

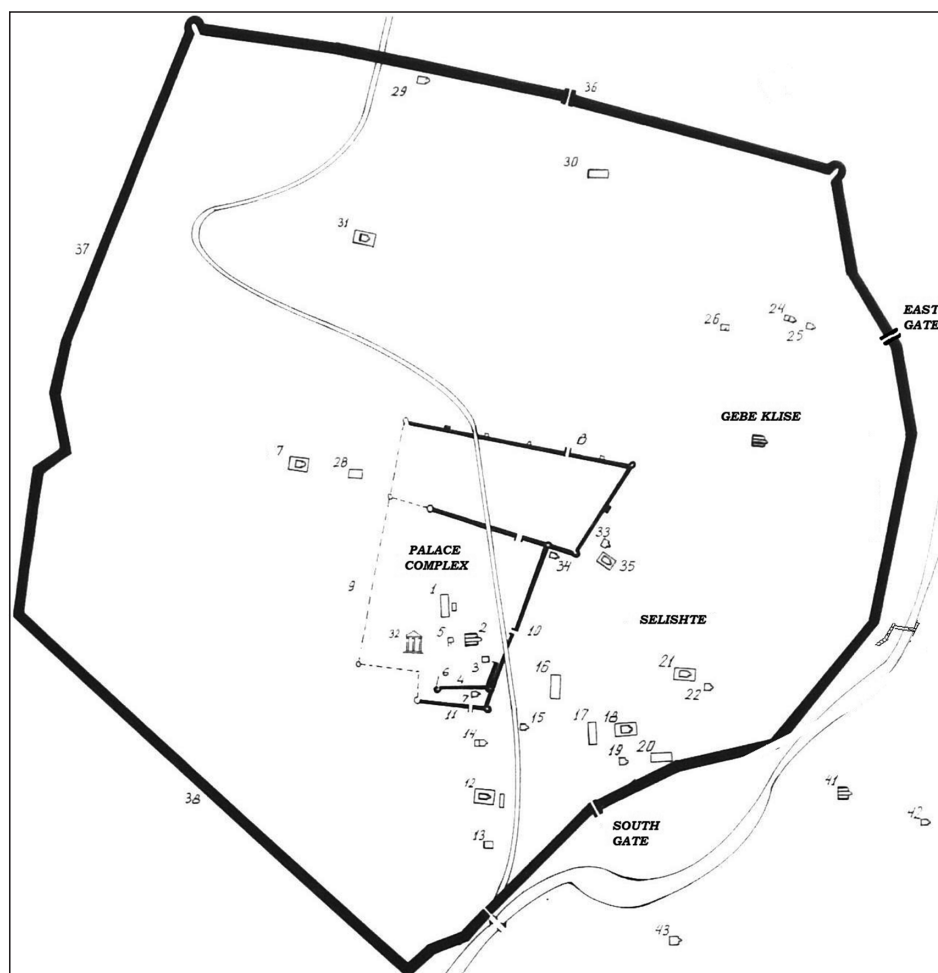
Archaeological Investigations at Veliki Preslav

Excavations in Veliki Preslav have been going on for 120 years (figs 1-2). During this time, many monuments of Old Bulgarian architecture and a large amount of archaeological material have been discovered, outlining the overall picture of a large medieval city centre. This requires an overview of archaeological research to formulate conclusions on the appearance of the second Bulgarian capital. There are two ways to approach this task, which we will try to combine: first, to focus on the chronological order of the excavations; and second, to focus on the topography, starting from the palace centre, passing through the main fortified city, looking at the

right bank of the river Ticha and other more distant suburbs to reach the ring of satellite villages.

While studying the antiquities in Preslav, several stages of archaeological investigation can be observed, each with its own characteristics and content. The first stage is from the beginning of the twentieth century to 1944. These excavations were led by the patriarchs of Bulgarian medieval archaeology, Karel Shkorpil, Yordan Gospodinov, Krastyo Miatiev and Vera Ivanova, and were characterised by some long interruptions. However, all of the most significant monuments in Preslav were explored in this period, at least in part, provid-

