

CHAPTER ONE

TOPOGRAPHY AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE EXPLORED CENTRES

The development of ceramic production on the territory of Nicopolis ad Istrum was connected with the general economic upsurge taking place in the Roman provinces at the beginning of the 2nd century A. D.

The first potter's workshops were built in the surroundings of the newly-founded Roman town, as well as on its urban territory, near rich clay deposits, water sources and woods, in the proximity of big settlements and — last but not least — along the important Roman roads connecting Nicopolis ad Istrum with near and far-off towns of the Empire.

Traces of ceramic production during the 2nd-4th century have been preserved in the northwestern outskirts of Nicopolis ad Istrum along the small river running along the village of Nikjup and the east fortification wall of the town. Ruined pottery kilns and many fragments of fine and coarser earthenware were discovered in that area. A clay mould for making clay lamps was also found there.¹ Similar clay moulds were found in Butovo and dated to the 3rd century.²

In the last few years regular archaeological explorations began at a big centre for production of bricks and tiles, situated south of the present-day town of Bjala Čerkva, along the Roman road from Novae to Disconduratae, Augusta Traiana, Constantinople and Asia Minor.³ Three kilns for baking of tegulae have been discovered so far, as well as the foundations of a big architectural complex which had existed from the 2nd to the 4th century. Kilns for various earthenware had been destroyed while exploiting the clay-pits for the modern plant for ceramic production.⁴

Archaeological explorations have been carried out on a wide scale for more than two decades now on the territory of Nicopolis ad Istrum and particularly in the three ceramic centres discovered near the present-day towns and villages of Hotnica, Pavlikeni and Butovo.⁵ The ceramic centre near Hotnica was the earliest, i. e. in the first decades of the 2nd century. The ceramic centre near Pavlikeni was founded at the same period, followed some time later by the ceramic centre in Butovo.

I. THE CERAMIC CENTRE NEAR HOTNICA

Hotnica is located about 17 km northwest of Veliko Tŕrnovo. The last foothills of the Balkan Mountains end to the south of the village and to the north lies the valley of the Rosica River. The small river Bohot, a tributary to Rosica, comes from the southwest, runs across Hotnica, then to the northeast. The ancient Roman road from Nicopolis ad Istrum to Constantinople⁶ followed the valley of the Bohot River.

More than thirty archaeological sites have been sought out and registered on the territory of Hotnica, dating from the Neolithic up to the late Middle Ages.⁷ The relicts dating from the Roman era are numerous. The quarries on

the high stony plateau, south of Hotnica, had been exploited for the needs of Nicopolis ad Istrum. A big settlement inhabited by the stone-cutters had been built near them. Some unfinished carved stone blocks, coins (from the 2nd-4th century) and fine and coarser earthenware were found on this site.⁹

Remains from some ancient settlements are still to be found in the locality called Kalimanica,¹⁰ 4 km to the northwest of the village; in the locality Barata,¹¹ lying between Hotnica and Samovodene, and in the locality Musinski Kelemeta — about 7 km to the southwest of Hotnica.¹²

The never-running-dry Karst spring Kaja Bunar, which flows into the Bohot River, is situated 3 km west of the quarries. The area on both sides of the spring is slightly sloping and cut through by a number of dry ravines. Long ago there had been vast pastures, now turned into arable land. Foundations of buildings and fragments of Thracian, Roman and Mediaeval Bulgarian ceramics were discovered during excavations in this area.¹³

The foundations of a rectangular building, pointing to the directions of the world, show up on the still preserved meadow, about 300 m east of the Karst spring. The southeastern corner of the building falls into arable land and ploughing has turned up rough stones stuck with mortar, as well as fine ceramics and coins from the 2nd-3rd century. Directly west of it stand three tumuli. One of them was destroyed while tracing a new road from Hotnica to the village of Momin Sbor, over the ancient Roman road.

Roughly 350 m west of Kaja Bunar the foundations of a building and twenty-one pottery kilns were discovered.¹⁴

The building is rectangular, measuring 17.90×8.30 m. The foundations were built of limestone pebbles and the upper part of non-durable material — adobe and wattle and daub. The roof was made of arched tegulae and it also had some ventilating fittings (special tegulae with covered vents). That building, most probably a potter's workshop, had three adjoining rooms. An oval platform 1.20×1.50 m was discovered in the southern half of the East room, built of rammed pebbles. Oxidized iron plates were found on this platform, most probably parts of a potter's wheel. A single mould was also found for making appliquéed ceramics. The southern side of the room had an entrance 2.20 m wide. There had been a second entrance to the Middle room, 7.40×6.90 m. People had access to it by an entrance in the southern side of the building. In the southwestern corner of the Middle room there had been a pottery kiln, half-dug into the ground. Numerous fragments of fine ceramics and water-pipes were found around the working area. A thick layer of yellow, well-processed clay was found in the northeastern corner of the room with the kiln.

The dimensions of the West room were 4.25×6.90 m. Fragments of greyish-black ceramics used in everyday life, were found in its northern half and in the centre of the room there was a fireplace. Its entrance was in the southeastern corner.

