

Boni Petrunova, *The treasure from the Kaliakra Fortress. The Tatar loot, Unicart, Sofia, 2020, (208 p.)*

This edition of luxe, printed in Bulgarian and English, is a studia devoted to a very curious treasure, discovered in 2018 during the regular archeological excavations of the fortress Kaliakra, one of the capitals of the Dobruja despotate in the second half of 14th century. It is worthy of admiration that the find is worked up and published for less than two years. The edition contains a vast *Preface* (p. 7 - 35), written by professor K. Dochev, who together with this has studied the rich numismatic material of 923 coins. Then follows *The Introduction* (p. 37 - 44) and nine basic chapters: *The Necropolis in Sector 83*(p. 45 - 55), *The Late Building* (p. 55 - 64), *The Treasure* (p. 64 - 67), *The Pot* (p. 67 - 72), *The Coins* (p. 72 - 98), *The Jewellery* (p. 98 - 109), *The Buttons* (p. 109 - 110), *The Buckles* (p. 110 - 118), *Analysis of the Treasure a sa Kind of Conclusion* (p. 119 - 134), *The Bibliography* (p. 134 - 139) and *The Catalogue* (p. 139 – 208).

Prof. K. Dochev in the Preface puts important markers and historical frames, which generally spoken are followed in the analytic texts by B. Petrunova. A professional review is made of the events during the second half of 14th century in Dobruja, as a very proper background including successfully the treasure. However, it can be observed some disputable moments which I cannot leave without attention. I cannot agree that the rock monasteries around Kaliakra are not studied (p. 9), because they are not only studied and mapped, but also published in the *Annals of the People's Museum of Varna*. But quite of another topic for discussion is the problem to which degree these artificial rock rooms are monasteries and its chronology. However, the churches and monasteries from 14th Century, answering to the topic, are elucidated.

The problem with the despot's title of Dobrotitza corresponds indirectly to this topic. The idea of K. Dochev that Dobrotitza gets his title '... *from the Byzantine emperor as well as from tsar Ivan Alexander*' (p. 11). There existed a firmly established rule both in Bulgaria and the Byzantine Empire the despot to be obligatory member of the family of the tsar or of the Byzantine emperor, more often son-in-law¹. It is sure that Dobrotitza was member of the imperial family in Constantinople (he was married to the grand-daughter of emperor Andronic II Palaiologos), and there are no data Dobrotitza to stay in close relative connections with the family of tsar Ivan Alexander². Finally, in 14th century there is no case the despot to be proclaimed at one and the same time by the rulers of two empires, and in the Bulgarian state only one despot can be active on the political horizon. During the time of Dobrotitza from the middle of XIV century up to around 1370 in Turnov, the despot was Constantine, the son-in-law of the Bulgarian tsar. Also disputable are the supposed boundaries of the despotate of Dobrotitza: the narrow strip alongside the sea from Varna to the delta of Danube, according to K. Dochev. In reality, after 1369/70 Dobrotitza is ruling over the entire territory thereabouts east of the line Tutrakan-Shumen, including Druster and Ovech/Provadia and its region.

¹ATANASOV 1999, p. 201-217.

²ATANASOV 2009, p. 150-152.

After that in the Preface follows the thesis that the harbours at the Black Sea have been given by Dobrotitza '...as colonies to the foreign tradesmen from Genua, Venetia, Dubrovnik, and to some Russians, Tatar-Mongols etc.' (p. 11). There are no narratives and archaeological data of such a total economic politics. Something alike can be met in the Delta near Vicina-Isakcha and Kiliya- Lycostomo, however Dobrotitza governed for a very short time the towns in the Delta, from where he has been driven out by Genua around 1370/71. It is curious the affirmation that Dobrotitza has been on Byzantine service for 10 years (p. 16). This interesting statement should rely on steady markers – by the way, the despot title is not an office one, and Dobrotitza was despot not for only 10, but for 40 years. Also there is no certain chronological marker that he has received to be vassal to sultan Murad I in 1371 (p. 18). More correctly is that he became vassal to the emir Murad I, because the first proclaimed sultan was Bayezid!

Even more controversial is the claim that Dobrotitza received the title of despot of Byzantium thanks to the marriage of his daughter to the despot of Mesembria Michael Palaeologus, the youngest son of emperor John V Palaeologus.

