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On the cover: a late eneolithic, zoomorphic clay vessel found in SE Bulgaria; photo by T. Dimitrov; see the article of M. Popova in this issue.

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Late Eneolithic Zoomorphic Vessel from the Tell near the Village of Poroy, Burgas Province

Archaeologia Bulgarica
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Margarita POPOVA

Abstract: This article examines a zoomorphic vessel found during archaeological excavations in 2020 at the tell site "Skritata Mogila", near Poroy, Burgas Province. Often the shape of these peculiar vessels give the researchers reason to assume that they were not used for everyday functions, but had a special function, possibly ritual. An attempt is made here to illustrate how the find from Poroy fits among the known zoomorphic vessels from the area of the Late Eneolithic Kodjadermen-Gumelnița-Karanovo VI culture.

Key words: zoomorphic vessel, Late Eneolithic, Kodjadermen-Gumelnița-Karanovo VI culture.

Introduction

Animal-shaped (zoomorphic) vessels made from various materials are among the most evocative archaeological finds. They are found in many ancient cultures around the world, and their appearance in the Mediterranean region dates back to the Neolithic. The shape of the vessels, and in some cases the context of their recovery, give the researchers reason to assume that they were not used in everyday life, but had a special – possibly ritualistic function.

A comparatively large number of zoomorphic vessels are known from the distribution area of the Kodjadermen-Gumelnița-Karanovo VI culture, but unfortunately there are few studies devoted to them. The subject of the present work is a zoomorphic vessel from the time of the Late Eneolithic (KGK VI culture), unearthed during the excavations of the tell site "Skritata Mogila" near the village of Poroy, Burgas Province. An attempt is made in this article to place the find from Poroy in the wider context of zoomorphic vessels already known from the area of KGK VI culture.

The Find from the Tell near the Village of Poroy

The tell site called "Skritata mogila" is situated on a low hill on the left bank of a small stream, a right tributary of the Handzhiyska River, and is about 12 km from the Black Sea coast. Its surface was disturbed by numerous looters' pits, one of which had even been made with heavy digging machinery. The archaeological excavations at the site started in 2018, and four habitation (settlement) levels have been recorded so far, all related to the first half of the Late Eneolithic (KGK VI culture) (Попова 2020; 2021; 2022).

The study of one of the burnt buildings (Building # 1) within habitation level 2, related to phase II of KGK VI culture, continued in 2020. The charred grain from the floor of Building # 2 of the same level provided a ^{14}C date – 5686 ± 23 (4555-4452 cal BC). Most of Building # 1 was destroyed by an irregularly shaped dug-in pit filled with materials from the Late Eneolithic and Late Antiquity. A well-preserved furnace and part of a vertical wall were uncovered at the northern end of the

Fig. 1a. Objects found in Building # 1, habitation level # 2, Poroy (photo: T. Dimitrov, Margarita Popova)