Fig. 1 General plan of medieval Preslav:
1 »Throne room« with church. – **2** Patriarchal church. – **3** Administrative building. – **4** Fortress wall. – **5** Large bath building. – **6** Small bath building. – **7** Chapel. – **8** North gate of the »inner city«. – **9** West fortress wall of the »inner city«. – **10** East gate of the »inner city«. – **11** South gate of the »inner city«. – **12** »Round church« with monastery. – **13** Workshop for painted ceramics. – **14** Pagan temple. – **15** Chapel. – **16** Boyar's houses. – **17** Secular building. – **18** Secular complex with church. – **19** Chapel. – **20** Secular building. – **21** Monastery complex. – **22** Mostich's church. – **23** Basilica »Gebe klise«. – **24-25** Churches of Varenitsite. – **26** Pagan shrine. – **27** Palace monastery. – **28** Houses. – **29** Chapel. – **30** Secular building. – **31** Monastery Chereshto. – **32** The personal residence of the rulers of Preslav. – **33** Church. – **34** Churches of Chupkata. – **35** Church with buildings. – **36** North gate of the »outer city«. – **37-38** West fortress wall of the »outer city«. – **39** South-east gate of the »outer city«. – **40** Church. – **41** Basilica Delidushka. – **42** Tomb's church. – **43** Church. – (Map Museum Veliki Preslav).



- 1 Stanchev, Dvadeset 18.
- 2 Gospodinov, Razkopki na Patlejna 113-117.
- 3 Dzhumaliev, Shestdest 14-17.

- 4 Vazharova, Slavyani.
- 5 Stanchev, Yordan 7-13.
- 6 Totev, Trideset 51.



Fig. 2 »Throne room«, 1927. –
(Photo Archive of NAIM-BAS).

ing the direction for archaeological investigations today. One of the achievements of these researchers was the discovery of a large part of the central palace ensemble¹ (fig. 2), the monastery in Patleina, with the initial data on the production of painted white clay ceramics², and the architectural masterpiece, the Round Church³, also known as the Golden Church (figs 3-4). Large sections of the fortress walls around the palace centre and the northern gate, the great basilica Gebe Klise⁴ and the first town monastery in Chereshto⁵ were revealed. In the locality of Selishte, more than ten churches were registered without further investigations⁶.

These studies indicated that future investigations should be concentrated in these areas: the construction of the fortress, the palace centre, monastery and church architecture, and secular buildings and complexes.

A new stage in the study of Preslav began after 1944 with systematic excavations and intensified publishing activity. The field studies were carried out on different plots inside and outside the fortified city, as well as in the nearer and further surroundings, where a significant number of monuments were discovered. Gradually, the appearance of the old city of Preslav was uncovered to an even greater extent. The management of the excavations included a team from the National Archaeological Museum (AIM) at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (BAS), headed by Vera Ivanova.

The excavations focused mainly on the low riverside district of the capital in the area of Selishte and along the right bank of the river Ticha. A group of monasteries characterise the area as a spiritual centre outside the city walls. The monastery in the area of Avradaka deserves special attention: it was equipped with two churches, one of which is a cross-in-square church of the complex Constantinopolitan type⁷. The

picture is complemented by two more monasteries in the area of Tuzlalaka⁸ (fig. 5). They appear to have been a production centre for painted ceramics. In the area of Valkashina⁹, remnants of a church represent the cross-in-square construction type characteristic for Preslav, with has two free-standing supports for the dome. Another church with the same plan was discovered in the north-east part of the monastery enclosure. In the White Coast valley, two cross-in-square churches were found that were built successively in the same place¹⁰. The older one has wall panels with built-in semi-columns. Yet another church nearby has the shape of a shortened basilica. In the same area, a secular building with a complex ground plan was revealed, which has a close connection with the large building excavated outside of the monastery fence of the complex in the area of Avradaka. About 15 km south of the old city near the village of Vinnitsa, a village was excavated, comprising a church, and an adjoining building from the ninth to tenth centuries¹¹.

Since 1949, the efforts of the team who led the archaeological research in Preslav have focused on areas within the boundaries of the fortified city. In the south-eastern part of the outer city, known as Selishte, the foundations of three large complexes were revealed. The residential and outbuildings of one of them are located around church no. 4¹². At the west end of the terrace, a small church of the cross-in-square building type is located. After a nearly twenty-year interruption, an architectural complex was discovered¹³ around the small church previously mentioned. Particular attention should be paid to the complex around the church with the tomb of Mostich. Attached to the north side of the temple was a chapel, in which an open tomb was found in 1954 with an inscription of the Chergobilya Mostich¹⁴. The attention

7 Totev, Trideset 50.

8 Totev, Manastirat.

9 Totev, Trideset 51.

10 Gospodinov, Razkopki iz dolinata 71-76.

11 Totev, Srednovekovna.

12 Totev, Trideset 51.

13 Bonev, Arhitektura 56-79.

14 Vaklinov/Ivanova-Mavrodinova, Nadpisa.

Fig. 3 Plan of the monastery ensemble of the »Round Church«, ninth-tenth centuries: **1** Monastery church. – **2** Monastery society. – **3** Painted ceramics and glass-making workshops. – **4** Monastery scriptorium with workshop. – (Plan by T. Totev).



