 0.7 cm; Thickness – 0.3 cm; Weight 2.93 g
Grid Sq. 63-A8/63-A9; Grave No. 3
Context: 14th c.
Field Inventory No. 128/2018

2. Silver earring with gilt (Plate I: 2)
With a hoop of thick wire with round cross-section. One main element is strung onto the lower part, in the shape of a cube made up of four welded granules per side, the element is held by a filigree coil with fixing small rings on both ends.
Size: Diam. – 2 cm; Size of the cube – 0.5 cm; Thickness – 0.3 cm; Weight 2.27 g
Grid Sq. 63-A8/63-A9; probably from Grave No. 3
Context: 14th c.
Field inventory No. 129/2018

3. Silver earring (Plate I: 3)
With a hoop of thin wire with round cross-section. Two open-work spheres in the lower part, made up of two hemispheres with six-leaf rosettes. Wire coiled between the spheres.
Size: Diam. – 2.1 cm; Diam. of the sphere – 0.7 cm; Thickness – 0.1 cm; Weight 0.88 g
Grid Sq. 63-A8; bone cluster on top of Grave No. 8
Context: 14th c.
Field inventory No. 47/2018

4. Silver earring with gilt (Plate I: 4)
With a hoop of thin wire with round cross-section. One open-work sphere in the lower part, made up of two hemispheres with seven-leaf rosettes. On both sides of the bead – thin wire coil.
Size: Diam. – 2.1 cm; Diam. of the sphere – 1 cm; Thickness – 0.1 cm; Weight 1.47 g
Grid Sq. 63-A14; level on top of Grave No. 17
Context: 14th c.
Field inventory No. 303/2019

5. Silver earring (Plate I: 5)
With a hoop of thick wire with round cross-section. One open-work sphere in the lower part, made up of six-leaf rosettes with thick leaves outlined with filigree threads. Two granules applied on each leaf, partially preserved. Coiled wire with small fixing rings on both sides of the sphere.
Size: Diam. – 2.5 cm; Diam. of the sphere – 1.2 cm; Thickness – 0.3 cm; Weight 3 g
Grid Sq. 63-A15; Grave No. 16
Context: 14th c.
Field inventory No. 304/019

6. Silver earring with gilt (Plate I: 6)
With a hoop of thin wire with round cross-section. One solid sphere in the lower part, made up of two semi-circular glued parts. A small opening on one of the semi-circular parts. Coiled wire on both sides.
Size: Diam. – 2.5 cm; Diam. of the sphere – 1.2 cm; Thickness – 0.3 cm; Weight 1.17 g
Grid Sq. 63-A14; level on top of Grave No. 17
Context: 14th c.
Field inventory No. 302/2019

7. Silver earring with gilt (Plate I: 7)
With a small hoop of thick wire with round cross-section. The hoop ends with a cube-like element with coiled wire on it, held by a small ring.
Size: Diam. – 1.1 cm; Size of the cube – 0.4 cm; Length – 2.2 cm; Thickness – 0.25 cm; Weight 1.13 g
Grid Sq. 63-A14; around wall of stones soldered with mud, south of the church
Context: 14th – 15th c.
Field inventory No. 225/2019

8. Gold finger ring (Plate I: 8)
Thin hoop with rectangular cross-section, with a soldered conical bezel with inlaid semi-precious stone or blue glass, secured by four small prongs. Symmetrical widenings on both sides of the bezel.
Size: Diam. – 2 cm; Height – 2.5 cm; Thickness – 0.1 cm; Weight 3.80 g
Grid Sq. 63-A9/63-A14; Grave No. 9, next to the skull
Context: 14th c.
Field inventory No. 301/2019

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ЦЪРКВА № 16 В ЗАПАДНИТЕ ПРЕДЕЛИ НА ВЪНШНИЯ ГРАД НА СРЕДНОВЕКОВНИЯ ЧЕРВЕН

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РЕЗЮМЕ

Новооткритата църква №16 е разположена в западната част на червенския хълм. Основната причина да насочим нашия интерес към нов сектор от крепостта са малкото данни, с които разполагаме за западния край на средновековния град. В началото на XX в. Карел Шкорпил обхожда тази територия и публикува заключенията си в „Опис на старините по течението на река Русенски Лом" (обр. 1).

Местоположението на храма е върху терен с естествена денивелация в южна посока, която е около 1,15 м, като в тази посока продължава да нараства. Храмът се състои от притвор, наосно пространство и единична тристенна апсида (обр. 3, обр. 4). Разполагал е с два входа в притворната част, както и други два в основното помещение. Църковната сграда е с отклонение от 40^0 в югоизточна посока. Западната фасада е с дължина 7 м, южната и северната стени са с дължина от 11,70 м. Общата дължина на храма по оста изток – запад е 12,80 м (обр. 5). Притворът е с вътрешни размери 5,10 х 2,70 м. Подът му е заравнена скала, покрита с хоросанова замазка. В северозападния ъгъл, до изсеченото входно стъпало, е разкрита скална пейка – висока 0,25 м, широка 0,50 м и дълга 0,70 м.

Наосът е с правоъгълна форма и вътрешни размери 5,10 х 5,33 м. Подът му е заравнена скала, покрита с хоросанова замазка. Подовото му ниво е повдигнато спрямо притвора с около 0,20 м. Разликата между двете нива се преодолява с изсечено в скалната основа стъпало, което се намира в притворното пространство. По протежение на цялата северната стена се разкри скална пейка, висока около 0,35 – 0,40 м от пода на църквата. Тя е разделена приблизително по средата от пиластър. Над гроб № 10 върху скалната пейка е регистрирано трасето на канал, чиито функции остават неизяснени (обр. 6). По начина на разположение на пиластрите в основното помещение определяме вида на църквата като еднокорабна, с полуцилиндричен свод, над който е изграден двускатен покрив.

Олтарното пространство на храма е с вътрешни размери: 3,20 м (север – юг) х 2,20 м (изток – запад) (обр. 6). Апсидата е единична, тристенна, с полукръгъл каменен цокъл с височина 0,75 м, който се издава на 0,20 м. Дължината на стените ѝ от външната страна са 1,90 х 1,70 х 1,90 м. Северната ѝ половина е с най-високо запазени стени, които достигат 1,80 м от нивото на пода. Няма промяна в нивото между зоните на олтара и наоса. Олтарната преграда вероятно е била изградена от дървена конструкция. Регистрирани са жлебове на двете срещуположни стени, до нивото на пода, които се свързват с нея. Ситуацията в олтарната част повтаря тази в южната половина на притвора. Отново за преодоляването на естествено понижаване на терена е било необходимо запълване с хоросан. В резултат на това се очертава в хоросановата подложка мястото на олтарния стълб. Отворът е с почти квадратна форма, а страните му са с дължини от 0,36 м. В североизточната част от отвора за олтарната маса е почистен канал с дължина 0,30 м и височина 0,28 м, който е регистриран под нивото на хоросановия под и е с посока на изток. Липсва олтарната маса, както и нейната база. Има вероятност разчистеното празно пространство до основата на престола да е използвано за съхранение на реликви.

Начинът на градеж на църквата се доближава до категоризирания от Виолета Димова строителен метод *semi-opus mixtum*, който тя отнася към първата половина на XIV в. Дебелината на стените на

храма е 0,90 м, като по външното лице се регистрират декоративни тухлени редове, които са неравномерни. Между двете лица се наблюдава пълнеж от дребни ломени камъни, фрагменти от тухли, споени с хоросан. Две от храмовите постройки, разкрити до момента в пределите на средновековния Червен, са изградени по същия строителен метод – Църква № 5 и Църква № 11. И двете са разположени в западната част на града, в относителна близост една до друга и до новооткрития храм.

Паралели с църкви от същия период, които притежават и сходни архитектурни планове, т.е. еднокорабни църкви с притвор, една апсида и полуцилиндричен свод, се наблюдават и в други средновековни градове. В столичния Търновград, на хълма Царевец, църква № 16 притежава подобни характеристики, въпреки слабо запазената си архитектура. Хълмът Трапезица предоставя като пример църква № 10, датирана от някои изследователи в XIII в., а други приемат началото на XIV в. за периода на нейното построяване. Църква № 22 на хълма Трапезица е датирана в 40-те години на XIV в., претърпяла е едно преустройство и е съществувала до края му. Сходен архитектурен план има и църквата „Св. Никола“ в с. Калотина.

Заедно с големия брой фрагментирани стенописи от насипната вътрешност на храма, при проучването разкрихме и части от живописен пояс по стените. Разкритите фрагменти от стенопис в притворното пространство представляват орнаменти от цокълната част. До северния вход на притвора, над скалната пейка, стенописите представят квадратни пана, разделени от червени, широки кантове (обр. 7). Орнаментите във вътрешността на квадратно оформените пространства се състоят от ромбове, триъгълници и флорални орнаменти. Рисувани са с тъмносиня боя върху бял фон. Рисувана драперия представлява и най-добре запазената част от разкритите стенописи (обр. 8). Те се намират на олтарната апсида и имат площ от 12 м^2. Височината им достига до 1,40 м. В долната част се наблюдава същата двойна рамка, която се състои от червена широка линия, а върху нея тъмносиня вълнообразна линия. Върху диплите на драперията са изрисувани флорални орнаменти. Горната граница е отбелязана с двоен широк кант от червена боя, след което започва поясът с човешките изображения, който не е запазен във височина. Върху южната стена са съхранени малка част от терена и нозете на фигурите от първия регистър, където вероятно са били изобразени фигурите на светци войни (обр. 9). Стилово-иконографските черти на фреските от новооткрития храм в Червен се доближават до тези в църкви № 4 и № 11 на Трапезица, както и при живописта на т. нар. Стар Преображенски манастир. Съпоставката е основно по цокълната декорация, която в посочените обекти е датирана в XIV в. При анализ на основните характеристики, откриваме сходства с паметниците на Палеологовия стил, който придобива широко разпространение в източнохристиянския свят по това време.

Обикновено около църковните храмове се образуват некрополи с различни размери. Такъв е случаят и с църква № 16. Проучените гробове обхващат както вътрешната част, така и зоната около храма. В наосното пространство са регистрирани седем гробни камери, които са изсечени в скалната основа. Те заемат входната част на наоса, подредени са в една линия, която запълва изцяло по ширина подовото пространство, а две са разположени на втори ред в североизточния и югоизточния ъгли на основното помещение. В запълнителя на гробните камери са разкрити размесени кости от различни индивиди, а на дъното се достига до скелет в анатомичен порядък. Всички гробни съоръжения са изсечени в скалната основа на две нива, като горното ниво се формира от перваз, който поддържа покривна каменна плоча. Според антропологичния анализ, погребаните индивиди са жени, деца и мъже в различни възрастови групи. Характера на съоръженията, количеството и вида на костния материал от тях ги разкрива като многократно използвани и отваряни. Пълните характеристики на некропола могат да се анализират с изчерпването на всички прилежащи гробове. В проучените гробове се откриха голямо количество сферични копчета с различен диаметър, изработени от мед, някои от които посребрени. Намерените накити са основно обеци, наушници, както и един пръстен. Обособили сме три групи от обеците и наушниците, според тяхната форма (Табло I).

Датировката на създаване на храма отнасяме към 20-те – 30-те години на XIV в., а завършека на неговото съществуване свързваме с похода Али паша през 1388 г. Изградената хронология е свързана с изследвания нумизматичен материал (Таблици 1 – 3) и стратиграфските наблюдения (обр. 11). След превземането на Червен зоната продължава да се обитава, като около развалините на храмовата постройка са изградени жилищни и стопански сгради (XV – XVI в.). Археологическото проучване на Църква № 16 (обр. 12) допълва информацията за историческите процеси в Средновековния Червен

във времето на неговия разцвет – XIV в. Архитектурните особености на храма, неговите стенописи, както и находките, разкрити в гробните камери на прилежащия некропол, показват че тази зона от хълма не е представлявала бедна периферия на града, а се е вписвала пълноценно в градската структура. Продължението на проучването на територията около храма ще даде допълнителна информация за съдбата на тази част от града и през ранния османски период.

Ключови думи: църква, стенописна декорация, некропол, накити, Червен

LATE MEDIEVAL BATTLE AXE HEAD FROM THE MONASTERY COMPLEX NEAR THE VILLAGE OF VODEN, YAMBOL DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to present the head of a battle axe found in the monastery complex near the village of Voden, Yambol district. The long, narrow, crescent-shaped blade, the long socket and the small opening at the heel for additional attachment to the shaft link this specimen to the Late Medieval weapons known as "bardiche". These weapons are widely represented in Western European art between the second half of the 13th and the first half of the 14th c. and will become a prototype of the far better known and widespread in the 16th – 17th c. in Eastern Europe, especially in Russia, "bardiche". The long socket ending in a conical tip with a bud links the axe from Voden to some maces, pointing to its Balkan-Byzantine origin and allowing the item to be dated to the 14th – 15th c.

Key words: Late Medieval weaponry, battle axe, maces

The topic of this study is the head of a battle axe of untypical form and structure, found in the monastery complex near the village of Voden, Yambol district. The axe head has been part of the museum exhibition of RMH – Yambol for many years, but it has not been published so far, and is not well-known (fig. 1). It has been fixed in place in the showcase during exhibition, and this has posed difficulties for some observations and the process of documentation.

The weapon under review was found in the medieval monastery located 2.9 km southeast of the village of Voden, Bolyarovo municipality, Yambol district (fig. 2). The site is not far from the southern border of present-day Bulgaria. It is about 800 m away from Druma area, through which the Diagonal Road connecting the capital Constantinople with inland Thrace passed, and in a straight line – only 400 m away from the *Malkoto Kale* fortress. Excavations in the latter place the date within the 11th – 12th c.[1] This is a territory which, with a few exceptions, did not leave the borders of the Byzantine Empire.

The remains of the monastery have long been a place of interest, and at the beginning of the 20th c., the existence of a cave adapted for prayers under the altar prompted the Professors Veselin Beshevliev and Ivan Velkov to assume that this is a monastery built by Gregory of Sinai, a hypothesis which is supported by many to this day.[2] The monastery itself was the subject of archaeological studies from 1979 to 1991, and in 2012 the uncovered architecture was cleaned (Танчева-Василева 1980, 121 – 122;

[1] On the *Malkoto Kale* fortress, see: Бакърджиев 2013, 457 – 459; Бакърджиев, Вълчев 2015, 703 – 706; Бакърджиев, Русев 2017, 574 – 576.

[2] On different opinions about this question, see: Велков 1938, 91 – 92; Орачев 2011; Николов 2015.

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Fig. 1. Axe head from the monastery complex near the village of Voden, Yambol district (Photo: M. Zlatkov)

Обр. 1. Брадва от манастирския комплекс до с. Воден, Ямболско (Снимка: М. Златков)

Танчева-Василева 1981, 79 – 81; Танчева, Крайчев 1987, 248 – 251; Алексиев и др. 1989, 151 – 152; Алексиев и др. 1990, 144 – 145; Алексиев и др. 1991, 159 – 160; Илиев, Вълчев 2013, 476 – 478). Without dwelling on the significant debate surrounding the chronology of the site, it will suffice to mention the opinion of its latest researchers, who refer it to the period between the 11th and the 13th c. (Илиев, Вълчев 2013, 477). As for the weapon under review, the debate about the dating would not provide any clues, since the axe head was uncovered during the clearing of the cave under the church of the monastery in 1985 (fig. 3). This work was carried out by the National Institute for Cultural Monuments (NICM) and has not been documented in any way. Thus, although it originated from a researched archaeological site, the weapon remains without a precise context and, respectively, without dating of the surroundings in which it was found. It is equally probable that it is from the period when the monastery functioned, or from the one after it was abandoned.

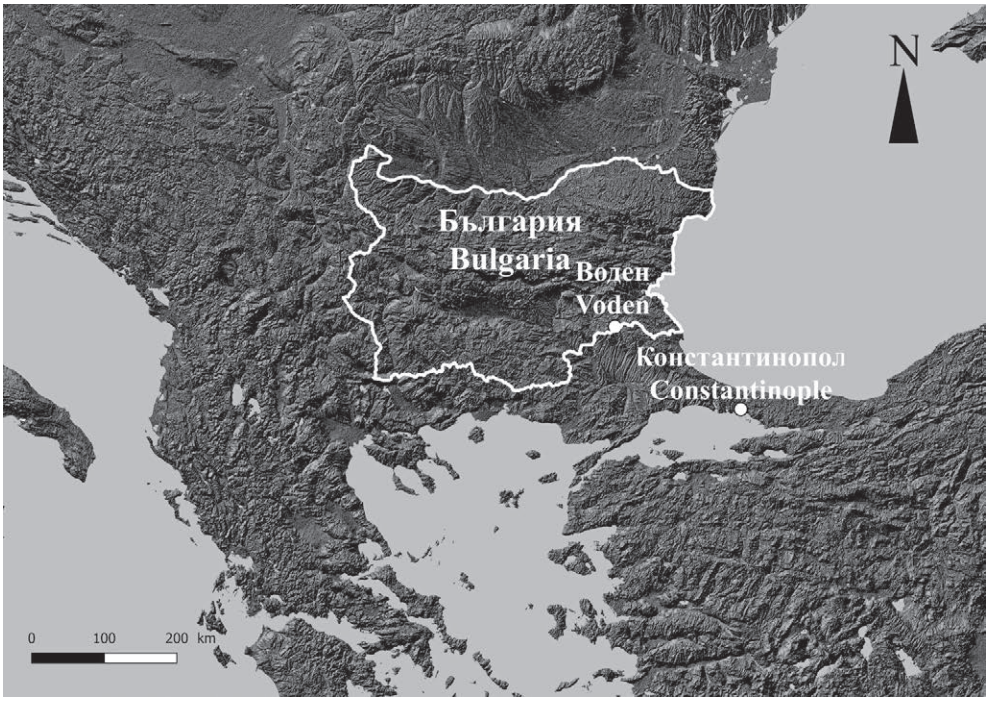


Fig. 2. Map with the location of the axe head

Обр. 2. Карта с местонамирането на брадвата

The artefact was registered in the depot of RMH – Yambol under Inv. No. 2718, as a halberd (fig. 1). It has a composite structure. In form, it has a narrow elongated crescentic axe-head with a markedly convex cutting edge. Its length is 27 cm and maximum width – 4 cm. The upper tip is sharpened, but its curve would make it difficult to use for piercing. The heel is round with a small opening for additional attachment to the shaft, lower than the socket. A flat spike protrudes from the poll of the 0.4-cm-thick blade, going through a transverse opening in the socket. It ends with a bud-like protrusion. The additional plate locks, and attaches the spike to the socket. The spike on the axe poll is too short and unsharpened to be used for striking blows.

The socket also contributes to the particularity of the weapon. It has a height of 18.3 cm, an inside diameter of 2.4 cm, a cylindrical lower part, and conical tip ending with a pointed bud. Traces of the wooden shaft are preserved on the inside. The fact that the upper tip of the blade protrudes over the tip of the socket makes it impossible to use for striking blows.

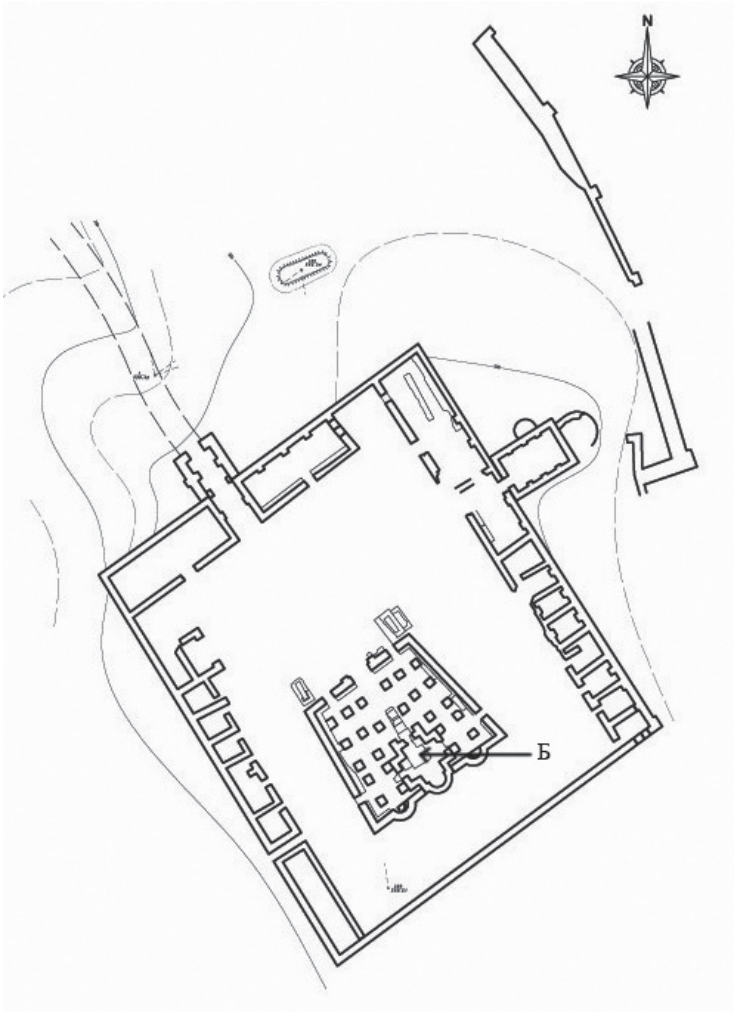


Fig. 3. Plan of the monastery with marked location of the axe head (after Илиев, Вълчев 2013, обр. 1)

Обр. 3. План на манастира с отбелязано местонамирането на брадвата (по Илиев, Вълчев 2013, обр. 1)

So, what does the weapon thus described tell us? The shape and the size of the blade, which has a device for additional attachment in the lower part and the long, massive socket present us with a variant of a battle axe with a long shaft and relatively narrow blade with a large damage area of the strike. This type of battle axe, known as "bardiche", were not an exception in Late Medieval Europe. It should be noted that they are better known in Western Europe in the period between the second half of the 13th c. and the middle of the 15th c., and they are more widely represented in works of art and much less as actual objects (fig. 4). In Eastern Europe, examples of the use of the bardiche come mainly from the end of the 16th – 17th c. (Двуреченский 2013, 162 – 228). Most weapons preserved in museums and private collections are also dated to this period.[3] In comparison with these data, the information from the Balkans and Byzantium, in particular, is much scarcer. Obviously battle axes with wide blades and long shafts were quite popular, which was also reflected in art, mainly in the depiction of the scene of the betrayal of Judas and the capture of

[3] Among examples of bardiches in museum collections in Bulgaria, one can find the weapons in the exhibitions of HM "Iskra" in the town of Kazanlak, HM – Karlovo, the National Museum of Military History in Sofia, RMH – Shumen, and others.

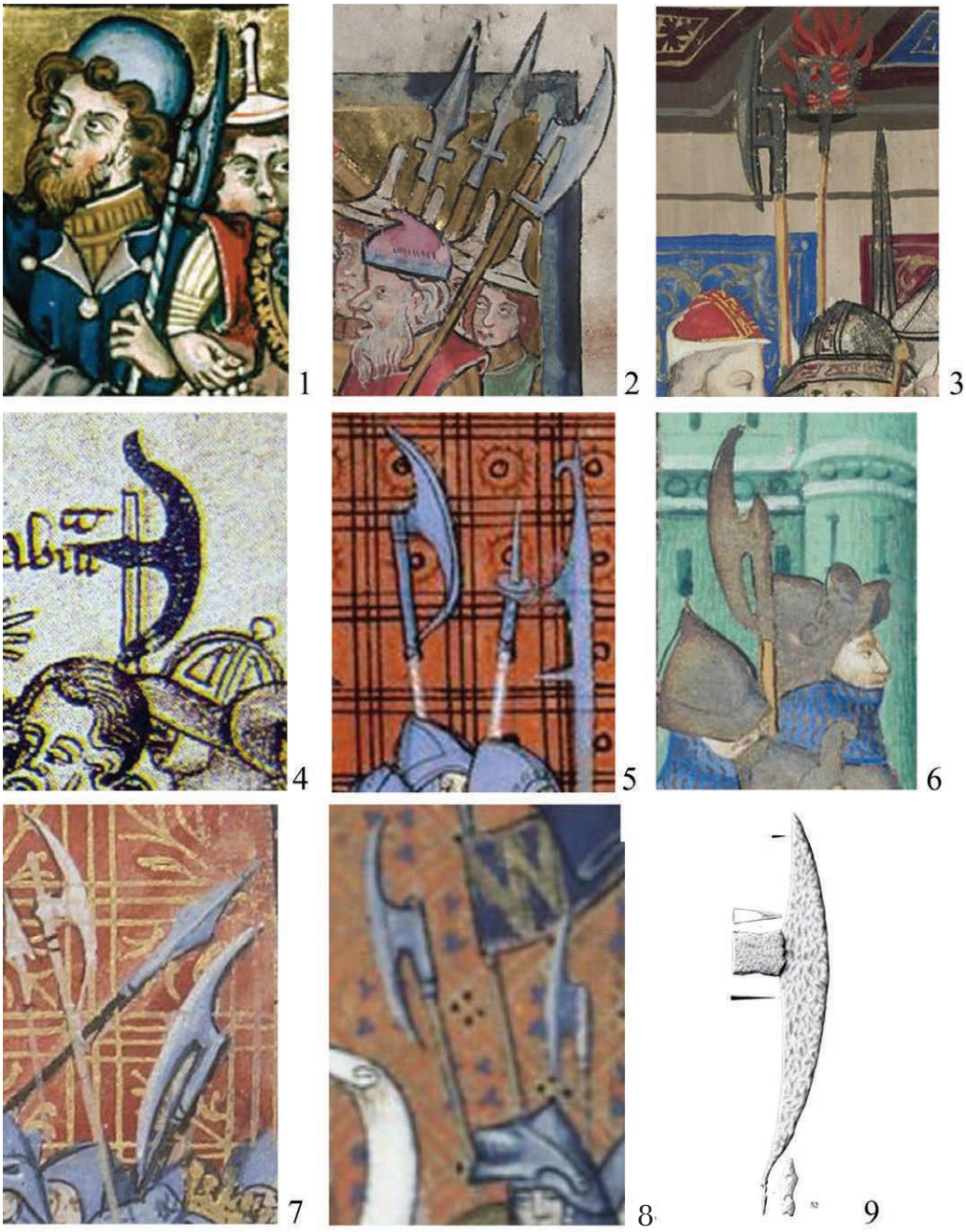


Fig. 4. Examples of the use of axes of the bardiche type in art from Western Europe: 1. Miniature from Besançon BM MS.54 Psalter Bonmont, Germany, ca. 1260 (after http://www.enluminures.culture.fr/documentation/enlumine/fr/BM/besancon_025-01.htm); 2. Miniature from WLB Cod.Don.186 Psalter, Elsace, ca. 1260 – 1270 (after http://digital.wlb-stuttgart.de/filegroups/psal-co_311458777/max/00000030.jpg); 3. Miniature from BNF Français 9561 Bible moralisée, Naples, ca. 1350 (after http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b7200010r); 4. Miniature from BL Egerton 1894 Genesis, England, ca. 1360; 5. Miniature from BL Royal 20 C VII Chroniques de France ou de St. Denis, Paris, ca. 1380 – 1400 (after http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=8466&CollID=16&NStart=200307); 6. Miniature from BGE Ms. fr. 190/1 Des cas des nobles hommes et femmes, Paris, ca. 1380 – 1400 (after http://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/fr/description/bge/fr0190-1); 7. Miniature from BNF Arsenal 5057 Bible historiale, France, ca. 1400 – 1450 (after http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84581431); 8. Miniature from BNF Français 282 Facta et Dicta Memorabilia, Paris, ca. 1380 – 1400 (after http://mandragore.bnf.fr/jsp/imprimerNoticeMan.jsp?id=946); 9. Axe of the bardiche type from the 15th c., from the museum in Boucher de Perthes, France (after Legros 2015, fig. 58$_{52}$)

Обр. 4. Примери за употреба на брадви от типа бердиш в изкуството от Западна Европа: 1. Миниатюра от Besançon BM MS.54 Psalter Bonmont, Германия, ок. 1260 г. (по http://www.enluminures.culture.fr/documentation/enlumine/fr/BM/besancon_025-01.htm); 2. Миниатюра от WLB Cod.Don.186 Psalter, Елзас, ок. 1260 – 1270 г. (по http://digital.

wlb-stuttgart.de/filegroups/psal-co_311458777/max/00000030.jpg); 3. Миниатюра от BNF Français 9561 Bible moralisée, Неапол, ок. 1350 г. (по http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b7200010r); 4. Миниатюра от BL Egerton 1894 Genesis, Англия ок. 1360 г.; 5. Миниатюра от BL Royal 20 C VII Chroniques de France ou de St. Denis, Париж, ок. 1380 – 1400 г. (по http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=8466&CollID=16&NStart=200307); 6. Миниатюра от BGE Ms. fr. 190/1 Des cas des nobles hommes et femmes, Париж, ок. 1380 – 1400 г. (по http://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/fr/description/bge/fr0190-1); 7. Миниатюра от BNF Arsenal 5057 Bible historiale, Франция, ок. 1400 – 1450 г. (по http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84581431); 8. Миниатюра от BNF Français 282 Facta et Dicta Memorabilia, Париж, ок. 1380 – 1400 г. (по http://mandragore.bnf.fr/jsp/imprimerNoticeMan.jsp?id=946); 9. Брадва тип бердиш от XV в. от музея в Буше дьо Перт, Франция (по Legros 2015, fig. 58$_{52}$)

Christ.[4] The author, however, is aware of only one direct parallel of the axe from Voden. It is a fresco from the katholikon of the Vatopedi Monastery on Mount Athos, dated ca. 1312, depicting the guards at the tomb of Jesus (fig. 5).[5] There is a close resemblance of one of the weapons rising above the heads of the sleeping soldiers to the axe from Voden.

