

Observations on the Bulgarian Northwest (II/1 c. BC – I c. AD)

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Наблюдения върху българския Северозапад (II/1 в. пр. Хр. – I в. сл. Хр.)

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Резюме: *В статията са разгледани данните за времето на края на т. нар. Късножелязна епоха и началото на Римската епоха (II/1 в. пр. Хр. – I в. сл. Хр.). Изследването е ограничено до района на реките Скът-Огоста-Цибрица-Лом. Въпреки, че за тази зона липсва обобщаващо изследване, а публикациите на вече проучените обекти са твърде лаконични, са налични редица данни за периода. Разгледани са най-важните обекти, които могат да се отнесат към това време: Монтана, Якимово и Вълчедръм. Откритите предмети (основно керами, фибули и монети) позволяват те да се отнесат към периода I в. пр. Хр. – I в. сл. Хр. Общия облик на материалната култура, илюстрира силна ретардация на късножелезните традиции, като през I в. сл. Хр. почти не са видими наченки на т. нар. „романизация”. Спорадични контакти са засвидетелствани от амфорна тара, като прави впечатление липсата на луксозна керамика в месните селища. Това вероятно отговаря на официалната политика на Принципата, който, поне в началния етап от провинциалното управление, не налага радикални промени в местния бит.*

Introduction. Several articles were published in the recent years which attempt to outline the sites and the settlement system in the end of the Iron Age and the beginning of the Roman period (usually referred as Late Hellenistic period by Bulgarian scholars). They are limited to Northeast Bulgaria² at least concerning the problems of what the Romans called

¹ This work was supported by a grant of the Ministry of Culture and Bulgarian Academy of Science.

² **Василева, Т.** Преглед на гетски обекти от Късната елинистическа епоха през погледа на проучвателите им. –В: Тракия и околният свят. Шумен, 2016, 318-325; **Димитрова, Ст.** Развитие на северно тракийските племена през III – I в. пр. Хр., според писмените и археологическите извори. –В: Тракия и околният свят. МИФ 14 2008, 337-362; **Varbanov, V.** Researched Late Hellenistic Sites in Northeastern Bulgaria. The Case-Study of the Sexaginta Prista Site – A Settlement or the Cult Place? -In: Mousaios, XIX 2014, 405-421.

Moesia. The present paper is an attempt to make similar outline of one small part of the Bulgarian Northwest. It is limited to the region between the modern rivers Tsibritsa (anc. Cebrus) and Ogosta (anc. Augusta). This geographical frame is artificial and not related in any way to specific historical or archaeological realities. With the unusually high intensity of the period of interest in Northwest Bulgaria this limitation is only for the purpose of this paper. Although an extensive overview of the Bulgarian Northwest in the Late Iron Age is already published³ the main purpose of the current paper is to outline the development of the settlement system in this region at the very end of the Iron Age, but mostly the transition to the Roman period and its beginning.

Historical background. The chronological framework of the current papers can be divided into four phases, which generally correspond to growing Roman influence. Many changes can be observed in the development of the East and Central Balkans around the middle of II c. BC. The history-political reason can be seen at the outcome of the III Macedon war and the unsuccessful rebellion of Andrisk which led to the establishment of the Roman province of Macedonia. For the region of interest here the new Roman presence in the place of the old Antigonid kingdom is considered the main reason for several changes and especially the appearance of “Padea-Spahii-Corlatte-Panagjurski kolonii” group – probably “paratribal” phenomena with clearly militaristic features. The period until the Mithridatic wars many northern raids in the province are documented⁴. This period ends with the campaign of Scipio Asiagenes which is considered to have put an end to the power of the Scordisoi⁵ – the main Roman antagonist in the region. The period after the Mithridatic wars is marked by the Triumvirates and Civil wars of the Late Republic. This period coincides with the growing power of the Dacians north of Danube. With consolidated power after the battle of Actium⁶ Rome finally ended its Danubian problems with the subjugation of Scordisci, Moesians, Getae and a decisive repulse of the Bastarnae. For the region of interest here most important is the campaigns of M. Crassus in 29-28 BC, which is considered the end of the Late Iron age in North Bulgaria. Not long after them Lentulus was probably the first to

³ **Theodossiev, N.** North-Western Thrace from the Fifth to First Centuries BC. BAR International Series 859, 2000.

⁴ **Popović, P.** The Territories of Scordisci. –Starinar, XLIII-XLIV 1992/1993, 1994, 13.

⁵ **Todorović, J.** Kelti u jogoistočnoj Evropi. Beograd, 1968, 130-131.

⁶ **Syme, R.** Danubian Papers. Bucharest, 1971, 13-15.

establish forts or *praesidia* here⁷. Probably around this time the legions of Macedonia were transferred into Moesia.

The historical development in the next half century seems peaceful with few data. Important events are the deduction of transdanubian population by Pl. Silvan and S. Catus⁸. The main rebellion took place in the 26 AD and was caused by the enforcement of recruits for the Roman army. This largest rebellion in Moesia was quelled the same winter by the provincial *legatus* Sabinus somewhere in the Haemus mountain⁹.

With the fall of the Julio-Claudian dynasty several times northern groups managed to break through the Roman limes. However the most problematic period for the region was the reign of Domitian (81-96 AD) when partly successful wars were waged against the Dacians. The final pacification in the region was done by Trajan (98-117 AD) and his Dacian wars (101-102 and 105 AD) when the last Roman province in Europe was established – Dacia. A new era of cultural and economical development began which lasted until the time of the Gothic wars and the decline of Roman power.

