

Archeo open-air museum Myssle

LADISLAV OLEXA and TOMÁŠ NOVÁČEK

*Institute of Archeology, Slovak Academy of Sciences, Hrnčiarska 13, 040 01 Košice, Slovakia
(E-mail: olexal@saske.sk)*

In past few years modern museology and tourism presented new phenomena of propagating our European past. It is so called open-air museum. In those types of museums it is at most interest to re-create former inhabitant's culture with every aspect of our prehistoric past. Most of these museums are exact reconstructions of building excavated with archeological methods on various sites. Slovak Republic has only little experience with running that kind of museums however situation in neighbor's countries, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, is significantly better. Surely it is not because Slovakia doesn't have adequate history worth of presentation. On the contrary many archeological sites prove that Slovakia, as a part of Carpathian basin, was important region during shaping our ancient European

past. There for it is only logical that it is important to spread knowledge about our country and not only for foreigners but also for our people, namely young generations, for better understanding our cultural identity. One of the very good ways is mentioned open-air museums that not only show prehistoric artifacts but also help to re-create original atmosphere. Visitors will have unique possibility to become part of history. They can experience living in prehistoric houses or crafting. They can touch and feel history.

One of the important archeological sites is prehistoric village from older Bronze Age situated 11 km south from city Košice. Nižná Myšľa, as this village is called today, was once important centre of early new formed civilization of metallurgists called Otomány – Füzesabony cultural complex.

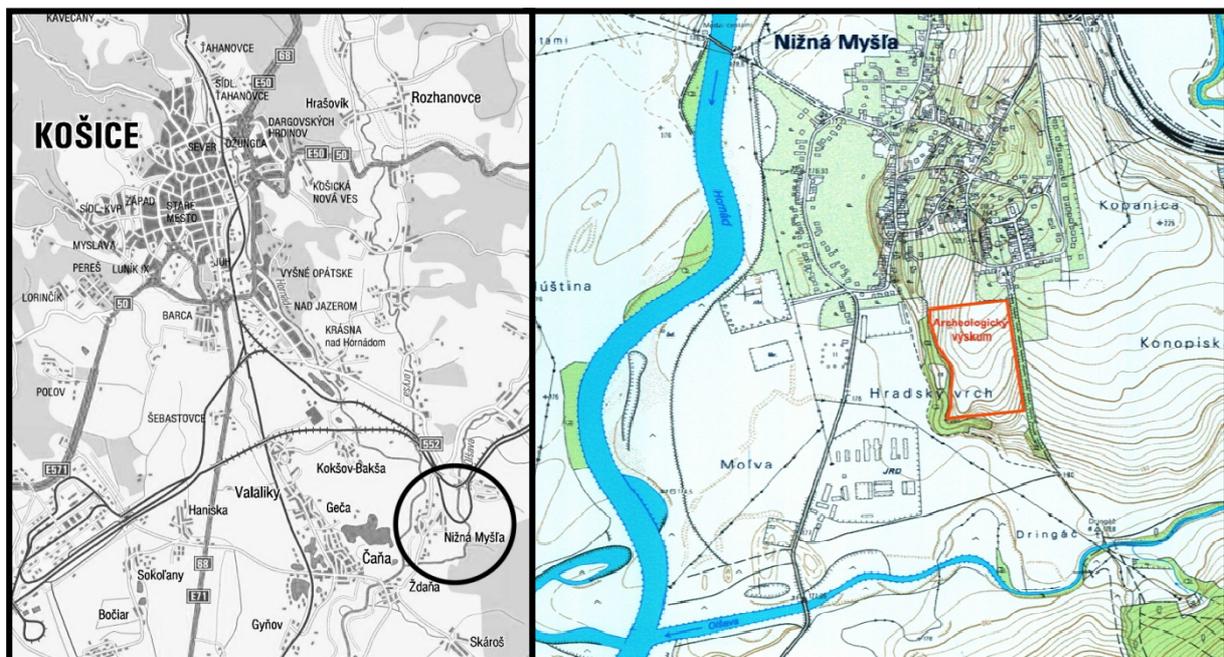


Fig. 1 Localization of Nižná Myšľa (left) and archeological site (right)

Several decades lasting archeological excavations prove that it was extremely important prehistoric village that played important role in forming region of eastern Slovakia. In 1995 it was established citizen's fellowship Collegium Myssle. One of the main objectives is to build open-air museum. Before we get to certain details, it is important to introduce Nižná Myšľa and results of archeological excavation.

NIŽNÁ MYŠĽA IN EARLY BRONZE AGE

On wide area of the Carpathian Basin in early stage of the older Bronze Age, sometimes around 17th century BC, fortified settlements appear with highly developed crafts. These settlements, thanks to their economic prosperity opened way and new possibilities, until that time unusual, cultural and trade contacts with both close and distant areas. At the same time they help to connect new and progressive conveniences from culturally and technically more advanced areas of Middle

East, Anatolia and east European territories more to the west till out of the Carpathian Basin and as well as to the north from Carpathian to the Baltic.

