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On the cover: a bronze terret or rein-ring, Mal Tepe tumulus by the village of Mezek, SE Bulgaria, second quarter of the 3rd c. BC, National Archaeological Institute with Museum in Sofia. Photo: Krasimir Georgiev (see the paper of Emilov / Megaw in this issue).
INTRODUCTION

More than a century has passed since the first accidental discoveries of finds around the Mal Tepe tumulus, the “Mound of the Treasure” near the village of Mezek in south-eastern Bulgaria (Hamdy 1908, pl.VIII-IX) and eight decades since Bogan Filov explored the tholos tomb there. Despite the efforts of several generations of researchers and general progress in later studies on tomb architecture (Стоянова 2002; Stoyanov 2005; Theodossiev 2007), breastplate and bronze vessels (Ognenova 1961; Venedikov 1977; Archibald 1985; 1998, 253-258, 277), jewellery items and horse-harness (Pfrommer 1990; Tonkova 1997; 2010; Stoyanov 2010) or the attempts of Domaradzki to analyze the sequence in burial practice (Домарадски 1988; 1998), it is still difficult to achieve a coherent explanation of multiple activities in the Mal Tepe tomb as reflected in the available archaeological data.

Following this retrospective line it is may be an appropriate occasion to mark one more anniversary. Seven decades ago Paul Jacobsthal (1940) recognized some of the objects from the tomb as Celtic and associated with the totemic bronze figure of a boar – “it obviously belonged to the Celtic burial” though a provincial piece (Jacobsthal 1944, 152). Thus was included an additional unknown variable in the already complex Mal Tepe equation.

The imagery of the chariot fittings from Mezek (fig. 1-6) is probably the first aspect of the tomb which springs to mind when one is looking for material evidence of the early third century BC Celtic raids in the Eastern Balkans. Considered as one of the finest examples of the “Plastic” or “Disney style”, the mounts with their immediately recognizable La Tène design as will be discussed below serve almost like a trade-mark of the Thracian Galatians and the historically documented Celtic expansion to the south-eastern corner of Europe (Домарадски 1984; Megaw / Megaw 2001, 140-141; Fol 1991; Mac Congail 2008; Megaw 2010; Anastassov 2011; Anastassov et al. forthcoming).

Beyond any doubt to find chariot fittings with a presumed western origin among the objects from an Early Hellenistic tholos tomb in Thrace is an extraordinary discovery and one which has provoked many discussions and various interpretative scenarios1. How, when and why parts of a Celtic chariot were deposited in the tomb are still troublesome questions and a constantly recurring topic in contemporary academic debates on the interrelations between Celts and local

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1 For the latest of previous reviews see: Megaw 2005; Emilov 2005; Stoyanov 2005; 2010.
Fig. 1a-d. Mal Tepe, Mezek. Four of the five surviving bronze terrets or rein-rings. National Archaeological Institute with Museum, Sofia. Photos: Roza Staneva

Fig. 2. Mal Tepe, Mezek. Five rein-rings photographed prior to cleaning in the 1970s. National Archaeological Institute with Museum, Sofia. Photo: Roza Staneva

Fig. 3. Mal Tepe, Mezek. Bronze finial from larger rein-ring. National Archaeological Institute with Museum, Sofia. Photo: Roza Staneva
Typology and Chronology of the Handmade Pottery of the Roman and Early Byzantine Period (I – VI c.) on the Territory of Bulgaria

Sirma ALEXANDROVA

Research on the handmade pottery which circulated in the area south of the Lower Danube during the Roman and the Early Byzantine times is in its infancy. The value of this group of pottery as chronological indicator is strongly underestimated. On the other hand, its value as ethnic indicator is much exaggerated. The subject of handmade pottery in antiquity (6th c. BC – 6th c. AD) remains marginal to the interests of Bulgarian archeologists. An a priori assumption is perpetuated, according to which the handmade pottery of the era signals the presence of Thracian people. Operating on this assumption all finds are uncritically assigned to the first millennium BC. The first special study on Hellenistic handmade pottery appeared in 2006. Although the territorial and chronological scopes of this work are limited to a small part of Ancient Thrace, and the Early Hellenistic times respectively, its quality distinguishes it as a perfect tool to draw archaeologists’ attention to the considerable information that this sizable group of artifacts offers for historical interpretations (Ханджийска 2010).

