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The Large Fortified Settlement Near Shepetivka: History of the Medieval Settlement – History of the Archaeological Site

ABSTRACT

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The dramatic history of the medieval fortified settlement, located between the Sluch' and Goryn' Rivers (near the village of Horodyshche, Shepetivka District, Khmelnytskyi Region, Ukraine), destroyed and burned as a result of Tatar-Mongol raids in the middle of the 13th c., gave rise to the appearance of a cultural layer which is unique as regards its abundant finds. During the excavations led by Mikhail Karger in 1957–1964, almost all the territory of the site was investigated (3.6 ha) and many thousands of archaeological and anthropological finds were collected. M. Karger planned to publish a monograph based on the research into these collections undertaken by the members of his expedition team, but his plan did not reach fruition. Over the last sixty years, the materials have often been referred to by specialists. Today the bibliography relating to the analysis and interpretation of the materials discovered during the excavations includes dozens of articles. The rather disjointed nature of the materials published so far, and the random and incomplete selection of finds for detailed investigation have meant that the presentation of the site as a whole has not been a well-integrated one and interpretations have often been inconsistent. Recently a project has been drawn up, enabling a team from the Institute for the History of Material Culture, to prepare the excavated materials for publication, supported by a grant from the Russian Foundation for Basic Research.

Keywords: Early Rus' fortified settlement, excavations, research, interpretation

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The remains of the fortified settlement near Horodyshche village (Shepetivka District, Khmelnytsky Region, Ukraine), situated at the place Valy on the River Guska (basin of the River Goryn') have featured on the archaeological map of Volhynia since the end of the 19th c. (Samokvasov

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Fig. 1. Mikhail Karger (1903–1976), photo of 1960s (Department of photographs, Scientific Archive of the Institute of the History of Material Culture, Russian Academy of Sciences, negative No. I 76721, print No. 2511.47)

1888, 51; Antonovich 1901, 104)¹. In the middle of the 20th c., the site was examined by archaeologists Petr Tretyakov (1949) and Mikhail Karger (1954) from Leningrad, when they were carrying out reconnaissance work in the field². Both researchers appreciated the scientific importance of the site. One of them dated it to the 11th–13th c. and the other to the end of the 12th c. or the 13th c. (Karger 1957, 2–3). For P. Tretyakov, specialist in Slavic studies, the Early Rus’ fortified settlement was of no special interest. M. Karger, on the other hand, who devoted his life and research to the culture of the Early Rus’ town and first and foremost to Early Rus’ architecture, after assessing the significance of the site and the prospects for field research there, decided to begin excavations (Fig. 1). This led to a change in the plans for his architectural-archaeological research. It was not until 1957

that a joint Galician-Volhynian architectural-archaeological expedition was set up by the Leningrad department of the Institute for the History of Material Culture (affiliated to the USSR Academy of Sciences) and Leningrad State University and M. Karger could at last embark upon wide-scale excavations of the site (Figs. 2–3). From that time onwards and until the end of the excavation project, each of M. Karger’s field seasons was based on two approaches: archaeological and architectural-archaeological. The main focus of the excavations at that time was naturally the Early-Rus’ fortified settlement near Shepetivka (Fig. 4).

¹ This article was written within the framework of a project supported by the Russian Foundation for Basic Research (RFBR), project No. 18-09-00753, entitled “The Large fortified settlement near Shepetivka: materials and research (results of excavations by Mikhail Karger, 1957–1964)”.

² For a short survey of the prospection in the area undertaken by Mikhailo Savitskyi in 1929 see: Yanenko 2016, 70–71, 359. His unpublished archaeological reports are today in the archives of the Institute of Archaeology, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine.



Fig. 2. The Large Fortified Settlement near Shepetivka. The beginning of the excavations (Archive of M. Karger)



Fig. 3. The Large Fortified Settlement near Shepetivka. Shooting a topographical plan of the site (Archive of M. Karger)



Fig. 4. The Large Fortified Settlement near Shepetivka. View of the settlement from the north (Archive of M. Karger)

About the excavations

The site, with a total area of about 3.6 ha, consists of two parts, designated by the researcher *a priori* as Detinets (fortified settlement) and Posad (unfortified suburban settlement). It was surrounded by an impressive system of banks and ditches in multiple rows, which is typical of the fortified settlements in the Bolokhov Land located in its immediate vicinity (Rappoport 1955, 52–59). Over the course of eight field seasons (1957–1964), the site was almost completely investigated within the limits of the inner rampart (Fig. 5). Under the inner slope of the rampart, around the entire perimeter, remains of burnt and empty log constructions were excavated (Fig. 6; *cf.* Peskova 2009). The occupation layer of the fortified settlement turned out to be unique regarding its saturation with artefacts and remains of human skeletons, its piles of scattered human and animal bones. The archaeologists were confronted by a monstrous picture of the devastation of a fortified settlement, routed and burned as a result of a sudden military attack, but hardly looted at all. Among the human bones, there were not only