The other twenty pottery kilns were discovered not far from the workshop. They were grouped in a circle, around a common working platform and they were all used at the same time. Kilns were also built later, using the platforms of some already destroyed kilns.

Three other pottery kilns, located around one common working platform, were discovered 25 m east of the already mentioned potter's workshop. The three of them had been destroyed at that time and the platform had been turned into a garbage pit. It was filled with fragmentary earthenware of fine ceramics, among which prevailed flat-handled amphorae and earthen jugs, small vessels, dishes, censers and cups.

The kiln built 25 m south of the workshop is of great interest. Its grate was made of imbrices and tegulae put radially on a clay pipe used as a supporting pillar.

A group of kilns were discovered to the northwest of the workshop. They were used in different times. One of them had been already destroyed and abandoned at that time. The partition had been removed from them and the lower chamber turned into a working platform serving the two pottery kilns built later.

Due to some defects occurring during the firing, one of the kilns had been abandoned and turned into a clay store. A considerable amount of clay prepared for moulding was found in the kiln itself.

Only one pottery kiln was discovered west of the workshop. This had also been abandoned because of some defects which had occurred during the firing and later used as garbage pit which was filled with discarded greyish-black ceramics used in everyday life. Prevalent among those are one-handed pots, deep bowls and mortars made of clay and sand, and resembling the imported clay mortars.

The remaining kilns were used with independent working platforms. They were arranged in a straight line northeast of the potter's workshop and they reached to the dry ravine delimiting the eastern part of the site. On cultivating the land, many burnt spots were discovered here, as well as remains of destroyed kilns and many potsherds. Prevailing among them were fragments of pots, dishes and bowls, made of clay, containing sand of large-sized grain.

The two-chamber kiln with no supporting pillar was a find of interest, discovered in the ceramic centre near Hotnica; it was located about 10 m north of the potter's workshop. Instead of the usual materials for such a centre, an exceptionally great number of potsherds were found in the kiln and around it. Those ceramics do not belong to the Roman era, but to the material culture of the First Bulgarian State.¹⁵

The Mediaeval Bulgarian pottery kiln discovered near Hotnica had two chambers and was dug into the ground, but its grate had no supporting pillar.¹⁶ More than twelve broken vessels were found inside the kiln and in front of the fireside. They belong to the already known two groups of earthenware, discovered in the Mediaeval Bulgarian settlements and necropolises.

One of the groups of earthenware consisted of pots with wide mouths, without handles, which had been turned on a potter's wheel. Some of them had been decorated with incised lines by means of a comb when placed on the potter's wheel.¹⁷

The earthenware of the second group were decorated with shiny strips before the baking.¹⁸ The two groups of ceramics were found in the same kiln and this fact is of great importance. All this has been established also in the Mediaeval Bulgarian settlements and necropolises. Therefore, during the 9th-10th century ceramic production existed near Hotnica and it was marketed in numerous Bulgarian settlements. This is not accidental, because only 325 m east of the ceramic centre, near Hotnica, the foundations of a Mediaeval Bulgarian church were discovered. In fact, this is not the only Bulgarian pottery kiln discovered in that area. In 1973 two kilns from the 12th-14th century were discovered and investigated east of Hotnica.¹⁹

Varied archaeological material, mainly whole and fragmentary vessels, were investigated during the excavations in the ceramic centre near Hotnica. Part of them were left in the kilns, which had been destroyed during the

firing,²⁰ and others were discarded in the destroyed ovens and the working platforms, turned into garbage pits.

The earthenware discovered near Hotnica is classified into two main groups:

1. Greyish-black ceramics used in everyday life

Here belong the vessels made of clay containing sand. In some of the them the sand is very fine-grained, while in others the size of the grains reached 4 mm. All of the pots had been turned on a potter's wheel and fired at a temperature of 600—800°C. As a result, the colour of the clay varies in the different parts of the vessels — from black, greyish-black, dark-brown to brown. The greater part of that type of ceramics had been subjected to additional smoking.²¹

2. Fine ceramics

This group consists of thin-walled vessels, made of well purified and worked-up clay with no additives. They were fired at a temperature over 900° C and because of that their colour varies from light to dark brown. Almost all of them were coated with a thin layer of glaze, applied unevenly on the surface of the clay vessel, usually by dipping it into the glaze solution. Depending on the degree of firing, the colour of the glaze varied from light-brown, brown, to bark brown.²²

Four bronze coins from the 2nd-3rd century and a bronze fibula with a small hinge, dating from the end of the 1st and the beginning of the 2nd century were discovered in the ceramic centre near Hotnica.

Having in mind the discovered archaeological and numismatic material and the author's personal observations during the archaeological explorations, it could be confirmed that the pottery kilns discovered near Hotnica did not function simultaneously, but consecutively for a long period of time, starting at the beginning of the 2nd up to the middle of the 3rd century A. D.

