Papers in Honour of Rastko Vasić 80th Birthday Зборник радова у част 80 г. живота Растка Васића

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INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY

PAPERS IN HONOUR OF RASTKO VASIĆ 80th BIRTHDAY

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Foreword Увод

Since 1990, after practically 30 years and the publication of the volume of the Starinar journal dedicated to the academician and professor Milutin Garašanin, the Institute of Archaeology in Belgrade publishes a volume dedicated to a doyen of both Serbian and European archaeology, Rasko Vasić. In contrast to university centers, where this kind of publications are usual, due to the position of individuals as professors and teachers (Festschrift, Homage...), the scientific researchers are usually neglected in that respect, which can be seen in the fact that this volume represents the first of a kind published by the Institute of Archaeology. Bearing in mind the significance and the influence of Vasić's work on ex-Yugoslav and prehistoric archaeology of Europe, as well as the fact that he spent his entire career at the Institute of Archaeology, we consider this volume as a humble act of our gratitude for everything our dear colleague Vasić did for archaeology and the Institute, on occasion of his 80th birthday.

Indeed, Rastko Vasić stands as a great of both Serbian and Yugoslav archaeology, distinctly appreciated and esteemed, which stands in opposition to his humble and unobtrusive nature. Vasić's scientific and artistic educations often intertwined in his papers dealing both with the protohistoric art and the particular problems of the Bronze and Iron Age in southeastern Europe. Years of work and scientific questions led him to various phenomena of our prehistoric archaeology, many of which he had himself defined, but from time to time he used to go back and discover the until then unobserved Iron Age art of the Central Balkans. Only a glimpse of his bibliography at the beginning of this volume reveals the archaeological phenomena he had defined and interpreted, and through his serious and responsible scientific work and afterwards authority introduced to archaeology. His first monographs (Културне групе старијег гвозденог доба у Југославији and The Chronology of the Early Iron Age in Socialist Republic of Serbia) were created on basis of his doctoral dissertation and more than a couple of decades since the publication represent often cited literature.

Након безмало 30 лета и Старинара посвећеног академику и професору Милутину Гарашанину из 1990. године, Археолошки институт у Београду објављује једну засебну публикацију посвећену доајену српске, али и европске археологије Растку Васићу. За разлику од универзитетских центара, где је овај тип публикација (Festschrift, Hommage...) уобичајен због позиције појединца као професора и учитеља, научни су радници обично занемарени у томе погледу, што се види и по томе да је ово прва таква засебна публикација наше куће. Но, имајући у виду значај Васићевих дела за бившу југословенску и праисторијску археологију Европе и утицај на њу, као и то што је цео свој радни век провео у Археолошком институту, сматрали смо да је овај зборник поводом 80 година живота један скромни чин наше захвалности за све што је драги колега Васић учинио за археологију и Институт.

Растко Васић доиста представља великана српске и југословенске археологије, изразито уваженог и цењеног, што је у неку руку у супротности са његовом скромном и ненаметљивом природом. Васићево научно, али и уметничко образовање често се сустицало у његовим првим радовима, када се бавио како уметничким протоисторијским темама, тако и конкретним проблемима гвозденог и бронзаног доба југоисточне Европе. Године рада и стручна питања одвела су га ка многим феноменима наше праисторијске археологије, од којих је неке и сам дефинисао, али се с времена на време враћао, а уједно и откривао до тада незапажену уметност гвозденог доба централног Балкана. Само и летимичан поглед на његову библиографију на почетку овог зборника говори о археолошким појавама које је Васић одредио и интерпретирао, а својим озбиљним и одговорним научним радом и доцнијим ауторитетом увео у домаћу археологију. Његове прве монографије (Културне групе старијег гвозденог доба у Југославији и The Chronology of the Early Iron Age in Socialist Republic of Serbia), настале на основама док-

A complete affirmation in Yugoslav archaeology for colleague Vasić was the invitation to write no less than 13 chapters for the 5th volume of the distinguished publication Praistorija jugoslavenskih zemalja, as one of the youngest authors, dealing with less familiar subjects or subjects with scarce background data, undetermined origin or undefined to a great extent. It can be said that even nowadays, after more than 30 years, Vasić's certain syntheses from the aforementioned publication, remain the postulates for the Iron Age of the Central Balkans. Another significant work of Rastko Vasić, although often not emphasized enough, is the fact that under the invitation of the academician Dragoslav Srejović, he participated in writing of 150 separate units in the unique domestic archaeological encyclopedia - Arheološki leksikon – preistorija Evrope, Afrike i Bliskog Istoka, grčka, etrurska i rimska civilizacija, a paper that Yugoslav and Serbian archaeology lacked for a number of decades. His international reputation was confirmed by five monographs published within the prestigious Prähistorische Bronzefunde edition. In parallel with that, through his advice and influence, as well as through his scientific renown, he aided younger colleagues to prepare the volumes for the same edition.