The close resemblance of the axe head, or, to be more precise, of its socket, to the growing group of weapons from the Late Byzantine period, however, is equally significant. They are a type of mace with six semi-circular, trapezoid or rectangular flanges, with a long, cylindrical socket ending in a conical tip with a bud (fig. 6, fig. 7). Most of them originate from the region of the Lower Danube and the Eastern Balkans, but there are some examples from Asia Minor and Caucasus. Unfortunately, there are no data on origin for most of them, i.e., there is no information on their surroundings or dating. Such examples include the maces from the museum exhibitions in Popovo and Kazanlak, one mace from the depot of the National Museum of History – Sofia (Кънев 2017, 30), one mace from the region of the Lower Danube in the collection of the World Museum of Man in Florida (D'Amato 2011, № 888, fig. 28$_3$), two from the National Archaeological Museum – Sofia (Popov 2018, 155 – 156) (fig. 6), six maces from the "Vatevi" collection in Plovdiv (Попов 2014, № 405 – 409, 412), and one from the Georgian National Museum in Tbilisi (Bakradze 2016, 207 – 216, fig. 1;



Fig. 5. Fresco from the katholikon of the Vatopedi Monastery, Mount Athos, depicting the guards at the tomb of Jesus (ca. 1312) (after D'Amato 2011, fig. 9)

Обр. 5. Стенопис от католикона на манастира Ватопед в Атон, представящ стражите на гроба Господен (ок. 1312 г.) (по D'Amato 2011, fig. 9)

[4] For examples of such, see: Ђурић 1975, Сл. 17; D'Amato 2013, 69 – 93, figs. 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 9 – 17, 28 – 30, 34, 43, 44.

[5] For more information, see: D'Amato 2011, fig. 9.



Fig. 6. Six-flanged maces with a long socket ending in a conical tip with a bud: 1. Mace from HM – Popovo (Photo: D. Rabovyanov); 2. Mace from HM "Iskra", town of Kazanlak (Photo: D. Rabovyanov); 3. Mace No. 34913 from the depot of the National Museum of History –Sofia (after Кънев 2017, 30); 4. Mace from the region of the Lower Danube from the collection of the World Museum of Man in Florida (after D'Amato 2011, fig. 28$_3$); 5. Mace from the depot of the National Archaeological Museum – Sofia (after Popov 2018, fig. 10); 6. Mace from the depot of the National Archaeological Museum – Sofia (after Popov 2018, fig. 11)

Обр. 6. Боздугани с шест ребра, притежаващи дълга втулка, завършваща с конусовиден връх с пъпка: 1. Боздуган от ИМ – Попово (Снимка: Д. Рабовянов); 2. Боздуган от ИМ „Искра" гр. Казанлък (Снимка: Д. Рабовянов); 3. Боздуган с № 34913 от фонда на Националния исторически музей (по Кънев 2017, 30); 4. Боздуган от района на Долен Дунав от колекцията на World Museum of Man във Флорида (по D'Amato 2011, fig. 28$_3$); 5. Боздуган от фонда на Националния археологически музей (по Popov 2018, fig. 10); 6. Боздуган от фонда на Националния археологически музей (по Popov 2018, fig. 11)

Tsurtsumia 2018, 99, fig. 1.1)(fig. 7: 1 – 5). Among those, three maces uncovered in Pergamon are of special interest (fig. 7: 6, 7), for which Late Byzantine dating is assumed (Gaitzsch 2005, 157 – 158, 214, Tafel 53: St. 1, 2, 3, Tafel 73$_{1, 2}$) and one kept in RMH – Dobrich (fig. 7: 8). About the latter, there is information that it was found near the fortress near Dolishte village, Dobrich district, together with copper scyphate coins and silver groschen from the 14th c. (Парушев 1998, 70 – 71).

It is important to note that the resemblance between these maces and the axe head from Voden is not only in the shape, but also in the size of the socket. The maces listed have a metal part with a height between 16.7 and 19 cm, and the length of the socket of the axe is 18.3 cm. This group of maces has been dated, not unreasonably, to the 14th – first half of the 15th c., but it should be emphasized that the arguments for that are still mainly based on pictorial sources and typology, and the number of dated examples from an archaeological environment is very limited.

The information presented allows us to refer the axe head found in the cave under the monastery church in the complex near Voden to the 14th – first half of the 15th c. Its characteristic features leave no doubt that it is the product of the local Byzantine or Balkan-Byzantine military tradition. The numerous synchronous examples show that the use of such weapons was typical of Late Medieval warfare from the period 14th – first half of the 15th c. for all of Europe. The axe from Voden, however, remains as yet rare material evidence of the use of this weapon in a Late Byzantine environment.[6]

[6] These weapons should not be confused with the bardiches from the end of the 16th and mainly from the 17th c. found in quite a few Bulgarian museums, and about which there are already wrong interpretations listing them as Byzantine weapons from the period of the developed Middle Ages. One such example is that of Raffaele D'Amato. For more information, see: D'Amato 2010, 236, fig. 10.



Fig. 7. Six-flanged maces with a long socket ending in a conical tip with a bud: 1. Mace from "Vatevi" collection with No. 296 (after Попов 2014, № 405); 2. Mace from "Vatevi" collection with No. 308 (after Попов 2014, № 406); 3. Mace from "Vatevi" collection with No. 307 (after Попов 2014, № 407); 4. Mace from "Vatevi" collection with No. 2857 (after Попов 2014, № 408); 5. Mace from the Georgian National Museum in Tbilisi (after Bakradze 2016, fig. 1); 6. Mace from Pergamon (after Gaitzsch 2005, Tafel 53, St. 1); 7. Mace from Pergamon (after Gaitzsch 2005, Tafel 53, St. 2); 8. Mace from the fortress near the village of Dolishte, Dobrich district (after Парушев 1998, обр. 12)

Обр. 7. Боздугани с шест ребра, притежаващи дълга втулка, завършваща с конусовиден връх с пъпка: 1. Боздуган от колекция „Ватеви" с № 296 (по Попов 2014, № 405); 2. Боздуган от колекция „Ватеви" с № 308 (по Попов 2014, № 406); 3. Боздуган от колекция „Ватеви" с № 307 (по Попов 2014, № 407); 4. Боздуган от колекция „Ватеви" с № 2857 (по Попов 2014, № 408); 5. Боздуган от Грузинския национален музей в Тбилиси (по Bakradze 2016, fig. 1); 6. Боздуган от Пергам (по Gaitzsch 2005, Tafel 53, St. 1); 7. Боздуган от Пергам (по Gaitzsch 2005, Tafel 53, St. 2); 8. Боздуган от крепостта при с. Долище, Добричко (по Парушев 1998, обр. 12)

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КЪСНОСРЕДНОВЕКОВНА БОЙНА БРАДВА ОТ МАНАСТИРСКИЯ КОМПЛЕКС ДО С. ВОДЕН, ЯМБОЛСКО

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РЕЗЮМЕ

Предмет на изследването е една бойна брадва (обр. 1), открита през 1985 г. по време на почистването на пещерата под църквата на манастирския комплекс до с. Воден, общ. Болярово, Ямболска област (обр. 2, обр. 3). Въпреки че е намерен в археологически обект, предметът произхожда от нерегламентирано и неотразено в научната документация почистване на споменатата пещера. Дългото и тясно луновидно острие, издължената втулка и допълнителният отвор на клина за прикрепване към дръжката свързват този паметник с късносредновековните оръжия с дълги дръжки, известни в литературата под името бердиш. Много популярни като представяне в западноевропейското изкуство в периода между втората половина на XIII и първата половина на XIV в. (обр. 4), тези оръжия ще станат прототип на далеч по-познатите и разпространени през XVI – XVII в. в Източна Европа, особено в Русия, бердиши. Издължената втулка с плътен конусовиден край, завършващ с пъпка, свързва брадвата от Воден с някои боздугани и насочва към нейния балкано-византийски произход и към датировка в рамките на XIV – XV в. (обр. 5 – 7). Все още единичен паметник за днешните български земи, брадвата от Воден е пример за употребата на ударно/сечащи оръжия с дълги дръжки през късносредновековния период на Балканите.

Ключови думи: късносредновековно въоръжение, бойна брадва, боздугани

CONTRIBUTION TO THE STUDY OF HEEL IRONS FROM PRESENT-DAY BULGARIAN LANDS

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ABSTRACT

It is generally acknowledged that heel irons in Bulgaria came into use around 1200 AD. They are considered one of the usual High medieval finds, which continues to be used in the Ottoman period and even today. They are believed to have been attached to the soles of "rough" shoes, often interpreted as "military". However, a careful examination of the contexts in which they are found compels a vast revision of existing views.

It is noteworthy that heel irons were not found in cemeteries dating back to the 13th and 14th c. The objects found in settlements are for the most part non-contextual finds, and as a rule, they were unearthed in settlements that indeed existed in the Middle Ages but also continued their life in the Ottoman era. The earliest of the few distinctly documented contexts containing heel irons within settlements cannot be dated before the very end of the 14th or even rather the first half of the 15th c.

On the other hand, heel irons are relatively common in cemeteries dating back to the Ottoman period. The available data suggest that they are one of the objects that appeared in present-day Bulgarian lands during the Ottoman conquest because of the widespread distribution – among all strata of the population and not only the soldiers – of specific oriental shoes and boots: *pabuç* and *çizme*. The scarce archaeological evidence from other Balkan countries, i. e. Greece or Serbia, does not contradict this idea. Considering this, one would not be surprised to hear that in Bulgarian the heel iron is called *налче* ("nalche"), which is a direct borrowing of the Turkish word *nalça/na'lçe*.

Key words: heel irons, shoes, Middle Ages, Ottoman period, Bulgaria, Balkan Peninsula

The inspiration for writing this paper came from two small horseshoe-shaped plates, each with three short and rounded prongs on one side (fig. 1), found during the non-destructive archaeological study of the settlement from the Ottoman era in the *Tursko Konush* area (Кирилов 2020). In themselves, they seem to be nothing special. Hundreds of such finds have been discussed in publications to date, some of which are identical to the two from Konush, and the number of unpublished examples is probably in the thousands, or even more. The majority of the known specimens originate from studies of medieval sites, they are also known from the Ottoman era, and their manufacture and use continued into modern times. Taking this into account, there could be nothing more ordinary than finding them during the collection of mass material from the surface of a settlement which existed during the period 15th – 19th c.

Still, there was something about them that was intriguing. This was due to the realisation that it was the first time the author had seen such finds coming out of the ground first hand, despite more than quarter of a century of excavations of mostly medieval sites as the basis of previous experience. I wondered whether it was pure coincidence that they were found within a settlement which, as all the evidence shows, was not inhabited before the beginning of the 15th c. Therefore an in-depth

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investigation seemed an appropriate course of action. The results turned out to be particularly interesting, and so this publication was prepared.

It has long been known that these objects are heel irons. This interpretation can be taken as absolute for a number of reasons, one of which is that when they are found in a clear (grave) context, they are always positioned near the feet of the deceased (Миков 1932 – 1933, 164; Радичков 1993, 177; Чангова 2006, 178; Попконстантинов и др. 2010, 596 and others). Thus, classifying them as *nalche* (the word for heel irons, which is commonly used to date) is completely justified.

It is indisputable that they were not known on Bulgarian territory before the end of the 12th – beginning of the 13th c. (Рабовянов 2015, 237). The two specimens found in different places in Pliska (Шкорпил 1905, 315; Михайлов 1948, 181) and those found during the excavations near Madara (Попов 1936, 68 – 69), which are practically finds without a context, cannot change the fact that heel irons have not been found during studies of sites where life after the beginning of the 13th c. has not been established.

The reason they were not present until about 1200 AD, and their appearance soon (as is usually assumed) afterwards is sought either in "the development of iron processing" (Николова 1974, 309), or in "a change of attire" (Рабовянов 2015, 237) which led to the replacement of "soft boots with an even sole, typical of the steppe population" with "boots with a hard sole, to which these heel irons could be nailed". Nikolova (Николова 1974, 303) also believes that they are a kind of "rougher shod shoe". Nesheva (Нешева 1985, 200) assumes the reasons for their appearance lie in the characteristic development of cities in the Second Bulgarian Kingdom, with their "steep winding cobbled streets", which led to the appearance of these parts of the shoes, unknown until then.

Within this category of objects, there is a diversity which should not be underestimated. The most significant attempt to develop a typology so far is that of Nikolova (Николова 1974, 303 – 308), but she did not apply sufficient consistency in the selection and combination of criteria. In any case, it is clear that heel irons differ in shape (rounded, U-shaped and with a slightly sharpened point), size, the method of attachment to the shoe (prongs, nails, rivets or combinations of those) and the form of the ends, which in some cases are flattened and widened. We will not be putting forward a new typology here, although one is definitely required so that in the future (if we adopt the necessary degree of optimism that more attention will be paid to them, and that the contexts in which they are found will be more carefully documented and published far more often than up until now) we would be able to understand the reasons for the observed differences better. They could be temporal, spatial, functional (attachment to different types of shoes) and so on, but in view of what is known to present day, it is difficult to state anything definite in this respect. In any case, the author believes it is still too early to make any statements of this type: "different types were used at the same time" (Рабовянов 2015, 237), which could be correct, but are not thoroughly justified and supported by sufficient evidence at this stage.

It was again Nikolova (Николова 1974, 308) who noticed that "in the graves of the civil population from the 13th – 14th c. in Tarnovo unearthed to date, no heel irons have been found". This observation is valid to date, and it applies not only to Tarnovo, but to the whole present-day Bulgarian territory.[1] This extremely important circumstance has been given an unsatisfactory, in

[1] At first glance, this conclusion is disproved by the necropolis excavated near the southern fortress wall of the Late Antique and medieval fortress in Silistra and dated between the 12th and the middle of the 14th c. (Ангелова 1993, 63, 71, 91). In one of the graves (No. 60), dated to the 13th c., a heel iron was discovered (Ангелова 1993, 63, 71, 91). However, the upper chronological boundary of the necropolis must undoubtedly be shifted at least a few decades forward, if not more. In the soil just above (and even around) the skeletons of some of the deceased were found coins from the middle – the second half of the 14th c., which set the *terminus post quem* for the burial, and not, as researchers wrongly assumed (Ангелова 1993, 62), *terminus ante quem*. Such is the case, for example, with Grave No. 74 (coin of Tsar Ivan Alexander

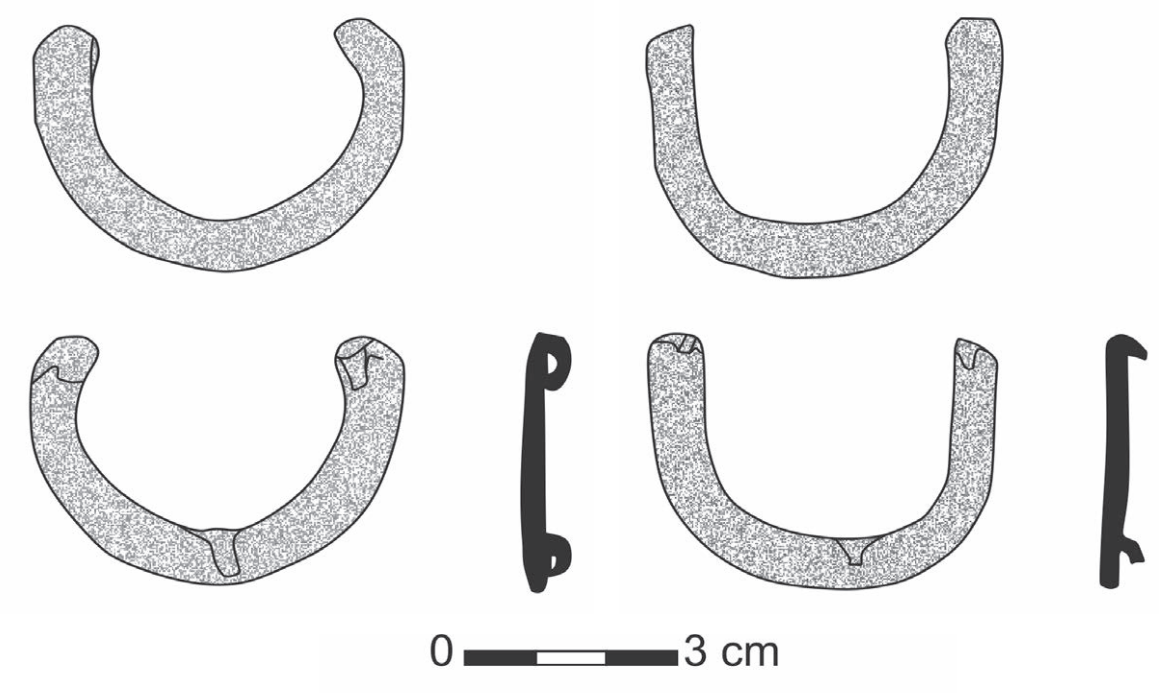


Fig. 1. Iron heel irons, found during the 2019 non-destructive archaeological study of the settlement from the Ottoman era near the village of Konush, Asenovgrad municipality (Drawing: Anna Agre)

Обр. 1. Железни подкови за обувки, открити през 2019 г. при недеструктивното археологическо проучване на селище от османската епоха край с. Конуш, общ. Асеновград (Рисунка: Анна Агре)

my opinion, explanation, derived from the belief that the finds uncovered in a settlement context undoubtedly date back to the 13th – 14th c. period. This led Nikolova to conclude that "these heel irons were used mainly for shodding soldier's boots" (Николова 1974, 308). To be honest, if the author had to reconcile both circumstances, it would lead to the supposition that in this period people were buried barefoot rather than postulate that "soldier's footwear" was deliberately not allowed in the afterworld, or assume the hypothetical existence of designated "soldier's cemeteries" with shoes with heel irons on them, which were different from the ones for civilians, and which we have still not discovered for some reason.

The contrast between finds in settlement and grave contexts is too significant to be underestimated. In theory, it is possible that some of the objects people used in their daily life are not found in their graves, but this line of thought should be followed only after it is completely certain that the objects which are not in the graves were really used in daily life in the same period. In this case, the question seems to have a clear and definitive affirmative answer. It is a fact that heel irons have been found during the excavation of many medieval sites in our country. On the other hand, however, it is also a fact that very few of them ceased to exist during the Ottoman era. The use of heel irons after the 15th c. cannot be questioned, and not only because of the presence of numerous specimens from certain contexts from the Ottoman times, which we will discuss later on. All this made the author take a deeper look at published data and make a careful check whether the known examples of medieval heel irons originate from precisely documented and well-dated medieval contexts. It turned out that it is actually impossible to give an affirmative answer to this question.

found near the pelvis of the deceased), above which on top of that is Grave No. 76 (Ангелова 1993, 72 – 73). As for Grave No. 60, the jewellery and other objects found in it do not necessarily require it to be dated to the 13th c. By the way, under it is Grave No. 71, in the embankment of which a coin of Emperor Theodore Lascaris was found.

First, it is clear that there are no grounds to believe that the heel irons found on the territory of sites which were inhabited in the Early Middle Ages (as well) can be dated to this period. The only thing known about the „подкова для сапог“ [heel iron for a boot] found during the first excavations in Pliska is that it was uncovered on the territory of the citadel (Шкорпил 1905, 315, Таблица LIX_{27}). Another heel iron was uncovered in the embankment of Basilica No. 2 in the Outer City, which was severely compromised (Михайлов 1948, 181, обр. 12), and the former, as well as the other finds from the basilica, can hardly be dated to the period of functioning of the temple.[2] The number of „подкови за обуща“ [heel irons for shoes] uncovered during the excavations at Madara is unknown (Попов 1936, 68 – 69), and nothing can be said about the context in which they were found, except that they were found in Madara, during the excavation of different sections at the foot of the rocky slopes and in the big cave. It is expressly highlighted that no data about stratigraphy or context are available (Попов 1936, 32). The objects represented generally in the paper come from a wide time range.

In the other settlements and necropoleis belonging to the "Era of the First Bulgarian Kingdom", such finds are completely unknown. This is also true of the sites which flourished during the so-called "times of the Byzantine rule". With one single exception, no heel irons have been found at any of them. This exception, however, is one of the few known examples in Thrace of an unfortified settlement, where life continued to the period between the end of the 13th and beginning of the 14th c. This is the medieval settlement above the Thracian town of Seuthopolis.

An unspecified number of heel irons were found during the excavations of the site (Чангова 1972, 90 – 91, обр. 72). Seven specimens are presented in a photo and it is possible that they comprise all the ones uncovered during the excavations. They are all fragmented. Nothing is known about the contexts in which they were found.

Although the date is not specified, there is no doubt that the researcher believes them to be finds which were part of the everyday life of the residents in the medieval settlement. This is also evident from the comparative material used (all from the territory of the former Soviet Union). As a side note, the parallels mentioned are as context-less as the heel irons from the settlement above Seuthopolis, and they were uncovered during the study of sites which were inhabited during the Middle Ages as well.

Despite this, the heel irons from Seuthopolis seem, at first glance at least, to be one of the solid pieces of evidence for the use of this type of objects during the Middle Ages in the territory of present-day Bulgaria, since they were uncovered during the excavations of a settlement which can be dated not later than the beginning of the 14th c. (Чангова 1972, 139). However, it should also be noted that eleven coins were found during the excavations of the settlement, which date back to the end of the 17th – beginning of the 20th c. It is not at all improbable that the assumption that they "undoubtedly became incorporated among the remains of the medieval settlement during processing of the fields which existed on its ruins in later centuries" (Пенчев 1984, 137) is correct. This could apply to the same, or even larger, extent to the heel irons found here.

The situation is similar with another unfortified site, to the north of the Stara Planina Mountain, dated most generally to the 13th – 14th c. The site in question is the medieval settlement near the village of Hotnitsa. One heel iron was uncovered during its excavation (Алексиев 2004, 61). The

[2] Thanks to the kind cooperation of my colleagues, M. Inkova and K. Konstantinov, I learnt of the discovery of as yet unpublished heel irons for shoes at one more of the sites studied in Pliska, "Site No. 41". They were uncovered on a relatively small area and in a depth of up to 40 cm under the level of the present-day terrain. At this depth, there are materials from the Early Middle Ages, but finds from the Ottoman era can also be observed in the surface layers. In any case, the heel irons do not originate from a definite medieval context, what is interesting about them is that there are also some of copper alloy.

latest possible period of its inhabitation was determined on the basis of a hoard of coins of Tsar Ivan Shishman, discovered in the corner of one of the buildings, and the assumption that the settlement "was probably set on fire and destroyed by Turkish invaders", as well as the lack of later materials. It should be taken into account, however, that the heel iron's location is completely unknown, so nothing can be said about the context in which it was found. In any case, it is clear that it did not originate from the studied medieval structures (buildings and pits), whose description reports, alas briefly, on some of the finds discovered there – ceramics and metal objects. Taking this into account, it would be very difficult to unconditionally refer the heel iron from Hotnitsa to the medieval settlement.

Numerous heel irons have been uncovered in the excavations of a number of urban centers from the Second Bulgarian Kingdom. They are the main reason to believe that these objects were an integral part of everyday life in Bulgaria at the time.

What is known about the twenty heel irons found in the excavations of the Shumen fortress is that they originate from the fortress (Антонова 1995, 104, обр. $107_{31, 32}$). Nothing more is known about the context in which they were found. Here is not the place to discuss whether life there really ceased in the middle of the 15th c., as is usually assumed, but there is no doubt that it continued after the end of the Second Bulgarian Kingdom.

The total number of heel irons found in the excavations of the Lovech fortress (Чангова 2006, 156) is unknown. The context in which they were found has generally not been commented on, but still, two of them (Чангова 2006, 147, 178, обр. 161_{1}) are said to originate from grave No. 82,[3] and they undoubtedly belonged to the person buried, and are not a find that somehow got into the grave's embankment by accident. The date of the latter is not known, but it should be kept in mind that it is part of the necropolis studied, which undoubtedly dates back to the Ottoman era, consequently, it should be dated to the same time period. The inhabitation of the old fortress for centuries after the end of the 14th c. is well-known thanks both to written records and the results of archaeological studies (Чангова 2006, 161 – 181).

Nothing is known about the numerous heel irons from Cherven (over 50 were uncovered) apart from the fact that they were discovered during the excavations of the fortress (Нешева 1985, 200 – 202). The fact that life there continued and the place preserved its status after the end of the 14th c. is indisputable. A register of ziamets and timars supposedly dating to the middle of the 15th c. describes the land tenures of at least three timariots from the "Chernovi fortress" – Baba İlyas (dizdar), Esenlü (bevab) and Ali Divane – and mentions quite a big cavalry garrison (jamaat) of 57 müsellems (Тодоров, Недков 1966, 325 – 327) positioned in it. Timars in the villages of Gilen (?) and Dechire (?) were also held by the cadi of Cherven Mevlyana, according to a register probably drawn up in the beginning of the 16th c. (Цветкова 1972, 373 – 374). The city was the center of a wilayah (Тодоров, Недков 1966, 187), and later on of a kaza (Цветкова 1972, 373 – 374), and centuries had to pass before it lost its importance to Ruse. Archaeological excavations in more recent times have produced evidence of life here after the end of the Second Bulgarian Kingdom (Йорданов 1999; Йорданов 2005; Йорданов 2006).

There are data of heel iron finds from excavations in Melnik. They were uncovered in a building where coins from the 13th c. were found (Нешева и др. 2010, 583), but there are coins from the 18th – 19th c. as well. According to the researchers "the finds also date to this wide chronological range". There are no serious grounds to date the heel irons in question here to the Middle Ages.

One of the two heel irons from the Tsepina fortress was uncovered "at Church No. 2", and the other – "in the northwestern part of the enclosure wall outside", practically in the humus layer,

[3] Only one specimen is represented graphically. The catalogue description of the grave (Чангова 2006, 178), however, mentions that heel irons for shoes were uncovered near the feet, so they were probably a pair.

at a depth of 20 cm under the then-terrain (Георгиева, Гиздова 1966, 53). The researchers are convinced that life here continued after the Ottoman conquest (Георгиева, Гиздова 1966, 55 – 56), although they do not present convincing data on that, but rather base their conclusions on legends and local folk stories. At the current level of knowledge about Tsepina, it is absolutely unnecessary to make any assumptions in one direction or other. What can be said for certain is that the heel irons in question by no means belong to a definite medieval context.

The situation is similar with the fortresses in the immediate vicinity of Stenimahos – Asen's fortress and the one near Voden, where the postulated medieval context of the few shoe plates found is, to put it mildly, insufficiently justified and evidenced (Морева 2007, 542; Морева-Арабова, Дуков 2013, 451). The dating of the two graves uncovered in 2009 on St. Ivan Island near Sozopol to "the middle of the 13th c." is also completely unjustified. One of the deceased was buried with shoes with spurs, and with heel irons positioned on his feet. From the description of the situation, one can conclude that the burial was performed much later.[4]

A special place in the discussion of heel irons is held by Tarnovo, with the largest collection in Bulgaria originating unconditionally from there. Such objects have also been found in excavations in a number of places in the city, on Tsarevets, Trapezitsa and the lower areas between them.

No less than 50 heel irons were found in the excavations of the palace on Tsarevets. None of them has a clear stratigraphic context. The information available allows nothing more than their most general positioning within the large building complex, the exact circumstances of their discovery being unknown (Николова 1974, 374 – 376). In such a situation, the unconditional assumption that they are medieval finds stems only from the presumption that they were uncovered in "the medieval palace of the Bulgarian kings". This, however, is by no means a must, especially taking into account that human presence at this place continued in different forms, and intensively at that, during the Ottoman period (Георгиева и др. 1973, 65 – 66; Гюлева 2013, 24 – 25). Perhaps it is no accident that the majority (about two thirds) of the heel irons "from the palace" originate from its northern parts, which from one moment on were occupied by the necropolis around the mosque of Firuz Bey, erected in 1435 to its north.