State of research. Five of the sites which can be dated in the chronological framework were excavated by archaeological surveys: partly *Valchedram – Armului* and *Pechina mogila, Yakimovo – Nad Urvata* and *Gradishteto*; almost entirely: *Montana – Kaleto*. The first four sites remain unpublished although known with their materials for different periods¹⁰. The Late Iron Age material was dated to I c. BC – I c. AD firstly by L. Vagalinski¹¹, while more materials and comments are published later by K. Luka¹². *Montana – Kaleto* is published as monograph, although the period of

⁷ Геров, Б. Романизмът между Дунава и Балкана. От Август до Хадриан. – Годишник на Софийския университет. Историко-филологически факултет. XLV 1948/1949, София, 1949, 6; Syme, R. op. cit., 57.

⁸ Велков, В. Добруджа в периода на Римско владичество. – В: История на Добруджа, т. III. София, 1988, 129.

⁹ Велков, В. Монтана – исторически очерк. – В: Монтана, I. София, 1987, 9.

¹⁰ Ангелова, Ст., Р. Колева. За някои особености на раннославянската керамика от Северозападна България. – В: Приноси към българската археология. I, София, 1992, 173-179.

¹¹ Vagalinski, L. Burnished Pottery from The First Century to the Beginning of the Seventh Century AD from the Region South of the Lower Danube (Bulgaria). Sofia, 2002, 42-43.

¹² Лука, Кр. Антична керамика от местността „Градището” при с. Якимово (проучвания на Ат. Милчев, 1959-1962 г.) (Предварително съобщение). – В: Collegium Historicum, I. София, Гутенберг, 2011, 358-374.

interest is only briefly mentioned and almost no material is included in the book¹³.

In the examined region here and around it are “Padea-Spahii-Corlatte-Panagjurski kolonii” group of graves – Altimir, Dobrusha, Kriva bara, Montana – Villa 1, Mizia, Lesura, Rogozen, Saraevo, Sofronievo and Sokolare. All of them are destroyed and the materials were collected mostly by B. Nikolov¹⁴. Excavations were carried only in the burial mound near Montana – Villa 1 by G. Aleksandrov, although the mound was already almost entirely destroyed¹⁵. The group “Padea-Spahii-Corlatte-Panagjurski kolonii” is considered to be synchronous with the European LT C2-D1 or the second half of II c. BC – early I c. BC¹⁶. With numerous research¹⁷ dedicated to this “phenomena” this specific group of graves are outside the topic of the current paper, but form an important background of the settlements examined below.

The large number of coin hoards (23) in area of the two rivers is to be mentioned: Yakimovo I and II (IRRCHBULG 71-72), Madan I (Gerasimov 1937), Madan II¹⁸, Portitovtsi (IGCH 505), Beli breg I and II (IRRCHBULG 5-6), Gradeshnitsa I-III (IRRCHBULG 26, IRRCHBULG 80), Medkovets¹⁹, Mihailovo (IRRCHBULG 11), Mizia I-II (IRRCHBULG 9-10), Krushovitsa (IRRCHBULG 38), Lipnitsa (IGCH 70), Altimir I-II (IRRCHBULG 1, 72),

¹³ **Александров, Г.** Резултати от разкопките на крепостта Монтана (1971-1982). –В: Монтана, I. София, 1987, 54-80.

¹⁴ **Николов, Б.** Тракийски гробни находки от Врачанско. – Археология, 1972, кн.3, 53-67.

¹⁵ **Александров, Г.** Антична вила №1 край Михайловград. – Известия на музеите в Северозападна България, 8, 1983, 61-64.

¹⁶ **Rustoiu, A.** Războjnici și artizani de prestigiu in Dacia preromană. Cluj-Napoca, 2002, 16-17; **Rustoiu, A.** The Padea-Panagjurski Kolonii Group in south-western Transylvania (Romania). –In: Celts on the Margin. Studies in European Cultural Interaction 7th Century BC – 1st Century AD. Dedicated to Z. Wozniak. Krakow, 2005, 115; **Torbov, N., J. Anastassov.** Le Groupe “Padea-Panagjurski kolonii” Reexamen des réexamen des ensembles funéraires des iie et Ier s. Av. J.-c. Du nord-ouest de la Bulgarie. –In: The Iron Gates Region during the Second Iron Age: Settlements, Necropolises, Treasures. Drobeta-Turni Severin, 2008, 98; **Zirra, V.** Beiträge zur Kenntnis des keltischen Laténe in Rumänien. – Dacia, XV 1971, 234-236.

¹⁷ **Домарадски, М.** Домарадски. Келти и траки. –В: Изкуство, IV 1983, 37-42; Торбов, Н. Тракийски надгробни могили във Врачанско. –В: Известия на музеите в Северозападна България, XVIII 1992, 161-174; Theodossiev op. cit. 2000, 25-47; Wozniak, Z. Wschodnie pogranicze kultury lateńskie. Warszawa, 1974, 74-86.

¹⁸ **Grigorova, V., I. Prokopov.** Les drachmes d’Apollonia et Dyrrachion en Illyrie dans la circulation monétaire en Thrace (IIe-Ier s. av. J.-C.). - Actes du VIIIe Congrès International de Thracologie Sofia 2000, Sofia 2002, kat. 11.

¹⁹ **Александров, Г., И. Белитов.** Находка на римски републикански монети от с. Медковец, Михайловградска област. – Археология, 1991, 4, 35-37.