Fig. 4 The »Round Church« after the discovery. – (Photo Archive of NAIM-BAS).



Fig. 5 The monastery complex, Tuzlalaka. – (Archive of NAIM-BAS).





Fig. 6 Citizens' complex, Selishte. – (Photo Archive of NAIM-BAS).

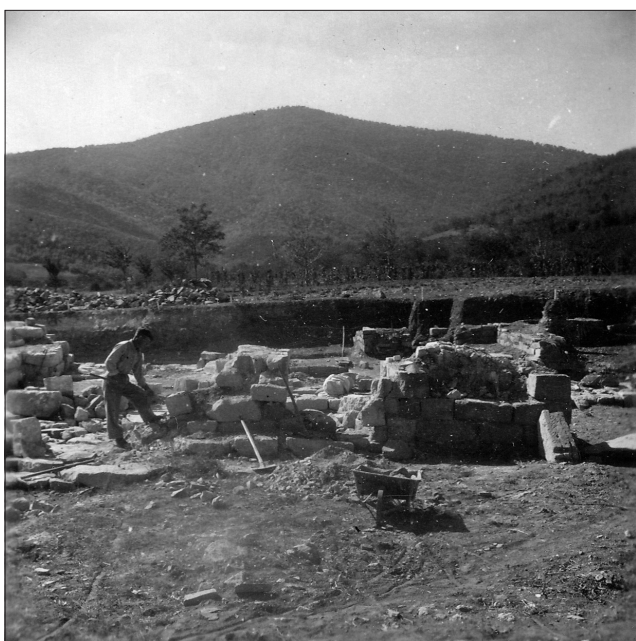


Fig. 7 The south gate of the inner city, 1951. – (Photo Archive of NAIM-BAS).

of the researchers was then focused on excavating another large residential complex in the shape of a yard open to the west. In the centre of this yard was a church of the cross-in-square type. A crypt was located next to the northern side of the church, comprising eight tombs with skeletons of children and adults, which has been interpreted as a private structure¹⁵ (fig. 6).

An important part of the study of Preslav during this period was excavating different areas of the fortifications. One

of the gates of the outer city wall was discovered at the south-east end of the area of Selishte, not far from church no. 4. The southern gate of the inner fortress was completely uncovered¹⁶ (fig. 7). To the west, on the outer side of the wall, a building with eighteen rooms was found, which overlooked a market square. It was interpreted as a chain of commercial premises¹⁷. A building with a similar structure was also found on the inside along the eastern wall.

Excavations of the central palace district in the large royal palace were also resumed. A more complete picture of the Preslav palace centre was formed after the discovery of the so-called »throne room«. It took fifteen years to finish the research on this room, its building history, and the reconstruction of the ground plan. This large ensemble had a complex plan: the rooms were grouped around two main areas in the east and the west, which, until this day, researchers refer to as the »grand palace«, the »throne room« (fig. 2), the »small palace« or »residential complex« without justification¹⁸. In the southern part of the palace centre, a bath was discovered¹⁹, which was the first of its kind to be found in Preslav. According to its plan and setup, it was similar to a bath later excavated in the monastery in the north-western part of the outer city²⁰.

Archaeological research was also conducted in areas located in the northern part of the outer city. In the area of the »new« cemeteries of Preslav which date back to the second half of the twentieth century, the silver cup of Župan Sivin was discovered in a tenth-century grave²¹. After a rescue excavation, a building with four segments, part of a complex, was revealed. Not far from it, a necropolis was located, with two burial types of the ninth to tenth centuries. The exca-

15 Popkonstantinov, Razkopki 98.

16 Vitlyanov, Yuzhnata 177-188.

17 Changova, Za grazhdanskite 139-157.

18 Vaklinova, Preslavskiyat dvorets 49-54.

19 Akrabova-Zhandova/Vasileva, Banya 258-270.

20 Totev, Dvortsoviyat.

21 Totev, Silver Cup 5-15.

Fig. 8 The east fortress of the palace complex. – (Photo Archive of NAIM-BAS).



vations of the northern gate of the outer city wall in 1969 closed a stage of research in this part of the capital²². The gate is similar in size and structure to the southern gate of the fortress, which has already been excavated.

