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HELMET FROM THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA¹

Abstract: A unique medieval helmet that is part of the archaeological collection of the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina was found in the village of Trnčina near Ljubinje, and donated to the museum more than a century ago. The following paper is the first detailed publication of this artefact. The first part of the paper contains a description of the helmet while the second discusses its dating and place on the timeline of the evolution of warrior headgear. As a result of the research it is possible to draw the conclusion that the Trnčina helmet was made and then altered in the 11th century.

Key words: Early middle ages, helmet, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Trnčina.

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A unique medieval helmet that is part of the archaeological collection² of the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sarajevo has many a time attracted the interest of experts. However, until now it has only been known from a drawing published in a monograph by Serbian researcher Gavro Škrivanić (1957, Fig. 93:1), and on a life-size model that is on exhibit at the Military Museum in Belgrade. Unfortunately though, this copy does not depict all of the unique aspects of the helmet’s construction, and leaves many questions unanswered (Fig. 1).

There is not much information concerning the discovery of the helmet because it was found accidentally and donated to the museum more than a century ago. Supposedly, the helmet originally came from a destroyed burial (Ćurčić 1943, 144). However, there is no description of this burial, nor record of any other finds that are associated with it. The first paper published about this helmet indicated that the artefact was discovered near

Blagaj (Truhelka 1914, 238). But, it was later ascertained that the helmet was found in a village called Trnčina near Ljubinje (Ćurčić 1943, 144).

One of the authors of this paper had the opportunity to visit the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina and examine the helmet.³

Description of the helmet

The structure of the helmet has been completely preserved. The only damage that the artefact sustained is some corrosion of the skull, and the loss of some parts of the lower band and several rivets (Fig. 2–4). Based on the condition of the helmet’s surface, it is possible to conclude that the artefact had at some unknown time undergone some cleaning and restoration by chemical means. Nevertheless, all of the elements of the helmet’s construction have been sufficiently preserved, and it is possible to reconstruct the original appearance of the helmet (Fig. 5).

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Fig. 1. Helmet from Trnčina: 1 – drawing of G. Škrivanić; 2 – replica of the helmet presented on exhibition at the Military Museum in Belgrade (1 – after Škrivanić 1957, Fig. 93:1; 2 – after D'Amato 2015, Pl. 5).

Ryc. 1. Hełm z Trnčiny: 1 – rysunek G. Škrivanicia; 2 – kopia hełmu prezentowana na wystawie w Muzeum Militarnym w Belgradzie (1 – wg Škrivanić 1957, Fig. 93:1; 2 – wg D'Amato 2015, Pl. 5).

The helmet is constructed of a skull, a forehead plate and a lower band (which also served as the aventail suspension band).

The skull of a helmet is the main element of the helmet's structure, because it determines the shape of the helmet. The lateral cross-section of the helmet's skull is semi-ellipsoid in shape, while the longitudinal cross-section is conical with convex sides. The height of the helmet is 18 cm. The base of the helmet is oval in shape: the longitudinal diameter is 24 cm, and the lateral diameter is 19 cm. The skull of the helmet is split into eight sections by vertical ridges that run up the sides of the helmet and meet at the top. However, this cannot be considered a true "faceting" of the helmet's skull: because the horizontal cross-section of the helmet near the top of its skull is elliptical in shape, rather than polygonal. The elliptical shape is not interrupted by the ridges, because they barely protrude from the sides of the skull: just 5-6 mm beyond the curve of the helmet between the ridges. The edges of the ridges are not sharp, but round with a radius of approximately 3 mm. The front and hind ridges form a crest along the top of the helmet, running front-to-back, and smoothly disappear towards the base of the helmet. There are three ridges on each of the helmet's sides; none of them touch the lower band, fading and disappearing some 4-5 cm above it. The ridges are somewhat asymmetrically located relative to the vertical front-to-back axis of the helmet. The skull of the helmet is crafted from two sheets of metal that have been welded together along the line of the crest.

An upside-down T-shaped plate is attached to the helmet above the area protecting the forehead: this additional element is meant to strengthen the structure of the helmet and enhance its defensive

qualities. The two "arms" of the T stretch out along the bottom edge of the helmet, while the "stem" of the T points upward, along the front ridge of the helmet's skull (Fig. 6). The length of the plate along the lower band is 11.2 cm, while the vertical length of the "stem" of the T is 6.3 cm. The thickness of the plate decreases from 5.5 mm in the middle to 2.4 mm at the edges. The "stem" of the T is trapezoidal in shape with bent edges: it is widest at the bottom, slightly narrower towards the middle, and wide again towards the top edge. The "stem's" dimensions are as follows: 5.1 cm in length, 11 mm wide at the top end, 10 mm wide in the middle and 13 mm wide at the base. The width of the two "arms" of the T varies from 11.5 to 9 mm, and decreases from the center to the edges.

The plate was attached to the helmet's skull with four large rivets, three of which were located at the ends of the T-shaped plate's "arms", while the fourth was right in the center of the plate, slightly above the intersection of the "stem" and the "arms". Although the topmost rivet has been lost, there remain two holes: one in the skull, and one in the plate, 3 and 6 mm in diameter, respectively. The heads of the three remaining rivets are in various states of preservation. The two rivets in the best condition have diameters of 9-10 mm and a height of 8 mm. Under each of the three rivet-heads there are traces of a thin sheet of yellow-colored metal, most likely a copper alloy (Fig. 6:2). The metal sheet extends beyond the edge of the rivet-heads, bends upwards, encircling them, and ends along a line of indentations, that seem to be traces of embossing. It appears that the iron rivet-heads were originally covered by a metal sheet of a copper alloy, which was decorated along the base of the rivets by a line of embossed dots.



Fig. 2. Helmet from Trnčina, National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina: 1 – front view; 2 – back view. Photo by A. Shchedrina.

Ryc. 2. Helm z Trnčiny, Muzeum Narodowe Bośni i Hercegowiny: 1 – przód; 2 – tył. Fot. A. Šedrina.



Fig. 3. Helmet from Trnčina, National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina: 1 – left side view; 2 – right side view. Photo by A. Shchedrina.

Ryc. 3. Hełm z Trnčiny, Muzeum Narodowe Bośni i Hercegowiny: 1 – lewa strona; 2 – prawa strona. Fot. A. Śedrina.