In that context, it is important to mention that defending boards for magister or doctoral thesis on the subject on Bronze and Iron Age could not be imagined without the presence of the colleague Vasić. On such occasions, not a single critique or a bad word could be heard from Vasić, but positive opinion and useful suggestions above all, so that the candidate could properly prepare the thesis for future publication. Rastko Vasić has been a member of the editorial board for the Starinar journal for more than 40 years, as well as for many other corpora and journals in the territory of southeastern Europe. As a member of editorial staff or as a reviewer of papers and monographs, he would always point out the qualities of the submitted material, and if the other members of editorial staff or reviewers decided to reject the material, his benevolent suggestions would help in publishing each useful paper after all, even in some other journal. Also, as a longtime director of scientific projects at the Institute of Archaeology, he would always do his best to help торске дисертације, и даље су, неколико деценија након објављивања, цитирано штиво.

Потпуну афирмацију у југословенској археологији колега Васић доживео је када је позван да, као један од тада најмлађих аутора, напише чак 13 поглавља за том V чувене Праисторије југославенских земаља, и то на неке теме о којима се мало знало или у вези с којима су подаци били штури, нејасног порекла и добрим делом недефинисани. Може се рећи да и данас, након 30 и више година, поједине Васићеве синтезе из ове серије и даље остају једини постулати гвозденог доба централног Балкана. Још један значајан допринос овога типа, чини се, није довољно помињан у досадашњем његовом раду, а то је чињеница да је на позив академика Драгослава Срејовића учествовао у изради преко 150 засебних јединица у јединственој домаћој археолошкој енциклопедији - Археолошки лексикон – преисторија Европе, Африке и Блиског истока, грчка, етрурска и римска цивилизација, делу које је дуги низ деценија недостајало југословенској и српској археологији. Међународни углед потврдио је са пет монографија у престижној едицији Prähistorische Bronzefunde, док је паралелно саветима и својим утицајем, као и научним реномеом, помагао млађим колегама да припреме своје свеске за исту едицију.

У томе контексту, важно је поменути да се без колеге Васића није могла замислити комисија за одбрану магистарских или докторских дисертација на тему бронзаног или старијег гвозденог доба. Том приликом од њега се није могла чути покуда или лоша реч, већ надасве позитивно мишљење и корисне сугестије како би кандитат своје дело адекватно припремио за будуће објављивање. Преко 40 година члан је редакције Старинара, као и многих зборника и часописа на простору југоисточне Европе. Као чест члан редакција или рецензент радова и монографија, увек је истицао квалитете прилога, а уколико би се остатак редакције или други рецензенти одлучили да одбију аутора, он би сесвојим благонаклоним сугестијама трудио да сваки користан рад ипак буде објављен, па макар у неком другом часопису. Такође, као дугогодишњи руководилац научних пројеката у Археолошком институту, young colleagues on each matter, never striking as a boss or a superior.

Plenty of details on the private and professional life of Rastko Vasić, both as an archaeologist and painter and literate, can be found in the continuation of this volume, which was one of the ideas of the editors. Therefore, about 60 pages are dedicated to his life and work, biography and a detailed bibliography, while the interview is illustrated with Vasić's numerous paintings, selected by the celebrant himself. Afterward, there is a collection of papers dedicated to the colleague Vasić, written in English, German, Russian and the ex-Yugoslav languages, assorted chronologically. Unfortunately, certain authors which were invited in agreement with the celebrant did not respond, primarily due to the poor health, so the editors once again point out that they regret the situation, although on the other hand, we are grateful and proud of the content of the volume, on 33 authors of the papers, and the editorial board comprised of prominent names of the word archaeology from nine different countries.

Through this volume, the editorial board and the Institute of Archaeology would like to heartily congratulate the jubilee to our colleague Vasić and to wish him many more years in archaeology.

Vojislav Filipović Aleksandar Bulatović Aleksandar Kapuran трудио се да помогне млађим колегама по свим питањима, не постављајући се притом као шеф.

