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On the cover: a late medieval iron war hammer; National Archaeological Institute with Museum at Sofia, inv. # 742 (see the paper of S. Popov in this issue).

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Establishing the Identity of Bulgaria's First Farmers—
a New Perspective

Maria GUROVA

“Patterns in practices are not identities themselves, but are the means through which identities are shaped and perpetuated….All features of identity are contextual – the kind of person one may be in a certain context is quite different from the kind of person one might be in another.”
C. Fowler (2004, 41-42)

Key words: Identity, diagnostic finds, 'Balkan flint', formal toolkit, macroblade production

Introduction
This paper presents an approach to identity through distinguishing and commenting on specific features of the Early Neolithic settlers of present-day Bulgaria. The problem of ‘identity’ sensu stricto has never been properly approached and articulated in the specialized literature, and respectively, no issues for a real debate have been formulated. The author’s attempt to approach the early Neolithic identity is based on the large amount of empirical evidence from the Early Neolithic period and its interpretation by different scholars. This is an innovative approach since it introduces to this debate the particularly important category of flint assemblages. These are an inherent part of the material culture, but usually have been treated as a marginal and superfluous adjunct to the problem of Neolithization. The quotation at the beginning of this paper was deliberately chosen as a challenging theoretical proxy to identity that, unfortunately, is not applicable to the contextual framework revealed in the paper. Thus, the sentence is a particular cognitive counterpoint and a challenge for further studies of identity from the Balkan perspective.

Identity is a prominent notion in the social sciences including social/cultural anthropology, and some theoretical schools in archaeology, whose methodological background unavoidably connects the production of artefacts with social agency. Nevertheless, identity in prehistory – clearly articulated or implicitly suggested by the description of material culture – has always been perceptible to researchers coming into contact with the mosaic of archaeological events. The concepts raised by Insoll (2007) in respect of identity have been discussed in terms of flints by van Gijn: “the concept of identity encompasses a myriad of different aspects of society. It may refer to such
Fig. 5. Rakitovo: 1 – white-painted pottery decoration: A – Rakitovo style; B – mixed style; C – Thracian style (according to Raduncheva et al. 2002, figs. 86-88); 2 – formal flint toolkit; 3 – microphotograph of the cereal polish (x 100), the artefact’s place is fixed by arrow on the drawing below; 4 – flint artefacts (tools) (the author; pottery picture by permission of the authors of quoted article)
A Place to Live, a Place to Bury and a Place to Hoard: Understanding Deposition on and off the Bulgarian Tell of Kosharna

INTRODUCTION

As Kent Flannery’s Old Timer once said, “Doing archaeology has always been “as much fun as you can have with your pants on” (Flannery 1982) but the challenges that our discipline has faced in the last two decades make it an even more exciting and rewarding pursuit. Whether it is the advances of archaeological science that prompt us to re-think the notion of diffusion or migration (Montgomery et al. 2000), the fascinating discoveries of the sourcing of Alpine jadeite (Pétrequin et al., forthcoming) or the identification of the quarry sites for the Easter Island stone sculptures (Richards 2010), archaeology has proved to be a dynamic and reflexive field, where hypotheses and interpretations are contested or confirmed with each new discovery. This global picture has its counterpart in Balkan archaeology with its stimulating discoveries on the one hand, such as the earliest monumental sculptures in Europe in the Iron Gates Mesolithic (Srejović 1969), or the massive Alsónyék Neolithic cemetery in Hungary with 2,400 Lengyel burials (Zalai-Gaál / Osztás 2009). On the other hand, changes have sprung from the introduction of groundbreaking concepts such as artefact biographies (Kopytoff 1986), deliberate fragmentation (Chapman 2000a), personhood (Fowler 2004; Chapman / Gaydarska 2006) and many more. The recognition of diverse and complex social practices that do not always comply with our modern lifeways is a long, painful and not at all widely shared process for local Balkan archaeologists to undergo but there are more and more examples of internalized understanding of archaeology as anthropology and social science and not as a merely descriptive subject (Stevanović 1997; Babić 2008; Gurova 2010; Palincas 2010). The stifling cultural historical approach could not engage with evidence like partial burials, deliberate house burning or pit-digging beyond poorly defined notions of ritual, rubbish, invasion and so on – if they were defined at all! The addressing of pressing issues like hoarding, structured deposition and deliberate fragmentation was only a matter of time in Balkan archaeology, and in particular, in Bulgarian prehistory this soon became evident (Gaydarska et al. 2004; Turk et al. 2009; Biehl 2003).
Fig. 8. Kosharna hoard, tools: 1 – combined tool endscraper / burin; 2 and 3 – burins; 4 and 5 – retouched blades. The parts with use-wear traces are designated by a broken line; the arrow mark to the points of taking microphotograph 4a and 5a – cutting/sawing hard undetermined material (x100). Field inventory numbers of the artefacts: 159/10; 159/17; 159/8; 159/7; 159/16 (drawings and microphotographs by M. Gurova)
Late Hellenistic Bowls with Relief from Ruse District, NE Bulgaria