In the 1960s, excavations were conducted on the left bank of the river Ticha, in the area of Pod stanciata. There, the remains of a large secular complex were found: the foundations of two units showed that they comprised chain-linked rooms of different sizes²³. In the area of Sakalova mogila, 4-5 km east of the old city, a basilica was located²⁴. Nearby, in the area of Stambol yolu another large three-nave basilica from the ninth to tenth centuries was found²⁵. These two and the basilica in the village of Khan Krum form a group of monuments constructed in the active church building phase under Knyaz Boris I (852-889).

During the 1960s, excavations took place in two more urban monasteries. One was located to the south of the Round Church. The other occupied a steep terrace in the northwestern part of the outer city, in the area of Pod manastira. In the northern part of the monastery yard, a cross-in-square church was excavated. The crypt ran along the entire length of the north side of this church. In the western part of the complex, a bath and the dwelling of the hegumen (abbot) were located²⁶.

After 1975, a new excavation phase began at Preslav. These excavations were related to the celebrations of the 1300th anniversary of the establishment of the First Bulgarian State in 1981. Large-scale projects on the art and culture of Preslav were initiated. They lasted for nearly a decade after

the anniversary. These focused mostly on the fortifications of the capital. The excavations on the eastern wall were concentrated on three areas: at the two bends of the wall and along its length in the southern part, where a hitherto unknown gate was discovered. In the second section of the bend to the east, the base of a round tower was found. West of the tower, a fortified wall marked an area similar to the already known ones. Opinions about its interpretation vary: for some, it was part of the fortification belt of Preslav's »aul« (a fortified state residence from the pagan period of 681-864); for others, the wall functioned as the northern fortification belt of the original Preslav palace built in the 870s to 880s. Later, an extension of the fortress wall to the north was added to the tower, which can be dated to the middle of the tenth century.

The third area of the excavation included tower no. 3 and the fortified wall to its west, i.e., the curtain wall between towers no. 2 and no. 3 (fig. 8)²⁷. Most of the wall between towers no. 3 and no. 4 was also found²⁸. At the same time, excavations took place in the area of the south fortress wall of the palace. There, the remnants of the southern wall were uncovered together with the south-west round tower²⁹.

In 1977, the investigation of the so-called »Archbishopric« began. A complex of churches and buildings constructed at different periods and in different sequences was excavated. In the middle of the ensemble, the foundations of the central church were preserved. It is a three-nave, triple-apse basilica with narthex and exonarthex. From the west, it is connected to the archepiscopal palace by two rows of pillars bearing a

22 Rashev, *Prouchvaniya* 215-222.

23 Totev/Staniolov, *Grazhdanski* 56-76.

24 Totev, *Bazilikata* 38-61.

25 Totev, *Sondazhni* 229-243.

26 Totev, *Dvortsoviyat*.

27 Ovcharov, *Razkopki* 131-161.

28 Lisitsov, *Razkopki* 177-184.

29 Vitlyanov, *Yuzhnata* 177-188.



Fig. 9 The find-spot of the Preslav Treasure in the Kastana area, 1978. – (Photo Archive of NAIM-BAS).

covered gallery. It dates back to the end of the ninth century, but the exonarthex and the marble flooring were added at the beginning of the tenth century. To the south of the basilica, a bath was revealed consisting of several rooms. To the south and east, a series of buildings followed. The archbishopric complex was equipped with plumbing and a drainage system. A small church was built next to the enclosing wall around the basilica in the south-west corner. Around the two religious buildings a Christian necropolis was found that was in use until the middle of the thirteenth century³⁰. East of the »Archbishopric« in the southern part of the »royal palace«, excavations were conducted in the area of the »administrative building«, which lasted until 2011 and revealed a complex of buildings and facilities, constructed in the tenth and eleventh centuries. In the buildings, over 500 Byzantine lead seals were discovered³¹.

From 1980 to 1990, the excavations in the south-eastern part of the »royal palace« were particularly intense. The famous »Preslav phiale«³² and, to the east of it, a triple-apse cross-in-square church were discovered, both part of the same architectural ensemble³³. These two masterpieces are a central part of a square connecting the south-eastern part of the ruler's courtyard with the main communication channels to its centre from the end of the ninth and during the tenth century. Several buildings, consisting of a different number of rooms aligned one after the other, are also part of the same square. Two of them are located along the southern fortress wall where a passage was left between them³⁴, and a third

one extends to the front, opposite the south gate. It consists of eighteen identical rooms, among which was included the above-mentioned bath discovered in the 1970s³⁵. At various sites of the outer city, the excavations continued, and new monuments were discovered: an Old Bulgarian pagan temple in the area of Selishte³⁶, a massive group of connected buildings to the east of the palace monastery and at the Gebe Klise basilica³⁷.

