KONSTANTIN PRESLAVSKY UNIVERSITY OF SHUMEN
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

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The Northern Balkans between East and West in 6th-15th century

edited by
Ivo Topalilov and Svetlana Nedelcheva

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In Memory of Professor Ivan Jordanov Jordanov (1949-2021)

Sigillography was his alter ego. It filled his entire personal space. It was everywhere – in his home, in his family, in his office, in his mind and heart. He lived for science, and it lived in him. The years roll by, driven by the speed of life. But he moved by the speed of thought – irresistible, accelerating and pulsating with every artifact found. Each new seal adds more speed and captures all the unknown facts in a stream of information photons. And it went on for 70 years until he passed away!

Professor Ivan Jordanov[1] was a person for whom time was a historical concept, not a physical value. It did not measure the length of his life, but the work he has done – per day, month, year... He competed with time to reach his goal – more seals studied, more new information, more new books. Achievements of the mind, accomplished with endless workaholism, unconditional dedication and many missed personal moments. The intentional loneliness in which every scholar of his magnitude finds himself is not accidental. On the contrary – it is sought and desired. The loneliness of the great mind leads to conscious isolation, in which he remained alone – alone with himself, with time and with the people who shaped the era, which he analyzed, studied and recorded. His work was related to reading and commenting on written sources – chronicles, hagiography, tractates and... seals!

Lead seals are small pieces of history that have survived to this day, bearing encoded information about the person who has stamped his words with the truth and legitimacy of the sigillum. Carrying confidence, protecting the secret, verifying the words hidden in the parchment, it is the sender's personal card. From the seal we learn his name, profession, position in the rankings or in other words his *cursus honorum*!

Ivan Jordanov's life was a series of happy accidents and coincidences (in his own words) that changed his way irrevocably. It was not just about events and experiences, but people who lent him a hand, believed in him,

[1] About Prof. Ivan Jordanov and his contributions to science, cf. **Zhekova, Zh.** Prof. Dean Ivan Jordanov Jordanov at 60! – *Numizmatika, sfragistika i epigrafika*. Studia in honorem professoris Ivan Jordanov. Sofia, 2009, 5, ix-xiv; **Zhekova, Zh.** Foreword. – In: **Jordanov, I**. *Gradove, kreposti i selishta v srednovekovna Bulgaria spored dannite na sfragistika (izbrani statii i studii)*. Konstantin Preslavsky University Press, Shumen, 2014, vii-x.; **Zhekova, Zh.** The First Seventy Years! – In: *ΑΝΤΙΧΑΡΙΣΜΑΤΟΣ ΕΠΙΣΦΡΑΓΙΣΙΣ. Yubileen nauchen sbornik v chest na 70-godishninata na prof. d.i.n. Ivan Yordanov* ot poreditsata In Honorem, 6, Shumen, 2019, 22-29.

gave him their trust and had faith in his talent and determination. Ivan Jordanov's professional career began not in 1972 at the museum in Nova Zagora, where he began working immediately after his graduation, but in 1979 in Preslav.

In 1978, the longtime researcher of the old capital, Prof. Ivanka Akrabova-Zhandova, came across a building in the northeast corner of which about 20 seals were found. This is also the total number of Byzantine lead seals in Bulgaria documented so far. At the time, these artifacts were still poorly researched and difficult to identify, for which no specialist in Bulgaria was trained. Globally, there are no more than two or three. Apparently, Ivanka Zhandova has figured out that as he is a good numismatist and studies coins, it will be no problem for him to study lead seals as well. It turned out that she was right. The discovery in Preslav sends Ivan Jordanov in a completely different dimension – the elitist world of Byzantinism, full of great emperors' deeds and the fall of those unfit to rule, military triumphs and humiliating losses, treachery and betrayal, palace intrigues and conspiracies, the imposition and abolishment of religious doctrines, the creation of civil books and the scholastic lives of saints. This is a world that is distant both in space and time from the ideas of modern people.

This was, however, Ivan Jordanov's world. For him, it was well known, intimate, intriguing, funny, inspiring, asking questions and waiting for answers. The answers are his books (already 14 in number), studies (over 20) and articles (nearly 300). His professional career was dedicated to the main goal – to search, collect, file and publish all lead seals from the territory of Bulgaria. The result was his great work *Corpus of the Byzantine Seals from Bulgaria* (2009). The book and how it was created is a scientific phenomenon. Ivan Jordanov was the only sphragist on a global scale who managed to document and publish all found seals from a specific geographical area. His contribution is indisputable: more than 3500 traced, described and published sigillographic artifacts, 500 seals, 10 moulds for casting cores, 3 boulloterions; all from one area (modern Bulgaria); most of these seals are now in Bulgarian museum and private collections. But that's not all. Ivan Jordanov accepted as his mission the publication and arrangement in strict chronological order the seals of medieval Bulgaria. In 2016 he published the *Corpus of Medieval Bulgarian Seals* (*Korpus na srednovekovnite bulgarski pechati*), comprising over 400 seals (molybdobulla, chrysobulla, argyrobulla, matrixes, ring-seals), belonging to rulers, clergymen, aristocrats from the epoch of the First and Second Bulgarian Kingdoms.

In 2019, his last book *Seals of the Byzantine Administration in Bulgaria (971-1118)* was published, summarizing and emphasizing important but not yet well-researched moments from the historical development of the Bulgarian lands during the period of Byzantine domination.

Shortly before his death, he worked on the fourth volume of the *Corpus of the Byzantine Seals from Bulgaria* which, however, will remain incomplete.

Rest in peace, Professor!

Αναπαύσου εν ειρήνη, καθηγητά!

CURRICULUM VITAE
Prof. Dr. Habil Ivan Jordanov Jordanov

April 13, 1949 – born in the village of Tsar Samuil, Silistra district

1972 – graduates with a Master's degree of History at "St. St. Cyril and Methodius" University of Veliko Turnovo

1972-1974 – curator at the Museum of History - Nova Zagora

1974-2018 – works at the Branch of National Archaeological Institute with Museum at Bulgarian Academy of Sciences in Shumen

1978 – defends his doctoral thesis on *Coins and Circulation in Eastern Bulgaria in the Period 1081 - 1261.*

1981 – participates in the XVI International Congress of Byzantine Studies, Vienna

1984 – his first monograph *Coins and Coinage in Medieval Bulgaria 1081-1261* is published

1986 – participates in the 18th International Byzantine Congress, Washington

1988 – habilitation at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

1988 – participates in the Second International Symposium on Byzantine Studies and Sigillography, Athens

1989, 2002, 2004, 2005, 2008 – specializes at the Center for Byzantine Studies at Harvard University – Dumberton Oaks, Washington

1990-1991 – Head of the Branch of National Archaeological Institute with Museum at Bulgarian Academy of Sciences in Shumen

1990-2017 – member of the Scientific Council of National Archaeological Institute with Museum at Bulgarian Academy of Sciences in Sofia

1991 – participates in the 18th International Congress on Byzantine Studies, Moscow

1991 – member of the International Byzantine Sphragistics Association

1992 – Doctor of History

1993 – specializes at Heberden Coin Room, Ashmolian Museum, Oxford, UK

1993 – participates in the IV International Symposium of Byzantine Studies and Sigillography, Vienna

1993 – his monograph *The Seals of the Preslav Strategy* is published

1995-2003 – Head of the Branch of National Archaeological Institute with Museum at Bulgarian Academy of Sciences in Shumen

1996 – elected as a Senior Research Associate I degree in the system of Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and, accordingly, professor in the system of education

1994-1996 – Head of the Department of History and Archeology at *Konstantin Preslavsky* University of Shumen

1998 – specializes at the Institute of Byzantine Studies, Vienna

1998 – chief organizer and leader of the VI International Symposium of Byzantine Studies and Sigillography, Veliki Preslav

1998-2010 – member of the Specialized Scientific Council of Old and Medieval History, Archeology and Ethnography of the Supreme Attestation Commission of the Council of Ministers

1999 – chairman of the Union of Bulgarian Scientists, Branch Shumen

2001 – participates in the XX International Congress of Byzantine Studies, Paris

2001 – *Corpus of the seals of medieval Bulgaria* is published

2003 – participates in the VIII International Symposium of Byzantine Studies and Sigillography, Berlin

2003 – the first volume of the Corpus of seals from Bulgaria is published: *Corpus of the Byzantine Seals from Bulgaria. Volume 1. Corpus of the Byzantine Seals with Geographical Names*

2004 – Editor-in-Chief of *Numismatics, Sphragistics and Epigraphy journal*, published by the National Archaeological Institute with Museum at Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

2005 – participates in the *40 Years International Symposium*, dedicated to Prof. Michael Metcalfe, Ashmolian Museum, Oxford

2005 – founder and director of the Byzantine Research Center at the University of Shumen

2006 – participates in the 21st International Byzantine Congress, London

2006 – the second volume of the Corpus of seals from Bulgaria is published: *Corpus of the Byzantine Seals from Bulgaria. Volume 2. Byzantine Seals with Family Names*

2007 – chief organizer and leader of the International Symposium dedicated to the 100th birth anniversary of the largest Bulgarian collector Dr. Vasil Haralanov, Shumen

2008 – Head of the International Conference *Travels in Medieval Bulgaria*, Shumen

2008 – receives the Shumen Prize for Arts and Culture for the book *Catalogue of Medieval Seals at the Regional Historical Museum of Shumen*

2009 – receives the title of Honorary Citizen of Shumen

2018 – Doctor honoris causa of *Konstantin Preslavsky* University of Shumen

Zhenya Zhekova

Introduction

The Northern Balkans are one of the most dynamically developing regions in European history between 6th and 15th century. The reasons for this are numerous and of various nature and are related not only to the proximity of the region to the world capital Constantinople. The region was also of interest to both the East and the West, an interest that did not cease when the medieval states were founded, but even intensified, again in both directions, but with varying intensity in favor of the East and, of course, Constantinople. All this determines the specifics of the political, historical and cultural processes that took place during this period and which find their place in material culture, expressed in one aspect or another. The current volume of Studia academica Šumenensia is dedicated to these processes, and for this purpose scholars are invited to participate, who will discover certain aspects of them and thus contribute to their better understanding.

The issue begins with an overview of the development of the complex political processes of the Lower Danube and in particular in Dobrudja between 7th and 13th century in the study of Cristina Paraschiv-Talmațchi. After the abandonment and disintegration of the Danube limes the region turned into a place of various in form and reason conflicts between migrants coming from the steppes and the locals. The population in the area changed over time due to the settlement of migrants themselves, the formation of the Bulgarian state, the restoration of the power of Byzantium, etc. At the same time, however, these lands became a place of trade and peaceful coexistence, as the trade brought Byzantines, Russian-Varangians and Central Europeans to this territory.

One of the most important questions in this region was the ethnic diversity through the centuries which was caused by the migration processes. An article in this respect is that of Emilia Corbu who happened to excavate a catacomb grave. It is identified on the base of a ritual with artificially deformed skulls and the mutilated skeletons, which are an argument for a prophylactic rite against the dead of most probably the second half of 5th century. The importance of the Alanic people for the Northern Balkans is still to be revealed, as despite the numerous literary sources, the archaeology is still much behind and the discussed archaeological find at Popina Blagodeasca contributes to this issue.

Two of the contributions are dealing explicitly with the craftsmanship in the region in 10th-12th century. Constantin Șova and the collective work of Stella Doncheva, Nina Arhangelova, Ákos Csepregi, Anikó Angyal, and Zita

Szikszai study two different regions in two different ways. The former reveals the results of the archaeological study of a workshop which might also have been used for the repairment of metal objects in Hârșova-Carsium, while the latter presents the results of the study of the elemental composition of a specially selected group of finds from the three centers for metal plastics in the vicinity of the capital Preslav – near Zlatar. The group includes mainly ingots (raw material for production) and scrap (castings / parts of the casting system). The new archaeological results combined with two already excavated pottery kilns allow to suggest that the area under question which is *extra muros* served as a craft district of the fortress located nearby, producing among the other items axes with side 'fins'. As for the elemental amylases, they reveal various types of alloys coming from various sources.

To this group may be added also the contribution of Silviu Oța on the treasures found in the Carpathian Arch with items of Balkanic or Central European origin (Byzantine items or items of Byzantine tradition). The study reveals that their burying may be due to external reasons such as the Tatar invasion of 1241-1242 for example, as well as to internal causes between 40s of 13th – the beginning of 14th century. They show the preference of the local aristocracy to the Byzantine cultural traditions and the Byzantine cultural heritage and reveal a possible link to it.

The contribution of Stoyan Popov deals with a collection of 11 spurs kept in the National Archaeological Institute with Museum – Bulgarian academy of Sciences, Sofia with no secure archaeological context. He distinguishes two types of spurs: one of them belongs to the type with a spike of the 10th-11th century and the rest – to the type with rowels which cover the chronological period from the middle of the 13th to the beginning of the 17th century. For the moment, however, it remains unclear if they belong to the Ottoman or Central European production.

Given the topic of the issue, it is not surprisingly that some of the contributions are dealing with Constantinople and the Byzantine empire. These are the contributions of Zhenya Zhekova, of Haluk Çetinkaya, and of Christina Savova and Thomas Thomov. The first of them deals with the publication of a new seal of the Byzantine military leader Alexius Comnenus Vrana as a *panhypersebastos* (1183-1186). Although we are well informed by the ancient sources about his battles, victories and misfortune, very few of his seals are known so far, namely 5, so new information in this respect is very welcome. The founding spot of the seal in the region where the possible fortress of Goloe was located, may serve as evidence of an initiative of the Byzantine general with the fortress garrison in his campaign either against the Bulgarians, or Isaac II Angelos, with preference of the latter.

Another contribution that deals particularly with a historical person is that of Haluk Çetinkaya with a certain Theodoros (Theodoulos) Goudeles whose epitaph was found in the course of conservation work at the Pantokrator monastery, now known as Zeyrek camii in Zeugma. The monument not only contributes to the Goudeles's family study, but it is also of importance since it contains some parts of poem 29 of the scriber and scholar Neophytus Prodromenus. As the author concludes, it is very rare to find a part of Byzantine literature written on stone, especially in late 14th century.

Another rare issue is discussed in the joint contribution of Christina Savova and Thomas Thomov, who deal with a 'Deesis' graffito scene located in the middle bay of the south gallery in the church Hagia Sophia in Constantinople. The scene is dated between 1261 and 1453 and consists of the Virgin, presented as a mediatrix between two supplicants on each side, and an imaginary Christ. One of the supplicants wears a diadem, which suggest that she is a noblewoman.

Last but not least is the group of contributions dealing with the western issue. The contribution of Deyan Rabovyanov discusses a gilt figure of a saint with enamel decoration that belonged to a reliquary chasse and was buried like a holy gift during the construction in 1330 of Church No 22 in the fortress of Trapezitsa. Based on stylistic and technological features, it is assumed that the figure was produced in the French town of Limoges, most probably during the first half of 13th century. The importance of this discovery is yet to be established, but it reveals that despite the difficulties between Catholic West and Orthodox East, the problems of the relationships are more complex than it has been assumed. This is clearly established in the other contribution of this group, that of Angel Nikolov, who broadens the context of the study by dealing with the known archaeological evidence of Bulgaria's contacts with the Latin Empire and the Roman Church in the first half of the 13th century.

Ivo Topalilov, Svetlana Nedelcheva

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At the frontier of the Empire. Military and peaceful interference between the Byzantine world and migrant populations in Dobruja

Cristina Paraschiv-Talmațchi

Abstract: Located on the border of the empire, Dobruja is among the regions affected by the abandonment and disintegration of the Danube limes (between 576 and 626 at most), the balance of the previous period being replaced by frequent and various changes dictated by the relations between newcomers and natives, and some still present Byzantines. The period of amalgamation of the existing population with migrant peoples began at the end of antiquity and ended with the great Mongol invasion.

This paper gives a brief presentation of the political situation on the Lower Danube between the 7th-13th centuries, revealing the intense military interference on the population left after the withdrawal of the Byzantine administration and migrant peoples who made invasions and even settled south of the river. The military interferences were interspersed throughout this period with the peaceful ones, an important role in this sense being played by trade. It was the citadels and towns that provided the enabling framework for peaceful interference (cultural, technical and religious) to take place beyond military interference. And each of them has left its mark on the ethnic background in the Istro-Pontic territory.

Key words: Byzantium, migrant peoples, first Bulgarian state, 7th-13th centuries, Dobruja

Резюме: Разположена на границата на империята, Добруджа е сред тези региони, които са били засегнати от напускането и дезинтеграцията на дунавския лимес (между 576 и 626), при които балансът от предишния период е бил заменен с честите и различни промени, диктувани от взаимоотношенията между пришълците и местното население. Периодът на сливането на съществуващото население с мигрантите започва в края на античността и приключва с голяма монголска инвазия.

Тази статия представя накратко политическата ситуация на долния Дунав между 7–13 век, разкриваща интензивните военни конфликти между населението, което е останало след оттеглянето на византийската администрация и мигрантите, които нахлували и дори се установили на юг от реката. Военните конфликти през този период се редували с мирни контакти, като важна роля за това е играела търговията. Цитаделите и градовете осигурили благоприятна обстановка за осъществяването на

мирни взаимоотношения (културни, технически и религиозни) освен военните. И всяко едно от тях е оставило своя отпечатък върху етническото население на истро-понтийската територия.

The end of antiquity displayed a Byzantine Empire whose borders, threatened in several directions, seemed to be meant to disintegrate and give way, at least for a time, to the pretending populations with territorial aspirations. It is the turning point of any empire, the stage in which the legendary greatness of the capital and the prosperity of the great centers, trade and vast territory, attracted like a magnet all these contenders. Registering some momentary losses, including the territories of the Lower Danube, the Byzantine Empire manages to overcome this stage without collapsing permanently and represents, not for long, one of the two states that will dominate the political life of the Balkans region in the early Middle Ages.

Located on the border of the empire, Dobruja is among the regions affected by the abandonment and disintegration of the Danube limes (between 576 and 626 at the most),[1] the balance of the Roman period, already fragmented in the last half century, being replaced by frequent and various changes dictated by the relations between newcomers and natives, and some still present Byzantines in the area of some port cities.[2] The long period of amalgamation of the existing population, which had a strong Roman and Byzantine socio-cultural imprint, with newcomers, which began at the end of antiquity, ends in the next millennium with the great Mongol invasion (13th century).

The arrival of allogeneic peoples, recorded in the 6th century, begins with the Slavs, initially in the form of incursions into the territory of the empire, attacks that intensify after their establishment to the north of the Danube border. Some actions involve, as allies, nomadic peoples, such as the Kutrigurs and the Antes (the latter a conglomeration of nomadic and semi-nomadic peoples, which included Kutrigurs, Utrigurs, Bulgarians and possibly small groups of Slavs, led by an Alan aristocracy)[3] After a pause of several years, determined by the arrival of the Avars in the area, which stopped their raids, the Slavs and their allies resumed their looting activities south of the Danube, some groups even trying to settle there.[4]

In 561-562, a population of warriors, the Avars, appeared in the steppes to the north and northeast of the mouth of the Danube, asking the Byzantine

[1] Comșa 1987, 222-223; Madgearu 1997, 139-143; Paraskiv-Talmacki 2020, 250.
[2] Damian 2015, 19, 23-31.
[3] Comșa 1974, 301-303; Teodor 2010, 861-862.
[4] Teodor 2010, 862-863.

emperor, without success, for permission to settle in the province of Scythia.[5] They remain north of the mouth of the Danube until 567 when they leave for the Pannonian Plain, where they settle and from where they undertake numerous expeditions to neighboring territories, including the Byzantine Empire.[6]

The attacks of the Avar-Slavic populations, which sometimes involved the aforementioned migratory groups, end during the reign of Emperor Phocas and the first years of Heraclius' reign, when the Danube border is permanently ceded, allowing them to enter the Balkan Peninsula.[7] The strength and repetitiveness of the attacks of the newcomers, combined with the division of the Byzantine army on several fronts and the general economic decline that affected the peripheral provinces in the last decades of the 6th century, were only part of the reasons that determined Byzantines to give up the territories of the Lower Danube in favor of the Avar-Slavs.

In Dobruja, the period of territorial debate of almost half a century, which marks the end of antiquity and the beginning of the period of migrations, is reflected archaeologically by heavy destruction accompanied by fires. For several cities and fortifications on the Danube line and inside the province, the impact of the attacks was overwhelming, leading to the cessation of their existence or the decline of urban life.[8] It should be emphasized for our analysis that the final moment coincided with the opening of the Dobruja territory for the crossing or settlement of migrating North Pontic populations, the Slavs and the Avars being the promoters of the waves that followed.

With a low presence in the area in the 6th century (as part of the conglomeration of nomadic and semi-nomadic peoples defined by historians as Antes, as mentioned above), in the second half of the 7th century the Bulgarians follow the route to southeastern Europe. They engaged in territorial dispute with the arrival of the Asparuch tribes in the Onglos region, located somewhere north of the Lower Danube.[9] In the period before Christianization and assimilation by the Slavic population, historians call this population with the term 'Proto-Bulgarians', the pagan stage being in the years 680-864/865.[10] This population originally from Asia, which had settled for a time in the Ponto-Caspian steppes, had in the past been an ally of the

[5] Comșa 1974, 303.
[6] Comșa 1974, 308-309; Teodor 2010, 861-862.
[7] Comșa 1987, 222-223; Madgearu 1997, 139-143.
[8] Paraskiv-Talmacki 2020, 250254.
[9] Mihăescu *et al*. 1970, 618-619; Diaconu 1994, 223; Damian 2015, 23 (and n. 46), 26 (and n. 72).
[10] Brezeanu 2004, 103-104.

empire against the Ostrogoths, the events of 480 bringing them to the attention of chroniclers for the first time, not much later (in 493, 499 and 502) to be with those who ravaged its northwestern border.[11] From the northeast of the Black Sea, under the pressure of the Chazars, an important part of them, led by Asparuch, goes west around the middle of the 7th century, reaching the Lower Danube area where it soon becomes a political factor. They dominate, along with the Byzantine Empire, the political life of the Balkan region at the beginning of the Middle Ages.

The news of the destruction caused by the newcomers in the territories near the Danube, in 'the country now ruled by them, but then under the care of Christians'[12] it determined the Emperor Constantine IV (668-685) to launch a military campaign against them (both on water and on land), an event that marks the beginning of the Byzantine-Bulgarian military confrontations on the Lower Danube. Although the situation was initially favorable to the Byzantines, the rumor that the emperor left the battlefield created panic among the troops, and changed the course of events in favor of the Bulgarians. The victory over the Byzantine army led by Emperor Constantine IV, around 680, is followed by crossing the river through the Dobrujan fords and the Bulgarian settlements in the northeastern territories of the Balkan Peninsula, in the Varna area and east of Balkan Mountains:[13] 'And following them as far as the Danube, they crossed this one as well and went as far as the so-called Varna, near Odessos, and as far as the inland lands. They found places in complete safety and guarded behind by the Danube River, and in front and on the sides of the mountains, the Pontic Sea, and the neighboring nations of the slaves, the so-called seven tribes'.[14]

The short span of events, 679-681, marks the founding of the first Bulgarian state (680-1018), recognized *de jure* by the Byzantine Empire in the 681 peace agreement, which in fact mentioned the Byzantine payment of an annual tribute to the victors.[15] With its capital at Pliska, the Bulgarian state gradually expands its dominance in the old provinces of Lower Moesia, Scythia and south into Thrace, having the support of the Slavic population.[16] Frequently they came into conflict with the Byzantine Empire, which did not reconcile with the thought of having a barbarian state on what it considered lands of Roman law.

[11] Diaconu 1994, 223.
[12] Mihăescu *et al*. 1970, 618-619.
[13] Pascu *et al*. 2010, 218.
[14] Mihăescu *et al*. 1970, 620-621.
[15] Barnea & Ștefănescu 1971, 23-24, n. 55; Obolensky 2002, 78; Pascu *et al*. 2010, 218.
[16] Brezeanu 2004, 104-105.

The realities of the south-eastern European area meant that in the next almost three and a half centuries the relations between the two protagonists alternated the periods of conflict with those of peace and understanding, or of alliance. In the first decades of the 8th century, the support given by czar Tervel (702-718), son of Asparuch (680-702), to the Emperor Justinian II (705-711), for the reoccupation of the throne of Constantinople (705),[17] and Emperor Leo III (717-741), in repelling the second Arab siege (718), leads to the recognition by the Byzantines of Bulgarian rule over the conquered territories and the achievement of the dignity of *Caesar* (czar) for the leader of the young Balkan state,[18] and the defeat of the Byzantine army by the Bulgarians at Anchialos (today Pomorie), in 708, strengthens its position.

The second half of the 8th century saw many Byzantine-Bulgarian conflicts, triggered by the request of the khan in Pliska to resume the payment of tribute, interrupted for some time by the Byzantines. Between 755-775 nine offensive military campaigns were undertaken by Emperor Constantine V (741-775). Its successes, of which we mention those of Markellai (759) and Anchialos (763), weakened for a time the Bulgarian state, which, however, recovered and under the leadership of Czar Kardam (777-802) won several victories, between 791-796 (near Adrianople and at Markellai, near Karnobat), against Emperor Constantine VI (780-797).[19]

The 9th century saw the rise of the power of the first Bulgarian state, which became, from the first decades, one of the great military and political forces of the continent. Under the leadership of Krum (802-814), who at first adopted a pacifist attitude towards the Byzantine Empire, the Bulgarian state oriented its territorial expansion to the northwest, where it contributed to the destruction of the Avar Chaganate (803)[20] and maintained a sustained offensive in the Tisza Plain (803-805),[21] and in the Balkans. Territorial expansion and actions in the Balkans came to the attention of the imperial court in Constantinople, which did not like either the strengthening of the Bulgarian state or the fact that it came to dominate an important segment of the traditional land trade route (passing through Sofia, Niš, Belgrade), which connected Constantinople to Western Europe.[22] In 807, Emperor Nikephor I (802-811) started hostilities against the neighboring state, trying to stop its rise. In response, Czar Krum conquered the fortress of Serdica (Sofia), an

[17] Mihăescu *et al*. 1970, 620-621; Damian 2015, 30-31.
[18] Brezeanu 2004, 104-105.
[19] Diaconu 1994, 223; Brezeanu 2004, 105; Damian 2015, 31-32.
[20] Rusu *et al*. 2010, 42.
[21] Madgearu 1997, 29; Spinei 2010a, 52.
[22] Barnea 2010, 32-33.

important Byzantine trading hub, in the spring of 809,[23] which he lost in the autumn of the same year, but not for long. Two years later, the capital Pliska was destroyed by the emperor's Byzantine army, which was largely destroyed on the way back to the Balkan gorges with the basileus itself falling into battle. In 812 the Bulgarians sacked Thrace and destroyed several fortresses, and in 813 they came at the walls of Constantinople. On their return, the Bulgarians besieged Adrianople and deported a large number of its inhabitants (about 10.000 people) north of the mouth of the river, in 'Bulgaria beyond the Danube'.[24]

The peace treaty signed by Emperor Leo V (813-820) with Czar Omurtag (814-830), Krum's son and successor, at the beginning of their reign, brought peace to the Byzantine-Bulgarian borders for almost 30 years[25] and increased the cultural influence of the empire on the territory of the Bulgarian state. Omurtag's period is highlighted by the beginning of the construction of large urban and military constructions: Pliska and Czar Krum were protected with stone walls; and a palace was built on the Danube (probably in Silistra or nearby).[26] Externally, for almost three decades the policy of territorial expansion is gaining new directions: towards the steppes to the north of the Black Sea, which the Bulgarians dispute with the Chazars and to the northwest, where they got into conflicts with the Carolingian Empire for territories in the middle Danube basin. The political control of the country is maintained in the Tisza basin until the penetration of the Hungarians.[27]

After almost a quarter of a century of exile, in 837, an attempt was made to repatriate the exiled population from Adrianople to 'Bulgaria beyond the Danube' with the help of Byzantine ships sent by Emperor Theophilus (829-842).[28] The circumstance generates a first attestation of the participation of a Hungarian detachment in the events near the Danube. The Hungarians came at the request of the Bulgarians, who asked them to prevent the repatriation of the population deported by Krum. But the actions of the Hungarians ended in failure. The rapid intervention of the Hungarians shows that at that time some of their settlements were relatively close to the conflict zone.[29]

[23] Diaconu 1994, 223.
[24] Barnea & Ștefănescu 1971, 25; Obolensky 2002, 82-83; Brezeanu 2004, 105-106.
[25] Barnea 2010, 33.
[26] Diaconu 1994, 223.
[27] Spinei 2010a, 52.
[28] Damian 2015, 33.
[29] Spinei 2010b, 264.

In the first Bulgarian state, the 9th century saw religious changes and changes in the organization of the state. In the seventh decade, during Czar Boris I (852-889), who became Michael, the official conversion to Christianity took place, the czar being baptized by a bishop sent by the Byzantine Empire. The name received symbolically conferred on the Bulgarian ruler the rank of spiritual son of Emperor Michael III (842-867). The acceptance of Byzantine Christianity, even under the conditions of known military pressure, placed the Bulgarian state within the 'Byzantine World', which was not easily accepted by part of the pagan Bulgarian aristocracy[30] and which did not stop the future disputes between the two state powers of the Balkan Peninsula.

The military confrontations of the last decade of the 9th century, having as main actors the Byzantines and Bulgarians, involved, as allies of one of the camps, numerous populations living at that time in the North Pontic regions, facilitating their presence in the Lower Danube, including Dobruja. Thus, the events of 894-895 bring the Hungarians back to the great river, this time as allies of the Byzantine Empire.[31] Crossing the Danube with the help of the imperial fleet, they defeat the army of the first Bulgarian State, advancing to the walls of Preslav fortress, in 893 the new state capital,[32] and they plunder its territory. Czar Simeon (893-927), who had begun hostilities for economic reasons (loss of trade privileges by Bulgarian traders and increased taxes),[33] had to take refuge in the fortress of Dorostolon (today Silistra), to pay dearly for the prisoners taken by the Hungarians[34] and in the face of Hungarian-Byzantine actions (Nikephor Phocas occupies the south of the Bulgarian state, and the imperial fleet led by Eustathios blocks the mouth of the Danube),[35] to conclude truce with Emperor Leo VI (886-912).[36] Soon after, in order to avoid a repeat of the situation and to counter a possible settlement with the Byzantine Empire, Simeon makes an alliance with the Pechenegs in the northern Pontic steppes, with whom he took action in 896 in the Hungarian-inhabited territories, destroying their families left at home, in the absence of the expeditionary army.[37] In the same year the Hungarians migrate again to the west, settling in Pannonia, where within a few years they occupy the entire plain, and after consolidating their position they undertake

[30] Obolensky 2002, 100-102; Brezeanu 2004, 150.
[31] Spinei 1990, 110; Barnea 2010, 35.
[32] Barnea & Ștefănescu 1971, 27; Diaconu 1994, 223; Rădulescu & Bitoleanu 1998, 173.
[33] Brezeanu 2004, 162-163; Obolensky 2002, 122-123.
[34] Elian & Tanașoca 1975, 210-211.
[35] Mihăescu *et al*. 1970, 652-653, 672-673.
[36] Barnea & Ștefănescu 1971, 30; Spinei 1999, 52; Brezeanu 2004, 163; Spinei 2010b, 265.
[37] Spinei 1999, 52; Barnea 2010, 35.

numerous attacks in central and western Europe, but also to the southeast.[38] The territory liberated by the Hungarian tribes is occupied by the Pechenegs, for a century and a half, now positioned closer to the political scene of the Lower Danube.[39]

Czar Simeon is the one who ensured, through his actions, the maximum share of the ascending trend of the first Bulgarian kingdom: it expands its territory to the southeast and southwest to the detriment of Byzantium and Serbia; supports trade by protecting Bulgarian traders, as the economy is booming; continues the operation of adapting Byzantine culture to the educational needs of the Bulgarians; brings craftsmen builders and artists from Byzantium; introduces imperial models at the royal court in Preslav and, very important for the coagulation of Bulgarian society, ends the process of 'nationalization' of the church, conquering its full autocephaly from the ecumenical patriarchate.[40] Simeon's years in Constantinople made an important contribution to shaping the future Bulgarian state, which is reflected in his approach to the internal and external public affairs in his policy.[41]

Externally, he did not agree with the armistice with Emperor Leo VI, which led him to resume the offensive on the Byzantine Empire shortly after securing the northeastern border. The decisive victory at Bulgarophygon was followed by a peace treaty (896) in favor of the first Bulgarian state, to which the Byzantines were to pay annual subsidies.[42]

About a year after the death of Emperor Leo VI, the Bulgarian-Byzantine conflicts resume and last, with varying intensity, for about four years. In this context, the literary sources specify war preparations of the Pecheneg population in the north of the Black Sea, made at the call of the Bulgarians to go against the Byzantine Empire. Constantinople diplomacy tries, through consistent gifts and aids of money, to attract Pechenegs to its side, but the misunderstandings between the fleet commanders who had to cross the Danube determined them to stay put, without supporting either of the two protagonists.[43]

It can be said that after the victories over the Byzantine army at Acheloos (917), near Anchialos, and Katasyrtai, not far from Constantinople, the Bulgarian state of Czar Simeon dominated the Balkans.[44] In 925, the

[38] Barnea & Ștefănescu 1971, 27; Spinei 2010b, 265.
[39] Spinei 1999, 107.
[40] Barnea & Ștefănescu 1971, 27-28; Obolensky 2002, 114, 120-124; Brezeanu 2004, 162-163; Barnea 2010, 35.
[41] Obolensky 2002, 121.
[42] Brezeanu 2004, 163.
[43] Spinei 1999, 109-111.
[44] Obolensky 2002, 127; Georgescu 2005, 190-191.

Emperor Roman I (920-944) admitted to Czar Simeon the title of basileus, as long as it was limited to Bulgarian territory and did not harm the integrity of the empire.[45]

After Simeon's death, Byzantine-Bulgarian hostilities were replaced by peace, strengthened by a marriage alliance. This peace, however, was sprinkled with episodes of misunderstandings or lack of support from the imperial authority, at the request of the Bulgarians, when their borders were in danger. The first crossing of the Danube by the Pechenegs took place, in 934, who in alliance with the Hungarians and with the support of the Bulgarians made an expedition to the Byzantine Empire.[46]

A decade later (944), the Pechenegs again took action against the Constantinople state, this time as allies of the Kievan Kneaz Igor, whom Byzantine diplomacy manages to stop with rich gifts at the mouth of the Danube. In this context, we are talking about the provocation of the Pechenegs by the Kievan prince to attack the territories of the first Bulgarian state, an action that could not be proven, unlike the invasions at the end of the second quarter of the 10th century, undertaken in the southern Danube state and White Croatia.[47]

The conjuncture of the middle of the 10th century caused the Byzantine influence to increase gradually, to the detriment of the Bulgarian one. Internal misunderstandings prevented the Bulgarian state from becoming a buffer zone for the empire in the face of attacks by nomadic tribes in the last years of Czar Peter's reign (927-969), which led to the interruption of the payment of subsidies by Emperor Nikephor II (963-969) after almost four decades.[48] The reign of Czar Peter, who had a Byzantine wife, is distinguished by great cultural and artistic achievements, but also by the success of preserving the inherited territory until its last years. At the request to resume the payment of subsidies, the empire responded with a military offensive.[49] It was the beginning of a war that, intermittently, lasted until 1018 and that brought the Kievens and Pechenegs to the Lower Danube.

Under the leadership of Kneaz Sviatoslav I (945-972), the Kiev army enters, in 967, the territories south of the Danube at the request of Emperor Nikephor II in exchange for a substantial payment and promises. They came with their Pecheneg allies, about whom Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos recorded, between 948-952, that they owned the territories between the opposite shore of Dorostolon and the fortress of Sarkel (Belaja Veža, on the

[45] Obolensky 2002, 128; Georgescu 2005, 192.
[46] Spinei 1999, 111.
[47] Spinei 1999, 111-112.
[48] Brezeanu 2004, 180; Georgescu 2005, 193.
[49] Obolensky 2002, 146; Brezeanu 2004, 180.

Don), which the Danube separated from the first Bulgarian kingdom,[50] and the Hungarians.[51] Czar Boris II (969-971), who had recently taken the throne following the death of his father Peter, was captured and the northeastern part of the Bulgarian state was subdued. Easy victories over the Bulgarian army enabled the Kievans to occupy vast territories in a relatively short time, which they later refused to hand over to the Byzantines, according to the agreements, and considered them possessions of Kievan Russia.[52] The intense trade of merchants from remote areas with expensive, diversified and quality goods impressed Sviatoslav and was one of the reasons why he considered the conquered territories his new home.[53]

In the year following the penetration of the three allies south of the Danube, the Pechenegs besieged Kiev (968), probably determined by Byzantine or Bulgarian diplomacy, causing Sviatoslav to return home to drive out the nomads. The records of the eminent scholar Constantine VII (913-959) well reflect the event: 'But the Russians can't even start wars properly outside their borders, if they don't get along with the Pechenegs first, because when they leave their places, the others come and cause them damage and destruction'.[54] But neither the brief abandonment of the territories in the northeast of the first Bulgarian kingdom by the Kievans, nor the massacre of most of the Pechenegs horsemen in a Byzantine trap (969), made it possible to impose imperial authority on the territories conquered by Sviatoslav.[55] His return to the Lower Danube triggered fierce confrontations between the Byzantines and the Russians (supported by the Bulgarians), with the armies of Emperor John I Tzimiskes (969-976) hardly succeeding in causing the withdrawal of the Kievanians in 971. The last confrontations took place in the south-west of Dobruja, at Dorostolon.[56]

This stage of the Byzantine-Russian-Bulgarian confrontations (967-971) gave the Byzantine Empire the opportunity to extend its authority over the eastern territories of the Bulgarian state.[57] Under the leadership of Emperor Basil II (976-1025) the Byzantine army ended the existence of the first Bulgarian kingdom in 1018, restoring the Balkan area under Constantinople authority.[58]

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[50] Spinei 1999, 112, 116.
[51] Spinei 2010b, 278.
[52] Spinei 2010b, 278.
[53] Popa-Lisseanu 1935, 73-74; Paraschiv-Talmațchi & Talmațchi 2013, 277.
[54] Mihăescu *et al*. 1970, 657.
[55] Spinei 2010b, 278.
[56] Barnea & Ștefănescu 1971, 72-73.
[57] Barnea & Ștefănescu 1971, 28.
[58] Obolensky 2002, 232; Zbuchea 2010, 330.

After the victory in 971, in Dobruja the Byzantine authority hurried to repair the old Roman fortifications, in order to make them checkpoints and intervention in a territory on the road used by nomadic peoples wishing to reach Constantinople. This activity, carried out in the last quarter of the 10th century and at the beginning of the 11th century, was documented archaeologically, especially on the right bank of the Danube, where new fortresses also appear, some equipped with port facilities. Larger actions were revealed in Cernavodă (Hinog),[59] Capidava,[60] Carsium-Hârșova,[61] Dinogetia-Garvăn.[62] Respectively, new fortifications appear at Păcuiul lui Soare,[63] Dervent,[64] Cetatea Pătulului[65] and Proslavița-Nufăru.[66] The first two were located near the capital of the *thema* Paradunavon (Dorostolon), the third south of Axiopolis-Cernavodă, and the last on the most navigable arm of the delta in those days. Existence of port facilities at Păcuiul lui Soare[67] and Nufăru[68] shows the importance given by the Byzantines to the new cities. They have well-defined roles in the structure of the border of the empire.[69]

The activities of rebuilding and building fortifications in Dobruja took place at a time when the Pecheneg attacks were directed at the Kievan state, and the Byzantine-Bulgarian conflicts were concentrated in the central-western part of the Balkan Peninsula, where Czar Samuel (980- 1014) carried on the political tradition of the state of Boris and Simeon.[70]

The second quarter of the 11th century records several invasions of the Pechenegs south of the Danube (in the intervals 1025-1027, 1032-1033 and 1034-1035).[71] The presence of burned levels in many settlements in Dobruja (Tulcea-Aegyssus, Isaccea-Noviodunum, Dinogetia-Garvăn, Beroe-Piatra Frecăței, Capidava, Oltina, Dervent, Constanța etc.), corroborated with the analysis of monetary discoveries, it was correlated with these invasions, as follows: in 1027 they caused damage to Dinogetia-Garvăn and Capidava; those from 1032-1035 targeted the region near Dorostolon, from here heading to

[59] Barnea 1960, 76; Mănucu-Adameșteanu 2001, 40-42.
[60] Florescu & Covacef 1988/1989, 240-244.
[61] Aricescu 1971, 356, n. 15; Panait *et al*. 1995/1996, 122-124.
[62] Ștefan *et al*. 1967, 20, 30-31.
[63] Diaconu & Vîlceanu 1972, 23.
[64] Mănucu-Adameșteanu 2001, 37-39.
[65] Diaconu 1973-1975, 203; Florescu 1986, 173.
[66] Damian *et al*. 2007-2008, 108-111.
[67] Diaconu & Vîlceanu 1972, 38-40.
[68] Damian *et al*. 2000, 67-68; 2007/2008, 110.
[69] Madgearu 2007, 87-100.
[70] Popa-Lisseanu 1935, 125; Spinei 1999, 116-117; Brezeanu 2004, 181.
[71] Elian & Tanașoca 1975, 149-151; Madgearu 2007, 104.

Preslav; and in 1036 they focused on the northern half of Dobruja, affecting some southern settlements.[72]

Conflicts between the Pecheneg tribes led to the refuge of Kegen and 20.000 Pechenegs south of the Danube in the Byzantine Empire, where they settled, with the assent of Emperor Constantine IX (1042-1055), in 1046. Kegen was baptized (with the name of John) and was raised to the dignity of *patricius*, and his tribes received lands and three cities in the Lower Danube area in exchange for military aid (border protection).[73] In the winter of the following year, Tyrach accompanied by 11 tribes crossed the Danube to the south, freely plundering the Danube territories of the empire. Although colonized in the Bulgarian plains, and Tyrah and 140 Pecheneg chiefs were Christianized and received great official dignity, yet by their warrior nature the Pechenegs continued to create problems for the Byzantine Empire whenever the opportunity arose.[74] More than a century after they were written, the notes of Emperor Constantine VII seemed to lose their meaning: 'I think it is always very useful for the Roman emperor to want to have peace with the Pecheneg people, to make agreements of friendship and alliance [...]'.[75] In 1059 new Pecheneg tribes took advantage of the weak defense of the border and crossed Dobruja, fleeing from the way of the Oghuz, where they managed, for a short time, to occupy a fortress, the Byzantines intervening quickly.[76] In the period 1072-1091, when the empire faced the revolt of the Paristrian cities, the Pechenegs south of the Danube undertake several attacks in the territory, increasing the state of insecurity and instability.[77] As a political force in the northern Balkans, the Pechenegs disappear from the scene following the Battle of Lebunion (1091). The last invasions of the Pechenegs north of the Danube in the territories of the empire took place in 1122-1123, when settlements from Dobruja (Nufăru, Dinogetia-Garvăn, Păcuiul lui Soare) were also affected, but the Byzantines retaliated promptly.[78]

The second half of the 11th century records the appearance in the territories of the Lower Danube, left free by the Pechenegs who passed into the empire, to another nomadic population, the Oghuz. Due to the pressures exerted by it, the Pechenegs were forced to go south of the Danube, and the

[72] Barnea & Ștefănescu 1971, 124-125; Diaconu 2000, 285; Spinei 2010b, 283-284; Stănică 2015, 83.
[73] Barnea & Ștefănescu 1971, 126.
[74] Madgearu 2007, 106-107; Spinei 2010b, 284; Stănică 2015, 83-85.
[75] Mihăescu *et al*. 1970, 657.
[76] Elian & Tanașoca 1975, 48-49, 58-59; Madgearu 2007, 111.
[77] Barnea & Ștefănescu 1971, 136-137; Madgearu 2007, 112-113.
[78] Diaconu 2000, 285; Madgearu 2007, 119; Stănică 2015, 85.

fate of the Oghuz was similar about two decades later (in winter 1064-1065), under Cuman pressure.

The presence of Oghuz south of the river, which passed through one of the fords in the north or west of Dobruja, are attributed to layers with traces of fire and the buried monetary treasures from Dinogetia-Garvăn, Aegyssus-Tulcea, Păcuiul lui Soare and 23 August.[79] The severe winter decimated the numbers of Oghuz, reaching below the walls of Thessaloniki, causing some of them to return to the north of the Danube. The Oghuz who remained offered their services to the empire. As with the Pechenegs, Constantinople diplomacy promoted some Oghuz leaders to high official dignities. Starting with the next century, they disappear from the Eastern European political scene.[80]

The space left free after the passage of the Oghuz in the Byzantine Empire is be occupied by the Cumans, whose supremacy stretched from Lake Aral to the Lower Danube. They first attacked the empire in 1078, when they reached the walls of Adrianople. For the Dobruja area, the beginnings of the Cuman invasions south of the Danube correspond to the period of the revolt of the Paristrian cities, which offered help to the Pecheneg chief who ruled the fortress of Dorostolon, Tatos.[81] The dissensions between the two nomadic peoples, caused by misunderstandings over the division of the spoils, provided an opportunity for Byzantine diplomacy to intervene with the Cumans, and draw them to the side of the empire. They were with the Byzantines at Lebunion (1091), helping to close the Pecheneg episode.[82]

Starting in 1094, from the positions in the north of the Lower Danube, the Cumans undertook several campaigns in the Byzantine Empire, in response to the requests of some pretenders to the throne or prey. These actions were also favored by the poor protection of the Danube border or even its abandonment for a period of time, by Emperor Alexios I (1081-1118), and the retreat of the army to the Balkan Mountains. The Cumans invade *thema* Paristrion, probably entering through the ford of Isaccea-Noviodunum (where the area outside the enclosure was severely affected) or through that of Axiopolis-Cernavodă (where the settlement was destroyed), advancing slightly to the south, as many fortresses surrender without a fight. Their rise is stopped in the mountains, and the capture of several Cuman chiefs and the pretender Diogenes gives them both a military and a

[79] Comșa & Bichir 1960, 223-244; Ștefan *et al*. 1967, 29; Elian & Tanașoca 1975, 60-61; Diaconu 1976, 235-238; Mănucu-Adameșteanu 1995, 364; Madgearu 2007, 111-112.
[80] Elian & Tanașoca 1975, 71-73; Spinei 2010b, 291-293; Stănică 2015, 87-88.
[81] Barnea & Ștefănescu 1971, 138-139; Diaconu 1978, 36-40; Stănică 2015, 90.
[82] Barnea & Ștefănescu 1971, 150-153; Madgearu 2007, 115.

psychological strike. Some Cuman tribes remain in the service of the empire, receiving gifts and giving dignity to rulers, others return to the north of the Danube.[83]

The period 1114-1148 does not register Cumanian-Byzantine conflicts, the peace being probably due to the payments sent by the Byzantines, but also to the orientation of the Cumanian policy towards the northern territories of the Black Sea. The middle of the 12th century again brought the territories of the southern Danube to the attention of the Cumans, several cities were destroyed, and the last quarter of the century finds them directly involved in the revolt of the Asănești, contributing to changing the geopolitics of southeastern Europe, by supporting the establishment of the second Bulgarian kingdom.[84]

But the involvement of the Cumans in numerous conflicts with their neighbors, the lack of political unity and the great extent of their possessions make them vulnerable to the Mongols, who cause them two great defeats (1222 and 1223) and subjugate them later.[85]

The brief presentation of the political situation on the Lower Danube between the 7th and 13th centuries reveals the intense interference between the population left after the withdrawal of the Byzantine administration and the nomadic peoples which, in turn, undertook invasions or even settled south of the river after 971. The failed campaign of Emperor Constantine IV in the last quarter of the 7th century is followed by the penetration and settlement of the Bulgarians in the northeastern territories of the Balkan Peninsula, in places guarded by the Black Sea and the Danube, breaking the land connection between Dobruja and the Byzantine Empire. At the same time, for about two and a half centuries, Dobruja came out of the chroniclers' attention, with few reports mentioning it in the 8th-10th centuries. The lack of narrative sources keeps in a shadow the political-administrative situation of the area, leaving room for various interpretations. The little information, from Byzantine sources and Russian chronicles, has divided researchers into two groups when it comes to Dobruja domination, with all that it means in classical forms.[86] Some claim that the northern half was under Byzantine rule, partly along the Danube and the coastline, before 971.[87] Others believe

[83] Elian & Tanașoca 1975, 113-117; Diaconu 1978, 55; Madgearu 2007, 116-117.
[84] Spinei 1999, 261-265.
[85] Spinei 1999, 280-281.
[86] Paraschiv-Talmațchi & Talmațchi 2013, 267-268.
[87] Barnea & Ștefănescu 1971, 28-29; Florescu & Ciobanu 1972, 381-400; Mănucu-Adamești eanu 1991, 307-309; Rădulescu & Bitoleanu 1998, 169; Damian 2004, 313; Zbuchea 2010, 320-321.

that for a certain period the whole territory was only under the authority of the first Bulgarian kingdom.[88] One of the texts underlying these controversies comes from the work of the Emperor Constantine VII, *De administrando imperio*, written in the middle of the 10th century. Describing the coastal road followed by the Russians to Constantinople, he attributed the territories between the mouth of the Danube and the river Ditzina to the Bulgarian state.[89] The toponyms of Byzantine origin in the text, as well as in others referring to the existing settlements in the 9th-10th centuries in Dobruja, corroborated with some archaeological discoveries, represent arguments for supporting the presence of the empire on at least a part of this territory,[90] otherwise they would have been changed, as has happened in other spaces.[91] At the same time, the discoveries of the last two decades, coming from unknown settlements until now, increase the number of sites that reveal the presence of the Bulgarian population in the Istro-Pontic territory and the influence of its material culture: Oltina,[92] Hârșova (point Stația de Epurare),[93] Pantelimonu de Sus,[94] Valu lui Traian[95] and Tufani.[96]

In the presentation of the Bulgarian-Russian-Byzantine conflicts in the last quarter of the 10th century, information about the peaceful interferences of the period was interspersed in the narrative sources, an important role being played by trade. Beyond political dissensions and ethnic differences, the need for beauty, quality and eccentricity has made economic centers invigorate in times of peace, strengthened or not by treaties. And when their merchants were supported and protected by political leaders, they became known far and wide, their reputation bringing new merchants and diversified goods. The presentation made by Kneaz Sviatoslav about the situation in a 'fortress' on the 'Danube' is eloquent: 'All the riches are gathered there: from Greece gold, fabrics, wine and various fruits; from Bohemia and Hungary silver and horses; from Russia, furs and waxes and honey and slaves'.[97]

The flourishing trade at the mouth of the Danube and on the west coast of the Black Sea, from the period reflected by Sviatoslav, was probably also due to the protection and support of the Bulgarian state, having mentioned

[88] Tăpkova-Zaimova 1970, 79-86; Madgearu 2007, 19.
[89] Mihăescu *et al*. 1970, 660-661.
[90] Diaconu 1977, 1894.
[91] Obolensky 2002, 32.
[92] Paraschiv-Talmațchi & Custurea 2018, 382.
[93] Paraschiv-Talmațchi *et al*. 2015, 397-423.
[94] Paraschiv-Talmațchi 2014a, 343-374.
[95] Paraschiv-Talmațchi 2014b, 13-14.
[96] Paraschiv-Talmațchi 2018, 397.
[97] Popa-Lisseanu 1935, 73.

above how its leadership was sometimes willing to go to war to regain the privileges of its merchants, in fact a source of increasing state revenues. The Bulgarian Czar understood the importance of the smooth operation of trade, and this is evidenced by the fact that in the time of Czar Simeon and earlier, the Bulgarian state had become a real warehouse for goods imported by Byzantium from the territories north of the first Bulgarian kingdom.[98]

In the points of attraction or interest, not only for traders, it was possible to establish the existing cities and fortresses on the Lower Danube during this period, such as: '80 fortresses on the Danube' (in the second half of the 10th century);[99] Dorostolon 'famous city among those located near Istru' (10th-11th centuries)[100] or 'city with wide streets, numerous bazaars and rich resources' (11th-12th centuries);[101] 'the cities from Danube' (in the 11th century);[102] 'the Paristrian cities' (11th-12th centuries);[103] Vicina '...is a thriving city with open spaces, fertile fields and cereal crops' (in the 12th century)[104] etc. Their framework was that which offered the possibility of peaceful interference beyond military interference, such as cultural influences, those of scholars and craftsmen, or even representatives of the army in peacetime. These 'contacts' are seen in the gradual adoption of 'fashion' (of whatever nature it was in a certain chronological range, Byzantine or nomadic), and archaeological evidence reveals such situations. Cultural influences can be seen in architecture (both laic and religious),[105] in adopting the rules of the courts of rulers; in clothing culture.[106] The scholars brought the Christian teachings and the alphabet,[107] craftsmen brought new techniques and models,[108] while the army was accompanied by craftsmen, who shared their knowledge in the places where they camped (military architecture, making weapons etc.).

The military and peaceful interferences in Dobruja have also left their mark on the ethnic background, to the establishment of which several factors

[98] Brezeanu 2004, 162-163.
[99] Popa-Lisseanu 1935, 71.
[100] Baraschi 1981, 313-6.
[101] Barnea & Ștefănescu 1971, 163.
[102] Elian & Tanașoca 1975, 159.
[103] Elian & Tanașoca 1975, 155, 163, 225, 227.
[104] Barnea & Ștefănescu 1971, 164; Baraschi 1981, 316-9.
[105] Ștefan *et al*. 1967, 355-356; Barnea & Ștefănescu 1971, 190,237,242.
[106] Ștefan *et al*. 1967, 277-326; Diaconu & Vîlceanu 1972, 137-162; Paraschiv-Talmațchi & Șova 2020, 32-35.
[107] Rădulescu 1970, 255-274; Barnea & Ștefănescu 1971, 203-221, 230-232, 241; Barnea 2010, 35.
[108] Diaconu & Vîlceanu 1972, 159, fig. 64.

have contributed, some of which are interdependent. An important contribution to the whole process is the movement of people in search of new territories. The newcomers settled next to and over the existing fund, which in turn had an ethnically diverse heritage, with mutual influences taking place. Conflict situations, which have led to various allies, generally present for certain periods of time, have contributed to ethnic diversification, although it cannot always be proven that some of them have settled south of the river. Trade brought Greek (Byzantine), Russian-Varangian, Central European to Istro-Pontic territory etc.

In fact, the reflection of the Dobrujan realities from the 10th century is well preserved in the representations and inscriptions incised or sculpted on the walls of the monastic complex at Murfatlar. Christians who still 'carried' with them the symbols of pagan faith, perhaps for double protection, used the runic, Greek, Cyrillic or Glagolitic writings.[109] And for the next century, the notes of the Byzantine chronicler Mihail Attaliates are relevant, who, trying to present the realities of North Dobruja, recorded: 'many and large' settlements inhabited by a 'population of all languages'.[110]

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[109] Barnea & Ștefănescu 1971,180-233.

[110] Elian & Tanașoca 1975, 73.

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An Alan catacomb discovered at Vlădeni-Popina Blagodeasca (Ialomița county, Romania)

Emilia Corbu

Abstract: The article contains data about the discovery's place, tomb's descriptions, the funeral inventory, the historical and cultural context.

The catacomb is like a boot with a burial chamber on its top. It looks like a cone of 2.50 x 2.30 m at the top. Towards the base it widens to 3.50 m. The depth is 2.50 m (fig. 3).[1] On the NW side, the pit is strongly vaulted, similarly to a niche. A thick deposit of pottery fragments and bones, some sort of a lid, covers the niches. The human skeleton is laid in supine position, with its head towards the North. The artificially deformed skull is put base up. The legs are bent at the knees to the left and the shanks carefully crossed, the paw of the left foot behind the right shank. The viscerocranium, the right forearm, the spine and ribs are missing. The niches of the pit contained 217 ceramic fragments and 170 fragmentary animal bones of big cattle. The statistical analysis shows that the two categories were almost at parity of 44,23% (96 fragments of fine pottery made on the fast wheel), relative to 46,56% (101 handmade fragments). Only 20 grey-clay paste fragments (9,21%) are found. The pottery's histogram indicated a date during the second half of 5th century to the first half of the 6th century. The author found analogies in the nomad people's pottery discovered in Roman-Byzantine fortresses in Dobruja.

The Roman – Gothic relationships and the Hun invasion marked the historical context of the 4th-5th century. The Alans from the North Black Sea and Crimea, Lower Moesia and Scythia Minor became federates of the Roman Empire during the reign of Emperor Marcian (450-457). Is it a coincidence that most of the artificially deformed skulls discovered in Romania were discovered in Roman-Byzantine sites during 4th-6th century from Dobruja?

The author suggests the catacomb belongs to the Alans. The arguments consist in the cultural analogies, the ritual, the artificially deformed skulls and the mutilated skeletons, a proof of a prophylactic rite against the dead.

Key words: Alan people, catacomb, Huns' invasion, nomads, the prophilactic rite against the dead

[1] The depth is measured from the present level of soil.

Резюме: Статията представя данни за мястото на откриване на гроба, неговото описание, гробния инвентар, както и историческия и културен му контекст.

Катакомбният гроб е във формата на ботуш с гробна камера, разположена на върха. Тя изглежда като конус с 2.50/2.30 м на върха, а към основата се разширява до 3.50 м. Дъното е вкопано до 2.50 м (фиг. 3). На северозападната страна, ямата е сводеста като ниша. Тънък слой от керамични фрагменти и кости покрива нишите като капак. Човешкият скелет е поставен по гръб, с глава на север. Черепът е изкуствено деформиран. Краката са завързани в колената, обърнати наляво и внимателно кръстосани, възглавничката на лявото ходило е поставена зад десния пищял. Лицевите кости, дясната ръка, гръбнакът и ребрата отсъстват. Нишите съдържат 217 керамични фрагменти и 170 фрагментирани животински кости на големи говеда. Статистическият анализ показва че двете категории са почти паритетни – 44,23% фина керамика, работена на бързо въртящо се колело (96 фрагмента) към 46,56% ръчно изработена керамика (101 фрагмента). Открити са само 20 фрагмента от сива керамика (9,21%). Статистиката на керамика разкрива датировка към втората половина на 5 век – първата половина на 6-ти век. Авторът открива аналогии в керамика на номадското население, открито в римско-византийските крепости в Добруджа.

Римско-готските взаимоотношения и хунската инвазия маркират историческия контекст на 4-ти и 5-ти век. Аланите от северното Черноморие и Крим, Долна Мизия и Малка Скития се превръщат във федерати на Римската империя при управлението на император Марциан (450–457). Дали е случайно че повечето от умишлено деформираните черепи, открити в Румъния, са открити на римско-византийски обекти от 4–6 век в Добруджа?

Авторът предполага че представения катакомбен гроб е алански. Аргументите за това са културните аналогии, ритуалът, изкуствената деформация на черепа и разчленяването на скелета, което е доказателство за предпазен ритуал срещу мъртвите.

The discovery's place

Popina Blagodeasca is placed three km from Balta Ialomiţa (Ialomitza Meadow), where Ialomiţa (the largest river in southern Romania) flows into the Danube, the largest river in Europe (fig. 1). In ancient times, the area had a strategic importance (bordering the frontier of the Roman Empire) and an economic one, because the natural resources favored animals breeding, hunting, fishing and cereal agriculture. On this archaeological site, the traces of an ancient culture were discovered: a defensive-system and an early medieval settlement.[2]

The tomb's description

The funeral room

The catacomb is like a boot with a burial chamber on its top. A subsequent intervention and a Dridu hut destroyed a great part of the entrance (dromos). A large, triangular pit was preserved, from which at -0.87 m the burial chamber was dug (fig. 2). The funeral chamber is placed just below the

[2] Corbu 2013.

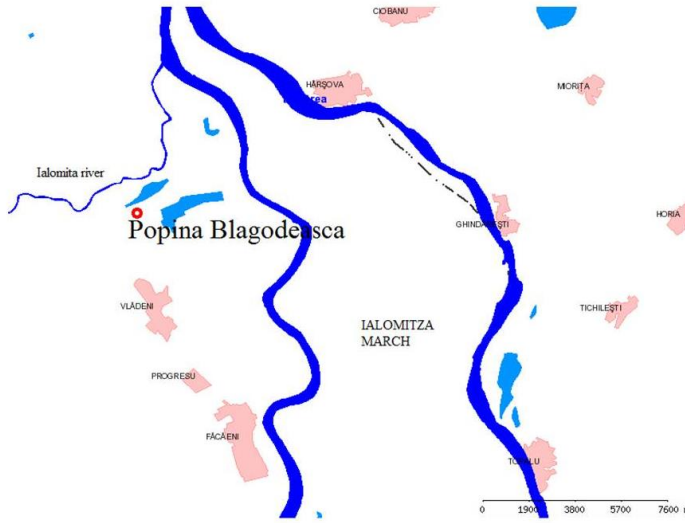
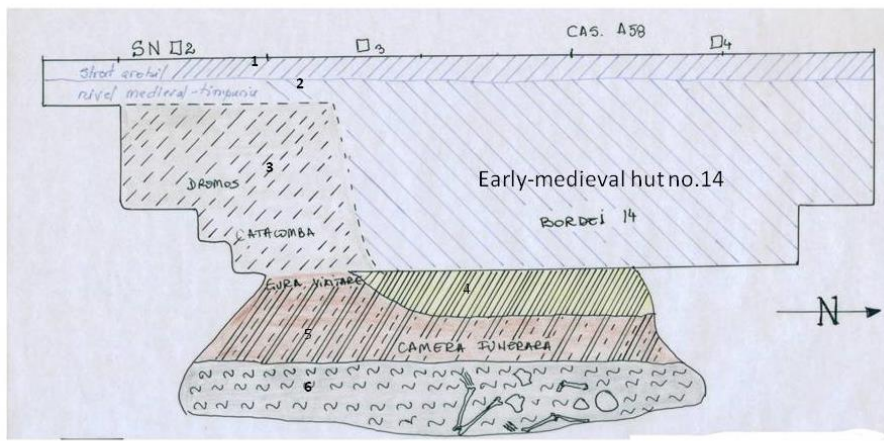


Fig. 1. Location of Vlădeni-Popina Blagodeasca (author: Emilia Corbu).