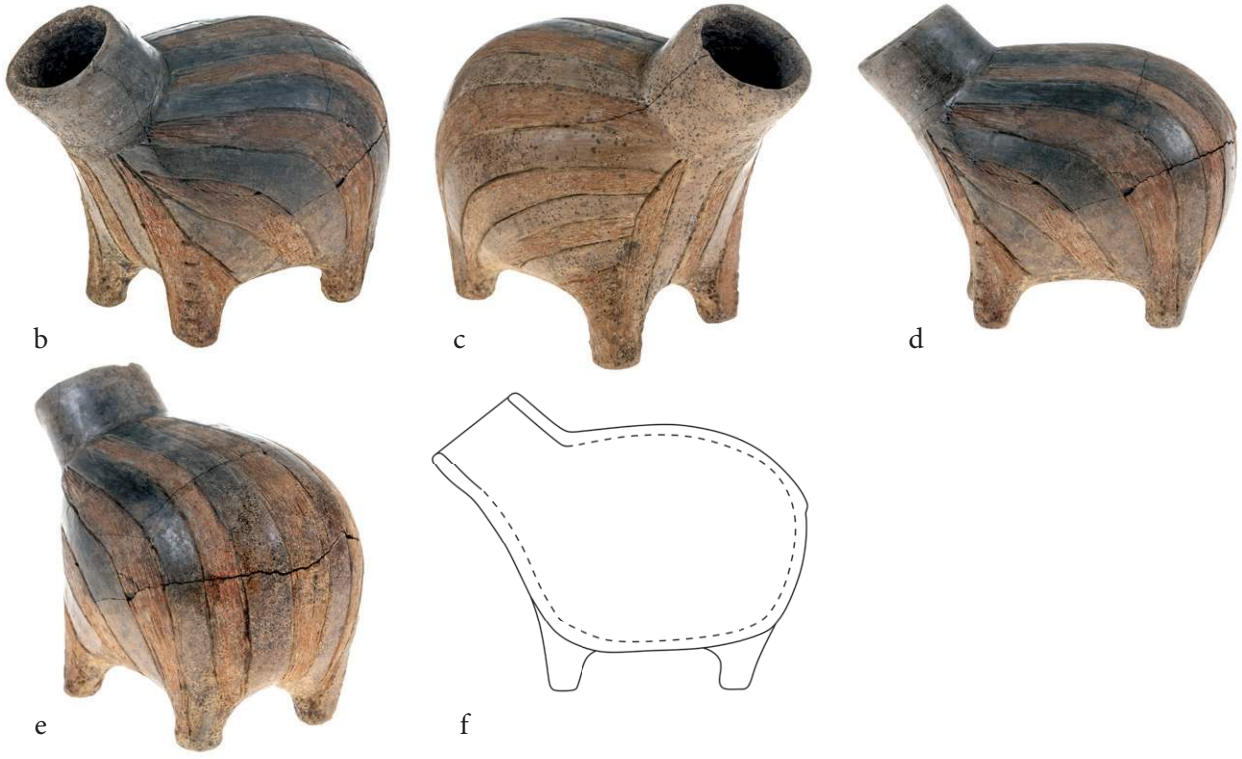

Fig. 1: b-e Zoomorphic vessel, Poroy (photo: T. Dimitrov); **f** Zoomorphic vessel, Poroy (drawing: M. Popova)

building. On the floor level of this section the excavators recovered 21 vessels of various shapes, sizes and decorative motifs, part of a flint super-blade, three bone tools, part of a stone axe, an assemblage of fragmented flint blades, a gold wire (part of an item of jewellery) and an entirely preserved zoomorphic vessel (**fig. 1a**) all *in situ* (Попова 2022, 46-48, fig. 9-10).

The animal-shaped vessel (**fig. 1b-f**) is made from well-refined clay. Because of its being secondarily baked by the fire that destroyed the building, one side of the vessel is beige-red and the other – dark brown-gray. Probably the original colour of the vessel, like the ceramic shapes we know from the period, was dark gray-black. The vessel was found intact, with two cracks running through the neck and body of the animal. No traces of its contents were preserved inside.

Assembling Raw Materials, Techniques and Artifacts: Antler Industry from the Chalcolithic Settlement of Vitănești-Măgurice (Romania)

Archaeologia Bulgarica
XXVI, 1 (2022), 25-56

Monica MĂRGĂRIT / Radian-Romus ANDREESCU /
Katia MOLDOVEANU / Pavel MIREA / Ion TORCICĂ

Abstract: The exploitation of animal resources in an economic system, to process artifacts, has the same sequence of phases: acquisition; transformation; use; and abandonment. This operation involves the implementation of a sequence of actions, first to extract the raw material and then to the manufacture of products obtained from it, and finally their use. The grouping of all the elements resulting from the *chaîne opératoire* – from waste to finished objects – and their analysis in terms of the acquisition of raw materials, the technological procedures that resulted from them and the ways of use, play a crucial role in understanding these economic systems in prehistory. This study was carried out on an archaeological assemblage from the settlement of Vitănești (Teleorman County), Gumelnița B1 level. Analysis of the assemble, made of *Cervus elaphus* antler, in different stages of transformation, allowed the reconstruction of the processes of management of antler, the *chaînes opératoires* and the utilitarian and functional activities implemented with the tools.

Key words: Chalcolithic, Gumelnița culture, *Cervus elaphus*, antler, *chaîne opératoire*.

Introduction

The antler is an outgrowth of the frontal bone, specific to all deer species (Christensen 2004) and being only the privilege of the male at the *Cervus elaphus* species. The antlers grow from the pedicle, which has a bony structure and is located on the frontal bone. They appear from the first year of life, in spring, and reach their maximum size after 3-5 months (Jin / Shipman 2010). Inside, the antler is composed of compact tissue and spongy tissue, the proportion of the two varying by species and by blood irrigation during growth (Grégor 1985; Fritz 1999), as well as by the age or diet of the animal (Billamboz 1979). The proportions, and texture of the spongy tissue also depends on the location within the antler branch (Averbouh 2000). According to specialists, among the osseous materials, the antler has the best elasticity/hardness ratio, being considered from this point of view as best suited to the manufacture of various artifacts specific to the prehistoric toolkit (Averbouh 2000; Riedel et al. 2004; Vercoutère et al. 2007).

Since the Aurignacian (c. 39000-28000 BP), the deer antler was permanently used by prehistoric communities to make tools and weapons (Liolios 1999; Tejero et al. 2012; Tejero 2013). The tradition is maintained over time so that, in some Chalcolithic communities, such as the one presented in this study, where we would expect the predominance of bone artifacts belonging to domestic species, the percentages of antler artifacts represents almost half of the whole assemblage (**table 1**). The purpose of this article is initially a techno-