Многи детаљи о приватном и професионалном животу Растка Васића и као археолога, и као сликара и књижевника, могу се наћи у наставку овог зборника, што је била и једна од идеја приређивача. Стога је првих шездесетак страна посвећено његовом животу и раду, биографији и детаљној библиографији, док је интервју илустрован бројним Васићевим сликама, по избору самог слављеника. Након тога уприличени сурадови посвећени колеги Васићу, на енглеском, немачком, руском и језицима бивше Југославије, поређани по хронолошком реду. Нажалост, поједини аутори позвани у консултацијама са слављеником нису се одазвали позиву, поглавито због нарушеног здравственог стања, па уредници и овом приликом напомињу да жале због оваквог развоја ситуације. С друге стране, поносни смо на садржај зборника – како на 33 аутора прилога, тако и на редакцију, у којој су врхунска имена светске археологије из девет земаља.

Колеги Васићу уредници и Археолошки институт овим зборником од срца честитају јубилеј и желе још много година рада у археологији.

Војислав Филиповић Александар Булатовић Александар Капуран



In the National Museum in Belgrade, 2018 (by Aca Đorđević) У Народном музеју, 2018. године (фото Аца Ђорђевић)

The Ruler's Palace in Bylazora – Capital of "Independent Paeonians"

Dragi Mitrevski

Abstract: The paper focuses on the results of recent archaeological research of the fortified settlement Gradište-Knežje near the town of Sveti Nikole. Based on the remains of architecture and the discovery of Ruler's Palace, the author discusses different building phases and finds in comparison to the existing ancient written records on Paeonians.

Key words: Bylazora, Ruler's Palace, Paeonians, architecture, 5th-2nd century BC.

Among all of the fortified settlements from the Early Ancient period, i.e. from the V to IV century BC, the settlement in Gradište-Knežje near the Sveti Nikole town is the most distinguished one, in terms of the so called north Paeonian territory. It is also the largest one, covering an area of 20 hectares and occupying a central and very strategic and important position for the entire Ovče Pole region, with the valleys of Vardar and Bregalnica rivers included.

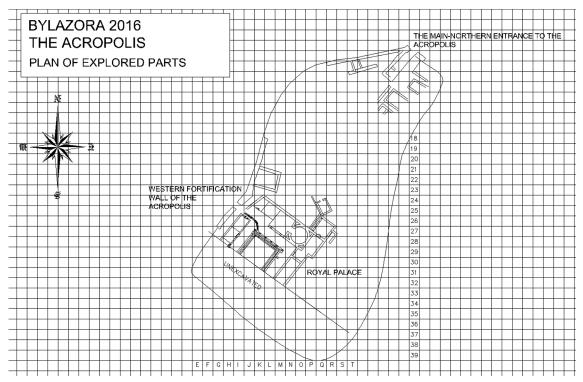


Fig. 1 – Plan of the acropolis in Bylazora with the position of the so-called Ruler Palace.

Back in the 1976, based on the existing written records from ancient authors (mainly Polybius, Livius, and Diodorus), as well as the size and geographical position of the site, I. Mikulčić located the largest Paeonian city – ancient Bylazora at the Gradište-Knežje site. As the years passed by, this assumption was more and more asserted. Thus, in light of recent archaeological

¹ Mikulcic 1976.



Fig. 2 – The main entrance room with the surrounding premises.



Fig. 3 – The facade of the main entrance destroyed in original position with two unfinished Corinthian capitals, left by the outer wall of the palace.

discoveries, not only are these assumptions are confirmed, but they are also significantly strengthened and complemented. After eight years of continuous research, not only was the discovery of numerous finds which illustrate the existence of a city exact like Bylazora made, but it has also gone a step further. They found that Bylazora was not only the largest city in terms of size, but also in terms of importance. Nowadays, it is clear that it is actually the city of Bylazora which was the Paeonian throne city.²

In the course of the research of the acropolis at the Gradište-Knežje site, remains of architecture which clearly mark a Ruler's Palace were discovered in the central and most dominant part of the acropolis (Fig. 1). With it, Bylazora was provided with a new dimension, much larger and more significant, revealing itself not only as an ordinary, and not even as the largest city in Paeonia, but also as a throne place of rulers, which meant it was a capital.

² Mitrevski 2016.

