

Trench Excavations at Tell Yurgandziiska near the Village of Konyovo, Nova Zagora Region

Vassil Nikolov

Tell Yurgandzhiiska is situated ca. 1.5 km to the northwest of the village of Konyovo, Nova Zagora region. It elevates ca. 2.5 m above the surrounding plane area and its diameter is ca. 100 m.

In this paper the author presents a brief reconstruction of the accumulation of the cultural layer of Tell Yurgandzhiiska. The data is based on the results from 7 small size trenches made in 1994 and the analysis of the yielded pottery sherds.

A settlement emerged on a small natural hill ca. 80 m in diameter and ca. 1 m high at the beginning of the Early Chalcolithic in Thrace, i. e. in the early phases of Karanovo V culture. The settlement was abandoned before the final phase IV of the same culture. The thickness of its cultural layer was 1 m and thus the total height of the hill became more than 2 m.

About 2.5 millennia later, in the 3rd (Sveti Kilirovo) stage of the Early Bronze age in Thrace, a circular ditch - *rondel* - was dug into the mound. The *rondel* is ca. 40 m in diameter; its size and shape are very well seen after ploughing when one can easily discern the gray ashy soil typical for the Early Bronze age. The *rondel* encloses the top-most part and part of the southern half of the site. It is slanting to the south or slightly to the southeast its highest point being ca. 1.5 m above its lowest point. The structure apparently had two stages of use. A ditch with a trapezoid section was

dug in the first stage. The depth of the ditch was ca. 3 m (at least at its southern part) and its bottom was more than 70 cm wide (again at its southern part). The width of the upper southern part is at least 4 m. The excavated soil was carried away from the tell. In the process of use the lower part of the ditch was filled back with eroded soil, a process which was due to anthropogenic as well as to climatic factors. It refers to the upper 1/3 of the ditch walls especially which are dug into the Chalcolithic layer. In order to stop or restrict the process of erosion and when almost half of the depth of the ditch was filled with soil, a consolidation of the visible upper parts of the wall was made. The wall was consolidated by a stone „coating“ (the beginning of the 2nd stage of use). Small and middle size stone were used, most probably brought from Kayryaka hill situated ca. 3 km to the north from the tell. Stone slabs were used mainly. The lowest row was made of larger stones and there were at least 7 or 8 upper rows made of smaller stones, each of them yielding to the outside. The preserved height of the „coating“ (at the southern part of the *rondel*) is ca. 1.70 m. After this necessary renovation the width of the upper part of the ditch became ca. 5.5-6 m and the width of the bottom - ca. 2.5-3 m. A layer up to 35-40 cm thick was accumulated during the period when the *rondel* was used.