The katacomb`s profile



LEGEND
1. Agriculture layer
2. Early medieval layer
3. Dromos of katakomb-gray sediments contains ash
4. Yelow clay
5. Dark-brown sediments with yelow deposits contains broken pottery, animal bones.
6. Blak sediments with coal.

Fig. 2. The catacomb's profile (author: Emilia Corbu).

floor of the Dridu hut. It is shaped like a cone of 2.50 x 2.30 m at the top. Towards the base it widens to 3.50 m. At the bottom the depth is 2.50 m (fig. 3).[3] On the northwestern side, the pit is strongly vaulted, similarly to a niche. Above the niches was a thick deposit of pottery fragments and bones, like a lid. On the southern part of the pit, there are traces of a wooden staircase leading up to the dromos. We notice three categories of sediment in the stratigraphy of the pit. At the top was a thick layer of yellow soil, almost 0.30 m, below which was scattered a yellow sediment mixed with brown. Between 1.70-2.20 m was (especially in the niches) the lid of bones and shards (like a dam) that was overlapped or mixed with very loose blackish-brown sediment (fig. 4). A layer of coal and ash covered a human skeleton and it continued beneath it.

The human skeleton

A human skeleton with missing parts, in supine position with its head towards North was laid on the central pit's bottom. The artificially deformed skull was put base up. The viscerocranium (face) was completely missing. The left arm with the handful clenched was lying next to the body. Above the fist was a brown sediment remains of leather or wood item probably. His right arm was lying next to the body. The forearm was missing, but the elbow was still preserved and a small fragment indicating that it had been flexed to the chest. Only two very battered bones were preserved from the pelvis. The legs were bent at the knees to the left and the shanks carefully crossed, the paw of the left foot behind the right shank. In conclusion, a part of the skeleton is missing: the viscerocranium, the right forearm, the spine and ribs.

Inventory

Ceramic fragments were found in the 'dam of bones and shards', scattered on the bottom of the tomb and in the ash sediment from the dromos. We have not found any inventory on the skeleton. The dam (preserved mainly in the niches of the pit) contained 217 ceramic fragments and 170 fragmentary animal bones of big cattle. The ceramic fragments couldn`t be used to restore the pots. There are two categories of pottery, according to the paste and technology: 1) handmade, scoured paste and 2) fine paste made on a fast wheel, oxidizing or reducing burns. The statistical analysis shows that the two categories were almost at parity of 44,23% (96 fragments of fine pottery made on the fast wheel), relative to 46,56% (101 handmade fragments). Only 20 grey paste fragments (9,21%) were found. The pottery inventory's statistics

[3] The depth is measured from the present level of soil.

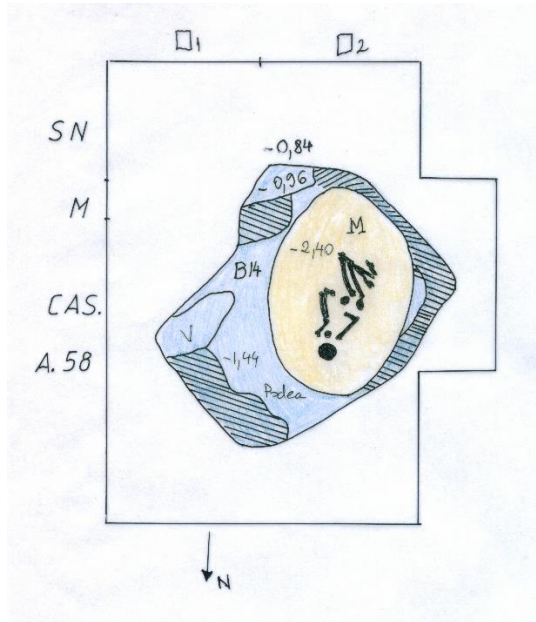


Fig. 3. The catacomb's plan (author: Emilia Corbu).



Fig. 4. Dam of sherds and animal bones (photo: Emilia Corbu).

indicated a later period because it was not specific to the Getic, Roman or Sântana de Mureș-Cerneahov culture. An equal percent between handmade pottery and wheel potery can be seen at Dulceanca settlement of the 6th century AD.[4]

Typological analysis

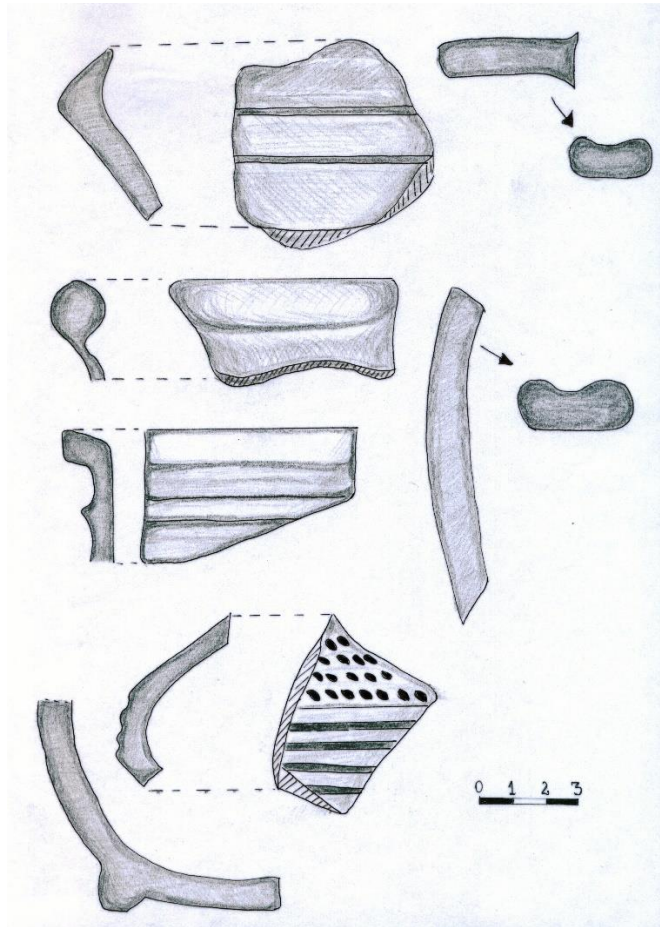
1. Grey pottery (pl. 1)

The grey pottery production ceases during the 6th century. It is the reason that this category is an important chronological marker. The classification of these fragments on a chronological scale is difficult because we do not have any whole pots. These are fragments of a bowl, jugs, a supply vessel from grey, clean, cement paste. The profiles of bowl lips fragments are different. Some of them have a rounded and thickened lip with a groove under the lip. Others have a wide, flattened lip with horizontally polished lines on the neck (fig. 5). Finally, the third variant has a widened lip splayed outwards with a rib under the lip and a high neck (fig. 6). A fragment of bowl handle is flatted and cover with black colour. The vessels got thin walls (only 5 mm). The bottom is annular. Such vessels have some features of Sântana de Mureș-Cerneahov culture. For example, the flat and splay lip was found in the cemetery of Mihălășeni, dating from the second half of the 3rd century to the first half of the 5th century.[5] However, the rounded and thickened bowl lip with the groove under it, is evidenced by several discoveries from Dobruja[6] during 4th-5th centuries. A fragment of a bowl with repoussé decor and horizontal grooves has analogy with a fragment found in the earliest layer at the Tropaeum Traiani (fig. 7).[7] The repoussé décor type comes on in Sântana de Mureș culture with fine black pottery.[8] Only two fragments of flatted handle of pitchers were preserved. But the analogies are not enough. The percent of grey pottery is very different. At Mihalaseni cemetery, which belonged to Sântana de Mureș culture, the percent of fine grey pottery' is 58%. At the catacomb mentioned below the percent is only 9,21%.

2. Amphorae

No vessel could be reconstructed. Moreover, only 2-3 fragments were preserved from each vessel. We even suspect that the 'dam of bones and

[4] Dolinescu-Ferche 1974, 91-93.
[5] Șovan 2009.
[6] Opaiț 1996, 129-130, pl.52/12.
[7] Barnea *et al*. 1979, 181, fig. 148, NII, 2 (23), fig. 156, 2.8.
[8] Ioniță 1966, 207.



Pl. 1. The grey pottery fragments discovered in the catacomb (author: Emilia Corbu).



Fig. 5. Grey pottery bowl lip (photo: Emilia Corbu).



Fig. 6. Grey pottery pot lip (photo: Emilia Corbu).

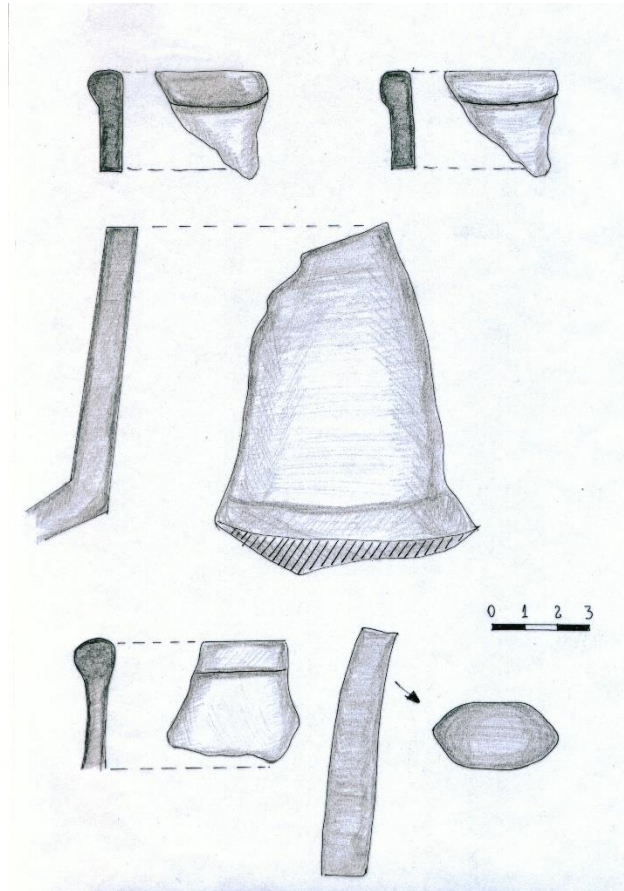


Fig. 7. Grey pottery bowl fragment (photo: Emilia Corbu).

shards' contains older ceramic fragments scattered around the complex. The state of conservation could not enable a very exact typology. However, fragments from two types of Late Roman amphorae (Pontic and Oriental)[9] were identified. The paste contains impurities (sand, oxides) and it was burnt from beige to reddish-brown. Pontic amphorae are characterized by a short and rounded outwards lip, high cylindrical or conical neck (pl. 2) and oval cross section handles with a median rib (fig. 8; pl. 3). Chronologically, the fragments could be dated from 4th-5th century (analogies with the amphorae types of Opaiț BV,[10] Zeest 94/Opaiț EVI[11]).

We found a few fragments of impure paste with sand or oxides that could belong to oriental amphorae. These are burned to a red-brick colour (fig. 9),

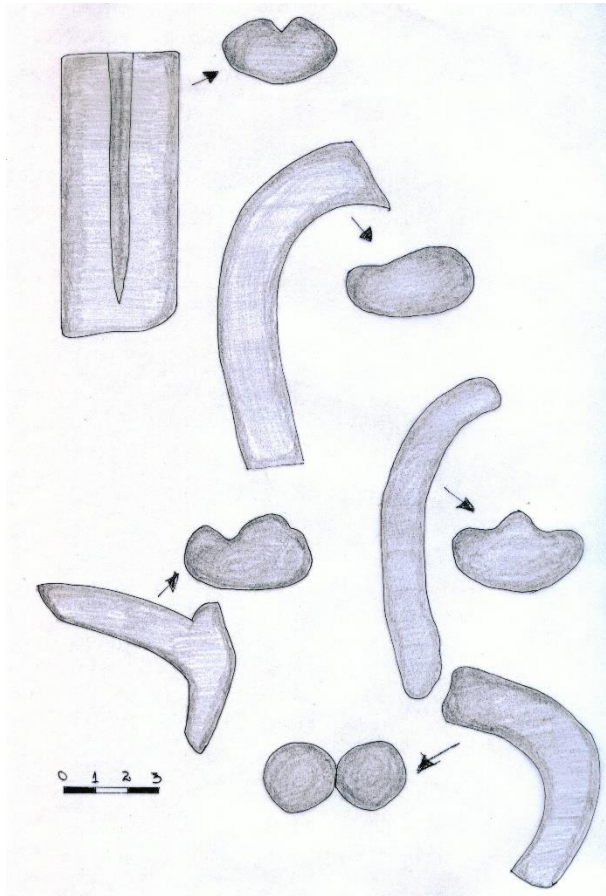
[9] Paraschiv 2006, 16-56,77-121 proposed this kind of classificasion of a lot of type of amphorae.
[10] Opaiț 1996, 73.
[11] Opaiț 1996, 75, pl. 21, 4-5.



Pl. 2. The amphorae pottery fragments discovered in the catacomb (author: Emilia Corbu).



Fig. 8. The rib amphorae handle (photo: Emilia Corbu).



Pl. 3. The amphorae pottery fragments discovered in the catacomb (author: Emilia Corbu).

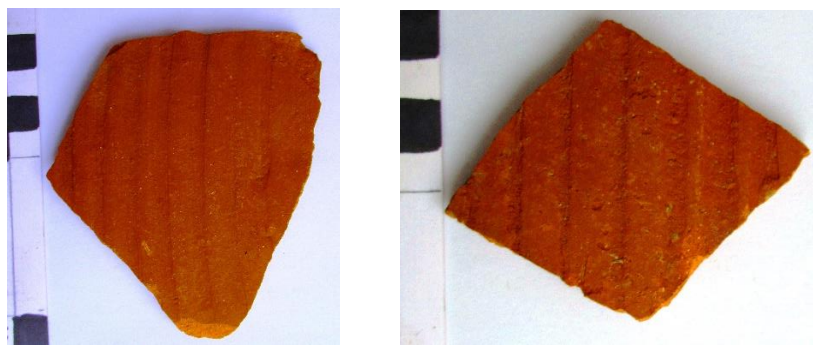


Fig. 9. Red-brick paste amphora's sherds (photo: Emilia Corbu).

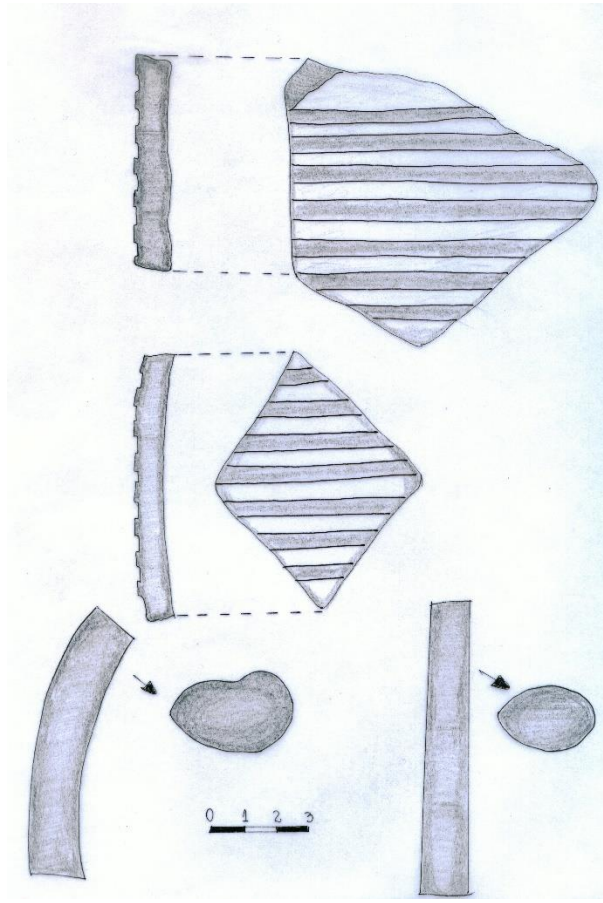
decorated with light grooves (pl. 4) and a round cross section handles also decorated with light grooves (fig. 10). Also, two small fragments of handles were found. One of them is a double barrelled handle[12] (the middle of 3rd century) and the second is an oval cross section handle marked by a median deep groove (fig. 11). The features of fragments have analogies in Opaiț C-III amphorae types[13] or bellows amphorae (4th-6th century) and Berenice MR5 (6th century),[14] Cyprus type[15] and Berenice-LRA1.[16] Interestingly, the research on the Halasarna de Kos production center have shown that the LR1 amphora type was produced even later, in the 6th-7th century as pointed out by discoveries from the coast of Asia Minor, the Aegean Islands, the Black Sea and the Lower Danube. The large spreading area could be explained by the state deliveries to urban and military communities (Annona).[17] We note that no fragments of amphora bottoms or feet were found.

3. Handmade pottery

Fragments of handmade pottery were found. The cracks have a black core and are badly burned. The bottom of the dishes is thick and flat as a sole (pl. 5). Only pots made of semifine paste have a thinner bottom. There were identified fragments of bowls, cups, jars and lid. The fragments of short and rounded bowls' lips are made of coarse paste with crushed shards, a little sand, shell, with a chestnut clay slip.

The fragments small and medium-size jars are made of coarse paste with crushed shards (pl. 6). They have a high neck and a straight lip decorated with incisions, alveoli on the lip or shoulder, a button embossed on the shoulder (fig. 12 a,b). Other fragments of jars are made of sand and limestone paste with high neck, flared and flattened lip, some decorated with alveoli on the shoulder. Some fragments have short, slightly sloping lips. There are also fragments of semifine, homogeneous paste with brown or reddish-brown clay varnish. A red-brick cup with a globular body and a ring handle was made of semifine paste (fig. 13). It had a wide mouth and a narrow flat base. A hand-molded lid is made of coarse paste with limestone and crushed shards, reddish in colour, with traces of a secondary burning (pl. 7; fig. 14). It has analogies in the Roman-Byzantine fortresses of Dobruja in the 6th century.

[12] Paraschiv 2006, 78.
[13] Opaiț 1996, 61.
[14] Paraschiv 2006, 111, pl.20/30.
[15] Opaiț 1996, 57, pl.10/9A.
[16] Paraschiv 2006, 89-92.
[17] Diamandi 2010, 143-153.



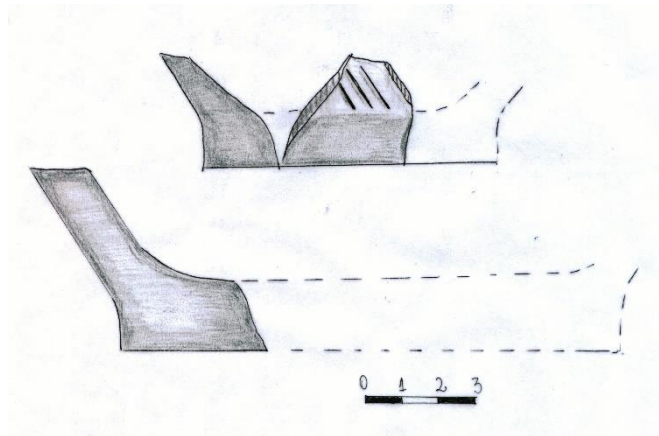
Pl. 4. The amphorae pottery fragments discovered in the catacomb (author: Emilia Corbu).



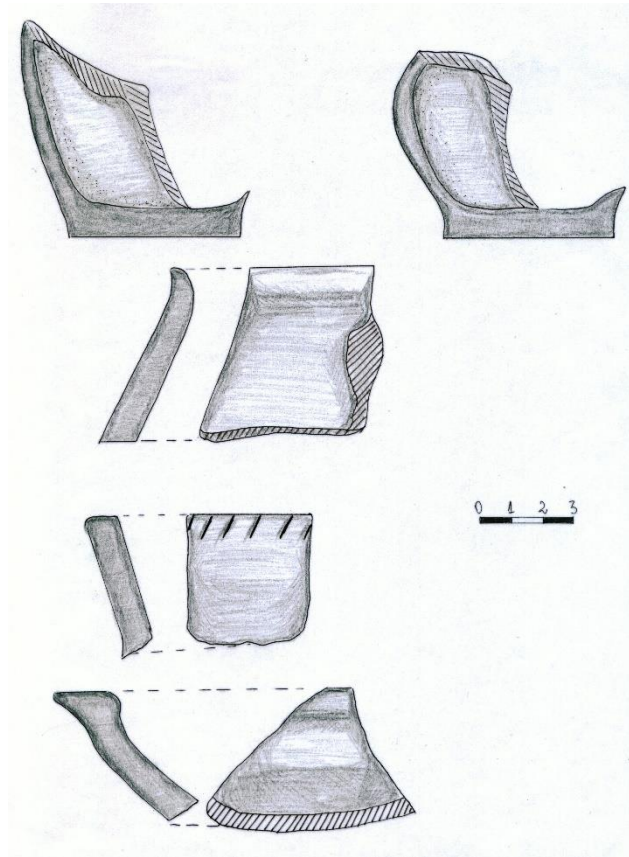
Fig. 10. A round grooved amphora's handle (photo: Emilia Corbu).



Fig. 11. A median groove amphora's handle (photo: Emilia Corbu).



Pl. 5. The handmade pottery fragments discovered in the catacomb (author: Emilia Corbu).



Pl. 6. The handmade pottery fragments discovered in the catacomb (author: Emilia Corbu).



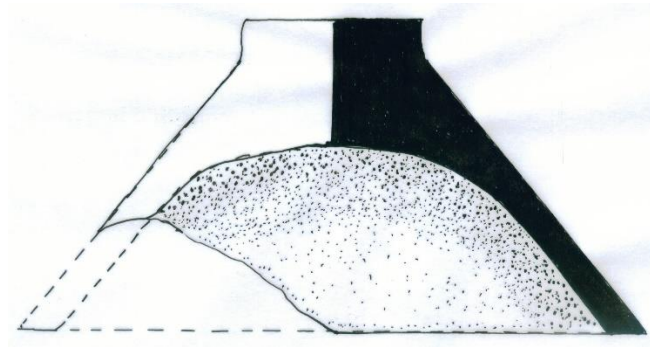
Fig. 12. Handmade jar lips (photo: Emilia Corbu).



Fig. 13. A cup fragment (photo: Emilia Corbu).



Fig. 14. A lid (photo: Emilia Corbu).



Pl. 7. The handmade pottery fragments discovered in the catacomb (author: Emilia Corbu).

The authors described this type of lid as made of coarse, hard paste, with a lot of crushed quartz and shell, limestone, iron oxide, etc.[18]

Overall, the handmade fragments have analogies in the pottery of the migrating people from Dobruja.[19] The small cup with a ring handle borrows features of the Late Roman cup. It should be noted that some kind of pottery can be found in the settlement of the local people from Davideni (Neamț County) in the 5th-6th century.[20]

Conclusion

In conclusion, the inventory is not a very useful tool to established an accurate chronology. We noted the analogies with pottery discovered in the Roman-Byzantine sites in Dobruja in the 4th-5th century. At the same time we notice only a few analogies with Sântana de Mureș-Cerneahov pottery, although it continues until the middle of the 5th century. These analogies have suggested a date during the second half of 5th century to the first half of the 6th century. It is possible that the handmade pottery might be linked to the presence of migrating people at a certain moment in Scythia Minor.

The ethnical attribution

The Roman – Gothic relationships and the Hun invasion marked the historical context of the 4th-5th century. The Gothic center of power from Buzău mountains led by Athanaric was just 130 km away from Popina Blagodeasca. The Huns' danger caused the migration of the Visigoths towards the south of Danube. In addition to the Goths and Huns, the historical

[18] Opaiț 1996, 94, 110.
[19] Opaiț 1996, 104.
[20] Mitrea 2001, 154-157.

sources mention the presence of the Alans in the region. The Alan history is very rich. They are mentioned in 34 Latin and Greek literary sources from the 4th-5th century. Although, part of them is based on older historical information, it's worthy to notice the interest shown for this people by numerous Roman historians during 1st-5th century. The Alans are mentioned also by Byzantine, Arab, Jewish, Iranian, Mongol, Russian and Chinese sources.[21] Despite the great number of sources, the Alans remain a subject little approached by historians. In the Romanian research, only the distinguished archaeologist, Gheorghe Diaconu, asserted that the Sarmatian tombs during 2nd-3rd century, with artificial deformed skulls, mirrors with tamga and side handle, lapis lazuli beads from Muntenia and Moldova, belong to the Alan branch of the Sarmatians.[22]

During the 4th-5th century it is possible that the two great branches of Alan people had met at the lower Danube. The first are Alans mentioned during 1st-4th century at the North of the Black Sea. The second are Alans brought about by the Huns' invasion from the east of Don river. Probably, this is the reason to increase of documentary mentions. Regarding the Alans from the North of the Black Sea, B. Bachrah's studies show that part of them migrated with the Goths to Western Europe and another part engaged in the Roman army. This process starts from the end of 3rd century onwards, when the Alans (known for their warlike qualities) were conscripted into the Roman army and reached high positions such as General and Consul Ardaburus and his son, the commander and consul, Aspar. Their contribution was a new configuration of the Roman cavalry.[23] The Alans from the North Black Sea and Crimea, Lower Moesia and Scythia Minor became federates of the Roman Empire during the reign of Emperor Marcian (450-457).[24]

Is it a coincidence that most of the artificially deformed skulls discovered in Romania (numbering 42) were discovered in Roman-Byzantine sites during the 4th-6th century in Dobruja? This big number shows a well-defined community in Scythia Minor. By comparison, only 44 skulls have been discovered in 27 sites during the 2nd-3rd century in Moldova and Muntenia.[25]

The Huns' invasion displaced the Alans from the East of Don. Part of them retreated to the North Caucasus while others followed the Huns to Central Europe. We assume that the Alans were also at Attila's court. For

[21] Alemany 2000, 30-116.
[22] Diaconu 1980, 275-285.
[23] Bachrach 1973, 41-49.
[24] Bachrach, 1973, 49.
[25] Mirițoiu 2015, 365-368.

example, Berichus, a Scythian man sent by Attila with a delegation to the Romans, felt offended and preferred to take a different path when the Roman ambassadors spoke ill about Aspar and Areobindus, Roman commanders of Alan origin.[26]

Behind the interesting history of time, only the Alans had a particular type of catacombs and artificially deformed skulls among the peoples present in the area (Romans, Huns, Goths and Alans). In this context it is necessary to say few words about cultural analogies.

Cultural analogies

I. The type of catacomb

To date, more than a hundred cemeteries with catacombs have been discovered, meaning more than a thousand graves are scattered along a large region from the North Caucasus to the Don, on the territory of today's states of Ossetia, Chechnya, Ingushetia, Dagestan, and were the subject of a statistical study conducted by D. S. Korobov.[27] The Alans' catacombs have a long history during the 3rd and 9th century. However, most of them date from the 5th-8th century (450-750).[28] There was a group of catacombs even in the Saltovo-Mayaky culture (8th-9th century).

There are two categories of catacomb cemeteries: tumulus and plane. The graves had three parts: dromos, the manhole and the burial chamber. These three elements have variations depending on time and space. Commonly, the shortest definition of a dromos is a pit from which the burial chamber was dug.

During 5th-8th century the main features of catacombs, their rite and ritual are:[29]

a) stones and masonry would mark the entrance;
b) oval funerary room with niches;
c) singular burial (only one human skeleton);
d) 63,3% of the analyzed catacombs have a NW-SE orientation;
e) the dromos is longer and deeper than in other time intervals.

Most of the funeral rite analogies were found in Alan catacombs, too:
1. The 'dam' of shards and bones, that is specific to all Alan catacombs.
2. The burnt timber and ash might be found in dromos.

[26] ARCP 1936, III, 108.
[27] Korobov 2003.
[28] Korobov 2003, 297.
[29] Korobov 2003, 190-263.

3. The coal in the filling of the pit.

4. The position of the skeleton with the legs kneeling and crossed. Such a position is mentioned especially in women's graves.

5. The size of the funeral chamber reflects the social position of the individual. Only important people had great burial chambers as is the case here.

Part of these features are present in the catacomb of Vladeni-Popina Blagodeasca.

II. The funeral rite

The situation of the human remains must be brought into discussion, as it offers two aspects worthy of research.

1. Artificially deformed skulls. Most cases (10,6%) were found in the catacombs dated 5th-8th century, while the percent is only 1% during the 8th-9th century. Among the Alans at the middle Volga, 70% had artificially deformed skulls.[30] The opinions are divided about the origin of this custom. This fashion spread especially in the 2nd-4th century under the influence of the Huns, according to some researchers. Others believe that the Alans inherited this fashion from the Saka people of Central Asia, whose descendants they were.[31] Another category of arguments has to do with the historical context and the territory in which the Alans lived.

2. The mutilated skeleton.

Two hypotheses regarding the desecration of graves and interventions on the skeleton were found in archaeological literature. Some claim that the graves were robbed in ancient times. Over 60% of the studied Alans catacombs are in this situation.[32] Other researchers speak about the rite of 'inactivation ritual of the dead' present in many cultures,[33] including Sântana de Mureș-Cerneahov. In the cemetery from Mihălășeni (Suceava county), 65 graves show damaged bodies in the area of the chest, arms, skull and pelvis.[34]

V. S. Flerov argues, however, that the inactivation ritual of the dead (the prophilactic rite against the dead) is the only explanation for the disturbed graves, bringing a number of archaeological and ethnographic arguments. He proposed a careful inspection of the stratigraphic situation of

[30] Brezinsky & Mielczarek 2002, 12.
[31] Zjivkov 2015, 31.
[32] Korobov 2003, 51.
[33] Komar 2001, 33.
[34] Șovan 2009, 200.

the catacombs.[35] From this point of view, the catacomb in Vladeni-Popina Blagodeasca presents the following situation:

1. The subsequent intervention was made through a pit starting from the dromos and aimed exactly at the skeleton. We assume that the authors of the intervention knew the location of the skeleton, because the inside of burial chamber was very large. The evidence of intervention is that the soil composition is the same in the chamber and dromos. In the primary stage of catacomb, the soil is present only in the dromos, not in the funeral chamber. The Alan funeral chamber might be compared with a nowadays funeral vault.

2. The viscerocranium, thorax (spine and ribs) and right forearm were taken. Only a bone (sacrum) of the spine could be found fallen down near the head. The neurocranium was turned upside down. The rest of the skeleton was intact. This part of body, the place of brain and heart is very important in the historical mentality. They are the places of the soul.

The analogies with some graves in Klin-Yar III cemetery (Russian Federation) are obvious:

'Most often the dead's chest was damaged without scattering the bones about the chamber. The disturbances affecting the upper part of the skeleton in most cases were accompanied by replacing the skull and separating the lower jaw.

The situation with replacing arms' bones is less definite. As a rule, they were moved when the chest underwent disturbance. Damaging hands' bones was not practiced'.[36]

3. At the catacomb the funeral gift on the skeleton is missing. The cup was broken and thrown into the east corner. But we don't know the real state of inventory. Maybe it was a treasure, maybe not. I think that in a case of robbery, only the inventory is missing, the bones were undisturbed, maybe scattered at the worst.

4. Some of the ceramic fragments from the chamber reached the surface of the soil. Some fragments of one vessel could be in the chamber, others outside. This is a sign of secondary intervention in a catacomb. The presence of charcoal in the chamber is a sign of ritual.

Dridu's hut crossed the catacomb and destroyed the stratigraphy traces a of secondary intervention in the tomb. However, we think that the prophilactic ritual against the dead was done in the catacomb in Vlădeni-Popina Blagodeasca.

[35] Flerov 2000, 9-21.
[36] Flerov 2000, 96.

Conclusion

The catacomb in Vlădeni-Popina Blagodeasca falls within the rather turbulent historical context of the 5th-6th century, marked by military events at the Roman border of the Lower Danube. The inventory of the catacomb does not contain the artifacts' specifics of the Alans from East of Don. We found the pottery's analogies in Scythia Minor, where the Alan federates of Roman Empire are mentioned in the 5th century. The prophylactic ritual against the dead are documented in many Alan cemeteries in the eastern European regions.

ARCP – Ambasadele Romanilor către popoare (1936), in: G. Popa Lisseanu (ed) *Izvoarele Istoriei Românilor. tom 8* (Bucharest).

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Hârșova – *extra muros* East. The craft district of the early medieval fortified settlement

Constantin Șova

Abstract: In the second half of 2020 for almost six months, a preventive archaeological research was carried out in Hârșova-Carsium for the realization of a restoration, conservation and cultural-tourist arrangement project. One of the target areas is located on the eastern side of the rocky promontory on which the fortress is located, in the *extra muros* area, near Dobruja Street. Archaeological excavations here have revealed, in the southern half of the investigated perimeter, an arrangement with a craft purpose, whose inventory revealed its use as a product workshop and repairment of metal objects. Its inventory also included an ax with side 'fins' at the glove hole. The new discoveries show that this area was organized in the early medieval period as a craft district of the fortress; the workshop is added to the two ceramic kilns researched in 1995. The organization of a special space appears as a result of the development of the settlement and reveals the presence of specialized craftsmen in Hârșova in the 10th-12th centuries.

Key words: workshop for metal objects, ceramic kilns, ax, 10th-12th centuries, Dobruja

Резюме: През втората половина на 2020 г., в течение на шест месеца, бяха извършени предварителни археологически проучвания в Хърсова-Карсиум за осъществяването на реставрационен, консервационен и културно-исторически проект. Една от изследваните площи е разположена на източната част на скалния нос, където е крепостта, etxra muros, в близост до улица „Добруджа". В южната половина на площта археологическите разкопки разкриха занаятчийска работилница, чийто инвентар я представя като производствено ателие или като такова за поправка на метални предмети. Инвентарът съдържа брадва с „перки". Новите открития показват че тази площ е била организирана в ранносредновековния период като занаятчийски квартал на крепостта, като ателието е било добавено към двете керамични пещи, проучени през 1995 г. Организирането на специално за целта място се разглежда в резултат от развитието на селището и разкрива наличието на специализирани майстори в Хърсова през 10–12 век.

Dobruja, the territory in southeastern Romania guarded on the west and north by the waters of the Danube, and on the east by those of the Black Sea,

has offered, since ancient times, favorable conditions for the emergence and development of human habitats. In this sense, there are hundreds of settlements and necropolises, lined up from the Paleolithic to the modern era, which were spotted following surface research or accidental discoveries, some of them researched later. On the archaeological map of the Istro-Pontic territory is also Hârșova, a city located 86 km northwest of Constanța, on whose territory two important sites are under investigation (a Neo-Eneolithic settlement[1] and Carsium Fortress[2]). The third site, an early medieval settlement, which existed where the 'Wastewater treatment plant' is now, has been completed.[3]

The site Carsium Fortress, as was its Roman name, is a stratigraphic deposit that sometimes exceeds five meters evidence of a Getic habitation;[4] on the site where it was built, probably by Ala (Gallorum) Flaviana,[5] a castellum; then in the time of Constantine the Great a fortress that underwent several restorations;[6] at the end of the 10th century the small enclosure was built (in the highest part of the rocky promontory on which the fortress is located);[7] followed by an alleged Genoese presence and domination by Ivanco;[8] then a brief rule by the Basarabi voivodes.[9] Starting with the 15th century, Dobruja came under Ottoman rule for several centuries, during which time a fortress with a much larger surface, with a circumference of 3000 feet's, was built in Hârșova.[10]

In the second half of 2020 for almost six months, preventive archaeological research was carried out at the Carsium Fortress. The context that generated it is given by a project of restoration, conservation and cultural-tourist arrangement, targeting the small precinct tower, the western walls and the port area. The construction of a tourist information point on the eastern side of the fortress, in the *extra muros* area, where in the past

[1] Popovici *et al*. 2011, 42-46.
[2] Brătulescu 1940, 3-24; Florescu 1946, 179-180; Aricescu 1971, 351-370; 1977, 55; Talmațchi 1997, 113-124.
[3] Paraschiv-Talmațchi *et al*. 2015, 397-423.
[4] Aricescu 1971, 352.
[5] Chiriac *et al*. 1998, 140, 149.
[6] Aricescu 1971, 354; Barnea 1994, 258.
[7] Barnea & Ștefănescu 1971, 79-80, fig. 31; Baraschi 1991, 138; Panait *et al*. 1995/1996, 121; Rădulescu & Bitoleanu 1998, 184; Madgearu 2007, 92.
[8] Ciobanu 1970, 25; Talmațchi 1997, 87-96.
[9] Panait *et al*. 1995/1996, 121.
[10] Cantacuzino 1992, 58-67;Talmațchi & Paraschiv-Talmațchi 1999, 34; Nicolae 2014, 375-400.

campaigns evidence of early ancient and medieval habitation was recorded, offered the opportunity to research an area of 120 sq m.

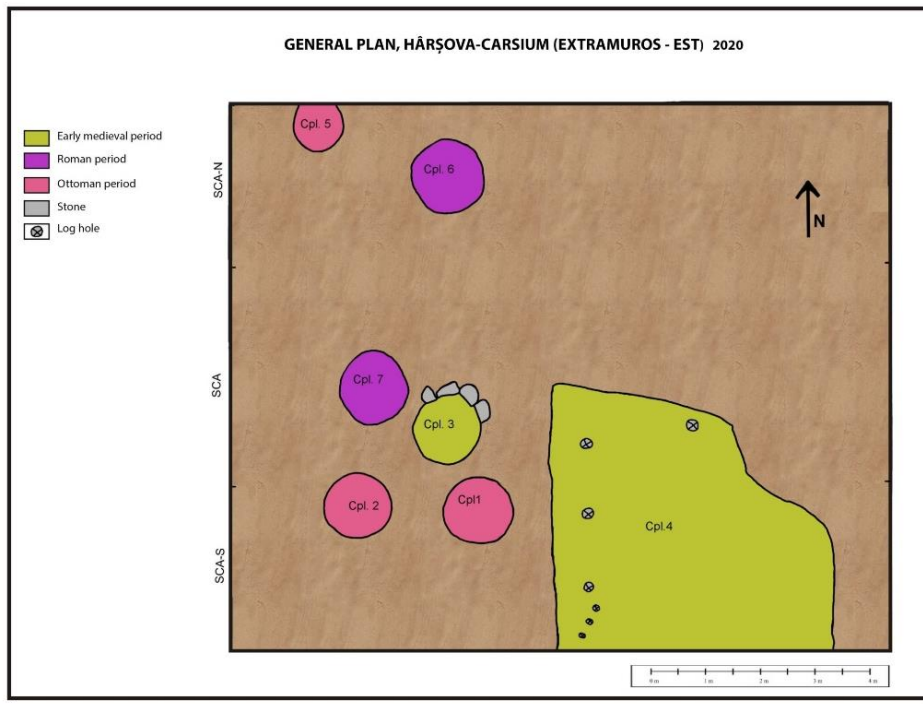
In the researched area in 2020, the stratigraphy was, in general, as follows: the vegetal level, with a thickness varying between 0.05-0.15 m; a contemporary deposit follows, with stone and various materials, whose thickness varies between 0.45 and 1.55 m; below this is a contemporary layer, composed of brown earth, with small and medium stone, with Roman, medieval and Ottoman pottery, with a thickness ranging between 0.60 and 1.85 m, a layer that also fills the surface investigated in 1995, as was observed on the southern profile (this layer seems to have formed in the last decade and a half by storing the excavated earth when the houses near the fortress were built); a yellowish-brown level follows, with burnt wooden pigment, rare lenses of yellow earth, stone, broken brick, bones, Ottoman pottery, early medieval and sporadically Roman, having a thickness ranging between 0.50 and 0.70 m (in the eastern part this level was not observed, between it and the archaeological excavation from 1995 was preserved a remnant from an Ottoman-era household pit, from the filling of which a grinder was recovered); a level with mortar and gravel follows, created by the evacuation of debris from the fortress, for straightening the ground, whose thickness varies between 0.25 and 0.85 m (characterized by the presence of sporadic archaeological materials from the early Byzantine and early medieval periods); the early medieval level follows, with a thickness of 0.40-1 m, in which materials from the Roman period are also involved; the ancient level, with Roman material, grayish and compacted, which includes successive, random, yellowish or gray lenses, the thickness of which varies between 0.50 and 1.20 m; then there is the bedrock, which appears on the south side at 3.88 m, and on the north side at 4.45 m, without fixed elevation.

Following the research, on the surface of 120 sq m seven complexes were identified, representing two pits of Roman period, a craft arrangement and a pit of early medieval period, respectively three pits of Ottoman period (pl. I/2). The two early medieval complexes are added to the data resulting from the research done in 1995, when the point was conventionally called 'Landscaping-east slope',[11] highlighting the organization of an area for handicrafts in the 10th-12th centuries (pl. I/1). It was a good place because it is located in the lower part of the promontory, closer to the Danube waters (necessary during the production activity), but not so close and low that it can be flooded. Placing it outside the premises, even if in an area exposed to possible attacks, was necessary because the production process often generates noises, unpleasant odors or the possibility of a fire hazard for the dwellings.

[11] Panait *et al*. 1995/1996, 129.



1



2

Pl. I. Disposition the discoveries in the site plan (1); General plan, Hârșova-Carsium (extra-muros Est), 2020 (2) (author: Constantin Șova).

Archaeological excavations in 2020 have revealed, in the southern half of the investigated perimeter, in squares 6-11, an arrangement with a craft role, whose inventory reveals its use as a product workshop and repairment of metal objects (Cpl. 4, pl. I/2). The walking level of the workshop was -3.15 m (in square 8) and consisted of a thick, dark gray clay with yellow lenses, small stones, small ceramic fragments and many small and medium pieces of iron and bronze, formless, spread over the entire surface. This clay was restored almost on the entire surface, between the two layers being a layer, 2 cm thick, with a lot of ash. The ash layer reveals arson in the workshop (the upper wooden structure) and is followed by a restoration, noting that the composition of the two layers of the floor was similar. The first clay floor was mostly 7-10 cm thick, towards the northern edge being 3 cm. The upper clay floor was 4-5 cm thick, and towards the northern edge of 10.5 cm, thus proceeding to an attempt to equalize it, after the moment of the fire.

The maximum dimensions of the researched surface of the workshop are the following: on the south side its length was 5.10 m; on the west side it was 4.80 m, but it went below the profile, leaving the perimeter we investigated. The north and east sides were narrower because in the northeast corner there was an inward retreat, as follows: the north side was 3.5 m; the eastern one 2.5 m (entering below the profile); and the retreat from the northeast was 2.60 m. On the west side, at 0.60 m from the edge of the floor, there were three log holes, aligned north-south, with a distance of 1.20-1.25 m between them. A fourth log hole was on the north side, 0.25 m from the floor. Their diameter varied between 0.24 m and 0.18 m, and the depth of the floor between 0.10 and 0.33 m. The log hole from the northwest corner was the largest and deepest. Three other holes, small in size, were located in the southern profile of the section (in the southwest corner of the researched area of the workshop) and were aligned in the southwest-northeast direction, at a length of 0.60 m. Their diameter varied from 0.075 to 0.06 m, and their depth was 0.10 m from the floor.

The arrangement of the large diameter holes reveals that the surface was covered, the logs having the role of supporting a roof. Neither the profile nor the load above the floor indicated the existence of walls or the deepening of the workshop. It was built on the surface of the land and had open sides, like a shed. The inventory of the workshop consists of: an iron ax; an iron clamp; fragmentary iron objects (knife blade, nails, links); fragmentary early medieval pottery. Between the two clay floors, slightly deepened in the lower one, were two fragments of a grinder, a fragment of a spheroidal amphora and some ceramic fragments of common or kaolinitic paste, oxidized and decorated with incised or wavy lines. The ax was discovered in square 7, on

the upper floor, near the three holes with small diameters, and the clamp was 0.30 m east of the large log hole from the south profile.

The ax in the workshop at Hârșova is of the type with side 'fins' at the glove hole (pl. III/11), being generally considered as weapons, but probably sometimes used as tools.[12] It has a thin body, a slightly widened and slightly convex edge, the nape is raised, and on either side the hole for the handle has fins. The ax is 13.5 cm long, the width of the blade is 4.3 cm, the width at the end of the neck is 3.3 cm, the thickness near the glove hole is 3.3 cm, and the width near the fins is 3.6 cm.

In the typology made by Dan Gh. Teodor for similar discoveries from the Carpatho-Dniester regions, such axes were included in type II. They come from surface discoveries and appeared in contexts with ceramic fragments dating from the 8th-9th or 10th-11th centuries.[13] Such types of axes appear, in general, for the first time in the Avar era, and their dating on the Romanian territory oscillates, depending on the context, in the 7th-8th centuries, but also in the 8th-9th centuries. In the classifications of B. Dostal (type II) and Al. Ruttkay (type IV) are included in the 7th-10th centuries, and in the classification of M.H. Alechkovski (type II) belong to the 10th-11th centuries.[14]

The ax in the blacksmith's workshop in Hârșova appeared in the context of ceramic materials dating to the end of the 10th century and the beginning of the 11th century. The fragment from the spheroidal amphora may be helpful, as such objects have a higher frequency in discoveries after 971 (after the return of the Byzantine administration), although they appear in Dobrujan discoveries even earlier.[15]

According to the inventory, the workshop in the *extra muros* area of the Hârșova fortress seems to have functioned at the earliest in the last quarter of the 10th century, without excluding the possibility of being active at the beginning of the next century, being probably contemporary with the moment when the small precinct was raised. Although the dating of that type is generally earlier, the context of the discovery does not allow this. So far, in the 'Fortress', no habitation levels were discovered before the last quarter of the 10th century, an earlier settlement being known in Hârșova (end of the 8th-10th century), but this is located about 1.2 km west, in the 'Abattoir'.[16]

The workshop from Hârșova is one of the similar discoveries in Dobruja, among which we mention those from the settlements in Dinogetia ('the

[12] Teodor 1996, 64, figs. 35-36; 2003, 541.
[13] Teodor 2003, 543, 545.
[14] Teodor 2003, 543, 545.
[15] Paraschiv-Talmațchi 2016, 136-137.
[16] Paraschiv-Talmațchi *et al.* 2015, 397-423.

blacksmith's house'),[17] Oltina (blacksmith's workshop),[18] Păcuiul lui Soare (iron magnifiers and slag)[19] and Valu lui Traian (ore smelting furnaces).[20]

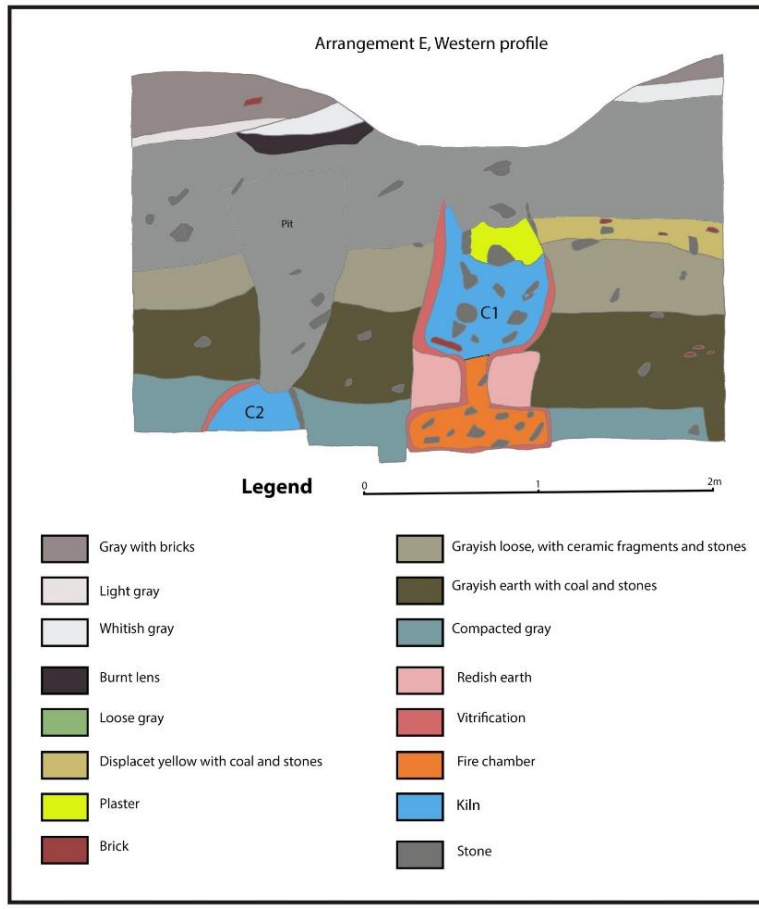
At 1.20 m towards the workshop there was an approximately circular pit (1.23 x 1.30 m), with walls slightly oblique so that it narrowed towards the base (Cpl. 3, pl. I/2). Its depth was 0.97 m. At the outline the pit was in the form of a dark gray spot, bordered by stones on the northern half. The filling of the pit consisted of brown earth with rare ash lenses, generally loose, in which were sporadic early medieval ceramic fragments, small and large stones, pieces of brick, two small iron nails, osteological remains of animal origin and some ceramic fragments from the Roman period. The ceramic inventory similar to the one in the workshop and the presence of the two iron nails lead us to assume that the two complexes were contemporary.

To the southeast of the blacksmith's workshop, on the access road to P. Munteanu's property, two ceramic kilns were discovered in 1995 (pl. II).[21] These were arranged in the land evacuated from the fortress, as a result of the clearing of the construction remains from the precinct and the preparation of the land for new constructions, not in a natural deposit. The two kilns belong to the type with two chambers (fire and burning vessels), separated by a platform with tubular channels (grate).

At the time of discovery, Kiln 1 still kept the fire chamber, the western part of the combustion chamber of the vessels and a single connecting channel of the platform that separated them. The fire chamber was short, slightly vaulted, and had dimensions corresponding to the boundaries of the lower part of the combustion chamber. The mouth of the kiln, made of bricks and stone, was oriented to the east and had an extension of the hearth on 0.38-0.40 m.

The combustion chamber was tronconic. It was preserved up to a height of 0.90 m, with a base diameter of 0.78 m, and that of the mouth of 0.60 m. The platform between the chambers of the installation was 0.37 m thick. The preserved channel was 0.25 m high. The potter burned horizontally over tiles and fragmentary bricks (3-4 cm thick), over which was applied a layer of plaster, made of yellow earth, thicker at the base of the chamber and thinner towards the top of it. The yellow earth plaster also dripped easily into the tubular channel of the separating plate. Ceramic fragments, faint traces of straw and prints of branches can be seen in the plaster.

[17] Ștefan *et al*. 1967, 72.
[18] Paraschiv-Talmațchi & Șova 2019, 420.
[19] Diaconu & Vîlceanu 1972, 167.
[20] Paraschiv-Talmațchi 2014, 14.
[21] Panait *et al*. 1995/1996, 130-133, figs. 5-6; Paraschiv 1996, 163-171.



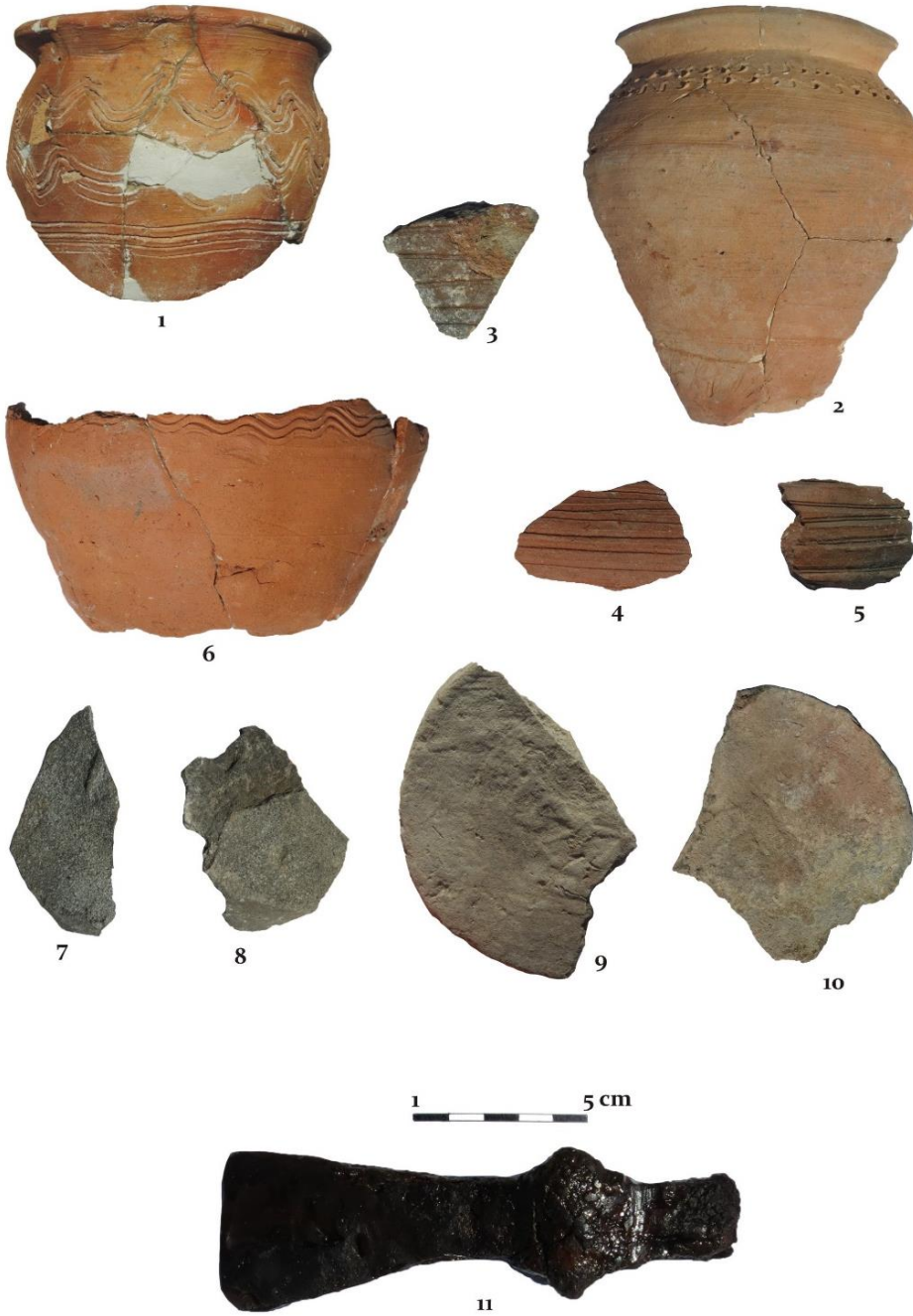
Pl. II. Pottery kilns discovered in Hârșova – 1 Profile; 2 Grund (after Panait *et al.* 1995/1996, figs. 5-6).

The walls of the baking chamber show inwards the appearance obtained after strong, successive burns, and from the thickness of its base 2-3 cm are vitrified, a phenomenon also found at the bottom of its walls, as well as at the channel between the two chambers of the kiln, showing the intense use of the installation.[22]

In the filling of the kiln were discovered several ceramic fragments, some burned several times, so that they changed color, became thinner and deformed. They were made of common clay and kaolinite, on a slow and fast spinning wheel. They were oxidized and were decorated with motifs made by the incision technique. Among the many fragments we mention: the upper part of a pot without handles (pl. III/1), with slightly profiled shoulders, short neck and slightly flared lip, which was ornamented with a wavy band that surrounded the vessel's shoulders twice, then turning into a band of horizontal lines; a fragmentary profile of a pot without handles (pl. III/2), with a slightly profiled body in the shoulder area, a short neck and a flared lip, decorated on the shoulders with two wavy lines; fragments of pots without handles ornamented with strips of wavy lines, with wider and spaced horizontal lines between them (pl. III/3-5); a fragment from the bottom of a pot without handles (untidy appearance on both sides), decorated with a band of wavy lines (pl. III/6); a fragment from the upper part of a pot without handles, with a straight neck and a slightly flared lip, ornamented with two bands in a disordered wave in the shoulder area, seconded by a field of horizontal lines; a fragment from the top of a pot without handles, with a short neck and an outward flared lip, adorned with wide, spaced horizontal lines; a fragment from the top of a pot without handles, with a short neck and an outward flared lip, adorned with three lines in a wave with uneven ridges, in the shoulder area; a fragment from the top of a pot without handles decorated with a row of alveoli in the shoulder area, seconded by wide, spaced horizontal lines; a fragment from the top of a pot without handles, with a short neck and a slightly flared lip, which shows a wavy band on the shoulder. Also, from Kiln 1 come seven pottery bottoms, fragmented, which have the mark of a potter (pl. III/7-10), embossed (three probably belonging to the same vessel).[23]

0.35 m south of the first kiln appeared Kiln 2,[24] at a depth of 1.85 m from the current level of walking, as a circular burned spot, at the same level as the fire chamber of Kiln 1. The fire chamber of Kiln 2 was slightly vaulted and was 0.30 m high. It was arranged on a deliberately deposited layer of earth,

[22] Panait *et al*. 1995/1996, 132; Paraschiv-Talmațchi 2009, 429.
[23] Paraschiv-Talmațchi 2009, 429-431, pl. III.
[24] Panait *et al*. 1995/1996, 132; Paraschiv-Talmațchi 2009, 433.



Pl. III. Pottery discovered in Kiln 1 (1-10);The ax discovered in the workshop (11) (photo: Constantin Șova).

6-7 cm thick, under which was the bedrock. The mouth of the fire chamber was oriented to the northeast.

At the time of the discovery, only the western wall was preserved from the baking chamber, on a height of 0.23 m. The platform between the two chambers of the installation, with a variable diameter of 0.91-0.95 m, had four tubular channels (with the role to transfer heat from the fire chamber to the upper one), 0.23-0.52 m high, with strongly burned walls, but not vitrified. This fact shows that Kiln 2 had a shorter period of use than Kiln 1.

Ceramic fragments were also discovered in this kiln, but reduced in quantity compared to those in the adjacent kiln, some secondarily burned and deformed. Among the early medieval fragments, we mention: the upper part of a vessel with a short neck and flared lip, oxidized burn, worked on the slow wheel of common paste, ornamented with wide horizontal incised lines; two oxidized burned fragments, made on a slow wheel, ornamented with frequently, thin horizontal lines, deeply incised. To these are added a few fragments that come from larger vessels, some from the Roman-Byzantine period, probably accidentally penetrated.

Based on the typological characteristics, the ceramic material inside, especially the secondary burning, and the archaeological context, it was established that the two ceramic kilns operated in the 11th-12th centuries, Kiln 1 established later than Kiln 2. Dating is supported and the discovery of a bronze coin, issued between 1059-1067,[25] appeared in one of the layers cut in Kiln 1.

From a typological point of view, the kilns from Hârșova resemble the potter's kiln discovered also in Dobruja, at Păcuiul lui Soare, inside the fortress, near the northern gate, dated in the first half of the 11th century.[26]

Archaeological research in 2020, carried out east of the fortress of Carsium, between its precincts and Dobruja Street, increased the information on the organization of this area in the early medieval period, as a handicraft district of the fortress. We now know of the existence of two kilns for burning ceramics (since 1995) and a workshop for processing and repairing metal objects (since 2020). The organization of a special space appears as a result of the development of the settlement and reveals the presence of specialized craftsmen. They could serve the local market, but could also respond to the demands of the surrounding settlements, making the settlement here a commercial center of that period.

[25] Panait *et al*. 1995/1996, 133.
[26] Baraschi 1974, 461-472.

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PIXE-Analyses of Ingots and Scrap from the Art Metal Production Centre near Zlatar, Veliki Preslav Municipality

Stella Doncheva, Nina Arhangelova, Ákos Csepregi, Anikó Angyal, Zita Szikszai

Abstract: In April 2018, a project called ACUDEMAB (Analyses of composition of non-ferrous metals, used for decorations in Early Middle Ages in Bulgaria) was successfully implemented in the Laboratory of Ion Beam Applications, MTA Atomki, Debrecen, in the framework of the EU H2020 IPERON CH (Integrated Project for the European Research Infrastructure ON Cultural Heritage) Trans-National Access program. Analysis of metal used for the casting of all these products, which is found in workshops and near furnaces can give convincing argument that this is precisely the metal used by medieval craftsmen. The results would give us the opportunity to identify ways of receipt of raw materials – import or reuse of waste products for new castings.

