

POSITION

of Assoc. Prof. D.Sc. Nartsis Torbov, ULSIT -Sofia
for Kaloyan Ivanov Petkov, PhD student
in Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”,
Faculty of History, Department of Archaeology
for conferring of an educational and scientific title “PhD”

The dissertation of Kaloyan Petkov comprises a foreword (an introduction into the subject), four chapters, conclusion, bibliography, appendix to the text, catalogue, diagrams and maps (10 diagrams and 15 maps) - 415 pages.

In the foreword the PhD student determines the goal and objective of the scientific research. The research subjects are votive weapons from Ancient Thrace and their role in ritual context. The main goal of the research is concentrated in the examination of the armament, discovered in a ritual/cult environment. The primary objective is the creation of a database for the weapons, situated on the territory of Ancient The method, used by the PhD student for the examination, is the comparative analysis and comparison of archaeological complexes from Ancient Thrace with analogous complexes from Europe. The information, gathered by the PhD student allows the composition of a catalogue, diagrams and maps. The research of Kaloyan Petkov is formed on the basis of an extensive source base: archaeological materials and written sources (historical sources and epigraphical data).

The territorial framework of the research includes three geographical zones: Ancient Thrace, neighboring territories and other regions of Europe and the Mediterranean. The chronological framework of the title is the 1st millennium BC - the Iron Age.

The historiographical examination of the scientific literature is presented in the first chapter. It is divided into two parts – in the first of them the scientific

research for Ancient Thrace is analyzed, and in the second those for the regions, examined in the dissertation, are presented.

In the third chapter of the dissertation the weapons from Ancient Thrace in ritual context are analyzed. Presented is a general examination of cult sites, from which they originate. Also examined is the weaponry itself, which was used as a votive offering – swords, daggers, knives, axes, spears; arrows, helmets, armor/mail, shin guards, shields, belt trimmings and riding equipment. The author concludes from the used statistical data that the spear takes a primary place in the offerings. The riding equipment (bridles, spurs, appliques for a horse harness) also finds a wide application as a votive offering. Weapons are rarely seen in sanctuaries. The main bulk of them originates from ritual pits and deposits.

The archaeological complexes, in which weaponry has been discovered, are examined in chronological order during the individual periods of the Iron Age. According to the author part of the graves, discovered in tumular embankments, are connected with the idea for heroization. The weapons determine the high hierarchical status of the deceased. They symbolize the idea of the man-warrior and they transcend with him into the afterlife. During the second phase of the Early Iron Age deposited in the graves is a rich and diverse grave inventory, consisting of weaponry, jewelry, vessels from precious metals and riding equipment. Kaloyan Petkov determines several stages in the development of burial practices and the deposition of weapons as votive offerings on the territory of Ancient Thrace. Stage 1: the Late Bronze Age and first phase of the Early Iron Age – the graves are with one or two pieces of armament. Stage 2a: the second phase of the Early Iron Age - rich tumular graves with diverse inventory. Stage 2b: the Classical and Early Hellenistic period - a presence of defensive and parade armament in rich grave, construction of monumental tombs. Stage 3: The middle and late period of the Hellenistic period – graves with new types of armament. Stage 4: a period of time before and after the formation of the Roman provinces

in Ancient Thrace – Roman influence in the elements of armament, discovered in graves.

The catalogue of the dissertation contains 61 archaeological sites from Ancient Thrace, divided on a geographical basis into three separate zones – the territories on the south from Stara planina (Catalogue-A); between Danube and Stara planina (Catalogue-B); on the north from Danube (Catalogue-C). The annotations include the position, chronology, structure and votive offerings from cult sites primarily from Bulgaria and Romania.

The fourth chapter of the dissertation is dedicated to the research of weapons of votive use from the regions, neighboring Ancient Thrace. Presented are evidences from Ancient Greece, Ancient Macedon, Magna Graecia and Italy (Apennine Peninsula), Ancient Illyria, the territories of the Celtic cultural circle (Central and Western Europe, the western parts of the Balkan peninsula) and of the Northern Black Sea cultural circle (regions of the Northern Black Sea coast). In the appendix to the text of the fourth chapter are used examples from the third group of the geographical framework: Asia Minor, the island of Sardinia, Iberia (Iberian Peninsula), Britannia (British Isles) and the territory of the Northern European cultural circle (Scandinavian peninsula, the Baltic states, Northern Germany and Poland).

The fifth chapter is dedicated to the rituals, connected with weaponry – the creation of trophies and the ritual “killing” of weapons. According to the PhD student the trophies are anthropomorphic monuments, constructed usually from wood, on top of which weapons are placed. They are created by the will of the victors, who plunder the weapons of their fallen enemies. Kaloyan Petkov remarks that on the territory of Ancient Thrace the presence of trophies on the territory of Ancient Thrace is not attested. In the historical sources are missing evidences for the construction of such monuments.

The ritual “killing” of weapons is done by their bending, hacking/breaking and burning. This ritual practice is commonly used during the period 3rd – 1st c.

BC. It leads to the construction of the large cult complexes in interred sets of armament in them. According to the PhD student on the territory of Bulgaria similar ritual activities are attested during a long period of time: from the Late Bronze Age to the first decades after the creation of the Roman provinces. Present are similarities with the documented ritual practice in Central and Western Europe.

In the conclusion of the dissertation the conclusions of the author, formulated in the textual part, are presented in short. On the basis of it a notion can be made about the scientific contribution of Kaloyan Petkov, who has summarized a considerable volume of information.

The PhD student is an author of four publications (two under print), which are of importance for his scientific development. In them he examines individual subjects, which are exhaustingly researched in the dissertation. I would recommend for Kaloyan Petkov to publish it, with the focus being set on the collected information about the weapons as votive offerings in the territory of Ancient Thrace.

The scientific - research activity of the PhD student is considerable and fruitful. I declare in front of the scientific jury my high opinion for the conferring of Kaloyan Ivanov Petkov of the scientific and educational title “PhD” in the professional field 2.2 “HISTORY and ARCHAEOLOGY”.

Date:

09.05. 2023

Member of the jury:



(Assoc. Prof. D.Sc. N. Torbov)