

# **Bone plaque of a crossbow from medieval Trapezitsa in Veliko Tarnovo (Abstract)**

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The paper presents a bone plaque from the stock of a crossbow, found during archaeological investigations in the Southern Sector of Trapezitsa – the second citadel of the medieval Bulgarian capital Tarnovo. The artifact was discovered in waste pit, the filling of which is dated with coins from the 1350s.

The plaque is made of a sawn long bone (Figs. 1, 2) and has rectangular shape, with a carved tang on one of the short sides. It is 11.2 cm long, 2/2.35 cm wide and 0.5/0.56 cm thick. On the flat side, there is a groove, 9.8 cm long, 1 cm wide and 0.4 cm deep.

Undoubtedly, the plaque served to cover the top of a crossbow's stock between the trigger and the bow. There are such examples from intact weapons (Fig. 3), as well as finds from archaeological sites (Fig. 4). The small dimensions and one of the short sides that is sawn flat indicate that it was part of a composite

plaque of a crossbow. That is to say that for the distance between the trigger and the bow, several touching plaques were needed (probably three). The simple shape indicates that the plaque belonged to a weapon with simple stock of constant width (Fig. 5). What is unusual is the absence of streaks on the back of the plaque to facilitate the gluing. The probable reason could be the large number of holes for fastening with rivets – or the plaque was left unfinished.

The artifact from Trapezitsa provides new and well-dated evidence of the use of crossbows in Medieval Bulgaria, that in the 14th c. seems to have been wider than previously thought (Рабовянов 2010a). This is one of the earliest artifacts of this type, discovered so far. In the same time, the plaque indicates the presence of specialized bone-carving workshops in the Bulgarian capital, capable of manufacturing objects of specific shape and function, following foreign models.