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THE PRZEWORSK CULTURE IN EASTERN SLOVAKIA¹

Abstract: The Przeworsk culture is part of the development of the Roman Period in Eastern Slovakia from the end of the Early Roman Period. First finds are known from the middle 20th century when the burial ground in Zemplín and settlement in Prešov were discovered. The goal of the submitted article is to inform about the first finds and gradual development of investigation as well as of our knowledge of the Przeworsk culture in Eastern Slovakia.

Keywords: Przeworsk culture, Eastern Slovakia, Roman Period, Zemplín burial ground, Prešov settlement

The Przeworsk culture is an inseparable part of the Roman Period in Eastern Slovakia. Its first finds known from archaeological literature include the urn cremation burial discovered in 1856 in Lastovce (Graffenried 1863, 300-305). In the time of its discovery, the Przeworsk culture was not defined (Andrzejowski 2010, 60) and the burial was dated only roughly in the Roman Period. Today, this burial is classified among the burial grounds and burials of the Przeworsk culture in Eastern Slovakia. The first finds of this culture were identified at sites in Eastern Slovakia by Vojtech Budinský-Krička. At the burial ground with tumuli in Zemplín, he distinguished the horizon of urn cremation burials and classified them in the sphere of the Przeworsk culture. The archaeological investigation was carried out in 1959-1961 and in 1963; in 1970-1974, Mária Lamiová-Schmiedlová continued with the research (Budinský-Krička, Lamiová-Schmiedlová 1990, 245-246). Burials of the Przeworsk culture were dated between the late 1st century AD and the late 2nd century (Budinský-Krička, Lamiová-Schmiedlová 1990, 310).

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Find a unique cremation burial of a warrior located in the tumulus of the Eastern Slovak tumulus culture group with corded ware in Lesné followed (Budinský-Krička 1967, 309). Never burial finds come from burials washed out on the bank of Domaša water dam (cadastral area of Kvakovce). The area was not investigated with regard to the flooded area of the dam. The collected finds, however, definitely come from cremation burials of the Przeworsk culture and were dated to stage B1, most of them to stage B2. Most of the finds come from the 2nd century (Lamiová-Schmiedlová, Mačala 1991, 137). The urn burial documented in 2006 during the systematic research at the Hallstatt burial ground in Ždaňa is unique (Miroššayová 2010, 241-242). The latest discovered burial ground in Rankovce was studied in systematic research in 2014 (Gašaj, Rákoš 2015, 11).

First settlement finds of the Przeworsk culture in Eastern Slovakia were distinguished by Vojtech Budinský-Krička at the settlement in Prešov, Pavlovičovo city square, during the archaeological investigation in 1959. He identified typical thin-walled black or grey pottery with burnished surface and dated its presence at the settlement to the 2nd-3rd century (Budinský-Krička 1963, 23). Other settlement finds are known from the settlement in Šebastovce-Barca (today Košice-Šebastovce) studied by Mária Lamiová-Schmiedlová in 1961 and 1962. Typical thin-walled black pottery occurs there in surface layers as well as in features. In the beginnings of investigation, the presence of the Przeworsk culture at the settlements of Eastern Slovakia was perceived only as penetration of cultural influences in the 1st century which disappear after 200 (Lamiová-Schmiedlová 1963, 69). On the basis of available knowledge, it was assumed that the Przeworsk culture did not manage to settle the whole area of Eastern Slovakia and that together with the remnants of the Celtic-Dacian population it disappeared in the Late Roman Period (Lamiová-Schmiedlová 1969, 466). The latest finds of the Przeworsk culture in Eastern Slovakia include settlement finds in Trstené pri Hornáde. A small area excavation was carried out there by Pavol Jurečko, who attempted to elaborate a detailed classification of pottery. He identified the typical thin-walled black to grey pottery with a burnished surface as group II-1. He dated the arrival of the Przeworsk culture at Eastern Slovakia to the beginning of chronological stage B2 and its survival until stage C1. Judging from thick-walled pottery, he expects its presence in Eastern Slovakia as late as the 3rd century. This hypothesis he based on the observation of thick-walled pottery (Jurečko 1983, 305).

Written sources mentioning Eastern Slovakia in the wider territory of the Upper Tisa region are associated with the historical period of the so-called Marcomannic wars. The *Roman History* by Cassius Dionus says that in 171, the Vandal tribes crossed the Carpathians (probably near the Dukliansky Priesmyk pass) and arrived at the border of the Roman Empire in Dacia. There, they asked for permission to settle, which they did not acquire. They stayed in Dacia for

some time, threatening the Dacians. Finally, they were allowed to settle next to the Quadi in the Upper Tisa River basin which was supposed to be depopulated under the condition that in the case of need, they would arrive as Roman allies (Dio 71; Strzelczyk 2003, 209).

Archaeological sources document that the beginning of the migration of the eastern branch of the Przeworsk culture southwards to the Carpathian Basin is dated to stage B2 in Poland. The greatest move was going to happen in the following chronological period (Andrzejowski 2010, 77-78). The move is caused by pressure of the Wielbark culture from the north to the original settlement area of the Przeworsk culture. The result is that part of the Przeworsk culture moves southeastwards to the Carpathian Basin (Kokowski 2003, 162-163). For the territory of Eastern Slovakia, the movement of its easternmost branch to the south, penetrating the Carpathian passes in the Laborecká and Ondavská vrchovina hills and settling in the East Slovak Lowland (the Topľa, Ondava, Laborec, Latorica, Uzh and Bodrog River basins) and the Košická Basin (the Hornád and Torysa River basins), areas of North-eastern Hungary, North-western Romania (Gindele 2010, 157) and Carpathian Ruthenia (Kokowski 2003, 164) as far as the border of the province of Dacia is important.

