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FROM THE RHONE TO THE DANUBE: THE CERAMIC PRODUCTION CENTRE AT BUTOVO AND ITS CONNECTIONS WITH GAUL IN LIGHT OF A REDISCOVERED MEDALLION MOULD

Trade connections between Moesia Inferior and the Western Roman provinces have long been studied and evaluated, however this was mostly done by taking into account the ready-to-use imported fine wares, oil lamps and amphora-borne commodities. A ceramic mould with a depiction of Cybele riding a lion, discovered at the industrial site underneath the modern village of Butovo (Northern Bulgaria), could help to shed more light on the importation of technical knowledge as well. Locally produced moulds and medallions with nearly identical depictions were found at sites in the Rhone valley (Southeastern France) and it seems very likely that this was also the point of origin for the Moesian find.

The aim of this contribution is to assess the Butovo mould in the light of this newly acquired data and in the broader context of the Moesian ceramic centre's production and chronology, thus looking for further evidence about the foreign influences in its repertoire.

Moesia Inferior – Butovo – medallion mould – Cybele – Rhone valley

*Dedicated to Professor
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Settled since the Flavian or the early Antonine period, the region of the modern village of Butovo and the neighbouring Nedan (Veliko Turnovo district, Northern Bulgaria) has produced large amounts of archaeological and epigraphic data pertaining to the local settlement network after its inclusion within the territory of the Roman Empire (Sultov 1985: 25; Gerov 1988: 45-47; Vladkova 2020: 251-270; Chakarov 2021: 87-118).

The archaeological sites and the ceramic production centre at Butovo

The major archaeological research underneath and around Butovo (fig. 1) was conducted during the 1960s and the 1970s by the late Bogdan Sultov. Remains of a Roman settlement or more likely settlements with adjacent necropoleis were partially uncovered at several locations (figs. 2-4). At the south end of the modern village, on the slopes of and atop the Kalvaka hill there was a tumular necropolis, where cremation burials were performed, supposedly between the late 1st – early 2nd century AD, and the 180s AD (figs. 2,2, 3,1 and 4,1). Some architectural remains also found there were interpreted as part of a complex, related to the said necropolis (Sultov 1985: 29; Vladkova 2020: 252-257; Chakarov 2021: 97). However, given that the latest coin discovered in a grave at this site was a worn out piece issued during the reign of Marcus Aurelius (Vladkova 2020: 253), the terminal date of the necropolis could be placed well after the 180s, for instance around the end of the 2nd or the beginning of the 3rd century AD.



Fig. 1. Map of the Roman provinces of Moesia Inferior and Thrace (AD 193-250) with the location of the centre at Butovo (after Harizanov 2020: 132, fig.1, with additions and corrections).

To the north-east of Butovo and north-west of the neighbouring village of Nedan, near the confluence of the Lomya River and its tributary Nedanska River, in the Harka locality (figs. 3,4 and 4,4), there was another Roman settlement with a necropolis (this one identified without excavations proper), dated from the early 2nd century to the middle of the 3rd century AD (Vladkova 2020: 262-264; Chakarov 2021: 102-103).