The study of hand-made pottery of the 1st – 6th c. AD and its chronological value remain overlooked. The terminus post quem coincides with the annexation of the examined area into the boundaries of the Roman Empire. The terminus ante quem is the end of antiquity in the southeast Balkans, marked by the reforms of the emperor Heraclius (AD 610-641) in the Eastern Roman Empire, the emerging Byzantium. In the course of the next 600 years, ethnic and demographic changes influence the development of the hand-made pottery.

This study focuses on the territory of modern Bulgaria with the goal of reviewing the unpublished material held in museum collections all over the country. Based on the method of formal typology the present study analyses pottery vessels from 44 sites (fig. 1). Both types and variants are grounded in morphology. Since very few intact vessels are preserved, the study deals mainly with diagnostic rim fragments. About a quarter of them could be grouped in types. Those include either completely preserved vessels, or fragments with rims typical for one of the defined types. The fact that the archaeological context of almost all catalogue entries is known provides a reliable chronological frame for the study. However, the dates assigned by the respective excavators are often too broad. The technological features of the hand

1 The full text of this research will be published as part of the Dissertations series of the National Archaeological Institute with Museum – Sofia by Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.
Fig. 3. Pots type I, variant 2

The village of Draschan, RHM - Vratza, Inv. # 73.
End of II - IV c.
Мишов 1975, 41-49.

Lautus.
Second quarter of V c.
Вагалинск 2002, 200, A.

Sexaginta Prista, RHM - Ruse, Inv. # II 885.
Beginning of III c. (t.p.q. 205).
Unpublished.

Fig. 4. Pots type II, variant 1.1

*Heraclea Sintica.*
Second half of III c. (t.p.q. 253).
Unpublished, excavations of L. Vagalinski.

Haskovo, HM - Haskovo, Inv. # A-1863.
II c.
Аладков/Китанова 1973, 80, fig. 17 b.
The Changing Landscapes of Byzantine Northern Anatolia

Adam IZDEBSKI

ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to study the history of landscape in northern Asia Minor – primarily Pontus and Paphlagonia – since Late Antiquity until the end of the Middle Byzantine period (6th-13th c. AD). Most of the conclusions presented in this paper are based on palynological material, as potentially relevant archaeological and textual evidence is scarce and poses serious interpretational problems. In order to properly use the pollen data collected by Bottema, Woldring and Aytuğ, new age-depth models were constructed with the use of clam age-modelling software, on the basis of the radiocarbon dates obtained by the original investigators. Thus, the key turning points in the history of northern Anatolian landscapes in the Byzantine era were identified. First, the transition from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages, which meant some diminishment of complex agricultural activities in the very north of the region and their collapse in the south; second, relatively short “pasturing phases” which seems to have occurred in many areas in the early medieval period; third, the Middle Byzantine agricultural expansion halted most probably by the Turkish invasion; finally, the late medieval recovery of agricultural activities. Unfortunately, as the archaeological evidence is very inconclusive, almost nothing is known as regards the transformations of settlement which must have accompanied each environmental change.

INTRODUCTION

The eternal periphery – perhaps this is the first association coming to mind when one starts thinking about the northern provinces of Asia Minor. Never have they really been a centre of power which would rule over the rest of Anatolia, rarely have they attracted much attention from the empires which grasped the western and southern parts of the peninsula (for instance, Matthews 2004). However, one may expect that in the Byzantine period the role of northern Anatolia, i.e. Pontus, Paphlagonia and the eastern outskirts of Bithynia, was different. Although the balance of power within Asia Minor changed substantially several times over the thousand years of the history of Byzantium, for various reasons this area remained important for the provision of resources which ensured the endurance of the Byzantine power. The aim of this paper is to study its landscape history in the period when Asia Minor was the heartland of the Byzantine Empire (7th-12th c. AD) (cf. Lilie 1991) and thus to contribute to our understanding of the economic role this part of the empire played within the wider Byzantine world. Importantly,
Fig. 5a. Lake Abant pollen diagram with the most meaningful plant taxa (part 1) (prepared on the basis of the data available in the European Pollen Database, http://pollen.cerege.fr/fpd-epd/, the pollen sum consists of herbs, trees and shrubs)
Elemental Composition of Metal Artifacts from the Early Medieval Centre for Artistic Metal Finds near the Village of Novosel, Shumen Region, NE Bulgaria