It is unknown exactly how many, but in any case "many" (Овчаров 2005, 60) heel irons were uncovered during the studies of different sections of Tsarevets, carried out under the supervision of Todor Ovcharov in the period between the 1960s and the 1990s. The results from all of them came to light in a small book, which raises many questions not only about the quality of publication of the materials found, but also on the methodology and documentation of the excavations. It is obvious that we can in no way speak of precise stratigraphic observations and well-documented contexts. One cannot but notice, however, that in the rare cases when it is stated not just where, i.e., in which of the excavated sections, heel irons were found, but also relatively in what environment and with what accompanying materials, respectively, this happened, these were practically without exception, either layers from the Ottoman era, or buildings in whose embankments there were coins from the second half and the end of the 14th c., postulating *terminus post quem* for the abandonment of the buildings (Овчаров 2005, 29 – 30, 35, 81, 87, 167).

[4] "In the northern part of the exonarthex, at 1.30 m west of the western wall of the narthex, we established a deep sinking of the brick floor covering with an elliptical outline. *Only in this section* (length – 3.70 m and width – 2.40 m) *of the exonarthex, the floor is covered with hexagonal bricks* (0.42 x 0.42 m), *in contrast to the remaining area, which is covered with square bricks* (0.32 x 0.32 m). The mortar putty of the hexagonal brick in the central part of the sinking on its northern side has been preserved. After the disassembly of the sunken bricks, an embankment was taken down with fragmented bricks, mortar lumps, charcoal, pottery sherds (with white slip and *dark blue painted decoration*, with green glaze and without cover), fragments of glass vessels and fragments of frescoes. At a depth of 0.80 m from the brick floor level, we found a buried individual" (Попконстантинов и др. 2010, 596; all the parts in Italics are mine – Ch. K.).

A total of 34 heel irons were found during the excavations of the St. Dimitar Church and the area around it at the foot of Trapezitsa hill (Николова, Робов 2005, 120, таблица XXIV$_{2-4}$). Nothing is known about the context in which most of them were found, but it is expressly mentioned that three specimens were uncovered in graves from the Ottoman era, which are part of the impressive necropolis at that place, dated between the metropolitan period of Tarnovo and the 19th c. Although such a statement is not made unambiguously, the rest seem to be assumed as medieval, to the extent that "they are similar to the ones found in the excavations of the palace on Tsarevets". The results from the excavations near St. Dimitar Church in themselves can in no way support such an early date.

One of the few sites in Tarnovo (and in general), where the precise circumstances in which these objects were uncovered was well-documented, is the southern section of Trapezitsa hill in Tarnovo (Рабовянов 2015, 237). Nine of the ten finds (Рабовянов 2015, 423 – 424, № 1592 – 1601) originate from contexts which the researcher dates to the second half of the 14th c. Truth be told, most of them were found at a very shallow depth (0.10 – 0.30 cm under the then-surface) and were not bound to specific structures (one was even found on "the terrain next to the site"). Their dating stems from the view of the report's author that life in this part of Trapezitsa more or less ceased with the Ottoman conquest, and the few materials from later times are explained with sporadic human presence. Even if so, the possibility for intensive inhabitation here up to the very beginning of the 15th c. is not rejected as a whole (Рабовянов 2015, 59).[5]

One of the heel irons (No. 1596) was uncovered in the embankment of Dwelling No. 6, which is also related to "the neighbourhood from the second half of the 14th c." Its construction is dated around the middle, and its abandonment – at the end of the same century (Рабовянов 2015, 57). This chronological interpretation is problematic in the very least because of the fact that the latest coins discovered in the embankment of the building were minted during the reign of Bayezid I (1389 – 1402) and Mehmed II (1451 – 1481) (Рабовянов 2015, 470). It is a fact that the number of coins minted in the period, during which, according to the researcher, the dwelling functioned, is significant (51), but they (as well) cannot be viewed as anything other than *terminus post quem* of its abandonment and embankment, similar to the other 85 (sic!) coins uncovered there, which were minted between the 4th and the first third of the 14th c. Furthermore, several pits were uncovered under the floor and the masonry of the dwelling – Nos. 39, 46, 56, 58, 68, 71, and 80 (Рабовянов 2015, 74 – 75, 84 – 85, 88 – 89), in whose embankment coins were also found. Most certainly in two of them, or probably three (pits Nos. 46 and 68, as well as No. 58), coins minted after the middle of the 14th c. were found. They were interpreted as intrusive finds which became incorporated into the fill of the pits, because they were perforated by beams from the later dwelling, but they suggest that both the upper and lower chronological limit of the building are problematic.

A potential earlier dating of these objects seems to be suggested by the fact that one of them (No. 1599) was uncovered in pit No. 43, dated to the first two decades of the 14th c. (Рабовянов 2015, 423 – 424). The date was determined based on the fact that a hoard of five coins (together with a number of earlier coins minted throughout almost a millennium between the first half of the 5th and beginning of the 14th c.) minted during the reign of Tsar Todor Svetoslav (1301 – 1322)

[5] During the annual archaeological reports in March 2021, in his report about the results from the excavations in that same section of Trapezitsa in 2020, Rabovyanov announced that during the campaign in question, for the first time (?!) indisputable traces of human inhabitation of the place throughout the 15th c. were found. This claim is somewhat surprising, since (as becomes clear further on here) their indisputable presence is also supported by his own monographic publication on the results from the excavations in the section up to 2015. This claim, for now only verbal, should be probably officially published in this year's volume of the series "Archaeological Discoveries and Excavations", which had not yet been released at the time when this paper was submitted to the publisher.

was found, which according to the researcher mark the time it was filled. For no apparent reason, however, two coins from the second half of the 14th c. were ignored (Рабовянов 2015, 464), which mark the actual *terminus post quem* of the end of the pit's life.

The parallels drawn in our literature with neighbouring territories to support the idea of their use in the 13th – 14th c. is no less problematic. The parallels are just as badly documented as those from Bulgaria, and their dating is often determined based on comparisons with the finds from our territory. Herein are presented two further characteristic examples.

The first is the Maglič fortress in Serbia. The 'excavations' there in the 1960s were rather a clearing of the ruins of the medieval fortification (Popović 2012, 38 – 41) rather than a scientific undertaking. Between 1975 and 1985, large-scale conservation and restoration activities were carried out, accompanied by something resembling archaeological excavations, characterised as "semi-legal". With the exception of the massive stone constructions, what was found on the site was not carefully documented, and quite a large part of the documentation has been lost (Popović 2012, 42 – 53).

It is assumed that the first fortification on the site was constructed towards the end of the 11th or beginning of the 12th c. and did not survive the middle of the last century (Popović 2012, 61 – 62). The fortress, which continues to impress today (after its restoration), was probably erected at the very end of the 13th c. and finalised in the second quarter of the 14th c. It survived the Ottoman conquest without significant damage, and continued to exist after that. Between the second half of the 15th and end of the 17th c., an Ottoman garrison was most certainly stationed here. Life on the site probably ceased as late as the 18th c. (Popović 2012, 23 – 28, 149 – 156).

Information about twelve heel irons for shoes has been preserved, although a lot more were probably found. There is practically no information about the contexts in which they were found and since this type of find is not given much attention in Serbia, Marko Popović was forced to date them based on what is known about analogous finds in Bulgaria. Using only the publications on the excavations in Tsarevets and Cherven, he dated them most generally to the 14th – 15th c. (in the text: Popović 2012, 174) or the 14th – 16th c. (in the catalogue description: Popović 2012, 213 – 214) The lower chronological limit in this case most certainly took into account the circumstance that he sees no traces of human presence in Maglič in the 13th c.

Several heel irons which were part of a large Thessaloniki exhibition presented about two decades ago dedicated to daily life in the Byzantine Empire, were dated to the 13th – 14th c. (Papanikola-Bakirtzi 2002, 113, No. 108). These specimens were uncovered during the excavations of the monastery complex "St. George "Vranokastro" near Paleochori in the northeastern foot of Pangaion Mountain (Ζήκος, Μπακιρτζής 1997, 854, Εικ. 13). However, it was evidenced for the first time in a patriarchal sigil in 1474. Few traces of life on the site in the 13th – 14th c. have been established, and their interpretation as belonging to a medieval monastery complex as early as the 11th c. is especially problematic. A huge number of finds from the Ottoman era, including a hoard of about 900 silver aspers from the time of Selim I, are definite evidence of the intensive human presence here in that period. It should be noted that the researchers do not put forward any dating for the heel irons found, and only comment that they were parts of the monk's shoes. The dating to the 13th – 14th c., as stated in the catalogue of the exhibition, probably derived from the analogy made with the heel irons from Tsarevets and Cherven (Ζήκος, Μπακιρτζής 1997, 854, n. 22).

This rather problematic dating of the heel irons to the time before the end of the 14th c. is in sharp contrast with their presence in well-dated complexes from the Ottoman era. Several such examples have already been mentioned here. The first ever information published about such finds in a burial context refers to the necropolis from the 15th – 18th c. near the village of Kalugeritsa

(Миков 1932 – 1933, 164; Петрунова 1992, 273). A pair of heel irons were also uncovered in grave No. 57 from the necropolis from the 15th – 17th c. around Church No. 3 on Kaliakra cape (Радичков 1993, 177). Such were also found in a grave with *terminus post quem* of the burial beginning of the 15th c. on Skamni cape in Sozopol (Панайотова и др. 2017, 233). Heel irons are also among the finds from the necropolis dated to the 15th – 17th c. in the western periphery of present-day Sofia (Даскалов и др. 2016, 758). Heel irons were also nailed to the last shoes worn by the person buried in Grave No. 10 in the necropolis from the Ottoman era near the village of Ivancha (Рабовянов и др. 2020, 1245). It seems that iron shod shoes, which were common at that time, were worn even by children (Георгиева 1965, 152 – 154; Rohn et al. 2009, 522 – 524). It is extremely indicative that, although heel irons are found within necropoleis used for a long time both in the Middle Ages and the Ottoman era, they are only documented in graves from the Ottoman period. For example, heel irons were found only in the latest graves (sic!) from a necropolis which existed between the 14th and the 17th c. in Plovdiv (Божинова, Станев 2015, 746), as well as in graves from the 16th – 17th c. at the church of the Holy 40 Martyrs in Tarnovo (Тотев и др. 2008, 697 – 698).

The data available to date suggest that heel irons are one of the objects which became common in present-day Bulgarian territory as a result of the Ottoman conquest, and are one of the direct pieces of archaeological evidence for the relatively widespread use of a type of "Eastern" iron shod shoe, which was new for the region. They are well-known from written sources from the Ottoman era (see the Appendix at the end of the text), which represent them as characteristic of wide strata of the population without giving the impression that there were any restrictions on who wore them in terms of sex, age, social status, religion, etc. There are even less grounds to claim that they were worn only by the military.[6] These are mostly slippers, resp. babouch (*pabuç*/*papuç*), but there are boots (*çizme*) as well.

The spread of these shoes for use in daily life and as part of the culture of the Balkans with the appearance of the Ottomans seems to be evidenced by the fact that their names are entirely Turkish, Turkish-Arab-Persian, respectively. This applies to the heel irons themselves [*nalche*], whose name is a direct borrowing of the Turkish *nalça, na'lçe,* respectively (Георгиев, Дуриданов 2012, 482; Atik Gürbüz 2017, passim and esp. 50 – 51), which means a horseshoe heel plate and is a derivative of the Arabic word for (horse)shoe plate *nal.* It is indicative (and logical) that the word *nal* did not take the place of *podkova* [horseshoe] to refer to the arc-shaped plates for shoeing horses, which were widespread during the Balkan Middle Ages, while *nalça* (similar to the name of the shoes of which it was a part) obviously entered the Balkan languages to refer to something which was not known until then.

Truth be told, the Byzantine world and the Greek language met these Oriental shoes long before the arrival of the Ottomans. Παπούτζιον is a term which can be found in Byzantine sources from the 12th c. on (Shukurov 2016, 274, 316), mainly in the Asia Minor provinces of the empire. It is difficult, with the view of the temporal data, not to make a connection between the appearance of the Seljuk Turks in Anatolia and the spread of the term in the Greek-speaking communities in the peripheral part of the peninsula. This, in the author's view, makes things even more interesting. If it actually turns out (or is proven) that (as is claimed) heel irons were present in Bulgaria as early as the first decades of the 13th c., this would raise a number of questions about (early) cultural relations and influences, or even migration, from the Orient, which far preceded the Ottoman conquest.

[6] It is difficult for the author to agree with the opinion that most of those buried in the Ottoman necropolis in Corinth are members of the city garrison. One of the arguments in favor of this statement is the frequent discovery of heel irons in the graves (Rohn et al. 2009, 554). These objects are not only used for shoeing (military) boots, but their discovery in the graves of both women and children in the same necropolis makes the thesis of its researchers seem problematic.

At this stage, however, the data do not allow any interpretations in this direction. Even if one had the best of wills to lower the data and place the appearance of heel irons before the demise of the Second Bulgarian Kingdom, it is impossible to see them in contexts preceding the second half of the 14th c. At that time, the Ottomans were already an integral part of the ethnic, economic and cultural landscape of the peninsula, so even such potentially early data would not contradict the thesis that they were the factor that brought and spread heel irons on the Balkans, including present-day Bulgarian territory. The thesis for the appearance of these shoe plates not earlier than just before their direct conquest is also supported by their absence in the necropoleis from the Second Bulgarian Kingdom. Even if we accept that some of the residents in Tarnovo, Cherven, Lovech and others met the conquest of their cities with shoes with heel irons on their feet, they would most probably have been representatives of the very first generation that used such shoes and would have passed away and been buried not earlier than the decades after the Ottoman conquest. What their parents and ancestors probably wore on their feet was more likely the *opanci* typical of the Middle Ages (Костов 1933).

In any case, it is clear that these finds (like many others undeservedly ignored seemingly "rather utilitarian" objects) can tell us a lot more than is usually expected from them, and they deserve attention accordingly. It should be noted – to honour Bulgarian archaeology – that here this has been and is being done much more often than in neighbouring countries. Nonetheless, researching them in detail and understanding them is yet to come. It is extremely important to document carefully the contexts in which they are found, to publish the finds, develop a detailed typology and then subject them to precise spatial, temporal, technological and other analyses, in order to get a better understanding of them, the shoes to which they were attached, and the people who made and used them.

Appendix

Written information on shod shoes from the Ottoman era

I have chosen to present three stories from different times, divided from each other by approximately equal intervals of time of about a century and a half (one from the middle of the 16th c., the next from the beginning of the 18th c., and the last – from the middle of the 19th c.), which give a sufficiently good idea of the shoes the ways they were used, so that any retelling is unnecessary.

The first was written by Hans Dernschwam, who spent two years in the Ottoman Empire (1553 – 1555). The passages presented here, from the original text of the Babinger (1923) edition, are accompanied by their English translation in order to make them easier to comprehend for those readers who would have difficulties understanding the specific 16th-century dialect the German-speaking Bohemian used.

The second text is an extract from the book by the English writer and dramatist Aaron Hill (Hill 1709, 93), who, at the early age of seventeen, visited and travelled around the Ottoman Empire in 1702. The third is a passage from the book by the esquire Charles White who spent three years in Constantinople (White 1846, 93).

Hans Dernschwam

Text: Jedermeniglich, der in die kirchen gehen und bethen wjll, der mus sich zuuor dohaim, hinden und vornen, auch die arme bis an die elnpogen waschen, vnd zum tajll die fusse, darczw fwr allen iren meczithen ader kirchen schone lustige springende prunnen sein. Auch geth ir kainer in den schuchen dorin, er sunst im koth pflegt zugehen in die kirchen. Sunder zeucht sy aus vnd

tregt sy in den henden mit sich hinein vnd stellt die neben sich. Die selbigen schuch nennen sy papuczsch. Seind stark, nider, weyth und beschlagen. Dorein gehoren knie stiffel von ainfachen solen, die tragen man vnd weib also (nent man kapcza) in den papuczschen. Vnd die turkhen tragen nit lenger hosen als zu dem knie, wiewol es nit hosen sein, sunder weytte plodertte gathia, wie die schiffer Hosen sein zw Venedig. Also mussen auch die cristen sich haltten, die ire kirchen beschawen wollen (Babinger 1923, 51 – 52).

Translation: Any person who wishes to go and pray in the mosques,[7] should first wash themselves at home, front and back, and the arms to the elbows, and partly the legs, which is why in all their mosques or churches there are nice fountains. Also, nobody shall enter the mosques with the shoes he walks in the filth [on the streets], but should take them off, carry them in hand while he enters, and leave them beside him. These shoes are called slippers [*papuczsch*]. They are strong, low-heeled, wide and shod. The slippers are worn over boots [*stiffel*],[8] which are up to the knees and with simple soles (they are called *kapcza*),[9] worn by both men and women. The Turks do not wear trousers below the knees, although they are not trousers, but large baggy pants [*gathia*],[10] like the sailors' pants in Venice. This should also be done by Christians who wish to view their mosques.

[...]

Text: An der strumpffe stat tragen sy stieffel von allerley farben, mit ainer solen, vnd daruber starke schuech, die wol aussgeschnitten sein, alle vnden mit eisen beschlagen, dorein er bald tretten, aus vnd ein zihen mag. Vnd wan er in die kirchen geht, zeuchtt er die vor der thwr ab, tregt sy in den henden vnd stelt sy neben sich, wan er begint zu bethen (Babinger 1923, 63).

Translation: Instead of socks, they wear boots of different colour, with one sole, and over them – strong shoes, which are deeply cut and shod with iron, and can be taken off and put on quickly. When he goes to the mosque, he takes them off in front of the door, carries them in hand and leaves them next to him when he starts praying.

[...]

Text: Dan die selbigen hailigen lewtte, die den Machomet gefressen haben, tragen alle stiffel bis an das knie vnd vber die stiffel papuczsch, das seind weytte, starke, beschlagene schuch, wol ausgeschnitten, also das ainer bald dorein tretten mag, ab vnd auszihen mag, oben auch darvon stat.

[7] The term used by Dernschwam is "kirchen", i.e., literally "churches", but as becomes clear from his own clarification at the end of the same sentence: "meczithen ader kirchen", i.e., "mosques or churches", he means the Muslim houses of worship. European travel writers at the time had the habit of clarifying the word mosque (masjid) to their readers with the term "church" in the general sense of "temple", so that it becomes clear that they mean a religious building.

[8] The strict translation of *stiffel* (modern German *Stiefel*) is actually boot, but if we had to explain better what is actually described by Dernschwam, the more accurate term would be (leather) *sock*, i.e. footwear, which (in contrast to a boot) was meant to be worn inside (at home, in the temple, etc.), and not outside (on the street). The close connection between the terms sock and shoe is also demonstrated by the Latin word *soccus* (Gr. συκχίς), i.e., a type of low, light shoe (Georges 1918, 2700), in *sock* (English) and *Socke* (German), namely sock.

[9] The publisher of the text (Babinger 1923, 285, n. 224) accurately notes that actually they are not called this (by the Turks), since Dernschwam uses the word *kapcza* unknown in the Turkish language (modern Hungarian *kapca*), which according to Babinger means socks (German *Socken*). Actually the word signifies something which should rather be called footwraps (German *Fußlappen*), i.e., a piece of cloth which is wrapped around the foot. It is a borrowing in Hungarian from Slavic languages, where it can be found as *kopitza, kopititza* and ascends to **kopyto* (hoof) (Zaicz 2006, 345). Dernschwam's clarification shows that he is trying to explain to his potential readers that the "boots" he speaks of are not exactly "boots", despite the fact that they are made of leather. Further on in the text (see the next passage) he once again clarifies explicitly that *instead of socks* (an der strumpffe stat), they wear "boots" (stieffel).

[10] The publisher clarifies the term *gathia* like this: "gathia = gatya, die weiten ungarischen Unterhosen, Pluderhosen" (Babinger 1923, 285, n. 225). *Gatya* is nothing more than a borrowing in Hungarian of the proto-Slavic word **gatja*, which remains in different Slavic languages today as *гащи* [gashti=pants], gacie, raĥe, etc. (Георгиев и др. 1971, 233). The literal translation of Dernschwam's expression "weytte plodertte gathia" is "wide, baggy pants".

Wan er nu an das fwss waschen kompt, zeucht er die papuczsch schuch aus, neczt die stiffel vornen ein wenig vnd sprengt mit der hand etlich tropfen wasser in die papuczsch schuch vnd tritt wider dorein, wie in ainen pantoffel, vnd geht also in die meczith bethen (Babinger 1923, 70).

Translation: Then these same holy people, who know Mohammed by heart, all wear boots reaching to their knees, and over the boots – *papuczsch*, which are wide, strong, shod shoes, deeply cut, so that when one wants to enter, he can [quickly] take them off, as I said above. When he gets to washing his feet, he takes the *papuczsch* off, wets the boots' front slightly and sprinkles a few drops of water in the papuczsch, puts them on again, just like slippers, then goes to pray in the mosque.[11]

[...]

Text: Stiffel, so man iczeduk nennt, tragen sy alle an, wie die menner, roth, plab, braun vnd gelb. Daruber zihen sy nider schuch, wan sy ausgehen, auch roth, gelb, braun ader plab. Die seind mit eysen beschlagen, nennt man paczschma. Die khan man aus vnd an thun, vornen weitter als andere schuech ausgeschnitten, das man leicht dorein tretten mag. Wan sy ins haws khomen, zihen sie di aus, domit sy di koczen ader tebich, darauff sy siczen, nicht vnrain machen (Babinger 1923, 131).

Translation: All [women] wear boots like the men, which are called *iczeduk*,[12] red, blue, brown and yellow. Over them, when they go out [of their homes] they put on low shoes, also red, yellow, brown or blue. They are shod with iron and called *paczschma*.[13] They can be [quickly] put on and taken off, more widely cut in front than other shoes, so that they can be slipped on easily. When they enter the house, they take them off, so that they do not dirty the goatskins and carpets on which they sit.

Aaron Hill[14]

"Their shirts are form'd alike, for Men and Women, open in the Sleeves, which some Men wear near half Yard broad; they make'em of a sort of *Callico*,[15] *Crape* or *Muslin*, without either *Neck* or *Wrist-band*; never suff'ring any Linen to appear when they are dress'd; a pair of Drawers tie upon the Shirt, of the same Stuff, and reaching loosely to they very Ancles; over these they draw their *Britches*, call'd *Shacksheers*[16] *in the Turkish Language*, made of *Scarlet*, or Violet *colour'd Clouth*; and reaching like the former to the *Instep*, where, being gather'd at the bottom commonly three quarters round, they strongly sow 'em to a sort of Leathern *House-shoes*, soft and yellow, and contriv'd exactly

[11] Here Dernschwam is describing *masah*, a specific and disputed form (allowed only in Sunni Islam) of ritual cleaning of the head and feet with water before praying, in which it is allowed (in certain cases) to slightly wet the leather socks instead of the feet (Alimen 2019, 188 – 189).

[12] The publisher of the text cannot determine the meaning of the word and makes the following clarification: "iczeduk, wohl Bildung vom türk. itsch, Inneres, Inwendiges, innerlich, und einem Hauptwort. Vgl. itsch donu, Unterhose" (Babinger 1923, 291, n. 381). The root, which escaped Babinger, is etük/edik/etik, one of the generic Turkic terms for shoe (Bayat 2008, 110; Hasanli-Garibova 2014, 311), and Dernschwam's *iczeduk* (literally, "inner shoe") is nothing more than one of the Turkish words for the leather boots or socks, over which the "outer" shoes, i.e., the papooches (compare also Atik Gürbüz 2017, 51 regarding the transformation into çedik).

[13] This is another word denoting the papooche. The correct identification of the term used by Dernschwam *paczschma* with *bashmaq* (in modern Turkish *paşmak*/*başmak*) was made by the publisher (Babinger 1923, 291).

[14] All Italics are from the original text.

[15] A type of cotton fabric, originating from the city of Calcutta in India.

[16] The word *Shacksheers* (also seen as *Shaksheers*) is undoubtedly used by Hill (like many other English-speaking authors from that period) to translate the Turkish word çakşır, denoting a type of trousers, which are in essence the *gathia* described by Dernschwam. The word still exists today in Bulgarian (cheshiri), Serbian (čakšire) and other Balkan languages.

to the shape of every Foot; these they call *Mests,*[17] which serve *within Doors* while they *sit* or *walk* on their embroidred Carpet; for they leave at entrance into any House their walking slippers or *Papooches*, made with smooth and yellow upper *Leathers*, and the *Sole* extreamly thin, but so well beaten that it will resist the *Dirt* or *Water* in their Streets to admiration, they are made without the smallest Heel, instead of which they use a piece of *Iron* fram'd exactly like a *Horse-shoe*; they are shaped like Women Slippers whith sharp and picked *Toe*, and come not half way up their Instep, so that by the smoothness of the *outside* of the *inner*, and the inside of the *outer Shoes*, I often kick'd 'em off as I was walking in the Streets, nor can a Stranger keep 'em on his Feet till *use* has made 'em easy to his motion.

Another Inconvenience which attends the wearing these above-nam'd Slippers, is the custom they have got of leaving 'em without, like *Womens Clogs*, at every Door they chance to enter, so that *often*, when I have been present at their stately *Visits*, *Feasts*, or *Publick Ceremonies*, coming out amidst a Crowd of People, I have sometimes found my Slippers chang'd, and others, *soil'd*, and not worth wearing, left me in their room, nay very often have been forc'd to walk thro' all the Dirt, with nothing on my Feet but *Mests*, which letting in the wet, were worse than if I had gone home barefooted; *Coaches* are not found in Turkish Cities, as esteem'd an idle Proof of an Effeminate Indulgence.

They ride on Horse-back with a great delight, and wear a sort of *Boots* unable long to keep out Water, they are shap'd at bottom like the *Shooe*'s above describ'd,[18] and made, *but weakly*, of the same *smooth Leather*, reaching to their Knees, and large enough to hold *with ease*, the numerous *Gathers* of their spacious Britches".

Charles White

No portion of Oriental costume admits of so many varieties and subdivisions as that intended for the feet. The articles worn by the male sex, who have adopted the modern dress, are, however, extremely simple. They consist of a pair of thin leather shoes (laptehin) with soft soles, worn in the house, and thick-soled galoshes (kondoora) put on when walking or riding. The latter are left at the foot of stairs when paying visits, or at the door when entering mosques. The former can be slipped off in an instant for ablutions.

Those who adhere to the old costume use, firstly, thin yellow sheepskin boots (mest) with soft soles, to which the shalwar is attached. On going out, they slip on a pair of strong-soled yellow papoosh". Some Turks, not content with this double protection, use a sock of fine black leather (terlik), worn over the mest. But stockings or socks of wool or cotton, now generally introduced, have superseded the terlik.

For riding journeys, heavy, loose boots, of thick, black leather (tchisma) are worn. They are also employed by Armenians and Jews during winter, and are extremely serviceable to those compelled to wade through the ill-paved and muddy streets. The soles are shod with iron cramps, to prevent falling upon the slanting and slippery pavement. Without these, or some similar covering, walking in Pera would be nearly impossible.

[17] Mest is a (Turkish) word, which in practice means the same as the *kapcza* and *iczeduk* mentioned by Dernschwam. It entered a number of other Balkan languages. Мéстьове (Георгиев 2012, 760), мéсте (I would like to thank M. Koleva-Zvancharova for her friendly referral to this variant of the word), мéства (Пешикан 1984, 425) and others, are the signifiers for the soft high leather shoes or socks, worn directly on the feet, over which the papooches are slipped on. The manufacturers of this type of footwear are called *mestçi* (Koleva-Zvancharova 2015, 664).

[18] It is meant that they also have leather soles, shod with heel irons.

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ПРИНОС КЪМ ПРОУЧВАНЕТО НА НАЛЧЕТАТА ОТ ДНЕШНИТЕ БЪЛГАРСКИ ЗЕМИ

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РЕЗЮМЕ

Според общоприетото мнение подковите за обувки се появяват в днешните български земи около 1200 г. сл. Хр. Те са считани за обичайни за зрялото средновековие предмети, които продължават да се използват през османската епоха, та чак до наши дни. Смята се, че са били прикрепвани към подметките на „груби" обувки, нерядко интерпретирани като „войнишки". Внимателното изследване на контекстите, в които се откриват, обаче налага сериозна ревизия на досегашните възгледи.

Забележително е, че подковите за обувки не се срещат в некрополи, отнасящи се към XIII – XIV в. Контекстът на находките, откривани в селища, съществували по същото време, най-често не е добре документиран. Освен това огромната част от въпросните селища продължават съществуването си и в османската епоха. Малкото добре документирани контексти в селищна среда, в които се намират подкови за обувки, не могат да бъдат датирани преди самия край на XIV в. и дори по-скоро преди първата половина на XV в.

