THE UNIVERSITY OF SHUMEN
THE FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

STUDIA ACADEMICA ŠUMENENSIA

THE EMPIRE AND BARBARIANS IN SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE IN LATE ANTIQUITY AND EARLY MIDDLE AGES

edited by
Stoyan Vitlyanov and Ivo Topalilov

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Introduction

by Stoyan Vitlyanov and Ivo Topalilov



This is the first volume of a new annual periodical that the Department of History and Archaeology of the University of Shumen has started entitled *Studia academica Šumenensia* (SAŠ). The main purpose of this periodical is to allow various topics of the history and archaeology of the Balkans and South–Eastern Europe which are quite often highly controversial to be discussed by the broader scholarly of the region. This is why the periodical will be focused on topics of general interest throughout the region and scholars from various countries will be invited to contribute to discussion. This is why the SAŠ will be published entirely in international languages – English, German, French, Italian, Russian and Spanish. In order to broaden the range of the discussion, an interdisciplinary approach will be employed and historians, archaeologists, classicists, epigraphists etc. will be invited and most welcomed.

In this first volume of SAŠ the reader will find contributions on some aspects of the huge topic of uneasy imperial-barbarian relations in Late Antiquity and Early Middle Ages in South-Eastern Europe. The papers contained in this volume are focused on four themes, which cover the vast Danube region south of ancient Pannonia dealing with the impact on both directions – of the Empire and of the barbarians respectively upon lands within the Empire or that once belonged to it. The first theme is presented by the paper of Georgi Atanasov dedicated to one of the most prominent personalities and statesmen born in the region during Antiquity – Flavius Aetius. The second theme is concentrated on some aspects of the material culture of the barbarians within the limits of the Empire and on the Danube limes. This section is opened by the paper of Monika Milosavljević dealing with the question of how the barbarian presence in the past can be identified based on material culture, and the practice of associating the processes of barbarization, disintegration and destruction with particular ethnicities based on the archaeological record. In the next article of Dorel Bondoc and Mirela Cojoc are treated two large brooches of the first half of the 6th century made of silver and gold, found recently in Sucidava-Celei and assigned to German *foederati*. In the third paper Artur Błażejewski is dealing with the archaeological evidence for Vandal settlements in the Danube area which existed until the beginning of the 5th century emphasizing the intercultural links with some local tribes. The fourth

paper in this theme belongs to Alexander Stanev and it focuses on certain elements of costume which – once correlated with the historical data – reveal that throughout Late Antiquity in *Moesia Secunda* there existed certain areas of persistent Germanic presence with a predominant Gothic element.

The third theme focuses on the intercultural links between the empire and the barbarians, and the impact in both directions. The paper of Totyu Totev presents what may well be the penetration of Christianity in a possible barbarian enclave, located near Abritus, or among the local inhabitants. More clearly identified is the impact of the barbarians on the topography and urbanization of Philippopolis, the capital of the province of Thrace in the second half of 6th century as revealed in the paper of Ivo Topalilov. The barbarian threat eventually would lead to the end of the Early Byzantine city. This theme is closed by the paper of Stoyan Vitlyanov dealing with the process of adoption of some separate elements of the already settled old culture by the new-comers and the new state, viz. the Bulgarians.

The fourth theme is connected with the newly established states on the former territory of the empire. The paper of Danijel Dzino treats social structures in Dalmatia from the 6th to mid-9th century which were modified in the 7th century after changes in the Dalmatian elite starting in the 5th and 6th century, rather than, as has been assumed, by massive migration and settlement of the Slavs. The next paper in this theme of Nedelcho Nedelchev is advancing the idea that in fact the Bulgarian state was established under Gostun-Organas, the predecessor of Kurt-Kubrat, and that the state system was preserved after the breakup of Old Great Bulgaria.

We would like to acknowledge the work of Dr. Katie Low and Dr. James Hargrave who with patience and good nature contributed to the English proofs of the texts, but also made valuable comments on the draft. The present volume would never have been published in this way without their assistance.

We also owe thanks to the advisers Ivan Karayotov and Angel Nikolov.

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The portrait of Flavius Aetius (390-454) from Durostorum (Silistra) inscribed on a consular diptych from Monza

Georgi Atanasov

Abstract: Born in Durostorum (modern Silistra) around 390 the Roman commander *(magister militum)*, consular and patrician Flavius Aetius could be related to the consular diptych from the treasure house in Monza cathedral (Italy) (figs. 1, 2). I personally deny its one-sided identification as a record with the image of Stilicho as I have come to that conclusion studying the images on the medallion of the warrior shield (figs. 5, 6). On the upper surface of the medallion two images are engraved with the names of an empress with a crown with propenduls and a young emperor who I associate with Galla Placidia and the juvenile emperor Valentinian III. During their mutual reign of the empire in 432 Flavius Aetius for the first time was promoted a consular, which was an event coinciding with the date of the diptych. Aetius's wife and his son Karpilio (fig. 4) as a young *tribunus et notaries* are engraved on the reverse side.

Key words: consular, diptych, Durostorum, late antiquity, medallion

One of the most universally famous figures in the nineteen hundred years Durostorum-Drustar-Silistra's history is Flavius Aetius. He was born in 390 in Durostorum, to a noble family descended from the aristocratic general Gaudentius, who started his military career in the XIth Claudian legion.[1] We have already had the opportunity to be acquainted with the intriguing life of Aetius, although it is rather surprising that there is no biography of one of the most outstanding and divisive personalities of late antique history.[2] The fact that for a period of thirty years Aetius was a chief commander (magister militum) of the Roman army, a prime patrician, three times a councillor and practically a prime minister in Rome, has made it necessary for his image to

1 Seeck 1894, 701-703; Mommsen 1901, 516-547; Lippold 1979, 105-106.
2 Atanasov & Ivanov 2006, 399-407.

be thoroughly examined. Additionally, during that epoch it was common practice, after a person had been elected as a councillor in the Roman senate, for them to be depicted in formal costume and then for this image to distributed on councillor diptychs, made mainly of ivory.[3] Moreover, it was typical for members of the supreme aristocracy, as well as the emperors elected as councillors, to be depicted in councillor costumes and the insignia that displayed their councillor authority. Historians and art critics have discussed about 50 similar councillor diptychs, among which the most famous are those of Rufius Probianus (380), Probus (406), Felix (428), Sividius (488), Austurius (449), Boethius (477), Aerobindus (506), Clementinus (513), Magnus (518), Philoxenius (525), Basilicus (480, 541), Orestius (530) and even the emperors Anastasius (517), Iustinianus Magnum (521, 540) and Constantine III (640).[4] Among these councillor diptychs there is one of a special character, which is particularly impressive for the quality of its fabrication and unique iconographic scheme – the diptych preserved in the treasury of Monza cathedral (Italy) with a reference number 63 Monza (figs. 1-4). For more than a century this monumental image has attracted the attention of prominent European scholars – historians and art critics, specialists in Roman and Byzantine history and late antique art – such as W. Wallbach, R. Delbrück,[5] A. Rumpf,[6] A. Alföldi,[7] A. Merati,[8] D. Dalbot Rice,[9] R. Konti,[10] I. Bóna,[11] R. Petrovich,[12] M. Shtukin,[13] and many others. Consequently there is not a single literary or research work on late antique history, or on late antique pictorial and applied art, in which the Monza diptych is not mentioned and images of it displayed. It is well known and referred to in specialist and academic journals, lexicons, encyclopedias and so on, and to a certain extent it serves as a symbol of the brief and eventful epoch in Late Antiquity that was marked by the great migration of the peoples.

The councillor diptych from Monza cathedral, numbered 63, has been illustrated and described numerous times in detail, and so in the paper I shall present it briefly. It consists of two parts 32,2x16,2 см in size (figs. 1-4). On the front upper surface a full-length image of a councillor of approximately

3 Delbrück 1929, 4-10.
4 Volbach 1916, 11-16; Delbrück 1929, 84, 93, 99, 100, 103, 1211, № 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 17.
5 Delbrück 1929, 248-248, Abb. 1-3.
6 Rumpf 1957, 28-29.
7 Alföldi 1932, 136, Abb. 1.
8 Merati 1963, 4, Fig. 1-2.
9 Talbot Rice 1966, 7, Fig. 1-3.
10 Konti 1983, 14-16, № 6.
11 Bóna 1991, 237-238.
12 Petrović 1999, 113-119.
13 Shtukin 2005, 328-330.

40-50 years of age is engraved, dressed in a distinguished manner in a tunic, with a richly decorated long chlamys with an onion-shaped fibula, long tight trousers and shoes (*campagii*). The face is oval, gracefully depicted with pleasant features, covered by a neatly-cut beard and average-length hair. The waist is fastened by a belt (*cingulum*) decorated with ornaments, from which a sheath containing a sword is dangling free, covered with precious stones (figs. 1, 2). In his right hand he is holding a spear and in his left a large round shield, on the upper half of which a round medallion is depicted circling the busts of the two figures – relatively young persons (figs. 2, 5, 6). The left figure is better preserved and probably illustrates the features of a young emperor or empress with a headdress from which barely visible pendants (*propenduls*) are hanging loose, and branching in three pearl offshoots. There are also some visible forms probably representing a necklace with pearls. The right figure is of a younger person, almost a child, whose image is badly preserved, and for this reason it is difficult to determine the gender as well as the costume and the exact age of the person.

On the bottom surface of the diptych a noble woman is depicted in a dalmatica with her hair strongly pulled up backwards, earrings, a necklace and a richly decorated belt (figs. 1, 4). Her right hand is facing upright, holding a rose, and the left hand is dangling loose holding a piece of cloth. A figure of a boy is standing next to the female one – or, it is probably better to say, a figure of a youth in noble aristocratic costume similar to that of the commander on the front surface. The youth is dressed in a chiton covered with a long chlamys buttoned with an onion-shaped fibula. The right hand is placed in front of the breast, the left hand is holding a codicil.

The lack of accompanying texts means there have been a number of different views about the identies of the figures on diptych Number 63 from Monza, and from the beginning of the 20th century to the present day the issue has periodically been discussed. At first W. Wallbach's idea, that the main persons were Flavius Aetius and the empress Galla Placidia (425-450), was adopted, from which it would be obvious that the boy is the young emperor Valentinian (425-455).[14] The weak points of this identification are rather evident. The orne and the insignia of the late Roman emperors and empresses are well known and in no way correspond to those of the mother and the young boy on the diptych of Monza. The portraits of Galla Placidia and Valentinian III were also circulated numerous times, and they do not bear any visual similarity to the couple on the reverse surface of the diptych.

In his fundamental research work of 1929 dedicated to the councillor diptychs, R. Delbruck identified the commander on the front surface of the Monza diptych with Stilicho, and on the other surface he was able to identify

14 Volbach 1916, 26, № 17.

the images of the latter's son Euherius and his wife Serena – an opinion which, with various modifications, has been current until now.[15] On the other hand, at the beginning of the 5th century Stilicho was in almost same position as Flavius Aetius in the middle of that century. Stilicho was a brilliant commander (commander-in-chief *magister militum*) of German (Vandal) origin.[16] After the Roman army split into two after the death of Theodosius I (379-395), he became a guardian of the young emperor Honorius of the Western Empire (395-423). In effect Stilicho ruled and protected the Roman Empire at the beginning of the 5th century as a councillor and commander-in-chief. He was married to Serena, recognized as a daughter-niece of the emperor Theodosius I, by whom he had a son and a daughter. In 408 Stilicho was killed by the weak-willed Honorius, which undoubtedly led to a catastrophe – the invasion of Rome by the Goths in the following year. In fact, a man such as the councillor Stilicho at first sight seems to have been worthy of the intricate councillor diptychs from Monza. Furthermore, on the other part of the diptych a noble woman is engraved, wearing lavish aristocratic garments and jewels, and next to her is placed her son - an adolescent dressed in the clothing of a supreme magistrate. The lady resembles Serena, a descendant of the charismatic Theodosius I the Great, and arguably deserves attention accordingly.

At first sight, the images of Stilicho, Euherius and Serena on the Monza Diptych correlate completely with the historical situation at the end of the 4th century. The clothing and age of the individual on the front surface of the diptych match the title and position of Stilicho. R. Delbrück considers that the similarity of the portrait and insignia of the child on the right part of the diptych to the position of Stilicho's son, Euherius, is worth mentioning. The latter actually received the title *tribunus et notarius*, which was accompanied by the presentation of a diptych-codicil, which the figure on the diptych holds in his hand, and the aristocratic chalmys with a fibula, which he wears.

Moreover, according to R. Delbrück the Monza diptych (n. 63) was made to commemorate Euherius's investiture as a *tribunus et notarius* rather than the investiture of his father Stilicho as councilor that is depicted on the front surface. If this is correct, the diptych dates to 395 or slightly later (Euherius was born in 389); according to the author this is proven by the bust images of the two emperors on Stilicho's shield. The author states that these are the young rulers Arcadius (395-408) and Honorius (395-423), who were active emperors during the Stilicho's conciliate (393-423).

R. Delbrück's idea was developed by W. Wallbach. He abandoned his previous ideas about Aetius and Galla Placidia and, in several publications including his fundamental research work *Elfenbeinarbeiten der Spätantike und*

15 Delbrück 1929, 248-248, Abb. 1-3.

16 Mommsen 1903, 101-115.

des frühen Mittelalters,[17] made the idea that Stilicho, Serena and Euherius are depicted on the Monza diptych 'gospel'. He precisely dates the diptych to 400 – the year in which Stilicho was elected as a councillor – and considers that the diptych was made in honour of the event. For more than half a century that view has been deemed correct in academic circles, and has been mentioned in a number of academic and popular science issues and encyclopedias. Some doubts about the exact date and identification of the diptych were expressed by Rumpf[18] and Bóna.[19] On the basis of an in-depth stylistic and comparative analysis of the councillor diptych of Felix from 428 (fig. 19) and the anonymous diptych from Navara, they consider that the Monza diptych dates to a later period and is almost synchronous with Felix's – an opinion which has not been accepted by academics.

But although the suggestion that the image of Stilicho on the councillor diptych from Monza has now been explored, it is my belief that it is still open to question. It is known that Stilicho's son Euherius was born in 389, and this excludes the possibility that the diptych could have been produced in around 395 (as was suggested by Delbrück) since the boy was six at that time. The year 400 is also quite doubtful, as at that time Euherius was 10 years old, and on the diptych an adolescent is depicted who had already been recognized, as his title, clothing and insignias (diptych-codicil) show, as *tribunus et notarius*. The other main benchmark for the scholars who link the Monza diptych with Stilicho and his family is the images engraved on the medallion on the commander's shield (figs. 5, 6). The bust of the young emperors Arcadius and Honorius are depicted; in 400 they were 23 and 26 years of age respectively, so almost grown-up men. If we look more closely at the figures on the medallion it is clear that one of the busts belongs to a much younger individual. A cipher which may offer a clue to the date and identity of the pair is the figure of an older individual, and in particular the tiara which surrounds his/her head.

The propendulum with the three pendants, the trefoil above the forehead and the hoop-comb placed, vertically coupled with two side semi-cylindrical head covers, can be clearly seen on the diptych. The form and decoration of Roman imperial tiaras in the 4th-5th century are well known not only from chronographers' descriptions but also from hundreds of imperial portraits circulated on medallions, coins, miniatures and works of applied art. The archetype is Constantine the Great's tiara (307-337), which is in fact a soft purple band fastened from behind with cords covered with pearls and oblong peripheries of pearl strings (figs. 7-8).[20] On the foreheads of his

17 Mommsen 1903, 101-115.

18 Rumpf 1957, 28-29.

19 Bóna 1991, 237-238.

20 Alföldi 1935, 128-140; Delbrück 1933, 55-60; Schramm 1956, 380 etc.; DACL 1950, 304-343; Twining 1967, 6-12; Wessel, Pilts & Nicolescu 1973, 380-381; Piltz 1977,

descendants a large precious stone is embedded in a plaque and a number of small oval stones separated by pearls encircle the entire band. A three-leaved plant is then placed over the front plaque. It is known for certain, however, that in Late Antiquity until the Middle Ages the male emperor's tiara was not coupled with a hat or any other item over it – that is, the emperor was always bareheaded. The tiara became a static hoop around the 5th century, the soft hat is dated to the 10th century, and a high construction made of upright and crossed hoops which form a semi-spherical kamelaukion appeared at the end of the 11-12th century.[21] It is still debatable when the propendula-pendants with which the tiara-band was tied in the early images were placed on either side of the ears. The pair of side pendants on the emperor's portraits on coins and plastic works of art appeared at the end of the 5th-6th century. They are also missing on the statues from the 4th-5th century, excluding the Berletta monument (fig. 9).[22] In fact under the crown some pendants can be seen but they are not placed around the ears but rather face the neck. It is also worth mentioning here that the side pendants contain a pearl and, right at the end of the 5th century (monetary issue of the emperor Olibrius from 472 – fig. 10), are presented as a branched triple of pendants. In my opinion the transfer of the pendants from the neck towards both ears was implemented after the transformation of the soft tiara into a firm wreath – a steama. Indeed the firm wreath-hoop does not need to be fastened by the side of the neck, which meant the cords with pearl pendants could move to either side of the ears. In that respect it is obvious that there is a difference between the male emperor's tiara and the image of the crown of the right figure on the medallion on the shield of the Monza commander. At the same time, alongside the formalisation of the emperor's ornatus in the 4th-5th century, the costumes and empresses' insignia formed and developed. The construction of the female ruler's crown is linked to Constantine the Great's mother Elena (fig. 11) and his wife Fausta (fig. 12).[23] The Augustae in Rome, however, wore different decorative items on their heads even in the 1st century, starting with Livia, the mother of Tiberius (14-37), Marciana, Trajan's sister (98-117), Sabina, Hadrian's wife (117-138), Faustina, Antoninus Pius's wife (138-169), Julia Domna, Septemius Severus's wife (195-197), Aquila Severius, Elagabalus's wife (218-222), Julia Mamaea, Al. Severus's wife (222-235), Otacilia Severa, Philippos's I wife (244-249), Severina, Aurelian's wife (270-275), Magina Urbika, Carinus's wife (283-285) and others who were sometimes depicted with different tiaras which complemented their

93; Atanasov 1999, 245-250.

21 Piltz 1977, 1-151; Atanasov 2000, 259-274.

22 Grabar 1936, pl. I; Twining 1967, 8, pl. I-d.

23 Delbrück 1932; Taf. X - 2-5, 7-12; Wessel, Pilts & Nicolescu 1973, 455-456; Deér 1955, 418-427; Twining 1967, 57-63.

hairstyles.[24] Nevertheless, they were not regularised and cannot be counted as regalia.

During the reign of Constantine the Great, in addition to the male emperor's crown there seem to have been certain innovations in the orne of the Augusta (the empress) as well. His mother and his wife started to wear tiaras,[25] which were unknown in the portraits of their predecessors from the 2nd-3rd century. According to the numerous surviving portraits from the second part of the 4th and the 5th century, this tiara already had a fixed and defined construction that remained in that form with relatively few changes until the 6th-7th century, when some new, though insignificant, changes occurred.[26] At first sight the female emperor's crown in the 4th-5th century imitates the male tiara, with peripheries that are extended and covered with pearls; there are also some pendants and a front plaque with a precious stone which is engraved with a three-leaved plant filled in stones and pearls. Unlike the male portraits, on which only his hair could be seen above the ruler's crown, in the empresses' portraits there is an extra item on top which is rather distinct. It comprises some hoops and hats with pearls embedded in them. The item in the 4th and the beginning of the 5th century (portraits of Elena – fig. 11, Fausta – fig. 12, Aelia Flacila – fig. 13, Eudokia – fig. 14, Galla Placidia – fig. 15, Plouheria, Honoria – fig. 16)[27] looks semi-spherical with a single hoop-comb. In fact most of the portraits are engraved on coins, medallions and small works of plastic art where the details are clear and distinct but the comb above the head is always present. The comb is still more evident in female emperors' crowns in the 4th century on the picturesque portraits of the Augustas Fausta and Elena from the imperial residence of Constantine the Great in Trier (fig. 12).[28] It is extremely interesting that, apart from the pendants in front of the ears, they are depicted with a single cord necklace which in the 2nd-3rd century was not typical as a monetary image, and after the 5th century the empresses were shown with three-line necklaces.[29] It is similar to St. Tecla's crown displayed

24 Kent, Overbeck & Stylow 1973, 102, Taf. 82-350, 119, Taf. XIII-331, 138, 153, Taf. 106-460.

25 RIC 1966, 80; Kent, Overbeck & Stylow 1973, 162, Taf. 138-469, 163, Taf. XXIV-648.

26 Delbrück 1932, 56-110, Taf. 10, 11, 24, 25; Grabar 1936, tabl. XX-2; Wessel 1967, 115-118, 133, Nr. 37, 38, 46; Grierson 1973, pl. XIII, XV, XXVIII; III, 1973, p. 130-131, tabl. 13 - K-P; Wessel, Pilts & Nicolescu 1973, 455-468; Deér 1955, 418-427; Atanasov 1999, 182-185.

27 Cohen 1955, 10, 12, 25; RIC 1966, 50, 51, 80: IX, 1951, 25; Kent, Overbeck & Stylow 1973, 173, Taf. 156-718; 174-176, Taf. 158-733, 735, Taf. 159-734; Taf. 160 – 738, 739, 742; Taf. XXVI – 720, 754; 178-179, Taf. 163-744, 745, 760, Taf. 165-753.

28 Reusch 1965, 240-246; Demandt & Engemann 2007, 378-379, Abb. 5.

29 Delbrück 1932, 56-110, Taf. 10, 11, 24, 25; Grabar 1936, V, XX-2; Wessel, Pilts & Nicolescu 1973, 485-488.

in an emperor's ornatus on the murals from the 5th century (fig. 17).[30] It is most probable that Lucia Eudokia, Valentine III's wife, was the first to wear the horn-like shoots placed upright which could be interpreted as a hat with two cornuls.[31] The hat is also visible in the portraits of Adriana, Anastasius's wife (491-518). In complete and detailed form this crown is present on a number of plastic and painted works of art in the 4th-6th century, but it is mostly illegible on the marble heads of the empresses in the Louvre, the museum in Rome and the emperor's diptych from Florence, and definitely absent from the mosaic portrait of Theodora in 'San Vitale'.[32]

By comparing the tiara worn by the individual on the medallion on the commander's shield from Monza and the crowns of the late Roman rulers we can conclude that the tiara resembles more an empress' crown than an emperor's crown. Apart from this, the first examples of single-line necklaces are very important since they are characteristic insignia of the Augusta in 4th-5th century, but were never part of the emperor's orne. These details of the clothing and regalia of the figure on the medallion show that the bust portraits of Arcadius and Honorius are quite unlikely to be represented here, and Stilicho cannot be engraved on the diptych. As I have already mentioned above, in 400, the year to which that magnificent monument was dated, Arcadius was 23 and Honorius was 16 – ages which do not correlate with the images on the shield medallion. At that time the empire was already split, as Arcadius was the legitimate emperor of the East with its capital city of Constantinopole, and Honorius single-handedly ruled the Western empire with Rome as its capital.[33] It is rather improbable that the Eastern emperor could have been placed on the medallion in 400 AD, since at that time Stilicho and Constantinopole were at odds.

If Arcadius and Honorius are not represented on the medallion of the commander's shield, but rather an empress and a young emperor, it means that it is impossible for the medallion to date exactly to or *ca*. 400, and it cannot be connected with Stilicho and his family. That undoubtedly means that the old and almost forgotten hypothesis, which links the Monza monument to the other outstanding commander in late Roman history, namely Flavius Aetius,[34] must be revived. It is necessary to revise the presupposition that on the right part of the diptych the empress Galla Placidia and the young emperor Valentinian III are depicted. It should be remembered here that the rulers in

30 Pillinger 2005, 56-63, Abb. 1.

31 Delbrück 1932, 55, 66, 103, Taf. 24; Deér 1955, 418-420, Abb. 57-c.; Kent, Overbeck & Stylow 1973, 178, 179, Taf. 164-757, Taf. 165-762.

32 Grabar 1936, tabl. V, XX-2; Wessel, Pilts & Nicolescu 1973, 455-466.

33 Seeck 1894, 701-703; Mommsen 1901, 523-547; Lippold 1912 105-109; Atanasov & Ivanov 2006, 401-403.

34 Volbach 1916, 11-16.

that period were always presented in their imperial clothing and insignias, whereas the lady and the boy on the diptych are presented in an ornatus typical of the Roman aristocracy.

There are three occasions on which Flavius Aetius could have been depicted on a councillor diptych, as a result of his investitures as councillor in 432, 437 and 446. In 437 and 446, however, the empire was ruled single-handedly by Valentinian III, and accordingly images of two emperors on the shield of Monza diptych would be rather illogical. In 432, when Aetius was elected a councillor for the first time, the emperor's throne in Rome (which for practical purposes at that time was in Ravena) was occupied by the juvenile Valentinian III and his mother, the empress Galla Placidia. In 428 the emperor Honorius died, and left the juvenile Valentinian III living in Constantinopole (the capital of the Eastern Roman empire) with his mother Galla Placidia.[35] In Rome, however, with the crucial help of Flavius Aetius, his father, the general Gaudentius, and his father's wife, the general Carpilio, a new emperor of the Western Roman empire named Yoan was set. In 425, emperor Theodosius II (408-450) sent an army from Constantinopole to Rome and Ravena, in order to accompany and enthrone the legal emperor Valentinian III and his mother, the female regent Galla Placidia. Gaudentius and Carpilio did not manage to resist to the army from Constantinopole and as a result Rome and Ravena were conquered. At that time Aetius went to his friends – the Huns. Their king Rugila, Attila's uncle, provided him with a great army but unfortunately arrived too late. When he entered Rome, Yoan had already been dethroned and killed, and the throne was taken by the young fourteen-year-old Valentinian and his mother Galla Placidia. In fact she took over the ruling of the empire as co-emperor until 437. The conditions were extremely tense and unfavourable. After prolonged negotiations Aetius agreed to become a guardian and protector of the imperial pair while Galla Placidia promised to make him a patrician, councillor and chief commander in return. So it happened. In 432 Flavius Aetius became a councillor for the first time, ruling together with Galla Placidia and her young son Valentinian III, and he swore to protect the helpless imperial pair. That was why the imperial pair are depicted on his shield, a symbol of support for the regent-Augusta Galla Placidia and the young emperor Valentinian III. In that respect the idea that the twenty-three-year-old emperor of the East, Arcadius, was depicted on the medallion is rather illogical: he did not need to be protected by Stilicho's 'shield', since at that time they were at odds. In fact Aetius acquired councillor's rights two more times, in 437 and 446, though at that time the empire was ruled single-handedly by Valentinian III who had freed himself from his mother's custody in 436. There is also another view, according to which there are two

35 Uspenski 2001, 166.

children depicted on the medallion. This is highly unlikely, since there is a clear difference between the heights of the two figures as well as the ages of the depicted persons. Though they could be an emperor's children, they could be only Honorius and Placidia's children, that is Valentine and his sister Honoria. Indeed, in 432, when Aetius was elected a councillor, he swore to protect not only the empress Placidia but also her young children Valentinian and Honoria. The crown of the elder figure, however, is highly unlikely to be that of an emperor; it is more likely to be an empress's, which suggests that the images are more likely to be of Galla Placidia and her young son Valentinian rather than the young Valentinian and his younger sister Honoria.

Additionally, there is one secondary argument which suggests the commander on the Monza diptych is to be identified as Flavius Aetius rather than Stilicho. The renowned connoisseur of barbarian monuments I. Bóna states that the sword and belt on the commander (figs. 2, 3) have characteristics typical of the Huns' armament.[36] It is also known, however, that Stilicho did not have any contacts or relations with the Huns, whereas Aetius lived with them and was one of Rugila's associates (even as a young boy he made friends with Attila and Bleda), and in certain crucial moments in his career he was arguably supported by them. This is why it is perfectly possible that he could wear a Hun's sword and belt, probably given as a gift by the Hun tsar Rugila – his protector and guardian.

Regarding the figures on the left part of the Monza diptych, it is highly likely that Aetius's first wife and his elder son were depicted. She was general Carpilio's daughter, the aforementioned friend of his father, who gave Aetius a son whose name was Carpilio as well. He was born in 420, which means that in 432 he was already a grown boy, as depicted on the diptych. Moreover, it is also known that during his father's first consulate he became a praetorian, and the costumes and insignia displayed on the diptych are characteristic of praetorians. Also, Aetius had a second son who was named after his father's father, general Gaudentius, but he was born in 432 after Aetius second marriage to Pelagia, general Bonifatius's daughter – Aetius's close associate and opponent. The name of Aetius's first wife who is displayed on the diptych is not known, but it is certain that she was general Carpilio's daughter and a granddaughter of the Goth king Fritigernus.

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36 Bóna 1991, 238.

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Fig. 1. Diptych from Monza



Fig. 2. Left /upper/ diptych plate from Monza

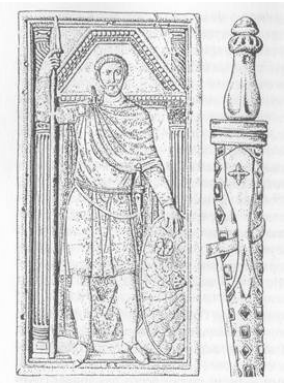


Fig. 3. A picture on the left plate of the diptych with a detailed image of a sword



Fig. 4. Right /lower/ diptych plate from Monza



Fig. 5. The medallion on the shield of the commander on the diptych of Monza



Fig. 6. A picture of the medallion on the shield of the commander on the diptych of Monza



Fig. 7. A bronze head of Constantine I the Great in the National museum in Belgrade.



Fig. 8. A coin with the image of Constantine I the Great



Fig. 9. Emperor Statue from IV-Vth century / Barletta monument/



Fig. 10. Monetary emission of Emperor Olibrius



Fig. 11. A coin with an image of Saint Helena



Fig. 12. Augusta Fausta on a mural from Trier



Fig. 13. A coin with the image of Augusta Aelia Flaccilla



Fig. 14. A coin with the image of Augusta Galla Placcidia



Fig. 15. A coin with the image of Augusta Placcidia



Fig. 16. A coin with the image of Augusta Honoria



Fig. 17. Saint Tecla on a mural from Vth century



Fig. 18. A coin of Emperor Yovian /411-413/



Fig. 19. The councillor diptych of Felix

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And now, what's going to happen to us without barbarians?[1]

Monika Milosavljević



Abstract: This article focusses on the notion of barbarians and the process of barbarization in the archaeological interpretations. The main question is how can scholars identify the presence of barbarians starting from the material record? In other words, why are the processes of barbarization, disintegration and destruction usually associated with particular ethnicities?

Key words: archaeology, epistemology, barbarization, disintegration, destruction

The quote from the famous poem of Constantine Cavafy '*Waiting for the barbarians*'[2] is used here as the title and as an invitation for reassessing the basis of archaeological epistemology, that is, for assessing the way we formulate archaeological categories (e. g. population, artifacts, research). In the broadest sense, the aim of this paper is to reconsider the construction of past collective identities, specifically the kind of identities that are identified as barbarian. I will firstly deal with the contextualization of interpretive tools that are related to the notion of barbarism, and then discuss some of the key interpretations of barbarians and the barbarization in the history of Serbian archaeology.

To begin with, one should note that archaeology benefits from different approaches to *epistemology*. These approaches, as superior frameworks of

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2 www.cavafy.com, 15. 09. 2013.

scientific knowledge, interpretation, selection and comprehension of data, can be distinguished from particular theories of society and culture. Theories of knowledge (epistemology) can be divided into two groups: the group that sees knowledge as something detectable and the one that sees knowledge as something that we construct on our own. According to the philosopher Richard Rorty, the first of these two concepts was dominantly represented in the Western thought and epistemology for a long time, and it focuses on the idea of '*search for the truth*' starting from the ancient Greek philosophy until now. Thus, the Enlightenment movement, together with its successors in logical positivism, promoted Isaac Newton and his approach to physics as a model of a *real* scientist, who reveals the valid laws of nature; this was to be an appropriate ideal for other sciences and overall knowledge as well. This empirical approach strongly influenced archaeology, starting from its creation in the nineteenth century. Central to this approach is the belief that archaeological data represents independent and reliable parameters for distinguishing '*true*' from '*false*' knowledge about the past. Therefore, obtaining the knowledge about the past is primarily a question of method, and it implies archaeological harmonization regarding the common procedure, which aims to bring our theories and ideas in line with the empirical material. That is, the archaeological empiricism, characteristic for this approach, incorporates the following assumptions: (1) archaeological record conveys information about the past and, therefore, archaeologists explain the past by explaining the material culture, (2) the interpretation of the past is pre-determined by data, because there is not an aspect of the past that exists beyond these data.[3]

Theories, barbarians and 'commonplaces'

The second epistemological position sees archaeological knowledge as our product, although it is not independent of the archaeological record, e.g. the material culture or the context in which the artifacts are located in archaeological sites. This *social constructivist perspective* relies on philosophical hermeneutics and post-structuralism. This is not to deny the existence of reality or past, it merely points out that the interpretation of present or past is historically, institutionally and socially conditioned, rather than a universal dimension beyond time and space. This approach does not imply giving up on the 'rules of the game' in science/humanities. On the contrary, it only accepts that our measures for knowledge, truths, and methods have no necessary relevance beyond our cultural and historical framework.[4]

One of the key points of this approach is the examination of the language of archaeology, arguing that this language is not a mere reflection of 'crude' reality of the past. However, it is not easy for the archaeological community

3 Olsen 2002, 109-112; Johnson 2011.

4 Burr 1995; Wylie 2002, 185-199; Olsen 2006, 85-103.

to accept that its (academic) language is all but neutral. Furthermore, this constructivist type of analysis emerges as a considerable challenge. Following this, reasons emerge for reconsideration of understanding of barbarism and barbarization; those concepts are often used, but rarely clearly articulated. The very fact that these concepts are assumed or implied (used as 'commonplaces') requires an archaeological problematization.[5]

The present aim is to investigate the confrontation of writing strategies in archaeology on one hand, and, on the other hand, barbarism as a matrix which can store 'commonplaces' and, by virtue of its generality, can establish most diverse stereotypes of the Other,. The term barbarism in Serbian archaeology can be seen as a consequence of accepting *a priori* categorization of past communities, taken from historical sources, especially the classical ones, with rudimentary impacts of unilinear social evolutionism.[6]6 As Alojz Benac (archaeologist from the times of former Yugoslavia) remarked:

'It is widely known from ancient sources that wide groupings, here listed, consisted of a multitude of small and large tribes or tribal communities. It is of ~~a~~ great interest to determine what the essential meanings of these terms are. It is known that in the definition of 'tribe' there are different perceptions and interpretation, as it is the case with the term 'ethnos'. This term is used in many regions of the world, in the so-called primitive societies, then in the ancient times and during the Middle Ages in Europe.'[7]

This paper's intention is not to reconsider the 'tribal' communities that archaeology deals with, but rather to address the mechanisms that bring out the anachronistic phenomena behind the concept of tribe and the ways those phenomena are used in the interpretation of the past.

The work of Geertz *Works and Lives: The Anthropologist as Author*[8] is a good starting point when it comes to problematizing archaeological writing. One of the problems Geertz pays particular attention to is the question of what author actually creates through the act of writing. Referring to the French philosophers Michel Foucault and Roland Barthes[9], Geertz points out the importance of the author as 'the founder of discursivity': apart from creating his own work, the author creates possibilities and rules for the formation of further texts. The author is of crucial importance not only for the development of an intellectual discipline, but for its nature as well. In that way, an author creates a theory, tradition or discipline in which other books and authors can

5 Shankes 2001, 284-305; Stoczkowski 2008, 350-351; Babić 2009, 123-132.
6 Tasić, 1979, 12, 17; Mihajlović, *in press.*
7 Benac 1987, 740.
8 Geertz 1988.
9 Barthes 1977, 142-154; Barthes 1982.

position themselves.[10]

On the other hand, approaching concepts of barbarism and barbarization as alterity relies on postcolonial discourse theory as a theoretical framework for research. The key work that determined this theoretical approach is *Orientalism* by Edward Said, which, as a research strategy, promotes an analysis of discursive formulation of the 'Other'. It is done independently from the fact that the formulation is used for imperial purposes, economic and political dominance or formation of partial, and stereotypes and prejudices favorable for a certain political moment.[11]Therefore, from this perspective, barbarity is to be understood only as a relational phenomenon and a stereotypical way of observing the Other, and not as a stable category readily recognizable in the archaeological material record. In addition, this approach deems meaningless the extended terms, such as *barbarization*, in which a cultural change is recognized bearing certain degrading characteristics. However, it is not only about formal concepts – abandoning the usage of the words *barbarism* and *barbarization* does not eliminate the interpretative mechanisms behind them. This is also about questions, research strategies and explanations that are probably strongly connected.[12]

Starting from the post-processual perspective, that is: considering archaeology as a present practice with its necessary responsibility, the proposed approach contributes to the insight into what scholars do, and into the mechanisms and ways in which archaeologists create disciplinary knowledge. The concept of barbarism carries many layers of meanings which can be used when necessary, and, moreover, the concept can be politically instrumentalized as a part of archaeologically revealed reality.[13] According to Kristiansen, the European archaeological tradition has produced myths about the origins, based on the explanations related to terms barbarism and civilization, and positioned them in the basics of archaeological discipline. These myths have two general forms. The first refers to the ancient Graeco-Roman's legacy to Europe and to the barbaric destruction of those civilized values, that is, to the 'naturalness' of affirmative civilizing influence upon barbaric population and destruction as an innate barbaric practice. By way of contrast, in Central Europe, under the influence of the German nineteenth-century historicism, the idea of indigenous European barbaric roots of people was developed; those barbaric roots became symbols of unspoiled freedom and vitality, as opposed to despotism of restrictive 'civilization'.[14]

10 Geertz 1988, 1-24; Pruitt 2011, 11-44.
11 Dietler 2005, 33–68; Harding 1998; Liebmann & Rizvi 2008.
12 Jahoda 1999, 1-13; Džino 2008, 415-424; Babić 2008, 73-89.
13 Rawson 2001; Kuper 2005, 20-36; Todorov 2010, 26.
14 Kristiansen 1996, 138-143.