Even on the area of east Slovakia in region of Otomány-Füzesabony cultural complex cca 1700 – 1400 BC appeared fortified settlements of craftsmen and agricultural workers. They became centre of production, social life, bureaucracy and government. Settlements with massive fortification, urban solution of building, cultic places, graveyards and ancient artifacts are undisputed proofs of advanced social, cultural and religious life of the east Slovakia's ancient inhabitants.

One of these important centres of culture and development in older Bronze Age in the region of east Slovakia is also Nižná Myšľa. Systematical archeological excavation begins in 1977 under the supervision of the Slovak Academy of Science namely Archeological Institute in Nitra and since beginning is lead by PhDr. Ladislav Olexa. After 35 excavation seasons Nižná Myšľa still does not stop surprise both experts and lay public (see: Olexa, 2003).



Fig. 2 Area of the excavation



Fig. 3 Excavation in Nižná Myšľa

Approximately around 2000 BC, there for 4000 years ago, became metallurgy of colored metals (copper, tin, gold) new craft that determined next evolution or progress inside Carpathian Basin. New fascinating artifacts made from bronze and gold appear such as jewelry, weapons and tools. Mining, prospecting and craftsmanship of metals change entire face of prehistoric society and even give name to certain period of European history. Bronze Age was born which lasted for 1000 years until it was replaced by Iron Age. At the beginning areas with rich natural resources became several steps ahead in comparison with general situation. Nižná Myšľa, site Varhegy, was one of them. Inhabitants of these villages crafted beautiful artifacts for various use and also established trade connections even with regions thousands kilometers away. Many of archeological experts call this entire time a s “golden age of Europe”. Good example that these experts could have truth is large amount of gold artifacts found in several important sites through Europe and also in Carpathian basin. One of them is also Nižná Myšľa.

Gold jewels first appear in so called

Tiszapolgar culture in the region of east Slovakia at the beginning of eneolithic period (around 3200 BC). Gold represent exquisite trade subject and was symbol of highly privilege elite. Numerous findings of gold products are also from older and middle Bronze Age - Tisza river region is very rich for these types of artifacts. Mostly it concerns so called Sibin earrings, golden spiral ornaments, appliquéés and other shapes (see: Olexa, Ľušík, Mihok, 1989).

Typical jewel from fortified settlement is golden spiral, made from wire with proximal wide around 3 mm. Mostly it served as hair decoration but it is also possible that it was used differently. In 2008 was found whole depot of those spirals that consists 5 pieces, everyone has 12 g and all exemplars are quite similar. Depot was found in the supplied hole number 450. This nearly 2 m deep hole, in its last phase served for waste and mentioned golden spirals were hide inside.

On the graveyard in Nižná Myšľa, with now-days explored nearly 800 graves were found numerous graves with gold artifacts. Mostly founded artifacts were already

mentioned golden sibir earrings. All earrings have triangular section and are heart shape. Their analogy can be found in entire region of Carpathian Basin. In the period of older Bronze Age all these artifacts are made by casting what is different in middle Bronze Age when they were produced from golden plate.

Another jewel, more typical for women, are golden appliqués mostly find in two line on bone "claviculae" what together with fact that graves was not destroyed may indicate former present of ornamented collar. Detailed metalografical analyses uncover process of crafting. In "tuf" form were casted thicker plates, later were cut and processed to bowl – shape under pressure and lastly were filled with two opposite holes made for connection to a cloth. Study of the micro particles proof that appliqués was not processed with any kind of pressure method (check: Mihók-

Olexa-Briančin, 1989).

Interesting gold object is golden spiral put into necklace in the woman's grave number 76. Spiral itself is situated in the middle of necklace made from bronze spirals, amber pearl and pair of similar bronze heart-shape lockets.

Provenience of the gold, more correctly electron, was determined as local according to the significant amount of iron. Possibilities are locality Telkybanya in Hungary, around 20 km from Košice, and rivers lying under the roots of Slanské Mountains. Chemical analysis proof incorrect former hypothesis about origin of the gold from Sedmihradsko, which consists copper and iron, against gold from Košice region consisting silver. Analysis of the surface proves that all gold objects was first casted and later polished (cut). Products were not processed by any kind of pressure method.



Fig. 4 Variability of the golden artifacts from Nižná Myšľa



Fig. 5 Toy of trade cart made from pottery found in Nižná Myšľa

Till nowadays there are not adequate amount of gold objects analysis found in Carpathian Basin. With their absence it is impossible to proper compare certain artifacts in wide analysis as well as determine the origin of gold jewelry in general meaning. Experience proved that best objects for comparison are firs-made artifacts from older and beginning of middle Bronze Age.

During entire Bronze Age “barter” trade with salt, furs, ores, ambra, cattle and other commodities play important role in forming prehistoric societies. Gold and bronze objects was no doubt highly priced subjects and was reserved for members of elite society.