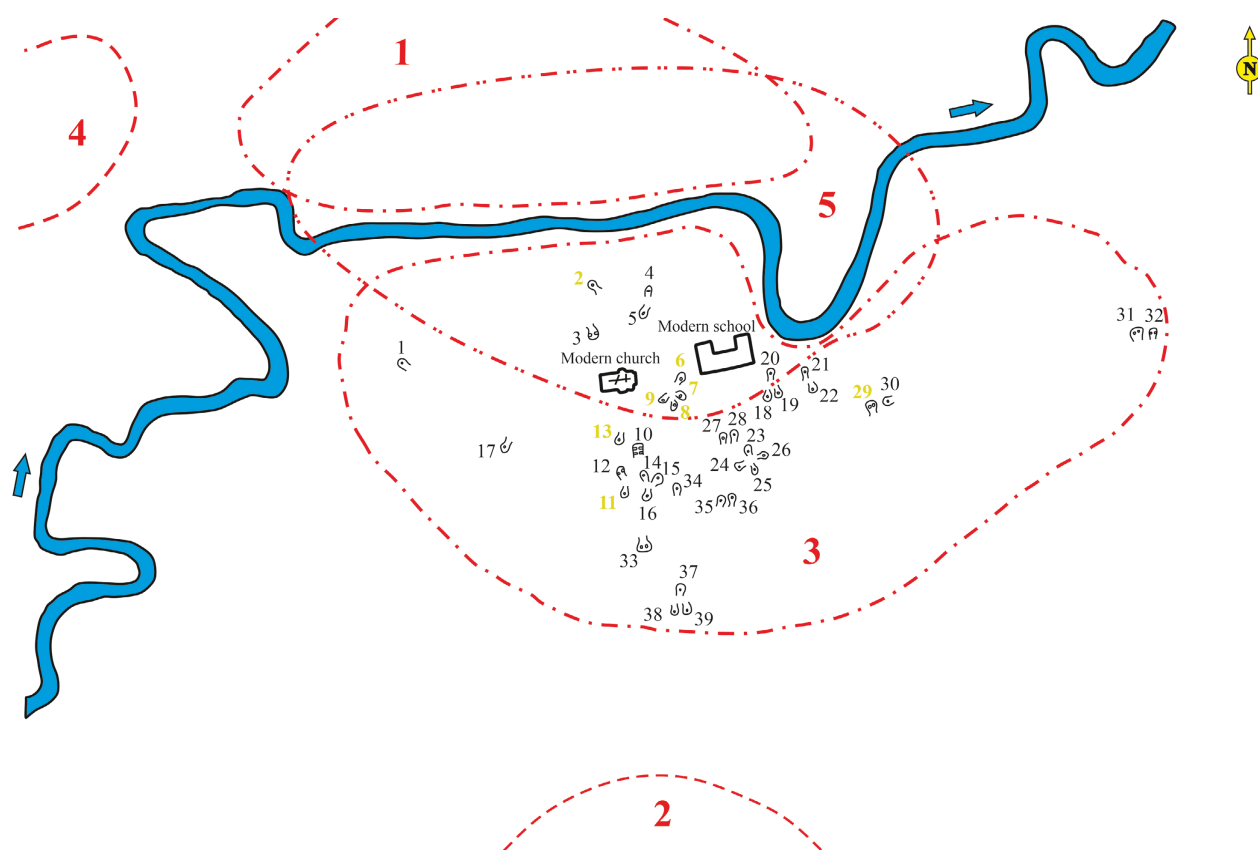


Fig. 2. General scheme of the Roman sites underneath the modern village of Butovo, according to B. Sultov: 1) A settlement on the left bank of the Lomya River; 2) A necropolis at the Kalvaka hill; 3) The manufacturing centre with 39 kilns (the kilns with uncertain original numbers are marked in yellow); 4) A necropolis on the left bank of the Lomya River; 5) A Late Roman settlement (after Sultov 1985: Table VIII.1; digital remastering, corrections and additions by A. Harizanov).

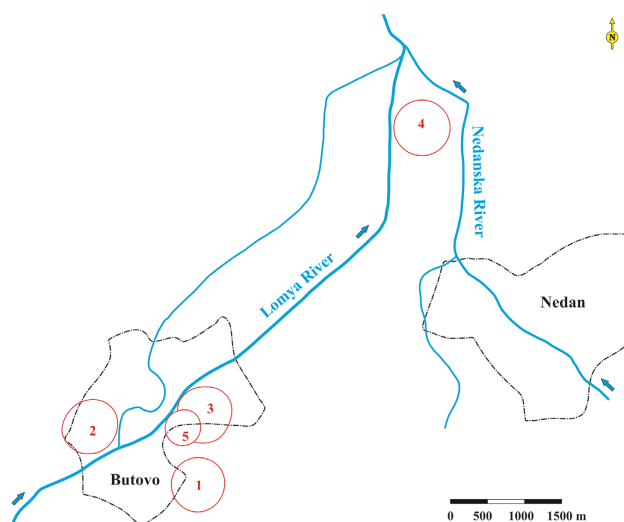


Fig. 3. General scheme of the Roman sites underneath and near the modern village of Butovo, according to P. Vladkova: 1) A necropolis at the Kalvaka hill; 2) A settlement with necropolis on the left bank of the Lomya River; 3) The manufacturing centre with 39 kilns; 4) A settlement with necropolis in the Harka locality; 5) A Late Roman settlement (after Vladkova 2020: 253, Scheme 1; digital remastering and additions by A. Harizanov).

A necropolis with inhumation burials and remains of solid architecture was found on the left bank of the Lomya River, underneath the western and northern parts of the village of Butovo (figs. 2,4, 3,2 and 4,2). According to B. Sultov, the Roman settlement structures on that side of the river were inhabited from the early 2nd century AD onwards, while the uncovered graves from the necropolis were to be dated in the late 2nd century AD (Sultov 1985: 26, 29) or the first half of the 3rd century AD (Sultov 1968: 41-43). P. Vladkova argued that this part of the Roman settlement with its adjacent necropolis should be dated from the late 2nd century to the middle of the 3rd century AD (Vladkova 2020: 258-259).

B. Sultov stated that during the second half of the 2nd century AD, the first pottery workshops and kilns from the well-known Roman manufacturing centre were built on the right bank of the Lomya River (figs. 2,3, 3,3 and 4,3). Thirty eight (or more likely thirty nine¹) production

¹ The exact number of the kilns studied in Butovo is a matter of uncertainty. According to the published text of Sultov's dissertation there were 38 kilns excavated within the manufacturing centre (Sultov 1985, 26). The same number is confirmed by the original manuscript of his thesis, now kept as part of his personal archive in the Regional State Archives – Veliko Tarnovo under no. 1397, archive unit no. 10 (page 43). However, the unpublished catalogue of his work (available in the manuscript only) contains 39 entries for the Butovo kilns (cat. nos.