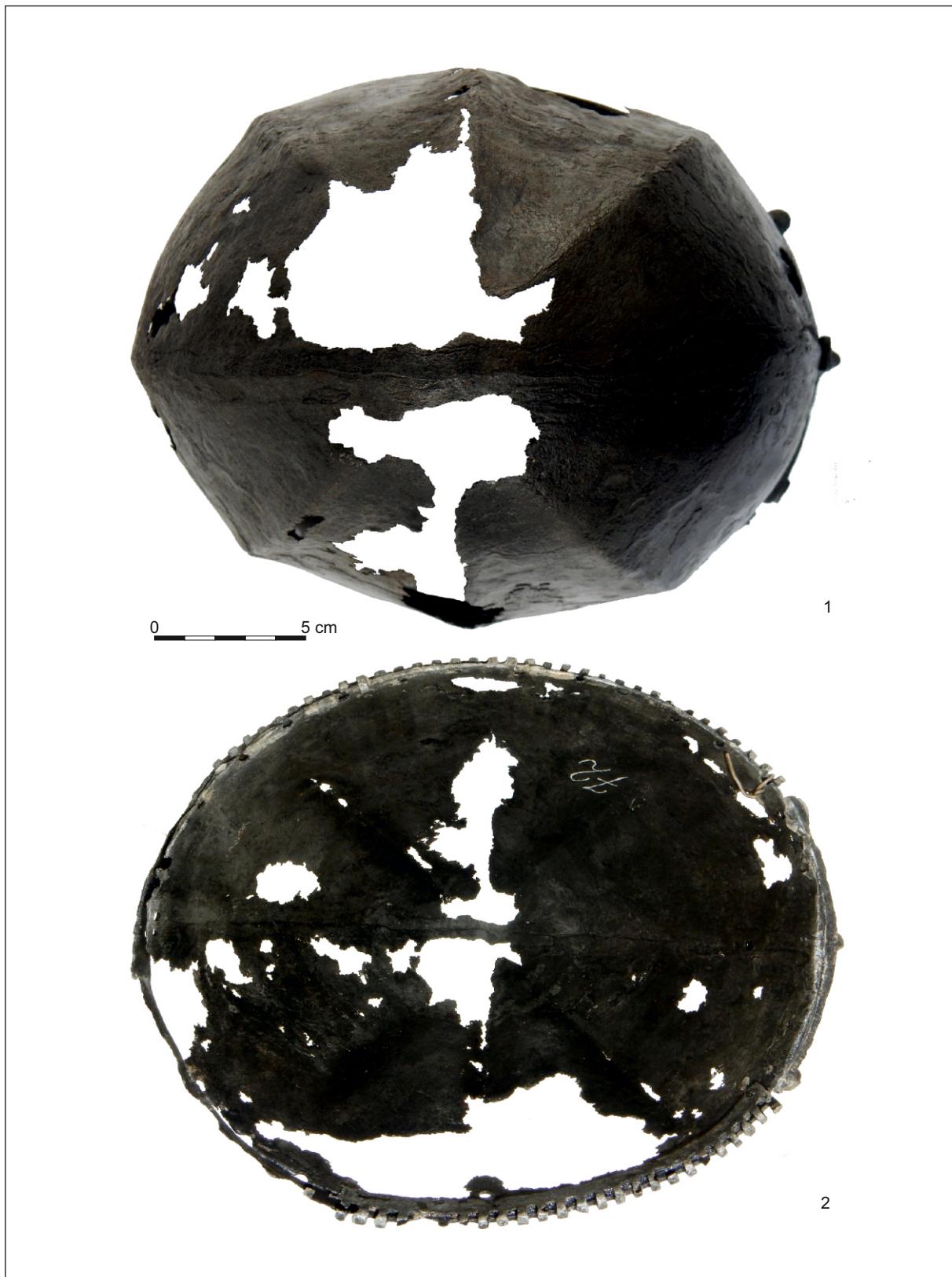


Fig. 4. Helmet from Trnčina, National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina: 1 – view from above; 2 – view from below. *Photo by A. Shchedrina.*

Ryc. 4. Hełm z Trnčiny, Muzeum Narodowe Bośni i Hercegowiny: 1 – widok z góry; 2 – widok od dołu. *Fot. A. Śedrina.*

Under the central rivet, between the remains of its covering and the surface of the plate, there have also survived the remains of a very thin sheet of metal lining;⁴ the sheet is 13 mm in diameter, and less than 0.5 mm thick. The purpose of this lining might have been to either cover an unnecessarily large hole in the forehead plate or to serve as a decorative element.

The bottom edges of the back and sides of the helmet are encircled by a ribbed lower band with loops along its bottom, which were used to attach the aventail to the helmet (Fig. 7:1). The lower band does not extend over the area of the helmet covering the forehead: it ends 2 mm from the T-shaped forehead plate on the right-hand side, and 5.5 mm on the left-hand side. This lower band is made of a sheet of metal that has been folded in half, so that the bottom edge of the skull of the helmet is between the two folded halves. Furthermore, rectangular holes have been cut into this plate along the folded edge. The exterior surface of the lower band has been preserved along its entire length, whereas the interior surface has survived only partially. The total height of the lower band is 15 mm, the height of the loops is 6 mm, the average width of the loops is 3.2 mm, and the average distance between two loops is 3.3 mm. The loops are Π-shaped in profile, and the width of a loop's underside is 4 mm.

The metal sheet out of which the lower band was made is not of uniform thickness. The exterior folded half of the metal sheet is 2 mm thick along its top edge, and has two parallel grooves (2 mm wide and 1 mm deep) running along the upper edge. The thickness of the metal sheet decreases towards the loops: the widths of the underside and interior surfaces of the lower band along the loops are 1 mm each.

The lower band was attached to the skull of the helmet by five rivets: one on each temple, one on each side, and one at the back. Only one of the side-rivets has been preserved: its top is flush with the surface of the lower band, and there is no protruding rivet-head. The four other rivets have not survived, and thus the lower band has become "stuck" to the helmet in a slightly shifted position. The diameters of the existing rivet and the openings in the lower band are 3 mm; these openings are located in the top groove of the exterior of the lower band.

Due to the condition of the helmet's surface (which has apparently been treated with some sort of chemical agent) the welds, and some unique aspects of the metal structure are visible to the

naked eye, and help understand the process of the helmet's production. The forge-welding of the skull of the helmet has been done with overlap. On the inside of the helmet the weld lies directly along the center of the front-to-back crest, while on the outside the seam is shifted about 0.5-1.0 cm onto the right half of the helmet. Along this seam, the edge of the left half of the helmet's skull overlaps and lies on top of the edge of the right half. At the same time the edge of the left half is bent outwards and welded to itself, thus strengthening the crest of the helmet (Fig. 8:1). At the base of the helmet the edge of the bottom (right) half is likewise bent inwards and welded to itself (Fig. 8:2). The thickness of the skull in its current condition is no more than 1 mm, but it increases to 2.5 mm in the areas that have been strengthened by the welds.

The forehead plate has apparently been made out of a single piece of iron, without welding, and the large rivet-openings were made by hot broaching. No evidence was found to support the hypothesis that originally a nasal had also been attached to the forehead plate, but was later taken off. The metal along the bottom edge of the plate is smooth lengthwise without any interruptions that would have indicated the previous existence of a nasal (Fig. 8:2).

An interesting element of the helmet is the row of round openings along the bottom edge of the skull, which are completely covered by the lower band and only visible in those areas on the inside of the helmet, where the lower band has not survived (Fig. 7:2). These openings are larger than the rivet-openings in the lower band, and occur at more frequent intervals. They are 4 mm in diameter, and are spaced an average 2.3 cm apart. The bottom edge of several of these openings, which are located very closely (only about 1.5-2.0 mm) to the edge of the helmet's skull, has been completely destroyed. One of the openings lies slightly above the others, because it is located 2 mm above the lower band on one side of the helmet. The corresponding area on the opposite side of the helmet did not survive, and therefore it is impossible to ascertain if an identical opening existed there. Another "unnecessary" opening is located under the forehead plate, just 1 cm beneath the rivet-opening on the "stem" of the T-shape.

Thus, the elements of the construction of the Trnčina helmet, which have been described above in great detail, indicate that the artefact had undergone alteration. The helmet's aventail

⁴ It cannot be determined what material the lining of the helmet is made of, but it is definitely a non-ferrous metal, maybe silver or light-colored bronze.