1. Condition of the research on Late Hellenistic bowls with relief decoration

The bowls with relief are a specific type of pottery, made by a fast potter’s wheel and with the help of a mould. Most often, they have the shape of a semi-sphere, rounded bottom with a relief medallion on it. Their rims are straight or curved on the outside, and their body is separated into a different number of sections with relief decoration (different geometric or floral motifs, animal and human figures). They are covered with black/red varnish or slipware.

In his monograph for this type of pottery from Histria, C. Domăneanțu proposes several ancient nominations for the bowls with relief: γυάλας; ἡμίτομος; κόνδυ. But since none of them is accurate and certain enough, he prefers using the term “bols hellénistiques à décor en relief” (Domăneanțu 2000, XIII). Often, terms like “Megarian” or “Delian” bowls can be met in the scholarly literature, depending on the order and time of the excavations of the eponymous archaeological sites. It has been settled now that workshops for this type of vessels were located in many places in Greece, Asia Minor, Italy, the Northern and Western Black Sea area (Casan-Franga 1967, 7-8; Кастанаян / Арсеньева 1984, 231; Domăneanțu 2000, XIII-XIV; Петрова 2011, 19-21). Their production is placed within the chronological frames from the last quarter of the 3rd century BC up to the first decades of the 1st century BC (Domăneanțu 2000, XIII-XIV).

Bowls with relief in Bulgaria are found mainly in the areas close to the Black Sea (Петрова 2011, 19-21). In the interior of the Balkans they are met quite rarely (Иримия 2006, 43; Varbanov / Dragoev 2006, 191, fig. 4g). From the territory of modern-day Romania and Bulgaria however, up to this moment are known around 800 fragments of bowls with relief (and several from their mould for relief decoration), made of clay with gray color after being baked, without a varnish or slipware cover. Undisputedly, they are imitations of the Greek prototypes, from which they borrowed the technique of modeling, the shape and larger part of the decorative elements (Sîrbu 2009, 20). Such imitations were found for the first time at the excavations of Piscul Crâşani (Romania). In 1967 I. Casan-Franga made a classification of this type of pottery, based on their shape and decoration, and dates them in the 2nd-1st century BC (Casan-Franga 1967). By examining the Transylvanian pot
Fig. 1.
Religion, Magic or Medicine? New Finds of Trepanned Skulls from Southeastern Bulgaria, 11th-13th c.

The recent excavations at cemeteries in southeastern Bulgaria revealed new information about trepanation in the middle Ages. Two skulls with clear traces of trepanation have been discovered in the cemetery of the Byzantine town of Anchialos, dated between the twelfth and the thirteenth century (Даскалов 2010, 546; Торбатов / Даскалов 2011, 480-481). The material under anthropological study comes from 127 graves and provides 63 more or less completely preserved cranial vaults of individuals, who died at an age older than four years (13 children and 50 juveniles and adults over 16-18 years of age, including 20 females and 30 males). On two of them (graves # 12 and 35), there were specific defects. One more skull, from grave # 14, shows a defect of similar appearance and localization. Another case is known from the Zlatna livada cemetery, which has been dated to the same period, or between the eleventh and the twelfth century (Янков et al. 2010; 2011). Materials from 119 graves in that cemetery have been studied anthropologically, with 64 more or less completely restored cranial vaults from individuals who died at the age over four-five years (nine children and 55 individuals over 16-18 years at death, including 44 males and 11 females). The specific defect in the Zlatna livada cemetery is found in grave W41-1.

