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On the cover: the scene on Jug #2 of the early medieval *Nagyszentmiklós* reasure; photo after The Gold of the Avars: The Nagyszentmiklós Treasure. Budapest. 2002, 17; see the paper of N. Markov in this issue.

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Lead Mirror with Greek Inscriptions from the Collection of the Regional Museum of History – Silistra

Mirena SLAVOVA

Archaeologia Bulgarica
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Abstract: The article presents a lead mirror with Greek inscriptions from the collection of the Regional Museum of History in Silistra. It consists of a die-cast frame with a handle and a cover plate welded to the rear to support the reflecting mirror. The mirror is richly decorated with two peacocks drinking water from a kantharos, with floral ornaments, embossing points, ivy leaves, and stars. A Greek inscription on the front side of the handle extension translates as: *The charm*, whereas another inscription on the cover reads *For the beautiful lady all the beautiful things are suitable. Buy me!*

The mirror is remarkable for its relatively large reflective surface which indicates its utilitarian function. On the basis of a general overview of the Greek inscribed lead mirrors with utilitarian function from the Eastern provinces of the Roman Empire discovered so far, a three-part classification is proposed: mirrors with elliptical inscriptions, mirrors with an "advertising" statement including a verb, and "talking" mirrors with an imperative sentence.

The Silistra mirror is distinguished by both its original combination of formulas of the second and third types and its rich ornamentation.

Key words: Greek inscriptions on ancient lead mirrors, Roman period, Silistra.

In one of the showcases on the second floor of the exhibition of the Regional Museum of History – Silistra, the eye of the curious visitor may come across a small but impressive artifact – a lead mirror with Greek inscriptions[1].

It was handed over to the museum in 2003 and was registered on October 10 of the same year under inv. # RIM-SS-A-OF / II 2219 without information about the location of its discovery. The mirror is made of lead, today darkened by patina, with a total length of 14.5 cm. It consists of a round lead frame cast in a mold, elongated in a handle, and a lid (**fig. 1**). The outer diameter of the frame is 7.8 cm. Its front side is decorated with embossed dots in two concentric circles along its outer and inner circle. They enclose a border with 18 leaf-like ornaments made by adjacent reverse S-shaped motifs, between which there is a relief point. The ornaments themselves are separated by three perpendicular relief points. At the top of the frame there are two protrusions with holes, which may be intended for hanging the mirror. In its inner circle, the frame ends with an edge that has held a thin mirror[2] with a diameter of 4.9 / 5.1 cm, probably convex (judging by the presence of protruding parts of the lid). Convex mirrors have the advantage of increased field of view and were therefore preferred in Antiquity and the Middle Ages.

The reverse side of the frame is decorated on its outer circumference with embossed dots framing a field with ivy ornaments (**fig. 2**). At the back, on the inner circle of the frame, a round lead cover cracked in the middle is attached by soldering in four places. Its front

[1] I would like to thank the Director of the Regional Museum of History – Silistra, Dr. Nicolay Todorov, and his colleagues who provided me with information from the inventory book in the museum, for the opportunity to publish the mirror, as well as the anonymous reviewer for the notes and suggestions made.

[2] In a recently published multidisciplinary study of a second-century AD lead mirror found in Padua, archaeometric results show that on its concave side the reflective surface was covered with a thin lead layer of only 200 μm (Rossi et al. 2019).

part was covered with the glass reflective surface of the mirror, which left whitish traces on it, and on its back there is an embossed Greek inscription in five lines.

The length of the handle is 5.9 cm. It was cast together with the frame, which passes into it with a trapezoidal widening. On its both sides there is a spiral hook, twisted backwards, for hanging. On its obverse there is a horizontal line of relief points, above which a two-line relief Greek inscription is read. Below it, the handle continues with a decoration of drop-shaped ornaments with a relief point in the middle, stylization of the club of Heracles, which in jewelry and amulets usually has an apotropaic function[3].

The height of the letters of the inscription is 0.7 cm. On the first line there are three letters, and in the two corners of the field there is one relief point. The other two letters are symmetrically cast on the second line, with four more relief points at the end and between them. Lunar sigma, A with longer right leg (**fig. 1**).

Ἡ χάρ-
ις.
Translation: The charm.

Fig. 1. Front side of the mirror (courtesy of the Regional Museum of History – Silistra)

The translation requires clarification. Since this is a larger mirror, apparently used in everyday life for its intended purpose, the inscription probably refers to the beauty of its owner – "(This is) the charm." However, when it comes to votive mirrors of smaller dimensions, χάρις is synonymous with εὐχαριστήριον "gift of thanksgiving" (Добруски 1896, 406; Кацаров 1914, 107)[4].

There is another five-line relief inscription cast in matrix on the reverse side of the mirror cover. The height of the letters is 0.7 cm, the sigma (l. 3, 4, 5) and the epsilon (l. 2, 5) are lunar, A (l. 1, 2, 3, 4) and Λ with longer right leg (l. 1, 2), cursive M (l. 5). Ligature of Π and P on l. 2. *Iota adscriptum* is missing.

Above the inscription, a relief image of two peacocks in profile facing each other and drinking water from a kantharos is depicted. The beginning and the end of the inscription are marked by one asterisk, and two others have the function of punctuation marks on l. 2 and l. 4. The inscription field is filled with an ivy leaf at the end of l. 3, as well as with relief points – two at the bottom of the inscription symmetrically to the birds, and another two inside, between the letters (l. 3), and above M (l. 5). The plumbarius has shown a real *horror vacui* in the design and decoration of the inscription field. His aim to transfer words at the syllable boundaries is also impressive, with only one exception in l. 4.