I have already pointed that the receiving of the despot title is connected with another level of relative connections. However, more acceptable is the thesis that Dobrotitza settled to the end of his life only in Kaliakra. There is enough ground for posing the question how many sons Dobrotitza had: two (Ivanko and Terter) or only one, Ioannes Terter. I have already stopped the attention on this problem, and I consider that they were rather two.

Not quite correct is the indirect critics (on p. 20) of my thesis (and of other authors too) that Druster (today Silistra) was the residence of Ivanko. My affirmation is rather that Terter emancipated as half-independent ruler in Druster, and I reject the forced thesis that his name was Ioannes Terter. The presence of Terter in Druster after 1371 (as independent ruler between 1376-1385/6?) can be proved by the coins, and also by other sources, written and archaeological. Particularly these are the two-headed eagles on the copper and silver coins (on which his name may be read), the luxury ceramics and the golden earrings of the ladies of his family with engraved monograms **TePTeP** and two-headed eagles. There are good reasons to put the accent on the topic 'the Tatars of Aktav in Dobruja', but I will stop on it in details at the end, because it is among the basic one as a marker in the research.

At the end of the conclusive part of his *Preface*, prof. K. Dochev has made a highly professional instructive analysis of the coins from the treasure of Kaliakra. It is very reasonable, because important data can be drawn not only concerning the chronology, but also the economic and trade processes in the despotate, particularly for Kaliakra. However, contentious is the idea, that the Tatars of Aktav have been the hosts of Dobruja', living in Kaliakra for several years, and that sultan Bayezid did not manage to send them away because he was taken prisoner in 1402 at Ankara by Tamerlan (p. 23). In fact, based on Laonici Chalcocandyl and some earlier Osmanian and Iranian chronicles (particularly on Ruchi Edreveni), already Aurel Decei, and recently also A. Uselatz and Y. Philipchuk prove that Aktav has been killed on the order of Bayezid already in 1401. This affirmation has been set forth long before that by prof. P. Panaitescu, prof. V. Gyuzelev and me too in the

monography 'The Despotate of Dobruja'. In fact, the database on the Tatars of Aktav I, too big and contradictory, needs a special attention, at least because the so-called 'Tatar loot' is tied namely with its presence in Dobruja after 1398 (according to P. Panaitescu, A. Decei and A. Uzelatz), and particularly in 1399.

Curious and very informative is the comment on the silver coins of the treasure. However, it is necessary to note that the affirmation that the Serbian grosches 'have been carried by big sums from Serbia along Danube and used in the towns-colonies in the trade with the Tatars-Mongols after the adequate check by their saraphs' is confronted by serious problem. Only 15 Serbian grosches are registered north of the Delta toward Dnester (here is the region of the most compact Tatar presence in 14th century). 6 of the grosches descend from the medieval site Orlovka situated against Isakcha at the Danubian shore, and they should rather belong to the metropolia Isakchawith good reason³. 3 grosches from the rest 9 ones come from the Tatar centre Kostesi, and the other 6 with uncertain provenance have been got from the looters mainly from South Moldova. On this background, the coins of the Bulgarian tsars are more numerous (Crivenco, Ovčarov 2012, 23 - 26)⁴. It is worthy of noting that only 3 grosches of Stefan Dušan are contramarked, and the 3 ones from Orlovka have the typical for the spread in the Dobruja despotate contra marks, namely a circle, and a circle with a point in the centre. In the rest towns between Dneper and Dnester, even in such famous town centres as Yangi-şehir/Sehr al-Cedid (the Old Orhei) and Bilhorod-Dnistrovskiyi, no Serbian grosches have been found so far, usual or with a contra mark. By the way, a complete analogy of the 4 contra marks is a rare phenomenon outside the boundaries of the Dobrudja despotate. This is a new feature that the Serbian grosches are a phenomenon exclusively for the Dobruja despotate, including the ones with contramarks.