The appearance of elements in the analysis depends on the geological and metallurgical conditions. According to the mineralogy of typical lead ores and the behaviour of the elements during the melting process, antimony Sb, arsenic As, bismuth Bi, copper Cu and silver Ag are among the leading elements in lead analysis. Similarly, with much less concentration than the actual melting of the ore, elements such as cobalt, iron, nickel and zinc, and gold, arsenic, selenium and tellurium may appear in the metal. Tin is not a typical ingredient for lead ores hence its absence in lead ingots.

They belong to the so called Balkan metallogenic belt, where there are two basic types of mineralization: lead-zinc mineralization with key representatives of galenite, sphalerite, chalcopyrite, pyrite (there were some ancient galenite mines found) and gold bearing polymetal minerals, represented by galenite, sphalerite and gold-bearing pyrite. Gold is placed in the oxidising zone of the galenite and pyrite. Investigations made on the remains of antique copper mines make us say with great certainty that the major portion of raw materials (copper and bronze) came from the Burgas-Strandja mining region. Numerous traces of mining activities were found in that region. Only in the Burgas sub-region there are more than 250 ancient ore mines.

Key words: Metalwork, non-ferrous metals, alloys, lead bronze, tin-lead bronze

Резюме: Целта на настоящата работа е да представи резултатите от изследването на елементния състав на специално подбрана група от находки от трите центъра за металопластика в околностите на столицата Преслав – при Новосел, Златар и Надарево. Групата включва предимно слитъци (изходната суровина за производство) и скрап (леячи/части от леековата система). Слитъците от своя страна биват два вида – издължени, пръчковидни с кръгло или правоъгълно сечение; и кръгли, капковидни, с права основа и полусферична повърхност. Леячите представляват застинал метал, част от разклонената леякова система в леярската каса, които след отливането са изрязани от готовите изделия и отделени за претопяване и повторна употреба. Включените в настоящото изследване подобни леячи са с различна големина и форма и дават добра представа за размерите на леярските каси и вероятния брой отливки.

Изследваните предмети са над 70, затова и решихме да представим резултатите от тях в няколко поредни публикации, основани на произхода на отделните групи находки от трите производствени центъра. Първата работа е посветена на резултатите от изследването на находките от производствения център при Златар. Избрани и подложени на анализ са общо 17 предмета, обозначени с абревиатура, указваща техния произход и пореден списъчен номер (табл. I). Спрямо елементния състав на основата, находките се разделят съответно на:

– I – сплав на медна основа;

– II – сплав на сребърна основа;

– III – сплав на оловна основа.

Преобладаващи са предметите на медна основа, където медта се явява основният компонент на сплавта (табл. I). Медната сплав от своя страна е представена в няколко разновидности в зависимост от легиращите елементи (фиг. 1, 6–8). От сравнително чиста *мед* са изготвени общо 5 предмета. Това е и *първата група*, която включва два слитъка (Zl 1, Zl 15) и два леяча (Zl 11, Zl 13), (табл. II–III). *Втората група* на медна основа с 6 предмета е групата на *месингите* (табл. II–III). Тук основно попадат слитъци с плоска форма и правоъгълно сечение – Zl 2, Zl 3, Zl 4, Zl 7; един слитък с капковидна форма – Zl 16 и един фрагмент от леекова система – Zl 12 (фиг. 10). Изключение правят слитъка с овално сечение (Zl 7) и леяча (Zl 12), където съдържанието на олово е съответно 3,35% и 7,36% Pb и определя сплавта като *оловен месинг.* Две отделни групи формират леяча Zl 14 (*трета група*) и капковидния слитък Zl 18 (*четвърта група*). Първият предмет е отлят от *калаено-оловен бронз,* а вторият – *от калаен бронз*.

Сравнителното представяне на резултатите от елементния анализ на слитъците на медна основа (табл. I) показва, че те биват няколко разновидности, на които отговарят различни форми. Така например, слитъците с правоъгълно сечение (Zl 2, 3, 4, 7) са главно от втора група, т.е. тази на месингите, където преобладаващ метал е цинка Zn. От тях единствено слитъка Zl 16 е с капковидна форма, което може да се дължи на стапянето на остатък от суровина в удобна за ползване форма. Това предварително наблюдение се основава и на резултатите от елементния анализ на слитъка с подобна капковидна форма, отлят от калаен бронз (Zl 18), (табл. II–III).

Слитъците с издължена пръчковидна форма се причисляват към първата химична група и без съмнение са изходна суровина, т.е. на практика чиста мед (Zl 1, 15). Тук е редно да причислим и слитъка от оловен бронз (Zl 22), чието съдържание на мед е сходно с това на споменатите слитъци – Zl 22 – 96,41% Cu; Zl 1 – 98,52% Cu; Zl 15 – 98,73% Cu, а повишеното съдържание на олово – 2,64% Pb е привнесено от рудата (фиг. 9–11).

В резултат на елементния анализ на слитъци и части от леекови системи на медна основа, можем да обобщим, че са налице няколко типа сплави – медна, оловен бронз, месинг, оловен месинг, калаено-оловен бронз, калаен бронз. Слитъкът на сребърна основа, показва използването на сребърна сплав, легирана с мед, а тези на оловна основа – на максимално чисто олово.

В ерата на достатъчно развитите търговски отношения в ръцете на майсторите попада суровина от различни рудни източници. Доказателствата за използването на минералните ресурси по българските земи от древността до късното средновековие показват, че повечето от рудодобивните находища са познати и разработвани през всички исторически епохи. На това се дължи и непрекъснатия приток на суровини към работилниците на производствените центрове през първата половина на 10 в.

Резултатите от направените анализи потвърждават, че има два източника на суровини за отливане на изделия от сребърни и медни сплави: чрез използване на сплави с високо съдържание на мед и сплави, получени от повторното стапяне на бракувани изделия. Използването на такива сложни лигатури води до промяна на изходната сплав. Следователно, резултатите от анализите на слитъците и частите от леячи са сходни в елементарния състав и принадлежат към едни и същи групи. Металът от Средновековието е с достатъчно сложна лигатура и на практика е трудно, и в повечето случаи невъзможно, да се определят първоначалните изходни химически групи. Това обаче, не пречи да се добие една сравнително пълна картина на използваните през ранното средновековие в България метали и сплави и настоящата работа е малка, но надяваме се успешна, стъпка в тази насока.

Introduction

In the vicinity of the second Bulgarian capital Preslav, several significant centres for artistic metal have been found.[1] They used various non-ferrous metals, namely bronze (various types), brass, tin-lead alloys, lead. These production centres near the capital worked for several decades and in particular from 20 to 70 years of 10th century. In practice craftsmen manufactured a large number of objects, more than 2,000 artefacts have been found so far during archaeological research. These finds do not include the numerous mouldings and ingots, and waste products. Workshops with furnaces, fireplaces, various instruments and many castings that were made at place were also discovered. Among the items belt adornments – mounts, buckles, strap ends – dominate. There are a lot of decorations, such as earrings, bracelets, and items with Christian symbolism as medallions and crosses.

Analysis of metal used for the casting of all these products, which is found in workshops and near furnaces can give convincing argument that this is precisely the metal used by medieval craftsmen. The results would give us the opportunity to identify ways of receipt of raw materials – import or reuse of waste products for new castings.

In April 2018, a project called ACUDEMAB (Analyses of composition of non-ferrous metals, used for decorations in Early Middle Ages in Bulgaria) was successfully implemented in the Laboratory of Ion Beam Applications, MTA Atomki, Debrecen, in the framework of the EU H2020 IPERON CH (Integrated Project for the European Research Infrastructure ON Cultural Heritage) Trans-National Access program. This was the second mission, realized

[1] Bonev & Doncheva 2011.

in the laboratory of MTA Atomki, Debrecen. The first took place in two stages of the CHARISMA program in 2010-2011. The results of our previous analyses of the metal composition of selected samples of belt adornments and those with Christian finds have been published in 'Archaeologia Bulgarica' journal.[2]

I. Method of study

The aim of this project is to investigate the elemental composition of a specially selected set of findings from the three metalworking centres. It mainly includes ingots (raw material for production) and scrap (parts of pour lip system). The bars are of two types – elongated, rod-shaped with round or rectangular cross-section and round, drop-shaped with straight base and hemispherical surface. Founders or pour lip system are parts of the metal that has been thawed from the branched casting system in the casting box to which the molten metal has been subjected. After the casting, finished products had to be cut out from the moulding box and remains of it were separated for remelting and re-use. The parts included in this study are of differrent size and shape and give an idea of the dimensions of the casting boxes themselves, and somewhere, for the more preserved objects, and the number of castings, too.

The quantitative analysis of the samples was carried out in the scanning nuclear microprobe installed at the 0° beam channel of the 5 MeV Van de Graaf accelerator of MTA Atomki (Debrecen, Hungary).[3] For the irradiation of the samples, a proton beam of 2.5 MeV or 3.2 MeV energy focused down to the diameter of ~ 4 μm × 5 μm with a current of 100-300 pA was used. The scan size was 1 mm × 1 mm. On each sample, 1-2 areas of 1 mm² were measured. At first, the elemental maps on the full scan were recorded, then, if it was necessary, homogenous areas were selected for the measurements. For each measurement the accumulated charge was 0.1-0.5 μC.

An SDD detector with AP3.3 ultra-thin polymer window (SGX Sensortech) and a Gresham-type Be windowed Si(Li) detector with an additional kapton filter of 250 μm thickness, each with a 30 mm² active surface, were placed 135° to the incidence beam. The SDD detector was protected from the scattered protons by a permanent magnet. The accumulated charge was measured with a beam chopper.[4] A detailed description of the measurement setup can be found in the study of individual atmospheric aerosol particles at the Debrecen ion microprobe.[5]

[2] Doncheva *et al*. 2012a; 2012b; 2012c; 2013.
[3] Rajta *et al*. 1996, 148-153.
[4] Bartha & Uzonyi 2000, 339-343.
[5] Kertész *et al*. 2009; Simon *et al*. 2011, 2236–2240.

Signals from all detectors (two PIXE and the particle detector of the chopper) were recorded event by event in a list mode by the Oxford type OMDAQ2007 data acquisition system.[6] PIXE spectra with better resolution and lower dead time were recorded parallel to this with the SGX DX200 digital DPP. The obtained PIXE spectra were evaluated by the GUPIXWIN software.[7] At first, the elemental composition of the matrix was determined from the spectrum of the Be windowed Gresham-type detector using the iterative matrix solution method and then the spectrum of the SDD detector was analysed for impurities. As a final step, the elemental composition was normalized to 100%, if needed. The uncertainty of the PIXE measurement for the main components is ~ 2-5%, while for the trace elements it is ~ 10-15%. The uncertainty originating from the fitting process is added to this.

At the beginning and at the end of the measurement campaign, analyses of standard reference materials were performed to check the accuracy of the dose measurement and the precision of the PIXE system. The applied standards were the following: a series of pure metal foils by Advent Research Materials Ltd. with 50 μm thickness (Pb, Fe, Sn, Ni, Zr), ERM-EB375 bronze, and a layered sample (6 μm thick Ti foil on 50 μm Ni). The calibration of the beam chopper was also done at the beginning and at the end of the campaign (table I).

II. Analysis of results

The items surveyed exceed 70, so we decided to present results in several successive publications related to the origin of the findings from the separate production complexes. In the present work our attention is directed to the results of the research of findings at the production centre at Zlatar. A total of 17 objects, identified by an abbreviation indicating their origin and a sequential list number (table II), are selected and analysed. Compared to the elemental composition of the alloy base, the items are divided into:

– *I – copper-based alloy;*
– *II – silver-based alloy;*
– *III – lead-based alloy.*

1. A copper-based alloy:

In predominant copper-based items copper is the main component of the alloy (table II). The copper alloy is represented in several varieties depending on constituting elements (figs. 2, 7, 8, 14). A total of 5 items have been produced from relatively pure ***copper***. This is the ***first group*** that includes

[6] Grime & Dawson 1995, 107-113.
[7] Campbell & Boyd 2010, 3356-3363.

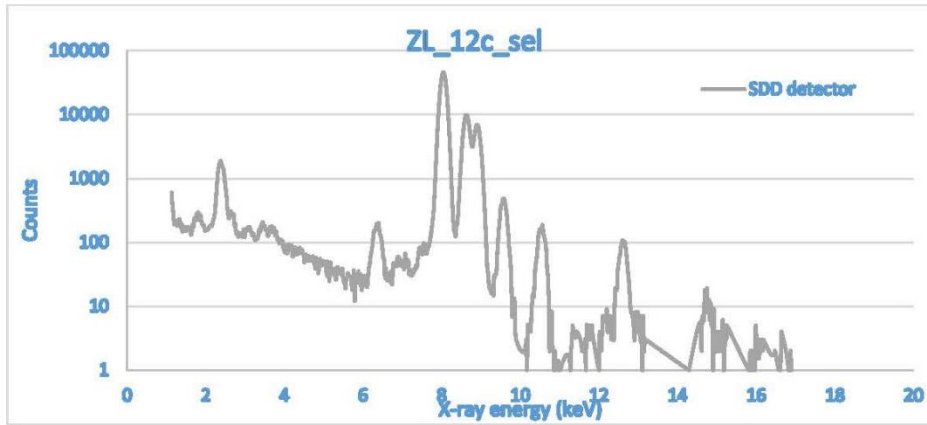
	Ti	Cr	Mn	Fe	Co	Ni	Cu	Zn	Ga	As	
LOD (ppm)	122	38	31	59	41	43	148	296	260	1273	
inf. depth. (μm)	7.32	11.08	13.17	15.18	17.01	18.56	19.93	21	9.84	10.75	
	Se	**Br**	**Zr**	**Nb**	**Ag**	**Sn**	**Sb**	**Au**	**Hg**	**Pb**	**Bi**
LOD (ppm)	73	89	216	753	267	718	702	4281	301	860	496
inf. depth. (μm)	12.09	13.35	18.05	18.7	21.87	22.57	22.66	9.23	9.74	10.8	11.36

Table I. Detection limits (LOD) in ppm
and information depth for 95% fractional yield (in μm).

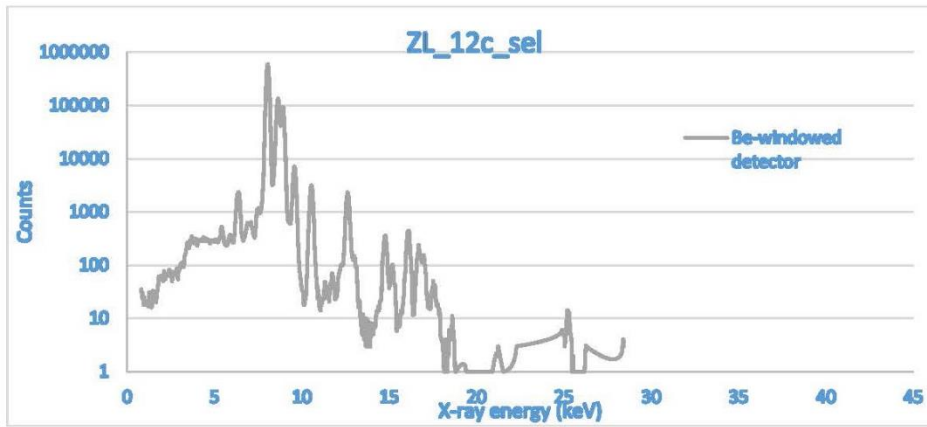
two ingots (Zl 1, Zl 15) and two casting pour lips (Zl 11, Zl 13) (table III-IV). The percentage of copper in them reaches 98,04-98,98% Cu (Zl 11 – Zl 13). The concentrations of the remaining constituents do not exceed 1%. Among them, the lead content (Pb) is predominant – from 0,26% (Zl 15) to 1% (0,93%) (Zl 11). The presence of arsenic (As) and antimony (Sb) is less than half a percent: 0,15-0,46% As; 0,11-0,13% Sb. More significant is the tin (Sn) content at the first ingot – 0,53% Sn (Zl 1). The presence of minimum quantities of these and other measured elements is a consequence of their entry from the sulphide ores. The low content of iron (Fe) in the raw material – from 0,10% to 0,24% (Zl 13 – Zl 1), except as a consequence of the primary ore minerals, confirms the very good reduction conditions during the melting of the ore (figs. 3, 10).

It is noteworthy that ingots from two varieties have been cast of pure copper – rod-shaped with round section (Zl 1) and drop-shaped (Zl 15). There are also two copper pour lips (Zl 11) and (Zl 13). This group also includes the rod-shaped ingot (Zl 22), in which the copper content is 96,41% Cu. The lead concentration here is significantly higher than in the other items in this group and reaches 2,64% Pb. The copper-lead ratio determines the alloy as ***lead bronze*** (table III-IV; fig. 10).

The ***second copper-based group***, which includes 6 objects, is the ***brass group*** (table III-IV). This group mainly consists of flat and rectangular cross section ingots (Zl 2, Zl 3, Zl 4, Zl 7); a drop-shaped ingot (Zl 16) and a fragment of pour lip system (Zl 12) (fig. 11). The predominant element in the alloy in these items is zinc Zn (table IV). Its content ranges from 16,58% to 27,06% Zn (Zl 4 – Zl 2). The average zinc value is 25% Zn, which determines the alloy as ***brass***. It should be noted that for the flat elongated ingot (Zl 4) the zinc content is the smallest but in contrast to the other objects it has an increased content of tin – 0,29% Sn, nickel – 0,13% Ni and iron – 0,21% Fe (fig. 4).



A.

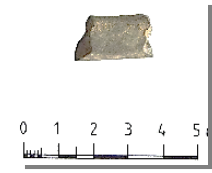
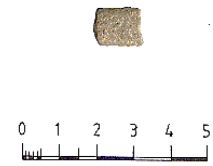
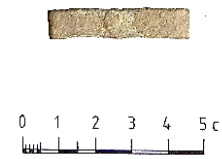
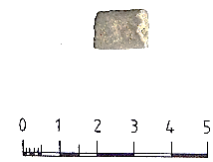


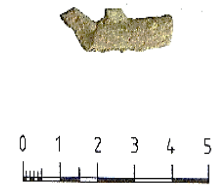
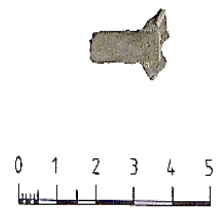
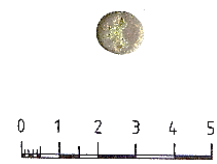
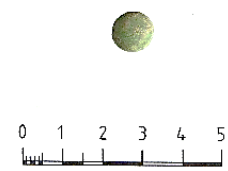
B.

Fig. 1. PIXE spectra recorded on the ZL_12c_sel samples (selected raster).
A. The upper spectrum was recorded with the SDD UTW detector;
B. the lower spectrum was recorded with the Be-windowed Si(Li) detector equipped with 250 μm kapton absorbent.

In the alloys of this group, the copper content is lower than that of the previous one. The ratio of copper is in the range of 72,24%-75,31% Cu (Zl 2 – Zl 16). The other elements are less than 1% and are coming from the original raw material – the ore. The trace elements, such as arsenic, for example, are only 0,2% As, and antimony Sb is absent. The tin is 0,13% to 0,29% Sn, and lead ranges from 0,07% to 0,87% Pb (table III-IV; fig. 11).

The exception is made by the oval cross section ingot (Zl 7) and the pour lip (Zl 12), where the lead content is 3,35% and 7,36% Pb respectively. It defines the alloy as ***lead brass***. The content of arsenic here is greater – 0,33%

Sample	Dimensions	Object	Alloy	Main elements obtained after PIXE, sorted by quantity above and about 1%	Image
S. No ZLT 1	4,8/0,7-0,7/0,5-0,6	Ingot	Cooper	Cu	
S. No ZLT 2	3/1,3/0,6	Ingot	Brass	Cu, Zn	
S. No ZLT 3	1,2/1/0,6	Ingot	Brass	Cu, Zn	
S. No ZLT 4	3,9/0,7/0,2	Ingot	Brass	Cu, Zn	
S. No ZLT 5	3,8/0,4/0,2	Ingot	Silver	Ag, Cu	
S. No ZLT 7	1,4/1/0,5	Ingot	Lead brass	Cu, Zn, Pb	

S. No ZLT 11	3/0,4-0,6/0,1-0,3	Pour lip	Cooper	Cu	
S. No ZLT 12	2,3/0,7-1,6/0,2-0,3	Pour lip	Lead brass	Cu, Zn, Pb	
S. No ZLT 13	3/0,5-1/0,15-0,2	Pour lip	Cooper	Cu	
S. No ZLT 14	2,1/0,6-1,5/0,2	Pour lip	Tin-Lead bronze	Cu, Sn, Pb	
S. No ZLT 15	1,2/1,1/0,5	Ingot	Cooper	Cu	
S. No ZLT 16	1/1,1/0,4	Ingot	Brass	Cu, Zn	

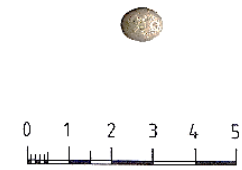
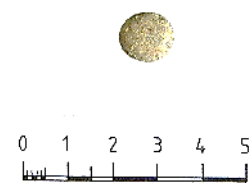
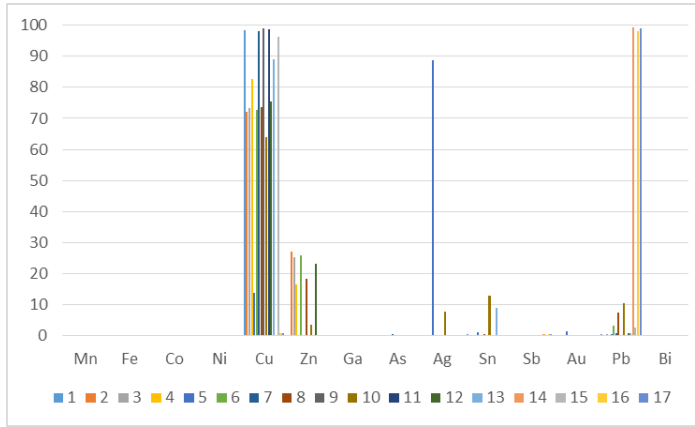
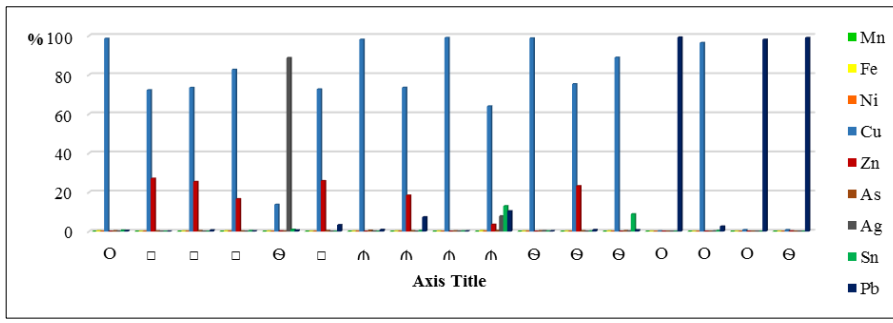
S. No ZLT 18	1/0,8/0,4	Ingot	Tin bronze	Cu, Sn	
S. No ZLT 19	4,2/0,4/0,5	Ingot	Lead	Pb	
S. No ZLT 22	2,2/0,2/0,4	Ingot	Lead bronze	Cu, Pb	
S. No ZLT 23	2,5/0,2/0,4	Ingot	Lead	Pb	
S. No ZLT 24	1,2/1,1/0,3	Ingot	Lead	Pb	

Table II. Ingots and scrap found at the production center near Zlatar, Veliki Preslav Municipality

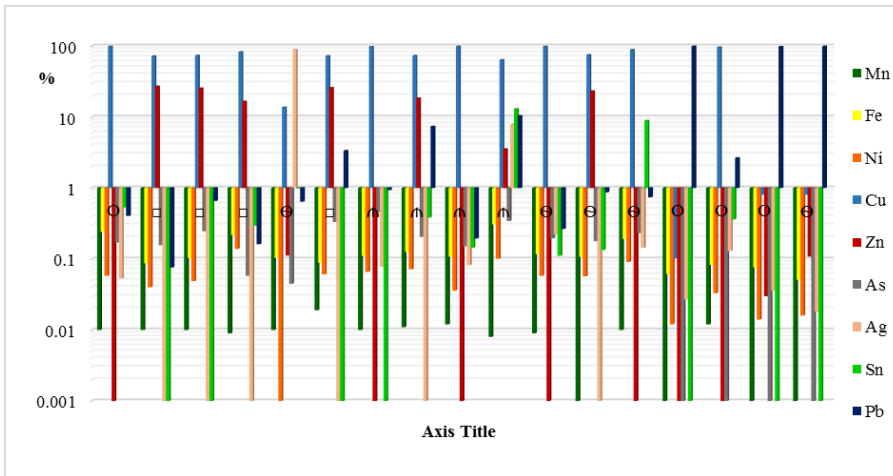
and 0,20% As. The two lead brass items are respectively ingot (Zl 7) and pour lip (Zl 12) (table III-IV). The increased lead content of the pour lip, which is actually a reused metal, is due to the artificial addition of lead to the alloy. The purpose of this additive is to improve the casting properties of the alloy, including thinness or plasticity, i.e. the ability of the molten metal to fill up all the details of the image in the mould.



a.



b.



c.

Fig. 2. Elemental composition of 17 artifacts of non-feroud metals, found on the center of metal art in Zlatar near Preslav. a-b – linear scale; c – logarithmic scale.

Two separate groups formed by the pour lip (Zl 14) – ***third group***; and the drop ingot (Zl 18) – ***fourth group***. The first item is cast of ***tin-lead bronze*** (table III-IV). The percentage of tin and lead is 13,00% Sn – 10,37% Pb. The silver content is also high – 7,86% Ag, due to its introduction from the galena ore (fig. 5). Compared to the items examined so far, the percentage of gold is relatively high – 0,12% Au. This is due to the increased zinc value – 3,53% Zn, through which gold has entered, too. Nickel and iron also have higher values than other items – 0,10% Ni and 0,30% Fe. The picture is similar for both antimony and arsenic – 0,23% Sb and 0,34% As (fig. 12). Against all these ratios, the copper base has the lowest indices – 63,95% Cu. Considering that the measured item is not raw material (ingot), but part of the casting product (pour lip), it is likely that the increased quantities of the main alloying metals are due to pieces of scrap added. It is known that when the metal is repeatedly melted, the number and quantity of elements is increased. At the same time, the practice of adding various metals (lead, tin, antimony, arsenic, etc.) was also widespread in order to improve the casting qualities of bronze.

The drop-shaped ingot (Zl 18), separated in the ***fourth group***, is the last object of the copper-based articles. The main alloying element is tin Sn (table III-IV). Its content is 8,86% Sn, which determines the alloy as ***tin bronze***. The values of the other elements are less than 1%, but their variety and presence suggests the purposeful improvement of the alloy before the ingot is formed by the addition of some Sn (fig. 5). The percentage of other elements – lead, antimony, arsenic, silver, etc. (0,74% Pb, 0,33% Sb, 0,23 As, 0,14% Ag) suggests that the ingot is not a primary raw material, but is made of a molten and reused multiplexed metal (fig. 12).

The comparative presentation of elemental analysis results (table II) on the copper based alloy shows that they are several varieties of different shapes. For example, rectangular section ingots (Zl 2, Zl 3, Zl 4, Zl 7) are mainly from the second group, i.e. that of the brass, where zinc is the predominant metal. Only the ingot (Zl 16) is in a drop-shaped form which may be due to the melting of a residue of raw material in a form convenient for further use. This preliminary observation is also based on results of ingot elemental analysis, cast from tin bronze (Zl 18), (table III-IV).

The ingots with elongated rod-shape design are assigned to the first chemical group and are no doubt raw material, i.e. practically pure copper (Zl 1, Zl 15). It is also appropriate to add the lead bronze ingot (Zl 22), whose copper content is similar to that of the said ingots – 96,41% Cu (Zl 22); 98,52% Cu (Zl 1); 98,73% Cu (Zl 15), and an increased content of lead – 2,64% Pb coming from the ore (figs. 10-12).

No	Object	Section	Ti	Cr	Mn	Fe	Co	Ni	Cu	Zn	Ga	As	Se	Br	Zr	Nb	Ag	Sn	Sb	Au	Hg	Pb	Bi	Alloy
ZI 1	ingot	O		0.04	0.01	0.2	0.006	0.05	99		0.1	0.2					0.05	0.3	0.1			0.4	0.01	copper
ZI 2	ingot	□		0.02	0.008	0.08	0.003	0.04	73	26		0.2	0.005									0.05		brass
ZI 3	ingot	□		0.02	0.01	0.1		0.05	74	25	0.03	0.3		0.01								0.6		brass
ZI 4	ingot	Θ		0.02	0.009	0.2	0.003	0.1	81	18		0.07	0.01					0.3				0.1		silver
ZI 5	ingot	□		0.006		0.04			14	0.06		0.03		0.005			83	0.8		1.2		0.5	0.02	lead brass
ZI 7	pour lip	⩚		0.02	0.008	0.1		0.05	74	25	0.07	0.2										0.8		copper
ZI 11	pour lip	⩚		0.02	0.009	0.1	0.005	0.06	98		0.3	0.5			0.03	0.04	0.07		0.2			1		lead brass
ZI 12	pour lip	⩚		0.02	0.01	0.1		0.07	73	18	0.07	0.2						0.4				7.4		copper
ZI 13	pour lip	⩚		0.02	0.01	0.1	0.003	0.04	99		0.2	0.1					0.09	0.2	0.08			0.2	0.01	tin-lead bronze
ZI 14	ingot	Θ		0.02	0.008	0.3	0.03	0.1	64	3.6	0.06	0.4	0.005		0.01		7.9	13	0.2	0.1		10		copper
ZI 15	ingot	Θ	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.1		0.06	99		0.2	0.2					0.2	0.07	0.09	0.03	0.02	0.2		brass
ZI 16	ingot	Θ	0.009	0.02	0.008	0.1		0.06	75	23	0.08	0.2			0.02			0.1				1		tin bronze
ZI 18	ingot	O		0.06	0.01	0.3	0.01	0.09	89		0.2	0.2			0.05	0.03	0.1	8.8	0.3	0.02	0.03	0.8	0.01	lead
ZI 19	ingot	O		0.01	0.009	0.05		0.01	0.09					0.009				0	0.4			99	0.09	lead bronze
ZI 22	ingot	O		0.02	0.01	0.08	0.004	0.04	98		0.2	0.04	0.007				0.1	0.2	0	0.02	0.03	1.7		lead
ZI 23	ingot	Θ		0.02		0.07		0.01	0.9	0.03			0.01				0.02		0.6			98	0.1	lead
ZI 24				0.01		0.05	0.005	0.01	0.3	0.01			0.02				0.01		0.5			99	0.2	

Legend:

O – long-shaped ingot / round section

□ – long-shaped ingot / rectangular section

Θ – oval or round dripping ingot / oval or round section

⩚ – pour lip

Table III. Elemental analysis of ingots and scrap found at the production center near Zlatar, Veliki Preslav Municipality

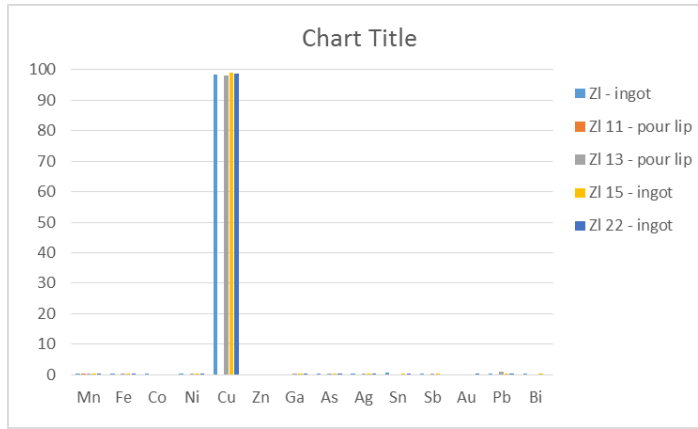


Fig. 3. Copper alloy group (I-1).

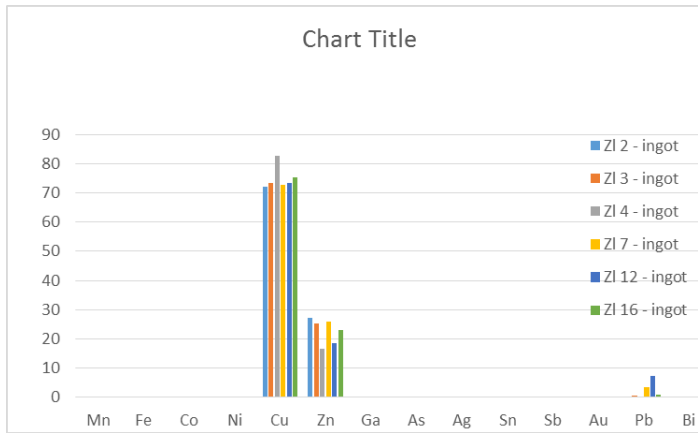


Fig. 4. Copper alloy group (I-2).

2. A silver based alloy:

In this group there is only the drop-shaped ingot (Zl 5), (table III-IV). It is cast from a silver alloy with a copper amount added, i.e. a silver-copper alloy – 88,67% Ag, 13,72% Cu. The gold content is near a percent and a half – 1,41% Au and is supplied from the copper ores. The amount of tin, reaching about 1% (0,98% Sn), fell into the alloy from ores. The origin of zinc is similar – 0,11% Zn, which is minimal and does not affect the alloy properties (fig. 13). The low lead content – 0,64% Pb is due to the very good conditions of the cupellation process of galena ores and extraction of silver.

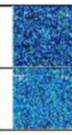
No	Object	Fe	Cu	Zn	Ag	Sn	Pb	Alloy
Zl 1	ingot							cooper
Zl 2	ingot							brass
Zl 3	ingot							brass
Zl 4	ingot							brass
Zl 5	ingot							silver
Zl 7	ingot							lead brass
Zl 11	pour lip							cooper
Zl 12	pour lip							lead brass
Zl 13	pour lip							cooper
Zl 14	pour lip							tin-lead bronze
Zl 15	ingot							cooper
Zl 16	ingot							brass
Zl 18	ingot							tin bronze
Zl 19	ingot							lead
Zl 22	ingot							lead bronze
Zl 23	ingot							lead
Zl 24	ingot							lead

Table IV. Cards of main elements obtained after PIXE-analyses

3. A lead based alloy:

There are three ingots – two with elongated rod-like shape (Zl 19, Zl 23) and one drop-shaped with flat base and rounded surface (Zl 24) (table II). Predominant among ingots, as raw material, are those with elongated shape and round section. Therefore, we assume that the last ingot (Zl 24), which differs from this, is secondarily melted in this form. This may have happened in the course of the operation, for example for easier and quicker collection

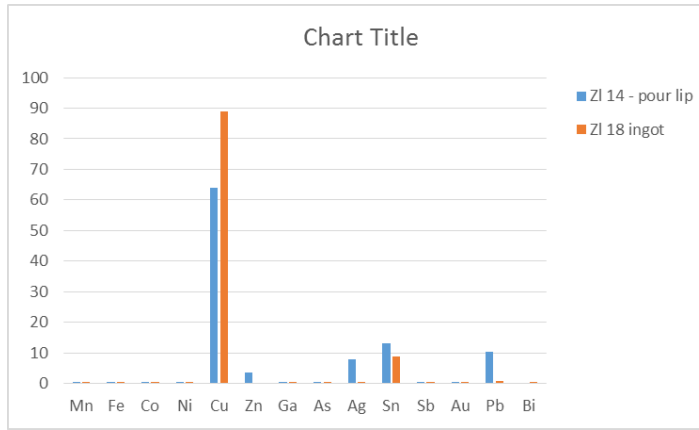


Fig. 5. Cooper alloy group (I-3/I-4).

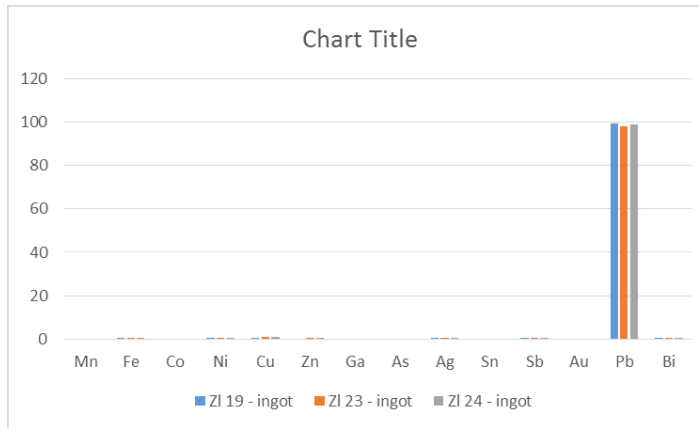


Fig. 6. Lead alloy group (III).

and consequent storage of residues of the metal used initially – part of a rod-shaped ingot with a round section. The lead concentration shows that in practice the ingots are cast from pure lead – 99,18% Pb (Zl 19), 98,05% Pb (Zl 23), 98,94% (Zl 24) (table III-IV). Antimony content – 0,46% Sb (Zl 19), 0,55% Sb (Zl 23), 0,54% Sb (Zl 24) and bismuth content were introduced from the ore and showed this is mainly the lead galena ore (fig. 6). This is also suggested by the copper content – 0,10% Cu (Zl 19), 0,80% Cu (Zl 23), 0,79% Cu (Zl 24). The values of analysed elements in the two last ingots – (Zl 23) and (Zl 24) are so close that we are tempted to assume the drop-shaped item was part of the elongated ingot (Zl 23) (fig. 14).

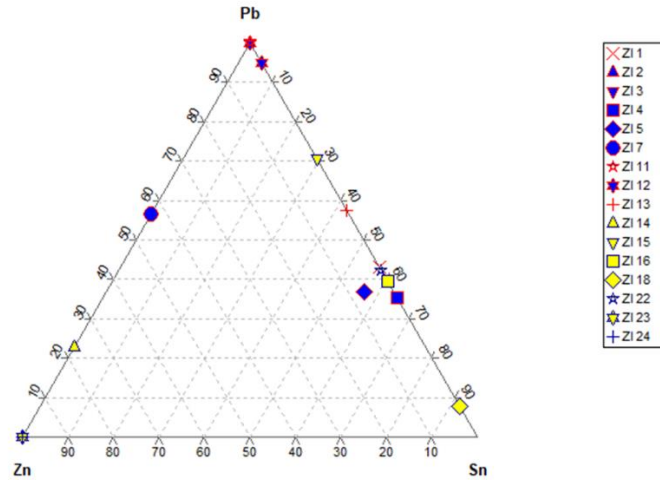


Fig. 7. Triplot. Sn-Pb-Zn.

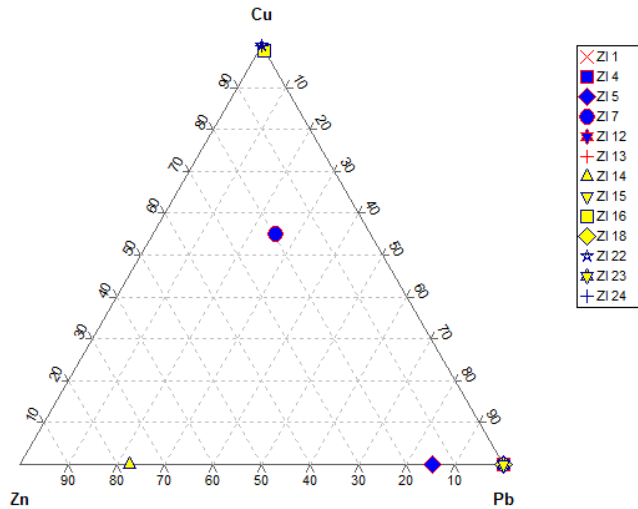


Fig. 8. Triplot. Pb-Zn-Cu.

Conclusions

As a result of the elemental analysis of ingots and parts of casting systems (pour lips), we can summarize that there are several types of alloys – copper, lead bronze, brass, lead brass, tin-lead bronze, tin bronze. The silver-based ingot shows a silver alloy use with added copper, but those of lead based indicate pure lead (figs. 2, 15; tab. III). Artefacts of copper base show

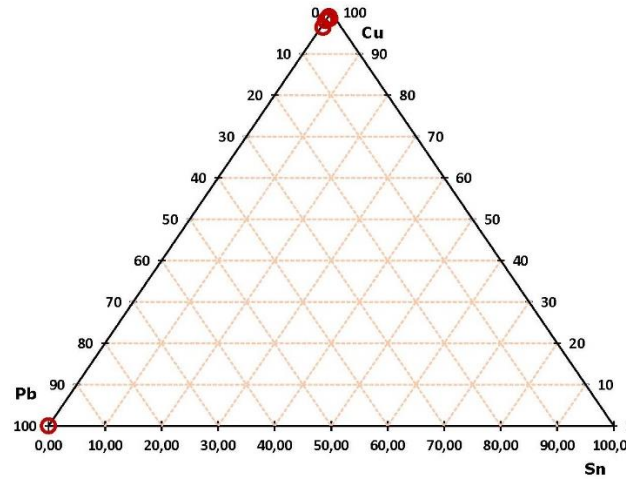


Fig. 9. Triplot. I.1 alloy group.

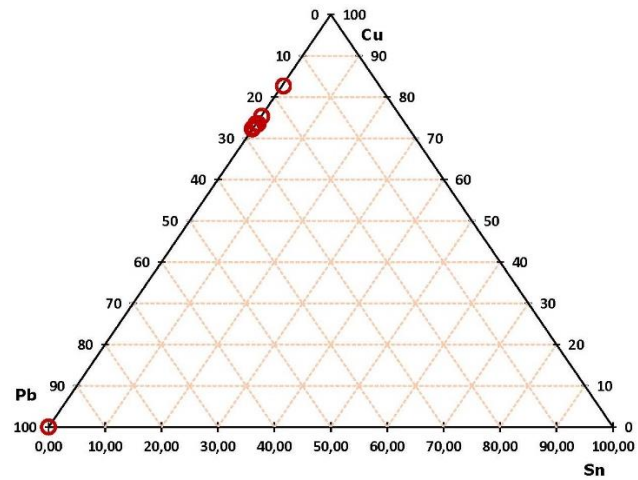


Fig. 10. Triplot. I.2 alloy groups.

low arsenic content, which was obviously not introduced by craftsmen, but seems to have come in the alloy as a result of melting bronze ingots (fig. 20; tab. III).

Copper alloys with content of lead have been known since the Bronze Age and were used in the second phase of the Iron Age precisely in connection with the lead extraction technique, i.e. cupellation.[8] The main advantage

[8] Pernitska 1994, 37; Agricola 1912, 439-490.

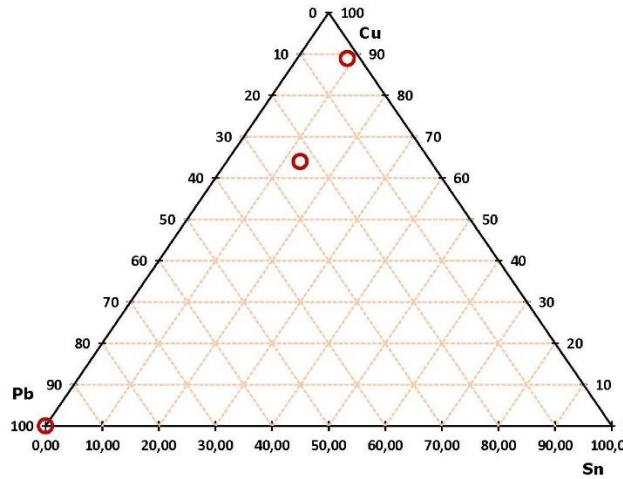


Fig. 11. Triplot. I.3-4 alloy groups.

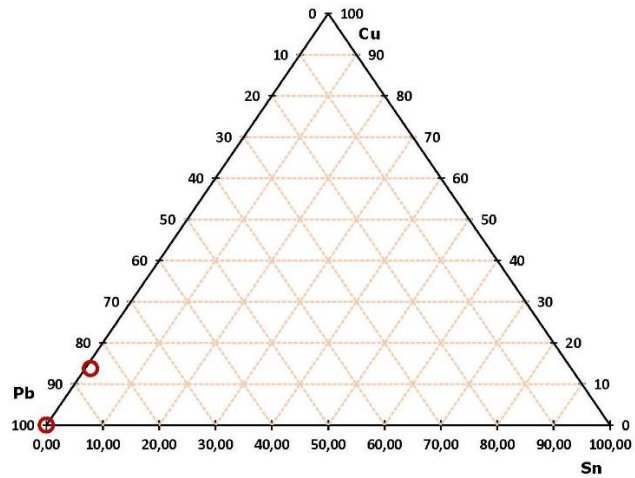


Fig. 12. Triplot. II alloy group.

of these alloys is the improved flowability, which makes it possible to fill into shapes and moulds. During Antiquity another notable advantage is the fact that the presence of lead leads to a significant decrease in the melting temperature of the whole alloy, which is of great importance, given the difficulties involved in achieving the necessary reduction conditions. The main disadvantage is the impossibility of forging treatment. Regardless of the lead pathway in copper, it has a significant impact on the technological properties of the metal. It is known that lead does not enter in copper solution. If lead

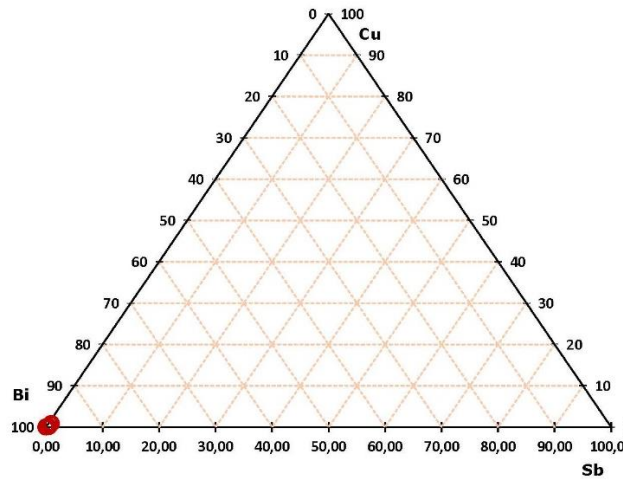


Fig. 13. Triplot. III alloy group.

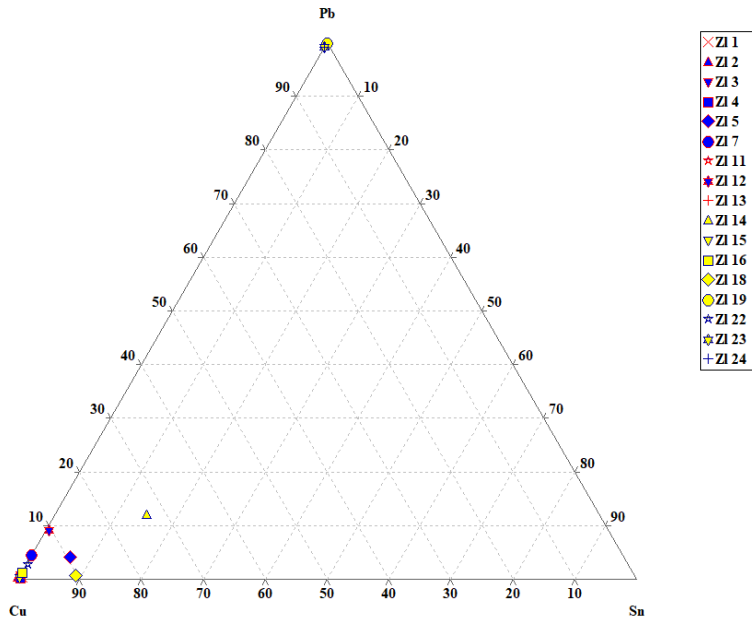


Fig. 14. Triplot. Tin-copper-lead. (Sn-Cu-Pb).

is more than 3% Pb, it has been added to the copper ore alloy (figs. 2, 15; tab. III). If the correlation coefficient between the silver and lead concentrations of Ag-Pb is high, this means that silver Ag does not come from copper ores but from lead Pb without cupellation.

Lead can be referred to as artificial impurity when it is within the range of 0,3-1% Pb. Therefore, low-lead products refer to the group of natural alloys resulting from the penetration of this element from the ores or as a result of the melting of lead copper. Tin Sn and lead Pb content in a large part of the objects below a certain limit indicates that their presence in the alloy is a result of the transition from the ores.

Some of the ingots and pouring lips are made of multicomponent alloy – tin-lead bronze, tin bronze, lead bronze, which, in addition to the tin and lead, contains all remaining elements in just fraction of the percent (fig. 2, 15-16; tab. III). The admixtures were either introduced through the source ores, or as a result of adding old bronze items to the mix. Thus some metals were introduced to the alloy accidentally to the source material (fig. 17; tab. III).

The high zinc content identifies the alloy as brass (figs. 2, 18; tab. III). Similar objects are found in North-West Russia – Stara Ladoga (second half of 8th to 10th century), Riurikovo and Sarskoe gradishte (9th to 10th century), Gnezdovo (10th to first half of 11th century).[9] The other elements are present at a considerably lower content. The group of brass items cast by the Bulgarian medieval jewellers is comparatively small, unlike the Russian metal art for which brass items take a considerable place among all items investigated so far. The prolific casting of brass items by Staraya (Old) Ladoga jewellers, for example, is explained most of all with the colour effect of the brass which resembles gold.[10] Therefore, we assume brass ingots come from East-European steppes or Russia. The analysis of the brass items from the metal art centre in Zlatar demonstrates low percentage of trace elements (Co, Ni, As, Sb, etc.) in alloys, which is an indicator of the high level of metal refinement achieved by the Bulgarian jewellers. The average iron content of 0,08-0,10% Fe in most items is an evidence for extremely good reduction in the melting process.[11]

A constant supply of fresh metal was not mandatory as the craftsmen widely used scrapped items to cast jewellery. The jewellers used alloys with composition typical for the certain region for very long periods of time.

[9] Eniosova *et al.* 2008, 134

[10] Kirpichnikov 2002, 227-253.

[11] Craddock & Meeks 1987, 187-190; Davies 1935.

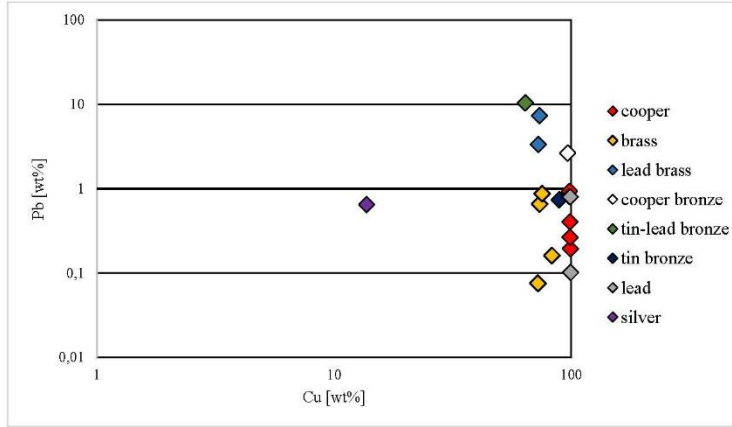


Fig. 15. Scatter graph of the concentration of copper and lead (Cu-Pb) in non-ferrous metal artifacts found at the production center of metal art in Zlatar, near Preslav.

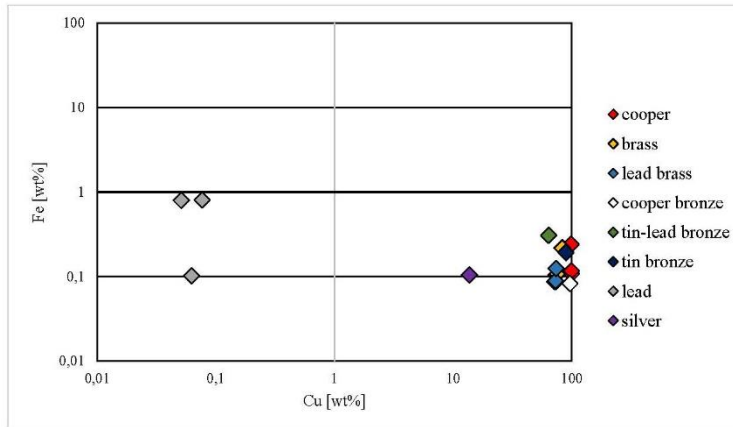


Fig. 16. Scatter graph of the concentration of copper and iron (Cu-Fe) in non-ferrous metal artifacts found at the production center of metal art in Zlatar, near Preslav.

There is no doubt that in the process of casting of various items they took into account the specific properties of metals. By adding tin, zinc, lead, etc. in different proportions, the craftsmen sought to improve the alloy casting properties and subsequently the mechanical properties of finished items (figs. 2, 18-19).

The results show that lead ingots were made of comparatively pure metal. Quite naturally, lead (Pb) takes the major share in the lead alloy items,

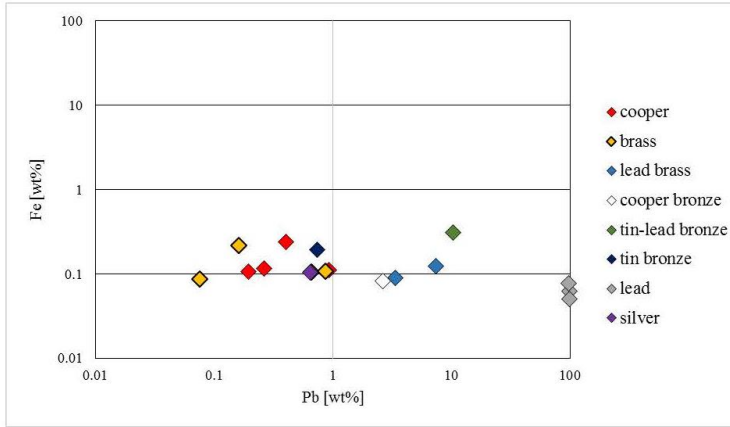


Fig. 17. Scatter graph of the concentration of lead and iron (Pb-Fe) in non-ferrous metal artifacts found at the production center of metal art in Zlatar, near Preslav.

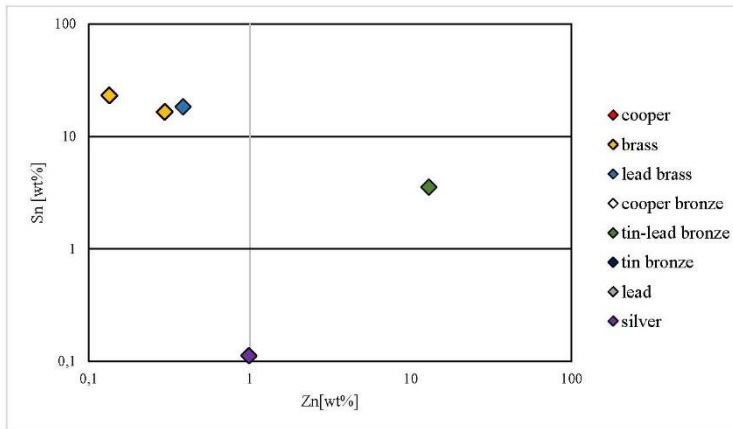


Fig. 18. Scatter graph of the concentration of zinc and tin (Zn-Sn) in non-ferrous metal artifacts found at the production center of metal art in Zlatar, near Preslav.

but we also traced the presence of antimony (Sb) and arsenic (As) (fig. 20; tab. III). When used in small portions (up to 3% by weight approximately), these additives exert hardening effect not only to lead alloys but to copper alloys as well. The low silver Ag content in the lead alloy samples (0,02%, 0,03% and 0,01% respectively) demonstrates the high technological level achieved by the medieval metallurgists in the cupellation and purification of metals. Lead ingots were mainly used in the metal art centres for preparation of models, which were subsequently used for casting items of silver and

copper alloys. As for the trace elements, the most important thing is to establish which of them are commonly present in all lead alloys and what role they play for the proper determination of the origin of ores (figs. 2, 15, 17; tab. III).

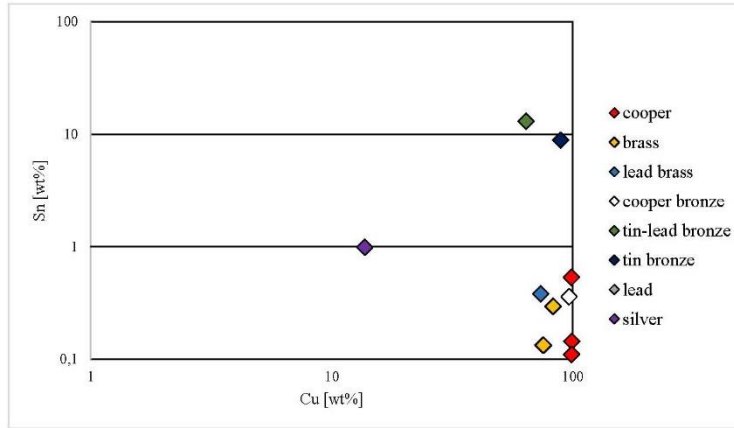


Fig. 19. Scatter graph of the concentration of copper and tin (Cu-Sn) in non-ferrous metal artifacts found at the production center of metal art in Zlatar, near Preslav.

The most common trace elements that come from lead ores are bismuth Bi, silver Ag, antimony Sb and arsenic As, and transit elements – iron Fe through zinc Zn (figs. 2, 16; tab. III). Less common is gold, mercury, tin, cadmium, tellurium and selenium, and in association with the available lead ores. The concentration of these elements in the molten metal lead naturally depends on their intrinsic concentration in the ores and the melting mode in the furnaces, both ranging from melting to melting. Thus, the trace elements and their signature reflect the ore deposits and melting conditions in the furnace.[12] High levels of arsenic As and antimony Sb suggest multiple re-melting (figs. 2, 19-20; tab. III). Here these levels are low, and the arsenic is almost absent. This indicates the use of relatively pure metal without further processing in the production centres for artistic metal in Preslav.

The appearance of elements in the analysis depends on the geological and metallurgical conditions. According to the mineralogy of typical lead ores and the behaviour of the elements during the melting process, antimony Sb, arsenic As, bismuth Bi, copper Cu and silver Ag are among the leading elements in lead analysis. Similarly, with much less concentration than the

[12] Rehren & Prange 1998, 183-196.

actual melting of the ore, elements such as cobalt, iron, nickel and zinc, and gold, arsenic, selenium and tellurium may appear in the metal. Tin is not a typical ingredient for lead ores hence its absence in lead ingots (figs. 2, 18-19; tab. III).

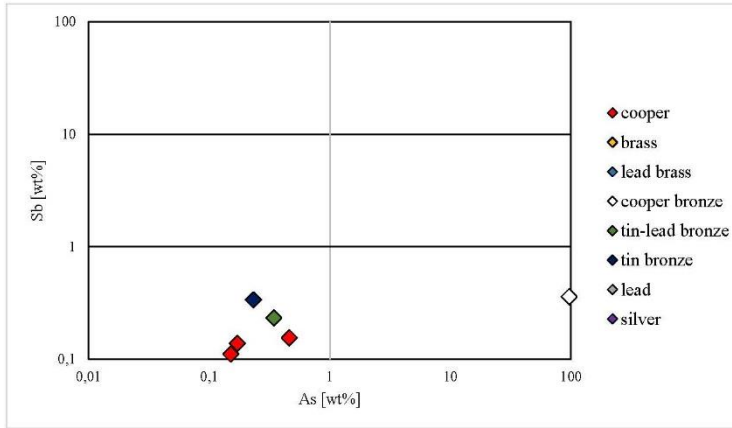


Fig. 20. Scatter graph of the concentration of arsenic and antimony (As-Sb) in non-ferrous metal artifacts found at the production center of metal art in Zlatar, near Preslav.

The results of the PIXE analysis give us some idea of the origin of raw materials used by the medieval craftsmen, as well as of the possible routes of supply to the metal art centres. Along with recycling of scrapped silver items, the jewellers used ingots of precious metals. A considerable number of such ingots have been found in the metal art centre of Zlatar. A well-known fact is that in the Bulgarian lands there were native silver deposits, such as the ones near Sedmochislenitsi – Municipality of Vratsa, Dolna Kamenitsa – Municipality of Etropole, Lesidren – Muicipality of Lovech, etc.[13]

They belong to the so called Balkan metallogenic belt, where there are two basic types of mineralization: lead-zinc mineralization with key representatives of galenite, sphalerite, chalcopyrite, pyrite (there were some ancient galenite mines found) and gold bearing polymetal minerals, represented by galenite, sphalerite and gold-bearing pyrite. Gold is placed in the oxidising zone of the galenite and pyrite. Investigations made on the remains of antique copper mines make us say with great certainty that the major portion of raw materials (copper and bronze) came from the Burgas-Strandja mining

[13] Georgiev 1987, 21.

region. Numerous traces of mining activities were found in that region. Only in the Burgas sub-region there are more than 250 ancient ore mines.[14]

In the age of sufficiently developed trade relations, the raw material from different ore sources falls into the hands of masters. The results from the analyses confirmed that there were two sources of raw materials for casting of silver and copper alloy items: by use of high copper and lead alloy ingots and by re-melting scrapped items. The use of complex ligatures leads to a change of the starting alloy. Therefore, the results of the analyses of the ingots and parts of pour lips are similar in elemental composition and belong to the same groups. In practice, metal from the Middle Ages became complicated and making even impossible to separate the starting chemical groups. The evidence of use of mineral resources on the Bulgarian lands from the ancient to late medieval era shows that most of the ore deposits had been known and developed over ages.