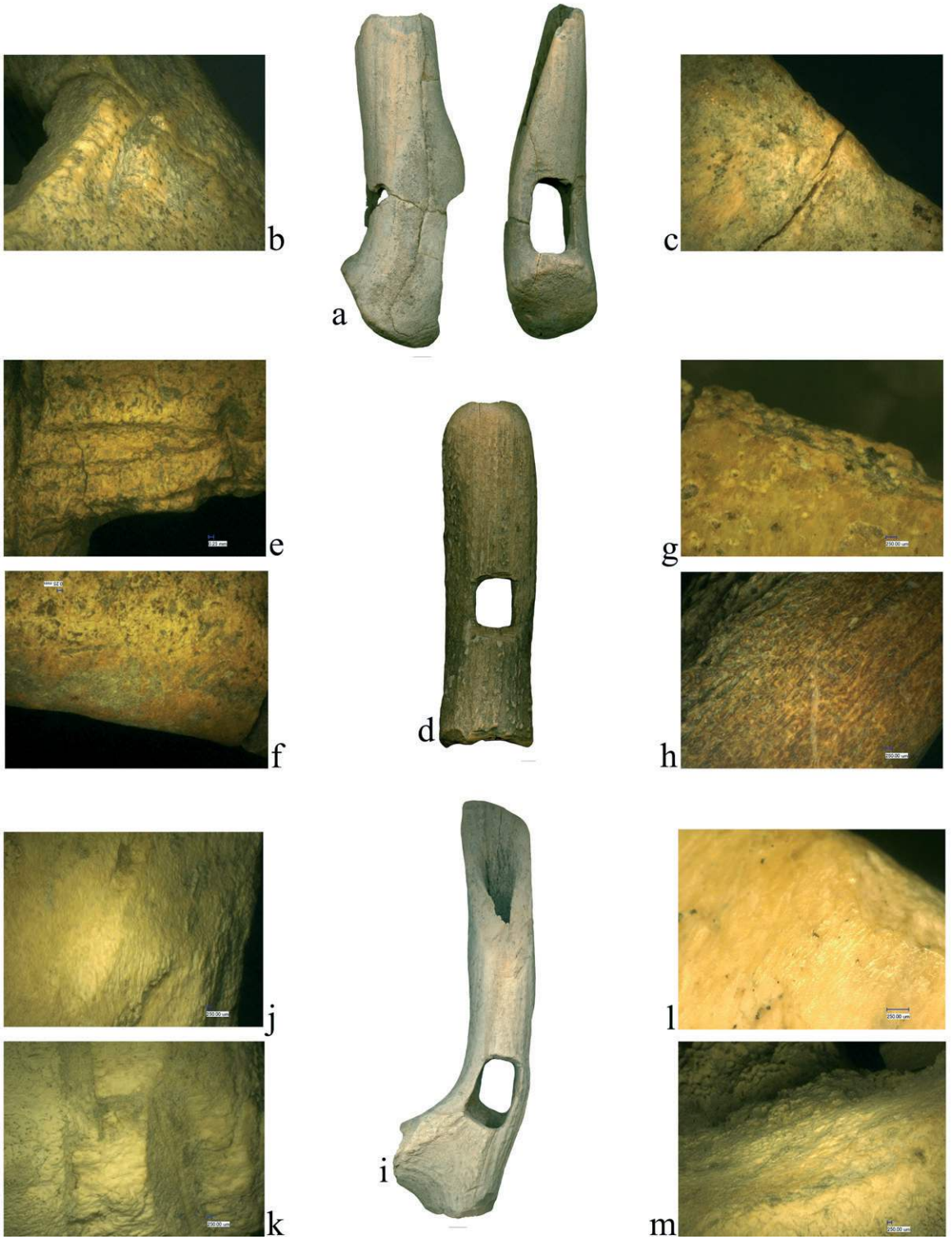

Fig. 3: a, d, i bevelled tools (scale – 1cm); **b, e, m** perforation details (30x, 25x, 20x); **c, g, l** distal end details (30x, 50x, 100x); **f** proximal end detail (25x); **h** shaping of debitage edge (30x); **j, k** direct percussion marks (20x, 20x) (micrographs by Monica Mărgărit)

tive end was shaped through use. An interesting specimen was made of a tine from the branch area, preserving a fragment of the beam (**fig. 6/f**). At the level of the beam, we witness a segmentation – both the beam and a tine by direct percussion applied around the entire circumference. Also, at this level, a perforation with a rectangular morphology was created through percussion (**fig. 6/h**). Immediately after

Minerva Deultensis and the Gigantomachy on Her Shield

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Milena RAYCHEVA

Abstract: The paper presents an unpublished marble statue of the goddess Minerva found in *colonia Flavia Pacis Deultensium*, a veteran settlement in Roman Thrace. In the course of excavations conducted (with interruptions) since 1986, several pieces of an over life-size statue have been uncovered. Despite its fragmented state, the identification of the goddess Minerva is certain due to the preserved characteristic attributes – an *aegis* and a shield. The closest parallel of the statue is found in the Athena Torlonia, a variant of the renowned Giustiniani type. The most unusual aspect of the Deultum statue is that the shield bears an unprecedented relief scene of Gigantomachy, unlike the traditionally depicted Amazonomachy. The statue was found in a secondary context: burnt, broken and used as debris – together with many parts of other statues, votive tablets and architectural details – to fill an abandoned water cistern at an unknown period. Due to the nature of the discovery context, the original location of the statue cannot be determined with certainty. The assembled pieces reveal a rather interesting monument and raise several questions pertaining to the iconography of the goddess in the Roman colony.

