



Poster exhibition “The panoply of the Thracian warriors” in Tsaribrod/Dimitrovgrad, Serbia

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Poster exhibitions¹ are one of the most accessible means of communication with the public, and their advantages are numerous. As visual narratives, posters could be used both as a supplement to an ongoing exhibition but also be an exhibition in its own right. Occasionally, poster exhibitions could be dedicated to an already complete exhibition that was held in a museum. In this way, the posters extend the “life” of the “real” exhibition, allowing it to be seen and admired by more people outside the museum environment and at many other places.

In the autumn of 2023, the National Archaeological Institute with Museum at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (NAIM–BAS) organised such a poster exhibition, which represented the already completed exhibition “The Panoply of the Thracian Warriors”. The latter was displayed in the Treasury Hall of the National Archaeological Museum from the 21st of April 2022 to the 29th of January 2023 (fig. 1). It was a result of a joint scientific project between NAIM–BAS and Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”. The exhibition was organised in cooperation with 21 museums in Bulgaria and two in Romania namely the National History Museum of Romania in Bucharest, and the Museum of History and Archaeology in Tulcea. More than 120 artefacts were presented, each of them carefully chosen to provide the visitor with valuable information about the military activities of the Thracians and the burial rites of their nobility. The objects demonstrated the high level of craftsmanship and reflected the religious beliefs and the mythology of the Thracian society at the time of the heyday of the Thracian culture in the second half of the 1st millennium BC.

The poster exhibition of the same name “The Panoply of the Thracian Warriors” was held from the 26th of September to the 21st of October 2023 in the lounge of the Cultural Centre in Tsaribrod, Serbia, in cooperation with the Cultural Centre and the National Library “Detko Petrov”, Tsaribrod (fig. 2). It was organised within the first year of the National Scientific Programme “Development and Promotion of Bulgarian Studies Abroad”, in which NAIM–BAS is participating. The choice

1 The origin of posters is related to the rise of printing technology. In 1870, Jules Chéret produced the first colour lithographic posters in Paris, transforming the poster from a black-and-white sheet of paper for the rapid dissemination of information into art. Despite their original purpose of advertising, posters have been subjects of museum exhibitions since the late 19th c. (Barnicoat 1972; Sermcheep 2020, 18).



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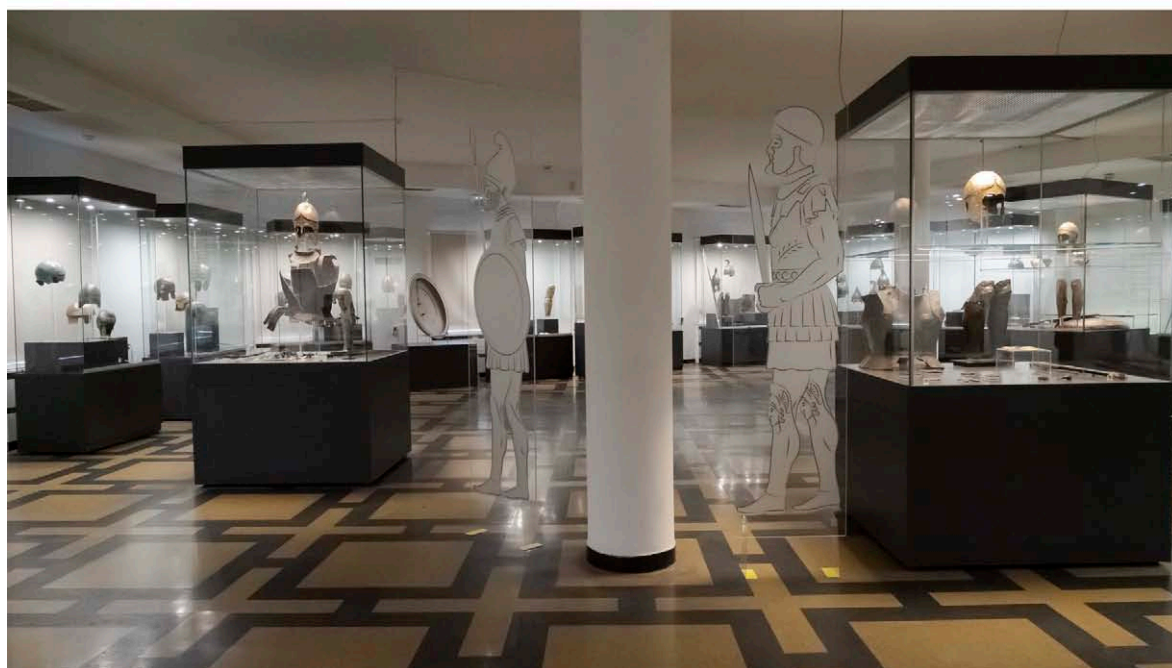


Fig. 1.1–2. The exhibition “The Panoply of the Thracian warriors” in the Treasury Hall of the National Archaeological Museum in Sofia (photos M. Raykovska)

Обр. 1.1–2. Изложбата „Доспехите на тракийските воители“ в Зала Трезор на Националния археологически музей в София (снимки М. Райковска)



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Fig. 2.1–2. Organisation of the poster exhibition in the lounge of the Cultural centre in Tsaribrod
(photos M. Stamberova, K. Pramatarov)