1. Introduction

As a result of systematic archaeological excavations through the last several years two production centres for artistic metal were found and researched in the environs of the second Bulgarian capital Preslav. One of these complexes, which is going to be discussed here, is located near the village of Novosel, Shumen region, and only about ten kilometres away from Preslav towards west direction. The research that started in 2004 ended recently. A monographic study is about to be published with the results from the last several years (Бонев / Дончева 2011). The researches prove the existence of an organized production of small plastics objects among which prevail belt ornaments, modern in that time period – plates, strap ends, buckles. There are also other items but the ornaments – earrings, rings, hangers, and the cult objects – crosses, pendants, book hasps, predominate. The time period of the production centres is precisely defined by the found folles of Leo VI (886-912), Romanus I (920-944), Constantine VII and Romanus II (945-959), as well as by the pottery with a linear incised decoration typical for that period. Over ten workshops for fabricating ornaments were excavated till now. These are half buried in the ground structures which usually consist of a kiln, entrance, hearth and a pit for the waste products.

The variety of artefacts found in the above mentioned centres raises the necessity of employing a chemical analysis, which would offer useful information about the metals and alloys used for the production of these works of art, and also about the production technology and the origin of the raw materials. For this purpose different analytical methods, described below, are used in our work.

2. Experimental methods used for a chemical analysis of samples from the complex near the village of Novosel

The modern archaeometry offers a wide range of physicochemical analytical methods for analysis of the elemental composition of archaeological metal artefacts. Some of these methods are used in this work and are described below. Depending on circumstances and re
Fig. 1. Primary elements in sample 1 and 2 (Table II). Linear scale

Fig. 2. Primary elements in samples 1 and 2 (Table II). Logarithmic scale
The contribution is an investigation of the use of copper and copper based alloys from Bell beaker society. The aim was to find the connection between the development of the metallurgy of copper and distribution of Bell beaker in central Europe. The book is based on doctoral thesis by Matthias B. Merkl, defended at the Department of Archaeology at the University of Edinburgh under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Barbara Ottaway and Prof. Dr. Roger Mercer in 2010. The doctoral thesis was prepared between 2006 and 2009.

In the book by Dr. Merkl the distribution of Bell beaker society in central Europe is presented without touching upon the archaeological artefacts discovered in Bulgaria. One of the premises of the book, however, is that the skill of the people from Bell beaker to produce metals is the basis for the distribution of this society in central Europe. It is known that there are evidences showing that the production of metals in Europe started in Carpathian mining area, such as the Chalcolithic necropolis in Varna (Черных 1978; Pernicka et al. 1997; Renfrew 1978). Thus this book must be of some interest for the archaeologists in Bulgaria. Given the extensive literature, as well as the numerous references made by the author, I think that the book is of good value.

The author – Dr. Merkl, presents the wide geographic distribution of ceramic finds of the Bell beaker which was the reason for expressing different hypotheses: invasion of unknown people into Europe; exchange of prestigious products; migration or diffusion of cultural components. So the author of the book was able to present all these thoughts along with the idea that the knowledge about the metallurgy of copper could be linked to this population. Scholarly information published in different journals and books (the bibliography has more than 390 titles) about the influences of different impurities on the copper, as well as about the metallurgy of Bell beaker, is presented in the book. No doubt this is one of the strengths of the book.

In my view very important detail is that the book contains evidences based on analysis carried out by other authors (Krause 2003; Ottaway 1982; Pernicka 1984; 1995). Thus the data about content of microelements¹, obtained in different laboratories using different analytical methods, are comparable. At the same time this claim was supported with investigation by the author himself. All data indicate that the microelement composition of the copper finds is in the frame of random errors.