In the earliest pottery kilns near Hotnica only ordinary greyish-black ceramics used in everyday life were fired, the clay being mixed with coarse-grained sand. Later, along with the ordinary coarse ceramics, a production of fine ceramics was introduced. Improvement of quality is noticed in the ordinary greyish-black ceramics. Vessel walls become thinner, with less additives of quartz and, moreover, they began to imitate the forms of the fine ceramics. For instance, along with amphorae of fine clay, greyish-black amphorae began to be produced.

The production of red glazed ware, widespread during the Roman era, had also been mastered, without deviating from the traditions of the ancient Thracian potters. This was particularly well discernible in the mass production of one-handed conical cups, tall stoups made of coarse clay on a potter's wheel, imitating some more ancient Thracian forms.

The production of the ceramic centre near Hotnica was sold in the nearest settlements and mainly in the settlement of the stone-cutters near the quarries of Nicopolis ad Istrum.

The discovery of a Mediaeval kiln in any ancient production centre is a contribution of value to the investigation of Bulgarian ceramics. This is a fact which not only testifies that the quality of the clay near the village of Hotnica had attracted the attention of the Bulgarian population, but it also suggests data about the continuity in ceramic production between ancient times and the Middle Ages in the Bulgarian lands.

II. THE CERAMIC CENTRE NEAR PAVLIKENI

The locality called 'Värbovski Livadi', crossed from west to east by a ravine, is located on the boundary between the territories of the town of Pavlikeni and the neighbouring village of Värbovka. To the south and to the north, the terrain is higher and slightly sloping toward the ravine. While cultivating the land here walls of buildings, limestone columns, ceramics, burnt plaster and Roman coins dating from the 2nd-3rd century, were discovered.²³

The results from the long archaeological investigation which started in 1971²⁴ showed that here, on an area of 15 hectares, a large complex consisting of residential quarters and farm buildings, potter's workshops and kilns, clay-pits and a tumular necropolis, had existed.

The complex was built at the beginning of the 2nd century over the ruins of an open Thracian settlement dating from the end of the Bronze and the beginning of the Iron Age. Its development continued up to the middle of the 3rd century, undergoing four building periods.

During the **first building period** residential quarters and farm buildings were erected, as well as brick-kilns. A clay-pit was exploited in the eastern part of the complex. The residential quarters consisted of seven adjoining rooms, three of these were heated by a hypocaust system. The foundations of a big farm building consisting of two rooms were discovered west of the residential quarters. Local sandstone and white mortar was used.

The need of bricks and tiles during the period of intensive construction which started in the first years of the 2nd century required kilns for baking the building materials. Three kilns for tegulae and one for imbrices have been discovered so far near Pavlikeni. The brick-kilns for tegulae are all of the same type — half-dug into the ground, with two chambers, and separated by a rectangular grate. Entirely similar kilns for firing of building materials were found in Butovo and Bjala Čerkva. They belong to the type of tunnel-shaped kilns with side branchings. Some tegulae were found on the grate of one of the kilns discovered near Pavlikeni. The kiln for firing imbrices is a single-chambered round platform with a perforated grate, fixed to a solid supporting pillar. The imbrices were vertically arranged in a circle upon that platform. The kiln mentioned above and one of the brick-kilns had a common working platform. Southwest of the brick-kilns, on an area of 0.5 decares, a clay-pit had been exploited. The layer of good-quality clay, located at depth of 0.80 m from the actual ground level, was exploited in ancient times to a depth of 2.50 m. When the clay-pit was exhausted, it was turned into a garbage pit.

The **second building period** is related to the beginning of pottery-making near Pavlikeni. The beginning of this period is dated to the second decade of the 2nd century. Two pottery kilns were built then (Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5), as well as two big buildings (Nos. 3, 4) and a clay-pit had been exploited in the eastern part of the complex.

All pottery kilns have two chambers and a round grate supported by a pillar. Kiln No.1 is of particular interest. It was destroyed during the firing and the deformed ceramic products fell into the lower chamber. That kiln had been used for baking the semi-conical small bowls and cups, decorated with squirted relief ornaments. A big building was erected south of the pottery kilns and not far from the abandoned and levelled clay-pit. It had a central room, used as a lodging. There are four smaller rooms around it, used as stores for agricultural products.

A new clay-pit was exploited during the second building period, located east of the brick-kilns. Three other constructions were built at the same time, resembling small two-chambered pottery kilns, which were discovered south of kilns Nos. 3 and 4. A clay urn turned upside down was used instead of a supporting pillar and a clay amphora was used as a second chamber plastered up with clay.²⁵ Remains of charred organic matter (cherry-tree resin) and some quartz grains, probably used in the ceramic production, were found in the amphora.²⁶

During the second building period, construction had also started in the western part of the complex. A big building was discovered here, its layout resembling building No.3 in the eastern part of the complex. It had been accessible from the southern side and a big anteroom, supported by columns, led to the remaining rooms. In the southeastern corner of the anteroom a working platform was discovered, serving a two-chambered pottery kiln built outside the building. A great amount of fine ceramics and potter's tools were found on the working platform of the kiln and in the East room of the building. There had probably been a potter's workshop. The central room of the building had probably been used as a lodging.