Colonization, destruction and disintegration

More specifically, this paper aims to reconsider the understanding of particular material culture (or changes in material culture) in Serbian archaeology as indicators of barbarian ethnicity.[15] This means that the processes identified as barbarization, disintegration, destruction are without sufficient evidence considered as indicators of presence of a particular barbaric population. Those processes are interpreted in that manner due to the understanding of changes in material culture, burdened with value judgments characteristic for understanding intercultural communication as disproportionate relation between civilization and barbarism. In fact, the possibility emerges here for an analysis of the mechanisms justifying the 'detection' of a barbaric population in the archaeological record, through observed changes in the material culture. From the perspective of modern values, the changes are regarded either as a deterioration in style, imitation, destruction, or as gaining distance from the imagined original.[16]

In that respect two relevant texts for the analysis of Serbian archaeological discourse will be discussed: *Archaeology and History of Barbaric colonization of South Slavic area from the fourth to the beginning of the seventh century* written by Jovan Kovačević (1960)[17], and the article *The Disintegration and Ruralization of the city in the eastern Illyricum from the fifth to the seventh century* by Vladislav Popović (2003 [1982]).[18] Although many similar texts can be used for this particular analysis, the two above mentioned are selected because of their influence and long presence in the syllabi within the study of archaeology at the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade. Furthermore, the fact that the authors of these texts were eminent professors and 'founding fathers' in their research area contributed to their reception, for they were recognized as the texts of authority.

The law and order of the barbaric world

Professor Jovan Kovačević (1920-1988), the author of the study *Archaeology and History of Barbaric colonization of South Slavic area from the fourth to the beginning of the seventh century* (1960), deserves our full attention. Namely, in 1954, a completely new course called *Slavic archaeology* was introduced to the Department of Archaeology at the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade. The Courses which he held during his 64 semesters of teaching included broad fields of interest. Professor Kovačević wrote a series of books that are fundamental for Serbian medieval archaeology and many of his students went on to become prominent figures in the particular

15 Lucy 2005, 88-109; Jones 1999; Babić 2002, 309-322; 2006, 655-659.

16 Myers 2006, 267-284; Curta 2011a, 403-478; 2011b, 537-548.

17 Kovačević 1960.

18 Popović 2003, 27.

field. The *Archaeology and History of barbaric colonization of South Slavic areas from the fourth to the early seventh century* is one of essential works for medieval archaeology in Serbia. However, the very fact that this work has been traditionally considered as essential, a source of scientific authority in Serbian archaeology, means that the ideas presented there should be critically reviewed.[19]

In the preface to the book, the author provides an overview of the work and humbly states that his book is merely a review:

'These lines attempt to provide an overview of barbaric colonization of South Slavic areas from the fourth century to the beginning of the seventh century, relying on archaeological material, written sources and toponomastic data. For the systematization of these, essentially heterogeneous data, territorial system of major historical geographic units was chosen, so that the archaeological sites and toponyms which can be related to barbaric peoples, as well as data from written sources, are classified in smaller areas, while only in conclusion an attempt was given of characterization of barbaric colonization in general terms.'[20]

Thus, the notions of barbarity and barbaric colonization are introduced as something that is obvious, and the focus of the problem is moved away from explaining those key notions toward presenting the catalogue of the phenomena which are defined by them. In that way, Kovačević's text appears as separate from any kind of interpretation and theoretical basis, offering the only possible solution - an 'objective' review, that is, a catalogue of archaeological artifacts. However, one can argue that even 'stating' the absence of theoretical approach *is* a theoretical approach; in this particular case, when Kovačević refuses to provide a theoretically based interpretation and turns toward the description of material culture by naming, categorizing and hierarching he actually provides an interpretation that is based on some initial, more or less unspoken, assumptions.[21]

'This work is intended only to show material culture from archaeological record from the already mentioned period, and to link it with the basic historical facts of the Avar colonization of the Balkans and the South Slavic part of Pannonia, on the basis of the currently known material culture and the present state of research without getting into any new hypotheses.'[22]

19 Jovanović 1990; Curta 2009, 191-196 (all translations from Serbian by the present author).

20 Kovačević 1960, 6.

21 Sommer & Gramsh 2011, 7-39; Novaković 2011, 440-451.

22 Kovačević 1960, 9.

Although Kovačević intends only to describe the artifacts, in his book, for example, two contrasting images of the barbaric world order are to be found, inspired by written sources, which can serve as a useful illustration of the author's assumed theoretical agenda, that is, of what can be read between the lines of the text. The first of the selected quotes gives an image of the barbaric Other through fascinating horrors:[23]

'So the Goths from the second half of the third century showed the true meaning of timor barbaricus to the Balkan part of the Eastern Roman Empire. Perhaps, the most eloquent characteristic of the condition in the eastern part of the Empire is presented in the letter of Saint Jerome to Heliodorus of Altino, from the year 396, in which it is stated that for more than twenty years, blood flows between Constantinople and Julius Alps, and the Goths, Sarmatians, Kvads, Alans, Huns, Vandals and Markomans are ravaging, plundering and destroying Scythia, Thrachia, Macedonia, Dardania, Dacia, Thessaly, Achaia, Epirus, Dalmatia and both Pannonias. He continues his dark description by pointing out to the murdering of women, capturing of bishops, killings of clergy, destruction of churches and desecration of altars, and to the dissipation of relics of martyrs - horror and death are all around!'[24]

However, there is more to the image of the barbaric Other than just 'horror and death'[25] - Kovačević also recognizes differences among barbarians and their behaviour, depending on whether they dwell on one or the other side of the Roman *limes*. The following lines are also the conclusions about the archaeology and history of barbaric colonization.

'Roman limes is actually the border between the two worlds - the ancient and the barbaric - which were different in their essence. The differences were diametric in terms of the economic base, social unit, material culture, religion, etc. In this regard, an anecdote recorded by a rhetorician Priscus is very characteristic. In Attila's capital, Priscus encountered a Greek who was a slave of Onegesius, significant Hunnic nobleman. He had to go into battles with his master until he collected enough money from his own plunder to repurchase himself. This Greek, who otherwise was a builder and a wealthy merchant from Viminacium, remained among the Huns, and he gives Priscus the following reasons for his actions: during the war the Romans are in constant danger of being destroyed due to the inability of the military commanders, and during peacetime conditions are even worse because of the ruthless collection of taxes and the helplessness of citizens when confronted with wealthy lawbreakers.

23 Todorov 1998; Jahuda 1999.

24 Kovačević 1960, 9.

25 Hall 1991; Jahuda 1999, 113-128.

Contrary to this, the Greek explained, among the Huns, 'after the war, people spend their time in idleness, everyone enjoys what they have, and at the same time they do not disturb each other at all or very little. In fact, the 'law and order of the barbarian world' for this Byzantine merchant was healthier than the late antique.'[26]

This idyllic scene of primitive or natural barbaric life, established first in Tacitus' *Germania* as a moralizing mirror and a critique of one's own 'civilized' society, developed from an anecdote into a historical context for archeological interpretation.[27]

The large number of plates with drawings of material culture or isolated details throughout the book contributes to the persuasiveness of what is said in Kovačević's work. This is particularly important precisely because the past material culture is perceived (by the general public and often among archaeologists) as speaking for itself. However, the multiplicity of possible interpretations, together with the tangibility of interpreted material culture certainly leaves space for a wide range of abuses, stereotypes and legitimizing 'commonplaces'. For example, when we think of barbarians, we often see uncivilized features, promoted within the paradigm of unilinear social evolutionism. Although such perspectives have long been subjected to a thorough critique within the scale of social and cultural anthropology, these rudimentary influences of unilinear social evolutionism have been entrenched in Serbian archaeology for a very long time.[28]

Not without reason, a striking description of 'the downfall of Sirmium' (Sremska Mitrovica in today's Serbia) found its way into Kovačević's survey. John of Ephesus notes that the city was destroyed a year before the Avar-Slavic conquests 'because barbarians could not put out the fire; instead, they ran for their lives, away from the burning city. The Roman population of Sirmium vanished from the town, and the despair of people before the Avar-Slavic destruction of the city is well illustrated by a Greek inscription scratched into a brick, found in Sirmium, in which the anonymous writer calls upon God to save Byzantine Empire, the city and himself from the Avars.'[29]

It is interesting that a very old idea is used in a review of one segment of the past of an archaeological site such as Sirmium, the idea that primitive, wild and barbaric groups are not familiar with fire. This motif, which is often found in medieval literature, is, for Lewis Henry Morgan, one of the key criteria for the characterization of the uncivilized societies.[30]

26 Kovačević 1960, 46.
27 Jahuda 1999, 129-194; Gruen 2012, 159-179.
28 Stocking 1968; Trigger 1998; Mihajlović, *in press*.
29 Kovačević 1960, 17.
30 Morgan 1877, 3-49.

To sum up the first example, the monograph *Archaeology and History of barbaric colonization of South Slavic area from the fourth to the beginning of the seventh century* presents itself as neither theoretical nor interpretive, providing a review of the state of research in the chosen field. However, due to an implicit theoretical position, one finds a sequence of stereotypical images of the barbaric Other in the study. Nevertheless, professor Jovan Kovačević is remembered by generations of students as self-critical and cautious in his academic work.[31]

Footprints of the Barbarians

The article *Disintegration and Ruralization of the city in the eastern Illyricum from the fifth to the seventh century* is just one of many studies written by professor Vladislav Popović (1930-1999). This particular study is known for its interpretations and it can still be found in the course syllabi at the undergraduate studies for archaeology at the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade. Much like Jovan Kovačević, Vladislav Popović was interested in the late antiquity and the early Middle Ages. For more than two decades, he lectured the course *Methodology of archaeological research* to undergraduate students of archaeology. In the history of Serbian and Yugoslav archaeology he is remembered for organizing the excavation of the famous archaeological sites of *Caričin Grad* and Sirmium (he was the director of the Yugoslav-American excavation project of *Sremska Mitrovica* and Yugoslav-French excavation project of *Caričin Grad*).[32]

Popović's text about disintegration and ruralization is based on his fieldwork experience. In Serbian archaeology, field experience is the essence of being an archaeologist; and 'becoming' an authority in archaeology is inseparable from the researcher's presence and his involvement in the birth of the 'facts' in the field. Furthermore, it should be noted that the power of an authority (and power in general) is not simply a strong and homogeneous domination of one group of individuals over the other, but it rather circulates in the community, passing through individuals connected into the network of relationships.[33]

Consequently, this article is not about a critical review of the work of the late antique/early medieval Serbian archaeology founders, but a critical review of the 'frozen' reception of later generations. The authority that an article *Disintegration and Ruralization of the city in the eastern Illyricum from the fifth to the seventh century* is based on are meticulous observations about the towns between late antiquity and the early middle ages. Persuasiveness of the given arguments is related directly to the 'authentic' field experience of

31 Jovanović 1990, 129-136.

32 Vasić 2003.

33 Foucault 1986; Pruitt 2011.

the author of the archaeological text, and thus the field experience is taken as an incubator of 'real facts'.[34]

At the beginning of his article, Vladimir Popović defines the notion of a city, so that he could, on that basis, define the urbanization's opposites. Similar to the culture in traditional interpretations, human characteristics are metaphorically attached to a city, the result of which are its predetermined phases of development:

'The city, in certain sense, can be defined as the concentration of population in a certain land, within which its material and spiritual needs find their spatial solution. Its creation, transformation and ending are mutually connected with a series of interdependent components.'[35]

Popović's text aims to show how the Byzantine cities in the 7th century in the Balkans were converted 'into more or less isolated episcopacies, without a wider hinterland, with limited opportunities for production and trade.'[36] Furthermore, it is said that cities 'got into a situation' to become well-fortified rural agglomerations.

'...the growing pressure and more frequent intrusions – later forming settlements - of barbarians on the territory of the Empire should be noted as well. The invasions resulted in the devastation of fertile and arable land, weakening, or even the loss of the most important economic sources of all strata of the urban population in the affected areas. In the provinces, near the conflict zone with the enemy, great landed estates remain abandoned, a layer of wealthy people flees to safe places, cities become strongholds of strategic importance or protected areas where the remaining population cultivates the land, and above all seeks salvation. It leads to disintegration of the city, termination of its original role as an economic, administrative and cultural center of the region. Under such circumstances, it is inevitable for the city to experience a significant change in its internal structure.'[37]

This leads to presenting the barbarians primarily by using a distorted image of the *Other* taken from written sources, then supporting or illustrating it with the help of archaeological perspective. The result is the suggestion that what we find in the written sources must necessarily be found in the archaeological records as well.[38]

34 Lucas 2001;Yarrow 2006, 20-39.
35 Popović 2003, 239.
36 Popović 2003, 239.
37 Popović 2003, 243.
38 Champion 1997, 79-95.

'The process of disintegration and ruralization of towns in Illyricum is not known to us only from written sources, but it echoes from the archaeological traces as well.'[39]

This correspondence between written sources and material culture then becomes a research aim.[40] This is the case with Sirmium and with a number of similar archaeological sites as well.

'Although only fragments of the city are known to us, based on the results of previous excavations, however, one can conclude that the city was distinguished by well-thought spatial solutions, well-planned network of streets with densely arranged and clearly defined building complexes in between. Between these massive buildings of public and private character, sometimes even on their ruins, a horizon of housing was identified, the basic characteristics of which were construction without a plan, changes of the function of original space, complete degradation of construction techniques and raising of cemeteries within the city walls.'[41]

More precisely, 'in the magnificent buildings' or 'public spaces', within the wider ordered structure, what is noted as distinctive is the following - 'shanty huts made of light materials or broken bricks connected with clay', burial areas created by digging into the mosaic floors, the presence of a number of quern-stones and agricultural tools and hearths in the churches.[42]

Without barbarians

Basic coordinates of otherness of the Middle Ages[43] as well as of barbaric alterity[44] are defined in relation to the seemingly monolithic Greco-Roman civilization. However, the ways in which images about those *Others* came to exist in the European tradition and in the modern humanistic disciplines rely greatly on the concepts established in antiquity. Even so, the way we see 'decadence' today, opposed to the 're-discovery' of classics and classical origins of certain phenomena, results primarily from the priorities articulated in modern days.[45]

'Aristotle suggested that 'it is likely that every art and every philosophy

39 Popović 2003, 241.
40 Andrén 1998, 9-36; Gerrard 2005, 185-231.
41 Popović 2003, 243.
42 Kovačević 1960; Popović 2003.
43 Brown 2000, 547-574; Bull 2005; Ganim 2008, 83-107.
44 Jones 1971, 376-407; Hartog 1980; Hall 1991; Gillet 2002.
45 Goldhill 2005, 95-159.

has been discovered and entirely developed on many occasions, only to be lost once again'. However, the ancients never fully formulated a model of historical development based on rebirth following a 'death' of culture and art. It was only in the modern age that the model of biological parabola was taken to its ultimate conclusion: the final stage of evolutionary paradigm of ancient art was used, on Pliny's authority, to exalt fifteenth and sixteenth-century Italian art. As the arts were dead at the end of antiquity, they could be reborn, and were in fact reborn. The concept of the history of art used by ancient writers, which was passed down the generations by Pliny in a summarized but recognizable form, thus became profoundly absorbed into our thinking and put to new purposes. The model of biological parabola which ends in decadence and the death of the arts became, with the addition of rebirth, a cyclical model that tends towards infinite repetition through a succession of cultural catastrophes and rebirths.'[46]

When we address the notions of barbarism and barbarization from this perspective- with a reminder that those notions are often associated with negative stereotypizations – it becomes apparent on what grounds these concepts should be deconstructed. Their strength is primarily derived from the authority of the 'founders of discursivity', rather than from the valid archaeological arguments.[47] As mentioned before, since authority is not a power to be possessed but it rather exists in a network of relationships, (de) sacralization of the traditional ideas is the responsibility of contemporary scholars. If the reception of the traditional interpretation is 'frozen', that is, if there exists, in later generations, only a very strict repetition and summing up of what was said by previous generations[48], there is little space left for critical reflection on, in this case, the 'barbarians'. Thus, in later generations, the barbarians can be 'detected' in the archaeological record only according to those repeated modules.

However, if we abandon this kind of 'frozeness', we can still wonder what these archaeological contexts - observed by Jovan Kovačević, Vladislav Popović and their numerous students - mean. That is, how to interpret this unusual reuse of space and material culture, which, by the standards of our time, is called destruction, ruralization and barbarisation?

One of the most striking examples from the Balkans comes from the site of Heraclea Lyncestis, located in the south-western Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia near Bitola. It is a multi-layered archaeological site where people lived continuously since the mid-4th century BC until the end of the 6th century AD. The example that I would like to refer to is a modest settlement

46 Settis 2006, 72.

47 Babić 2002, 309-322; 2006, 655-659; Novaković 2011; Babić, *in press*.

48 Pruitt 2011.

established in Heraclea after the abandonment of the city in the late Roman period. In the settlement, the houses, made of stone and clay, appeared in the place of a former antique theatre. The theatre was damaged sometime before the middle of the 5th century AD, and after its disuse, its central part was filled with a thick layer of erosive sediment. The oldest buildings were built above the orchestra, after which this group of buildings spread over the entire surface of the theatre. The buildings are mostly small in size, made up of one or more small rooms, mostly with earthen compacted floors.[49]

Particularly noticeable are the Heraklea's buildings made of stone and clay in which parts of a 1st and 2nd century AD Roman portico are incorporated. One of the objects has two marble statues built in it, each one with a stand and an engraved inscription. The first inscription is dedicated to the goddess Nemesis, and the second one to the high priest Titus Flavius Orestes. Gordana Cvetković-Tomašević, writing about this archaeological context, notes that the builders of these rustic objects actually saved the two Roman statues, though not intentionally nor consciously. She argues that the sculptures had no special meaning for them, other than being a good foundation material for the house.[50]

This excursus raises the questions about how past people dealt with material culture from their past. One might expect a relation full of respect for the antique material culture, but in the case of Heraclea Lyncestis we see quite the opposite. However, is it possible that people who used the mentioned statues as building material could not differentiate them from any other stone? Breaking the usual images of the barbarians at the very least brings this possibility into question. In other words, does the treatment of ancient material culture in the early Byzantine period have to be necessarily incorporated into the expected standards of the Western attitude towards the 'ruins'.

'For the Western tradition, ruins denote both a presence and absence: they demonstrate, indeed they are, the point where the visible and the invisible meet. The one that is invisible (or absent) is summoned up and accentuated by the fragmentation of ruins, their useless and occasionally incomprehensible nature and their loss of purpose (or at least their original purpose). However their obstinate visible presence demonstrates, far more than loss of utility, the longevity and indeed eternity of ruins and their victory over ineluctable course of time [...] Not only do ruins challenge time, they also inspire reactions. Thus they can be looked upon and acquire status in their new codified role as precisely what they have become – ruins.'[51]

49 Janakievski 1978, 696.
50 Cvetković-Tomašević 1987, 17-18.
51 Settis 2006, 72.

Can we, in fact, in the case of Heraclea Lyncestis, speak about a deliberate destructive opposition to the 'order of ancient world'? Was it kind of revolt or any kind of intentional act? For example, early Christianity defined itself by contrast and downright antagonism against the classical world. This may be seen in the attitudes to the human body - mortification of the body as opposed to the beautiful body. Goldhill remarks:

'...museums curators keep the penises that have been knocked off statues, along with other objects which the Christian tradition covered with fig-leavers'.[52]

On the other hand, Settis argues that the preoccupation with decay, ruins and 'classical' past is precisely European and the effect of collective trauma following the collapse of the Roman Empire. This situation differed from the Chinese Empire which always enjoyed a high degree of continuity. The idea of the 'classical' has changed over the time. Every era invented a different idea of classical - barbarian opposition to make its own identity. No culture can invent itself if it does not have other societies in other times and places to act as benchmark. 'Classical' is not a dead culture we inherited, but something that is a powerful stimulus to understand the barbaric Other.[53] Anyhow, the 'barbaric acts' are good to think about.

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52 Goldhill 2004, 29.

53 Settis 2006.

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German discoveries at Sucidava-Celei in the 6th century

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Abstract: The archaeological excavations inside the Late Roman fortification in Sucidava-Celei pointed out a rich material. There are inscriptions, sculptural pieces, lamps, coins, brooches, pottery, bones, objects of bronze, etc. A small quantity of pieces belongs to the Barbarian populations, who were in connection with the Roman Empire.

From these barbarians, the most important were the Germans. Artefacts of German culture have been discovered in Sucidava-Celei for a long time. But in 1993, there were discovered two big brooches made of silver and gold, and a golden coin. Here, we takle these extraordinary pieces, their dating and their owner.

Keywords: brooches, Germans, Sucidava-Celei, *cabochon* technique

Introduction

The Late Roman fortification of Sucidava-Celei (fig. 1) was the most important one from those raised to the north of the Lower Danube, during the Late Roman and Early Byzantine Period.[1] It was located approximately at the boundary line between Dacia Ripensis and Moesia Prima provinces (fig. 2-3), and it was a central point in the north-Danubian defence of the two provinces.[2] During the Late Roman Period, at Sucidava-Celei there was stationed a *praefectus* of Legio V Macedonica.[3] Between Sucidava and Oescus there was built a bridge over the Danube[4] and from Sucidava towards north

1 Tudor 1965; 1966; 1974; 1978, 423-448; Toropu & Tătulea 1987; Bondoc 2009, 76-81, 186-187.
2 Toropu 1986, 56.
3 *Notitia Dignitatum*. XLII. 39.
4 Tudor 1971, 155-182, with the bibliography and Tudor 1978, 416-422; for the graphic

there started an older Roman road, which was rebuilt during the time of Constantine the Great.[5] All these prove the special importance of Sucidava in the defence system of the Lower Danube.

The first military fortification at Sucidava was raised during the time of Gallienus;[6] there are other opinions which support the dating of the fortification in the time of Aurelianus[7] or Constantine the Great.[8] Anyway, throughout time, the fortification was rebuilt many times, the most important reconstructions could be dated in the time of Constantine the Great and later, Justinian.

Its actual sizes are the following: the western side - 126.05m; the north-eastern side - 161.15m; the southern side (destroyed) - 160m. The Roman archaeological discoveries inside the fortification are impressive: inscriptions, sculptural pieces, tiles and bricks- some of them are stamped, weapons, military equipment, pottery, coins, iron objects, bronze objects, bone objects, lead objects, etc.

Some discoveries are in contrast with the previous ones. Thus, in 1993, when I was a student in the archaeological practice period at Sucidava, during the excavations led by Professor Octavian Toropu inside the fortification, there were discovered two very special German brooches of silver.[9] The two brooches have semidiscoidal heads with rhomboidal prolonged feet. The pieces have the fastening mechanism with double spring. They were not discovered inside a grave, but in a Late Roman level. They have not been published properly, they have just been mentioned (inadequately !) in a paper published in a review with a limitted circulation a year after the death of the head of the site works, Professor O. Toropu.[10]

Description of the objects

The feet of the brooches present prominent median nervures, and their lower parts were rounded. On the sides of the semidiscoidal heads there is a decorative motif like a bird of prey, most probably an eagle or an aquila. From these decorative motifs, on the back of the pieces, there were fixed two springs with two rivets. In the mid-upper part of the head, on the same direction with

reconstruction of the northern part of this bridge, see Toropu 1972, 20-31.

5 Tudor 1938, 19 sqq.; Popescu 1976, 278.

6 Barbu 1973, 42 sqq.; 1974, 84; *Inscriptiones Daciae Romanae* 2, 101.

7 Tudor 1978, 430.

8 Tudor 1968, 432.

9 Toropu, Gherghe & Bociu 1996, 9-12; Bondoc 2009, 365, pl. CXXI, fig. 433-434.

10 Toropu, Gherghe & Bociu 1996, 9-12.

the foot, there is a button in the shape of a head of the same prey bird (eagle or aquila). The height of the birds' heads is about 3cm and they were gilded. The spring was cast and then hammered and it was decorated with twisted golden wires on the upper part. In the places where the spring meets the semidiscoidal head and the rhomboidal foot, there were applied small golden plates in the shape of crescent. On the edges, these little plates were decorated with golden wire worked in filigree; on the surface of the little plates, there were made many squares (*cabochon* technique) and inside these squares there were fixed cherry-coloured almandines. The squares were framed by a thin golden wire worked in filigree.

The first brooch is 28.3cm long and it weighs 375.3g (fig. 4-6). When it was discovered it was broken in many fragments and the restoration process started immediately. The little plate above the spring was decorated with 13 small squares in the *cabochon* technique, disposed on three rows, containing cherry-coloured almandines inside. On the golden plate under the spring, there are only 12 such squares. Other sizes: the width - 15.3cm; the thickness (height of the bow) - 5.4cm; the sizes of the head: 6.9 x 10cm; the sizes of the foot: 4.3 x 14.5cm; the sizes of the plate above the spring are 3.3 x 4.6cm, and the thickness of the plate is 1.5mm; the sizes of the plate under the spring are 3.7 x 3.7cm and its thickness is 1.5mm; the sizes of the left prey bird: 1.2 x 3.1 x 4cm; the sizes of the right prey bird: 1.2 x 3.3 x 4.5cm; the sizes of the spring: length - 10.2cm, diameter - 0.6cm; diameter of the wire - 1.2mm. The Museum of Corabia, Romania, inv. 2974.

The second brooch is 28cm long and it weighs 359.3g (fig. 7-9). It has been preserved better than the first. On both golden plates, above the spring and respectively below there are 11 golden squares with almandines. Other sizes: the width - 15.7cm; the thickness (height of the spring) - 5.2cm; the sizes of the head: 6.1 x 9.9cm; the sizes of the foot: 4.3 x 15cm; the sizes of the plate above the spring are 3.3 x 3.4cm, and the thickness of the plate is 1.5mm; the sizes of the plate below the spring are 3.1 x 3.2cm and its thickness is 1.5mm; the sizes of the left prey bird: 4.4 x 3.2 x 1.3cm; the sizes of the right prey bird: 4.5 x 3.2 x 1.2cm; the sizes of the spring: the length- 10.4cm, the diameter - 0.5cm; the diameter of the wire - 1.2mm. The Museum of Corabia, Romania, inv. 2975.

Comments

It is clear that the two brooches represent a couple of jewellery worn

by an important female character. Why were these pieces found in a military fortification? Most probably, they belonged to the wife (or daughter) of a German *foederatus* at Sucidava, where he fought under the service of the Empire. It is not the case to discuss this fact now. The presence of the German *foederati* inside the Late Roman army is well-known. To support this idea, Sucidava is exactly on the northern Danubian border of the Empire during the Late Roman and early Byzantine Period. The antiques, like the brooches presented here, which were discovered on the territory of Romania, have been attributed to the Gepides or to the Ostrogoths.

More interesting are the discussions about the dating of the two brooches. As it is customary, I will mention a few of the similar discoveries. From the beginning, it is necessary to specify the fact that we cannot find other brooches absolutely identical with the ones from Sucidava because such pieces were custom made. Probably, the most well-known discovery in this respect is the princely grave of Untersibenbrunn in Austria[11], which can be dated in the first quater of the 5th century. To the same cultural level belong the brooches from Airan, France[12] and Șimleul Silvaniei, Romania.[13] Furthermore, we can invoke here the brooches discovered in Thaya, in Austria, which can be dated to mid 5th century.[14] And then, the brooches discovered in Periam[15] and Dindești, the both in Romania,[16] from the second half of the 5th century. And not at last, the brooches from Saint-Martin-de-Fontenay in France, from late 5th century.[17] It is easy to see that the brooches of this type were spread in the German world during the 5th century, and everybody agrees with this dating.

Some other pieces could be dated a little bit later, like the discoveries from the Roman legionary camp of *Potaissa*, today Turda, Romania. In this place, such pieces have been discovered inside a princely German grave, placed in the *latrinae* of the baths from *latus dextrum*.[18] After a thorough analyse of the pieces from the inventory of the grave and taking into account the historical context of the burial, the dating of this German grave from Turda was placed in early 6th century.[19]

We know already that experts in the field have established that the big

11 The illustration was accessible for me at Harhoiu 1976, 1049, fig. 13-14 and Atilla 2007, 99.
12 Atilla 2007, 104.
13 Florescu & Miclea 1979, 43-44, fig. 30-32; Harhoiu 1998, 189-190.
14 Atilla 2007, 100.
15 Milleker 1898, 174; Harhoiu 1998, 183-184.
16 Németi 1967, 499-504; Harhoiu 1998, 173.
17 Atilla 2007, 320-321.
18 Bărbulescu 2008; Attila 2007, 239-241.
19 Bărbulescu 2008, 97.

size of such brooches is a sign of their later dating. Moreover, the maximum width of the foot above its center, shows the same thing, a later dating.

For the dating of the two German brooches from Sucidava, we have a very precious element. In the same level of discovery of the brooches, there was found a golden coin;[20] the authors of the paper where the pieces were mentioned for the first time emphasized the fact that the coin came from the same level with the brooches; it is a coin of *tremissis* type (fig. 10-11) issued by Justinian.[21]

The conclusion that the two brooches from Sucidava are dated in the 6th century (probably from its first half) it is now very credible. There cannot be excluded the possibility that these objects could have been produced earlier (to the end of the 5th century)[22] but the fact that they remained in use for much longer is certain, taking into account that they were made of precious metal.

These are not only archaeological evidences about the presence of the Germans at Sucidava-Celei in Late Roman period. Inside the fortification, there was discovered a grave of a warrior (fig. 12-13) from the second half of the 5th century, with a sword beside him.[23]

Another grave[24] was discovered under the foundation of the Christian church from the 6th century and the skeleton (fig. 14-16) has been considered of the Northern type.[25]

It is pointed out in this case once again the importance of the foreign allies in the Late Roman army of the Lower Danube, and also the significant presence of the Germans inside it. All these and many other aspects will be discussed with another occasion.

Translated by dr. Mihaela Pena

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21 Moisil 2009, 79-86.
22 Ambroz 1966, pl. XVI.
23 Toropu & Tătulea 1987, fig. XXXII/1-2; Bondoc 2011-2012, 133-142.
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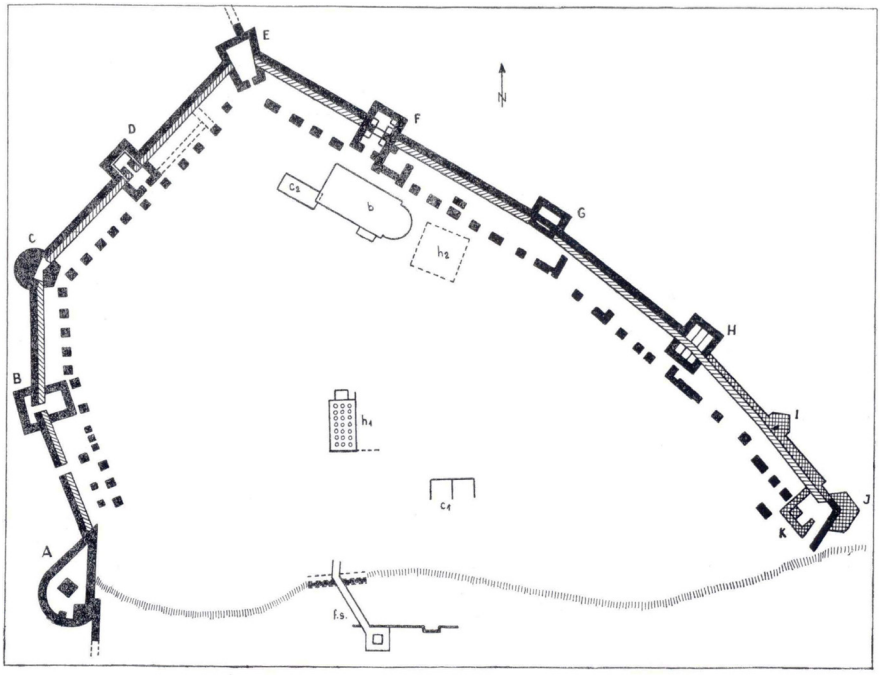


Fig. 1. The Late Roman fortification of Sucidava-Celei (after Toropu & Tătulea 1987).

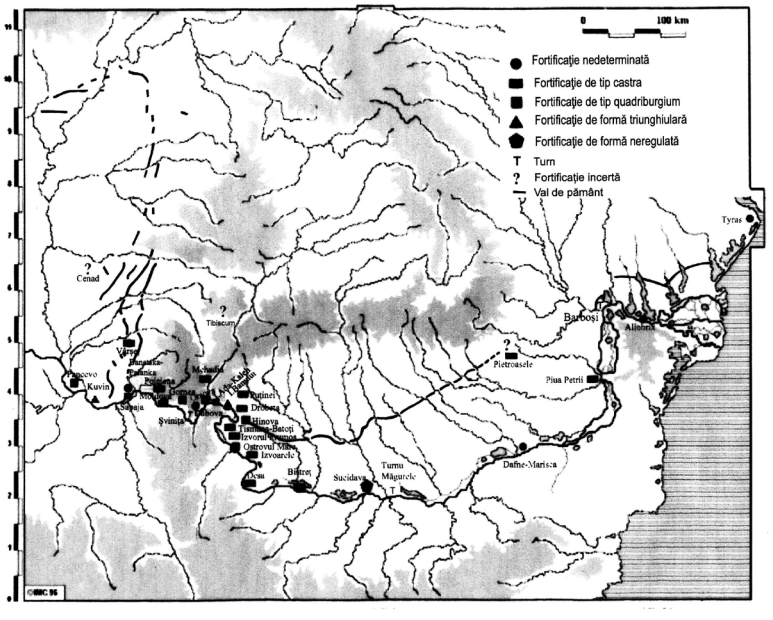


Fig. 2. Sucidava-Celei and its surroundings on the northern bank of the Danube, during the 4th- the begining of the 5th century (after Bondoc 2009, 363, pl. CXIX).

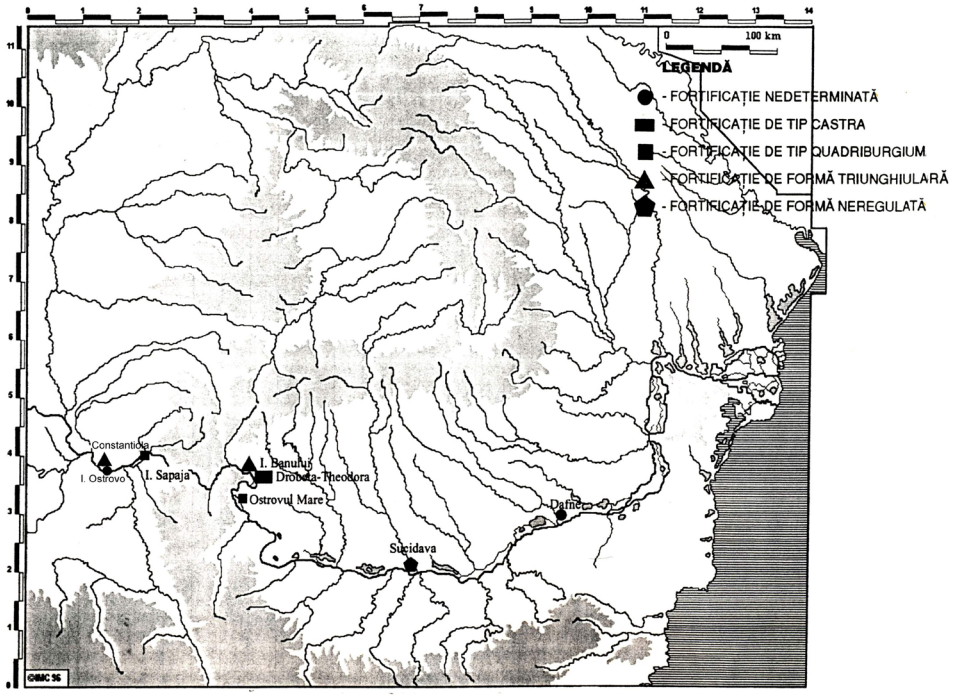


Fig. 3. Sucidava-Celei on the northern bank of the Danube, during the 6th century (Bondoc 2009, 364, pl. CXX).



Fig. 4-6. Sucidava-Celei. A German brooch (after Bondoc 2009, 365, fig. 433a-c).



Fig. 7-9. Sucidava-Celei. Another German brooch (after Bondoc 2009, 365, fig. 434a-c).



Fig. 10-11. Sucidava-Celei. A golden coin of tremissis type.

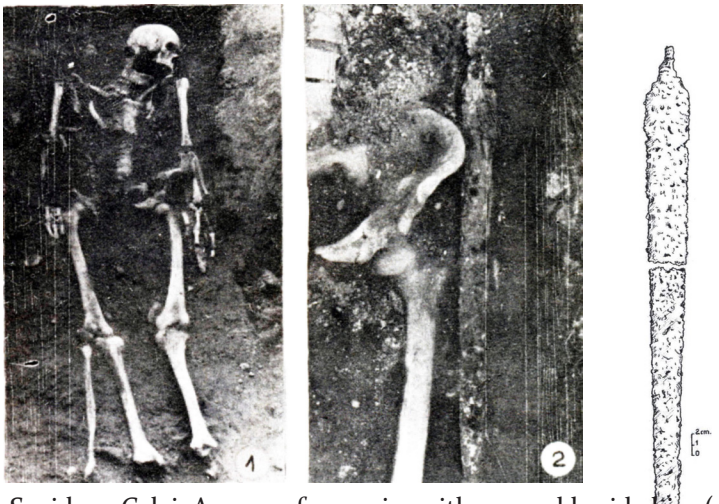


Fig. 12-13. Sucidava-Celei. A grave of a warrior with a sword beside him (after to Toropu & Tătulea 1987, fig. XXXII/1-2; Amon 2004, pl. XVII/2; Bondoc 2011-1012, 136).