Fig. 5. The Large Fortified Settlement near Shepetivka. Plan showing the excavations by year (Drawn by A. Peskova and K. Mikhaylov; computer design by E. Nikitina)

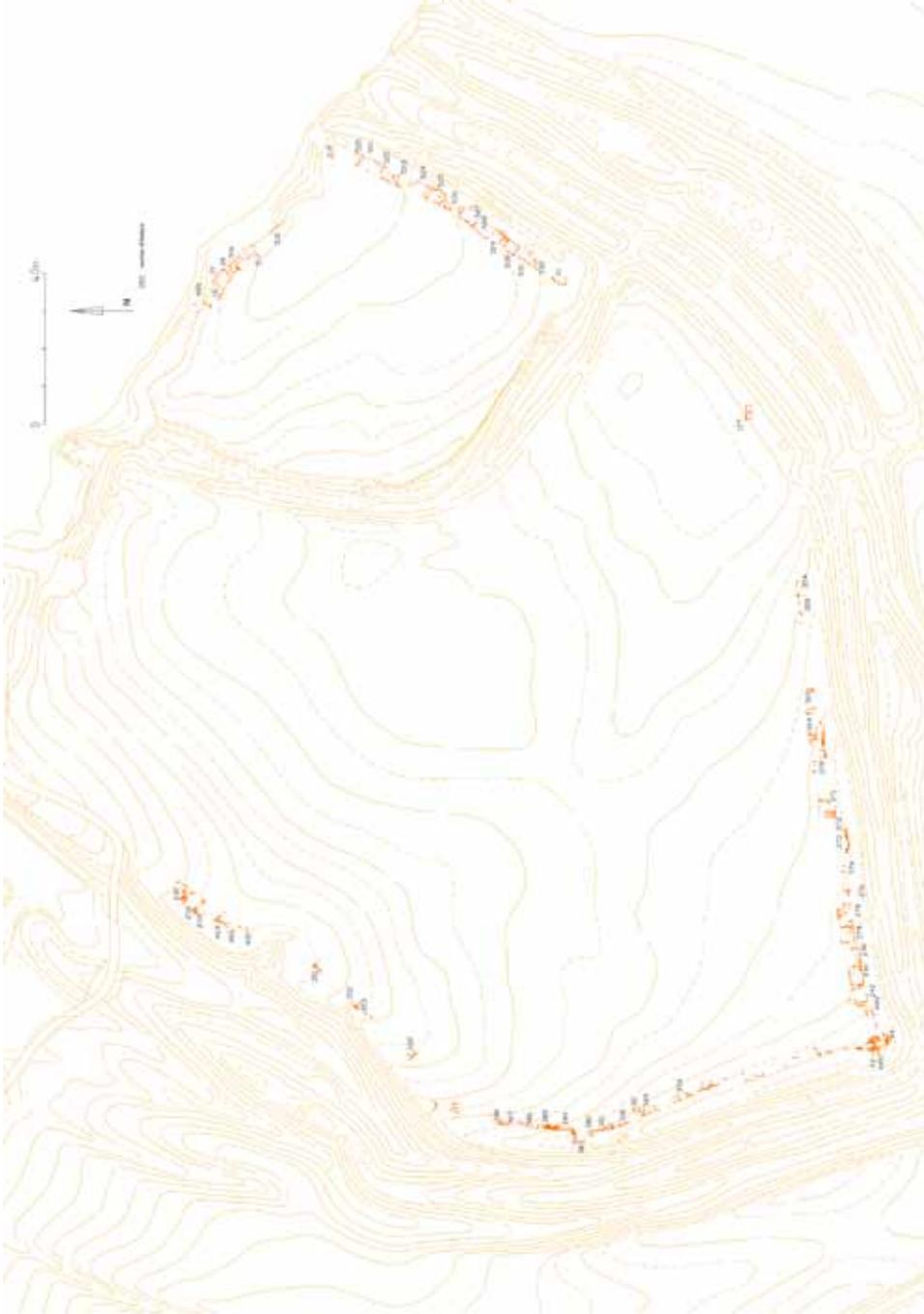


Fig. 6. The Large Fortified Settlement near Shepetivka. The layout of the wooden hollow log constructions on the hillfort (Drawn by A. Peskova and K. Mikhaylov; computer design by E. Nikitina)