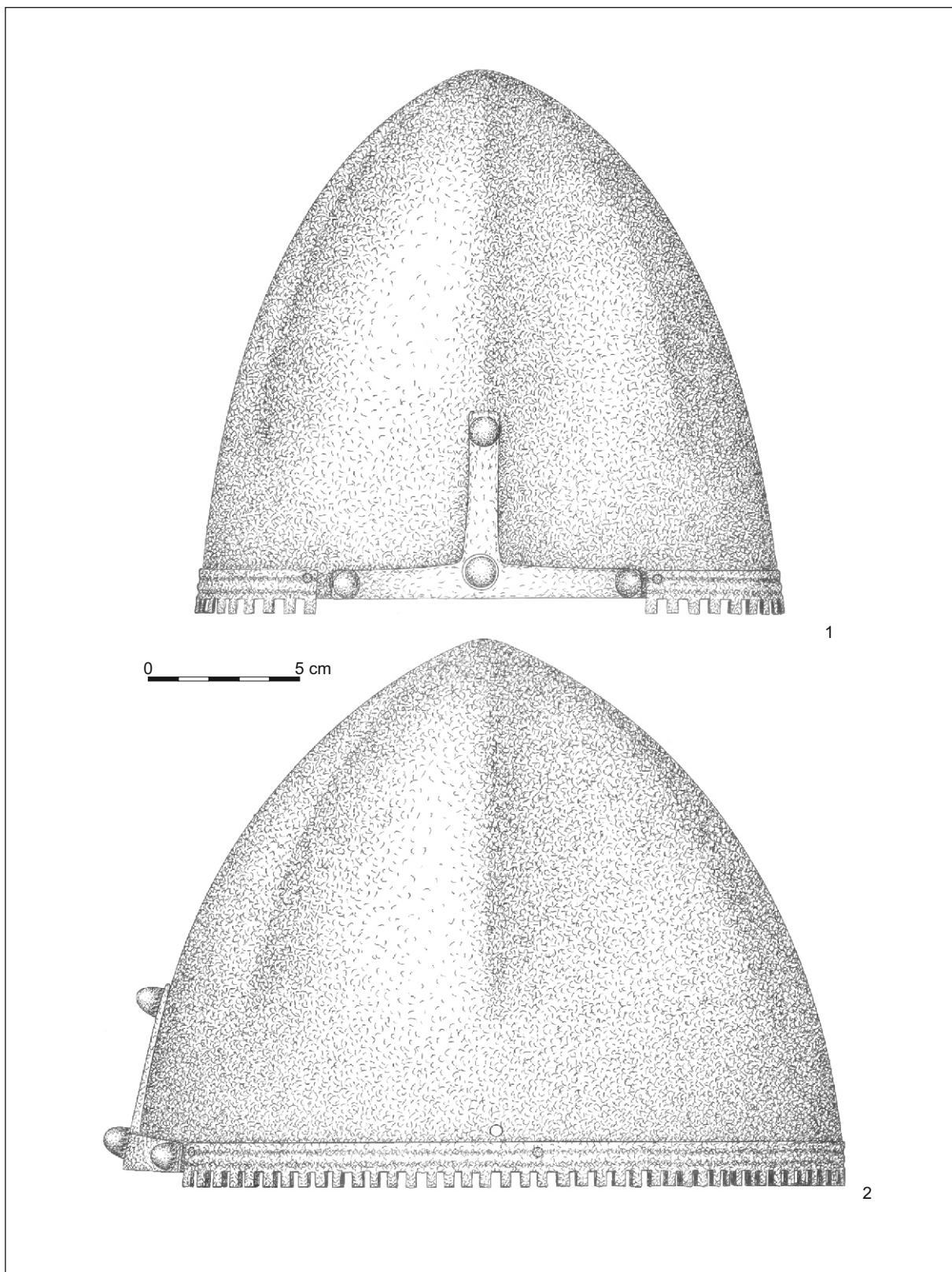


Fig. 5. Reconstruction of the helmet from Trnčina: 1 – front view; 2 – side view. *Drawing by A. Shchedrina.*

Ryc. 5. Rekonstrukcja hełmu z Trnčiny: 1 – przód; 2 – bok. *Rys. A. Šedrina.*

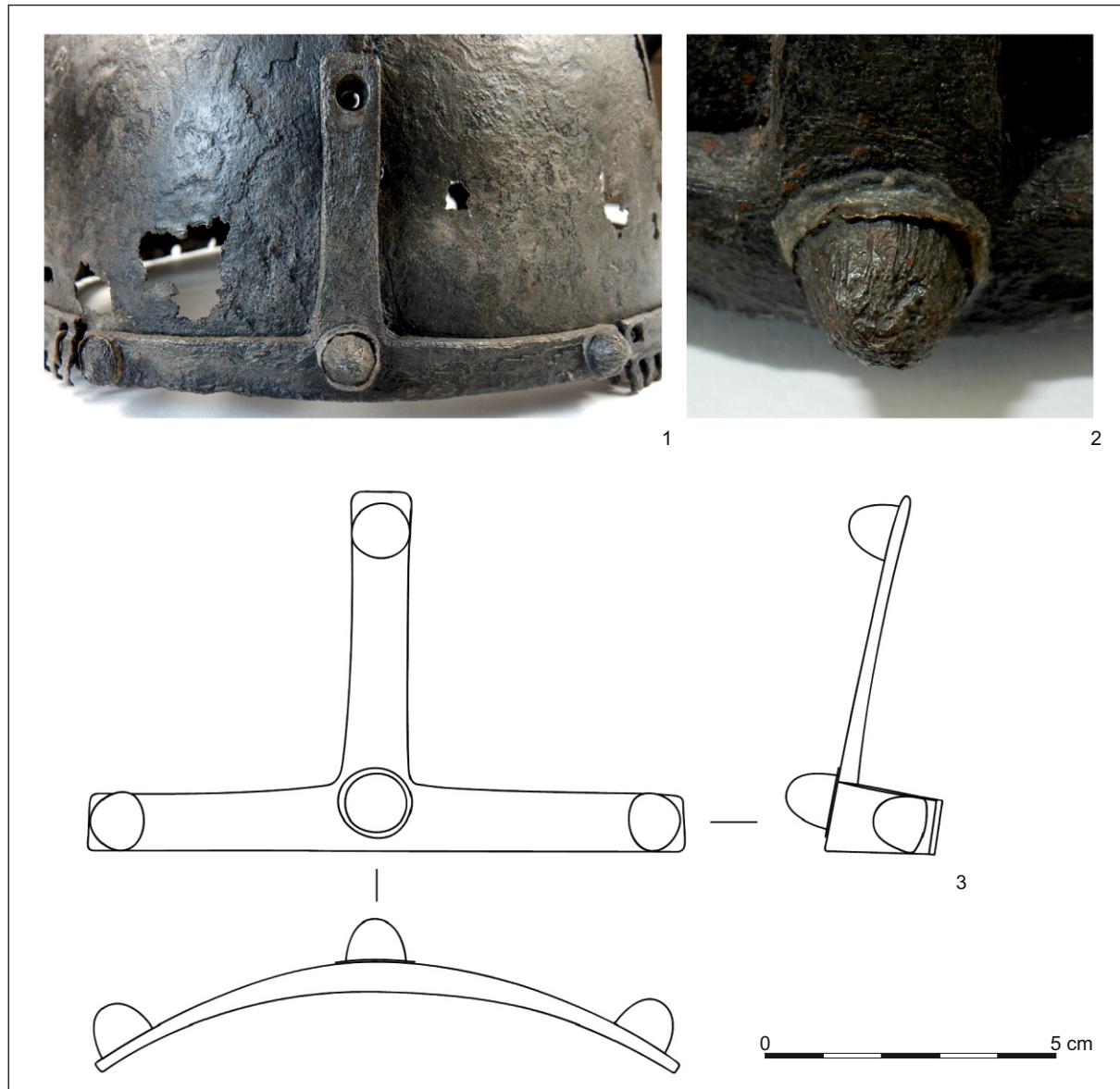


Fig. 6. Forehead plate of the helmet from Trnčina, National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina: 1 – complete view; 2 – front rivet with the remains of the covering; 3 – reconstruction. Photo and drawing by A. Shchedrina.

Ryc. 6. Płyta czołowa hełmu z Trnčiny, Muzeum Narodowe Bośni i Hercegowiny: 1 – widok z przodu; 2 – centralny nit z pozostałościami okładziny; 3 – rekonstrukcja. Fot. i rys. A. Śedrina.

had originally been attached using holes⁵ located along the base of the helmet except for in the area of the face. Furthermore, the forehead plate was probably originally different. The modifications that the helmet underwent are: the addition of a new forehead plate, attached with four rivets with large heads, that were covered with a metal sheet of copper alloy, and the attachment of a lower band, a sheet of iron that had been folded in half, with rectangular holes cut along the fold. The side

openings above the lower band could either have been part of the helmet's original appearance or been added on later. These openings might have been used for the attachment of chin straps.

There is a small hole ($1 \text{ mm} \times 4 \text{ mm}$) in the forehead area of the skull of the helmet, next to the “stem” of the T-shaped plate. This hole was made by an instrument held at an angle to the surface of the helmet, and might have occurred during combat.

⁵ One cannot exclude the possibility that these openings were used to attach a helmet lining. However, the absence of these openings in the front area of the skull of the helmet contradicts this possibility.

