

SUMMARY

The Kartal fort, located near the village of Orlovka in the Reni district (more recently, Izmail district) of the Odessa region, is an indisputable historical and archaeological phenomenon in the Northwestern Black Sea region.¹ This position is well-established among archaeologists who study various periods of antiquity in Southeastern Europe.

The fort is located on the left bank of the Lower Danube, 1.5 km west of the settlement of Orlovka and 1 km from the riverbed (Fig. 1–3).

The site was discovered long ago. In the middle of the 19th century, its first visual and descriptive studies were conducted by the secretary of the Odessa Society of History and Antiquities, N.N. Murzakevich, in 1842 (Fig. 6), and Count A.S. Uvarov (Fig. 7), who led the expedition of the St. Petersburg Archaeological and Numismatic Society, which worked here in 1848. Their efforts resulted in a detailed topographic plan, thanks to which we have a complete picture of what the fort and the surrounding area looked like 170 years ago (Fig. 8).

The archaeological excavations of the fort began only in 1963. They continued until 1993 (with interruptions), led by the associate professor of Odessa State University R.D. Bondar (Fig. 11). During this period, research was focused on the fort's acropolis, the "Stone Mountain" (Fig. 4). The discovery of the burial ground, which dates back to 2004, marks the newest period in the study of the site when the excava-

tions were moved to the posad (suburb) territory. Today, the cultural and chronological column of the fort contains six main horizons: the Eneolithic (Early and Late), Early Hallstatt (Late Bronze Age), Middle Hallstatt, Antiquity (5th–3rd centuries), Roman Time, and Early Middle Ages. The burial ground corresponds to period III, making thus clear its designation as "Kartal III".

The area where the burial ground is located, in full accordance with its location on the site, was named "North-East." For the evolution of studies on the burial ground, see Fig. 15–16. Today, it is the largest Middle Hallstatt burial ground of all known (published) in the Carpathian-Danube region. Overall, 532 burials with inhumations were unearthed in an area of 6,000 sq.m. Presumably, this makes up about half of all the burials in the cemetery, and thus, their number may be about one thousand.

Approximately 30% of the graves examined do not contain any grave goods. Ceramics predominates in the remaining burials. Its forms are pretty diverse, although there is one that dominates. These are vessels of the so-called Kartal III type (Fig. 31, 19, 26, 33, 30, 35, 35, etc.). Their number approaches 150. Other types of vessels are also present in the graves: scoops, cups, bowls, vases, etc. In addition to ceramics, the grave goods include bronze jewelry and costume details (bracelets, fibulae, plaques, rings, belt elements), tools (iron knives), weapons (spearheads, axe), and beads (glass, amber). It should be noted that there is a very representative collection of fibulae, which includes about 50 specimens of various types.

Some findings from *the discussion of the collection of ceramics* from the burial ground can be summarized as follows. The main form is *Kartal III.1* (Fig. 349–354), which evolves sudden-

¹ The name of the site goes back to the old place name. Up to the late 1940s, the village was called "Kartal" (*Turk. Kartal* — "eagle"). This toponym is a legacy of the Turkish period in the history of the Northern Black Sea region, which lasted from the end of the 15th to the end of the 18th centuries.

ly without any close prototypes in previous cultures. If we take into account the large number of such vessels, then the assumption of the local origins of this form seems more than likely. At the same time, very few forms similar to those found in the burial ground were found on the settlement. For example, vessels of the most numerous type, such as Kartal III.1, are scarce. The same applies to type Kartal III.2. Most likely, the small vessels were made specifically for the funerary ceremony.

When discussing the previous local cultures that may be related to the genesis of the burial ground's ceramic complex, first of all, it is necessary to keep in mind the culture of the population of the early Hallstatt period, both from Kartal and adjacent areas, as well as the Belozersk culture of the final stage of the late Bronze Age. Belozersk settlements and burial grounds are known near Kartal within a 2–7 km radius. Vessels from Kartal III have minimal similarity with Belozersk ceramics. Wide-necked, rounded shapes are characteristic of the dining ceramics of the Belozersk culture, which, as we can see, is not present in the Kartal. The types of vessels, such as bowls, scoops, etc., seem to be the only commonality between the Early Hallstatt ceramics from the Kartal II horizon and the ceramics from the Middle Hallstatt horizon. If, typologically, it is still possible to talk about some similarities, then in terms of production technology and the quality of ceramic processing, there is a vast difference between these two cultural and chronological horizons of Kartal.