The text reads as follows:

Τῇ καλῇ
τὰ καλὰ πρέ-
πουσι πάν-
τα. Ἀγόρασό-
ν με σύ.

Translation: For the beautiful lady all the beautiful things are suitable. Buy me!

[3] For the finds in Bulgaria, see Кирякова 2018, 119-121.

[4] Crossing the boundary between the quotidian and sacred in the functioning of the same artifact is easily feasible, especially if its size is reduced. When an object of everyday life becomes too small to perform its usual function and becomes something "deliberately non-functional", its purpose is often interpreted as ritual, as long as it only imitates its prototype (Foxhall 2015, 2-3). This does not exclude the possibility of donating an expensive and usable object to the deity *ex voto.*

Votive Reliefs from Nozrina near Aleksinac (Thracian Influences in the Cult Practice of Upper Moesia)

Archaeologia Bulgarica
XXVI, 2 (2022), 9-20

Bojana PLEMIĆ / Ljubiša VASILJEVIĆ

Abstract: A few votive monuments from the village of Nozrina in the vicinity of the town of Aleksinac (southern Serbia) are currently housed in the National Museum in Kruševac, representing the accidental finds from the site of Mogile. These are the two previously published reliefs, depicting Helios/Apollo and God Mithras, which are analysed in detail herein, as well as a small fragment which is recognised here as a part of the representation of the Thracian horseman. The solar character of the worshipped deities and the data attesting that the monuments dedicated to Jupiter and the dyad of Jupiter and Juno were found on the same site, prompted us to the assume that this could be a small sanctuary active in the late Roman period. A counterpart to such sacral ambience can be found in Ravna (*Timacum Minus*), and partially in the sanctuary of Zeus and Hera at Belava near Pirot, while the nature of the deities represented in Nozrina, including the inscriptions, show that its dedicants could have been primarily of Thracian origin.

Key words: Helios/Apollo, Thracian horseman, Mithras, syncretism, Greek inscriptions, cult, sanctuary.

Introduction

The geographical area of Upper Moesia and the provinces formed on the same territory during the administrative division of the Roman Empire in the Late antiquity were characterised by a strong local component as well as of a significant impact of various cultures, among which Hellenistic, Thracian and Italic predominated. This paper presents several votive monuments from the village of Nozrina near the town of Aleksinac in southern Serbia, where a complex sacral image that may have resulted from such influences was recognised. These are fragments of reliefs depicting Helios/Apollo and the God Mithras in tauroctony, as well as a small fragment of a relief identified as a representation of the Thracian horseman. The first two finds have already been published (Васиљевић 2017, 23-25; Plemić / Vasiljević 2021), but it was considered necessary to analyse them in more detail in this paper and place them in a wider context. In this way, the paper notices their connection to the complex processes of syncretism typical of the late Roman epoch, i.e., to the features of the religious practice of the nearby province of Thrace, which led us to an assumption that these monuments may have been placed in a small sanctuary, mainly visited by worshippers of Thracian origin.

Aleksinac Depression in the Roman Times

The village of Nozrina is situated in the Aleksinac depression, in the northern part of south Pomoravlje (the Morava Valley) which is connected with the Niš depression in the south**.** The Romans were present in this area since the second half of the 2nd century BC, during the campaigns on the territories north of the province of Macedonia. As

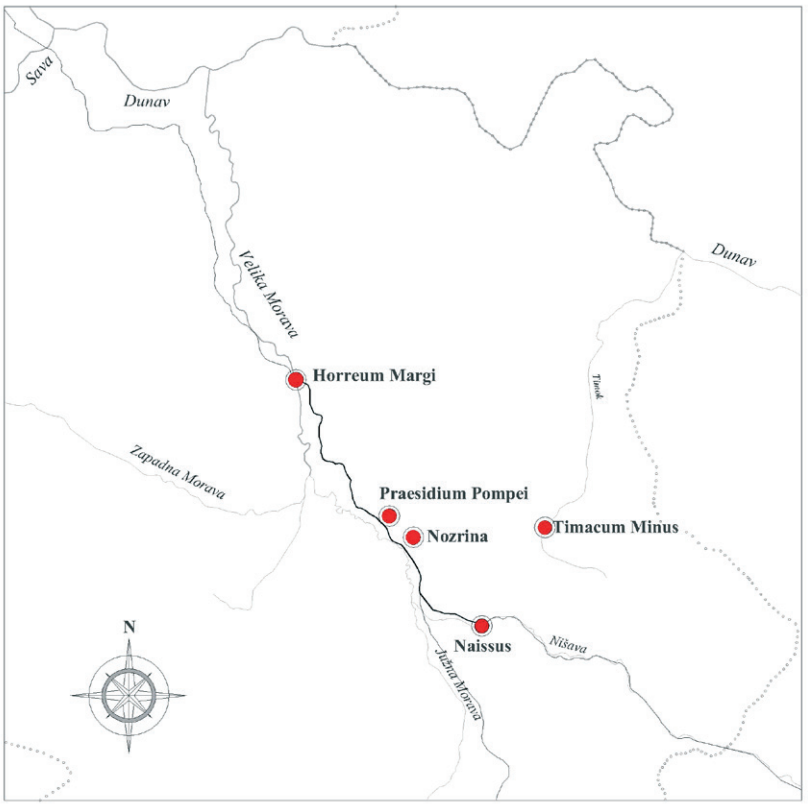

Fig. 1. Position of village Nozrina in the Roman province of Upper Moesia (map by Nataša Miladinović, National Museum Kruševac)