От друга страна подковите за обувки са често срещани в некрополи от османската епоха. Наличните данни подсказват, че те са едни от предметите, които се появяват в днешните български земи по време на османското завоевание като резултат от широкото разпространение – сред всички групи и слоеве на населението, а не само сред войската – на специфични ориенталски обувки и ботуши: папуци и чизми. Оскъдните данни от други балкански страни, например Гърция и Сърбия, не противоречат на тази теза. С оглед на това не е изненадващо, че на български подковата за обувка се нарича „налче", което е директна заемка от турското ѝ означение *nalça/na'lçe*.

Ключови думи: подкови за обувки, обувки, Средновековие, османска епоха, България, Балкански полуостров

ДИСКУСИИ/DISCUSSIONS

НАДПИСИТЕ ОТ НАДСЕНТМИКЛОШ И ТЯХНАТА КУЛТУРНО-ИСТОРИЧЕСКА ХАРАКТЕРИСТИКА[1]

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ABSTRACT

The article aims to briefly overview the three types of inscriptions on the vessels of the Nagyszentmiklós treasure (NSM) as an uniform evidence of the existence of specific religious beliefs in the Middle Danube area in the 8th – 9th c. The emphasis of the study is on deciphering the runiform inscriptions, which the author considers as cryptography of sacred concepts and names of a Christian community with Gnostic conceptions and ideas. At the basis of their decoding he placed the decipherment of individual runiform graphemes and short texts in related written monuments from the Lower Danube area (Pliska, Murfatlar, etc.). The concepts and names decoded (Tetragrammatôn, Hexagrammatôn, Eôn, Five/the Fifth Eon, Hiueh, Eueh and others) allow establishing that they are cryptograms, attested in the ideas about the God of Gnostic Christians in the first centuries AD in the Middle East. This is evidenced by the use of specific Semitic and Greek graphemes in the three types of inscriptions from the treasure. Their use on vessels of precious metal in the Early Middle Ages is part of these beliefs and is evidence of their stability and transfer to the Middle and Lower Danube area by adherents of Christian Gnosis, most likely the doctrine of the so-called Valentinians.

The link of repetitive or similar cryptograms and Greek-language texts to vessels of identical or similar shape and similar use allows those marked with them to be distributed in "sets" that met the cult and ritual needs of different categories of believers in Christian Gnosis ("pneumatikoi", "psyxikoi" and "hylics").

Finally, the author tries to highlight cultural and historical traces of the presence of a population with similar ideas in the region of the Middle Danube. Although fragmentary and hypothetical, they allow us assuming that the so-called Danube runic script was in fact a relic of the life of Gnostic-Christian sects in Central and Southeastern Europe in the Early Middle Ages.

Key words: Nagyszentmiklós treasure, inscriptions (Turkic, grant, quasi-Greek, and runiform), cryptography, Gnosticism, sect of the Valentinians, Edem, Danube River, "heavenly river" Fusôn (Feissôn), Pseudo-Caesar, "Fusônitai" and "Ripianoi", Einhard, Abodrites Praedenecenti

[1] Поради специфичната тема и съдържание, статията не получи еднозначни препоръки и коментари от страна на рецензентите си. Редакционната колегия на „Приноси към българската археология" взе решение да публикува статията в оригиналния вид, предоставен от автора, и призовава не само рецензентите, но и всички специалисти, имащи отношение по темата, да се включат в дискусията. Съответните мнения, получени в редакцията на списанието, ще бъдат публикувани в следващите броеве според реда на постъпването им.

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Проучванията върху съкровището от Надсентмиклош (НСМ) имат двувековна история, съпроводена с по-малко или повече задълбочени разисквания върху надписите от неговите съдове (подробно у Göbl, Róna-Tas 1995, 9 – 20). През 2017 г. се навършиха 100 години от публикацията на датския учен Вилхелм Томсен, която слага начало на сериозните разисквания върху характера и езика на надписите (Thomsen 1917, 17 – 18). В резултат на тях днес е налице значителен напредък, въпреки че общоприето разчитане все още липсва (Róna-Tas 2002, 120 – 129).

Задачата на настоящата работа е да допринесе за това, като акцентира върху решение, което разглежда всички надписи като автентично и единно свидетелство за културната принадлежност на съдовете и тяхната функция в специфични религиозни представи от Средното Подунавие през VIII – IX в. (обр. 1).

В езиково отношение надписите, както е известно, са три вида:

- Тюркоезичен надпис с гръцки букви върху дъното на съд № 21;

- Гръцки надписи с особени гръцки и неразбираеми букви върху дъното на съдове № 9 и 10;

- Руноподобни надписи (runiform inscriptions, Kerbshrifts) върху стените или дъната на 14 от 23-те съда (№ 2, 3 – 6, 8 – 10, 12, 15 – 17, 22, 23). Върху шест от съдовете (№ 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 12) те са по един, а върху останалите са по два и само кана № 6 е с три отделни, съвсем кратки надписа. Върху два съда (№ 2 и 17) са установени изолирани знаци или лигатурни съчетания.

Без надписи са осем съда: № 1, 7, 11, 13, 14 и 18 – 20.

Най-сериозен е напредъкът в разчитане на тюркоезичния надпис от съд № 21. Поради това тук ще добавим наши бележки по него.

1. Тюркоезичен надпис с гръцки букви върху дъното на съд № 21 (обр. 2a, b)

Надписът е гравиран с унциални букви около кръгъл медальон с изображение на гръцки кръст. Съдът представлява плитка купа с височина на стените около 2,5 см и диаметър 12 см, вместимост 21 cl и тежи 212 г. Той е почти еднакъв с № 20, който е без надпис и тежи 179 г. Неговата украса е също на дъното, но от два медальона, отвътре и отвън, заети от изображения на грифони, докато при № 21 подобно изображение има само на външната страна (обр. 2a). По-голямата му тежест (с около 30 г) се дължи изглежда на допълнителното апликиране на медальона с кръст отвътре, както и на двойния фриз при устието (Zhuber-Okrog 2017, 26; Каталог 2017, № 21, 150 – 155).

Разискванията върху надписа имат добре известна история (Moravczik 1958, 18, 31, 34, 93, 307; Németh 1971, 11 – 16, 36; Michailov 1986, 53 – 69; Göbl, Róna-Tas 1995, 18 – 19; Róna-Tas 2002, 128 – 129; Славова 2010, 86 и сл.; Станилов 2017, 39 – 57; Николов 2017, 58 – 76 и цит. в тях съчинения). Първото обосновано разчитане дължим на В. Томсен: *„Жупанът Буила завърши чашата, (тази) чаша, която жупан Бутаул беше приспособил да бъде провесвана“* (Thomsen 1917, 1 – 28; Thomsen 1922, 325 – 353). Българският филолог Ст. Младенов дава сходен, но свой прочит: *„Жупанът Буила направи (вряза, изписа) борбата (състезанието,* от digit, džigit), *жупанът Бутаул направи (вряза, изписа) кръста отвътре“* (Младенов 1926а, Младенов 1926б). Последният познат ни опит за прочит е на унгарския тюрколог А. Рона-Таш (Róna-Tas 2002, 128 – 129). Транскрибиран на латиница, неговият прочит е:

BUJLA Z(Ž)U(OA)PAN TÄS(S)I DÜG(J/DŽ)ETÖG(J/DŽ)ETÖG(J/DŽ)I
BUTAUL Z(Ž)U(OA)PAN TAGROG(J/DŽ)I ITS(CS)IG(J/DŽ)I TÄS(S)I

В превод първата част гласи: *„Чашата на Буйла жупан, завършена* (или: *Буйла жупан завърши тази чаша“.* По втората част авторът проявява колебание, като е склонен да осмисли ITSIGI с тюркските думи іč „пия“ и ičik „побеждавам, надвивам“ и да свърже произведената



Обр. 1. Съдовете от златното съкровище от Надсентмиклош (по Kovács 2002, 2)
Fig. 1. The vessels from the Nagyszentmiklós treasure (after Kovács 2002, 2)



Обр. 2. Съд № 21: a. Общ изглед, отвън; b. Медальон с кръст и околовръстен надпис с гръцки букви отвътре (по Gschwantler 2002, 41)
Fig. 2. Vessel No. 21: a. A general view from the outside; b. On the inside – a medallion with a cross, surrounded by an inscription with Greek letters (after Gschwantler 2002, 41)

от жупана Бутаул чаша с негова победа над жупана Буйла. Но той не е убеден напълно в подобно осмисляне и го нарежда наред с прочита на други автори.

Извършеното от тюрколозите позволява да се заключи, че надписът съдържа две допълващи се части, които се отнасят до изработката и последвала украса на съда, извършени съответно от жупаните Буйла и Бутаул. Първият от тях е изготвил чашата (у Д. Немет – dügytögi

'his melting'), „отлял" съда и го украсил, докато вторият го украсил само отвътре, заедно с кръста и надписа, както прие още Ст. Младенов.

Ключови в осмислянето на надписа са изразите TESI DYGETOIGI и TAGROGI ITZIGH TAISI.[2] Според нас не е изключено в първия от тях да влиза древно, нетюркско понятие за съд с ритуални функции DYG-, употребено като *terminus technicus*, който подчертава сакралната функция на въпросния „тас". Повод за това разбиране е съчетанието DUG BURZI от заклинание върху два шумерски сакрални съда за светена вода с посветителен характер, където думата DUG означава „съд" за подобен ритуал (Емельянов 1998, 47). В такъв случай свързаното с него понятие – ETOIGI е наистина глаголна форма (от et „правя, произвеждам, почитам"), която се отнася и до съд и изобщо всичко правено с инструмент (Севортян 1974, 312). В този смисъл предприетото от жупана Буйла може да се сведе до превръщане на „таса" в ритуален съд. Втората част с името на жупана Бутаул се отнася, както приемат повечето тюрколози, до украсата във вътрешността на съда, постигната посредством изображение на равнораменен кръст, ограден с пищна плетеница и самия надпис. Думата ITSIGI там изглежда възпроизвежда архаично производно от тюркския глагол іč „пия, изпивам" – ičgü ~ ičkü, което се отнася най-вече за напитка с целебна сила (Севортян 1974, 391). Думата TAGROGI там е също тюркска, с корен tag- и изглежда да е употребена в значение на „долна част, дъно на съд" (Мурзаев 1984, 538), така че визира наистина украсата с кръста.

Надписът е *ex votum* от името на две лица. Дарът на жупана Буйла се изразява в поръчка за изработка на самия съд, докато този на жупана Бутаул се отнася за украсата с кръст, чрез който съдът придобива християнски характер и възможност за употреба в ритуали, свързани с християнска богослужебна практика. Надписът обединява посвещенията и на двамата дарители, така че те биха могли да са водачи в общност от християни, които практикуват гръцко писмо, но говорят на тюркски език.

Това поставя по нов начин въпроса за значението, вложено в титлата ZOAPAN. А. Рона-Таш продължава да я приема за "possible explanation for the curious Greek spelling" на славянската по произход титла „жупан" (Róna-Tas 2002, 128). Нейният произход и точен смисъл обаче са недостатъчно изяснени от езиковедите (Фасмер 1986 – 1987, 65 – 66; Славова 2010, 86 – 87). По-обосновано е, с оглед на тюркоезичния характер на надписа, мнението на К. Менгес, тя да се обяснява като „старейшина" на общност, отколкото като „началник на област". Към това води и съдържанието на надписа и характера на съда. За нас е допустимо титлата с надпис ζο/ωαπάν да е съзнателно трансформирана в епитет пред имената на двамата посветители, които изглежда са имали отговорни функции не само при употреба на съд № 21, но и на останалите в съкровището.[3]

2. Гръцки надпис с особени гръцки и други букви (обр. 3a, b)

Той фигурира единствено върху съдове № 9 и 10, които са аналогични по форма и украса на съдове № 20 и 21. Надписът върху тях е еднообразен и както при № 21 се разгъва около

[2] Различията в правописа на еднаквите думи в надписа се дължат вероятно на стремежа буквите да запълнят кръговото поле. За втория израз е било предвидено повече от половината място и се е наложило гравьорът да въведе в ZOAPAN „омега" вместо „омикрон", а в TESI да изпише "Е", посредством диграмата "AI". Въпреки това, от двете страни на кръстовидната инвокация остават нееднакви интервали, а самата тя е с издължено хоризонтално рамо, което би могло да е и съзнателно, тъй като се забелязва и при кръстовидните инвокации и в руноподобния надпис върху съд № 8.

[3] В такъв случай ZO/ΩΑΠΑΝ може да е двусъставно понятие, които би означавало „изцяло (напълно) живият", т. е. „осветеният" и да се отнася до Буйла и Бутаул като водачи в религиозна общност. Към подобна интерпретация на грецизираната светска титла/звание води и характерът на руноподобните надписи.

a



b



Обр. 3. Съд № 9: a. Медальон с цъфнал кръст и квазигръцки надпис (по Gschwantler 2002, 28); b. Факсимиле на надписа (по Fehér 1950, 36)

Fig. 3. Vessel No. 9: a. A medallion with a cross whose arms end with three-lobed leaves and a quasi-Greek inscription (after Gschwantler 2002, 28); b. A facsimile of the inscription (after Fehér 1950, 36)

кръст отвътре на техните дъна. Сходството между трите съда издава тяхна идейна и функционална близост.

Съдове № 9 и 10 са също „тасове“ (купи) с токи за окачване, но се приемат за блюда или чаши, въпреки че са малко по-големи от № 20 и 21. Техният диаметър е съответно 17,7 и 14,6 см, а максималната им дълбочина е 3,4 см и разполагат с двойно по-голяма вместимост – до 43 cl. Надписът е гравиран, както впрочем и руноподобният, там. Възможно е те да са нанесени в различно време, но не може да се изключва и тяхна едновременност.

Различията в гръкоезичния надпис върху съдове № 9 и 10 са в детайлите. Неговото разчитане предизвиква *„не по-малко противоречиви четения и тълкувания от тюркския надпис с гръцки букви върху тас № 21“* (Ждраков, Делева 2000, 62 – 63). Заключението на австрийски специалисти е, че *„макар и да е написан на гръцки език и с гръцки букви, неговото тълкуване досега не се е увенчало с успех“* (Каталог 2017, 118).

Надписът започва (и завършва) със ставрограма и се чете от ляво надясно. Буквите са полуунциални маюскули, съставени от специфично разкривени хасти с несиметрични краища и прекъсвания. За последния е отредено повече място и под и над него са поставени по един малък знак, а пред тях и по една средно голяма буква (обр. 3a, b). Маюскулите са безспорно гръцки, но притежават елементи, които са чужди на това писмо. Те са 22 на брой, но последната може да бъде приета за „сигма“ само условно. Тя заслужава особено внимание. Подобно нейно начертание се среща в първобългарския надпис № 54, но издължената хоризонтална линия тук насочва към неин негръцки прототип. Макар и отворена надясно, тя наподобява арамейската “wâw”, която често играе роля на теоним в семитските писмени системи и се явява предшественик на архаичната гръцка „дигама“ и класическия „ипсилон“ (Dupont-Sommer 1946, tabl. IV). Така че сложната по състав и заемаща най-голямо място буква е „автентичен“ образ на т. нар. Знак-инсигния, когото гностиците определят като Épisémon, който изразява „двойната“ (човешката и божествена) природа на Иисус Христос в качеството му на Висш Еон (Dupont-Sommer 1946, 55 – 57). Заложената в него догматика има основно място в гнос-

тико-християнските представи през Античността и Средновековието и, както ще се убедим, играе основна роля в т. нар. руноподобни надписи на Среден, а и на Долен, Дунав.

„Окаченáта“ под нея буква е обърната наопаки и наляво гръцка дигама. В руноподобните надписи тя е използвана в 2 варианта и с промени в посоката и графиката си самостоятелно 18 пъти и още в няколко случая – в лигатури (обр. 4а). Това издава нейното особено място в надписите от НСМ и е важно указание за наличие на общи идеи между тях. Раздвояването на единия от краищата на хастите при “A” и “N” в особения гръцки надпис изглежда да е резултат от стремеж на автора те да се доближат до образа на гръцката дигама или ипсилон, а отвореното “O” до арамейската “wâw” (обр. 3а).

Пред големия сигмаподобен знак стоят титулованите маюскули: “AE”, а след тях и друга двойка – “IC”. В тях специалистите разчитат съкращение на понятието „свети“ и сакралното име „Иисус“, макар да е без титул. Автентичният сирийски знак-инсигния на Бога ги следва и това затвърждава убеждението, че става въпрос за гностико-християнската представа за Иисус като Висш Еон в Плеромата (Универса). Ставрограмата след тях е закономерна и може да се приеме и за „хризмон“, който изразява името „Христос“, както се дешифрира и в съчетание “G” от руноподобните текстове (обр. 7). Тук обаче той е също лигатура, но между кръст с издължено, хоризонтално, вилообразно раздвоено рамо, а „ро“ е с незатворена петлица, която наподобява начертания на сакралната “wâw” (Dupont-Sommer 1946, pl. IV) (обр. 3).

В текста от маюскули изследователите четат отдавна две гръцки думи с християнски характер: ὕδατος и ἀνάπαυσον. Излизайки от това, проф. Ст. Младенов видя в надписа парафраза на текста от псалом LXV:12 и предложи трибуквеното съчетание пред тях да се приеме за предлога διὰ. В малките букви той видя гръцката дума pai(d)ion, „дете“. Така българският езиковед коригира четенето на Бруно Кайл: „*Христос с вода човеците спасил, като изпратил новия Свети Дух*“ и приема, че текстът гласи: „*Детето (отрока, раба), чрез водата упокой, чрез мир*“ (Младенов 1926а, 375 – 376).

По-късно се появиха и четения на Г. Векони, Ст. Михайлов, З. Ждраков с А. Делева и други, но всички те отново не дават обяснение и подценяват особеностите на маюскулните, а и на малоформатните букви.

Маюскулите само наподобяват гръцките и фактически ги преиначават, придавайки им облик, който в редица случаи може да се търси в сирийската и коптска писменост. При това е по-правилно да приемаме надписа за „квазигръцки“.

За отбелязване е, че „коптски“ гръцки унциални букви са използвани, макар и изолирано, в някои от първобългарските надписи от първата половина на IX в., а също и в гръкоезични паметници от християнския период в България (Бешевлиев 1979, 37 и сл., № 7а, 31, 37, 48, 50, 51, 54, 59, 60).

Съзнателното преиначаване на гръцките букви като семитски може да се обясни със стремеж те да се доближат по облик до автентичната, според близкоизточни гностически схващания истински божествена по произход, писменост – сирийската. По тази причина и последната от 22-те букви в надписа е представена в близък до нейния автентичен (сигмаподобен) вид на най-важната от тях – “wâw”, а общият им брой е съобразен с този на сирийската азбука.

След тези разяснения можем да предложим наше осмисляне на надписа. Неговият език е гръцки. Чете се от ляво надясно след ставрограмата, която е лигатура между кръст и „ро“ и така следва да се схваща за 23-ти и 24-ти маюскулен знак. С тях употребените в надписа големи графеми достигат броя на буквите в гръцката азбука, представена тук като вариант на сирийската и вследствие на това също с „божествен“ произход.

Най-трудни за прочит и осмисляне са „малоформатните“ букви. Тези отляво на ставрограмата са в директна връзка със Знака-еписемон (“wâw”). Това доказва окаченáта наопаки дигама. Тази

над него остава засега неидентифицирана. Средно големите и поставени една над друга букви "O"[4] и "N" представят съкратено формулата-епитет ΟΩΝ със значение „Сущий, Същинският" (Георгиев 1999a, 90 и сл.). Това съчетание се чете, както ще се убедим, и в руноподобния надпис от съд № 8. Шестте „малоформатни" букви отдясно на ставрограмата и над съседния „инициал" – "Δ"[5] са вместени там, за да продължат смисъла на текста отляво. С други думи – да пояснят кому Иисус Христос ще донесе покой чрез вода. Според нас те представят съчетанието ΧΗΛΙ LON. В него се долавя основното понятие, с което гностиците валентиниани означават третата, най-низша категория почитатели на Гносиса, т. нар. Хилици, т. е. „телесните" (материалните) (Leclercq 1907b, col. 1334; Георгиев 1999a, 98, бел. 30).[6] Прочитът, който предлагаме, гласи:

„*Светият Иисус, Wâw (=Знакът-еписемон). Христос, чрез (силата на) Водата, (даде) покой на* посветените (?) Хилици".

Изглежда, че с помощта на съдове № 9 и 10 е бил извършван ритуал на посвещение на поелите пътя към Гносиса и по-точно тяхното преминаване в категорията на т. нар. „душевни" (подробно у Стефанов 2008, 267 и сл.).

3. Т. нар. руноподобни надписи (Kerbschrifts, runiform inscriptions) (обр. 4 – 16)

Общи наблюдения. Те са врязвани само върху външни повърхности на 14 от съдовете (Göbl, Róna-Tas 1995, 25 sqq., Taf. I – IV, VI – VII) (обр. 4, обр. 5). Броят на „текстовете", включително и отделните знаци, е 15, но тъй като се повтарят по няколко пъти, той е по-голям.[7] Според авторите на палеографското изследване от 1995 г. руноподобните текстове и знаци образуват 17 съчетания, които те оценяват като "Wort". Р. Гьобл ги обозначава с букви от латинската азбука, от "A" до "T" и номерация с арабски цифри, докато тази на съдовете е с римски цифри, които ние тук преобразуваме в арабски. Има основания да допускаме, че общият брой на отделните съчетания, въпреки че някои от тях са се повтаряли от два до пет пъти, са били 30 или малко повече.[8] Така отново се изправяме пред поредното доказателство за съзнателно търсен брой „елементи" в тях.

Отделните съчетания имат от 1 до 7 знака. Надписи № 2, 3 и 5 са съставени от по 9 знака, но най-дълъг е № 1. В него са използвани общо 20 графеми (обр. 4, обр. 8b).

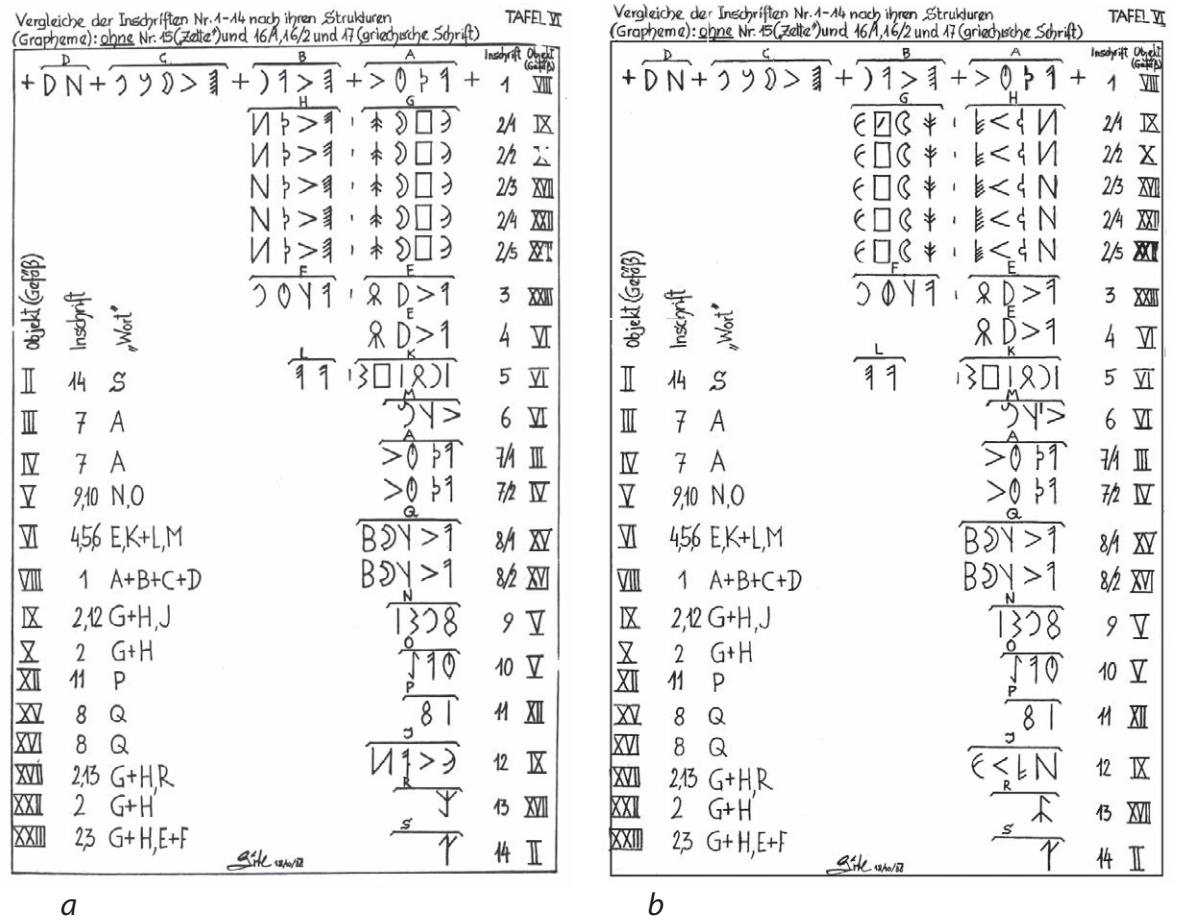
[4] Всъщност незатвореното му очертание допуска това да е „омега", изправена, както е и знакът за тази буква в съчетание "H" от руноподобните текстове. За заменяемостта на двете "O" в Св. Писание, вж. Dupont-Sommer 1946, 17 – 18.

[5] С тях общият брой на всички употребени в надписа символи нараства на общо 30 и в това също е бил търсен смисъл, който съответства на определен тип гностически схващания в областта на буквената мистика.

[6] Понятието има гръцки произход, от думата ὕλη „вещество", в Кирило-Методиевската традиция – ′ѓромадꙗ′, а в Симеоновия изборник – вещть, където предава гр. στοιχεῖα „стихия, първоелемент, основна идея", вж. у Колесов 1976, 260 – 264.

[7] Надпис № 2 е представен пет пъти; надписи № 7, 8 и 15 – по два пъти, както и необозначеният в таблицата на Р. Гьобл знак "D"от кана № 2.

[8] Надпис № 1 – **4**; № 2 – **10**; № 3 – **2**, № 4 – **1**; № 5 – **2**; № 6 – **1**; № 7 – **2**; № 8 – **2**; № 9 – **1**; № 10 – **1**; № 11 – **1**; № 12 – **1**; № 13 – **1** и № 14 – **1**, № 15 върху кана № 2 – **1** (вж. за това по-долу), **всичко 30 (тридесет)**. Върху кана № 2 обаче има две двойки еднообразни означения (вж. за тях по-долу). Общият брой нараства на 34, а ако допуснем, че липсващата кана № 6а е имала, както и № 6, още 4 съчетания, техният брой нараства на 38. По всяка вероятност обаче желаната от криптографите обща бройка означения е била по-малка. Например, съчетания "N" и "O" се броят за надписи № 9 и 10, но в действителност са били възприемани за един, тъй като представят акрофонично подредения Хептаграматон. Освен това не знаем дали надпис № 15, както и неотчетената досега двойка други знаци от кана № 2, не са били броени за един, или пък изобщо не са били зачетени, поради покъсно врязване. Не сме сигурни и какви съчетания е имало върху допускания съд № 6а и дали пък не е бил без такива, както е чаша № 11.