**Material and methods**

The aging and sexing of the individuals were achieved during the preliminary anthropological investigation according to the available skeletal material. The criteria employed for that analysis were the symphyseal surface relief of the pubic bone, which was evaluated after Todd (in Schwartz 1995); the relief of the auricular surfaces, after Lovejoy's scales (1985); the cranial sutures obliteration – after Olivier-Simpson's scales for endo- and ecto-cranial surface (in Алексеев / Дебец 1964) and after Meindl-Lovejoy's scores for ectocranial vault points (in Schwartz 1995). The skeletal development was assessed according to the stages of epiphyseal fusion following Schwartz (1995). To establish the age of children, the dental development was evaluated after the tables of Zubov (Зубов 1968) and Ubelaker (1989, adapted in White / Folkens 2005, 366). For sexing, priority was given to the features of sexual dimorphism, particularly to pelvic bones, as summarized in Acsádi and Nemeskéri (1970, 79-83). The sexual dimorphism of cranial bones was assessed after Ferenbach et al. (1980) and Buikstra
Fig. 3. Pathological changes on endocranial surface: 1 Left temporal, endocranial surface, grave # 12, Anchialos – cribrotic destructions of cortical bone; 2 Frontal squama, endocranial surface, grave # W-41-1, Zlatna livada – cribrotic destructions of cortical bone (photo: author)

Fig. 4. Cranial vault, fragment, grave # 12, Anchialos: 1 Lateral view, left side; 2 Occipital side; 3 Lateral view, right side; 4 Detail – defect from complete trepanation; 5 Detail – defect from complete trepanation, endocranial surface (photo: author)
The studies of cold steel and protective armour from the Ottoman Age found in the today’s Bulgarian territories are at their rather initial stage (Дерменджиев 1988; Попов 2006, 25-26; Димитров 2008; Семерджиева 2009; Рабоянов 2009; Попов a, forthcoming). It refers also to a very interesting group of weapons from this period – the war hammers. Only recently a couple of contributions to the theme have been issued (Атанасов / Йорданов 1994, 32-33, pl. X/96, 97; Венедикова 2007; Игнатова 2007, 434-436). The studies of this type of arms in Europe are not quite far ahead either (Пасzkiewicz 1975; Калмар 1971, 34-37).

In Europe (especially Central and to a lesser degree Western regions) this type of weapon became most widespread during the 15th – 16th c. Some written sources and pieces of art dating from as early as the mid 13th and late 14th c. contain data of its function (Laking 1920, 87-89; Laking 1921, 331-332; Edge / Paddock 1991, 88-89, 128, 149; Бехайм 1995, 262-265). The war hammers went out of use entirely in the Western European continent in early 17th c. However, in Central and Eastern Europe they were in use during the whole span of the 17th c. (Квикковский 2005, 46-47), and in Poland and Hungary – till the mid 18th c. (Калмар 1971, 36-37; Пасzkiewicz 1975, 225; Окешот 2000, 69-72). In the Balkan provinces of the Ottoman Empire this weapon remained in use till the late 19th c. mainly as a cane or a rod carried by dervishes (Венедикова 2007; Игнатова 2007).

Provoked by the war conflicts between the Ottoman Empire and the Central European states, mainly Poland and Hungary, an active exchange of ideas, design and shapes was running in the sphere of warfare and of arms and armour in particular. This circumstance, alongside the almost entire lack of investigation on the problem makes me rely on the studies in both mentioned countries. According to the research, the war hammers in use in Poland and Hungary till the 16th c. were similar to the German and Italian ones. Since the same century on they came under the strong influence of the East and various groups and types developed. In M. Пасzkiewicz’ view, the Polish war hammers differed from the Western and Eastern types in their handles. Oftentimes they were made of hard wood and according to him, they were longer than the ones in the rest of the countries (Пасzkiewicz 1975, 226). I think though the handles of the hammers exploited in Poland as well as in Hungary and the Ottoman Empire had approximately the same length, and we could not draw such a definite ethnic attribution on the grounds of this feature alone. Nevertheless, it is a fact that the war hammers handles exploited in the Western Europe
Fig. 8. War hammer from the depot of NIAM – Sofia, Inv. #1149, iron

Fig. 9. War hammer from the depot of NIAM – Sofia, Inv. #1150, iron

Fig. 10 a, b. War hammer from the depot of NIAM – Sofia, Inv. #742, iron