Dobrolevo²⁰, Kalimanitsa (IRRCHBULG 29) and the area of Montana²¹. Correlation with settlements nearby or at the exact place is impossible at the moment, because of the lack of excavations (for example: Portitovtsi, Komoshtitsa, Mihailovo, Beli breg) or the lack of precise publications with materials and narrow chronology: Medkovets²² and Rassovo²³. A sole example is Yakimovo-Gradishteto, where a coin hoard of republican denarii (closing around Actium battle) was discovered²⁴, five years before the excavations of At. Milchev. However, as examined below, the site continued its development after the end of I c. BC. For the presence of settlements around or at the place of finds of hoards a specific enigmatic examples is delivered in Yakimovo-Livadeto. According to the excavator there were no traces of settlement²⁵, however others claim there are²⁶.

The most famous find from the region of interest is the Yakimovo hoard²⁷. Beside it there are two more silver hoards from the area of the village which are unpublished²⁸. According to the information provided by National Historical Museum they consist of silver bracelets with axe shaped pendants. This type of jewelry is typical for the period of I c. BC – I/II c. AD²⁹. In the examined region in the current paper they are present in the Gradeshnitsa hoard with coins up till Trajan (98-117 AD)³⁰. More hoards of jewelry items were discovered near Vladimirovo³¹ and Krushovitsa³² all to be dated in the I c. BC – I c. AD.

²⁰ **Prokopov, I.** Die Silberprägung der Insel Thasos und die Tetradrachmen des „Thasischen Typs“ vom 2.–1. Jh. v. Chr., Berlin, Akademie verlag, 2006; **Прокопов, И., Т. Ковачева.** Монетни съкровища и монети от II-I в. пр. Хр. в нумизматичната колекция на Плевенския музей, София, 2006, кат. 90.

²¹ **Crawford, M.** Coinage and Money Under the Roman Republic. Italy and the Mediterranean Economy. London, Methuen & Co, 1985, 238.

²² **Александров, Г., И. Белитов,** цит. съч.

²³ **Бонев, А., Г. Александров.** Сондаж край язовира при с. Расово, Михайловградска област. – Археологически открития и разкопки през 1988 г. Кърджали, 1989, 23.

²⁴ **Герасимов, Т.** Колективни находки на монети през 1951, 1952, 1953 и 1954 г. –В: Известия на археологическия институт, XX 1955, 608.

²⁵ **Александров, Г.** Новооткрито съкровище в с. Якимово, Михайловградско. – Векове, 1972, 5, 92.

²⁶ **Милчев, Ат.** Новооткрито съкровище от Якимово III, Михайловградско. – Археология, 1973, 1, бел. 3

²⁷ **Маразов, И.** Съкровището от Якимово. София, 1979.

²⁸ Now kept at the Nation Historical museum – Sofia. My access to the hoards was denied in 2016 and 2019.

²⁹ **Torbov, N.** Silver Antique Adornments from Northwest Bulgaria (I C. BC – III C. AD). – Archaeologia Bulgarica, XII 2008, 3, 64.

³⁰ Ibid., 58.

³¹ **Slokoska, L.** Roman Jewellery. London, Cromwell editions, 1991, cat. 85.

³² **Antonov, D.** Ancient finds from the Vicinity of Butan, Vratsa District (1st-6th c.). –In: Stephanos Archaeologicos in honorem professoris Ludmili Getov Studia archaeologica

In the second half of I c. AD a deduction of veterans is attested by two military diplomas: one from Montana (RMD IV, 208) and another one from Dalgodeltsi (CIL XVI, 13).

In this brief overview of the archaeological situation it can be concluded that although numerous data is known for graves and hoards (**Table I**), generally what is lacking are settlements dated to the period II/I c. BC – I c. AD.

The new evidence.

Montana-Krepostta. The site was entirely excavated along with two Late Antiquity basilicas, which are assumed to inherit a Roman sanctuary, mostly because of the large amount of inscriptions which were discovered as reused materials in the two later buildings. The material of interest here is only briefly mentioned – “Dacian” cups, which are referred as “Thracian”, Samian ware with producer stamps of “GELLIUS”³³. Most of these materials were discovered around a wall³⁴ (**Table II.1**). The form of this wall is extremely interesting as there is no straight angle. This is a matter of another research, but I should note that similar buildings, apsis in plan, are known from many Dacian sites³⁵. For the materials from Montana it should be noted the presence of Roman Aucissa fibula (**Table II. 3**) and part of heavily burned Dressel 2-4 amphora handle (**Table II. 6**) which are both to be dated in the I c. AD. Similar chronology can be proposed for grey pitcher with two handles (**Table II. 2**³⁶) the burnished ware (**Table II. 4, 8**³⁷; **5, 9**³⁸) and the other local pottery (**Table II. 7, 10-11**)³⁹. Probably connected with this settlement are the published coins of Augustus, Agripina the Elder and Claudius⁴⁰.

Universitatis Serdicensisl, Suppl. 4. София, Университетско издателство „Св. Климент Охридски”, 2005, Fig. 2.1.

³³ **Александров, Г.** цит. съч., 1987, 60-61. Can be dated in the first half of I c. AD.

³⁴ Пак там, 57.

³⁵ **Живков, Вл.** Между дава и опидум: Монтана и Сталийска махала (I в. пр. Хр. – I в. сл. Хр.). Северозападна България в контекста на селищната система в края на Желязната епоха. – Проблеми и изследвания на тракийската култура, XIII (под печат).

³⁶ **Brukner, O.** Rimska keramika u Jugoslovenskom delu provincije Donje Panonike. Dissertationes et monographiae, XXIV. Beograd, 1981, 44, T. 150.

³⁷ **Vagalinski, L.** op. cit. 2002, type V, var. 1, considers possible first half of II c. AD. There are known examples from Brad level IV or I c. BC – I c. AD (Ursachi 1995, Pl. 163, 3, 6).