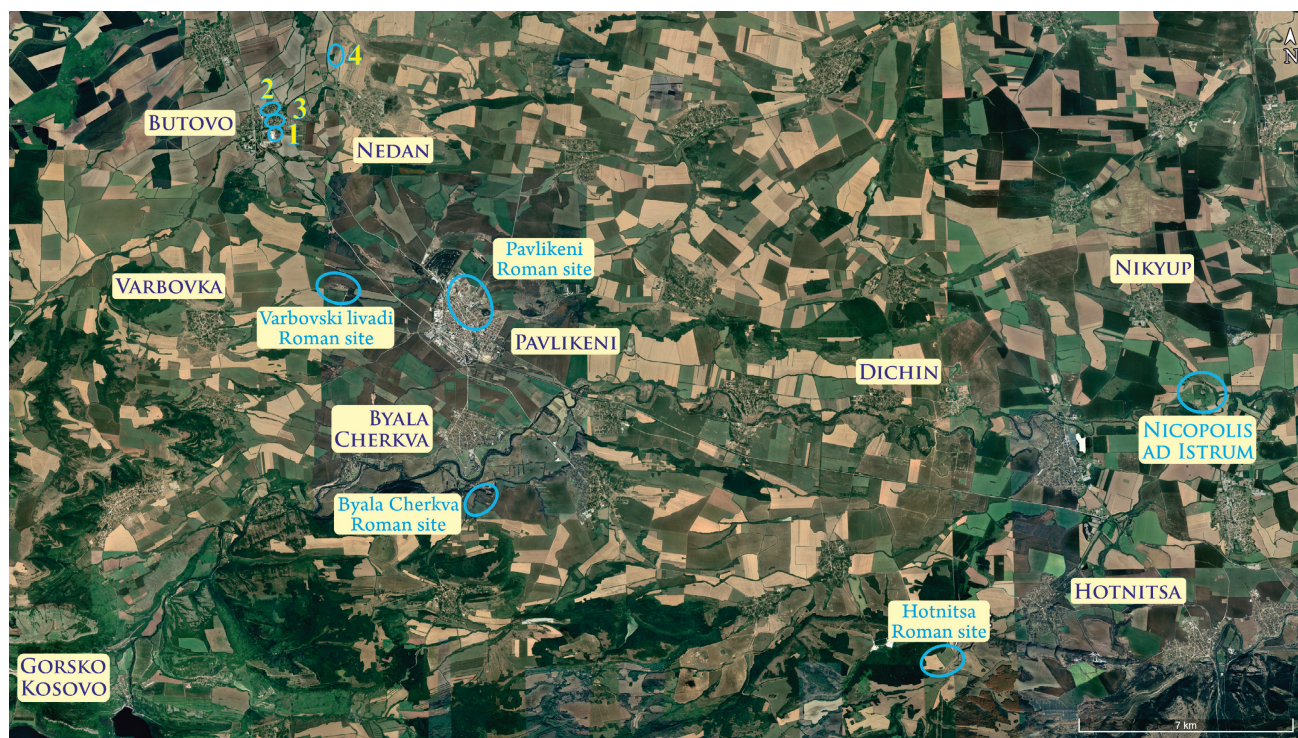


Fig. 4. Satellite image of Butovo and the nearby region with locations of the Roman sites, mentioned in the text:

1) A necropolis at the Kalvaka hill; 2) A settlement with necropolis on the left bank of the Lomya River; 3) The manufacturing centre with 39 kilns; 4) A settlement with necropolis in the Harka locality (site locations after Vladkova 2020; Chakarov 2021; image source – Google Earth, access date 20.02.2023).

installations were found beneath the eastern and southern parts of the modern village, in a zone stretching south to the northern slopes of the Kalvaka hill. The majority of the kilns functioned until the mid- 3rd century AD, while some were supposedly used until the early 4th century AD (Sultov 1985: 25-29; 41-42). According to more recent opinions on the matter, the production centre was active only between the late 2nd century and the middle of the 3rd century AD (Vladkova 2020: 259-260; Ivanov 2022: 100-101) or the early 4th century AD at the latest (Harizanov 2019: 142-143; 196). Considering the numismatic finds published, the last coins related to the ceramics centre were those of Gordian III (according to P. Vladkova) or Trajan Decius (see Sultov 1968: 48, note 25), while the next in chronological order were coins of Diocletian, Maximian and emperors of the 4th century AD, with these later issues being recently related to another rural settlement (**fig. 3,5**), built above the ruins of the potters' establishment (Vladkova 2020: 261). As commonly stated for other sites in the province, the desertion of the manufacturing centre has been associated with the Gothic invasions of the mid-3rd century (Vladkova 2020: 260; Ivanov 2022: 101). This is however not necessarily true given the lack of related destruction layers and the overall

small number of numismatic finds available (the ones from the first construction period comprised 44 pieces out of a total of 164 coins published, with the rest being dated from the last decades of the 3rd century to the last decades of the 4th century AD) as well as the dating of some of the kilns studied, where the artefacts and pottery found were at least initially associated by B. Sultov with the second half of the 3rd century or the second and third quarter of the 3rd century AD². It is also possible that other installations (used according to B. Sultov to the beginning of the 4th century AD at the latest – see Sultov 1985: 41-42) were actually operated by the inhabitants of the later settlement rather than by the craftsmen of the ceramics centre.

