

Foreword

The Preslav Treasure is one of the most impressive gold and jewellery hoards of the Middle Ages and one of the most important archaeological discoveries of Bulgaria. It was a sensation for Bulgarian archaeology and is regarded as a national treasure, but it also holds broader significance for Medieval Studies. Over 180 pieces of jewellery and appliques, coins, and spoons, made from gold and silver, adorned with precious stones, pearls and enamels, were unearthed in 1978 near the town of Preslav in Bulgaria that was for roughly eighty years, from the late ninth century to 971, the capital of the First Bulgarian Empire (681-1018). The treasure sheds light on the relations of medieval Bulgaria and its neighbour Byzantium: most objects would have come from Constantinople, and they might even be associated with a historical event, the marriage of the Bulgarian Tsar Peter I (927-969) with the Byzantine princess Marie-Irene in 927.

For the first time since its excavation, objects from the Preslav Treasure were analysed with scientific methods. To that aim, an international co-operation was established in 2017 between the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (Prof. Stanislav Stanilov), the Museum »Veliki Preslav« (Dr Plamen Slavov) and the Leibniz-Zentrum für Archäologie (LEIZA; formerly Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum [RGZM], Prof. Falko Daim). The research project »The Preslav Treasure from Bulgaria (Tenth Century)« was established at the LEIZA, generously funded by the Gerda Henkel Foundation, Düsseldorf (Germany), and also by the Society of Friends of the LEIZA. Almost all objects – except for five diadem plaques – were shipped to Mainz in two batches. The metals, enamels and precious stones were analysed with the non-destructive Micro-X-Ray-Fluorescence method, Raman Spectroscopy and X-ray radiography to specify the materials, their compositions, as well as the structure of the objects. The latter was also studied by the LEIZA goldsmiths and conservators regarding medieval goldsmithing technology. Equally important was to restore the objects, first to clean and secure the fragile artefacts, and also to remove traces of older restorations and replace them with state-of-the-art materials used today. The LEIZA's experts were Prof. Susanne Greiff, then head of the department of Scientific Archaeology and Experimental Archaeology, and Matthias Heinzel, restorer at the workshop for

Precious Metal Conservation, who conducted the restoration. Dr Marlène Aubin was in charge of the material science investigations, Stephan Patscher MA and Sabine Steidl contributed to another essential goal of the project, the photographic documentation. High-resolution photographs were taken using the focus stacking technique; additional images were produced through X-ray radiography.

Serendipity on our side, some objects from the Preslav Treasure had been requested for an exhibition in the Musée du Louvre in 2018. With the director of the Louvre's department Objets d'art, Dr Jannic Durand, Univ.-Prof. Falko Daim and project co-ordinator Dr Antje Bosselmann-Ruickbie jointly organised the conference »Autor le trésor de Preslav«, which took place in the Musée du Louvre in Paris from 19 to 20 September 2018 accompanying the exhibition. Seventeen international experts on Bulgarian history, archaeology, and art history, as well as on archaeometry and material science, from Austria, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, and Italy advanced our understanding of Bulgarian Cultural History, particular aspects of the treasure and many of its objects.

This book comprises fourteen of these papers presented at the conference and includes an introduction by Jannic Durand, our host at the Louvre. The peer-reviewed contributions cover four subject areas: the first part sheds light on the historical context and Bulgaria's relations with the East and the West, specifically Byzantium and the Franks, furthermore, the Christian missioning of Bulgaria. The second part is devoted to archaeological excavations in Preslav and on a wider scope in Bulgaria, while the third part focuses on selected objects and object groups in the treasure, such as the diadem plaques, the earrings and the spherical pendants. Part four comprises papers on the technology and scientific analyses of the Preslav Treasure and related objects.

We would like to express our gratitude to all speakers at this conference and authors of this volume, to Dr Jannic Durand and his team at the Musée du Louvre, and our Bulgarian partners at the Museum Veliki Preslav, including its current director Dr Alexander Gorchev, and the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences in Sofia. Our sincere thanks also go to the Gerda Henkel Foundation and the Society of Friends of the LEIZA for their support.

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