³⁸ **Върбанов, В.** Керамика от тракийски ямен комплекс в Русе. – Sexaginta Prista, I. Тракийски ямен комплекс. Велико Търново 2013, Табло VII. 1, 35.

³⁹ The fruit bowl have exact analogy in Malaya Koranya dated in the first half of I c. BC – see Котигорошко, В. Исследование Малокопаньского комплекса в 2008 г. – Satu Mare. Studii și comunicări. XXVII, 1, 2011, 129-137. 2011, 137, Рис. 6.29.

⁴⁰ **Александров, Г.** Цит. съч., 1987, 60-61, Обр. 8.

Yakimovo-Gradishteto. A whole pitcher was discovered by At. Milchev during his excavations (**Table III.3**). The vessel have exact analogy in a grave near Sofronievo⁴¹, which can be dated in the late II and early I c. BC. In the modern village of Yakimovo a rich collection of archaeological artefacts are kept. Most of them were discovered in the Gradishteto locality. They are all described in an inventory book by the former chemistry teacher L. Kirilov, who together with his students used to seek materials after the agricultural working of the land. A map prepared by him is illustrated here (**Table III.1** – with green are “Thracian” settlements). Only part of the material will be examined here due to its large number. The most typical type of vessels – the “dacian” cups is represented by several examples (**Table III.4-6**). The mould made cup (**Table III.7**) can be dated in the period II-I c. BC when they are typical for North Thrace and Dacia⁴². However I am not aware of exact parallel of the decoration of the examined example from Yakimovo. A rare find is kept in this collection which deserves special attention (**Table III. 8**). It is probably part of *rhyta* (?). The shard is made of well cleansed clay, with gray color. It is probably part of the ending of a vessel which is formed in the shape of bull head. Similar items are known from Dacia⁴³, for example from Brad/Zargidava⁴⁴. As far as I know it is the only example from modern Bulgaria with such chronology.

Relatively many brooches were discovered in the area of Gradishteto. Only few will be examined here to demonstrate the main periods in the chronology of the site. The earliest brooch (**Table III.10**) is of the well known Orlea-Maglavit type⁴⁵. They are considered typical for I c. BC by some Bulgarian scholars – for example Skalsko, near Dryanovo⁴⁶. However examples from clear archaeological context in Bulgaria are dated in the first

⁴¹ **Николов, Б.** Тракийски паметници във Врачанско. – Известия на археологическия институт, XXVIII 1965, Обр. 38а.

⁴² **Glodariu, I.** Glodariu. Relații comerciale ale Daciei cu lumea elenistică și romană. Cluj 1974, 144; **Varbanov, V.** Late Hellenistic Bowls with Relief from Ruse District, NE Bulgaria. –In: Archaeologica Bulgarica, XVI, 59-75; **Vulpe, R., G. Georghita.** Bols á reliefs de Popești. –In: Dacia, XX 1976, 167-198

⁴³ Rich collection comes from Cîrlomănești, but the items are not vessels – **Babeș, M.** Statuetele geto-dace de la Cîrlomănești (jud. Buzău). –In: Studii și cercetari de istorie veche și arheologie. 1977, 3, 319-352.

⁴⁴ **Ursachi, V.** Zargidava. Cetatea dacică de la Brad. Bibliotheca Thracologica, București, 1995, Pl. 122, 2.

⁴⁵ **Zirra, VI.** Stand der Forschung der keltischen Spätlatènezeit in Rumänien. – Archeologiké Rozhledy, 1971, 539.

⁴⁶ **Христов, Ив.** Светилища на траките в Централен Хемус. Фабер 2007, 87, обр. 57а.

half of III c. BC⁴⁷. According to the inventory book in Yakimovo the brooch was discovered in “urn cremation”, however the vessel is lost.

The End of the Iron Age is attested by Late La tène fibula (**Table III.11**). Brooches with similar construction are usually dated in the late I c. BC⁴⁸.

Next fibula (**Table III.12**) is typical find for the Early Roman period in the territory of modern Bulgaria, the closest analogy is from Bolyarovo⁴⁹.

The “Alesia” type of fibula (**Table III.13**) is the only example from Bulgaria, at least known to me. They have limited appearance in Romania⁵⁰. The type is widely distributed in Western Europe⁵¹ and the Alpine area⁵². The date of the fibula can be placed in the second half of I c. BC and the very beginning of I c. AD.

The two last brooches (**Table III.14-15**) are of the so called strongly profiled brooches Pontic type and have wide chronology in I c. AD, while the latest examples are from Trajanic contexts⁵³. Although common in Flavian contexts in Serbia, this type is encountered later⁵⁴.

The large number of finds which were discovered during the agricultural working of the land is definitely indication of a necropolis related to the site excavated by At. Milchev, which is being destroyed. In this matter important information is provided by V. Dobruski who saw burial mounds on the hill right of Tsibritsa river more than one hundred years ago⁵⁵. This information is not attested in later studies - probably due to the small size of the mounds they were destroyed in the early 20th century.

⁴⁷ **Дремсизова, Цв.** Тракийски погребения от Коларовградско. – Известия на народния музей в Коларовград, II 1963, 6-7, Табло VII; more comments on the chronological problems of the type **Măndescu, D.** Cateva consideratii relative la tipul de fibule Orlea-Maglavit. – Dacia, XXII 2004, 7-14.

⁴⁸ **Василева, М.**, Фибули от късножелязната епоха в Древна Тракия (V-I в. пр. Хр.) Автореферат на дисертация за присъждане на образователна и научна степен „доктор”. София 2012, 28; **Rustoiu, A.** Fibulele din Dacia Preromana (sec. II î.e.n.-I e.n.). Bibliotheca Thracologica, XXII 1997., București, 42-44.