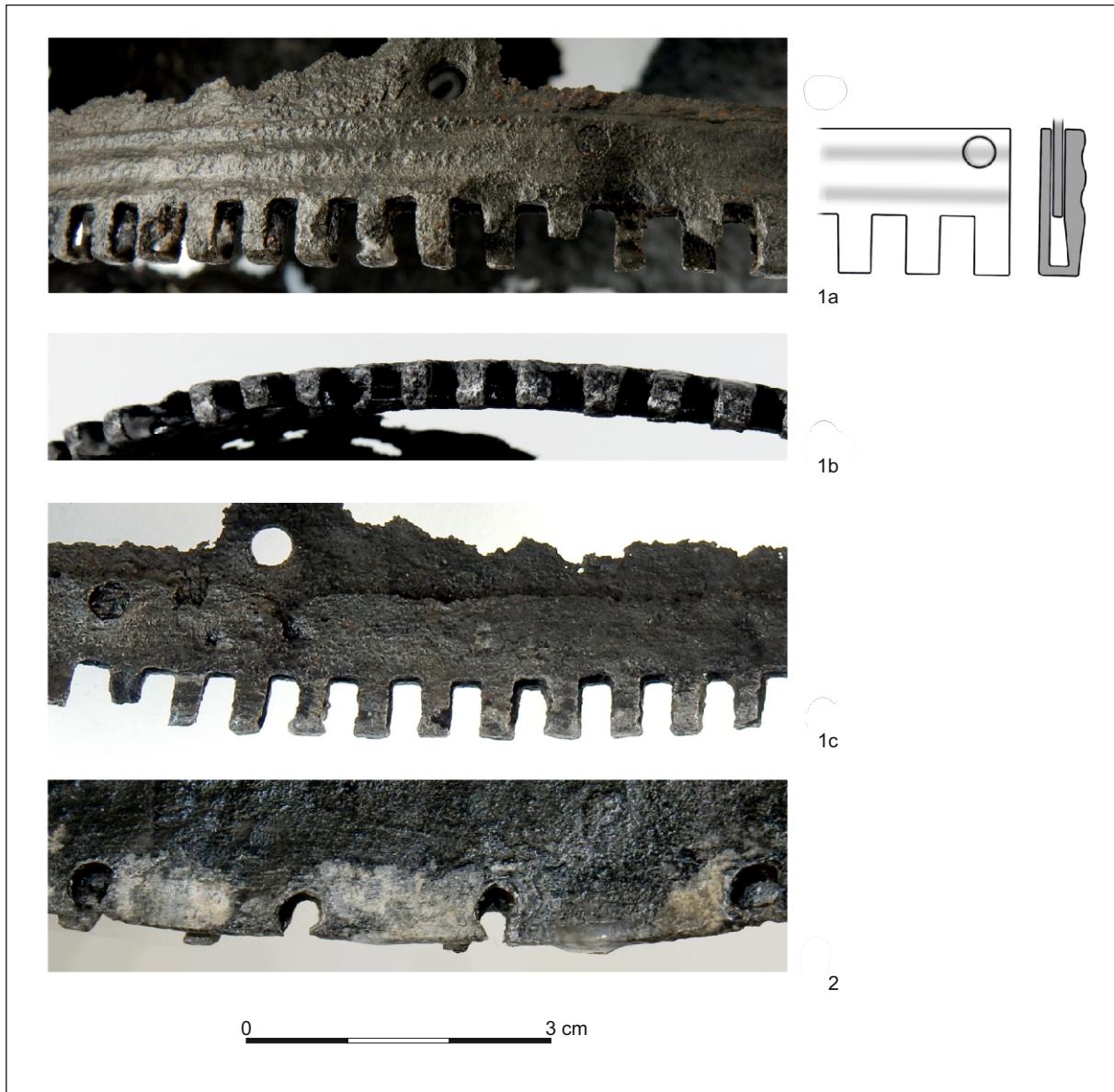


Fig. 7. Aventail suspension band (lower band) on the helmet from Trnčina, National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina: 1a – view from the exterior of the helmet; 1b – view from the bottom; 1c – view from the interior of the helmet; 2 – openings in the skull of the helmet, where the aventail suspension band did not survive. *Photo and drawing by A. Shchedrina.*

Ryc. 7. Dolna obręcz do podwieszania czepca na hełmie z Trnčiny, Muzeum Narodowe Bośni i Hercegowiny: 1a – część zewnętrzna; 1b – widok od dołu; 1c – część wewnętrzna; 2 – otwory w dzwonie, w miejscach, gdzie obręcz się nie zachowała. *Fot. i rys. A. Śedrina.*

Discussion

It is impossible to date this helmet based on its archaeological context due to the unclear circumstances surrounding its discovery. The only possible way to date this helmet and place it on the timeline of the evolution of warrior headgear is by finding other similar artefacts with distinctive elements of construction that are analogous to the ones on the Trnčina helmet.

Shape of the helmet's skull

The most similar in shape are the so-called Norman type conical⁶ helmets, dated by different researchers from the 9th to the 12th centuries (Fig. 9). These helmets have skulls that were forged from a single piece of iron (Bernart 2010, 46-50; Bravermanová et al. 2019, 268-269). Due to the lack of archaeological context, it is possible to date only two helmets of this type (and both of them

⁶ Despite the conventional name, the real shape of the skull of this group of helmets is far from the cone.

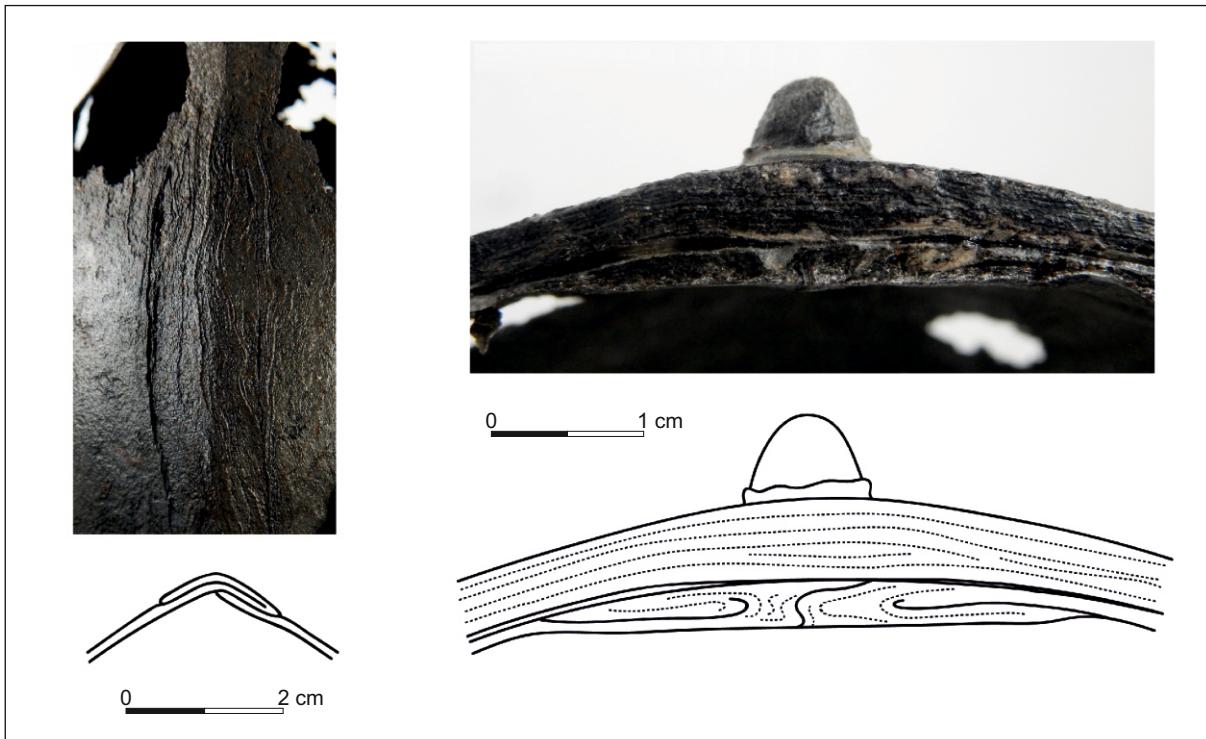


Fig. 8. Weld on the skull of the helmet from Trnčina (National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina): 1a-1b – at the top of the crest; 2a-2b – in the area of the forehead, at the base of the helmet. Photo and drawing by A. Shchedrina.

Ryc. 8. Ślady zgrzewania na dzwonie hełmu z Trnčiny, Muzeum Narodowe Bośni i Hercegowiny: 1a-1b – szczyt grzbietu dzownu; 2a-2b – płyta czołowa przy podstawie dzownu. Fot. i rys. A. Šedrina.

have undergone alterations, associated with the addition of decorative elements). The two helmets in question are the helmet of Saint Wenceslaus and the helmet found near the village of Nemiiā in modern-day Ukraine (Kirpichnikov 1962). Based on the latest research, it has been ascertained that the decorative lower band and the decorated nasal were added onto the helmet of St Wenceslaus no earlier than the end of the 10th century (Bravermanová et al. 2019, 299). In our opinion, it is most logical to date the addition of the decorative lower band (which was made from a sheet of gilded bronze) and forehead plate to the Nemiiā helmet to the end of the 10th – beginning of the 11th centuries.