The third building period generally coincided with the rule of Emperor Marcus Aurelius, i. e. c. 138—170 A. D. New residential and farm buildings, potter's workshops and kilns were erected in this period. Construction in the eastern part of the complex was particularly intensive. New constructions were adjoined to the already existing older farm and residential buildings. In that way a great architectural complex was laid out, with rooms of various sizes and designations, situated around an inner courtyard with a colonnade. Thus, a big building with three rooms was erected next to the eastern façade of the residential building with adjoining rooms, closing in that way the eastern part of the complex. A second building was erected westward, outlying the southwestern corner of the inner courtyard.

North of the big building a farm courtyard was laid out, with two shelters and three smaller rooms used for storing agricultural products and farming implements.

The old pottery kilns were not used during that period, remaining under the foundations of the new buildings. The tendency had been to drive the ceramic industry as far away as possible. Only two pottery kilns apparently functioned at that time, and one small workshop had remained outside the northern wall of the architectural complex. The workshop measures 7.50×10 m and it has two rooms (Building No.6). Clay seals for stamping earthenware and a clay mould for making lamps were found in one of its rooms.

During the third building period intensive construction took place both in the western and southwestern parts of the complex, where two other buildings were discovered, as well as a farm building and twenty-two pottery kilns.

The first of those buildings (No 7) repeated the layout of the buildings already described (Nos. 3 and 5), dating from the second building period. There was also a spacious anteroom in the southern part of the building. The central room, used as a lodging, was the biggest (9.50×10 m). There was a rectangular fireplace in the centre, outlined by vertically arranged bricks. Fragments of amphorae, iron hooks for hanging meat and pieces of big clay vessels were found in the East room. All that defines its function as a store for agricultural products. The two west rooms were used as a potter's workshop. Tools used in ceramic production and many fragments of fine ceramics were discovered in them.

The building described above also had a big courtyard, surrounded by a stone wall. Two pottery kilns were discovered in the northwestern part of the courtyard. They have one working platform and they completely resemble kiln No. 1 in structure.

The second building completely imitates the layout of the Greek temple *in antis*. An anteroom supported by two wooden columns led into a rectangular room where fragments of fine ceramics and potter's tools were found. That building could be defined as an independent potter's workshop. The kilns situated northwest of the building and designed for firing of fine ceramics only, probably belonged to that workshop.

Two small kilns built southwest of the second potter's workshop are of particular interest. Only their lower chambers with one tongue-shaped supporting pillar have been preserved. Most probably these are not precisely pottery kilns, but the so-called fornaculae; they resemble those discovered in the eastern part of the complex and used for preparing half-finished materials for the ceramic production.

A residential building (No. 9), found in the southwestern part of the complex, belongs also to the third building period. Various archaeological material was discovered there — fine ceramics, bronze statuettes, small copper lamps, coins from the mid-2nd century, etc.²⁷

A big courtyard was discovered south of the residential quarters. Its eastern part had been occupied by farm buildings and potter's workshops, and the western part by pottery kilns. All of them have two chambers and one supporting pillar.

An abandoned clay-pit was found 10 m south of the kilns. Only discarded ceramic products were found in it. Prevalent among the finds are the dishes and bowls with outwardly curved rims, as well as tall cups, decorated with squirted relief ornaments, typical of the production of that ceramic centre during the first half of the 2nd century.

To the third building period we could refer the collective find of 3,727 Roman silver coins from a room located in the southwestern corner of this architectural complex and belonging to the eastern part of the site.²⁸ The latest coin of the find dates from 169 A. D. — the time of the joint rule of Emperor Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus. A year later the Costoboci crossed the Danube and a large group of them set off for Achaia *via* Abritus — Nicopolis ad Istrum — Melta and Serdica.²⁹ The Barbarian invasion was catastrophic for the site near Pavlikeni. A great part of the buildings were destroyed and plundered and even the limestone columns and bases broken and thrown into the well in the inner courtyard.

The fourth building period is related to the last stage of existence of this ceramic centre. Its beginning was dated following the tragic invasion of the aforementioned Barbarian tribes, and it continued up to the middle of the 3rd century, when the whole vicinity became the victim of a new devastating invasion. Construction slowed down. Some repairs are noticed of the undestroyed buildings, whose rooms had been turned into independent lodgings. The *praefurnia* and *suspensurae* of the heating facilities were also destroyed, and simple hearths daubed with clay were built instead on the levelled floor of the lodgings.

Ceramic production was dying out. Fine ceramic products had been replaced by coarse greyish-black earthenware. The metal finds used in everyday

life were fewer in number, and the restricted constructions are of coarse whinstone and clay. Gradually local ceramics were replaced by production imported from Butovo.

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The results of the archaeological explorations carried out so far near Pavlikeni give grounds for claiming that the ceramic centre in the Vărbovski Livadi locality was founded upon the ruins of a Thracian settlement from the end of the Bronze Age and the beginning of the Iron Age, which had continued to exist a few centuries later. The main products of this centre were the fine red-glazed and greyish-black wares, the latter used in everyday life — in quite limited quantities. The whole ceramic production had been turned on a potter's wheel and part of the earthenware had been additionally decorated using different techniques. Most widely used techniques were: squirting of liquid clay (Barbotine technique), sealing and appliquéing of relief ornaments, previously made in single clay moulds.