Fig. 2. Votive relief with a depiction of Helios/Apollo from Nozrina (photo: National Museum Kruševac)

tion. It consists of three joining fragments from the lower part of a votive plate which represented a deity in a chariot. The width is 20 cm, the maximum preserved height measures 17 cm, and the thickness is 3.5 cm. The preserved part of the relief depicts part of the legs and the cloak belonging to a figure who rides a chariot with two wheels, of which the right one with six spikes is visible. In front of the chariot there are figures of prancing horses, or more precisely one prancing

Rekonstruktion von Drehmühlen der Sântana de Mureş – Černjachov-Kultur nach Materialien aus der Siedlung Vojtenki (Ostukraine)

Archaeologia Bulgarica
XXVI, 2 (2022), 21-38

Michail LJUBIČEV / Dmitrij FILATOV / Erdmute SCHULTZE

Abstract: Agriculture is considered to be the basis for economic growth of the Chernyakhov culture. Due to influence of the Roman provincial culture, the progress of Chernyakhov agriculture was also associated with the massive use of querns. Despite numerous finds of mill stones there is a problem concerning the stand or table, on which the stones were located, and the reconstruction of the mill. On the settlement of Voitenki (East Ukraine) a part of the wooden table of a hand mill was discovered. The table consists of two massive beams rectangular in cross section, made of common oak (*Quercus robur L*). In the middle of the beams, at their junction, a round recess is carved for the lower stone of a quern. There were rye (*Secale L*) grains on the charred surface of the table. The ^{14}C dates of the wooden structure are 248-337 AD (with a probability of 68%) or 240-362 AD (with a probability of 95%). This mill from the settlement in Voitenki has been integrated in a structure of clay and timber at ground level. This construction included remains of an oven, a hearth and some loom weights. Size and character of the building are discussed as well as possible reconstructions of a wooden stand for working with the quern.

Key words: Late Roman Period, Sântana de Mureş – Chernyakhov Culture, settlement Voitenki, hand mill, wooden table of the quern.

Einführung

Die Landwirtschaft bildete die Grundlage für den ökonomischen Aufschwung der Černjachov-Kultur und das Anwachsen der Bevölkerung (Магомедов 2001, 89). Durch den provinzial-römischen Einfluss ist der Fortschritt in der Landwirtschaft außer mit einen weiten Verbreitung von eisernen Beschlägen an den Ackergeräten (Schneidmesser), neuen Typen von Sicheln und Sensen auch mit der massiven Nutzung von Handmühlen aus leichten Mahlsteinen verbunden, einem Typ der antiken Drehmühlen (Магомедов 2001, 89; Минасян 1978, 101-102). Solche Drehmühlen hatten bereits einen langen Entwicklungsweg hinter sich, bevor sie zu einem Element der provinzial-römischen Kultur wurden. Ihre Erfinder waren wahrscheinlich die Phönizier, die Drehmühlen dank ihrer Handelswege schnell im Mittelmeerraum verbreiteten. Teile von ins 6.-5. Jh. v. Chr. datierten Mahlsteine stammen aus Tunis, Spanien, Sizilien, aber auch aus England, wohin die Mühlen als Resultat des Handels mit Zinn gelangten (Wefers 2012, 20, Abb. 2). Im Verlaufe des 4.-1. Jhs. v. Chr. gelangten Handdrehmühlen auch ins Gebiet nördlich der Alpen und wurden in Griechenland bekannt. Funde von Mahlsteinfragmenten dieser Periode sind auch aus Schlesien bekannt, wohin sie die Kelten der Latènezeit brachten (Wefers 2012, Abb. 2). Danach fand ein umgekehrter Transfer statt, als die Drehmühlen durch die keltische

