

სამარხის სტელის ფრაგმენტი ბიჭვინტიდან

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ბიჭვინტაში შემთხვევით აღმოჩენილი სამარხის სტელა მრავალმხრივ საინტერესო ძეგლია, რომელსაც გარკვეული მნიშვნელობა ენიჭება II-III სს-ის პიტიუნტისა და საერთოდ ამ პერიოდის კოლხეთის ისტორიისათვის. მოცემული სტელა თაღისებური ტიპის სტელებს განეკუთვნება. ასეთი ტიპისა და ხარისხის საფლავის ქვები სპეციალურ სახელოსნოებში მზადდებოდნენ. ბიჭვინტის მსგავსი სტელები ფართოდ იყო გავრცელებული რომაულ სამყაროში. ეთნო-კულტურულად იგი დაკავშირებულია ბერძნულ-რომაულ სამყაროსთან. სამარხი სტელა როგორც ჩანს ეკუთვნოდა დაწინაურებული ფენის წარმომადგენელ პიროვნებას.

The Fragment of the Gravestone of the Tomb from Bichvinta

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The gravestones are very important historical-archaeological monuments. The burial stones, steles, contain interesting information about the individual and patrimonial name, the rank, the place of birth, age and merit of deceased. In some cases, there are representations of portraits of deceased either. In other cases, there are some inscriptions, which were the symbol of immortality (J. Wilkins. 1992. p. 7).

The burial stela were spread as early as Mycenaean era. But their serial manufacture begins in Greek-Roman world, from 6th century B.C. till the 4th cent. A.D. during whole this period, the style, form and construction of burial stela had been often changed.

In the stages of different times, there were popular burial steles: tall, thin, with inscription of narrow reliefs, and with decorative ornaments. Often there were small, simple, steles with inscription or without.

In Colchis, the burial stela of antique period are rare. Here they are represented with only 4 samples yet. Two of them are confirmed in Sokhumi, others in Bichvinta. One gravestone from Sokhumi is made of marble and is dated to the 5th cent. B.C. A lot of scientific publications had been dedicated to it (Лордкипанидзе, 1968. сс. 166-176; Трапш, 1989. сс. 163-165).

The second gravestone, which is made of sandstone monolith, had been discovered in the territory of ancient castle of Sokhumi, in the south-eastern section of eight facet temple. The stele is with Greek inscription and is dated to the 4th-5th cent. B.C. (Todua, 2004. pp. 151-153; Kaukhchishvili, 2004. p. 374). Gravestone is not made with high mastery. Probably its author was not a high qualified professional, master. Accordingly, stele could not have been made in serious manufacturing center. Only boldly inscribed and high architecturally designed stelae had been manufactured in such kind of centers.

Steles similar to Sokhumi had been manufactured in the garrison duty (Античная скульптура Херсонеса. 19764. сс. 124). However we should indicate that after the 3rd cent. A.D. in the Greek-Roman world, the manufacture of sculptural-relief and decorative-ornamentally appeared stelae had been stopped. (М. Максимова, М. Наливкина. 1955. с. 312). From the 4th cent. A.D. according to the victory of Christianity, the stelae, which had been stored in special workshops, drew their attention with their simplicity. From now, very rarely only inscriptions are made on steles. However the Sokhumi gravestone belongs to simple type stelae.

Its paradox, but fact, that in the very well researched and studied Bichvinta necropolis, had not been confirmed stelae with inscription or image, which however are very characteristic to the burials of Roman period. By now here are identified only two gravestones. One was discovered on the central part of the necropolis, in the ruins of wall of the semicircular construction. The stele is made of the sandstone monolith. On its higher section is curved the quadrangle cavity, in which iron cross was placed. The cross socket is carefully covered with the special valve, which was made of the pieces of groovy tile. The manufacturer which made this stele was evidently less skilled unprofessional master. Stele had not been made in the special workshop; it has been made handicraft with short meeting rule and is dated to the 4th cent. A.D.