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[14] Panayotov & Iordanov 1975; Bonchev 1920; Konyarov 1953, 24-39.

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Treasures with medieval items of Byzantine tradition, discovered inside the Carpathian Arch (Romanian and Serbian territory) from 13th-14th centuries

Silviu Oța

Abstract: Inside the Carpathian Arch, on the present territory of Romania and the Serbian Banat, were discovered several treasures that contain items attributable to the Balkan space in terms of the typology of most items. Most of them were discovered either in marginal areas, where the Wallachian voivodes had domains (Amnaș, Streza-Cârțișoara, Brașov), or near the border areas close to the Danube (Dubovac, Duplijaja and Macoviște) and on the Lower Tisza (Banatski Despotovac). The exceptions are the treasures from Șopteriu (where only remains of a tiara were found, more specifically necklaces with pendants), Sâmbăteni and Brașov. To these is added another one found in the former county of Maramureș.

The analyzed treasures include tiaras plate, hair rings, earings, temple earrings, coins, glass bracelets, silver bracelets, buttons, metal vesels, fragments of ingots, buckles. In some treasures the items have different origins, balkanic or central european.

The chronology of the burial of the treasures indicates first of all the Tatar invasion of 1241-1242, but also the following ones from the thirteenth century. For the other situations, the causes had rather local reasons. For the middle Danube area, we must not forget the attacks of the Cumans from the end of the thirteenth century, when numerous destructions of the localities from the lower Tisza plain were attested. Other important moments can be related to the Danube conflicts between the Kingdom of Hungary and the Ottoman Empire, especially during the reign of Sigismund of Luxembourg (1387-1437). In southern Transylvania, the situation can be linked either to the tense relations between the king and the Saxons in the south of the region, but also to possible Tatar invasions on the Olt valley at the end of the thirteenth century and the beginning of the fourteenth century. Starting with the fifteenth century, the burial of the treasures can be attributed to the Turkish invasions.

Key words: treasure, silver, earring, bracelet, tiara

Резюме: В Карпатската арка, на територията на днешна Румъния и сръбския Банат, са открити съкровища, които съдържат предмети, приписвани на балканското пространство по отношение на типологията им. Повечето от тях са открити или в

периферни области, където влашките войводи са имали владения (Амнас, Стреза-Каршишоара, Брашов), или в близост до граничните райони до р. Дунав (Дубовац, Дуплиджая и Маковище) и по Долна Тиса (Банатски Деспотовац). Изключение правят съкровищата от Чоптериу (където са открити само останки от диадема, и по-точно огърлици с висулки), Самбетени и Брашов. Към тях се добавя още едно, открито в бившия окръг Марамуреш.

Анализираните съкровища включват диадеми, пръстени за коса, обеци, храмови обеци, монети, стъклени гривни, сребърни гривни, копчета, метални съдове, фрагменти от слитъци, катарами.

В някои съкровища артикулите имат различен произход, балкански или централноевропейски.

Хронологията на погребването на съкровищата показва преди всичко татарското нашествие от 1241–1242 г., но и последвалите през 13 век. При други примери причините са били по-скоро местни. За района на средния Дунав не трябва да забравяме нападенията на куманите от края на 13 век, за когато са засвидетелствани многобройни разрушения на селищата, разположени по долината на р. Тиса. Други важни моменти могат да бъдат свързани с конфликтите по р. Дунав между Унгарско кралство и Османската империя, особено при управлението на Сигизмунд Люксембургски (1387–1437). В Южна Трансилвания ситуацията може да бъде свързана или с напрегнатите отношения между краля и саксонците в южната част на региона, но също и с евентуални татарски нашествия в долината на р. Олт в края на 13 век и началото на 14 век. Започвайки от петнадесети век, погребването на съкровищата може да се дължи на турските нашествия.

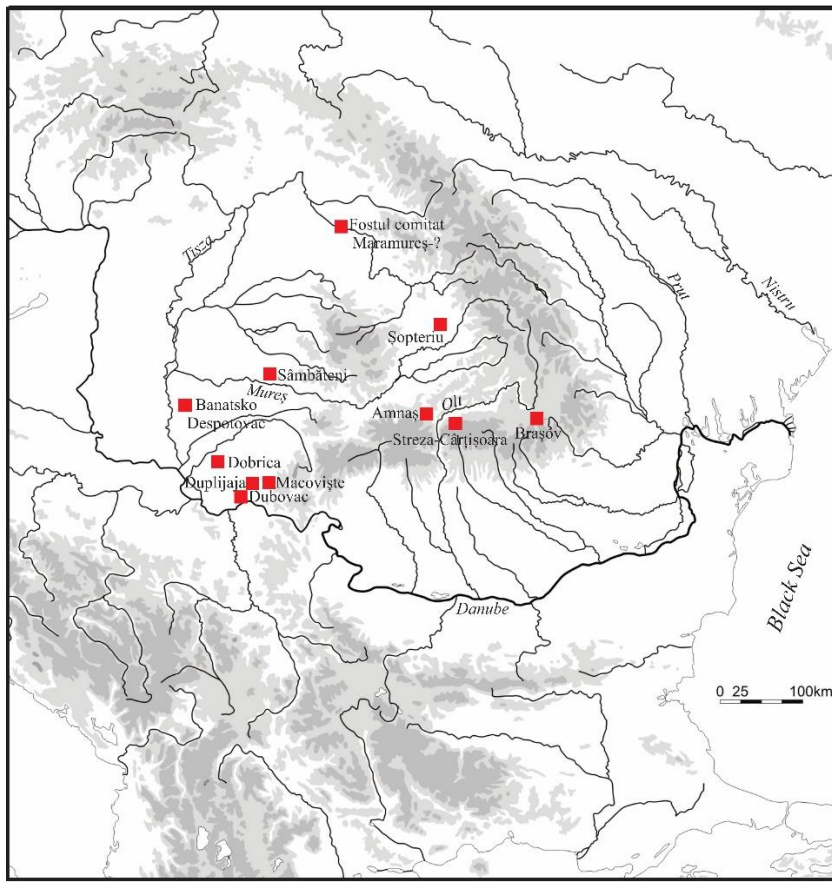
Inside the Carpathian Arch, on the present territory of Romania and the Serbian Banat, were discovered several treasures that contain items attributable to the Balkan space in terms of the typology of most items (pl. I). Most of them were discovered either in marginal areas, where the Wallachian voivodes had domains (Amnaș, Streza-Cârțișoara, Brașov), or near the border areas close to the Danube (Dubovac, Duplijaja and Macoviște) and on the Lower Tisza (Banatski Despotovac). The exceptions are the treasures from Șopteriu (where only remains of a tiara were found, more specifically necklaces with pendants), Sâmbăteni and Brașov. To these is added another one found in the former county of Maramureș.[1]

Research stage

So far, in the studies and articles published in Romania, they have been treated only separately and have not been correlated with each other except to a lesser extent. Perhaps the only exception is the article published in 1998 by Antal Lukács, which refers to the treasure from Streza-Cârțișoara.

With few exceptions, in the Serbian literature there is the same tendency to analyze them by offering rather some typological analogies of the adornment items discovered. The possible events that led to their burial have

[1] Lukács 1998, 150, 151, fig. 3; 152. Except for two pendants of Byzantine tradition, the treasure items were not yet published with a description or pictures/photos.



Pl. I. The map of treasures with adornment items discovered inside the Carpathian Arch, in Romania and the Serbian Banat (map support provided by Mihai Florea, SRTM-30, author mapping: Silviu Oța).

been analyzed more clearly only recently. Also, in most cases, the population movements, even if isolated from one state to another, for example from the south to the north of the River, were not discussed. We are dealing here with the individual migration of individuals or small-sized groups, which in most cases were not the subject of the chancellery documents, or if the latter ever existed, were lost in various circumstances.

The Hungarian literature was focused mainly on the discoveries made in the current Hungarian space, and less on those made in the Banat[2] and Transylvania, the treasures being only mentioned rather than analyzed.

[2] From Banat, the Banatsko Despotovac hoard was especially analised (see Hampel 1881, 175, 176, 177 and n. 12).

It would also have been interesting to see where such treasures are concentrated and whether they can be linked to the existence in certain necropoleis of similar or analogous adornments, in our case of Byzantine, Central European or other European tradition. Of course, these observations will not completely solve the problem of each individual treasure, but at least we will know from which areas the component adornments may originate and whether they are related to a certain population group arrived here. At the same time, we can find out information about a certain trade with adornments and clothing accessories of some members of the local communities and perhaps why they turned their attention to a certain space for their purchases. The treasures with items from different cultural spaces can also indicate another aspect, namely a possible integration of the owner in the structures of a state, even if he may have had another origin.

There is another aspect that should not be overlooked. We are referring to the burial of treasures around major events, such as the great Tatar-Mongol invasion of 1240-1241. In this case, the treasures could have been formed in a different way, either by robberies or hidden by one or more individuals sharing their goods, trying to save them from a possible robbery in order to recover them later. In the case of the treasures formed by robberies, as a general rule we may notice that the items have different origins and are very mixed, depending on the area of action of the one who collected them at a given time. Such a possible case seems to be the treasure from Voinești,[3] County of Iași, but this belongs to an area different than the one analyzed herein.

In this study I will consider only the adornments, while the coins will be used strictly as a dating element. Essentially, I do not wish to republish these artefacts, but I only intend to discuss their presence in the southern and eastern areas of the Kingdom of Hungary.

Along with these there are also other adornments that are likely to originate from treasures, but whose place of discovery is unknown. These are massive silver bar bracelets located at the National Museum of Banat, the British Museum in London, and also at the Staatliches Museum in Berlin. I will not analyze them in this study, because we do not have data on the context of their discovery. For that matter, most items have been published in articles dedicated to bracelets.[4]

There is documentation about another treasure discovered in the ruins of the church in Mehadia-Ulici since 1829, supplied by the priest Nicolae Stoica de Hațeg in the volume *Scrieri. Cronica Mehadiei și a Băilor Herculane. Povești moșăști școlarilor rumânești. Varia.*[5]

[3] Teodor 1961, 245-269; Otsa & Dzhordzhesku 2016, 301-319.
[4] Jankuhn 1933, 185, Abb. 18; 186, Abb. 19-20; 187, Abb. 21-23; 190.
[5] Țeicu 2003, 96. According to the author, it contained several metal vessels.

Brief description of the treasures

The treasure from Sâmbăteni[6] (R; Locality: Sâmbăteni; commune: Păuliș; county: Arad; year of discovery: 1971). It contains 400 coins issued during the time of the Bishop of Salzburg, Eberhard I (1147-1164; one item), coins from 1164-1183 (32 items), the Archbishop Adalbest I (1183-1200; five items), Eberhard II (1200-1246; 45 items) and adornments from the thirteenth century (four temple rings, one triangular pendant decorated with filigree to which three necklaces with polyhedral pendants were attached, five signet rings, four bracelets and two buckles). At the present time, the coins from the treasure are in the custody of several institutions, with only 200 of them located at the National Museum of Romanian History.

The treasure from Macoviște[7] (R;[8] Locality: Macoviște; commune: Ciuchici; county: Caraș-Severin; year of discovery: 1978). It contained a double number of adornments in addition to those published, namely four tiara plates (pl. II/A/1-4), one temple earring (pl. II/A/5) and five rings (pl. II/A/6-10). The other items could no longer be recovered.

The treasure did not contain coins.

The treasure from Dobrica[9] (S; Locality: Dobrica; opština: Alibunar; year of discovery: 1923). It contained adornments: one tiara (pl. II/B/1), one earring pendant (pl. II/B/2),[10] one link with an S-shaped end (pl. II/B/3), one ring (pl. II/B/5). These are added by a buckle (pl. II/B/4) and 600 silver coins mainly from Carinthia, but also one from Hungary.

The treasure from Duplijaja[11] (S; Locality: Duplijaja; opština: Bela Crkva; year of discovery: after 2002). It contains earrings, eight Byzantine glass bracelets, some of which are painted, nine rings, three buckles and over 1000 coins issued in Hungary, Frisia, England and Ireland from 1180 to 1247, during Henry II (1154-1189), Richard I (1189-1199), John Lackland (1199-1216), Henry III (1216-1272), William I (1195-1214), Alexander II (1214-1249), Andrew II (1205-1235) and Béla IV (1235-1270). To date, it has not been published exhaustively.

[6] Știrbu 1979, 47; Lukács 1998, 152; Velter & Dumitriu 2012, 11.
[7] Uzum 1983, 509-519; Țeicu 2009, 89-92, 109, pl. 45.
[8] R=România; S=Srbija.
[9] Țeicu 2009, 93, 190, 264, fig. 24; Radichevich 2020, 235, fig. 2.
[10] They were most probably part of some tiaras manufactured under the influence of the Byzantine art and were in use especially in the central, south-eastern and eastern part of the continent (Ryabtseva 2010, 80-90).
[11] Aralitsa 2012, 12-13; Radičević 2019, 167; 2020, 236.



Pl. II. A. Macovișteː 1-4. Tiara plates; 5. Temple earring; 6-10. Rings (after Țeicu 2009, 109, Pl. 45); B. Dobrica; 1. Tiara; 2. Earring pendant with chains; 3. Hair link with an S-shaped bent end; 4. Buckle; 5. Ring (after Radichevich 2000, 235, figs. 2/1-5).

The treasure from Banatski Despotovac[12] (S; Locality: Banatski Despotovac; opština: Zrenjanin; year of discovery: 1879). The treasure contains various objects, namely two rings (pl. IV/4-5), chain (pl. III/2), chains with pendants from frontal tiaras (two), one frontal tiara (pl. III/1a-c; pl. IV/ 1-2), a round pandant (pl. III/5) and another one trapezoidal (pl. III/3a-b), five metal vessels (pl. V/1-4), fragments of chain with spherical pendants (pl. III/ 4b-c) and without (pl. III/4a), two bracelets (pl. III/6; pl. IV/3-?),[13] two crosses (pl. IV/6-7), two buttons (pl. IV/8a-b, 9) and two fragments of earrings (pl. IV/ 10a-b, 11a-b). According to other opinions, the treasure contained 33 adornments items.[14]

The treasure contained coins issued during the reign of Štefan Uroš IV Dušan (1331-1346), Queen Mary (1382-1395) and Emperor Sigismund of Luxembourg (1387-1437).

The treasure from Dubovac[15] (S; Locality: Dubovac; opština: Kovin; year of discovery: 1901 (?); in 1901 became part of the collection of the Vršac Museum). It contains two pairs of temple earrings dated to the fourteenth-fifteenth centuries (pl. VI/1-4). The rest of the items are late, namely from the sixteenth-seventeenth centuries. It was buried during the seventeenth century and the majority of the adornments are from the period of the Ottoman rule on the Middle Danube, representing the fashion of the time.

The treasure from Amnaș[16] (R; Locality: Amnaș; town: Sălișteː county: Sibiu; year of discovery: 1934). The treasure includes coins issued by Jacopo Contarini (1275-1279), Štefan Uroš II (1275-1321), Richard of Cornwall (1257-1271), Štefan Dragutin (1281-1316) and Philip IV the Fair (1285-1314), fragments of ingots and one silver bracelet with widened ends (weight=78.3 grams), decorated in the granulation and filigree technique (pl. VI/5).

The treasure from the former county of Maramureș[17] (R; Locality: ?; county: Maramureș; year of discovery: the nineteenth century)**.**

Two circular pendants are known, each of them decorated on one side with the figure of a saint, and on the opposite side with an aviform motif

[12] Hampel 1881, 175, 176, 177; Kövér 1897, 244, 245, 246; Pîrvulescu 1993, 233-244; Țeicu 2009, 92-97, 102, pl. 38; 103, pl. 39; 104, pl. 40; 105, pl. 41; 106, pl. 42; 107, pl. 43; 108, pl. 44; Velter & Dumitriu 2012, 11.

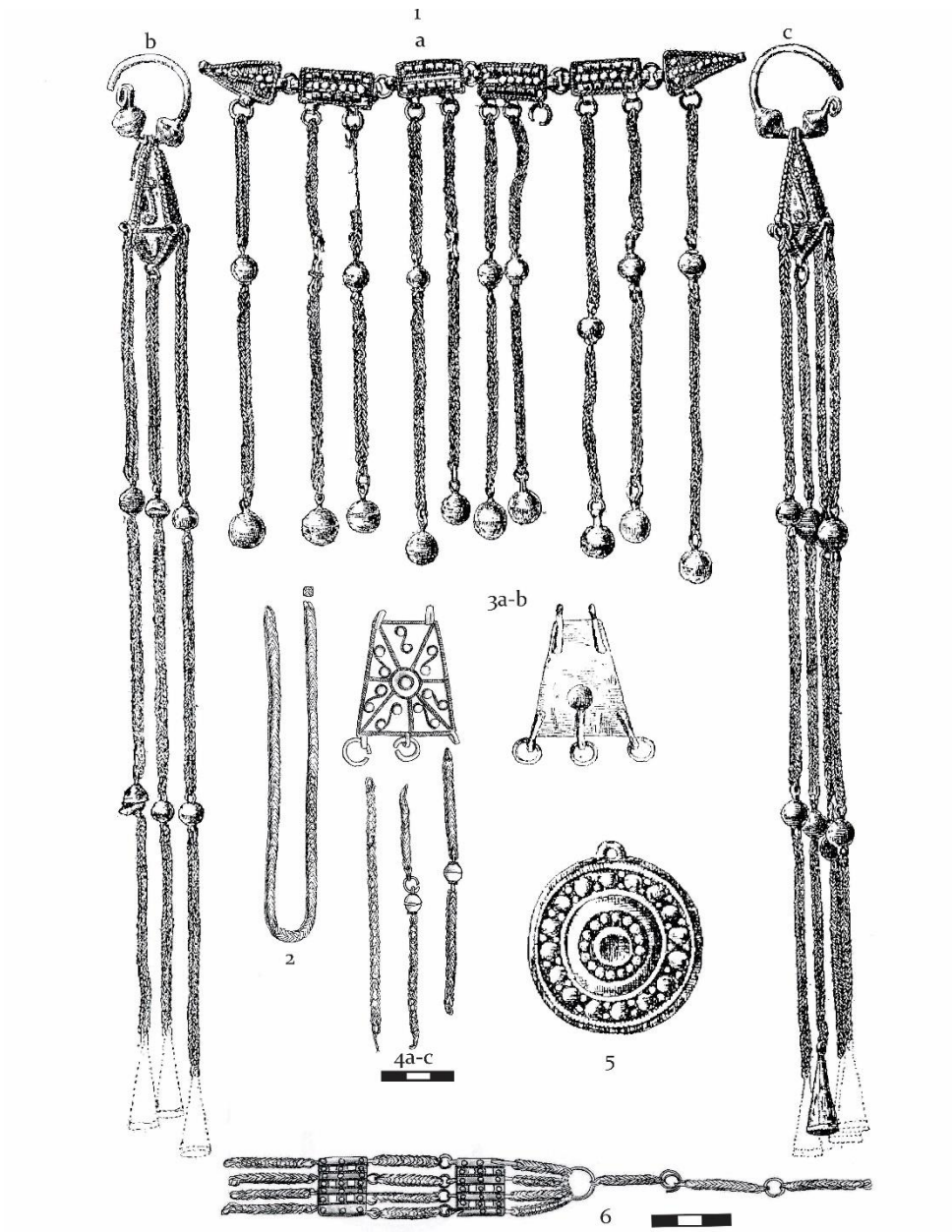
[13] For the latter we cannot specify whether this was its purpose or it suffered modifications during the restoration.

[14] Zsámbéky 1983, 124.

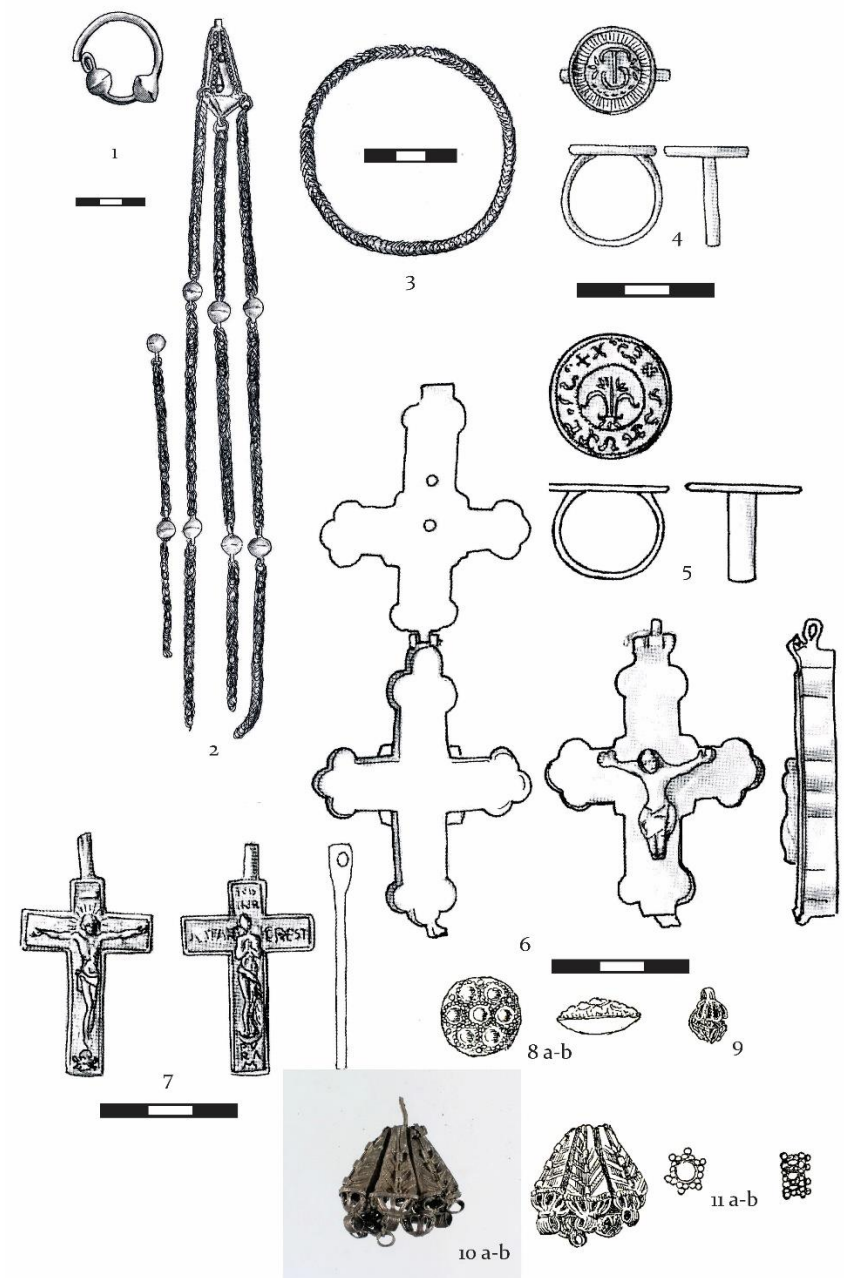
[15] Birtashevich 1961, 25-48; Țeicu 2009, 82, pl. 32/3-4; 112, pl. 48/3-4; 190, 191, 192, 263, fig. 23, up; Ryabtseva 2010, 82, fig. 1/2; 86; Oța 2020b, 186, fig. 4/3.

[16] Weisskircher 1935, 236, 232, fig. 2; Mesterházy 1994, 206; Oța *et al.* 2010, 159, 170, pl. 4/4; Oța 2020a, 269.

[17] Lukács 1998, 150, 151, fig. 3; 152.



Pl. III. 1a-c. Tiara with earrings (after Hampel 1881, 175, Ernesthazai leletet, 1 a-b, 2, no scale); 2. Necklace; 3a-b. Pendant (2, 3a. after Țeicu 2009, 105, Pl. 41/1-2; 3b. after Hampel 1881, 175, Ernesthazai leletet, 3b no scale); 4a-c. Necklaces (after Țeicu 2009, 105, Pl. 41/2); 5. Pendant (?) (after Hampel 1881, 175, Ernesthazai leletet, 4, no scale); 6. Bracelet (after Țeicu 2009, 105, Pl. 41/3).



Pl. IV. 1-2. Earring with hung pendants on the link; 3. Necklace; 4-5. Rings; 6-7. Crosses (after Țeicu 2009, 106, Pl. 42, 1, 2, 3; 107, Pl. 43/1, 2, 3, 4); 8 a-b, 9. Buttons; 10b. Earring pendant; 11 a-b. Double moulding from an earring (after Hampel 1881, 175, Ernesthazai leletet, 5a-b, 7; 8, 10a-b, no scale); 10a (photo: Marius Amarie) (after Borș & Ilie 2016, 457, left).

(pl. VI/6a-b). From each of them hang seven chains decorated in the middle area with a sphere made of silver foil, and at the bottom with a hemstitched circle.

The treasure from Streza-Cârțișoara[18] (R; Locality: Cârțișoara; commune: Cârțișoara; county: Sibiu; year of discovery: 1892). It contained several fragments of necklaces with three spherical pendants and one triangular. One of them had a link with a hook attached at one end. However, the last two elements are missing. These are added by silver pieces cut from one or more ingots. It is possible that the treasure may have also contained six coins. One is Byzantine, issued during John II Komnenos (1118-1143), and other five silver coins could not be determined. The MNIR collection preserves only one necklace with two pendants of which one is spherical and the other is triangular (pl. VI/7) and silver pieces of one or more ingots (pl. VII, VIII/A). Fragments of necklaces were linked to each other subsequently.

The treasure from Șopteriu[19] (R; Locality: Șopteriu; commune: Urmeniș; county: Bistrița-Năsăud; year of discovery: 1985).

From the whole lot of adornments and clothing accessories, only one link (pl. VIII/B/3), a few pendants (pl. VIII/B/1a-b, 2a-b) and fragments of necklaces decorated with silver foil spheres are from the fourteenth century (pl. VIII/B/4a-i). The rest are artefacts and coins (1632 items)[20] issued from the fourteenth/fifteenth centuries to the seventeenth century. It was buried in the seventeenth century.

The treasure from Brașov[21] (R; Locality: Brașov – ?; county: Brașov; year of discovery: 1878). It contained four whole earrings (pl. IX/1, 2, 5, 6) and two fragments from different items (pl. IX/3, 4)[22] and fragments of tiaras with necklaces, most probably from four different items (pl. IX/7-11).[23] The treasure

[18] Lukács 1998; 1999, 126, fig. 12; 127

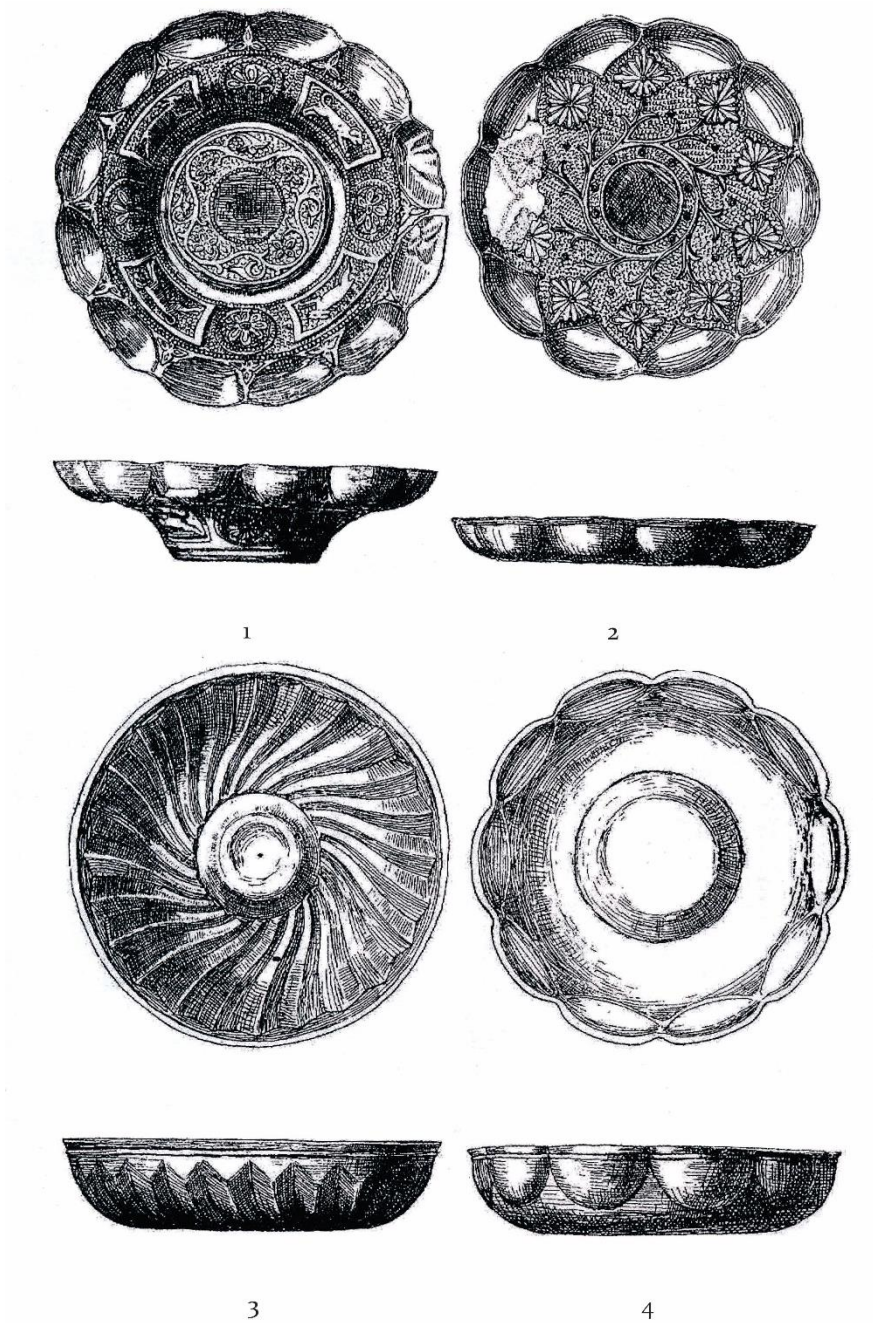
[19] Velter & Dumitriu 2012, 10, 11, fig. 1, 231, pl. 1.

[20] Velter & Dumitriu 2012, 26, 27, tabelul I. They were issued in Poland (999 items), the Baltic and Silesian area (29 items), Central Europe (590), Western Europe (18). The most recent coin was issued in 1690.

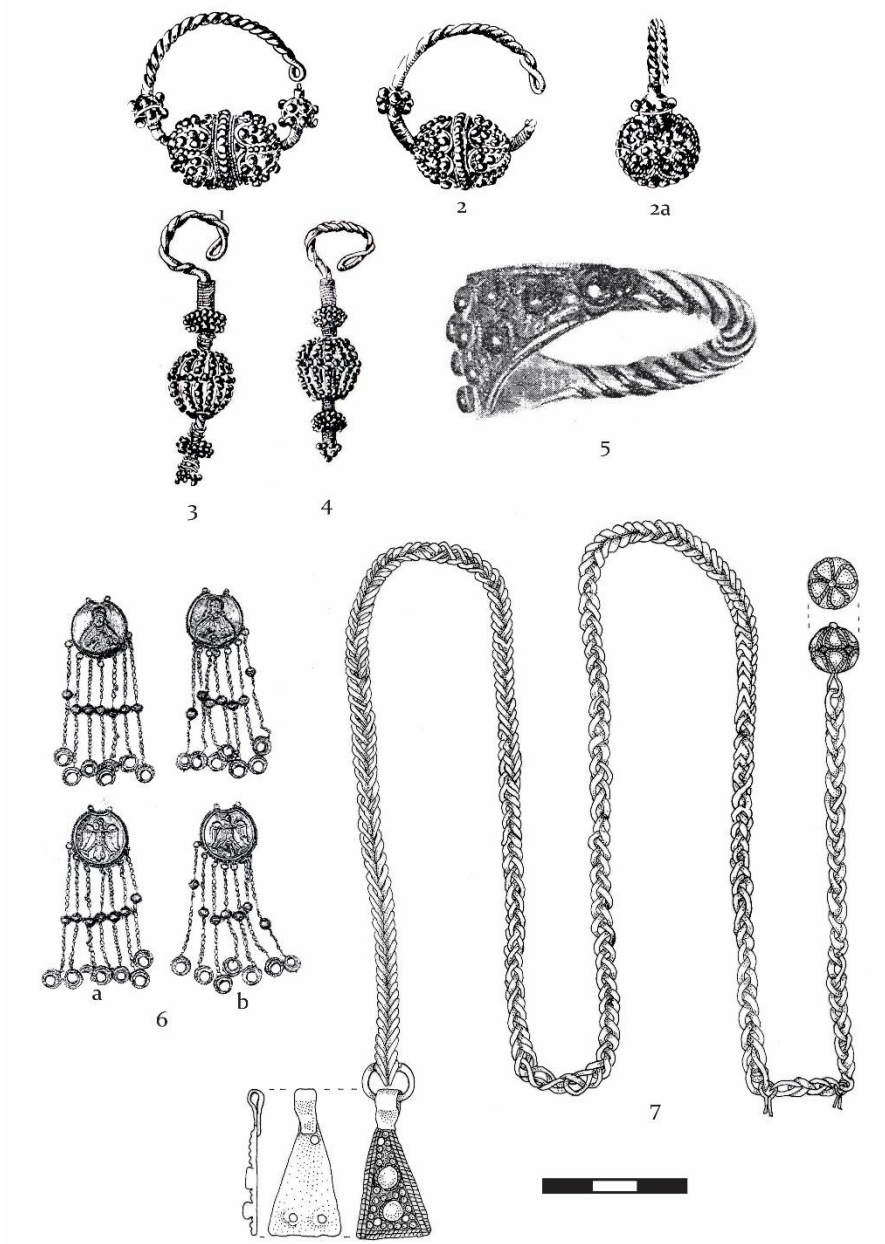
[21] Lukács 1998, 154, fig. 5; 155; 1999, 127, fig. 13/1-e; 128; Oța 2020b, 182, 184, 185, 187, 188, 189.

[22] These are two items with a question mark-shaped rod, one item with a two-folded and twisted wire link that was adorned with three uneven pendants, one item with a simple wire link with a central pendant, flanked at a short distance of three mouldings next to silver beads. There is also a fragment of an earring that seems to have been the pair with the one with unequal pendants and another fragment from another earring, most likely also of the same type, but with a different model of pendants.

[23] These appear to be items part of five tiaras.



Pl. V. 1-4. Metal vessels from the treasure at Banatsko Despotovac (after Hampel 1881, 176, fig. 1-4, no scale).



Pl. VI. 1-4. Earrings from the treasure at Dubovac (after Birtashevich 1961, 27, tab. I/1-4; no scale); 5. Amnaș. Bracelet (after Weisskircher 1935, 232, fig. 2, no scale); 6a-b. Pendants discovered in the former county of Maramureș (after Lukács 1998, 151, fig. 3; no scale); 7. Necklace with pendant from the treasure at Streza-Cârțișoara (drawing: Simona Movilă) as currently preserved.

did not contain coins. It has not been published exhaustively and is located at the National Hungarian Museum in Budapest.

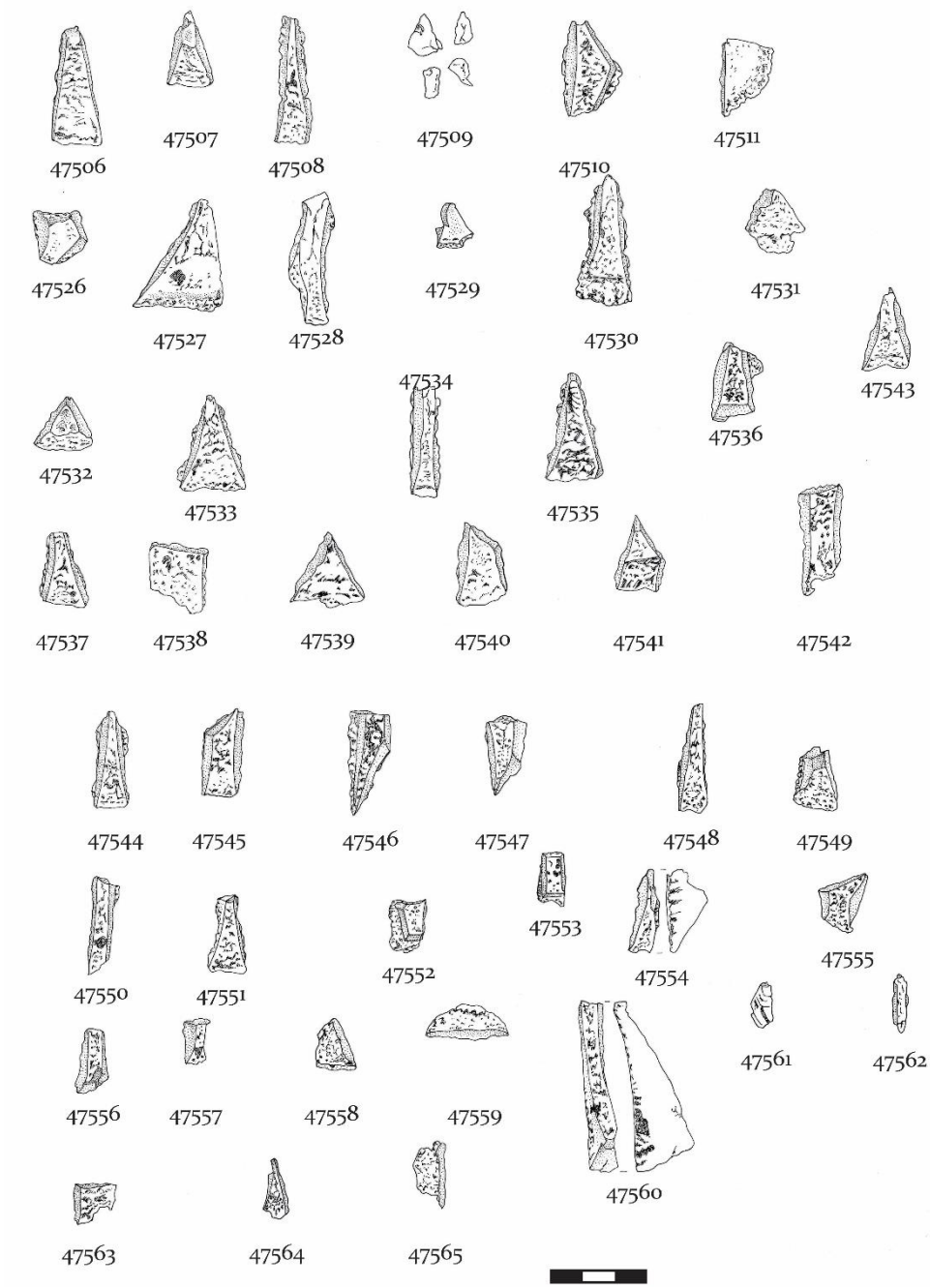
Of all these, two date as time of burial to the seventeenth century (Șopteriu and Dubovac). The vast majority of objects and adornments they contained were late artefacts, and the adornments or fragments of adornments represent either the initial date of the treasure accumulation, or are old items from the fourteenth-fifteenth centuries. In the case of the treasure from Șopteriu, these are fragments of an early tiara that may have belonged to the individual who buried the artefacts and who possibly owned them from his family or came into their possession as a result of an exchange or commercial activity. Their fragmentary state and partial preservation indicate a possible use for silver re-manufacturing. Also, it is possible that the owner may have received the pieces of items as payment for certain goods or a real estate, or he was going to buy/purchase a certain good. The treasure from Dubovac contained two earrings dated to the same period, namely the fourteenth-fifteenth centuries. The fact that they were preserved entirely and were not cut may rather indicate their preservation in the family and a possible use until the late fifteenth century. In this case, two hypotheses can be launched. Either the hoarding of the adornments begun much earlier than the date of the burial of the treasure, or the early earrings were used in this case also as payment for certain services or goods. We must also not exclude the fact that over time the composition of the treasure accumulated by this owner may have been different and at the time of burial may not have been identical with the one from the previous years, with part of the goods possibly being already alienated.

The presence of these earlier artefacts in treasures from the sixteenth-seventeenth centuries located not far from the border of the kingdom proves first of all that silver items of Byzantine tradition circulated especially in the marginal territories of medieval Hungary, in certain environments. They did not represent a defining fashion of this state, but rather they were in use for certain population groups. Moreover, it should not be ruled out that they were used as a raw material for the manufacturing of other silver objects (Șopteriu), or a means of payment for goods or services.

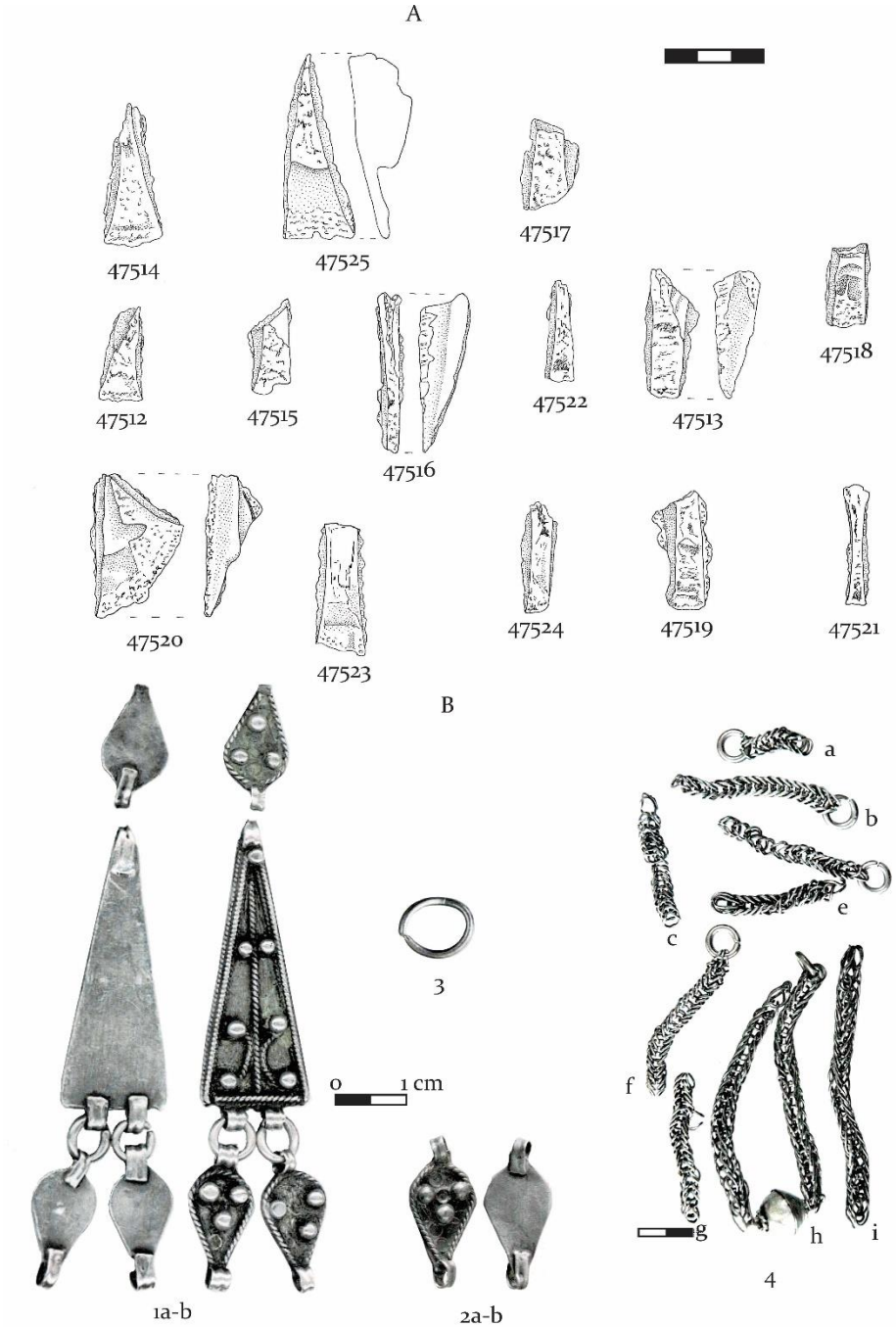
The composition of the treasures (fig. 1)

Regarding the composition of the analyzed treasures, I shall consider all the component artefacts (fig. 4), except the coins. I shall mention the latter only as an element of relative dating of the accumulation period.

I. Head adornments. As a rule, for the chronological interval under discussion, namely the thirteenth-fifteenth centuries, we may speak of rather



Pl. VII. Fragments of ingots from the treasure at Streza-Cârțișoara (drawing: Simona Movilă).



Pl. VIII. A. Streza-Cârțișoara. Fragments of ingots (drawing: Simona Mateescu); B. Șopteriu. 1a-b, 2a-b. Pendants from a tiara; 3. Link; 4a-i. Fragments of chains from a tiara (after Velter & Dumitriu 2012, 231, Pl. 1/1-4).

complex items that included several elements (tiara plates, necklaces with pendants, earrings with or without pendants hanging on necklaces, etc).

Tiara plates were discovered in the treasures from Macovișteˌ[24] Brașov[25] and Banatski Despotovac.[26] Pieces from tiara elements were also found in the treasures from Șopteriu (necklaces with pendants)[27] and Streza-Cârțișoara (necklace with pendants, of which one spherical and one triangular).[28]

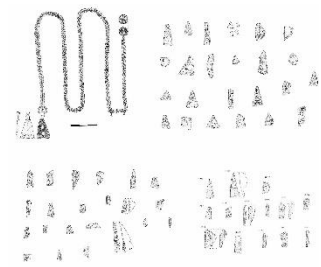
These are added by hair links, either simple or with an S-shaped bent end, but also various earrings.

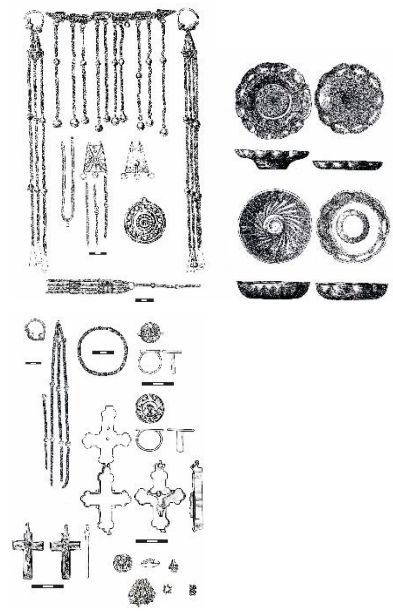
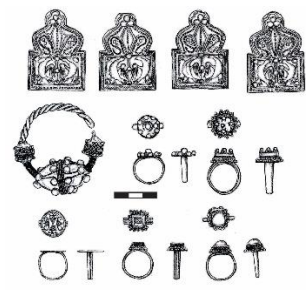
Frontal tiaras (pl. X).[29] The simplest items in terms of execution were found in the treasure from Macovișteˌ The plates (pl. II/1-4), manufactured in the *au repoussé* technique, belong to a tiara less common in the north-Danubian area. The decorative motifs and the shape indicate a Balkan origin. Similar items were also found at Sibnica[30] and Požarevac (Serbia).[31]

The items from Brașov (pl. IX/7-11), Șopteriu (pl. VIII/B/1, 2, 4) and Banatski Despotovac (pl. III/1, 4; pl. IV/1-2) are more complex and in terms of manufacturing techniques have analogies in the Balkan environment,[32] but also east of the Carpathians, such as in Schinetea[33] or in the area between the Danube and the mountains (Olteni,[34] Gogoșu[35] and perhaps Mavrodin[36]). They contain plates that compose the tiara itself, necklaces with pendants, plates with necklaces and pendants.

A special item was found at Dobrica (pl. II/B/1). This tiara is composed of pressed plates, tied together with wires, and on their lower part are fastened necklaces finished with conical pendants, decorated with incised points. Most likely, the earrings with conical pendants, finished at the bottom with a dome on which chains are hung (pl. II/B/2) belong to this tiara.

[24] Uzum 1983, 515, 516; Oța 2007, 127, 140, 149, fig. 4/IX.1 Macovișteˌ IX.2 Macovișteˌ Țeicu 2009, 93, 102, pl. 38/1a-b, 2; 104, pl. 40; 106, pl. 42/1, 3.
[25] Lukács 1998, 154, fig. 5, left up; 1999, 127, fig. 13.
[26] Pîrvulescu 1993, 233, 234, pl. 1/1a-b, 2; 236, 238, foto 1, up; 239, foto 4; 240, foto 3.
[27] Velter & Dumitriu 2012, 10, 231, pl. 1/2-4.
[28] Lukács 1998, 145, 146, fig. 1. /1, 3; 1999, 126, fig. 12.
[29] I included here the earrings, the chains and other elements susceptible to have been part of more complex tiaras that comprised more elements.
[30] Bikić 2010, 36, 37, sl. 10/1-2.
[31] Reabțeva 2014, 28, 263, fig. 1/3.
[32] For example, see the treasure from Nikopol.
[33] Alaiba 2007, 21-23.
[34] Rosseti 1972, 4, 11, fig. 20; 12, fig. 21, 22.
[35] Dumitru 2001, 124, Taf. 33.
[36] Țânțăreanu 2013, 257, 261, pl. I/1.

No.	Locality	Country	Items	Coins
1	Streza-Cârțișoara	R		six coins, of which one is Byzantine, issued during John II Komnenos (1118-1143), and five are made of silver and undetermined
2	Sâmbăteni	R	four temple rings, one triangular pendant decorated with filigree on which three chains with polyhedral pendants were attached, five signet rings, four bracelets and two buckles	Eberhard I (1147-1164); coins from the years 1164-1183 Adalbest I (1183-1200); Eberhard II (1200-1246)
3	Duplijaja	S	earrings, eight Byzantine glass bracelets, nine rings, three buckles	Henric II (1154-1189), Richard I (1189-1199), John Lackland (1199-1216), Henry III (1216-1272), William I (1195-1214), Alexander II (1214-1249), Andrew II (1205-1235) and Bela IV (1235-1270)
4	Dobrica	S		600 silver coins (Carintia and one from Hungary)
5	Amnaș	R		Jacopo Contarini (1275-1279), Ștefan Uroš II (1275-1321), Richard of Cornwall (1257-

				1271), Štefan Dragutin (1281-1316) and Philip IV the Fair (1285-1314)
6	Banatsko Despotovac	S		Štefan Uroš IV Dušan (1331-1346), Queen Mary (1382-1395) and Emperor Sigismund of Luxembourg (1387-1437)
7	Macoviște	R		-
8	Maramureș	R		-

9	Brașov	R		-
10	Șopteriu	R		coins issued from the fourteenth/ fifteenth centuries to the seventeenth century
11	Dubovac	S		coins from 16th-17th centuries

Fig. 1. The composition of the treasures (author: Silviu Oța).

Similar earrings were discovered at Tyukod-Bagolivár[37] and Szank[38] in Hungary, or at Lukovit[39] in Bulgaria. Other items originate from the Ukrainian and Russian space.[40]

The items from the former county of Maramureș are very likely to have been part of a tiara (pl. VI/6a-b).

These are added by a possible tiara item discovered in the treasure from Banatski Despotovac (pl. III/5). This item has analogies with elements of similar tiara earrings, components of the tiaras from Schinetea[41] and Covei.[42] While the second treasure did not contain coins, the first was dated with

[37] Varga 2015, 24, fig. 13; 75, fig. 48,
[38] Gábor 2014, 84, 104, 8. Kép/5-6.
[39] Stanchev & Nacheva 1960, 89, obr. 9/2; Reabțeva 2014, 57, 276, fig. 14/9.
[40] See Reabțeva 2014, 58-61.
[41] Alaiba 2007, 23, fig. 5-6.
[42] Dumitriu 2001, 117, Taf. 24/1, Taf. 25/1, Taf. 112/3.

coins issued probably during the last years of the fourteenth century[43] and during the fifteenth century.[44]

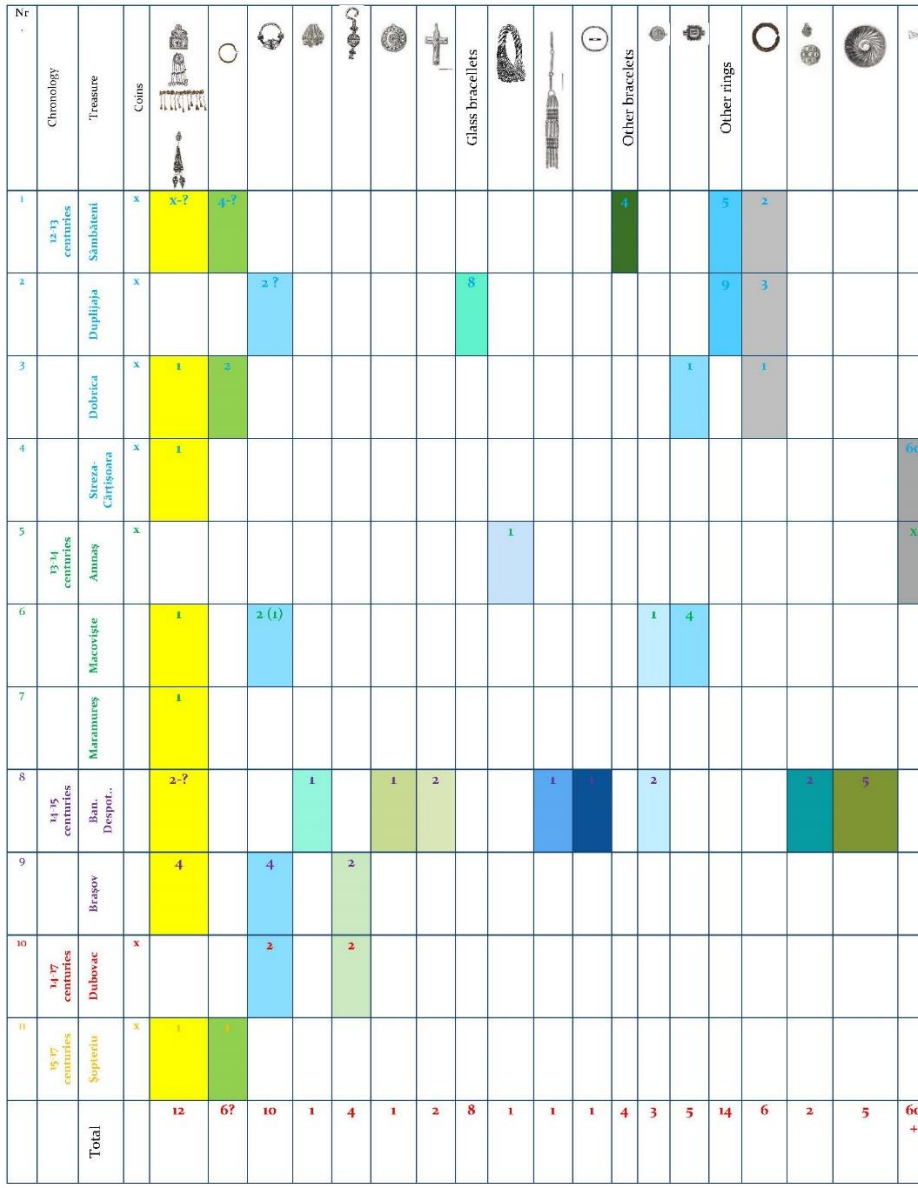


Fig. 2. The distribution of the items in the treasures (author: Silviu Oța).

[43] Alaiba 2007, 20.
[44] Alaiba 2007, 16-20.

Chains from earrings or tiaras were discovered in the treasures from Streza-Cârțișoara (pl. VI/7). The items are from a tiara or its accessories, which however was not preserved. Initially there were more fragments, then some of them were linked. The place of storage of some of the chains is unknown. The spheres attached to their ends were decorated in the filigree and granulation technique and have very good formal analogies with the pendants of the earrings discovered in the necropolis from Ilidia-Obliță.[45] Spherical in shape, but with five or six petals adorned with one or more granules, the mountings under discussion would be a decorative motif often found on various types of earrings, usually on those with three unequal pendants (three items in the collection of the Hungarian National Museum in Budapest, of which two from the so-called treasure from Tokaj,[46] Cotnari, Olteni, Brașov, Buruienești, Șaptebani, Cotul Morii-Popricani, Șușița, Reșița-Ogășele),[47] and sometimes also on the earrings with question mark-shaped link (Schinetea, Brașov) especially in the fourteenth-fifteenth centuries.

Other fragments not attached to the base item were found in the treasure from Banatsko Despotovac (pl. III/2, 4a-c). They had one or two spheres made of silver simple foil, mounted along the chains. It can be seen on the ones that are completely preserved that the dimensions of the pendants at the ends are larger. They have a single perforation for fixing, compared to those mounted along the chains. Around the attachment loops, the interlaid spherical pendants have one small circle made of filigree or simple wire.

For the nine fragments of necklaces found in the treasure from Șopteriu (pl. VIII/b/4a-i), the situation is similar to the one of the fragments from Banatsko Despotovac.

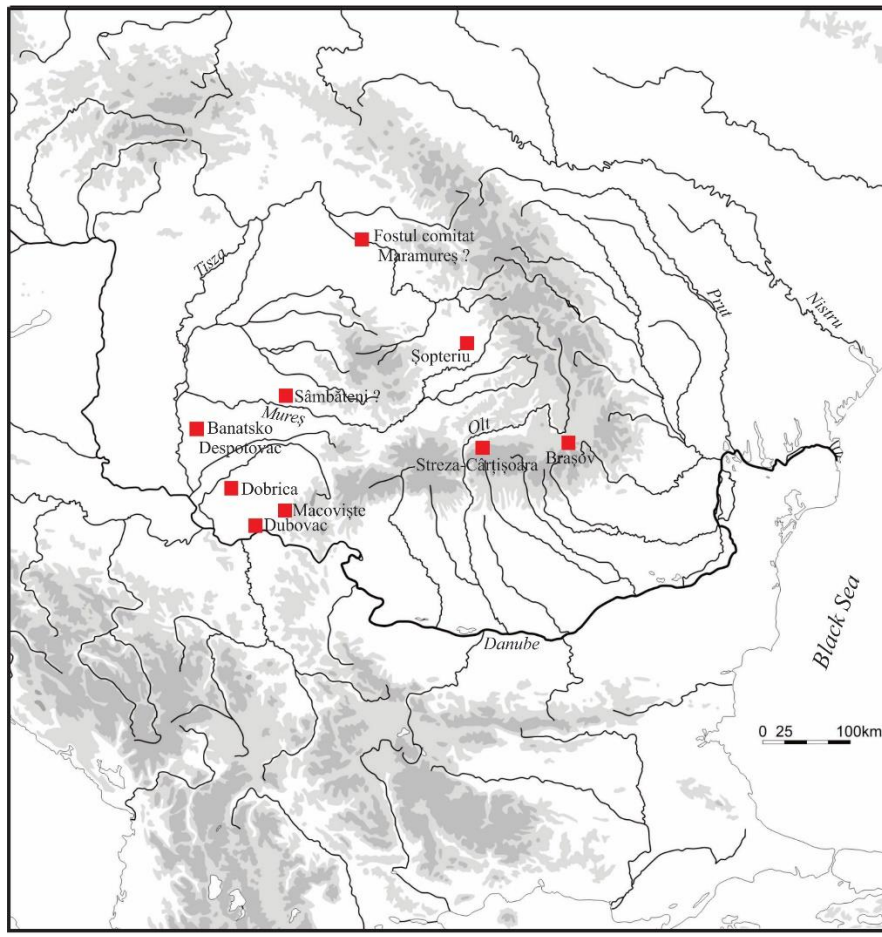
Temple earrings (pl. XI).[48] They were discovered at Dubovac,[49] Brașov,[50] Duplijaja,[51] Macoviște,[52] and Banatsko Despotovac.[53] In all the cases, they are of Balkan tradition and are decorated in the granulation and filigree technique, even if the origin of the link model is different.[54] They are of three types.