Key words: Minerva/Athena, Gigantomachy, shield, Roman sculpture, Flavian colony.

Introduction

Excavations in the northern area of the National Archaeological Reserve "Deultum – Debelt" began in 1986 and, despite several interruptions owing to different factors, are still ongoing[1]. This part of the Reserve is located on elevated terrain, well visible from afar, and is characterized by tall, still standing monumental ruins. The earliest systematic excavation campaigns in Deultum began namely in this promising area and soon revealed impressive remains, perhaps belonging to the same architectural complex, initially interpreted as a "Public Building". After the discovery of a number of (reused?) statue-base inscriptions and notably the fragments from a bronze head of a Septimius Severus statue[2], the site was renamed and known for a long time as "The Imperial Cult Temple"[3]. Inconsistent documentation, combined with complicated stratigraphy, heavily disturbed layers and stone looting over the centuries have presented the archaeologists with a true challenge over the decades and this interpretation remains yet to be confirmed or refuted by future research[4].

The 1986-1988 expedition explored a context which appeared to be the fill of a deep and hollow structure, initially believed to be a well inside an Asclepius temple[5]. The excavations were temporarily suspended for safety reasons. Archaeological investigation was renewed in 2017-2019 and the fill was finally extracted and the bottom of the structure was reached – revealed to be a Roman brick-made cistern (or irregular rectangular plan, of approximately 4.00 x 1.90 m, and depth of 1.35 m, filled and covered with meters-thick layer of debris (Прешленов / Райчева 2018, 311; 2019, 340, обр. 3). The reason for its abandonment is still unclear but it is most likely related to the con-

[1] First excavated by S. Damyanov (1986) and later by P. Balabanov (1987-1988). Since 2017, H. Preshlenov, together with the author, is in charge of the renewed investigations. I express my sincere gratitude to H. Preshlenov for our work together and for letting me publish the statue. Acknowledgement is due also to K. Kostova, director of Deultum Reserve, for letting me access previously discovered fragments of the statue, and to M. Koleva for the valuable discussion on iconography. Special thanks go to S. Kirov, P. Dakasheva, E. Dakashev, A. Alexiev, I. Cholakov, N. Sharankov, K. Kitanov and P. Charalampakis for offering various forms of support.

[2] On the head, its discovery and latest interpretations see Milčeva 2020 and Boteva 2020, with cited literature.

[3] Old interpretation, though tentative: see Азманов 1998, 11, 16; Балабанов / Петрова 2002, 243-244; Draganov 2007, 31; Костова 2013, 64. Latest excavations might suggest otherwise; publication is due.

[4] The excavation in this area is still ongoing and the results and conclusions will be summarized in a forthcoming publication by the team.

[5] The interpretation was due to a fragment of a marble torso of a youth and fragments of an unrelated snake sculpture; as well as the assumption that an "Imperial cult temple" could be constructed above a predating temple.

Fig. 4. A four-side view of the reconstructed statue of Minerva (drawing M. Raycheva)

The missing head is reconstructed according to the Vatican specimen which is the most preserved copy to-day. It is interesting to note that the Athena Torlonia used to be exhibited with a different head, turned to her right, according to a 16th century engraving (although there is no indication that that head was original), but was eventually replaced in the 18th century with its current head in order to resemble Giustiniani (Dodero 2020, 288-289, # 87). Other copies that do contain heads, like the specimen found in Ephesus (Izmir Museum, inv. 11; Atalay 1989, # 5, 65-68), as well as single finds of busts, confirm

Two Amulets with Isis and Harpocrates from the Roman Imperial Period Found in Bulgaria

Nikolay MARKOV

Archaeologia Bulgarica
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Abstract: Two silver amulets with the images of Isis and Harpocrates, found in Bulgaria, are presented. A brief overview of the already known 19 similar amulets was made. It has been suggested that these amulets were probably part of the burial inventory of followers of the Egyptian cults who inhabited the Danube region in the 2nd – 3rd century AD.

Kew words: amulets, Roman, Isis, Harpocrates, the Balkans.

Introduction

The respectable scholarly literature on the subject of the penetration of Eastern cults into the European territories of the Roman Empire has focused almost invariably on the appreciable monuments testifying to this process, including the remains of temples, temple complexes, and lapidary monuments (large sculptures, reliefs and inscriptions). Much less interest has traditionally been shown in the smaller, often inconspicuous objects, which are most often related to the spiritual attitudes of individual members of society, such as amulets. This selectivity led to a relative distortion of our knowledge of the spiritual life in the Roman society during the imperial period. In fact, the study of the material traces of the popular notions has been largely neglected because of the focus on the monuments of the official cult art. The attempt in this paper to deviate from the official mainstream must undoubtedly assess the accumulation of empirical material, which will then be summarised in order to finally reach a consistent and more reliable picture of our ancestors' life. In addition, the practical benefit of such a study would be undoubted, because it will allow for a more accurate definition of the divine protagonists represented in the monuments, of their attributes or related scenes, and the so-called syncretic deities will begin to take on an ever more precise and complete form.