The Introduction of the tituli author B. Petrunova is well structured and gives the idea of the processes in Kaliakra from Antiquity up to 14th century. Having in mind the title of the studia, it could be selected more definite place of the processes in the fortress in 14th – first half of 15th century on the background of the historical, numismatic and archaeological sources. It is disputable that around and after the middle of 15th century the Bulgarian state is divided into 5 small principalities, 3 of them situated in North Bulgaria. In reality, the case of point is of 7 of them: we should not omit the one of Momchil in the Rhodops, and if we add Melnik of Vulkashin, Syar of Uglesha and Elena, King Marco Mrnjavčević (1371 – 1395) and the Druster state of Terter between 1376-1386, the general number is not the same in both directions. More debatable, or straight wrong is the affirmation that in 1444 the united Christian army of the Polish-Hungarian King Vladislav III Jagello and John Hunyadi have conquered (liberated) Kaliakra from the Osmanians. Even more, Laonic Halckonodil has explicitly written: '*The besieged* (by the crusaders, note of mine) *Varna surrender by agreement, while*

³ KRIVENCO 2014, p. 339-345.

⁴ KRIVENCO & OVČAROV 2012, p. 23 – 26.

Kaliakra (the Osmanian garrison, note of mine) repelled the attacking Hungarians, and threw them down from the walls'⁵!

The necropolis is represented in a short and contact way, because, as B. Petrunova has noted, it needs a special publication. Most probably, by oversight on p. 47 the necropolis is dated 'in the second half of 14th – the beginning of 15th century'. If the founded over it building is from the end of XIV century (see also on p. 63), this chronology should be corrected. The necropolis is as important as it can help for the precise dating (particularly as *terminus post quem*) of the erected over it building, in which the treasure was found. Very important is the pointed in this connection (on p. 52) statement of the team (Vasileva-Dimitrova-Petrunov) that the building over the necropolis (with the Tatar loot) has been set on fire after the conquer of Mircho in the first years of the 15th century. However, Mircho I has captured twice Kaliakra: for short in 1389 r. and after 1404, ruling over it till about 1416. In the first years of XV in Kaliakra there ruled the Genueses (after the battle at Ankara and the capture of Bayezid), and this is documented by an absolutely authentic document of the cancellaria of the Hungarian King Sigismund of Luxembourg from 8th of September 1402, published and commented in details several times, so it could not be left without attention ⁶.

The Late building. It is an important marker for the discovered in it treasure (rather under the pavement with plates?), but also for the horizontal stratigraphy in general of Kaliakra. The building is well represented and even better illustrated. However, the lack of profiles, or at least of longitude sections and cross-sections is a serious omission, not allowing the precise documentation of the treasure. Even more: non-explicable lapse is the fact that nowhere on the plan is fixed strictly the place of finding the pot with the treasure, and its situation towards the pavement, the walls etc. It does not become clear if there are any heating facilities, which could be an important feature of its function. Confusing is the statement on p. 63 that there is a Christian necropolis from 13th century in the sector of the Late building, on the background of the affirmation some pages earlier that the *terminus post quem* of the necropolis is the middle of 14th century. In case there are in fact cultural layers of 13th century, there should be a kind of accent, which to be illustrated well, because according to the research to the present moment in Kaliakra and on the background of the coin circulation, the life here is activated only at the beginning of 13th century. Very curious is also the statement on p. 65, that the building, respectively the 'Late building' with the 'Tatar loot', 'should be related to the limits of the period 1350-1404'. The logical question arises on this background, namely how this building has been erected over the tombs from the second half of 14th century, if the building itself is 'dated in the limits of the period 1350-1404'? However, it may turn that 1404 is more adequate as *terminus ante quem*, but on this a little bit below.

Too much attention has been paid to the pot, in which the treasure was deposited. On the base of the commented analogies, the conclusion is made that it is not a locally made pottery, with parallels pointed to the north to Ukraine and

⁵ BOZILOV & GYUZELEV, 2004, p. 263-264; CHALCOCANDYLAE 1922, II. 1. 98.

⁶ ATANASOV 2000, p. 267-272; BOZILOV & GYUZELEV, 2004, p. 259; ATANASOV 2007, p. 200-201.

Estonia, but also to the south to central Greece. It is less possible and not practiced by the nomads (later in the book the treasure is connected with the Tatars of Aktav, who are certainly nomads) to carry and bring with them ceramic vessels for thousands of km. Finally, the route of the Aktav's horde is relatively well clarified and it didn't pass neither on the way to Dobruja, nor to Estonia, Letovia, Poland and Greece. Even more, the handleless pots have been made, although rarely, by the potters in Dobruja and North Bulgaria in 14th century.