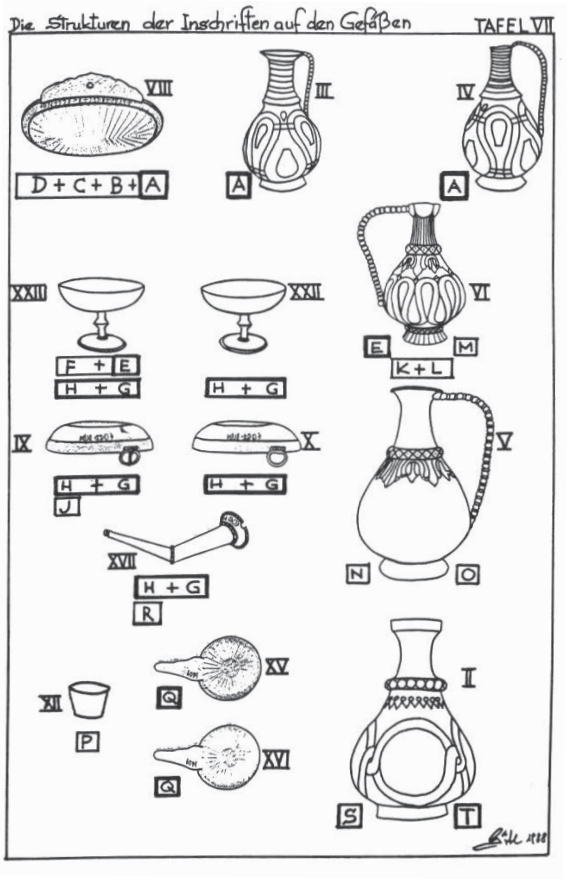


Обр. 4. Таблица с разположение и означение на руноподобни надписи № 1 – 14 с техните съчетания (A – S): a. По Göbl, Róna-Tas 1995, Tafel VI; b. С корекции на П. Георгиев по посоката на разчитане на съчетания G – H, J и R

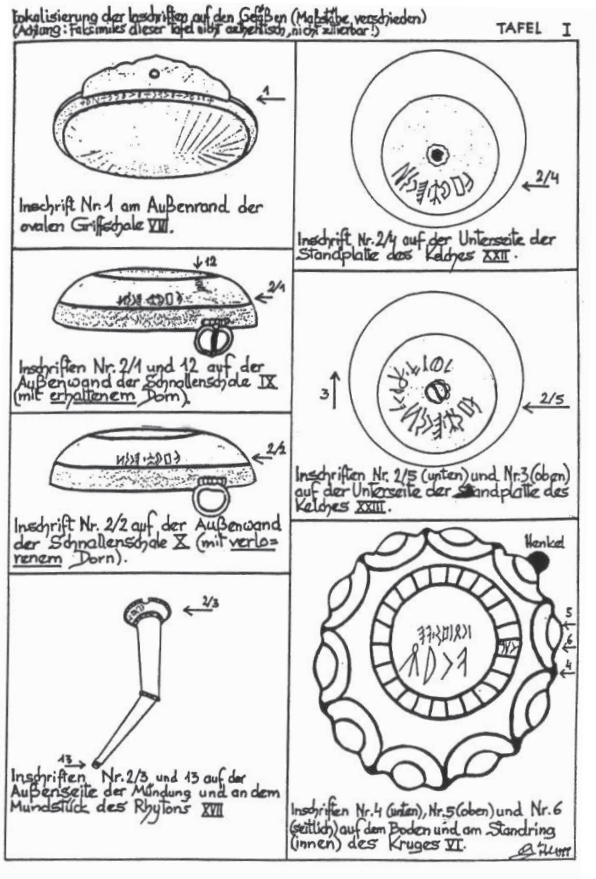
Fig. 4. A table with position and denotation of runiform inscriptions Nos. 1 – 14 and their combinations (A – S): a. After Göbl, Róna-Tas 1995, Tafel VI; b. With corrections by P. Georgiev in the direction of reading of the combinations G – H, J and R

Броят на графемите във всички руноподобни съчетания са, според наблюденията на Р. Гьобл, общо 24, но освен тях той отбелязва още 2, които определя като Furter Rules: № 25 като разделител между думи от надписи № 2, 3 и 5 и № 26 – кръст, като въведение, ключ или разделител (Róna-Tas 2002, Table Nr. 2, Table Nr. 3) (обр. 6а). Но графема № 21 не е знак във вид на "B", а съставена от две отделни (№ 11 и 13), въпреки своята свързаност и заобляне на „петлиците" на втората. Така че броят им остава 25. В таблицата обаче липсват двете „пиктограми" (т. нар. "Tents") от кана № 2 (надпис № 15), а знак № 4 е в два варианта. Подобен изглежда е случаят и с графема № 19, която е лигатура между две букви, но втората от тях е на практика в два графични образа. Знак № 5 е всъщност в две посоки и има по няколко варианта. В два графични варианта са и № 2 и № 10. Така че, въпреки някои колебания, можем да приемем, че броят на използваните знаци и лигатури достига 32 или 33 (Георгиев 2004, 289 – 298, спец. 293) (обр. 7). Търсенето на тази бройка изглежда е накарало авторите на съчетанията да използват варианти на графеми с еднакво фонетично или смислово значение.

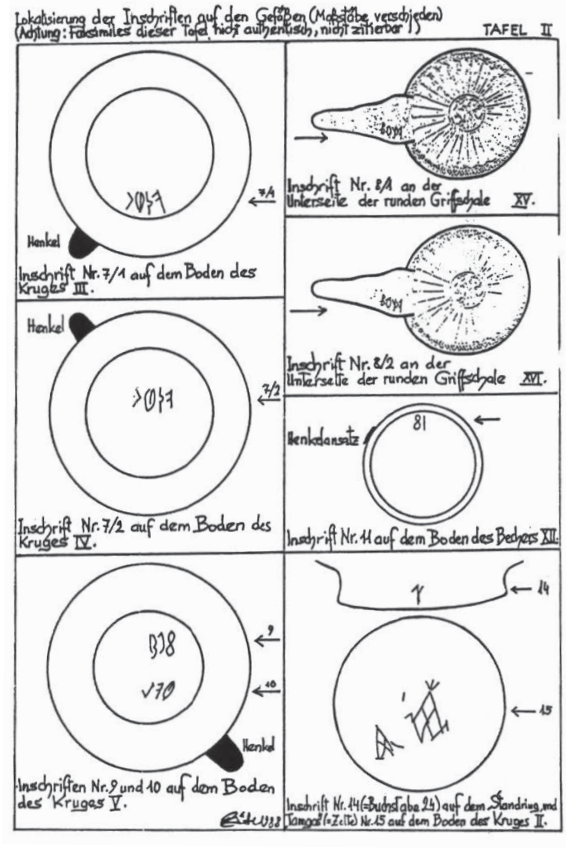
Другото наше уточнение се отнася за посоката на четене. В повечето случаи тя е от ляво надясно, а не задължително обратно, както приемат „по традиция" Р. Гьобл и А. Рона-Таш (Göbl, Róna-Tas 1995, Taf. III, Taf. VII) (обр. 4а). Това се вижда от мястото, което заемат руноподобните надписи върху съдовете (обр. 5а – с). Всички те, без изключение, са нанесени



a



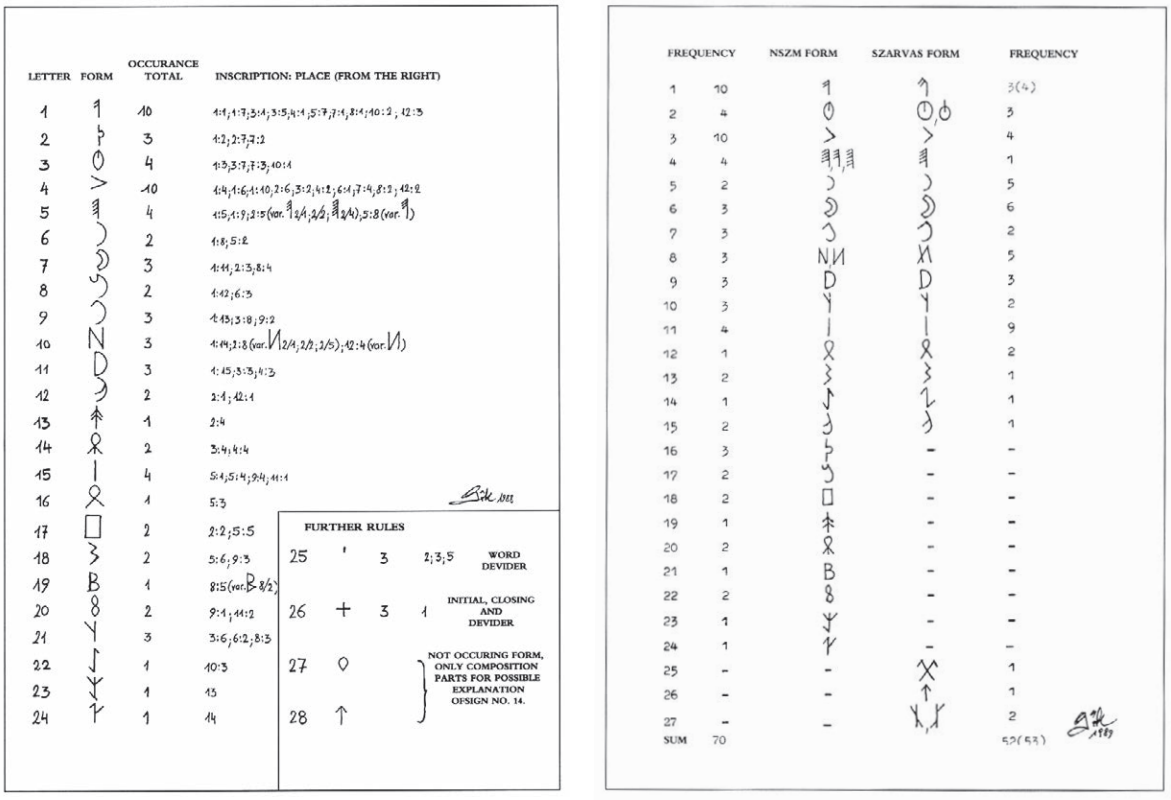
b



c

Обр. 5а – с. Разположение на съчетания A – T върху съдовете (по Göbl, Róna-Tas 1995, Tafel I, Tafel II, Tafel VII)

Fig. 5a – c. Position of combinations A – T on the vessels (after Göbl, Róna-Tas 1995, Tafel I, Tafel II, Tafel VII)



a *b*

Обр. 6. Таблици на руноподобните графеми: a. По Göbl, Róna-Tas 1995, Taf. VIII и Róna-Tas 2002, Table Nos. 1 and 2; b. Сравнителна таблица на графемите от НСМ и Сарваш (по Göbl, Róna-Tas 1995, Taf. XXII; Róna-Tas 2002, Table No. 2)

Fig. 6. Tables of the runiform graphemes: a. After Göbl, Róna-Tas 1995, Taf. VIII and Róna-Tas 2002, Table Nos. 1 and 2; b. Comparative table of the graphemes from NSM and Szarvas (after Göbl, Róna-Tas 1995, Taf. XXII; Róna-Tas 2002, Table No. 2)

върху външни повърхности (стени, дъно и дръжки), така че да бъдат виждани по-скоро от тези, които си служат с тях, а не от тези, на които са поднасяни. Другите два вида надписи от съкровището са изписани във вътрешността им, кръгово и по посока на часовниковата стрелка (обр. 2, обр. 3). Така че е по-резонно, в името на идеята за общото им използване, да допускаме отново прочит от ляво надясно. При съд № 8 например четирите съчетания (“A – D”) са „скрити“ под неговата дръжка и в рамките на околоръстния декоративен фриз (обр. 8). В подкрепа на неговото нанасяне и четене от ляво надясно свидетелства ориентацията на онези от графемите, които имат съответствия в латинското, гръцкото или семитското писмо (“D”, “N”, “Hē”). Всички те са „обърнати“ надясно. За четене от ляво надясно свидетелстват съчетанията, представящи различни комбинации от седемте гласни в гръцката азбука (обр. 5, обр. 11, обр. 13).

Това не означава, че трябва да изключваме прочит и в обратна посока, както при семитските писмени системи, или и в двете посоки, както ще отбележим на съответните места. Надписът под гърловината на ритона (№ 17) например е положен така, че може да се чете от ляво надясно само, ако допуснем, че е бил нанесен в обратно на неговото естествено изправено положение, а не от гледната точка на пиещия от него (обр. 10b). Както посочихме вече, става въпрос за тайнопис, който не е бил разбираем за всички и поради това е бил поставян на места, видими изключително от служещите си със съдовете, например под дръжките или на дъната. Красноречив пример за това са съчетанията върху поставката на чашите със столчета (бокали) № 22 и 23 (обр. 5, обр. 14).

№	фонема	графема	срещу №
	ГЛАСНИ		
1	алфа (alfa)	I	1,12,15,16
2	— " —	Y	6,15,16
3	— " —	ı	5,6
4	епсилон (epsilon)	<	9,10,17,22,23
5	— " —	>	3,4,6,8,15,16,23
6	— " —	⋛	5,6
7	— " —	3	15,16
8	— " —	)	6,8,23
9	ета (eta)	⌒	5,8
10	— " —	⋑	8,15,16
11	йота (iota)	⋎	6,8
12	— " —	⋛	5,12
13	омикрон (omikron)	⌄	5
14	ипсилон (ypsilon)	⋔	5,6,8,15,16,23
15	— " —	□	6
16	— " —	⋇	6
17	омега (omega)	⌄	9
18	— " —	⋗	2,6,8,23
19	— " —	⋒	3,4,5,8,23
20	— " —	⌄	9,10,17,22,23
	СЪГЛАСНИ		
21	вита(v)=ть (beta)	⋔	8
22	— " —	⋑	8
23	ни (ni)	⋀	9,10,23
24	— " —	N	8,17,22
25	— " —	⋗	3,4,8
26	— " —	⋇	6,23
27	— " —	⋎	23
28	хе he	⋛	8
	ПОНЯТИЯ		
29	wαw еписсемон	∈	9,10,17,22,23
30	"името" (το Όnoma)	□	9,10,17,22,23
31	тъсеъышен (ypsistos)	⋐	9,10,17,22,23
32	⋇ (исусос) Ψ=hi+Υ=υho	Ψ	9,10,17,22,23
33	Пет/ият"	⋐	9,10,17,22,23
34	Нун (Еот) Noun ex	N	2
35	Нун° Noun°	⋇	2
36	тъсеъышен ypsistos(?)	⋏	17
37	"Бог"	⋋	8
	ПУНКТУАЦИЯ		
38	раздълител на теории	⋋	8
39	раздълител на съчетания	I	3,6,9,10,17,22,23

Обр. 7. Фонетично, смислово и пунктуационно значение на графемите в руноподобните надписи от НСМ (Автор: П. Георгиев)

Fig. 7. Phonetic, semantic and punctuational meaning of the graphemes in the runiform inscriptions of NSM (Author: P. Georgiev)

В основата на нашето разчитане е дешифрирането на руноподобните графеми върху седемлъчевата розета-печат от Плиска (Georgiev 1995, 547 – 555) (обр. 17), на някои надписи от скалния манастир при Басараби/Мурфатлар в Северна Добруджа, Румъния (Георгиев 1996а, 188 – 193; Георгиев 1997, 96 – 109; Georgiev 2004, 425 – 432), керамичния семантерий от Комарево, Провадийско (Георгиев 2012а, 163 – 173) и наблюдения върху други паметници на Първото българско царство (Георгиев 2007, 125 – 140). Прилагането на подхода в дешифрирането на „долнодунавското" руноподобно писмо спрямо „среднодунавското" от НСМ даде убедителни резултати и позволи да се установи, че неговите Kerbschrifts (runiform inscriptions) не са друго, освен изразени с по-различни или същите графеми варианти на гностически тайнопис (Георгиев 2004, 289 – 298).

Дешифриране на отделните знаци и съчетания. Започваме с идентификация на съчетанията, които са поредици от гласни в гръцката азбука, както е обичайно в гностическия тайнопис. Седемте акрофонично подредени вокала **A E H I O Y Ω** са гравирани на дъното на кана № 5 (обр. 5, обр. 11) (Каталог 2017, 100). Там те са нанесени в два реда и поради това Р. Гьобл ги приема за отделни съчетания ("N" и "O") (обр. 4а). Нанесени са посредством плитко гравиране. В буквената мистика и гностическата литература т. нар. **Heptagrammatôn** се приема за пълен запис на „непроизносимото" „**Име Божие**".



a



b

Обр. 8. Овален съд № 8 (по Gschwantler 2002, 26 – 27): a. Общ изглед; b. Руноподобен надпис № 1 (съчетания D – A) (надпис № 1) с текст: „Бог (O)ÔN (=Сущий), Бог HIYEX, Бог EYEX, EÔN Y(psistos) (=Всевишен) Бог"

Fig. 8. Oval vessel No. 8 (after Gschwantler 2002, 26 – 27): a. General view; b. Runiform inscription No. 1 (combinations D – A) (inscription No. 1) with text: "God (O)ÔN (=True God), God HIYEX, God EYEX, EÔN Y(psistos) (=Suprême) God"



Обр. 9. Руноподобните съчетания върху съдове № 9 и 10 (по Каталог 2017, 116 – 117, 120): a. Цизелиран надпис № 2/1 от съд № 9 (съчетания G – H): „Wâw (=Знак-еписемон) (е) Името (на) (=Всевишния) ХР(истос), Петият Еон"; b. Цизелиран надпис № 2/2 от съд № 10 (съчетания G – H), (за текста вж. по-горе); c. Гравиран допълнително надпис № 12 (съчетание J): "Wâw (=Знак-еписемон) EÔN" .

Fig. 9. Runiform combinations on vessels Nos. 9 и 10 (after Каталог 2017, 116 – 117, 120): a. Engraved inscription No. 2/1 on vessel No. 9 (combinations G – H): "The symbol-épisémon Wâw (is) The Name (of) the Y(psistos) (=Suprême) Ch(rist), the Fifth Eôn"; b. Engraved inscription No. 2/2 on vessel No. 10 (combinations G – H), (for the text see above); c. Additionally engraved inscription No. 12 (combination J): "Wâw (=The symbol-épisémon) EÔN"

Върху дъното на кана № 6 са нанесени съчетания "K" и "L" (обр. 4, обр. 13b). Те са на един ред, непосредствено под съчетание "E", и би следвало да имат същата посока на прочит (Каталог 2017, 103) (обр. 4, обр. 13c). Съчетание "K" се състои от шест или седем знака, така че следва да очакваме, че може да е Хекзаграматон или Хептаграматон.[9] Втората възможност утвърждават познатите със звуковата си стойност шест от седемте негови графеми. Хептаграматонът тук е съставен от две групи вокали: **A E Y**, както се вижда в дясната му половина. Всяка от тях тук се разчита от краищата към средата, където стои отново (за трети път) "A" („алфа"). Това навежда на възможността за прочит като каркином. Посоката на втория отдясно знак е като в съчетание "B", който е със стойност на „епсилон". Така че формулата на Хептаграматона тук, за разлика от този в съчетание "N", е записана насрещно, както и при съчетания "E – F" (обр. 14b). Единствено непознатата графема в "K" има вид на буква за дифтонга ου, но обърната наопаки. Въпреки това, тя следва да се озвучи като „ипсилон", тъй като се явява „двойник" на знака във вид на изправен правоъгълник там. В първобългарския надпис № 13 на хан Маламир (831 – 836) сред гръцките букви е използван подобен знак (също с конкавна извивка на дясната хаста, но с хоризонтална чертица във вътрешността, така че наподобява „вита", но, както посочи още А. Грегуар, в гръкоезичния текст той има звукова стойност на „ипсилон" (Георгиев 2012б, 474, обр. 4). Това се дължи изглежда на практиката знакът „правоъгълник" да се възприема като утвърден символ за „Името" (някъде „квадрат") ΥΨΙΣΤΟΣ (=Hypsistos), сиреч на Всевишния (бог), както е в съчетание "G".

[9] Смущава само малката дължина на вертикалната чертица в левия край на съчетанието, която така е с облик на разделителя между съчетания "G" и "H".



a b

Обр. 10. Руноподобен знак и съчетание G – H (надпис № 2/3) от ритон № 17 (по Каталог 2017, 139): a. Лигатурен знак "OY" върху мундщука; b. Цизелиран надпис (за текста, вж. обр. 9a)

Fig. 10. Runiform sign and combination G – H (inscription No. 2/3) from Drinking horn No. 17 (after Каталог 2017, 139): a. Ligature "OY" on the mouthpiece; b. Engraved inscription (for the text see above fig. 9a)



a b

Обр. 11a, b. Руноподобните съчетания N и O върху дъното на кана № 5 (по Каталог 2017, 100), т. нар. акрофоничен Хептаграматон (със седемте гръцки гласни букви: Alfa, Heta, Iôta, Omicron, Ypsilon, Omega)

Fig. 11a, b. Runiform combinations N and O on the base of Jug No. 5 (after Каталог 2017, 100), the so-called acrophonic Heptagrammatôn (with the seven Greek vowels: Alfa, Heta, Iôta, Omicron, Ypsilon, Omega)

Това потвърждава и двузнаковото съчетание "L". Първият му знак отдясно е дигама и следва да я приемем за символ на "wâw", респективно за понятието ΥΨΙΣΤΟΣ. Вторият знак е с начертание (вкл. и по посока) на този от съчетания "B" и "C". Там той е с роля на семитското "Hē" в края на собствени имена на Върховния бог на гностиците от школата на Валентин (вж. по-нататък). Така че сме склонни да обясним съчетание "L" като опит на криптографа да представи Хептаграматона като собствено име на Бога.

Със същия подход идентифицираме и т. нар. **Hexagrammatôn**, т. е. съчетание от шест гласни букви. То ("Q") е на долната страна на дръжките на патери № 15 и 16 (обр. 12). Графемите там са отново в две групи и представят по три еднообразни гръцки гласни, акрофонично – от ляво надясно и обратно. Транскрибирано с гръцки букви, съчетанието гласи: **A E Y A E Y**.[10] Макар и с еднаква фонетична стойност, трите повтарящи се вокала са показани отново с различни графеми, така че всеки от тях има по чифт застъпници. Благодарение на тяхното отъждествяване става ясно, че знакът за „ипсилон" в първата група е идентичен с третия отляво

[10] Знакът за „епсилон", за разлика от подобния в съчетание "N", е заоблен и закачен към знака за „алфа", който представлява и тук вертикална черта. Така именно броят на знаците е шест, а не пет, както е у Р. Гьобл (обр. 4).



Обр. 12. Руноподобно съчетание Q върху обратната страна на дръжката на патера № 15 (по Каталог 2017, 137) (надпис № 8/1): т. нар. Хекзаграматон (гласните букви: AEY AEY)

Fig. 12. Runiform combination Q on the reverse side of the handle of the Small handled bowl No. 15 (after Каталог 2017, 137) (inscription No. 8/1), the so-called Hexagrammatôn (the vowels: AEY AEY)

(sic!) в съчетание "C", а в другата – е с вид на дигама и е тъждествен на „ипсилона" от Хептаграматона върху кана № 5 (обр. 4, обр. 11).

Tetragrammatôn е използван в съчетания "M" и "P" (обр. 4a). Първото от тях е от кана № 6 и има 4, а не 3 знака (Каталог 2017, 103) (обр. 13a). Там то има положение както върху ритона и следва да се чете с поглед от горе надолу, а не както при стоящо положение на каната. За това свидетелства и ориентацията на самите знаци. Въпреки това, следва да започнем с прочит отляво. Първият знак там е идентичен с втория от съчетание "C" и, както ще посочим по-долу, той има стойност на „йота". За средния вече знаем, че е „алфа". Подобно озвучаване на знак във вид на „ипсилон" с „алфа" е налице и в розетката-печат от Плиска, а и в текстове от Мурфатлар. Знакът в края е „епсилон". Така че буквалният прочит на дешифрираното съчетание е **I A E**. В този си вид то съответства на един от вариантите на старозаветния теоним **IAΩ** (Leclercq 1907a, 138). Но върху фотографии на съчетанието се вижда ясно, че между втората и третата графема е врязана къса вертикална чертица (обр. 4b, обр. 13a) като тази между съчетания "G" и "H" и "K"и "L", която P. Гьобл тук е пропуснал да отбележи (обр. 4a). Тя може да бъде схващана като знак за съкращение, „титул" (след сакрално име) или знак за самостоятелна гласна. Последната възможност потвърждава същата къса чертичка в съчетание "K", където тя е знак за „алфа" (обр. 13b). Така става ясно, че съчетание "M" представя Тетраграматона **I A A E** (Leclercq 1907a, 141 – 142).

Криптограмата, която стои зад съчетание "P" е само от два знака (обр. 4, обр. 5c) и те са приложени за вокалите **A I**, но в обратна посока те могат да се прочетат и **I A.** Това именно подсказва, че макар и двузнаков, записът е синтезиран вариант на **Tetragrammatôn**. А той е много характерен за гностическите спекулации в буквената мистика и е най-разпространената форма на изписване и произнасяне на Божието Име и в Библията.

Според гностически речник на И. Льоклерк, съчетанието от чаша № 12 може също да е вариант на теонима **IAΩ** (Leclercq 1907a, 142; Leclercq 1927, 2153 – 2156).

Идентифицирането на графемите, които са били използвани, за да „скрият" гръцките вокали, дава възможност да се разчете и често срещаната и много важна дума **Eôn**. В Гносиса тя е едновременно времево-пространствено понятие и еквивалент на думата „Бог". Върху съдовете от съкровището то се среща общо 12 пъти.

В изписаните върху пет съда (№ 9, 10, 17, 22 и 23) по две еднообразни съчетания – "G" и "H" P. Гьобл и A. Рона-Таш разпознават две понятия, отделени от малка вертикална чертица, която тълкуват като Worttrenner (обр. 4a). Според отбелязаното по-горе за посоката на техния прочит, ние поставяме съчетание "G" в началото, т. е. вляво, а "H" – след него (вдясно), като прочитът им е наопаки (обр. 4b, обр. 9a, b, обр. 10b).

Първият знак от съчетание "G" е обърната надясно, но извита дъгообразно, а не изправена, „дигама=ипсилон", която има прилика с малкия знак под образа на "wâw" в квазигръцкия надпис от съдове № 9 и 10 (обр. 3). Тук тя е директен представител на Знака-еписемон



Обр. 13. Руноподобни съчетания върху кана № 6 (по Каталог 2017, 103) (надписи № 4 – 6): a. Съчетание M с т. нар. Тетраграматон: IAAE; b. Съчетания K – L – Хептаграматон: AEYAYEA и "Y(psistos) He"; c. Съчетание E (от дясно на ляво): "Y(psistos) Eôn" (=Всевишен Еон)

Fig. 13. Runiform combinations on Jug No. 6 (after Каталог 2017, 103) (inscriptions Nos. 4 – 6): a. Combination M with the so-called Tetragrammatôn: IAAE; b. Combinations K – L – Heptagrammatôn: AEYAYEA and "Y(psistos) He"; c. Combination E (from right to left): "Y(psistos) Eôn" (=Supreme Eôn)



Обр. 14. Руноподобни съчетания от чаша № 23 (по Каталог 2017, 160 – 161): a. G – H (за текста, вж. обр. 9a); b. E – F с текст: "Y(psistos) EÔN" – "Y(psistos) EÔN" (=Всевишен Еон – Еон Всевишен)

Fig. 14. Runiform combinations on Cup No. 23 (after Каталог 2017, 160 – 161): a. G – H (for the text, See above fig. 9a); b. E – F with text "Y(psistos) EÔN" – "Y(psistos) EÔN" (=Supreme Eôn – Eôn Supreme)

(инсигния) на Бога. Но тъй като в гръцката азбука той е представен от своите наследници „дигама" и „ипсилон", получава значение на божествената квалификация "Hypsistos", сиреч „Всевишен". С други думи, това е същата графема, която в квазигръцкия надпис от съдове № 9 и 10 е „Еписемон", т. е. Знак-инсигния на Иисус Христос. В руноподобното съчетание "G" тя също е в образа на съзнателно променена гръцка дигама.

Вторият знак в съчетание "G" има вид на изправен правоъгълник. В папирусни текстове той криптира понятието „Името (божие)" (Leclercq 1907a, 1286 – 1287; Георгиев 2012a, 165 – 166, фиг. 1) Такава е неговата стойност и в разглежданото съчетание (Георгиев 2004, 292 – 293 и посл. примери). Вътрешността на „правоъгълничето" от съчетание "G" върху съд № 9 е с чертица, изтеглена по диагонал, докато при съд № 10 е с точка в центъра, досущ както е в папирусни текстове.

Третият знак от съчетание "G" знаем като „ипсилон" от неговото място в първата половина от Хекзаграматона от патерите (обр. 4a, обр. 12). Тук той е обърнат надясно и отново не е с роля на буква, а на цяло понятие, което в контекста на цялостния прочит следва да се осмисли като "Hypsistos" (=Всевишен (бог).

Последният знак в съчетание "G" е лигатура от два поставени един над друг към обща вертикална ос. В розетата-печат от Плиска те се озвучават поотделно като „хи" и „ро" (обр. 17) и са runiform Xrismôn, който отново замества понятието „Христос", т. е. Помазаният Син Божи. Макар и с друга форма, той фигурира в квазигръцкия надпис от съдове № 9 и 10 (обр. 3).

Първата от четирите графеми в следващото съчетание "H" е от вертикален стълбец с прикачени отдолу три до пет наклонени надясно и нагоре чертици (обр. 4b). Подобна вариативност има и знакът в съчетания "B", "C" и "L", но там и обърнат наляво, и чертичките започват отгоре. И в двата си варианта той възпроизвежда семитското "Hē" („хе"), но всеки от тях има различна криптографска стойност. Тук то е използвано заради своята числова стойност „пет" (според мястото на "Hē" в семитската азбука).

Това решение подсказва преди всичко фонетичното значение на следващите три литери. Първата от тях е „епсилон", както се вижда от втората част на Хекзаграматона върху патерите, където също е с връх наляво (обр. 12). Фонетичното значение на следващия знак от съчетание "H" се подразбира по смисъл, че е „омега", показана, както отдавна допускаха Ст. Младенов, Ст. Михайлов и други учени, като изправено вертикално нейно начертание. Така трите последни графеми представят по нов начин използваното често и в долнодунавското рунописмо понятие **ΕΩΝ** (Георгиев 2004, 429 – 430). Така че съчетание "H" се дешифрира като „***Пет/ият Еон***".