According to some researchers the ceramic production centre was identical with or at least an integral part of *Emporium Piretensium*, which is known to have existed in the region (Gerov 1988: 119; Sultov 1985: 26, 100 and the literature cited). Another claim has been made that the aforementioned *emporium* was actually located some 20 km to the south of Butovo, near the modern village of Gorsko Kosovo (**fig. 4**; Tsarov 2005: 47-52; Chakarov 2021: 106).

64-102). The same number is visible on the general plan of the site (here **fig. 2**, with kiln numbers added to the original published version in accordance with the description of the catalogue entries), and that is why accepted as the more plausible in previous works on the matter (Harizanov 2019: 142).

² Information from a field documentation of B. Sultov for excavations in Butovo in the 1973 and the 1983, acquired at the scientific archive of the National Archaeological Institute with Museum in Sofia with the aid of Dr. Philip Kolev (NAIM-BAS), to whom I express my sincere gratitude. It should be noted however that the finds mentioned and available with drawings in the field inventory book could have all been produced well before the mid- 3rd century AD (personal observations, detailed analysis to come in a separate article).



Fig. 5. The mould from Butovo (photo-based drawing by A. Harizanov, photos by K. Chakarov).

Recent studies on the topic tend to accept the presence of a similar type of settlement structure beneath Butovo, but not necessarily the one known from the epigraphic sources. There is also a hypothesis that apart from this trading outpost, given the site's location next to the provincial border and near a supposed crossroad between the *Novae – Philippopolis* and the *Marcianopolis – Melita* roads, there were also a road and a customs station nearby (Vladkova 2020: 264). The discovery of *imbrices* with stamps of *Legio I Italica* (of the type 'LEGII TAL') in the vicinity of the modern village, briefly mentioned by B. Sultov (Sultov 1985: 26; 31, note 36), could likewise be added to the discussion regarding this suggestion, if we consider them proof for the presence of a military detachment.

As said above, the manufacturing centre was established very close to the border between *Moesia Inferior* and *Thracia*. Its surroundings were included in the territory of Lower Moesia either at AD 136, when the first organisation of their margins known to date has been done, or in AD 193, when the towns of *Nicopolis ad Istrum* and *Marcianopolis* were transferred under the jurisdiction of the Moesian governors along with their entire administrative territories (see Harizanov 2020b: 107; Vladkova 2020: 267; Chakarov 2021: 106-110, and the literature cited). In any case, given that the Butovo workshops were mainly active between the last quarter of the 2nd century and the 250s or the 270s, these ateliers should be considered Moesian (or more precisely Lower Moesian) as oppose to other closely located centres, which functioned while being within the limits of both provinces (like Varbovski livadi, Hotnitsa and likely also the newly discovered one underneath the town of Pavlikeni – see fig. 4; Harizanov 2020b: 105-109, 111-115 and the literature cited). Although this fact is not to be exaggerated, it could have been of some importance for the economic ties of the settlement and thus for the diversity of foreign influences reflected in the repertoire of its ceramic workshops as well.

The ceramic mould find

The main subject of the present contribution was discovered in 1963 during archaeological research within the village of

Butovo³. In his dissertation B. Sultov writes about a mould for applied decoration with a negative image of Cybele that was found inside a small building (a presumed workshop), near three of the ceramic kilns studied (Sultov 1985: 27⁴). Given that the mould described here is the only one known to date, bearing the image of the Mother Goddess, it seems very likely that it is identical to the find Sultov wrote about.

According to the initial description of B. Sultov, the mould is made of fine clay and represents a woman with a long dress and a veil, sitting on a lion walking to the left. In front of the lion there is a burning altar, while beneath the animal there are uncertain depictions of fish. The woman is holding her left hand up pulling out an arrow, while the right hand is resting on her stomach. There are garlands on both sides of her head, with the latter being covered with something like a crown. The find is 9 cm in diameter and 1.2 cm thick (personal archive B. Sultov, archive unit no. 69).

The same artefact is mentioned in three other publications, where it is dated to the 3rd century or the late 2nd – 3rd century AD and described as a mould with a negative imprint of the image of Cybele riding a lion. The goddess is wearing a *chiton* and a *himation*. She is sitting sideways, facing the head of the animal. In front of the lion there is an altar. Cybele's head is covered with a *calathos*. She is holding a tambourine (*tympanum*) with her left hand and a *pathera* in her right. Above her head there are two leafy olive branches (fig. 5; Kabakchieva, Sultova and Vladkova 1988: 32, no. 187; Vladkova 2004: 116-117; Gencheva 2013: 99, no. 253).