The site of the ceramic centre near Pavlikeni had been propitiously chosen. The whole vicinity is surrounded by old forests and good-quality clay in large quantities. The waters of the never-drying Vărbovsko Dere flowing across the ceramic centre had been of great importance for its functioning. It was certainly not by chance that the potters had settled in that locality. It had been a natural centre, surrounded by large settlements, where a greater part of the ceramic production was marketed.³⁰ The proximity to the important Roman roads was of significance,³¹ because they served as a link between near and far-off towns of the Roman provinces Moesia and Dacia,³² where part of the production reached.

Nevertheless, the ceramic centre near Pavlikeni remained with limited potentialities and therefore was not able to resist the competition of the bigger centre in Butovo, which had won recognition by the beginning of the 3rd century.

III. THE CERAMIC CENTRE IN BUTOVO

Butovo lies 50 km northwest of the town of Veliko Tărnovo, in a flat country, surrounded from east and south by small hills. A hill called Kalvaka rises just south of the village. This hill overlooks the surrounding area and offers good-quality clay which is used to this day for the production of bricks and tiles. The small river Lomja, tributary to the Osăm River, runs across Butovo.

Many archaeological and epigraphic records of the past have been found in Butovo; some of them are preserved in the Archaeological Museum in Sofia, others — in the District Historical Museum in Veliko Tărnovo. That is why many researchers studying the Antiquity in the Bulgarian lands have been looking for a significant ancient settlement in the vicinity of Butovo, lying on the boundary between the Roman provinces Thracia and Moesia Inferior, as well as on the junction where the Roman roads intersected from Nicopolis ad Istrum across Melta and Serdica for Central Europe and from Oescus and Novae across the Balkan Mountains, Augusta Traiana and Constantinople to Asia Minor.³³

At the beginning of this century Karel Škorpiš³⁴ wrote about the ruins of a big ancient settlement on the vicinity of Butovo and the neighbouring village of Nedan, as well as about the archaeological materials found there. Later B. Gerov, referring to the epigraphic records from this region and especially to the list of members of a Dionysian society (*thias*) dating from 227 A. D., assumed that there had been a settlement here (κώμη or *Vicus*), which had probably had connections with the First Italic Legion stationed in Novae. The presence of members of the society, who held different posts in the government of Nicopolis ad Istrum, shows that the settlement had belonged to its territory.³⁵

The stamps on tegulae with the name of the First Italic Legion, found in Butovo, confirm the assumption stated by B. Gerov that there had been a detachment of the Legion or some kind of paramilitary settlers belonging to it.³⁶

There are some other hypotheses about the nature of the settlement. Many researchers think that in the vicinity of Butovo they should seek not an ordinary settlement, but the Emporium Piritensium, known from a number of epigraphic records. For the first time this idea was suggested by G. Mihailov³⁷ and developed further by the Polish historian T. Zawadski.³⁸ The localization of Emporium Piritensium near the village of Butovo was accepted also by T. Ivanov.³⁹

The ruins of the long-sought ancient settlement near Butovo turned out to be lying under the foundations of the present-day village. This became clear during the archaeological excavations in the village itself and in its vicinity.⁴⁰ The abundant and varied archaeological and epigraphic material which was discovered and the observations made at the time of the archaeological explorations provided the possibility of making a complete stratigraphic characterization of the ancient settlement in Butovo.

Originally, a Thracian settlement had existed on the site of present-day Butovo. This is proved by the earthenware dating from the Bronze Age, found there, as well as the Thracian burials and silver coins dating from the time of Alexander the Great (336—323 B. C.).⁴¹

At the beginning of the 2nd century A. D. a large settlement came into being north of the Lomja River. Foundations of buildings of rough stones and mortar were found during the excavations. Some of the buildings had been provided with heating facilities. Many architectural elements were found in that part of the village — bases of columns and statues, capitals, architraves, shafts, marble votive tablets, bronze statuettes and coins from the 2nd-4th century.

During the second half of the 2nd century, along the right hand river bank some potter's workshops and pottery kilns were built, forming complete ceramic quarters. To the east it reached the present-day cemetery of Butovo, to the south — the north slopes of Kalvaka hill and to the west it stretched as far as the bend of the Lomja River. Thirty-eight pottery kilns have been discovered in the ceramic centre so far. Most of them were discovered and brought down during past excavations.

Only one pottery kiln⁴² was discovered in the westernmost part of the potter's quarters, not far from the river. It was half-dug into the ground, with one supporting pillar. Many fragments of fine ceramics and pieces of cylindrical clay objects were found near the kiln; they had been used as building materials in the construction of the big public buildings and private houses.