[45] Țeicu 2017, 108, 127, fig. 6/1; 129, fig. 8/1-2.
[46] Mesterházi 1994, 196, 201, 3. Abra/2-4; 205. The items were registered in the Hungarian museum in 1961 and 1897.
[47] See Oța 2020b, 181-190.
[48] Here are selected those items that were not part of tiaras.
[49] Birtashevich 1961, 27, tab. I/1-4; 41.
[50] Lukács 1998, 154, fig. 5; 155.
[51] Aralitsa 2012, 12-13.
[52] Uzum 1983, 510-511, fig. 2.
[53] Hampel 1881, 175, Ernestházai lelet/8; 177.
[54] These are earrings whose link is question mark-shaped. Their origin was regarded as eastern European, brought here by the Turkic populations, after the great Tatar-



Pl. IX. The treasure from Brașov. 1-4. Earrings with three pendants on the link; 5-6. Question mark-shaped earrings; 7-8. Tiara plates (after Lukács 1998, 154, fig. 5, no scale); 9-11. Tiara fragments (after Lukács 1999, 127, fig. 13, no scale.

Mongol invasion in 1240-1241 (Vladimirov 2019, 12-34). However, it must be specified that even if the link model is very likely of eastern origin, the adornments are mostly of Byzantine origin, and later on of Balkan origin.



Pl. X. Tiaras and fragments of tiaras in treasures (author mapping: Silviu Oța).

1. The simplest items are question mark-shaped, either with a simple rod link (Brașov;[55] pl. IX/5), or made of double-folded and twisted wire (Dubovac;[56] pl. VI/3-4; Brașov;[57] pl. IX/6).

2. Another group includes the items with the unequal mounts on the link. It (the link) may be simple (Duplijaja;[58] Brașov pl. IX/2), or twisted (Dubovac;[59] pl. VI/1-2; Macoviște; pl. II//A/5; Brașov;[60] pl. IX/1, 3, 4).

[55] Lukács 1998, 154, fig. 5, right.
[56] Birtashevich 1961, 27, tab. I/3-4.
[57] Lukács 1998, 154, fig. 5, right.
[58] Radichevich 2020, 236.
[59] Birtashevich 1961, 27, tab. I/1-2.
[60] Lukács 1998, 154, fig. 5, bottom rows.

The items from Dubovac have the central pendants manufactured in the same techniques and have models similar to the ones of the items discovered at Schinetea, Șaptebani, Olteni, Cotul Morii-Popricani and Buruienești.[61] In all these cases of the Romanian space, the links were made of double-folded and twisted wire. South of the Danube we may find other items with the central pendant similarly manufactured, such as in Korbovo (Serbia),[62] Dolište[63] and Krumovo (Bulgaria).[64]

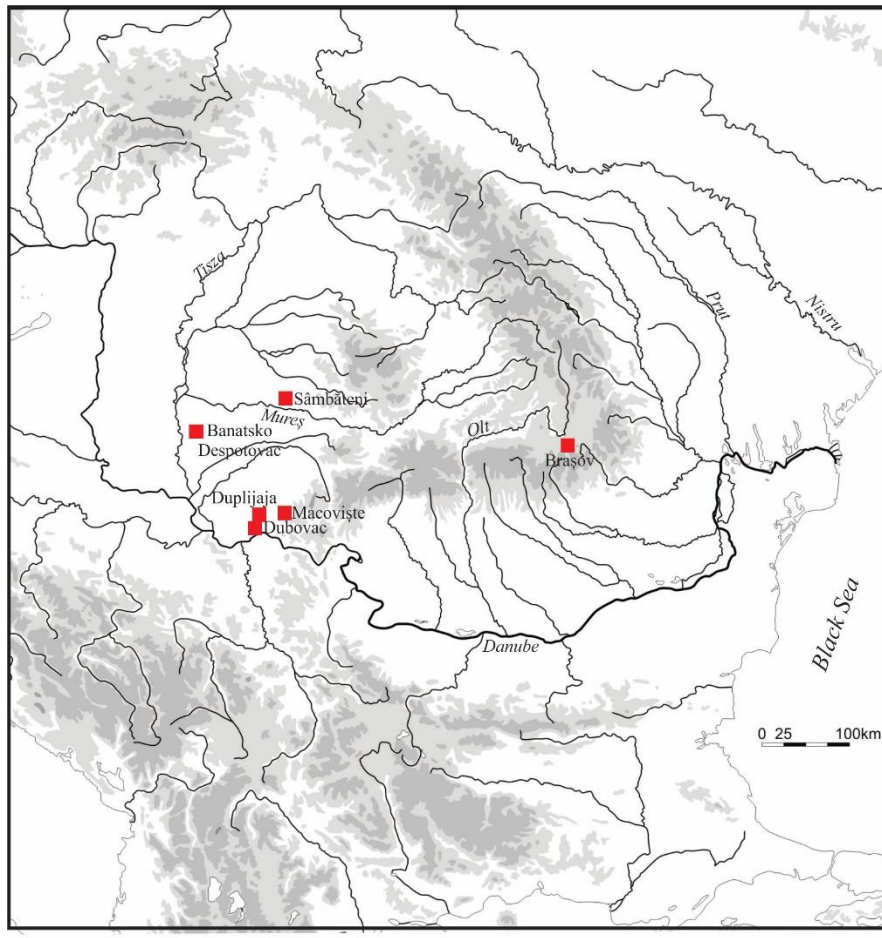
The links of these earrings were also manufactured of simple bar, such as the items from Korbovo and Krumovo.

3. Another earring model is represented by a pendant discovered at Banatsko Despotovac. Unfortunately, the link and the decorations of the earring were not preserved, which hinders its chronological framing. In most cases, it is round and on it, next to the central pendant, there are two more, on either side of it. The highest concentration of such earrings is observed in the western half of the Balkans. Both the central and the side pendants were variously adorned, but usually in the granulation and filigree technique or with tube-shaped twisted wires. Such items were found in the area Despotovo,[65] Koštunići (Serbia),[66] Vrh Rici- The church Sf. Spas,[67] Cetina-The church Sf. Spas[68] and Biskupija (Croatia).[69] They are added by others whose place of discovery is unknown, found in the collection of the Zadar Museum.[70] Unfortunately, the link and the side pendants are missing, which makes it difficult to have a clearer chronological framing of the item.

A pendant, probably the lateral part of an earring, was found in the same treasure. This is a double moulding of granules, which from a typological point of view can be dated most probably to the fourteenth-fifteenth centuries,[71] especially if we also consider the dating of the treasure as a whole.

Hair links (pl. XII/a). A single item was discovered, that most likely had a flattened end, bent in the shape of the letter S, in the treasure from Dobrica (pl. II/B/3). Unfortunately, its end was broken. The presence of such an item indicates an earlier treasure compared with most of the analyzed treasures.

[61] Oța 2020b, 186, fig. 4/4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10.
[62] Miloshevich 1990, 158-159, cat. no. 258.
[63] Pavlova 2007, 48, cat. no. 6.1; Reabțeva 2014, 297, fig. 35/9-10.
[64] Pavlova 2007, 55, cat. no. 10.2.
[65] Miloshevich 1990, 161-162, cat. no. 261.
[66] Miloshevich 1990, 162, cat. no. 262; Bikić 2010, 48, sl. 20.
[67] Jakšić 1996, 170, G. 872; Petrinec 1996, 80.
[68] Petrinec 2012, 470, 471, fig. 8; 2019, 67, sl. 26.
[69] Petrinec 2009, 176, 189, T. V/Grob 102.
[70] Jurić 2015, 98-100.
[71] Oța 2012, 269-292.

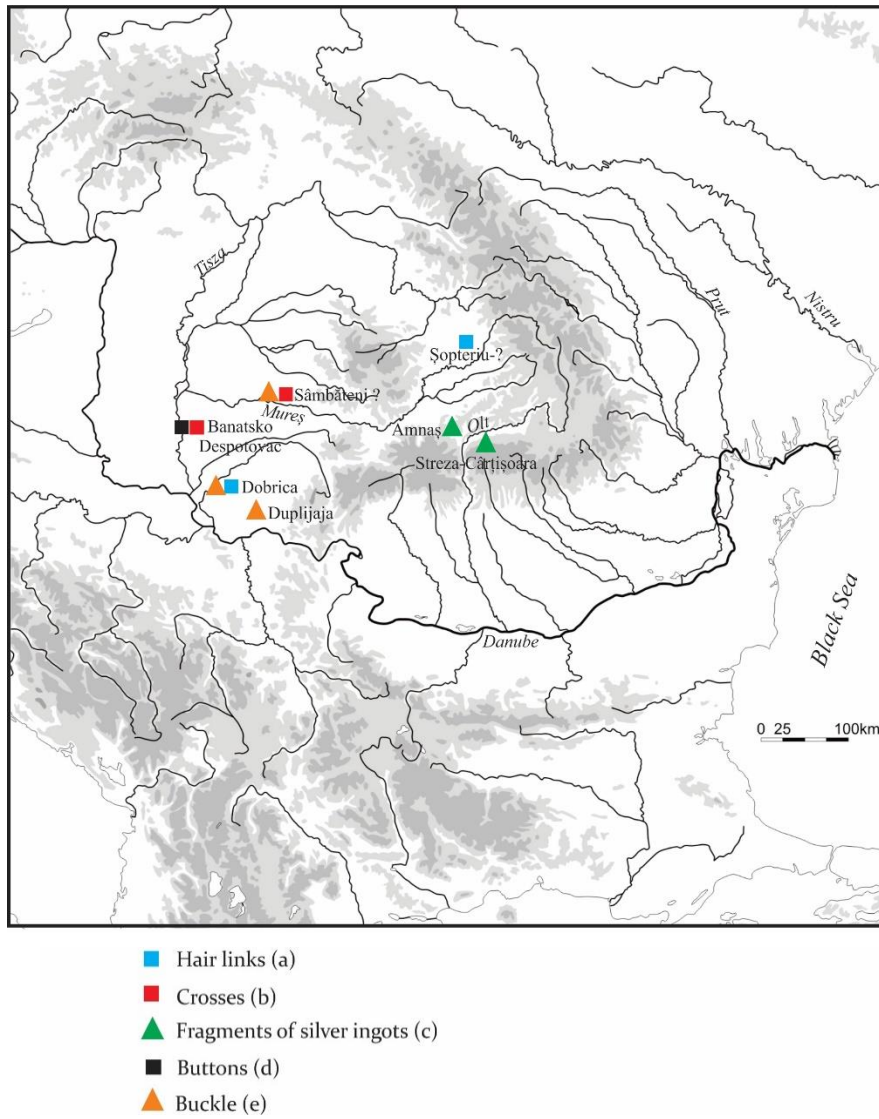


Pl. XI. Temple earrings or fragments of earrings which are not components of tiaras (map support provided by Mihai Florea, SRTM-30, author mapping: Silviu Oța).

Other four items were discovered in the treasure from Sâmbăteni. Unfortunately, images or more detailed descriptions have not been published so far.

Another silver link whose role could not be clarified is part of the treasure from Șopteriu (pl. VIII/B/3). It is difficult to say whether it was a hair adornment or had a different role.

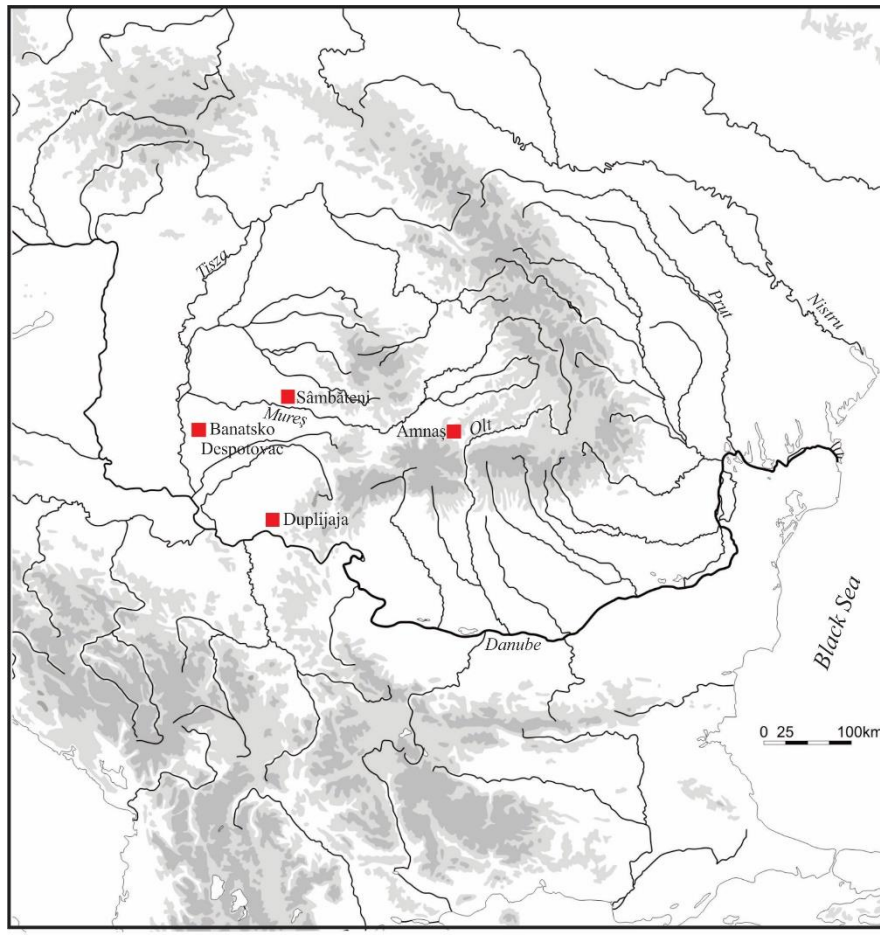
II. Neck items. They are in small numbers and are represented by two **crosses** (pl. XII/b) discovered in the treasure from Banatsko Despotovac (Pl. IV/6-7). The reliquary cross has decent analogies with the item in the treasure from Schinetea, which however is not decorated.



Pl. XII. Various items discovered in treasures (adornments, clothing accessories, fragments of ingots, crosses) (map support provided by Mihai Florea, SRTM-30, author mapping: Silviu Oța).

III. Arm adornments. They consist of bracelets and rings.

Bracelets (pl. XIII). From all the treasures analyzed herein, only four included bracelets, namely the treasures from Duplijaja, Sâmbăteni, Banatsko Despotovac and Amnaș.



Pl. XIII. Bracelets in treasures (map support provided by Mihai Florea, SRTM-30, author mapping: Silviu Oța).

In the first case we are dealing with Byzantine items manufactured of coloured, painted glass, datable to the eleventh-twelfth centuries.

The metal bracelets are very rare in the treasures found inside the Carpathian Arch. One item was discovered in the treasure from Amnaș (pl. VI/5). It is made of twisted wires, decorated with trapezoidal plates at the ends, adorned with granules and filigree wire. In terms of distribution, similar bracelets were discovered at Voinești, Pantelimon-Pădurea Cernica and Păcuiul lui Soare.[72] They were dated by considering the burial of the treasures

[72] Oța 2020a, 269 with the related bibliography. We are not considering those items that have a body made of thin braided wires, specific especially to the southern Danube area.

at the turn of the thirteenth-fourteenth centuries, with one exception (Păcuiul lui Soare), buried in the middle of the fourteenth century.

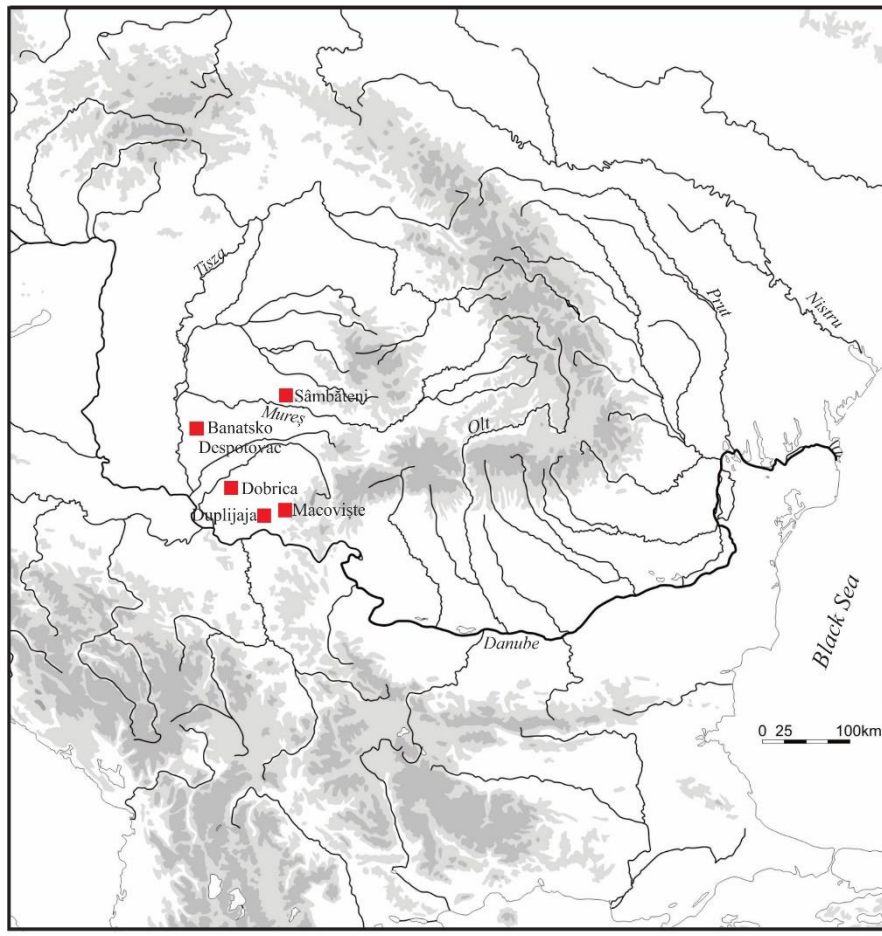
The item from Banatsko Despotovac (pl. III/6) is of another type, made of chains, links and hemstitched plates decorated with granules and filigree. The other possible item is a simple chain made of twisted wire (pl. IV/3).

The items from Sâmbăteni were not published with images or detailed descriptions; it is only specified that two of the four items from the treasure were broken.

Rings (pl. XIV) were found in the treasures from Macoviște (pl. II/A/6-10),[73] Sâmbăteni,[74] Dobrica (pl. II/B/5) and Banatski Despotovac (pl. IV/4-5). They are both of central European tradition (Macoviște; pl. II/A/8[75] and Banatski Despotovac;[76] pl. IV/4-5), and of Balkan tradition (pl. II/A/6, 7, 9, 10; Pl. II/B/5), but the latter seem to prevail.[77] The last mentioned items were manufactured in the granulation and filigree technique (pl. II/A/6-7), and were sometimes adorned with semi-precious stones or glass (pl. II/A/9-10; II/B/5).[78]

The first ring, of central European tradition, has analogies in terms of execution and adornments with the items from Nuštar,[79] Ostrovo (Croatia),[80] Ersig[81] and Giulești[82] (Romania). The items from Banatsko Despotovac also have analogies in terms of decoration with the items discovered at Karadžićevo (item decorated with lily and two bundles of ears)[83] and Nuštar (Croatia).[84]

[73] Uzum 1983, 511-514, fig. 3/a-d; fig. 4.
[74] These items have not been yet published with images or descriptions, as to allow us to say more about their origin or their area of circulation.
[75] Uzum 1983, 514, fig. 4.
[76] Hampel 1881, 175/9a-b; 177.
[77] The publication of the treasure from Sâmbăteni could bring some clarifications on the real number of Balkan and Central European items or the items of Central European tradition.
[78] Uzum 1983, 511-514, fig. 3/a-d.
[79] Adžaga 2020, 294, cat. no. 393; 326, cat. no. 459. The items were dated during the fourteenth – fifteenth centuries and were regarded as representing the Gothic letter M.
[80] Adžaga 2020, 115, cat. no. 36; 311, cat. no. 428. The item was dated during the fourteenth – fifteenth centuries.
[81] Țeicu & Rancu 2005, 291, 303, fig. 8/1. The item was dated during the fourteenth – fifteenth centuries.
[82] Reabțeva 2014, 111, 338, fig. 76/10, 11.
[83] Adžaga 2020, 288, cat. no. 382.
[84] Adžaga 2020, 292, cat. no. 389; 293, cat. no.392.



Pl. XIV. Rings in treasures (map support provided by Mihai Florea, SRTM-30, author mapping: Silviu Oța).

The items decorated in the granulation and filigree technique, with a stone or coloured glass in the cabochon have analogies at Romula,[85] Măicănești-Străulești,[86] Craiova-Fântâna Obedeanu,[87] Cetățeni-Poiana Târgului,[88] Isaccea-Burg,[89] Drobeta-Turnu Severin-Termele Romane,[90] Păcuiul lui Soare,[91]

[85] Unpublished item. We thank Mr. Mircea Negru for the information. Excavations Gh. Popilian.
[86] Dumitriu 2001, 129, Taf. 93/4, 8, 9.
[87] Dumitriu 2001, 118, 119, Taf. 89/9, 10, 18.
[88] Dumitriu 2001, 116, Taf. 86/6.
[89] Dumitriu 2001, 108, Taf. 72/4.
[90] Dumitriu 2001, 123, Taf. 37/22, 25.
[91] Dumitriu 2001, 113, Taf. 20/9.

Cotul Morii-Popricani,[92] Suceava-Câmpul Șanțurilor[93] and Giulești.[94] The ring from Dobrica seems to come from the point of view of the model, from the Greek area.[95] They had a fairly wide chronological circulation in time, being encountered until the fifteenth century and sometimes even in the early sixteenth century.

IV. Dress accessories (pl. XII/d, e). They consist of two buttons (pl. XII/d) and several buckles (pl. XII/e).

The buttons. One is missing the tag and was decorated in the granulation technique. It was discovered in the treasure from Banatski Despotovac (pl. IV/8a-b).[96] The second button was found in the same treasure and is manufactured in the filigree technique (pl. IV/9). Usually, such clothing accessories were discovered in later treasures (Zăvoaia,[97] Covei,[98] Cotul Morii-Popricani,[99] Țifești[100] and Schinetea[101]), probably due to the manufacturing material (silver and gilded silver) and the manufacturing techniques.

Buckles. Only one item was published with an image, namely the item from Dobrica (pl. II/B/4). This was manufactured by casting and is flat. The decoration consists of adjacent triangles, obliquely hachured, interlaid with others without decoration. The item has analogies with the discoveries from Abony[102] and Akasztó-Pusztaszentimre.[103] Their presence in the treasures indicates that besides having clothing function, they were also valuable items. The fact that they were rarely found inside the graves shows that they were used by individuals with certain financial means, not necessarily from among the elites of a community. The fact that they were discovered in three treasures from within the analysed space, namely in Dobrica, Sâmbăteni and Duplijaja, confirms that they were treasure items. Most likely they were used as mantle clasps. At least at this stage of research, their presence is a feature of some of the treasures inside the Carpathian Arch. It can be noticed that in

[92] Neamțu 1961, 286, 287, fig. 3/3-4.
[93] Batariuc 1993, 237, 242, fig. 6/16.
[94] Reabțeba 2014, 111, 338, fig. 76/6.
[95] Boseelmann-Ruickbie 2011, 334, Kat. Nr. 239, 240.
[96] Hampel 1881, 175/5a-b; 177.
[97] Dragomir 1972, 68, 69, fig. 1/7-19; 71.
[98] Dumitriu 2001, 118, Taf. 24/2-14; Taf. 25/1-15.
[99] Neamțu 1961, 288, fig. 4/1-4; 289, fig. 5/1-4.
[100] Moisil 2016, 5, 13 and pl. *Tezaurul de la Țifești*; Oța *et al*. 2011, 141, 151, pl. I/5-11.
[101] Alaiba 2007, 29-30.
[102] Parádi 1975, 128, 130, 7. Ábra/1.
[103] Parádi 1975, 128, 130, 131, 8 Ábra/9.

the others, from the space of the future Walachia and Moldavia, such mantle items are absent. The situation is similar inside the graves.

V. Vessels (pl. XV) were found at the present time only in the treasure from Banatski Despotovac. They consist of five bowls made of silver plate, with various adornments (pl. V/1-4). These are added by another one, discovered by chance on the hills located north-east from the city of Vršac in 1895.[104] Such items were also discovered south of the Carpathians, in the treasures from Gogoșu,[105] Covei,[106] Olteni[107] and Mavrodin,[108] and in Bulgaria at Shumen[109] and Nikopol[110] and in Serbia, at Dobri Dol.[111]

VI. Coins (pl. XVI). Quite a lot of the treasures contain smaller or larger lots of coins. They can be regarded as the beginning or the end of the hoarding of some items, although it is obvious that some of the adornments come to invalidate one term or the other. It is the case of the treasures from Dubovac, Șopteriu and Streza-Cârțișoara. While in the first cases some adornments are earlier, namely even from the fourteenth-fifteenth centuries, in the third locality the adornments are later than the determined coin.

Another treasure in which coins were discovered is the one in Duplijaja. They were issued during the reign of kings Henry II (1154-1189), Richard I (1189-1199), John Lackland (1199-1216), Henry III (1216-1272), William I (1195-1214), Alexander II (1214-1249), Andrew II (1205-1235) and Bela IV (1235-1270).

The treasure from Dobrica comprised 600 silver coins issued in Carinthia and one issued in Hungary.

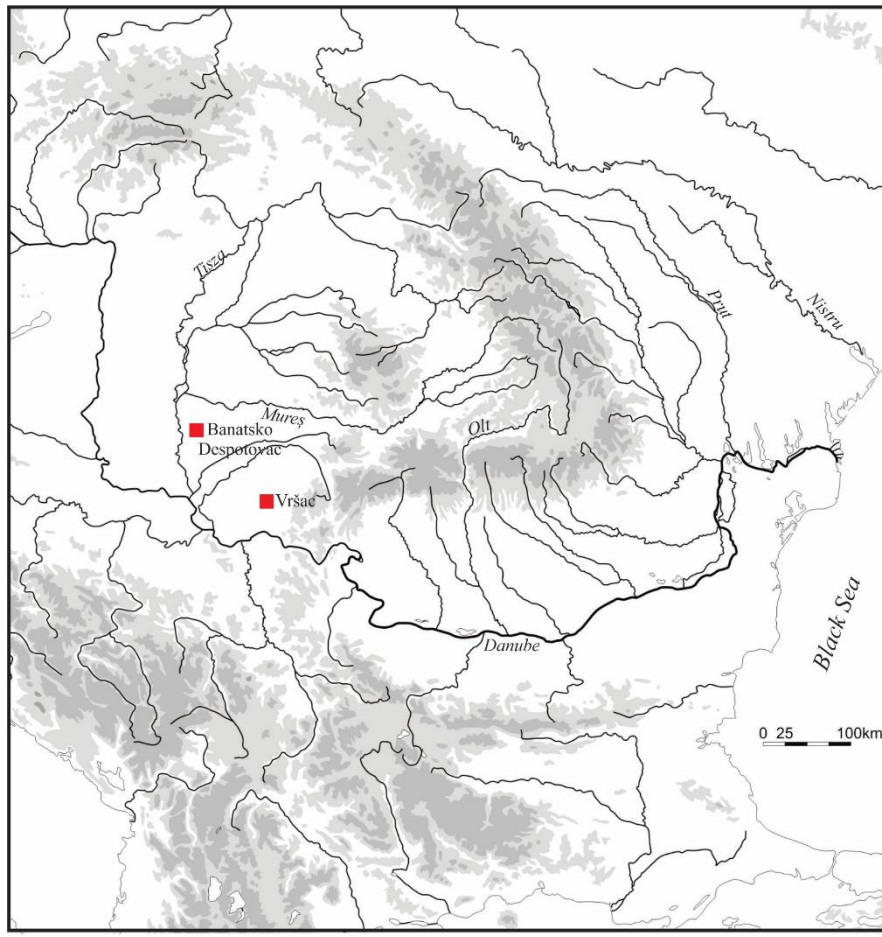
At Șopteriu, the coins are from the time of the Roman Empire (three items), medieval items from Vladislav Jagello (1386-1434) & Vladislas Warnenczyk (1434-1444) and late medieval until Louis I Grimaldi (1662-1701). The latest coin was issued in 1690 at Campen, in the Netherlands.

In the treasure from Amnaș were discovered coins issued during Jacopo Contarini (1275-1280) until Štefan Uroš II Milutin (1282-1321) and Philip IV the Fair (1285-1314).

At Banatsko Despotovac the coins were issued during Štefan Uroš IV Dušan (1331-1346), Queen Mary (1382-1395) and Emperor Sigismund of Luxembourg (1387-1437).

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[104] Țeicu 2009, 122, 271, fig. 31.
[105] Dumitriu 2001, 124, Taf. 36. This item is oval, with rippled edges.
[106] Dumitriu 2001, 117, Taf. 26/1, Taf. 27/1.
[107] Rosetti 1972, 3, 5, fig. 2.
[108] Țânțăreanu 2013, 257, 258, 261, pl. I/1.
[109] Pavlova 2007, 61, 12.1.1 (this item is also oval, with rippled edges).
[110] We thank our colleague Tudor Martin for the information.
[111] Trivunats – Tomich 1962, 188, sl. 22.

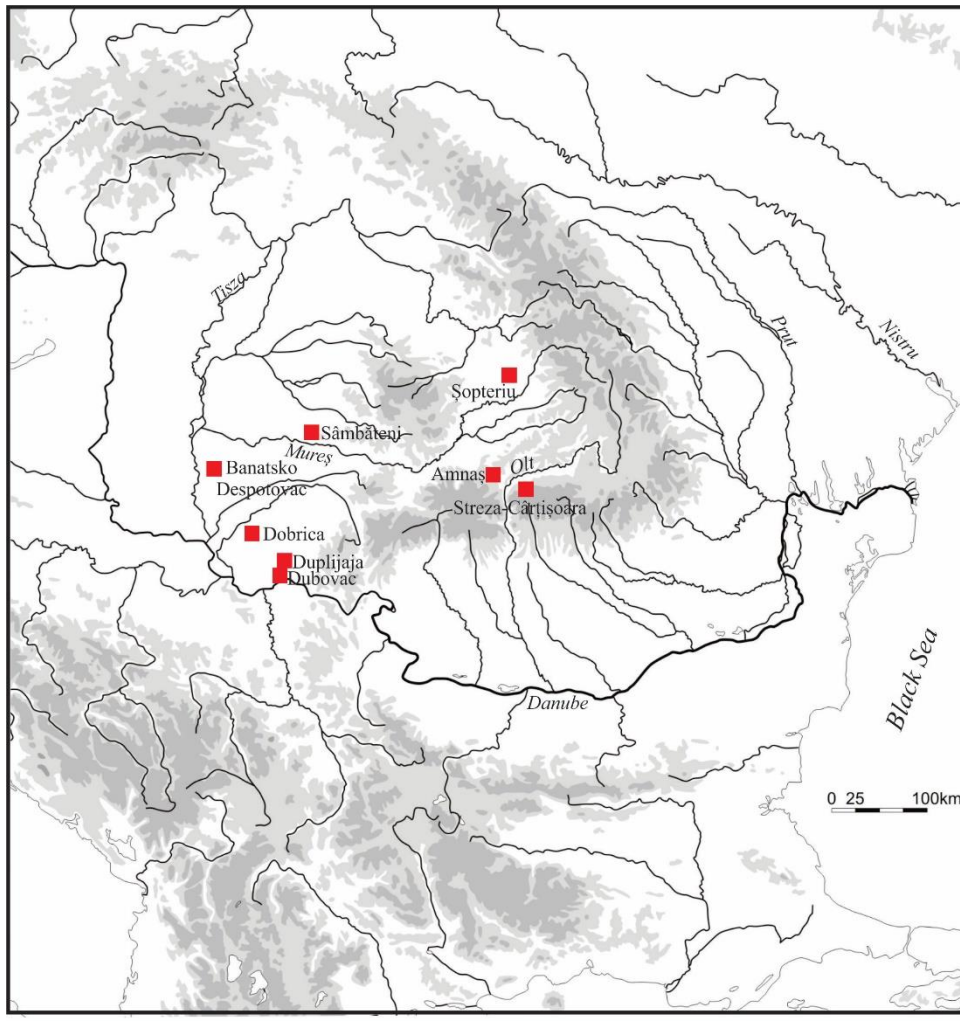


Pl. XV. Metal vessels (map support provided by Mihai Florea, SRTM-30, author mapping: Silviu Oța).

The treasure from Dubovac contains monetary emissions from the sixteenth-seventeenth centuries.

VII. Fragments of ingots (pl. XII/c) made of silver were discovered in the treasures from Amnaș and Straza-Cârțișoara (Pl. VII, VIII/A). They were very likely replacing the coins. There are 60 in the latter treasure, representing 895 grams of silver. Fragments of ingots were also discovered in the treasures from Tyukod-Bagolyvár,[112] Pécel[113] and Nagykamarás-Bánkút.[114]

[112] Vargha 2015, 24, fig. 13, down.
[113] Parádi 1975, 138, 139, 12. Ábra/2-3.
[114] Parádi 1975, 144, 145, 15. Ábra/11-12.



Pl. XVI. Coins in treasures (map support provided by Mihai Florea, SRTM-30, author mapping: Silviu Oța).

The chronology of the treasures based on the coins (fig. 3)

The presence of the coins inside the treasures indicates a certain chronological frame for its accumulation (fig. 3). Normally, there may be exceptions, such as the treasure from Șopteriu, where Roman imperial coins (three items) were also discovered.

At the present time, monetary emissions were discovered in eight treasures (Streza-Cârțișoara, Sâmbăteni, Duplijaja, Dobrica, Amnaș, Banatsko Despotovac, Șopteriu and Dubovac). Unfortunately, they are not very conclusive,

as the inventory items (adornments, clothing accessories) also indicate accumulation periods other than the ones observable by using the coins.

No.	Chronology	Streza-Cârțișoara	Sâmbăteni	Duplijaja	Dobrica	Amnaș	Banatsko Despotovac	Șopteriu	Dubovac
	12th-13th centuries								
1									
2		1118 - ?							
3			1147 - 1246						
4				1154 - 1270					
5					XIII ?				
6	13th-14th centuries					1275 - 1321			
7	14th-15th centuries						1331 - 1437		
8	14th-17th centuries							1386 - 1690	
9									14th-17th centuries

Fig. 3. Treasures from the twelve-fifteenth/seventeenth centuries. The accumulation period according to the coins discovered. The years represent the year of the reign of the first issuer and the last year of the reign of the last issuer (author: Silviu Oța).

The earliest belong to the thirteenth century (Duplijaja, Sâmbăteni, Streza-Cârțișoara, Dobrica-?), but we cannot specify whether they must be linked to the Tatar-Mongol invasion from 1241-1242.

The treasure from Amnaș follows in chronological order. This one is difficult to relate to a particular moment. According to the first publisher of the treasure, it is related to the arrival of Carol Robert in the Sibiu area and to the tense events in the area during the first years of the reign of this king. As the last year of issue of the newest coin is not published, it is difficult to specify which the real cause of its burial was. Given that the situation of the Tatar society in the late thirteenth century and the beginning of the following one was quite tense, it is not excluded that we are dealing with a possible Tatar invasion in the area.

The treasure from Banatsko Despotovac was very likely buried during the reign of Sigismund I of Luxembourg. There could be multiple causes of its burial, but the more plausible could be related to the conflicts with the Turks at the Danube.

The presence of the coins from the previous centuries is less relevant in the case of the treasures from the seventeenth century, as the items were very likely preserved for the silver.

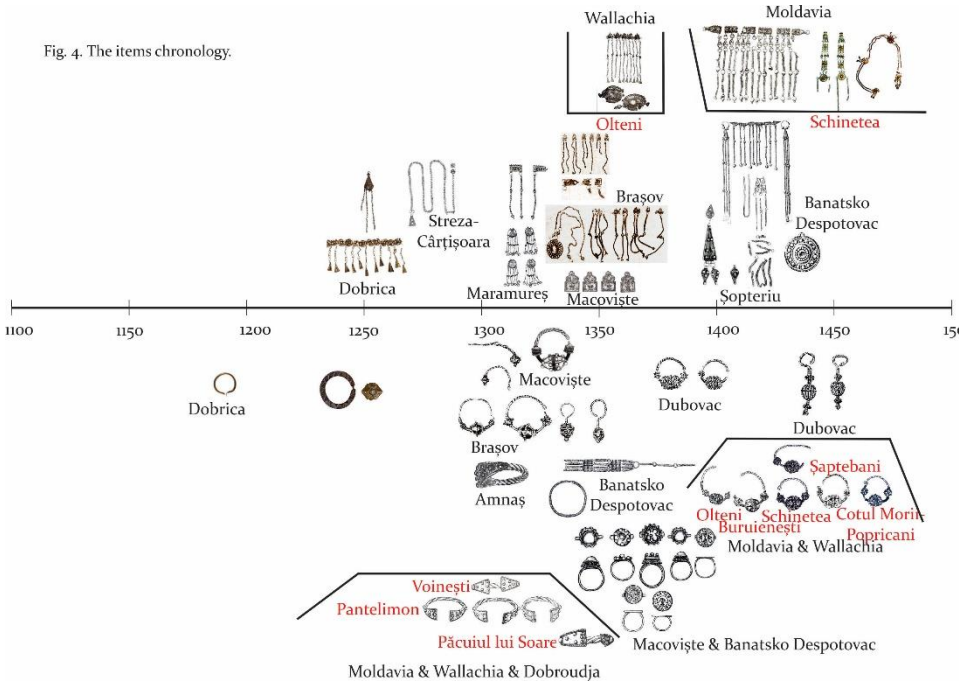


Fig. 4. The items chronology (author: Silviu Oța).

Conclusions

The discovery of the treasures with Byzantine items or items of Byzantine tradition inside the Carpathian Arch is of great importance from several points of view.

First, they demonstrate that there was an aristocracy linked to the Byzantine cultural traditions and the Byzantine cultural heritage. As a rule, the adornments and the clothing accessories in the Balkan space were quite little used by other populations than the Wallachians or the Slavic groups. For the latter, we can speak especially of those in the northern Pontic and the southern Danube areas, where the tradition of using and manufacturing adornments according to the Byzantine Empire techniques, but also of some models there, was very strong and persistent. Not only did they perpetuate techniques and patterns of jewelry or clothing accessories, but they also enriched them after 1204, when Constantinople was conquered by the Crusaders. The products of these workshops, but also craftsmen most probably penetrated the north of the Danube, especially after the conquest of the Balkans by the Ottoman Turks, towards the end of the fourteenth century.

The phenomenon has its beginnings after the decrease of the influence of the Cuman tribes south and east of the Carpathian Mountains, when many

Balkan adornments began to be traded here. Imitations of them were also manufactured in the northern part of the River, either by local craftsmen or by those who probably took refuge here for various reasons. Products of these Balkan workshops but also of local workshops from the thirteenth-fourteenth centuries are from various locations of the extra-Carpathian territory, either as treasures (Basarabi, Covei, Schela Cladovei, Jiana Mare, Gogoșu, Olteni, Jidosița, Șușița, Cernica Forest in the area from the south of the Carpathians and Cotnari, Schinetea, Suceava, Buruienești, Cotul Morii-Popricani from Moldavia), or from funerary structures (Drobeta-Turnu Severin, Cetățeni, Ostrovul Mare, Potlogi, Frumoasa, Retevoiești, Craiova-Făcăi and Fântâna Obedeanu, Dridu, Măicănești, Portărești, Bucșani), settlements (Drobeta-Turnu Severin-Termele Romane, Coconi, Hlincea, Ghindăoani[115]) or accidental discoveries (earrings from the Bucharest area, items from the Drobeta-Turnu Severin city area).

On the other hand, we are dealing with trade relations with the South-Danubian area. However, it is not excluded that they arrived here by the settlement on these territories of some aristocrats or possible traders from the Balkan area. If we consider the discoveries of adornments of the same tradition also in graves or settlements, it is obvious that we are dealing with a dress quite spread in certain localities. They are concentrated especially in the Banat, at Ilidia-Obliță (pair of question mark-shaped earrings, decorated with a sphere on the rod, rings),[116] Cuptoare-Sfogea (earrings with the link made of twisted wire, decorated with three unequal pendants;[117] earring with two spherical pendants,[118] rings), Reșița-Ogășele (earring with the link made of simple bar, with three unequal pendants on the link),[119] Svinița (earrings with the link made of double-folded and twisted bar, with three unequal pendants on the link),[120] Ciclova-Română-Morminți (ring manufactured in the granulation and filigree technique),[121] Cârnecea-Dealu Bisericii (necklace with metal plates),[122] Mehadia-Zidină (ring decorated with aviform motif with two ends),[123] Vršac (ring with stone or glass, decorated in the granulation technique[124] and one earring with the link made of double-folded and

[115] See Oța 2014, 168-176.
[116] Țeicu 2009, 66, pl. 16/3; 82, pl. 32/1-2; 193.
[117] Țeicu 2009, 81, pl. 31/5-6; 188-189.
[118] Țeicu 2009, 79, pl. 29/5-6; 204.
[119] Țeicu 2009, 54, 81, pl. 31/7.
[120] Dumitriu 2001, 136, Taf. 112/1-2.
[121] Uzum & Țeicu 1981, 213, 215, fig. 5.
[122] Țeicu 1995, 228.
[123] Țeicu 2003, 97, 98, 100, 103, fig. 3.
[124] Oța 2008, 303, pl. 127/2.

twisted wire, decorated with three unequal pendants),[125] but also, others balcanik jeweleries, in southern Transylvania (Cârța[126] and Vețel-Luncă).[127]

However, their presence may prove that they were brought there and buried at various times, for reasons that escape us or can only be assumed. The fact that they are concentrated in areas where Byzantine or Balkan items had previously been discovered (Banat, southern and eastern Transylvania), however, greatly reduces the possibility that they came from robberies and got there by chance.

It is quite obvious that this aristocracy enjoyed certain rights, mainly commercial, especially if we consider that they had the economic power to acquire such adornments. Their presence both in the treasures and in the graves also demonstrates an accentuated stratification of the society compared to the previous centuries, when the Balkan adornments were a relatively common good in the mentioned areas. The hoarded items were generally made of larger quantities of silver or gilded silver. The fact that in the graves there are no others of Byzantine tradition, produced in the Balkan workshops and cheaper (only exceptionally), comes to confirm the difference in terms of wealth previously asserted. The concentration of the items only in the hands of elites also proves that the rest of the population no longer had access to them, either as a result of impoverishment or as a result of its movement limitation. This phenomenon is observable for the moment especially in Transylvania, where the Balkan adornments of Byzantine tradition appear only rarely in graves or settlements in the thirteenth-fourteenth centuries. Such items were discovered only at Cârța, where a fragment of an earring and a ring were found.[128] The situation is nevertheless slightly different in the space between the Mureș River, Tisza River, Danube River and the Carpathian Mountains, where the archaeological excavations identified several such Balkan adornments in various locations, especially in the east of the region. Access to the procurement markets has also become relatively limited. However, we can also delimit certain distribution areas of these items, usually in the trade areas, such as Vršac (Vršac with two locations where an earring with unequal pendants and a ring decorated with a stone or glass and granules were discovered and other items found in the collection of the museum, Cârnecea-Dealul Bisericii, Reșița, Vărădia, Forotic), Ilidia

[125] Chorovich-Lyubinkovich 1954, 87, fig. 12.
[126] Fragment of an earring with the link made of a twisted bar rectangular in section, adorned with a sphere decorated with pseudo-granules and one ring decorated with pseudo-granules. Research Petre Beșliu.
[127] Information from Cătălin Rișcuța, to whom I express my thanks.
[128] Research Petre Muntenu-Beșliu.

(Ilidia, Ciclova-Română), Mehadia area (Mehadia, Cuptoare), Brașov (the treasure), Olt area (Cârța and Steaza-Cârțișoara). The same phenomenon can also be observed in localities along the Danube or in neighbouring areas (Svinița, Orșova). Such adornments have rarely been found in relatively isolated areas, also along the great rivers of the Banat, such as the rings from Botoš[129] (near the Bega river, on its lower course). At least for the eastern Banat, it can be observed in most cases that they are found near the district centres (Ilidia, Mehadia) or county centres (Vršac). It is interesting that so far there were no discoveries of Balkan adornments in the fortified cities for the interval between the thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries. This may mean that the nobility there was going through a process of transformation and adaptation to the Central European fashion. The phenomenon can be best observed in the necropolis from Caransebeș-Centru, dated to the fourteenth-sixteenth centuries. I would mention that at this moment it represents only a stage of research, and future archaeological discoveries will confirm or contradict this process. It would be also very interesting to investigate the cemeteries belonging to the villages located on the domains of the Wallachian nobles who resided even temporarily in the cities of Caransebeș and Lugoj. Their research could clarify whether it is an apparent behaviour, manifested in the cities as a result of the authorities' influence, or it is a reality of the time, a result of the beliefs of the noble residing in the urban environment, who may have become not only interested in the central European fashion but perhaps also Catholics, out of conviction or need to preserve privileges and property.

Chronologically, the burial of these treasures had several causes. First, we are dealing with the great Tatar-Mongol invasion of 1241-1242. The treasure from Duplijaja date back to those days.

In the case of the treasure from Amnaș, the first author to publish it believed that it was about the fourteenth century conflicts in the Sibiu area, more precisely from around 1324, when the presence of King Charles I of Hungary was required in the area.[130] If we consider the chronology of the coins, the latest dating back to the reigns of Štefan Uroš II Milutin (1275-1321), Štefan Dragutin (1281-1316), Richard of Cornwall (1257-1271) and Philip the Fair (1285-1314),[131] we are most likely dealing with another event that had

[129] Stanoyev 1989, 30, 31/158-161.

[130] Weisskircher 1935, 236-237.

[131] The coins were never published exhaustively, therefore we cannot conclude which was the latest. We may suspect that they are coins issued during the abovementioned kings. This means that the date provided by the author of the first article is quite relative and certainly not safe. However, we may take it, it is quite clear that they are

happened previously. Even so, we can only assume it. Therefore, the events from southern Transylvania should be correlated with those from Walachia, Dobrogea and Moldavia rather than with local military actions. I believe that this is a somewhat earlier burial of the treasure from Amnaș, rather related to the Tatar invasions due to the internal turmoil in their society at the end of the thirteenth century and the beginning of the following one, which certainly also affected the extra-Carpathian regions and the southern part of Transylvania.[132]

In the case of the treasure from Macoviște where the coins are absent, we may only suspect based on the relative chronology of the items that it was buried during the fourteenth century. At this stage of research, it is difficult to specify which the causes were. The assumptions do not provide a clear answer.

Another treasure whose date of burial is quite late for our subject is the one from Banatski Despotovac. Among the main possible causes of its burial must be the frequent incursions of the Ottoman troops in the area of the Lower Tisza in the fifteenth century. There is one aspect here worth mentioning, namely that in the nearby area, in Botoš, rings from the South-Danube area were found. This already indicates a small concentration of population from the Balkans or having trade links with the Balkan environment. If we also consider the earlier items here, from the Botoš-Mlaka point (bracelets and hairpins decorated in the filigree technique), we can see quite clearly that in the area there was, at least two centuries before, a small enclave with a population that used artefacts of Byzantine tradition, with connections in the South-Danube environment.

Unfortunately, in the case of the treasure from Brașov (or from the Brașov area) which can be dated roughly to the same period, it is difficult to know which were the reasons for its burial, but generally speaking, they were very likely the same. It is not excluded that we are dealing with zonal conflicts between the Wallachian population and that from the Saxon area.

As the other treasures, namely the later, from the seventeenth century, raise other issues, we will not be discussing them. They were merely mentioned because of the circulation of the Balkan items of Byzantine tradition inside the Carpathian Arch. It should be noted, however, that at least the lot of adornments from Dubovac contained Balkan artefacts from the time of the Ottoman rule in Hungary. In contrast, the treasure from Șopteriu did not contain such items.

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not coins issued around the date proposed by Weisskircher, but very likely earlier coins.

[132] Oța & Oberlander-Târnoveanu 2018, 231-232.

What is interesting about these treasures is that a good part of them contain frontal tiaras or parts of them. They were used especially in the marriage ceremony[133]. Because of this, we can hypothesize that they could also be artefacts of institutions, such as religious ones. The lack or sporadic presence of signet rings decorated in the granulation and filigree technique, therefore which could not be used as signet rings, could suggest that we are dealing with personal and not institutional artefacts, at least in some cases. On the other hand, the presence in the treasures of signet rings lead to the idea that some of them belonged to nobles or aristocrats who could sign documents or put their seal on them (Macoviște, Banatski Despotovac).

The presence of the silver ingots fragments from Streza-Cârțișoara could suggest that the owner had certain financial means and could afford to pay, in the absence of money, certain services or goods. Cutting one or several ingots supports the idea that the owner of the treasure had access to silver, regardless of how it came into his possession, by mining or smelting other goods. The tiara fragments may suggest that they were partly used to pay some goods. The tiara fragments discovered in Brașov or the areas nearby are in the same situation, as they are in turn preserved only partially, like the pieces of chains from the tiara found at Șopteriu.

The treasure from Banatski Despotovac has a relatively special status. Here, the items have been preserved largely intact. Only a few seem to have been used for payments, namely those from which certain fragments have been preserved and which were considered less useful at the time in terms of their initial destination.

From these few observations, we can conclude that at the time of their burial, the items from the treasures had only to a small extent the role for which they were manufactured. The crisis situations that the owners went through led to the almost total or partial destruction of the artefacts they owned. This may be mainly due either to the lack of liquidity of the holders, or to urgent payments. The cutting or removing of parts from the assemblies may also indicate the amount of silver used to pay for goods. Unfortunately, in many cases, this can no longer be specified, as the artefacts are far too damaged.

Another problem is that in some treasures, in addition to the items of Byzantine tradition, new models of adornments were discovered, models that appeared towards the end of the thirteenth century and whose fashion lasted for the next two centuries. These are especially certain models of rings, which could also act as a seal. Such items were discovered in the treasure from Banatski Despotovac or in Macoviște. Similar cases were also observed

[133] Dumitriu 2001, 25-29; Reabțeva 2014, 19-26 and literature.

in the treasures from Olteni[134] and Schinetea.[135] The presence of such rings in treasures, but also in many funerary structures, proves that they were adopted in the local environment.

The territorial distribution of the treasures, regardless of the period in which they were buried, shows us that they were hidden especially in the marginal areas of the Kingdom or near trade and military routes (the water-courses of the rivers Olt, Danube, Tisza, Mures, Timiș and Nera). Their occurrence in the marginal areas is normal, because there were areas of the Wallachian nobility, especially in southern Transylvania. The situation is relatively similar in the area of the present-day Banat, especially in the east of the region, where the presence of the Wallachian population and its elites is massively attested. Such adornments of Byzantine tradition were also discovered not far from the Danube (Duplijaja, Dubovac), near the Tisza (at Banatsko Despotovac) and near the Mureș (Sâmbăteni). Not far from the great rivers of the region were also found the treasures from Macoviște (near the Nera) and Dobrica (near the Timiș).

The chronology of the burial of the treasures (fig. 2) indicates first of all the Tatar invasion of 1241-1242, but also the following ones from the thirteenth century. For the other situations, the causes had rather local reasons. For the middle Danube area, we must not forget the attacks of the Cumans from the end of the thirteenth century, when numerous destructions of the localities from the lower Tisza plain were attested. Other important moments can be related to the Danube conflicts between the Kingdom of Hungary and the Ottoman Empire, especially during the reign of Sigismund of Luxembourg (1387-1437).

In southern Transylvania, the situation can be linked either to the tense relations between the king and the Saxons in the south of the region, but also to possible Tatar invasions on the Olt valley at the end of the thirteenth century and the beginning of the fourteenth century. Starting with the fifteenth century, the burial of the treasures can be attributed to the Turkish invasions.

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[134] Dumitriu 2001, 130, Taf. 42/7-9.

[135] Alaiba 2007, 28, fig. 20-25; 29.

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Medieval spurs from the fund of the National Archaeological Institute with Museum in Sofia, Bulgaria[1]

Stoyan Popov

Abstract: This work is dedicated to eleven spurs kept in the fund of the National Archaeological Institute with Museum in Sofia (NAIM BAS-Sofia). They are deposited in the museum's fund as purchases or donations, so in most cases they cannot be linked to a secure context. They are representatives of the two main classes among the spurs, according to their working part, namely those with a spike and a rowel.

The spurs with a spike are represented by only one specimen (ill. 1, cat. № 1). The spur dates back to the period of the 10th-11th century.

The other ten artifacts discussed in this paper are spurs with rowels (ill. 2-11, cat. № 2-11). They cover the chronological period from the middle of the 13th to the beginning of the 17th century.

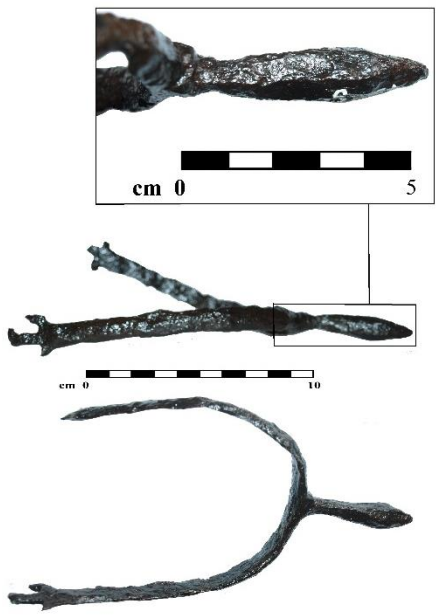
Key words: horseman's equipment, prick spurs, rowel spurs, medieval military equipment, Middle ages

Резюме: Работата е посветена на единадесет шпори, съхранявани във фонда на НАИМ БАН-София. Те са депонирани във фонда на музея като покупки или дарения, така че в повечето случаи те не могат да бъдат свързани със сигурен контекст. Те са представители на двата основни класа сред шпорите, съобразно работната им част, а именно такива с шип и със звезда. Шпорите с шип са представени само от един екземпляр (ил. 1, кат. № 1). Шпората датира от периода 10–11 в. Останалите десет артефакта, разгледани в тази статия, са шпори със звезди (ил. 2–11, кат. № 2–11). Те обхващат хронологичния период от средата на 13 до началото на 17 в.

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Spurs are an important part of the rider-warrior's equipment. They appeared in Europe even earlier than stirrups, being used by the Celtic tribes.[2]

This work is dedicated to 11 spurs kept in the fund of National Archaeological Institute with Museum – Bulgarian academy of Sciences, Sofia (further NAIM-BAS). They are deposited in the museum's fund as purchases or donations, so in most cases they cannot be linked to a secure context. They are representatives of the two main classes among the spurs, according to their working part, namely those with a spike and a rowel.



Ill. 1. A prick spur. Cat. № 1. Inv. № 1588; list 74 II; consecutive № 53 – NAIM BAS-Sofia (photo: Stoyan Popov).

The spurs with a spike are represented by only one specimen (ill. 1, cat. № 1). The spur has horizontal shoulders, a rectangular vertical loop with two rectangular holes. The spike is bipyramidal, consisting of two five-walled pyramids. It comes from a cubic base. There are no sure signs that the spike is additionally riveted to the shoulders. It appears to have been made together with the rest of the spur and is a monolithic whole with it. The spur was discovered during excavations in the vicinity of Chelopech. During the subsequent archeological field excavations, coins from the end of the 10th – the beginning of the 11th century were found here.[3] According to the typology of A. Kirpichnikov, the spur belongs to type I, whose appearance and use in Ancient Russ refers to the 11th-12th centuries.[4] V. Yotov places specimens with the characteristics of this spur in type IV, variant B and dates them to the 10th-11th century,[5] which date I consider applicable to the spur in question.

The other ten artifacts discussed in this paper are spurs with rowels. Chronologically, they are located in the later periods than the spurs with a spike, and for a short time there is a parallel use of the two kinds. The next

[2] Perkhavko 1978, 113.
[3] Mutafchiev 1914/1915, 264-266; Yotov 2004, 164.
[4] Kolchin *et al*. 1985, 318; 361, tabl. 147.
[5] Yotov 2004, 164-169.

of the considered representatives of the rider's equipment is quite interesting and, I would say somewhat unique (ill. 2, cat. № 2)! This is due to the material from which the spur is made and the characteristic location of the loops for its suspension. The shoulders of the specimen in question form an arched shape; have a slight arcuate curve and a triangular cross-section. They are relatively narrow. Above the base of the rowel holder there is a slightly protruding triangular tip.

The shape and the way of attaching the spur straps are very interesting. First of all, the two loops have a different shape – one is rectangular, with a rectangular hole, and the other is shaped like the number 8, with two round holes. The appearance of asymmetrical-shaped loops dates back to the time of the first half of the 13th century, according to Kirpichnikov.[6] The 8-shaped loops appeared in the 12th century and are spread to the 16th-17th centuries.[7] The next interesting feature of the spur is the different orientation of its loops. The left (rectangular) is placed horizontally and the right (8-shaped) is vertical. This divergent orientation of the loops refers to the time of the mid. 12th – middle of 13th century.[8] After the middle – end of the 13th century, this orientation of the loops, as well as the asymmetry do not occur. The rowel holder's opening for the rowel shows that it was about 3.6 cm in diameter. This size places it among the small rowels, which, in combination with the spur characteristics discussed above, also points to dating it to the 13th century.



Ill. 2. A rowel spur. Cat. № 2. Inv. № 338; list 811; consecutive № 774 – NAIM BAS-Sofia

[6] Kirpichnikov 1973, tabl. 13. S. Vitlyanov published a spur with a rowel from the region of Madara (Vitlyanov 1996, 62-63, Cat. No. 15), which has asymmetrical loops, respectively round and rectangular. It is referred by the author to the spurs with a rowel and arched shoulders, dated to the 11th century. This spur is placed in type 8 of the typology of V. Yotov, dated in the first decades of the 11th – beginning of the 12th century. I believe that the date of the spur in question should be placed in the first half – the middle of the 13th century due to the combination of arched shoulders and the presence of a rowel, of which only the rowel holder remains.

[7] Kirpichnikov 1973, 62-63, fig. 37, 38; Koóšová 2004, 540, tabl. 1; Krajic 2003, 121, obr. 105; 124-125.

[8] Lagane 2010, 105-106; Ioniță 2019, 219-220; 228, fig. ¼; Ghenescu 2017, 109; 121, pl. 1/1; Ellis 2002, fig. 5/18, 20; 7, cat. 18, 20.

The location of the holes for the fastening strap, as well as the slight asymmetry of the shoulders when viewed from above, on part of the spurs, can suggest whether the object is intended for the left or right leg. The horizontal rectangular loop was used to run through it the end of the strap, which passes under the foot, pierces through the frame of the buckle and is fastened by its tongue. The other end of this strap is attached by means of a copper S-hook to the lower hole of the 8-shaped loop. Attached to the upper hole of the vertical, 8-shaped loop (probably also with such a hook, now lost) is the strap holding the buckle of the spur. As a rule, the buckle is on the outside of the foot. At the same time, the shoulders of the spur have a slightly noticeable asymmetry, in which the rowel holder is slightly oriented in the direction of the shoulder with the rectangular loop, i.e. to the belly of the horse. These marks present the spur as intended for placement on the left foot.

The third interesting and rare feature of the spur is the material from which it is made, namely a copper alloy. I am aware of a spur of such material, stored in the Italian museum Museo Civico Medievale di Bologna, dated to the middle of 13th – beginning of the 14th century.[9] This spur also has loops with horizontal and vertical orientation, respectively rectangular and round. The difference is that the Italian spur has a spike, not a rowel.

The spur of cat. No. 2 refers to group C according to the typology of A. Ruttkai (middle of 13th – middle of 14th century).[10] P. Koóšová placed spurs with rowels and a less arcuate curve of the shoulders in the 13th century.[11] A. Kirpichnikov puts these spurs in type V (first half of the 13th-14th century). I think that placing the date of the spur in the middle – the third quarter of the 13th century is completely reasonable.

The next spur (ill. 3, cat. № 3) is also from the group of the rowels. Its shoulders, however, have a deeper arcuate curve than those of the previous specimen. The shoulders are relatively wide with a cross section shaped like an obtuse triangle. The rowel holder is short, and the shoulders above its base do not form a pointed tip upwards. The rowel is small in diameter. The shoulders end with vertical round loops with one round hole each. One loop carries a preserved buckle attached to a hook, and next to it – a rectangular plate with two hooks, one of which holds it by the hook, and the other is designed to hang the strap. According to the location of the buckle and the plate, the spur is designed for the left foot. The plate carries the underfoot strap and the buckle is located on the outside of the foot.

[9] Boccia 1991, 101, cat. No. 187).
[10] Ruttkay 1976, 347, abb. 72; 350-352.
[11] Koóšová 2004, 530, 540, tabl. 1.



Ill. 3. A rowel spur. Cat. № 3. Inv. № 265; list 74 II; consecutive № 51 – NAIM BAS-Sofia (photo: Stoyan Popov).