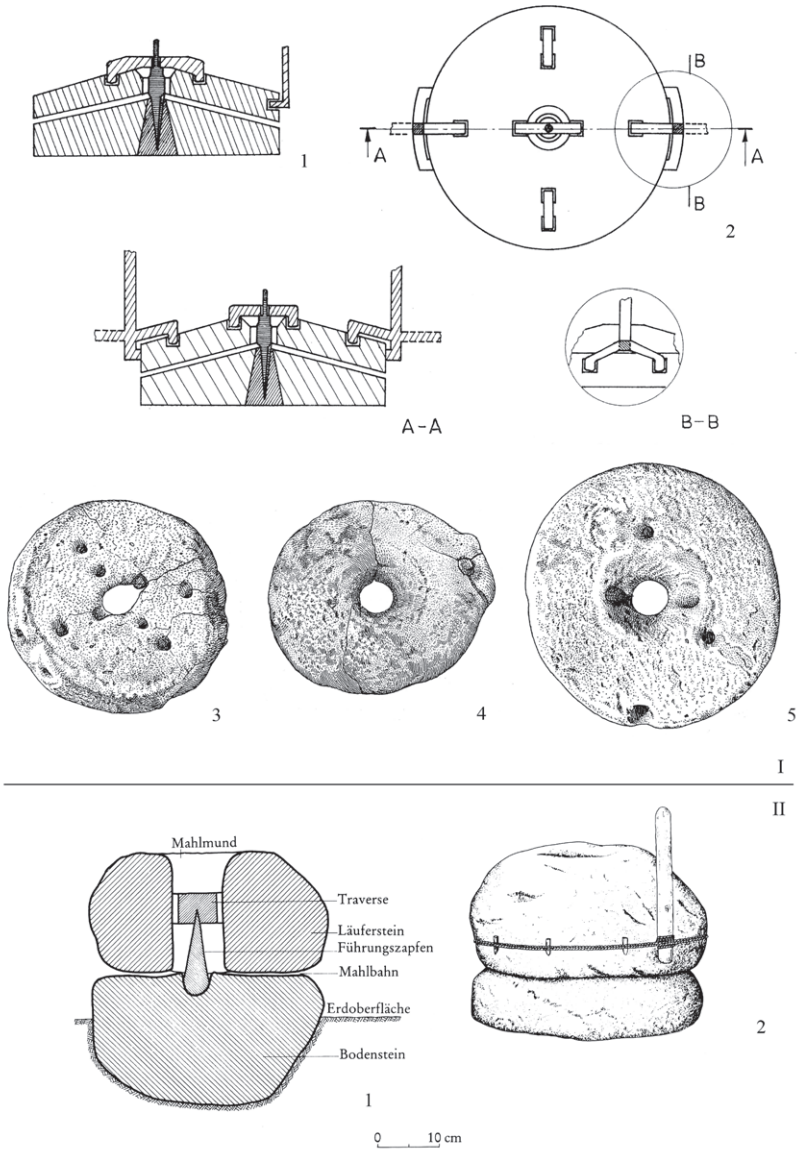

Abb. 1. Mühle aus den Provinzen des Römischen Reiches (**I**) und dem mitteleuropäischen Barbaricum (**II**). **I: 1** Querschnitt der Mühle mit seitlichem Drehschwengel; **2** Querschnitt der Mühle mit dreifach verklammertem Drehschwengel; **3-5** Mahlsteine aus Iatrus-Krivina (Gomolka-Fuchs 1982, Abb. 17, 18, Taf. 73/685, 695); **II:** Handmühle aus Waltersdorf; **1** – Profil; **2** – äußere Rekonstruktion (Krüger 1987, Abb. 62)

Arbeitsoberfläche (Хавлюк 1973, 37). Nahe der Černjachov-Siedlung bei Žornice, Lugovaja (Illineckij Rajon, Obl. Vinnica), wo der oberste Teil des Kraters eines früheren Vulkans (Caldera) die Oberfläche erreicht, befinden sich nach P. I. Havljuk alte Steinbrüche für den Abbau des von Erde bedeckten Effusivgesteins. Daraus wurden Mahlsteine hergestellt, deren Verbreitungsgebiet das Territorium vom Dnestr (Siedlung Dorošivka) bis zum Dnepr (Siedlung Les´ki) umfasste (Хавлюк 1973, 36-37, рис. 3; 1980, 31-32).

Die überwältigende Mehrheit der auf den Černjachov-Siedlungen entdeckten Mahlsteine gehört zur Variante A („germanische oder Černjachov-Variante“) der Gruppe 2 in der Klassifikation von R. S. Minasjan. Charakteristisch für sie ist eine Öffnung im oberen Mahlstein (Läuferstein, Oberstein, верхник, catillus) und eine konische kleine Vertiefung von 3-4 cm im unteren Mahlstein (Bodenstein, Unterstein, нижник, meta) (Минасян 1978, 104). Diese Mahlsteine unterscheiden sich durch die Vertiefung auf dem unteren Stein von den aus den römischen Provinzen bekannten Mahlsteinen (**Abb. 1/I: 1, 2**), ähneln aber stark den aus dem mitteleuropäischen Barbaricum bekannten Konstruktionen (**Abb. 1/II**).

Archaeometric Study of Belt Fittings to Late Antiquity in Bulgaria

Archaeologia Bulgarica
XXVI, 2 (2022), 39-91

Lyuba TRAYKOVA / Boika ZLATEVA / Deyan LESIGYARSKI / Veronika MIHAYLOVA / Lyudmil VAGALINSKI / Ivelin KULEFF

Abstract: The current investigation is a continuation of the project about the chemical composition of belt fittings dated from the end of the 3rd c. to the first half of the 7th c. AD in Bulgaria and covers archaeological finds from different geographical regions. In this study, we analyzed 169 samples (buckles, plate of buckles, strap – end and tongues of buckles) by portable XRF and ICP-AES was used for a selection. The main advantage of p-XRF spectrometry is the possibility to analyze objects on the spot, almost without causing any damage, which is very important for finds with very high historical and museum exposition value. The results show that only 11 buckles were made from silver, and the rest belt fittings were made from various kinds of copper alloys, such as bronze, brass, semi-red brass, gunmetal, etc.

Key words: belt fittings, Late antiquity, chronological groups, p-XRF, ICP-AES.

Introduction

Since their invention, belt fittings have played a very important role as an integral part of people's clothing. In this sense, they can serve as chronological indicators. As is the subject of fashion, buckles may provide information about the social status of the owner, as well as gender, ethnical origin, or trade connection and production centers. It is known that in late antiquity many interactions were found between people of different origins. Each ethnic group had its specific habits, culture, manufacturing technology, etc. Thus, a complex survey of belt fittings regarding their morphological structure, elemental composition and archaeological evidence can bring important information about similarities in the material composition and therefore cultural and economic connections, and whether there were chronological changes in the alloy composition or not.