Another similarity between helmets of the so-called Norman type and the Trnčina helmet, besides the similar shape of the skull, is the presence of a row of openings along the base of the skull. Hypothetically, this row of openings on the Trnčina helmet was originally used to attach the aventail, but post-alteration the openings were hidden under the lower band. The closest analogy to these openings (in terms of their diameters and the spacing between them) is the corresponding element of the structure of the Nemiiā helmet.

Two-piece welded structure of the helmet's skull

Segmented helmets, constructed of two halves joined together by a metal band, are one of the most widespread types of helmets throughout the first millennium A.D. The appearance of helmets, the two halves of which were welded together, is a question that has not been researched yet or discussed. It is possible that this type of helmet appeared as an attempt to copy the helmet with a single-piece skull, which was more difficult to manufacture. If the above assumption is correct, then the two-piece welded helmets that copied the shape of helmets with single-piece skulls appeared either at the same time as or slightly after the wide spread of the latter type.

Unfortunately, the weld becomes nearly invisible to the naked eye when the helmet in question is badly preserved or when the skull of the helmet is of high quality production (when the processes of welding and final grinding of the weld have been especially well done). Two 12th century helmets that were discovered during the excavations of medieval Braničevo (Serbia) are perfect examples illustrating the difficulty of identifying the weld. In the publications describing one of the helmets it is noted that the skull of the helmet had been forged from a single sheet of iron.



Fig. 9. Some of the so-called Norman type conical helmets: 1 – Olomouc (Czech Republic); 2 – Lake Lednica (Poland); 3 – Lake Orchowskie (Poland); 4 – helmet of St Wenceslaus (Czech Republic); 5 – Nemiiā (Ukraine) (1 – photo courtesy KHM-Museumsverband; 2 – after Sankiewicz 2018, No. 1; 3 – after Glosik 2003, Fig. 24; 4 – after Bravermanová et al. 2019, Figs. 5-6; 5a – photo courtesy Déri Museum of Debrecen; 5b – after Kirpichnikov 1962, Fig. 1).

Ryc. 9. Niektóre z tzw. hełmów normańskich: 1 – Olomuniec (Republika Czeska); 2 – Jezioro Lednickie (Polska); 3 – Jezioro Orchowskie (Polska); 4 – hełm św. Wacława (Republika Czeska); 5 – Nemiā (Ukraina) (1 – fot. dzięki uprzejmości KHM-Museumsverband; 2 – wg Sankiewicz 2018, nr 1; 3 – wg Glosik 2003, ryc. 24; 4 – wg Bravermanová et al. 2019, Fobr. 5-6; 5a – fot. dzięki uprzejmości Déri Museum w Debreczynie; 5b – wg Kirpichnikov 1962, ris. 1).

However, at the same time the author notes the presence of a relief of line on the inside of the helmet that runs continuously along the front-to-back axis, and posits that this line could be a weld (Spasić-Durić 2017, 350; D'Amato, Spasić-Durić 2018, 36, 64). This discrepancy can only be resolved after a more in-depth study of the helmet, that will include an X-ray examination of the artefact.

It is probable that the conical helmet, discovered in the ancient cemetery at Pakalniškiai (Lithuania), and which different researchers date to the 11th-13th centuries, was of a two-piece welded construction. A helmet, the skull halves of which had been riveted together, was discovered in a destroyed burial in Hrodna (Belarus) (Kuleshov 2019). Another helmet discovered, most likely,

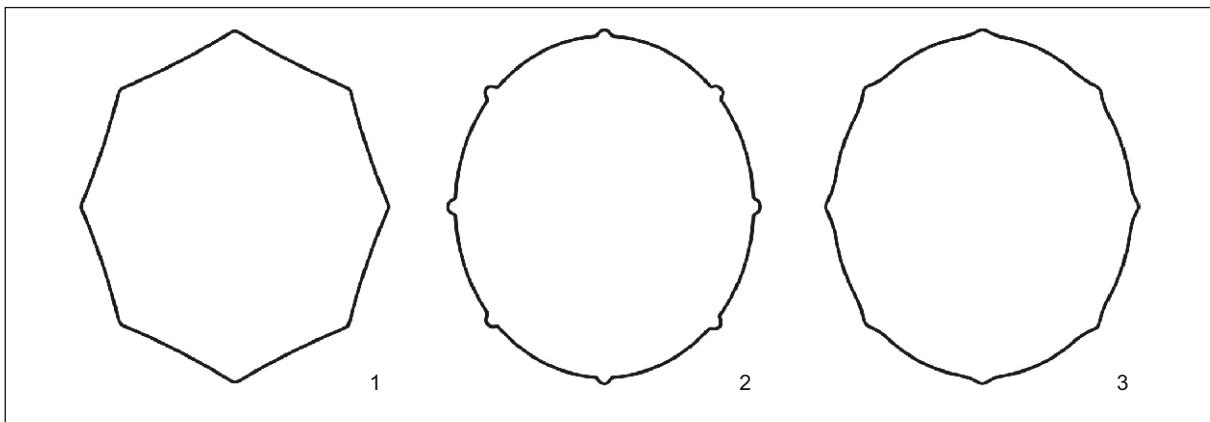


Fig. 10. Sketches of the lateral cross-sections of helmets: 1 – with faceting; 2 – with ridges; 3 – helmet from Trnčina. Drawing by A. Shchedrina.

Fig. 10. Szkice poprzecznych przekrójów hełmów: 1 – z facetowaniem; 2 – z żebrami; 3 – hełm z Trnčiny. Rys. A. Śedrina.

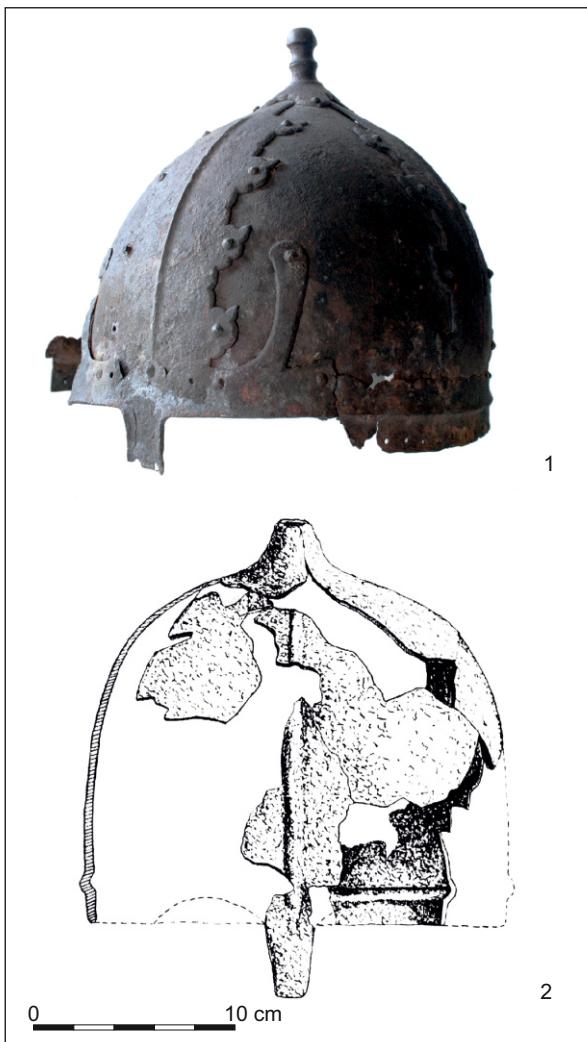


Fig. 11. Helmets with plates that are strengthened with ridges: 1 – Zabaikalsky Krai (Russia); 2 – barrow 8 of the Murakaevsky burial ground (Russia) (1 – after Bobrov 2013, fig. 3, photo by E. Bagrin; 2 – after Mazhitov 1981, fig. 71:10).

Ryc. 11. Hełmy z dzwonami wzmocnionymi żebrami: 1 – Zabajkalski Krai (Rosja); 2 – pochówek nr 8 z cmentarzyska Murakaevskoe (Rosja) (1 – wg Bobrov 2013, ris. 3, fot. E. Bagrin; 2 – wg Mazhitov 1981, ris. 71:10).

in Lithuania had a skull of semi-spherical shape that had also been constructed of two halves that were riveted together (Gabriūnaite 1965, 129). This helmet could not, unfortunately, be conclusively dated.