household items (whole and crushed ceramic vessels, locks, keys, knives, scissors, etc.), numerous agricultural tools and tools used by blacksmiths and jewellers, but also fragments of bells, expensive weapons and hastily hidden silver jewellery (hoards). This could be compared with the destruction of Pompeii and Herculaneum and it was not by chance that one of the articles by M. Karger in the university newspaper at that time was entitled “Russian Pompeii” (Karger 1962b). Writing about dwellings and outbuildings at the site, the researcher noted repeatedly in his field reports that the only well-recorded indication of dwellings was provided by remnants of clay stoves with collapsed covers: “Despite the most careful research investigations of all, even the most insignificant traces of structures, it is not possible to trace the precise plan of dwellings or outbuildings... the plan of dwellings can only be restored to a certain extent based on the distribution of objects found near the remains of stoves, and sometimes on the arrangement of human skeletons along the walls” (Karger 1962, 3). On the basis of these observations, M. Karger believed that all the dwellings in this settlement had been standing buildings “of a wattle-and-daub type without vertical support posts dug into the ground” (ibid.). Indeed in some cases a large number of household items (ceramic vessels, sometimes whole ones, mill-stones, knives, fire-steels, locks, keys, etc.) was recorded in the field drawings near the stoves, thus confirming the presence of dwellings. In such cases the arrangement of the finds provided an idea of a dwelling’s size. Yet more often in the field drawings only the stoves (or their foundations) are recorded. The mapping of all the individual finds in the plan of the settlement, announced by M. Karger in his field reports, was not in fact implemented. As a result, the plan of the settlement remained unclear.

M. Karger considered the Early Rus’ fortified settlement “basically a single-layer site” and, based on analysis of the archaeological materials, he dated it to the end of the 12th c. or first half of the 13th (in his final summing-up he attributed the emergence of the town to the second half of the 12th c.; Karger 1965, 40). Initially he had assumed that certain finds of the Late Roman period had been accidentally brought to the site from a nearby settlement or burial-ground. Only in the last years of his excavations did M. Kargerr admit that an older settlement had existed at this place long before the appearance of an Early Rus’ population, but the earlier cultural layer had, in his opinion, been destroyed by Early

Rus' buildings. In his 1962 report, Karger had already observed that “in the part of the Detinets and Posad near the river bank a layer had survived containing the remains of a much more ancient settlement which, judging from the ceramics, bronze brooches and Roman coins, dated from the first centuries AD” (Karger 1963, 2–3). Then in 1963, on the cape outside the fortifications, remains of an industrial complex of the same period were discovered by means of magnetometry. They were held to be a two-tier kiln for firing grey-burnished Chernyakhov pottery (Karger 1963, 6; Shilik 1965, 265–269).

Karger spoke enthusiastically and vividly at the university about the results of the excavations and lectured on the results of the field studies at the plenary sessions of the IHMC (Karger 1959, 17–20; 1960, 100–101; 1962a, 59–61). Yet he expounded his final idea about the site as a whole only once, in a short summary at the First International Congress of Slavic Archaeology in Warsaw (Karger 1965, 39–41). On the basis of these data the site was included in almost all archaeological works relating to Early Rus' fortified urban sites in general, and in particular to those in the southern part of Rus'. The discovery of the Late Roman settlement, which predated the Early Rus' fortified settlement, went almost unnoticed.

During the excavations of the fortified settlement, when its name was often heard in archaeological circles, it was included in the catalogue of Chernyakhov sites found within the territory of the Ukraine (Makhno 1960, 54, Cat. No. 37). At the same time, one of the Roman coins found during the excavations of the fortified settlement was included in the summary of the hoards of Roman coins on the territory of USSR (Kropotkin 1961, 84, Cat. No. 1124). This is all that is currently known to the archaeological community about the settlement from the Late Roman period in the basin of the River Goryn'.

The Early Rus' settlement initially appeared in the academic literature with the attractive name Izyaslavl'. In the first year of successful field research M. Karger identified the site under investigation with the city of Izyaslavl' mentioned in chronicles, which had happened to be on the path of the Batu Khan's troops, when they were moving west in the winter of 1240/1241, after the capture of Kiev (*Ipatiev Chronicle*, col. 786; Karger 1958, 16–17). Under this name the fortified settlement continues to figure in the literature to the present day, despite the fact that M. Karger's hypothesis has long been challenged. He himself

noted that its legitimacy would depend on the presence or absence of a cultural layer, of a similar date to that of Horodyshche, in the district centre Izyaslav, located on the Goryn' River not far away (about 20 km): "In order for the hypothesis expressed here to become a scientifically substantiated position, additional archaeological research is needed on the territory of modern Izyaslav" (Karger 1958, 17). The excavations carried out by Ukrainian archaeologists in Izyaslav in the 1980s and 1990s made it possible to establish the presence of an urban level dating from the 12th c. or first half of the 13th within its territory. This confirmed the possibility of direct historical continuity between the Izyaslav' mentioned in the chronicles and the modern town of Izyaslav (Nikitenko, Osadchy and Polegaylov 1985, 270–274; Nikitenko 1999, 547–552; Pryshchepa 2016, 130; Demidko 2017, 144–149). The fortified settlement excavated by M. Karger thus became an unnamed fortified settlement, but the search for its name in the chronicles continues. It is difficult to say what enabled Karger's hypothesis to survive so long: either the scale of the destruction of the ancient town discovered by archaeologists, or the forceful personality of the researcher himself – most likely both. All the more so since the likelihood of the annihilation of this town resulting from Tatar-Mongol attack is very high regardless of its name, given that it was located in the path of the Batu Khan's troops.