Despite our two previous investigations (Zlateva et al. 2019; Kuleff et al. 2002) and several other analyses (Craddock et al. 2010; Aparaschive et al. 2012), archaeometrical studies of belt fittings from the Great Migration period in South-Eastern Europe are still insufficient in number. Considering this, the main aim of this study was to collect entirely new data on the elemental composition of archaeological buckles from almost all of the geographical regions in Bulgaria. At the same time, this allowed us to enlarge the data set obtained by analyses of copper-made archaeological finds from the modern Bulgarian territory and other parts of the Balkan Peninsula (Giumlia-Mair 2009; Bonev et al. 2015). By statistical treatment of analytical data obtained we also made suggestions about possible differences in the chemical content in dependence on geographical region or dating of the items investigated.

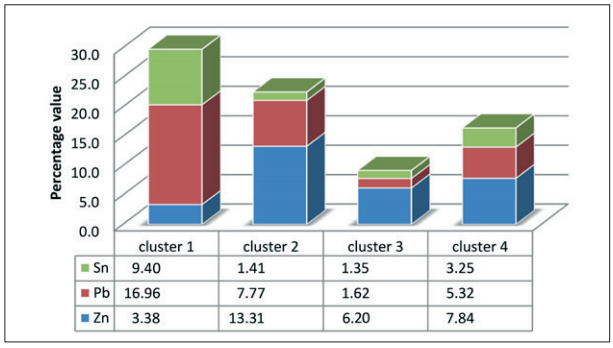

Fig. 7. Average concentrations of tin, lead and zinc for the obtained four clusters (V. Mihaylova)

Pb- brass, semi-red brass) compared to those from North West and North Central Bulgaria.

The members of Cluster 1 are defined as leaded tin bronze because the amounts of Pb and Sn are above 5% and are sufficient for the alloy to be considered bronze. On the other hand, the concentration of zinc is on average only about 3.4%, and therefore the finds were most probably produced by melting older bronze objects with a small addition of Zn. The members of cluster 1 can be separated into three sub-clusters. Cluster 1.1 consists of samples that do not contain enough Sn and Pb to be considered bronze (the concentration of both of the elements is below 3%). Yet, all samples belong unambiguously to the same sub-cluster 1.1. There is only one exception that is considered to be sample # 3193.RUS (it is an outlier). This sample is either made of silver-copper alloy with a concentration of silver of about 58% or its outer layer was silvered in antiquity.

Sub-cluster 1.2 is formed only by samples from North Bulgaria and the concentration of Zn is about 2.8%. The last sub-cluster (1.3) consists of specimens showing Zn content above 5%, but the concentrations of Sn and Pb are significantly higher than those of the other elements. The mean value of all samples that belong to cluster 1 is 3.38% Zn, 9.36% Sn, and 16.95% Pb. In general, the largest numbers of samples that belong to cluster 1 are made of Pb-Sn bronze.

Regarding the tin concentration, the next two clusters have values below 1.5% and the last one has an average of 3.25% Sn. Again, here we have several samples that are out of range for the mean values of the main elements – Zn, Pb, Sn (and Cu as basic metal).

The samples that belong to cluster 2 have average concentrations of Zn – 13.31%, Sn – 1.41%, and Pb – 7.77% respectively (samples # 3122.SOZ, # 3163.VDN and # 3807A.PLV have Pb concentrations below 3% but can be considered as part of cluster 2). Such alloy can be described as leaded brass or semi-red brass with an addition of lead. Nowadays it is perceived that the classification of brass is as follows: concentration of Zn above 10% can be considered brass, but it is possible to be above 50%.

Cluster 3 is defined as semi-red brass with a concentration of Zn above 6.20% for the members and the levels of the remaining elements – Sn and Pb are below 2%. This cluster can be divided into subclusters also as follows: Sub-cluster 3.1 – Cu content above 90% which

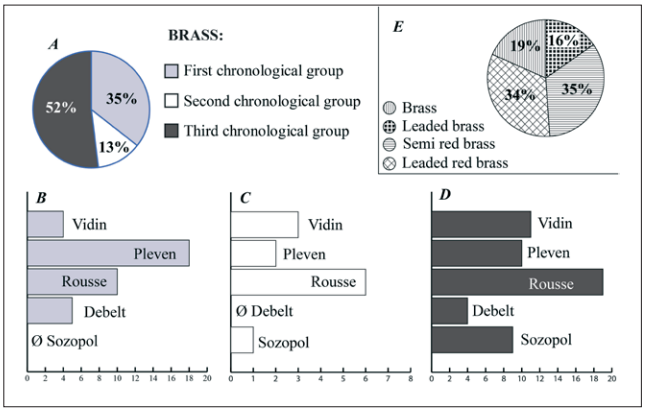

Fig. 17. Belt fittings made from brass: A – percentage proportion; B – number of samples of the First chronological group; C – number of samples of the Second chronological group; D – number of samples of the Third chronological group: E – The Third chronological group (L. Traykova)