It may be interesting to see further development of the Kartal ceramics complex and, above all, the leading type of Kartal III.1. After the settlement in Kartal ceased to function at the HaC1b stage, vessels comparable by form and size to the type of Kartal III.1 emerged on the middle Danube and its tributaries in the next HaC2 phase. Rather numerous series of such vessels from Southern Styria in Austria (Kleinklein) and the Dolenjsko region in Slovenia look particularly convincing as analogies. It is still challenging to explain this phenomenon. This may be a sheer coincidence, which is very likely if it turns out that there are prototypes in previous cultures in these Alpine regions. However, this could also be the result of dissemina-

tion from the starting point in Kartal, further up the Danube, and along its right tributaries, Sava and Drava. Moreover, given the distance between the starting point and the final regions and the absence of sites with such ceramics in the areas lying between Styria and the lower reaches of the Danube, there is nothing else we can do but see population migration behind this phenomenon. As is known, the Danube in the lower and middle reaches was one of the main communication ways through which cultural innovations, including the Thracian-Cimmerian culture, were disseminated from Eastern to Central Europe. The vector of such contacts was by no means one-sided. During the burial ground's active functioning, the population of the Kartal III horizon received some impacts from the Middle Danube region. This is indicated by some apparently imported ceramic molds found in the burial ground (Fig. 367, 5; 373, 260).

The first thing that catches the eye when reviewing fibulae from the Kartal III burial ground is their typological diversity (Fig. 384; 387; 390; 392; 395). This is an infrequent phenomenon for a separate site. Examples of other burial grounds (Basarabi, Vayuga Pesak) generally show the same type of fastener series, with some variations.

Fibulae are details of the costume. It is believed that, ethnoculturally, the costume is a conservative element and an indicator of social status. Concerning Kartal, we may presume that an intersubjective population group of quite diverse origin could live here. In my opinion, the origins of this diversity should be sought in the gender-cultural/ethnic aspect; the fibula in the burial may contain the following information about its owner:

- ethno-geographic (“ethnic”);
- practical — the most generalized type of costume, based on the location of the fibula;
- social/family — the condition of the fibula, its preservation;

The presence of fibulae in female burials and their absence in male ones may mean that the inhabitants of Kartal (at least some of them, quite many, in fact), were, literally, wearers of costumes of different cultural traditions. This assumption is supported by the age and sex distri-

bution of fibulae on other burial grounds, particularly in the Lower Danube basin.

Fibulae are undoubtedly a Western component of material culture. The women of Kartal, at least those accompanied by fibulae in the funerary rite, belonged to the cultural space located west and southwest of the lower reaches of the Danube. Accordingly, the male population, at least some part of it, was alien to this tradition. It probably belonged to another cultural area — local, Black Sea, or broader, Eastern European one. The inevitable conclusion that emerges from this line of reasoning seems quite apparent.

Among *the items of weapons*, 13 spearheads of varying degrees of preservation were found in the burial ground (Fig. 404). Ten of them are represented by intact and archaeologically intact specimens. The morphology of the spearheads from Kartal indicates that this type of weapon was formed under strong Eastern influence; however, the Western cultural impulse was also involved. This is, in principle, quite consistent with the widespread opinion regarding the formation of this type of weapon in the south of Eastern Europe at the beginning of the early Iron Age.

About two dozen *iron knives* were found in the burial ground. This item of grave goods can be considered traditional for the material culture of the eastern steppe population during the pre-Scythian period.

Five *psaliae* were found in four burials (Fig. 407). All of them are made of antler. All belong to the type of psalia with three holes. Analogies can be found in the Sakharna culture and the North Caucasus. Unfinished psaliae (Fig. 408, A) tell about their local production.

