

HUMANITIES INSTITUTE
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THE VOLGA BULGARS – ART – ARCHITECTURE – ENGRAVINGS

OVERVIEW

Archaeological studies showed that the Volga Bulgarians built a highly developed complex defense system which included large well-fortified cities and small border fortresses.

In the 13th - 14th centuries, the dishes that were found during the excavations in the burial sites of Volga Bugaria portrayed daily life, animals, and mythological scenes.

ARCHITECTURE AND ENGRAVINGS

Fortresses

Archaeological research to examine the ancient fortifications of the Volga Bulgaria revealed the remains of earth-timber fortifications.

Although there is some degree of variation in Volga Bulgar fortifications, the most commonly encountered systems of fortifications are either the combination of a single moat and defensive walls, or double defensive walls and multiple moats. Combinations of moats and three or four ramparts are uncommon.

The stonework used in the ramparts and moats indicate that they were designed for active defense, including the use of missile artillery. Traces of wooden structures found on the top of the ramparts indicate that both simple stockades and more complex log constructions, *gorodnya*, were constructed.

Egravings



plate).

During the archeological research many dishes carved with mythological scenes, drawings of human figures riding on horses, animals like horses, lions and deer and found on the river Synya, in the burial ground in Zeleny Yar site near Salekhard, in the Tomsk province.

A dish with two lions from Zeleny Yar

A number of niello pieces dating to the 13th and 14th centuries, displayed a mix of decorative figures. A common image found by archaeologists on a number of items is horseman with a bird on his arm. These decorative plates has been discovered in the Perm Kama (16 plates), in the Komi Republic (5 plates), and on Vaigach Island (a single



A horseman with a bird on his arm in Yamal Peninsula

Discussion/Questions

1- Why are fortifications the primary example of Volga Bulgar architecture?

Readings

1- Sitdikov, A.G., Izmailov, I. L., & Khayrutdinov, R.R., "Weapons, Fortification and Military Art of the Volga Bulgaria in the 10th – the First Third of the 13th Centuries", *Journal of Sustainable Development*; Vol. 8, No. 7; 2015.

2-Fedorova, N.V., "Volga Bulgaria Silver of the 10th-14th centuries (on materials of the Trans-Urals collections), Artistic Metal Studies presented to B. Marshak", *Marshak Festschrift, Eran ud Aneran*, Venice, 2006.

3- Pict. A dish with two lions from Zeleny Yar - From <http://www.transoxiana.org/Eran/Articles/fedorova.html>

4- Pict. A horseman with a bird on his arm in Yamal Peninsula - From

<http://www.transoxiana.org/Eran/Articles/fedorova.html>