The skull of a conical helmet from the former Ekaterinoslav Governorate had been brazed from two halves, with the use of a copper alloy. The preliminary dating of this helmet places it in the second half the 13th – beginning of the 14th century (Zhukov 2005, 22).

Separation of the skull of the helmet into sections

The skull of the helmet from Trnčina had not been faceted, instead it had been divided into sections, through the addition of several ridges (Fig. 10).

Ridges, the purpose of which was the strengthening of the helmet, were a common feature among many helmets, dating to the middle – second half of the first millennium A.D. For example, ridges were embossed on bands of the segmented helmets in the 5th-7th centuries (Vogt 2006, Pl. 1, 4, 6, 10 and others). Later segmented helmets, that were most likely made in Asia, also had plates that had been strengthened by ridges (Fig. 11). One of these helmets, dating from the third quarter of the 10th century, was discovered in barrow C-41/ Siz-1885 in the burial ground of Gnezdovo, and has ridges not only on the bands that have been attached to the skull of the helmet, but also along the center of the four segments that make up the skull itself (Fig. 12:1).

Strengthening ridges are also present on helmets that are classified as the Stromovka-Gnezdovo Type,⁷ which researchers date to the

⁷ A total of four helmets of this type were found. These are: two helmets from Stromovka in Prague (Czech Republic), the helmet from Gnezdovo (Russia) and the helmet from Bojná (Slovakia) (Hejdová 1964, 49-51, Bernart 2010, 22-27, Vlasatý 2018).

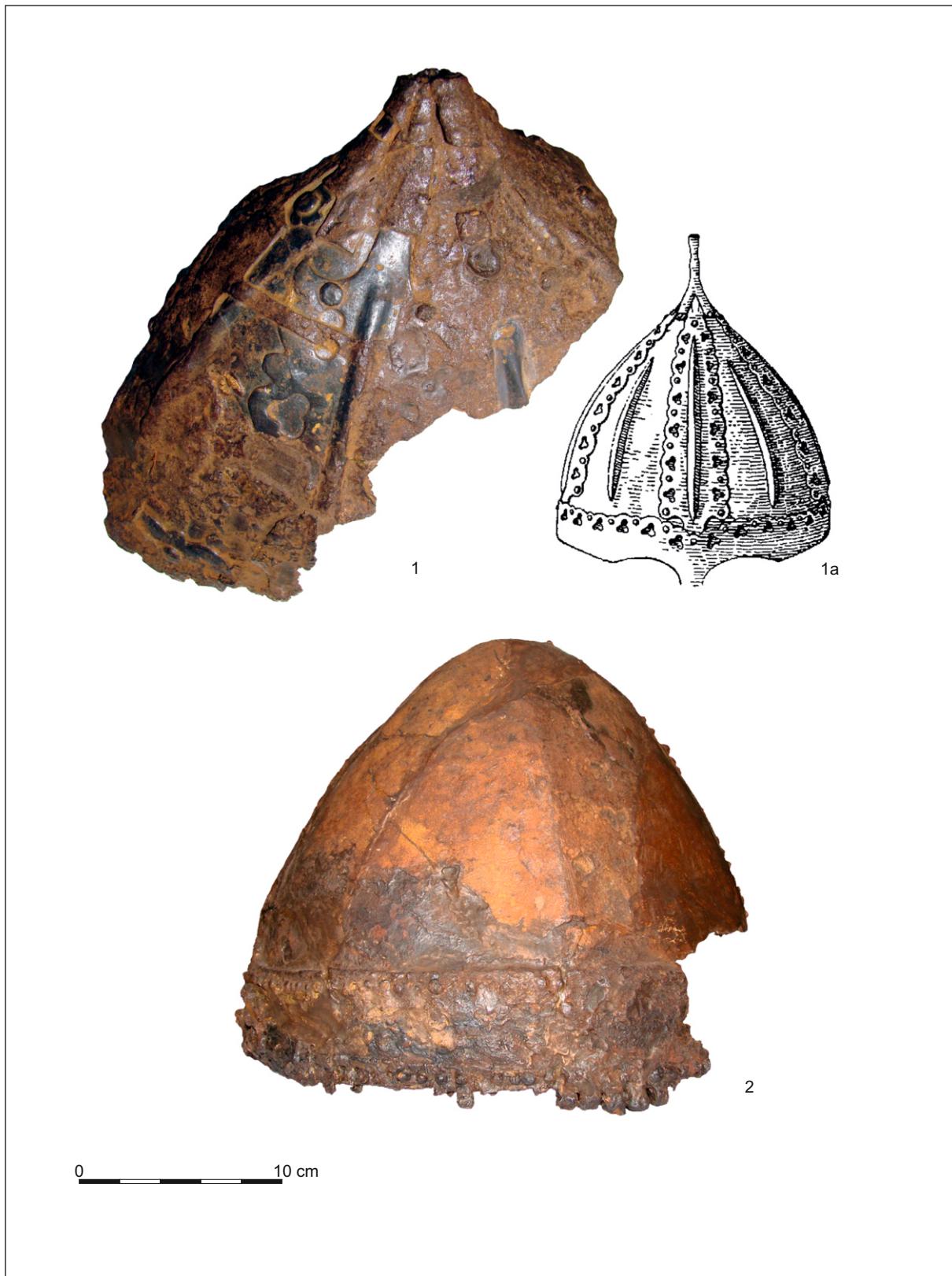


Fig. 12. Helmets with structural elements that have been strengthened with ridges: 1 – barrow C-41/Siz-1885 of the burial ground of Gnezdovo (Russia); 1a – reconstruction of the helmet by V.V. Arendt; 2 – barrow Dn-86/Serg-1901 of the burial ground of Gnezdovo (Russia) (1, 2 – photos by S. Kainov; 1a – after Arendt 1935, Fig. 7).

Ryc. 12. Hełmy o dzwonach wzmacnianych żebrami: 1 – kurhan C-41/Siz-1885 z cmentarzyska w Gnezdowie (Rosja); 1a – rekonstrukcja hełmu autorstwa V.V. Arendta; 2 – kurhan Dn-86/Serg-1901 z cmentarzyska w Gnezdowie (Rosja) (1, 2 – fot. S. Kainov; 1a – wg Arendt 1935, Abb. 7).



Fig. 13. Helmets with ridges or facetting in iconographic sources: 1-3 – “Corbie Psalter”, Bibliothèque d’Amiens Métropole, beginning of the 9th century (1 – fol. 011; 2 – fol. 029v; 3 – fol. 067); 4 – “Theodore Psalter”, British Library, London, 1066, folio 7r (“Guards sleeping at the door”); 5:a-d – Church of La Madeleine, Vezelay (France), ca. 1120; 6:a-c – Church of St. Nectaire (France), late 11th – early 12th centuries (1-3 – photo courtesy of Bibliothèque d’Amiens Métropole; 4 – photo courtesy of British Library; 5-6 – after Nicolle 1999, Figs. 9:a-d, 289:c,f,h).

Ryc. 13. Hełmy z żebrowanymi lub facetowanymi dzwonami w źródłach ikonograficznych: 1-3 – „Psałterz z Corbie”, Bibliothèque d’Amiens Métropole, początek IX w. (1 – fol. 011; 2 – fol. 029v; 3 – fol. 067); 4 – „Psałterz Teodora”, British Library, Londyn, 1066 r., folio 7r („Śpiący strażnicy”); 5:a-d – bazylika św. Magdaleny, Vezelay (Francja), ok. 1120 r.; 6:a-c – kościół św. Nektariusza (Francja), koniec XI – początek XII w. (1-3 – fot. dzięki uprzejmości Bibliothèque d’Amiens Métropole; 4 – fot. dzięki uprzejmości British Library; 5-6 – wg Nicolle 1999, Figs. 9:a-d, 289:c,f,h).



Fig. 14. Nasals: 1 – helmet of St Wenceslaus (Czech Republic); 2a-b – Stromovka (Czech Republic) (1 – after Bravermanová et al. 2019, Fig. 5; 2a – after Hejdová 1964, fig. 7:3-5; 2b – photo courtesy of Národní muzeum in Prague).

Ryc. 14. Nosale: 1 – hełm św. Wacława (Republika Czeska); 2a-b – Stromovka (Republika Czeska) (1 – wg Bravermanová et al. 2019, Fig. 5; 2a – wg Hejdová 1964, fig. 7:3-5; 2b – fot. dzięki uprzejmości Národní muzeum w Pradze).