The deep curve of the shoulders, the lack of protrusion above the base of the rowel holder, the short rowel holder and the small diameter rowel are characteristics that point to dating in the 13th century. I believe that the date could be refined in the second half of the century because of the curvature of the shoulders. The considered spur of cat. № 3 refers to group C according to the typology of A. Ruttkay (middle 13th – middle 14th century) (Ruttkay 1976, 347, abb. 72; 350-352). Kirpichnikov puts these spurs in type V (first half of the 13th-14th century).[12] He gave an example of a spur of a similar shape, depicted on an English tombstone, dating to the beginning of the 14th century.[13]

The next spur (ill. 4, cat. No. 4) has strongly bent downward arched shoulders. The loops are round, curved downwards. Above the base of the rowel holder, the shoulders end with a triangular protrusion upwards. The rowel holder is relatively short and its shoulders end in plastic decoration. The rowel of the spur is interesting. It has a disc shape and a serrated edge and is decorated with radial, incised lines starting from the center of the disc. The specimen in question was worn on the left foot, as the buckle attaching the object to the foot is preserved for the left loop of the spur. A spur from northwestern Bohemia, discovered by a road, without context, dates to the 14th-15th century.[14] According to English researchers, spurs with these specific rowels were fashionable in the second half of the 14th century, and at the end of the century these rowels were abandoned.[15] The distinctive characteristics of the spur's shoulders, the specific rowel and the indicated parallels place the object in the second half of the 14th century.

[12] Kirpichnikov 1973, 67-68.
[13] Kirpichnikov 1973, fig. 35.
[14] Štolba & Rypka 2014, 372, obr. 16.
[15] Ellis 1995, 147-148.



Ill. 4. A rowel spur. Cat. № 4. Inv. № 42; list 1004; consecutive № 564 – NAIM BAS-Sofia (photo: Stoyan Popov).

The shape, the arcuate curve of the shoulders, the triangular protrusion above the base of the rowel holder and the downward-pointing round loops of the next spur (ill. 5, cat. No. 5) in the present exposition are the same as those of the previous specimen. The difference between the two artifacts is in the rowel. In the case of the spur under consideration, the rowel has a relatively large diameter and 8 distinct leaf-shaped rays. According to the described characteristics, the spur can be generally dated to the 14th century.[16]

The next spur (ill. 6, cat. No. 6) has slightly arched shoulders. They are almost straight, curving upwards in the last third of their length and ending with round loops. This spur has several interesting features. The first feature is the embossed decoration, which covers two thirds of the shoulders. Part of this embossed ornamentation is the rectangular, embossed, horizontal edge, formed above the base of the rowel holder. The shape of the rowel is very interesting and relatively rare. It has an odd (9) number of elongated pentagonal rays. Spur with such a rowel, but with a different layout of the shoulders is known from the collection of the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina.[17] It dates back to the first half of the 14th century. This is why I think these rowels spread mainly during this century. The plastic decoration of the shoulders of the spurs dates back to the second half of the 14th century and is especially characteristic of the 15th century. From the end of the 14th to the beginning of the 15th century, some spurs have a relatively shallow or missing curvature

[16] Koóšová 2004, 533-536; Győrfi 2006, 104-105, 120: 34-36; Žákovský 2011, 141-142, fig. 30a.
[17] Sijaric 1996/2000, 307-308, 313, 318, 337-tab. V-16.

of the shoulders which are rising up at the end to form a finish with the loops. These characteristics point to the dating of the specimen to the end of the 14th – beginning of the 15th century.

The next three spurs (ill. 7-9, cat. Nos. 7-9) of the considered group are of one type. Up to the middle of their length, the shoulders are horizontal, then they rise almost at right angles upwards, and in the last third of their length, they are again horizontal. They end with round vertical loops. The shoulders of two of the spurs are embossed. Their stars have 8 leaf-shaped rays. One of the spurs (cat. No. 9) has a preserved buckle, the location of which defines it as intended for the left foot. An image of very similar in form to the three specimens in question, we find in one of the murals in the church of the Dragalevtsi Monastery, near Sofia. This is the image of St. George, located on the outer west facade of the temple.[18] According to previous research, it refers to the end of the 15th – beginning of the 16th century.[19] I believe that the image in the Dragalevtsi monastery marks the upper chronological limit of the use of these spurs. In my opinion, spurs with such characteristic features appeared at the end of the 14th century and were in use until the end of the 15th – beginning of the 16th century. In the 15th century, they were used along with spurs with a long rowel holder, a small diameter rowel and a highly raised, basket-like upper shoulder.[20] This type of spurs are similar to the considered specimens in the main features of the shoulders: horizontal layout in the first half or 2/3 of their length, vertical part at almost right angles and horizontal end of the shoulders in their part with the holes for hanging.



Ill. 5. A rowel spur. Cat. № 5. Inv. № 43; list 1004; consecutive № 563 – NAIM BAS-Sofia (photo: Stoyan Popov).

[18] Popov 2011, 45-47, figs. 6-6a.
[19] Chavrakov 1978, 224-237.
[20] Popov 2020, 56-58, cat. Nos. 1-3, ill. 1-6.



Ill. 6. A rowel spur. Cat. № 6. Inv. № 3328; list 1004; consecutive № 727 – NAIM BAS-Sofia (photo: Stoyan Popov).

The next spur (ill. 10, cat. No. 10) can be referred to the group of the previous three specimens (cat. Nos. 7-9). This is dictated by the S-shaped appearance of the shoulders, the shape of the rowel holder and the diameter of the rowel. The difference between them is in the number of rays of the rowel – in the one considered here, they are 6, and in the previous 3 spurs, they are 8. Along with this, the shape of the rays of the rowel in cat. No. 10 is conical, and in cat. Nos. 7-9 is leafy. Another difference is the lack of ornamentation on the shoulders of cat. No. 10 and the presence of such in cat. No. 7 and 9 (regarding cat. No. 8 there are no data due to the fact that large parts of the artifact are missing!).

In all probability, the spur of cat. No. 10 was designed for the left foot. This assumption is based on the assumed location of the buckle. For the preserved shoulder of the spur, two plates for attaching the straps have survived. One plate ends with a forked part, as the two horns of the fork are folded like hooks. I consider that this plate was part of the attachment buckle, the frame of which was suspended from the fork-shaped part, and the buckle tongue was located in the space between the two horns of the fork. In the other plate, the folded tongues of the forked part are missing. Here, at their place, survived part of the T-shaped end to which the strap was attached. I believe that the placement of the plate with the T-shaped end above the plate with the buckle is incorrect and is a product of confusion when processing the artifact in the museum or when it was first discovered. The dating of the spur of cat. No. 10 I place within the end of the 14th – the end of the 15th/the beginning of the 16th century.

The last artifact in the present exposition (ill. 11, cat. No. 11) belongs to a group of spurs distributed in Poland, Hungary and Southeastern Europe. They are characterized by straight horizontal shoulders that are relatively flat

and wide. At the end they finish with small holes for the suspension system. They have a long flat and wide rowel holder (the same width as the shoulders), ending with a medium or large rowel.

According to J. Kalmar, these spurs date back to the 15th century.[21] At the same time, the same author deals with similar, but with some differences, spurs of Hungarian Hussars, which he classifies as tournament equipment and dates to the middle of the 16th century.[22] Another Hungarian author also associates this type of spurs with the Hussars and places them in the 15th-16th centuries.[23]



Ill. 7. A rowel spur. Cat. № 7. Inv. № 572; list 811; consecutive № 771 – NAIM BAS-Sofia (photo: Stoyan Popov).

Polish authors believe that these spurs were used by Hussar regiments from the end of the 16th (about the last quarter of the century – 1570s – 1580s)[24] to the beginning of the 17th century as part of the parade equipment. During battle, Polish Hussars used shorter spurs of another type.[25]

Similar spurs have been found in Croatia. The author of the publication considers that they are locally produced under the influence of Hungarian fashion. They are dated on the basis of older publications to the first half of the 15th century.[26]

There are also similar specimens from the collection of the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which are dated by the author of the publication to the first half of the 15th century, again on the basis of an older publication.[27]

Spurs like the one discussed here are found on images from the end of the 16th century worn by Ottoman soldiers (ill. 12-13). There are also those on an Ottoman manuscript from the middle of the century, as here it is depicted in a battle scene, and not as part of the parade equipment (ill. 14).

[21] Kalmár 1971, 361-362, 59, kep. a, d.
[22] Kalmár 1954, 65-66.
[23] Fabian 2012, 59-61.
[24] Gembarzewski 2017, 31, 34.
[25] Brzezinski 2006, 59.
[26] Jakovljević 2008/2009, 111-112, tabl. 6, 7, 8, cat. Nos. 15-18.
[27] Sijaric 1996/2000, 313, 323, 343, tab. XI-40.



Ill. 8. A rowel spur.
Cat. № 8. Inv. № 468;
list 74II; consecutive
№ 52 – NAIM BAS-Sofia
(photo: Stoyan Popov).

The dating of these spurs to the 15th century is probably dictated by the presence of a long rowel holder, characteristic of the spurs of this period. Moreover, the specimens published in the scientific literature do not originate from contexts with undeniably narrow dating. I believe that the spur of cat. No. 11 of the present work should be placed within the period of the second half of the 16th – beginning of the 17th century. This conclusion of mine is based on the presence of such spurs on images from that period and the absence of such from the 15th century. At this stage of the research, it is not possible to say with certainty where these spurs originated – whether they are the Ottoman or Central European fashion product.

The rider's equipment discussed here descended in today's Bulgarian lands, especially from the period of the 12th-17th century, needs more in-depth study. The presented work is a contribution to the study of an important and very typical for the Middle Ages equipment – the spurs.





Ill. 9. A rowel spur.
Cat. № 9. Inv. № 468;
нов акт I; consecutive № 1 –
NAIM BAS-Sofia
(photo: Stoyan Popov).



Ill. 10. A rowel spur. Cat. № 10. Inv. № 3499; list 811; consecutive № 775 – NAIM BAS-Sofia (photo: Stoyan Popov).



Ill. 11. A rowel spur. Cat. № 11. Inv. № 27; list 1004; consecutive № 726 – NAIM BAS-Sofia (photo: Stoyan Popov).



Ill. 12. Ottoman soldiers with rowel spurs. Codex Vindobonensis 8626, Vienna (1580-1590)



Ill. 13. Ottoman soldiers with rowel spurs. Codex Vindobonensis 8626, Vienna (1580-1590)



Ill. 14. Ottoman and Hungarian soldiers with rowel spurs. *Süleymanname*, Topkapı Sarayı Museum, written by Sinan Çavush, Hazine 1517, folio 212r (1543-1551)

CATALOG

1. **Inv. № 1588;** list 74 II; consecutive № 53
Spur. Iron.
Total length (L) 17.3 cm
L. spike 5.3 cm
Shoulder L. 12 cm

Shoulders – straight, horizontal, with a semicircular section, height (H.) 1 cm, thickness (T.) 0.4 cm. The right is bent upwards. Due to the breakage of the end, it has a cruciform end. The left shoulder ends with the remains of a loop with 2 rectangular holes, located one above the other. The L. of the loop is 1.7 cm, the width (W.) is 1.7 cm; size of the holes 1x0.4 cm.

Spike – situated slightly obliquely on the shoulders. Its base is cubic with a W. of 1 cm, L. 0.9 cm and H. 0.9 cm. The spike is bipyramidal, consisting of 5-walled pyramids. The base of the spike measures W. 0.7 cm x H. 0.9 cm at the base of the pyramids (the widest part of the spike) and W. x H. 1.1 x 1.1 cm. The H. of the short pyramid is 1.4 cm and of the long one – 3.5 cm.

It was **found** in the Silishtar area, 4 km north of town of Chelopech, Pirdop region, by miners digging for a hut. It was collected by the mayor,

who handed it over to the Museum. At this place the Museum did some excavation in 1914 and discovered 2 bronze coins of John Tsimishi. They entered the museum on December 14, 1914.

Date: 11th century.

Ill. 1

2. Inv. №338; list 811; consecutive № 774

Spur. Copper (?). Left (?).

Total L. 14.9 cm

L. rowel holder 4.5 cm

L. shoulders 10.4 cm

Shoulders: slight arcuate curve. Joined shoulders form an arch. At the joining point, there is a strong thickening of the shoulders and a triangular protrusion upwards. Their cross-section is triangular, in size: at the loops H. 0.5 cm thickness (T.) 0.3 cm, at the rowel holder H. 1.5 cm, T. 1 cm.

Loops: One shoulder ends with a loop shaped like vertically put digit 8. The circles of the eight are round, with a d out. 1.1 cm, inn. 0.6 cm. An S-shaped hook with a L. of 2.6 cm is attached to the lower hole. Near the one end there is a hemispherical thickening with d=0.8 cm. The side with which the hook is attached to the hole is thicker and longer, and the now free side is thinner, shorter, and with a sharply pointed tip. The other shoulder ends with an inclined rectangular taper. It measures 1.6x0.9 cm (out.) and 1.3x 0.5 cm (inn.). The cross section of the loops is semicircular.

Rowel holder: it protrudes smoothly from the shoulders and its base is almost conical. The base is 1 cm long, after which 2 plates with a triangular end come out of it. At the base their cross section is triangular, and at the end elliptical. Dimensions of the rowel holder: base – H. 0.8 cm, T. 0.5 cm; in the middle – H. 0.5 cm, T. 0.2 cm; at the hole for the axis of the rowel – H. 0.8 cm, T. 0.3 cm. The distance between the 2 plates at their base is 0.2 cm, at the axis it is 0.4 cm. The holes for the axis of the star are round, leaving parts of the axis in them. The axis itself is broken in the middle, which led to the loss of the rowel. d on the holes 0.4 cm, d on the axis 0.2 cm. Estimated radius of the rowel 1.8 cm (d=3.6 cm).

Discovered in the village of Smochane, Lovech region. Sent by the Lovech District Administration with №916 from 27.01.1897, ent. № 38.

Date: middle – third quarter of the 13th century.

Ill. 2

3. **Inv. № 265; list** 74 II; consecutive № 51

Spur. Iron. Left.

Total L. 12.5 cm

L. rowel holder 2.5 cm
L. shoulders 10.5 cm

The shoulders are arched. They end with round loops with a d out. 1.6 cm and a d inn. 1 cm. The cross section of the loop is round. Section of the shoulders is triangular, with the edge on the outside passing along the lower part of the shoulders. Shoulder sizes at the loop W. 0.8 cm, T. 0.5 cm; at the base of the rowel holder W. 1.4 cm, T. 0.6 cm. The right shoulder is cracked and curved outwards. The protrusion up the shoulders above the rowel holder base is broken. To the loop of one of the shoulders are attached by means of hooks a buckle and 1 flat plate – rectangular with a rectangular cross section. The plate has a total L. 3.4 cm, and its rectangular part is 1.8x1.1 cm. On one side of the rectangular part of the plate there is a hook with which the plate is attached to the loop, and on the other side there is a T-shaped segment on which one half of the horizontal hasta is broken off. The lower part of the other half is beveled and slightly bent inwards. **The buckle** attached to this loop consists of a shield in the shape of a rectangular plate and measuring 2x3 cm and a frame. On one narrow side of the shield comes a hook for attaching to the loop of the spur. In the middle of the other narrow side of the shield, near the edge, a round hole with a d= 0.4 cm is made. On this side is the trapezoidal buckle frame, with the short base of the trapezoid facing the shield. It has a rectangular cross section and the outer edges are rounded. Its dimensions are: 2.3x4.1x2.5x2.5 cm. The long base of the frame is decorated with bud-shaped protrusions.

Rowel holder. It is placed obliquely on the shoulders. It consists of 2 parallel plates with a semicircular cross-section with a radius of 0.5 cm and a d=0.8 cm. They end with hemispheres with a d=1 cm and 0.9 cm, in the center of which is the axis of the rowel. The distance between the plates of the rowel holder is 0.5 cm.

Rowel. 7 beams with a diameter of 3.5 cm. The diameter of the hole in the center is 0.6 cm. The height of the rays is 1.1-1.3 cm. They have strongly pointed tips and an oval cross section.

There is no information about the finding place and circumstances of admission to the Museum.

Date: the second half of the 13th century.

Ill. 3

4. **Inv. № 42; list** 1004; consecutive № 564
Spur. Iron. Left.
Total L. 16 cm
L. rowel holder 3.1 cm
L. shoulders 10.9 cm

Shoulders – S-shaped. Triangular section, and trapezoidal to the base of the rowel holder. At the junction of the 2 arms, a pointed vertical arch is formed above the base of the rowel holder. The dimensions of the shoulders: at the loop 0.7x0.3x0.5 cm; in the lowest part 0.9x0.7x0.7 cm. H. at the rowel holder 1.7 cm.

Loops – the shoulders end with round loops with a d (out.)=1.7 cm, d of the hole=0.7 cm. A buckle and a round plate are attached to the one loop. The round plate has a d=1.4x1.7 cm. On its one side there is a T-shaped segment with dimensions: W. of the vertical hasta 0.4 cm, total H. 0.6 cm, L. of the horizontal hasta 0.9 cm. On the opposite side of the round plate comes out a hook by means of which the plate is attached to the loop of the spur. The hook has a rectangular cross section and triangular outlines. Dimensions at the base: W. 0.4 cm, T. 0.2 cm. **The buckle** consists of several segments: central oval plate 2x1 cm; on its one side there is a hook with which it is attached to the loop (rectangular section, at the base 0.5x0.1 cm); on the other side there is a tongue bent around one side of the buckle frame, cut in the middle part for passing the buckle tongue. The tongue of the buckle has a rectangular cross-section, a strongly pointed tip and a L. 0.7 cm. The frame of the buckle is oval with a d=2.4x1.7 cm; d opening=1.6x1.1 cm. Attached to the other loop are 2 oval plates with a d=1.4x 1.8 cm and 1.3x1.8 cm. The attachment for the loop is with hooks as in the other two. On the opposite side comes a T-shaped segment with dimensions: W. of the vertical hasta 0.5 and 0.6 cm; L. of the horizontal hasta 0.7 cm and 1 cm. In all three T-segments of the 3 round plates, the lower parts of the horizontal hastae are beveled.

Rowel holder. It consists of 2 parallel plates protruding from a common base. The base is W. 0.9 cm and H. 0.7 cm. They are at a distance of 0.4 cm. The cross section of these plates at their base is semicircular with a H. 0.6-0.7 cm and a W. of 0.4 cm. Towards the end, before the axis for the rowel, the section is rectangular with dimensions 0.9x0.4 cm. In the middle part of the plate 1 cm from the base of the rowel holder there are 3 vertical parallel lines incised. After approx. 1 cm a vertical embossed edge is formed after which the hole for the rowel axis is made. It is modeled as an oval ring at the end of which are placed 3 spherical pimples. The rowel holder is welded to the lower part of the shoulder arch.

Rowel. It is shaped like a gear wheel with a d=5 cm, the H. of the teeth with a triangular shape 0.2-0.4 cm; number of teeth 43. The wheel is disc-shaped. Radially, straight incised lines start from the center, ending on both sides at the base of each tooth.

Found in the village of Kuyudjuk (Debrene), Varna region by the villagers. Donated by the Ministry of Education together with inv. №№ 41

(part of a ring armor) and 43 (a spur) with protocol № 6070 from 1892. Received at the Museum on June 26, 1892.

Date: second half of the 14th century.

Ill. 4

5. **Inv. № 43**; **list** 1004; consecutive № 563

Spur. Iron.

Total L. 17 cm

L. rowel holder 3.7 cm

L. shoulders 10.6 cm

Shoulders – S-shaped curved, forming a triangular tip when merging above the capture point of the star holder. The thickness of this part is 0.3 cm. At the end of them **round loops** are formed, the openings of which are d=0.7 cm, out. d=2 cm. The shoulders have a section of an obtuse triangle, the edge passing close to the lower part of the shoulder. The inner side of the shoulders is flat with a width of 0.7 cm at the loops, and at the merging of the two shoulders – 2 cm. By means of flat hooks 2 oval plates are hung to the loops with dimensions 2.1x1.5 cm. The hooks are strongly curved with a pointed end, W. 0.6 cm at the base and T. 0.2 cm. They protrude from the wide side of the oval of the plate. On the other wide side of the plate there are T-shaped tongues with a H. 0.7 cm and a W. of the vertical segment of 0.4 cm and 0.5 cm, respectively. The two tongues are slightly curved inwards relative to the plane of the oval plate.

The rowel holder consists of 2 plates protruding from a common base. At 0.5 cm from the catchment area for the shoulders, 2 vertical parallel relief lines are formed. The W. of the rowel holder at the base is 1.2 cm and the H. 0.9 cm. The W. of the plates after the two vertical relief edges is 0.4 cm, H. 0.8 cm. The cross section of these plates is hexagonal with dimensions 0,8x 0.1x0.3x0.3x0.3x0.1 cm. At 2.2 cm from the relief edges is formed a hemispherical protrusion with a d at the base of 0.9 cm and a radius of 0.8 cm. Through their center passes a circular axis with a L. 2.2 cm and a d approx. 0.3 cm, which holds the rowel.

The rowel has 8 rays with pointed tips and a slightly leaf-like silhouette. Their cross-section is four-walled and the outer walls are flat with dimensions at the base of 0.3-0.4 cm, and in the widest part – 0.5 cm. d of the rowel is 5.2 cm. The inner walls of the rays are slightly blunted. The place of welding of the rowel holder for the shoulders is flat. The T. of the shoulders is 0.4-0.5 cm.

Found in the village of Kuyudjuk (Debrene), Varna region by the villagers. Donated by the Ministry of Education together with inv. №№ 41

(part of a ring armor) and 42 (a spur) with protocol № 6070 from 1892. Received at the Museum on June 26, 1892.

Date: 14th century.

Ill. 5

6. **Inv. № 3328; list** 1004; consecutive № 727

Spur. Iron. Left.

Total L. 16.7 cm

L. rowel holder 5.3 cm

L. shoulders 8.3 cm

The shoulders are L-shaped, with the ends pointing upwards. Their cross-section is quadrangular, with dimensions up to the loop 0.5x0.3x0.7x0.3 cm and before the rowel holder 1.7x0.2x1.8x0.3 cm. Above the rowel holder there is a triangular rise of the shoulders upwards, here the W. of the shoulders is 2 cm. In the middle part of both shoulders there is an embossed ornament of two circles with a recess in the center, separated by two vertical relief lines. The whole described ornament is flanked by two such lines.

Loops. Round. Vertical. Oval section. d out.=1.3 cm, d openn.=0.7 cm. A buckle consisting of several elements is attached to one of the loops. The first element is a trapezoidal plate with an elongated shape and a rectangular section with a L. 3.3 cm. It is curved on both sides, and a hook is formed on the narrow side, by means of which the buckle is attached to the loop. The curve on the wide side of the plate covers the frame of the buckle. The frame of the buckle has a pentagonal shape and dimensions 1.7x1.6x1.3x1.4x1.6 cm. At two of the corners of the pentagon are made 3 horizontal parallel lines, and at the top of the pentagonal frame, where the end of the buckle tongue lies, 2 vertical parallel relief lines are made. The tongue of the buckle has a rectangular cross-section, pointed at one end, and the other end is wrapped around the base of the pentagonal frame. On the other loop of the spur a leaf-shaped plate is hung with a length of 2.4 cm. Both ends of the plate are curved in the form of hooks, one of which serves to attach the plate to the loop. By means of the other hook, which is shorter and sharper (now free), a strap is attached to the spur.

Rowel holder. It starts from the lower edge of the shoulders. It has two parallel plates with slightly arcuate outer sides with dimensions at the base 0.7x0.3 cm and before the openings for the axis of the rowel – 0.4x0.4 cm. Their ends are shaped like round rings with disc-shaped outlines and d out.= 1.2 cm. The axis of the rowel has d=0.3 cm and L. 1.3 cm.

Rowel. It consists of 12 rays. 3 of them are whole, the rest have missing parts. The rays have an elongated pentagonal shape. The H. of the rays is 2-2.4 cm. The rowel d=6.6 cm.

Found in the Lukovit region. Purchased by Vatko Tangov from Sadovets with protocol 477 / 29.12.1942.

Date: end of the 14th – beginning of the 15th century

Ill. 6

7. **Inv. № 572; list** 811; consecutive № 771

Spur. Iron. Left.

Total L. 15.6 cm

L. rowel holder 3.9 cm

L. shoulders 9 cm

The shoulders are S-shaped. One is highly corroded, the other is missing a part. It is preserved at a length of 6.8 cm and at the end goes at right angle upwards. Plastic decoration can be seen on the part of the short shoulder going to the rowel holder. It consists of 3 relief circles connected by 1 horizontal relief line each. Due to the strong corrosion, this ornament is not visible on one of the shoulders. It is shaped with an arched curve (probably the layout of the other, short arm was not taken into account during the restoration!). It ends with a **round loop** with a d out=1.2 cm. In the round opening of the loop filled with corrosion products, parts of the hooks of 2 plates are visible. At the base of the rowel holder, the shoulders have a triangular pointed extension upwards. Dimensions of the shoulders: short shoulder end 0.3x0.4 cm; preserved shoulder at the loop 0.2x0.5 cm. Width at the rowel holder 1.7 cm.

Rowel holder. It comes out of the lower edge of the shoulders. It consists of 2 parallel plates with a rectangular cross section. They end in round widenings with round openings for the axis of the rowel with a d out.=0.7 cm, a d open. for the axis 0.3 cm. The cross section of the widenings is rectangular. It is located almost perpendicular to the shoulders. Dimensions of the plates: base 0.5x0.4 cm, before the openings for the axis 0.4x0.4 cm, distance between the plates of the rowel holder 0.5 cm.

Rowel. With 8 rays, 1 of the rays is missing. Rowel d=5.7 cm. The rays are strongly pointed, with a diamond-shaped cross section and 1.8-2.3 cm long.

Unknown finding place and circumstances of discovering. Donated by St. Makariev from Belogradchik, with ent. № 289.1901. Received at the Museum in 1901.

Date: end of the 14th century – end of the 15th/beginning of the 16th century

Ill. 7

8. **Inv. № 468;** list 74II; consecutive № 52
Spur. Iron.
Total L. 13 cm
L. rowel holder 4.8 cm
L. (preserved) shoulders 5.2 cm

Shoulders. The spur is badly damaged. 2.7 cm remain from one shoulder and 6.7 cm from the other. At the base of the rowel holder, above it, the shoulders form a slightly pointed arch. On the outside, the shoulders are concavely shaped with a pronounced upper and lower edge protruding outwards. H. first shoulder 0.9 cm, H. second shoulder 1.7 cm; H. at the base of the rowel holder 2.2 cm. The ends of the shoulders with the loops are missing.

Rowel holder. It starts from the lower edge of the shoulders. It consists of 2 parallel plates, the outer side of which is slightly arched. They have a rectangular cross section with a size of 1x0.3 cm at the base and 0.5x0.5 cm at the end before the opening for the rowel axis. The distance between them is 1 cm.

Rowel. With 8 rays and d=6.5 cm. The rays are flat, leaf-shaped, with a height. 2.9-3 cm. The axis of the rowel has d approx. 0.4 cm. It enters the edges of the rowel holder, shaped like rounded rings.

Date: end of the 14th century – end of the 15th/beginning of the 16th century

Ill. 8

9. **Inv. № 468;** нов акт I; consecutive № 1
Spur. Iron. Left.
Total L. 19.1 cm.
L. rowel holder 5 cm
L. shoulders 10 cm

Shoulders. S-shaped. Slightly asymmetrical, with one shoulder more open. An arrow-shaped frame is formed from the base of the rowel holder. The inner side of the shoulders is flat, and the cross section of the shoulders, at a distance of 2/3 of the length, is pentagonal, with the edge passing along the length of the shoulders. The pentagonal section of the shoulders is limited by the expanding part by means of X-shaped relief decoration (6.7 cm from the end of the shoulders). There is also a relief decoration on one of the curves of the shoulders. From the center of the X-shaped ornament begin two embossed horizontal edges, covering the upper and lower edges of the shoulders. The ends of the shoulders are shaped like vertical loops with a round shape.

Loops. Round, vertical. The section is four-walled. Outer d=1.4 cm, inn. d=0.9-1 cm. Flat oval plates with d=1.7x1.8 cm are attached to one of the loops. A pointed tongue, folded like a hook, emerges from the two opposite ends. By one hook the plates are attached to the loop, and the other was used to hang the spur to a strap. There are also two plates attached to the other loop. One has an arrow-shaped form with a spike bent like a hook, by means of which it is attached to the loop. The other plate has a round central part with d=1.9 cm. On one side of the circle there is a hook for attachment to the loop, and on the opposite – a tongue-shaped protrusion with a rounded tip (base = 1.2 cm and W. at folding 1.4 cm). This tongued part is bent as a hook in the middle. A rectangular hole is cut in the center of the tongue, through which the buckle tongue passes. The tongue of the plate is folded around the middle part of the buckle frame. The buckle frame consists of two trapezoidal parts, the tongued part of the plate and the buckle tongue being wrapped around the common short base of the two trapezoidal figures. The L. of the frame is 4.4 cm, the W. of the long bases of the two trapezoids is 2.5 and 2.6 cm, the narrow base is 2.3 cm wide. The frame of the buckle has a semicircular cross section (radius 0.2-0.3 cm), and its middle axial part is round (d=0.2 cm). The tongue of the buckle is rectangular at its base (0.3x0.2 cm), immediately after the curved part, the section becomes pentagonal.

Rowel holder. It consists of two parallel plates with a pentagonal cross-section and dimensions at the base 0.3x0.7x0.2x0.3x0.7-0.8 cm, and at the hole for the axis of the rowel – 0.9x0.2x0.4x0.4x0.2 cm. The opening between the two plates is leaf-shaped with a W. at the rowel axis =1.5 cm. At the ends of the plates of the rowel holder are formed rings for the rowel axis (out. d=1.2 cm, inn. d=0.7-0.9 cm). They have a quadrangular cross-section, bounded by the rest of the rowel holder by a vertical embossed edge. At the very end of the star holder, the rings are decorated with three embossed radial edges. The axis of the rowel is 2.2 cm long. It has a biconical shape with d at the base=0.6 cm and d in the middle of the axis=0.2 cm.

Rowel. With 8 rays, one missing. Rowel d=8.2 cm. The rays of the rowel are leaf-shaped with a L.=3.5-3.7 cm, T. at the base 0.5 cm, W. at the base 0.9-1 cm. There is central edge along their entire length from base to tip.

Unknown finding place and circumstances. Purchased by P. K. Gabev together with other items (inv. №№ 463, 464, 465, 466, 467). Protocol XII-300-38-4.06.1899.

Date: end of the 14th century – end of the 15th/beginning of the 16th century

Ill. 9

10. **Inv. №3499;** list 811; consecutive № 775
Spur. Iron. Left.
Total L. 18 cm
L. rowel holder 4 cm
L. shoulders 11.9 cm

Shoulders. Only one shoulder is preserved. 1.1 cm remain from the other arm. The preserved shoulder is S-shaped. Ends with a round vertical loop. It has a rectangular cross section with dimensions of 0.5x0.2 cm at the loop and 1.8x0.2 cm at the shoulder holder. At the base of the rowel holder there is a slightly formed vertical edge.

Loop. It is vertical, round in shape and rectangular in cross section. Out. d = 1.5 cm; inn. d = 0.8 cm. Two plates are attached to the preserved loop, serving for the attachment of the spur-bearing straps. These plates are composed of 3 parts. One part is shaped like a hook, by means of which the plate is attached to the loop. The middle part of the plates has an oval shape, in the center of which is made a round hole with dimensions d out.=0.8 cm, d inn.=0.3 cm. The third part of the plate is preserved entirely in only one of the plates. It is trapezoidal, with a forked end, and the two tongues of the "fork" are folded like hooks. I consider that this plate was part of the attachment buckle, the frame of which was suspended from the fork-shaped part, and the tongue was located in the space between the two horns of the fork. In the other plate, the folded tongues of the forked part are missing. Here survives part of the T-shaped end to which the strap was attached. The total L. of the fully preserved plate is 2.9 cm, and the other is 2.4 cm. The W. of the two horns of the "fork" is 0.2 cm and 0.3 cm.

Rowel holder. It comes out of the base of the shoulders. It consists of 2 parallel plates with a rectangular cross-section and dimensions at the base of 0.5x0.3 cm and 0.4x0.3 cm. They end with holes with a round shape and a rectangular cross-section. Out. d=0.7 cm, inn. d=0.2 cm. The axis of the rowel is 1.5 cm long and d 0.2 cm. The distance between the plates of the rowel holder is 0.5-0.6 cm. One ring is separated from the rest of the rowel holder by an incised vertical line.

Rowel. It consists of 6 strongly pointed rays with a round cross section. Rowel d=5.9 cm. Hole for the axis of the rowel d=0.5 cm.

Unknown finding place and date of admission to NAIM-BAS.

Date: end of the 14th century – end of the 15th/beginning of the 16th century

Ill. 10

11**. Inv. № 27;** list 1004; consecutive № 726
Spur. Iron.
Total L.23 cm

L. rowel holder 8 cm

L. shoulders 15 cm

The shoulders are straight. The section is a segment of a circle with a central edge, the flat part being towards the rider's heel. H. at the base of the rowel holder is 3 cm. a slightly noticeable horizontal edge passes through the middle of the outer surface. At 1.5 cm from the end of the shoulders are formed trapezoidal protrusions, in which oval holes with dimensions of 0.8x0.5 cm are drilled. In the opposite corner of the shoulders there are round holes with d=0.5 cm. The shoulders are decorated with incised double lines in the shape of Λ. An embossed edge is formed at the end of one shoulder. There is such an edge at the opening in the corner of the shoulder.

The rowel holder has an elliptical cross-section with pointed sides and central horizontal edges running along its entire length. The rowel holder is placed at an obtuse angle to the shoulders of the spur. At its end are formed 2 parallel ears with a L. 4.5 cm. At the end they are rounded. Here 2 cone-shaped growths stand aside with a H. 1.4 cm. The axis to which the rowel is attached passes through them. The axis is 3.8 cm long and d=0.3-0.4 cm.

The rowel has 8 rays. Rowel d=5 cm. The rays are conical, with a L. 2.1-2.4 cm.

Unknown finding place and circumstances of discovery. Donated by Mr. Draginski. Received at the Museum on June 15, 1889.

Date: second half of the 16th – beginning of the 17th century.

Ill. 11

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Alexios Komnenos Branas – the last general of the *Komnenoi* (based to his seals)[1]

Zhenya Zhekova

In memory of my mentor ...

Abstract: A new seal was published of the Byzantine military leader Alexius Comnenus Vrana as a *panhypersebastos* (1183-1186). It originates from the area of the village of Lyulyakovo, Burgas region, where according to some researchers the Goloe fortress was situated. Branas has exceptional merits to Byzantium, which is evidenced from the high title he holds, ranking among the first in the hierarchy of the Empire. An excellent commander, a cold-blooded tactician who won some of the most difficult victories during this period, he ended his life as a usurper of the throne in Constantinople. He remains in the memory of his contemporaries as the last great general of the *Komnenoi* era.

Key words: seal, Alexios Komnenos Branas, *panhypersebastos*, Lyulyakovo

Резюме: Публикува се нов печат на византийския военачалник Алексий Комнин Врана в качеството му на панхиперсеваст (1183–1186). Произхожда от района на село Люляково, Бургаско, където според някои изследователи се ситуира крепостта Голое. Врана има изключителни заслуги към Византия, за което съдим и от високата титла, която заема, нареждаща се сред първите в ранговата йерархия на Империята. Отличен командир, хладнокръвен тактик, спечелил едни от най-трудните победи през този период, той завършва живота си като узурпатор на трона на Константинопол. Остава в паметта на съвременниците си като последния велик пълководец от епохата на Комнините.

My interest in the personality of Alexios Komnenos Branas was provoked during my work with materials from pre-trial proceedings, where I found his seal. Its publication was postponed for a long time, but after getting to know his personality, I realized that the work on his seals was worth the effort. I was surprised by the disproportion in the information I found about his

[1] Current article is the last text which I prepared under the guidance of my mentor Professor Ivan Jordanov.

personality in the famous sources of the era. Chroniclers describe in great detail his battles, victories and misfortune. In contrast, I found only a few seals that illustrate his rank in the Byzantine society, which at first glance is surprising. Usually, a person with his rank and rich military biography should have at least a few groups of seals. Often the seals are the sources that inform us about a person who once existed, about whom the other documents are silent.

So far, two seals of Alexios Komnenos Branas are known in Bulgaria. They are of unknown origin, but there is information for one of them that it is from Plovdiv region. The third specimen published here was not found during regular archaeological excavations, but the information about its finding points to the area of the village of Lyulyakovo, Burgas region, where enough numismatic, sphragistic and archaeological material is accumulated supporting the claim that the possible origin of the seal is in this area.

Publishing the two seals from Bulgaria, Ivan Yordanov gave enough information to allow their identification with Alexios Komnenos Branas – son of *sebastos* Michael Branas and Maria Komnena, granddaughter of the first *sebastocrator* Isaac Komnenos, brother of Emperor Alexios I Komnenos.[2] On the other hand, he himself married Anna Vatatzaina Komnena, a niece of Emperor Manuel I Komnenos, thus connecting with the *Komnenoi* dynasty in two lines. Probably for this reason he remained completely loyal to the *Komnenoi* and in particular to the Emperor Andronicos I Komnenos (1183-1185). He never revolts against him, although he has this opportunity – he has both the necessary army and loyal supporters. Understanding this decision correctly, the emperor elevated him to the rank of *protosebastos* – a title ranking high in the hierarchy of the *Komnenoi*.

The Branas family is associated with the provincial aristocracy of Byzantium. Ivan Bozhilov suggests that the name comes from the Slavic word 'врань' (black).[3] The first attested representative was Marianos Branas (1047), and later representatives of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries are associated with the *Palaiologoi* dynasty, ruling at that time. The ancestral estates are probably located around Adrianople, where Alexios was born.

His name was first mentioned in 1166, when a meeting of the synod was held, where he was a representative in his position of a *sebastos*.[4] During the siege of Mosinople in 1185, both chroniclers, Niketas Choniates and Theodore Skoutariotes, mentioned him as a *strategos*.[5]

[2] Barzos 1968, 395-417.
[3] Bozhilov 1995, 90.
[4] Grumel 1947, no. 1075.
[5] Choniatae 1983, 23; Scutariotae 1972, 241-242.

Alexios Branas' exceptional merits to Byzantium are his successful military campaigns, which marked the last great victories of the Empire before its conquest by the Latins in 1204. Alexios Branas did not recklessly fight, he waited and judged, he was a good tactician and an excellent military leader, loyal to the emperor and the homeland. His qualities catapulted him to the heights of the military hierarchy, becoming a symbol of the declining Byzantine power.

His first great victory was against the Hungarians, who in 1183, led by King Bela III, conquered the Belgrade and Branichevo regions. Their march reaches Sofia, from where they return triumphantly with the relics of St. John of Rila. Alexios Branas defeated them and almost immediately after the end of the Hungarian campaign he was sent to Asia Minor against the insurgent Theodore Kantakouzenos. He quelled the revolt and returned victorious to Constantinople, and Isaac II Angelos (1185-1195) was already on the throne. For Branas, this is the man who killed the legitimate emperor and his patron, Andronicos I Komnenos, in cold blood. The enmity that arose between the general and the emperor became a barrier in the relations between both of them. Despite Branas' deep-rooted loyalty to the imperial institution, he eventually neglected his duty, proclaimed himself emperor, and revolted against the ruler.

Before that, however, he won his most glamorous victory. We assess its significance from the detailed descriptions by Niketas Choniates and Theodore Skoutariotes, who pay due attention to it. Isaac Angelos entrusted Alexios Branas with the extremely important task of dealing once and for all with the Normans and to chase them away from Epirus, Macedonia and Thrace. The general unites all the smaller military units into a single army that opposes the Normans. He captured and set fire to Mosinople, where they fortified themselves. After a long persecution, he finally defeated them on the evening of November 7, 1185 near Demetritzes.[6]

The chroniclers spare no words to describe the brilliant victory of Alexios Branas. The descriptions of his actions are thorough and detailed: '<...> Upon learning of this, the strategos Branas led the army against them, and it was with difficulty that he persuaded the warriors to come down from the mountain to the comfortable riding field <...> It happened that they continued the persecution to Mosinople. Having defeated the enemies in a hand-to-hand combat outside the town, they also attacked the enemies inside. They immediately set fire to the doors guarded by the enemies (because they were already overwhelmed by fear) and went inside, slaughtering the enemies and looting the enemy's wealth.

[6] Choniatae 1983, 23-24; Scutariotae 1972, 242.

When they ate the wealth and put on weight, they gained courage against the enemies around Amphipolis. And so they rose from Mosinople as God's army, equipped with enemy horses and weapons, and attacked the enemies at Strymon. It was November 7, and when it happened, it was evening'.[7] We consider the scale of the defeat from the information he gives about the captured leaders of the Normans: 'Both commanders of the (enemy) army were captured: Richard, the brother of Tancred's wife, who was a navarchos of the Sicilian fleet, and Alduin Comte, who did not come from a noble family, but was respected by the emperor for his great military experience and then he was commander in chief of all troops'.[8]

Alexios Branas's last successful action was against the insurgent brothers Peter and Assen, where he was sent in the late autumn of 1185 after several Byzantine generals failed to deal with the Bulgarians. It is not entirely clear from the sources whether Alexios Branas actually entered the Bulgarian lands and whether he conducted any military operations. First Niketas Choniates, and then Theodore Skoutariotes merged his action against the Bulgarians with the subsequent uprising against Isaac II Angelos. Therefore, some historians believe that Branas did not carry out military action against the Bulgarians. It is not clear whether he managed to achieve any victory against them, but the fact that he led an entire army gave him a reason and strength to take a stand against the emperor. At this time he led an army, had many associates and the support of his relatives in Adrianople. Choniates explicitly mentions that 'on the advice of his fellow citizens who were related to him by birth, he wore red sandals'.[9] Theodore Skoutariotes`s writings also put an emphasis on 'advisers-relatives'.[10] A proclaimed emperor by the whole army, he went to the capital and set up a camp around the outer walls. Initially, Branas was successful, but later the bad mood in Constantinople against him increased. Fortunately for Isaac II Angelos, the general remained unwelcome in the capital. The probable explanation for this is the dislike of the citizens of Constantinople for the provincial aristocracy embodied by Branas.[11] The outcome came after the emperor turned for help to his trusted

[7] Scutariotae 1972, 242.
[8] Choniatae 1983, 24 – 25.
[9] Choniatae 1983, 31.
[10] Scutariotae 1972, 245.
[11] Much of the provincial aristocracy joined the army of Alexios Branas, as some of its representatives were not included in the distribution of the pronias by the emperor. Many Propontis fishermen, deprived of their right of income from the sea, joined the general's side. An interesting fact that the sources tell us is that they transform their fishing boats into military ones. Later, the defeat of the uprising had a negative

ally and son-in-law Conrad of Monferrato (husband of his sister Theodora). Conrad's heavy cavalry pierced into Branas's troops. In the end, there was a real knightly clash between the two commanders. Conrad managed to scratch Branas's cheek with his spear. This disoriented him and he was soon knocked to the ground by his horse. Unable to defend himself, he was pierced by the copies of the Normans. He was then beheaded and his head placed on the road to the capital. Sources say that the hatred of Isaac II Angelos was so great that he used his head as a ball. To humiliate Branas's wife, the emperor himself entered Anna Vatatzaina's room, showing her husband's head, asking if she knew who she belonged to. Anna managed to keep her composure and responded with dignity. This behavior of hers impresses even the chroniclers who describe this tragic spectacle. After the defeat of Alexios Branas, many of his supporters joined the army of Assen and Peter, becoming part of their war against Isaac II Angelos.

Confirmation of the brilliant career of this great military leader can be found in his seals, which are direct historical sources. Of particular importance are not only the titles with which Alexios Branas is mentioned on them, testifying to his career growth, but also the places where his corresponddence was sent. So far, 5 seals (molybdobulles) have been documented with his name.

1. Alexios Komnenos Branas, sebastos (1166). This is the earliest attested molybdovull of Branas, as a *sebastos*. It is part of the Zakos collection (fig. 1).[12]

2. Alexios Komnenos Branas, *protosebastos* (1166-1183). The seal is in the Vatican's collection (fig. 2).[13]

3. Alexios Komnenos Branas, *panhypersebastos* (1185-1186). Three specimens have been documented in Bulgaria, marking the top of his military career, as well as his unfortunate end. These are the last artifacts associated with the name of Alexios Branas. On them he is mentioned with the title *panhypersebastos*, which he probably received after the defeat of the Normans in 1185. Ivan Yordanov is more inclined to accept that the title was given to him by Andronicos I Komnenos during his reign in September 1183.[14]

3.1. National Archaeological Institute with museum – Bulgarian academy of Sceinces (further NAIM – BAS) - Sofia, inv. no. 43. Unknown location.

D. 26 – 29.5 (27) 3 mm. Item 13.71 Incomplete print (fig. 3).

impact on trade and crafts in Constantinople, precisely due to the fact that these strata joined the side of Branas (Syuzyumov 1957, 70 – 72).

[12] Zacos 1972, no. 2743.

[13] Laurent 1962, no. 64.

[14] Yordanov 2003, 33.



Fig. 1. Alexios Komnenos Branas, *sebastos* (1166) (after Zacos 1972, no 2734).



Fig. 2. Alexios Komnenos Branas, *protosebastos* (1166-1183) (after Laurent 1962, no. 64).

Publication: Yordanov 2003, no 5; Jordanov 2006, no. 121; Jordanov 2009, no. 462.

3.2. Private collection. Today the seal is unknown, but a plaster cast of it was provided by Prof. Ivan Karayotov to Prof. Ivan Yordanov with the information that it is somewhere in the Plovdiv region. Based on the collected information, Ivan Yordanov links its origin to the fortress near the village of Dobri dol, Plovdiv region.

D. 22 – 23 (30)? Mm. Half of a once good specimen.

Publication: Yordanov 2003, no. 6; Jordanov 2006, no. 122; Jordanov 2009, no. 463.

3.3. The seal together with other artifacts was provided to me for examination in 2016 (Regional administration – Ministry of Interior – Sungurlare). According to the person from whom these objects were taken, they originated from the fortress near the village of Lyulyakovo, Ruen municipality, Burgas district.



Fig. 3. Alexios Komnenos Branas, *panhypersebastos* (1185-1886), NAIM – BAN – Sofia, no. 43 (photo: after Jordanov 2009, no. 462).



Fig. 4. Alexios Komnenos Branas, *panhypersebastos* (1185-1886), Lyulyakovo, Burgas region (photo: Nina Deyanova).

D. 31 (24) 3.5 mm; T. 10.78. The seal is well preserved, uncleaned, which probably kept it in this good condition. Nearly 1/3 of the core is missing (fig. 4).

Unpublished.

Obv. + | ΑΛЄƵΙ.. | ΤVΠΟΙΜ. | .ΡΑΝΑCΔЄ… | ΤΗCΚΟΜ…. | ΦVΗ.
Rev. …. ΝδC | … ΗΤΡΟΘЄ | …. ΑΝVΠЄΡ |…. ΦΟCЄΚ |.. CAƵΙΑ

+ʾΑλέξι[ος] | τύποι μ[ε] | [Β]ρανᾶς δε[σπό]- | της Κομ[νηνο]- | φυή[ς] [ἐκ γέ]νους | [τοῦ μ]ητρόθε[ν] | [καὶ π]ανυπερ- | [σέβα]στος ἐκ | [τῆ]ς [ἀ]ξία

+ ᾽Αλέξιος τύποι με Βρανᾶς δεσπότης Κομνηνο φυής / ἐκ γένους τοῦ μητρόθεν καὶ πανυπερσέβαστος ἐκ τῆς ἀξίας

Alexios Branas despotes made me, descended from the Komnenians/on his mother's side and a panhypersebastos in dignity

All three seals are printed with one bulotirion.

The emphasis in this group of seals is the text, which, in addition to containing the name and title of Alexios Komnenos Branas, declares his deep connection with the Komnenoi dynasty. It not only reminds us that he is enate Komnenos, but also that he bears the title of *despotes*. This title was created in 1163 by Emperor Manuel I Komnenos, especially for the fiancé of his daughter Mary, Alexios Bella. It has since been used by the emperor's sons-in-law. But in a broader sense, the honored group of *despotes* is formed by the *basileus*, *sebastocrator*, *caesar*, *panhypersebastos*, *protosebastohypertatos* and *sebastohypertatos*, ie. all the highest holders of titles in Byzantium.[15] After Alexios I Komnenos, the positions were no longer written on the seals, but only the connection of the person with the ruling dynasty. This creates difficulties in attributing the owner of the seal to the actual position he holds. According to the Byzantine rank hierarchy from the time of Emperor Isaac II Angelos, the *panhypersebastos* Alexios Komnenos Branas occupied the fourth position. If the *despotes* was a real title at the time, it would mean that Branas was among the top five men in the empire. The only other known seal of *despotes* and *panhypersebastos* is that of John Dalasinos (1136/1138). He was the husband of Maria Komnena, the eldest daughter of Emperor John II Komnenos (1118-1143). He received the title after marrying Maria, and was later elevated to the rank of Caesar.[16]

Unfortunately, none of the specimens commented here were found during archaeological excavations, which would confirm a possible definite origin. Only for the seal from the village of Lyulyakovo we can be relatively sure, as the person from whom the artifacts were confiscated informs that they were found by him personally around the same village.[17] Near today's

[15] Zacos 1972, 1485.

[16] Zacos 1972, no. 2721.

[17] In addition to the seal of Alexios Branas, among the objects provided for expertise, there were several other seals, with possible origin in the area of the village of Lyulyakovo. They belong to Michael Iasites, *protospatharios* and *katepano* of Iberia (1037/1038) (Yordanov & Zhekova, in press); Basil, imperial *protospatharios* and *genikos logothetes* (10 century); seal of *St. Panteleimon* monastery (11 century); illegible (12 century).

villages Lyulyakovo and the neighboring Saedinenie four fortresses are registered: 'Monastery' and 'Kayryaka' around Saedinenie, 'Golyamoto kale' and 'Malkoto kale' around Lyulyakovo.[18] In recent years, Dimcho Momchilov hypothesized that the fortress Goloe, known from the sources, should be located in the area of the road junction Saedinenie – Lyulyakovo. Goloe appears several times in narrative sources, one of them Anna Komnena's *Alexiad*. The fortress has an important place in the defense of the Empire in the era of Alexios I Komnenos. In 1087, during a military operation, the prominent military leader Leo Nikerites was saved there. A seal of this military leader has been documented in the area of Lyulyakovo, which is Momchilov's strongest argument in favor of the location of Goloe near the present-day village of Lyulyakovo. Moreover, the location of the fortress 'Malkoto Kale' fully corresponds to the information that Alexios I Komnenos spent one night on a hill above Goloe.

Undoubtedly, the fortifications near today's village of Lyulyakovo were of great strategic importance. They guard the road leading to the main pass, connecting the lands to the south with the Bulgarian territories north of Hemus. Naturally, the question arises as to how and on what occasion the seal of Alexios Komnenos Branas appears here. Can we connect its finding in the fortress near Lyulyakovo with a specific military action of the empire?

The only significant event in this part of the Bulgarian lands at that time, in which Alexios Branas took a direct part, was the revolt and the liberation movement of Assenevtsi. This was, in fact, his last appointment by the emperor before he declared himself emperor. After the military failures of *sebastocrator* John and the defeat of *caesar* John Kantakouzenos, the experienced military leader Alexios Branas was sent against the Bulgarians. It is here that Niketas Choniates's account is too vague and confusing, which raises many ambiguities both in the chronology of events and in the unraveling of the enigma of whether the general actually took any action against the rebels. According to Ivan Duychev, his action against the Bulgarians lasted from November 1185 to February 1186.[19] Probably for these few months, Branas still carried out some military activity as Choniates reported that after passing through many difficult places, he eventually reached a place called Black Hill or Black Mound.[20] Vasil Zlatarski made an attempt to localize this area and according to him the military actions were carried out in the area between today's cities of Yambol and Sliven, in the area of the so-called Monastery hills (peaks) (The monastery hills today are located near the

[18] Momchlov 2001, 35.
[19] Duichev 1981, 59.
[20] Choniates 490, note 2.

village of General Toshevo, Yambol region). Probably one of the peaks of these hills was called Black Hill or Black Mound. They lie on the direct road leading from Adrianople to the north, to the Bulgarian lands. It was there that he gathered his troops and having a large army, openly declared his intention to seize the throne in Constantinople.

The overlap of events raises a lot of questions, allowing Vasil Zlatarski to assume that there is a direct connection between the revolt of Alexios Branas and the actions of Assenevtsi. The arguments he puts forward are that in practice the general renounced actions against the rebels, despite the orders of the emperor; according to Niketas Choniates, Branas does not carry out military actions against the Bulgarians; after his death, most of his followers joined the side of the Assenevtsi. Whether there was an agreement between the Byzantine military leader and the Bulgarians is difficult to say today. In all likelihood, he skillfully used the occasion to gain a large army to support his plans to usurp the throne in Constantinople.

In this case, it is quite logical to assume that in connection with these actions, Alexios Branas sent a message to the garrison in the fortress near the present-day village of Lyulyakovo. Was it to prepare them for the military actions against the Bulgarians, or against Isaac II Angelos? This is one of the last correspondences sent by him before his tragic end in the spring of 1186. History today gives high value to Alexios Komnenos Branas, but it is best described by the chronicler of the era Niketas Choniates, his outspoken critic, who says he 'is the best general of his time'.

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Epitaph of Theodoros (Theodoulous) Goudeles at Pantokrator monastery

Halûk Çetinkaya

Abstract: An epitaph with part of a poem by Neophytos Prodromenos inscribed to commemorate Theodoros Goudeles was discovered during restoration works in Pantokrator monastery in Istanbul. It is rare to find an example of Byzantine literature written on stone. The late 14th century piece provides important information about the Goudeles family as well as Pantokrator monastery.

Key words: Goudeles, funeral slab, Pantokrator monastery, Byzantine Poetry, Neophytus Prodromenust

Резюме: При реставрационните работи на манастира Пантократор в Истанбул е открита епитафия, съдържаща част от поема на Неофит Продромен, посветена на Теодор Гуделес. Рядко е да се открие пример на византийската литература, написан на камък. Примерът от късния 14 век предоставя важна информация относно фамилията на Гуделес както и за самия манастир.

During recent restorations of the Pantokrator complex, now known as Zeyrek camii, new discoveries were made. However, not all the discoveries were published. In May 2021, social media have announced that a marble slab was found at Pantokrator monastery. This information was confirmed by the chief architect of the restoration project. Based on this fact an exhaustive study became necessary and results of it are presented in this article.

Pantokrator monastery was located at Zeugma, before the foundation of the monastic complex it was a 3 km wide cemetery. Later, due to the residence of lady Hilara in the same area, the neighborhood was called *tes Ilaras*.[1] Prior to the construction of Pantokrator complex, the same area was used by a brothel which turned into a hospital during the reign of Constantine I. Consequently it became the residence of a certain Isidoros, later turned into a nunnery and finally a hospital again during the reign of emperor

[1] Magdalino 1996, 46-47.

Theophilos after whom it was named.[2] Since the typikon of the monastic complex was signed by emperor John II Komnenos on 15 October 1136[3] the construction must have been completed before that,[4] especially given the fact that empress Piroshka / Irene died in August 1134 and was buried inside the monastic complex. A foundation inscription carved on a stone slab was visible until 1739 inside the monastic churches.[5] Churches of the monastery were dedicated to Jesus Christ the Ruler of All (Christ Pantokrator), Mary the Merciful (Maria Eleousa) and Archangel Michael. The construction of churches started with the southern church, Pantokrator, followed by the northern church, Maria Eleousa. Between them the church of Archangel Michael, believed to be the funeral structure to house the tombs of the Komnenos dynasty, was constructed.[6] The monastic complex survived the conflagrations of the fourth Crusaders on 12-13 April 1204 but on the following day it was looted.[7] It is important to note that the monastery of Pantokrator was the seat of Podesta of Venice, where as the seat of Venetian patriarch was Hagia Sophia during the Latin occupation until 1261.[8]

Pantokrator monastery was intended to be a burial ground for the imperial household, clergy and monks. Although there is no description of the location of the tombs in the typikon, several suggestions were made. The founder emperor's tomb was suggested to be below the western dome of Archangel Michael church.[9]

The irregular shape of the church of Archangel Michael was taken for granted, since it appeared between the northern and southern churches. Originally it had a single dome and the two dome arrangement is a reconstruction of later times.[10]

During restorations of 2008-2018 underneath the Northern church of Eleousa a substructure with skeletons was discovered.[11] These most probably belonged to the monks. Another burial area, hitherto unknown, is attached to the southern church of Pantokrator. Immediately out of the southern church to its south, a skeleton facing east was discovered during restorations. This area most probably had more burials, but since it remained unexcavated

[2] Berger 2013, 95.
[3] Moravcsik 1923, 80.
[4] Loukaki 2013, 198.
[5] Muratorio 1739, 268.
[6] Hubert & Megaw 1963, 344.
[7] Madden 1991/1992, 85.
[8] Bettini 1984, 39, n. 7.
[9] Ousterhout 2002, 11.
[10] Çetinkaya 2020, 295-308.
[11] Özgümüş *et al*. 2017, 334.

this statement cannot be proven at the moment. What is currently a garden was an indoor space before. The arches in the western entrance and traces of frescoes by windowsills in the eastern end of the garden are the indicators of it. Next to this area a freestanding chapel was unearthed. Unfortunately soon after its discovery it was filled with earth. In situ marble column bases and an apse were found. It was suggested to be a funeral chapel of Manuel I Komnenos.[12] The approximate size of this church was 10 x 6 m. In the following centuries other than the founding Komnenos family 8 members of the Palaiologos dynasty were also buried.[13] Most of the imperial tombs were in the sarcophagi. On the other hand, the *arcosolium* type must have been used as well in which case tombs require pseudo sarcophagi. An observation of the author on the minbar of the southern building indicated part of a cross made of verd antique. This may explain why none of the sarcophagi survived. Verd antique was used lavishly decorating the southern building since it also housed the lodge of Sultan for a private prayer.

Humbler tombs most probably only had a slab with inscription. The reason for a detailed explanation of Pantokrator monastic complex is its importance from the perspective of burials in it. Recently different type of burials and their locations came afore and provided a new perspective to the monastery. This is also the case with a recent example.

A photograph of a marble slab was made public on an internet site. Seeing the photograph the author became curious about the marble slab (fig. 1). After a contact with the head architect of the restoration project of Pantokrator complex the discovery of the marble slab within Pantokrator was confirmed. During the restorations and excavations of Pantokrator complex, which was finished in 2018, a marble slab with approximate size of 65 x 44 x 6 cm was found. This slab was entrusted to Istanbul archaeological museums. In the lower left and bottom part a broken inscription with a monogram in the middle of the slab is visible. The long inscription is apparently one of the poems of Neophytus Prodromenus,[14] who was a monk at Ioannes Prodromos monastery in Petra.[15] Neophytus Prodromenus was a scribe copying books and scholar. It may be assumed since he was a medical professional that he did not only copy sources but seemed to have practiced therapies suggested in them, such as the Dioscorides manuscript, in the Xenodocheion to Krali attached to the monastery of St John Prodromos in Petra.[16] As a poet, some

[12] Çetinkaya 2020, 295-308.
[13] Jordan 2000, 725-726.
[14] Kalogeropoulou-Metallinou 1996, 529-544.
[15] Barber 2015, 212.
[16] Touwaide 2020, 376-377.

of his works reached our time. The recently discovered slab contains parts of one of his poems.[17] Underlined sections of the poem are the ones inscribed on the slab. Poem 29 reads:



Fig. 1. Marble slab found during the restoration of Pantokrator monastery (Photo: https://www.facebook.com/groups/677705915699526/posts/2263982240405211, consulted on 16 May 2021).

ἐκ σχήματος αὖθίς τε τοῦ σεβασμίου, κληθεὶς μοναχὸς Θεόδουλος Χριστοῦ λάτρης, ὃς δεξιᾶς ἔτυχε δόξης μὲν κάτω,

πολλαῖς φυσικαῖς ταῖς χάρισιν ἐμπρέπων.

Ὡς ἄριστος ἦν ἐν λόγοις, ἐν πρακτέοις, (220) ἄρχουσιν οὐκ ἄρχουσιν ἠσχολημένος, λῷστος βασιλεῖ, τῇ τε βουλῇ χαρίεις,

ὡς ἡδὺς καὶ εὔλαλος ἐν συνουσίαις ὁμηλίκων, φίλων τε, συγγενῶν πάλιν.

Ταῦτα συναπέκλεισεν, οἴμοι, τῷ τάφῳ, (225) τῷ τῆς τελευτῆς ἐκπιὼν ἤδη σκῦφον.

Ὅσα γε μὴν εἴργασται τῆς ψυχῆς χάριν, ὡς νουνεχής τις ἔμπορος θησαυρίσας, ταῦτ᾽ ἀμάραντον προξενεῖ τούτῳ κλέος,

[17] I should like to express my gratitude to Maria Parani for her guidance.

