

Summary

V.I. Kozlov

Population of the Danube-Dniester Steppes in Late 8th — Early 11th cc.: Balkan-Danube Culture

The monograph focuses on archaeological sites of late 8th — early 11th centuries located on the territories of Ukraine and Moldova; it is based on a dissertation thesis presented by V.I. Kozlov in Leningrad in 1990. The book includes a preface, five chapters and conclusions. Its seven annexes and 103 illustrations are a value in itself.

In *Preface*, the author marks a long-standing interest towards the specific culture of the population who left sites of the so-called “Balkan-Danube Archaeological Culture” in the steppes stretching between the Danube and Dniester rivers; this interest is fair enough, for the history of this region in the time of the First Bulgarian Kingdom (681—1018) is not properly reflected in written sources. The specific feature is the peripheral location of understudied South-Slavic, East-Slavic and nomadic antiquities.

Chapter I outlines historical studies of the Balkan-Danube Culture; particularly, it elucidates ways of its development. As V.I. Kozlov states, majority of Bulgarian researchers believe that the left bank of the Lower Danube was part of the First Bulgarian Kingdom, and the material culture in this region is the Old Bulgarian Culture. As the author believes, recognition of the active role of the Turkic-Bulgarian element in formation of the Slavic-Bulgarian Culture (which is expressed in typical glossy pottery, funerary rite, housing) should be regarded as an important aspect of Bulgarian historiography. The author criticizes Romanian researchers who use the name of “Dridu Culture” for the same cultural array and attribute it to the Eastern Roman population. Soviet and Polish archaeologists seem to have quite opposite views: they consider these sites to be of the South-Slavic origin, typical of the First Bulgarian Kingdom. German historiographers suggest a similar opinion, complemented by a view that the earthen walls found in the region must be regarded as borderlines of the First Bulgarian Kingdom, whose north-eastern part included Bessarabia.

V.I. Kozlov characterizes archaeological data and notes that ceramics — though found en masse — has been little studied. The work summarizes facts about 137 non-fortified settlements (except for the fort of Calfa on the Dniester River); fourteen of these have

been explored, including by the author. Remnants of 72 dwellings, hearths, pottery kilns, blacksmith's and potter's workshops and household pits have been thus studied. Overall, about 13,000 ceramic sherds and 130 whole and graphically reconstructed vessels have been documented. The following complex artefacts are considered: grindstones, knives, sickles, spindle whorls, sinkers, bone borers, steels, arrowheads, decorations, as well as osteological characteristics.

In *Chapter II*, the author analyzes settlement patterns of the Balkan-Danube Culture bearers in the steppes stretching between the Dniester and Danube, structure of their settlements, suggests their typology and social interpretation and outlines stages of colonization of this region. He identifies two arrays of different (from less than 0.5 to over 9 ha) settlements. One array is the Dniester Array (35 sites), which includes three groups — Calfa, Tudora and Coastal. The second array is the Danube Array, which unites 102 settlements in Cahul, Ialpug and Catlabug Groups. The latter array seems to be the most developed one: it is protected in the north by the Lower Trajan Wall, and is characterized by absolute domination of the Balkan-Danube Culture. At the same time, in the Dniester area, this domination was unstable and short-lasting. From the middle of the 9th c., the whole region seems to have become one of the comitati of the First Bulgarian Kingdom.

In *Chapter III*, V.I. Kozlov examines debris of 72 houses, which had framed construction, in most cases. In terms of the wall structure, he divides them into frame-and-pillar, Fachwerk and land-frame construction. He analyzes three types of kilns (of stone, wattle-and-daub in a niche, wattle-and-daub on earthen bed) and two types of hearths (in-floor and on a bed or rock pillar). As a result, the author distinguished pre-Bulgarian reminiscences in the Balkan-Danube Culture: “yurt-like” structures, hearths in the center of dwellings, stone-lined walls.

Chapter IV is dedicated to studies of pottery, which is divided into three groups based on technological features, assortment of forms and methods of decoration: I — ware manufactured on fast or slow wheels and decorated with cut-in linear-wavy ornament; II — ware manufactured on a fast wheel, most often decorated with glossy strips; III — wheel pottery combining technological features of the first two groups: clay and baking are the same as in objects of the second group, while their decoration is the same as in the first group (hybrid vessels). Imported (foreign) pottery in the Balkan-Danube Culture is represented by the Eastern-Slavic pottery of Luka-Raykovetskaya type, Byzantine products and individual fragments of a clay cauldron typical of the Raducaneni Culture. Having completed this analysis, V.I. Kozlov suggested his own chronology of the sites. He distinguished three periods in development of the Balkan-Danube Culture: 1) late 8th — mid 9th cc.; 2) mid 9th — mid 10th cc.; 3) second half of 10th — early 11th cc.

In Chapter V, the author examines issues related to economy and everyday culture, as well as ethno-cultural and political history. He inferred that the economy in this region was that of settled farmers, which was typical for the main territories of the First Bulgarian Kingdom. Besides, he characterized the role of fishing and hunting, emphasized the role of crafts — processing of metals, stone and bone; ceramic production and housing. V.I. Kozlov analyzes scarce objects of spiritual culture, which implicitly indicate to spread of Christianity in the region in 10th c. He suggests a possible localization of the place known as “Onglos”, locating it in the steppes on the left bank of the Danube delta, which was controlled by nomadic pre-Bulgarians in 8th c., while the Eastern Slavs could not penetrate these lands. Touching upon the issues of similarities and differences with

the Saltovo-Mayaki (Khazar) Culture, the author emphasizes their common pre-Bulgarian background.

In the *Conclusion*, the Russian researcher offers a model for ethnocultural development of the Balkan-Danube Culture. In his view, the 1st stage (late 8th — mid 9th cc.) was to explore the territories in the Lower Danube region. Later on, due to economic and political achievements of the First Bulgarian Kingdom, the number of settlements grew and spread to the Dniester region. The face of the culture of the time finds closest analogies on sites in the north-eastern part of Bulgaria and Dobrogea. The 2nd stage (second half of 9th — first half of 10th cc.) was marked by structural enhancement and dawn of the Balkan-Danube Culture, with a vast and rich network of settlements, which had encompassed the territories in the Lower Danube and Lower Dniester region by late 9th c. In the Dniester region, the comers from the Danube lands came into contact with the Eastern Slavs — bearers of the Luka-Raykovetskaia Culture. The 3rd stage (mid 10th — early 11th cc.), in author's opinion, is characterized by unification of the material culture. He believes that the region was involved in building a uniform material culture with essential features of statehood, which reflected development of Slavic-Bulgarian ethnicity.

This monograph by V.I. Kozlov, who unfortunately died so early, will be an important and long-expected event for researchers from different countries. Publication of little known archaeological materials and the author's historical reconstructions (including the debatable ones) will no doubt enable a better study of the early medieval history of Bulgaria and contact zones in the Northern Pontic Area (Moldova, in particular), as well as a better understanding of intercultural interaction processes in the western part of the Eurasian steppe.