In 1978, unique ornaments of gold and silver objects were found in the vicinity of Preslav: the Preslav Treasure, which is the focus of this volume. It was discovered by agricultural workers in the area of Kastana, situated 3-4 km north-west of the »royal palace« (fig. 9). Part of the treasure was brought to the surface during agricultural work, at which point the precious find was scattered over an area of 300-400 m². Traces of buildings along with numerous materials indicated that life here was most active in the time of the First Bulgarian State when a large Old Bulgarian settlement was established. During the excavations, a semi-dugout dwelling was brought to light with a rectangular shape and dimensions of 3.55 m × 2.9 m. This is where the extraordinary jewellery of the Preslav Treasure was found. On the floor, six postholes were preserved with diameters of 0.15-0.22 m each, which were distributed along the eastern and the two short walls. In the north-west corner of the dwelling was a furnace made of quarry rock material. Judging by the features of its heating equipment, the building can be classified as belonging to one of the main groups of the most common dwelling

30 Ovcharov et al., *Golemiyat tsarski*.

31 Mihaylova, *Administrativnata* 40-56; Yordanov, *Pechatite*.

32 Bonev, *Tsarskiyat dvorets* (IX-XIV).

33 Bonev, *Tsarkva* 44-49.

34 Vitlyanov, *Voennoadministrativni*.

35 Akrabova-Zhandova/Vasileva, *Banya* 258-270.

36 Totev/Bonev, *Novorazkrit* 222.

37 Totev, *Razkopki* 183-184.

Fig. 10 a-b Byzantine silver coin from the Preslav Treasure (avers/revers, one of 15 coins); issued under Emperors Constantine VII Prophyrogenetos and Romanos II (945-969). – (Photos S. Steidl, LEIZA).



Fig. 11 Two-sided necklace from the Preslav Treasure. – (Photo S. Steidl, LEIZA).



constructions in north-eastern Bulgaria. The treasure is not associated with a burial or with everyday life in the buildings, but was hidden in a wooden chest. Some of the excavated silver and silvered casings, appliques and silver clasps of the container can be connected to the treasure. The chest was placed over the stove under the roof, and when the building burned down, the objects were scattered all over the floor. The discovery of fifteen Byzantine silver coins of Emperors Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos and Romanos II (945-959, example in **fig. 10a-b**) and other evidence support the interpretation that the concealment of the jewellery (examples in **figs 11-13**) took place during the conquest of Preslav by the Byzantine Emperor John I Tzimiskes in 971³⁸.

The fourth phase of the investigations in Preslav began at the end of the twentieth century and continues to this day. It is marked by large-scale field studies mostly in the large area of the »royal palace«. Over the last twenty years, the



Fig. 12 Diadem plaque from the Preslav Treasure, showing the »Ascension of Alexander the Great«. – (Photo © Museum Veliki Preslav).

38 Totev, Preslavskoto; Totev, Preslav Treasure.



Fig. 13 a-c Three pendants from the Preslav Treasure. – (Photos S. Steidl, LEIZA).



Fig. 14 The palace complex, aerial view: 1 »Royal basilica«, – 2 »Throne room«, – 3 »Small palace«, – 4 Patriarch's reception hall. – 5 Patriarchal church. – 6 Tomb church. – 7 Large bath building. – 8 Building serving clergy. – 9 Administrative building. – 10 East gate of the »inner city«. – 11 Representative building. – 12 Church with »phiale«. – 13 South gate of the »inner city«. – 14 Commercial premises. – 15 The personal residence of the rulers of Preslav. – (Photo B. Kolev, Šumen)

south-western part of the palace was excavated, comprising an extensive architectural ensemble that was important for the urban planning of the capital's centre (fig. 14). This ensemble was built in the last quarter of the ninth century and destroyed at the end of the tenth century after the Byzantine

invasion. In its southern part, an east-west orientated building was erected, comprising three large rooms on the ground floor. A portico built on massive stone pillars was found at about 2.8m on the northern facade. On top of them, in front of the upper floor, a wide gallery was positioned. A small

Fig. 15 Eastern part of the ruler's residence. – (Photo R. Blagoeva, Veliki Preslav).



room at the western end of the building was (along its northern wall) in line with the pilaster row. In front of the second room of the main part of the building was a trail of four large slabs, which led to the southern wall of the water facility of the »royal chancery«. The »chancery« itself was located at a distance of 1.8 m north of the portico and had a rectangular shape with dimensions of 12 m × 15 m. The walls of nine cells divide the inner space of the ground floor.