⁴⁹ **Генчева, Е.** Римските фибули от България от края на I в. пр. Хр. до края на VI в. сл. Хр. Велико Търново 2004, 17-19, Табло I. 4 – her type 3.

⁵⁰ **Rustoiu, A.** op. cit., 59-60, type 28.

⁵¹ **Feugere, M.** Les Fibules en Gaule Méridionale de la conquête à la fin du Ve s. ap. J.-C. Paris, 1985, 299-306.

⁵² **Demetz, St.** Fibeln der Spätlatène und frühen Römischen kaiserzeit in den Alpenländern. Marie Leidorf GmbH, 1999, 157-164, Tafel 40.

⁵³ **Cociș, S.** Fibulele din Dacia Romană. Editura Mega, Cluj-Napoca, 2004, 42-43, type 6.

⁵⁴ **Petković, S.** Rimske fibulae u Srbiji. Beograd, Arheološki institut. Posedna izdanja, 50. Beograd, 2010, 96-97.

⁵⁵ **Добруски, В.** Археологически издивания в Западна България –В: Сборник за народни умотворения, наука и книжнина, II 1890, 14.

The mentioned above coin hoard from Yakimovo-Gradishteto⁵⁶ is an important moment. The commented brooches, coins and casserole clearly demonstrate later habitation than the battle of Actium and the campaign of M. Crassus. It is unclear was this site destroyed (by M. Crassus) and rebuilt or the coin hoard was buried for another reason and never recovered. In this matter it should be reminded that during the campaign of M. Crassus a Moesian rampart was destroyed somewhere around the Cebus river⁵⁷. With the lack of accessible documentation of the surveys this question is without solution for the time being.

From the excavations of At. Milchev⁵⁸ only one coin can be dated in the period of interest here – a coin of Emperor Caligula (**Table III.16, RIC 38**). From the Gradishteto area several coins from the I c. BC and I c. AD are kept in the village collection. The earliest is drachm Dyrrachium (**Table III.17 - TENON**). It is followed by coins of the Roman Principate: Augustus (**Table III.18, RIC 431**); **Table III.19, RIC 180**), Caligula (**Table III.19, RIC 47**), Vespasian (**Table III.20, RIC 834**) and Trajan (**Table III.21**; - heavily worn). According to K. Lozanov all of them were discovered in Gradishteto.

Yakimovo – Nad Urvata. Extremely enigmatic situation was excavated by At. Milchev in the nearby locality of *Nad Urvata*. In an unknown context a skeleton in anatomical order was discovered. The material around it is dated in I c. AD⁵⁹. Later more material with similar chronology was added⁶⁰. The unusually high number of shards attests that they are not part of a grave inventory⁶¹. An important find is not published until now – a “lustrator” tool was discovered in the “grave” (**Table III. 9**). This type of item is typical for the II-I c. BC and more rarely for I c. AD⁶². The burial custom (inhumation) is also untypical for the period. With the lack of documentation any attempt to explain the situation is risky however two possibilities are quite possible. The first one is that the skeleton was placed in

⁵⁶ Герасимов, Т. Цит. съч. 1955, 608;

⁵⁷ Тачева, М. Власт и социум в Древна Тракия. София 2000, 18 – with more comments and different opinion for the localization of this settlement

⁵⁸ Part of bronze *casserole* was also discovered. It will be published elsewhere.

⁵⁹ Vagalinski, L. op. cit. 2002, 44.

⁶⁰ Лука, К. Цит. съч. 2011, 365-366.

⁶¹ Handmade pottery is not included so far. Approximately 15-20 more vessels can be added in I c. BC – I c. AD.

⁶² Върбанов, В. Други изделия от глина. –В: Sexaginta Prista, I. Тракийски ямен комплекс. Велико Търново, 2013,187. Zhivkov, VI. A Recently Discovered Site Dated to the End of the Iron Age near Riben, Dolna Mitropolia District, Northern Bulgaria (III/II- c. BC – I c. AD). Preliminary Report on the Pottery Finds. – Revista de Cercetări arheologice și numismatice, 2017, 3, 198-199.

pit. This tradition can be traced into the earlier period⁶³. Synchronous examples are relatively many in Dacia (Babeş 1988, 13-14). It should be noted that the published skeleton from pit 24 in Brad/Zargidava is in similar position especially the legs and dated in II-I c. BC⁶⁴. The closest analogy in Thrace is unpublished but known from the nearby Bagachina⁶⁵. Inhumation dated to the late I c. BC and early I c. AD was discovered in Krivina⁶⁶. The last synchronous “unusual” grave or sacrifice is from Batin, where only the cranial part of the skeleton was discovered in a pit⁶⁷. Another possible explanation for the situation in *Yakimovo – Nad Urvata* is that this is a later burial and its burial pit disturbed a cultural layer of settlement which existed in the II/I c. BC and I c. AD.

Valchedram – Pechina mogila. Besides the already published pottery with burnished decoration, a large number of handmade pottery was discovered from this site, also typical for the period of interest. Just to illustrate the finds a shard from jar with “currycomb” decoration (**Table IV.14**) with many analogies in broad geographical area⁶⁸.