Guided by such thoughts, I am tempted to present in the following lines two amulets found in Bulgaria. They are associated with the cult from the Roman period of the ancient Egyptian deities Isis and Harpocrates[1] (Graecised name of the Egyptian deity Horus the Child, by *interpretatio graeca* also Karpocratès, '*lord of the fruits of the earth*')[2] which has been known to scholars for centuries. Such small artefacts are exclusively accidental finds, although they have been known for some time, the specialists' attention was drawn to them only fifteen years ago[3]; but I know no published examples in the Bulgarian scholarly literature.

Discussion

The first of these amulets belongs to a private collection[4]. The amulet was made by casting from low-grade silver[5] and, as can be seen in the photo (**fig. 1**), it presents Isis (left) and Harpocrates (right), the

[1] A remarkably large number of works were written in Europe on the cult of Isis in the Roman period. Even listing them would take at least a hundred pages. Things are different with the studies of the cult of Harpocrates, although the interest in its cult originated in Antiquity. Also, as far as I know, except for a dozen or more generalising smaller and larger works, the single largest study devoted to date is the monograph by Michel Malaise (Malaise 2011) which is mainly related to historiographical works on the problem; hence there is no illustrative part in it.

[2] There are already many scholarly publications on the Egyptian cults in the Balkans during the Hellenistic and Roman periods. Here I will mention only some of the fundamental works: 1. Drexler 1890 (especially about the Balkans 38-124); 2. Zotović 1966 (especially 54-59), in which p. 56 reads '*…the cults of Magna Mater, Serapis and Isis in the Eastern Balkans are spread only in a narrow area along the Black Sea coast. … Indeed, this situation cannot be considered final: the insufficiently studied central and eastern Balkan regions may one day give us a very different picture.*'; 3. Kobylina / Névérov 1976 (in particular 34-52; 68-70), in the catalogue of which several amulets are included, but none similar to those discussed here; 4. Berciu / Petolescu 1976 (especially 5-7; 30-34); 5. Тачева-Хитова 1982 (in particular 12-116); 6. Vidman 1989 (On the Balkans, 993-1008); 7. Bricault 2007; 8. Budischovsky 2007; 9. Атанасова / Брико 2020. It should be noted that in none of these works is an amulet published that is similar to those discussed here; such are also not published in any of the articles on the problems of Egyptian cults in the Balkans known to me.

[3] The first and so far the only researchers of these small art pieces are the Frenchman Laurent Bricault and the Belgian Richard Veymiers. In their joint report 'Silver Figurines from the Danube Limes with the Images of Isis and Harpocrates', read in Budapest in 2004, they present not only

Fig. 1. Amulet with Isis and Harpocrates from a private collection in Bulgaria

4 cm, width 3.3 cm, authentic...' This second exemplar is just as primitively made as the previous one. In fact, this more or less primitive workmanship characterises, without exception, all 19 similar figures already known. For comparison, I refer here to the already mentioned work of Laurent Bricault and Richard Veymiers (Bricault / Veymiers 2006), in which 10 specimens were collected and another was added a few years later (**fig. 2**)[11]. In addition to the two amulets already presented, I myself can add six more examples, data on which I found in various (printed and electronic) sales lists[12]. I list them without following the order of their appearance on the market: 1. Silver amulet, put up for auction in London in June 2013 (**fig. 3**), its height is 39 mm, but the base is missing; its origin is indicated in this way: '*On the UK art market, acquired before 1980*' (TimeLine Auctions 2013, 50, Lot 504); 2. Silver amulet, defined by the dealers of TimeLine Auctions in 2016 as a '*Roman plaque with Isis and Harpocrates*', the origin of which is indicated as: '*Property of a German collector; acquired in the 80s – 90s*', its specified size is [height] 36 mm (**fig. 4**)[13]; 3. Silver amulet purchased without any information about its origin on eBay in 2020[14] (**fig. 5**), the dimensions submitted by its new owner are 3.2 x 3.2 cm; 4. A silver amulet designated by a Gorny & Mosch dealer as a pendant, presented for sale on 18 December 2018 in the Gorny & Mosch Antique Art Trade Catalogue # 260 in Munich (Lot 231c) (**fig. 6**), the size of 3.1 cm is that of the width, and the origin is indicated as '*acquired from the collection of A. A. in Munich between 1992 and 1996*' (Gorny & Mosch 2018, 140, Lot 231c); 5. Silver amulet, again identified by the dealer as a pendant, sold on 13 November 2019 in Munich at an auction organised by Hermann Historica (Lot 2021) (**fig. 7**), indicated height of 3.9 cm; as to its origin it is indicated: '*From southern Germany, preserved in a private collection. Purchased in the 1970s and 1980s at the art market*'[15]; 6. Silver amulet, defined as a pendant in the trade sheet of H. D. Rauch, Vienna from November 18, 2010 (D 1266), the indicated height is 35 mm, the place of origin is mentioned only as '*from the Danube area*' (Donaulände) (**fig. 8**)[16].