In 2010, the impressive structure of the royal family's »residential palace« was excavated, which was the core of the entire architectural complex in the western direction of the »chancery« (fig. 15). The unearthed part of this building includes a central hall floored with marble slabs and surrounded by three pairs of rooms to the south and north. The size of the building, the richness of its architectural sculptural decoration and its location dominating the entire territory of the palace defines it as the private residential palace or the chambers of the ruler's family in Preslav (fig. 16)³⁹.

The remains of a Christian church were found 30 m north-east of the palace complex, where the excavations have been going on for a decade. The building is a basilica with three naves, three apses, a narthex and an exonarthex. The impressive dimensions of the building, its exquisite construction and decoration, and its central location in the capital suggest that the church was part of the royal palace complex⁴⁰.

Research was also conducted in the area north-east of the »Patriarchate« and south of the »ruler's church«, where the foundations of several monumental buildings were revealed.

Two of the walls are from different connected buildings which surrounded the patriarchal complex and the ruler's basilica on the east side during the times when Preslav was the capital. A fortified wall with a length of 145 m⁴⁰ was discovered. At its north side, a building was attached. This »aul« dates from the earliest pre-capital construction period⁴¹.

Excavations were continued in the outer city around the Old Bulgarian temple of Rumska reka. A semi-dugout dwelling dating from the beginning of the ninth century was found. Its existence near the temple at about 1.5 km from the stone fortress of the Preslav settlement (»aul«) allows us to assume that there was a neighbourhood here dating from the earliest years of the »aul's« construction. The presence of this neighbourhood explains to a large extent the reasons behind the inclusion of the vast riverside terrace in the fortified parts of the capital⁴².

The investigations in the surroundings of the church of Mostich in the area of Selishte were also resumed. Long complexes of several connected buildings were uncovered, and they imply that the complex was a city monastery to which the ruler Chargubilya Mostich retired at the end of his life⁴³.

The remains of a medieval monastery were brought to light near Veliki Preslav in the area of Manastircheto, 2.5 km south of the outer fortress wall. Until today, the excavations revealed a small cross-in-square church and two other buildings south and south-west of the Christian building, dating from the middle of the tenth to the beginning of the thirteenth centuries⁴⁴.

39 Bonev, Veliki 175-189.

40 Vaklinova/Shtereva, Vladetelskata 30.

41 Balabanov/Slavov, Razkopki 409-411.

42 Bonev et al., Selište okolo 7-23.

43 Popkonstantinov, Arheologicheski 184-185.

44 Balabanov et al., Arheologičeski 125-126.



Fig. 16 The personal residence of the rulers of Preslav, south-east corner. – (Photo R. Blagoeva, Veliki Preslav).

The review of the excavations in Preslav allows us to outline the structure and appearance of a significant medieval city. It has all the characteristics necessary for an urban organism: a clear urban planning strategy, a complex communication system, and synchronised plumbing and drainage systems with public facilities, and an active social, spiritual and creative life. The implementation of these requirements by architects, builders and intellectuals made the Bulgarian capital one of the leading political and cultural centres in early medieval Europe in the tenth century.

The area, which by some researchers is still defined as the outer city, follows a precise plan and is surrounded by a long fortified wall. Within this area, residential buildings were erected, arranged as quarters or neighbourhoods, with separate aristocratic complexes and urban monasteries with churches. Private churches intended for the use of the inhabitants were located in distinct areas, and poorer neighbourhoods as well as several marketplaces can be identified. In fact, this was the city proper, in which the numerous residents lived and worked⁴⁵, and where visitors to the capital stayed⁴⁶.

The large »royal palace« was built in the middle of the political centre on a high terrace, which, until recently, was often thought to be the inner city. It was built in the same place where, more than half a century before, the »aul« of Preslav had developed. The building activities did not start *ex nihilo* at the end of the ninth century. On the layout of the old »aul«, they found buildings, hygiene facilities and a centralised plumbing system. Thus, when planning the interior space in the areas where the palace coincides with the area of the

»aul«, existing architectural and urban constructions had to be considered. Some of them were successfully implemented in the new palace centre⁴⁷.

The new palace area designed here was much more spectacular. A new throne hall was built, which, together with the palace area of the »aul«, defined the core, official part of the ruler's residence. South of the hall, a large square was located. The western end of this »forum« abutted the royal stables where horses of the royalty were bred, guarded and taken care of. Two huge basilicas surrounded by a long row of connected buildings were located to the east and south of the representative reception hall⁴⁸. Other buildings that had an administrative purpose were also constructed⁴⁹. The urban structure was created by combining the traditions of the old construction with new architectural concepts.

