

Newly discovered piece of jewellery from Pliska (Abstract)

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The present report is dedicated to a rare piece of jewellery. The find was acquired recently from the excavations of the Small Wooden Fortification site at Pliska. It was discovered in a poor state of preservation, folded several times, with unclear shape and function. It belongs to a layer, dated to the period from 970s to the first half of the 11th c. A chemist-conservator treated the find before it was included in the Field Inventory, thus revealing its shape and function. It is a thin lead plate (99.5 percent Pb, 0.5 percent Sb) with the shape of crescent, a horn in the middle of the concave side, and a broken upper end. The object has no loops or openings for fastening and is decorated on both sides with fine lines, engraved with a thin blade. There is one heraldic composition in each field. On Side A,

polymorphic animals are symmetrically depicted at both ends of the plate. These are winged creatures, known as Senmurvs in Iranian mythology. They are protectors against evil forces and combine the shapes of a dog and a bird. In the centre of the composition, there is a composite palmette of flowers arranged one on top of the other. The animal that is depicted on Side B resembles a lion. It is a creature that is alert even when sleeping, therefore a reliable guardian, which predefines its apotropaic function. In our opinion, the plate from Pliska was a talisman. This function ensues from the conception of protection by the two “beasts”, engraved on both its sides. The object is of good craftsmanship, probably made by a skillful jeweler. At present, there is no exact parallel.