As it is clearly seen, the organisers of auctions today, despite the legal requirements, have managed to well conceal the origin of the objects of interest to us, and thus deprived their researchers of essential information. Indeed, only one of the 19 specimens in my knowledge

[11] In 2008 Laurent Bricault and Jean-Louis Podvin published another example (Bricault / Podvin 2008, 19-20, # 5, fig. 26).

[12] I have to accept the assertions of the dealers of the respective auctions about the authenticity of these exemplars.

[13] TimeLine Auctions. Antiquities. 25 February 2016. London. Lot 235, offered again on the market at the same auction of 6 December 2016, Lot 196. (https://www.ac-search.info/search.html?similar=526447)

[14] The internet address of the item at this auction is https://www.ebay.com/itm/123311326976 (currently inactive). Now more images of the same amulet can be seen online at https://www.catawiki.com/l/21778501-ancient-roman-silver-pendant-of-isis-holding-cornuptia-and-harpotcrates-3-2-x-3-2.

[15] https://veryimportantlot.com/en/lot/view/silberanhanger-mit-isis-und-harpokrates-romisch-254613 (The same amulet was put up for auction again by the same auctioneer on October 30, 2015, Lot 3612).

[16] H. D. Rauch-2, 18 November 2010, 203, D 1266 (https://issuu.com/core_tech_gmbh/docs/575)

On the Origins of Tilling Tools of the Migration Period in the Middle Volga Region

Archaeologia Bulgarica
XXVI, 1 (2022), 93-108

Leonid A. VYAZOV / Yulia A. SALOVA

Abstract: The Migration period brought about dramatic changes to the cultural pattern of Eastern Europe. Along with movements of population groups, new artifact assemblages and new economic technologies spread over Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals. With regards to the Middle Volga region, the migration processes started here the Imen'kovo culture (4th – 7th c. AD) with a pronounced role of farming in the economy. Having no local predecessors, the assemblage of agricultural tools of the Imen'kovo is one of the markers of population movement and can be used as a proxy for reconstructing the origins of migration flows. In this paper, we consider the ploughshares from the Middle Volga region, dated from 5th to 7th c. AD. The most conspicuous category of the Imen'kovo agricultural implements, the ploughshares were probably used as ard tips and were introduced to the region by one of the migration waves somewhere in the 5th c. AD. Between then and the establishment of the Early Medieval states, i.e. Khazarian Kaganate, Kievan Rus', and Volga Bulgaria, the area of the Imen'kovo culture was a territory with the most numerous finds of ploughshares from the Urals to the Wisla. To reveal the origin of the migration which brought ploughshares so far to the East, we undertook a typological analysis of ploughshares found in the sites of the first millennium AD in Central and Eastern Europe. According to this analysis we distinguish a special type of ploughshares, typified by small size and tiny "wings" in the transition from blade to the socket, as a specific category of artifacts that first appeared in the Dniester region and later spread widely with Chernyakhov culture and subsequently with migrations of its population. At the end of the Migration period, this category was replaced by more effective wide-bladed ploughshares. The ploughshares of the Imen'kovo culture, therefore, originated from the ploughshares of Chernyakhov culture from some distinct region in the Dnieper and Dniester interfluves and remained conserved and unchanged as an agricultural tool of the Middle Volga population until the desolation of the region after 650 AD.

Key words: Eastern Europe, Migration period, Middle Volga region, Imen'kovo culture, agriculture, ploughshares, classification.

Introduction

The Migration Period was one of the important stages for the appearance and spread of cultural "innovations" in the Middle Volga, bringing significant changes to the ethnocultural structure and lifestyle of the population in the region. The more distinct changes affected their economic organization. Among the new types of tools present in the Middle Volga region during the Migration period were iron ploughshares, sickles, millstones, and axes with long narrow blades. The increase in the number of iron tools was accompanied by a spread of new metalworking technologies across the region. This assemblage of tools and related technologies had a cross-cultural character. However, it is most completely represented in the Imen'kovo culture (450-650 AD), the largest cultural group of the Middle Volga region in the period studied (Матвеева 2003).