New urban planning solutions were implemented in the areas recently incorporated into the palace. In its southern part, the new fortress wall was moved 40 m south of the already ruined wall of the »aul«. In the space delimited by the new fortress wall, several impressive buildings were erected, forming a new ceremonial square⁵⁰. The highlights in the silhouette of this square are a cross-in-square church and the famous »phiale« of Preslav.

To the west of the square with the »phiale« was an architectural ensemble that shaped the south-west district of the »royal palace«. Three buildings dominated the ensemble, creating a harmonious structure. Each of the buildings had its characteristics, presenting different types of medieval secular architecture.

45 Based on the available sources, an estimation of the actual number of inhabitants is not possible.

46 Vaklinova et al., *Preslavskiya* 11-23.

47 Bonev, *Tsarskiyat* 181-185.

48 Ovcharov et al., *Golemiyat*; Vaklinova et al., *Vladetelskata* 30-40.

49 Mihaylova, »Administrativnata« 114-123.

50 Bonev, *Tsarskiyat dvorets* (IX-XIV).

One of the buildings consisted of three rooms arranged in a row from east to west. A portico built on solid square steps was in front of its northern façade. The second building was developed north of the portico. The inner space at the base level was divided by two pairs of walls into three rows with a total of nine cells. The south-eastern corner of the building was occupied by a »water mirror« (reflecting pool). The appearance and purpose of the ensemble were completed by an impressive building situated on an elevated terrace from where it rose above the entire »royal palace«. This was a palace equal to the two central palace buildings, in which the »throne rooms« were located. This palace, together with the other two buildings, was the personal residence of the Preslav royal dynasty. In the residence was the »office«, in which the rulers performed their daily state duties. The palace also provided chambers for the ruler and the royal family. The Preslav ruler's residence was an urban planning phenomenon of the utmost importance for Old Bulgarian culture, and also for the culture of the whole Eastern Orthodox world⁵¹.

In its original form completed by the time of the relocation of the capital, the large »royal palace« in Preslav was the southern part of the complex known as the »inner city« until recently, without its extension from the north known as Chupkata on the eastern fortress wall. The planning and construction of the palace began no later than the 670s, immediately after the Christianisation of the state, and it continued intensively over the next three decades. The architectural design of the palace was new at the time, with the initial plan to cover a large territory. The different areas of the ensemble are not isolated or even separated, but are in direct dependence and functionally connected. The palace buildings were a harmonic ensemble with communicating rooms, centralised plumbing and drainage systems.

The two parts of the capital formed a remarkable medieval city, which together with the surrounding satellite settlements constituted a large urban concentration. Numerous monasteries were built in the south and east, reminiscent of Mount Athos. They were used for religious activities, but were at the same time centres of the arts and crafts.

The large estates of the aristocracy stretched out to the east and north of the urban centre⁵². This is also the situation in the area of Pod Stancyata and on the Byal Bryag. To the west, suburbs developed for the population that could not be accommodated within the walls of the capital. These suburbs are mainly characterised by dwellings dug into the ground. The Preslav Treasure was hidden in one of these suburbs in the area of Kastana⁵³. Not far from there, in the area of Byal Grad, a large aristocratic residential complex with stone architecture and its own church was established.

Everything reviewed so far was revealed during the excavations undertaken throughout the twentieth century. The archaeological investigations have uncovered large sections of the tenth-century urban fabric of the Bulgarian capital (fig. 1). The great *polis*, however, appears to have been more extensive, which became clear in the beginning of the twenty-first century after the study of the Old Bulgarian artistic production centre for metal works at the village of Novosel⁵⁴. The appearance and development of the Novosel production centre was directly related to Veliki Preslav. The Novosel products seem to have been made especially for the Preslav market. Finds from the excavations of the urban residential areas, of the secular buildings and the monastery complexes provide examples of this. The products of the small metal workshops made there are, not only similar, but, in most cases, exactly the same as the ones cast in the workshops of the above-mentioned centre, proving their relation to the needs and tastes of the capital.

With the expansion of the scope of the archaeological research in several other places, it could be concluded that the Novosel production centre was only a small part of the whole picture. In recent years, two similar centres were discovered in the village of Nadar Evo in the Targovishte municipality⁵⁵ (unfortunately abandoned in the early stages of research) and at the village of Zlatan, which is being excavated systematically⁵⁶ – all in the hinterland of Veliki Preslav. All of them are located at an equal distance from the capital to the north, west and east and hardly differ in structure, equipment and stylistic characteristics of the objects. Thus, Preslav was surrounded by artistic production centres fulfilling the capital's needs and working to its tastes. There were also workshops for architectural ceramics located at the Vinnitsa dam⁵⁷ and the huge quarry for stone blocks at the modern villages of Srednya and Novosel (Šumen municipality), which was used for building the entire »royal palace«⁵⁸.