About the collection

A great assemblage of archaeological and anthropological materials, animal bones and charred grain collected during field research was distributed among several academic institutions for the purpose of specialist study and storage. The bulk of archaeological finds made between 1971 and 1976 was transferred to the State Hermitage Museum, where in 1983 a temporary exhibition was organized and a catalogue entitled "The Town of Izyaslav' in Early Rus'" was published (Mirolyubov 1983). Currently, striking finds from the excavations of the fortified settlement make up a significant part of the permanent exhibition in the Hermitage dedicated to the culture of Early Rus.

A small part of the finds was sent to the Artillery Museum in Leningrad and to the Khmelnytskyi Museum of Regional History (Ukraine). The graphic and photo documentation are held in the IHMC. Field reports, identical in their content, are to be found in

academic archives in Moscow, Kyiv and St. Petersburg but there are no site journals available.

Anthropological materials, collected at the site in enormous quantities, were transferred for research purposes partly to the First Leningrad Medical Institute, partly to the Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (Kunstkamera; hereinafter the MAE). In the early years of the excavations (1957–1958), human bones were sent to the Department of Radiology of the First Leningrad Medical Institute, where they were immediately examined by a group of staff under the guidance of the head of the Department, Dmitrii Rokhlin. While determining the age and gender of the specimens, the researchers also focused on identifying palaeo-pathological changes and traumatic injuries of bones, which showed no signs of having healed. Some of this joint work was briefly published by the group leader in his book, *Diseases of Ancient People* (Rokhlin 1965, 208–211, Fig. 100). From it we learn that the skeletons and scattered human bones obtained from archaeologists had been sorted and that among them researchers had been able to isolate the remains of 242 individuals (55 men, 64 women and 59 children, while in 64 cases the gender had not been determined; cf. Rokhlin 1965, 209). Some of the bones displayed traumatic injuries, testifying to the violent death of the individuals concerned.

Anthropological materials from the excavations of the next six years were sent to the MAE, but for 60 years traces of them had been lost in the depths of the museum's repositories. Only recently, thanks to the efforts of MAE researcher, Ivan Shirobokov, we succeeded in finding boxes with materials from the excavations of 1959–1964 in the museum's storerooms. The significance of this find for a full and comprehensive study of the site excavated by M. Karger cannot be overestimated. The prospects for investigating these new-found materials largely depend, however, on whether the young researcher is able to obtain financial support for his project.

The bones of animals and plant residues (mainly charred grain) were sent to the Moscow laboratory of the IHMC (at that time known as the Institute of Archaeology of the USSR Academy of Sciences, Moscow) to Veniamin Tsalkin (palaeozoology) and Aleksei Kiryanov (palaeobotany). The question of the extent and method of sampling for the study remains unclear. Among the materials of Karger's archive at the IHMC, the conclusion of V. Tsalkin regarding the results of the

study can be found, together with parts of his correspondence with A. Kiryanov, briefly cited in the dissertation of A. Peskova (1988a).

The complete results of these studies have not been published, although the conclusions of A. Kiryanov were partially cited for comparison with materials discussed in the works of Natalia Kiryanova (1979, 75 [Note 20], 81), and also in those of Svitlana Belyaeva and Galyna Pashkevych (1990, 42). A number of samples of charred grain from the excavations of the fortified settlement were independently analysed and published by Zoya Yanushevich, so as to compare them with materials from excavations of the ancient settlements of Yekimautsi and Petrukha in Moldova (Yanushevich 1976, 86–89, tables 15, 16, Fig. 42).

Research history

One of the regular members of the expedition and closest assistants of Mikhail Karger, Oleg Ovsyannikov, in his unpublished manuscript wrote: “predetermining the future of the accumulated material, M.K. Karger has repeatedly and in various forums announced the preparation of a large joint monograph, the authors of which will work with materials of the main, most important, categories of finds from the fortified settlement, its dwelling complexes and fortification structures. The aforementioned group of authors, according to M. Karger, should have included: Mikhail Karger (general management, dwelling complexes, fortifications, jewellery), Anatolii Kirpichnikov (weaponry-related items), Mark Mirolyubov (agricultural tools), Oleg Ovsyannikov (pottery)” (Ovsyannikov 1968). It should also be noted that the potential authors of the future monograph were regular members of the expedition.

The study of the finds by a large group of authors during the lifetime of M. Karger turned out in practice to be an impossible project; certain categories of finds, however, were studied and introduced into the academic literature. Items connected with weaponry were studied by A. Kirpichnikov, as planned, and most of them were published both in surveys of archaeological sources and also in individual articles (Kirpichnikov 1966–1973; 1971; 1973; 1975; 1976; 1978), but much of this work still remains unpublished. A study of the pottery written by O. Ovsyannikov in 1968 also remains unpublished. These contributions, despite having been written decades ago, are of great interest to modern

researchers investigating the towns of Early Rus' in general and this site and region in particular, first of all due to their exhaustive detail and also to the integrated approach to these painstakingly investigated materials.