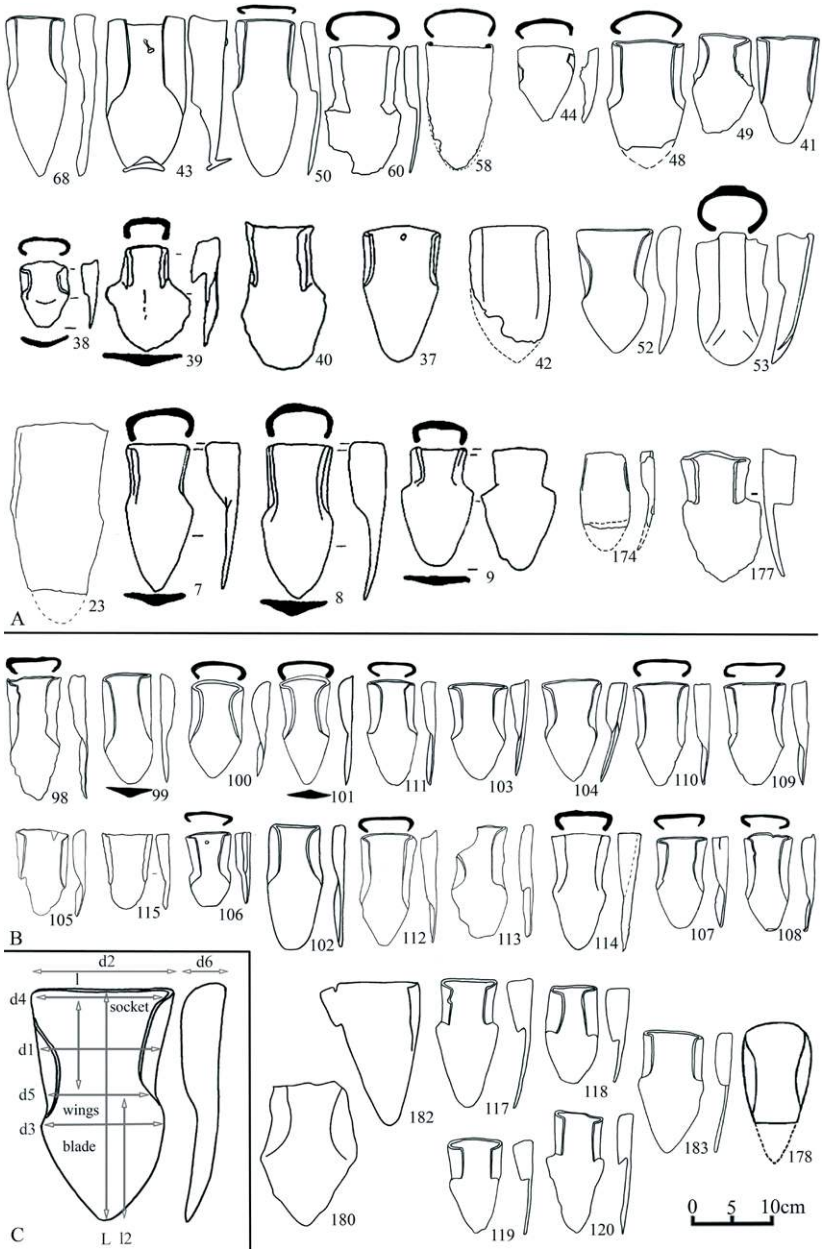

Fig. 2. East European ploughshares of the first half of the first millennium AD. **A** ploughshares from the sites of the 2nd quarter of the first millennium AD: **68** after Цигилик 1975, 115; **43, 44** after Сымонович 1993, 289; **50** after Бейдин et al. 2006, 328; **60** after Городенко / Ткачук 1990, 253 and Строцень 2008, 229; **42, 48** after Магомедов 2001, 282; **49** after Рикман 1959, 116; **41** after Брайчевская 1960, 175, 189; **38** after Henning 1987, Taf. 20/11; **39** after Henning 1987, Taf. 16/24; **40** after Henning 1987, Taf. 16/23; **37** after Henning 1987, Taf. 20/7; **53** after Федоров 1960, 322; **23** after Генинг 1963, табл. XXVI; **7-8** after Henning 1987, Taf. 18/11-12; **9** after Henning 1987, Taf. 14/15; **174** after Горбаненко / Пашкевич 2010, 105, 4/2-4; **177** after Горбаненко / Пашкевич 2010, 105, 4/2-1. **B** ploughshares from the sites of the 3rd quarter of the first millennium AD: **98, 106-112, 115** museum collections; **99** after Казаков 1986, 123, 127; **100-102** after Степанов 1967, 204; **103-104** after Матвеева 2003, 149; **105** after Семыкин 2007, 83; **113** after Старостин 1967; **114** after Руденко 2010; **180, 182** after Горбаненко / Пашкевич 2010, 106, 4/3-3, 5; **117-120** after Приходнюк 2005, 124; **183** after Приходнюк 1998, 131, 60/2; **178** after Горбаненко 2016, 132, 4/2. **C** scheme of elements and measurements of a ploughshare

Several ploughshares of the cultures of 5th – 7th c. AD, such as Pen'kovka, Prague and Kolochin as well as findings from Pastyrskoye hillfort, were also considered here. This is due to the fact that tilling tools implements are quite rare for these cultures: only 10 finds are currently known and only half of them are available for measurements (**fig. 2B/117-120, 178, 180, 182).**

About 80 ploughshares originated from the dated sites are published in the monograph of Henning (1987) were found on the territory of Roman Danube provinces, 59 of them are preserved well enough to allow classification according to their shape and details of manufacturing. These samples were also considered in this paper without measurements (**fig. 2A/7-11, fig. 3, fig. 4B**).