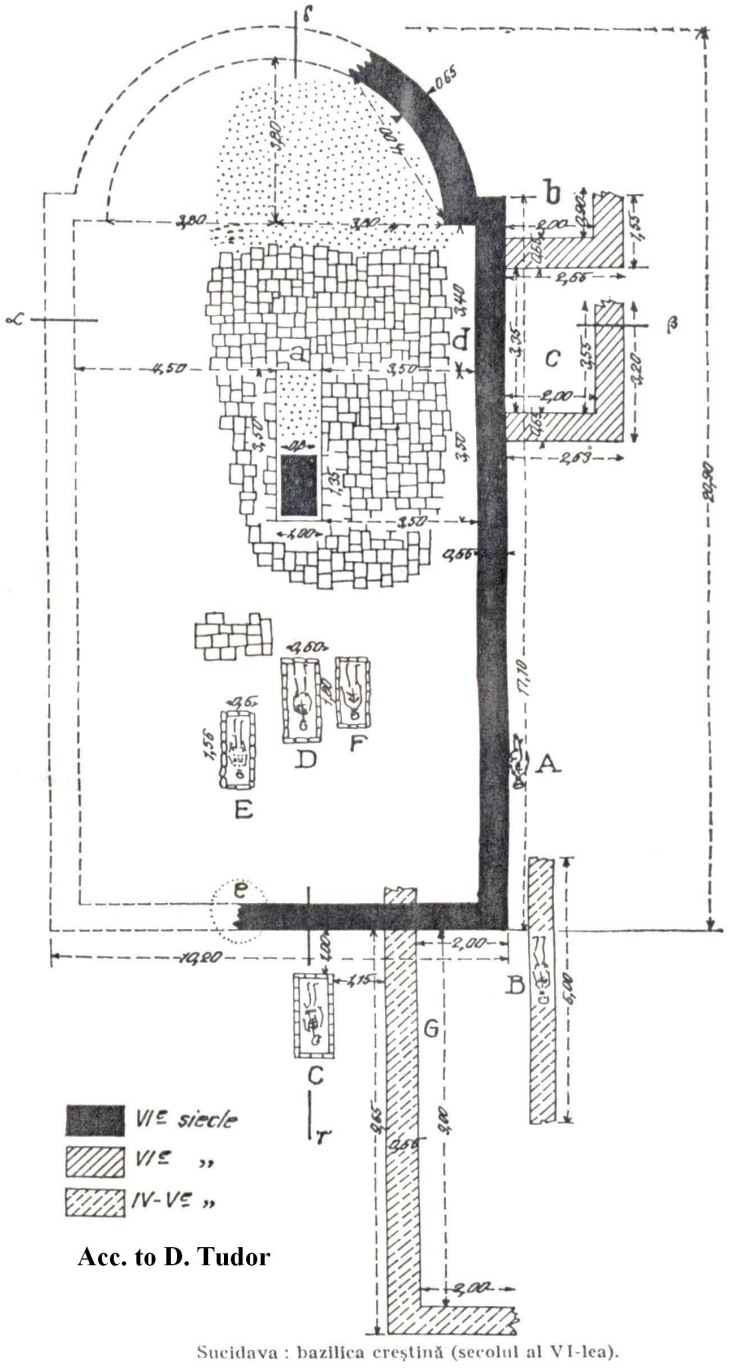


Fig. 14. Sucidava-Celei. The Christian church from the 6th century (after Tudor 1965, 110, fig. 28).

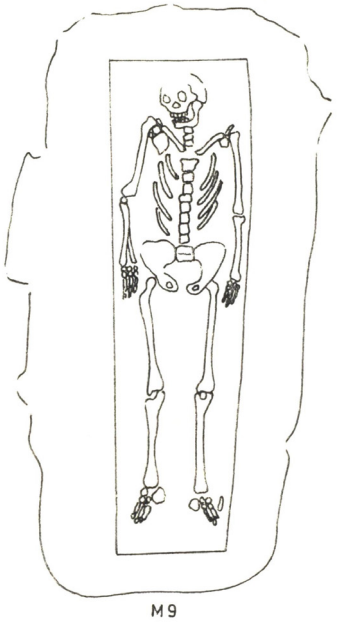




Photo 1: *norma facialis*



Photo 2: *norma lateralis*

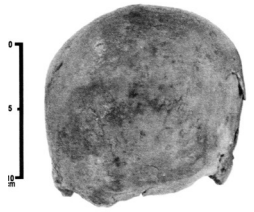


Photo 3: *norma occipitalis*

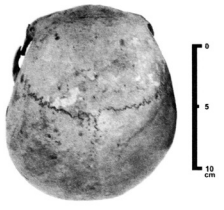


Photo 4: *norma verticalis*

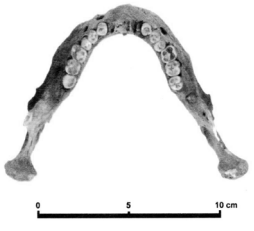


Photo 5: mandible

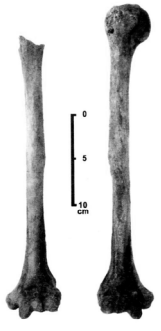


Photo 6: humerusul

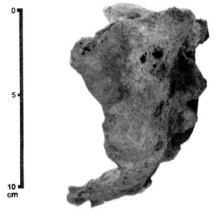


Photo 7: sacrum

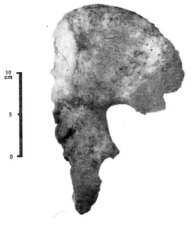


Photo 8: coxal

Fig. 15-17. Sucidava-Celei. A skeleton of Northern type (after Vasile 2006, 437-450.

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The beginnings of the Vandals settlement in the Danube area

Artur Błażejewski

Abstract: Between the arrival of the Vandals in the Danube area and the time when they left this location about 420 passed probably several centuries. There is still no consensus concerning from where this tribe came to the Roman Limes, what was the cultural context of it and with what artefacts Vandals' stay in the Danube area could be possibly linked.

The earliest date of the Vandals appearance in the Danube frontier of the Empire are years 171-172 AD, when the Hasdingi (a faction of the Vandals) reached the northern border of Dacia. From this area, however, the Hasdingi ejected former inhabitants, the Costoboci - a Dacian tribe living in areas outside of the provinces.

In the Tisa River basin occur archaeological sites that represent the characteristics of the Przeworsk culture (Fig. 1), identified as the relics of Vandals settlement, from the eastern part of this archaeological culture. Some of those finds are also concentrated in the Roman *Dacia Porolissensis*, with no traces of stable settlement.

In the next centuries the Vandals population in the Danube area was integrated with local, Dacian and Sarmatian background. The archaeological evidence of their presence is identified as Blaħice-Bereg culture.

The Vandals from the Tisa River and the Danube area appear in written sources again only in the context of events of the year 212 when Dacian Carpi and the Hasdingi attacked Dacia Porolissensis.

Key words: Vandals, Marcomannic wars, Danubian limes, Roman Period

Between the arrival of the Vandals in the Danube area and the time when they left this location about 420 passed probably several centuries. There is still no consensus concerning from where this tribe came to the Roman Limes, what was the cultural context of it and with what artifacts Vandals' stay in the Danube area could be possibly linked.

While fairly extensive literature refers to the end of the Vandals' stay in the zone of the Danube Limes, the beginnings of their settlement in the border areas of the Roman Empire are not well known. It is somewhat the

result of an abundance of written sources describing migrations of barbarian peoples in the late antiquity and yet a scant number of them when it comes to these peoples in the first centuries AD.

The earliest date of the Vandals appearance in the Danube frontier of the Empire are years 171-172, when the Hasdingi (a faction of the Vandals) reached the northern border of Dacia at the time of the governor Sextus Cornelius Clemens with the intention to conquer a new settlement area just in the province.[1] The Romans, however, prevented the fight in their characteristic manner - they settled the newcomers from the Germanic tribe as allies (*foederati*) in the upper Tisa River basin.

From this area, however, the Hasdingi ejected former inhabitants, the Costoboci - a Dacian tribe living in areas outside of the provinces - who very often and probably rightly are identified with the Lipița archaeological culture.[2] Quite precise location of this culture in the area of today's Ukraine on the east side of the Carpathians means probably that the settlement zone of the tribe extended far beyond the territory of the aforementioned archaeological culture and it should be associated also with other complexes of artefacts, discovered either in the Carpathians themselves or on their west or south-west side. It is also possible that the current state of research does not present all artefacts of the Lipița culture.

The Costoboci appear frequently in accounts concerning the Marcomannic Wars as active participants, who undertook, among others, a long raid to Greece.[3] They had crossed the lower Danube and then marched through Lower Moesia, Thrace and Macedonia. They reached the Achaia. On their way they left traces of destruction and looting. It was one of many bloody episodes of the Marcomannic Wars that left for long its mark in the memory of the Balkan Peninsula inhabitants. It should be stressed that the Vandals in 171 or early 172 defeated the largely exhausted opponent.[4] Firstly, the Costoboci troops less than two years earlier returned from a long raid to areas located more than 1000 km from their headquarters and secondly, in the first half of 171 the warriors of this tribe were fought off and defeated by Roman army.[5]

There is a clear correlation between recorded by Cassius arrival of the Vandals in the Dacian frontier and the disappearance of the Lipița culture. The latter process took place just at the end of the Marcomannic Wars or soon after, i.e. in phase B2/C1 or very early phase C1, according to the relative chronology of the Barbaricum.[6] Interestingly, the Roman historian gives an

1 Dio Cassius, *Hist. Romana*. 71.11.
2 Śmiszko 1932, 179; Russu 1959.
3 Böhme 1975, 164, fig. 3.
4 Dio Cassius, *Hist. Romana*. 71.12.1.
5 Gudea 1994, 373.
6 Godłowski 1970, 36-38, 92-94; 1985, 67-68; Tejral 1970, 202-203; 1999, 182-199;

information concerning leaders of the Vandals. The tribe was ruled by two brothers, known by names: Raus and Raptus, which mean 'reed' and 'beam' respectively.[7] It is not certain whether these are real historical figures or we are dealing here with a kind of dynastic myth (probably in its initial form). Perhaps the names themselves reflect brothers' characters, as if opposite ones. It is possible that it is only to highlight various fighting methods used by the Vandals, sometimes they dodged (bent like reed), sometimes they fought hard, at full confrontation.

Shortly after the victory over the Costoboci, however, the Hasdingi were defeated by the Lacringi tribe (or the Dacringi - there are two versions in sources). The origin of this people is not clear. In the literature, there were often assumptions that this was another faction of the Vandals. Hence, we would deal with a conflict between two factions of the same tribe. Most likely, however, it is one of tribes of the free Dacians.[8]

What saved the Vandals from total disaster was the alliance with Rome. They kept the former Costoboci territories, where they settled permanently for several centuries. Roman protective umbrella had to be very attractive because the Cotini tribe inhabiting western Carpathians (to the north from the Quadi) tried in a very inefficient way (by imprisoning the Roman envoy Tarrutenius Paternus), enforce the same alliance conditions. This resulted in their case in the opposite way – they were defeated by Romans. The disintegration of their culture is very well confirmed by the archaeological evidences.[9]

We presented above the beginnings of the Vandals' settlement in the Danube area in the light of written sources. What about the archaeological sources then? Indeed, the migrations and conflicts described especially by Cassius Dio seem to be confirmed by discovered assemblages.

Namely it concerns the finds characteristic for the so-called Przeworsk culture, which main territory was located in today's Poland. It is not the place to summarize the wide discussion that periodically bursts in the professional literature concerning ethnic identification of this culture. While it is not acceptable, in my opinion, to link all of its parts with the Germanic Vandals, the settlement zones of various factions of this people certainly should be sought in this area.[10]

In any case, in the Tisa River basin occur archaeological sites that represent the characteristics of the Przeworsk culture (Fig. 1). They were once analyzed in detail by M. Olędzki.[11] The oldest horizon of these sites should be

Kolník 1971, 511, 524; 1994; Domański 1992.

7 Dio Cassius, *Hist. Romana*. 71.12.1

8 Olędzki 2008, 32.

9 Pieta 1982, 146.

10 Olędzki 1993, 66; 1997.

11 Olędzki 1993; 2001.

dated exactly to the time of the Marcomannic Wars, i.e. to the phase B2/C1 according to the relative chronology of Barbaricum. I must emphasize that I am a supporter of the chronological approach proposed by Czech and Slovak researchers who consider the very phase B2/C1 as exactly correlated with these events.[12] M. Olędzki instead includes phase B2/C1 to the phase C1a, basically after K. Godłowski.[13] In my opinion in the Danube area this approach leads to losing an opportunity for more precise dating of the assemblages, despite that there are such possibilities created by very well dating metal artefacts. This different approach to the problem of relative chronology does not diminish in any way the achievements of M. Olędzki when it comes to presentation of aforementioned finds.

Probably the oldest assemblages with the Przeworsk culture characteristics from the Tisa River basin are graves of the well-known burial ground in Zemplин.[14] It should probably be dated to the late phase B2b, i.e. the time immediately before the start of the Marcomannic Wars. The other assemblages should be included to the proper phase B2/C1 and some of them to the phase C1a (according to J. Tejral[15]). It should be added that these are, in principle, only the funerary sites. So far, only several and isolated discoveries of settlements can be correlated with them. In the upper Tisa River basin the Vandals' settlement appears to be very dense. The concentration of sites showing the 'Przeworsk' nature is very clear and the north-east border of the settlement zone is the inner line of the Carpathians.

Among those sites dating for the stage B2/C2 or C1a are, for example: grave from Mala Kopania,[16] but also Kvakovce in Slovakia, perhaps a bit older (phase B2b),[17] Bratovo, Ardanove,[18] Apa,[19] Bodrog,[20] Cehăluț,[21] Kökcse,[22] Lastovce.[23] Those newly established cemeteries of 'Przeworsk' type (or: with some complexes with 'Przeworsk' finds), show the range of 'the Vandals' settlement zone' in the time of Marcomannic wars (Fig. 2; 3).

In the next few decades during the second half of the 3rd century AD and in the 4th century AD this local group loses its 'Przeworsk' character and

12 Tejral 1970, 202-203; 1999, 182-199; Kolník 1971; 1994.
13 Godłowski 1970, 36-38, 92-94; Olędzki 2008, 11-28.
14 Budinský-Krička & Lamiová-Schmiedlová 1990, 245-344; Lamiová-Schmiedlová 1992, 75.
15 Tejral 1970,202-203.
16 Kobal 1997, 41, 51.
17 Olędzki 1999, 108.
18 Kotigoroško 1993, 146-153.
19 Nagy 1997, 152.
20 Lamiová-Schmiedlová 1969, 405.
21 Lazin 1992, 339-346.
22 Istvánovits & Kulcsár 1992, 55.
23 Eisner 1933, 211-212.

become more and more integrated with local cultural background of Dacian type. The development of this new archaeological group of finds is represented by numerous sites from Upper Tisa region, known from the literature as the Blaħice-Bereg culture.[24]

Analysing distribution of the sites one can notice that in the upper Tisa River basin the sites of the Przeworsk culture form a cluster while in other areas, namely in the Great Hungarian Plain and in the Roman Dacia they are scattered. It certainly proves the stability of settlement in recently conquered territories formerly belonged to the Costoboci tribe.

As for the province of Dacia the case presents yet another way. We are dealing here with an absolute lack of military artefacts, which for the Przeworsk culture is quite remarkable. Quite often there appear only spurs. These are definitely items considered to be so-called determinants of the female gender. These finds are concentrated in the northern part of Dacia Porolissensis, in the upper Someș River basin. It is remarkable that a large part of them was found within or next to Roman castra or castelli: Moigrad (Porolissum), Jac, Ilișua, Orheiul Bistriței and, far to the South, Obreja (fig. 4).[25] This situation can be explained thanks to written sources. Cassius Dio, quoted here many times,[26] says that one of conditions of peace between the Empire and the Hasdingi, apart from the latter military action against the Dacian Costoboci, was leaving the hostages, i.e. women and children, under 'care' of Clemens. After wars against the Costoboci and Dacringi/Lacringi, the hostages were released. I fully support the thesis of M. Olędzki, who stated that finds identified as Vandals' ones from the province of Dacia are just a reflection of this episode in the history of the Vandals.[27]

The situation of the Vandals' finds appears different when it comes to the Great Hungarian Plain (on the left bank of the Danube). This area was settled in the period in question by Sarmatian tribes with whom the Vandals had apparently been in contact. Archaeological context of the Przeworsk culture type artefacts is here clearly Sarmatian, connected to the Kiszombor-Ernőháza culture.[28]

But it is worth considering from where groups of the Vandals came to the Tisa River basin. In this case one can rely solely on information obtained from analysis of archaeological artifacts. As stated earlier, these are assemblages with obvious characteristics of the Przeworsk culture. According to previous, detailed analyses, everything indicates so-called eastern zone of this culture, i.e. the part generally associated with the Vistula River basin. There are basically

24 Csallány 1966; Olędzki 1999, 118, 126.
25 Horendt 1958, 36-37, 41; Opreanu 1998, 105-110.
26 Dio Cassius, *Hist. Romana*. 71.12.1-3.
27 Gudea 1994, 375; Olędzki 2001, 147-148.
28 Párducz 1950, 103-107.

the regions of today's Poland: Mazovia and Lublin Land. The settlement of the Przeworsk culture, stabilized there since the Pre-Roman period, at the end of the phase B2 according to the relative chronology of the Barbaricum began to be displaced by the so-called Wielbark culture, usually identified with the Goths and tribes related to them, probably of Scandinavian origins. As the result of this expansion, the population of the so-called Przeworsk culture left its former areas, initially in Kujawy and northern Greater Poland and then exactly in the Vistula River basin, particularly on the right bank of the river. In addition, as it was mentioned, indeed the most characteristic artifacts that can be found in the Przeworsk type assemblages in the Tisa River basin, meet close analogies in the eastern part of the territory of today's Poland. Therefore, this is the starting point of the Vandals-Hasdingi journey in the direction of the Danube Limes.

Probably, due to the presence of high mountains dividing the Vistula River basin and the Tisa River area, the journey led through the Dukla Pass, northwards from which recently the Przeworsk culture sites were discovered, very likely documenting the journey of this population to the south. But even earlier, in the phase B2, some groups of the Przeworsk culture expanded to neighboring areas, although the ones located in the eastern, outer side of the line of the Carpathians, in the western regions of today's Ukraine.

The compact Vandals' settlement zone in the first period after the conquest of new lands in the Tisa River basin still has strictly 'Przeworsk' character. This situation remained unchanged probably for the whole phase C1a. Then, however, it loses its original characteristics. It did not happen, however, certainly as a result of a demographic crisis. Written sources indicate the opposite process, namely the development of the tribe and establishing its position in the vicinity of the border of the Empire during several dozen years of peace. What happened here was just the so-called acculturation, i.e. a gradual blending the newcomers in the local cultural environment yet preserving some of the original features. These features, however, disappeared over time. The integration of the east Germanic tribe with Dacian and, as mentioned earlier, Sarmatian tribes in such a short time may seem surprising but it is a fact. This new entity is most commonly referred to as the Blaħice-Bereg culture, basically unambiguously associated with the Hasdingi.

One can ask whether the emergence of this new archaeological culture, which is currently a material trace of a Vandals' faction migration, had any impact on cultural picture of the tribe's native area, i.e. the Przeworsk culture and particularly its eastern zone. It turns out that indeed it had. Numerous archaeological sites of Przeworsk culture from the Western Carpathians confirm the consequent move of this population in the SE direction, as for

example lately excavated cemetery at Prusiek, near Sanok (SE Poland).[29] For the start of the younger Roman period, i.e. for the phase C1, there are numerous examples of artifacts of the Danube area provenance, from the border of Pannonia and Dacia.[30] Here can be listed whole series of fibulae produced in these areas. Also the pottery finds attest maintaining contacts between emigrants and their native areas, where most likely remained some number of their tribesmen, despite the expansion of new groups of the Goths.

It is worth a moment of reflection concerning the problem from time to time signaled in the literature, namely the origins of wheel-made pottery in the Przeworsk culture. Many times the opinion of the Danube area provenance of the technology used in this culture was expressed and mainly the evidences indicate here rather Dacia than Pannonia as a starting point of the workshop pottery in the eastern zone of the Przeworsk culture.[31] In the western zone the situation is different, probably the role of the Middle Danube area was much more important. The starting date of this craft is still disputable. One can not agree with assumptions of some researchers who are willing to see it before the Marcomannic Wars, i.e. at the end of the phase B2. There is simply no evidence. The mere presence of fragments of wheel-made vessels in the Przeworsk culture graves dating as early as to the phase B2/C1 can not be such an evidence. In fact it is not known whether they are local products or imports, which in burial assemblages of this culture, deliberately assembled, appear quite often. I fully agree in this matter with the very skeptic opinion of G. Domański.[32]

An evidence of the pottery production, in the sense of craft, can be, in my opinion, only a discovery of a well-dated pottery kiln and such finds before the phase C1a in the Przeworsk culture simply do not exist. The earliest feature connected to the ceramics production from Przeworsk culture's territory, namely the kiln from the site at Sanok, dated to the phase B2 (around the beginning of 2nd century AD), contains the pottery of Dacian, not 'Przeworsk' type (Fig. 5).[33] Hence, it seems that the beginnings of workshop pottery production in the Przeworsk culture are linked with the period after the Marcomannic Wars and may constitute one of the consequences of population movements as a result of the military actions.[34] It should be also noticed the simultaneity of the process of shaping the settlement of the Vandals in the Tisa River basin and formation of the aforementioned Blaћice-Bereg culture.[35]

29 Madyda-Legutko, Pohorska-Kleja & Rodzińska-Nowak 2005, 124.
30 Gralak 2012, 117-143.
31 Dobrzańska 1980, 91.
32 Domański 2010, 44.
33 Madyda-Legutko, Pohorska-Kleja & Rodzińska-Nowak 2008.
34 Dobrzańska 1982.
35 Csallány 1966; 1973, 295-298.

Its role in the civilization development of areas located to the north from the Carpathians was probably very high.

The Vandals from the Tisa River and the Danube area appear in written sources again only in the context of events of the year 212 when Dacian Carpi and the Hasdingi attacked Dacia Porolissensis. The capital of the province was destroyed and the Danube Limes was damaged. This was, therefore, the end of peace between the Empire and the Vandals. In the year 215 in the area in question appeared yet another faction of the Vandals, i.e. the Victovali.[36] This event is associated with the development of the settlement of these tribes in the middle Danube zone. After about two centuries these crossed the Limes and started their journey to North Africa.

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36 Dio Cassius, *Hist. Romana*. 78.20.3

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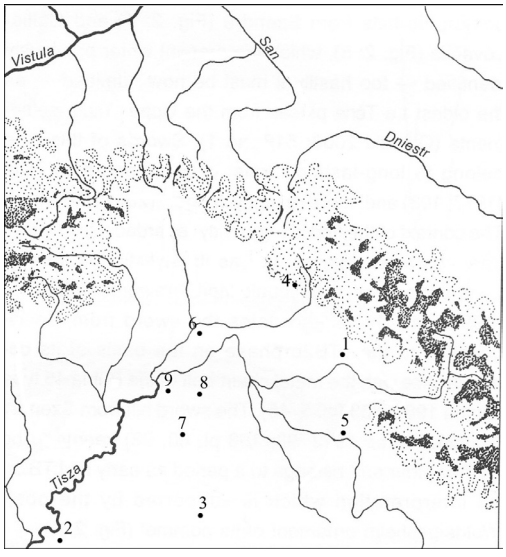


Fig. 1. The Earliest archaeological sites with finds of Vandals character from Upper Tisa basin. 1 – Mala Kopania, 2 – Kvakovce, 3 – Bratovo, 4 – Ardanove, 5 – Apa, 6 – Bodrog, 7 – Cehăluț, 8 – Kékcse, 9 – Lastovce (drawn by author).

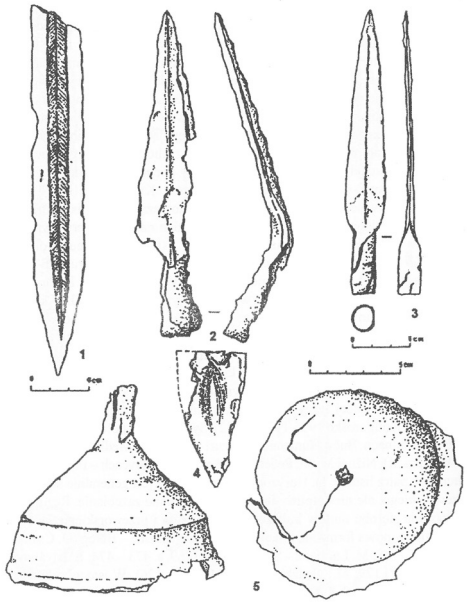


Fig. 2. Kvakovce. Mixed material of Przeworsk culture from cemetery (after Olędzki, 2001, 142, fig. 3).

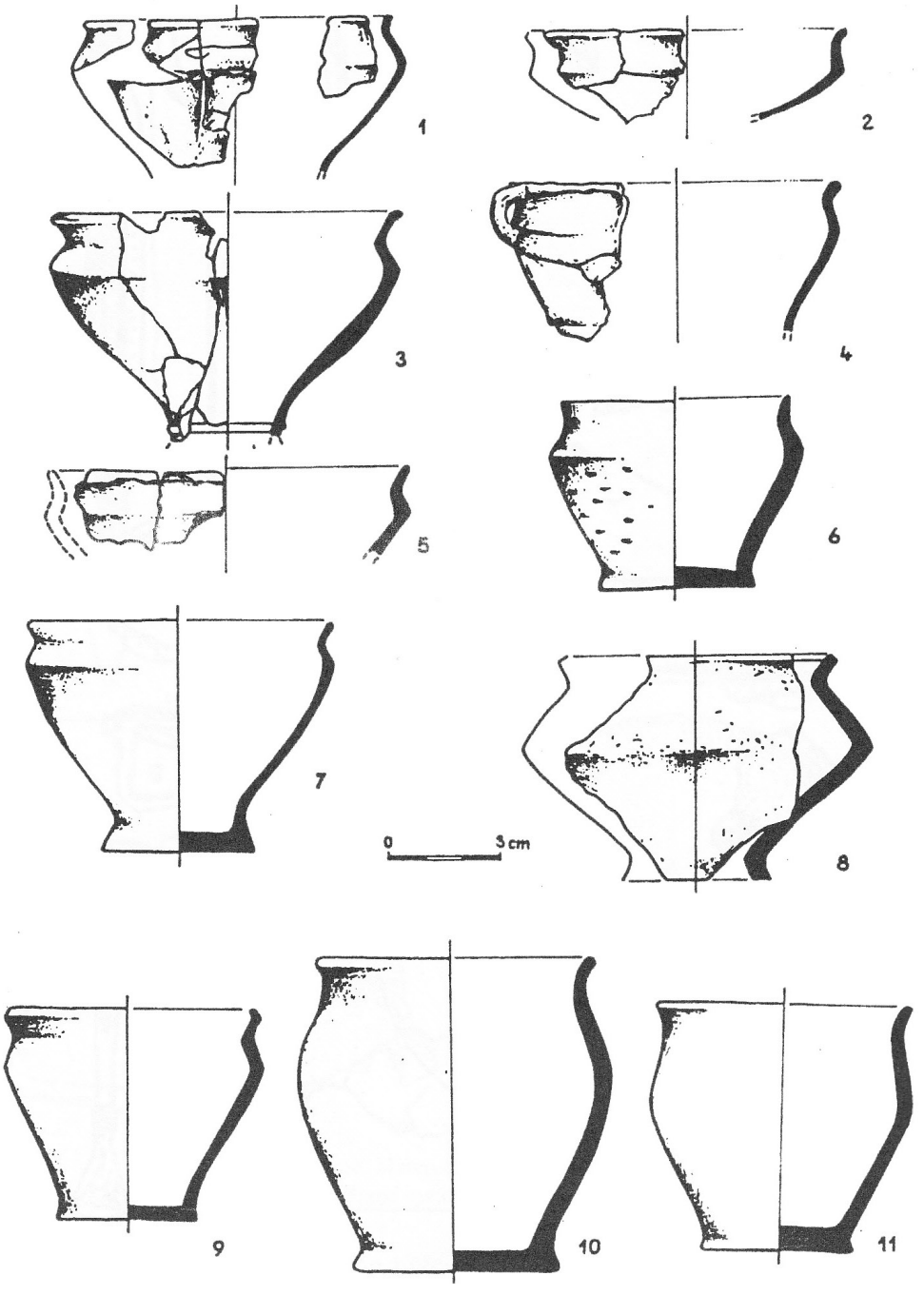


Fig. 3. Vandals pottery from 'settlement zone': 1 -5 – Beregsurány, 6 – Vuzlovie, 7, 10, 11 – Buča, 8 – Căpleni, 9 – Cholmok (after Olędzki 2001, 144, fig. 5).

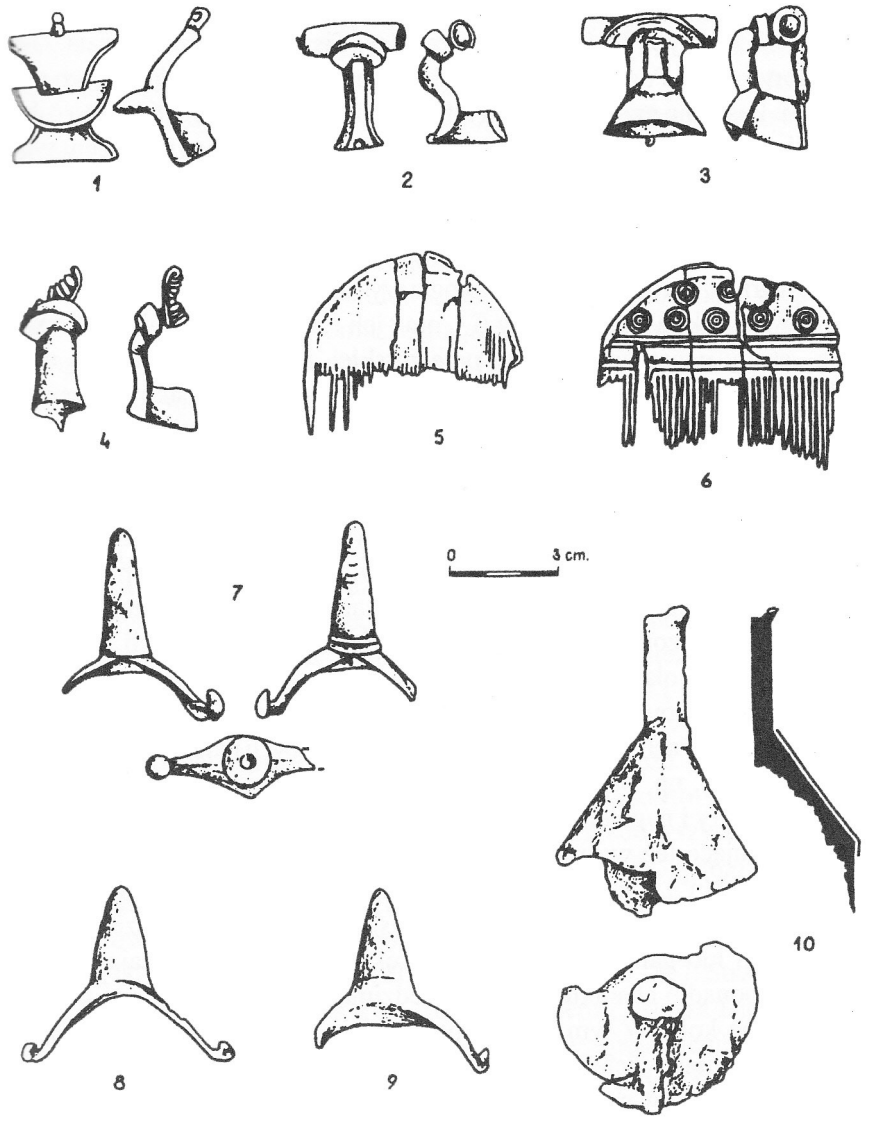


Fig. 4. Vandals finds from Roman Dacia. 1, 2 – Moigrad/Porolissum, 3 – Tiszavasvári, 4 – Căşei, 5- Obreja, 6 – Gherla, 7 – Szalbocs, 8 – Ilişua, 9 – Toarcla, 10 – Nyiregyháza (after Olędzki 2001, 145, fig. 6).

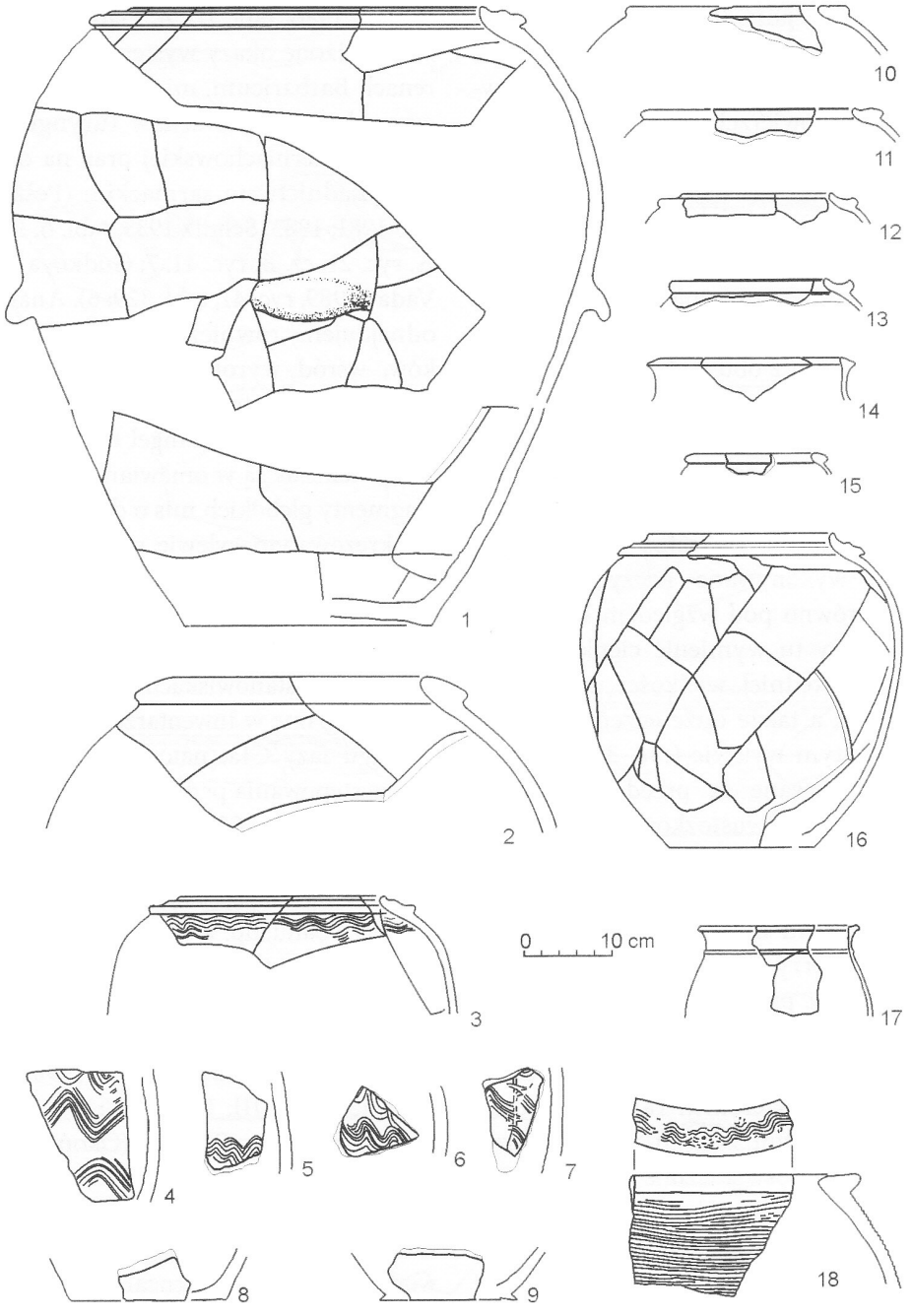


Fig. 5. Sanok, site 54, SE Poland. Pottery of Dacian type from the kiln (after Madyda-Legutko, Pohorska-Kleja & Rodzińska-Nowak 2008, 14, fig. 4).

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Observations on the Barbarian presence in the province of Moesia Secunda in Late Antiquity

Alexander Stanev



Abstract: The paper explores the barbaric presence in *Moesia Secunda* based on the elements of costume, with a correlation to the historical data about the province. The author observes that there are zones of persisting presence throughout Late Antiquity – the Danube limes, the pre-mountainous and mountainous parts of the Haemus and the area between Marcianopolis and Odessos. As far as the ethnical aspect is concerned, mixed Germanic groups with a dominating Goth element are attested. The study also poses the question whether this province was specifically determined to accept foreign population as part of the imperial policy for admission of barbarians.

Key words: Moesia Secunda, Late Antiquity, Adornments, Goths, Barbarians

The present article has been prompted by previous research that, in one way or another, covered partly or entirely the territory of Late Antique Moesia Secunda. Because of the relatively insufficient level of publication of finds from the region, and due to the concentration of barbarian material, this province appears as an area of long-lasting and abundant evidence on the presence of such material south of the Lower Danube. The focus of the paper is on the elements of costume, which are among the most attractive and at the same time most informative finds.

After the death of Emperor Constantine (306-337), the barbarian pressure on the Lower Danubian provinces decreased for a time. Ancient sources do not record great conflicts in the border zones. A sudden change in the political situation along the Lower Danube occurred during the last third of the 4th century. Generally speaking, this is the first phase of the so-called Migration of people. Ancient literature mentions several barbarian peoples who, swept by the Hunnic invasion, gravitated near to the frontiers of the

empire, or settled within it.

The examination of sources offers various types of barbarian presence in the territory of Moesia Secunda. It should be noted that historians put an emphasis on the different kinds of acceptance (*receptio*) by the Eastern Roman Empire. The comparison of this information with the data from before the 4th century shows a change of imperial policy towards the northern neighbors. The traditional barbarian expeditions from the 3rd century are now modified, with a tendency to settle down in a certain territory in return for keeping contract responsibilities. Certainly, there are also mentions of incursions, but entirely related to the Hunnic movement to the west and limited to a narrow chronological interval (Fig. 1).

One of the earliest testimonies about the period comes from the time of Constantius II (337-361). The intensified Christianization to the north of the Danube (due to the active deeds of Avdius) caused a reaction among the independent Gothic rulers and led to religious strife. We lack precise information about the surrounding events, but around 347/348 a large group of Goths, led by bishop Wulfila used the protection given by the emperor and settled down in the vicinity of Nicopolis ad Istrum, mostly in the pre-mountain areas of the Haemus (Shtukin 2005, 203).[1] These barbarians demonstrated impressive resistance and managed to remain a compact ethnic group even in the time of Iordanes (*Getica* was written around 551), who described them as 'peaceful and poor folks'.[2]

Christianization continued to underlie the rapport between the empire and the people north of the Lower Danube three decades later. In the autumn of 376, the barbarians in the former Dacian lands, pressured by the approaching Hunnic wave, attempted to gain the protection of the Roman Empire. The negotiations were led by Fritigern and Alaviv, a noble from the Balti. In return for *receptio* south of the Danube, the Visigoths (other ethnic groups were denied protection) acquired the duty to keep Roman laws and finally convert to Christianity in its Arian form.[3] The contract relations were clarified and Valens (364-378) decreed the movement to be done to a precisely defined place near Durostorum, where the Danube fleet was stationed. The territories of the provinces of Dacia Ripensis and Moesia Secunda were let as settlement lands, and according to Iordanes and Socrates, Thracia was given as well.[4] Additional information is offered by Ammianus Marcelinus, who claims that at the same time there already existed in the Moesian *auxilia* composed of Visigoths, led by Munderic (an aristocrat from the royal family

1 About Avdius' Christianization campaign, see Ἐπιφάνιος. *Panarion*. II. 70. On Wulfila's Goths, see Philostorg. *Hist.Eccl*. II.5.