Neither was a small, but very important in our opinion, article by Galina Romanova (1980s) published: it was devoted to the most striking finds of the Late Roman period. M. Karger, as already mentioned, linked these to a badly destroyed layer pertaining to the Chernyakhov culture, noting that “the contemporary hand-moulded pottery is of particular interest” (Karger 1965, 41). It was the presence of the characteristic hand-moulded pottery (in combination with other features) that allowed G. Romanova to attribute this settlement to a group of Velbar Culture sites, which at a later stage evolved into Chernyakhov settlements (Romanova, manuscript, 5).

M. Mirolyubov, the first curator of the collection from Horodyshe, who had organized the Hermitage exhibition of 1983 devoted to these materials, published much later a very brief survey of the agricultural tools collection, as well as craft tools and items manufactured by blacksmiths for various purposes (Mirolyubov 1983; 1984; 1988a; 1988b; 1995). While working through the Mirolyubov archive, we had hoped to find a study of the agricultural tools from ‘Izyaslavl’, but the search was in vain.

Over the past 60 years, experts have frequently referred to materials from the excavations at the fortified settlement. Certain categories of objects, such as stone icons, silver jewellery with niello decoration (headdress pendants [*kolt(s)*] and finger rings), fragments of bells, bronze hand-censers, reliquary-crosses and a bronze icon-pendant continued to be studied and published separately and in works of a survey type (Nikolaeva 1983; Makarova 1986; Shashkina and Galibin 1986; Bank and Zalesskaya 1995; Korzukhina and Peskova 2003; Churakova 2017). Seventeen hoards of silver jewellery (Piskova 1988a), a range of pilgrimage relics unique in the towns of Early Rus' (Peskova 1994, 64–66; 1997, 48–50; 2001, 113–126), fragments of a copper alloy cross of medium size with the representation of the Crucifix and saints used as an object of private devotion (Peskova 1998, 238–252) and lead seals (Peskova and Beletsky 1997, 129–138) were also published.

Two articles were devoted to the fortifications of the Large Fortified Settlement at Valy (M. Karger’s Izyaslavl’) and of the Small Fortified

Settlement, possibly designed as a look-out post and located on the northern outskirts of Horodyshche village (Peskova 2008; 2009).

The specialists from Kyiv studied the production technology used for certain groups of ferrous-metal products (knives, scissors, scythes, sickles), some of which turned out to have damascened blades (Voznesenska 1989; 1992; Voznesenskaya 1990). Based on analysis of the special processes required for the manufacture of silver headdress pendants with niello decoration, two technological traditions were identified, indicating the possibility that there had been two workshops producing jewellery in the settlement (Kornienko 2017, 229–240).

Recently, new studies of a unique find known as the Early Rus' garment from Izyaslavl' have been conducted at a more advanced level (Saburova 1997, 102, Pl. 68: 6). It was established that, judging by the cut of the garment, it is most likely to have been a man's caftan, the closest parallels for which are to be found in Polovtsian costume (Orfinskaya and Mikhaylov 2013).

Today the list of works relating in varying degrees to the interpretation of the materials obtained during the excavations of the fortified settlement includes dozens of articles. We have only mentioned some of them. They testify to researchers' continued interest. At the same time, the scattered and fragmentary nature of the published materials, the random selection of the samples and the incomplete coverage of the materials cannot provide a picture of the site as a whole. This gives rise to very contradictory interpretations regarding not only its name in the chronicles, but also its social composition and the historical and geographical affiliations, which defined its place and role in the history of the south-western regions of Early Rus'.

Issues requiring attention in the study of the site

The historical fate of the region, in which the town is situated, was largely determined, first of all by its position at the point where the Kievan, Volhynian, Galician and Bolokhov Lands meet and by its dangerous proximity to the Steppes. A second crucial factor was that at least two of the traditional routes of communication, leading from Kiev to the West (via Volodymyr and Galych) and mentioned in the chronicles, passed through this territory. More often than not, these routes can be traced through chronicle reports on the movement of

military detachments supporting warring princes, although there is no doubt that they were at the same time trade and pilgrim routes. The construction of fortified centers in the region resulted from, among other things, the need to ensure the security of these major communication routes.

These same routes were used in the winter of 1240/1241 by the army of Batu on its way from Kiev through Kolodyazhin, Kamenets, Izyaslav', Kremenets and Danilov (*Ipatiev Chronicle*, col. 786). Of these cities, only Kolodyazhin has definitely been identified with a fortified settlement, excavated on the River Sluch' near the village of Kolodyazhne in the Zhytomyr region of the Ukraine (Yura 1962, 57–130). Medieval Izyaslav', as was noted above, can with a high degree of probability be seen as the predecessor of the modern town of Izyaslav, located on the River Goryn'. Medieval Kamenets ought therefore to be situated between the Sluch' and Goryn' rivers and can be linked to one of the sites located on this section of the route. The question as to the location of Kamenets has a very long history and several answers have been suggested. One of them is that it was located near Kamyanka village on the Tsvetokha river, the eastern tributary of the Goryn' River (Grushevsky 1891, 43–44, note 5). The village of Kamyanka is located at the point where the Guska river flows into the Tsvetokha, but there is not a single fortified settlement near it. The nearest one to Kamyanka is the fortified settlement excavated by M. Karger in the upper reaches of the Guska river, which makes it possible to regard it as one of the 'contenders' for the Kamenets of the chronicles. Archaeological materials from the excavations of the fortified settlement correspond in general to the Kamenets' of the chronicles, which was an important fortified centre, located on the border between the Volhynian and Kievan Lands and in the immediate vicinity of the Bolokhov Land (Peskova and Beletsky 1997, 132–137). This hypothesis, however, also needs to be tested by further more detailed studies of the materials from the site itself and its surroundings.