According to the most recent opinion on the matter, based both on personal observations and newly discovered parallels, the goddess is actually holding part of her veil or dress above her head, while the object in front of the lion could be either an altar or a *calathos* (Harizanov 2021: 173). Furthermore, her head could be covered by a mural crown and not with a *calathos* (see below for parallels of both options).

³ There is a note for the discovery preserved in the said personal archive of B. Sultov, under archive unit no. 69.

The initial description of the artefact, also given here, is made by the late researcher

⁴ This is also noted in the original manuscript of his dissertation (archive unit no. 10, page 45). The kilns mentioned are the ones with nos. 11-13 (see fig. 2, 11-13).

Function and parallels

The mould from Butovo was in all probability used for the manufacture of decoration in relief. However, there are two options for its application proper. The first one is using the artefact while making pastries (festive or daily cakes), which depending on the occasion were called *dulcea*, *libum* or *crustula*. Terracotta moulds of similar design found in *Noricum*, *Pannonia*, *Dacia* and Italy have been supposedly used for the purpose (Alföldi 1938: 312-341; Cociş and Ruscu 1994: 121-134; Leleković 2004: 103-119; Fényes 2021: 118-129). Bearing the images of reigning emperors, deities related to the imperial cult or other mythological figures and scenes, sometimes connected to certain festivals, many of these finds were larger in diameter than the Butovo find, measuring between 19 and 27 cm, while others had similar dimensions, where the actual image covered an area with diameter of less than 10 cm (Fényes 2021: 118-129).

The second possibility for the use of such moulds is for the application of shaped medallions onto the walls and bases of ceramic vessels. A large number of finds from *Gallia* and especially from the Rhone valley, comprising both moulds and pottery sherds with preserved applied decoration testify for this type of usage (Déchelette 1904: 235-308; Willeumier and Audin 1952; Vertet 1969: 93-133). This practise was characteristic for the Western Roman provinces, and as it seems, was also popular in the Balkan territories of the Empire. Medallions depicting mythological figures and scenes, or heads/busts of mythological personages were usually applied as decoration to the walls of krater-shaped and other tall vessels, or on the internal bases of bowls, dishes and trays. Others were supposedly used as pendants or as votive tiles. This trend is thoroughly attested in *Moesia Inferior* and the northern parts of *Thracia*, for instance in the production centres at Varbovski livadi, Montana, Mezdra, Chatalka, Stara Zagora (*Augusta Traiana*) and Plovdiv (*Philippopolis*). Furthermore, medallions and/or vessels with applied decoration of presumed local (intra-provincial) origin were found both to the north and the south of the *Haemus mons*, near or at Gigen (*Oescus*), Tuchenitsa, Hotnitsa (but not at the eponym production centre), Dorkovo, Sofia (*Serdica*) etc. (Sultow 1972: 21-29; Kabakčieva, Sultova and Vladkova 1988: 28-34; Kalčev 1991: 245-273; Martinova 1994: 164-167; Harizanov 2021: 171-172; Ivanov 2022: 39-44, 61-64, 16, 205-209). Moulds, applied and separately used medallions, as well as supposed votive tiles were part of the repertoire of workshops in the neighbouring province of *Macedonia* as well (see Cholakov 2008: 55-76; Nankov 2021: 249-269, Vagalinski 2022: 44-45).

Despite the abundance of moulds and medallions published, finds with the scene similar to the one depicted on the Butovo mould are scarcely attested, as oppose to comparable images occasionally found on ceramic lamps and more commonly on the reverse sides of coins (see Harizanov 2021: 167-171 and the literature cited). For example, in Lower Moesia and Thrace, Cybele riding a lion (either leaping or walking) has been attested in the coinage of the towns of *Serdica*, *Pautalia*, *Traianopolis*, *Bizye*, *Deultum*, *Hadrianopolis*, *Augusta Traiana*, *Marcianopolis*, *Callatis* and *Nicopolis ad*

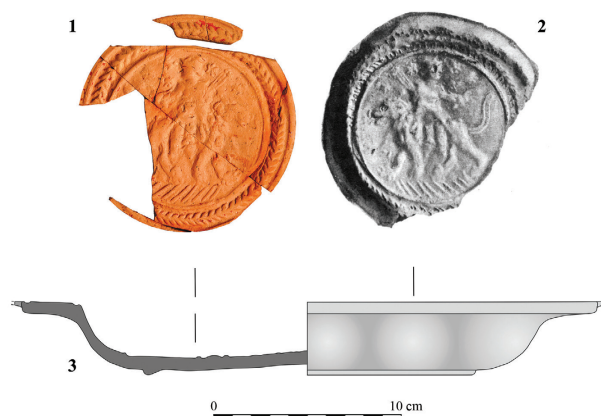


Fig. 6. The ceramic tray from *Serdica* (1 and 3) and the mould from *Philippopolis* (2) (after Harizanov 2021: 162-163, figs. 2, 5).