On the basis of detailed statistical evaluation of all analyzed up to date archaeological finds of copper or copper alloys by other investigators from the chronological interval of Bell beaker society, the author reached the conclusion that the Bell beaker did not use specifically metal alloys; thus the knowledge of metallurgy could not be among the characteristics of the Bell beaker society. One of the strengths of the book is the attempt to localize different groups of metal finds and get it into the chronological intervals as well as to deduce some technological features of the alloys on the basis of this grouping. This leads to the hypothesis about archaeological meaning of different groups of metal and the character of the societies inhabiting certain regions as well as their technological knowledge, the level of exchange of goods and trade in general. Thus the explanation of wide distribution of Bell beaker society in central Europe is not the metallurgy of copper. More probably the reasons for the wide distribution of the Bell beaker could be the religious rituals, popular beliefs or the structure of the society. According to Dr. Merkl in this direction could be oriented the future investigations aiming to explain the wide distribution of the Bell beaker society in central Europe.

As a remark to the author of the book could be added his opinion (in the introduction to the 4th part of the book) that copper mines in Ai bunar

¹ The author used the term “trace element” which I think is not correct. That is why I used the term “microelements”, “microelement concentration”, because it is connected with microelement composition of copper artefacts.

The edited volume stems from contributions by participants in the international conference “The Eastern Celts between the Hellenistic and the Roman worlds” held at Vršac on the 1st-4th November 2007 and invited authors with papers discussing recent archaeological research on the Iron Age communities defined as “Eastern Celts” in a wide geographical area from the Eastern Alpine fringes to the Western Pontic coast. The collection comprises twenty four submissions of scholars from Central and South-Eastern Europe and abounds with well reproduced colour or black-and-white figures of artefacts and structures, distribution maps, sections and photographs of finds and sites related to the Late Iron Age inhabitants in these regions.

Modern scholarly interest on the subject is outlined in the introductory paper by the editors entitled “From treasure of objects to treasure of words. The past and the present research on Eastern Celts” (pp. 7-12). History of the research is traced back to the early 20th century pioneering publications in European Iron Age archaeology, but Mitja Guštin and Miloš Jevtić dedicate their overview to Jovan Todorović for his integrated approach to material evidence and historical sources on “the Celts in South-Eastern Europe”. The monograph under the same title (Todorović 1968) followed by a number of regional and supra-regional studies on material evidence of the “Celts” on the eastern margin mark the intellectual path and the stimuli of the current volume. As the editors put it in their introduction, The Eastern Celts edition with its geographical scope and the themes discussed is designed to “contribute to our knowledge about Celtica in an area”, “which is not researched to such an extent to allow clear answers about the contacts of the Celtic tribes with the indigenous populations and the advanced civilisations of the ancient Mediterranean and the Black sea”. While many of the questions about the exact models of these interactions still remain far from definite answers, the volume already serves as a valuable companion and deserves the label – a true “treasure of words” and images in the investigation of Iron Age communities in Central and South-Eastern Europe.

Although each of the remaining twenty three papers has its own distinctive character, focus and informed scholarship, they could be divided into several thematic circles: (1) “Eastern Celts” according to available data from grave inventories (Horváth / Németh; Lubština-Tušek / Kavur; Jovanović), settlements (Kerman; Pavlović; Tiefengraber; Popović), object-based typological studies (Karwowski / Militký; Jovanović; Luština) and regional overviews (Bochnak; Džidar; Guštin), (2) “Židovar treasure” and silver jewelery in a wider context (Popović; Tonkova; Mitrevski), (3) “On the Edge/March of the Celtic world” (Rustoiu; Ferenz; Sîrbu / Bodó; Vagalinski; Anastassov) and (4) “Special studies” on physical anthropological remains (Hincak / Guštin; Mikić). The editors generally followed the geographical principle in the arrangement of the contributions. The volume starts with overview on finds related to the “Eastern Celts” in the territories to the north of the Carpathians (Bochnak) and discussions on archaeological discoveries in Transdanubia (Horváth / Németh), in the lands of the Taurisci (Džidar; Jovanović; Guštin) and the Scordisci tribal groups along the Sava, Drava, and Danube rivers (Jovanović), Transylvania (Rustoiu; Ferenz), reviews on sites and finds in the Central Balkan region (Popović; Mitrevski), and a section on the Lower Danube region (Tonkova; Sîrbu / Bodó; Vagalinski; Anastassov). “Special studies” on skeletal remains come as scientific addenda to the previous contributions, which are primarily based on interpretation of archaeological structures, objects or contexts.