The bronze anklets in the funerary rite of the Kartal burial ground (Fig. 413–415) should be considered a manifestation of the Western, Carpathian-Balkan cultural tradition. In the steppes of Eastern Europe, this element of the funerary goods is missing. In the North Caucasus, in the Koban culture area (the Western version), anklets are known in small numbers and in late complexes — not earlier than the 7th century BC or even the second half of it. There are slightly more of them on the sites of the eastern variant, where there seems to be no evidence for independent dating.

A set of beads from the graves of the Kartal III burial ground suggests the Mediterranean connections of the Lower Danube population at this time. The glass for their manufacture was obtained in certain centers of the Eastern Mediterranean (at the same time, the ash glass comes from Mesopotamia or the Syrian-Palestinian region rather than from Egypt) and then processed into finished products in secondary workshops. Apparently, one of these workshops was located on Rhodes Island. It is impossible to exclude the possible processing of glass in Southern or Eastern Europe. The so-called Vogelperlen find should be considered unique for the entire region of Southeastern Europe (excluding Greece) (Fig. 431, 13)

The basic parameters of the *funerary rite* indicate a very high degree of unification in the burial ground. The features and the statistics, summarized in several tables, confirm this in full. First, this concerns the position of the bodies and, particularly, their orientation. Thus, the South-SSE direction is slightly less than 90%. (Table 3). The position on the right side predominates (70%), as does the right side, with a turn on the stomach (about 15% more) (Tables 4–5). In fact, the only type of burial structure is a simple pit that is rectangular, oval, trapezoidal, or a combination of these features. In three cases, a niche was documented in the burial pit's eastern wall (burials 32, 240, 402). The pits are usually shallow. Only about a dozen have a depth of up to 150 cm from the modern surface (no. 57, 74, 103, 109, 111, 228, 240, 340, 509). The deepest pits were found in burials 79 and 438, their depth reaching 170 cm. In addition to single burials, paired and collective burials are found on the burial ground (e.g., grave 16).

The genesis of the funerary rite of the Kartal burial ground is reduced to two main traditions. One of them is local and dates back to the rites of the Late Bronze Age population (Noah culture and Belozersk culture). Among other things, this is confirmed by DNA tests. All six samples (burials 19, 103, 109, 124, 126, 132) showed similarities with the population of Eastern Europe of the Late Bronze Age. The second tradition is the eastern one, brought here by the nomads of the Eurasian steppes. We cannot distinguish any features in the funerary rite of Kar-

tal that could be called unique to the Thracian communities of the lower reaches of the Danube and the wider Carpathian-Danube zone. For some Thracian cultures (Babadag, Kozia, Ostrov group), funerary sites are still unknown. The burial grounds of the Basarabi culture, as well as the burial mounds of the Sakharna culture, have nothing to do with Kartal.

The chronology of the burial ground is developed based on three indicators.

- internal stratigraphy of the site (the burial ground and the settlement);
- external analogies for various objects (from the burial ground and the settlement);
- radiocarbon dates (the burial ground).

The burial ground belongs to the site's third cultural and chronological horizon. In the European chronological system, this horizon corresponds to the stage of the middle Hallstatt — HaB3-aC (after H. Muller-Karpe), or HaB2/B3-Hac (after the new scheme). The burial ground existed relatively briefly, for about a century and a half. However, judging by the number of burials, it was used intensively. As the studies progressed, views on the chronology

of the burial ground changed. First, the cemetery was assumed to function in the 8th – first half of the 7th centuries. Now, the initial phase of the burial ground dates back to the 9th century BC. Although the C¹⁴ dates give the 10th century, I think they are by far too early, at least because, between the horizon of Kartal II (12th–11th centuries) and Kartal III, a chronological break of about 100 years is recorded in the life of the ancient settlement.

The archaeological content of the Kartal III horizon (burial ground+settlement), combined with an analysis of the early literary tradition (mainly ancient), quite logically brings us to the **historical level of generalization**, which is reflected in the concept of the “Thracian-Cimmerian culture”. This concept remained a historical abstraction for a long time and did not have full-fledged factual support in the form of archaeological realia. Owing to the archaeological realia of the Middle Hallstatt Kartal, the term “Thracian-Cimmerian culture” cannot only be rehabilitated but also supplied with content, the search for which has remained unsuccessful for a long time.