Обр. 2.1–2. Подготовка на постерната изложба във фойето на Културния център в Цариброд
(снимки М. Стамберова, К. Праматаров)



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Fig. 3.1–2. Launch of the poster exhibition “The Panoply of the Thracian warriors” in Tsaribrod, Serbia (photos A. Milev)

Обр. 3.1–2. Откриване на постерната изложба „Доспехите на тракийските војни“ в гр. Цариброд, Сърбия (снимки А. Милев)



Fig. 4. Interviews for the local TV with the Assistant Director of NAIM–BAS, Assoc. Prof. Dr Stefan Alexandrov, and the curators of the exhibition, Assist. Prof. Dr Kaloyan Pramatarov and Assist. Prof. Dr Miglena Stamberova

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Обр. 4. Интервјуа за местната телевизија на зам.-директора на НАИМ–БАН доц. д-р Стефан Александров и кураторите на изложбата гл. ас. д-р Калоян Праматаров и гл. ас. д-р Миглена Стамберова

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of the host Tsaribrod was not accidental. There has been a good practice of cooperation between NAIM–BAS and the institutions of the city over the last few years, which has resulted in several other poster exhibitions being organised there (Goryanova, Stefanova 2020, 157). In general, exhibitions need to be associated with the experience and enjoyment of the visitors, so in addition to the scientific aims of the programme to promote the Bulgarian history and culture abroad, the fact that a large part of the population of Tsaribrod has a Bulgarian consciousness and expresses its Bulgarian identity², was very important. Moreover, this exhibition was among the largest and most significant temporary exhibitions organised in Bulgaria for a number of decades and the great public interest was expected.

The opening of the poster exhibition “The Panoply of the Thracian Warriors” (fig. 3.1–2) was attended by the Assistant Director of NAIM–BAS, Associate Professor Stefan Alexandrov, and the curators of the exhibition, Assistant Professor Miglena Stamberova, PhD and Assistant Professor Kaloyan Pramatarov, PhD. Among the official guests were Mr. Zoran Djurov, Vice Chairman of the Tsaribrod Municipal Assembly, Mrs. Albena Milev, Director of the National Library “Detko Petrov”, and Mr. Sasha Kostov, Director of the Cultural Centre at Tsaribrod, Serbia. The inauguration was broadcast on the local Radio and television of Tsaribrod (fig. 4). The exhibition was of great interest to the local residents, the pupils of the High school “St. Cyril and St. Methodius” and the Primary School “Hristo Botev”, as well as to the Bulgarian tourists who visited Tsaribrod at that time.

The exhibition itself consists of 16 posters made on foamed PVC sheets (called *komatex*), exposed on both sides (fig. 5). This was due to the characteristics of the exhibition space and the availability of suitable wooden stands. Posters attracted the public with their visual design, colourful pictures of the impressive artefacts and informative short texts in both Bulgarian and English. The first two posters, “About the exhibition” and “Thrace”, are introductory, presenting the overall information about the actual exhibition, held in 2022–2023, the Thracian lands and the main Thracian tribes (Odrysians, Getae, and Triballi) from the 6th to the 3rd c. BC. The next posters present the Thracian army, the Thracian warfare, the interactions between the Thracians and their neighbours, as well as the depictions of the Thracian warriors on various artefacts and monuments. The other

2 The town of Tsaribrod is located in the so-called Western Bulgarian Outlands and was within the borders of the Principality/Kingdom of Bulgaria from 1879 to 1920 (Velev 2009, 69–79, 81–92, 99–100; Gotsev, Gotseva 2012, 460–462) and between 1941 and 1944 (Toshkova 2012, 385–387). In 1950, it was renamed Dimitrovgrad after the Bulgarian communist leader Georgi Dimitrov (Ivanov 2022, 90–91), as today the name Tsaribrod is used in parallel.



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Fig. 5.1–2. The posters of the exhibition (photos M. Stamberova)
 Фиг. 5.1–2. Постерите в изложбата (снимки М. Стамберова)

posters are dedicated to the different groups of warrior's panoply such as helmets, shields and pectorals, cuirasses and corselets, greaves, and the ceremonial armour which is the most fascinating and representative panoply because it was made of precious metals. The last four posters represent the rich warrior burials in Svetitsata Mound and Golyama Kosmatka Mound (known as „The tomb of the Odrysian king Seuthes III“) in Kazanlak region, Zlatinitsa–Malomirovo in Yambol region and Dolna Koznitsa in Kyustendil region. On the final poster (fig. 6), the visitors can see the map of Bulgaria with the archaeological sites where the panoply included in the exhibition was discovered.

ДОСПЕХИТЕ НА ТРАКИЙСКИТЕ ВОИНИ THE PANOPLY OF THE THRACIAN WARRIORS



Национален археологически институт с музей
при Българска академия на науките



National Archaeological Institute with Museum
at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences



Fig. 6. The final poster presenting the map of Bulgaria with the archaeological sites where the panoply included in the exhibition was discovered

Обр. 6. Завършващият постер на изложбата, представящ карта на България с археологическите обекти, в които са открити представените в изложбата доспехи

The next ambitious goal in front of the curators of the poster exhibition “The Panoply of the Thracian Warriors” is to turn it into a travelling exhibition and to present it to a wide audience of the Bulgarian diaspora in Europe and other continents, as well as to the public interested in the archaeological heritage of the present-day Bulgarian lands.

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