The current state of knowledge of the Przeworsk culture in Eastern Slovakia is complemented with revision of previously published older settlement complexes. At the settlement in Šebastovce-Barca (Košice-Šebastovce today) studied in 1961 and 1962, fine black pottery with burnished surface can be found in the cultural layer in most trenches and in features 6, 10a, 14a, 14b, 19 and 27 (Luščíková 2013, 92-93). Like in the past, only the typical decorated thin-walled pottery with black to the grey burnished surface is considered to belong among finds of the Przeworsk culture. Pottery is mostly fragmentary. Fragments of flat bowls with oval finger-pressed bottoms and S-profiled rims and tall bowls with S-profiled rims are identified. The pottery is decorated with engravings and finger impressions. The accompanying thick-walled pottery consists mainly of pots and shallow bowls with oval bottoms. They are decorated with finger impressions or pinched surface.

It was possible to identify only several fragments of small bowls of the Przeworsk culture in a pithouse in Sector 10 and Pit 2 in sector 7 at the settlement in Peder (Luščíková 2017, 119). One fragment has finger-pressed walls, similarly to *Faltenbechers*. The accompanying pottery contains mostly thick-walled pots decorated with finger impressions, pinched surface and variably arranged short cuts and impressions. Rims of the pots are often cut or finger-pressed. The feature contains a considerable number of pottery of Roman provenance and jiggered thin-walled, the so-called grey pottery typical of the Late Roman Period.

The typical thin-walled pottery of the Przeworsk culture comes also from features 11, 31, 47, 70, 199, 292, 297, 299 and 307 at the settlement in Ostrovany

(Lamiová-Schmiedlová et al. 2017, 15-17). The accompanying thick-walled pottery – pots – are S-profiled. They are decorated with finger impressions, pinched surface or plastic protuberances and finger-pressed rims (Lamiová-Schmiedlová et al. 2017, 17).

Because of those finds, we know that the settlement at those sites started in the end of the Early Roman Period in stages B2/C1. This situation corresponds with the above mentioned historical sources about the Vandals moving southwards (Dio 71, 12; Strzelczyk 2003, 209) as well as with the expansion of the Przeworsk culture from the territory of Poland southeastwards to the Carpathian Basin in the times of the Marcomannic wars (Andrzejowski 2010, 78). The studied settlements are founded at new sites without traces of settlement in older chronological periods (the La Tène Period, the so-called Celtic-Dacian horizon and the Early Roman Period). Other settlements with evidence of the Przeworsk culture include Prešov, Pavlovičovo city square site (Budinský-Krička 1963, 5-58), Trstené pri Hornáde (Jurečko 1983, 277-384), Blažice and Bohdanovce (Jurečko 1982, 113-139), Valaliky-Košťany (Pastor 1962, 625-630, 645-650), Nižný Žipov (Béreš 1997, 39-40), Kechnec (Lamiová-Schmiedlová 1973, 131-142), Ždaňa (Lamiová-Schmiedlová, Olexa 2003, 175-188) and Medzany (Lamiová-Schmiedlová et al. 2017). Sporadic finds of the Przeworsk culture have been documented from the sites of Dolány and Spišský Hrhov in Spiš region (Soják 2009, 104).

On the basis of newer findings, we can correct dating of burials of the Przeworsk culture at the burial grounds in Zemplín and Kvakovce. Burials at the burial ground in Zemplín were originally dated between 100 and 200 (Lamiová-Schmiedlová 1992, 75-77). Currently, these burials can be dated to the second half of the 2nd century, i.e. chronological stage B2/C1 (Pieta 2006, 502). Unique finds in Lesné (Budinský-Krička 1967, 309), Lastovce (Graffenried 1863, 300-301) and Ždaňa (Miroššayová 2010, 241-242) can be dated to the same chronological period. The burial ground in Kvakovce can also be dated to stage B2 – B2/C1 on the basis of analogies of weapons, military equipment and fibulae at Polish burial grounds (Andrzejowski 2010, 76-83). The burial ground in Rankovce is dated to the second half of the 2nd century (Gašaj, Rákoš 2015, 11).

Fine black pottery with burnished surface is found at settlements within chronological stages B2/C1 – C1. This fact is documented by the blending of two types of pottery made using by different production techniques. While hand-made pottery with burnished black surface represents expansion of the Przeworsk culture of in stage B2 to B2/C1 from the territory of Poland, the fine grey wheel-made pottery in Eastern Slovakia is typical of the following Late Roman Period. Its production is associated with a technological impulse and accepted influences from the province of Dacia and the beginning of production in Eastern Slovakia is assumed as early as the end of the 2nd century (Lamiová-Schmiedlová 2004, 324). Settlements in Peder, Ostrovany and Šebastovce-Barca suggest continuous

development and their transformation into the Late Roman Period. In that period, wheel-made grey pottery – later decorated with stamps and with ground decoration in the 4th century – is dominant at settlements (Lamiová-Schmiedlová 2004, 324). The youngest finds at those settlements come from the Late Roman Period. After this horizon, settlement at those sites is probably extinct.

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