2 Jord. *Get*. 267.

3 Iord. *Get*, 131-133.

4 Iord. *Get*, 133; Socrat. *Hist*, IV.34.

of the Balti) and Lagariman.[5]

A noteworthy issue is the status of the population that was transferred south of the Danube. According to T.S. Burns, the barbarians who acquired *receptio* in the period 350-378 were usually settled as *laeti* or were sent directly to military service (Burns 1981, 392). Ammianus Marcellinus, the most detailed source of information, writes that they were distributed as *auxilia*. On the other hand, *Σωζομενός* and Paulus Orosius present them as *foederis*.[6] H. Wolfram puts forward another hypothesis, with regard to the terms of the contract – the Visigoths had to be disarmed when passing into Roman lands. He suggests that the demilitarization of the immigrants accounts for their acceptance as *dediticii*, who had the status of *coloni* (Wolfram 1990, 118).

Certainly, in the process of accepting the barbarians, reality must have differed from the conditions of the contract. At first, separate groups of Visigoths started to move to places different from the established check point near Durostorum. This in turn led to the intrusion of a large mass of barbarians who did not pass the compulsory disarming regime. South of the river certain groups embarked that were not granted *receptio* at all – the ethnically mixed contingent led by Alatheus (Ostrogoth by origin) and Saphrax (Alan), as well as a troop of Ostrogoths led by Farnobius.

The subsequent events that led to the Visigothic uprising in the autumn of 376, the defeat of the Roman army near Adrianopolis on 9 August 378, and the practical elimination of Roman rule north of the Haemus, have been the subject of interest to ancient authors and have been described in detail. The situation was legitimized on 3 October 382, when a *foedus* contract was made up, according to which the Goths received lands in the Danubian provinces and agreed to serve in the Roman army (Schmidt 1969, 417). Even though the event was presented as a triumph of Emperor Theodosius (379-395), the contract clauses were not favorable for the Roman state. The lands of the Goths were not taxed, Roman administration had no actual rule, and these lands were almost entirely autonomous.[7] Military service was carried out not in the legions, but in ethnically distinct volunteer armies, led by their own military leaders. Moreover, the empire was obliged to pay an annual money stipend (Wolfram 1990, 133).[8]

After the establishment of contract agreement with Frittigern, all data

5 Amm.Marc. *Res.Gest*. XXXI.3.5.

6 Amm.Marc. *Res.Gest*. XXXI.4.1; Paul. Oros. *Hist.adv.pag.* VII.33.9.

7 According to the contract, lands for settlement were given between Haemus and the Danube. At the same time, compact Gothic groups continued to live in their temporary camps in the central part of Thrace. Synchronous barbarian settlements are recorded also in the province of Scythia – near Tomis (Zos. *Hist.Nova* IV.40).

8 Iord. *Get*. 146; Them. *Or*. XXXIV.24 (Wolfram 1990, 133, an. 102).

about the barbarian presence along the Lower Danube in the next half century continue to be directly or indirectly related to the Hunnic invasion. The first information is about the winter of 384/385, when 'Scythians', chased by the Huns, passed across the frozen river.[9] A new group of Ostrogothic refugees arrived in 386, led by Odotheus. The barbarians demanded *receptio*, which was declined. Nevertheless, the Ostrogoths started to transfer themselves south of the Danube. Promotus, *magister peditum per Thracias,* attacked the incursionists at the border and in the subsequent battle managed to eliminate them, and even their leader perished in it (Wolfram 1990, 134-135).[10] Probably at the same time two more invasions should be recorded – one of them by Scirians, Carpodacians and Huns (Velkov 1959, 38).[11]

The penetration of barbarians in the 4th century can be outlined with the help of individual finds and archaeological complexes. Emblematic examples are the miniature items that predated the double-plate brooches, made of plate-like elements. Most of these items have been detected in archaeological contexts (the Late Antique fortress at Voyvoda; Iatrus; Novae). They can be attributed to the second half of the 4th century and are directly connected with the penetration of contingents of the Chernyakhov and post-Chernyakhov culture(s) south of the Danube (Milchev & Damyanov 1972, 274, fig 10; Gomolka-Fuchs 1991, 170; Gencheva 2010, 313). The same ethnic bearers are recorded archaeologically in the inland areas – at the cemeteries in Kaylaka/Strazhata near Pleven; the Gradat locality near Gabrovo;[12] in the ancient settlement at Dolishte (Stanchev, Changova *et al.* 1961, 40-41; Koycheva 2002, 179-180; Lazarov 2009, 447; Kharalambieva 1991, 33); and in the *limes* zone near Durostorum and Tegulicium (Stanev 2010, 491; Atanasov & Buchvarov 2007, 238)(Fig. 2).

The main focus is the presence of barbarian infiltrations in and around the Late Antique strongholds which could be directly linked to the military contract with the empire, as attested by written sources. The type of archaeological material also proves that the barbarians who received status were accepted together with their families, i.e. the penetration of a non-

9 Philost. *Hist.Eccl*. X.6.

10 Zos. *Hist.Nova*, IV.34; *Consularia Constantinopolitana*, 379.3 (Wolfram 1990, 135, an. 107); Claud.Cl. *Pan.Hon.Aug*. 655-674.

11 Zos. *Hist.Nova*. IV.34.

12 The author K. Koycheva considers the date of the necropolis to be the 6th-beginning of the 7th century, according to parallels from 'Northern Black Sea area, the Caucasus, Urals and Danube areas'. At the same time, the analogies from the provinces south of the Danube (including the presented examples of Kabile, Pleven and Peychenovo village) considerably extend the lower chronological border. K. Koycheva (2002, 179) also notes that the beginning of the necropolis is not synchronic to the nearby church from the second half of the 6th century.

military population is assumed for probable subsequent settlement after the clauses expire. It is interesting to observe that we still lack rich complexes or individual finds to indicate the higher social status of their owners. All archaeological evidence from the period can be attributed to the so-called 'ordinary' population.

Another line of analysis is to acknowledge the imbalance between the accounted historical data (including the Visigothic *receptio* and the related events) and the limited amount of archaeological material from the second half of the 4th century. Presently, there is no definitive answer to this discrepancy, but certain possible hypotheses can be suggested: the barbarians accepted in the empire found themselves in a strongly Romanized environment where they quickly lost the archaeological indicators of ethnic identity (i.e. elements of costume, pottery, weapons); the territories let according to the contracts were not near big urban centers and most of them have not yet been identified archaeologically – even at the time of the almost complete obliteration of imperial jurisdiction north of the Haemus after the events of 376, there are almost no testimonies of taken or occupied cities by the barbarians; the invading people were still at a nomadic level of organization, and thus no archaeological finds accumulated at the sites.

The first massive Hunnic invasion south of the Danube took place in the winter of 394/395. Mounted troops crossed the frozen river and attacked the unprotected Moesian territories; it was mainly the lands of the Gothic *foederati* that suffered. The progressive strength of the Huns was again demonstrated in 447, when due to a fictitious breaking of the terms of the contract (such as not upholding the clause for the return of refugees), Attila undertook the greatest military campaign south of the Danube. It impacted mainly the dioceses of Thracia and Dacia. According to the sources, the Hunnic army comprised two troops, one in which vassal Gepids were led by Ardaric, and the Ostrogoths by Valamir.[13] It is due to the latter that most of the towns in Thracia suffered (Kulakovskiy 1913, 280).

During the dynamic events surrounding the Hunnic expansion, barbarian material is continuously attested, without increasing its intensity over time. In the first years of the 5th century there is a tendency to detect such material in fortresses in the Hemus and its outskirts – Kovachevets, Treskavets peak near Teteven (Rusev 2010, 344; Lazarov 2009, 447),[14] and in the *limes* zone near the *castellum* of Iatrus (Gomolka-Fuchs 1993, 356)(Fig. 3).

Even more interesting are the Germanic infiltrations around the middle

13 Iord. *Rom*. 331.

14 In the fortress at Lozarevo village there are barbarian finds from the time (Ignatiev 1921-22, 213). The site is on the border between Moesia Secunda and Thracia. A similar situation is witnessed in the border zone of Scythia near Debrene village (Haralambieva 1997, abb. 4).

of the century. They are characterized by representative female jewelry from Marcianopolis,[15] grave no. 3 from the necropolis of church no. 4 at Han Krum village, and Odessos (Kharalambieva 1988, 74; Balabanov 2006; Dumanov 2001, 71). The brooch from Marcianopolis directly corresponds to the Hunnic invasion of 447 and the burning of the town, but the situation of the discovery does not enable us to know whether they belonged to a citizen or to a member of the barbarian troop entourage. The inventory of grave no. 3, on the other hand, can be compared with similar complexes in modern-day Serbia, and the burial rite belongs to the rich burials of the Laa/Smolin horizon, attributed to the German aristocracy from the time of Hunnic domination along the Middle Danube.

The find from Han Krum village is evidence that even before the middle of the 5th century the empire allowed the infiltration and settlement of Germans from the developing multi-ethnic Hun-dominated state in Central Europe. Similarly, the brooch from the grave complex and especially the jewelry from Marcianopolis can be linked to owners of high social status. This makes it possible to suggest a purposeful movement of barbarian formations, led by a secular and probably a religious aristocracy (the burials at the church complex in Khan Krum). Such movement to a great extent was executed throughout legitimate admission into the empire guaranteed by contract.

A specific element of costume was introduced towards the first half of the 5th century: S-shaped clasps. Its origin is not completely clear yet, nor is its ethnic character or chronological span. The conceptual research on these finds tends to favor their barbarian character throughout the 5th century. Their incorporation into barbarian heritage is to a great extent indirect and is due to the fact that all (22) published finds from the Balkan provinces of the empire have been registered at sites from strictly limited areas where there is accompanying barbarian material. For the territory of Moesia Secunda such finds have been discovered as single items at Durostorum, and during the exploration of the Great Cave near Madara, as well as in the collection of the Kotel Historical Museum (all of them found in the region and probably some of them from the border area of Thracia) (Elefterscu & Șerbănescu 2009, 182-183; Popov 1934, fig. 177/G; Trendafilova 2007, 149-151). The identification of the finds as barbarian would establish them as the first mainstream type of costume element that spread in the province in Late Antiquity. At present, K.

15 From the territory of the ancient settlement there is further published evidence of a barbarian presence. Rescue excavations in 1975 unearthed two graves that contained bone combs, laid near the heads according to the 'Chernyakhov rite' (Minchev & Georgiev 1979, 107-108, Tabl. XVI, 3-4). During the 2009 archaeological season, in the 'Western insulae' sector coarse masonry houses with mud binding were explored, dated to the last third of the 5th century. It has been suggested that these are related to the Gothic population (Kuzov 2010, 282).

Trendafilova's idea to connect them to the local federated population can be accepted as probable. It may be added that the accompanying database for that population links it to some of the Germanic groups in the region.

After the collapse of the Hunnic state, its heritage in Central Europe was distributed among various barbarian contingents. This phenomenon was due to the active movement of separate formations and ethnic groups. Their activity is reflected also in the territories we are examining. Iordanes describes events related to the son of Aspar - Ardabur, who, around 458, killed another Goth – Bigelis.[16] The latter had his camp somewhere in modern Eastern Moesia or Southern Dobrudza. Nearby, by imperial permission, parts of the provinces of Moesia Secunda and Scythia were let to the Alanian chief Candac, who led an ethnically mixed group of Alans, Scirians and Sarmatians-Sadagarians (Wolfram 1990, 259).[17]

Especially significant is the information from the time between the civil war of Emperor Zeno (474-491) and the usurper Basiliscus (475-476) and the withdrawal of Theodoric's Ostrogoths towards Italy in 488.

In the final phase of the conflict between Zeno and Basiliscus, the former was supported by Armatius, *magister militum praesentalis* of the imperial army, which consisted mainly of barbarian *foederati*. According to Anonymus Valesianus, Zeno was also assisted by the Ostrogoth ruler Theodoric, son of Thiudimir, from the Amal family. For his favor to the emperor, the latter received the office *magister militum praesentalis*, patrician status, the right to lands in Moesia Secunda and annual stipend.[18]

In fact, these were the privileges taken from another Gothic commander, Theodoric Strabo, son of Triarius, who fell into disgrace after helping the usurper Basiliscus (Bury 1958, 413).[19] Resulting from this decision, the next period (476-483) provides plenty of information on diplomatic contacts and military actions in the political 'triangle' in the Lower Danubian provinces, consisting of the two Ostrogoth formations and the Roman Empire, represented by

16 Iord. *Rom*. 336.

17 Iord. *Get*. 265-266.

18 There is disagreement in the sources regarding the residence of Theodoric the Amal. According to Μάλχος, it is Marcianopolis (Malch, *Byz.* 17), while Anonymus Valesianus mentions Novae (Anon.Vales. *Exce*. I.IX.42). Exploring this issue in detail, J. Prostko-Rostyński (1997, 25) reaches the conclusion that Theodoric and the Pannonian Goths arrived in Moesia Secunda no sooner than the beginning of 475, and this happened in the region of Novae. P. Heater maintains the same opinion and points out that the Goths were not settled in the hinterland of Marcianopolis before 477 (Heater 1996, 159).

19 In the text by Μάλχος, the main source for the period, it is mentioned several times that Theodoric Strabo and his federate troops were situated in Thrace. However it is not clear whether the reference is to the geographical region, the province or the diocese (Malch, *Byz.* 2; 13).

Zeno, who tried to maneuver between them. As an outcome of this activity, the ancient sources describe several transfers of imperial privileges between the two Ostrogoth leaders.[20] The end came in 483, when Theodoric the Amal had his patrician title, the office of *magister militum praesentalis*, and the lands of the provinces of Moesia Secunda and Dacia Ripensis restored (Heater 1996, 163).[21] In the same year Theodoric returned to Novae, and it officially became his residence. In order to prove his goodwill, on 1 January 484, Zeno invited Theodoric to Constantinople and awarded him consular insignia (Wolfram 1990, 277).[22] Thus, in the period 484-488, the Ostrogoths settled as a compact ethnic group in the Lower Danubian provinces of the Eastern Empire. With sufficient military strength, the Gothic leader ruled almost independently.

Immediately after the demise of the Hunnic coalition, the first massive penetration of barbarian materials in this territory took place. Some of the items display the crafting traditions of the Middle Danube workshops. Fully developed types of elements of costume, adornments and accessories were introduced. From a chronological point of view, first appeared the derivative forms of large double-plate brooches made of plate-like elements, established as Bratei-type.[23] The territorial distribution makes two interesting facts evident. All finds published so far are from the interior of the province[24] – the pre-mountainous and mountainous areas of the eastern Haemus (three finds in the collection of Historical Museum Kotel; Rish village) (Trendafilova 2007, 146-147; Kharalambieva 1991, 35) and from the hinterland of Odessos (Yanchova polyana locality near Odessos) (Kharalambieva 1991, 33).[25] What is more, in terms of quantity, Moesia Secunda marks the highest concentration of such finds in the entire Eastern Roman Empire.[26] A probable hypothesis is

20 Malch, *Byz.* 19; Information related to Marcian's uprising in 479/480 (Bury 1958, 413).

21 Marc.Com. *Chron*, 483.VI.

22 Iord. *Get*. 289; Anon.Vales. *Exc.Val*. I.IX.49.

23 The double-plate brooches were also introduced south of the Danube, but their distribution in the empire stopped at the eastern border of the province of Dacia Ripensis.

24 A singular brooch with the characteristics of the Bratei-type has been attested in the Late Antique layer at the fortress of Kaleto, Nova Cherna village, Silistra. According to the archaeological context of the layer, the find falls between the end of the 5th and the beginning of the 6th century. In the same fortress there were fragments of so-called grey Germanic polished pottery (Milchev & Angelova 1970, 36; 1971, 22). A series of finds in close vicinity to the western border of the province of Scythia should be mentioned as well: villages of Severci, Botevo and Rogachevo (Kharalambieva 1991, 35).

25 Outside geographically placed finds, there are three additional examples probably discovered within the studied territory (Haralambieva 2002, 393).

26 For the sake of statistical completeness, two more brooches from the border zone

the penetration of a compact ethnic group, using similar elements of costume. They must have been also in direct contact with the population that used the double-plate tin brooch and their variants from Late Hunnic times. The route of distribution can be traced through another region with a concentration of such finds – the Serbian Danube area. In all Europe, at the time of its greatest local development, the type started to fall out of use in the Middle Danube areas and the Carpathian Valley, which can be related to the dynamic historical events after the fall of the Hunnic coalition and the active migration of people it used to include. In the lands studied, the brooch group remains stable until the penetration of the next barbarian wave (mainly eastern Germans, with a leading Gothic presence), which brought the new fashion of *Kerbschnitt* decorated objects (Fig. 4).

The detection of Bratei-type brooches allows us to analyze further the situation of the third quarter of the 5th century. On a local level, the type developed, as seen by the large amount of low quality objects, including imitations, which suggests the existence of one or more workshops, specialized in such production.[27] This demonstrates specific usage in the region, with a tendency towards duration in time. Also, similar Germanic finds are frequently found deep in the Haemus area, and their distribution reaches as far as the northern border of Thracia. The find-spots in most cases are Late Antique castles from the Haemus fortification system. It is a fascinating question why these strategic points in the defensive line were occupied by federate military garrisons in a period when Roman power still experienced trouble in regaining control of the Danubian provinces. A correlation with the historical situation demonstrates that the third quarter of the 5th century in Moesia Secunda and Dacia Ripensis witnessed the incursion of one of the mightiest Germanic formations (the Ostrogoths), whose presence resulted in the letting of the two provinces to them with a contract in 483. In this way, the Haemus practically turned into a border zone, so it can be speculated that the barbarians in the Haemus castles of this period had the task of protecting the passes from the south. Probably it was after the Ostrogoths departed towards Italy that the mountain garrisons passed into genuine imperial service (Stanev 2012, 44-46).

The period of the greatest amount of jewelry finds is connected precisely to the Ostrogothic presence along the Lower Danube. The entry of various Gothic formations together with satellite mixed groups of barbarians can be traced along the exit regions of Central Europe, throughout the Serbian Danube area to the lands here researched. One of the emblematic points of

of Scythia (villages of Rogachevo and Severtsi) should be noted (Kharalambieva 1991, 35).

27 The assumption of a local workshop(s) for the manufacture of non-Roman production is supported by the discovery of low quality items, imitations and lead samples of other types, as mentioned below.

ethnic identification is the different types and functional elements of costume decorated with *Kerbschnitt*.

We should start our comments by looking at high quality products with artistic and technical characteristics similar to Pannonian prototypes. For the province of Moesia Secunda these are three items of grave goods from Marcianopolis (a pair of brooches) and Krassen village. They are related to the common European Domolospuszta/Bácsordas horizon and belong to the period 470-480. (Mikhaylov 1961, 48; Kharalambieva 1984, 45-47). A single brooch from a grave in Marcianopolis that falls into Szekszárd-Palánk/Sokolnice variant should be added to them; as well as a fragmented item kept at the Late Antique fortress at Stan village (Mikhaylov 1961, 48; Dumanov 2012, 418)(Fig. 5).

Also contemporary are some luxury finds from the early Christian necropolis of Novae (an eagle-shaped brooch, a cicada and a rhomboid brooch, all of them made of gold in *cloisonné* technique) and a gold bracelet and a pair of silver gilt cicadae from the banks of the Vit river near Bivolare village (Vladkova 2006, 66; Kovacheva 2003, 95).[28] The brooches from Novae (in *cloisonné* technique, like the other items from the necropolis) demonstrate identical manufacture, moreover probably foreign to the settlement and even to the region jewelry workshop. Chronologically, they belong to the second half of the 5th century and more precisely, to the Ostrogothic presence in the settlement. Historically speaking, in the period 476-488 Novae was Theodoric's residence in his Lower Danubian territory. From a technological point of view, the pair from Bivolare demonstrates the characteristics of the same advanced jewelry tradition, but their find context does not allow further commentary.

The abovementioned examples have a few common features: in the first place, the high quality of production, unusual for the region, but widespread in Central Europe, which allows the movement of the users to be traced after the fall of the Hunnic coalition. Chronologically, all of the objects are characteristic in the period between the Ostrogoths' passage to the southeast under the leadership of Theodoric the Amal, and before his quest towards Italy, which implies their ethnic interpretation.[29] Another conclusion is that expensive costume elements appear for the first time, which would point to

28 The lower chronological border of the cicada-type items is directly linked to the political situation at the time of Hunnic presence along the Middle Danube. In the Balkan provinces, the earliest finds originate from the Serbian Danube area. All other finds south of the Danube date to the second half of the 5th century, and they develop as late as the turn of the 6th century.

29 From the border zone of Dacia Ripensis originates a set of luxury items from Sadovsko kale dated between 450/460 – 480/490, according to its typological characteristics (Uenze 1992, 159-161, 183-184).

the existence of a group of high social status. Such information corresponds to the historical data about a great number of barbarian commanders who took high military rank at the time. The brooch, typical for female clothing, indicates that the advancing troops were accompanied by civilians. It should be also noted that the brooches are discovered in necropolises of great urban centers such as Novae and Marcianopolis, suggesting the unimpeded entrance of barbarians into the larger settlements of the province.

The chance discovery from Tushovitsa village is worth mentioning – despite the bad manufacturing quality, it is the only published item that falls into the Szekszárd-Palánk/Sokolnice variant that developed along the Lower Danube, and is made of precious metal (Kharalambieva & Atanasov 1994, 111-112). This, together with the two lead brooch model samples of the Szekszárd-Palánk/Sokolnice variant and the Viškov-Domolospuszta/Bácsordas mixed variant (respectively from the Late Antique fortress at Rish and from the vicinity of Razgrad) once again provoke the idea of the existence of a local center that produced imitations of imported goods (Haralambieva 2002, 393).

Certainly, apart from the luxury objects already discussed, there are products targeted at users of lower social status, and such are the various *Kerbschnitt* decorated items. The geographical distribution of the Bakodpusta/Zemun brooch shows that within the Balkan provinces they are found only in Moesia Secunda and in the border zone from the side of Thracia. All finds belong to the second half of the 5th century and have been discovered inside fortresses: Novae and the villages of Kovachevets, Medven and Stan (Genčeva 1998, 61-63; Rusev 2004, 69, 77; Kharalambieva & Atanasov 1994, 110-111; 1992, 69). Synchronous to them is another widespread type – Levice/Prša. The examples are again recorded only inside Late Antique strongholds: Kovachevsko kale, Rimsko kale, Sexa(gi)nta Prista, Zikadeva and Varbitsa (Rusev 2004, 68, 76-77; Trandafilova 2007, 147; Kharalambieva 1991, 36; Kharalambieva & Atanasov 1994, 106-107).[30] As for the territorial distribution, Moesia Secunda again dominates the picture in comparison with other Lower Danube provinces. Singular brooches of other types are also attested near Kotel, in the Shumen fortress, in the Late Antique fort at Rish and at Zvanets village (Trendafilova 2007, 147; Kovacheva & Kharalambieva 1992, 49-50; Kharalambieva 1991, 36).

The characteristics of the widely featured Bakodpuszta/Zemun and Levice/Prša types once again point to connections with Pannonian workshops, and their chronological span supports the thesis of a linkage to the southeast-bound Germanic formations. It is interesting to note that the two types have an almost identical period of use, and show almost no wavering in their typological development. This would mean that they belong to a strictly

30 In the border zone of the province of Scythia another two examples have been recorded – at the villages Bistrets and Chernookovo (Kharalambieva 1992, 137).

defined ethnic group, which arrived at the Lower Danube with an already developed costume and settled in a certain region (Moesia Secunda). After their withdrawal, these items ceased to appear. Sources indicate that the so-called 'Pannonian Ostrogoths' had a similar historical fate.

In the middle of 488, Rugian ambassadors, led by the brother of Flaccitheus – Ferderuch, arrived at the residence of Theodoric with a request for military help against Odoaker (Kulakovskiy 1913, 435).[31] Theodoric had already entertained the thought of moving to Italy. In any case, the territories let to the foederati were suitable from a strategic point of view: the Ostrogoths were at the border of the barbarian world and served as a buffer for the Roman state. Moreover, the Eastern Empire, as lawful owner of these lands, could initiate actions in order to regain possession at any time. The Ostrogoths themselves were settled in compact groups, but they occupied extensive territories such as Moesia Secunda and Dacia Ripensis, and also some provinces south of the Haemus.

After Theodoric's actions, the same autumn Emperor Zeno gave his consent to a march on Italy and even sponsored the venture. An additional clause stated that if the Ostrogoths defeated Odoaker, they would obtain the right to establish their own country in those lands.[32] According to the ancient sources, Theodoric the Amal took off with all Goths who would follow him willingly, the Rugians of Ferderuch and a certain number of Roman citizens, among whom were even some relatives of the emperor (Wolfram 1990, 279)[33].

After 488 and into the beginning of the 6th century, the Lower Danubian provinces still contained compact groups of barbarian population. The main ethnic component in this period continued to be different Gothic groups. Procopius Caesariensis, in various texts, informs us of the descendants of those Ostrogoths who refused to follow Theodoric to the west.[34] There are several of testimonies about the Germanic presence in the region during this period. The campaign of Emperor Anastasius (491-518) against the Isaurians in 492 was carried out by an army recruited mainly from the Moesian and Thracian provinces. The commander-in-chief was John the Scythian, and Ἰωάννης Μαλάλας accounts for troops composed of Goths and Bessians.[35]

The 6th century brought another change in the concept of barbarian infiltration on the frontiers of the empire. The new northern neighbors (Avars,

31 Anon.Vales. *Exc.Val.* I.X.48.

32 Anon.Vales. *Exc.Val.* I.XI.49; Paul.Diac. *Hist.Rom.* 19.

33 Iord. *Get*. 292; Anon.Vales. *Exc.Val*. I.XI.49; Marc.Com. *Chron*. 488.XI.2.

34 Indirect data about the barbarian presence can be found in the description by Procopius Caesariensis regarding the building campaigns of Justinian I (527-565), *De Aedificiis*, according to which, in the 6th century in Moesia Secunda stood the castella Βαστέρνας and Σκυθιάς (Proc. *Aed.* IV.XI.20).

35 Malal. *Chron*. XVI.

Slavs, Langobards) used the established forms of *receptio*, but the information in historical sources shows an abrupt increase of non-regulated penetrations in the Lower Danubian provinces.

The next chronological period is extremely fascinating. For the Lower Danubian provinces of the Eastern Roman Empire, the second half of the 5th century can be divided into two by the Ostrogoth withdrawal to Italy. In other words, after 488 the archaeological evidence of barbarian (or at least Germanic) presence south of the Danube should decrease. In fact, no such thing occurs. In the last decade of the 5th-the first decade of the 6th century, the extensive appearance of archaeological data of a barbarian nature continues.

The brooches show a variety of types, including some Central European and Italian examples, not too popular in the East. Their geographical distribution exhibits is vast: the abovementioned find from Tushovitsa, the Troyan-Karnare Pass, Iatrus, Dimum; graves nos. 1 and 2 near church no. 2 at Khan Krum village, Voynikovo village, Odessos, Apiaria and Nigriniana/ Candidianis (Welkow 1942, 48-49; Gomolka-Fuchs 1991, 170; Lazarova 2010, 305; Balabanov 2006, 71; Dimitrov 1961, 57-58; Kharalambieva 1992, 137; Angelova & Koleva 1995, 168; Vagalinski 2010, 405). It should be mentioned that some of the objects were made of silver and with the use of additional jewelry techniques (gilt, *niello*). This means that there still remained an aristocracy or population of a higher social rank that sought expensive quality products. The existence of such items in the first decades of the 6th century shows that they were preserved as elements of costume at least a generation after the withdrawal of the Ostrogoths. Local production is established by the lead sample from northeast Bulgaria (possibly from the studied territory) (Haralambieva 2002, 394)(Fig. 6).

At the border of the 5th and 6th centuries a new type of bow brooch with a specific smooth rhomboid base-plate was introduced. In the specialized bibliography these objects are usually connected to Gepid heritage, and the main area of distribution is the territory of the Gepid kingdom. Three such items have been found so far in Moesia Secunda, at two late antique settlements – Starmen village and Novgrad village (Haralambieva 2001, 457-459). If the ethnic interpretation of these products is correct, this would constitute direct proof of the presence of yet another Germanic formation in the territory.

The mapping of the objects continues to demonstrate a pattern of presence in the Haemus. At the same time, the concentration of material in this period moves towards the Danube fortresses. The latter are also linked to most of the north and western types of brooch in the province. A correlation with the historical events in the western Balkans and Pannonia suggests that a new Germanic wave (that had contacts with West Germanic culture) entered Moesia Secunda.

After the beginning of the 6th century and especially in its first half, a new

type of object is attested – buckles with eagle symbolism, genetically linked to the *Kerbschnitt* decorated jewelry production. This element of costume spread over a vast territory in Europe and, traditionally, it has been attributed to the Gothic cultural heritage. In the province studied such buckles are found largely in the pre-mountainous area of the Haemus (in the villages of Kostel and Goren Gorski Trambesh), in the vicinity of Shumen, south of Veliko Tarnovo and Rish village, plus two examples from the Omurtag area (Vagalinski & Atanassov & Dimitrov 2000, 88-89; Khrisimov 2006, 226-228); and further in the *limes* zone of Novae and Iatrus (Vagalinski, Atanasov & Dimitrov 2000, 88-89).[36] All of these buckles show some stylistically homogeneous crafting, which suggests their manufacture in the same workshop, probably in Moesia Secunda. An additional argument to support this is the fact that all objects discovered so far (and published) were found within the administrative borders of the province. They also originate from sites with attested Germanic (Gothic) population as early as the second half of the 5th century (fig. 7).[37]

This study has offered several lines of analysis which allow us to summarize the problem. In the first place, the correlation between archaeological evidence and written sources presents a picture of the persisting presence of barbarian groups in Late Antiquity. According to the archaeological data, there is a tendency towards increased intensity after the mid-5th century, i.e. after the fall of the Hunnic coalition in the Middle Danube. In the period explored there are definite zones of a solid and continuous presence – the Danubian *limes*, the pre-mountainous and mountainous areas of the eastern Haemus, and in the region between Marcianopolis and Odessos (Fig. 8).

The ethnic attribution of the finds indicates the dominant role of a population bearing Germanic cultural heritage throughout the entire period. In a narrower sense, the leading role of certain Gothic groups should be emphasized. The written sources on the other hand, show two models of penetration in the province – barbarian contingents that fulfilled their duties to the empire, most often sealed by a military contract (archaeological data demonstrates that troops were accompanied by civilians); and a variety of non-

36 S. Stanilov (1995, 126) informs us of a singular find: 'a fragment of a rhomboid buckle plate with an animal head *en face*' found in the territory of Preslav. In his opinion, it 'belongs to the culture of Germanic tribes of the 5th-6th century'. The presence of the item is interpreted with its use as raw material in a metalworking shop. If the buckle is indeed Germanic, it can theoretically be ascribed to barbarian production within the borders of Moesia Secunda, as presented here.

37 To the eagle buckles should be added another type, presently still under discussion, since there is no certain data about its development and ethnic identity. In Bulgarian literature it has been defined as Kaliakra-type and one such item has been found in the territory under discussion at the village of Zhivkovo (Vagalinski, Atanassov & Dimitrov 2000, 89-90).

regulated trespasses (looting campaigns, requests for protection, attempts at obtaining contract partnerships and, last but not least, settling territories. In the end, it could be argued that the comparison of archaeological and historiographical material might suggest that Moesia Secunda was deliberately appointed for barbarian settlement as part of the imperial policy of accepting foreign populations. The province served this function throughout the entire period of Late Antiquity and probably into the early Middle Ages as well.

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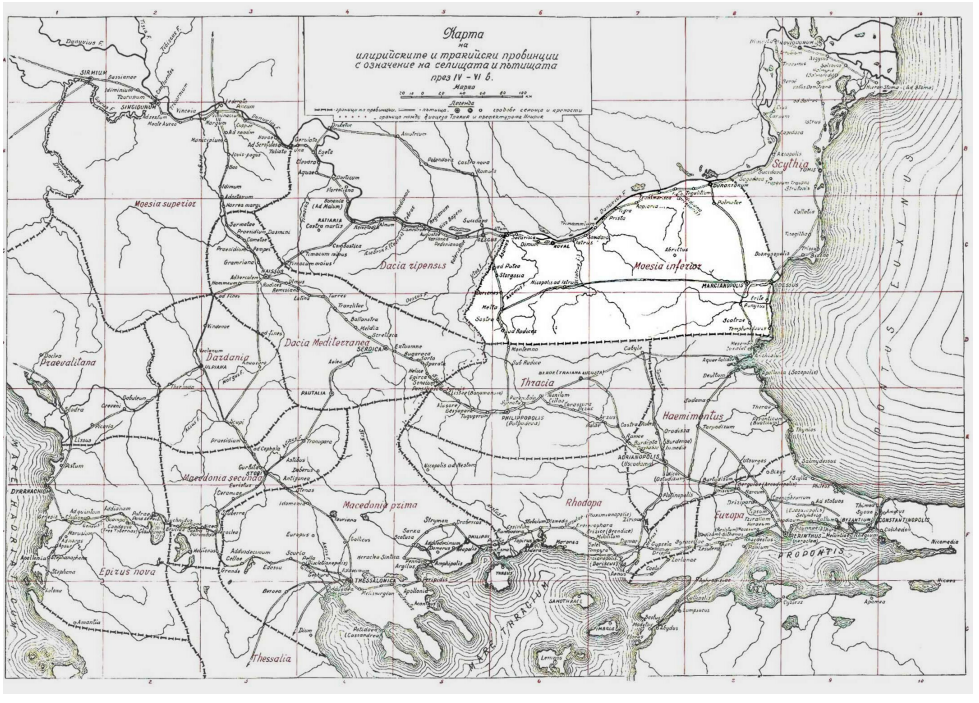


Fig. 1. Map of the Balkan provinces of the Eastern Roman Empire (after Tupkova-Zaimova & Velkov)

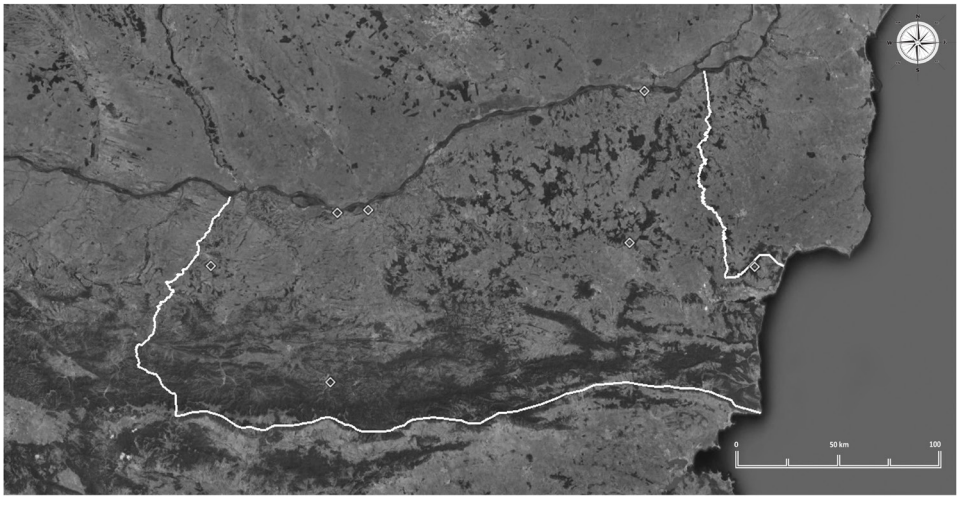


Fig. 2. Second half of 4th century

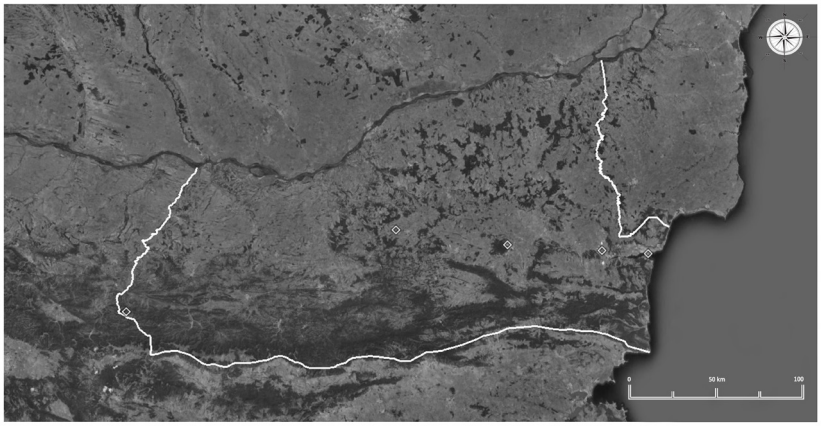


Fig. 3. First half of 5th century

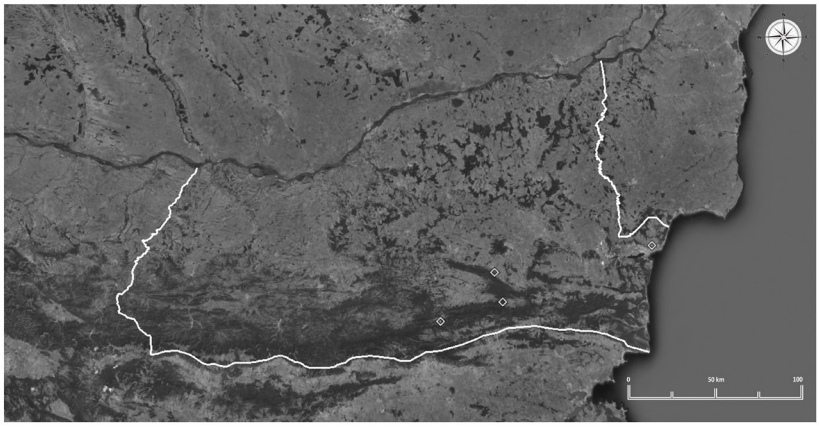


Fig. 4. Brooch type Bratei

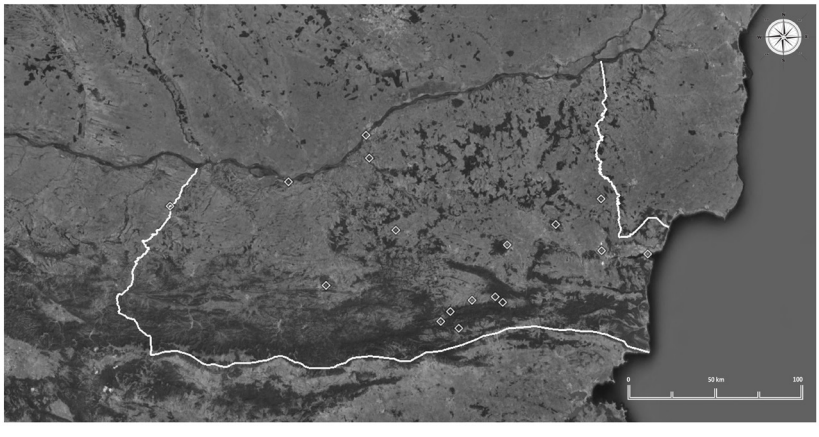


Fig. 5. Third quarter of 5th century

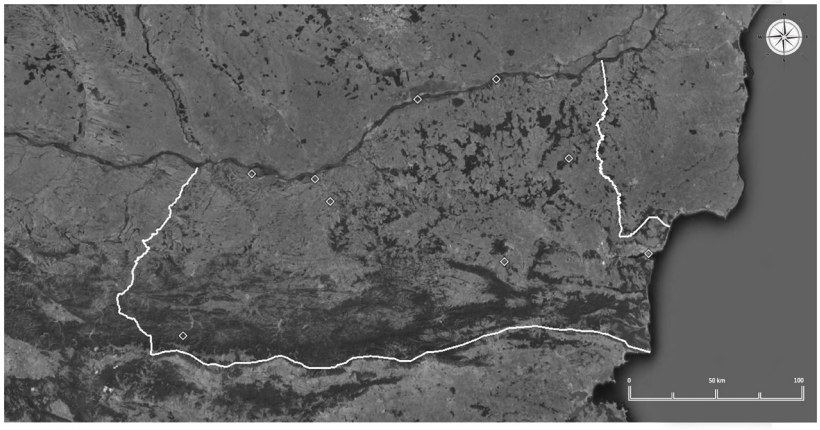


Fig. 6. Last decade of 5th – first decade of 6th century

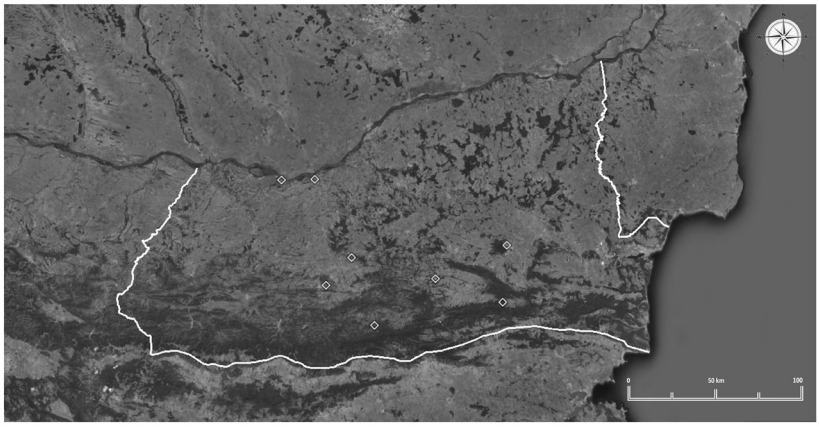


Fig. 7. First half of 6th century

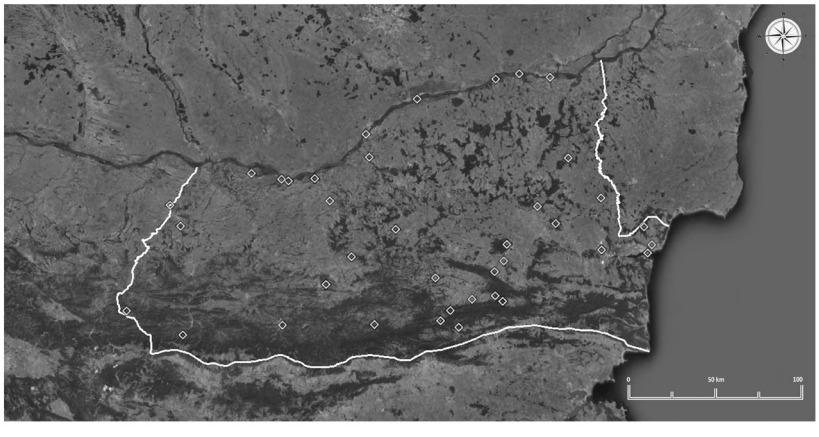


Fig. 8. Second half of 4th – first half of 6th century

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Two bronze late antique buckles with Christian inscriptions in Greek from Northeast Bulgaria

Totyu Totev

Abstract: The paper dwells on two bronze buckles found hears ago during plowing in the vicinity of the Roman city of Abritus near Razgrad. Especially important are the dotted inscriptions on the plates which are connected by hinges to the buckles.

