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BRONZE MACE HEAD FROM THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF ANNALISTIC ZVENYHOROD

Abstract:

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The article presents bronze mace head found in the neighborhood of early medieval Zvenyhorod in L'viv region, Ukraine. Artefact belongs to rare type of bronze maces and could be dated back preliminary to the period between 12th and 13th centuries. It is possible that such maces belonged to the elite members and could be a ceremonial weapon and symbol of power.

Key words: bronze mace, Zvenyhorod, the 12th-13th centuries, symbol of power

Introduction

In June 2015 the author of this paper got an interesting bronze find, discovered in the area between annalistic Zvenyhorod in L'viv region and the neighboring village Hryniv, but closer to the village Vodnyky (Fig. 1). First information about this find was published in Ukrainian already (Петегірч, Павлів, Томенюк 2016, 357-361). It was the well-preserved bronze medieval mace head. The way in which this artefact got to archaeologists was interesting too. The find was given by historian Kost' Kondratyuk, Professor of Ivan Franko National University of Lviv to Professor Andriy Bogucki scientist-geologist from the same institution. With the assistance of Professor Bogucki's student candidate of geographical sciences Olena Tomenjuk the mace was given to archaeologists from Ivan Krypiakevych Institute of Ukrainian Studies of National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine for scientific examination.¹

Description of the mace

The mace's head has a rounded shape with the cylindrical hole, the edges of which clearly protrude from its upper and lower sides outside its main body. The mace is made of bronze – it is covered by the noble patina and preserved quite well (Figs. 2-3). It was casted in two-side split, perhaps, clay form, as evidenced by obliterated

subtle casting seam that runs through the middle of the product. The height of the mace – 4.4-4.6 cm, its width with protruding spikes – 5.4-5.5 cm, diameter of cylindrical hole in the bottom – 2.3 cm and in the top – 2.2 cm, thickness of sides of mace in different places reaches from – 2.5 to 4.0 mm. Tube of cylindrical hole extends beyond the rounded body in the bottom of mace by 1 cm, in the top – 0.7 cm. Along the perimeter the broadest part of the mace is covered by 13 rounded spikes with the diameter of 0.6-0.9 cm at the base and 0.5-0.6 cm – in the upper part with the height of 0.4-0.6 cm. The upper part of some spikes is rough, slightly deformed, possibly by the using or during production. On the top and bottom along the spikes the mace is decorated by ornamental line of rounded embossings 1.0-1.5 mm in diameter, which imitate the granulation. Between the lines of pseudo-granulation and upper and lower cylindrical parts of the head two groups of 25 elongated oval embossings are placed. Their size – 2.0-2.5 mm x 5.0-8.0 mm on the top of the mace and 2.0-3.0 mm x 10.0-12.0 mm on its bottom. On the surface of some embossings slightly visible transverse incisions can be observed.

Analysis of the find and brief conclusion

The artefact from the neighborhood of annalistic Zvenyhorod belongs to little common type of cast bronze maces with round spikes

¹ I would like to thank to all persons mentioned above for the assistance in obtaining and possibility to publish this unique find.