Istrum, starting from the reign of Antoninus Pius until that of Philip the Arab (see Harizanov 2021: 169 and the literature cited). On the contrary, the only parallels of fired clay from the Roman period in the same region found to date are a ceramic mould from *Philippopolis* and a ceramic tray from *Serdica* (fig. 6). Both finds bear the identical depiction of a female figure holding a bow and seated upon a walking lion while facing its back, with the former being identified as the syncretised image of Cybele-Artemis, popular in Thrace and Asia Minor since the pre-Roman period (see Martinova 1994: 164-167; Harizanov 2021: 165-181 and the literature cited). A partially preserved terracotta figurine from the Hellenistic period (3rd century BC) found at the ancient sanctuary of *Aquae Calidae* (located to the west of the Black sea town of *Anchialos*, nowadays Pomorie) is the other artefact discovered in Thrace, shaped as the Mother Goddess on a lion. She wears the usual dress, with a *calathos* or more likely a mural crown on her head. Cybele is probably sitting sideways (?) on the back of a lion standing still⁵.

The closest parallels to the depiction on the Butovo mould come not from the said nearby region (considering the images on both metal and ceramic artefacts) but instead from the valley of the Rhone River (fig. 7). According to the account of M. Vermaseren, two moulds and a partially preserved medallion were found at and near Vienne, two fragmented medallions at Lyon, and another medallion at Saint-Rémy-de-Provence (fig. 7,1-4; 7,6-7; Vermaseren 1986: 116, n. 339; 128-129, n. 375, 377, 379; 134, n. 387; 139, n. 398). In a publication by R. Turcan yet another ceramic sherd with a preserved medallion is described, this one being kept in the museum of Saint-Rémy as well (fig. 7,5; Turcan 1972: 95; 143; Pl. XII). On two of the finds mentioned (fig. 7,3-4) the image of Cybele is only partially conserved. She is riding a running lion, moving towards the right. Her feet rest on a globe, beneath which there are

⁵ Unpublished, see https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/30/Burgas_Archeological_Museum_-_Kibela_%28Cybele%29_figure.jpg



Fig. 7. Medallions from Lyon (1-3) and Saint-Rémy-de-Provence (4-5), and a mould from Vienne (6-7) (after <https://lugdunum.grandlyon.com/fr/Oeuvre/1818-Medaillon-d-applique-la-desse-Cybele-sur-un-lion>; Wuilleumier, Audin 1952: 96, n. 157; <https://lugdunum.grandlyon.com/fr/Oeuvre/2003-Medaillon-d-applique-Cybele-sur-un-lion-fragment>; Wuilleumier and Audin 1952: 160, n. 305; Turcan 1972: Pl. XII; Déchelette 1904: 268, n. 61; Desbat 2011: 132, Fig. 4).

two birds, situated on both sides of an ovoid object (Wuilleumier and Audin 1952: 160-161, n. 305; Turcan 1972: 95; Pl. XIII.2; Vermaseren 1986: 134, n. 387). On the rest of the artefacts described, the goddess is depicted wearing a *chiton* and a *himation*, sitting on a lion walking to the right and holding the upper part of her dress or a veil behind her head. There is a *calathos* or an altar in front of the animal, and two leafy branches or garlands on both sides of her head and torso (fig. 7, 1-2, 5, 7). All the finds are generally dated to the Roman period or more specifically to the 2nd-3rd century AD (Déchelette 1904: 268; Wuilleumier and Audin 1952: 96, 98, n. 157; Turcan 1972: 95; Vermaseren 1986: 116, 128-129, 134-135, 139). The appearance of the second group of finds is almost identical to the image on the Butovo mould, with some minor exclusions such as the position of the altar or *calathos*, which in the case of the Moesian find is depicted almost straight, while being set obliquely on the Gaulish ones (fig. 8).

It should be pointed out that the ancient origin of one of the moulds from Vienne (fig. 7, 6-7), part of a collection of such items, has been recently questioned by A. Desbat,

who summarised and presented valuable arguments for the supposed forgery, including their unusual surface colour and somewhat mediocre craftsmanship (Desbat 2011: 129-136). Nevertheless, the Vienne find aside, the rest of the artefacts from the Rhone valley seem strong enough evidence for the production of such items in the local ceramic ateliers, as part of their manufacture of the so-called “sigillee (ceramique) Claire B”, which developed in Southeastern Gaul from the second quarter of the 2nd century AD onwards (see Desbat 1987: 267-278; Raynaud 1993: 175-184).

Given all said, it seems much more credible for the Butovo mould to have been used as a tool for the decoration of ceramic vessels rather than baked pastries. Both its small size and the large amount of parallels presented are in favour of the first option. There is also the distinct possibility for a double use, but in such a case one should expect to have two identical moulds utilised for these purposes rather than a single item.

Similar was the opinion of B. Sultov, who wrote that the artefact was designed for the decoration of ceramic vessels (personal archive B. Sultov, archive unit no. 10, p. 45).