1. An oval bronze buckle (3,2cm x 1,2cm in diameter) with a rectangular plate connected by a hinge (sized 2,5c, x 1,5cm). On the upper frontal part of the plate is read a two-line dotted inscription in Greek which is enclosed in a double frame: 'Saint Gabriel, help'.

2. A bronze triangular pate from a belt buckle with a Greek inscription. A dotted inscription enclosed in a single line frame made in the same manner is written on the plate. The letters are in three lines: 'Lord, help who carries me'. By comparisons with similar buckles from the museum of Archeology in Varna and other places the author dates the finds in question to the second half of the 4th century or the early 5th century. The buckles were also meant to be apotropeic for their owners.

Key words: buckles, Christianity, late antiquity, bronze

The number of late antique bronze buckles with Christian inscriptions found in Bulgarian lands is rather limited[1] and that's why the present paper will contribute extensively to the issue shedding light on two recently found samples of bronze buckles (fig. 1, fig. 3).[2] Their owner exchanged them about ten years ago for Roman coins with a voluntary numismatist whose name he does not remember. He learnt from him that the buckles originated from the

1 See Minchev 1994/1995, 13-23 and the cited reference below.

2 The samples were given to me by Mr N. Nedyalkov, a lawyer from Shumen and a collector-numismatist. I have to thank him again in this paper. I also point out that according to him it is a rare kind of belt buckle with two plates attached to the buckle by two hinges – rectangular and triangular- with dotted inscriptions in Greek.

north-east areas of Razgrad.[3] They were found in the process of ploughing but when and under what circumstances it is not known. There are no extra evidences if other objects were found along with the excavations of the buckles. In that respect we could speculate on their chronological parameters and could draw some conclusion analogically.

1.**Oval-shaped buckle** (fig. 1)

Moulded in bronze (3.20 x 1.20cm in diameter) the buckle is joined with a small hinge which holds a rectangular plate (size: 2.5 x 1.5cm). It is hard to say what the form of the buckle catch was: it could have been either oval or triangular. The buckle and the plate are relatively well-preserved. The plate is also double and moulded. On its polished surface side there is a two-line inscription in Greek written in dotted font, which is also circled with a double frame forged out in the same way.

In the inside corners of the upper frame on the plate and almost in the middle of the low dotted line there are openings 0.3 cm in diameter which were drilled after the inscription was forged. These openings were used to attach or hold small objects most probably.

While in the first line of the inscriptions there are no indistinct or deleted letters, in the second line the situation is different. In it there are letters that are slightly affected due to the openings and there are other omitted letters or 'concise' and uneven unscripted letters. Probably the reason could be related to the limited space. The epigraphists might have found it rather difficult to concise the two lines of the whole text. The limited space might probably have been the cause of certain omissions, deformations and uneven letters in the second line. This fact, however, is not a problem since it does not make the text reading any harder as it contains already established old Christian formula, which becomes evident in a great number of archeological monuments (icons, chest crosses and pendentives, necklaces and bracelets, scales and others). As a confirmation to the above mentioned regarding the limited space as a basic reason for problems in reading we can demonstrate another bronze plate, part of a belt buckle found in the area called 'The Three Mills' close to the village of Novakovo, Varna region, which at present is displayed in Varna archeological museum. The inscription on it is divided into three lines, not in two lines as in the buckle in question. The text in both buckles is one and the same with only one exception: Michael was replaced with Gabriel. In the three-line

3 The efforts I made to find any information and data concerning the archeological place where the buckles were supposed to be found and roughly said in the north-east region not far from the town of Razgrad with the assistance of my colleagues from the Archeological department in Razgrad Historical museum, were unfortunately in vain. Though it is certain that such exhibits in the above mentioned museum have never been displayed.

inscription, however, the word 'αγειε'[4] is written out incorrectly. In our case in the two-line inscription this form is written correctly – 'αγιε' (fig. 2).

A. Minchev informs us that there is another bronze buckle still unpublished which was also found in the area 'The Three Mills' close to the village of Novakovo consisting of three lines and is preserved in Dobrich historical museum.[5] It is important to mention here that Minchev assumes that the two buckles dated to 4th-5th century,[6] which has certainly its grounds. We could also assume that the buckle with the two-line inscription also belonged to that times. It is essential to add that the belt buckle in question is similar in form and structure with another buckle of two-line inscription from north-east part of Bulgaria, which place Minchev also finds in the chronological boundaries of 4th-5th century.[7]

There is a certain number of evidences from the lands of the East Roman empire and north Africa[8] that during the 4th-5th century there was a cult of Archangel Gabriel and Michael. After the establishment of Christianity as an official state religion during the reign of Constantine the Great (324-337) the Saint Archangel Gabriel and Michael as well as the rest of the archangels were often drawn in murals and mosaic ensembles – busts or in full-length. For example, as a bust image along with the other archangels Archangel Gabriel can be seen in tomb N9 in the early Christian necropolis in Sofia[9] and in full-length, again together with the other archangels; it can be seen in the mosaics of Ravena of Sant Apollinare Nuovo[10] and Sant Apollinare in Classe from 6th century.[11]

In the tomb of the empress Maria, emperor's Honorius wife (395-423) in Patronela church in Rome was found a golden plate with the names of the four archangels[12] and in Philipopolis – there was found a fibulis with the inscription 'Gabriel'.[13]

2. A plate from a belt buckle (fig. 3)

The plate is double, moulded, made of bronze and triangular in shape (size: 2,8x3,5cm and the diameter of the round ending of the top part – 1,3cm). In the middle of the basis beside the four-corner carving inward there are

4 Minchev 1994/1995, 20, fig. 4,2.
5 Minchev 1994/1995, 20.
6 Minchev 1994/1995, 20.
7 Minchev 1994/1995, 18, fig. $4_{a.}$
8 Duval 1982, 623-624.
9 Miyatev 1925, 99.
10 van Berchem 1924, p. 166, fig.209
11 Dalton 1911, 352, fig. 211.
12 Leclerq & Chabrol 1937, 2080.
13 Minchev 1998.

protruding parts which purpose was to hold the hinges of the buckle which is not available at present. The buckle might probably have been oval, similar to a buckle found in a tomb in 'Skalistoe'[14] and two other buckles from Crimea.[15] The three buckles do not contain any inscriptions. It is also important to point out here that they might probably dated to 4th-5th century (fig. 5).[16] I have to confess here that other similar buckles though with no inscriptions have not been found in Bulgaria. On the even upper surface of the plate in question there is a three-line dotted inscription in Greek. The inscription is framed with one dotted line and the inside is also lined in the same way in six lines. As we can see the first three lines are filled, the rest are blank. There are three round openings drilled after the inscription was written. Their size is 1, 2cm in diameter (one in the middle of the round ending, the other two in the inside corners) and they were used to hold the plate. Only the openings which cover the first line have affected two of the letters (in the upper end).

The letters are relatively even, only in two places in the second and third line there are missing sections. It is hard to say what were the purposes of the blank lines at the end of the inscription field. It is possible that the inscription remains unfinished or the blank space at the end of it might have been assumed to contain the name of the prospective owner of the buckle (fig. 4).

The content of the inscription in its end is partially similar to the above mentioned inscription of the unpublished belt buckle from Dobrich historical museum with the three-line inscription: 'Saint Michael, help the bearer.[17] The same formula is used also with two other single seals-amulets with images of lake birds from 9th-10th century found in Veliki Preslav.[18]

The inscriptions on the buckles worn by civil people and military men also testify to the wide-spread Christianity in Moesia and Thracia in the period from 4th-6th century. The content of the inscription mainly contains prayers and requests to God, as it is the case with the inscription on the plate of the second belt buckle, as well as prayers to Archangel Gabriel on the first buckle to help those in need.

These two inscriptions turn to be a constant request for help. When constantly worn they played a crucial role as apotropaios asking for heavenly protection to the buckle owner.[19]

With respect to the construction of the buckles A. Minchev draws truthful

14 Aybabin 1990, fig.3715.
15 Aybabin 1990, 2822 and 23.
16 Aybabin 1990, fig. 2.
17 Minchev 1994/1995, 20.
18 Totev 1968, 176-177, fig. 5 and fig. 6.
19 On similar inscriptions of requests on other metal objects but not buckles See: den Hoek, Feissel & Hermann 1994, 41-60.

conclusions. He is convinced that they were constructed in the seaside urban production centers in the north-east part of the Balkan peninsula – Tomi, Odessos, Marcianopolis and others.[20] The two belt buckles with inscriptions discussed in this paper add to the number of a certain group of monuments from 4th-5th century, from one side and from the other – they depict broader boundaries with respect to the excavations in north-east Bulgaria.

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20 Minchev 1994/1995, 20.

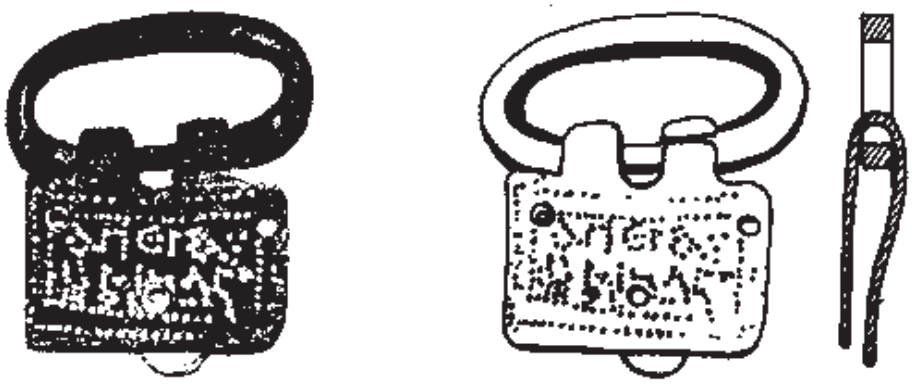


Fig. 1. Late antique bronze buckle with Christian inscription from north-east Bulgaria

ΑΓΙΕΓΑΒ

Αγιε Γαβ

Ρ|ΗΛ|ΒΟΙ|ΘΕΙ|C|ΟΝ|

ρι|ηλ| βοι|θει|σ|ον|

Fig. 2. The inscription of the oval-shaped buckle

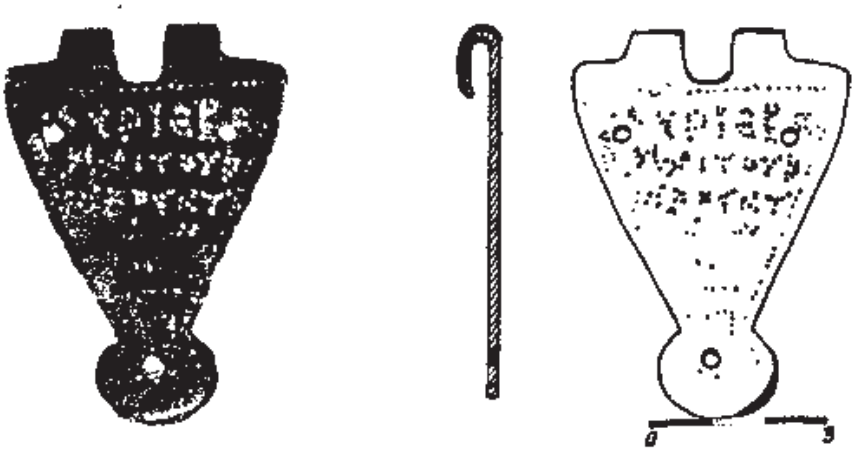


Fig. 3. Late antique bronze plate from a belt buckle with Christian inscription from north-east Bulgaria

ΚΥΡΙΕ ΒΟ	κύριε βο
ΗΘ[Ε]Ι ΤΟΝ	ηθ[ε]ι θόν
ΕΧΟΝΤ[ΑΜΕ]	ἔχονθ[αμε]

Fig. 4. The inscription of the belt buckle

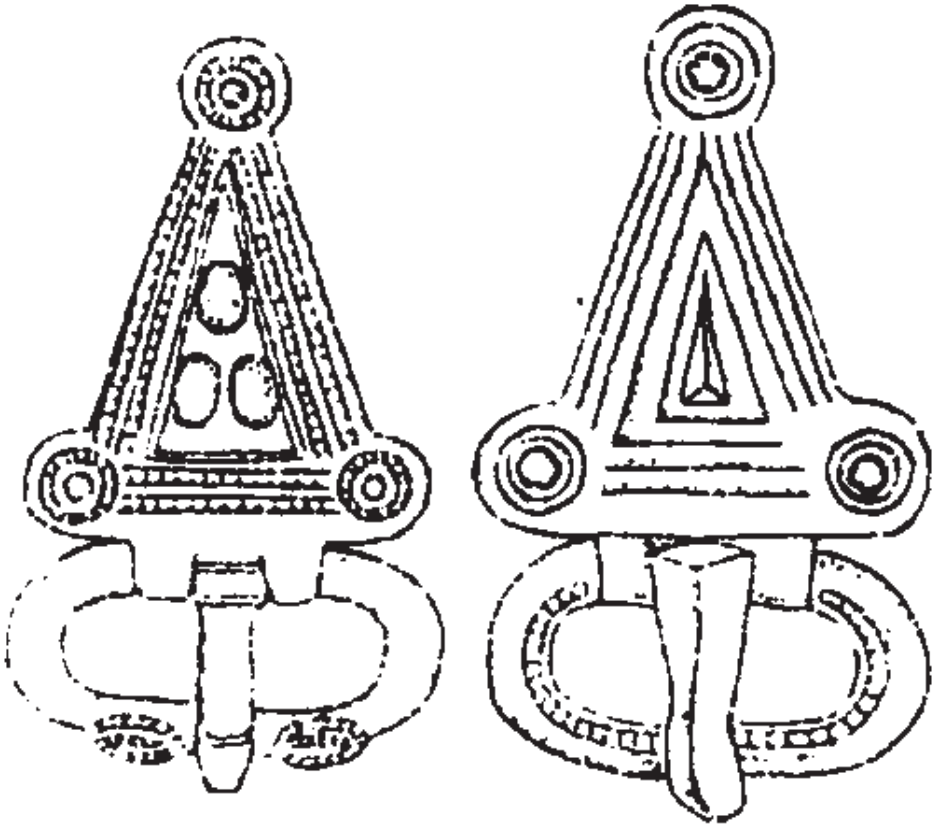


Fig. 5. Bronze buckles from Crimea (by A. I. Aybabin)

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Barbarians and Philippopolis, Thrace, in the second half of the 6th century (on archaeological data)

Ivo Topalilov

Abstract: This paper is discussing the impact of the barbarian invasions on the topography and urbanization of Philippopolis, Thrace, in the second half of 6th century looking primarily in material evidence and using written sources available. It is argued that it was the siege in 587 which was the turning point and the end of the antique city begun. In fact, despite massive migration and settlement of the Slavs assumed the Justinianic Philippopolis recall the city's glorious ages.

Key words: late antiquity, barbarians, urbanization, topography, Slavs

Numerous studies have been devoted to the topography and the development of urbanization in Early Byzantine Philippopolis.[1] Unfortunately, none, with one exception,[2] has dealt with the impact of the barbarian invasions in Thrace on these questions, despite the obvious connection between them. The reasons for this vary, but mainly concern the lack of (partially or fully) published results of the archaeological excavations in Plovdiv, as well as the lack of specific material on the topic. Despite this, I believe that such a study, albeit in outline only, can be made; and the main aim of this paper is to argue for the impact of the barbarian invasions in the second half of the 6th century, which eventually would lead to the end of the ancient city of Philippopolis in the first half of the 7th century.[3]

1 Botušarova & Kesjakova 1983, 264-273; Kesyakova 1993, 79-97; 1994, 192-204; Kesjakova 2001, 165-171. On some problems considering the classification of Late Antique/Early Byzantine cities in Thrace, see the study of Dinchev 2001, 223-252.

2 See Topalilov forthcoming.

3 On the end of the city after AD 626, see Stanev 2012, 28-30, 38-39; Topalilov 2012,

The lack of specific data on the topic has led scholars to discuss two main aspects: the forms of destruction which were caused by the barbarian invasions in the city, and the arrangements made by members of society to protect the city, such as the construction of a new curtain wall and other actions. In what follows I will make this clear.

The results of the archaeological excavations carried out in Plovdiv allow a clear link to be made between the barbarian invasions in the second half of the 6th century and the urbanization and topographical development of the city. When considering them in chronological order, one should start with the so-called 'Justinianic' curtain wall by which the fortified area of the city in both cases was reduced; this is clear evidence for the stagnation/decline of civic life and in the importance of the city. Opinions vary about which curtain wall should be identified with the evidence of Procopius, since it remains unclear if he refers to a newly built curtain wall or merely a reconstruction of one that already existed, as in the time of Justinian I.[4]

According to L. Botoucharova, who is followed by E. Kesyakova, the reference in Procopius denotes the construction of the curtain wall in *opus mixtum* which fortified the area of the Tree hills only, by which an inner fortification in the city was made. Subsequently, near the end of the 6th/ beginning of the 7th century, a new curtain wall was constructed on the southern slopes of the Tree hills, which served as a *proteichisma* of the former (fig. 1).[5] The latter curtain wall, on the other hand, has been interpreted by V. Dinchev in line with the evidence by Procopius, who says that it reduced the fortified area of the city by some 50%.[6] According to Dincev, it was the fortified area of each city that was the mark of the importance of the city itself.[7] By constructing this wall, it is clear that a serious decline was to be observed in the fortified area of the city, as well as in the material used for the construction of this wall – mainly *spolia* from antique buildings.

Another thesis is put forward by M. Bospachieva. She is inclined to accept that Procopius' evidence refers mainly to the maintenance of the

374.

4 Procop. *De aedif.* IV. 11: Καὶ ὅσα δὲ αὐτῷ ὀχυρώματα εἴργασται ἀμφί τε τὴν ἀλλην Θρᾴκην καὶ τὴν νῦν καλουμένην Αἱμίμοντον, ἐγω δηλώσω. πρῶτα μὲν Φιλιππουπόλεώς τε καὶ Βεροίας, ἔτι μέντοι Ἀδριανουπόλεώς τε καὶ Πλωτινουπόλεως τά τε ἐνδέοντα καὶ καταπεπονηκότα σφοδρῇ τῇ πάσῃ ὠκοδομήσατο ἐπεὶ αὐτὰς ἐπιμαχωτάτας ξυνέβαινεν εἶναι, καίπερ ἔθνεσι γειτονούσας βαρβάρων πολλοῖς.

5 Kesyakova 2001, 58-59. Zh. Tankova believes that the curtain wall was built somewhere after the middle of 6th century – see Tankova 2010, 388. On the fifth century date – see Botusharova 1977, 100.

6 Dinchev 2001, 225.

7 Dinchev 2001, 223, 237.

pre-existing fortification on the Tree hills and in the city itself. It is therefore possible that an inner fortification already existed at that time.[8]

In order to solve that problem I believe it is necessary to turn again to the written sources as well as to the results of the archaeological excavations carried out in Plovdiv. The latter, despite not being fully or precisely published, allow some observations to be made.

It is well known and evident from the written sources, and also from coin hoards that have been discovered, that during the time of Justinian I barbarian attacks were more frequent than previously in the Balkan provinces of the Empire, especially Thrace. Accordingly, the sources mention the depopulation of whole settlements and regions.[9] It is not by chance that in 535 a special notice was issued in which the emperor admitted these troubles, which had led him to unite military and civic power in the hands of one man, the πραίτωρ Ἰουστινιανὸς ἐπὶ Θρᾴκης.[10] Despite these measures, the barbarian invasions did not cease, and new waves of barbarians devastated the area in 530,[11] 538,[12] 540, 549[13] and 550;[14] they were mostly Slavic, while in 558 it was the Kutrigours who led the attacks.[15] Consequently, Philippopolis, Hadrianopolis, Beroia and Plotinopolis become '*the border of the numerous barbarian tribes*';[16] this was thus the time when the Romans themselves could do nothing but watch helplessly the invasions in 550-551 between Serdica and Naissos.

The situation in the provinces at the time led the emperor to undertake a massive fortification campaign. The frequent attacks by the barbarians, however, affected the rural population more than the city-dwellers; the former started to seek protection behind the curtain walls of small fortifications and the curtain walls of the cities. Among them Philippopolis should logically be

8 Martinova & Bospachieva 2002, 187, 192.

9 See Duychev 1972, 25 ff.

10 See Iust. Nov. XXV. (6. De praetore Thraciae).

11 This is the case when Mundo defeated a Bulgarian detachment – Marc. Com. *Chron*. 103.

12 Malal., *Chronogr*. 18; Theoph. Confess. *Chron*. 217, 25-218, 17.

13 According to the written sources this was the start of the devastating attacks which eventually defeated not only villages and unfortified settlements in the plain, but also fortresses, some of them situated close to the capital itself. One example of this is the city of Topiros, defeated after a betrayal.

14 According to the written sources, mainly Procopius, it was from this time onwards that the territories under consideration were not only devastated, but some of the Slavs spent the winter there. Procopius mentions explicitly these territories between Philippopolis and Hadrianopolis that hitherto had escaped the attention of the Slavs.

15 Theoph. Confess. *Chron.* 233; Cedr. I, 677.

16 Proc. *De Aedif*. 145

included. In his study dedicated to the Early Byzantine fortifications in the dioceses of Thrace and Dacia, Dinchev considered up to 116 items. It is not a difficult task to observe the almost total lack of such fortifications around Philippopolis. According to the archaeological data, in an area limited in the east by the fortifications of Carassura, in the north by the uplands of Sredna Gora by Diocletianopolis, in the west by the villages of Ovtchepolzi[17] and Velichkovo,[18] and to the south by the modern city of Asenovgrad, near the foothills of the Rhodope Mountains, not a single fortification is attested except at Philippopolis.[19] It is true that the region is flat, and such fortifications were not well suited to it, but it is not possible that in emergencies all the villagers would found protection behind the temporary havens, many of them located in the foothills of the Rhodopes and the uplands of Sredna Gora. Even more, with one exception (the fortress near the village of Belovo which is also to be interpreted as a fortified centre of an estate), villa structures in the region under consideration are also lacking.[20] Their absence shows that the region may have contained a new population which would hide behind the reconstructed and restrained curtain walls of Philippopolis. The reasons for doing so were numerous, especially during the reign of Justinian I. The abovementioned notice, issued in 535, confirms that the economy in Thrace suffered greatly as early as 535, if not before. If this was the case, it would have been almost impossible to accommodate the population of the region within the highly reduced area of Philippopolis, of which almost one-third was unsuitable due to remains of the ancient stadium, the Roman thermae, aqueducts and reservoirs, as well as rocky massifs. If the curtain wall in the plain that reduced the area of the city was constructed in the time of Justinian I as proposed, the rest of the city, which ultimately remained outside this area, should show some traces of a possible disaster which spread over the plain at that time, especially after 549 when the cities themselves were subjected to attacks in addition to the devastation of the plain. Even if not all of these barbarian invasions affected Philippopolis immediately, the coin hoards show that this might have happened in 530,[21] probably in 558,[22] 582,[23] and definitely

17 Torbatov 2009, 387–413.

18 Daskalov & Sotirov 2007, 465.

19 See Dinchev 2006.

20 For the villas in the region and possible explanation of their lack in that time, see Dinchev 1997.

21 See the coin hoard found in the vicinity of the modern city of Rakovski, where the latest coin is dated to 527: Tenchova 2012, 15.

22 See the coin hoard found in the vicinity of the modern city of Asenovgrad, where the latest coin is dated to 558: Tenchova 2012, 15.

23 I attribute to this invasion of the Slavs, who, according the written sources, were outnumbered by 100 000 – see Men. II, 24, the coin hoards found in the vicinity

in 587. The last-mentioned invasion is also attested by written sources, which will be discussed below. A disaster on such a scale, which destroyed the unfortified area of Philippopolis, would have made a great impression on ancient writers and they would not hesitate to mention it. The same is the case with the archaeological excavations in that area. One would expect that such a disaster would be attested at sites such as the later one discovered in the so-called 'Archaeological site Hotel Trimontium', where the buildings were destroyed by fire; of the coins found within it, the latest is of Justin II and Sophia (567-578) and is undoubtedly linked to the siege of the city in 587. Instead, the archaeological excavations reveal quite a different picture. They show that the most characteristic feature of Philippopolis during the time of Justinian I was not the decline of civic life, but rather its opposite. The next paragraphs will make this clear.

The results of the archaeological excavations reveal that during the time of Justinian I, Philippopolis, and its civic and religious life, were flourishing in a manner unparalleled in the 5th-6th centuries. This is shown by, for example, the restoration and construction of huge public and Christian buildings, lavish decoration of aristocratic residential complexes and, last but not least, reconstruction of the fortification of the Tree hills and strengthening of the curtain walls there. For instance, this programme included the reconstruction of at least the mosaic floor pavements of the Episcopal basilica, which, in its dimensions, seems to have been the third largest in the Balkan Peninsula (fig.1. 3).[24] Thus, an analysis of the mosaic pavement reveals that a restoration was carried out: this is clearly visible in the panel farthest to the east in the central nave, which was now executed in the so-called 'heraldic' style, typical of the time of Justinian I.[25]

Another building of importance for the Christians in Philippopolis, which then received its lavish decoration in the form of a mosaic pavement, is the martyrium, dedicated to the 38 martyrs who were believed to have undergone their martyrdom in the time of the Great Persecutions at the beginning of the 4th century (fig. 1. 5). The building is located near the so-called Eastern Gate of the city (fig. 1. 11).[26] The latest study of the style of the mosaic reveals that the pavement was laid later than the restoration of the building, which happened in the mid-/second half of the 5th century, and is

of Mineralni bani (after 564), Dragoinovo and the town of Părvomai (after 565)– see latest Tenchova 2012, 15. The latter may be linked to the Avar invasion in 587.

24 For the basilica, see Kesyakova 1989b, 113-126; 2006, 146-156; 2011, 173-210; Kessiakova 1989, 2539- 2559; 1994, 165-170;

25 In this case it is the first panel to the east, located near the altar.

26 For the martyrium, see Bospatchieva 2001, 2, 59-69; Boyadjiev 2001, 71-75; Topalilov & Ljubenova 2010, 59-70.

most likely dated to the 6th century,[27] in contrast to the dating proposed in the literature, which would make it contemporaneous with the restoration of the building.[28]

Another religious building receiving rich mosaic decoration was the Synagogue, which seems to have been converted into a Christian basilica in the time of Justinian I (fig. 1. 1). The new basilica was decorated with new polychrome mosaics in geometric style.[29]

The newly built baptistery attached to the basilica (i.e. the so-called 'Small basilica'), located in the Eastern quarter of the city, was also decorated with mosaic pavements (fig. 1. 4).[30] Its construction is undoubtedly linked with the Christianization of the population of Philippopolis. It also may indicate that a sizeable new population entered the city and the existing Episcopal basilica was not large enough for the emperor's purpose of turning the pagans into Christians.

Not only religious buildings but also private ones were decorated with new mosaic pavements in the time of Justinian I. For instance, archaeological excavations reveal the representative part of a *domus* with private baths, of which the apodyterium has a mosaic pavement showing organic items – beards, along with other such objects as masks, dishes, loaves of bread and so on – presented in a geometric frame (fig. 1. 9).[31] The date proposed for the mosaic is generally 5th-6th century, but stylistically it is executed in the 'heraldic' style, which has parallels in the panel in the central nave of the Episcopal basilica that was mentioned above.

The archaeological excavations also reveal that, in many places in the city, the remains of abandoned ancient buildings, public or private, were reused in the time of Justinian I. Thus, among the ruins of the Eastern Thermae dwellings have appeared in which coins of Justinian I have been found.[32] The case is similar for the Agora complex which, despite ceasing to function as such in the middle/second half of the 5th century,[33] continued to be used at

27 See the analysis made in Popova & Topalilov, forthcoming.

28 The initial dating of the mosaic to the middle/second half of the 5th century, which is in line with the reconstruction of the building after its demolition during the Huns' campaigns in 440s, is proposed in Bospatchieva 2001, 66.

29 On the Synagogue, see mainly Kesyakova 1989a, 20-33; Popova 2006, 47-48.

30 On the so-called 'Small basilica', see mainly Bospachieva 2002, 55-76. On the necropolis discovered there - see Bospatchieva 1998, 147-157.

31 The description of the mosaic pavement is made in Bospačieva 2005, 51, Abb. 19; Kesyakova 1998, 159-171.

32 Note Tshonchev 1950, 144. On the latest structures, see Bospatchieva 2002, 301-305.

33 On the end of the Agora, see most recently Dinchev 2009, 63-81. On the processes ran in Philippopolis which resulted in the second half of the 5th century with the abandonment of the Pagan Agora and the shifting of its public functions in

least until the time of Justinian I, as the latest coin found there shows.[34]

As for the dwelling houses, one can cite the example of the *insulae*, located eastward of the agora with a monumental fa3ade facing the *cardo maximus* which ran by the agora. Coin finds reveal that these dwellings were in use until the time of Justinian I.[35] These examples are not isolated but quite frequent. They show that the city spread not only within the limits of Marcus Aurelius' curtain wall, but also beyond. A part of a quarter *extra muros* built in the area of the south necropolis of the city from the 4th/5th centuries has been discovered. The buildings were constructed in lightweight masonry, and in the layer of it the latest coin found there is dated to the reign of Justin II and Sophia (566-578).[36] These are not the only buildings discovered in the area within the limits of the old necropolis that show the expansion of the city in this direction beyond the curtain wall in the 6th century.[37]

What is most characteristic of the new dwellings is their poor construction and quality, which is in sharp contrast to the rest of the city. I would not hesitate to assign these dwellings to newcomers to the city, immigrants.

Usually, such kinds of dwelling are attributed to the Slavs.[38] One argument for this is the Slavic fibulae found in Plovdiv, which are generally dated to the 6th century,[39] but also some pottery found in Plovdiv. This putative settlement, however, did not affect life in the city.[40] The scanty archaeological evidence, including the written sources, as well as the lack of e Slavic pottery found in these dwellings, throws this thesis into doubt and renders it a mere hypothesis. It seems to me more plausible to suggest that this new population that spread over the old quarters, in fact, were peasants from the region of the city who, as shown earlier, suffered during the barbarian campaigns, and whose only chance of survival was to take refuge behind the curtain walls of the city. If so, we can assume that a demographic peak in the time of Justinian I is plausible. It remains unclear if this new population stayed permanently or not. It is logical to accept that it was just a temporary measure, since it would

the Christian Eastern gate complex, see Topalilov 2013, 117-123.

34 Bospachieva 2003, 44-45.

35 The results of the excavation have never been published, but see the preliminary report in Kesyakova 1987, 133.

36 Botusharova 1956, 126-127. For the results of the excavation, see Kesyakova, Tankova & Topalilov 2004, 278-280.

37 See, for example, Kesyakova 1975, 113. On the necropolis – see Botoucharova 1962; Botusharova 1962.

38 See, for example, Kesyakova 1989a; 2008; 2009.

39 The fibulae belong to Werber's type I D. On this type, see recently Curta 2006, 423-474

40 On these problems, see Angelova & Koleva 2003, 159-185; 2007, 481-504; Angelova 1997, 486-489.

have led to the economic collapse of the city and its notables, mainly wealthy landowners and bishops. Unfortunately, no such village has been excavated in the plain so far, but I am inclined to accept that this was not a temporary move. We may also suggest that newcomers from other places and cities in Thrace, and from north of the Balkans too, had arrived.[41] The city's notables were its main benefactors, spending their money on all the massive building constructions including a new aqueduct, along with the restoration of the older ones.[42] This new aqueduct was a symbol of the wealth of the city and its notables, but also the existence of a need for water, probably connected with the growth of the population, which the old supply system could not meet.

To support the idea that the population in Philippopolis grew, one can point out the several storage buildings discovered recently date to that time (*horreum*). One of them has been discovered on the eastern slope of the Tree hills, *intra muros*, built during the time of Justinian I, and it consists of a huge room containing pythoi put in two rows.[43]

Another similar building was discovered among the remains of the so-called 'Narcissus' building, located within the Eastern quarters of the city, *intra muros*, with a storage construction of a round shape and d - 1, 75 m,[44] as well as another close to it (fig. 1. 1, 7).[45] In the South quarter remains of buildings that may be interpreted in that way have also been discovered.[46]

After this short review, let us turn back to the topic of this paper. The archaeological excavations, to my mind, despite being unpublished or just partly published, clearly reveal that civic and religious life in Philippopolis observably revived rather than declined during the time of Justinian I. If the fortification on the southern slope of the Tree hills is still held to be Justinianic, as suggested by V. Dinchev, I would be inclined to suggest that it was built as a preventative measure against the frequent barbarian invasions and not that it indicates a decline in the development of civic life. It is worth mentioning that its manner of construction is completely unlike that of the other fortifications attested and studied in Thrace from the time of Justinian I. It seems quite surprising to note that the curtain walls of the capital of a province were of such poor construction, using mainly *spolia*, while the rest

41 For another interpretation of abandoning the settlements, but mainly in the first half of the 7th century, see Nikolov 2002, 28-29.

