

## **EQUITES DANUVINI SERDICENSES. The chronology and distribution of these monuments (Abstract)**

**Mario Ivanov**

A lead plaque with an image of the so-called Danubian horsemen was found during archeological investigations in the centre of Sofia in 2010. This is very important for the study of these monuments since the plaque was found in a clear stratigraphic and chronological context. At the time of its discovery, two corners of the plaque were folded (fig. 1). It is made by casting in a mould and is 7.8 cm high, 5.6 cm wide and 0.2 cm thick. The find is a lead plaque with rectangular form and triangular upper end that is shaped as a pediment (fig. 2).

The relief depictions are framed by a slightly protruding border decorated with channels that resemble a cord. The pediment contains an eagle with outspread wings turned to the right. The upper part of the rectangular embossed window is occupied by two horsemen placed opposite to each other and a standing female figure – a goddess is depicted between them. Two smaller figures of unidentified gender are placed behind the horsemen and behind them depiction of snakes can be seen. The busts of Sol (right) and Luna (left) are depicted above the horsemen's heads. Two lying human figures are placed under the horses' hooves.

The centre of the lower embossed area is occupied by a three-legged table with turned legs, over which a large fish is placed. The images in the lower left corner are fairly erased due to the strong fold of the plaque at this place. Several round objects – fruits or bread are very clearly visible. A candelabra is placed behind them next to the frame, while some other boat-shaped objects, lamps perhaps, are

visible above. The upper part of an animal – a lion - can be recognized immediately next to the left leg of the table with the fish. An unidentified object is engraved under the legs of the table and an image of a window – a square with inscribed cross, is depicted in the upper right corner. A figure of a bird is presented between the table and the window, while under the window there is a small human figure with raised hands.

The plaque was found under the level of the street pavement of a narrow decumanus in the northern part of the site, together with coins from the 4th century AD. A seat from the Serdica amphitheatre was re-used for the pavement of the street (fig. 3), thus turning into a terminus ante quem for the plaque. The utilization of the seat in the pavement can be dated after the end of the 4th century AD at the earliest, when the building of the amphitheatre was abandoned. Having in mind this information, the plaque with images of Danubian horsemen should be dated to the 4th century AD.

The data for the chronology of the plaque is very important, since it allows the dating of several other plaques with identical images - from Rebro, Breznik district, quarter Arbanas in Radomir and from the investigations of the Serdica amphitheatre (unpublished). All of these finds demonstrate similarity in terms of iconography, style, depicted persons and objects, which suggest a common manufacturing in the same workshop. Probably this workshop was based in Serdica, from where part of the production was distributed in adjacent areas.