В представите на гностиците *Петият Еон* е т. нар. Неизразимо Име на Иисус, с което той се явява пред останалите Еони на Плеромата (Dupont-Sommer 1946, 41, 70 – 71). У нас подобно съчетание фигурира в надпис, състоящ се от гръцкото числително ΠΕΜΤΕ и голям по размери знак от две гръцки букви (OY) (=upsilon). Става дума за надпис върху плоча от Преслав с вероятна датировка в края на IX или X в. (Овчаров 1993, 94 и сл.). Там той предава също добре познатото в Гносиса съчетание PENTE AIOSI (Георгиев 1996б, 294 и сл.).[11]

Така че грижливо оформеният надпис върху съдове № 9, 10, 17, 22 и 23 се дешифрира така: **„*Знакът-еписемон Wâw (е) Името (на) Хюпсистос (=Всевишният) Христос, Петият Еон*".**

Негови версии са продуцирани допълнително и съкратено в съчетания "A", "E", "F" и "J" (обр. 4a, b).

Последното е гравирано небрежно напречно и пред голямата формула от съд № 9 (Каталог 2017, 117) (обр. 9c). Трябва да се чете от долу нагоре, следователно от ляво надясно и наопаки, както показва ориентацията на неговите графеми (обр. 4b). Първата от тях е идентична на тази в съчетание "G" (=wâw). Следващата е „епсилон", а последната е несъмнено „ню", представено като „И", както впрочем и в съчетание "H" (съдове № 9, 10 и 22). Преди него стои обърната обратно и наопаки дигама.[12] В такъв случай тя трябва да е със звукова стойност различна от „ипсилон". Разпознаваме я като „омега", според смисъла, който носят знаците от двете ѝ страни. Така съчетание "J" може да се разчете: "**Wâw ΕΩΝ**", т. е. „**Еонът-еписемон**", този, който е **ΥΨΙΣΤΟΣ** (Всевишният) сред Еоните в Универса.

Сходен състав, а и прочит, има и съчетание "A" от дъната на кани № 3 и 4, но там той се чете от ляво надясно, без да се обръща наопаки (Каталог 2017, 98) (обр. 4a, обр. 15). То, както отбелязва и Р. Гьобл, е напълно идентично със стоящото най-отдясно съчетание от съд № 8,

[11] В нея именно можем да разпознаем известния в българския език израз **„от памти века"**, като синоним на **„изначалност"**.

[12] Според Р. Гьобл, отляво на вертикалната си хаста тя има къса хоризонтална чертица, но върху фотографиите тя не се вижда (Каталог 2017, 117). Липсва и при преписа на неговата табл. IV.

което е много по-грижливо оформено (обр. 8), докато това върху двете кани изглежда да е негово копие.

То гласи **ΕΩΝ Wâw (=Знакът-епиземон ΥΨΙΣΤΟΣ)**, тъй като архаичната гръцка дигама – приемникът на сакралния сирийски знак "wâw" – е наследен в класическото гръцко писмо от Ипсилона. В такъв случай се отличава от съчетание "J" само в словореда.

Съчетания "E" от кана № 6 и чаша № 23 са идентични (Каталог 2017, 103) (обр. 14b). Прочитът им следва да е от дясно наляво и без обръщане (обр. 4a). Първата графема е обърната наляво дигама и получава звукова стойност на „ипсилон", както и в съчетания "A", "B", "L", "O" и "Q". Следва знак за „епсилон", а след него и такъв във вид на "D". Същият фигурира и в съчетание "D", където, както ще се убедим, е застъпник на „омега". Четвъртият знак от съчетание "E" не се среща другаде, но ако го озвучим по смисъл с „ню", то получава познатия ни от "A" и "J" прочит: **Wâw (=Знакът-епиземон ΥΨΙΣΤΟΣ) ΕΩΝ**.

Съчетание "E" от чаша № 23 е последвано от съчетание "F" и между тях има знак-разделител, както при "G – H" (обр. 4a). Разчитането на съчетание "F" като продължение на криптоформулата вдясно от него обаче не дава задоволителен резултат. Това налага неговият прочит да е срещуположен на "E", което показва и ориентацията на неговите четири знака. За съжаление те са нанесени небрежно и с отклонения от сходните на тях (обр. 14b). Начертанието на първия знак в съчетание "F" е от пръв поглед подобно на това в съчетание "C", но всъщност е още по-близко до първия знак от съчетание "B", където има звукова стойност „епсилон". Вторият знак е безспорна „омега" както в съчетание "O". Третият прилича на „алфа", но с особености, така че го приемаме все пак за „ню". Последният знак повтаря точно първия знак в съчетание "E" и следва да е отново архаичната гръцка „дигама", респективно класическия „ипсилон". В такъв случай съчетание "F" следва да се прочете също като **ΕΩΝ Wâw (=Знак-епиземон ΥΨΙΣΤΟΣ)**. Двете съчетания от чаша № 23 са равностойни половини от единен надпис, който гласи: **ΕΩΝ Wâw (=ΥΨΙΣΤΟΣ), Wâw (=ΥΨΙΣΤΟΣ) ΕΩΝ**. Знакът между тях би могъл да е и титул към сакралното име на Всевишния Еон, но може да е и съкращение на пропусната част от пълната формула в "G – H".

Най-дългият и основен сред останалите Kerbschrifts е врязан върху стените на овалната по форма и със заоблено дъно купа № 8 (обр. 8a). Той е най-старателно изписан (след първоначално маркиране!), както изглежда, заедно или непосредствено след изработката на декоративния фриз, в който е включен (обр. 8b). Петкратното повторение на кръстен знак – в началото, края и между четирите съчетания, които четем от "D" към "A" (обр. 4b), потвърждава, че е имал роля на словоразделител, както приемат и Р. Гьобл и А. Рона-Таш. Малкият, почти равнораменен и завършващ с триъгълни уширения кръст има сходна роля на Interpunktionen в халдейското писмо, използвано от християните-несториани и през VIII в. (Faulmann 1985, 86 – 87). В нашия случай петте кръстчета са още и криптограми за думата „Бог", както впрочем изглежда можем да четем и ставрограмата в квазигръцкия надпис.

Съчетание "D" е от два знака, чиято фонетичната стойност вече знаем. Първият е използван в съчетание "E" за „омега", а вторият е „ню". Така че съчетанието представя характерната християнска формула (O)**ΩN**, т. е. „Същинският" (Истинският). Заедно с кръстчето отпред, криптоформулата се разчита като „*Бог Сущий (=Същинският бог)*".

Съчетание "C" е от пет графеми. Първата от тях знаем от акрофоничния Хептаграматон в съчетание "N" (обр. 4, обр. 11a), където е на трета позиция и се озвучава като „ета". Втората графема в съчетание "C" е с близко начертание, в което може да се разпознае гласната „йота" от съчетание "M".

В розетката-печат от Плиска „ета" и „йота" имат еднакво начертание (обр. 17). Езикът на криптографите от НСМ е със сигурност гръцкият и това е обусловило използването за тях на близки, но все пак различни графеми.



Обр. 15. Руноподобно съчетание A (по Каталог 2017, 98) с текст "Eôn Y(psistos)" от кана № 3 (надпис № 7/1)

Fig. 15. Runiform combination A (after Каталог 2017, 98) with text "Eôn Y(psistos)" from Jug No. 3 (inscription No. 7/1)

Третият знак в съчетание "C" би трябвало да бъде озвучен като „ипсилон", както и в съчетание "Q", но не и в съчетание "G", където е обърнат с извивката си надясно (обр. 4a, b).

Последните две графеми от съчетание "C" познаваме от съчетание "H" като „епсилон" и "Hē", но тук те са обърнати в обратна посока (обр. 8b). При "Hē" това е обяснимо, тъй като нейните коси чертички започват от горната част на вертикалната хаста и са насочени наляво. Така криптографът подсказва, че става въпрос за буква (фонема), а не за числова стойност „пет". При „епсилон" изглежда, че знакът е с еднаква звукова стойност и при двете си посоки, както е и в долнодунавската криптография.

Следователно съчетание "C" се състои от четири гласни и една съгласна като: H I Y E X и може да се огласи: ***Hiueh*.** То със сигурност е запис на собственото име на Същинския Бог на гностиците от школата на Валентин, засвидетелствано в магически папирус на коптски език (т. нар. Оксфордски "Codex Brucianus (Bruce)" (Георгиев 1999a, 91; Георгиев 2004, 293 и пос. лит.; Стефанов 2008, 54, бел. 132). Там името се произнася като **Jeoû**. В такъв случай съчетание "C" може да се разчете като „Бог Ииуех (Йуех)". Както се вижда, това произношение е близко до прочита на трите „капитални" знака от съчетание "M", като "Иàе".

В съчетание "B" фигурира същият теоним, но в редуцирана форма. Там се дешифрира съчетанието E Y E X, т. е. ***Eueh*.**

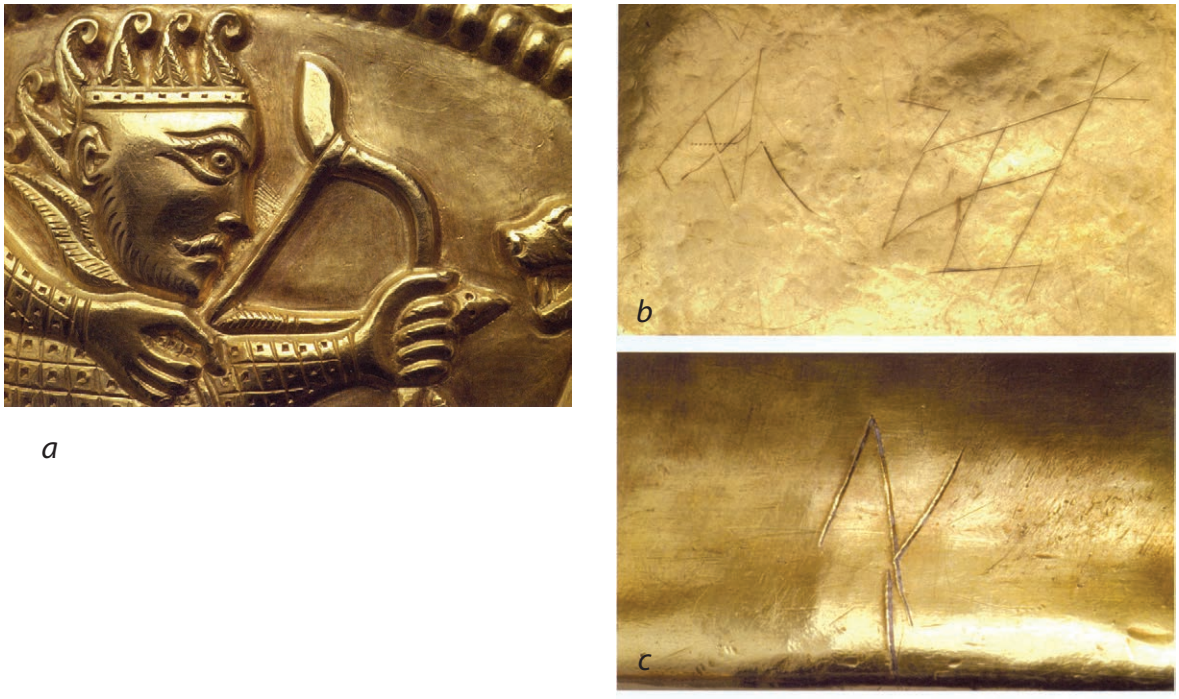
Ако съдим от прочита на „ипсилон" като „вита" в цитирания по-горе надпис № 13 на хан Маламир, бихме могли да озвучим въпросните две имена като „Бог Йвех" и „Бог Евех".

Съчетание "A" познаваме от кани № 3 и 4 (обр. 4, обр. 15). Те са четирибуквени и започват с „епсилон" и завършват с „дигама=ипсилон". Непознатите графеми между тях следва логически да озвучим като „омега" (като в акрофоничния Хептаграматон) и „ню" (със знак обратен на този на „изправената омега"), за да получим засвидетелстваното вече и често повтарящо се понятие ΕΩN.

Така руноподобният надпис под дръжката на съд № 8 получава следния прочит: „***Бог (O)ΩN (=Бог Сущий), Бог Ииуех (=Йвех), Бог Еуех (=Евех), Бог-Еон* ΥΨΙΣΤΟΣ, т. е. Всевишен Бог**".

Текстът представя Същинския бог на гностици-християни, определен като „Извечен" и „Истински", както и неговите три ипостаси. Първите две от тях са неговото пълно и съкратено собствено Име, а третата е описателната формула: „*Бог-Еон Всевишен*". Това подсеща, че Името е било произнасяно по различен начин пред отделните категории вярващи в гностико-християнската общност. Записът на собственото име на Бога на валентинианите в два варианта – пълен и съкратен, може да се обясни с това, че те са били огласявани съответно пред т. нар. „душевни" и „духовни" (пневматици). Третата форма: „*Бог-Еон Всевишен*" остава да е била адресирана към „хилиците", т. е. телесните или по-скоро към тези от тях, които са поели пътя към категорията на „душевните". Върху дъната на кани № 3 и 4 тя е възпроизведена като единствена формула. Това предполага, че тези съдове са били предназначени за две общности на това равнище на усвояване на Гносиса, както личи и от разпределението на съдовете от съкровището (обр. 18).

Накрая следва да се спрем на дешифрирането на единичните графеми.



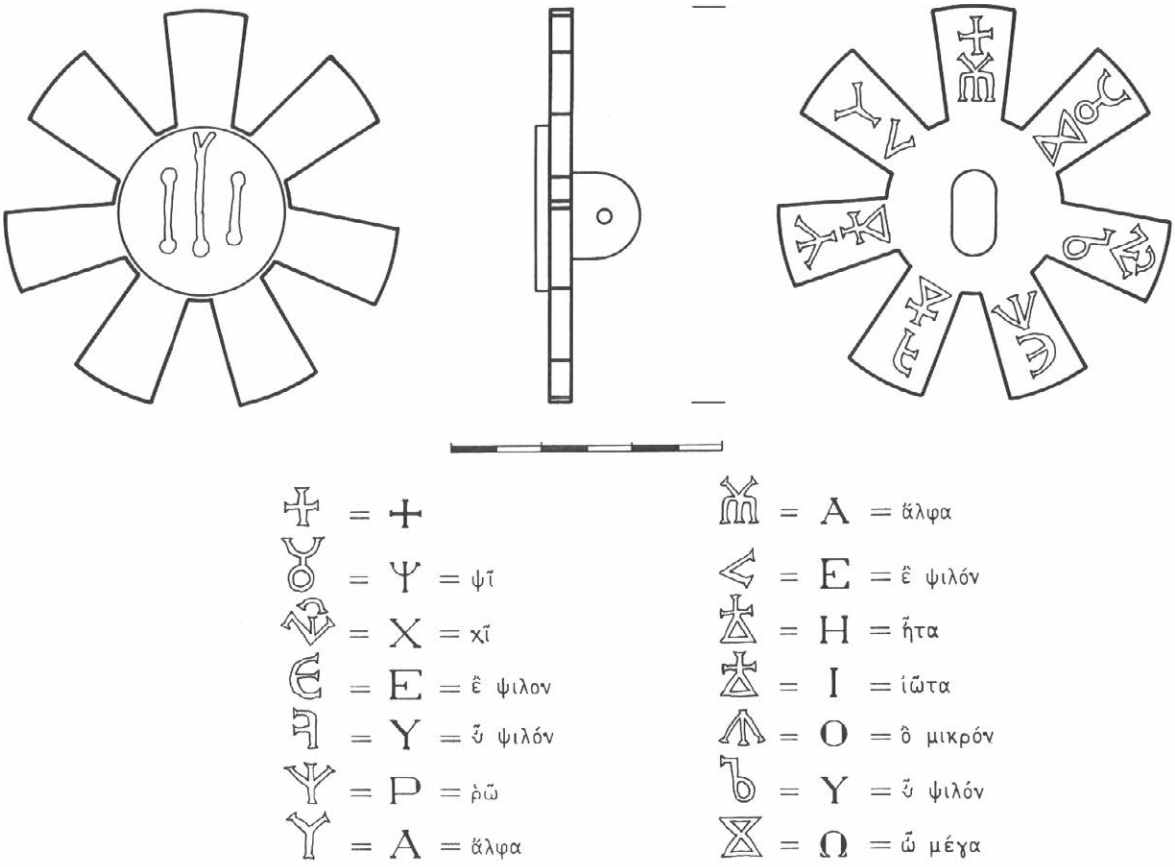
Обр. 16. Знаци и съчетания върху кана № 2 (по Каталог 2017, 89, 92): a. Две плитко врязани графеми: D (=голяма и малка „омега") върху кана № 2 (неотбелязани у Göbl, Róna-Tas 1995) b. Съчетание S (надпис № 14), дешифрирано като "Noῦn (Eôn)"; c. Съчетание T (надпис № 15), състоящо се от голямо и малко (опростено) построение със значение "Noun Hē" (=Нун/ех)

Fig. 16. Signs and combinations on Jug No. 2 (after Каталог 2017, 89, 92): a. Two shallowly engraved graphemes: D (=large and small "omega") on Jug No. 2 (unrecorded by Göbl, Róna-Tas 1995); b. Combination S (inscription No. 14), deciphered as "Noῦn (Eôn)"; c. Combination T (inscription No. 15) consisting of a large and small (simplified) combination meaning "Noun Hē" (=Nun/eh)

В документацията на Р. Гьобл те са три – две отразени в неговата таблица (обр. 4а), плюс една в два варианта, които определя условно като "Tents".

Тази от устието на ритона ("R") е близка до „ро" от розетката-печат от Плиска и донякъде напомня за лигатурата "XP" в съчетание "G", но е с коса чертичка при вертикалния стълбец (обр. 4а). С това тя съответства на знака (с коса чертичка, но отдясно), врязан дълбоко в гривата на мраморната скулптурна фигура на лъв от Аула на хан Омуртаг, чийто строеж се датира към 821/2 г., а също и върху мраморни изделия от Преслав. Подобен е знакът и върху каменната скулптура на лъв от Плиска (Дончева-Петкова 1980, обр. 9, 11, табл. XV, 7 – 11 и 43). В него можем да разпознаем криптографския символ със семитски произход – resh, „глава" или „начало". Нанесен върху самото отверстие на ритона (обр. 10а), той изглежда да е означавал главенството на лицето, което го е ползвало. Ако обърнем знака според посоката на прочит и на надписа в горния край на ритона (обр. 4b), той може да се приеме за лигатура между „омикрон" от розетата-печат от Плиска (обр. 17) и обърната надясно дигама, която в съкровището е използвана за Знак-еписемон, а обърнатата наляво е застъпник за „ипсилон". Така че зад съчетанието "R" стои диграфът OY, който тук е нова форма на теонима "Hypsistos" или на негов Знак, както е в съчетание "J" (обр. 7). Забележително е, че подобен символ фигурира върху опаката страна на византийски (?) моливдовул като централно изображение, оградено с надписа ΕΥΦΥΜΗΟΥ (обр. 18а). Те според нас съставят формула, посветена „преблагому Богу" (Георгиев 1999б, 81 – 85, вж. още за находката у Йорданов 2016, 185 – 186).

Единичният знак от кана № 2 ("S") е гравиран под изображението на стрелеца с лък, яздещ четириног антропоид (Каталог 2017, 92) (обр. 16b). Преписът на Р. Гьобл оставя впечатле-



Обр. 17. Седмолъчева розетка-печат с два кръга знаци: външен с означения качествата на Иисус Христос от т. нар. Седмопечатие (по посока на часовниковата стрелка) и вътрешен със седемте гръцки вокала – означения на седемте планети от Универса (в ред обратен на часовниковата стрелка) (по Georgiev 1995, 548 – 549)

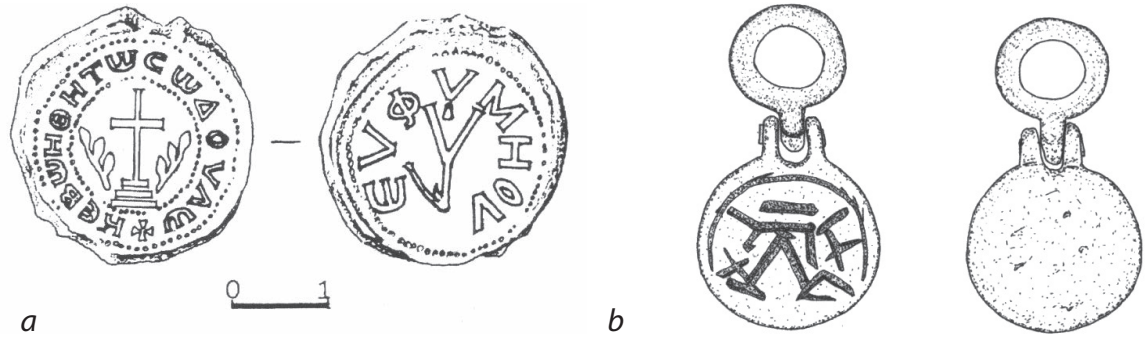
Fig. 17. Seven-point rosette-stamp with signs arranged in two circles: outer with indications of the qualities of Jesus Christ from the so-called Seven Seals (clockwise) and inner with the seven Greek vowels – indications of the seven planets of the Universe (in counterclockwise order) (after Georgiev 1995, 548 – 549)

ние, че е близък до начертанието на „ипсилон“ (обр. 4а, обр. 5). Детайлната фотография в „Каталога“ от София показва, че това би могло да е „ню“, към което отдолу и малко наляво има добавена отвесна черта (обр. 16с). Възниква въпросът дали знакът не е изражение на “Noun Eon” (Georgiev 2004, 430 sqq., fig. 3, fig. 4).

В тази връзка следва да отбележим, че отново на съд № 2 – пред главата на ездача с корона (обр. 16а) и пантерата – се забелязват две плитко, по-късно надраскани начертания (Каталог 2017, 89), останали незабелязани от Р. Гьобл[13] (обр. 4а). Те са с различна големина, но и двете възпроизвеждат латинското “D”, което е графема за „омега“.

Върху дъното на същата кана са нанесени две сходни изображения, които Р. Гьобл приема за “Tents”, но ги схваща и за Inschrift Nr. 15 (обр. 5с, обр. 16b). В тях са представени по две доближаващи се с върховете си „ламбди“, които разпределят триъгълната рамка на големите фигури съответно на седем или пет по-малки, които са също във вид на „ламбди“. Към долните краища на по-едрото изображение са прикачени още две малки „ламбди“, а на върха – „знак“ с близки разме-

[13] Използвам случая да благодаря на д-р Галина Гроздановa от Националния археологически музей, куратор на изложбата на съкровището в София през 2017 г., за съдействието при работата по уточняване на графиката на знаците върху съдове № 2 и 19.



Обр. 18: a. Моливдовул с кръст и инвокация към християнския Бог (лице) и знак-теоним (лигатура между „омикрон" (?) и „дигама" или между „ипсилон" (?) и „дигама" с околовръстен гръцки надпис (опако) от Южна България (по Георгиев 1999б, обр. 1); b. Бронзово печатче с лигатурно свързани знаци от Североизточна България (по Дончева, Николов 2011, обр. 2)

Fig. 18: a. Lead bulla with a cross and an invocation of the Christian God (obverse) and a sign-theonym (ligature between omicron(?) and digamma or between upsilon(?) and digamma) with a circular Greek inscription (reverse) from Southern Bulgaria (after Георгиев 1999б, обр. 1); b. Bronze stamp with ligature from Northeastern Bulgaria (after Дончева, Николов 2011, обр. 2)

ри, който прилича на „хи" от розетката-печат от Плиска (обр. 17). Така схващана, голямата "Tent" е всъщност съчетание от един голям и девет малки знака във вид на „ламбда". Сходната по-малка фигура има състав от пет малки и една голяма „ламбда". Анализът показва, че това са построения, в които доминира тази именно гръцка буква. В долнодунавското руноподобно писмо тя се явява застъпник на т. нар. Noun (Еон), за който отчетливо се говори в руноподобния надпис от Мурфатлар в Северна Добруджа (Румъния) (Georgiev 2004, 430 sqq., fig. 4). С „хи" на върха въпросното построение от НСМ се превръща, както в съчетания "B", "C" и "L", в собствено Име на божествена сила. Сложносъставен буквен символ на основата на „ламбда", вероятно като застъпник на „Нун", стои върху подпечатващата страна на бронзово печатче от Североизточна България с ориентировъчна датировка към X – XI в. (Дончева, Николов 2011, 279 и сл., обр. 1) (обр. 18b).

Това ни кара да допускаме, че двата лигатурни символа от дъното на кана № 2 и този от ритона № 17, може да са били заимствани (допълнително) от долнодунавския Kerbschrift.

Надписите и съдовете. Руноподобните надписи са нанасяни най-малко на три пъти. Найранен и основен е големият текст върху съд № 8. Възможността той да е изготвен по поръчка заедно със самия съд е реална. По тези причини може да се приеме, че неговото съдържание има основополагащо значение за останалите единични или чифтно разположени съчетания и единични графеми и лигатури.

Получените чрез цизелиране (дълбоко гравиране) надписи върху пет други съда (№ 9, 10, 17, 22 и 23) са изработени грижливо, едновременно или не много след основния от съд № 8 (Zhuber-Okrog 2017, 28 – 31). Според наблюденията на изследователите на технологията на съдовете и надписите е възможно руноподобните съчетания върху съдове № 9 и 10 да са били изготвени заедно с квазигръцкия надпис върху техните дъна. Налице са и някои белези, които показват, че и тюркоезичният надпис от съд № 21 е оформян под влияние на идеи, обусловили използването на квазигръцко писмо и гностически тайнопис.[14]

По-късно изглежда да са били гравирани останалите съчетания и знаци. Най-вероятно те са били нанасяни от знаещи криптография лица в общността, на която съкровището е било в разположение. Понякога знаците в тях са небрежно и не винаги точно възпроизведени.

[14] Всички букви в него са издържани в духа на класическия гръцки унциал, но апексите при върховете на "N" в думата ΖΟΑΠΑΝ са показани с три разклонения, а "П" е със следи от допълнително затваряне отдолу, така че наподобява „правоъгълника" от руноподобните надписи № 2 и 5.

Нанасянето им може да е станало на два или повече етапа от използване на съдовете от гностико-християнската общност. По-ранни изглежда да са тези върху каните № 3 – 6 и патерите № 15 и 16, а и върху чаша № 12.

След тях може би са били нанесени „дублиращите" надписи от съдове № 6, 9 и 23, а най-накрая – единичните символи върху кана № 2 и ритона № 17. Тази последователност говори за продължителното използване на съдовете от посветени в Гносиса лица.

Разгледани от гледна точка на своите Kerbschrifts, те изглеждат свързани с култ и ритуал на общност на последователи на доктрината на живелия през II в. Валентин и неговия ученик Марк(о) (Георгиев 1999а, 90 и сл.; Стефанов 2008, 178 и сл. и бел. 552).

За подобна роля на съкровището свидетелстват и квазигръцките надписи от съдове № 9 и 10. „Светски" изглежда донякъде единствено надписът върху съд № 21, но неговият християнски характер е вън от съмнение и той е врязан от името на две лица с тюркски имена с ранг на „жупани" най-вероятно в същата религиозна общност.

Взети сами за себе си, надписите не подкрепят директно обвързване на съкровището с „аварска", „българска" или друга етнически определена култура, особено такава с „езически" (дохристиянски) характер.