What about the second stele (Fig. 1) which had been discovered in Bichvinta it was discovered accidentally in the north-western section of necropolis.

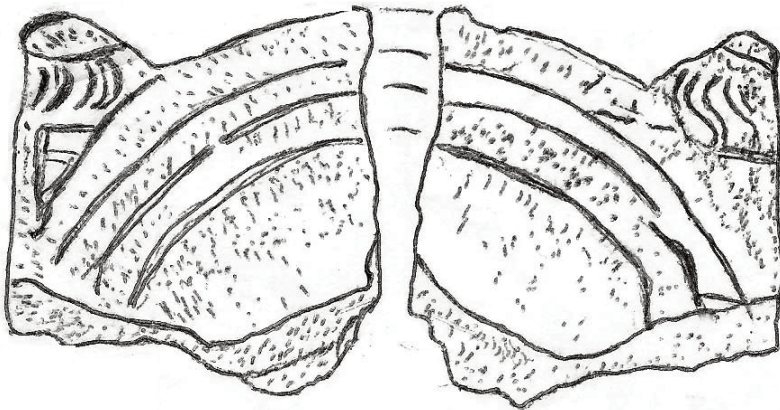


Fig. 1

According to the Petrologic data, the gravestone represents the organic, graining limestone. It consists of the fine protected, microorganisms. On the structure of limestone are not traced marbleizing. The preparatory is of beautiful structure, on it is traced grayish impression and is marble-like. This kind of limestone we meet in western Georgia and in Apkhazeti also (Lortkipanidze, 1991. p. 212). The stele is fragmentary. Only upper, heads fragment (with ledges, which represents the stylizing representation of the flaming torch) is preserved. Stele is well designed. Its producer must have been qualified, professional worker. According to the form of the stele, it's evident that it had been raised in the grave of deceased.

The described stele belongs to the arch-like style steles. These type and quality burial stones had been manufactured in special workshops. Bichvinta stele-like steles were widely spread in the Roman Empire. Its analogies are known from Eskus (Р. Иванов. 1989. с. 46, Рис.2) and Köln (Римское искусство и культура. 1984. сс. 64. Рис.35). Accordingly they are dated to the 1st-3rd cent. A.D (G. Borde nache. 1965. p. 281. Fig. 31). The Bichvinta gravestone analogies is the burial stele which is kept in the museum of Trabzon,



Fig. 2

(Fig. 2), which might have been manufactured in the special workshop. It also belongs to the arch-like stelae. There is big similarity between them, also with the design of ledges. Which either has the stylizing representation of the flaming torch.

It's meaningful that the burial stele of Trabzon is with inscription. On the surface of the stele is curved Latin inscription from which we identify, that the gravestone was raised on the grave of the doctor of 15th Legions vacillation. Stele is dated to the 2nd cent. A.D. and the Bichvinta gravestone, according to analogies and paint-stylistic features should be dated to the 2nd-3rd cent. B.C.

The fragment of Bichvinta gravestone, with its accomplishment and analogies, should have been inscribed. We can't foreclose the possibility that stele belonged to the soldier of 15th legion; which's military formation was delocalized in Pitius in 2nd-3rd cent. A.D. In any case, one thing is evident: the mentioned stele must have been raised on the grave of socially promoted, outstanding, merited person. In the sense of Ethno culture, it is connected to the Greek-Roman ethnos, which represented the dominant of the Pitiunt's military-citizen population.

Perhaps stelae are represented with only two examples on the well studied necropolis of Bichvinta, but besides that, we think that steles might have been wide spread here. The confirming evidence of this represents the thing, that no fact of burial robbing had been identified here. Burials must have been covered with proper surface features, rocks and steles.

So, the accidentally discovered burial stele of Bichvinta is multilaterally interesting monument, which has particular meaning for the history of 2nd-3rd century A.D. Pitiunt and Colchis. Thereby, the discovery of such type of stele is unique for the archaeological actuality of Black Sea Area; furthermore it draws the actual interest.

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