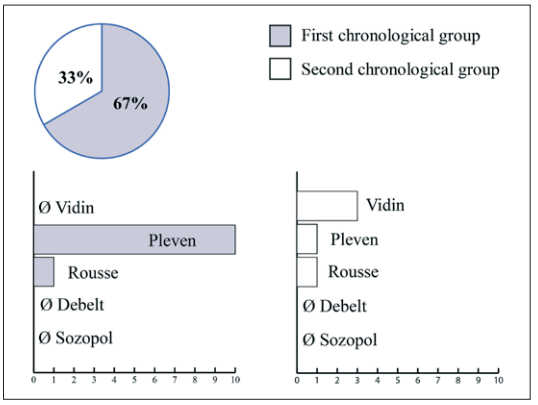

Fig. 18. Percentage proportion and number of samples of the belt fittings made from semi-red brass (L. Traykova)

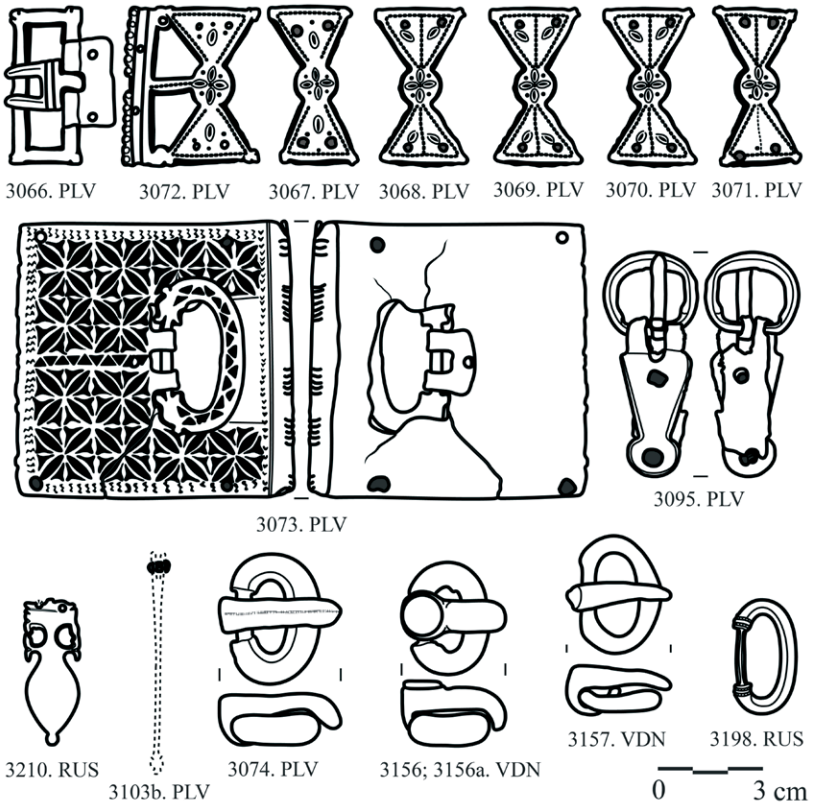

Fig. 19. Belt fittings made from semi-red brass: First chronological group – 3066-3073 PLV, 3095 PLV, 3210 RUS, 3103b PLV; Second chronological group – 3074 PLV, 3156/ 3156a VDN, 3157 VDN, 3198 RUS (L. Traykova)

3122. SOZ) and a loop (**fig. 24/ 3135. DBT**). Except for one applique (**fig. 24/ 3124. SOZ**), all the others belong to the type associated with buckles "Sucidava" (**fig. 24/ 3098, 3082. PLV; 3128. DBT; fig. 27/ 3160. VDN**).

The First chronological group include tree loops of buckles and disk-shaped strap-end (**fig. 24/ 3218. RUS; 3131. DBT; 3186. RUS**; **3189. RUS**).

There are no samples of the Second chronological group made of leaded brass.

A New Attempt at Interpreting the Scene 'Woman Carried Away by an Eagle' Represented on Jug # 2 from the Early Medieval Treasure of Nagyszentmiklós

Archaeologia Bulgarica
XXVI, 2 (2022), 93-115

Nikolay MARKOV

Abstract: The article is an attempt to make sense of one of the most curious scenes presented on Jug # 2 from the remarkable treasure of Nagyszentmiklós, known as the 'Woman carried away by an eagle'. For the purpose of this research, numerous similar images were collected and the Asian sacred texts and fairy-tale plots, that are in undoubted connection with it, have been analyzed. This article presents the conclusions that the large bird probably featured the mythical Varagna and the naked girl is 'daēnā', the 'wandering soul' of the deceased, both being also hypostases of Mithra and Anāhitā, perceived by Zoroastrians as páredroi in the Sassanian period. Thus, the goldsmith who made Jug # 2 from the Nagyszentmiklós Treasure, consciously or not, seems to have presented the scene 'Ascension of the soul of the righteous'. It is suggested that until another meaningful interpretation is given, the scene should be described under this name, instead of under the too common and vague 'Woman carried away by an eagle'.

Key words: Nagyszentmiklós, Anāhitā, Mithra, *daēnā*, Sassanians, Varagna.