Following the antique written records, it is not difficult to answer which capital and which rulers we are talking about. In the historical sources, from the V to III century BC, we encounter an independent Paeonian country with its own dynasty and rulers that forged their own coins, managed their own politics, and were ritually crowned in the waters of the Bregalnica River.³ That country was obviously organized with a certain political cause, because did not use a specific tribal territory or typical tribal name. They were simply known as Paeonia, organized only in the Paeonian country that enjoyed independence. In that sense, the rulers of Bylazora could have been the emperors of only those Paeonians who Thucydides called the "Independent Paeonians", which are to be differentiated from the other Paeonians, who were not independent but constitutive and an essential element of Ancient Macedonia. Therefore, the Independent Paeonians had a significant historical assignment as defenders: to protect the Macedonian Empire from the north. A few names of the rulers who sequentially ruled within the country of the Independent Paeonians were noted (Agis, Licceus, Patraus, Audoleon, Leon and Dropion). They were all connected to different historical events, representing important political factors in the Balkans during the IV and III century BC.

The first remains of the palace were discovered back in 2011 and 2012, while only the central entrance was being researched. In that stage of excavations, and without enough elements, it was determined to be the palace of Philip V, primarily based on the information from Polybius (V:

97); the overtaking of Bylazora by the Macedonian King Philip V in 217 BC.4 However, the last year of excavations (2013 - 2016) led almost to its full disclosure, except the very southern parts and also the rich archaeological material finds. With that in mind, the data set is quite sufficient for a much more complete chronological and cultural determination.

The palace in Bylazora is a complex construction taking up the entire southern half of the Acropolis. The position, architectural,



Fig. 4 – Apithoi with a part of the wall painting in the so-called North-east corridor.

constructional and decorative manifestations, and especially according to the open central courtyard and the specific layout and character of the individual rooms around it, provides proof that this was a Ruler's Palace, conceptually very similar to the Macedonian Royal Palace in Vergina (Aigai).⁵

The current stage of excavation still does not allow full valuation of the palace, but its basic architectural and archaeological features are evident.

In spite of the still undiscovered southern part, it can be assumed that the palace occupied an area of approximately 50 x 50 meters (Fig. 1). The rooms in the palace have different dimen-

³ Petrova 1999; Sokolovska 1986.

⁴ Matthews and Neidinger 2014, 75.

⁵ Touratsoglou 1998.

sions, purpose, wall decoration, and inventory. Among them stands a central entrance room with an open representative entrance on the west and a side entrance on the opposite eastern wall (Fig. 2-3). From that entrance part, you can enter a long room, which stretches along the eastern side of the palace, from where through a specifically shaped passage it goes towards the central opened atrium. The walls of the room were decorated with fresco decoration laid out in horizontal zones in red, black and white colours (Fig. 4). Speaking of room inventories, only a pithoi was discovered *in situ* in the north-eastern corner of the room. Based on that, it is possible to determine this room as a passage or north–east corridor (Fig. 1).

Among other rooms, there is the circular room, named as the Tholos room which occupied a prominent position and covered an area of 9 meters in diameter (Fig. 5). It had a separate entrance from the west, which probably constituted an open crossing, because that is the only entrance where usual stone thresholds with grooves typical for the doors, have not been detected. The most interesting movable finds are found in that room, as different kinds of gifts were left in smaller cult pits, buried in floor of the room (Fig. 5). The presence of certain types of ceramic vessels and small metal objects, a lot of animal bones in the pits and around them, along with the circular shape and position of the premises, determines this place as an area in the purpose of cult. Such premises in the exact same position are known from the palace of the Macedonian rulers in Vergina.

In the north-western part of the palace, a set of dining rooms, most probably a kitchen, are distinguished. Remains of fireplaces and ovens as well as movable finds that confirm this purpose were found on floors of these rooms (Fig. 1).⁶



Fig. 5 – The so called Tholos room in the process of the excavation.

The central part of the palace is represented by a spacious open courtyard (atrium) which was enclosed by the porches with colonnades (Fig. 6). Unfortunately, only the northern colonnade with 7 stone bases for wooden columns was completely discovered until now. Starting from these porches, the entrance into the separate rooms was organized through the massive stone thresholds, usually for double wooden doors. Nevertheless, the entry from the northern porch into the anteroom and to the mentioned Tholos room was an opened passage with two Doric columns.

⁶ Matthews and Neidinger 2014, 105-107.



Fig. 6 – A part of the central open atrium with the basis of colonnade to the northern porch.