Concerning the image depicted, it is probably not by chance that the illustrated deity was Cybele. As already noted, the Mother Goddess was popular in both *Thracia* and *Moesia Inferior*. In addition to the presence of her image on the local coinage, the *collegia* of the *dendrofori* which is usually related to goddess is well attested epigraphically in the two provinces, and in the local administrative centre of *Nicopolis ad Istrum* in particular (Vladkova 2004: 114-115). In this regard, the discoveries of the mould from *Philippopolis* and the tray from *Serdica* mentioned could be also regarded as a supplement to other archaeological and epigraphic data from the two towns, testifying to the worship of Cybele (see Harizanov 2021: 169; 174-176 and the literature cited).

The cult of the Mother Goddess was popular in the Rhone valley as well (for instance Turcan 1972: 48-102), but whether this fact could have been of importance for the choice of items for export/import, one could only hypothesize.

Discussion

The data gathered and analysed seems to testify to the Gaulish origin of the Butovo find. However, it is hard to consider whether the mould was directly imported or has been fashioned by the local craftsmen upon a model bought for the purpose. Given the macroscopic differences, at least, in the fired clay colours (the Butovo find has the paler beige to beige-brown colouring of the local pottery), the latter appears more plausible.

Comparing with the neighbouring *Dacia*, the earliest local moulds there (but for entirely mould-made vessels) were supposedly made by copying imported shapes from Lezoux and Rheinzabern (see Rusu-Bolindeț 2014: 159, 170) and not by obtaining original moulds or models, or by the work of foreign (travelling) craftsmen. In this regard, the option for the image on the Butovo mould to have been taken from an imported vessel rather than a model should also be mentioned. However, no evidence for the importation of medallion decorated Rhodian pottery shapes to the region in question has been found so far.

Was the described here supposed import an accident (including a personal possession of a foreign merchant or a craftsman) or was it part of established connections between the Butovo artisans and the workshops in Gaul, and the Rhone valley in particular?

Apart from occasional, mostly 1st to early 2nd century AD imports from the East, the majority of the sigillata and related wares in *Moesia Inferior*, especially during the 2nd century and the first half of the 3rd century AD, came from the Western parts of the Empire and predominantly from the Gaulish provinces. Starting with products of Italian workshops (mainly Arretine) during the first three quarters of the 1st century AD, as early as the Flavian period it was surpassed by South Gaulish centres like La Graufesenque and Banassac, which in turn were later supplemented and gradually replaced by Central Gaulish imports, mostly coming from the area of Lezoux. After the mid- 2nd century AD the production of Rheinzabern and other Eastern Gaulish centres became more popular. During the 3rd century AD products of Pannonian and Upper Moesian workshops were



Fig. 8. The mould from Butovo (3-4) compared to a medallion from Lyon (1-2) (drawing after Wuilleumier, Audin 1952: 96, n. 157; photo – <https://lugdunum.grandlyon.com/fr/Oeuvre/1818-Medaillon-d-applique-la-desse-Cybele-sur-un-lion>; drawing by A. Harizanov; photo by K. Chakarov).

also to be found in the Lower Moesian territory. In addition, thin-walled pottery was imported from Northern Italy and *Pannonia* during the second half of the 1st century and the 2nd century AD (Dimitrova-Milčeva 2000: 5-29).

On the contrary, the development of the local pottery production in Lower Moesia and Thracia is usually related predominantly with Eastern traditions in the craft (mostly coming from Asia Minor) which seems to correspond with the majority of the assemblages published (see for instance Kabakčieva 2000: 313-318; Ivanov 2022: 117-119 and the literature cited). This could be owed to a certain extent to the fact that most of the ceramic workshops excavated were at least initially located within the territory of *Thracia* (see Harizanov 2020b: 103-147), where most of the imported pottery came traditionally from the East, with the Pergamon region being its usual place of origin (see Kabakčieva 2000: 313-318; Harizanov 2020a: 75-110 and the literature cited).

Conversely, at least some of the vessel shapes and decoration styles utilised by the Butovo workshops appear influenced by fashion trends and manufacturing techniques of the Western sigillata and red slipped products, as well as their local alternatives in *Pannonia*, *Moesia Superior* and *Dacia*. Such is for example the production of mould-made vessels and decorations, the medallions as well (for parallels between Butovo items and products of La Graufesenque, Lezoux, Rheinzabern and Upper Moesian centres, see Dimitrova-Milčeva 2000: 18-19, Abb. 3-5; for similarities in pottery decoration techniques with Gaulish ateliers, including medallions, see Kabakčieva 2001: 199-201). One can also note