Enough place is paid in the studia on the coins, and with reason. They are not only numerous, diverse and of precious metals and copper, but also serve as the main and steady markers for the date of the treasure as a whole, and indirectly for the processes in Kaliakra at the beginning of 14th century. The professionalism of prof. K. Dochev, the leading Bulgarian numismatist on the material from 13-14th centuries, and study of the coins from the treasure is a matter of fact.

It is difficult for me to judge if the comment or rather the critic of my idea on p. 86 on the spread of the golden Venetian coins belongs to B. Petrunova or to prof. K. Dochev. Nevertheless, there is ground to discuss my standpoint that after the middle of 14th century, in spite of the good relations of Dobrotitza with Venetia, the number of golden Venetian ducats falls sharply. Really, differently to the known up to this moment golden Venetian ducats in the despotate of the whole Dobruja, the ones after the middle of 14th century are exceptions (generally 13, of them 10 belonging to the first half of this century, and only 3 from the second half of it). At the same moment, there are as a whole 8 ducats from the treasure itself, 4 of them from the first half and the next 4 from the second half of 14th century. This is an important observation, and although general conclusions cannot be made only on the base of the single case from Kaliakra, nevertheless this fact should not be underestimated. Much more unclear and groundless is the critics to my idea (borrowed in some aspects from Dr. I. Lazarenko), that the Serbian grosches arrive to the Dobruja despotate as shipment on the require of Dobrotitza, but it is offered to consider them as a 'loot', indirectly connected with the 'pirate' activity of the fleet of Dobrotitza?! This 'loot' includes as a whole around 1200 grosches, 95% of them distributed almost in all the centres of the Dobrudja despotate (?). This rather looks like a consciously organized activity of the rulers of the despotate! Even more, it has been already commented the indirect connection between the march of Dobrotitza to Constantinople in 1346-7 and the politics of king/tsar Stefan Dušan. However, it is simply *noncencethe* idea that the coins have been looted by the navy of Dobrotitza, who was attacking mainly the ships of Genua. By the way, no silver Serbian grosches have been found in the colonies of Genua at the Black Sea, allowing to admit that the ships of Genua were shipping big parcels of Serbian grosches. It is much more unbelievable to ship them for the needs of Dobrotitza, who is their 'sworn enemy'.

As it concerns the relatively numerous coins of tsar Ivan Sratsimir in the treasure from Kaliakra (they are relatively high % in general of the coin circulation of the despot), they are entirely correctly tied with the role of Dobrotitza in the 'liberation' of Vidin, and respectively of tsar Ivan Sratsimir from

the Hungarian captivity in the events of 1366-1369. Doubtless, this had very favorable sequences for the contacts Kaliakra-Vidin, expressed also in the coin circulation of the despotate. There is ground to pose the question and to open a discussion on my point of view, that they are not active in the coin circulation after the death of Dobrotitza. They are really missing in the known treasures from the last quarter of 14th century, and in the so-called 'Tatar loot' they are only 4 from the general 925 coins (895 of them respectively silver?! 4 are on the background of 377 are Osmanian, 252 from the Bulgarian kingdom, 42 are Valachian, 43 belong to the Vidin tsar Ivan Sratsimir, and only 9 are Tatar?! The Serbian grosches which between 50s – 70s of the 14th century are more than 60 % from all the coins in the circulation in the boundary of the despotate, while the ones in the treasure from Kaliakra are only 0.4 % of the treasure?! Nevertheless, in spite of all this, it is possible to admit the hypothesis that part of the Serbian grosches, especially the strongly cut, could be in circulation, or rather they were forming treasures as precious metal in Dobruja to the beginning of 15th century, when are 'supressed' by the wave of akçes of Bayezid I, respectively also by Bulgarian and Valachian silver coins.