τῇ παρελεύσει τοῦ μακραίωνος χρόνου. (230) Πᾶς οὖν τις, λοιπόν, εἰσιὼν ᾧδε ξένος,

This is to commemorate the death of one Theodoros Goudeles, who upon entering the monastery took the name of Theodoulos. The monogram on the slab can be completed as 'του Γουδ(έ)λ(η)' (of Goudeles).

Poem 28 reads:

Εἰς τὴν μετάληψιν ἐπιγραφή. (197)

Τὸν ἐξ ἀγάπης ψυχικῆς προσιόντα φαγεῖν, Χριστέ μου, σῶμά σου ζωηφόρον,

Θεόδωρον φύλαττε, τὸν καὶ Γουδέλην, (200) πάσης πονηρᾶς ἀπρόσιτον κακίας·

νέμοις δέ μιν ἄφθιτον βίον δὴ πάλιν, δεήσεσί τε τῆς Θεητόκου κόρης,

To my knowledge there is one Theodoros who was claimed to have lived between 1370 and 1421.[18] But the slab with the poem must have been for another Theodoros since time wise it would not allow such a time difference. It is intriguing to have the epitaph of Theodoros / Theodoulos at the Pantokrator complex. The reason to have his epitaph in the monastery could be, either that he was a monk serving at Pantokrator, hence he had the privilege to be buried at the monastery, or died of illness during his treatment at the Pantokrator hospital. Alas, the whereabouts of the piece of discovery is not clear. Since it seems to be the frontal part of an *arcosolium* type of burial, it must have been inside the churches, perhaps in one of the *parekklesia*. The second opinion is that it could have come from the burial site to the south. What seems to be currently a garden was apparently a burial ground for monks and clergy.

Neophytus Prodromenus and Theodoros Goudeles became friends either because they were at the same monastery, or met at Pantokrator monastery where Theodoros stayed and Neophytus regularly visited. This must be the reason for this oration-poem. Why Theodoros chose to become a monk instead of following the family tradition in finance is a pure speculation but it could be because he did not approve of the financial activities and methods of his family members, their political ambitions or simply to renounce the material world. Nothing is known about his life, but a scholarly guess for the date of his death could be made. Since Neophytos Prodromenos was most active in 1360-1370's the poem could have been written around this time upon the loss of his dear friend.

[18] Ganchou 2010, 354.

A similar slab was found in Iznik / Nicaea which mentions the names of Hyakinthos and Naukratios as the founders of Koimesis church (fig. 2). The Goudeles family is known from the seals and literary texts as early as 10th



Fig. 2. Marble slab of founders of Koimesis monastery in Iznik museum garden in 2018 (Photo: Halûk Çetinkaya).

century.[19] They were influential in Asia Minor in 11th century, whose status declined in the 12th century. They appeared again as landowners and commanders in 13th century.[20] The Goudeles had good relations with the Genoese starting in the last quarter of the 14th century.[21] In fact, some members, such as Georgios Goudeles, obtained Genoese citizenship in 1380's in the meantime he was mesazon (first minister) of the Byzantine state. His son Ioannes made a fortune from the sales of overpriced wheat to his own citizens during the siege of Bayezid I between 1394-1402, thanks to his Genoese connections.[22] Another member, Demetrios Palaiologos Goudeles, was a cousin of emperor Manuel II and an uncle of emperor Ioannes VIII. He also served as mesazon around 1416.[23]

[19] Harris 2009, 170.
[20] Kazhdan 1991, 862.
[21] Ganchou 2010, 283.
[22] Necipoğlu 2000, 253.
[23] Malatras 2013, 308.

According to the eyewitness Ubertino Posculo, members of the Goudeles family defended their city, such as Nicolaos Goudeles at the Pege gate; Manuel Goudeles at Kaligaria gate during the Ottoman siege in 1453.[24] The Goudeles family appeared in Italy with their two petitions, dated to 1461 and 1462 respectively, written to the pope to seek his assistance in claiming their money deposited at the bank of St George of Genoa. The sum was deposited by Georgios and was claimed by his sons Nicholaos, Manuel and granddaughter Maria.[25] The last representative of the Goudeles family was Moisa Goudelina Sgouromallina who died around 1550.[26]

It is very rare to have part of literature found on a tangible material, in this case an epitaph. Therefore, this unrecognized piece of marble slab has a very special value. This also indicates that a city like Istanbul may provide new archaeological evidence in the years to come.

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[24] Whitchurch 2019, 204-208.
[25] Harris 2009, 174.
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A Graffito Scene of 'Deesis' at Hagia Sophia, Constantinople (modern Istanbul)

Christina Savova and Thomas Thomov

Abstract: The paper deals with a rare example of a whole graffito scene in the middle bay of the south gallery in the church Hagia Sophia. In view of the posture, clothing and headgear of the figures, most likely the anonymous author has intended to present the theme of Deesis in which the Virgin with a halo around her head is a focal point of the drawing and where it is emphasized her supreme role as intercessor, as mediatrix between the two supplicants by the side and below her and an imaginary Christ. A remarkable and somewhat surprising detail is the adornment of the woman's headdress that looks like a band or diadem (stephanos) with a small square projection in the front. The diadem leaves no doubt that the image is of a noblewoman. The concern of the anonymous author was to present the persons in his drawing in such a way as if they look toward the Mother of God from the mosaic Deesis in the south gallery of Hagia Sophia and not to follow the iconographical scheme. The hypothetical time span for the drawing's creation is between the 1261 and 1453.

Key words: Hagia Sophia, Deesis, graffiti, Holy Mother of God, noblewoman

Резюме: Статията разглежда рядък пример за цяла сцена от рисунка-графит в средната част на южната галерия в църквата „Св. София". С оглед на позата, облеклото и украсата за глава на фигурите, най-вероятно анонимният автор е имал за цел да представи темата „Дейсис", в която Божията Майка с ореол около главата е фокус на рисунката и така се подчертава нейната върховна роля като ходатай, като посредник между двамата молители до и под нея и един въображаем Христос. Забележителен и донякъде изненадващ детайл е украсата на женската шапка, която прилича на лента или диадема (стефанос) с малка квадратна издатина отпред. Диадемата не оставя съмнение, че изображението е на благородничка. Желанието на анонимния автор е да представи лицата в рисунката си по такъв начин, че да гледат към Божията майка от мозайката „Дейсис" в южната галерия на „Св. София", отколкото да следва иконографската схема. Хипотетичният период на време за създаване на рисунката е между 1261 и 1453 г.

The Great Church or the church of the Holy Wisdom is a famous sixth-century domed church, which was built by emperor Justinian the Great. It contains an interesting collection of graffiti inscriptions and drawings, some

crude and schematic, others remarkably detailed. Thematically, they may be divided into memoranda, inscribed mainly on the occasion of attendance at the church, various inscriptions of an invocative nature, the beginning of an alphabet, human, magical and animal figures, ships, coats-of-arms, weapons, crosses, games board, monograms and mason's marks.[1] The autographic, supplicatory inscriptions containing the formula 'Lord, help Your servant X' and those with the formula 'X wrote' occur frequently. The graffiti are written in Greek, Cyrillic, Armenian and Latin script. Ninety-four Cyrillic and one Glagolitic inscription which have been scratched in almost all parts of the galleries of Hagia Sophia were recently published.[2] A total of 200 graffiti drawings were recorded as a result of the fieldwork conducted by Th. Thomov in Istanbul between 2007 and 2014. Among them, the most numerous are the ship graffiti (52).[3] Many of the drawings are highly detailed and accurate, indicating that they have been sketched by skilled visitors.

In the present paper,[4] we concentrate our attention on a graffito drawing that is incised slightly on the marble plinth of the left side of the three windows in the south-west end of the middle bay of the south gallery, which is now barely visible (see fig. 1). When one's eyes adjust to the light, the incised lines begin to take shape, providing in graphic detail a composition of three bust human figures that are placed vertically on the same axis (see fig. 2). The area of the drawing is 15.5 cm in width and 39.5 cm in height at about 70 cm above the floor. The first and second busts are situated in close proximity to each other while the third one is placed 11 cm below the second one. It is not always easy to discern a concrete prototype in each graffito drawing due to its schematic manner of representation.

The first bust has an elongated oval face with hinted eyebrows and a relatively straight nose. It is turned in a three-quarter view, with a head slightly bent and with a contour of headdress that one can identify as maphorion around the face and on the shoulders[5] (see fig. 2). The hinted parallel hands are extended for a prayer. And here, we must remember that the garment, the position in a three-quarter view, with hands extended parallel in supplication and a glance directed sideway, is basic to the iconography of

[1] For a full bibliographical survey on the subject of graffiti in Hagia Sophia, see Thomov 2021, 111-123.

[2] Tomov 2016; 2019.

[3] Tomov 2021.

[4] This paper is the result of a fieldwork in the Church of Hagia Sophia carried out by Th. Thomov in Istanbul in 2010.

[5] Maphorion is a general term for a veil that can be worn by monastics or the laity, male or female: Ball 2009/2010, 32. Cf. also Ball 2005, 50, 99-100; Condra 2008, 259.



Fig. 1. A graffito drawing at middle bay of the south gallery. Hagia Sophia (photo: Thomas Thomov)



Fig. 2. A redrawing of the graffito (author: Thomas Thomov)

the Virgin in the Deesis.[6] Apparently in our case, we are dealing with an image of the Virgin with a halo around her head who is a focal point of the drawing and where it is emphasized her supreme role as an intercessor, as a mediatrix between man and Christ. Moreover, this identification does not confront with what we know about her and her pose in the drawing is the same as that of the Virgin from the adjacent Deesis mosaic[7] (see fig. 5). As it

[6] The theme of the Deesis is traditional: Saint John Baptist, the last Prophet of the old dispensation, and the Virgin Mary, embodiment of the new, interceding with Christ on behalf of humanity. This subject owes its title to the Greek word δέησις (deesis), supplication, which is the purpose of the presence of the Virgin and the Baptist on either side of Christ. For this, see Mouriki 1968, 13, 18; Cutler 1987, 146.

[7] The literature on the subject has traditionally equated the term Deesis with a group of three figures, specifically, Christ between the Virgin and St. John Prodrom. The

is stated by Doula Mouriki 'the iconographic theme of the Deesis is of a purely Byzantine character and basically, it is the pictorialization of the Commemoration or Intercession Prayer of the Byzantine liturgy,[8] in which the names of Christ, the Virgin, John the Baptist, and a host of other holy figures are commemorated'.[9] In this context one should also point out that according to Nicholas Cabasilas, the fourteenth-century liturgical commentator, thanksgiving and supplication are the purposes of this prayer.[10] As a result of the profound theological significance and the concrete salvation connotations embodied in the iconographic theme of the Deesis, it enjoyed a tremendous popularity throughout the Byzantine period, both in monumental art and in portable items.[11]

On the Virgin's right and by the side of her is placed an image of a man with a bald and uncovered head (see fig. 2). He has a hint of slim moustache and a short beard framing an oblong face with weakly hinted features as raised base and pointed tip of the nose, as well as a small mouth with full lower lip.[12] The eyes are marked by an extremely short slim line. Unlike the Virgin the face of the second image looks directly at the spectator. However, the absence of a halo behind the head indicates that the bust is not a Christian saint or Christ. Secondly, its position also excludes a similar assumption. Therefore, this is most likely a secular person who seeks the Holy Mother intercession before Christ. The nearest analogue is the Deesis mosaic in the inner narthex of the *katholikon* of the Monastery of the Holy Savior in Chora representing the Virgin interceding before Christ on behalf of two kneeling supplicants on either side – the *sebastocrator* Isaac Comnenus and the nun Melane (fig. 2)[13] (see fig. 4). In theory any saint could perform the role of intercessor, but here the Virgin Mary was preferred by the anonymous author

related literature devoted in whole or in part to the Deesis is enormous. Some of the most important are Mouriki 1968, 13-28; Walter 1968, 311-336; 1970, 161-187; 1980, 261-269; Velmans 1980/1981, 47-102; Andaloro 1970, 85-153 and Carr 1991, 599-600. Together, these works contain references to the majority of the older literature.

[8] This prayer is found in two parts of the Byzantine liturgy, i.e. the Office of the Prothesis and the Office of the Faithful. See Brightman 1896, 331-335, 356-361, 388, 406-407.

[9] Mouriki 1968, 13.

[10] Cabasilas 1960, 38-41 and 83-84.

[11] Mouriki 1968, 16 (with cited examples and literature).

[12] The elder men are always with well kept beards and the moustaches are always pendulous. For this, see the visual examples in Atanasova, K. Medieval Bulgarian Hairstyles, Moustache and Beard Fashions <http://badamba.info/english/en_hairstyles.html> (consulted on 30.10.2021).

[13] Underwood 1955, 254-260; 1958, fig. 18 opposite 277.

because she was known to have been a particularly effective intercessor or, more important, she was always the first intercessor to be invoked in the Commemoration or Intercession Prayer of the Liturgy.[14] Equally significant is the fact that according to the Church writers of the eighth and ninth centuries, for instance, Andrew of Crete, the Patriarch Germanus, Theodore the Studite, and the Patriarch Nicephorus, the Virgin's mediation is most effective, not only because she is 'holier than the saints, higher than the heavens, more glorious than the cherubim, more honorable than the seraphim and more venerable than all creatures', but also because of her maternal authority – Christ could not but listen to the entreaties of His mother.[15]

As far as the position of this intercessor in relation to Christ is concerned, our example apparently follows the canonical approach of depicting the Virgin at the right side of Christ. What is missing in the graffito drawing, however, is the posture of the supplicant – instead only his face is shown. It seems certain that some of the authors of graffiti realized that they were doing something forbidden. The poor quality of drawings, the imperfections, the desire to hide what is written or drawn, as well as the general incompleteness indicate that such writings had to be done quickly and in secret. Those who were thrown out of the location chosen for drawing or writing, for example, would leave unfinished drawings or inscriptions. In our case, we deal with two busts and one face, which apparently belongs to the anonymous author, who for unknown for us reasons has failed to complete his own portrait. Unfortunately, his identification opens the door of various hypotheses. In such circumstances and with meagre evidence at our disposal it would be unwise to attempt an identification of the author of the graffiti drawing.

The visage of the third figure below the first two is definitely that of a woman (see fig. 2). However, interpreting this drawing presents several problems with her garments, that at first glance appear to be those of a nun. Thus, when we look at this graffito, we realize that the drawing seems somewhat ambiguous, primarily due to a schematic carving. The only clue to understand it correctly is the headdress – one of the most visible and obvious ways to convey social roles: status, gender, age, situation in life, locality. With regard to the headdress the anonymous author, unfortunately, is not as clear as we might have wished.

In our case, we have a band of rigid cloth (or a cap) on the top of the head which is adorned at the forehead and wrapped with a veil.[16] Apparently,

[14] See Brightman 1896, 357, 388, 406. Cf. also Nersessian 1960, 81.
[15] Nersessian 1960, 75 (with cited sources).
[16] Based on the artistic sources, M. Parani (Parani 2003, 77-78) comes to the conclusion that there existed three types of headdress of Byzantine noble ladies -

a second veil is attached to this band (or cap) and its ends pass under the chin and wrap the neck. The veil somewhat resembles the Western European wimple, known also in the area of the Balkans.[17] And here it should be worth mentioning that in the reign of Andronikos III Palaiologos the Byzantines enjoyed wearing strange and variegated headdresses, imitating fashions coming from Western Europe, the Middle East, as well as Serbia and Bulgaria.[18] A remarkable and somewhat surprising detail is the adornment that looks like a band or diadem (*stephanos*) with small square projection in the front and placed most probably in the base of the rigid cloth.[19] The diadem is shown so short that it only covers the forehead of an adult but it leaves no doubt that the visage is of a noblewoman. By the way the short size is justified because in our case the entire backside of her head is covered by the upper veil and the effect of a longer ornament would be lost (see fig. 3). The diadem is, however, excessively stylized and does not give a true idea of woman's adornment. In such circumstances and with meagre evidence at our disposal it would be unwise to attempt an identification of the lady as *caesarissa* or *sebastocratorissa*.[20] According to M. Parani the known portraits of Byzantine

fabric veils, hats and crowns. According to her, in the Middle and the Late Byzantine periods the most common were the fabric headdresses which she describes as a scarf wound in various way around the head, the neck and the shoulders, in some cases fixed by a diadem or a ribbon, sometimes combined with a second scarf so to cover everything except the face.

[17] Most of the women covered their hair with linen head cloths: caps or kerchiefs, wimples, sometime veils or hoods but from the middle of the fourteenth century, the headdress became more complex. The style of headdress was ephemeral and changed regularly - like fashion, and its quality and complexity was a sign of the owner's status. For details, see Frensis & Rendol'f 2007, 32-33; Nunn 2000², 23.

[18] Parani 2003, 71.

[19] For the insignia of the sebastokrator and caesar, see Macrides *et al.* 2013, 44, 46, 248, 346-347 and 432-433 (with cited examples). According to Pseudo-Kodinos the stephanos is clearly distinguished from the stemma since the latter was a term used consistently for the coronation headpiece of the emperor and his wife (224.8-9). He describes the stephanos, also called a stemmatogyrion (Macrides *et al.* 2013, ch. VIII: 246.1), as decorated with gems and pearls and with small arches on all sides (for the despot) or only in front (for the sebastokrator and Caesar, Macrides *et al.* 2013, ch. VIII: 248.8). For this, see also Macrides *et al.* 2013, 143, n. 372; Atanasov 1999, 126, 201, 216.

[20] The wives of dignitaries (despots, sebastokratores and caesars) and of the other court title holders were designated by their husbands' titles. The uppermost titles (including the dignities of despot, sebastokrator and caesar) were already established during the reign of Manuel I Komnenos in the twelfth century and remained unchanged until the Palaiologan period. For this, see Macrides *et al.* 2013, 303, 318.

ladies wearing crowns date from the fourteenth century, however, the head ornaments worn by the aristocratic ladies were neither 'as tall or as richly adorned nor were they placed over a veil or a hairnet as the crowns of empresses, but rested directly on the hair'.[21] Another thing, the modelling of the oval face is made hurriedly and although the author has attempted to mark the eyes, nose and lips, the face seems schematic and unfinished. In sum, the basic conclusion which can be drawn from the above findings is that our third visage represents definitely an aristocratic lady.



Fig. 3. Reconstruction drawing of the women's visage after Christina Savova

Our portrait has some similarities with that of the church Holy Mother of God in Dolna Kamenica (painted in the fourteenth century) where boyar's wife wears a low cylindrical element covered with a large veil as well as another veil that wraps the face and falls on the shoulders.[22] However, the crown does not have a central arch. The second parallel is from the church of the Holy Mother of God at Mali Grad, Prespa (1369), which shows caesarissa Kale with a veil on her head and a second one that falls down on both sides of her face, wrapping her neck.[23] Another analogy is a fresco in the church of Panagia Bellas (Kokkine Ekklesia), Boulgarelii, near Arta (1295-1296) with the visage of Maria Tzimiskes who wears a two-piece headdress - an embroidered flat cap, visible at the forehead, covered with a wimple.[24] Somewhat close stylistic parallel for our figure is seen in a fresco from the Church of Panagia Phorbiotissa, better known as Panagia of Asinou, Cyprus (1333) which portrays a woman named Anastasia Saramalina beside her patron saint St. Anastasia Pharmakolytria.[25] Her head-covering, which consist of a wimple, veil, kerchief with a band of rigid linen cloth pinned on it, seems to follow the western style that, in fact, has been quite prevalent in the Mediterranean East in the second half of the thirteenth century.[26]

[21] Parani 2003, 79.
[22] Atanasova 2016, 388-389, fig. 4 on 388.
[23] Kovachevich 1953, 56 and 57 (image).
[24] Parani 2003, 341, # 76. For image, see Atanasova, K. A List of Preserved Byzantine Portraits during the thirteenth and fourteenth century <https://1.bp.blogspot.com/-hpYYQipNEmc/WkkMeIOsdzI/AAAAAAAAI-g/qwBHKoAuLCUZeQnHwah_auMyajXAUGZ-QCEwYBhgL/s1600/DSC_7851.jpg> (consulted on 30.10.2021).
[25] Kalopissi-Verti 2012, 120.
[26] Kalopissi-Verti 2012, 119.



Fig. 4. The Deesis mosaic. Chora Monastery (photo: Thomas Thomov)

Now we are confronted with the question: what image does the drawing depict? The question immediately leads to a second one: why did the anonymous author feel obliged to make such a drawing in the south gallery in Hagia Sophia? First and foremost, there is a reason to think that since there are no other images around our visages, it is obvious that they form together a whole scene that is unfolded vertically instead of horizontally. In other words, the last image should not be at the bottom, but on the left side of the Mother of God and the imaginary Christ, as is usual for the Deesis scene. However, in our case the main intercessor is the Mother of God, and the placement of this female image below presupposes precisely this function of hers. There is no doubt that the actions of the Mother of God in this role and the Byzantine belief in their efficacy are the answer of the second question. Therefore, the anonymous author was not interested in the location of the persons here; his concern was to present them in such a way as if they look toward the Mother of God from the mosaic than to follow the canon and place her on the left, against the other two images in the drawing. For this reason, he did not follow the iconographical scheme according to which the woman visage must be on the left against the other two images in the drawing.

All we wish to say here is that there was some kind of connection between the graffiti drawing and the Deesis mosaic, which the author saw on the west wall of the south gallery. After gaining access to the galleries of Hagia Sophia he stopped before the left side of the three windows in the south-west end of the middle bay of the south gallery. On the one hand, it seems to us that the author's choice of a scratching place was due to his belief of the power of the intercessory role of the Mother of God. On the other hand, the author was forced to avoid an enclosure in front of the mosaic, which does not allow direct access to it as evidenced by a series of holes that are still visible in the pavement.[27] In this way, the place chosen by him is the only one that is as close as possible to the mosaic and where he can 'work' relatively undisturbed. The question we have, therefore, is whether the graffito was scratched during service or not. The answer to this question opens the door to various hypotheses. Anyone who has ever sat through the whole of a long Orthodox service can understand how the worshiper had plenty of time to scratch something on the marble. Such an assumption would, however, require us to conclude that the galleries were open to access for everyone at any time or that the author was an important person or a companion to a nobleman. While this explanation is quite plausible, it is also possible that he might stroll about the empty galleries just to see how large the church was. In so doing our author intended to incise his name or drawing after the example of many others before him. It seems to us that we have here an example of what are expected to do the worshippers in an Orthodox church: adore the savior, approach him in prayer and humility, and seek his forgiveness eye to eye. Every believer chooses whether to hold a candle in their hands during a service or to be on their knees before the holy image, or to seek the intercession of the Mother of God in solitude non-verbally using a drawing.

If we judge by the distance at which the drawing is from the floor level it is clear that the creator has been on his knees. The desire to leave a pious mark through a drawing in the church comes from the understanding of medieval person that the power of one's prayer is directly related to the permanence of the act. Hence, it is not so much a marker of someone's visit, but through its direct interaction with the sacred surface of the church building it becomes an eternal presence and prayer ('to this day'), which in durability and strength surpasses a lighted candle the remains of which are thrown from the altar and candelabras after their burning. This may explain

[27] The area in front of the Deesis mosaic was partitioned off by a low parapet (recorded in the 18th century), in order to create a small oratory. For this, see Mango 1962, 29; Cormack 2000, 120.

why these images inspire respect among their contemporaries and subsequent visitors.



Fig. 5. The Deesis mosaic. Hagia Sophia (photo: Thomas Thomov)

We have no doubt that there was an official ban on writing on the walls of the temple, but everyone wrote – both secular and clergy, literate and illiterate. If these images were considered destructive or unwanted, they could have been removed or deleted at any time. But their preservation to this day shows that this did not happen and they were not perceived by the church authorities as vandalism, but as a legitimate and vivid expression of the faith and piety of their creators. It seems certain, however, that some of the authors of graffiti realized that they were doing something forbidden. The imperfections, the desire to hide what is written or drawn, which led to the general incompleteness, indicate that such acts had to be done quickly and in secret. Those who were thrown out of the location chosen for writing or drawing, for example, would leave unfinished inscriptions or drawings. This is the case with the second, unfinished portrait in our drawing thus suggesting that the author was thrown out of its 'working' place. However, we are dealing with a whole pious scene which is the third one discovered in Hagia Sophia after that of St. George the Dragon slayer[28] and the votive maritime scene with St. Nicholas.[29]

[28] Thomov 2019, 289-301.

[29] Thomov 2015, 57-74.

As to the date of the drawing, it is very difficult to give a precise date to a graffito without some clues in the inscriptions or some specific details. What seems certain in our case is that the graffito was incised sometime after the appearance (probably 1261)[30] of the monumental mosaic of the Deesis in the south gallery of the church of Hagia Sophia, possibly for the coronation of Michael VIII. It was a large devotional panel in a small oratory ideally suited to the message of the iconography of the Deesis: petition and entreaty.[31] The drawing of Cornelius Loos, an officer of the Swedish king Charles XII, proves that by 1710 this mosaic was covered over.[32] To this, we should add the fact that the known portraits of Byzantine ladies wearing crowns date from the 14th century. Because of this, it seems feasible to date the graffito with a reasonable certainty to this time. In trying to be more specific about the date it should be noted that the *terminus post quem* is the fall of Constantinople in 1453 after the Ottomans successfully laid siege to the city.

The presence of such a graffito in the Church of Hagia Sophia is also important because it is first-hand evidence of a worshiper's visit to the Church of Hagia Sophia, who was able to address his prayer to Christ through the intercession of the Holy Mother of God. The very fact that these graffiti were tolerated in the past, and even seen as part of the normal use of the church fabric, changes our view of how the inside of the medieval church may have looked. Their visual nature –they are either drawings or inscriptions – did not break the formal order of the church but found a way around it to express the thoughts, emotions, hopes, and wishes to which voiced expression was suppressed.

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[30] R. Cormack (Cormack 2000, 120) argues that this mosaic was done between July 25 and Christmas day, 1261, which was the most likely time for the renovation and redecoration of the south gallery at Hagia Sophia following the reconquest of the city by Emperor Michael VIII.

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Reliquary from Limoges, a holy gift to the capital of the Second Bulgarian kingdom Tarnovgrad (Figure from West European reliquary from Church 22 in Trapezitsa fortress in Veliko Tarnovo)

Deyan Rabovyanov

Abstract: Subject of the research is a gilt figure of a saint with enamel decoration (fig. 7) discovered in the fortress of Trapezitsa, the second citadel of the capital of the Second Bulgarian Kingdom – Tarnovgrad (figs. 1, 2). The height of the figure is 5.86 cm, its width is 2.56 cm, and its thickness at the edge of the hollow body is 0.2 cm. Today it is kept at Veliko Tarnovo Regional Museum of History. The stylistic and technological features of the figure reveal that it was made in the French town of Limoges, most probably during the first half of 13th century. The figure originally belongs to reliquary chasse, most probably from its lid. It was buried like a holy gift during construction of building in 1330's Church No 22 together with other monuments of Christian art, most of them with Byzantine origin (figs. 3-6). The figure was put below the chest/cabinet or bench, next to the south wall of altar space of the temple.

The reason for this monument of Christian art from the Catholic West to have reached the heart of the Bulgarian lands will remain unknown. Regardless of its path to Bulgaria, the item is an example for the fact that despite the differences and the growing alienation between the two main Christian doctrines in Medieval Europe, the communication between them has been preserved.

Key words: Limoges, enamel, relics

Резюме: Предмет на изследването е позлатена фигурка на светец с емайлова декорация (обр. 7) открита в крепостта Трапезица, втората цитадела на столицата на Второто българско царство Търновград (обр. 1, 2). Височината на фигурката е 5.86 см, ширината ѝ е 2.56 см, а дебелината при ръба на кухото ѝ тяло е 0.2 см. Днес тя се съхранява в Регионален исторически музей – Велико Търново. Стилистичните и технологичните черти на фигурата показват, че е била изработена във френския град Лимож, най-вероятно през първата половина на 13 в. Фигурката първоначално е принадлежала на реликварий, като най-вероятно е била от капака му. Тя е била заровена в земята като свещен дар по време на построяването на Църква No 22 заедно с други паметници на

християнското изкуство, повечето от които с византийски произход (обр. 3–6). Фигурката е била поставена под ракла/шкаф до южната стена на олтарното пространство на храма.

Причината този паметник на християнското изкуство от католическия Запад да достигне до сърцето на българските земи ще остане неизвестна. Независимо от пътя му до България обаче, този предмет е пример за това как въпреки различията и увеличаващото се отчуждение между двете основни християнски доктрини в средновековна Европа комуникацията между двете се е запазила.

Subject of the research is a monument of Western European Medieval art, which is rare for the East Balkans. It is a gilt figure of a saint with enamel decoration, which was part of a reliquary made in the French town of Limoges. It was discovered in the fortress of Trapezitsa, the second citadel of the capital of the Second Bulgarian Kingdom – Tarnovgrad.

The value of this item regarding the understanding of the cultural links of Medieval Bulgaria with Western Europe is further strengthened by the specific environment, in which it was unearthed. This monument of Western European Christian art, directly related to the Catholic church, was found inside a Christian temple in the heart of Orthodox Tarnovo. The capital of Bulgaria purposefully bears the title 'Third Rome and second Constantinople' and during the 13th-14th century is one of the centers of Orthodox Christianity in Europe.[1]

The dating of the context of discovery also presents an occasion for thought. Church No 22 in the fortress of Trapezitsa is built in the 1330s and exists, with one reconstruction, until the end of the same century. It delivers an interesting picture of transfer of 'sanctity' between the two confessions, which is in reverse direction to the dominant transfer of relics from the lands of the East Christianity towards Western Europe.[2] It is also worth noting that during this period the attempts for relating the Bulgarian church with the Papacy from the first half of the 13th century are long forgotten, and until the destruction of the Bulgarian kingdom in the end of the 14th century they were not restored.

A second line of thought is given by the specific role played by the figurine from the Limoges reliquary inside the mentioned Christian temple. This will be addressed below, and it is especially important to understand the context of the find.

The fortress of Trapezitsa, from which the reliquary figurine originates, is one of the two fortified nuclei forming the capital of the Second Bulgarian Kingdom, Tarnovgrad (fig. 1). The massive fortress walls erected in the early

[1] Totev & Rabovyanov 2019.
[2] Yordanov 2015.

decades of the 13th century enclose an area of approx. 70 decares, which especially during the 14th century is densely filled with residential neighbourhoods, churches, monasteries, administrative, military and economic buildings, united by a developed street network (fig. 2).[3] Although the tsar and the patriarch did not reside in this second citadel of Tarnovo, its significance was no less than that of the neighbouring Tsarevets. This is testified by its independent examination by the contemporaries, who called it 'the glorious town of Trapezitsa'.[4]

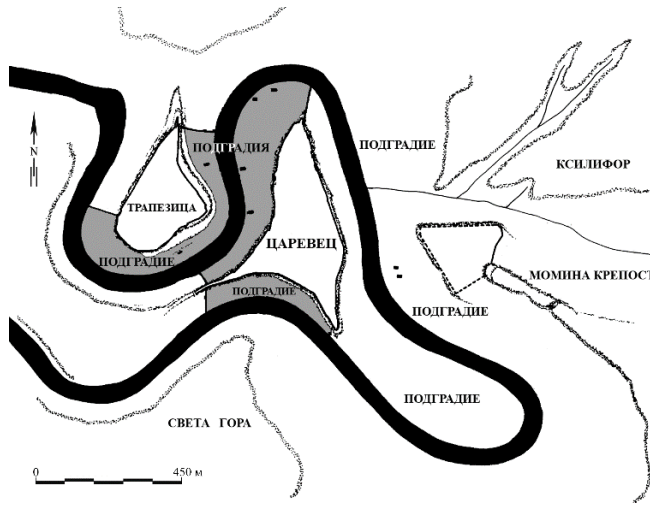


Fig. 1. Schematic plan of the Medieval Tarnovgrad (author: D. Rabovyanov).

It is not a coincidence that this important place for the Bulgarian medieval history triggered the interest of archaeologists and historians from an early stage. As early as 1879, the first official archaeological excavations in Bulgaria were carried out on the site. They were followed by others in 1884, 1900 and in the 1930s and the 1990s. Implemented through the methodology of their time, they do not always leave a positive response, and unfortunately their results are poorly reflected. More informative are the recent studies of Trapezitsa, which started in 2007 and continue to this day.[5] Part of them is

[3] Dermendzhiev 2011; Karailiev 2011; Rabovyanov 2015; 2017; 2020; Robov 2011; Totev 2017; Totev & Koseva 2011.

[4] For the name of the fortress of Trapezitsa and its reflection in historical sources, see Dobrev 2010.

[5] They are implemented as part of the 30-year program of the National Institute of Archaeology with Museum (NAIM – BAS) for the research of this capital citadel. For the excavations on Trapezitsa, see: Rabovyanov 2015, 17-34; Totev 2012; 2017.

the study of the southern sector of the fortress carried out for twelve years by the author of this work.

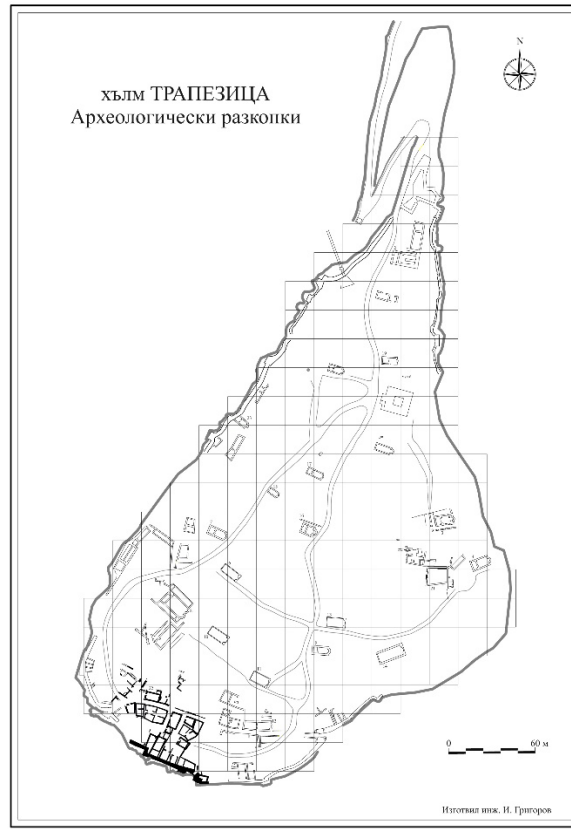


Fig. 2. Plan of the fortress of Trapezitsa with marked location of Church 22 (author: I. Grigorov).

In 2017, a new, previously unknown church was discovered in this sector, numbered 22, according to the sequence of the Christian churches discovered on Trapezitsa.[6] Church No 22, along with the necropolis related to it, gave important results for the connection of the Christian temples with the urban environment of the capital city.[7] The main contribution, however, was the material illustration of the practices of consecration of temples and the vaulting of relics and sacred gifts inside them. This aspect was recently

[6] Rabovyanov 2018.

[7] Within the outlines of the nave and the narthex of Church 22 86 graves were studied.



Fig. 3. Plan of the structures, revealed in the South sector of the fortress of Trapezitsa (author: D. Rabovyanov).

reflected in a series of articles by K. Totev and N. Boteva, but there the environment and function of the monuments of Christian art discovered in the Church No 22 are not specified.[8] Here we will pay attention to only one of

[8] Regarding them, see: Boteva & Totev 2019; Totev & Boteva 2018; 2019a.

the more than 20 monuments of Christian art found inside the temple.[9] It was chosen not by chance, as it stands out with its origin against the background of the other objects, which without two other exceptions are a product of the Byzantine cultural circle. However, let us pay attention to the context of the find.

Church No 22 is located in a key point for the urban environment of Trapezitsa (figs. 2, 3). It is only 15 m northeast of the southwestern gate of the fortress, which in its size and shape appears as the main of the four entrances to the southern part of the citadel. In addition, the Christian church is at the very crossroad, where the two main streets with east-west and north-south direction join, and face the southwest gate. Church No 22 is not only one of the largest in Trapezitsa, but it was obviously in direct connection with the surrounding residential neighbourhoods. Built in the 30s of the 14th century together with the stone pavements of the streets, it appears as a kind of core – probably a parish church, for the rapidly developed residential neighbourhoods until the middle of the century. The church was also a burial place for the inhabitants of the southern part of Trapezitsa, with more than 150 graves being excavated in and around the necropolis so far. Together with the renovation of the church in the 70s of the 14th century, this necropolis was separated by stone fence walls (figs. 3, 4).

Church No 22 is a relatively large for Medieval Tarnovo single-nave, single-apse building with a narthex to the west and a gallery attached to the north of the nave (figs. 4, 5). Its apse is wide and shallow, with rounded façade. The nave together with the apse has dimensions of 11.30 to 6.20 m, and together with the narthex the temple is 15 m long. A gallery with width of 2.60 m is attached to the north of the narthex. Thus, the general area of the church during its construction in the 1330s is 120 sq. m.[10] Its proximity to the southwest gate provoked its destruction and made easier the extraction of construction material during the Ottoman period. As a result its south wall is preserved to a height between 0.30 and 0.50 m, the north – to 1.30 m, and the narthex is almost entirely obliterated (fig. 4). The 0.60/0.70 m thick walls are carefully made of slab stones, jointed with yellow clay (fig. 6). On the inside the temple was coated and frescoed and on the outside, it had a modest decoration of green decorative plates. The floor was covered with stone slabs, which step over the cultural layer or over embankments, and in the altar section they are placed over a 5 cm thick layer of black earth, which cover

[9] The overall publishing of this interesting and important for the Christian cult in the Bulgarian capital item is foreseen.

[10] This makes it the fifth largest church on Trapezitsa, following numbers 2, 3, 8 and 14.



Fig. 4. Aerial photography of Church 22 at Trapezitsa following its excavation in 2018 (photo: G. Hristov).

the plaster coating. The latter was made after the coating of the temple's walls. The altar section was separated from the nave with a fence, the slot for which is preserved in the plaster (fig. 6). The altar table, with traces of a step in front of it, is attached tightly to the arch of the apse. The proscomide niches were formed with platforms – extensions of the eastern walls of the church on both sides of the apse. It should be noted that the northern extension is shorter and with east-west direction, while the longer south one has north-south direction. This also gives a certain asymmetry to the building. The front parts of these otherwise masoned extensions and the pillar of the altar table with dimensions of 0.90 m per 1 m, are made of pressed yellow clay, which was later coated with mortar plaster. The plate of the altar table was a marble slab, parts of which were found in the nave. In the southern half of the altar space, the plaster base on the floor is discontinued in two places, forming rectangular spots. Obviously, they mark the places of a massive furniture rising in height, which is planned and complied with during the construction.

Research in the southern sector of Trapezitsa temple reveals perhaps the most common plan of a church from the period of the Second Bulgarian Kingdom. As a planning scheme, Church No 22 finds many analogies both in Tarnovo and throughout the territory of the Second Bulgarian Kingdom and the Byzantine world.[11] Among the close regional parallels in terms of planning, construction equipment and structure of the altar can be mentioned Churches

[11] Regarding such churches, see: Aleksiev 1980, 44-54, fig. 1; Dimova 2008, 280-328; Koseva-Toteva 2016, 214-221; Naumenko & Iozhitsa 2018, 170-188, il. 10; Hristov *et al*. 2019, 114-131, figs. 15-21.

No 19 and 23 in Trapezitsa itself, Churches No 19, 23, 24 in Tsarevets, Church No 2 in St. Demetrius complex below Trapezitsa, Churches No 1, 2, 3 and 4 in the fortress near Sevlievo.[12]

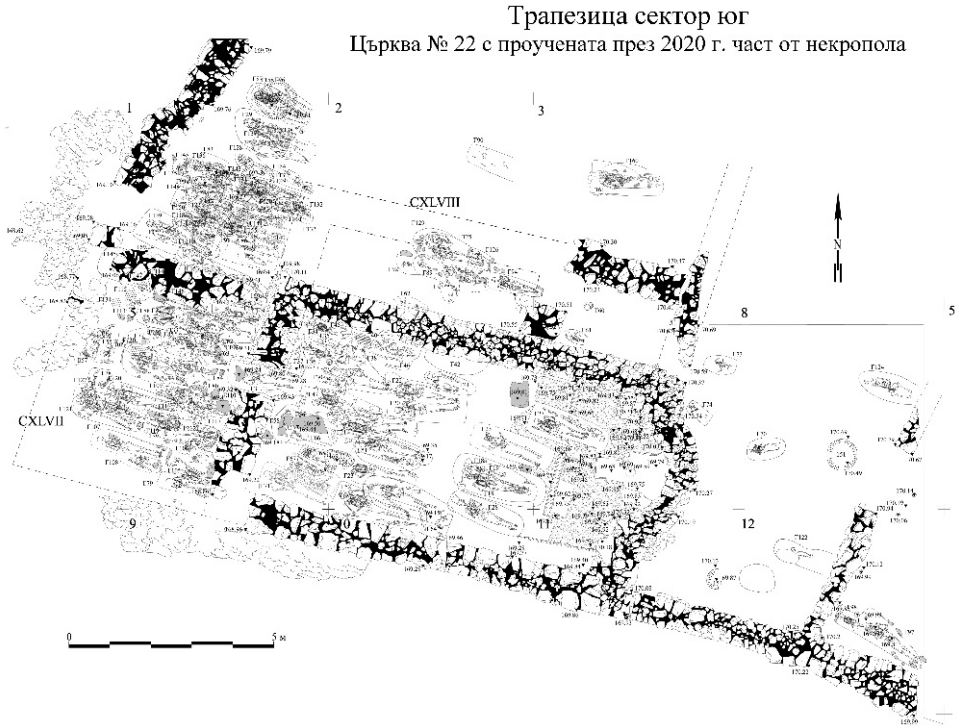


Fig. 5. Plan of Church 22 at Trapezitsa with the marked location of the find (author: D. Rabovyanov).

In the 1370s the church had obviously suffered destruction followed by significant repair works (figs. 4-6). The narthex received a new, south-facing north wall and a higher floor level. The gallery to the north disappeared, leaving only one room measuring 2.60 by 4.50 m, attached to the northeast corner of the nave. The nave itself received a new floor, up to 0.30 m higher, and in its northwest corner a stone bench was built with masonry on clay. The old altar fence was discontinued by the intersecting grave No 27. The apse, together with the extensions for the prosthesis and the diaconicon, was also reconstructed, and the proscomide niches were narrowed.

It was the altar part that provided this large collection of objects of Christian art and ministry, part of which is the considered figure from reliquary. The main group of objects was found in the narrow space behind the

[12] Koseva-Toteva 2016, 214-221; Nikolova & Robov 2005, 88-96; Totev & Boteva.

block at the base of the altar table, used as a repository for relics and gifts. Here, between the unplastered back of the clay pillar and the arch of the inner face of the apse, six whole and a half of reliquary encolpion crosses, a cassette encolpion cross with filigree decoration and pearl inserts, a fragment of a processional cross with embossed decoration and a small isosceles cross for sewing or application, were found. Along with these copper alloy items, an iron banner cross with a broken spike, a fragmented glazed cup, possibly an ointment vessel, and a disc of a brick fragment of unknown purpose were found. Along with them lay a treasure trove of Byzantine Christian art, a steatite icon depicting the archangel Gabriel in high relief under a tracery canopy.



Fig. 6. The altar part of Church 22 at a stage of its research (photo: D. Rabovyanov).

The use of the space behind the altar table as a repository for sacred objects – relics and holy gifts – is not uncommon in the Orthodox world. It is attested by various decisions and has a direct relation to the founding of every Christian temple and the accumulation of holiness in it. Although rarely preserved, examples of this practice we have from other churches from the period of the Second Bulgarian Kingdom, including Churches No 19 and 23 of Trapezitsa, Churches No 1 and 3 in the fortress near Sevlievo, Church No 2 in the citadel of Cherven.[13] It should be noted that the position and sealing of these relics related to the consecration of the temple did not allow

[13] Regarding this problem of interest, see: Boteva & Totev 2019, 91; Totev & Boteva 2018, 612-623; 2019a, 250-256; Totev & Rabovyanov 2019, 109-110; Marinis & Ousterhout 2015, 153-157.

them to be the object of worship. In addition to consecrating the temple, they continued to make it sacred during its operation. The disturbance of the environment in Church No 22, namely the destruction of the upper half of the pillar of the altar table and the removal and breaking of its top, does not allow any final conclusions to be drawn. However, the position of the group of finds between the base of the altar table and the inner face of the apse, at the level of the rock base, shows that they were placed behind the pillar of the table and covered by its top. This means that after the installation of the marble slab, they were not available and apparently played the role of relics for the consecration of the temple.

However, another religious practice, also rarely registered during archaeological excavations, was witnessed in Church No 22. During the excavations at various places in the altar part in the mortar floor mat and in the black embankment above it a fragment of a shoulder of a bronze processional cross is found, a fragment of lead eulogy, a whole bronze breastplate reliquary, a bronze book clasp, copper-alloy tweezers, a fragment of an relief fitting with traces of enamel, and, indicatively, a bronze relief element for application with a teardrop shape identical to that of the decoration of the fragment of the reliquary cross behind the altar table.

This practice is not an exclusion, but is rarely registered so far. Although not so clearly expressed, we find examples of it in Churches No 19, 20 and 23 at Trapezitsa, the church to the south of 'St. Forty Martyrs' in Tarnovo, Church No 1 at the fortress near Sevlievo,[14] but it should be underlined that a large portion of the finds, related to the cult, cannot be clearly referred to as deposited during the construction of the temple and later scattered during their destruction, or as part of the church's belongings. The only explanation which can be presented for this practice regarding Church No 22, is that Christian items were intentionally placed during the construction of the temple, which are to 'concentrate' the new temple.

Apart from around the altar table, this practice was also witnessed in the southern part of the altar space, where the mortar base on the floor is discontinued, forming an elongated rectangular spot measuring 0.50 m (N-S) to at last 1.20 m (E-W) to the south wall of the church (figs. 5, 6). Not covering the place with mortar means that during the construction a structure was planned to be erected here and therefore there was no need of a floor. The absence of graves means that this structure has been preserved even after the reconstruction of the church. It is difficult to conclude what it was, due to the low preservation of the southern part of the temple, destroyed for extracting building materials. In addition to a bench, such as the one in the

[14] Boteva & Totev 2019a, 92, figs. 11, 12; Totev & Boteva 2018, 612-614, 618-623.

northwest corner of the nave, it is possible that a chest or a vertical cupboard for storing objects related to the cult was located here, and even for other values of importance for the temple. A similar lockable cupboard for storing sacred vessels and clothing, as well as reliquaries, is attested to the south wall of the bema of the church of Pantocrator monastery, so called Zeyrek Camii in Constantinople, where it assumed the functions of diaconicon.[15]

The significance of the place is also hinted at by the discovery of more sacred items buried in the layer under the missing element of the furniture. These are fragments of a glass vessel, probably a chandelier or a chalice, a bronze chandelier hook with a pinned ornament, a gilded silver lamella with an enamel image of the blessing Christ and the bronze reliquary figurine, which is under examination here (figs. 5, 7).

There is information in Church No 3 in the fortress near Sevlievo for such incorporation of cult objects with a relic function. According to the participants in the excavations in 1980, parts of processional crosses and details of gospel fittings were found in a masonry chamber in the bench to the south of the apse.[16]

It is important to note that the monuments of Christian cult and art buried during the construction are placed in two places inside the church – around the altar table and under the missing structure – chest/cabinet or bench, next to the south wall. Therefore, in addition to their common function as relics related to consecration, the meaning given to these spaces by the altar also brings them closer. It is reasonable to assume that for the builders and the users of Church No 22 the now vanished structure next to the south wall was of a significance close to that of the altar table, which is the heart of the temple.

The character of the objects placed for consecration in the churches is impressive. These are not only items that have contained sacred relics such as reliquary crosses, but also others with cult and liturgical functions – processional and banner crosses, steatite icons, candlesticks and chandeliers, chalices and parts of liturgical books. It is reasonable for them to admit that their engagement with relics and their preservation in the altar and participation in the liturgy has turned them into the eyes of believers in relics themselves. In this respect, in addition to the function, their age also played a role. Most of them are centuries older than the time they were deposited in the churches.[17] The condition of these finds, often fragmented or parts of

[15] Marinis & Ousterhout 2015, 158, fig. 8.3.
[16] Boteva & Totev 2019, 92; Totev & Boteva 2018, 614, fig. 3.
[17] Boteva & Totev 2019, 93-94; Totev & Boteva 2018, 607-610, 624-626; Totev & Rabovyanov 2019, 101-119.

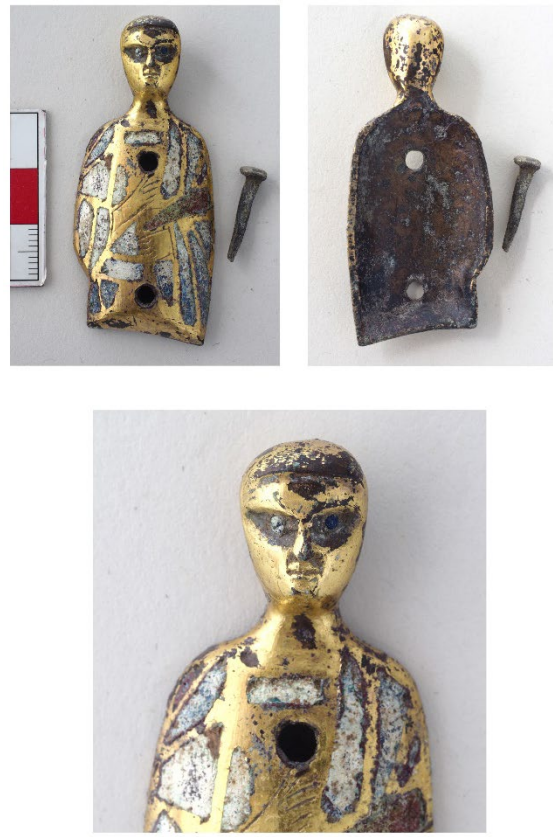


Fig. 7. Figure of Limoges reliquary from Church 22 at Trapezitsa (photo: K. Georgiev).

objects, leads K. Totev and N. Boteva to believe that the intensified construction of temples in the period of the Second Bulgarian Kingdom with the mandatory requirement to incorporate relics in the consecration led to a problem of finding enough sacred items. For this reason, even old cult and liturgical objects are not set in their entity, but fragmented in order to meet the growing needs.[18] This assumption has reason, but the relics found in the Church No 22 provide another line of thought. Although there are parts of cult and liturgical items among them, more than half of them are related rather to the personal search and veneration of holiness. Such are the steatite icon, the cassette cross decorated with filigree and pearls, the seven halves and whole chest reliquary crosses and the fragment of lead eulogy. The number and variety of relics from Church No 22 exceeds that in all known

[18] Boteva & Totev 2019, 93-94; Totev & Boteva 2018, 624-626.

examples in Bulgaria. This raises the question, are they not donated by those interested in the construction of the temple and do we not encounter an example of collective donation by the common people, in contrast to the actions of tsars and boyars described in the sources? We can hope that future discoveries of this type will provide answers.

However, let us pay attention to the very subject of the study. The reliquary figure from Church No 22 is a waist-length image of a man dressed in loose clothing with wide, hanging down sleeves (fig. 7). The object is cast of a copper alloy. The body is hollow, with a convex surface, a sloping base and a rounded upper part, forming the shoulders. The left side of the body is arched, and the right side has an expressed protrusion, emphasizing the elbow of the hand raised high in front of the chest. The palms and fingers are relatively roughly depicted through shallow cuts on the metal. Above and below the arms, two small round riveting holes with a diameter of 0.3 cm were made. They were drilled from the nape to the front, probably after the application of the gilding. A 1.7 cm long copper alloy wedge was found near the object. Its spike has a quadrangular cross-section and the flat quadrangular head with rounded sides measures 0.4 by 0.4 cm. The gilding on the head and the patina of the metal leaves no doubt that this is one of the two wedges for attaching the figure to the reliquary.

The clothes, probably a robe, are represented by wide folds formed by cut-outs of various shapes on the metal surface, filled with enamel in three colours. Dominating is the white, occupying the upper part of the garment. Only the skirt and part of the left sleeve are marked with dark blue enamel. To the left, between the arm and the body, is depicted an elongated triangle with red-brown enamel. Probably in this way is represented a book carried by the figure. The right shoulder of the figure is marked in the same colour.

Above the rounded shoulders of the flat-depicted body is a door in the shape of a truncated cone crowned with an ovoid head, extending upwards. They are voluminously presented and completely covered with gilding, i.e. they were intended to be visible also from behind. The head is presented in a stylized way, but with a great deal of realism. Its features were formed during casting and were hardly treated further. The chin is narrow and rounded. Above it, with two embossed protrusions, are formed compressed straight lips with an expressed depression above the upper one. An elongated and straight teardrop-shaped nose rests over it. It stands between two wide almond-shaped depressions forming the eye cavities. In them, the views of the eyes are shaped with regular round openings. Only in the right eye there is a remnant of dark blue enamel preserved, with which the pupils are marked. The eyebrows and forehead are not emphasized, and a slight indentation conveys the line of the low-cut hair. The smooth surface of the head does not exclude the display of the tonsure of a spiritual person.

On the outside, the figure is entirely covered with quality gilding, which has partially penetrated the edges of the hollow body. Unlike the neck and head, it was not visible from behind and for this reason no gilding was applied there. The condition of the item is good. With few exceptions, the gilding and the enamel are preserved. There are no visible traces of damage or deformation, which indicates that the figure was carefully removed from the object to which it was attached. The preservation of one of the wedges does not exclude that part of the wooden base had also been preserved.

The height of the figure is 5.86 cm, its width is 2.56 cm, and its thickness at the edge of the hollow body is 0.2 cm. Today it is kept at the Veliko Tarnovo Regional Museum of History.

The created image, especially when compared with the parallels, which will be discussed below, leaves no doubt that the figure represented a saint. It is probably a man of spirituality – a bishop or a monk, depicted from the front, with his left hand bent towards the body, holding a book and his right hand raised in front of his chest, perhaps for a blessing.

The form, decoration and technology of production of this rare for Bulgaria monument of Christian art leaves no doubt that its origin should be sought in the studios in the area of the town of Limoges in Aquitaine. It is the main center of the Limousin region, a river-cut area of plateaus in the western part of the Massif Central in France. Limoges and its region were part of the European possessions of the Plantagenets in the 12th and 13th centuries.[19] It was during this period that the style, in which the figure found at Trapezitsa was implemented, was born and developed. It combines the impression of the colours of the enamel with the gilding of the metal and the relief elements – initially the heads, and later the whole figures of the characters.[20]

The typical features of the figure from Church 22 are visible as early as the last decades of the 12th century. The shaping of the heads with eyes with pupils made of blue enamel, the treating of the fingers and the use of white enamel is visible on two lamellae with female figures, produced in Limoges around 1170-1180 (fig. 8).[21] A closer parallel is found in the relief figures that decorate the arms of two processional crosses kept in Statens Historiska Museum in Stokholm, Sweden. They are related to the Limoges craftsmen studios from the early 13th century.[22] The same asymmetrical bodies are

[19] Barrière 1996.
[20] See: Gauthier 1972, 67-118; 1987, Cat. 80, 92, 134, 135, 202, 205, 228, 315; O'Neill 1996, 95-338.
[21] Gauthier 1972, ill. 45/46.
[22] Gauthier 1972, ill. 71.

observed there, attached with two rivets each and a similar technology for the use of enamel.



Fig. 8. Two lamellae with female figures, produced in Limoges around 1170-1180's, Österreichische Museum, Vienne, Inv. No Em. 472 and Museo nazionale dell Bargello, Florence, Inv. No C.632 (after Gauthier 1972, Ill. 45/46).

In fact, the first three decades of the 13th century are the most abundant and diverse period of the Limoges enamel. At that time the main stylistic tendencies are divided between the Romanesque traditions and the adoption of new forms from the early Gothic style.[23] The product of this development is probably our only direct parallel from the Balkans. It is a figure almost identical in size, body and head shape, the method of attaching and engraving of the hands (fig. 9). Its poor state of preservation does not allow observation of the enamel, but traces of red colour are noticeable. The figure was found together with 186 Hungarian and Venetian coins from the late 14th and the early 15th century, belonging to a treasure found near the village of Karadžićevo 10 km to the northwest of Vinkovci in Eastern Croatia.[24]

[23] Boehm & Taburet-Delahaye 1996, 244.
[24] Papesa 2015, 261-262.



Fig. 9. Figure of Limoges reliquary from treasure found near the village of Karadžićevo, Croatia (after Papesa 2015, Pl. I2).

Close parallels from the same period are also several figures of saints from reliquaries found in England.[25] Despite their poor preservation, the one from Wrelton, North Yorkshire (fig. 10) stands out among them as particularly close to the Trapezitsa example. It is again a waist-length figure with two holes for attachment, it has traces of enamel in white, red and blue and features the same wide metal edges separating the coloured fields.



Fig. 10. Figure of Limoges reliquary from Wrelton, North Yorkshire, No DUR-B54092 (after Lewis 2015, fig. 6).

The last in this development is a figure of Christ as Lord of Glory, kept in the Cabinet of Medals of the National Library in Paris. It is referred to as Limoges production from the middle of the third quarter of the 13th century.[26] A very close parallel, including in terms of function, is presented by

[25] Lewis 2015, 4-7.
[26] Tixier 2014, 216-218, fig. 9.

the so-called 'Châsse of Saint Hippolytus'. Produced in Limoges in the second quarter of the 13th century, it is kept in the Louvre in Paris (fig. 11).[27] Despite the fact that the figures that decorate its cover and front part are more elongated, they have the same volume treatment of the heads with pupils made of enamel, and the hollow bodies, attached with two rivets each, are covered with wide layers of enamel in similarity to the specimen from Trapezitsa.



Fig. 11. Chase of St. Hipolitus, originating from the treasury of Saint Deni, Musée du Louvre, Paris, No MR 343, Limoges, second quarter of 13 century (after https://gorbutovich.livejournal.com/178657.html).

It is this wonderful reliquary that directs us to the function of the subject under consideration in this study. Its dimensions, the type of body, the two rivets for attachment and the three-dimensional shape of the head and neck without a shaped halo show that the figure from Church 22 was supposed to decorate such a chest. There the halo is part of the background formed by the wall of the box. It is difficult to say with certainty exactly where the figure from Trapezitsa stood on the reliquary. However, its shortened proportions point more to its lid. This is evidenced by the more expressed protrusion of the head forward, which was intended to visually compensate for the slope of the lid.

Parallels to the figure from Trapezitsa, are the Limoges reliquaries from the 13th century, preserved in world museums. One has been registered in the Hermitage in Saint Petersburg in 1885, which was initially part of the collection of A. P. Bazilevski (fig. 12).[28] Another reliquary from the same period is in the permanent exhibition of Glencairn Museum in Pennsylvania (fig. 13).[29] A Limoges reliquary from the 13th century from the collection of J.

[27] Taburet-Delahaye 1996, 327-328.

[28] About this see: https://www.hermitagemuseum.org/wps/portal/hermitage/digital-collection/08.+Applied+Arts/194237/?lng=de. (consulted on 20.05.2021)

[29] About this see: https://glencairnmuseum.org/newsletter/2018/3/8/medieval-depictions-of-the-last-judgment-the-resurrection-of-the-body. (consulted on 20.05.2021)

Pierpoint Morgan is kept under number 17.190.521 in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (fig. 14).[30]



Fig. 12. Reliquary chase from Hermitage museum, Sanct Peterburg, inv. No Ф-183, Limoges, 13 century (after https://www.hermitagemuseum.org/wps/portal/hermitage/digital-collection/08.+Applied+Arts/19423

The discovery of items of West European Christian art in Bulgaria, and in the Balkans, is not an exception but it remains a rare phenomenon. Examples for that are the bronze statuette of a saint from Melnik, referred to the 13th-14th century,[31] the bronze figure of a warrior from Svishtov which bears the features of Romanesque art,[32] and the lead eulogy from the Saint Peter basilica in Rome, discovered inside a grave in the Medieval fortress near Sevlievo.[33] In this relation, the items produced with the technique of the Limoges enamel are also rarer.[34] Even within the lands of Croatia, which are directly associated with Western Europe, they appear as an exception,[35] and furthermore – most often they have reached the present day with a changed function. An example for this is an altar crucifix from the first half of the 13th century, discovered as a chest crucifix inside a grave from the second half of the 13th century in the necropolis under the 'Saint Jacob' cathedral in Udbina.[36] The abovementioned figure from a reliquary discovered near the village of Karadžićevo,[37]

[30] About this see: https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/464491?rpp=30&pg=1135&rndkey=20160130&ao=on&ft=%2A&pos=34045&imgno=1&tabname=object-information. (consulted on 20.05.2021)

[31] Milanova 1992, 325-328.

[32] Vaklinova 2006, 153-160.

[33] Totev & Boteva 2019b, 131-135.

[34] Examples of items of Limoges origin in Bulgaria are few pendants from horse harness from the Bulgarian capital Tyrnovgrad and its vicinity. About them see: Vaklinova 1975, 69-70; Markov 1995, 41-45.