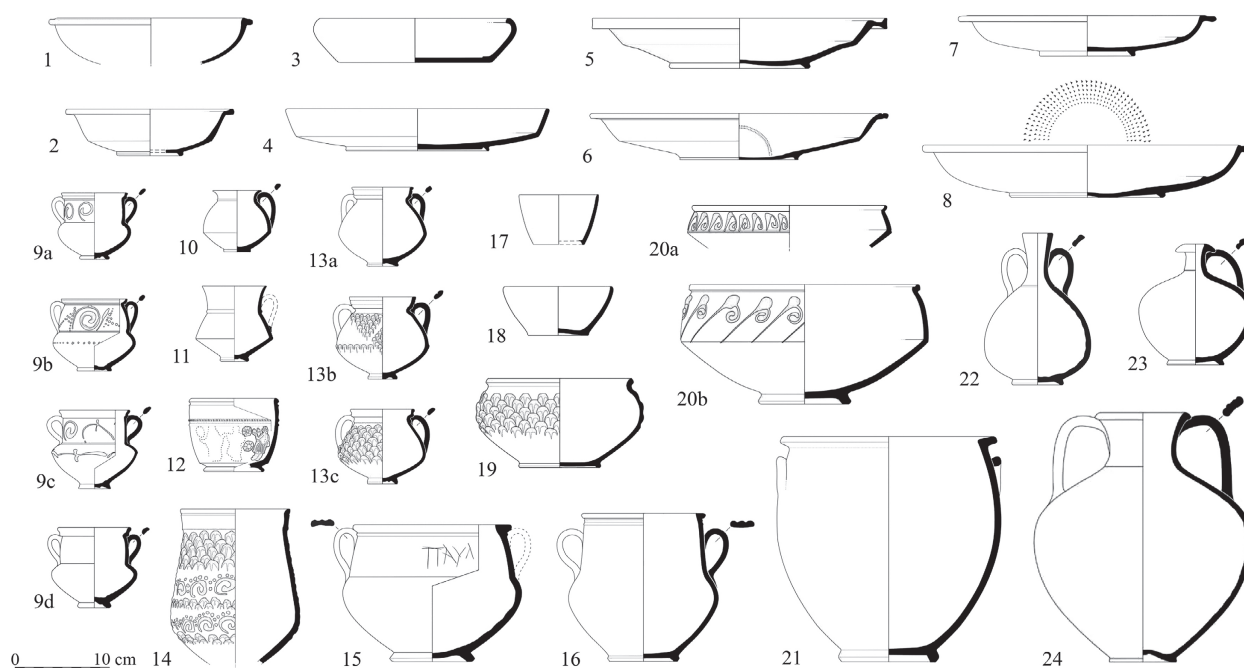


Fig. 9. Red slipped ceramic vessels found at the manufacturing centre at Butovo (after Ivanov 2022: 23-71, figs. 4-7, 12-13, 18-20, 22, 25, 27, 29-30; a compiled image by A. Harizanov).

resemblance between vessels manufactured (or supposedly manufactured) at Butovo and precisely shapes of *Ceramique Claire B*, for instance with types CLAIR-B 62, 68, G4 of the cups, CLAIR-B 84 of the pitchers, CLAIR-B 105 of the bowls (see Raynaud 1993: 180-184, and **fig. 9, 4, 10-11, 13, 23** for the Butovo shapes in question). Some of these forms however are also found in the production repertoire of other centres in the Lower Danube region (like those at *Romula*, *Apulum* – see Popilian 1997: 7-20; Egri 2018: 115-129). Parallels of shape, decoration or both, could be seen in more distant regions as well, for example among the Pannonian thin-walled wares with their distinctive pinecone scales decoration (see Premk 1987: 437-450; Nagy 2016: 633-641), the Aegean “colarino” type mugs (see Hayes 2008: 101-104) and their Pontic sigillata alternatives (Zhuravlev 2010: 91-92), so this issue needs a thorough further investigation. At least for now, though pointed out, the abovementioned similarities cannot be considered with certainty as a proof for regular rather than accidental contacts and exchange of technical knowledge between the Moesian centre and the ones in the Rhone valley in particular.

Adding all said above, it becomes more and more clear that the repertoire of the Butovo workshops has much more divergent origin than recently stated (see Ivanov 2022: 102, according to whom, there was a major predominance of Eastern originated traditions in the craft). While there is Eastern and maybe also Pontic and other influences to be found within it, the products of the local artisans had more in common with the style and techniques used by Western and Western inspired workshops (see above), and foremost with centres like the those at *Romula*, *Acidava* (as previously noted – see Popilian 1997: 12; Rusu-Bolindeț 2014: 170), probably also *Apulum*, *Micăsa* and other Dacian workshops, than with the majority of the more closely located Thraco-Moesian ones,

especially those located to northeast and the south of the *Haemus Mons* (for the latter, see for instance Kalčev 1991: 245-273; Harizanov 2020b: 103-147; Ivanov 2022: 110-112). This briefly described here diversity in the repertoire of the Butovo ateliers (see also Sultov 1985: 102) was in all probability owed to craftsmen of both western and eastern origin who settled and worked in this supposed artisanal community (Sultov 1985: 44-45, 101; Harizanov 2019: 143-144).

Conclusion

Despite the many controversies remaining, the discovery of the Butovo mould and its almost identical parallels from the Rhone valley could be viewed as a proof for the importation of technical knowledge from that region to the Lower Danube. Still, more evidence is needed for us to identify the true scope of the trade and industrial connections between the two Roman regions during one of the peaks of their economic development.

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