An interesting coin is known only from a drawing (**Table IV. 1**) which was discovered in one of the notebooks dedicated to the site. The coin can be easily identified as a tetradrachm of Tenedos in Troada⁶⁹. It should be underlined that there is no firm evidence that the coin was actually discovered there, however the chronology of the known materials is making this assumption possible. If this proves to be correct that will be the only coin of this type discovered north of the Hemus Mountain. However I should strongly underline that there is no certain information that the coin was actually discovered here as it is not mentioned in the brief descriptions of the

⁶³ **Tonkova, M.** On Human Sacrifice in Thrace (On Archaeological Evidence). – The Thracians and their Neighbours in Antiquity. Studia in Honorem Valerii Sîrbu. Editura Istros, Braila, 2010, 503-522.

⁶⁴ **Urshachi, V.** Op. cit. 1995, 273, Pl. 360.

⁶⁵ **Tonkova, M.** Op. cit. 2010, 503.

⁶⁶ **Vagalinski, L.** A New Late La Tène Pottery Kiln with a Bread Oven on the Lower Danube (Northern Bulgaria). – The Eastern Celts. The Communities between the Alps and the Black Sea. Beograd, 2011, 219-226. For further comments on the situation see: **Egri, M., A. Rustoiu.** Body and matter transformation. Burials in kilns and ovens during the Late Iron Age. – Settlements of life and death. Studies from Prehistory to Middle Ages. Cluj-Napoca, 2016, 331-346.

⁶⁷ **Varbanov, V.** Op. cit. 2014, 407, fig. 4.

⁶⁸ **Prohászka, P.** Das Germanische gräberfeld von “Dunajska Streda”. – Slovenská archeológia, LXII, 2014, 1, 177-178, Abb. 12.1; **Valentová, J.** Oppidum Stradonice. Keramika ze starších fondu Národního muzea. Fontes Archaeologici Pragenses, 39. Národní muzeum, 2013, Tab. 36.

⁶⁹ **Callataÿ, F.** Les monnaies hellénistiques en argent de Ténédos. – Studies in Greek Numismatics in Memory of Martin Jessop Price. London, Spink, 1998, 99-119.

site in the field journal. Other two coins can be dated in I c. AD. They are all heavily worn and difficult to be determined (**Table IV.2-3**).

In the “collection” in Valchedram ten coins are kept, which were discovered around the village – no inventory book is kept and the precise location remains unknown⁷⁰. Because of the possibility that they are from Pechina mogila or synchronous site they will be briefly examined here. The earliest are two drachmae of Dyrrachium (**Table IV. 4-5**). The eponym of the first is well readable – ΦΙΛΩΝ, with head of Helios above the name (Ceka 438/Meta V84/Petranyi Group D5, minted 49 BC).

The next group is represented by Republican denarii: Flaminia (**Table IV.6**; Cr. 302/1, 109-108 BC); Calpurnia (**Table IV.7** Cr. 340/1) and Tituria (**Table IV. 8**; Cr. 344/1a).

The Roman imperial coins are: Mark Agrippa (**Table IV, 9**; RIC 58), Claudius (**Table IV, 11**; RIC 97; BMC 145) and Vespasian (**Table IV, 12**; RIC 181) which was struck 71 AD; the latest coin is of Emperor Domitian (**Table IV.13**; RIC 720).

The rest of the coins are from the Roman Principate. An extremely shabby coin (**Table IV. 02**) is of emperor Trajan, with readable “(T)RAIAN GER DAC”. The precise type cannot be determined, but the coin can be dated in the period 103-117 (after the triumph of Trajan). This coin is the latest emission⁷¹, however it is quite possible that it’s connected with later Roman settlement of II c. AD, mostly because the traces of long circulations.

Discussion.

The present paper is extremely limited attempt to systematize the rich data for the period of II/I c. BC – and I c. AD or the time when Moesia (respectively Northern Bulgaria) was incorporated into the Roman Empire. With this preliminary overview several important moments are to be noted. The limited amount of Roman import and luxuries is extremely typical (only a part of casserole, samian ware and Dressel 2-4 amphora handle are known from this region so far, most published here for the first time). This situation can be observed mostly anywhere throughout North Bulgaria. The local pottery seems to retain its “Late Iron Age” appearance. Probably in this “static” outlook of the material culture in the early development of the province of Moesia we can see the official imperial policy in the newly founded provinces where the authorities seems to avoid to change the daily customs and tradition of locals or as Cassius Dio tells us, although for far

⁷⁰ In collection of Valchedram was robbed several times in the recent 30 years. I was unable to locate other materials from the period II c. BC – I c. AD, except the coins.

⁷¹ Only the coins of the Early Roman period are being examined here (until the reign of Trajan). There are later Roman and Late Antiquity coins.

away region: “... and soldiers of theirs were wintering there and cities were being founded. The barbarians were adapting themselves to Roman ways, were becoming accustomed to hold markets, and were meeting in peaceful assemblages. They had not, however, forgotten their ancestral habits, their native manners, their old life of independence, or the power derived from arms. Hence, so long as they were unlearning these customs gradually and by the way, as one may say, under careful watching, they were not disturbed by the change in their manner of life, and were becoming different without knowing it. But when *Quintilius Varus* became governor of the province of *Germania*, and in the discharge of his official duties was administering the affairs of these peoples also, he strove to change them more rapidly. Besides issuing orders to them as if they were actually slaves of the Romans, he exacted money as he would from subject nations.” (C. Dio, *Historia Romana*, 56.18.2-3). However the presence of coins and imports (although rarely) clearly indicate contacts between the natives and the Roman army in I c. AD. Although social contacts between the Romans and the local population are not attested in I c. AD⁷² it seems that the already established settlements continued to work the land as they had before the conquest⁷³. The nature of this contact remains unclear, because of the lack of precise publications and basic observations of the archaeological situation. Even if the metal vessels and the luxury pottery are indications for “peer polity” relations, the circulations of coins (of small nominal) might be the manifestation of economical contacts⁷⁴, probably the supply of the camps (?).