At the end of the chapter on the coins, again the question is raised on the contramarks on the Serbian grosches. K. Dochev has no position on it, but points this activity to the Tatar-Mongolian customs, or consider that they have given this right to '*...the colonies of Genuawhich are numerous and with big towns (Soldaia, Kaffa, Mangup, Theodoro,etc.), but also at the harbours around the mouth of Danube – Lycostomo, Kiliya, present-day Bilhorod-Dnistrovskiyi,, and probably also in the present-day Kastritsi, Kaliakra and other places of the Turnovo kingdom*'. In this citation can be found at least four mistakes: 1. *Theodoro* is not a town but independent principality on the Crimean peninsula with capital Mangup; 2. Lycostomo and Kiliya are one and the same town⁷; 3. Bilhorod-Dnistrovskiyi is not in the Danubian Delta, but at the mouth of the other big river, namely Dnister; 4. The Turnovo kingdom cannot have anything common with the contramarking of the Serbian grosches, because it has no access to the Black Sea between 1370 and 1386/7, and also since the grosches with contra marks are a rare phenomenon in its boundaries. At this background, it should be one more time posed the question why in the pointed by the author harbours north of Danube, for which we read the affirmation that they are making the contra marks, not a single Serbian grosch is found so far, including with a contra mark and certain provenance.

The jewellery has found adequate place in the studia. It is studied with ground on the background of the finds to the present moment and especially of the treasures from Kaliakra. B. Petrunova knows the standpoint of L. Bobcheva made 45 years ago that the other big treasure with jewellery from Kaliakra should be dated after 1400. With enough ground, Petrunova does not take the responsibility of making a special typology and classification of the yearings, the pendulia hang around the ears, rings, applications, buttons etc. finds from the treasure, because for this it is necessary another volume and territory envelopment of the adornments. With good reason, the pendulia are related to the

⁷ DIACONU 1996 - 1996, p. 235-263.

14th century, and this chronology, at least at the present moment, cannot be narrowed. It is not impossible that two of them with bi-conical hangings without filigree are earlier, from end of the 13th -beginning of 14th centuries. Really, the earrings and generally the adornments belong to a treasure from end of the 14th -beginning of the 15th centuries. However, this chronology cannot be imposed on all of the jewels, because among them could be also earlier pieces.

It is not clear to me which are the sources and from where they have been taken, and some non-cited literature in this studia with the thesis that Dobrotitsa ruled over Kiliya and Kyustendja/Constanta. Principally, in a scientific research is accepted to cite the sources and studies, on which the author is basing, However, in the edition on the Kaliakra treasure this is generally a rare practice. First, Kiliya is identical to Lycostomo (pointed on p. 96 as two different towns-fortresses), a fact established by P. Diaconu and commented thoroughly in the book 'The Dobrudja despotate' cited everywhere. Second, the hypothesis that Kiliya is conquered by Dobrotitza has been overcome long ago, because there are no data on such event. The archaeological excavations in Kyustendja/Constanta have been made for more than one century, but nowhere in it have been found pottery, coins and other finds between the second half of the 11th – end of the 15th centuries, and this is already fixed in the Bulgarian and Romanian archaeological literature. Finely, it is already commented too that Constanța was not a town-fortress from the 9th up to 15th centuries. Similar to it in the 14th century are the harbours like Laxilutico (Shabla ?), Pangalia (Mangalia), Zanauarda (Karaharman), Grosea, Itvarico (in the Delta) where the archaeological research also does not register towns, fortresses and sites from 14th century. Really, some of these fortresses (?) are present in the narrative of Evlya Celebi from the second half of 17th century, but it already has been paid attention concerning the events from the beginning of the 15th century that they are based on some legendary and not reliable information⁸. It is a fact that among them according to Evlya Celebi is also Хаджиоглу Пазарджик (Dobrich), whose rise is surely only after the beginning of the 14th century. That's why on the maps and Portolan they are marked with black ink (the town centres are marked in red), because they are only convenient harbours where the ships can temporary get shelter and remedy its provisions. That is to say, they, including Kyustendja, are not sites to be really conquered by Dobrotitza. This picture is supported beyond dispute in the list namely from the end of 14th century in the "Список городов дальних и ближних", in which the registered from the region are Kiliya, Novo selo /Enisala/, Kaliakra, Varna, Kavarna, Bilhorod-Dnistrovskiy etc. to the north and west, but not Constanta⁹.