All ploughshares mentioned above are from the sites of the 1st half of the first millennium AD, i.e. they are of the same period or they do precede Imen'kovo ploughshares. In fact, this selection may be limited by these samples. However, we also used 56 samples from sites of East

New Data About the "Last" Uncovered Imperial Mosaic in Hagia Sophia

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Alexander STANKOV

Abstract: The recent uncovering of a mosaic representation of the Byzantine Emperor John V Palaiologos in the Constantinople Hagia Sophia allows careful analysis for the first time, and provides an opportunity to look possibly for its parallels among the works of the Byzantine art, part of the world cultural heritage. It may be safely assigned to one of the last top creations of the Byzantine mosaic and fine art from 14th c., developing in proximity to the creative processes to the west of Constantinople.

Key words: Constantinople, Hagia Sophia, mosaic, John V Palaiologos, culture, mastery, humanism.

Introduction

The capital of the Eastern Roman Empire, Constantinople, present-day Istanbul, continues to reveal even until today its magnificent secrets. The emblematic Hagia Sophia is an integral part of the thousand-year-old cultural heritage of the city, which is present in our lives today[1].

Several drawings of the church interior, made by Western travellers[2] and explorers, which show quite roughly the existence of the original mosaic decoration that the Ottomans found in May of 1453, have reached us. The mosaics and the Christian images were initially left open by the Muslims, but over time many of them were damaged and were irrevocably lost for the science, while others were covered and disappeared under plaster to wait for their fate in the indefinite future.

The situation remained such until 1847 when Sultan Abdulmejid I (1839-1861) decided that the state of the building was so deplorable that it needed urgent restoration and repair to be saved. He hired the Fossati brothers[3] who took up the restoration and renovation of its decoration. In the process of the work, they uncovered and documented various mosaics that were concealed for centuries under the plaster layer. The Sultan ordered to recover the mosaics, and on them, the brothers drew geometrical and floral figures similar to the original initial Justinianic decoration. Their work is visible, even until today, on the greater part of the internal drawn surfaces of the building.

In 1931, under the leadership of Thomas Whittemore[4], the Byzantine Institute of America received permission to uncover the mosaics in Hagia Sophia, after it was turned into a museum by the founder of the Turkish Republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. The project took 18 years and, nevertheless, failed to discover and localize many of the mosaics, known from black-and-white drawings and sketches, whose state, fate and exact location remain unknown to this day.

[1] I would like to thank Associate Prof. Dimcho Momchilov, who supported and encouraged me in the whole process of publication creation, for the assistance rendered.

[2] Among them are the names of: Cornelius Loos and Guillaume-Joseph Grelot.

[3] The Fossati brothers, Gaspare (7 October 1809 – 5 September 1883) and Giuseppe (1822–1891), were Swiss architects. They completed more than 50 projects in Turkey during the Tanzimat era. Gaspare was a superb draftsman and a master of renovations. He is most noted for his renovation of the Hagia Sofia in Constantinople, which virtually saved it from destruction.

[4] Thomas Whittemore (January 2, 1871 – June 8, 1950) was an American scholar and archaeologist who founded the Byzantine Institute of America. His close personal relationship with Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, founder and the first president of the Turkish Republic, enabled him to gain permission from the Turkish government to start the preservation of the Hagia Sophia mosaics in 1931.

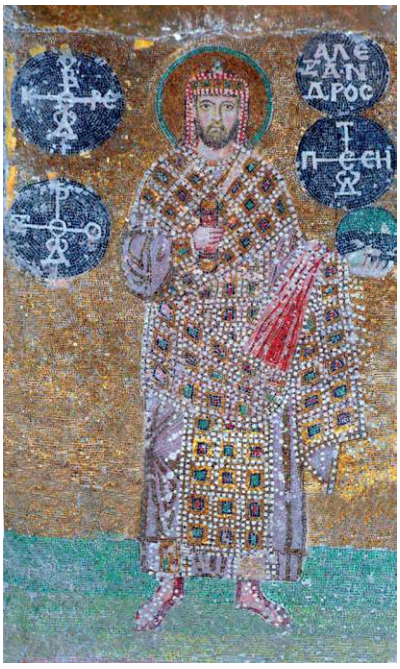

Fig. 3. Hagia Sophia, the mosaic of Emperor Alexander (photo taken by the author on 30.09.2006)

Fig. 4. Hagia Sophia, the mosaic of Empress Zoe and Constantine Monomachos (photo taken by the author on 30.09.2006)

Fig. 5. Hagia Sophia, the mosaic of John II Comnenus (photo taken by the author on 30.09.2006)

located on the second floor in a dark corner near the ceiling. It may be dated exactly to the period 912-913. The imperial compositions in the upper southern gallery are two – the Empress Zoe mosaic on the eastern wall of the southern gallery dates from the 11th century **(fig. 4)** (Oikonomides 1978, 219-232). The Comnenus rule mosaic **(fig. 5)** located next to it dates from 1122. The Deësis mosaic is also located in the southern gallery and was most probably commissioned to mark the end of the 57-year Latin occupation (Talbot 1993) of Constantinople and the return of the Eastern Orthodox faith to the city and the church.

During the analysis of those mosaics, an impression is made by the way the eyes of the imperial images are directed downwards or to one side of the viewer. The faces are hard set and unmeaning. Such are