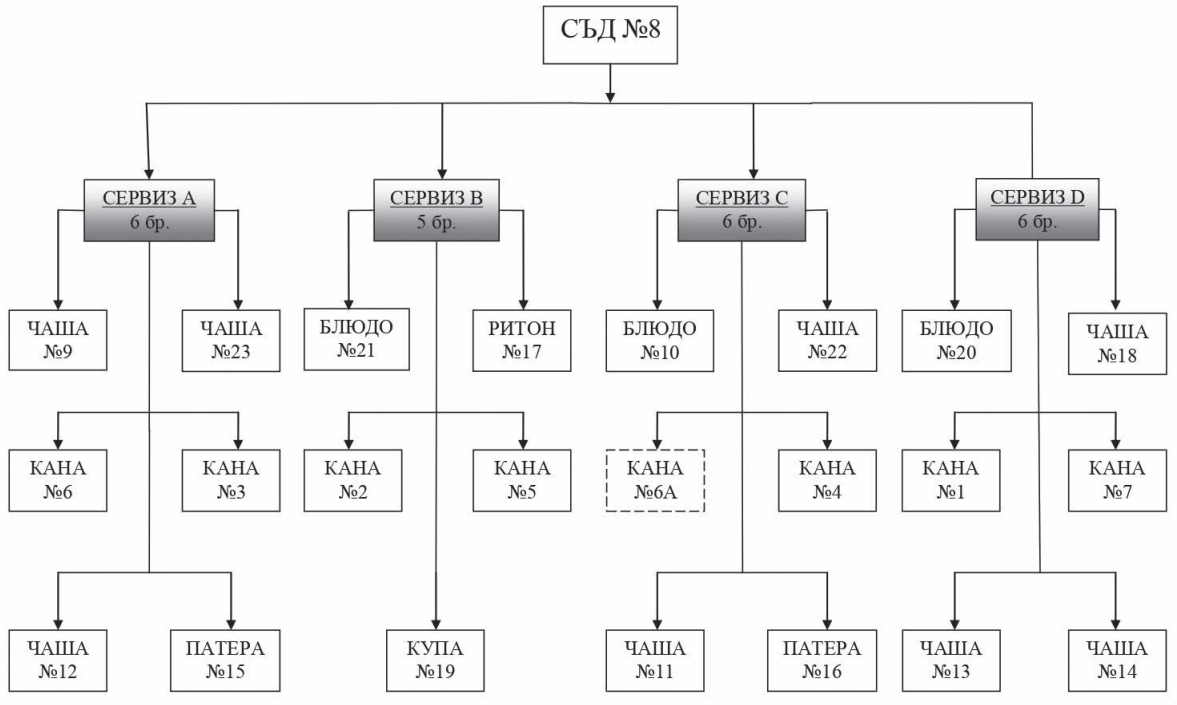
Разбира се, съкровището има сборен и хетерогенен характер. Наличието в него на различни по дата и място на производство съдове е вън от съмнение (Zhuber-Okrog 2017, 21 sqq.). Досегашната диференциация на хронологията на съдовете се основава изключително на формата и стила на украса (Zhuber-Okrog 2017, 34).

От гледна точка на надписите за нас по-ранна би могла да е групата съдове, която е без надписи, а именно: кани № 1 и 7, както и трите купи с животински глави. Към нея би могло да се добавят чашите № 11 и 12 (първата останала без надпис), патерите № 15 и 16, ритонът № 17 и чашите със столче № 22 и 23, но преди нанасянето на руноподобните съчетания и знаци върху тях. В първоначален състав на съкровището може да са влизали и съдове № 20 и 21, но преди хипотетична преправка на втория от тях с християнски символ и дарствен надпис. Всички те са, както се вижда, съдове с изявено трапезен характер и в този смисъл можем да продължим да приемаме, че първоначално са били притежание на светско лице. Особено показателен в това отношение е ритонът, за който с основание се допуска, че е от „аварски" княжески сервиз.

Надписите с Kerbschrifts са врязани върху някои от тях явно избирателно и едва след като към първоначалния трезор са били привлечени нови единични или двойки съдове, чиито разнообразни по характер надписи изглеждат изработени заедно с тях самите (№ 8, 21, а също и № 9 и 10). Така че сегашният състав на съкровището изглежда е бил вече налице, когато шест от неговите съдове (№ 8 – 10, 17, 22 и 23) е трябвало да получат първите Kerbschrifts. Два от тях вече са имали своите квазигръцки надписи, а № 21 – тюркоезичен с гръцки букви, досущ като първобългарските надписи от първата половина на IX в. (Бешевлиев 1979).

При това положение става ясно, че трите вида надписи са били реализирани общо взето едновременно, очевидно за да задоволят потребностите на специфична общност, изповядваща култ и следваща ритуали, свързани тясно с най-древния християнски Гносис. Те представят категорично наличие на „гностико-християнски" период на употреба на всички съдове от съкровището. Общият им брой е бил най-малко 24 (23+1)[15] и така изглежда е съответствал на броя на буквените символи от гръцката азбука, приемана от нея за „божествена", но върху основата на семитската (Dupont-Sommer 1946, 55 sqq.).

[15] Податки за това вж. у Zhuber-Okrog 2017, 16 sqq. и спец. с. 17; Ердейи 2016, 35 – 50. За съществуването на изчезнал след откриването на съкровището съд, вж. Erdelyi, Pataky 1974, 145; Kiss 2006, 91– 92.



Обр. 19. Разпределение на съдовете (23 + 1) от съкровището в четири „сервиза", според форма, украса и наличие, вид и съдържание на надписите върху тях (по Георгиев 2020)

Fig. 19. Distribution of the vessels (23 + 1) from the treasure in four "sets", according to their shape, decoration and the presence, type and content of the inscriptions engraved (after Георгиев 2020)

Преди около 20 години се опитахме да разпределим съдовете с 15-те Kerbschrifts в три отделни „сервиза" ("A – C"), като се съобразихме с формата, функционалните характеристики на всеки от тях и особено с характера и семантичната стойност на надписите им (Георгиев 1999, 95 и сл, обр. 1). Тук ще се опитаме да внесем някои корекции в първоначалното наше схващане, като обособим в четвърти „сервиз" ("D") съдовете без надписи (обр. 19).

Съдовете с Kerbschrifts са общо 14. Те образуват шест двойки с еднаква или много близка форма, а и украса. На тях в общи линии съответстват еднообразни или смислово близки текстове. На тази основа разпределяме отново въпросните 12 съда в два идентични сервиза: "A" и "C" (обр. 19). Във всеки от тях влизат: купа-блюдо (т. нар. тас), по една чаша – с и без столче, патера и по две кани. Съобразно големината на тези съдове изглежда по-удачно подреждане, при което каните да стоят на челно място, но характерът и семантичният ранг на самите надписи са за нас с водещо значение. Руноподобните текстове върху тях са с различно съдържание и семантика и позволяват да бъдат поставени на три нива. Най-висок семантичен ранг имат надписите върху купите-тасове № 9 и 10. Непосредствено под него, но само от функционална гледна точка, следва да се поставят чашите № 22 и 23, които носят същия текст „скрит" върху поставката на своето столче. Така всеки от двата комплекта съдове ("A" и "C") е разполагал с по два еднообразни криптирани текста, разкриващи пред посветените в Гносиса съществена част от номенклатурата на Божието име, като „Всевишен", като „Христос", т. е. Помазаник и като „Петият Еон". Следват патерите № 15 и 16 с Хекзаграматон, т. е. „шестбуквеното" Божие „Име". От чашите без столче само една (№ 12) е с надпис и той е съвсем кратък. Без сигурен отговор остава въпросът защо другата чаша

без столче (№ 11) е оставена без аналогично или друго означение. Кани № 3 – 6 са също допълнително означени с изпълнени небрежно руноподобни текстове. Този от еднаквите № 3 и 4 гласи: "*Wâw Еон*", т. е. „*Всевишен Еон*". Кана № 6 също има такова съчетание, но носи и второ – Хептаграматонът: *AEYAYEA,* който има продължение ("L"), състоящо се от знака "*wâw" (=Хюпсистос)*, след който обаче има завършек в лицето на "Hē", като в завършека на собствените имена на Върховния бог ***Иуех/Еуех***, а изглежда и при ***Нун(е)х*** от кана № 2. С това тя се доближава частично до съдържанието на едната половина от надписа върху тасовете № 9 и 10. Кана № 6 пази и трето съчетание – "M" – с друга форма на теонима Iaô (от Йехова), изглежда допълнително преобразувано в Тетраграматон. Чаша № 12 носи също Тетраграматон, но сведен до два знака. Патерите от своя страна са маркирани с еднообразен Хекзаграматон, който е също теоним, но семантически по-нисък от Хептаграматона.

Извън дванадесетте (11+1) съда от сервизи "A" и "C" остават съдове № 2, 5, 8 и 17. Всички те са без дублиращ екземпляр и би следвало да ги разположим в един комплект (сервиз "B").

Особената форма на съд № 8 (овална купа със заоблено и разпределено чрез 40 ребра дъно и стени) и най-дългият и най-старателно изработен надпис ни карат да го поставим отделно, а в семантично отношение – над всички съдове. Това налага и неговото първично изготвяне и повторение на някои негови формули върху съдове от сервизи "A" и "C". Само неговият надпис съдържа собственото име на гностическото божество Иуех (Йев) (в пълна и кратка форма), както и формула за гностическия Върховен Бог като „Еон Всевишен", стоящ над всички части на Плеромата (=Универса). Тази семантика на надписа дава основание съд № 8 да бъде поставен начело на йерархията от означени с тайнопис съдове.

Кана № 5 е с форма и украса близка до тази на необозначената изобщо най-голяма по обем кана № 1. По вместимост, тегло и карати тя се доближава до кани № 3, 4 и 6, така че следва да е играла аналогична на тях роля. Това показва и нейното обозначение с акрофоничен „Хептаграматон", който е висока за това семантично равнище формула за Божието Име.

Кана № 2 е с размери, обем и тежест, близки до тези на кани № 3 и 4 и макар да е от по-ниска проба злато (както и ритонът № 17) има богата украса от четири медальона с фигури или композиции. Kerbschrifts върху нея обаче са представени с единични знаци и лигатурни съчетания, сред които разпознахме и два сложно съставени символа, посветени на познатия от долнодунавския тайнопис Noun Eon. Изглежда, че съдът е бил привлечен за потребностите на гностическата ритуалност най-късно. Изявено светският характер на неговата украса подобава за употребата му на трапеза за аристократични пиршества, оглавени от издигната/и в обществената йерархия личност/и.

Ритонът е с още по-изявена принадлежност към аристократичен сервиз и ползването му като чаша за ритуално пиене е безспорна. В неговата горна част обаче фигурира руноподобен текст от висок семантичен ранг и изявено теонимен характер. С него той е напълно реципрочен на чашите № 22 и 23. Такава изглежда и семантиката на лигатурното съчетание върху мястото, откъдето се пие от ритона. Всичко това навежда на предположение, че може да е бил използван от високопоставен член на гностико-християнската общност.

Така стигаме до убеждение, че трите съда с надписи от сервиз "B" са били на разположение на елита в общността. Това предполага, че вотивният съд № 21 също може да е фигурирал в този комплект. Тюркоезичният му надпис, отразяващ ролята на неговите двама поръчители с еднакъв ранг – ZOAPAN, да е част от „аристократичния" по характер сервиз "B". Още повече, че неговата форма, както и на безнадписния № 20, е аналогична на съдове № 9 и 10, които отнесохме към сервизи "A" и "C". Остава обаче без отговор въпросът защо, за разлика от тях, той не е получил свой Kerbschrift? Към състава на сервиз "B" бихме могли

да добавим и пети съд – купа № 19, заради богатата си украса и наличие на явен християнски символ сред нея.[16]

Тук следва да поставим и още един въпрос. Използвани ли са били за нуждите на въпросната общност останалите седем съда (№ 1, 7, 13, 14, 18 и 20)? Вероятно да, тъй като са намерени заедно с останалите и техният брой е отново шест. Това последното предполага да са съставяли отделен комплект, без надписи. Още повече, че в него влизат съдове, аналогични по форма или близки по функция на тези от сервизи "A" и "C" – две кани (№ 1 и 7), тас с тока (№ 20), купи-чаши с животински глави (№ 13, 14), както и друга чаша с глава на „наутилус" (№ 18). Това е сериозно основание да откроим наличието и на четвърти, анепиграфичен (безнадписен), комплект ("D"). Той има следните характеристики: 1. Разнообразни форми и украса, която варира от пестелива геометризирана (кана № 1) до пищна с антропоморфна, зооморфна и растителна украса и мотиви в рамките на композиции с митологичен характер (кана № 7 и блюдо-чаша № 20); 2. Отсъствие на каквито и да са надписи.

Ако се опитаме да отнесем четирите сервиза от съкровището с трите категории вярващи в една гностико-християнска общност, получаваме следната тяхна атрибуция.

Сервизи "A" и "C" са обслужвали два почти равноправни в религиозно отношение „колектива", изглежда от т. нар. „душевни". В тях можем предположително да видим съответно мъжете и жените на общността от посветени, които, знае се, са участвали поотделно в ритуалите и култа (Георгиев 1999а, 98 – 99; Стефанов 2008, 349 и сл.).

Сервиз "B" бихме могли да свържем, както вече стана ясно, с хора с аристократично потекло, които, ако съдим от надписа от съд № 21, са тюркоезични и поръчващи в свой интерес гръцки надписи, досущ както аристокрацията от Плиска и Първото българско царство. Начело на този елит от долината на Тиса трябва да са били „жупаните" Буйла и Бутаул.

Състоящият се от съдове без надписи сервиз "D" бихме могли да свържем хипотетично с много богата общност от прозелити, която е оставала в категорията на непосветените „хилици".

Комплектът "B" в такъв случай остава да е бил на разположение на онази част от аристократите в общността, които вече са приели първично посвещение в тайнствата на Гносиса. От тази гледна точка изглежда по-основателно необичайният съд № 19 с християнска символика по стените си да бъде поставян в състава на сервиз "B", отколкото на сервиз "D".

Извън тези нива на усвояване на християнския Гносис остават т. нар. „духовни", т. е. онези, които владеят най-добре знанието за Бога, Плеромата и техните времево-пространствени елементи, наречени Еони. Поставен в светлината на Оксфордския папирус на Брус („Книга за Йеу (Йев)"), всеки съд от НСМ се явява материализация на представата у гностиците-валентиниани за т. нар. **Еон на съкровището**, който е седалище на Върховното божество и на сътворения от него Бог на Истината Йеу/Йев, мястото, където се съхранява мистерията на т. нар. Велико Име Bythos (Бездна) (Георгиев 1999а, 97). В коптския ръкопис „Еонът на съкровището" е представен графически като басейн, пълен с вода. По този начин се загатва за древната представа за Изначалната божествена сила като водна Бездна (Хаос), която по-късно се трансформира във Висше божество (Amelineau 1890, 201; Dupont-Sommer 1946, 62 sqq.). В съответствие с тези идеи седалището на тази сила и на нейната еманация Бога на истината Йеу/Йев е възможно най-сакралната мистерия за гностиците. За да стигнат до там учениците на Иисус и всички, които желаят да постигнат „познание" (Gnosis), трябва да преминат през

[16] Според И. Ердейи на дъното си тя има два гравирани един до друг знака: "I" и "Y" (Ердейи 2016, 63, скица 5). „Гравиран рунически знак" авторът отбелязва и за чашата с глава на бик № 13, но без да дава неговото начертание (Ердейи 2016, 61, 69). Палеографските изследвания на Р. Гьобл от 1995 г. не потвърждават това. Не се забелязват и върху фотографии с висока резолюция от документация на съкровището в София. Там е врязана само дълга черта.

отделните Еони, съставящи със своите мистерии Плеромата. В кръга от тези представи Еоните се схващат като малки съкровища, които изграждат „Голямото съкровище".

В съответствие с тези идеи и представи трезорът от НСМ ще да е бил възприеман през IX в. като „Съкровище", символ на Плеромата, а отделните негови съдове – за Еони-съкровища със свои „печати" в лицето на своите Kerbschrifts, които имат сакрален характер и мистериозен за непосветените смисъл. Изхождайки от това именно, си позволихме преди 20-на години да изкажем предположението, че първоначалният брой на съдовете от НСМ може да е бил около тридесет (Георгиев 1999а, 99).

В светлината на тази информация съд № 8 със своята уникална форма и криптографска формула – майка за останалите в съкровището, е бил на разположение на най-вещите и най-високопоставените в йерархията на общността от района на Среден Дунав. Те са имали признанието на „духовни" (пневматици) сред своите събратя. Как точно е протичал ритуалът и с каква течност (вода, вино или смес от тях) не може да се каже със сигурност, но е възможно той да е бил близък до църковната евхаристия. Указание за това донякъде са врязаните в капковидните медальони на кани № 3 и 4 множество малки кръстове и триъгълничета в техните междурамия. Те съответстват на т. нар. merides, т. е. изрязаните от кръстовидно разрязаната просфора от хляба на предложението (Георгиев 1999а, 98 и пос. там литература; Bálint 2002, 110, fig. 34; Ердейи 2016, 80).

4. Културно-историческата принадлежност на надписите

Това е всъщност най-трудният въпрос, тъй като въпросът за характера на самото съкровище остава неизяснен, дори и след последните „високотехнологични" и комплексни проучвания (Zhuber-Okrog 2017, 32 – 34; Станилов 2017, 39 – 57). Според австрийската специалистка „*по-новите изследвания показват тенденция да се допуска връзка с културата на аварите*". Имат се предвид преди всичко изследванията от 2002 г. на унгарските учени Ч. Балинт, Е. Гарам и А. Рона-Таш (Bálint 2002, 57 – 80; Garam 2002, 81 – 111; Róna-Tas 2002, 120 – 133). Според Станилов „*емпирични аргументи за една или друга културна идентификация няма, като изключим отделни елементи от изображенията, отразени в украсата на летите бронзови обкови за колани от късния етап на аварската култура*" (Станилов 2017, 40). Ние сме съгласни с тази констатация, без да споделяме формулираната там наново възможност (след Н. Мавродинов и Ст. Ваклинов) съкровището да е изработено под българско влияние или дори в златарско ателие на българската столица Плиска (Станилов 2017, 43 и сл.).[17]

Според нас, решението на въпроса за етно-културната характеристика на съкровището може да бъде отключено ефективно, въз основа главно на надписите, както впрочем са изтъквали В. Томсен, Р. Гьобл и А. Рона-Таш и много други учени.

Предварително условие за това е убедително решение на въпроса за хронологията на съдовете. Според Ч. Балинт датата на производство на ритона № 17 и чаши № 22 и 23 варира между 650 и 680 г., а на съд № 8 – към началото (?) на VIII в. (Bálint 2002, 74). Ф. Дайм и П. Щадлер препоръчват модерни методи на археологическото му изследване (Daim, Stadler 2002, 130 – 133). Те открояват три стилистични и морфологични групи с приблизителни датировки. Първата включва чаши № 11 и 12, бокалите № 22 и 23 и ритона № 17. За тях се допуска, че може да датират още в VII до към началото на VIII в. Във втора група са главно каните № 1 – 7, а към третата група – купите с животински глави (№ 13, 14 и 18). За най-късен белег в нея се предлага

[17] Според И. Ердейи и Я. Радуй е напълно възможно мястото на производство на съкровището да се търси „в столицата на трансилванските Дюла, в българския Белград, тоест Дюлафехервар!" (Ердейи 2016, 67 – 68, 79). Вж. там и за мнения, които не потвърждават тезата на Ч. Балинт за изготвяне на съкровището в аварско време.

украсата от т. нар. „пръчици-ластари“ (Stäbchenrankendekor). Според Ф. Дайм втората група датира от първа половина на VIII в., а трета група – към неговата втора половина, т.е. изцяло в късноаварско време (Daim 2004, 439 – 445; Zhuber-Okrog 2017, 27 – 28, 33 – 34). Изследване на М. Шулце-Дьорлам върху т. нар. jungsten Elementen в съкровището обоснова отново малко по-късна датировка на редица от неговите реалии, както и времето на неговото депониране (Schulze-Dörrlamm 2010, 127 – 142). За съжаление те не са взети предвид от издателите на софийския Каталог през 2017 г. За нас тук са важни крайните заключения на известната познавачка на ранносредновековния художествен метал в Европа. Според тях, най-ранното време за съдовете от НСМ е „малко преди или към 800 г.“ (kurz vor oder nach 800), а укриването им – към средата на IX в. (Schulze-Dörrlamm 2010, 138, 141). Нейният анализ допуска да-



a



b

Обр. 20: a. Местонахождение на „рунически паметници VII – X в.“ на Среден Дунав по (Ердели 1989, 265): 1. Надсентмиклош (Сънникулау Маре, Румъния), 2. Кьорне, 3. Сексард-Паланк, 4. Хомокмедь-Халом, 5. Яношхида-Тоткерпуста, 6. Сентеш-Фелшечордаяраш, 7. Сарваш, 8. Кишкьорьош-Вагохид, 9. Кишкьорьош-Цебепуста, 10. Будапеща; b. Костена пластина с поредица от руноподобни графеми от Сарваш (по Garam 2002, fig. 35)

Fig. 20: a. Location of the "7th – 10th c. runic monuments" from the Middle Danube area (after Ердели 1989, 265): 1. Nagyszentmiklós (Sânnicolau Mare, Romania), 2. Környe, 3. Szekszárd-Palánk, 4. Homokmégy-Halom, 5. Jánoshida-Tótkérpuszta, 6. Szentes-Felsőcsordajárás, 7. Szarvas, 8. Kiskőrös-Vágóhíd, 9. Kiskőrös-Cebe puszta, 10. Budapest; b. Bone plate with runiform graphemes from Szarvas (after Garam 2002, fig. 35)

тата на производство на последните съдове от съкровището, в това число и повечето от тези с Kerbschrifts и с останалите надписи, да е в началото на IX в., след раздробяването на целокупния Аварски хаганат, когато той съществува под формата на малки политически единици (Pohl 2002, 323 – 328, спец. 327). Мнение за дата на производство на част от съдовете в съкровището между 800 и 850 г., сиреч в поставарско време, отстояват в миналото и чеха Кл. Бенда, както и други автори (Ердейи 2016, 68, 88 и сл.).

Другият важен пункт от последните проучвания са оповестените предварителни резултати от изследванията върху златарските техники, използвани за съдовете от НСМ. Според тях, откроените по дата на своето производство групи съдове „*е възможно ... да са по-близо една до друга*" (Zhuber-Okrog 2017, 28 и сл.).

Много важни аргументи за датата на съдовете са техните Kerbschrifts (Bálint 2002, 74, 77; Róna-Tas 2002, 125, 128; Zhuber-Okrog 2017, 33). Находки като игленика от кост от Сарваш от 1983 г. и пластина за лък, също от кост, от района на Кишкундорожма от 2004 г., са с решаващо значение за тезата, че съкровището е „*продукт на аварското златарство*" от VII – VIII в., работещо в духа на афинитета на аварите към византийската култура (Bálint 2002, 74). Според изследването на А. Рона-Таш 15 от руноподобните букви от НСМ намират пълно съответствие със засвидетелстваните върху костения игленик от Сарваш 27 знака, както и с 9 от буквите в късносредновековното писмо на секелите от Трансилвания (Róna-Tas 2002, 121, 125, 127, Tabl. Nr. 3, Tabl. Nr. 4) (обр. 6b).

Това доказва само местни корени и вековна устойчивост на руноподобно писмо в земите на дн. Източна Унгария, западна Румъния и Трансилвания, където са съсредоточени повечето от находищата на „рунически паметници" от ранното средновековие (Эрдели 1989, 263 и сл.) (обр. 20a). Остава под съмнение обаче възможността всички находки с Kerbschrifts от там да са само „късноаварски". Напротив, за някои от тях се допуска да са от следаварско време (Ердейи 2016, 68, 70).

Важен за нашето изследване е и изводът на А. Рона-Таш, че руноподобното писмо от НСМ – Сарваш може да се отнесе по произход към семитското писмо и трудно може да се приеме за същинско руническо (Róna-Tas 2002, 121 – 123). Нашето разчитане на буквени или числови символи от съдовете е в съгласие с него. А. Рона-Таш пръв предлага тази нова, според него, писменост с неясен език да се означава условно като „дунавска", а И. Кизласов, за да я разграничи с писмото от Мурфатлар и Североизточна България, предложи да бъде определена като „тиско" писмо (по името на р. Тиса) (Кызласов 1994, 35 – 37).

Ние считаме, че руноподобните текстове от НСМ и Сарваш са криптографско писмо, привнесено най-вероятно от Близкия Изток и развито в Средното Подунавие, както по-късно и на Долен Дунав, за нуждите на установили се там секти от християни-гностици. В същинска писменост то прераства, както изглежда, доста по-късно само у т. нар. секлери в Трансилвания, въз основа и на други местни източници. Ролята на аварското общество в този избор не може да се обоснове засега с неопровержими доказателства, тъй като находките от Сарваш и другите находища специално на изток от Тиса трудно могат да се датират преди края на VIII в. Доколкото можем да се осланяме на представения през 2002 г. от А. Рона-Таш препис на знаците от игленика от Сарваш, те, както и върху съдовете от НСМ, се транскрибират като низ от предимно гласни букви, което за нас е указание, че и те са тайнопис, а не същинско писмо (обр. 20b). За разлика от текстовете от НСМ обаче поредицата от знаци от Сарваш не предлага, поне за нас днес, възможности за дешифриране.[18] Това ни дава основа-

[18] На друго мнение по въпроса са редица авторитетни учени като Г. Векони, С. Байчоров, А. Рона-Таш, И. Кизласов и други (Ердейи 2016, 83 – 85).

ние да мислим, че Kerbschrifts от НСМ предхождат тези от Сарваш, които изглеждат по-скоро като поредица от нечетими знаци, отколкото като криптирани текстове.

При тази ситуация трябва да се насочим към търсене на източници и данни за присъствието на гностико-християнски идеи в района на Среден Дунав през ранното средновековие и по-специално към края на VIII и първата половина на IX в.

Идеите на класическия гностицизъм на практика не приключват своето съществуване през Късната античност, а през Средновековието търпят най-различни превъплъщения (Стефанов 2008, 19 и сл.). Поради това, днес е извънредно трудно тяхното проследяване единствено по материални останки и археологическа информация. Един от най-устойчивите клонове на гностицизма е учението на Манес и неговите последователи – манихеите, коментирано критично и в началото на IX в. от византийски ортодоксални дейци като Теодор Студит (Стефанов 2008, 21, бел. 25).[19] Дуалистичното учение на Манес е своеобразно развитие на идеите на класическия гностицизъм от началото на III в. и проявява изключителна виталност, включително и сред славяните и българите, задавайки основата на богомилството и другите дуалистични учения през Средновековието (Dujčev 1968, 411 sqq.; Стефанов 2008, 192 и сл.). Един от неговите предшественици – Вардесан Едески (+222 г.) е създател на учение, което е „*особена форма на източния гносис*“, а самият той, според Ипполит Римски, е пряк епигон на Валентин, но вместо за 30, пише за 7 Еона. От тях произлиза Небесният Христос, наречен Син на Живота. Той е познат на византийски автори чак до XIV – XV в. В послание на неокесарийския епископ Стилиян до папа Стефан VI (885 – 891) се съобщава за Сантаварин, баща на близкия до константинополския патриарх Фотий „*незнатен и неизвестен чародеец и магьосник Авадий*“, който бил „*от манихейската ерес и се занимаваше с магьосничество*“. Въпросният Сантаварин бил избягал „***при българите,** които* (тогава – П. Г.) *още боледуваха от безбожие и неблагочестие. Прочее и той сам се отрече от Христовата вяра*“ (ГИБИ 1961, 115). Това указание е ясен пример за заселване в България на „манихеи“, „магьосници“ и „чародеи“, които биха могли да са носители и на идеи от съхранените във византийския Изток гностически учения.

Но и самото Валентинианство, с което определено се свързват някои от текстовете от НСМ, е запазила се до късно гностическа секта. Тя продължава да съществува „*в дълбоката византийска провинция чак до VIII в.*“ и техни общини се споменават в едно от правилата на Трулския църковен събор от 692 г. (Стефанов 2008, 191 – 192, бел. 574 и 575). Освен това през Късната античност е документиран и неин „италийски“ клон.

Единственото свидетелство, което предлага косвена информация за това, че на Среден Дунав през VI в. са живели хора, които могат да са носители на гностически идеи, е известното съобщение на Псевдо-Кесарий за назоваване на Дунав с името на библейската река Фисон и за обитаващи на Среден Дунав „славяни“ и „фисонити“ (Φυσωνῖται) (ГИБИ 1954, 190 – 193). За да подчертае връзка на фисонитите с голямата европейска река, той подчертава, че те били наричани още „дунавци“ (Danoúbioi), т. е. според „ромейското“, а не съгласно гръцкото или готско име на реката. В тази връзка той говори и за живеещи там „Рипиани“. За това название се приема, че произлиза от латинската дума за „бряг“ – ripa и това дава основание на изследователите да го свързват с жителите на провинция Dacia Ripensis (Курта 2009, 53 – 54).

[19] За връзка на руноподобните надписи от НСМ с дуалистични учения от Средновековието се досеща В. П. Даркевич и допуска съдовете да са използвани в ритуали на разпространената още през X в. на Балканите секта на богомилите, които използват също двойни съдове за своите квазихристиянски ритуали (Даркевич 1976). В. Хаусиг също не изключва възможността съдовете да са използвани от християнската секта на павликяните в България и дори допуска те да са били погребани отначало заедно с високопоставен български аристократ и после отнесени на унгарска територия при някое от маджарските нашествия в началото на XI в. (Haussig 1985, 17 sqq.; Ердейи 2016, 71 – 72, 80).