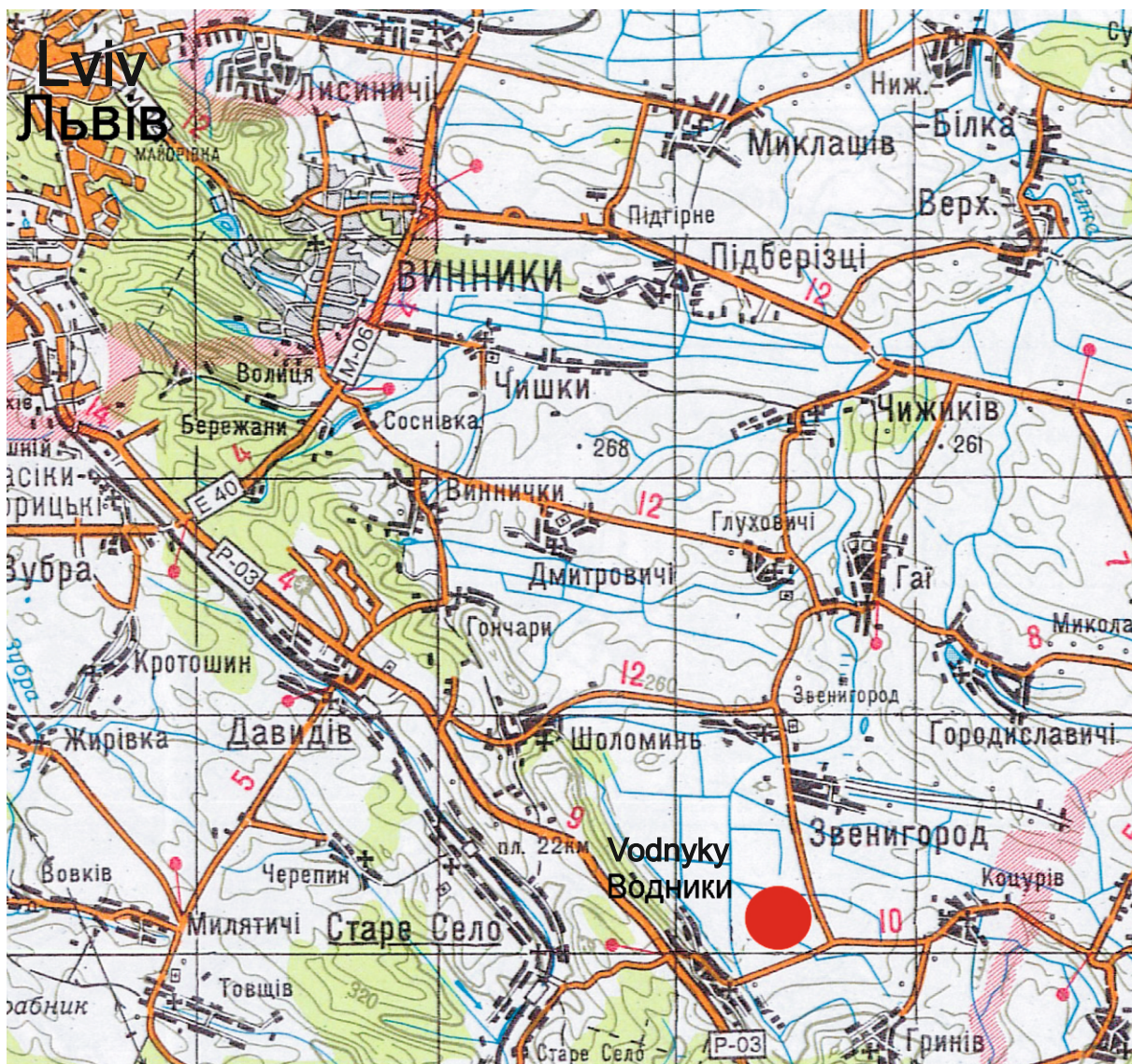


Fig. 1. Approximate location of find.

Ryc. 1. Przybliżona lokalizacja odkrycia zabytku.

and convex ornament in the form of small rounded and slightly more elongated oval embossings. The exact analogies to this mace among materials of Middle Ages were not found.² In A. N. Kirpichnikov's work maces with spikes are combined into types III and IV and interpreted as the most common for the period of the 12th-13th centuries (Кирпичников 1966, 51-53). Such products are well known in the territory of Halychyna and Volhynian lands and on the adjacent territories (ibid., 132; Strzyż 2005, 107-114; Liwoch 2006, 67-78; Пивоваров 2012, 31-35; Возный 2014, 55-64). However, this

mace by its characteristics cannot be included to this typology. The only, very similar, but not identical mace was found in medieval Halych (Коваль, Миронюк 2015, 285). The authors of this publication unfortunately do not present detailed description of the find: information about its size, circumstances and exact place of discovery of this object. According to some not quite certain data the mace was found in Podil of Halych near Church of the Annunciation. Mace head from Halych has the same round spikes and similar ornamentation, but differs from the "Zvenyhorod" one by design of cylindrical

² Unfortunately during the search for analogies we have no possibility to read the newly published work that deal specifically with maces from Bulgaria (cf. Popov 2015).