Most pottery kilns were found around the present-day square of the village of Butovo. The remains of four kilns have been preserved to the north of it, two of these being situated around a common working platform. The kilns

and the working platform had already in ancient times been turned into garbage pits filled with the discarded products. A clay mould for terracotta, imitation of *Venus Pudix*,⁴³ was of particular interest among the other finds. The model used by the craftsmen was a marble statuette of Venus, found not far from the pottery kilns.

The other two kilns had independent working platforms. One of them had already come down during the firing. A stone building was erected on the levelled terrain at the beginning of the 3rd century and used as a smithery. This was confirmed by the iron jacks and iron scraps found there. The smithery had been part of a large architectural complex, occupying the northern part of the village square of today. A cartwright's workshop and smithery were near it, identified by various carpenter's tools discovered therein. South of it had been residential buildings. A military diploma dating from 227 A. D. was found in this part of the complex.⁴⁴

Three pottery kilns were explored in the eastern part of the present-day square, in the neighbourhood of which there had been a small building (14×5 m) consisting of two rooms, the basement of which had been built of black whin-stone and the upper part of non-durable material. The building was probably used as a potter's workshop, because many fragments of fine ceramics were found in it, as well as a single mould with a negative image of Cybele used for additional decoration on earthenware.

Seven kilns were discovered in the southeastern corner of the square. One of these is of interest, as one of its grates is lying upon a sophisticated vaulted system. For the time being, it is unique in Butovo; as regards its construction layout — completely similar to the kilns for baking of bricks and tiles known from Pavlikeni, Bjala Čerkva and some other ceramic centres. The presence of a great amount of fragments of fine ceramics, found in the kiln and on the working platform, as well as the absence of discarded production usually found near any pottery kiln of the kind, suggests that these kilns had also been used for baking earthenware of bigger sizes. Some similar cases are known from Novae,⁴⁵ Aquincum,⁴⁶ etc.

South of the pottery kilns there had been a small potter's workshop consisting of two rooms (4.80×6.90 m). Five pottery kilns were discovered about 50 m east of the square and near the river. These were arranged in groups of three kilns, each around a common working platform. The foundations of a building, made of whin-stone and clay, were found near the kilns. Most potter's tools were found in that part of Butovo — mainly clay moulds for making trays. A clay die was found here for votive tablets dedicated to Orpheus. It had been copied from a metal relief, but defects had formed during the process of drying and baking, and so it had become unfit for use. The die was thrown away, together with the rest of the discarded earthenware and moulds, onto one of the kiln working platforms, already turned in ancient times into a garbage pit. Most probably, production in the potter's workshop, discovered in this part of Butovo, had specialized only in the making of trays and terracotta. A potter's workshop with six kilns was also discovered about 100 m east of the square. All of them were arranged around one common platform, but had been destroyed and turned into a garbage pit. A small building was located south of them, constructed of whin-stone and clay — like all potter's workshops explored here so far. Elements of specialized ceramic production were also noticed in it. Together with some fine ceramics turned on a potter's wheel, clay lamps and terracotta were produced in big quantities. The

kilns and the workshop were used during the first half of the 3rd century, according to the archaeological and numismatic material found there.

Two pottery kilns were discovered 200 m east of the square. The first one is rectangular, with two supporting pillars; the second one — half-dug into the ground, with one supporting pillar, is one of the best preserved pottery kilns discovered in Butovo. It was built entirely of clay. The ground around the two kilns abounds in fragments of earthenware among which ordinary ceramics prevail. A small earthenware pot is of particular interest among these finds. It has one handle and is made of clay mixed with sand; the pot had been additionally smoked and the name Aurelius List...⁴⁷ scratched under its rim before the firing.

As it has already been noted, to the east the ancient ceramic centre reached the end of the present-day village. The new graveyard of Butovo today also belonged to its territory. According to information given by the local inhabitants, clay vessels, terracotta, coins and ruins of destroyed pottery kilns usually came out while digging for new graves. North of the graveyard, foundations of buildings were discovered, constructed of waste material from destroyed pottery kilns. These had probably been potter's workshops, situated in the easternmost part of the ceramic centre in Butovo. Traces of ceramic production were also found in its southern part.

A rectangular kiln with two supporting pillars was discovered 100 m south of the square, the grate had suffered serious damage during the firing and had subsequently been turned into a garbage pit. Earthenware of greyish-black ceramics prevailed amongst the finds discovered there. One clay *oenochóé* found here imitates the shape of metal vessels used for the same purpose. Part of a small building was found 6 m east of the kiln. Its foundations were built of stones and clay and the upper part of non-durable material — wattle and daub. The building had been covered with imbrices, some of which had round orifices for the smoke to come through. Similar ventilation facilities were found in Hotnica and Pavlikeni.⁴⁸ The earthenware, moulds for making lamps and the coins dating from the 2nd-4th century which were found provided sufficient grounds for claiming that the building discovered had once been part of a potter's workshop. The lower half of a pottery kiln, with one supporting pillar, was found about 40 m northeast of it. It had been one of the earliest kilns in Butovo, destroyed in ancient times and turned into a garbage pit. Among the finds discovered in it we should mention a clay mould for two-wick lamps, typical of the second half of the 2nd century. Many fragments of tegulae were found around the kiln, with side edges cut at right angles, which in Pavlikeni and Butovo are found together with coins dating from the middle of the 2nd century.