Comparative studies of the micro-regions of modern Izyaslav on the Goryn' River and the fortified settlement on the River Guska, systematically carried out by Serhii Demydko, are of great importance and hold out interesting prospects in this respect (Demydko 2008; Demidko 2017). Perhaps further research in this direction will help evaluate the consistency of a hypothesis put forward by Evgen Osadchyi,

who located Kamenets on the site of modern Izyaslav. The author of the hypothesis believes that Kamenets and Izyaslavl' are names of one and the same town, namely Kamenets', whose ruler or founder was prince Izyaslav. No town called Izyaslavl', according to this researcher, ever existed (Osadchyi 2011).

After the brief report delivered by M. Karger in 1965, the next attempt to summarize the studies of the site, which had accumulated by the end of the 1980s, was a PhD thesis by A. Peskova «The Early Rus' Town of Izyaslavl' in the 12th and 13th c. (based on materials from the fortified settlement at the village of Horodyshche near Shepetivka)» (Peskova 1988a). The site excavated by M. Karger was interpreted as a military-aristocratic fortified centre with a pronounced urban culture, built according to a single plan as an outpost of the Volhynian prince, Roman Mstislavovich, at the eastern edges of Volhynia in the 1190s, and remaining in existence until the middle of the 13th c. (Peskova 1981; 1988a; 1988b). Over time a few items were identified, which had been used by the Early Rus' population around the middle of the 13th c. and had been widespread mainly in the second half of the 13th c. and the 14th, and also isolated finds from the 14th–16th c. In this connection it was suggested that the destruction of the settlement could be associated not only with the attack by Batu's troops in 1241, but perhaps also with the assault by the Mongolian warlord Burundai, in 1259 (Medvedev and Peskova 2008, 311–315). This is still an open question, as is the closely related issue of the location of the cities mentioned in the chronicles as routed in 1241 by the Mongolian Khan, Batu.

Currently, a number of researchers, and especially those who are excavating in this region, are coming more and more often to include M. Karger's 'Izyaslavl'' in the group of cities of the Bolokhov Land and even to consider it the main administrative centre of the region (Yakubovskiy 1997; Vynokur *et al.* 2004). This is not surprising, since the common features of the material culture in the Sluch'-Goryn' interfluvium and in the upper reaches of the Southern Bug are indeed striking. What was the reason behind these shared features and how far-reaching was it? Today there are not yet any ready answers to these questions.

If we reconstruct the territory of the Bolokhov Land on the basis of the few references in the chronicle, it is easy to see that this fortified settlement is located very near, but nevertheless still outside it (*Ipatiev*

Chronicle, a. 6658, 6739, 6743, 6749, 6765). Yet, starting out from the archaeological data, the researchers have significantly expanded the hypothetical boundaries of the elusive Bolokhov Land in the first half of the 13th c.

On archaeological maps, these boundaries stretch from Dorogobuzh and Vozvyagl' in the North (in the Sluch'-Goryn' interfluve) to Mezhybozhe and Buzhsk in the South (in the upper reaches of the Southern Bug), to Kotelnich and the Raiky fortified settlements in the East (in the upper reaches of the River Teterev). The site of the Large Fortified Settlement near Shepetivka appears on this map on the western border of the area (Morgunov 2009, Fig. 89). Yuri Morgunov notes the contemporaneous existence of fortified settlement with an atypical layout of fortifications (of the Bolokhov type) and ordinary Early Rus' fortifications within the outlined territory (Morgunov 2009, 196). The appearance of atypical settlements in this region Y. Morgunov explains with reference to the involvement in the building of the fortifications of immigrants from the steppes, specifically the group of 'wild' Polovtsy who moved there from the upper reaches of the Southern Bug (Pletneva 1975, 280, 282; Morgunov 2009, 196–197). The cohabitation of different ethnic groups was bound to have been reflected not only in the nature of the fortifications being erected, but also in other elements of the local material culture. Certain "steppe" elements are to be observed in the materials from the Large fortified settlement, but their full scale and the extent to which the former steppe people were represented in the population remain to be seen. Naturally anthropological research will play the decisive role in the resolution of this issue.

The range of questions relating to the study of the fortified settlement excavated by M. Karger is very wide. Here we have merely noted the main ones. A full investigation of such a site is possible only as a group undertaking.