42 Kesyakova 1983, 63-76; 1985, 114-127; Topalilov 2009, 240-242.

43 See the preliminary report of the archaeological excavation in Topalilov & Stanev 2010, 386-388.

44 See Kesyakova 2009, 120, 128, fig. 10

45 Martinova-Kyutova 2008, 397-399.

46 It is a huge room with dimensions of 20/11, 80 m covered by very thick hydrophobic mortar floor – see the preliminary report of the archaeological excavation in Topalilov 2009, 238-239.

were in *opus mixtum*. The construction of the Philippopolitan fortification was intended to deal with an immediate threat to the city. This is why, until the full publication of the results of the archaeological excavations, I am inclined to accept Bospachieva's view that in the time of Justinian I it was Marcus Aurelius's wall that was reconstructed, and was used till the end of the 6th century,[47] while the fortification of the Tree hills were also reconstructed and strengthened.[48] The curtain walls and the city's economic growth allowed Narzes and his troops to stay in the city for some time.[49]

According to E. Kesyakova, the archaeological excavations in Plovdiv reveal that the effect of the Slavic invasions on the urbanization of Philippopolis was instant. She believes that the very large Episcopal basilica was destroyed by one such invasion in 577. As a crucial argument she cites a coin of Tiberius II Constantine (578-582) found among the debris of the basilica, where almost 100 graves from a medieval necropolis were also discovered.[50] Since the grave goods, where they have been found, date the necropolis generally to the 11th/12th centuries[51] it is unlikely that this coin dates to the beginning of the necropolis' existence. Instead, it is more likely that it belongs to the context of the Late Antique basilica and therefore suggests a *terminus post quem*[52] for the destruction of the building.[53] In fact, the written sources fail to show that Philippopolis, one of the centres of the province, was affected in any way at that time. As noted by A. Dancheva-Vasileva, if this ever happened, it would not have escaped the attention of ancient writers.[54] Even if the city had been besieged, it seems highly improbable that a huge structure such as the basilica would have been demolished. What could be demolished in a successful siege would not be the basilica and other huge public buildings and complexes, but rather a part of the curtain wall that would allow easy ingress.[55]

It seems as though the topographical development of Early Byzantine

47 See the results of the archaeological excavation of the Eastern curtain walls in Bospačieva 2001, 173-183.

48 It was precisely to the 6th century that the strengthening of the fortification situated on the western slope of Dzambaz tepe, which also included construction of some towers, is dated – see Botusharova 1965, 6.

49 Proc. *Libri de bellis*. VIII. 21.

50 See Kesyakova 1989b, 123. For the invasion, see Velkov 1959, 50 and the bibliography cited.

51 See for this Stanev 2012, 29.

52 In fact, the written sources mention that the invasion of Thrace by 100 000 Slavs took place not in 577, but 582, when plundering occurred – Men. *Fragm*. II. 24.

53 In initial reports the necropolis is dated to the 7th-11th centuries – see Kesyakova, Karov & Mirchev 1984, 77.

54 Dancheva-Vasileva 2009, 28-31.

55 Note Topalilov 2014 with the numerous examples of the Huns' invasions in the 440s and their impact on the urbanization of Philippopolis.

Philippopolis was affected seriously by the siege of the city in 587. According to Theophilact Simocatta, in 587 hoards of Avars entered Thrace and besieged in turn Philippopolis, Diocletianopolis, Beroiea and Hadrianopolis, albeit without success. The siege of Philippopolis is described as follows:

> At once he moved to Philippopolis, invested the city, and strove to take it. (3) The town's inhabitants fought back most skilfully and inflicted many injuries from their ramparts and battlements, so that the Chagan willingly abandoned the fight, respecting their inviolability on account of their courage.[56]

That the Avars appeared in the vicinity of Philippopolis is without doubt. Some of the coin hoards that have been found also confirm it. It is also clear that the city was under siege but remained uncaptured. The problem that arises here is which curtain walls were besieged by the Avars: the old fortification of Marcus Aurelius, or a new one? The relevant paragraph in the *History* of Theophilact Simocatta suggests that the curtain wall in question was situated near the Tree hills, from where 'the town's inhabitants ... inflicted many injuries'. The words used for 'ramparts' and 'battlements' suggest a higher place, one that dominated the terrain. The only place like this is the Tree hills and their curtain walls. If so, it is logical to accept that in fact the Avars besieged the curtain wall located on the southern slope of the Tree hills and this, as mentioned above, reduced the fortified area of the city by half. And, consequently, all the structures, and especially the light dwellings were affected somehow, either destroyed or burned.

At first glance, the archaeological excavations confirm this theory. In the burnt layer discovered in the ruins of the Eastern Thermae, which were among the dwellings in whose construction the massive remains of the ancient building were reused, the latest coins found were of Justinian I.[57]

Another similar destruction, dated by a coin hoard that includes coins of Justinian I, is the suburban monastery located near the 'Eastern Gate' complex, *extra muros*.[58] In the burnt layer discovered between the fallen roof construction and the mosaic floor a hoard was found of 13 coins of 40 numii nominals, the latest of which is dated to 565.[59] It is highly probable that it was not until then that another quarter, the one situated in the southern part of the city, *extra muros*, also ceased to exist, as is revealed by the latest coin in the aforementioned burnt layer, which is dated to the time of Justin II and Sophia (fig. 1. 15). It seems that this burnt layer, which was definitely the result of

56 Theoph. Sim. *Hist*. II. 17.2 – see also Whitby 1988.
57 See Tshonchev 1950, 144.
58 On the complex, note Topalilov 2007, 37-62; Tankova & Topalilov 2006, 260-262.
59 The coins were identified by Dr. N. Schindel, Vienna.

the Avar siege of the city in 587, is clearly defined in archaeological sites, and the one from the Eastern Thermae suggests that the Avars besieged the inner curtain walls, i.e. the fortification located on the southern slopes of the Tree hills, which is called the 'second curtain wall' in some studies. Probably this is why most scholars are inclined to date the fall into disuse of these structures beyond this wall to the end of the 6th century.[60] If so, this means that it was not until 587 that almost half of the city and its population was reduced from what they had been in the time of Justinian I.

This might seem so, but only at first glance. In fact, the aforementioned burnt layer was absent, or never reported to have been found in the archaeological reports of the rest of the sites in Plovdiv. The example of the Synagogue may be taken as characteristic of almost all of them: in the ruins of this building, constructions of stones bonded by clay were found, but not a burnt layer, which should be clearly visible given the material of the building.[61] The same is true of the so-called aristocratic residence,[62] and the aristocratic residence with private baths,[63] the 'Narcissus' building and the remains situated on it,[64] and so on. As mentioned, the results of these excavations have never been published, so in order to give a clear idea, I draw attention to the results of archaeological excavations carried out by myself. The site is located at 27 Mitropolit Panaret Street on the eastern slope of the Tree hills, *intra muros*, close to the 'Eastern Gate complex')fig. 1. 14). In the course of excavations, a *horreum* dated to the time of Justinian I came to light, but it became possible to study the end of the Early Byzantine city in this part close to the emblematic complex which had replaced the ancient agora. In the course of excavations no trace of any burnt layer or any other disaster is attested. The excavation, however, revealed that the site was abandoned, and the building seems to have collapsed in the course of time without being reconstructed.[65] At least two main points can therefore be made. On the one hand, the archaeological excavation confirms the thesis that during the reign of Justinian I Philippopolis did not suffer heavily, if at all, because of the barbarian invasions which, as mentioned above, affected the vicinity of the city. It seems that the city's fortifications were sufficient enough to withstand the threat, but we should bear in mind the incompetence of the Slavs and Bulgars at that time in carrying out successful sieges: the town of Topiros was conquered by a betrayal. On the other hand, the result of the excavation suggest

60 See, for example, Martinova & Bospachieva 2002, 192; Botušarova & Kesjakova 1983, 273.
61 Kesyakova 1989a, 31.
62 Kesyakova 2008, 242.
63 Kesyakova 2008, 242; Kesyakova 1998, 159-171.
64 Kesyakova 2009, 120.
65 Topalilov & Stanev 2010, 386-388.

further arguments for the thesis that in fact Philippopolis did not develop within the limits of the 'second curtain wall', thus reducing the original area of the city, but of Marcus Aurelius' curtain wall. The abandonment of the site is also attested by the lack of any material from the late 6th/first half of the 7th century, and this is also one of the most characteristic features of the rest of the archaeological sites in Plovdiv. The situation is similar in the so-called 'Small Basilica', 'aristocratic residence', 'Narcissus' building, Synagogue, martyrium and elsewhere. They also can be interpreted as abandoned sites. But, in this context, some coins were found, the latest being from the time of Tiberius II.[66] It is worth mentioning that this situation, with its lack of material and the condition of the remains, is in sharp contrast to the time when the city was besieged and conquered in the middle of the 3rd century as well as in the 440s.

To my mind, it is logical to accept that the destruction of the buildings and the burnt layer attested at the suburban monastery and the 'Hotel Trimontium' site, with its latest coin being of Justin II and Sophia, could be attributed to the siege of the city in 587, since they remained *extra muros*, i.e. beyond Marcus Aurelius' curtain wall, which was reconstructed and strengthened in the time of Justinian I. Probably this event also put to an end to the martyrium, also situated *extra muros*. On the other hand, the archaeological excavations do not permit any conclusion concerning the existence of a common burnt layer in the buildings, *intra muros*. According to the excavation, not only the rich *domus* but also poorer dwellings continued to exist until the end of the 6th century or even afterwards. A very distinctive example is the case of the so-called 'EIPHNH' house, which, despite being destroyed in the middle of the 5th century, was later restored, and the mosaic decorating the floor of the audience hall was renovated in the 5th, as well as in the 6th century (fig. 1. 6). The case is similar of the so-called Aristocratic residence, whose audience hall was also decorated in the first half of 4th century and remained in constant use until almost the end of the 6th century.

The abandonment of buildings located *intra muros* was to be found not only with the Synagogue and the rich aristocratic houses in the plain, but also on the Tree hills itself (fig. 1. 16). Archaeological excavation from last year reveals the abandonment of a massive Late Antique/Early Byzantine house, without traces of a burnt layer, and with a lack of small finds and other material.[67] This example is of great importance, since it shows that even in the strongest and most fortified part of the city we can note this phenomenon of abandoning an area. But in many studies this part of the city is used as an example of the existence of the undisturbed development of civic life in Philippopolis. The importance of the results of this excavation will be fully revealed after full publication of the material.

66 See, for example, the report of Tshonchev 1946, 219.

67 Bozhinova & Stanev 2013, 487-488.

Nonetheless, I believe that the examples from the archaeological sites in the plain are sufficient to suggest that the barbarian invasions in the 580s, which culminated in the siege of 587, had a great impact on the development of civic life, society, and the urbanization and topography of Philippopolis. The unstable political situation as well, to some extent, as the plague that was sweeping through Thrace (as written sources inform us) led to migration of a great part of the population of the city toward the mountains, especially the Rhodopes, and other provinces to the south.[68] It is probably for this reason that some scholars are inclined to date the 'second curtain wall', which reduced the area of the city by 50%, to the end of the 6th century (fig. 1. 8).[69] The expected decline in civic life might be visible in demographic terms, notably the abandonment of a certain area of the city, but also in financial terms: the society and civic community and the nobles were not able to maintain the massive public and Christian buildings, which eventually led to their gradual destruction.[70] If any impulse to build existed, it is clearly visible in the partial restoration of the suburban monastery where a chapel was built on a tomb containing relics (fig. 1. 13).[71] The brick floor of the chapel was repaired at least twice, and beneath it two coins of Heraclius and Constantine (612-615) were found.[72] These are the latest coins, from the 7th century, found in the course of excavations in Plovdiv.

The abandonment of a vast area of the city, however, in the late 6th century did not put to an end to the Early Byzantine city itself. A burnt layer with the debris of the 'EIPHNH' house was obviously the reason for the end of that building.[73] Contrary to the opinion put forward several times in the literature, by which, accordingly, the end of the house should be dated to the end of the 6th century,[74] the latest coin in that layer is a coin of Phocas (602-610): this automatically shifts the end of the building to the first half of the 7th century at least. Until full publication of the archaeological and numismatic material, it is logical to accept that the end of the area outside the 'second curtain wall' should be assigned to the period between 614, when one of the most devastating Avar invasions attested (which destroyed some of the great cities in the Balkans, such as Odessos) came to an end,[75] and the next one in

68 See the suggestion proposed first by Velkov 1977, 58

69 See, for example, Tankova 2010, 388.

70 It is without doubt that the numerous earthquakes attested in the written sources from this time also had a huge effect.

71 Topalilov, Yordanov & Dimitrova 2008, 455-470.

72 Topalilov 2007, 53. Dr. Konstantin Dochev was consulted about the coins.

73 Bospachieva 2003, 102.

74 See the latest in Martinova & Bospachieva 2002, 192.

75 For this invasion and its effect on coin circulation and the end of Odessos, see Lazarenko 1998-1999, 150-166.

626, which ended with the siege of Constantinople itself.[76]

The question of the reuse of the ruins of some of the massive ancient buildings, and the construction of rich houses, remains open. Whether this was linked to the stationing of the troops led by Comentiol – they spent the winter of 601 in Philippopolis[77] – or to Slavic settlement is highly disputable. Both views still remain speculative, although I am in favour of the former, and in some cases in the latter.

After this short review, a few observations can be made on the impact of the barbarian invasions on the urbanization and topography of Philippopolis in the second half of the 6th century. For instance, Philippopolis did not reduce in area, as suggested, but spread territorially, and reached the limits of the Roman city and even beyond. The growth of the population as well as economic stability allowed the city to become a stronghold and a base of the Byzantine army against the barbarian invasions. The city was in a position to defend itself successfully without the help of the Byzantine army. As can be observed in the siege of 587, it was the citizens who bravely drove back the attacks of the Avars and caused many injuries, admitted by the Khagan. Its strong fortifications and the growth of its population and the economic progress attested clearly in the time of Justinian I made the city an attractive place for the Byzantines and the barbarians, which eventually caused the 'barbarization' of the city.

It seems that the barbarian invasions from the second half of 6th century, despite their devastating effect on urbanization in Thrace (as most fortresses are said to have ceased to exist in the late 6th century), did not have a decisive effect on the urban development of Philippopolis. I would suggest that the decline of the city appeared when the rich families, i.e. nobles, left the city, and that this is to be regarded as the beginning of the end of the Early Byzantine city. It was probably for this reason that the quantity of coins found on excavations after those dated to the time of Justin II and Sophia, and especially Tiberius II, rapidly decreases. Nonetheless, society's impulse to build did not cease totally. I am inclined to suggest that, despite the fact that the city was not captured in 587, it was this event, as well as the sweeping devastation of this decade, which led indirectly to the decline of city life and its logical end in the first half of the 7th century, and more precisely in 626 when the other cities in Thrace suffered too.

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76 Theoph. Confess. *Chron*. 27; 29; De obsidione Constantinopolis homilia; Georg Pisida *bell. Avar*. 15 – 540; 2, 66 – 95; Chron. Pasch. 19; Theoph. Sim. *Hist*. 7.

77 Theop. Sim. *Hist.*, VIII. 1-4, 284-291; Theoph. Confess. *Chron*. 281-283.

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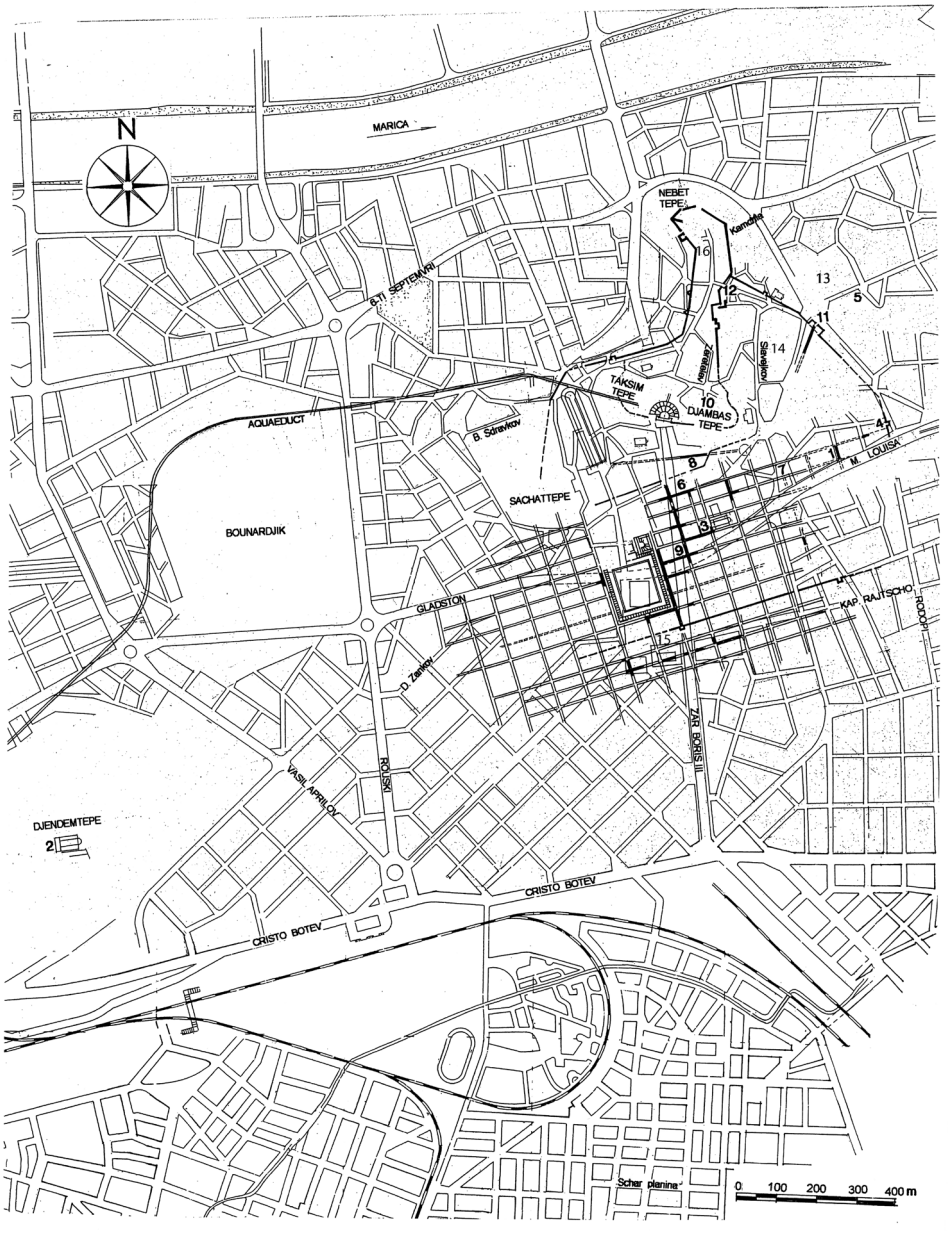


Fig. 1. Locations of the sites in LA Philippopolis linked to the article

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Barbarian raids and Late Antique production tradition in the Low Danube area in 6th – 7th century

Stoyan Vitlyanov

Abstract: The archeological research works in the recent years provide a considerable amount of material data on a number of problems concerning the ethnic identity of the population in Low Danube lands and issues related to the transition period between Late Antiquity and Early Middle Ages. The problem of the process of Romanization has been discussed in a series of publications concerning the overall or partial prevention of the people on either banks of the Danube; the stability of the local traditions of the towns along the limes (borders) as well as in the remote parts of the provinces such as Scythia Minor, Low Moesia, both Dacia and others. These crucial problems concerning the transition period are in close connection to the Bulgarian nationality.

Additionally, there is an extensive complex of similar problems closely related to the socio-economic relationships and cultural interrelations as well as to the character and content of the craftsman-production traditions brought by the new and settled by the old population.

The complicated process of continuity is also discussed in the paper depicting the ancient images and samples in different spheres of economic life in the newly-established Bulgarian state. The author comes to the conclusion that the various manifestations of continuity process of the separate elements of the already settled old culture are adopted by the new-comers and the new state, they are viewed in a new way and are included in the new ethnic, socio-economic and cultural society enriching it extensively. This dynamics undoubtedly was of crucial importance in establishing the different branches of the Bulgarian medieval economy.

Key words: production traditions, continuity, economy, socio-economic and cultural society

At the end of 7th century on the territory of the former Byzantine provinces of Low Moesia and Scythia Minor a new country was established, and namely, the country of Bulgarians – a fact, which determines the geo-political environment for the existence of the new state formation.[1] The establishment of the new state

1 When comparing the data by the Byzantine chronologist Theophanes the Con-

is a result of a complicated evolution of historical, demographic, economic and cultural processes which started in Eurasian territories during the Great migration of the peoples. In the turbulent epoch from 4th to the end of 7th century the lands of Low Moesia gradually turned into a center and crossroad of the Byzantine world and 'the Barbarians', who invaded the lands crossing the Wallachian plain and the remote Russian steppes. This land, which gave shelter to 'the seven Slavonic tribes' and Asparuh Bulgarians, which turned into a cradle of Bulgarian state, officially declared a state in 681 in a contract signed by Byzantium. The new state union turned to set the beginning of a number of new phenomena in the history of the Balkan lands which until then had spread and developed only in the boundaries of Greek-Roman civilization. These phenomena came as a result mainly of the radical ethnic changes and the new socio-economic relationships which began after the mass migration of the Slavs and Proto-Bulgarians to the south of the Danube.

The archeological excavations carried out in the recent years provide a great amount of research material related to a number of mutually connected Low Danube lands with respect to the ethnic identity of the population and the questions related to the transition period between Late Antiquity and Early Middle Ages. It was not once that the problem of the process of Romanization was mentioned in literature, concerning total or partial prevention of the people on both banks of the Danube, the relevant stability of the local traditions in the towns along the limes (border) as well as in the remote ends of the provinces such as Scythia Minor, Low Moesia, both Dacias and others. These major problems in transition period are closely related to the formation and establishment of the Bulgarian national identity. Along with them there is a complex of other similar problems closely connected both to the socio-economic and cultural interrelations and also to the character and content of the craft-production traditions brought by the new people and found by the old ones.

In the lands of Low Moesia, the Slavs found the territories totally devastated due to the constant Barbarian raids, towns-completely demolished, slack economic life, sparse population. In the period between 1st - 4th century the Roman power managed to settle a great number of foreign people under different forms; colonists, craftsmen, merchants, soldiers or veterans and it was quite often that great numbers of peasants were deported from various places. The new settlers, who consisted of different peoples, led primarily a nomad kind of living. Most of them knew and practiced various crafts, which

fessor and patriarch Niciphor it becomes clear that the most important event in 681 is the peace treaty signed by Romans, which was considered a disgraceful act. This act is discussed almost in one and the same way by the Bulgarian historians as it means international recognition of the new state by Byzantium. In other words, the peace from 681 fixed the beginning of Low Danube Bulgaria.

did not contribute to the development of the craftsman's trade at that time. This was the reason why the craftsmen from the big urban centers turned into distributers of craftsman's production for the new settlers in the lands of the Eastern Roman empire.

The rebellion of the Byzantine Danube army in 602 put an end to the empire's efforts to stop the Slavonic loots in the Balkan peninsula. A rapid decline followed which led to the abandonment of the early Byzantine fortification constructions. As a result of the numerous risings and inter conflicts, the bare and unprotected Balkan territories turned into an easy prey for the Slav and Avar raids. After the beginning of 6th century the Slavs started to settle in massive groups on the Balkan peninsula turning into border citizens of Byzantium. For a period of ten years the Slavonic tribes conquered almost all Balkan holdings of the empire. Roughly said, these settlements were completed after the first one-fourth of 6th century, before the beginning of the rush Slavonic raids over the lands of the East Byzantine empire.[2]

During their loots on the Low Danube territories the Slavs conquered the best and most fertile lands of the local residents, mostly Thracians, part of whom were forced to withdraw into the mountain regions. The rest underwent a process of assimilation and it was not late that they totally vanished. The Slavs adopted from the Thracians the high achievements of the Byzantine provincial culture in the area of agriculture, crafts, building techniques and artistic productions.

After the settlements of the Slavs in the Balkan lands of Byzantium a new kind of life began. The Slavonic tribes did not only take in the desolate Byzantine lands, but they also managed to cultivate new lands and found shelter in many abandoned towns. The archeological excavations arguably testify that as a result of Slavonic invasion the production level increased which led also to the development of the economic life. Along with the old Roman and Byzantine towns where the high standard of the local rich culture could be seen, the new settlers on the Balkan peninsula established new settlements where the traces of the Slavonic kind of living were predominant. Life in these settlements was mainly agricultural, they lived in semi-underground dwellings hardly seen on the surface, which walls were made of hedge and mud; their tools were rough. The material which was found during the excavations was ceramic which stands far apart from the potter's wheel and which in many respects is too similar almost indistinct in various Slavonic countries. That kind of living was typical to all Slavs who started to spread westward to Prague and eastward to the Eastern part of Ukraine.[3]

From the data taken from the written sources and mostly those which were

2 Velkov 1959; Vaklinov 1974, 177-188; 1977, 48-50; Dinchev 1996, 31-32; Bozhilov & Gyuzelev 2004, 13-14.

3 Vaklinov 1977, 17-27.

archeologically excavated it becomes clear that before the Slavonic settlement in the Low Danube lands the Slavs knew the plough agriculture; they used all tools which were known at that time; they cultivated the lands and bred animals. Pseudo-Maurice tells that the Slavs *had numerous various domestic animals and food arranged in crosses – and mainly wheat and millet, they bred oxen and many other animals.*[4] The testimonies of the Byzantine authors about a profundity of various types of food within the Slavonic tribes agree with the archeological research data. In many places in Bulgaria in Slavonic settlements a great number of agricultural tools can be found such as sickles, scythes, reeping-hooks, spades, hoes, ploughshares, coulters, millstones and others, which testify to well-developed agriculture. In many respects the tools which were found out were on a par with the agricultural equipment of the settled local people and most probably the Slavs adopted some aspects from them. The Slavs also adopted certain new kinds of livelihood, for example, vine-growing, which enhanced the level of agricultural work. The Slavs also knew a number of productions connected to the household kind of living, such as weaving, carpentry, stonemasonry, bone sculpturing and some others. Even before Slavs' settlement on the Balkan peninsula they used to practice metal-processing.[5] A great number of findings made of metal mainly for household purposes such as different agricultural tools, armaments, different craftsman's tools testify to well-developed blacksmith's trade which later turned to be one of the important and basic crafts related to the public division of labour. The process of exploiting tools made of iron in production was closely related to the advance in iron-foundry and iron-processing. A number of archeological data show that the Slavs settling in 6th-7th century in the lands to the south of the Danube brought with them certain production traditions and transferred them on craftsman's trades in Bulgarian lands.

With respect to the material culture of Proto-Bulgarians before their settlement in our lands, it was obviously similar to that of the Slavs'. A number of Proto-Bulgarian production traditions were transferred to their new country and later mastered in the process of their historical development. In that respect the statements some scholars make that the Proto-Bulgarian works of art were rough and primitive are rather groundless. Presently the scientific research works are provided with great number of archeological data so that it could be easily stated that the culture which Proto-Bulgarian brought with them into South Danube lands, cannot be assumed to be nomad and primitive.[6] It was highly developed for the time it existed due to the internal

4 Maurici. *Artis militaris*. 2. 12; Proc. Caesar. *Libri de bellis*. 8. 7. 14; Tsankova-Petkova 1957, 338.

5 Pokrovskiy 1936, 35; Grekov & Artamanov 1948, 56, 79-82; Ribakov 1948, 123; Kolchin 1953, 5; Tretyakov 1953, 42-43.

6 Pletneva & Ribakov 1981, 76.

economic, political and social factors. In that respect the Russian scholar N. Kondakov is quite right when he first energetically confronted the statements according to which the Proto-Bulgarian works of art were considered rough and primitive.[7] The archeological data are rather plain that the Proto-Bulgarian culture was highly developed for its time and is on a par with the culture of their neighbors.

Before the formation of Danube Bulgaria in its early history the Proto-Bulgarians had passed through many years of development and progress closely related to the prolonged influence of the old agricultural civilization in Eastern and Internal Asia, along the rivers of Amur and Surdarya. It was the same situation along the North Black Sea, along the sea of Azov and the areas between Major and Minor Caucasus. Along with the old traditions in the nomad society one additional factor should be taken into consideration as well – the relevant proximity to Ponta and the seasidal old towns, which main purpose was to connect these lands to the civilization of the Eastern Roman empire. In that respect not only Iran influenced the formation of Bulgarian culture, but the culture of Byzantium as well.

For two centuries the Proto-Bulgarian families and tribes lived in lands which seaside areas thrived culturally for centuries on end. That factor was a turning point in their economic, social and cultural progress. At the end of 6th century new favourable conditions were established for semi-settled kind of living, connected not only to the development of animal breeding, but most probably to some vital crafts such as blacksmith's trade, wood-processing, pottery-making, leather-dressing and leather-working and others. These crafts were mainly connected to their economic life and more specifically to their need of clothing, dwellings, tools, armaments. A number of archeological research data[8] testify the transition towards a settled kind of living which becomes explicit with new dwelling and economic forms. Though it cannot be said that all territories occupied by the Bulgarians have been sufficiently and profoundly explored it can be claimed that the forms in which the transition from nomad to settled kind of livelihood have already been found out. This transition turns to be a legal consequence in the development of all nomad peoples, as a result of which a number of different branches of economic and social life were developed.[9]

The Proto-Bulgarians settle in Europe with a totally moving animal farm. In their new lands they convert to another economic organization in which the whole population live from spring till autumn in the steppes and in winter come back to their permanent dwellings. This is the reason why

7 Rempel 1978, 239.

8 The issue concerning the settled kind of living of Proto-Bulgarians before their arrival along the Danube is still debatable. Comp. Rashev 2008, 282.

9 Pletneva 1967, 180; Rudenko 1961, 3 ff.

no traces were found of their culture in the period from 5th-6th century. Certain archeological traces in the winter dwellings of the Proto-Bulgarians are noticed after the 7th century. These are fragments of wrapping Byzantine amphoras which were used by the Proto-Bulgarians to deliver wine and oil from the town situated along the Black Sea coast. In that period permanent agricultural settlements were formed which were more frequently placed along the vast river valleys and around some stone fortresses.

The production experience of the Slavs and Proto-Bulgarians in the area of craftsman's trade comes as a result of the internal process of formation of the production forces which were exploited in social-economic development. After they settled south of the Danube it was not necessary new craftsman's centers to be established and to learn again the secrets of the craftsman's trade. The settled local population had great traditions and production experience in the area of craftsman's trades. The Slavs and Proto-Bulgarians brought with them to their new country different production traditions which mixed with the local population who had better tools and had longer experience that was easily developed in the economic-production activities.[10] In fact the problem concerning the contacts of the Slavs and Proto-Bulgarians with the local people in 7th century can be viewed in different dimensions. It is widely known that the population on the Balkan peninsula, Asia Minor, Europe and North Africa was forced to give up on their religions and adopt Christianity in 4th century. In that respect there are two main issues of great importance: the contact between the new-comers and the settled ones and the extent to which the old pagan traditions, the old kind of livelihood and its forms of economic and cultural life has been preserved in the former Byzantine provinces after the arrival of the Proto-Bulgarians and the Slavs south of the Danube. According to the archeological research works the Slavs and Proto-Bulgarians arrived on the Balkan peninsula with their traditional social-economic structure and celebration-ritual system which led to the establishment of new forms of social life different from the early Byzantine one. In fact the Balkans, the most ancient cradle of European culture, turned into a meeting place for different cultural models and traditions as a result of the direct and constant contact with the Byzantine culture. In general a process called acculturation of the Slavonic and Proto-Bulgarian tribes was carried out which overlapped with the global cultural-historic changes in the eastern Roman empire. Byzantium's main priority was not to integrate the new tribes but it was even ready to make great compromises even to preserve the ethno-political and economic structure formed in the course of the Barbarian raids.[11] This led to the formation of the north-east periphery of the Byzantine West which first comprised only Slavonic tribe principalities and

10 Kuzov 2002, 38-50.

11 Litavrin 1985, 34-98.

later the Bulgarian state. The fading ancient tradition could not keep the Slavs and Proto-Bulgarians in the sphere of its cultural and economic influence as it was the case with the Thracian tribes, which was the reason why its traces in their original look turned to be available for the new settlers.[12] These processes which usually started with material and technological borrowings (tools, armaments, clothes), following by social (vocabulary, economy) and spiritual exchange, motivated more by their curiosity and drive for gaining prestige are well-exemplified in the study of the early stages of the formation of the medieval Bulgarian state.[13] The new borrowed models and cultural adaptation which came as a result of the geographical, professional and social spheres imposed a reorganization of the already existing elements and the formation of new economic, cultural and political structure of life of the Slavs and Proto-Bulgarians.

The considerable number of activities and two-century-long interest of the Bulgarians and their associate tribes and allies towards the Balkan peninsula ended eventually in the arrival of Asparuh in the present Bulgarian lands and the formation of Danube Bulgaria. The new state confederation on the territory of the Balkan provinces of Byzantium which got the name of Bulgaria (the name was adopted as a tradition from Great Bulgaria of Kubrat), was one of the most magnificent events not only in the Bulgarian medieval history but also in the history of the whole European South-East. Bulgaria was the first state organization which found its place and gained prosperity though it met a strong resistance on the part of the great Byzantine empire. The foundation of an organized state of Slavs and Proto-Bulgarians and the birth of a new material and spiritual culture turned to be both a result and a beginning. As it was mentioned already this came as a result of the centuries-old development of the Slavonic culture in the lands of Middle and South-east Europe, from one side and of political and ethnic progress of the Proto-Bulgarians in the steppe Eurasia, from the other side.

The road that the Bulgarian medieval state had to pass shows different mutually connected stages in the development of the state's crossroad civilization. On the territory of Bulgaria many trade routes cross which connect three continents, a circumstance which turned to be extremely favourable for the state's political and economic development. And it is not accidental that in the Early Middle Ages Bulgaria was one of most economically developed country in Europe. In that respect it was on a par with politically and military powerful opponents such as Byzantium, Arab Caliphate, the German Empire and Moravia Magna. The military and political power went hand in hand with the overall economic progress, with the advance in craftsman's trades and

12 About this synthesis of the ancient cultural heritage on the Balkans and the moral values of the new settlers. Comp. Venedikov 1983; 1987; 1992.

13 Mihailov 1986, 224- 231.

merchandise and mostly with the establishment of the medieval town as a centre of busy political, religious, cultural and economic life. In that respect the early urban settlements such as the first capital centers of Pliska and Veliki Preslav were well developed which at present are archeologically better explored.

The settling process in the new territory was followed by a number of changes in the culture of the new settlers. In the beginning, especially during the first century of their arrival, the changes were rather slight and in a number of cultural events they were even hardly noticeable. A very important condition in adopting the new cultural values was that the new settlers found themselves on the border of a Christian culture four centuries-old which impact was guaranteed and it was just a matter of time to adopt it. Actually the process of adopting Christianity was one of the boundaries related to the survival of the Slavs and Proto-Bulgarians.[14]

The problem concerning the continuity of the economic life of the Bulgarians in the Early Middle Ages is part of the big problem regarding the formation of the early Bulgarian culture and its attitude towards the settled local culture. In the Bulgarian historiography there is a great amount of collected and classified data which allow us to come to certain conclusions with view of the cultural and demographic state of the population in Thracia and Dacia and also about the continuity between the Late Antiquity and early medieval cultural tradition, which is more important in our case. It should be mentioned here that this problem is rather debatable. Regardless of the published literature and opinions on that issue there are totally different attitudes and opinions on what actually stands for continuity.[15] The available publications related to the topic of continuity between the ancient and medieval town with the new-comers – the Slavs and their attitude towards the old Roman towns focus on complicated problems concerning the genesis of the early Bulgarian culture.[16] Most probably this problem as a historical phenomenon is a complex of many factors in which the main role takes the level of the social-economic development.

When analyzing the various elements in the economic development of the First Bulgarian kingdom in all its aspects, we have to point out the deep syncretism of the economic life. Its genesis is broadly influenced by the different production and cultural traditions. In that respect a characteristic feature is the settled ancient production tradition that the new-comers faced

14 Rashev 2008, 11.

15 In Bulgarian historiography there are different opinions on continuity process on the territory of the Balkan peninsula. Important research works: comp. Ovcharov 1983, 16 - 25; 1985, 19-27; Vaklinov 1974, 177 - 188; Boyadzhiev 1975, 32 – 79; Angelova & Doncheva-Petkova 1982, 179-186.

16 Miyatev 1949, 260; Beshevliev 1954, 341 - 355.

in the lands of the new state with which the Slavs and Proto-Bulgarians get in contact in different periods of their development in different regions of Eurasia.[17] This mechanism of influence depended on a number of factors such as public relations, material culture, ethnic changes and other elements of economic development which make various shapes accordingly. The main point of this process is actually the character, the way of living and organization of new-comers who face a new, rather different, but developed world. In that respect the different levels and forms of influence of the local traditions are determined by the fact whether the old settlers are bearers of higher or lower culture. Undoubtedly the leading part is taken by the level of cultural and socio-economic development.

The new settlers, the Slavs and Proto-Bulgarians, face a new, higher stage of socio-economic organization of Byzantium, as a result of which certain ethnic and social changes occur, but new forms of economic and cultural interrelations and influences find their place and win recognition. In that respect the issues concerning the continuity in Bulgarian lands in 6th - 7th century adopt a versatile character. This is not only a process of recovering after the material collapse due to the numerous Barbarian raids or the prolongation of life in a certain region or settlement. Continuity mostly refers to the various pragmatic borrowings in the sphere of agricultural technique, craftsman's trades, various economic forms of livelihood as well as the assimilation of the totally new forms of public and cultural events.

In the sphere of craftsman's trades the local population managed to adopt part of the ancient production technologies which led to an extensive increase in work productivity. It is essential to mention here that the advance in craftsman's trade could not be possible and gain popularity unless there were traditions in production activities. During the process of adopting the old forms and imposing the new content the tradition turned to be of great importance for cultural development though under certain circumstances it had a temporary negative effect.[18] In fact the complicated way of continuity in its various forms turns to be a majority of different factors which is undoubtedly based on higher level of culture. According to Foll Al. the adoption of elements from the local culture complied with the various religious, ethnic and other conditions characteristic for social development.[19]

Continuity as a historical phenomenon is the factor which is used in order for us *to find out what exactly disappeared in the storm of the great raids of the northern tribes in 4-7Ith century and what was preserved and was a compound part in the medieval Bulgarian state*.[20] The process of this

17 Ovcharov 1989, 32.
18 Goncharenko & Rudaya 1982, 5.
19 Fol 1980, 82 - 87.
20 Velkov 1959, 11.

interrelation was extremely active during the time of Slavonic and Proto-Bulgarian settling on the Balkan peninsula when in the lands south of the Danube the early Byzantine culture was formed – a conglomerate of various, even contradictory cultures including some elements of the Thracian, Hellenic and Roman antiquity.