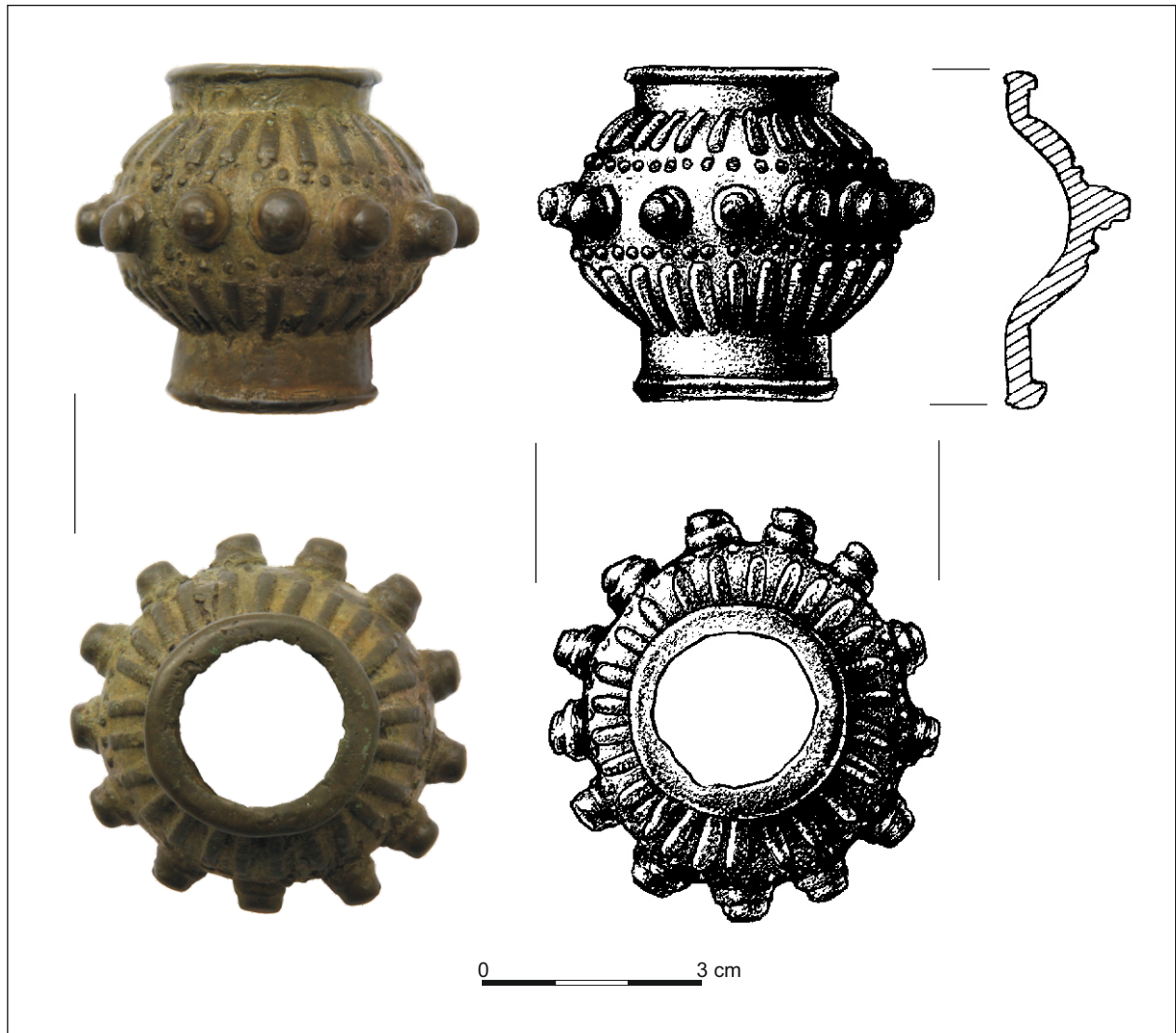


Fig. 2. Bronze mace head from the neighborhood of Zvenyhorod. Photo by D. Pavliv; drawing by I. Prynada.

Ryc. 2. Brązowa głowica buławy z okolic Dźwinogrodu. Fot. D. Pavliv; rys. I. Prynada.

hole that is not extends beyond its rounded body (Fig. 3:1). From the Internet is known a photo of similar find without more specific data, that is associated with Khmelnytsky region (Fig. 3:2). On this mace, which is very similar to 'Zvenyhorod' artefact, whole surface is covered by rows of pseudo-granulation. Very close analogy to the find from the outskirts of Zvenyhorod was discovered in Izborsk, and it is dated back to the 13th century (Седов 1989, 56, рис. 13; Артемьев 1990, 12, рис. 9:5).³ Obviously finds from Zvenyhorod vicinity, Halych, Khmelnytsky region and Izborsk represent some variants of the same type of maces, which differs from another by its original ornamentation, number and shape of spikes and their locations.