Introduction to the Topic

On July 3, 1799, while digging a trench to fix the fence in his yard, at a depth of only one foot, the peasant Neza Vuin, a resident of the Banat village of Nagyszentmiklós (now Sânnicolau Mare, Romania) came across one of the most remarkable treasures from the Middle Ages. The well-known Nagyszentmiklós Treasure. He sold the treasure, consisting of 23 gold vessels with a total weight of 9.925 kg, in two parts; one to the Orthodox merchants Trandafil Pandovich and Mark Dimitrievich, and the other to the goldsmith Jankovich. After vicissitudes, during which part of the treasure was taken to St. Petersburg for sale (fortunately not accomplished), almost all the treasure was collected in the city of Pest in early August of the same year. The handles of jugs ## 1 and 2 were missing (and they are still missing). The investigation into the circumstances of the discovery of the treasure, undertaken by the authorities shortly after it was found, revealed some other minor deficiencies. To this day, however, there are suspicions that the discoverer's family did not hand over all the vessels found.

News of the treasure spread quickly through Pest, and the city's chief judge, János Boráros, sent a report to the Vienna authorities. On September 18, 1799, Abbot Neumann, director of the Viennese Imperial and Royal Collection of Greek and Roman Antiquities, informed the head of the royal chancellery of the find and asked him to persuade the emperor to issue an order that the treasure, then in Pest, be taken to Vienna and submitted to its Collection of Greek and

Fig. 2. Garuda and Nāginī. Schistose stone, dimensions 40.6 x 23.4 x 7.5 cm (after Slouber 2013, 32)

Fig. 3. Garuda and Nāginī (?), painting from Zartepa, a drawing; dimensions 1.8 x 1.34 m (after Пидаев / Реутова 2008, 96)

Fig. 4. Sassanian gold ring gem from the late 4th-5th centuries, National Museum of Kuwait; gem and imprint (after Harper 2015, 327)

Daily Material Life in Sofia through Locally Produced Ceramics, 15th-19th Centuries

Archaeologia Bulgarica
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Guergana GUIONOVA

Abstract: The article proposes an overview of the ceramic forms of daily life of Sofia's residents for the period 15th to 19th century. This observation is limited to the common furniture of local production from the Ottoman contexts of the archaeological excavations of the Roman Amphitheater site. The objects are grouped by their function, defined by the form and traces of use. Their place in daily life is explored through written sources (kadi registers and cookbooks) and iconographic sources (paintings and photographs from the late 19th and early 20th century).

Key words: Sofia, pottery production, Ottoman Empire.

Archaeological research attentive to the strata of the Ottoman period has become more frequent on the territory of the Balkan Peninsula as well as in Bulgaria. In the last two decades, material culture and, in particular, ceramics, have been studied more often. The elements of material everyday life in the Ottoman period remain, on the whole, poorly known in Bulgaria (Guionova 2005). Few studies deliver descriptions of archaeological ceramics from the Ottoman period (Генова 1993; Плетньов 2004). The objects presented are often chosen and isolated and the assemblages are little discussed.

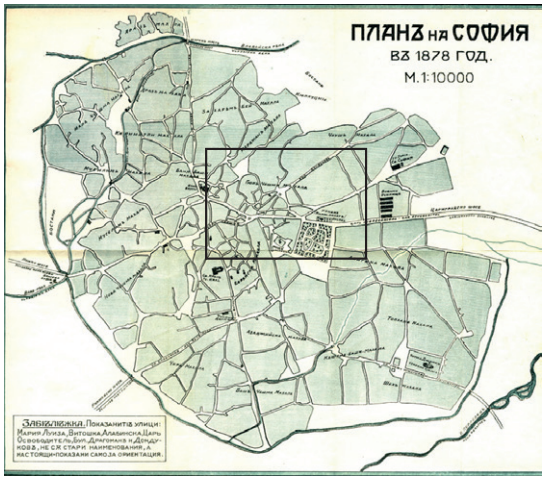
Since the 2000s, urban archaeological excavations have focused on this period. Those of Sofia have brought to light about twenty Ottoman pits on the site of the Roman amphitheatre[1]. Their material was systematically collected and studied as a whole. Dating is proposed, based on the presence of coins and imported objects. The closed sets illustrate the periods from the 15th to the 19th centuries.

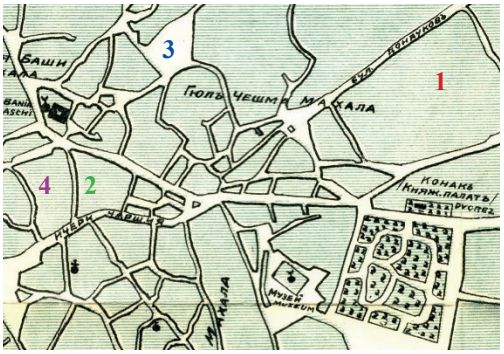
Historical Context

The city of Sredec, medieval name of Sofia, was then the main city of the province of Roumelia, since the end of the 14th century, and of the eyalet since 1591. It developed as an important economic and cultural centre, defined until the 18th century by travellers as an important place for trade. At the beginning of this period, the population of the city, including Christians, enjoyed relative wealth as evidenced by the figures in the tax records of 1576 (Кил 2002, 64-65). In the 18th century the city is gradually abandoned by the Ottoman administration in favor of Monastir (Bitola) and undergoes a real decline during the 19th century.

Sofia is defined as a rehabilitated urban centre populated by Turks. In reality, 16th century records indicate that only about a quarter of the city's households were non-Muslim (Christian and Jewish). This share gradually increased, especially with the high proportion of Christian population in the surrounding countryside. By the 19th century, Christian and Jewish households slightly outnumbered Muslim ones (Кийл 2017, 43-45).