9th-10th centuries.⁸ A helmet discovered in barrow Dn-86/Serg-1901 in Gnezdovo has a ridge running down the plate joining its segments, as well as down the center of each segment, making up the skull of the helmet (Fig. 12:2).

However, only in the mid-13th century do ridges appear on helmets, the skulls of which either “imitate” being single-piece or are truly forged from a single sheet of iron. The first such helmets with strengthening ridges are from Mosku and Nikolskoe. Skulls of these helmets are made from three sheets of metal which were riveted together, and the outer surface of these sheets is constructed of alternating flat faces and faces with embossed ridges (Kuleshov 2018, Fig. 4:1,3). Iu. A. Kuleshov classifies helmets with skulls split into eight faces⁹ as belonging to the Byzantine tradition, and, based on an analysis of the relevant iconographic sources, proposes to date these helmets to the period between the 1340s and 1430s (Kuleshov 2019, 231, 234).

Helmets with skulls that have been “faceted” (split into sections or faces) can be seen in visual sources dating to the end of the first millennium A.D.

Some of the earliest such sources are the miniatures from the “Corbie Psalter” in Northern France (beginning of the 9th century) (Fig. 13). Images of conical helmets with “faceted” skulls also occur during the 11th and 12th centuries: such images can be seen in the “Theodore Psalter”, Byzantine (1066 AD), in the Church of St Nectaire, France (end of the 11th to the beginning of the 12th centuries), in the Church of La Madeleine, Vezelay, France (first half of the 12th century), in Notre Dame de la Coulre, Pearthenay, France (mid-12th century).

Upside-down T-shaped forehead plate

The main function of this element was the strengthening of the skull of the helmet. The most similar analogy to this plate is the forehead plate with nasal on the helmet of St Wenceslaus. This piece was also attached to the helmet by rivets with large heads (Fig. 14:1).

The T-shaped nasals of the helmets of the Stromovka-Gnezdovo Type can also, most likely, be considered to be remote analogies to the forehead plate of the Trnčina helmet (Fig. 14:2).

⁸ The helmet from Gnezdovo is dated to the 10th century because it was found in barrow Dn-86/Serg-1901, which was most likely constructed in the third fourth of the 10th century. However, it is possible that this helmet had already become outdated at this point in time.

⁹ The skull of the helmet is constructed of one sheet of metal which has been rolled up into a “funnel” and the edges have been welded together (Kuleshov 2019, 230-231).

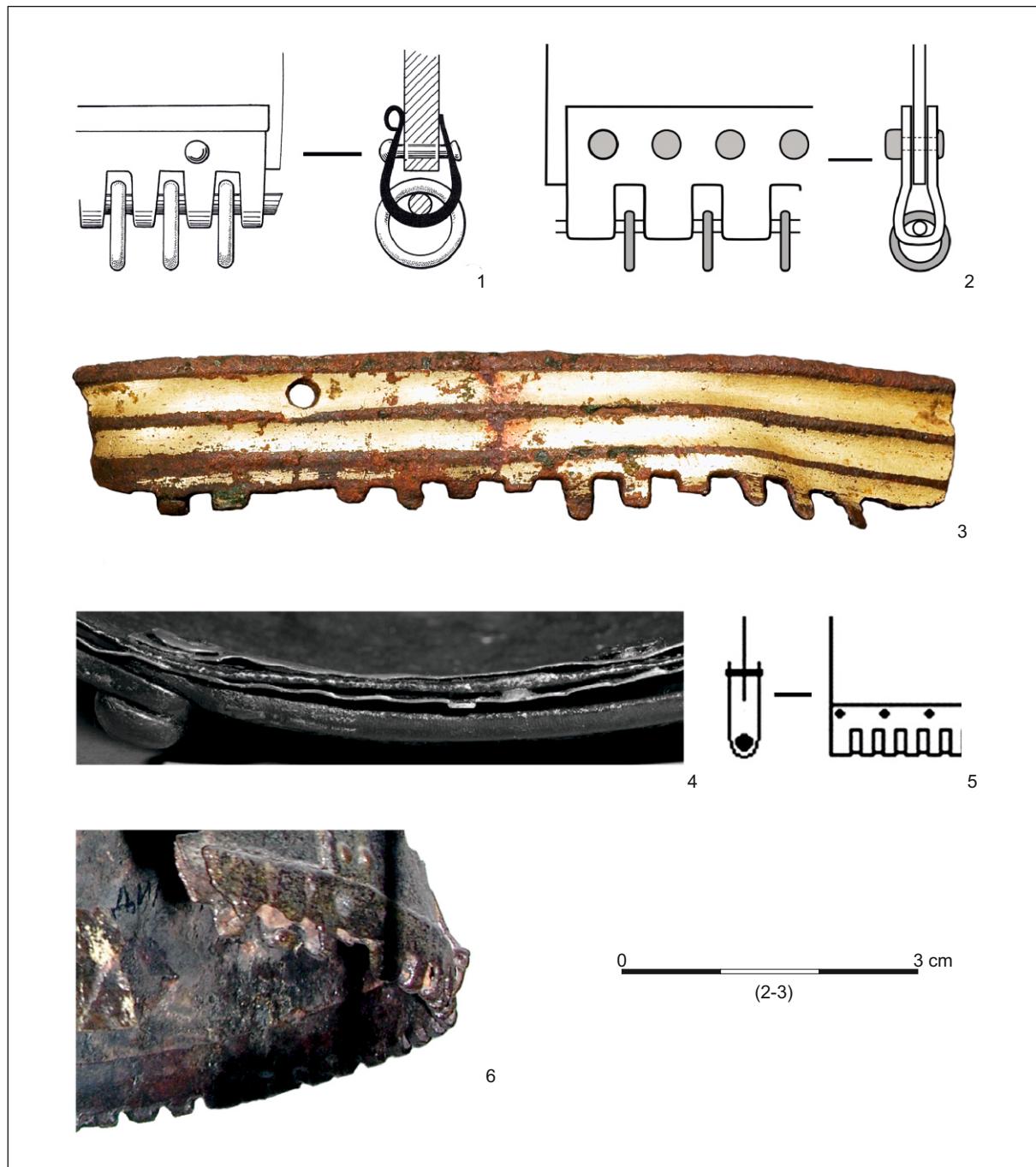


Fig. 15. Aventail suspension bands: 1 – Coppergate (Great Britain); 2 – Gnezdovo (Russia); 3 – Birka (Sweden); 4-5 – helmet of St Wenceslaus (Czech Republic); 6 – helmet from the Dmytro Ià vornytsky National Historical Museum of Dnipro (Ukraine) (1 – after Tweddle 1992, 939, Fig. 406; 2 – drawing by S. Kainov; 3 – photo by B. Gustafsson; 4-5 – after Bravermanová et al. 2019, Figs. 65, 67).

Fig. 15. Obręcze dolne do podwieszania czepów: 1 – Coppergate (Wielka Brytania); 2 – Gnezdovo (Rosja); 3 – Birka (Szwecja); 4-5 – hełm św. Wacława (Republika Czeska); 6 – hełm ze zbiorów Dnieproprowskiego Narodowego Muzeum Historycznego im. Dmytra Jawornickiego (Ukraina) (1 – wg Tweddle 1992, 939, Fig. 406; 2 – rys. S. Kainov; 3 – fot. B. Gustafsson; 4-5 – wg Bravermanová et al. 2019, obr. 65, 67).

Aventail suspension band, with Π-shaped profile

The earliest analogies to the aventail suspension band of the Trnčina helmet can be found on the helmets from the Valsgärde 8 (end of the 6th to the beginning of the 7th centuries), Vendel XII (first half

of the 7th century) and Valsgärde 7 (second half of the 7th century) burials (Arwidsson 1954, Fig. 10, Pl. 2-4; 1977, Fig. 19, Pl. 1-3; Lindqvist 1950, Fig. 3-4; Andersson 2017, 53-62). The Coppergate helmet, discovered during excavations at York, also has a similar aventail suspension band

(Tweddle 1992, Fig. 406). At this moment, it is hypothesized that the Coppergate helmet was made in 750-775 AD, but was placed into the hole from which it was excavated much later: sometime during the 890s (*ibidem*, 1082) (Fig. 15:1). However, the aventail suspension bands of all these helmets were made of bronze.