There are certain difficulties with the dating of described type of shock weapon. This find is not associated with a specific archaeological context. The issue could be solved by well dated analogies, but they are also absent. Some importance for establishing of the chronology of this mace could have the fact that it was found near annalistic Zvenyhorod. The find is probably connected with the history of this important economic, political and cultural center of the South-Western Ruthenian Principalities. The Zvenyhorod stronghold is dated on the background materials from cultural layers and objects mostly to the 11th-13th centuries and only recently finds and some constructions of the second half of 13th – 14th century were discovered here (Гупало 2014, 453-456). So,

³ I am grateful to Arkadiusz Michalak, PhD, from Zielona Góra for his kind help in searching of analogies.



Fig. 3. Close analogies to mace head from Zvenyhorod: 1 – the mace head from Halych (after Коваль, Миронюк 2015); 2 – bronze mace head from the Khmelnytsky region.

Рис. 3. Близкие аналогии до головки булавы з Дзвингорода: 1 – головка булавы з Халича (wg Коваль, Миронюк 2015); 2 – бразова головка булавы з обводу хмельницького.

except the 11th century, when the maces with spikes were 'not in vogue', chronology of the mace head from the neighborhood of Zvenyhorod can be roughly placed in timeframes between the 12th and 13th century. The fact should also be taken into account that the only similar mace known to me was found (if the information is reliable) near the church of the Annunciation in Halych. According to the results of excavations of the church and its vicinity it was possible to be established that the cultural layer and sacral objects refer to the 12th-13th centuries (Лукомський 2008, 370-371; Томенчук, Мельничук 2015, 115). The presented data, as it seems, gives the reason to date the bronze mace from the neighborhood of Zvenyhorod approximately and preliminary to the period between the 12th and 13th century.

This unique bronze mace is an important addition to the source base of studying of medieval weapons. It also confirms the existence in Halych Principality and also in the other areas (see for example: Артемьев, Гайдуков 1995, 202-206), little common types of maces. However, this find indicates that some samples of this type were simultaneously armaments and perfect artistic products. By its combat qualities, this mace is somewhat worse than ones with massive pyramidal spikes because its spikes were smaller and rounded. It is possible that such maces belonged to the members of that time elite, they could be used as a ceremonial weapon and symbols of power.

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BRĄZOWA GŁOWICA BUŁAWY Z OKOLIC LATOPIŚOWEGO DŹWINOGRODU

Streszczenie

W artykule omówiono znalezisko unikalnej, brązowej głowicy buławy, odkrytej w pobliżu latopisowego Dźwinogrodu (ukr. Звенигород) na Lwowszczyźnie. Należy ona do mało znanego typu odlewanych głowic buław, charakteryzującego się rozmieszczonymi w jednym dookołnym rzędzie dużymi zaokrąglonymi kolcami, ornamentem pseudogranulacji oraz pionowymi, podłużnymi wałeczkami. Podobieństwo do omawianego zabytku wykazuje głowica buławy odkryta w okolicach cerkwi Zwiastowania na terenie książęcego Halicza, gdzie natrafiono na nawarstwienia kulturowe i obiekty sakralne datowane na XII-XIII w.

Pewne znaczenie dla datowania analizowanego zabytku może mieć też fakt, iż odkryto go nieopodal latopisowego Dźwinogrodu, funkcjonującego, jak wynika z analizy stratygrafii, głównie w XI-XIII w. i w mniejszej mierze jeszcze w XIV stuleciu. Jako że buławy z kolcami nie występują w XI w., zabytek z okolic Dźwinogrodu można wstępnie datować na XII-XIII w.

Znalezisko to pokazuje, że głowice buław były nie tylko elementami uzbrojenia, ale też przedstawiają sobą wysokiej klasy wyroby artystyczne. Niewykluczone, że takie zabytki należały do członków elity i miały głównie paradne przeznaczenie, służąc jako symbole władzy.