At the end analysis the accent is put with ground on the fact why, when and who has hidden the treasure of Kaliakra. The offered *terminus ante quem* 1402, adequate the death of Bayezid, is not very sure, because his coins are in circulation and later, almost to the end of 15th century. This is true especially when it concerns a treasure with any kind of precious metals. Then follows the so-called 'Tatar tie' at the end of the 14th century, connected with the events around the Mongolian victory of Tamerlan over the Tatar of chan Tohtamasin 1395. The

⁸ BOZILOV & GYUZELEV 2004, p. 255.

⁹ TICHOMIROV 1952, p. 216 – 217.

accent is on the tuman of Aktav (i.e. 10 000, and according to A. Decei together with the other people they are 50 000 persons?), a true supporter of Tohtamas, who was forced under the pressure of the Mongols to withdraw through Dneper to Valachia and Danube in 1397, or rather in 1398¹⁰. It is disputable that they crossed the river at Isakcha the more detailed chronist Şarafu'd-diu Yazdiin the Persian text from 1424/5 is writing on the place „Ire Yaka” - Asiryaka, at least with 4 localisations), but they are accepted by sultan Bayezid offering him their service. The well-known Osmanian chronist Edrenevi writes in 1462 that the Tatars of Aktav who has run from Deshta (Desht-i Qipchaq = Cumania) are settled in the area of Edrine (Adrianople). This is confirmed by the chroniclers Oruç and Ruhi at the end of the 15th century, according to whom Aktav died (executed!) in Edirne, and his followers were placed in the service of Bayezid I before the battle of Ankara. Only after that they settled in Yambol, Provadia and others.

We have, however, a sure marker for the presence of the Tatars of Aktav in Dobruja, coded in the Short Chronicle from Mesembria under No 22, but we have nosure information in the sources that the Tatars *‘have given themselves to plundering in the territory still reigned by the Dobrudja despotate’*, according to the affirmation of the author. Really, in a chronicle note in the Short chronicle of Mesembria under No 22 is written: *‘in the year 6907 (=1399) indict 7 of 2 February, Friday Varna was enslaved by the godless Tatars’(ήχμαλωτίθη ή Βάρνα από των άθέων Τατάρων)*¹¹. It remains unknown why the translation of B. Petrunova of this text on p. 122 (again not pointing to the source, as many times before) replaced the word *‘enslaved’* or *‘conquered’* (ήχμαλωτίθη) with *‘plundered’*, by which the meaning of the narrative is changed to some degree. Thus, there is another hypothesis, unnoticed by the author, according to which Varna came under Ottoman rule (in my opinion, rather under Ottoman sovereignty)¹² before 1399, and yet the Tatars "captured" it¹³. They did the same with the Felibe/Plovdiv region at the same time¹⁴, which will be discussed below.

Probably because of his arbitrary acts in Varna and around Plovdiv, soon after that Aktav signed to himself a dead sentence and his horde has been settled separated. That’s the reason its route and behaviour to deserve more attention by B. Petrunova, also because the horde is the main accent in the so-called ‘Tatar loot’. It is established by a whole group of connoisseurs of the Tatar history on the Lower Danube, respectively of the sources¹⁵ that only in 1398 the horde of Aktav penetrated in Dobrudja as ‘federatives’ of Bayezid I. In 1399 they ‘enslaved’ Varna, rather without the knowledge and the permission of sultan Bayezid I. We have the impression from the context of the Osmanian and Iranian Chronicles and Laonic Chalcocondyl that in 1402 they were in the area of Edirne (Adrianople),

¹⁰ PANAITESCU 1944, p. 287 - 291; DECEI 1950/1955, p. 77-92; SCHREINER 1979, p. 158 - 160; UZELAC 2019, p. 423 - 426.

¹¹ SCHREINER 1979, p. 158 - 160; GYUZELEV 1975, p. 151 - 151, 168 - 171; BOZILOV & GYUZELEV 2004, p. 255.

¹² ATANASOV 2000, p. 199 - 200.

¹³ KUZEV 1981, p. 303 - 304; UZELAC 2019, p. 426, note 9.

¹⁴ DECEI 1950/1955, p. 85, not. 21.