Most of the Bulgarian scholars consider that the ancient borrowings in different spheres of economic and cultural life in the medieval Bulgarian state could not be part of it. *When we try to find any traces of ancient influence and traditions – Velkov V. points out – we should not forget that the exact influence and traditions were viewed through the eyes of the antiquity with all its manifestations – mostly ethnic and on the basis of considerable alterations in the area of economy, social relations, religion and culture*.[21] The conclusion drawn finds complete support in different other sides in material-household culture of everyday life and socio-economic life.[22] With respect to some other influences such as artistic images and plots of ancient and late ancient origin deeply rooted in the repertoire of the Bulgarian medieval authors, this process took place under the impact of some other cultures – first, the Byzantine followed by near-east culture.[23]

Some scholars presume that the towns from the First Bulgarian kingdom are closely connected to the local late ancient (early Byzantine) towns.[24] The archeological excavations, however, explicitly demonstrate that the Slavs and Proto-Bulgarians found very few Byzantine towns on the Balkan peninsula which remained intact from the Barbarian raids.[25] The bigger part of the towns were destroyed, left abandoned and completely discarded. Undoubtedly between the late ancient (early Byzantine respectively) town in Bulgarian lands and early Bulgarian medieval town no genetic connection can be found. The Slavs and Proto-Bulgarians could not adopt thoroughly the ancient town type – neither as a kind of settlement not as a production tradition, nor as a concrete expression of high-developed culture which for the new-comers was remote and foreign. In that way the Slavs and Proto-Bulgarians had to build their own towns on their own without copying ready samples, but having in mind the heritage they found which consisted of separate elements of urban construction principles, economic-production and cultural traditions. The borrowed elements, however, were deeply overthought in the spirit of their own understandings. The capital centres of Pliska and Preslav were built in the same way, which considerably differed from the Roman and the Byzantine towns. The formation and construction of Bulgarian capitals complied mostly

21 Velkov 1972, 379.
22 Mavrodinov 1959; Miyatev 1965.
23 Ovcharov 1989, 33.
24 Mihaylov 1983, 192.
25 Tapkova-Zaimova 1966.

with the specificity of the newly developed Bulgarian society.

It is natural to suppose that the contact of the Slavs and Proto-Bulgarians with the ancient culture was extremely active during the period of their settlement on the Balkan peninsula. This process took place in 5th-7th century, when the early Byzantine culture had already been established – a mixture of characteristic features and influences of the antique ancient times, of Christian religion and of Asian barbarian peoples. The Roman dominance on the Balkan peninsula is connected with a specific kind of migration which includes single and unorganized craftsman's migrations which were of great importance for the preservation and development of the production traditions. One part of the new production principles of craft organization filtered in Low Danube regions remained alien or were assimilated rapidly by the local population. In that way the complicated process of continuity of the ancient images and models from various spheres of economic life took place in the newly established Bulgarian state. In that respect we could conclude that *the various continuity manifestations of separate elements which belonged to the settled earlier culture adopted by the new-comers and the new country were viewed in a new way and were included in the new ethnic, socio-economic and cultural society and enriched it to a great extent*.[26] Consequently continuity is not a process of one-way constant influences of the old cultural forms of life through the various socio-economic stages of development, but adopting valuable elements of the old into the new which aim was to establish a new in form and content culture. The cultural continuity in the early Middle Ages was a process which was carried out in different and diverse ways which depended mainly on the need and aim of the cultural understanding. This dynamics undoubtedly had a crucial importance in laying the foundations of the various branches of Bulgarian medieval economy.

The prerequisites mentioned above in all their diverse forms as well as the elements of continuity helped extensively the advance of the various forms of economic life in the First Bulgarian kingdom and its capital centers of Pliska and Veliki Preslav. Due to this fact the medieval Bulgaria turned not only into an important political and military factor on the Balkan peninsula, but also into economically powerful state which was able to establish material and spiritual culture characteristic of medieval times.

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The rise and fall of the Dalmatian 'Big-men': Social structures in Late Antique, Post-Roman and Early Medieval Dalmatia (ca. 500-850)

Danijel Dzino



Abstract: This paper is discussing social structures in Dalmatia from 6th to mid-9th century, looking primarily in material evidence and utilising Sahlins' anthropological approaches to power-structures. It is argued that change occurring in 7th century should be better explained by looking into changes in Dalmatian elite expression starting in 5th and 6th century, than by assumption of massive migration and settlement of the Slavs.

Key words: Dalmatia, post-Roman, Croats, 'Old-Croat', Slavs, late antiquity

This paper will discuss social structure in Dalmatia between 6th and mid-9th century, focusing on the evidence deriving from so-called 'Old-Croat' cemeteries. Some of the issues discussed here were initially developed in my recent publication on identity-transformations in this period, so more substantial bibliographical details and lengthy overviews of the existing scholarship will be omitted. It is my intention to reflect on the arguments developed there with some new thoughts and ideas, hopefully initiating more substantial discussion of this insufficiently known region and period.[1] Dalmatia

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1 Dzino 2010a. Comprehensive and mostly up to date bibliography on 'Old-Croat' cemeteries can be found in Petrinec 2009. This present paper is in many ways complementary with Dzino forthcoming a, and forthcoming b, both revisiting

referred to in this paper was formed as by-product of Roman imperialism in first century BC/AD. It extended over the territory of modern-day countries of Croatia (southern part of the country, without Istria and Slavonia), Bosnia and Herzegovina (except the valley of Sava) and a small part of Montenegro (the gulf of Boka Kotorska). Initially Dalmatia included larger area, but Diocletian separated its eastern parts, establishing the province of Praevalitana. Under the Dalmatian 'hinterland' the paper refers to northern and central parts of the province – modern regions of Herzegovina, Lika, Dalmatian Zagora and Bosnia.

Mainstream scholarship usually sees early/mid-7th century as the end of antiquity and a start of Middle Ages in Dalmatia.[2] Such chronological division does oversimplify situation in large degree, failing to take into account specific social organisation of Dalmatian communities in 7th and 8th century, which were not quite late antique, but even less early medieval. For that reason, it seems necessary to rethink chronological labels applied to the period between the Byzantine evacuation of the Balkan peninsula (at least most of it) *ca.*610/626 and the times when large parts of Dalmatia became included in the Carolingian imperial system *ca.*790/814. The term post-Roman, I chose to use in the paper to describe this period, is certainly not a new approach in comparative perspective. While not used in relation to Dalmatia or neighbouring areas, it is frequently applied to post-Imperial societies after the disappearance of Western Roman Empire, between late 5th and 9th century, depending of the region and the author preferences.[3]

Introduction

The sources for post-Roman Dalmatia are very scarce. Contemporary written sources cease with the early 7th century, and stay silent until late 8th/early 9th century. The view of the period is for that reason heavily influenced by testimony of later sources, such as mid-10th century Byzantine diplomatic manual known as *De Administrando Imperio* (DAI). This relates in particular to the stories of origins, settlement and baptism of the Croats, Serbs and the other Slavophone groups in that region from the chapters 29 to 36. Historiography for a long time assumed that in this period occurred mass-invasion of the Avars and Slavs, followed by settlement 'flood' of the Slavs in whole southeastern Europe from the eastern Alps to Greece. This invasion is

post-Roman Dalmatia.

2 One exception is Curta 2006, 70-110, who calls the period between 600 and 800 'Dark Ages' of Southeastern Europe, acknowledging special position of this period for much wider region of Southeastern Europe.

3 The term post-Roman started to appear in scholarship dealing with western part of the Balkan peninsula only quite recently, see e.g. Gračanin & Rapeša 2011 for southern Pannonia.

thought to be a consequence of withdrawal of imperial troops in the times of the Byzantine emperor Heraclius (610-641), transferred to fight the war against the Persians and curb the Avar threat culminating with the siege of Constantinople in 626. The problem with such assumption of mass settlement is lack of even a single contemporary written source directly proving it. The reliability of DAI as a source for origin-stories of the Serbs and Croats, and the events from 7th century is seriously shaken in the last decade.[4] Furthermore, we are also missing the evidence which would show consistent layer of destruction or indicate massive settlement of foreign groups in material record of Dalmatia in seventh century.[5] In fact, it seems more and more clear that in whole wider region of southeastern Europe is not possible to attest large settlement of outside groups in archaeological record of 7th century.[6]

While written sources for post-Roman Dalmatia are almost non-existent, archaeology provides considerably more material to work with. The evidence for the settlements in this period is scarce, so overwhelming quantity of material comes from burials and row-grave cemeteries. Traditional archaeological interpretation assumes migration and settlement of foreign groups, seeing the stories of Slav and Croat arrival from DAI as distorted, yet unquestionably based on indisputable facts which must be reconciled with material record. The interpretation is traditionally heavily dominated by typological analysis of objects, and culture-history explanatory model ascribing certain objects and grave-assemblages to ethnicity and religion of the deceased. The acceptance of migration as explanation for social and historical change in 7th century connected the appearance of row-grave cemeteries with grave assemblages, and new funeral rites such as cremation with the new migrants identified as the Slavs. To these migrants is ascribed extermination and assimilation of scattered remains of provincial population, who are thought to survive only in a few coastal cities and the Adriatic islands.[7] The whole archaeological culture from *ca*. mid-7th century onwards is thus named 'Old Croat'.[8] This interpretation of material evidence has roots in establishment of early medieval archaeology of Dalmatia as a part of Croatian national archaeology and its institutionalised separation from research of

4 Recent criticism of the evidence from DAI: Curta 2010a; Alimov 2008; Dzino 2010a, 104-17; 2010b; forthcoming a; Ančić 2010; 2011; Borri 2011.

5 Curta 2010b, see also Dzino 2010, 87-90.

6 Curta 2013c.

7 As far the most comprehensive presentation of evidence and Croatian-language literature can be found in Petrinec 2009.

8 Some archaeologists, such as Sokol (2006) and Milošević (2000), date the arrival of the Croats and late 8th century – albeit in very different ways. See Dzino 2010a, 179-82 for the overview of the scholarship on Croat settlement in Dalmatia in late 8th/early 9th century.

Dalmatian late antiquity in 19th and 20th century – complex topic, which will be discussed elsewhere.

Internalisation of archaeological research for domestic use, rather than for international scholarly exchange, and focus on style and typology of objects resulted with failure of local archaeology in later 20th century to make better use from developments in research of cemeteries in post-Roman West, especially Merovingian Gaul or Anglo-Saxon Britain. Instead of burial rituals and grave-assemblages seen as reflection of ethnicity and religion, more recent interpretation focuses on their function as signifiers of social status and local identity in those communities.[9] There are many parallels between the 'Old-Croat' cemeteries, and other post-imperial row-grave cemeteries in the West, certainly if we disregard the differences in typology and chronology of the objects. The attention to the assemblages of grave objects and careful landscaping of cemeteries suggests pretty plausible the significance of burial sites in the display and communication of communal social status in 'Old-Croat' cemeteries. These strategies of displaying social status through placing of objects in graves, or choice of burial sites are similar to the strategies employed by local communities elsewhere in post-Roman West, after the collapse of Roman imperial structures.[10]

Big-Men – the concept

In order to relate the evidence from cemeteries with the analysis of social structures, the paper is also utilizing Sahlins' anthropological concept of 'Big-man' as useful framework for an analysis of these communities. Marshall Sahlins developed this concept doing fieldwork in Melanesia and Polynesia in order to distinguish between self-made charismatic war-leaders ('Great-men') and those whose power was rooted into privileged, mostly hereditary and institutionalised control of wealth, which can be backed up by force ('Chiefs'). The society of 'Big-men' is dominated by individuals who drew their power from informal personal influences and wealth, rather than through birth-right. 'Big-men' are leaders appearing in societies without strongly defined social hierarchy. Some dominate by their physical strength, particularly in contexts where leading warriors are politically important, some by force of character. 'Big-men' organize feasts and festivals, they are daring warriors and commanders in warfare, aggressors in interpersonal and intergroup conflict.

9 The most significant works being Halsall 1995; Effros 2003 and Williams 2006. The literature is increasing: see useful critical overviews in Williams 2005 and Symonds 2009.

10 Evans (1989) first noticed important structural similarities of Dalmatian post-Roman cemeteries with neighbouring regions, especially Pannonia. Unfortunately his study was largely overlooked at the time of publication and is still not cited in most of literature dealing with 'Old-Croat' cemeteries.

They can also be orators, directors of communal work and enterprise, men of authority who arbitrate disputes within the community, ritual practitioners, magicians, and sorcerers.[11]

The anthropological methodology of Sahlins is widely applied in research of communities in different cultures and/or different historical periods, as a useful tool for analysis of social structure amongst illiterate communities. Certainly, there are traps and dangers in uncritical application of these anthropological approaches to different cultures in more or less distant past. As Spriggs rightly warns – the indigenous societies which Sahlins analysed were not timeless and untouched by historical processes, but actually experiencing substantial social changes at the times when the research was conducted. Prior to Sahlins' research, these Melanesian and Polynesian communities already experienced significant population decline and impact of western colonialism, which resulted in shift of power from 'Chiefs' and 'Great-men' to 'Big-men'.[12] Related to present discussion, this methodology was used by Curta to describe social organisation of the Sclavenes – the groups described under this term in the Byzantine sources from 6th and early 7th century. He challenged earlier ideas of 'democracy' amongst the Sclavenes in this period, arguing that those groups were led by leaders who might be described as 'Great-men'. In his opinion transition from 'Great-men' to 'Chiefs' in these communities occurred in late 6th and early 7th century.[13]

In earlier mentioned book I argued that communities in post-Roman Dalmatia did not fit into model of either 'Great-men' or 'Chiefs'. Rather, they were showing characteristics of 'Big-men': kin-based redistributive society lasting until late 8th century, when they were replaced by 'Chiefs', who found more efficient models to justify and entrench their domination, through Carolingian templates of power.[14] While still considering such description as the most insightful approach towards post-Roman Dalmatia and its communities, I do agree with some of my reviewers that more work needs to be done in defining and conceptualising better these Dalmatian 'Big-men'.[15] The present paper is one small step in that direction.

Late antiquity

Material record of Late antique Dalmatia shows that this region avoided the worst extent of the troubles affecting the Roman Empire after late fourth century. The province was certainly affected by the conflicts of its age, but material record from 5th and 6th century does not show traces of substantial

11 Sahlins 1963.
12 Spriggs 2008.
13 Curta 2001a, 311-34.
14 Dzino 2010a, 152, 170-73, 209, 215-17.
15 Bennett 2011, 916, cf. Alimov 2012, 216-17.

economical and social decline or collapse. Rural hinterland did not have distinct urban units which might be endangered by fragmentations of global system of communications and exchanges in the Roman Empire. Coastal cities such as Salona, Iader or Narona were certainly under more stress, but nevertheless continued with habitation throughout 6th century. Dispersed settlements of the hinterland, being more self-reliant, suffered even less from the coast. Mining, important economic activity in the hinterland, especially what is today the region of Bosnia, also continued throughout 6th century – although some troubles with the exploitation of some mines might have occur in late 5th/early 6th century.[16]

Social structure of late Antique Dalmatia was not much different from the societies in the most of Roman world. It is dominated by local elites which – to put it in shortest way – exchanged payment of taxes for maintenance of their local power. Some changes detectable in material record signify development of Dalmatian social structures starting after the end of 4th century. The first is the disappearance of *villa rustica* from Dalmatian landscape ca. 400-450, especially in northern and central parts of the province. The evidence from better researched coastal regions and islands in the eastern Adriatic indicates that villas survive there later than in the hinterland.[17] The second is militarisation of the society, in particular the way aristocratic identities were expressed, which is attested for wider region of southeastern Europe in 6th century.[18] Finally, there is the appearance of ecclesiastic architecture, which undoubtedly began to dominate urban and rural landscapes of late antique Dalmatia.[19] There are significant numbers of late antique fortified sites in Dalmatian hinterland, but they are very poorly researched and inadequately dated in the existing literature. Most of them are small in size and placed in interior of the province rather than on its borders.[20] Some of them certainly hosted soldiers, but whether that applies to all is questionable as the area was not primary target of 6th century invasions, with the exception of the Avar raid on northern parts of province

16 See Posavec 2007 for 5th century Dalmatia, and Dzino forthcoming b for more substantial discussion.

17 Busuladžić 2011, esp. 149-67; cf. Turković & Zeman 2011 (hinterland); Begović & Schrunk 2001 (the coast and islands). It is important to note that the regions of modern Herzegovina and especially Bosnia are very poorly researched.

18 On militarisation see Curta 2013a, especially for central and eastern Balkans. Militarisation of the ways elites presented themselves is general characteristics of late antiquity, Wickham 2005, 153-258; Haldon 2006, 629-35, cf. Esmonde Cleary 2013, 438-41 and Borri 2005 on military elites in the Exarchate of Ravenna.

19 See Chevalier 1996a for fairly complete catalogue of Dalmatian churches outside of Salona located up to the date of publication.

20 Špehar 2008.

in 597.

The incorporation of Christianity into imperial ideological discourse throughout 4th century modified the ways late antique elites defined and presented themselves throughout the Empire. After initial period of accommodation, negotiation and adjustment of Christianity to the established elite values, the imperial elites turned en masse to the patronage of the Church from late 4th century. The investment in ecclesiastic buildings and various gifts to the Church became preferred way of displaying social positions and representation of local power throughout the Empire.[21] As Wickham points out, the end of *villa* economy in late antiquity probably shows social and cultural change rather than economic collapse. It seems to be a sign of shift in estate managements as villas are replaced with churches or monasteries, which transformed into focal architectural points in rural landscapes. At the same time, militarisation of the ways aristocracies expressed their identities resulted with the shift of attention from the display of (diminishing) wealth in architecture or interior design of habitation, on personal appearance.[22] These changes in expression of elite identities are related to fragmentation and regionalisation of wider imperial system. As a consequence the existing social relationships restructured, transforming rigidly stratified society of later antiquity into more flexible and less restrictive social landscape.

Militarization of society, Christianisation and the changes in expression of elite identities affected Dalmatia as well. Thick ecclesiastic network in more urbanised Dalmatian coastal belt gets established as early as late 4th/early 5th century, but in rural hinterland Christian basilicas appear in 5th century, with quite a few being built in 6th century.[23] These churches were usually positioned by major thoroughfares and communication-routes.[24]

These rural churches are typologically similar – usually made in so-called Naronitan (or Dalmatian-Norican) style – small in size, 'rustic' and

21 See Saltzman 2002, esp. 200-20, or Elsner 1998, 757-59.

22 Wickham 2005, 473-81, cf. also for changes in the West in Esmonde Cleary 2013, 435-54. Dalmatia splits into southern and northern pattern of villa disappearance defined by Wickham – coast and islands into southern (mid-6th) and hinterland into northern (end of 4th century).

23 Chevalier 1996a, see also Posavec 2007, 119-25 with bibliography. It was suggested (mostly not accepted by Chevalier) that earliest Christian churches from what is today Bosnia and Herzegovina might have been of earlier date, some of them built as early as late 4th century, I. Marijanović 1990. There is general problem with dating Late antique and Early Medieval churches in this region, as many Late antique churches have been in use in the later period. Also, it is necessary to revisit number of earlier excavations, especially those by Lujo Marun and Stjepan Gunjača, for inadequate methodology used by the excavators in those times.

24 Basler 1972, 137.

'untidy' in appearance, frequently accompanied with the burials in vaults.[25] The change in burial-customs also appears at this time, best seen through custom of elite burials in sarcophagi and, much more frequently, burials in vaults (*a pozzetto* type).[26] The appearance of early Christian architecture in the hinterland is particularly interesting, showing significant investment of resources in the region which had very modest ecclesiastic structure compared with the coastal regions.[27] Rather, these small churches outside major urban centres of Salona, Iader and Narona were not built in order to accommodate large number of worshipers. They also were not new burial grounds for local communities, as vault burial-chambers are most frequently contained just a few burials, which should be connected with local elite families.[28] These churches rather fulfilled needs of rural elites to display prestige and position in their communities through patronage of the buildings associated with their burial places, competing with neighbouring local elites.

In Dalmatia row-grave cemeteries are appearing in 6th century, which is relatively late, when compared with the Roman west. They are originating in the period when Dalmatia was part of the Ostrogothic kingdom (490-536). The best examples are cemeteries in Mihaljevići near Sarajevo, Njive-Narona, Kašić-Glavčurak near Zadar or Greblje-Knin, all of which having artefacts of 'Ostrogothic' provenience in some female burials. There is also a sarcophagus from Han Potoci near Mostar with ‚Ostrogothic' fibula, and the graves from the regon of Travnik (Varošluk, Oborci, and Dželilovac). The row-grave cemetery in Korita near Tomislavgrad, is also dated in 6th century. This is identified as a Christian cemetery of local population, yet number of graves contains modest and gendered grave-goods, which are not much different from grave-goods in 'Old-Croat' cemeteries – needles, buttons, small tools, hygienic tools and even a knife. Most of the graves were simple earth burials, but some had

25 Rendić-Miočević 1985; Basler 1990, 83-105; Chevalier 1995, 97-100; 1996b, see also Posavec 2007, 127-29 and Cvijanović 2006, 35-41.

26 Sarcophagi in coastal Dalmatia: Cambi 2002, 256-72; in hinterland (quantitatively much more modest) Paškvalin 2012, 445 (no. 9-13), 465. Burials: Cambi *et al*. 1999, 44-47; Posavec 2007, 113-8; Paškvalin 2003, 110-25, also Nikolajević 1969 (wrongly dating basilicas into medieval period). More burials in vaults have been discovered recently, see Busuladžić 2012; Miličević Capek 2009.

27 Out of 14 (16) dioceses known for 530 and 533, only four (six) are located inland (*Historia Salonitana Maior*, 5 [76-83]). Those dioceses are: Baloie (Šipovo?), Bistues (Central Bosnia); Sarsenterum (assumed to be either Aržan, Konjic, Mostar or the area eastern of river Neretva), and Ludrum (Knin). The existence of Mactaritanum-Martaritanum and Delminensis diocese is questionable. Some authorities place the diocese of Mactaritanum in Mostar region and Delminensis close to Tomislavgrad. See Dzino 2010a, 70-71 in English for essential literature, which should be supplemented with Škegro 2009.

28 Bojanovski 1964, 115-16.

simple architecture made of uncut stones, and a few burials were conducted in a more unusual manner, such as the dugout tree-trunk coffins, covering of the deceased with a wooden plank, or graves built with *tegulae*.[29]

Very interesting and significant characteristic of Korita cemetery is the choice of its location – on prehistoric hill-fort, located on hill whose slopes are steeply falling into the Mukišnica creek. While it was not unusual for post-Roman cemeteries after 7th century to use prehistoric and antique structures, their use in late antiquity was considered to be very rare. Recent discoveries however, show that use of prehistoric structures for late antique cemeteries in Dalmatia was perhaps more frequent than previously thought. The recently excavated sites Matakova glavica-Krneze and Škornica-Privlaka, both close to Zadar, reveal late antique burials conducted in prehistoric tumuli. Matakova glavica burial site is even more complex than Škornica as it has later 'Old-Croat' burials in stratigraphic layer above late antique graves. Škornica is dated in 6th century, while on Matakova glavica has been found coin with Constantine's I image dated in 337-340 and a piece of so-called south Alpine domestic pottery dated in 4th to 7th century (both found between graves). These finds indicate dating for Matakova glavica contemporary, or maybe slightly earlier than Škornica.[30]

The appearance of grave-goods is recorded in burials elsewhere in Dalmatia, even those conducted in purely Christian settings.[31] In that context is important to notice finds of grave goods in vault-tombs in Oborci, Kijevo-Vrlika, Lučani and Gale near Sinj, Dželilovac near Travnik, Gorica-Imotski (Šamatorije), Varvara-Prozor, and Vrba-Glamoč. These are mostly individual graves except Lučani, all dated loosely in late antiquity: Lučani burials are dated ca. 400-550 and Gale in 5th century. Oborci, Varvara and Vrba are connected with churches, while Lučani contains larger number of 16 burials, including two children. It is particularly interesting to notice the appearance of pottery-vessels in late antique graves in Vrlika, Lučani, Gale, Dželilovac, Oborci and Vrba, which are important characteristic of 'Old-Croat' graves before mid-9th century. Some of these burials contain weapons – long battle-knife very much like *saxa* (Vrlika) and a spear (Gala).[32] To these should be

29 See literature in Dzino 2010a, 80-84. cf. Radimsky 1891 (Han Potoci) and Vinski 1964, 107-08. It is very likely that most of females with 'Ostrogothic' fibulae might have been of local origins, incorporating foreign symbols of power into construction of their social personae.

30 Gusar & Vujević 2012 (Matakova glavica); B. Marijanović 2006 (Škornica).

31 Majority of late antique Dalmatian burial vaults have no grave goods. However, it is very likely that this situation is also due to activity of tomb robbers, for which exist some evidence, Bojanovski 1964, 109-10 n.27.

32 Basler 1959 (Oborci); Patsch 1909, 104-06 (Varvara); Marković 1938, 67 pic.2 (Dželilovac); Milošević 1990; 2005, cf. Posavec 2007, 114-17.

added military helmet from 6th century burial in Sinj,[33] and a knife found in the grave 4 from Matakova glavica.[34]

Earlier archaeological interpretation did not connect row-grave cemeteries from 6th century with the 'Old-Croat' cemeteries of later period. The cemeteries from 6th century introduce significant number of innovations which will continue in the earliest phase of Old-Croat culture, such as grave goods or more elaborate grave stone architecture. The appearance of row-grave cemeteries and grave-assemblages in my opinion reflects substantial changes in social structure of Dalmatia in 6th century. The rural aristocratic families did change the ways they present their identities in 5th century patronizing building of churches, and displaying status of their families in vault burials linked with those churches. Still, this does not show dramatic change in social hierarchies and power structures – 5th century Dalmatia was essentially remaining a civil society. Its elites might have been more localized than before, but stylistic similarity of newly built churches reveals functioning of inter-provincial social networks. Only with 6th century and the appearance of row-grave cemeteries we might assume substantial social change occurring on multiple levels.[35] These changes were probably influenced with the disruption in internal provincial networks caused by Justinian's reconquista of Ostrogothic Dalmatia and placement of northern parts of Dalmatia in position of imperial frontier-zone after the loss of Pannonia – especially after the Avars got established there in 567. The consequence was repositioning of the existing social networks and emphasis on personal achievement and role of community leaders, rather than on established elite networks, personal wealth and one's noble origins. Hierarchically entrenched Late antique society was gradually replaced by more egalitarian frontier-society with unsecure hierarchies and status differences. This is where the origins of post-Roman 'Big-men' should be searched for – amongst 'New men' (whether locals, or migrants of any provenience), whose position was not determined by birth, but by self-achievements.[36]

Social changes are complex processes and are never caused by single cause, but rather as conjunction of several different causes. Another reason for these social changes in late antique Dalmatia should probably be sought in its

33 Milošević 1990, 335-36 n.16 corrects earlier study of Vinski (1982), which did not take into account that this helmet was not accidental find, but that it was discovered in a grave with stone architecture, together with small glass bottle.

34 Gusar & Vujević 2012, 158-60.

35 The very origins of row-grave cemeteries might have been traced back to late Roman military burials, the idea pioneered in Halsall 1992; 2000 (republished as Halsall 2010, 93-130). See overview of the subsequent reactions on these views in Halsall 2010, 131-68.

36 Cf. Borri 2005, 23-24 for similar situation in the Byzantine exarchate of Ravenna.

depopulation – urban as much as on the countryside. Depopulation in wider area of southeastern Europe in this period is attested in material record.[37] The reasons for depopulation in Dalmatia will be discussed elsewhere, but the most serious 'suspects' are without any doubt Justinian's plague and probably even a possibility of climate change.[38] Depopulation, whether by decease, famine or war, causes serious social changes. The most important change is increased demand for a workforce, which causes rise of price of labour, increased social mobility of labourers, improvement of their social position and challenge to the existing authority.[39] In context of Justinian's plague, it is also important to notice examples of changes in burial customs by some communities, which look as reversion to earlier traditions and an abandonment of Christian burial rites.[40] While the topic of Justinian's plague its causes and consequences remains disputed topic in the scholarship,[41] the changes in 6th century Dalmatia show that depopulation might be indeed the reason for social changes and rise of Big-men in changed social circumstances.

7th century

As said before, the events from 7th century in Dalmatia are not entirely clear. What we know for certain is that the Eastern Roman empire contracted in southeastern Europe. Consequently, the most of Dalmatia, apart from a few coastal cities, experienced fast social collapse and visible simplification of social and other networks. The existing social structures were not capable any more to maintain themselves.[42] The Byzantines withdrew their administrative and military structures, maintaining as little as they needed for securing navigation and sea links with their possessions in Istria and Ravenna. This restructuring of imperial positions enabled indirect control of the hinterland

37 Curta 2001b and 2013c. Stathakopoulos (2012) argues convincingly that rural populations of the Byzantine Empire in late antiquity in general suffered from serious food stress caused by famine and epidemics. The quality of life in Dalmatia significantly diminished from late antiquity to early Middle Ages, what is seen from anthropological analysis of numerous skeletal remains, Šlaus 2008.

38 Dzino forthcoming b, for discussion. The plague as reason of depopulation in Illyricum resulting with settlement of the Slavs was earlier assumed without direct evidence by Goldstein 1992: 65–7; Grmek 1998. The climate change in 'The Dark Age Cold period' and its impact remains disputed topic, see Aberth 2013, 27-28, 239 n.42-45, and Cheyette 2008.

39 Little 2006, 21-23, drawing also his comparisons on much better documented evidence from European Black Death in 14th century. See also Stathakopoulos 2006, 115-18 and Hays 2006, 37-42.

40 Little 2006, 27; cf. Stathakopoulos 2102, 111.

41 See Little 2011 for overview of current debates in study of plague outbreaks in history.

42 See Dzino, forthcoming b.

and maintenance of connections with Istria and Ravenna, without commitment of significant resources into defense of these important communications. These Byzantine 'bunkers', to use Jonathan Shepard's expression, were not isolated from the hinterland – they formed interactive frontier zones with communities surrounding them.[43] Gradual movements of smaller Slavophone groups from the north are certainly to be anticipated, although quantity and especially the motives influencing migration in the region with such scarce resources are at this moment very much open for discussion.

'Old-Croat' cemeteries

'Old-Croat' cemeteries are dispersed in most of coastal regions, immediate hinterland and modern Herzegovina west of (and including) the Neretva valley. In central and northern areas of the province post-Roman cemeteries are generally sparsely located, which can be due to insufficient excavations. It can also be due to more serious degree of depopulation in this region, occurring in 6th century. 'Old-Croat' cemeteries are showing general cultural uniformity, which is at the same time similar to approaches to burial customs in neighboring Istria in North Adriatic but also Komani-Kruje archaeological culture in southern Adriatic and post-Roman Epirus.[44] The appearance of the 'Old-Croat' cemeteries did not reveal a striking change of cultural customs from earlier period, or a significant population change with the foreign immigrants. At the same time under apparent cultural uniformity can be seen pluralism of approaches in which local communities commemorated their dead. The burials were usually furnished or non-furnished inhumations in row-grave cemeteries, with a few examples of cremation, the custom which did not exist in Late Antique Dalmatia.[45] The most accepted dating of individual 'Old-Croat' graves and cemeteries follows chronological sequence starting with cremations preceding furnished 'pagan' burials, which last from early 8th century to mid-9th, followed by non-furnished 'Christian' burials, starting in early 9th century. It is allowed that cremation and furnished burials co-existed at same time, in the same way furnished 'pagan' burials co-existed with 'Christian'.[46] Yet, dating of the earliest 'Old-Croat' cemeteries outside of fairly rough estimates is notoriously unreliable. For example, the crescent-

43 Shepard, forthcoming. The Byzantines might have control immediate hinterland of Zadar and Salona, see Milošević 1995; 2005; 2010; Jakšić 2008; Dzino 2010a, 158, 160. Similar could have happen in Istria and Dyrrachium, Curta 2004, 527; 2006, 103-05; 2013b, 62-65.

44 See literature in Dzino 2010a, 84-87.

45 Crucial modern works on 'Old-Croat' cemeteries are Belošević 1980; Jarak 2002; Sokol 2006; Petrinec 2009.

46 Belošević 2000; Petrinec 2009, 311-20. See also Petrinec 2009, 9-12 for earlier classifications.

shaped pendant from the 'Old-Croat' inhumation grave 54 in the Kašić cemetery can be associated with similar pendants from Albania related to the Pergamon class pendants, dated in 7th century.[47] The dating of this pendant from 'Old Croat' grave shows that chronological sequence: cremations-'pagan burials'-'Christian burials' actually have no meaning and that chronology of early 'Old-Croat' graves must be seriously reconsidered.[48]

The graves were usually made in the simple earth graves or in modest stone burial chambers. Less frequently has been used wooden coffins, and very rarely the deceased were buried in sarcophagi made of spolia from Late Antiquity. The use of Late antique sarcophagi occurred in cemeteries which showed continuity with the late antique sepulchre places.[49] Only quite recently archaeology confirmed that cremation was practised in 'Old-Croat' cemeteries, but as exceptional and relatively rare burial custom.[50] The quantity of grave-goods was usually not large, and they were not always present in graves. Grave-goods were modest and gendered, similar to those from 6th century cemeteries. Most frequently assemblages contained pottery vessels, small tools, hygienic tools, weapons, cloth, and small jewellery. Before *ca.* 775 there are no equestrian equipment and weapons, apart from axes and arrowheads, and when they do start to appear (spurs, swords, spears), they are imports, or a local imitation of Carolingian models.[51]

The cemeteries are often located on prominent locations dominating landscapes from slopes of the hills or close to a water – whether the sea coast or running water. They were also sometimes positioned near or within the Iron Age mound graves and burial sites, the ruins from antiquity, around churches from Late Antiquity, or late antique cemeteries.[52] This shows concern of local communities with location of the cemeteries but also the intention to appropriate and/or rewrite the local past. These strategies in the choice of location and obvious need of post-Roman Dalmatians to state their claims on the past, shows us that local communities and their elites had no control over the past. It is very likely that those elites had no noble ancestry, established

47 Milošević 2009; Curta 2010b, 317-18, esp. n. 90. Contra Petrinec 2007; 2009, 162-63 who dates it in late 8th/9th century.

48 It is also rather questionable who was 'pagan' and who 'Christian' in 'Old-Croat' cemeteries before mid-9th century, see Dzino 2010a, 136-46 and 165-68.

49 Petrinec 2009, 113-30, cf. Sokol 2006, 144-48. There is a new find of male burial in sarcophagus with Carolingian-type sword from Vaćani near Skradin. It was excavated by Šibenik city-museum under the direction of Mr Željko Krnčević in 2012.

50 Petrinec 2009, 15-16, with few suspected, but not confirmed cases (16-17).

51 Petrinec 2009, 184-88; 192-203, 302-07; cf. Dzino 2010a, 146-50;.

52 Petrinec 2009, 113-15; cf. Sokol 2006, 152-54; Dzino 2010a, 140 and Milošević 2000, 115-19.

ideological discourse or social system which would secure and justify social domination.

As stated earlier, at certain point of time an important shift occurs in the material record, affecting elite male graves. The dating of this change has been made easier with the appearance of Carolingian-type martial artefacts and late Avar belt fittings in those grave-assemblages. However, scholars differ as to whether the earliest appearance should be dated to ca. 775–800, or after 800, often changing opinions on dating.[53] The most significant finds are spurs, belt fittings, Carolingian-type swords, battle axes and long battle knives. There are also Byzantine *solidi* from the mid-second part of the 8th century (Leo III, Constantine V Copronymus, and Leo IV) find in the few elite graves. The most important localities were again concentrated between the region between the rivers Cetina and Zrmanja, but also in western/central Herzegovina in the hinterland. The area around Knin, in particular the village Biskupija, had the majority of Carolingian finds, such those from the cemetery complex at Crkvine, which included the elite mausoleum in the basilica of St. Mary. In the Ravni Kotari, the area around Nin had the most significant concentration of cemeteries from this era, such as Ždrijac for example.[54]

Archaeological and historical interpretation sees this change in material culture through two frameworks – one implying settlement of the Croats as either small elite group or larger conglomeration ('people') and the other as the outcome of the contacts between local Slavs/Croats with the expanding Carolingian kingdom.[55] The appearance of the foreign, late Avar and Carolingian, objects in elite graves is usually interpreted as war-booty, a gift of Frankish rulers to their loyal subjects, or consequence of immigration/exchange with Pannonia.[56] Yet, not many scholars related sudden increase in complexity of 'Old-Croat' grave assemblages and the acceptance of foreign symbols of power with social transformation occurring in most of post-Roman Dalmatia. Grave goods reflect different things, and apart from marking gender identity and fitting into broader cultural templates, they frequently reflect achieved status of deceased, rather than status ascribed through heredity. Funerals and funeral customs are undoubtedly the arena of activity rather than passive reflection of society – they represent perceived reality of social

53 Belošević 1980, 99-109; Milošević 2000 (end of 8th up to ca. 830s); Petrinec 2009 (ca. 785-830); Jurčević 2011 (from the 820-830s); Belošević 2007, 282-84 (820-850).

54 Petrinec 2009, 169-88; 192-203, 302-07. For the coins see Mirnik 2004. See also recently Bilogrivić 2009 on Carolingian K-type swords (total of 14, including one from Vaćani mentioned in n. 49) and Jurčević 2011 on early Carolingian finds.

55 See above n.8 for views on Croat arrrival in Dalmatia in late 8th/early 9th century.

56 Petrinec 2009, 181-84; Milošević 2000, 128; see also Filipec 2002/03.

relations and are useful place for forging new identities.[57] Thus, increased complexity of grave-assemblages can relate to increase in social competition and the formation of new elites or significant changes in the way the existing elites define themselves.