[35] Regarding the monuments of Limoges enamel in Croatia, see Vučić 2020 and the literature cited there.

[36] Vučić 2020, 161-168.

[37] Papesa 2015, 261-262.

which is a direct parallel of the find from Trapezitsa, also does not execute its original function (fig. 9). In this case, the item has also been separated from the reliquary to which it belonged, and despite the fact that it is not made of precious metal, it has been preserved as a valuable by the owner of the treasure.

The figure from Church 22 is also discovered separated from the item, to which it belonged originally. This has apparently been made with caution and it is entirely preserved. In similarity to the indicated examples from Croatia, it is also discovered within a context, which is with a century later than its production. Its location leaves no doubt that it has been acknowledged by the builders and/or the donors of the temple in the Bulgarian capital as an item loaded with Christian blessing. Its presence has replaced the relic itself, with which it was originally associated. For the inhabitants of Trapezitsa in the beginning of the reign of Tsar Ivan Alexander (the 1330s) it was obviously equally accepted in terms of sanctity with the others, closer and more familiar monuments of Christian art and items of clerical service, associated with the Byzantine cultural circle.



Fig. 13. Reliquary chase from Glencairn Museum, Pennsylvania, No 05.EN.111, Limoges, 13 century (after https://glencairnmuseum.org/newsletter/2018/3/8/medieval-depictions-of-the-last-judgment-the-resurrection-of-the-body).

The reason for this monument of Christian art from the Catholic West to have reached the heart of the Bulgarian lands will remain unknown. The various assumptions are equally unprovable. Whether it has been carried by the Latin priests in the early 13th century during their mission to Tsar Kaloyan, or it has been looted during the continuing Bulgarian-Latin wars in the first half of the 13th century? Could it have been among the belongings of the Hungarian princess Ana-Maria – one of the wives of Tsar Ivan Asen II? Regardless of its path to Bulgaria, the item is an example of the fact that despite the differences and the growing alienation between the two main Christian doctrines in Medieval Europe, the communication between them has been preserved.



Fig. 14. Reliquary chase from former collection of J. Pierpoint Morgan, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, No 17.190.521, Limoges, 13 century (after https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/464491?rpp=30&pg=1135&rndkey=20160130&ao=on&ft=%2A&pos=34045&imgno=1&tabname=object-information).

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Archaeological evidence of Bulgaria's contacts with the Latin Empire and the Roman Church in the first half of the 13th century Preliminary remarks*

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Abstract: In the first half of the 13th century, Bulgaria had unusually intense political and ecclesiastical contacts with the West, which has its logical explanation with the dramatic changes in the Balkans due to the conquest of Constantinople by the troops of the Fourth Crusade in April 1204 and the rise of the Latin Empire as a leading factor in the politically fragmented Byzantine space. Concerned about the confused and unpredictable situation in the region, the Bulgarian Emperor Kaloyan (1196-1207) exchanged several letters with Pope Innocent III (1198-1216) and eventually subordinated the Bulgarian Church to the Roman See. In return, on November 8, 1204 the papal legate Leo Brancaleoni anointed him and placed a royal crown on his head. On April 14, 1205, Kaloyan defeated the Latin troops near Adrianople and took as a captive Emperor Baldwin I (1204-1205), who ended his life in Tarnovo. From then until 1261, Bulgaria and the Latin Empire would more than once meet on the battlefield, and sometimes they would be allies, which largely depended on their relations with other neighbouring powers – Epirus, Serbia, Hungary, Nicaea.

The purpose of this article is to analyse some archaeological evidence of Bulgaria's contacts with the Latin Empire and the Roman Church in the first half of the thirteenth century, some of which only came to light in recent years. Although relatively scarce and heterogeneous, these materials deserve further attention and should be subject to more in-depth interpretations: the lead seals of Latin emperors from Bulgaria (especially those of Baldwin II, found in the fortress of Pleven and in the vicinity of Popovo), a fragment of an early thirteenth-century Romanesque bronze crucifix with gilding from a processional cross found in Preslav, a bronze gilded figurine of a saint with enamel decoration, made in Limoges, discovered in 2018 in Veliko Tarnovo, as well as a lead pilgrim badge from the Saint Peter's

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Basilica in Rome, discovered in 2017 in a mid-thirteenth-century tomb in the medieval town of Hotalich, near Sevlievo.

Key words: Kaloyan of Bulgaria, Church union of 1204, Innocent III, Limoges enamels, Pilgrim badges, Pleven fortress, Hotalich, Lead seals

Резюме: През първата половина на 13 в. България установила необичайно интензивни политически и църковни контакти със Запада, което има своето логично обяснение в драматичните промени на Балканите във връзка с превземането на Константинопол от войските на IV кръстоносен поход на 13 април 1204 г. и издигането на Латинската империя като водещ политически фактор в политически фрагментираното византийско пространство. Загрижен от объркаката и непредсказуема ситуация във Византия, както и от териториалните претенции на Унгария, българският цар Калоян (1196–1207) разменил няколко писма с папа Инокентий III (1198–1216) и в края на краищата подчинил Българската църква на Римския престол, а в замяна на 8 ноември 1204 г. в Търново папският легат Лъв Бранкалеоне го миропомазал и сложил на главата му кралска корона. На 14 април 1205 г. Калоян разгромил латинските войски край Адрианопол и пленил император Балдуин I (1204–1205), който приключил живота си в Търново. Оттук нататък България и Латинската империя неведнъж щели да се сблъскат на бойното поле, а понякога щели да бъдат и съюзници, което до голяма степен зависело от техните отношения с останалите фактори в региона – Епир, Сърбия, Унгария, Никея.

Целта на настоящата статия е да маркира някои археологически свидетелства за контактите на България с Латинската империя и Римската църква през първата половина на 13 в., част от които станаха известни през последните години. Макар и оскъдни и разнородни, тези материали заслужават внимание и би трябвало да станат обект на по-задълбочени интерпретации: оловните печати на латинските императори от България (и по-специално тези на Балдуин II, открити в Плевенската крепост и в околностите на Попово), фрагмент от едно романско бронзово позлатено разпятие от процесиен кръст от Преслав, позлатена бронзова фигурка на светец с украса от емайл, произведена в Лимож, открита през 2018 г. във Велико Търново, а също и една оловна поклонническа значка от базиликата Св. Петър в Рим, открита през 2017 г. в гроб от средата на 13 в. в средновековния град Хоталич край Севлиево.

In the first half of the 13th century Bulgaria established and kept unusually intense political and ecclesiastical contacts with the West, which has its logical explanation in the dramatic changes in the Balkans in the context of the capture of Constantinople by the troops of the Fourth Crusade on 13 April 1204 and the rise of the Latin Empire as the leading political factor in the politically fragmented Byzantine space. Concerned about the confused and unpredictable situation in Byzantium, as well as the territorial claims of Hungary, the Bulgarian Emperor Kaloyan (1196-1207) exchanged several letters with Pope Innocent III (1198-1216) and eventually subordinated the Bulgarian Church to the Roman See, and in return on 8 November 1204 in Tarnovo, the papal legate Leo Brancaleoni, cardinal priest of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, anointed him and put a royal crown on his head. On 14 April 1205, Kaloyan defeated the Latin troops near Adrianople and took as a captive Emperor Baldwin I (1204-1205), who ended his life in Tarnovo. From then on, Bulgaria

and the Latin Empire would meet on the battlefield more than once, and sometimes they would be allies, which largely depended on their relations with the other key actors in the region – Epirus, Serbia, Hungary, Nicaea.[1]

The intensity of Bulgaria's contacts with the West can be seen in the marriage policy of the Bulgarian rulers and their close relatives: in 1208 Alexius Slav ('Sthlabos'), who was Kaloyan's nephew and after his death claimed the Bulgarian throne, received the title of *despot* from the Latin Emperor Henry (1206-1216) and married his illegitimate daughter (her name is unknown); in 1213, Emperor Boril (1207-1218) married a niece of Emperor Henry, who in turn married a daughter of Kaloyan; in 1221, Princess Anna-Maria, a daughter of King Andrew II of Hungary (1205-1235), married, with the consent of Pope Honorius III (1216-1227), the Bulgarian Emperor John Asen II (1218-1241); it seems that Princess Helena, John Asen II's daughter by his marriage to Anna-Maria, had to be betrothed to the Latin Emperor Baldwin II (1228-1261), but this was made impossible by the contract of the barons of Constantinople with the King of Jerusalem Jean de Brienne.[2]

During the period 1204-1232 the Bulgarian Church was in union with the Roman See and recognized the papal primacy. There is no doubt that regular contacts were maintained between Tarnovo and Rome at this time. They continued after the official restoration of the Orthodox Bulgarian Patriarchate (1235), since in the last years of his pontificate Pope Gregory IX (1227-1241), together with King Béla IV of Hungary (1235-1270), exerted pressure on John Asen II and forced him to let the 40,000 army of the Latin Emperor Baldwin II pass through his country on its way from Europe to Constantinople. In 1245 Pope Innocent IV (1243-1254) encouraged the missionary activity of the Franciscan Order among the Bulgarians and a number of other Eastern peoples, and wrote to the Bulgarian Emperor Kaliman I (1241-1246) to revive the ecclesiastical union and to send representatives to the First Council of Lyons.[3]

It is highly unlikely that Bulgaria's intensive political and ecclesiastical contacts with the West in the first half of the thirteenth century left no material traces, or that they did not influence Bulgarian culture (and art in

[1] General works: Zlatarski 1940, 149-418; Prinzing 1972; 2002; 2019; Gjuzelev 1977, 42-47; 2009; Dancheva-Vasileva 1985; Fine 1994, 54-153; Bozhilov & Gjuzelev 1999, 441-500; Van Tricht 2011; Madgearu 2017. On the title of Kaloyan: Dall'Aglio 2019b. Overview of the main problems and publications: Podskalsky 2000, 73-79.

[2] On the dynastic marriages: Bozhilov 1985, 72-74, 93-94 (Boril), 78-79, 102 (John Asen II), 96 (Slav); Georgieva 2014; 2019; Van Tricht 2020a. On Alexius Slav: Nikolov 2011; Kanev 2016.

[3] Zlatarski 1940, 425-427; Dujčev 1965, 395-400; Gjuzelev 2009, 151-153.

particular[4]) during this period, but the evidence for this is very vague and debatable.

A good example in this respect is the miniature on f. 72v in manuscript no 17 of the Saints Cyril and Methodius National Library in Sofia from the first half of the 13th century,[5] which depicts the Bulgarian priest Dobreisho clean-shaven and with a tonsure-style haircut: some scholars interpret it as a reflection of much older models found in Carolingian and Romanesque art,[6] while others are inclined to see it as evidence of direct Western ecclesiastical (and artistic) influence in Bulgaria at the time of Kaloyan's union with Rome and thus present Dobreisho as a Catholic priest and even a Benedictine monk[7] – assumptions that are greeted with greater or lesser scepticism in the more recent literature.[8]

Half a century ago, fragments of the earliest frescoes of the Church of St. Peter and St. Paul in Tarnovo, built under the patronage of John Asen II's Hungarian wife, were discovered, but they bear no resemblance to Western art and stylistically find their closest parallel in the frescoes of the Milesheva Monastery, built by the Serbian King Stefan Vladislav (1234-1243) – John Asen II's son-in-law.[9]

Recently Branislav Todić interpreted a fresco from the beginning of the 13th century featuring unusual for the Byzantine tradition images of Christ, the Apostle Peter and an anonymous bishop from the old Metropolitan Church of St. Nicholas in Melnik as a depiction of the symbolic investiture of Archbishop Basil of Tarnovo as Primate of Bulgaria and Wallachia, carried out by the legate of Innocent III Cardinal Leo on 7 November 1204 – the day

[4] A typical example of the Western influence on fashion in the Bulgarian lands is reflected in the image of the *sebastocratorissa* Desislava from the Boyana Church (1259) – her head is covered with a complex decoration, which includes elements characteristic of the aristocratic women's attire of 13th-century Western Europe: a small cap covering tightly the hair (*coiffe*), a narrow piece of veil that passes under the chin (*barbette*) and a cap of gold-woven cloth (*mitella*): Penkova 2017, 11-12. We should also note the way Desislava holds her cloak in place, using the thumb of her right hand to pull the thin black cord that crosses her chest: a gesture that has been interpreted as a reflection of the Western courteous fashion of the day: Grabar 1924, 229-236; 1982, 54-56.

[5] Edition: Tsonev 1906, Tabl. V. Description: Tsonev 1910, 15-18.

[6] Grabar 1925, 558-566.

[7] Putsko 1985, 70-73; 1990, 80-83; 1997; Dzhurova 1991, 93; Polyviannyi 2000, 148; Stefanov 2001, 349-350.

[8] Moussakova 2005; 2009, 303; 2014; Valkova 2009; Polyviannyi & Turilov 2012.

[9] Mavrodinova 1995, 49; Bakalova 2009, 242; Koseva-Toteva 2015; 2016, i: 132-137.

before the coronation of Kaloyan.[10] This assumption has so far provoked mixed reactions and needs a wider scholarly debate.[11]

Unsurprisingly, the settlement of the union was accompanied by a mutual exchange of various gifts, thanks to which some liturgical objects from Bulgaria were sent to Rome, including an antiphonary in a silver setting (*gradale argenteum*), mentioned by Kaloyan in his letter to Innocent III from the autumn of 1203.[12] Some authors[13] associate the appearance in Rome of the famous miraculous icon with Cyrillic inscription (the so-called 'La Sainte Face') with the intensive contacts between the Bulgarian Church and the Curia around and after 1204. In 1249 it was sent to the abbacy of Montreuil-sous-Laon[14] near the town of Laon (in Northern France) by Iacques Pantaléon,

[10] Todić 2008, 65-66.

[11] The interpretation of Todić was questioned by Penkova 2012, 146: 'If the Union and more specifically the ideas expressed in the letters of Pope Innocent had inspired the said composition, its creation in Melnik, of all places, is rather unfounded'. See also Kostova 2013, 48. As far as I know, Todić's concept was supported without any reservations only by Madgearu 2017, 135-136. I could define as interesting and quite logical the very recent hypothesis of Tricht 2020b, 318: 'That the Bulgarian union would have had an almost immediate iconographic impact in faraway Melnik seems, however, not that likely. One may ask whether the fresco should not rather be connected with Sthlabos' reign. In the late twelfth-century Notitia 13 Melnik is still mentioned as a suffragan of Serres. Paul Klaudiopolites, however, styles himself metropolitan of Melnik, the first incumbent of the diocese to do so… This suggests that Melnik's elevation to metropolitan status may well have occurred after the Latin conquest of Constantinople. Taking into account that pre-1204 Byzantine emperors could be instrumental in changing a diocese's status, one may imagine that this measure of ecclesiastical autonomy was negotiated between the imperial *despotes* and his father-in-law Emperor Henry – presumably collaborating with Patriarch Morosini – after the former had gained control over the town. This could in turn mean that the bishop being consecrated is none other than Klaudiopolites himself as the first metropolitan of Melnik'.

[12] RI VII/6, 20$_{28-29}$ (= Dujčev 1942, 48, no 18). On this letter see Jordanov 2006.

[13] Miyatev 1965, 37-38; Paskaleva 1980, 340-341; Bozhkov 1985, 130; Putsko 2004. For caution in the interpretation of the origin of the icon pleads Grabar 1931, 19-20: 'Ces rapprochements pertemporaine de l'image du Christ et son style se rapprochent de si près des œuvres byzantines qu'il est raisonnable de considérer ce beau monument, comme une copie russe d'un modèle byzantin. Or, rien n'empechaît que des modèles grecs de même genre et des copies tirées sur ces originaux n'aient existé en Bulgarie et en Serbie. La prudence dans l'attribution de la Sainte Face de Laon à l'un ou à l'autre des arts des nations slaves est d'autant plus justifiée, qu'aucune autre peinture slave n'offre absolument les mêmes caractères'.

[14] The icon was kept in the abbey until its secularization in 1792, and shortly thereafter found its way into the cathedral of the town of Laon, where it has been

the future Pope Urban IV (1260-1264). However, there is a trend in historiography linking the origin of this monument to Serbia[15] or to Old Rus' (and in particular to the principality of Galicia-Volhynia).[16]

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The purpose of the present article is to highlight certain archaeological evidence of Bulgaria's contacts with the Latin Empire and the Roman Church in the first half of the 13th century, some of which has come to light in recent years. Although relatively scarce and heterogeneous, this material deserves attention and is likely to become the subject of more thorough interpretations.

First of all, we will focus here on the lead seals of three Latin emperors found in Bulgaria. It is hardly surprising that two of these seals – those of Emperor Henry[17] and Emperor Robert de Courtenay[18] – come from the capital city of Tarnovo, and more specifically from the well-fortified hill of Tsarevets, where the Bulgarian emperors resided. However, it is the two seals of Baldwin II, found in different parts of the country, which attract attention. One of them was recently found in the vicinity of the town of Popovo and has been deposited in the local history museum, but so far no details are known about the archaeological context of this find.[19] The other seal of Baldwin II (fig. 1)[20] was discovered in 1962 during archaeological excavations of the fortress in the Kailaka Park to the south of the present-day town of Pleven, among the ruins of a 4th-6th century basilica where there was a functioning necropolis in the 12th-14th centuries.[21]

The presence of a Latin emperor's seal in the fortress of medieval Pleven is impressive for a variety of reasons, among which the fact that the

preserved ever since. On the fate of the icon in the second half of the 13th century and its reception in a French environment: Grabar 1931, 8-9; Sansterre 2008, 273-285.

[15] Sabourin 2017.

[16] Turilov 2017, 109-113.

[17] Tsochev 1987, 24; Gjuzelev 2000, 37-40; Jordanov 2009, 107 (no 202). It has been suggested that the seal should be dated after 1212, when there was a rapprochement between the Latin Empire and Bulgaria: Jordanov 2009, 107; Tricht 2011, 68. For overview of Henry's seals: Stepanenko 1999; Kanev 2018.

[18] Ovcharov 1979, 5; Gjuzelev 2000, 40-42; Jordanov 2009, 107-108 (no 203), 1116 (no 203); 2009b. This seal has remained unknown to Tricht 2011, 71.

[19] Kanev & Totev 2015, 374; Jordanov 2015, 225 (no 9).

[20] Genova 1985, 12-13; Gjuzelev 2000, 42-44; Jordanov 2009, 108-109 (no 204).

[21] Genova 1988, 135, 140. See also: Mitova-Dzhonova 1979, 57 (no 350), 58 (no 357).

earliest written record of this town dates back only to 1270, when King Stephen V of Hungary issued a grant in favour of his servant who had captured the Bulgarian fortress of Pleven in 1266 (*castrum Pleun Bulgarorum optinuit expugnando*).[22] However, the silence of the written sources about the fate of the town in the first half of the 13th century is no reason to underestimate its importance, as indirectly evidenced by the seal of Baldwin II found among the ruins of the fortress. Of course, we cannot be sure that any of the Bulgarian rulers personally received a letter from the Latin emperor during his stay in Pleven: the seal is pierced and was probably worn as an ornament, as was the case with the seals of Baldwin II found near Popovo (later also used as a lead weight)[23] and of Henry I from Tsarevets. Despite this circumstance, which introduces an element of uncertainty into any attempt to make conjectures about the seal, it has already been the subject of various interpretations.



Fig. 1. Lead seal of the Latin Emperor Baldwin II found in the fortress in Kailaka Park near Pleven, reverse (Regional Museum of History – Pleven).

According to Evelina Genova, the seal of Baldwin II was attached to some official document addressed to a person of very high rank who resided in Pleven: 'It could be assumed that the seal dates from the period of prolonged internecine strife in the Bulgarian state after the death of John Asen II. As a result of the advanced development of feudalism, the provincial nobility strengthened economically and militarily. This affected its relations with the already weakened central government and created conditions for a certain separatism. All of this was undoubtedly exploited by Baldwin II and therefore it is possible that he had connections with administrative or military officials in the Pleven fortress'.[24]

Vasil Gjuzelev points out the strategic importance of the Pleven fortress and assumes that in the period 1259-1260 it was from here that Emperor Constantine Tih (1257-1277) led the actions of the Bulgarian troops who repelled a Hungarian invasion and carried out a counter-offensive in the area of Severin. The author assumes that it was during this stay of the Bulgarian

[22] Wenzel 1874, 8; Nikov 1920, 203. See also: Dimitrov 1998, 173; Madgearu 2017, 255.
[23] Kanev & Totev 2015, 375.
[24] Genova 1985, 14.

ruler in Pleven that he received a letter from Baldwin II, to which was attached the seal found in the fortress in Kailaka.[25]

A rather different chronology of the seal from the Pleven Fortress was proposed by Nikolai Kanev and Konstantin Totev. They believe that its *boullotirion* was used in 1238-1239, but was eventually damaged during the passage of the emperor together with his crusader army through the Bulgarian lands on the way to Constantinople. This necessitated a local inexperienced craftsman making a new boullotirion, which was used to cut the Popovo *molybdobull*. Noting that the seals from Pleven and Popovo were pierced and reused, the authors summarize their observations as follows:

'That being the case, there is no guarantee that their location is related to the specific route of Baldwin II through Bulgaria, and it rather indicates that there were individuals residing in the two settlements who reused the two lead artefacts... In other words, it can be assumed with a very high degree of probability that the molybdobull of Baldwin II ended up by chance in the area of Popovo, and the same applies to the one from Pleven, from which it follows that they can by no means be regarded as evidence indicating that correspondence from the last Latin emperor was at some point received in the two settlements in question'.[26]

Let me point out straight away that the argumentation of the two authors is logical, and perhaps it is superfluous to speculate on this topic. However, I will take the liberty of noting that, in the case of the Pleven seal, we have good reasons to puzzle over the status of this town with a strategically located fortress, where it is not inconceivable that some of the emperors of Tarnovo may have temporarily resided under certain circumstances. Archaeological materials from the 13th-14th centuries from the fortress in Kailaka and from the necropolis on the plateau opposite it, above the right bank of the Tuchenitsa River, suggest the existence of a settlement that has not yet been located.[27] It is also worth noting that a few kilometres upstream of the same river, Ottoman tax records from the first half of the 16th century mention the monasteries of St. George (nowadays below the wall separating the two dams in the Kailaka Park)[28] and St. Nicholas, somewhere

[25] Gjuzelev 2000, 43-44; 2002, 38.

[26] Kanev & Totev 2015, 376. The dating of the two seals of Baldwin II of Bulgaria to 1239-1240, proposed by the two authors, was adopted by Madgearu 2017, 223.

[27] Genova 1988, 140. See also: Mitova-Dzhonova 1979, 58 (no 357-358).

[28] Kovachev 2002, 126; 2005, 238. See also: Valev 1910, 203-206; Trifonov 1933, 85-86; Mitova-Dzhonova 1979, 58 (no 358); Grancharov 2001, 17, 73; Vachev 2013, 21; Vasilev 2013a, 178-180.

in the vicinity of the village of Bohot (not located yet),[29] which most likely existed before the demise of the Second Bulgarian Empire. The latter also applies to the St. Nicholas church in the centre of the modern town of Pleven. If we are to trust the statement of the firman issued in 1699 by Sultan Mustafa II (1695-1703) concerning the legality of the renovation of the church by the local Christians, it 'has been left in their possession from the time of the conquest until now, and in the course of time it began to crumble'.[30]

It seems that medieval Pleven was an important urban centre in the centuries before the Ottoman invasion. That was also the impression the town left on the Catholic Bishop of Nikopol, Philip Stanislavov (1612-1674), who noted in his report to the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith of 4 February 1659 that Pleven was 'once a residence of Michael, the ruler of the Bulgarians'.[31]

Most likely, the particular ruler's name appeared here as an attempt to make sense of the fact that by the middle of the 17th century Pleven was governed by descendants of the famous Ottoman Mihaloglu family, whose representatives had obtained large land holdings in this region as early as the second half of the 15th century.[32] On the other hand, Philip Stanislavov seems to have had his own specific reasons for considering Pleven one of the residences of the former Bulgarian rulers and for mentioning it alongside some of the most important (according to his own ideas) cities of the destroyed Bulgarian empire: Vidin ('where the ruler of the Bulgarians once lived'),[33] Vratsa ('where the ruler of the Bulgarians once kept his treasure because of

[29] Kovachev 2002, 126. See also: Todorova 1997, 89, 104, note 237; Grancharov 2001, 17 (the author does not know about the petition of the monastic brotherhood to the Russian Tsar Mikhail Fiodorovich (1613-1645) from 1642, retrieved by Olga Todorova, where the monastery of St. Nicholas is explicitly associated with the village of Bohot, and mistakenly identifies it with the church of the same name in the centre of the present-day city of Pleven); Vachev 2013, 20-21; Vasilev 2013a, 56-58; 2013b, 177, 181 (the author unjustifiably distinguishes and considers as separate institutions the St. Nicholas monastery, which appears in the Ottoman registers from the 16th century, and the aforementioned St. Nicholas monastery near Bohot).

[30] Regional Historical Museum - Pleven, Fund 'Revival', no 515. I quote the document according to the translation from Ottoman Turkish made by Orlin Sabev. The same passage is quoted after another translation by Grancharov 2001, 17.

[31] Fermendžin 1887, 262: 'Pleven Civitas. Olim residentia Michaelis Bulgarorum principis'. New edition: Iačov 1992, 26.

[32] Sabev 2002a; 2002b; Kiprovska 2013; 2015; 2017; 2021; Boykov 2021, 57-59.

[33] Fermendžin 1887, 262: 'Vidin civitas... In ea olim residebat Bulgarorum princeps'.

the power and position of the city')[34] and Tarnovo ('once the capital of the rulers of Bulgaria').[35]

In the context of the above facts, the presence of a lead seal of Baldwin II in the medieval fortress of Pleven can indeed be interpreted as further evidence of the importance of this city, where in the 13th century some Bulgarian emperors may have temporarily resided (and from where they conducted their correspondence) – an assumption that seems likely, but so far remains not fully proven. Of course, one cannot rule out the possibility that the seal was acquired in Tarnovo or elsewhere by a person who subsequently ended up in Pleven for some unknown reasons.

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Another interesting issue I wish to address here is the question of whether archaeology could confirm and clarify the postulate, deeply rooted in the historiography, that Emperor Kaloyan's union with Rome had 'only a hierarchical and canonical character, but not a dogmatic and ritual one',[36] which is why in Tarnovo it was seen as a formal political act, while the internal life of the Bulgarian Church remained unchanged.[37] Meanwhile, in recent decades Kiril Petkov and Pavel Stefanov have proposed rather different interpretations of the sources that have come down to us. If we follow their logic, we should assume that thanks to the union under Pope Innocent III and his successors the ritual system of the Bulgarian Church underwent certain reforms in order to approach the customs and traditions of the Western Christendom.[38]

[34] Fermendžin 1887, 262: 'Vratza civitas… In ea olim princeps Bulgarorum thesaurum conservabat, ob fortitudinem civitatis et situationis'.
[35] Fermendžin 1887, 262: 'Tarnovium civitas… olim regia principum Bulgarorum'.
[36] Zlatarski 1940, 207.
[37] Prinzing 1972, 143-144; Gjuzelev 1977, 44-45; 2009, 140. More recently Günter Prinzing pointed out that 'the question remains how effective and lasting was the union that the Pope established with the Bulgarians. The answer must take into account two aspects, ecclesiastical and political. At the church level, it hardly left any deeper trace in church life and religious literature, as we know primarily from documents from the Byzantine-Orthodox side within the sphere of the Ohrid Archbishopric around 1218': Prinzing 2002b, 172; 2019, 84.
[38] Petkov 1992, 25-32; Stefanov 2001, 343-346. To these 'revisionist' publications we could add the Gerhard Podskalsky's opinion that 'the union did not have as little consequence in the country as it is sometimes portrayed by the Bulgarian side: otherwise, how would one understand the complaints of the Oecumenical Patriarch

We will not dwell here on some very hypothetical and controversial statements of the two authors, but it seems to me that they – each of them in his own way – have rightly raised the point that the importance of the union should not be underestimated.

In fact, however paradoxical it may sound, the key to a better understanding of the issues raised lies in the well-known letters exchanged between Innocent III and his Bulgarian correspondents.

The first apostolic legate in Bulgaria, the Cistercian monk John the Chaplain from Casamari Abbey in Lazio, who arrived in Tarnovo in the summer of 1203, was tasked by Innocent (for which the pope informed Kaloyan by letter dated 27 November 1202) with the mission to examine the situation of the Bulgarian Church and to introduce the necessary changes in the spiritual affairs of the country:

'We ordered our beloved son, John, our chaplain and familiar, legate of the Apostolic See, a man of foresight and discretion, whom we and our brothers embrace because of his probity and religion among all of our other chaplains in the arms of a special love of the Lord, and we have committed to him our office so that in your whole land he may correct those spiritual matters that he sees are in need of correction and establish what should be established according to God. We also sent the *pallium* by him, namely, the sign of episcopal dignity, to the archbishop of your land and we have ordered it to be conferred on him according to the form we directed under our seal'.[39]

It is noteworthy that in the letter of the Archbishop of Tarnovo Basil to the Roman Pontiff from the autumn of 1203, by which the head of the Bulgarian Church expressed his gratitude for the pallium sent to him, a request was explicitly made to the Pope 'that you dispose and fulfill the ecclesiastical order and how I should rule the flock that has been committed to me by God and your Holiness'.[40]

Kallistos I in the middle of the 14th century against the continuing Latin customs in the administration of the sacraments (baptism, confirmation)?': Podskalsky 2000, 76.

[39] RI V/115, 228_{17} – 229_{5} (= Dujčev 1942, 46, no 16): 'dilectum filium I(ohannem), capellanum et familiarem nostrum, apostolice sedis legatum, virum providum et discretum, quem nos et fratres nostri sue religionis et probitatis obtentu inter ceteros capellanos nostros specialis dilectionis in Domino bracchiis amplexamur, ad te duximus destitnandum, cui etiam commisimus vices nostras, ut in tota terra tua quoad spiritualia corrigat, qui corrigenda cognoverit, et statuat, que secundum Deum fuerit statuenda. Per ipsum quoque archiepiscopo terre tue palleum, insigne videlicet plenitudinis pontificalis officii, destinamus, et iuxta formam, quam sub bulla nostra dirigimus, conferendum'; trans. Powell 2004, 99-100.

[40] RI VII/5, 17_{17-19} (= Dujčev 1942, 46, no 16): 'rogo… ut dispenses et adimpleas ordinem ecclesiasticum et qualiter debeam regere ovile, quod michi est commissum a Deo et sanctitate tua'; trans. Powell 2004, 106.

As regards the second much more solemn embassy, Innocent explicitly stressed in his message to King Imre of Hungary of 15 September 1204 that his legate Cardinal Leo Brancaleoni had been sent to the Bulgarian capital with the mission 'to propagate the sacrament of the Christian faith and promote the honour of the Apostolic See'.[41] For this purpose the Pope delegated broad powers to Leo, of which he informed Kaloyan in his letter of 25 February 1204: 'And to the same ambassador we have given full authority to correct what he decides ought to be corrected, and to decree what he decides ought to be decreed … And so we remind your royal lordship and urge you more insistently to receive the ambassador favourably as our person, moreover, in his person to receive us and blessed Peter, and to endeavour to treat him with honour, accepting and observing his salutary counsels and decisions yourself, and causing them to be accepted and observed by your whole country'.[42]

Indeed, Cardinal Leo – along with the mission to anoint and crown Kaloyan – was authorized by Innocent III to consecrate the Archbishop of Tarnovo Basil as Primate and *de facto* Patriarch of Bulgaria,[43] as well as to

[41] RI VII/127, 206$_{31-32}$ (= Dujčev 1942, 62, no 28): 'procedat ad propagandum Christianae fidei sacramentum et promovendum apostolice sedis honorem'; trans. Powell 2004, 125. For the political context of this letter: Sweeney 1973, 328-329; Hintner 1976, 141-179; Prinzing 2002b, 170-172; 2019, 82-83.

[42] RI VII/8, 23$_{23-24, 27-28, 29-31}$ (= Dujčev 1942, 51, no 20): 'Eidem quoque legato plenam contulimus facultatem corrigendi, que corrigenda cognoverit, et statuendi, que duxerit statuenda… Monemus igitur serenitatem regiam et exhortamur at(tentius), quatinus legatum ipsum, quatinus legatum ipsum sicut personam nostrum – immo nos et beatum Petrum in ipso – benigne recipias et honorifice studeas pertractare, salubria monita et statuta ipsius et tu ipse et observans et ab universa terra tua recipi faciens et servari'. The powers of Leo are similarly described in the letter of Innocent III to the Archbishop of Tarnovo and the clergy of the Bulgarian Church of 25 February 1204: RI VII/13, 28-29 (= Dujčev 1942, 55-56, no 21).

[43] After John the Chaplain presented a pallium to Basil, in the autumn of 1203 Kaloyan approached Innocent with an insistence that he be given the imperial crown and that Archbishop Basil be proclaimed patriarch – RI VII/6, 19$_{26-30}$ (= Dujčev 1942, 48, no 18): 'et rogo et deprecor magnam sanctitatem tuam, ut compleat desiderium imperii mei et mittat virgam pastoralem ad congregandas oves et cetera, que patriarcha consuevit habere, et faciat presentem primatem patriarcham in sancta et magna ecclesia Trinoue, primi civitatis totius Bulgarie'; trans. Powell 2004, 104: 'And I ask and pray your great Holiness to fulfill the desire of my empire and send a pastoral staff to gather the sheep, and the other things the patriarch has by custom, and make the present primate patriarch in the holy and great church of Tarnovo, the first city of all Bulgaria'. In his privilege for Basil of 25 February 1204, Innocent explained to the newly proclaimed Bulgarian primate that his status was equal to that of patriarch –

bestow on the metropolitans of Velbazhd and Preslav and the bishops of Skopje, Prizren and Vidin their pallia which symbolized the fullness of their ecclesiastical offices and the primacy of the Roman Church.[44] In this connection, the Pope sent the Bulgarian clergy a special instruction[45] concerning the church feasts on which the pallia should be used during Mass, and in a separate message to Archbishop Basil he ordered that the anointing be introduced as a mandatory element of the rites of consecration of bishops and ordination of priests in Bulgaria:

'Because, according to the custom of the Bulgarians and the Wallachians, bishops were not anointed either in the order of the priesthood or in consecration, the Lord Pope ordered that the bishop of Kostolac near Smederevo should be anointed in his presence according to the Latin Rite by John, the Bishop of Albano, with two other bishops assisting, and he commanded that both the Primate and the Metropolitans and all the bishops should receive the sacred anointing, and thenceforward no priests should be ordained or bishops consecrated without anointing, giving his reasons on these matters in the letters he sent to the primate, to whom he also sent freely all the episcopal insignia by the same legate'.[46]

RI VII/2, 7 (= Dujčev 1942, 38, no 19): 'fraternitatem tuam scire volentes, quod apud nos hec duo nomina, primas et patriarcha, pene penitus idem sonant, cum primates et patriarche teneant unam formam, licet eorum nomina sunt diversa'; trans. Powell 2004, 111: 'We want your fraternity to know that among us these two words, primate and patriarch, mean almost the same thing, since patriarchs and primates have the same model, even though their names are different'. In the eyes of his contemporaries, the Primate of Bulgaria, Archbishop Basil, indeed looked like a true patriarch, consecrated by the Roman Pope, as testified by the Archbishop of Ohrid, Demetrios Chomatenos, in a letter to the Metropolitan of Kerkyra, Basil Pediadites: 'Also the one declared their patriarch, though subsequently elevated to the patriarchal dignity by the pope of old Rome, was originally elevated to the archiepiscopal rank by a legitimate Roman bishop – that of Vidin and two other bishops' (Prinzing 2002, 50). See also Prinzing 1972, 140-141; Iliev 2010, 87-89, 191-193, 246.

[44] In a letter to the metropolitan of Velbazhd Anastasius (the same message was received by the bishop of Preslav Sabbas), Innocent writes that he sends him by his legate Cardinal Leo a pallium, which he is to use 'in his church during the feast days at liturgies which the same cardinal will designate to you'. – RI VII/7, 21_{33-34} (= Dujčev 1942, 49, no 19): 'infra ecclesiam tuam in missarum sollempnibus diebus illis utaris, quos idem tibi cardinalis exponet'.

[45] RI VII/10, 25_{4-21} (= Dujčev 1942, 52, no 22).

[46] Gesta 1855, CXXVII A – CXXVIII A (§ LXXVI); trans. Powell 2004, 112-113. According to Robert Lee Wolff, this provision of Innocent 'was a requirement of ritual, not of the sacramental form': Wolff 1948, 36, note 8. On the Western tradition of anointing priests and bishops: Andrieu 1930; Reynolds 1987; Bradshaw 2013, 106-131.

Given that 'ordination was seen as the basis for many other liturgical actions, including the Eucharist',[47] Pope Innocent III's actions in this situation seem to be the beginning of a wider reform in the liturgical life of the Bulgarian Church, the full implementation of which was probably hindered (but hardly completely deterred) by the complex political situation in the Balkans in the last years of Kaloyan's reign.[48] Such an assumption is also borne out by the detailed list of *insignia* sent to Primate Basil in response to his request to the Pope to give him 'whatever… your Holiness knows may be needed for the fullness of my pontifical office'.[49] It is evident that the Archbishop of Tarnovo eventually received from Innocent III a complete set of the archiepiscopal vestments and accoutrements (*instrumenta*, or, *sacra utensilia*[50]) which corresponded to his position within the Catholic church hierarchy and were absolutely necessary[51] for the proper celebration of the liturgy in the main cathedral of his diocese:

'He sent a chasuble to the Patriarch of the Bulgarians, as well as a tunic of white velvet nicely decorated with gold embroidery and a large ring with five topazes which he had had for his own use, a miter with gold embroidery, a shirt, amice, a manual stole, a cincture, shoes, sandals, gloves, and other ornaments consistent with being a patriarch'.[52]

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[47] Reynolds 1987, 263.

[48] In this context it is well to recall a recent remark on the general tone of the correspondence between Innocent and Kaloyan in Dall'Aglio 2019a, 20: 'the complete lack of any discussion about Christian doctrine is striking, since from the point of view of the pontiff Bulgaria should have been considered at least heterodox, and before accepting its subordination to Rome many measures should have been taken to ensure a strict adherence to the principles of Roman Catholicism'.

[49] RI VII/5, 17$_{26-28}$ (= Dujčev 1942, 46, no 16): 'et, quicquid aliud noverit vestra sanctitas, que sit ad opus mei pontificalis officii plenitudinem, michi illud vestra dirigat sanctitas'; trans. Powell 2004, 106.

[50] Alberti 1783; Ornements 1885; Gasparri 1897, 1-111.

[51] This view of Innocent III is reflected in his treatise *De sacro altaris mysterio*, written even before he assumed the papal throne, in which he systematically and in great detail described and interpreted the symbolic meaning of the vestments and insignia of priests, bishops and the supreme pontiff: PL 217, 780-802.

[52] Gesta 1855, CCIX A-B (§ CXLV): 'Misit patriarchae Bulgarorum planetam, dalmaticam et tunicam examiti albi, cum aurifrigio convenienter ornatas, et magnum annulum cum quinque topatiis, quem ad suum usum habuerat; mitram aurifrigio insignatam, camisum, amictum, stolam, manual, cinctorium, caligas, sandalia, chirotecas et alia ornamenta quae convenient patriarchae'; trans. Powell 2004, 263. See also the letter of Innocent III to Basil, archbishop of Tarnovo, from February 25, 1204 – RI VII/3, 13$_{17-20}$ (= Dujčev 1942, 43, no 14): 'Mittimus autem tibi per cardinalem predictum pontificalia ornamenta: caligas et sandalia, amictum et albam, cingulum

The Bishop of Branichevo also received special gifts from Innocent III:

'To the Bishop of Branichevo, who approached the presence of the Pope, a gold ring with an emerald and a miter with nicely arranged gold embroidery'.[53]

Contemporary scholars, who take for granted the formal nature of the union between Tarnovo and Rome, seem not to have paid attention[54] to the fact that these gifts themselves evidence Innocent III's intention to reform the rituals of the Bulgarian Church – the conferring of the instruments or symbols to the ordinand (*traditio instrumentorum*) is considered by modern scholars as the most important component of the medieval Catholic ordination rite.[55] It seems that, according to Innocent, the union implied the gradual imposition of the Roman rites, traditions and canonical rules,[56] and the Bulgarian bishops had to adopt and wear in the performance of their duties those insignia (*ornamenta sacerdotalia*) which symbolized their subordination to the Holy See: pallia, silk vestments, mitres, gloves and rings.

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et succinctorium, orarium et manipulum, tunicam et dalmaticam, chirothecas et anulum, planetam et mitram'. Already Ivan Dujčev noted that 'the accounts of the compiler of the Gesta are much more detailed, indicating that he was personally well aware of the gifts sent': Dujčev 1942, 95. The anonymous biography of Innocent III, in which a number of subsequently lost documents are cited, appears to have been written by his confidant Cardinal Peter of Benevento: Powell 1999. For the list of papal gifts in *Gesta Inocentii III* see: Bolton 1999, 113-140; Elster 2017, 291.

[53] Gesta 1855, CCIX B (§ CXLV); trans. Powell 2004, 263.

[54] In this respect, interesting but somewhat hypothetical judgments are offered by Tillmann 1980, 270: 'In Bulgaria a modification of the rite can hardly have been intended. On assuming the Roman rite either Latin would have had to become the church language or else the Roman liturgy have had to be translated into the church language hitherto used. In any case the whole range of liturgical texts would have had to be replaced by Latin ones, but, given the total ignorance of Latin in the Bulgaria of that time, such a course was out of the question… The circumstantial way in which Innocent justifies one single ritual modification, namely the anointing of bishops and priests with chrism at their ordination…, and his emphasis that the Bulgarians by effecting the ordination in this form would not be following the Roman rite in the first place, but the divine command…, all this does not suggest that a demand had been made for far-reaching modifications in the rite practiced by the Bulgarian Church'.

[55] Reynolds 1987, 267.

[56] In this vein is the answer of Innocent III to the question of primate Basil from where and how the Bulgarian Church should procure chrism: he allowed oil of catechumens and chrism to be prepared in every cathedral of Bulgaria and Wallachia 'according to the custom of the Roman Church' – RI VII/2, 8_5 (= Dujčev 1942, 39, no 13): 'secundum consuetudinem ecclesie Romane'. See also Prinzing 2002b, 169, note 111; 2019, 81 (note 93).

And if the simple woolen pallium had as its traditional Eastern counterpart the omophorion, the other Western attributes of episcopal dignity were often treated in Byzantine and medieval Slavonic polemical texts as innovations alien to the Orthodox tradition and as outward signs of the 'Latin heresy'.[57]

Pope Innocent III granted the first primate of Bulgaria, Basil, and his successors a special privilege: 'We also grant your fraternity the license to have, besides the cross, the banner of our Lord's Passion, carried before you throughout Bulgaria and Wallachia'.[58]

A little later a similar privilege was granted to the first Latin Patriarch of Constantinople, Tommaso Morosini (1204-1211),[59] and the great importance attached to it by Innocent can be gleaned from Canon 5 of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215), convened and presided over by that pope:

'Renewing the ancient privileges of the patriarchal sees, we decree with the approval of the holy and ecumenical council, that after the Roman Church, which by the will of God holds over all others pre-eminence of ordinary power as the mother and mistress of all the faithful, that of Constantinople shall hold first place, that of Alexandria second, that of Antioch third, and that of Jerusalem fourth, the dignity proper to each to be observed.... They may have the standard of the cross borne before them everywhere, except in the city of Rome and wherever the supreme pontiff or his legate wearing the insignia of apostolic dignity is present'.[60]

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[57] For the Byzantine texts: Kolbaba 2000, 12 (rings), 53 (rings), 61-62 (gloves, silk vestments, mitres & rings), 95 (rings), 176 (rings & silk vestments), 195-196 (silk & multi-colored vestments), 197 (gloves), 203 (gloves & mitres), 204 (rings & gloves). For the Slavic texts: Popov 1875, 22 (silk vestments, mitres & gloves), 49 (rings), 55 (rings), 63 (silk vestments, rings & gloves), 85 (rings), 104 (rings), 279 (rings & gloves), 286 (rings & gloves), 292 (rings), 322 (silk vestments, rings & gloves); Nikolov 2016, 76 (silk vestments, mitres & gloves), 204 (rings), 206 (rings).

[58] RI VII/2, 8_{16-17} (= Dujčev 1942, 39, no 13): 'Preterea crucem, vexillum videlicet Dominice passionis, ante te per totam Bulgariam et Blachiam deferendi fraternitati tue licentiam impertimur'; trans. Powell 2004, 112.

[59] RI VIII/19, 33_{22-25}: 'Porro crucem, videlicet vexillum Dominicum, per quecumque locum te transire contigerit excepta urbe Romana et loco, in quo fuerit Romanus antistes, ante te deferendi fraternitati tue licentiam impertimur'.

[60] COGD 2013, 169: 'Antiqua patriarchalium sedium privilegia renovantes, sacra universali synodo approbante sancimus ut post romanam ecclesiam, que disponente domino super omnes alias ordinarie potestatis optinet principatum utpote mater universorum christifidelium et magistra, constantinopolitana primum, alexandrina secundum, antiochena tertium et ierosolymitana quartum locum optineat, servata cuilibet propria dignitate... Dominice vero crucis vexillum ante se faciant ubique deferri, nisi in urbe romana et ubicumque summus pontifex presens extiterit aut eius

There is no doubt that during his stay in Tarnovo Cardinal Leo enjoyed the same privilege in his capacity of apostolic *legatus a latere*,[61] and this enabled the Bulgarian Primate to appreciate the great favour of Innocent towards him – henceforth, like the Pope, everywhere within the limits of his diocese he would be preceded by the cross which had been sent to him from Rome.

The above evidence convinces us that when Innocent III concluded the union in 1204, he found it necessary to significantly transform the ritual of the Bulgarian Church, as evidenced by some Western liturgical objects discovered during archaeological excavations in some of the most important cities of medieval Bulgaria.

A few decades ago a fragment of a figure of Christ (left arm) from a Romanesque bronze crucifix with gilding was discovered near the metropolitan church in Preslav[62] – a luxurious liturgical object that recalls the events of the early 13th century, when the archbishop of the former Bulgarian capital Sabbas accepted the papal supremacy.[63] Although the arm is not very well preserved, there is no doubt that the now missing thumb was raised and separated from the other fingers, the elbow is slightly bent, and long strands of hair run down the shoulder. According to Paul Thoby's classification,[64] these features indicate that this crucifix was made by Western goldsmiths of the 12th or early 13th century whose work was influenced by Byzantine art.

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legatus utens insigniis apostolice dignitatis'; trans. Schroeder 1937, 246. See also: Gill 1979, 260, note 62.

[61] RI VII/8, 238$_{12\text{-}13,\ 15}$ (= Dujčev 1942, 50-51, no 20): 'Ideoque dilectum filium L(eonem), tituli sancte Crucis presbyterum cardinalem, apostolice sedis legatum... in Bulgariam et Blachiam a nostro latere destinamus'. According to R. Beattie, by the time of Innocent III the *legatus a latere* was the most powerful of medieval papal representatives, whose 'general mandate allowed him to function essentially as pope in pursuit of the papacy's objectives in a given time and place' (Beattie 2007, 65-66); like the pope, during his mission he was preceded everywhere by the *vexillum crucis* (a processional crucifix) and his unique prerogatives included the right to wear the insignia of the apostolic dignity: 'the pope's white mount, its crimson trappings interworked with cloth of gold, the red papal mantle, the crimson shoes' (Wasner 1958, 301; cf. Salminen 1998, 339-354); in other words, he was an '*alter ego* of the pope' (Figueira 2016, 74). Concerning the legatine status of Cardinal Leo Brancaleoni in Bulgaria see also Hintner 1976, 87-89.

[62] Ovcharov 1993, 7-9 (Fig. 10-11).

[63] RI VII/5, 17$_{1\text{-}2}$ ('peccator et humilis mitropolitanus Sauas magne ecclesie Prostlaue'); VII/7, 21$_{4}$ ('Saue, Prosthlauensi archiepiscopo'); VII/8, 23$_{20}$; VII/231, 412$_{9\text{-}10}$ (= Dujčev 1942, 46, no 17; 49, no 19; 51, no 20; 67, no 31).

[64] Thoby 1953, 6, note 1, 7 (Fig. 3).



Fig. 2. Bronze gilded figurine of a saint with enamel decoration from Church 22 on Trapezitsa Hill in Veliko Tarnovo (after Rabovyanov 2019a, 49).

In 2018, a bronze gilded figurine of a saint with enamel decoration was discovered in Church 22 on Trapezitsa Hill in Veliko Tarnovo, the origin of which Deyan Rabovyanov rightly linked to the famous enamel workshops in Limoges, which reached their heyday in the 13th century (fig. 2).[65] However, we have some doubts about the discoverer's proposed interpretation of the object as a decoration from the lid of a reliquary – the bevelled lower edge of the figurine suggests that it was rather an element of the decoration of a crucifix, flanking the left (from Christ's perspective) arm of the cross, the side usually reserved for John the Theologian. The earliest Limoges composite processional crosses with this design date from the first two decades of the thirteenth century and are quite ubiquitous (fig. 3a, 3b-4).[66] The appearance of such an object in Tarnovo in the context of the union of the Bulgarian Church with the Roman See in the period 1204-1232 would be quite natural – the mass use of the relatively inexpensive, yet spectacular liturgical items of the Limoges workshops was strongly advocated and encouraged in the Western Christian world by Pope Innocent III and his successors.[67]

[65] Rabovyanov 2019a, 49; 2019b, 480; Totev & Rabovyanov 2019, 109.

[66] We note here the crosses from: Moudon, Swiss – Musée cantonal d'Archéologie et d'Histoire (Lausanne), inv. no 23032: Decollogny 1962, 143-148; Victoria and Albert Museum (London), inv. no M 575-1910: Thoby 1953, 128, no 66 (today the figurines on the both sides of Christ are missing); State Hermitage (Saint-Petersburg), inv. no Ф-184: Thoby 1953, 138-139, no 81; Eskenazi Museum of Art, Indiana University (Bloomington, IN), inv. no 75-97: Thoby 1953, 136, no 76; Ukna, Sweden – State Historical Museum (Stockholm), inv. no 11054: Andersson 1980, 18-22 (Fig. 32), Taburet-Delahaye 1996b, 186-187 (Fig. 50a); Nävelsjö, Sweden – State Historical Museum (Stockholm), inv. no 10603 A & B (a pair of very similar crosses): Andersson 1980, 19-23 (Fig. 26-28), Taburet-Delahaye 1996a, 184-185 (Fig. 49a), Margani 2020, 106, Fig. 7-8; Mozac, France – Musée Dobrée (Nantes), inv. no 896-1-24: Thoby 1953, 109, no 32. For further details on this group of crosses see: Thoby 1953, 126; Margani 2020, 95-97. Later crosses of this type are also known: Kollandsrud 2014, 59, Fig. 10 (a cross from the church in Uvdal, Norvegia, ca. 1240-1260); Lewis 2015, 12, Fig. 24 (a composite processional cross from the Colchester Museum).

[67] Boehm 1996, 44; Siede 2016, 229-232.



Fig. 3a. An archival photo of a pair of early 13th century processional crosses from the medieval church in Nävelsjö (Småland, South Sweden), produced in Limoges and kept in the State Historical Museum (Stockholm), inv. no 10603 A & B. E-Archive of the Swedish National Heritage Board, available at https://app.raa.se/oppnadata/forndok/search/view?7&o=10173540 (last consulted on 29 December 2021).



Fig. 3b. A detail of one of the processional crosses from Nävelsjö, available at https://app.raa.se/oppnadata/forndok/search/view?6&o=11856045 (last consulted on 29 December 2021).



Fig. 4. A processional cross, produced in Limoges in early 13th century and kept in the State Hermitage Museum (Saint Petersburg, Russia), inv. no Ф-184 available at: https://www.hermitagemuseum.org/wps/portal/hermitage/digital-collection/08.+applied+arts/194238 (last consulted on 29 December 2021).

To the fragments of Western processional crosses from Preslav and Tarnovo, as evidence of liturgical innovations associated with Kaloyan's union with Rome, we should probably add a long-known but little-studied object – an enameled Eucharistic Dove produced in Limoges, which once belonged to the St. Sophia cathedral church of the Ohrid Archbishops; after this church was converted into a mosque in 1466, the dove passed to the treasury of the Church of Theotokos (also known as *Περίβλεπτος* and *Saint Kliment*) in Ohrid, and is now kept in the Institute for Protection of Monuments of Culture and Museum – Ohrid (Republic of North Macedonia).[68] Considering that this liturgical vessel was intended for the storage of the Consecrated Host and was meant to hang above the altar table, it could have been brought into the main temple of the Ohrid Archdiocese either during the years when Kaloyan extended his authority (and thus also the papal supremacy)[69] over these lands, or after the conclusion of the Second Union

[68] Radojković 1964, 327-332; Mikulčić 1996, 245 (Ill. 99); Georgievski 2001, no 30. Recently this object has been commented on by Kovachev 2021a, 176-178; 2021b.

[69] On this point I will confine myself to recalling Günter Prizing's thought that 'the assumption that the metropolitans of Cherven, Sredets (Sofia), Dristra (Silistra), Ser (Seres) and Mesembria (Nesebar) as well as the Archbishop of Ohrid and the Bishop of Belgrade rejected the union, because they are not mentioned in the correspondence of Kaloyan with Innocent III… is possible, but it's too speculative': Prinzing 2002b, 170, note 115; 2019, 81-82, note 97.

of Lyon (1274), which was supported by the then Archbishop of Ohrid.[70] At least for the time being, this question cannot be answered unequivocally.

An interesting archaeological discovery, made in 2017 during excavations of the necropolis near the Eastern Church of the medieval town of Hotalich (4 km northwest of the present-day town of Sevlievo), serves as evidence that the ecclesiastical union of 1204 left its mark on the personal piety of the Bulgarians: in a grave from the mid-13th century Nadezhda Boteva and her team discovered a lead pilgrim badge from the Basilica of Saint Peter in Rome.[71]

It is well known that on 18 January 1199 Innocent III granted the canons of the basilica a monopoly on the production of lead or alloy pilgrim badges with images of the apostles Peter and Paul, which pilgrims acquired when visiting the church as proof of their personal devotion and as a testimony of the journey undertaken.[72] Given this, it is no wonder that this type of square plaques (*quadrangulae*) enjoyed extreme popularity in the Western Christendom throughout the 13th century and became 'the most widespread pilgrim sign ever'.[73]

The pilgrim's badge from Hotalich is rectangular in shape, with Peter (with keys) and Paul (with a sword) in the centre on either side of a high cross, and with the legend 'SIGNA APOSTLORUM PETRI ET PAULI' running along the periphery of the plaque (fig. 5). The object bears the characteristic features of *Variant 1* badges, according to the classification of Andreas

[70] Theiner 1859, 377 (no 609); Langlois 1891, 893 (no 6712). For further details see: Bilyarski & Iliev 1997; Bilyarski 1998; Gjuzelev 2009, 383-384.

[71] Boteva & Totev 2018; 2019.

[72] RI I/534, 773$_{5-14}$: 'Eapropter, dilecti in Domino filii, tam redditum, quem de signis plumbeis sive stagneis apostolorum Petri et Pauli imaginem preferentibus, quibus eorum limina visitants in argumentum proprie devotionis et testimonium itineris consummati se ipsos insigniunt, predecessores nostri et nos ipsi percipere consuevimus, quam auctoritatem fundendi ea vel quibus volueritis fusoribus concedendi, qui vobis tantum de ipsis respondeant, vobis et per vos canonice presentium auctoritate concedimus et presentis scripti patrocinio communimus. Ad hec sub pena excommunicationis districtius inhibemus, ne quis ea preter assensum et concessionem vestram aliquatenus formare presumat'. See also Gesta 1855, CCIV C – CCV A (§ CXLV): 'Basilicae sancti Petri, quartam partem oblationum de omnibus ministeriis, potestatem insignia plumbea, vel stagnea faciendi, et proventus eorum'; trans. Powell 2004, 260: 'For the basilica of St. Peter, he granted a fourth share of the offerings of all the ministries and the right of making leaden or tin badges and the income from them'. For further details: Bolton 1999, 123-124; Egger 2004, 18; Johrendt 2009; 2011, 114-116; Kühne 2015, 17. On the badges as confirmation of pilgrimage: Rębkowski 2013, 48-49.

[73] Leo Imperiale 2012, 701.

Haasis-Berner.[74] Although it is rather damaged, its iconography shows similarities to the pilgrim badges from Burg Vohburg (Vohburg an der Donau, Upper Bavaria)[75] (fig. 6), Torcello (Italy),[76] Dordrecht (South Holland, Netherlands)[77] and London, Billingsgate.[78]



Fig. 5. Lead pilgrim badge from the Basilica of Saint Peter in Rome, found in a mid-thirteenth-century grave in the medieval town of Hotalich near present-day Sevlievo (after Boteva & Totev 2018, 135, fig. 3).

The presence of a pilgrim badge in a grave is not surprising and has parallels in a number of similar finds from Western and Central Europe, although no such object has ever been found in Bulgaria under any circumstances. As Andreas Haasis-Berner notes, 'numerous pilgrim signs – especially up to the middle of the 14th century – served as grave goods. These grave goods were probably motivated by the hope of being recognized as a pilgrim at the resurrection, in order to be able to reach paradise immediately'.[79] However, insofar as the badge from Hotalich was sewn on the

[74] Haasis-Berner 2003, 138.
[75] Prähistorische Staatssammlung (München), inv. no 1976, 2246: Köster 1981, 455-456 (Fig. 97); Haasis-Berner 2003, 139 (no 1); Leo Imperiale 2012, 701 (Fig. 2.12).
[76] Walters Art Museum (Baltimore, MD), inv. no 55.76, https://art.thewalters.org/detail/29714 (last consulted on 27 December 2021). Cf. Boteva & Totev 2018, 134 (Fig. 4).
[77] Sammlung van Beuningen (Cothen), inv. no 1907: Haasis-Berner 2003, 140 (no 5).
[78] Museum of London (London), inv. no BIG82 2700: Haasis-Berner 2003, 141 (no 14).
[79] Haasis-Berner 2002, 69. An interesting example in this regard is the recently found badge from the Basilica of St. Peter in Rome, unearthed in a grave close to the octagonal church of St. Philip the Apostle in Hierapolis in Phrygia (near Pamukkale, Southwestern Turkey) – a testimony to the infiltration of Western pilgrims along the

inside of the garment in which the deceased was clothed,[80] it can be assumed that he wore it also during his lifetime as a personal amulet with apotropaic functions: the pilgrim badges from St. Peter's Basilica were considered sacred objects because of their (real or presumed) contact with the tomb of the supreme apostle and were therefore sometimes even placed in altar tables.[81]



Fig. 6. Lead pilgrim badge from the Basilica of Saint Peter in Rome, found in a grave in Vohburg an der Donau (Upper Bavaria) and kept in the Prähistorische Staatssammlung (Munich), inv. no 1976, 2246 (after Köster 1981, 456, fig. 97).

Although we do not know any biographical details about the pilgrim from Hotalich, there can be little doubt that the people who buried him – like their contemporaries in the lands of Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, England, Poland – regarded his pilgrim badge from the Basilica of St. Peter in Rome as sacred and perfectly fit to accompany the deceased on his

Meander Valley as a result of the 1304 Catalan campaign in Anatolia: Ahrens 2012, 68, 72-74; Leo Imperiale 2019, 141, 146, 149.

[80] According to personal information from Nadezhda Boteva. Cf. Boteva & Totev 2018, 130 ('The interred was a male individual, with stretched limbs and arms placed on his abdomen. There were traces of a solid wooden coffin'), 132 ('pilgrim badge, sewn onto the burial garment').

[81] During excavations of the medieval church in the Misericordia hospital complex near the castle of Monte Copiolo (The Marches region, Italy), a pilgrim badge from the Basilica of St. Peter in Rome (from the variant with the legend 'SPE+SPA') was found at the base of a 13th-14th century altar: Sacco *et al*. 2015, 190; 2019, Fig. 16, n. 1. On the functioning of pilgrim souvenirs as amulets: Koldeweij 1999, 307-328; Blick 2019, 8-9.

journey to the afterlife. In other words, the reverence for the sanctity and the belief in the miraculous power of the sacred objects seems to have overcome the ecclesiastical divide between East and West and created a common space of shared thoughts, emotions and rituals.

It is thus evident that Bulgaria's intensive contacts with the Latin Empire and the Roman Church in the first half of the 13th century left tangible material traces which, in combination with the surviving written sources, enable us to build a more objective picture of how the country's international contacts and the church's involvement with the major centres of Christianity affected the daily life of Bulgarian society during a very turbulent era. Let us hope that future archaeological research will add to our knowledge and permit further clarification and discussion of issues and questions that cannot yet be resolved unequivocally with the research tools at our disposal.

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