Analogous aventail suspension bands made of iron can be found on all four of the helmets that belong to the Stromovka-Gnezdovo Type, which date to the 9th-10th centuries (Hejdová 1964, 51; 1966; Vlasatý 2018). The aventail suspension band of the helmet from Gnezdovo is presented in the drawing (Fig. 15:2).

An item which is supposedly a fragment of an aventail suspension band, discovered at the Garrison of Birka (Fig. 15:3) dates to the third quarter of the 10th century (Holmquist Olausson, Kitzler Åhfeldt 2002; Vlasatý 2015). The profile of this band is similar to the analogous structural element of the Trnčina helmet. However, this element was made of copper alloy, and its outer surface is gilded.

Recent studies of the helmet of St Wenceslaus have found that the helmet once had a silver aventail suspension band with a Π-shaped profile (Bravermanová et al. 2019) (Fig. 15:4-5). According to the researchers, who conducted this study, this helmet was made during St Wenceslaus's life and belonged to him. However, towards the end of the 10th century the helmet's significance as a relic increased, and this was reflected in changes made to the helmet's appearance: the addition of a silver aventail suspension band with a Π-shaped profile, a decorative lower band and a forehead plate with nasal to the helmet.

A helmet from the Dmytro Iavornitsky National Historical Museum of Dnipro had a similar aventail suspension band, but due to a lack of historical and archaeological context this helmet could not be dated (Fig. 15:6). The skull of this helmet is made of two parts, however the joining strips go from side-to-side rather than front-to-

back. A helmet of analogous construction with a side-to-side joint was found in a cenotaph, probably belonging to a warrior, in the cemetery at Andreevskaia Schel. Andrei M. Novichikhin dated this archaeological complex to the first half of the 12th century (Novichikhin 2008, 34). The Dnipro Museum helmet has a forehead plate with a mask face on it, and the closest analogy to this application is the decorative plate on the Nemiiā helmet (end of the 10th /? – first half of the 11th century)¹⁰ mentioned previously (Kirpichnikov 1962).

Several publications included descriptions of similar aventail suspension bands with a Π-shaped profile that were found on later helmets, discovered in the destroyed burials near the villages of Novoterskoe¹¹ (13th to 14th centuries) and Semenovod¹² (second half of the 13th century), in burial 15 of the Keliūskii burial ground and among artefacts found in the Alkhan-Kala settlement (Narozhnyi 2008, 44-46; 2010, 101-102). Unfortunately, these publications did not include detailed photos of the aventail suspension bands.

A similar, but not identical,¹³ aventail suspension band caught the attention of Įu. A. Kuleshov (2017, 546, 547). During his research concerning the structural particularities of a group of helmets from Ploskoe, Ozana and the Cherkasy regional local history museum, the author concluded that the aventail suspension band of these helmets is an evolution of the aventail suspension band with a Π-shaped profile. Furthermore, Įu. A. Kuleshov emphasized the exclusively European history of this kind of aventail suspension band; helmets with such aventail suspension bands have not been found in the Near East or in Central Asia.

Conclusion

As a result of the research conducted a wide range of analogies have been found for the various structural elements of the helmet from Trnčina. However, despite the wide chronological range, it is the combination of all of these features in the construction of this particular helmet that make it

¹⁰ Such mask faces are present on some other helmets, dating from the second half of the 13th century (from Ploskoe, Ozana, Chengele, Chojosh) (Kuleshov 2017, 538-542). However, there is a big difference in their construction is that image of the mask has been done directly on the front of the skull of the helmet, not on a plate, which was later attached onto the skull.

¹¹ The exterior surface of the aventail suspension band of this helmet is of a similar profile to that of the Trnčina helmet.

¹² However, it is important to note that in an article, critiquing a previously suggested reconstruction of the helmet found by the Semenovod village, there is no mention of an aventail suspension band with a Π-shaped profile (Maklasov, Maklasova, Kravtsova 2018, 114).

¹³ This aventail suspension band has a P-shaped rather than a Π-shaped profile, because only one side of the lower band is attached to the skull of the helmet. The second (bottom) edge of the this metal band is rolled up underneath, thus forming a space through which a metal rod, onto which the rings of the aventail could be attached, was pushed through (Kuleshov 2017, Fig. 1:i, 2:h). Helmets from the Pakalniškai (Lithuania) burial ground and the former Ekaterinoslav Governorate have similar aventail suspension bands.

possible to draw the conclusion that it was made and then altered in the 11th century. It should be mentioned that basing on an analysis of mainly iconographic sources Italian researcher R. D'Amato dated this helmet to the 10th-11th centuries (D'Amato 2015, 67).

The helmet described in this article is most similar to the helmet of St Wenceslaus. Elements that both of these helmets have in common are: the shape of the skull of the helmet, a forehead plate kept in place by rivets with large head and an aventail suspension band with a Π-shaped profile. The possibility that the helmet of St Wenceslaus (a relic that was already treasured in the 11th century) was the prototype for the helmet from Trnčina cannot be disregarded or excluded. It is possible that the smith who created the helmet from Trnčina either did not have sufficient expertise to forge a helmet from a single piece of iron, or preferred a different method of helmet construction. The skull of

the helmet was welded from two halves (each a separate sheet of metal). It was strengthened by the addition of eight uniformly spaced ridges: this strategy was used to enhance the helmet's protective qualities without increasing its weight.

It is impossible not to note the similarities between the Trnčina helmet and the helmet, which was discovered in barrow Dn-86/Serg-1901 in Gnezdovo. Both of these helmets have a skull of conical shape with convex sides, ridges to strengthen the skull, and an aventail suspension band with a Π-shaped profile. However, the construction of the helmets classified as the Stromovka-Gnezdovo type – characterized by a skull made of two halves that were joined with a vertical plate – was probably older and more archaic. This construction later evolved into the so-called Norman type conical helmets, which were forged from a single piece of iron, and then was simplified even further with the appearance of two-piece welded helmets.

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Alexandra Yu. Shchedrina
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HEŁM Z NARODOWEGO MUZEUM BOŚNI I HERCEGOWINY

Streszczenie

Unikatowy hełm średniowieczny, będący częścią kolekcji archeologicznej Narodowego Muzeum Bośni i Hercegowiny, został odnaleziony przypadkowo we wsi Trnčina niedaleko miejscowości Ljubinje. Podarowany został do muzeum ponad sto lat temu.

Hełm skonstruowany jest z dwuczęściowego skutawanego dzwonu z ośmioma graniami, płyty czołowej w kształcie odwróconego T przymocowanej za pomocą czterech nitów z dużymi główkami, które pokryto blachą ze stopu miedzi oraz z obręczy dolnej (która służyła także do podwieszenia czepca). Pewne elementy hełmu, jak rząd okrągłych otworów naokoło dolnej krawędzi dzwonu i „zbędny” otwór, umieszczony pod płytą czołową, wskazują, iż podlegał on modyfikacjom.

W efekcie przeprowadzonych badań i analiz odnaleziono liczne analogie dla różnych elementów strukturalnych hełmu z Trnčiny. Wszelako, pomimo szerokiego zakresu chronologicznego analogii do poszczególnych cech hełmu z Trnčiny, to właśnie na podstawie kombinacji wszystkich tych cech konstrukcji tego szczególnego hełmu można dojść do

wniosku, iż został on wykonany i następnie podlegał modyfikacjom w XI w.

Hełm omawiany w niniejszym artykule jest niezwykle podobny do hełmu św. Wacława. Wspólnymi cechami obu hełmów są: sferyczno-stożkowy kształt dzwonu hełmu, płyta czołowa mocowana za pomocą nitów z dużymi głóvkami oraz obręcz do podwieszenia czepca z profilem ukształtowanym na kształt liter IT. Nie można odrzucić ani wykluczyć możliwości, że hełm św. Wacława (relikwia, która była przechowywana w skarbcu już w XI w.) był prototypem dla hełmu z Trnčiny. Możliwym jest, iż kowal, który wykonał hełm z Trnčiny, nie posiadał wystarczającego doświadczenia, aby wykuć hełm z jednego kawałka żelaza bądź też preferował inną metodę konstrukcji hełmu. Dzwon hełmu skuto z dwóch połówek (każda z nich była osobną metalową blachą). Wzmocnionego, dodając osiem równomiernie rozłożonych grani: zabieg ten zastosowano, aby poprawić właściwości ochronne hełmu bez zwiększenia jego wagi.

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