Common ground with Dalmatian cemeteries can be found in the most elaborated phase of furnished burials in Anglo-Saxon England or Merovingian Gaul, which showed the intensification of burial rites and the increased complexity of grave-goods. In both cases, much before this process occurred in 'Old-Croat' cemeteries, this intensification was reflection of social change occurring in these communities. Instead of gender, they now signified rank and increased competition between local elites and negotiation of new ways for display of social dominance. The outcome in both cases was the acceptance of Christianity by the elites, entrenching consolidation of power, social inequality and complexity of political institutions.[58] The change which occurred in the material record from the 'Old- Croat' graves was almost identical to the contemporary changes, which occurred on a much wider area in Central and parts of southeastern Europe in late 8th century. The finds of belt strap ends and mounts, battle axes and equestrian equipment spread from the second Avar qaganate through the Middle Danube, in particular in the area of the later Moravian state (e.g. Blatnica-Mikulčice, Staré Město or Pohansko-Břeclav) but some similarities have also been noted in the palatial complex of Bulgar rulers in Pliska. Subsequent destruction of the Avar qaganate by Charlemagne's armies in the late 700s corresponds with the appearance of Carolingian military equipment in the material record.[59]

The dynamics on a fringe on Carolingian and Byzantine imperial projects in late 8th/early 9th century caused structural political changes in Dalmatia. Despite the Byzantines losing north Adriatic points in Venice, Ravenna and Istria in late 8th century, surviving Dalmatian coastal cities such as Zadar, remained the outposts of the Byzantine Empire. The parts of Dalmatia got included in Carolingian zone of influence, and Dalmatian duchy was established, as a part of Carolingian imperial commonwealth after 814.[60] Dalmatian elites selectively accepted Carolingian templates of power, characterised amongst other things through ideologically defined partnership between Christianity and imperial structures of power. This is seen in new impetus for church-building patronized by local elites, the arrival of the Frankish monks and the use of Christianity for justification of elite dominance. Dalmatian burials are losing grave-goods and the elites are now buried in cemeteries located next to the churches. The basilica of St. Mary in

57 E.g Parker Pearson 2009, 72-94; Babić 2005.
58 E.g. Halsall 1998; Webster 1992.
59 Curta 2006, 130-33, 143-44, 159-60.
60 Ančić 1997; Budak 1997.

Crkvina-Biskupija near Knin is a good example of these changes as earlier elite burials were incorporated in the church and two burials in sarcophagi as it seems were actually done in church. This site shows the connection between furnished burials and the use of a church-building for the display of elite status – similar to the roughly contemporary elite mausoleums in Moravia.[61] These changes ultimately resulted with establishment of more stable social hierarchy in Dalmatian society in mid-9th century, strengthening power of local elites in their domains (*županijas*), which were integrated in the Dalmatian duchy, ruled by the group whose leaders called themselves the dukes of the Croats.[62]

Conclusions

This brief analysis of Dalmatian social structures reveals significant potential for further research in the period between 500 and 850. Lack of written sources and focused regional archaeological research makes conclusions expressed here a working hypothesis that should be tested and modified in the future research. The conclusions are necessarily generalizing, and certainly leave space for variations within regional patterns. However, it seems reasonably clear that thorough transformation and apparent discontinuity between late antiquity and early Middle Ages in Dalmatia cannot be explained relying solely on migration and settlement of foreign groups as cause of historical change. Dalmatian society started to transform already in late antiquity, much before collapse of complex social networks, which followed Byzantine evacuation in 7th century. The speed and intensity of changes did not affect a whole province. North and central regions transformed earlier than urbanised Adriatic coast, but the coast experienced more visible change as more complex urban units such as Salona or Narona lost its urban characteristics. The end of villa economy and building of rural churches in 5th century reveals changes in self-representation of the existing rural aristocracies, who now invested their resources in church-building and asserted publically their social dominance through vault-burials associated with those churches. Rural aristocracies in Dalmatian hinterland probably still existed as a social network in 5th and even 6th century, and the existing local hierarchy does not appear too much disrupted in these centuries.

Yet, the appearance of row-grave cemeteries and sporadic use of grave-goods in 6th century throughout the province signals beginning of deeper social change. It is suggested in this paper that in this period Late antique hierarchy begin to be challenged by self-made men and new families, who needed to place emphasis on presenting their achievements in order to legitimize new position in community. Political changes, in particular the Ostrogothic rule of Dalmatia, prolonged conflict between the Ostrogoths and

61 Petrinec 2006; 2009, 75-81.

62 Dzino 2010a, 182-210.

Justinian's Empire, and the rise of hostile Avar entity in Pannonia, might have been cumulative trigger for those social changes. Equally, severe depopulation should certainly not be overlooked as a cause for undermining and breaking existing social hierarchies. The New men who appeared in local rural power-networks might have been soldiers or locals capable of organising their communities in the times of crisis. Dalmatian new men from 6th century did not destroy the existing social structures even in the hinterland – they worked within the imperial system and helped maintaining it until the evacuation of the province in 7th century. The idea which is argued in this paper is that we cannot understand post-Roman Dalmatia and the changes in 7th century without looking into changes in elite expression starting in 5th and 6th century. In the same way we cannot understand formation of early medieval Dalmatia without looking into changes occurring in old-Croat cemeteries in late 8th century. If the Byzantines did not evacuate troops and administration from Dalmatia, things might have been different, but the fact that Dalmatian society was more different between 400 and 600 than between 600 and 775, would probably stay unchanged.

We cannot see the appearance of 'Old-Croat' culture as the evidence or consequence of mass-migration. The appearance of grave goods and changes in burial rites reflect the society without established and ideologically maintained hierarchy, where local elites needed continually to justify their position to their communities in different categories of social practices. One of those was burial, or at least what we can see today from certainly much more complex rituals. 'Old-Croat' graves put strong emphasis on presentation of assemblage of grave-goods during the funeral and choice of grave architecture, or funeral rites, as signifiers of achieved social status, rather that reflection of society, mark of beliefs or ethnicity of the deceased. Row-grave cemeteries in Dalmatia displayed a fall in the living standards and poverty, which was shown in the simplicity of the funerary customs. It is unfortunate that for the time being, we have at our disposal mostly material from the coastal area and its immediate hinterland, which left the zone of the Dinaric Alps mostly out of sight. On one hand, the 7th and most of the 8th century showed a similarity of general patterns in which individual communities in the Ravni Kotari, Cetina and Neretva valleys and *karst* valleys of Livno, Duvno and Glamoč approached the burial of their dead. Below the surface of a shared general cultural patterns the heterogeneity of different aspects of burial rites and the deposition of the dead revealed a complex sociological, regional and political fragmentation in this period.

The emphasis on the use and display of grave-goods suggests that post-Roman Dalmatian communities were very much alike those described in anthropological theory as dominated by 'Big-men'. As said before 'Big-men' took power in societies which did not establish a strongly stratified

social ladder, and which were dominated by displays of wealth and personal standing of individual within the community. Evidence from the Dalmatian cemeteries does not show the presence of war leaders or hereditary elite in the post-Roman period before ca. 775. The modest display of grave-goods and visible traces of funerary feasts on cemeteries show that society of post-Roman Dalmatia was dominated by people who derived their authority from personal influence and were not able to extend this authority to become hereditary. It is suggested here that post-Roman Dalmatian 'Big-men' society was already taking place with new men, from mid-later 6th century.

After ca. 775, and going well into 9th century, local elites outside of Dalmatian cities started to use martial attributes and equestrian equipment in the graves to construct their social personae. Similarities of those changes in wider areas of Central Europe indicate that new elite-identity was negotiated and forged in this time between Charlemagne's conquest of the Avars starting 791 and the end of Frankish-Byzantine war, ending in 814. The competition between local elites, whether symbolic or real, was initiated by imperialism of Carolingian and Byzantine imperial projects, briefly competing in the eastern Adriatic. This increased competition was the ultimate end of 'Big-men' society, as templates on which Carolingian social hierarchy was established, provided more efficient lasting tools for justifying and preserving power amongst the Dalmatian elites. The unification of burial rites coincided with the rise of dux Trepimirus (Trpimir, r. 840?-850/864?) and the elite-group who called themselves Croats as leaders of the Dalmatian duchy, regardless whether they were recent migrants, the existing local group, clan or newly forged elite-identity. The ethnonyme 'Croats' from mid-9th century provided important reference-point for later generations of Dalmatian elites, expanding as identity-discourse together with the borders of now Croat duchy, and from early 10th century – Croat kingdom.

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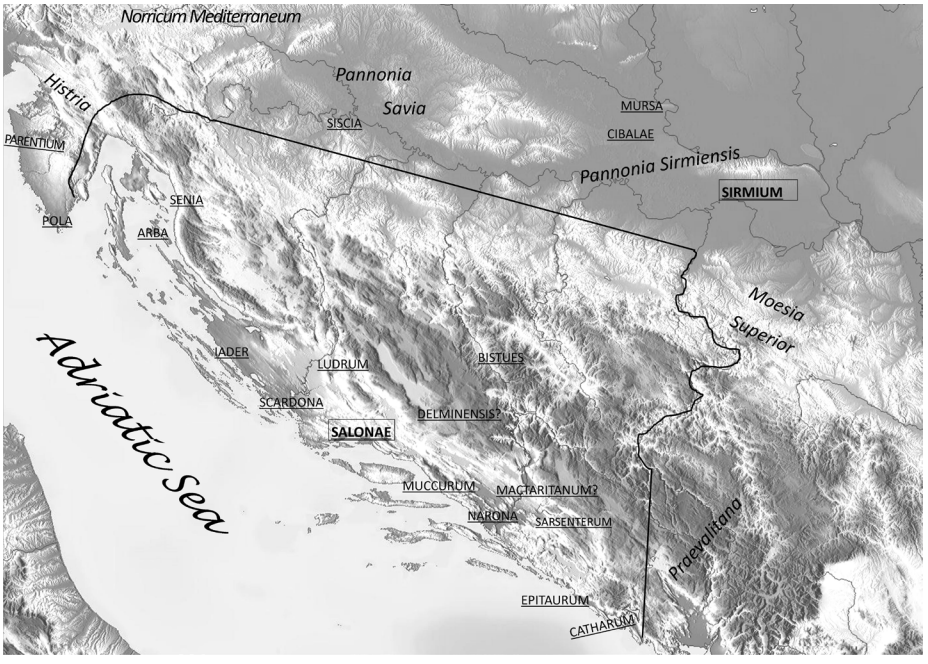
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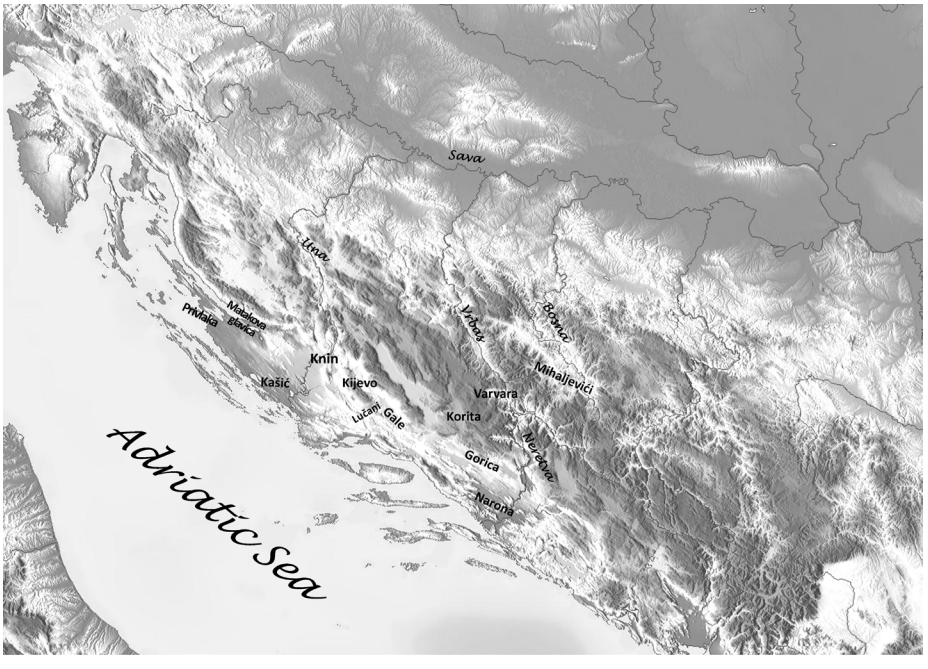
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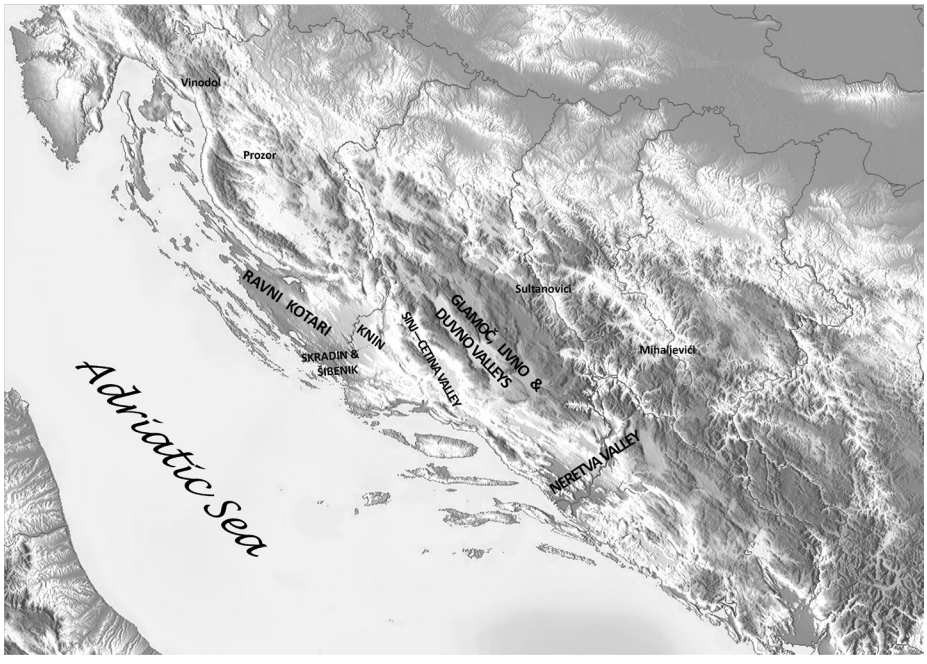
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Map 1: Late antique Dalmatia with episcopal centres



Map 2: Sites mentioned in the paper.



Map 3: The regions with earliest 'Old-Croat' cemeteries, and individual cemeteries

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The establishment of the Bulgarian state under Gostun-Gast-Organs

Nedelcho Nedelchev



Abstract: The Bulgarian, Byzantine and Hungarian medieval historical traditions contain extremely similar pieces of information about the creation of the Bulgarian state and its early development. In my opinion, the Bulgarian state was established under Gostun-Organas, the predecessor of Kurt-Kubrat, and the state-system was preserved after the breakup of Old Great Bulgaria. The Proto-Bulgarians led by Asparukh and Tervel continued to observe their allied relations with the heirs of Emperor Herakleios, preserved their own state-system and founded a new state in the Danube River Valley. Danube Bulgaria continued to follow the policy, as maintained by Herakleios, Gostun and Kurt, of holding back the invasions from the East into Europe. The historical memory of the Bulgarians has reflected the beginning of the said state with Gostun as its founder in the Bulgarian Rulers' List (in Bulgarian: 'Именник на българските владетели'). The various traditions allow for tracing the ancient Iranian, non-Turkic state ideology and name-ranking system of the proto-Bulgarians and the latter's gradual slavicization

Keywords: Gostun-Gestator-Organas, Kurt-Kubrat-Kubera-Kava, Keanus-Keyanides-kane (kana)

The Bulgarian state was established at the borderline of two epochs – Antiquity and the Middle Ages. The Eastern Roman Empire in the reign of Herakleios contributed to incorporating the emerging Bulgarian state into its own model of governing the world and such model's boundaries. The Bulgarians accepted the alliance offered and had observed their obligations under it from the time of establishing Old Great Bulgaria under Gostun-Organas and Kurt-Kubrat[1] until the offensive of Asparuh's Bulgarians into the outlying regions of the empire in 681. The reasons for dissolving the allied relations were bilateral and

1 In the contemporary Bulgarian history kan(e)'s Kubrat 'Old Great Bulgaria' is interpreted as Tribal union. The idea is contradictory, because for instance V. Gyuzelev used for Kubrat the conflicting titles 'chieftain' and 'ruler' – title 'rulers' was used for Kubrat and Byzantine imperator in Gyuzelev 1981, 69-76.

pertained to the struggles for domination in what is known as the Byzantine Empire. Ioannes of Nikius reported that Kubrat was a defender of 'Herakleios' sons and an enemy to those of Constantine'.[2]

The internal contradictions in Constantinople resulted in a military coup and bodily injuries to Empress Martina and her son by Herakleios – Herakleion. This enhanced the resistance against Constantine's son – Emperor Constant and his government. All these actions led to the pull-out from Egypt, which surrendered to the Arabs in 642. For economic, political and religious reasons the Arab Muslims were joined by a number of communities and individuals from Southwestern Asia and Northern Africa. The Bulgarian state of 'Old Great Bulgaria' – 'e palaia Boulgaria estin e megale'[3] – followed, too, the overall process of disintegration. One part of the Bulgarians withdrew from the path of the Eastern European and Asian invaders, while the people led by Asparuh and Tervel blocked at the walls of Constantinople the invaders' march into the Eastern European steppes and the Balkans.

Nevertheless, V. Zlatarski shared the opinion that Bulgaria was created with the help of the Byzantine Empire against the aggressive Turks, while presuming that Kubrat probably 'had hereditary rights in respect of the Bulgarian khan's throne in the lands of the former Utigurian state', and [also with] 'the requisite support under the leadership of his uncle Organa'.[4]

When, however, was the Bulgarian state established? Why is the Bulgarian tradition not aware of any other earlier rulers prior to those mentioned in the *Bulgarian Rulers' List*? How long had Turkish domination over the former Bulgarian states lasted, given the fact that Organa or Gostun had ruled for only two years? May we presume that the issue related to the establishment of the Bulgarian state actually covers up a refusal to investigate a tribal society's transformation into a state, political and class society?

My contention is that the names of Bulgarian rulers reflect in various forms diverse aspects of the historical process related to the Bulgarian early state-system and that attention should be paid to them, even if this is a mere hypothesis.

The name of Kurt's eldest son, Batbaygan, may be translated as 'Lord Keeper', based on the Persian meaning of the word 'badegan' as 'keeping', 'keeper', 'watching'; of 'bay' as 'lord'; and 'gan' or 'kan' as 'governor', 'ruler'. This is a name which is in harmony with the memory preserved for Batbaygan as a keeper of Kubrat's legendary legacy for the unity of the state. The Slavonic version of the name – 'Bezmer' – is probably a translation of 'Batbaygan' from Persian through the Greek 'ameras' – 'boundless', i.e. the 'Lord Keeper' of the old state-system of Kubrat's Old Great Bulgaria, such state-system being

2 Zlatarski 1894, 145-154, 148-149.

3 Theoph. Confess. *Chron*. 3. 32. 261.

4 Zlatarski 1970, 136.

undivided among the various Bulgarian tribal unions. However, the variant of the name – 'Batbayan' – would mean 'Keeper of the Words, the Law', based on the meaning of 'bayan' as 'saying the words' or 'the law' or 'the command of the words', and 'bat' as an 'elder brother' or 'father' in its Indo-European interpretation, which is well known from various Russian, Bulgarian and Serbian examples.

The Bulgarian tradition presents Kubrat's predecessor with the name of Gostun. The Byzantine tradition presents Kubrat as an heir to Organas. There exist contradictory opinions about whether Organas and Gostun were one and the same person or not, on account, I believe, of no consideration having been taken of the various meanings of the name. This was perceived by Zlatarski, who wrote: 'Organa and Gostun have already been found to be identical on account of their equal historical importance, and based mainly on their close kinship to Kubrat or Kurt…'[5].

The name Organa, Organas is apparently unfamiliar in the Bulgarian language, but it is very close in respect of pronunciation to the Greek word for 'action', 'creation', 'building up', 'means' – 'organon' – while also having the possible meaning of 'custodian' or its related term and name 'Gostun'. The fact that Gostun is designated as 'This custodian' ('наместник сы') suggests the meaning of the name itself. Is it a tradition to designate tribal or military chieftains using a name, which means 'guest'? The examples with the Slavonic chieftains Peiragastos and Adargastos, reported by Theophylaktos Simokates in his 'Histories', are quite indicative![6] P. Mutafchiev deciphered the names of Peiragastos and Adargastos as Pirogost and Radogost but did not draw any parallels with the name or the title Gostun.[7]

The transfer of power from a tribal chieftain to a head of the state is the process that was described by Late Roman or Early Byzantine writers in the case of Organa-Gostun and Kurt-Kubrat. 'Gast' from the Latin term 'gestator' – 'bearer', or from 'gestio' – 'performance', 'commission', is the elective chieftain comprehended as 'gostun' or 'Gostun'.

The question is: under which Bulgarian ruler was the Bulgarian state known as Old Great Bulgaria founded? Under Gostun, who was Kurt's uncle, or under Kurt himself? Here I would pose a question about the establishment of the Bulgarian state in connection with so-called matriarchalism-matrilineality, inasmuch as in my opinion it has not been investigated. The acts of matrilineality do not bear witness to the transition from a tribal to

5 Zlatarski 1970, 132.

6 Theoph. Sim. *Hist*. 3. 8. 322; 13. 336. According to the translation of V. Beshevliev, Peiragastos was 'the leader' of the barbarian detachment. The title is 'Peiragastos … phylarhos de outos tes plitnos ekeinis ton barbarikon' and means 'tribal chieftain'.

7 Mutafchiev 1943, 67.

a patrilineal and state society but rather to a transitional and inherited method for the preservation of hereditary power. Zlatarski wrote about 'the ancient Bulgarian royal clan of Dulo', and of Kubrat as 'the founder of Old Great Bulgaria'.[8] Apparently there is a problem here: did any royal power exist before Kubrat or Kurt? If power was hereditary according to the tradition as exemplified by the succession from Avitohol to Irnik, why then was it not illustrated by some later examples until the time of Gostun and Kurt?

The transfer of power from an uncle to a nephew reveals a process of control over the rulers by some collective body/bodies – councils of elders, priests or the national assembly. Such a process has been attested even in the earliest Hittite state. The first kings and heirs on the consanguineous male side were Pithanas, Anitas and Pervas. After that there were disorders,[9] which were terminated only under Hattusilis I, grandson of Puhassumas.[10] Hattusilis initiated a civil war after his wife, daughter and son rejected him as the royal heir, undoubtedly in favor of some other relative.[11]

In the ancient East the title 'lord' – 'rubaum' was transitional to the title 'king', first in Assyria under Irishum and after that in the Hittite Kingdom at the end of the 20th and during the 19th century BC.[12]

Apparently this tradition was stable and displayed some generally valid transitional forms to the state institution, since 'Organa' in the testimony of Nikephoros is a 'lord' – 'kyrios', and the Bulgarian rulers were designated mostly as lords – 'kyrios', 'archon' or 'prince (knyaz)' but not as 'king' – in the Byzantine tradition until the 13th century. This is why it was not by accident that Organa/Gostun was designated as 'kyrios'. In the Bulgarian Rulers' List Asparuh was designated as 'prince (knyaz)': 'Knyaz Isperih'.[13] 'Knyaz' is a title designating a pre-state and state governor.

The fact that Gostun was only a custodian did not deprive him of the right to be a state ruler. In the Bulgarian Rulers' List, Gostun was referred to as 'Gostun – This custodian'.[14] Regardless of whose custodian he was, Gostun possessed and exercised power that was obviously hereditary and not typical for tribal societies.

In the Bulgarian Rulers' List, Avitohol, having reigned for 300 years, and Irnik, having reigned for 150 years, are mythological figures, while the following rulers seem actually to have reigned: Gostun of the Ermi clan for 2 years, Kurt (Kurt and his successors until Kormisosh being of the Dulo clan)

8 Zlatarski 1970, 131.
9 Nedelchev 2000, 90-91 ff., 241.
10 Nedelchev 2000, 92 et seq.
11 Nedelchev 2000, 92 et seq.
12 Nedelchev 2000, 90 et seq.; Cf. Nedelchev 2004, 249 et seq.
13 Cf. the photocopy of the *Bulgarian Rulers' List* in: Mutafchiev 1943, 86.
14 The photocopy in: Mutafchiev 1943, 86.

for 60 years, Bezmer for 3 years. These five rulers have been called 'princes (knyaz)', and ruled for 515 years in total. The next ruler is Knyaz Espererih, for 61 years, followed by Tervel for 21... Sevar for 15 years. Then comes Knyaz Kormisosh, who reigned for 17 years – 'And this knyaz changed the Dulo clan'.[15] The title 'knyaz' is specifically mentioned twice in relation to some most significant changes, namely in connection with Espererih, who created a separate state governed by the Dulo clan, and Kormisosh, who changed the clan as a ruling one. The very fact that Espererih is referred to by the term 'knyaz' of the Dulo clan hints at some political changes that differ from the generally accepted history.

The time of the Hunnic Empire and Attila until the mid-5th century was close enough to oppose a 515-year-long reign of princes with sheared heads beyond the River Danube. This must have meant dependency for the people led by Asparuh. By referring to the knyaz status of Espererih/Asparuh a new political change is implied after the decay of the preceding Old Great Bulgaria of Kurt/Kubrat. The term 'knyaz' lays an emphasis on the state-system; by eliminating the power of the Dulo clan a new stage in the government and development of Bulgaria was marked, which is once again underlined by the title 'knyaz' in respect of Kormisosh.

The evidence contained in the Bulgarian Rulers' List presents the only possible announcement about the first Bulgarian ruler, namely 'Gostun' – 'custodian'.

The name 'Gostun' is also known in the variant 'Organas' according to the evidence of Nikephoros Patriarchos and Ioannes of Nikius in Egypt.[16] The name is an obvious translation, which in ancient Greek means a 'tool' or 'instrument', and in ancient Bulgarian a 'custodian' or 'representative'. Such meaning may suggest temporary replacement of a ruler on account of his immature age after the end of a transitional period from a pre-state to a state society. In this sense the name 'Gostun' or 'Organa' – 'custodian' or 'tool', 'means' – is understandable. The origin, however, of 'Gost' –'gast' reveals the institution of a chieftain who becomes a lord. And here comes the question: is it not the transfer of power from a military tribal chieftain to an actual head of state demonstrative/ritual in its nature? Another question that also emerges is why no other chieftain or ruler has been specified after Irnik and before Organa-Gostun?

The idea of 'Organa' as 'Orkan', which was approved by the supporters of the Turkic origin of the proto-Bulgarians and for example by Mutafchiev as well,[17] is more than debatable.

15 The photocopy in: Mutafchiev 1943, 86.

16 Niceph. Patr. *Breviar*. 294; Zlatarski 1894, 148-149.

17 Mutafchiev 1943, 85.

The title of Organa as 'Kyrios' of the Unogundurs[18] was transitional; however, it also meant 'lord' and was borne by many Bulgarian rulers after Asparuh. According to Nikephoros Patriarchos, the title 'kyrios' was borne by Kubrat as well.[19] This title appeared as a natural transitional one from an elective to a monarchic title. In accordance with the Byzantine system, where the emperor/basileus was the only one in the world, it was only natural that the neighboring rulers should not bear any title suggesting independence. And it was not by accident that Samuil in his fight to defend the Bulgarian state-system as king of the Bulgarians would proclaim himself an independent ruler, an autocrator, in the 10th-11th centuries.

The heir of Organas-Gostun was Kubrat. His name was popular in two forms – Kurt and Kubrat or Kovrat, etc. 'Kurt' is an Indo-European and Iranian name by origin; it is related to the German 'Kurt' and the Latin 'Curtius' and means 'nomad' or 'stockbreeder', or 'running'. 'Kurt' is related to the modern ethnonym Kurd[20] and is also found in some Bulgarian family names like 'Kurdov/a'.

The second variant of the name – 'Kubrat, Kovrat' etc. – is related to the Indo-Iranian meanings of 'Kubera' as 'Lord of Wealth' and to 'Kava' or 'Kova', a smith hero in the Iranian mythology who declared a rebellion against a usurper of the throne, or to the first and legendary royal Iranian dynasty – Keyanides or Kayanides, and such dynasty's first three representatives – Kavi Kavad (Kay Kubad), Kavi Usan and Kavi (Kay Husroy).[21] The adherence of the Bulgarians to the dynastic and ancient Iranian state-building theory is reflected in the name 'Kubrat', undoubtedly the second name of Kurt, which in its meaning 'Kovi' or 'smith' has inherited the ancient Iranian state tradition and corresponds to the actions of Kurt-Kubrat as a statesman, who overthrew the tyranny exercised by the Turks or the Avars and Turks over his people.

It is indicative that in the Hungarian tradition, in *Gesta Hungarorum*, the Bulgarian Kane Krum was called Keanus the Great – Keanus magnus: 'And the land that lies between Tisza and Danube was occupied by Keanus [(Krum)] the Great' – the lord of Bulgaria'. The possible explanations of the name are 'the Great Kan' or 'Krum the Great', however it is most probable that 'Keanus' was a name-title and that it was related to the ancient Persian state title of the Keyanides clan. Keanus/Krum was specified as the grandfather of Salan/Simeon or of the general who defended the country to the north of the Danube against the Magyars. The contacts of the Bulgarians with the Finno-Ugric and Ugric peoples remain unclear but the Hungarians, led by the tribe

18 Zlatarski 1970, 131, note 2.
19 Zlatarski 1970, 143.
20 See Nedelchev 2011, 35-45, 40.
21 Cf. Lelekov 1980-1982, 633; Nedelchev 2011, 39.

of Magyars, used to have a supreme chieftain named 'kende',[22] a title which sounds similar to the Bulgarian title 'kana'. The origin of the titles 'kana' or 'kane' and 'kende' is, in my opinion, related to the legendary ancient Iranian doctrine about the Keyanides or Kayanides. The title 'kana' appears to refer to the meaning of the Indo-Iranian terms for community – 'kana' or 'gana'. The terms are also preserved in modern Bulgarian as personal names.

Gesta Hungarorum renders a Bulgarian legend about Keanus' descent from Attila: 'After Attila's death the chieftain Keanus the Great, grandfather of the chieftain Salan, came to Bulgaria...'[23] .

'Canus magnus' was the title of Kana Krum because he took possession of the crown of the Eastern Roman Emperor and his other insignia of power, and also owned a part of the empire, namely Zagorie, as 'sarakt' of which he was 'sär', i.e. 'chieftain' and 'ruler of an empire', i.e. 'tsar', which is how the word containing a short 'a' – 'ä' should be pronounced.

The ancient Hungarian tradition of designating Bulgarian rulers as 'keanus' can be traced also in the 10th/11th century when, in 1003-1004, some Bulgarian lands were taken away under King (Tsar) Samuil. It has been assumed that during the reign of Samuil the governor of the lands at the frontier with Hungary was a 'provincial boyar'. This 'provincial boyar', however, played a substantial role in diplomatic and political relations between Bulgaria and Hungary and, based in Vidin, was governing the Bulgarian territories beyond the Danube.[24] Therefore it was not by accident that in the Hungarian chronicles he was called 'keanus' and was killed during a war with the Hungarians: 'Kean Bulgarorum Ducem', 'Kean Ducis bulgarorum et slavorum'.[25]

Old Great Bulgaria came to an end. And it was again the authors of the Bulgarian Rulers' List who deemed it necessary to lay emphasis on the continuity of the state, which is why Esperih was called 'knyaz'.

The name of the first Bulgarian ruler of Danube Bulgaria is known in two forms – Asparuh and Ispor or I/Esperih. In my opinion, the form 'Isperih' is close to the ancient Iranian 'ispahsalar' or to the Arabic pronunciation of the word – 'isfahsalar' – 'general'.[26] The meaning of the Persian word for 'shield' – ispar[27] – stands close to the form 'Ispor'.

The names of the Bulgarian rulers Kubrat, Kouvrat and Kuber are related to the name of the legendary ruler of the Aryans from the socio-political union, 'Aryioshaiana – Kavata', of his heir Kavi Hausrava. It was then that the state

22 Pletneva 1966, 438-463, 447.
23 Chronica Hungarorum 1883, Inscript secunus Liber de Reditu, II, 24.
24 Petrov 1981, 413.
25 Chronicon Budense 1838, Tertius Gyula Transilvania potitur, 42, De Generationi S. Stephani genealogia, nativitas, et filii, 66-67
26 Justi 1898, 143.
27 Detschev 1976, 475.

tradition started – in the late 8th-7th centuries BC, and it is possible to trace it as an Aryan tradition with the Bulgarians and the Persians. The name of Asparuh in the meaning of 'horseman' is traced even down to the 5th century BC, the time in which Persian kings such as Darius I wrote about their Aryan descent or made references to the Aryan language: arriya-ma – 'in the Aryan language'; and arriya cithřa – 'of Aryan descent'.[28]

The most frequently studied name is 'Asparuh'. V. Beshevliev has rendered a comprehensive analysis of all known opinions, whether backed up with arguments or not. The name 'Asparuh' was first announced to be a Persian name in 1832 by M. Fren, without any additional evidence, however. This hypothesis was shared by I.P. Shafarik, S. Uvarov and V. Tomashek. In 1878 A. Kunik presumed that the name 'Asparuh' could be similar to the ancient Bactrian term 'Ashpa' – 'horse', a hypothesis that was reflected in the studies of I. Shishmanov, A. Duychev, V. Beshevliev, etc.[29] In 1940, a gemma inscribed in Greek was discovered in the old Georgian capital Mtskheta, such inscription reading 'Asparoukis pitiaxes' and being dated to the 2nd century. After that the studies of the name 'Asparuh' underwent reconsideration based on the possible influence of an Armenian language environment, which opinion is deemed currently of decisive importance.[30]

According to G. Justi, the Sasanid Persian form rendered in Greek as 'Asforougos' and the Armenian 'Aspurak' both originated from the Old Persian 'asabāri' – 'horseman' (and from the Pehlevian form 'asobari') and were similar to the New Persian forms 'asvar' and 'suvar' and also to the Syrian 'aspuraka'.[31] This hypothesis is acceptable not only for the purposes of explaining Armenian or other Caucasian language forms influenced by the Iranian language. The New Persian variants display some unexpected similarity with the name of the last ruler of the Dulo clan - Sevar.

The name 'Asparuh' contains also the Iranian and not just the Bactrian word for 'horse' – 'aspa' – 'äsb'. In early Persian of the 6th-5th centuries BC 'asabāri' meant 'horseman'[32] and was the earliest form of the name 'Asparuh'; the name 'Kardam' meant 'perfect' – such a form originating directly in terms of sound and meaning from the time of the early Achaemenids in Persia and the 'Aryan language' spoken by them. Similar to the name 'Asparuh' is the Persian name from the 5th century BC, 'Aspacanā' – 'One who loves horses'.[33] According to Herodotus, one of the Persian aristocrats bore the name 'Aspatin.'[34]

28 Weisbach 1980, 100.
29 Beshevliev 1967, 237-247, 237-238.
30 Tshereteli 1948, 48-57.
31 Justi 1898, 43, 47.
32 Weisbach 1980, 100.
33 Weisbach 1980, 104.
34 Herod. *Historia*. III, 70, 78, 200, 203.

There is evidence for the existence of the noble clan of the Asparukans in the pre-Sasanid period.[35] The dynasty of the Asparukans was also known among the Sarmatians in later times and by the Alans – under the form 'Aspar'. The name 'Asparuh' was known as a dynastic name not only among the Parthians but also among the Sarmatians and in the ancient Iberian environment – in ancient Georgia in the Caucasus and in the Caucasian region[36] – but was preserved later only among the Bulgarians as a modern name.

The names containing 'aspar' and 'kana' presume combinations similar to the Thracian combinations of the 'Thracians who love horses' type. However, 'kana' is a title of the Bulgarian rulers as well, most probably meaning 'friend of the people' or 'community'. The suffixes in the names of the rulers Isperih/Asparuh and Telerig contain the term 'rig', which is related to 'rex' – an elective supreme chief and king. The term 'rex' was used for the first time by a Byzantine writer in respect of a Bulgar-Kutrigur chieftain, a ruler according to V. Zlatarski, as of the time of Emperor Justinian I, namely the rex Grod around 530.[37]

It was only with its handing over to Tervel as a part of the Eastern Roman Empire, and until the time of Krum and afterwards, that Zagora became a sarakt of the Bulgarian rulers who started exercising their right to act as rulers of an empire. It was then that the Slavonic term 'tsar' was coined, based on a 'ruler of a sarakt', such term being related to the Persian word for chieftain and ruler of an empire: 'sär'. The term appears for the first time in Naum's Passionary of the 10th century, at least according to what we know so far.

The history of the establishment of the Bulgarian state contains many unsolved issues, at the core of which are: the attitude of the political and class society towards its own and other peoples, the disintegrations and restorations of the state-system, and the characteristics of the state institutions. Sometimes the last mentioned are the same for pre-state and state societies; sometimes they differ!

In my opinion, the Bulgarian state was established at the time of Gostun-Organa. Its emergence on the Balkans under Asparuh is a continuation of the Bulgarian state-system of Old Great Bulgaria and a joint policy with the Eastern Roman Emperor Herakleios and his followers to withstand the destructive invasions from the East. This seems also to be the reason for the fact that until the much later time of Krum's dynasty and under Krum himself

35 Lukonin 1987, 120.

36 Justi 1898, 45.

37 See Zlatarski 1970, 88-89. The name of the Kutrigur Grod, who was also 'rex', is definitely not Turkish and suggests some Indo-European and Slavonic characteristics. The disagreements of this rex with his brother regarding their power over the Kutrigurs, which resulted in an internal tribal war, undoubtedly bear no testimony to a hereditary ruler's status!

many eminent Byzantine aristocrats were part of the circles of Bulgarian statesmen and were even related to them.

The history of the Bulgarian state is longer and more complex than we currently recognise. And this is only natural – history is a process. The start was made under Gostun-Organas-Gestator. The presumption of an earlier state-system needs to be supported by evidence, which, however, does not mean that the restoration processes after a possible decay of the state did not follow patterns that were typical for ante-state and pre-state societies. This is why the phenomena typical for the beginning of the state-system under Gostun-Organas-Gestator constitute an example of the creation of a state from a late tribal society to an early political and class society. After kan(e) Kubrat the Bulgarian state tradition is not destroyed.

In the Bulgarian historical tradition after mythological Avitohol and Irnik comes the first real knyaz (prince) with state and heredity power named Gostun who was in fact the first Bulgarian ruler of the state Old Great Bulgaria. His Title – name Gostun is the last tribes, and the first Bulgarian States title-name.

Chronicon Budense (1838), Chronicon Budense. Post elapsos ab Editione Prima et Rarissima. in Iosephua Podhradczky (ed), (Budae).

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