

## **Medieval settlement in Grindur locality at Antimovo near Vidin** (Abstract) **Chavdar Lalov**

The report presents the results of the rescue investigations at Grindur locality near Antimovo, Vidin Municipality. In relation to the construction of Danube Bridge 2 (Vidin-Calafat), trench excavations were carried out in October 2010 by a team led by Dr. S. Alexandrov and Dr. V. Dinchev (NIAM-BAS). The trenches cover a limited area of the sand dune in the ancient riverbed. The investigations and the observations were further impeded by the specifics of the soil: all structures were dug into almost pure sand that made it impossible to detect their actual limits.

In one of the trenches (No. 4), two stone ovens were unearthed that could be identified as belonging to sunken dwellings due to the depth they were discovered at. Some 200 m to the west of them, in Trench No. 9, the remains of a dwelling were partially investigated, with an oval fireplace to the south of it.

In the absence of materials with a narrow date and of stratigraphic superpositions, only the analysis of the pottery could help specifying the chronology of the dwellings. The ceramics reveal important differences in both manufacturing techniques and morphology and two groups could be distinguished.

The pottery from Trench No. 4 consists of vessels that were hand-made and then finished on potter's wheel, while the vases from Trench No. 9 were thrown on fast turning hand-powered wheel. The presumption that the structures in the two trenches belong to two chronological periods is grounded on the stratigraphic situation in Trench No. 4. There, above the layer with hand-made pottery, shards of a wheel-made vase were discovered. In addition, the pottery from the two trenches was not found together. There are

important differences in the shape and morphology of the vases.

Vases with the characteristics of the finds from Trench No. 4 are known from Valchedram-Yakimovo Group (in the neighbouring Montana Region). Their appearance is dated to the early decades of the 7<sup>th</sup> c. This dating is confirmed by the available evidence from outside Bulgaria. The closest parallels of the pottery from Antimovo could be found in the Avarian-Slavic complexes in Slovakia and some sites in Slovenia, dated to 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> c. These are the chronological limits of the first phase of the settlement at Antimovo.

The dating of the structures in Trench No. 9 is more difficult, as there are no exact parallels of the pottery. The stratigraphic position of the wheel-made pottery compared to hand-made pottery in Trench No. 4 is a direct indication for a date of the dwelling in Trench No. 9 after 8<sup>th</sup> c. The manufacturing technique (on a fast-turning wheel) also provides grounds for a later dating. The lower chronological limit may go into the 10<sup>th</sup> c. The possible 10<sup>th</sup> c. date is supported by a few fragments of vases that were discovered out of context in some of the adjacent trenches.

In addition to these structures, four graves were investigated at Antimovo that comply with the main precepts of Christianity. However, in the absence of grave goods and any specific features, it would be precarious to relate them to a particular chronological period.

The available evidence does not allow building a more precise chronology, but the two phases could be generally dated respectively to 7<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> c. and 8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup>//10<sup>th</sup> c. Future investigations in the region could refine this dating.