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(review) Raiko Krauß, *Ovčarovo-Gorata. Eine frühneolitische Siedlung in Nordostbulgarien* (= *Archäologie in Eurasien* 29). Bonn 2014: Habelt-Verlag, 350 pages, 74 plates.

Svend Hansen, the editor of the *Archäologie in Eurasien* series published by the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut in Berlin, points out in the preface to the reviewed book how many crucial sites excavated in the Balkans several dozen years ago, e.g. the famous Karanovo tell (or, I may add, the equally famous cemetery in Varna), have not yet been fully described. Through the efforts of Henrietta Todorova and the authorities of the Eurasien Abteilung Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, the material recovered from the Ovčarovo-Gorata site in Bulgaria in 1974–1979 was entrusted to the care of Raiko Krauß, a Berlin archaeologist and the author of the reviewed publication, ten years ago. Thus, valuable artefacts from one of the most important early Neolithic sites in the eastern Balkans, dated to the first half of the 6th millennium BC, have finally been made available to the archaeological community.

The publication consists of ten chapters and 74 full-page plates, preceded with prefaces by the editor of the series and by the author. The first chapter, *Introduction*, presents a short history of the site and the excavation carried out there. It also discusses the state of research on the Neolithic Age in the central and eastern Balkans, as well as the location and topography of the Ovčarovo-Gorata site and other Neolithic or Eneolithic sites near the city of Targovište in north-eastern Bulgaria.

The second chapter, *The excavations in Ovčarovo-Gorata*, describes in detail the excavation in 1974–1979 and lists its main stages. It also discusses information on the Ovčarovo-Gorata site in the literature, mentioning the first publications of flint and bone materials from the 1980s and preliminary reports on field investigation published in 1986 and 1992 by Ilka Angelova, who had supervised the excavation.

The third chapter, *House architecture*, concerns the documentation and interpretation of various kinds of building structures. The author presents Angelova's reconstruction of the forms of settlement at the site. Angelova has identified four chronological horizons,

each with its own inner development of the Ovčarovo-Gorata settlement, which slightly changed in time. Krauß points out the divergence between the plans of the dwellings published in the preliminary reports and their traces in the records of the field investigation. The actual state has been determined only within the oldest horizon, the one with the best preserved sunk features, the remains of the dwelling structures.

In the fourth chapter, *The finds*, the author describes the documentation of the artefacts and the methods of their inventorying and classification. Special attention is paid to the ceramics, which have been divided into types and studied in relation to their spatial distribution. Since many of the ceramic artefacts cannot be attributed with certainty to the horizons of settlement, the entire ceramic material, 23 744 items, is discussed jointly, without dividing it into the proposed chronological stages. In order to determine the relative chronology of the ceramics, a penetrating comprehensive analysis is carried out, with the artefacts being compared to contemporaneous finds from the area of the lower Danube, the north-western coast of Black Sea, the Carpathian Basin, the central Balkans, Macedonia, Thrace and Anatolia. Further, the author discusses anthropomorphic and animal figurines and clay pendants, loom weights and spindle whorls. The chapter also includes monographs, e.g. *Archaeoceramological studies* by Małgorzata Daszkiewicz, Gerwulf Schneider and Ewa Bobryk, *The polished stone tools* by Florian Klimscha, *The Neolithic [flint] inventory from Ovčarovo-Gorata* by Nguyen Van Binh, and *Bone and antler tools: Traditions and practices in the everyday life of the residents of Ovčarovo-Gorata* by Petar Zidarov.

The fifth chapter, *Hunting and the keeping of livestock in the Early Neolithic settlement Ovčarovo-Gorata*, brings paleozoological studies by Norbert Benecke. Among 2530 items of animal bone material, remains of cattle and goats or sheep predominate, with a small percentage of pig bones. Hunting was a definitely less important source of meat than animal husbandry. The main hunted wild animals were red deer, wild pigs, wild horses and donkeys. The species composition of the material shows that the settlement lay in the immediate vicinity of forests (the red deer) and of open areas (the wild horses and donkeys).

A paleobotanical study by Elena Marinowa makes up the sixth chapter, *Agriculture and land use in the region of Ovčarovo-Gorata: Archaeobotanical studies on the Early Neolithic of Northwest Bulgaria*. Because no paleobotanical sources were acquired during the excavation, comments on the subject have been based on accidentally preserved burnt plant seeds or fruit and on charcoals obtained through flotation of samples taken from different layers. More comprehensive conclusions have been possible only when the scarce paleobotanical sources from Ovčarovo-Gorata were analysed against a more varied natural environment reconstructed from data obtained at the adjacent Neolithic sites in Džuljunica, Orlovec and Koprivec.

The seventh chapter, *The chronological position of the Northern Bulgarian Early Neolithic*, concerns the chronology of the early Neolithic in northern Bulgaria. It presents the radiocarbon dating of the absolute age of samples from different settlement horizons at Ovčarovo-Gorata. The site has provided 18 radiocarbon dates altogether, five of them

determined in a Berlin laboratory and thirteen determined in Poznan. The penetrating competent analysis of the series of absolute dates has indicated yet again that the vertical division of the layers into four settlement horizons is inaccurate, and that the settlement was inhabited for a relatively short period, most probably for 200 years, possibly up to 300 years. Contrary to Angelova's view, there is no evidence of intervals between the settlement episodes (horizons). The Ovčarovo-Gorata settlement has been dated to 5700–5500 (perhaps 5400) BC. On the basis of the comparative analysis of the ceramics in the fourth chapter and the analysis of the absolute chronology, Krauß has synchronised the development of the Ovčarovo-Gorata settlement with the Karanovo II horizon in Thrace.

The analysis of 18 dates obtained for the Ovčarovo-Gorata site, of 40 dates obtained for other Neolithic sites and 29 dates for early Eneolithic sites in northern Bulgaria has shown that agricultural settlement began in that area in the 71st century BC, and that the Eneolithic began in the 49th century BC with the developing metallurgy of copper and gold and the transregional exchange of shells, flint and other raw materials.

The eight and ninth chapters contain Bulgarian and English summaries of the publication, and the tenth chapter brings a bibliography comprising nearly 530 references.

The publication about the Ovčarovo-Gorata settlement may well fulfil Svend Hansen's hopes expressed in his preface and become a model for texts presenting the results of excavations that were carried out at crucial Neolithic settlements in the Balkans several dozen years ago, but have remained inaccessible to the wider archaeological community until now. The work done by Reiko Krauß and the team of his collaborators merits a special commendation for its comprehensiveness, completeness and interdisciplinary character.

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