About the project

The joint project planned by M. Karger did not, as we know, materialize. Yet now, 60 years after the beginning of the excavations, at the end of 2017, a grant was approved by the RFBR to prepare research papers and materials from the excavations of the fortified settlement near Shepetivka for publication. The grant was for a period of three

years for a group of five researchers — members of the IHMC and the State Hermitage Museum (led by A. Peskova). The aim of the project is to introduce, as fully as possible, these materials into the academic literature.

One of the key tasks is to identify and reconstruct all the dwelling and craft complexes and to reconstitute the fortified settlement plan on this basis. M. Karger had been unable in the field to establish the boundaries of dwellings and outbuildings, so he had not kept track of these (or numbered them). Sometimes, however, the label “dwelling” is to be found in the lists of finds next to certain groups of objects. He did, however, photograph every object or cluster of objects found at the site and the expedition’s illustrator duly drew them. Each such drawing was labelled “Detail No.” and given a number (Fig. 7a-b). This word was used by M. Karger for drawings depicting not just individual skeletons, clusters of bones, ground-level frames for houses and other buildings, stoves and clusters of objects, but also certain clearly discernible groups of dwellings and outbuildings. Sometimes individual finds were also mapped in these drawings but this, unfortunately, was not the rule. The numbering of the “Details” was, of course, not continuous, but applicable only within the limits of each trench. Therefore, after digitizing all the materials, we were forced to use our own designations and numbering system for the structures and their parts, burials, mass graves, etc., which had been discovered. As a result, an all-encompassing catalogue of the objects that have been investigated was finally obtained.

At the end of each field season, M. Karger usually sent field drawings to the laboratories for post-excavation processing at the IHMC (then known as the Leningrad Department of the Institute of Archaeology), where they were reworked on high-quality drawing paper and photographed. Negatives and photographic prints were sent to the Institute’s academic archive. Comparison of photographs with the enhanced field drawings showed that about a quarter of the field drawings had not been reworked on high-quality drawing paper and required copying.

The academic archive was also sent a significant proportion of the field photographs recording the excavation process. They had only been annotated very briefly and, as it turned out, often incorrectly. Many more field photographs, usually without annotations but grouped by years, are preserved in the personal archive of M. Karger, held in the