⁷² Геров, Б. Романизмът между Дунава и Балкана. От Август до Хадриан. – Годишник на Софийския университет. Историко-филологически факултет. XLV 1948/1949. София, 1949, 69.

⁷³ Тачева, М. Цит. съч. 2000, 134 - almost no epigraphical data for “Thracian slaves” is attested

⁷⁴ Zhivkov, VI. Adapting to Rome (forthcoming).

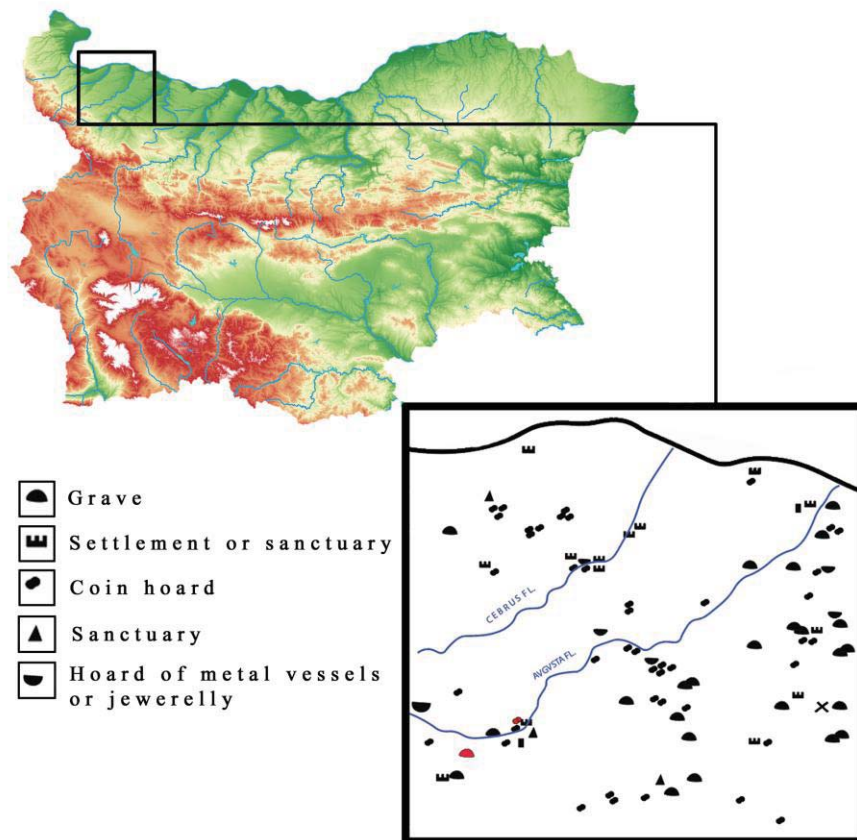


Table I. Map of modern Bulgaria and the rivers Tsibritsa (Cebros) and Ogosta (Augusta)

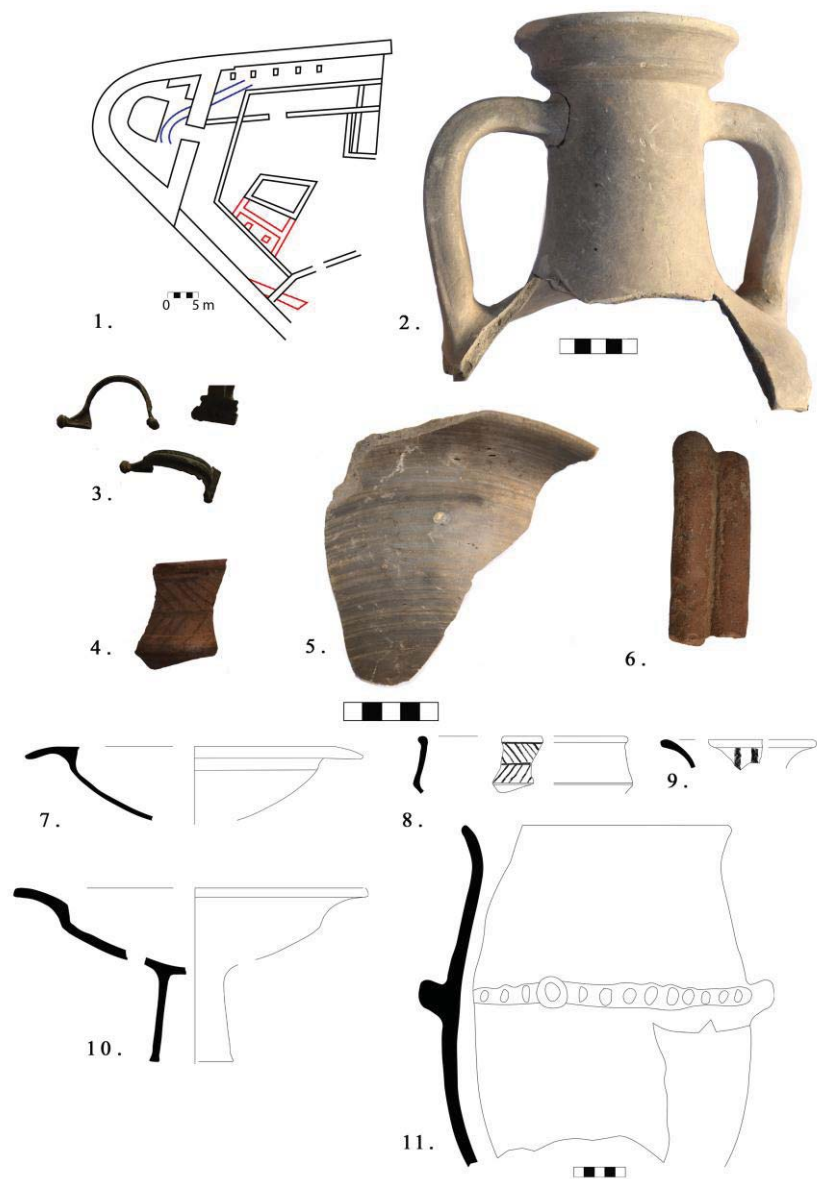


Table II. Montana – Kaletu.