Но съчинението на Псевдо-Кесарий има богословско-догматичен характер и представя редица съвременни или по-стари християнски ереси и хетеродоксии, включително и манихейството (Баришић 1952, 37 и сл.; Dujčev 1965, 27, n. 3; Милтенов 2006, 75). Свидетелство за неговите познания върху гностическите схващания е обяснението, което дава за горните и долни небесни води (Баришић 1952, 45 – 46). Интересен детайл у Псевдо-Кесарий е, че на друго място в своето съчинение той споменава за „*западни фисонски речни кучета* (kynopotamoi)", т. е. бобри, за които се знае, че са се срещали в Дунав до средата на XIX в. в района на Смедерево (Баришић 1952, 46, бел. 7).[20] Псевдо-Кесарий говори още за т. нар. „*барушитинске жабе*" и „*евфратски грифони*". Това донякъде напомня за „фауната" върху кана № 7 от НСМ.

В тази връзка изглежда резонно да допуснем Псевдо-Кесарий да е използвал названието Ῥιπιανοῖς за част от онези, които живеят край браговете на Дунав, наричайки го Δανούβης, т. е. според предпочитания от римляните хидроним. В този смисъл то се явява паралелно название за онези крайречни жители, които не са славяни, а са били наричани, или пък са предпочитали да се самоопределят, според библейското название на голямата река – Φυσωνῖται. С оглед на това, определението Ῥιπιάνοι изглежда да е латинизирана калка на еднозначното гръцко название, което е било предпочитано от тези, които са търсели всякаква възможност за откриване на мястото на „земния Рай" и неговите митично преливащи се една в друга „райски реки". В този смисъл бихме допуснали това да са привърженици на една от най-разпространените гностически секти от Близкия Изток, а именно т. нар. Перати. Според Иполит Римски, тяхното название (περίται, περατικοί) се дължи на основната им доктрина за „преминаването" на отвъден бряг на море или река, схващано като акт на „пречистване" от Водите на първичната Бездна и Хаоса, считани за източник на разложение и упадък (Dupont-Sommer 1946, 64 – 69). Според Климент Александрийски обаче името си Ператите дължат на мястото, където се е зародила тяхната секта (Dupont-Sommer 1946, 69 , n. 1). За него са изказани различни предположения, но най-удачно ни се струва това да е отвъдният „бряг" (πέραν) на другата „райската река" Ефрат, чието сирийско, сиреч автентично, название е именно Perāth (Добрев 1982, 27). Тя именно е била приемана за първоначална граница на Богоизбрания библейски народ с околния свят (ППБЭС I 1992, кол. 830) и в този смисъл е била приемана за място на освобождаване от мръсотията на т. нар. Bythos. По-късно, такива места за обитаване на гностическите общини са били търсени и в други райони в покрайнините на тогавашния цивилизован свят, следствие на преследванията им от ортодоксалната Църква.

При своето описание на Дунав-Фисон Псевдо-Кесарий посочва, че населението там проявява разнообразни, често противоположни особености в своя начин на живот и обществена организация. Загатва и за категория хора, които имат начин на живот, който не е характерен нито за славяните, нито за умерените и „изнежени" (по думите на Фл. Курта) „рипиани" в Крайбрежна Дакия.

Въпросът е кои са хората с особени нрави и дали те именно не са се самоопределяли като „фисонити"? Няма съмнение обаче, че тези последните са приемали Истър-Дунав за „райската Фисон" и са обвързвали своя произход с библейската представа за създадената от Бог земна твърд и с началото на „същинското" източно християнство (Аверинцев 1985, 5 и сл.). В своите отговори 141 – 144 самият Псевдо-Кесарий се занимава с въпроса за мястото на Рая – в небето или на земята (Dujčev 1965, 28). В общохристиянските представи четирите райски реки са и символ на началото на християнството. Според Иполит Римски гностиците им дават друга идентификация (Février 1956, 179 – 199; Février 1958, 295 sqq., fig. 2, 3; Стефанов 2008, 189 и сл.). В тър-

[20] Според В. Тъпкова-Заимова, в този именно пасаж на Псевдо-Кесарий под „западни фисонски речни кучета" става въпрос не за животни, а за „люде, които живеят край река Фисон (т. е. Дунав)", вж. Тъпкова-Заимова 2009, 51, бел. 31.

сене на мястото на земния Едем коментаторите на библейските книги го поместват не само в Месопотамия, Сирия или Египет (приемайки Нил също за една от четирите райски реки), но например и в Закавказието, където библейската Фисон се идентифицира с Фазис (дн. Аракс) (ППБЭС 1992, 841, за реката вж.: Добрев 1982, 23, бел. 6 и 27).[21] Изглежда, че на тази основа още преди средата на VI в. в определени среди възниква идеята, че и Среден Дунав, а и неговият паралелно течащ ляв приток – Тиса, е изтичащата от земния рай река Фисон.

Така че заселването на подобни преселници отвъд Среден Дунав с Тиса[22] може да се приеме за целенасочен акт за търсене на новия Едем и на желания „бряг" на тамошната „райска река" – Фисон. Още повече, че това именно е първоначалната римска провинция Dacia Ripensis. Франкският автор от IX в. Айнхард продължава да я нарича „Крайдунавска Дакия" (Daciam Danubio) и тя се е намирала срещу „*двете Панонии и към лежащата на другия Дунавски бряг Дакия*" (utramque Pannoniam, et adpositam **in altera Danubii ripa Datiam**) (ЛИБИ 1960, 31).[23] През VI в. тя именно е била обитавана, наред със „славяни" и от „рипиани" и „фисонити". За началните десетилетия на IX в. обаче биографът на Карл Велики не споменава нищо за тях, а пише за някакви „Абодрити" с „прозвище" „Преденеценти", които били към 824 г. „съседи на българите" и обитатели на същата „Крайдунавска Дакия", за която твърди, че е била завоювана от франките. Няколко десетилетия по-късно т. нар. Баварски географ нарича това население Ostabtrezi (Гюзелев 1981, 75 – 76, бел. 42; Georgiev 2014, 107 – 109). Двете определения съответстват по смисъл на „рипианите" у Псевдо-Кесарий, не само защото името означава „обитатели на крайбрежие", но и защото латинското ripa е обозначение на естествена (речна) граница (Georgiev 2014, 111, 117).

Всичко това дава основание да се мисли, че „рипианите" – „фисонити", т. е. „дунавци" (при Тиса) (в старобългарския превод: Фисонитанѣ, еже и Дънавианѣ) са измежду предшествениците на Абодритите "qui vulgo Praedenecenti vocantur" у Айнхард. За смисъла, който носи въпросното „вулгаризирано" прозвище, има изказани различни мнения. Доскоро ние считахме, че то произлиза от латиноезичното praedonae, сиреч „разбойници, грабители" и се основава на свидетелствата още на късноантични и ранносредновековни автори, че местното население се занимава с разбойничество и е известно със своето богатство и „жестокост" преди предприетата от франките към 796 г. негова християнизация (Georgiev 2014, 114, 117). В аварско и следаварско време то е било под политическия контрол на Хаганата и неговите остатъци, а от 30-те години на IX в. е включено ефективно в пределите на българската държава заедно с колонизирани там изселници-арменци от Източна Тракия (Георгиев 2020, 51 – 70).

Сведенията на Айнхард не оставят особени съмнения, че Абодритите-Преденеценти са хетерогенно по произход население, което през началните десетилетия на IX в. живее в буферната зона между Франкската и Българската държава, чиито владения след 803 г. са включ-

[21] По аналогичен начин и жителите на считаната за Фисон река Фазис, възможно горното течение на Ефрат, да са били наричани Fasianoi (Добрев 1982, 27, бел. 16).

[22] Страбон познава Тиса с името **Pathissos**, но счита, че нейните леви притоци – Кьорьош и Марош, се вливат директно в Дунав (Szadecky-Kardoss 1953, 77 sqq.). Това име на Тиса, особено без своя предикат, съдържа именната форма -thissus, която се налага през средните векове за големия ляв приток на Среден Дунав. Още по-важно е обаче, че изписана на гръцки с Theta (Thissus), тя се отличава от автентичното библейско название на райската река Фисон само в транскрибиране на началната „тета" с „Ф". Забележително е също, че в старобългарския превод на съчинението на Псевдо-Кесарий името Φυσωνῖται е транскрибирано като: Фисонитанѣ, еже и Дънавианѣ. Срв. Dujčev 1965, 30, n. 2; Милтенов 2006, 79. В такъв случай е възможно антична представа за Тиса с нейните притоци като част от хидрографската мрежа на Среден Дунав да е участвала по някакъв начин във формирането на представата за Среден Дунав като библейската река Фисон.

[23] Важно е да се посочи тук, че Айнхард споменава поименно и провинции от илирийския бряг и това се съгласува с посочването на Псевдо-Кесарий, че освен Рипианите и илирите наричат Дунав – Δανούβης.

вали поне част от левия бряг на Долна Тиса. Днес, разбира се, е много трудно да се установи западна и северна граница на Абодритите-Преденеценти и мнозина изследователи продължават да приемат, че това е славянско племе, обитавало земите по левия бряг на Дунав, но срещу устията на Тимок и Сава (Златарски 1970, 400 – 401; ЛИБИ 1960, 34, бел. 9; Szőke 2014, 41 – 43). Повече основания обаче има заключението на В. Гюзелев, че „земите на абодритите-преденеценти са се намирали източно от Тиса в днешната Банатска област, а не на двата бряга на Дунав, както се смята от по-голямата част от изследвачите" (Гюзелев 1981, 76 – 77). В тази насока заслужава внимание и указанието на автора на втората част от текста на Баварския географ, че Остерабтрезите са сред тези „*които обитават близо до техните* (на франките – П. Г.) *граници*". Там някъде „по направление на Дунав", според В. Гюзелев, следва да се ситуират споменатите малко преди средата на IX в. **Phesnuzi** (Фесnуци) (Гюзелев 1981, 74, бел. 36 и 80), чието название напомня за това на енигматичните Physsonitae.

Днес, в светлината на възможността за историческа връзка на Абодритите-Остерабтрези от IX в. с Фисонитите-дунавци и Рипиани от Крайдунавска Дакия през VI в., е възможно „енигматичното" название Преденеценти да произлиза от друго латиноезично понятие или израз. В тази насока нашето внимание се спира на глаголите prae-cento „произнасям магически думи" и praecino, -cinui, -cecini „предричам, предвещавам". В светлината на това е възможно вулгаризираното означение на Източните Абодрити да е включвало и понятие като praecentores, т. е. тези които произнасят магически слова и предричат нещо. В този смисъл е много вероятно vulgo прозвището **praedenecenti** да е производно от глаголите praecento и cedo, cessi, cessus „минавам, преминавам напред" или пък „минавам, смятам се за някого". Това ни дава основание да предположим, че същинската форма на въпросното прозвище е било *prae-ceden-tores, такива, които се правят, че произнасят магически думи (песни). Това определение подхожда напълно за членове на секта, които произнасят тайнствени думи в областта на буквената мистика и гностическите спекулации.

С наличието на преселници от византийския Изток можем да обясним и впечатляващата устойчивост на представата за Среден Дунав като райската река Фисон, просъществувала през цялото Ранно средновековие. Във византийската литература тя е застъпена сравнително широко, а оттам прониква и остава до късно в средновековната българска книжнина (Чолова 2009, 492 и сл.). За Дунав като Фисон през втората половина на X в. пише например Лъв Дякон и то в контекста на своя разказ за превземането на българската столица Преслав през 971 г. (ГИБИ 1964, 259 – 260). „*Казват*, пише той, *че Истър е една от реките, които изтичат от Едема и се нарича Фисон (Φισῶν). Извира от Изток, но се скрива под земята по непостижимата мъдрост на Създателя, а после пак излиза на земята на запад от Келтските планини, след това се извива през Европа и, разделена на пет устия, влива водите си в Понт, наричан Евксински. Някои предполагат, че Фисон е реката, която, известна под името Ганг, прекосява Индийската земя, където се пази камъкът смарагд*".

Важно е и уточнението, което прави в своя Лексикон Йоан Зонара, а именно, че Истър е „*реката, наречена у Евреите Фисон*" (ГИБИ 1965, 208). Така той пояснява, че „райското" си название Истър/Дунав дължи на хора с близкоизточен произход, които той обобщено представя за „евреи". Какво се крие под този етноним може да е предмет на специално разискване. Всеки случай в писмото на испанския евреин Хасдай ибн Шафрут до хазарския цар Йосиф е посочено, че в страната Х-н-г-рин (Унгария) живеят евреи, които пренасят въпросното писмо до Хазарския хаган (Коковцов 1932, 65 – 66; Гюзелев 1981, 122).

Напоследък П. Шрайнер публикува непознат доскоро текст на лексикографска лема от началото на X в., посветена на късноантичното, но живо и през средновековието, схващане на Дунав като Райската река Фисон *(Φησὼν)* (Schreiner 2016, 220 – 229).

Изложеното по-горе върху надписите от НСМ ни дава определени основания да допускаме, че земите при Долна Тиса и Среден Дунав са били едно от най-късните огнища на валентинианския гностицизъм. Там поклонниците му са се настанили най-вероятно още преди средата на VI в., афиширайки се като „фисонити“. Те или подобни на тях сектанти са продължили да обитават своя „нов“ Едем и да спазват ритуалите на късния християнски гностицизъм и през VIII и през първата половина на IX в.

Важна опорна точка за тяхната историческа идентификация изглежда да е споменаването през 777 г. в документ за основаването на Кремсмюнстерския манастир в Горна Австрия на някой си ***iopan qui vocatur Physso***, който бил на служба при баварския херцог Тасило III, който по време на своето независимо от Франкската империя управление е поддържал за известно време съюзни отношения и с Аварския хаганат (Pohl 2002, 305, Anm. 147; Славова 2010, 87; Szőke 2014, 9). Счита се, Фисо е бил „сановник“ сред местните славяни и е имал роля в прокарването на западната граница на Аварския хаганат. Нашето внимание е насочено не само към титлата „жупан“, която се счита за най-старото нейно документиране, но и към името или прозвището, с което е записан той. Изписано с Ph- и -y-, то отговаря на латинския запис на името на река Фисон и е много вероятно да произлиза от него, независимо дали е собствено име или прозвище. Двойното -ss- насочва донякъде към предположение, че става въпрос за производно на квазиетнонима Φυσωνῖται, Фисонитѣне. Важно е да се изтъкне още, че жупан Фисо е споменат заедно с двама свои подчинени, които носят неславянски, може би ираноезични лични имена Талиуп и Спаруна (Славова 2010, 87). Това, разбира се, подсилва нашето убеждение, че споменатите в тюркоезичния надпис върху съд № 21 от НСМ жупани Бойла и Бутаул са могли да бъдат членове на гностико-християнска общност на Тиса и Среден Дунав като една от „райските реки“ – Фисон. В административно-политическо отношение те биха могли да са сановници в разпадащия се Аварски хаганат. Не по-малко вероятна е обаче и възможността те да са били част от българската администрация в земите между Тиса и Дунав при управлението на българските владетели Омуртаг и неговите приемници (Георгиев 2020, 51 – 70). Към това именно води от една страна предлаганата напоследък дата на съкровището, а също и констатацията, че титлата „жупан“ остава недоказана (nicht belegt) у аварите, докато у българите тя е засвидетелствана в домашни паметници от IX и X в. (Pohl 2002, 305, Anm. 150; Славова 2010, 86 и сл.; Николов 2017, 73 – 74). В България, особено до нейната официална и пълна християнизация, те са играели важна роля и са били част от нейния управленски елит, както и в Хаганата или местните славянски и други княжества. За клерикалните среди във франкската държава обаче те са били особено население, което обитава пограничните райони с България и предпочитат да ги определят с прозвището Praedenecenti, сиреч хараразбойници, които се правят, че говорят магически слова, което в общи линии съответства на определението „чародеи“ в гръцки източници.

Притежанието на толкова скъпо и ефектно съкровище от съдове за гностическа секта от фисонити-дунавци изглежда най-правдоподобно, ако се допусне, че е извършено към края на Аварското господство на Среден Дунав, може би след разгрома през и след 796 г. в началото от франки, а след това и от българи. За адептите на късния християнски гностицизъм там това е било догматически набелязана цел и легитимация на тяхното самоопределение като „фисонити“, т. е народ от земния рай. С други думи съкровището е било съставено като материално свидетелство за истинността на следния библейски текст (Бит., 2: 10 – 12):

„От Едем изтичаше река, за да напоява рая, и подир се разклоняваше на четири реки. Името на едната е Фисон: тя обикаля цялата земя Хавилска, там, гдето има злато. Златото на тази земя е добро и там има бдолах (скъпоценна смола с качества на драгоценен камък – П. Г.) и камък оникс“.

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THE INSCRIPTIONS FROM NAGYSZENTMIKLÓS AND THEIR CULTURAL AND HISTORIC ATTRIBUTION

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SUMMARY

The goal of this study is to present all the inscriptions on the vessels from the Nagyszentmiklós treasure (NSM) as authentic evidence for its function in the Gnostic Christian's community in the Middle Danube area during the second half of the 8th and the first half of the 9th c.

1. Turkic language inscription with Greek letters on vessel Nr. 21 (fig. 2)

The inscription unravels around a lavishly decorated cross, and most scholars highlight its Christian character. The author adheres to the interpretations of V. Thomsen, St. Mladenov, A. Róna-Tas and others and is inclined to present the following interpretation: "*The Župan Buyla made this cup, a cup which the Župan Butaul decorated inside as a (ritual) Christian vessel*". The inscription is of votive character and highlights the contribution of the named donors with the title/position of zô/oapan. In the light of this and the other inscriptions it can be considered not only as administrative, but also as a sign of leadership over a religious community.

2. Quasi-Greek inscription on vessels Nrs. 9 and 10 (fig. 3)

The vessels have the same shape as the one with the grant inscription. They are also decorated with crosses, and the inscriptions are unravelling around these. This shows their similarity in idea and function. That is, it is also confirmed by the readings of the texts prepared until now. The text has 22 Greek majuscules which start and terminate with staurogramma with the value of a "Chrismon". With that, their number goes up to 24. All of them are deformed on purpose, seemingly to imitate the considered divine letters from the Syrian writing. The biggest grapheme follows the ancient image of the Semitic letter wâw which is considered a Sign-insignia (Épisémon) of God and also of his Son, together with the digamma and upsilon from the Greek alphabet. From below, a small sign appearing as a reversed "digamma" is "attached" to it. In the runiform inscriptions from the treasure it is present 16 times exactly as a Greek replacement for the Syrian wâw. This proves the relationship of the quasi-Greek inscription to them and is the initial key for their decryption. This is also evident by the presence of two letters **ON**, inserted in front of the staurogramma. They represent the familiar denotement for the God-Father – **ΟΩΝ** as the "The True (God)". The same, but as an encrypted two-symbol combination – **ΩΝ** is present in the beginning of the runiform text on vessel Nr. 8.

The small letters at the end of the inscription are read as the combination (?) ***ΧΗΛΙLΟΝ.*** In that, we could see a term used by the Gnostics in the so-called school of Valentine (2nd c.) to describe the lowest category of believers – Hylikoi (Hylics), i.e. "corporeal" (material).

After this commentary, the text deciphered already in the past, could be read like this: ***"(The) Holy Jesus, Wâw, The True (God). Christ, through the water (gave) peace to the initiated(?) Hylics".***

3. Runiform inscriptions (fig. 4, fig. 5, fig. 6, etc.)

These are engraved on the outer surfaces only of 14 out of the 23 vessels from the treasure. Their precise recording we owe to R. Göbl, and here we will only make small corrections and additions to it. The number of the texts quoted so far is 15 but it is actually larger. Basic elements are the combinations and the single symbols marked by R. Göbl with the letters A – T. Their total count is at least 32. The graphemes used are also approximately the same number. Adhering to numbers around 30 is associated with some concepts about the letters as "elements" of the Creation.

The author suggests the reading for most of the combinations should be done from the left to the right and offers his reasons for that. Some of them though need to be read from the right to the left or both ways (the so-called karkinom).

The process of deciphering of the combinations from NSM includes recognising the nature and features of the graphemes used (letters, numbers, ligatures), followed by gradual uncovering of their phonetic and semantic value. In reality this is a process of deciphering a cryptogram, used by its authors to protect the secret of the Knowledge (the so-called Gnosis) of the Universe, called Plérôme. The verification of the symbols is carried out consistently by following their use in the corresponding combinations.

Guided by the preference for the vocals in the Greek alphabet established in the Lower Danube, the author begins with the combinations of only vowels (alpha to omega), used instead of theonyms.

The so-called acrophonic Heptagrammatôn can be seen in the combination N and O (fig. 11), while in K the seven vowels are positioned in two opposite groups to the letters ***AEY***, plus another **A** between them (fig. 13b).

The so-called Hexagrammatôn, i.e. a combination of six vocals, is found in combination Q (fig. 12). The graphemes there are again arranged in two groups of symbols, behind which are the same vocals ***AEY***, but they follow order only from the left to the right and each of them has a separate drawing.

The so-called Tetragrammatôn is represented in combinations M and P. In the former 4 symbols are used, while in the latter they are only two and are vocalised as alpha and iota, according to their position in the acrophonic Heptagrammatôn (fig. 4a, b, fig. 5). They can be read in both directions and thus we get the gnostic combination ***IAAI***. The Tetragrammatôn in M is asymmetric and is deciphered as ***IAAE***, probably a variant of writing the theonym Iaô (fig. 13a).

The identification of the graphemes used to encrypt the seven Greek vocals gives the opportunity to decipher the commonly used for the needs of the Gnosis space-time ***Eôn***, which is equivalent to the word God. It can be read 12 times on the vessels from NSM (3 times in A, 2 times in E, 5 times in H and once in F and J).

The text from combinations G and H repeats on different vessels 5 times (fig. 4, fig. 9a, b, fig. 10b). Their symbols though can be identified only if read opposite to the proposed by R. Göbl direction (fig. 4a, b). In H is encoded ***Eôn***, but in front of it there is a peculiar symbol in which the Semitic "***He***" can be recognised, here used because of its numeric value – "Five". So combination H can be read as "The Fifth Eôn". This is the way to formulate the so-called Unspeakable Name of Jesus in some Gnostic speculations, the one He uses in front of the other Eons of the Plérôme. An important proof for the use of this formula is its presence on a big stone plate in Preslav from the 9th – 10th c.

The qualification of Jesus as the "Fifth Eôn" is preceded by another, revealed in combination G. It begins with an imitation of the Semitic wâw and also of the Greek digamma. After that there is a symbol resembling a standing rectangle. In Greek papyrus texts it replaces tò Onoma, i.e. The Name (of God). After that there is the crescent shaped symbol which in the Hexagrammatôn represents the Greek upsilon, but here encrypts the term Hypsistos (Theós), "Suprême (God)". The last grapheme is a ligature between the Greek hi and rô, which we know from the Rosette-seal from Pliska (fig. 17).

Thus decrypted, the text from combinations G and H can be read the following way:

"The symbol-épisémôn Wâw (is) The Name (of) the Suprême Christ, the Fifth Eôn".

Shortened versions have been engraved additionally and with different word order on several more of the vessels.

The four combinations on vessel Nr. 8 (D – A) are the best shaped and longest runiform text (fig. 8). This is not a coincidence. It reveals the true nature of the Supreme deity for the separate categories in the Christian Gnostic community of supporters of the schools of Valentine, Mark and other coryphaeis of the oldest Christian Gnosis. On the basis of the familiar from the other combinations graphemes, we have the following reading:

"God (O)ΩN (=True God), God Hiueh, God Eueh, God-Eôn Wâw (=Suprême) God".

The own name of the Supreme God is written only here. On a magical papyrus in the Coptic language, associated with the sect of the Valentinians, it is written as ***Jeoû***. This is an evidence, that the Gnostic sect members, who owned the treasure from the Middle Danube, were descendants of one of the most famous and authoritative schools in Christian Gnosticism during Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages.

Also noteworthy is that the Name ***Jeoû*** is reproduced in its full and shortened versions. It seems they have been separately pronounced in front of the two upper Valentinian categories – the so-called pneumatikoi (carriers of the Spirit) and the so-called psyxikoi (the ones with just human Soul). For the lowest category – the "hylics", the Name of God was probably announced only through the combination Eôn Hypsitos.

The runiform inscriptions have technical and graphical characteristics which allow the conclusion that they have been engraved in several stages. It is interesting that certain vessels have been engraved copying the original quasi-Greek inscription from Nr. 9 and Nr. 10, but the Turkic from Nr. 21 was not copied.

In most cases the inscriptions are placed over vessels whose shape and decorations pair them. Each bears cryptographic combinations with equal or very similar semantics. This suggests that they could be split in two identical sets, which we conditionally denote as set A and set C (fig. 19).

The vessels with single symbols or ligatures we put in a separate set – B. Their character reveals that they have been intended for someone with an important social status. Because of this we should add here also

plate Nr. 21, which has shape close to Nr. 9 and Nr. 10 and an inscription with "secular" character. Here we should also add cup Nr. 19 which is not inscribed but represents typical Christian symbolism.

The fourth set – D, should include the remaining 6 vessels. They have the most complex and different shapes and rich and diverse decoration, mostly with zoomorphic and anthropomorphic images, but have no inscriptions.

Each of the four sets has probably been intended for a certain circle of the religious community. The distribution has been primarily based on their level of adoption of the Christian Gnosis, but also based on their social status and likely also their gender.

It seems that out of the 4 sets, remains the peculiar and uniquely shaped vessel Nr. 8, as it bears a sacred text with title character, so it deserves to be placed semantically at the head of the hierarchy of the treasure vessels. In the light of the so-called "Book of Jeoû" this particular vessel could be seen as the material expression of the Valentinians' idea about the so-called "Eon of the hoard". According to them it is the seat of the Supreme God and it holds the mystery of the Great Name Bythos (=Abyss, Chaos).

4. Cultural and historical aspects of the inscriptions

The analysis of the inscriptions and the vessels in the treasure clearly shows that it has belonged to a sect of Christian Gnostics, most probably Valentinians, and it has played an important role in their cult and rituals. The research of F. Daim, Cs. Bálint and other scholars on the shapes and the decorations of the vessels prove that most of them were made between the mid-7th c and the end of the 8th c. Other scholars like M. Schulze-Dörrlamm insist that some of the objects could be from the first half of the 9th c. Based on all this is the conclusion of the inscription interpreters, that those are a local occurrence from the region of Middle Danube and Tisza, most commonly associated with Avars or Bulgarians.

The decryption of the inscriptions however does not allow attributing of the treasure to a concrete ethno-cultural tradition. Some of the inscriptions were created at the vessel's production, so it ties those to the specific needs of the religious and everyday life of a local Christian community. Although they were far from the birthplace of the antique Gnosis, they continued on that path towards their spiritual cleansing and improvement. Most probably they were emigrants from the Near East, which settled in the region of Middle Danube and Tisza during the times of the Avar Khaganate, or maybe even before that. In this respect, the conclusion of A. Róna-Tas, supported by our specific observations, about the similarity of the symbols of NSM and Szarvas to the Semitic writing, is important to us.

Irrevocable proof for that conclusion is foremost the deciphered texts and symbols from the runiform inscriptions.

Written and archaeological data about the presence of Gnostics in the region of Middle Danube are scarce and mostly date from the Late Antiquity. There is no hard evidence about migration and/or presence of adepts of such beliefs in the Early Middle Ages. We have only general conclusions about the relative stability of some sects, including those who followed the teaching of Valentine. It is accepted that they existed in the deep Byzantine province up to the 8th c.

In this respect it is imperative to undertake review and a new commentary of the written and other evidence about the spiritual life in the region during the Early Middle Ages. A special interest from the author's point of view is the evidence of Pseudo-Caesar from the middle of the 6th c. about the naming of the Danube with the name of the "heavenly river" Fusôn (Feissôn), as well as his statement that those living alongside it call themselves "Fusônitai and Danoúbioi", but also Ripianoi. The persistent calling of the Danube with the biblical name Fisson is recorded by a number of Byzantine authors from the 10th – 12th c., and proves it is not just a borrowed literature term but a conservative image of the Heaven on Earth (Edem) in certain circles, which could be emigrants from the East on the Middle Danube.

The accumulation of this expensive treasure of ritual vessels engraved with secret writing and other inscriptions seems to have been completed by a sect of Valentinians, self-proclaiming as "Fissonites" towards the end of the Avar domination in the region. That was not just a singular goal, but a part of their doctrine and legitimisation as a community which lives and prospers in the "new Edem" in confirmation of the following biblical text (Genesis 2: 10 – 12):

"A river watering the garden flowed from Eden; from there it was separated into four headwaters. The name of the first is the Phisson; it winds through the entire land of Havilah, where there is gold...".

Key words: Nagyszentmiklós treasure, inscriptions (Turkic, grant, quasi-Greek, and runiform), cryptography, Gnosticism, sect of the Valentinians, Edem, Danube River, "heavenly river" Fusôn (Feissôn), Pseudo-Caesar, "Fusônitai" and "Ripianoi", Einhard, Abodrites Praedenecenti