¹⁵ DECEI 1950/1955, p. 89 - 90; SCHREINER 1979, p. 158 - 160; UZELAC 2019, p. 425 - 426; POLIPCUK 2021, p. 65 - 66.

where Aktav was killed. But in the sources no hint is alluded that other fortresses at the Black Sea and particularly Kaliakra, except Varna, have been also conquered. In Kaliakra a topos is known, often cited in the documents from the 14-15th centuries. Having in mind the splendid fortification and the inaccessibility of Kaliakra, in front of which are helpless even the well-equipped and experienced Hungarian crusaders, it is curious how the nomads as the horde of Aktav could conquer Kaliakra without the help of the Osmanian troops supplied with high military technological weapons. The determination of the Tatars of Aktav as 'classical nomads' is known from several sources. For instance, prof. Hamit Sadi (Selen) has translated the document *Pasaeli Sarki*. There it is written the following on the occasion of the march of conquest of Timur in 1400 to Asia Minor (the year according to Decei and the number are not correct): '*Aktav chan with his 100, 000 people has left behind his lands in Kunçak /Bessabia/ and through Eflak /Valachia/ and Danube arrived at Edirne (Odrin). It was permitted to them (by Bayezid I) to settle in the environs of the sandjak Filibe. This tribe however has been never occupied by agriculture. They caused a strong discontent /among the local population/ in the given territory because they harmed everywhere around themselves. On this reason their leader Aktav was killed*¹⁶. The 'people' of Aktav are written down in the Osmanian defters from 1453, printed by T. Gokbilgin, and in *Yiirukan Kanunu* (Law of the nomadian tribes) during the time of Kanuni Sultan Süleyman (Sulejman the Magnificent 1520-1566) in the middle of the 16th century, published by Ö. L. Barkan (detailed comment of these sources see in A. Decei)¹⁷. It cannot be explained how one can write extensively on Aktav not knowing this basic studia.

On this background, it is interesting to explain how the nomads could settle in an urban milieu and even erect massive stone buildings in Kaliakra, as the so-called 'Late building', with a pavement of stone plates. Therefore, the conquer of Kaliakra by the Tatars of Aktav is extremely disputable, the urban settling and building of stone houses has no precedents and analogies, respectively on this background the 'Tatar loot' is an illogical, very problematic interpretation without sure markers. That's why this curious and quite interesting treasure should be rather related after the beginning of the 15th century. It is difficult to outline the reason of its hiding. At the present stage, more logical is to refer this event after the death of Bayezid in 1492, when the Genuesen (probably with the help of their wonderfully equipped and high-technological fleet) captured Kaliakra either in 1404, when we have indirect data that the fortress was occupied by the army of the Valachian chieftain Mircea the Elder. The lack of coins of Süleyman Çelebi (1403-1411), the son and heir of Bayezid I in the Balkans, which are to be met, although rarer in Dobruja, supposes 1402-1404 as reasonable *terminus ante quem* for hiding the treasure. We can only guess who was its owner. There is enough ground to observe too the hypothesis that the treasure of Kaliakra was a 'resource' of a saraf, having in mind the mixture of coins and adornments from different periods (from the middle of the 13th up to the beginning of the 15th centuries), including only precious metals, silver and gold.

¹⁶ DECEI 1950/1955, p. 85, not. 21.

¹⁷ DECEI 1950/1955, p. 89 - 90, n. 35, 36.

On the last pages of the analytic text of B. Petrunova, questions are posed of the historical character of the Dobruja despotate and Kaliakra at the end of the 14th - the beginning of the 15th centuries. It is strange to read an affirmation relating the cited text of Johannes Schiltberger on the Third Bulgarian kingdom with capital Kaliakra, that it has been ignored in the analysis of the events from the end of the 14th century. On the opposite, this has been done in details in two monographies published in 2000 and 2004 (of G. Atanasov and V. Gyuselev). The conclusions made there are almost the same as in the later studia on the Kaliakra treasure.

In general, the passages in the *Conclusion* are in fact an abstract with some mistakes. It lacks the source that in 1444 Kaliakra has been conquered by the crusaders, which is also not correct, see the last chapters of the monography 'History of Dobruja', v. 2, and 'The Dobruja despotate'. As usual practice in the studia, namely they are also omitted and not cited.

At the end, it is necessary to outline that the decision to publish so quickly this precious and quite curious treasure is worthy of favourable comment. The treasure may become an important source of new research of the coin circulation, the jewellery and the general processes in Kaliakra and the Dobruja despotate at the end of the 14th and the beginning of the 15th century.

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