1. Plan of the Late Antiquity and Medieval fortress. In blue wall from I c. BC – I c. AD. (adapted from Александров 1987).
2. Gray pitcher with two handles.
3. Aucissa brooch
- 4-5. Gray burnished pottery.
6. Dressel 2-4 amphora handle.
- 7, 10-11. Local pottery, drawing.
- 8-9. Gray burnished pottery (drawings).

2. The grave from Yakimovo – Nad Urvata. Unpublished photo from students album – now in the Archaeological library of Sofia University.
3. Handmade pitcher from Yakimovo-Gradishteto. Now in Sofia University.
- 4-6. Dacian cups. Collection in Yakimovo.
7. Local mouldmade bowl. Collection in Yakimovo.
8. Zoormorphic vessels. Collection in Yakimovo.
9. “Lustrator” tool. Yakimovo – Nad Urvata. Now in Sofia University.
- 10-15. Brooches from Yakimovo-Gradishteto. Collection in Yakimovo.
- 16-21. Coins from Yakimovo-Gradishteto.

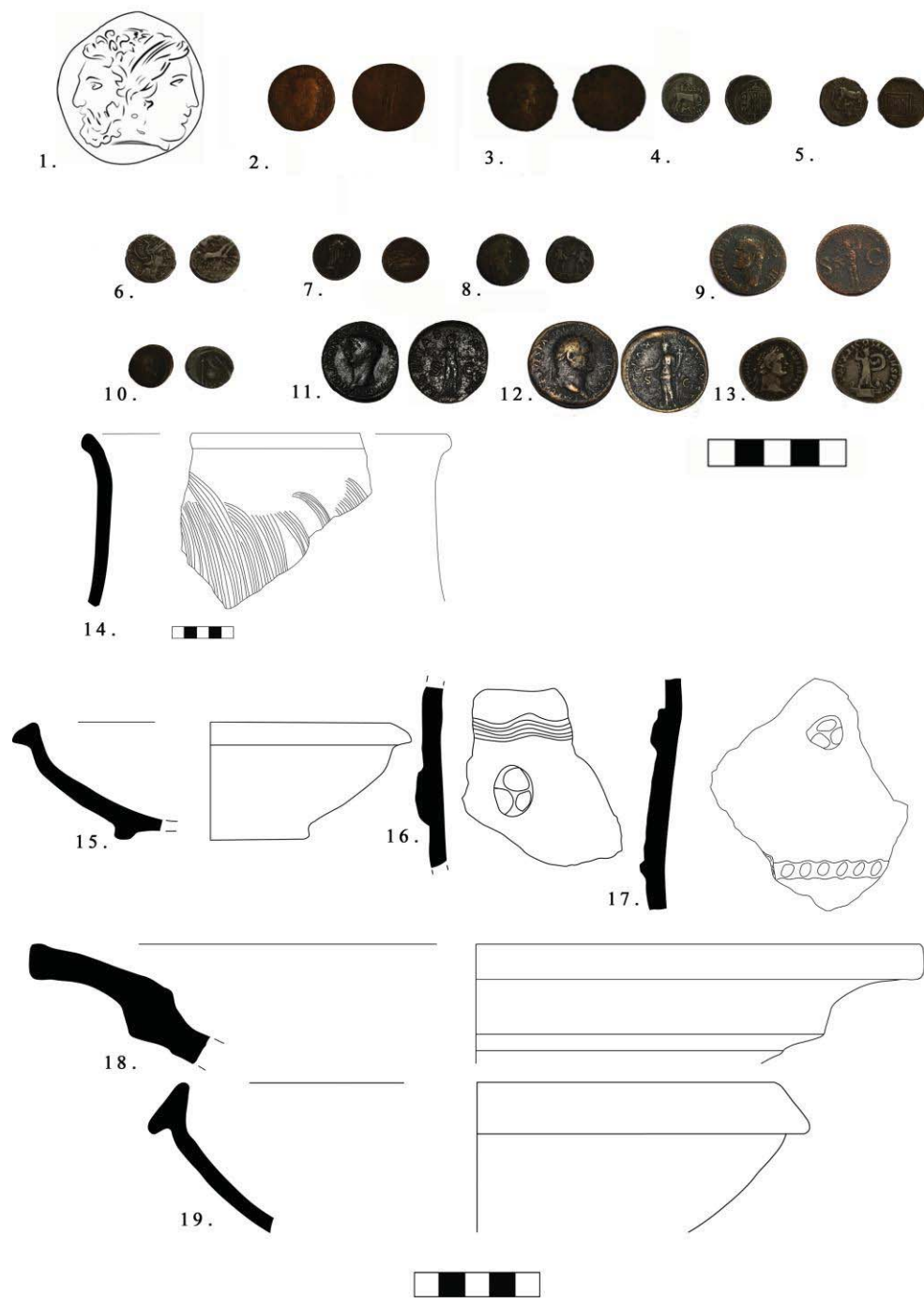


Table IV. Valchedram

1-13. Coins from the area of the village.

14-19. Pottery from Pechina mogila. Now in Sofia University.