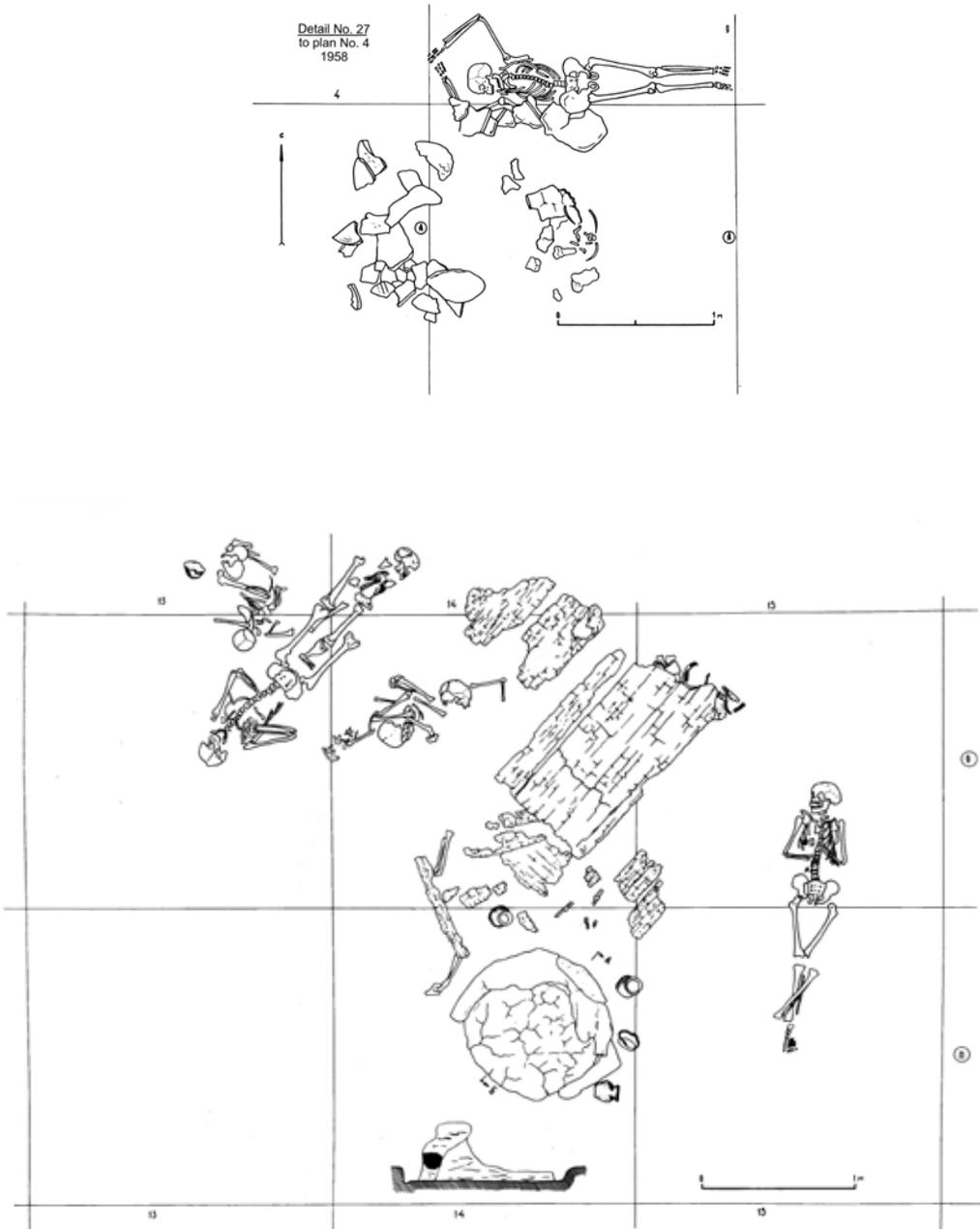


Fig. 7a; b. The Large Fortified Settlement near Shepetivka. Composite elements of reworked drawings (Department of photographs, Scientific Archive of the Institute of the History of Material Culture, Russian Academy of Sciences, negative no I 54449, print No 2574.75; negative No. I 78868, print No 2574.2)

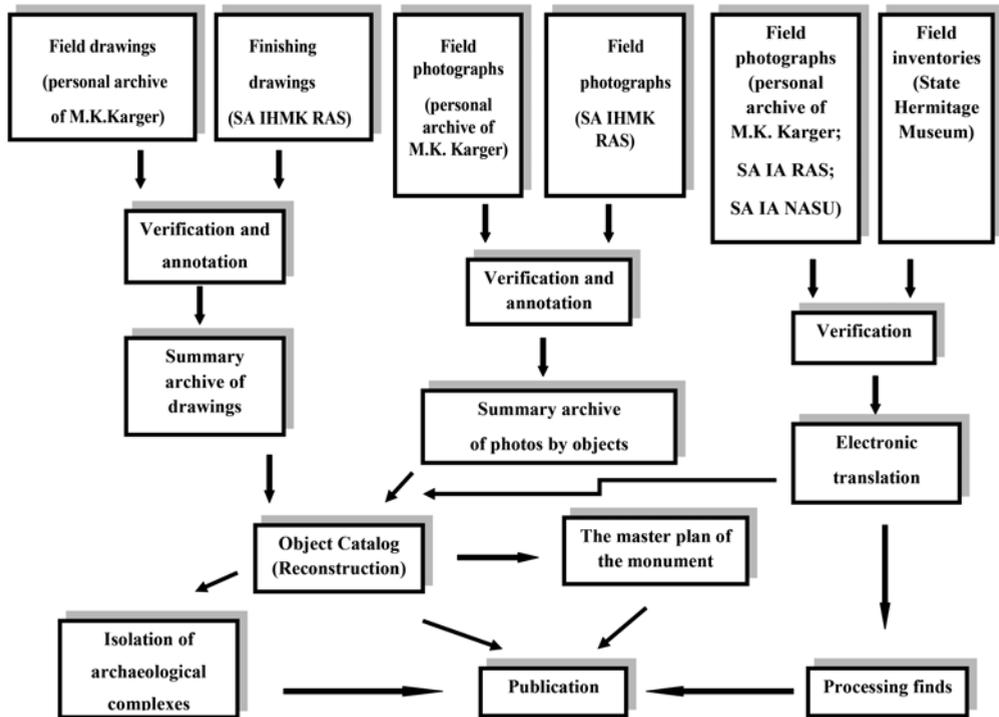


Fig. 8. The Large Fortified Settlement near Shepetivka. The schematic graph of the working on the documentation (Prepared by A. Peskova, K. Mikhaylov)

Department of Slavic-Finnish Archaeology of the IHMC (about one thousand prints). The log-books listing the photographs taken have, unfortunately, not survived.

To create a complete plan of the settlement in the future it will be essential to transfer all these types of documentation into a single database, check them, correlate field photographs with drawings and digitize all the materials (Fig. 8).

As a result of the work we have already carried out, 555 features have been identified and mapped within the plan of the fortified settlement. So far this provides only the basis on which later – after comparison with data from the lists of finds – it will be possible to reconstruct dwellings and outbuildings and to reconstitute the settlement plan.

The main conclusions obtained at the first stage of the study of the scientific documentation compiled by the team are as follows: the

documentation of the expedition has been preserved on a large scale. It is adequate by the standards of the time in question and, for the most part, clearly reflects the complicated structure of the site, making it possible to reconstruct groups of dwellings and outbuildings and, as a result, the overall plan of the settlement.

In the coming years the team will continue its research work with archive materials and the collection of archaeological finds held in the Hermitage. The team also plans to bring out unpublished manuscripts by A. Kirpichnikov, O. Ovsyannikov and G. Romanova.

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