Fig. 7 – Some examples of fresco decoration from different walls.

Special constructive elements in the atrium are stone channels for collecting and draining the rain water from the roofs of the porches.

The outer walls of the palace were built from cut sandy stone blocks in the lower zone up to one meter in height, and of bricks in the upper zone. Internal walls were built mostly by mud bricks, but all of them, the same as the internal side of the outer walls, were decorated by fresco

(Fig. 7). The fresco painting was executed in geometric patterns, in different colours and of very high level of quality.

According to the stratigraphy and movable finds, the palace was in use from the V to III century BC, throughout two successive building phases. The earlier phase is connected with the finds from the late V and first half of the IV century BC, and the later phase with the objects which are characteristic for the second half of the IV and beginning of the III century BC.

The basic plan was implemented in the first phase, when after several renovations the palace was demolished around the middle of the IV century BC. The higher, brick-made parts of the palace including the roof construction were also ruined. After the clearing and levelling of the remaining debris, new mud brick walls and new roof construction was built on the same stone blocks from the previous phase in the lower zone.



Fig. 8 – Some ceramic finds from the palace.

Many different finds can be connected to that phase. Among the ceramic finds, we have typical classical pottery, mainly local grey vessels, local painted pottery and black furnished and red figurate imported pottery (Fig. 8). Some iron tools, bronze pins, fibulae and some other jewellery forms are also present, as is the typical red painted roof tiles. All of the finds are characteristic for the second half of the V century BC and first half of the IV century BC.⁷

⁷ Blazevska 2013; Sokolovska 1986.



Fig. 9 – Some small finds from the palace.

The new construction of the palace implied a new facade, new floors, new wall canvases, which were decorated from the inside with new fresco decoration. A wall painting consisting of geometric patterns with red, black, white, ochre, orange, blue, and grey colours decorated clay base and a thin mortar coating. At the same time, some new facilities were added to the northern external wall, as a special north wing of the new palace (Fig. 1). This palace was in use throughout the second half of the IV and the beginning of the III century BC.

Before its final demolition it was prepared for renovation, as we see from the two new capitals of the Corinthian type that were altered and left unfinished at the entrance to the north wall of the palace. They were most likely left there in order to be used in the renovation of the main entrance. However, the capitals remained unfinished and thus unused.

The Palace was apparently suddenly and violently demolished somewhere in the first decades of the III century BC, without being restored again. Relatively few movable finds were discovered on the floors from the final phase of use, including two coins, one silver Alexander III and a bronze coin of the Paeonian ruler Leon. In addition to those, some very indicative objects, such as lead seal and a decorative glass gem, a lead projectile with an inscription, several fibulae and numerous ceramic vessels were found (Fig. 9). All of those finds, in particular a hundred offensive iron arrows which allowed archer to cause fires, were found in their original position in the rubble and as a part of the burnt floors of the rooms (Fig. 10). Their discovery, mainly in the burnt parts of the palace, in a very picturesque way documents the moment of the final destruction of the palace. Because of that, the final period of the palace is commonly correlated with the

attacks of the Celts and their military campaign toward the south. After that, the palace was not renewed any more.

The city of Bylazora entered the new and last developing phase, but without the palace. The remains of the palace during the second half of the III and first half of the II century BC have been covered by the thick layer of eroded soil from the higher parts of the terrain. Above that layer, ordinary settlement architecture was built without any connection to the palace beneath it.



Fig. 10 – Fire arrows in original position on the floor of the eastern porch.

The archaeological situation discovered at the Gradište-Knežje site, or ancient Bylazora, is very similar to the situation at the surrounding settlements in Ovče Pole, to the well-known settlements in Skopje region (Brazda, Nerezi, Studeničani, Varvara, Kale, etc.) and Kumanovo region (Mlado Nagoričane, Pelince, etc.), up to the Kacipup near Preševo and Krševica near Vranje. All of them have the same topographic, architectural, and archaeological marks, living as the first small towns throughout the V to the beginning of the III century BC. However, the Gradište site in the village of Knežje stands out of them. With 20 hectares of living area, opposite to 2 to 5 hectares on the other mentioned settlements, it was the largest one. It is also the only one with the ruler's palace. Even today's name of the village of Knežje, which means the place of the rulers, is actually referring to the former rulers. The village was organized right below the Gradište city even in the Middle Ages, when the ruler's tradition was obviously still alive and connected to that place.

⁸ Mikulčić 1982; Popović 2012, 11.

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