According to the results of the latest excavations, the Bulgarian capital Preslav appears in a new light: it was the centre and driving force of a large region, an area with a strong focus on manufacturing of the arts and crafts, distributing its products to a wide market. The development, location and professional specialisation were directed by certain circles in the capital, but apparently under a central state authority. By the tenth century, the village of Preslav had become a large centre around which conglomerated a significant number of smaller and larger villages with numerous production centres, benefiting from the economic centre. In turn, the capital benefited from the satellites and was able to care for the needs of its inhabitants. Both became a commercial hot spot for the wider area.

51 Bonev, Lichniyat 29-43; Bonev, Vtora 243-258.

52 Popkonstantinov, Razkopki 98.

53 Totev, Preslavskoto; Totev, Preslav Treasure.

54 Bonev/Doncheva, Starobalgarski.

55 Konakliev, Kolanni 230-242; Konakliev, Instrument 184-190.

56 Doncheva, Arheologicheski 576-577; Doncheva, Proizvodstven 523-525; Doncheva, Rekonstruktsiya 152-170.

57 Totev, Srednovekovna 39-73.

58 Maystorski, Srednovekovna 578-580.

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Summary / Zusammenfassung / Résumé

Archaeological Investigations at Veliki Preslav

This chapter reviews the archaeological excavations in Veliki Preslav in the last 120 years. Methodologically, the analyses are based on the only two possible approaches, chronological and thematic. The chapter refers mostly to the time when Preslav was the capital of the First Bulgarian State (end of ninth to tenth centuries). These findings include fortifications, secular buildings and monastery complexes, residential neighbourhoods, public waterworks, and craft workshops. Special attention is paid to the ensemble of buildings, which form the large »royal palace«. The hinterland of Preslav with its production centres is also addressed. In the second part of the study, the conclusions drawn outline Preslav as one of the most significant urban centres in South-east Europe during the Early Middle Ages based on the results of the excavations. In this way, Preslav contributed to the cultural heritage of Europe and the Orthodox world.

Archäologische Untersuchungen in Veliki Preslav

Dieses Kapitel bietet einen Überblick über die archäologischen Ausgrabungen in Veliki Preslav in den letzten 120 Jahren. Methodisch stützen sich die Analysen auf die beiden möglichen Ansätze, nämlich den chronologischen und den thematischen. Der Aufsatz bezieht sich hauptsächlich auf die Zeit, als Preslav die Hauptstadt des Ersten Bulgarischen Reiches war (Ende des 9.-10. Jahrhunderts). Zu den Funden gehören Befestigungsanlagen, Profanbauten und Klosterkomplexe, Wohnviertel, Abwasseranlagen sowie Werkstätten. Besondere Aufmerksamkeit wird dem Gebäudeensemble gewidmet, das den großen »Königspalast« bildet. Das Hinterland von Preslav mit seinen Produktionszentren wird ebenfalls berücksichtigt. Im zweiten Teil der Studie kann anhand der Ausgrabungsergebnisse der Schluss gezogen werden, dass Preslav eines der bedeutendsten urbanen Zentren Südosteuropas im Frühmittelalter war. Auf diese Weise trug Preslav zum kulturellen Erbe Europas und der orthodoxen Welt bei.

Fouilles archéologiques à Veliki Preslav

Ce chapitre passe en revue les fouilles archéologiques menées à Veliki Preslav au cours des 120 dernières années. D'un point de vue méthodologique, les analyses sont basées sur les deux seules approches possibles, chronologique et thématique. Le chapitre porte principalement sur l'époque où Preslav était la capitale du Premier Empire bulgare (fin du IX^e au X^e siècle). Les découvertes comprennent des fortifications, des bâtiments séculiers et des complexes monastiques, des quartiers résidentiels, des installations hydrauliques publiques et des ateliers d'artisans. Une attention particulière est accordée à l'ensemble des bâtiments qui forment le grand »palais royal«. L'arrière-pays de Preslav, avec ses centres de production, est également abordé. Dans la deuxième partie de l'étude, les conclusions tirées des résultats des fouilles montrent que Preslav est l'un des centres urbains les plus importants du sud-est de l'Europe au cours du haut Moyen Âge. Preslav a ainsi contribué au patrimoine culturel de l'Europe et du monde orthodoxe.