[1] Director Jharin Velichkov (Regional History Museum, Sofia), Assistant directors: Katia Trendafilova, Yunian Meshekov (National Institute of Immovable Cultural Heritage – Sofia).





1 Amphitheatre site
2 Merchant districts including *Luledji čarsi*
3 Wheat market, *Jitni pazar* (E)
4 Place Trapezitza market (D)

A

B

C

D

E

F

G

H

I

Plate 1. A Locations of the amphitheatre site and the markets on the 1878 Sofia map (https://pbase.com/ngruev/mapsofsofia). **B** Anton Mitov, *Sofia vegetable market (pottery market)*, 1917. Galerie nationale d'art, Sofia. (Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons). Postcards from Sofia: **C** Women's market, 1930s (www.lostbulgaria.com). **D** Trapezica Place, *ca.* 1900 (www.stara-sofia.com). **E** *Jitni Pazar* (Wheat market), *ca.* 1900 (www.stara-sofia.com). **F** Pottery market, 1930s (coll. part.). **G** Women's market, 1930s (www.lostbulgaria.com). **H** *Boza* seller, early 20th century (www.lostbulgaria.com). **I** Sofia, *ca.* 1917 (www.stara-sofia.com)

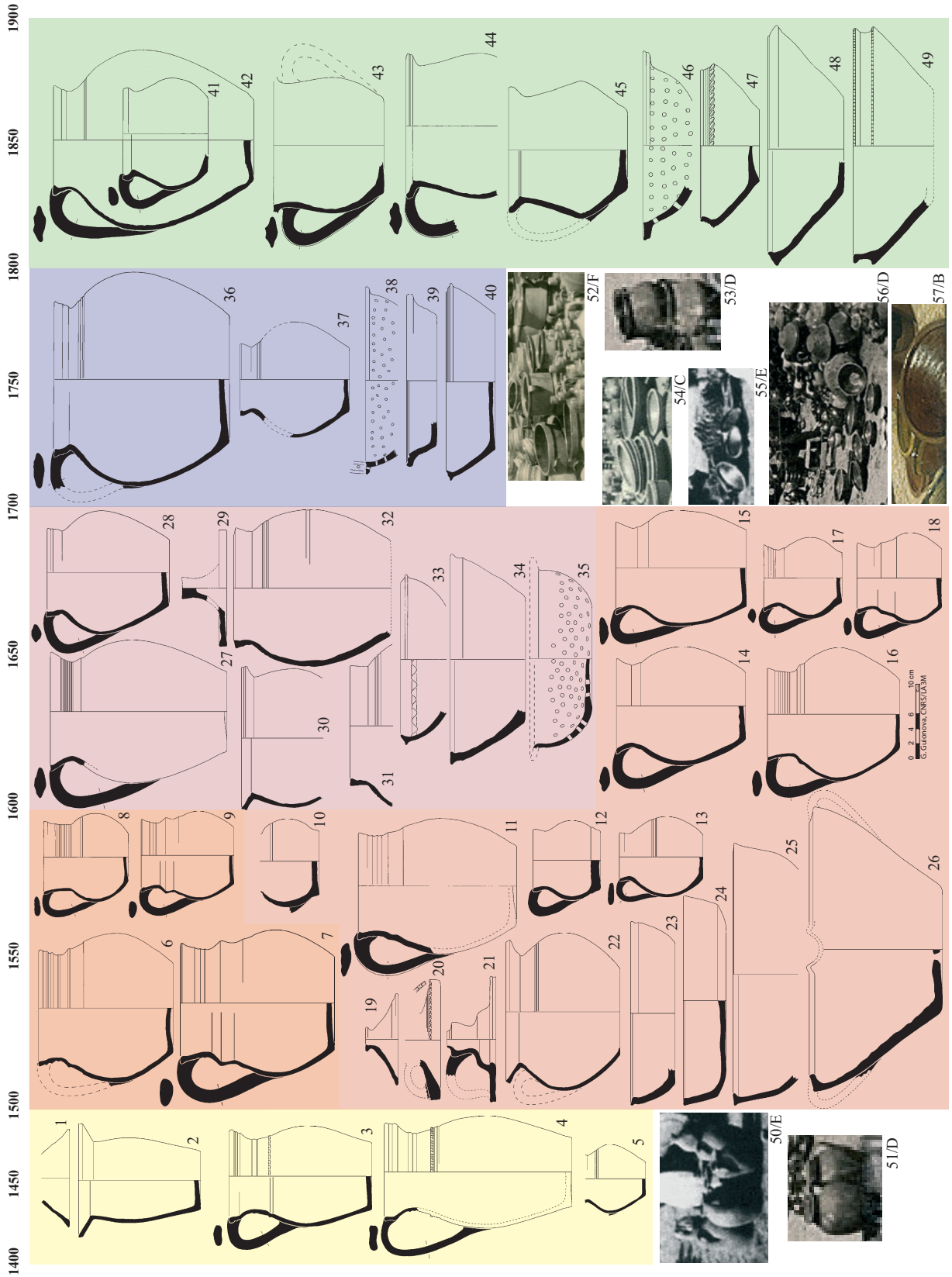


Plate 2. Chronology of cooking ware: 15th century (**1-5**), 16th century (**6-9**), 16th-17th century (**10-26**), 17th century (**27-35**), 18th century (**36-40**), 19th century (**41-49**); details of their sale on markets (**50-51, 52-57**)