

Bronze arrowhead from Skobelevo near Sliven (Abstract)

Lyuben Leshtakov

A bronze arrowhead was discovered during rescue archaeological investigations of Site 15 near Skobelevo on the route of Trakia Highway. The site was a large settlement that consisted of individual farms and existed from the 1st to the middle of the 4th c. AD, when it was abandoned for good. According to H. Popov, director of the excavations, the site was inhabited also in earlier times - in the Late Bronze Age and the Early Iron Age. There are no preserved structures from these periods.

The arrowhead was discovered in the courtyard of a large farm, in a layer with mixed materials. It was cast from bronze and is 5.1 cm long and 2.1 cm wide. It is covered with dark green patina. A small fragment is missing from the rim of the socket (fig. 1).

The morphological features of the item (lozenge-shaped tip with incorporated socket) define the artifact as unique for present-day Bulgaria. Similar arrowhead, but with trilobate tip, is known from Nanevo near Dobrich and dates from 7th-6th c. BC. Such arrowheads are often found in Greece, Turkey, and Iran. The design of the tip allows for distinguishing two types:

Type I. Bilobate arrowheads with lozenge-shaped tip.

The type is represented with finds from Skobelevo, Ialysos, Paphos, Kameiros, and Lindos (fig. 2). The small number of specimens indicates that the type is rarely found on the Balkans.

Type II. Trilobate arrowheads with lozenge-shaped tip.

The type is represented with specimens from

Nanevo, Olympia, Paphos, Lindos, five chance finds in Haskovo Museum, and 143 arrowheads from Shumen region. They all have trilobate tips with 120-130° angles between the lobes. The design of the tip was an innovation that was introduced during the Early Iron Age. Large numbers of such arrowheads have been found at Olympia, on the western slope of the Athenian Acropolis, and at Palaeo Paphos.

According to A. Snodgrass, these two types have common origin that could be traced to Asia Minor. They appeared on the Balkans and the Greek islands during the Persian campaigns in the early 5th c. BC. Large numbers of such arrowheads were unearthed during the investigations of Paphos, sacked by the Persians in 498 BC. This is confirmed by H. Baitinger who notes that Type II appeared in Olympia after the battle of Marathon in 490 BC.

The appearance of arrowheads like those from Skobelevo, Nanevo, and other sites in Thrace should be related to the Persian army. At present, there is no certain evidence to suggest they were manufactured locally, which would be possible, having in mind another Persian weapon that was adopted by the Thracians - the akinakes sword. This could have happened in result of interactions between Thracians, on one hand, and Scythians or Persians on the other. Persian kings Darius and Xerxes invaded Thrace and on two occasions left garrisons that occupied Southern Thrace for nearly 30 years. The Persian influence on Thracian culture could be seen also in certain personal ornaments, phialai, rhyta, etc.

гл. ас. д-р Любен Лещаков
Национален археологически институт и музей - БАН
BG-1000 София, Съборна 2
l_leshtakow@abv.bg

Assist. Prof. Lyuben Leshtakov, PhD
National Institute of Archaeology and Museum
Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
2 Saborna St. BG-1000 Sofia
l_leshtakow@abv.bg