Five pottery kilns were found at the foot of the Kalvaka hill, where the ceramic centre ended to the south. The first two of these were built in a circle, around one common working platform. The ceramic material found in this part of the settlement consisted only of fragmentary earthenware, turned on a potter's wheel, with some additional decoration. The fragments with squirted, stylized plant ornaments prevailed. There were also fragments of rough greyish-black ceramics with lesser variety in shape. Usually they are one or two-handled deep pots, as well as semi-conical deep bowls.

During the second half of the 3rd century the residential quarters of the ancient settlement lying under the present-day Butovo expanded south of the

river and over the earlier potter's quarters. New residential and farm buildings were erected over the ruined kilns and workshops. Life here ceased completely during the second half of the 4th century.

The ancient settlement in Butovo had four necropolises found so far: one of them is at the foot and on top of the Kalvaka hill, the second lies between the present-day ceramic plant and the yard of the cooperative farm, the third is next to the present-day pottery and the fourth is located to the north of the village.

One necropolis consisting of five tumuli explored in 1965 was discovered on top of the Kalvaka hill. Burials were performed by cremation in special pits.⁴⁹ The varied grave offerings consisted of ceramic objects and coins dating from the end of the 1st up to the second half of the 2nd century. The greater part of the earthenware was produced in other ceramic centres,⁵⁰ and only a very small part of it — found mainly in the later burials — was produced in Butovo.

Burials in the second necropolis were performed also by cremation and the grave offerings are completely similar to those found in the tumular necropolis on the Kalvaka hill.

The earliest burials in the third necropolis date from the beginning of the 4th century and they are all cremation interments.

The fourth necropolis, situated north of the village, was used towards the end of the 2nd century. The burials were performed by inhumation and the grave offerings consisted mainly of earthenware produced in the ceramic centre in Butovo.

Towards the end of the 2nd century cremation was obviously replaced by inhumation of the bodies in specially constructed brick graves. Various ceramic materials from the ceramic workshops in Butovo were found in them.

* * *

The results from the archaeological explorations carried out up to now showed that the excellent plastic properties of the clay from Butovo had provided a possibility for a varied ceramic production, the greater part of which had been earthenware turned on a potter's wheel. Deep bowls, shallow dishes, slender two-handled earthenware pots, conical cups, etc., were prevalent. Part of them were additionally decorated on the potter's wheel. Different tools and techniques were used for that purpose.

Liquid clay squirting upon the wet surface of the earthenware (Barbotine technique) was very widely used, and stylized vine-twigs, ivy-leaves and successfully imitated pine-cone scales were the decorative result.

Earthenware was additionally decorated by means of one or more moulds filled in advance with clay and appliquéd upon the wet earthenware. In this way earthenware with relief decoration was produced, imitating the metal vessels. Together with appliquéd ceramics, the production of vessels made in single clay moulds⁵¹ also started in the ancient settlement in Butovo.

Towards the end of the 2nd century mass production of clay lamps started here. The potters usually took as a model the Eastern Greek and Western Roman lamps, creating forms according to the taste of the native consumers.

At the beginning of the 3rd century the production of terracotta⁵² was also adopted. In many respects the craftsmen copied famous works of the ancient

sculptures. Here we should mention as an example the terracotta imitations of Venus Pudix, which were most widespread in this centre; but the potters also made terracotta which bore the marks of the individual artist whose aesthetic principles differed from those of the ancient masters.

The ceramic centres near Hotnica and Pavlikeni came into being at the same time, i. e. the first decades of the 2nd century, and they functioned till the mid-3rd century A. D. The basic production of the ceramic centre near Hotnica was greyish-black ceramics for everyday use, while the ceramic centre near Pavlikeni produced fine ceramics. It seems that the latter had become more popular, which was the reason for the expansion of its production. This was obviously one of the main reasons for the setting up of a new ceramic centre in Butovo towards the second half of the 2nd century, which flooded the whole vicinity with its production, as well as the neighbouring towns of Nicopolis ad Istrum, Novae, Succidava, etc. In the competition for markets between the ceramic centres in Butovo and Pavlikeni, the former somehow forced the latter to limit its production of fine ceramics and continue to produce only ordinary earthenware for everyday use.

Intensive ceramic production existed on the territory of Nicopolis ad Istrum, as well as in some other centres situated along the lower course of the Rosica River. They have not been explored as yet, but these centres have proved their presence through their discarded ceramic production, discovered while cultivating the land. Traces of their ceramic production are occasionally registered near the town of Suhindol and in the northern part of the town of Pavlikeni.

It could be established from the archaeological and numismatic material found on these sites that they had functioned simultaneously with the ceramic centres explored near Hotnica, Pavlikeni and Butovo. It is obviously not by accident that in this part of the country the most modern enterprises for building materials (bricks and tiles) are to be found.

NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

¹ The upper half of a mould made of fine clay, light-brown colour. The mould was meant for lamps with more than one wick.

² СУЛТОВ Б., 1962а, 30, обр. 6

³ The archeological excavations near Bjala Čerkva, led by B. SULTOV and M. COČEV, started in 1973 with the discovery of a Dionysian sanctuary. Later on, kilns for bricks and tiles were unearthed, as well as earthenware kilns and the ruins of a large architectural complex lying near the road, leading from Novae to Augusta Traiana.

⁴ The kilns were round, half-dug into the ground; diam. c. 1.20 m.

⁵ SULTOV B., 1980, 379—388.

⁶ СУЛТОВ Б., 1962б, 21—22.

⁷ СТАНЕВ П., 1976, 5; АНГЕЛОВ Н., 1958, 389; 1959, 38—46; ИЛЧЕВА В. и Ив. КОКОРКОВ, 1975, 1—11; КОКОРКОВ Ив. и Й. АЛЕКСИЕВ, 1975, 134—136; while ploughing deep the fields north of the locality known as Mečata Dupka (Bear's lair), lying about 2 km east of Hotnica, a round-grated kiln was hit and ruined, built of clay and thatch. Around it, fragments of grey Thracian ware are found.

⁸ ИРЕЧЕК К., 1974², 297—298.

⁹ Unpublished materials kept in the District Historical Museum in Veliko Tärново.

¹⁰ In this locality remains of a Thracian settlement and a necropolis of pre-Roman times are found; the settlement developed and grew in Roman times and continued to exist up to the Late Antiquity.

¹¹ СУЛТОВ Б., 1968, 45 сл.

¹² Here ruins of buildings are registered, together with a tumular necropolis and coins dating from the 2nd-3rd century. Unpublished materials.

¹³ Unpublished materials for the archaeological map of the District of Veliko Tärново.

¹⁴ СУЛТОВ Б., 1969а, 12—24

¹⁵ ИВИДЕМ, 14 сл.

¹⁶ ИВИДЕМ, обр. 13

¹⁷ ИВИДЕМ; for literature Cf. note 10.

¹⁸ ИВИДЕМ, 22, обр. 14б.

¹⁹ АЛЕКСИЕВ Й., 1977, 55 сл., обр. 1, 2.

²⁰ СУЛТОВ Б., Ор. cit., обр. 9.

²¹ ИВИДЕМ, 17—19, обр. 10.

²² ИВИДЕМ, 19—22, обр. 11, 12.

²³ СУЛТОВ Б., 1977, 27 сл.

²⁴ SULTOV B., Ор. cit., 379 sqq.

²⁵ SULTOV B., 1984, 184—190.

²⁶ For similar facilities Cf. BLÜMNER H., 1879, 95—96, Fig. 16, 17.

²⁷ Unpublished materials.

²⁸ The coins were put in the jar on Tabl. XXXIX, 1 and were covered with the conical bowl on Tabl. XIV, 6.

²⁹ ИСТОРИЯ на България, 1979, 297.

³⁰ СУЛТОВ Б., Ор. cit., 17 сл.

³¹ СУЛТОВ Б., 1962в, 7.

³² POPILIAN Gh., 1976, 50 ff.

³³ ШКОРПИЛ Х. и К., 1892, 94—95, фиг. 3; ДОБУСКИ В., 1901, 733, фиг. 25; ЦОНЧЕВ Д., 1935, 456—457, обр. 277, 278; ГЕРОВ Б., 1950, 20 сл.

³⁴ ШКОРПИЛ К., 1905, 478 сл.

³⁵ ГЕРОВ Б., 1950—51, 112, inscription No 397.

³⁶ In the environments of Butovo, fragments of imbrices, bearing a stamp LEG. I ITAL(ica) were found. Unpublished materials from archaeological surveys.

³⁷ МИХАЙЛОВ Г., 1958, 121, No. 695.

³⁸ ZAWADZKI T., 1964, 531—538.

³⁹ ИВАНОВ Т., 1974, 44.

⁴⁰ СУЛТОВ Б., 1962а, 30—34; 1969, 479—488; RUTKOWSKI B., 1963—64.

⁴¹ Traces of a Thracian settlement are found east of the present-day square of Butovo, while the Thracian interments lie south of the village, in the locality known as Kalvaka.

⁴² The fragments of glassy-baked clay substance suggest the existence of other pottery kilns in the immediate vicinity, already ruined in Antiquity.

⁴³ Similar moulds are found also east of the square.

⁴⁴ Unpublished materials.

⁴⁵ Unpublished materials from the archaeological expedition in Novae.

⁴⁶ For Aquincum — Cf. KUZSINSZKY B., 1932, 391.

⁴⁷ Unpublished materials.

⁴⁸ СУИТОВ Б., 1969a, 17, обр. 8.

⁴⁹ ГЕТОВ Л., 1969, 39.

⁵⁰ Cf. the chronological characteristic.

⁵¹ СУИТОВ Б., 1972b, 21—29.

⁵² СУИТОВ Б., 1976, 20 сл.