OPEN-AIR MUSEUM MYSSLE

As it was mentioned before, Collegium Myssle has one of the main objectives to build archeo-open-air museum in Nižná Myšľa. Purpose of the open-air museum Myssle is clear: presentation European cultural heritage, development of tourism, improving general education process of youth and increasing national history awareness. Entire area should be around 10 ha large but with possibility of further increasing. Next to the reconstruction of

original prehistoric houses it is also planned to build two gates and surrounding fortification that will match original situation based on archeological excavation. Also other buildings will be built upon former houses of prehistoric inhabitants and by using original technologies – what will be done under the supervision of experts from Slovak Academy of Science. Open-air museum will be organic part of touristic interests surrounding Slovaks - Hungarian border. Visiting of open-air museum will follows after visit of local museum in Nižná Myšľa (also established by Collegium Myssle).

Archeo open-air museum Myssle is unique because visitors can have direct connection with prehistoric way of life. Local museum in Nižná Myšľa also shows the nicest artifacts excavated during last 35 years. This combination of performance of both movable and unmovable remains of prehistoric time is unique even in general meaning in European outdoor museums.

Archeo open-air museums represents newest trend in presentation of European history. Nižná Myšľa, with no doubt, belongs to one of the most important European sites. Building of open-air museum will be decent ending of efforts of both archeologists and citizen’s fellowship COLLEGIUM MYSSLE.



Fig. 6 General plan of open-air museum

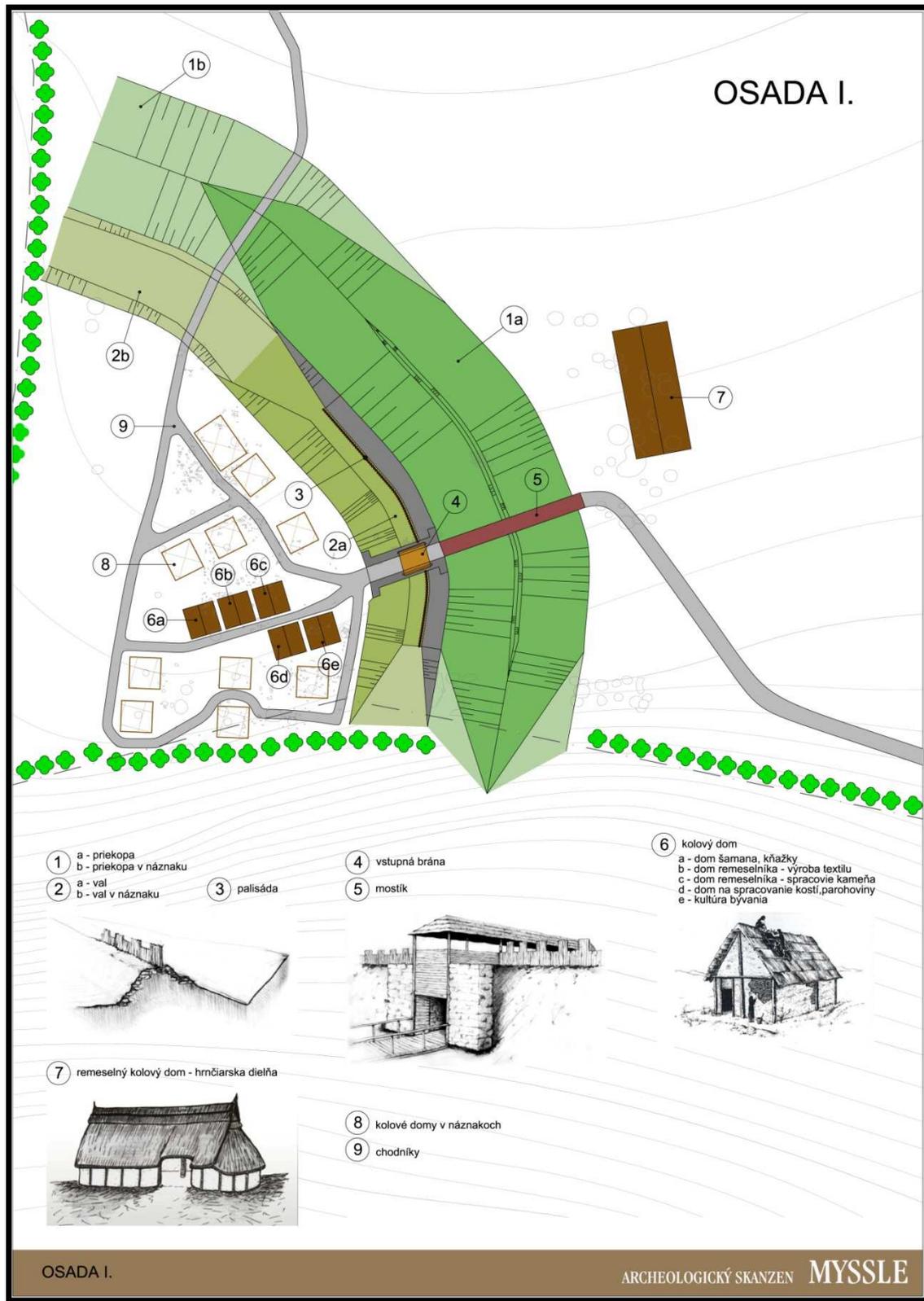


Fig. 7 Plan of village num. 1 in open-air museum

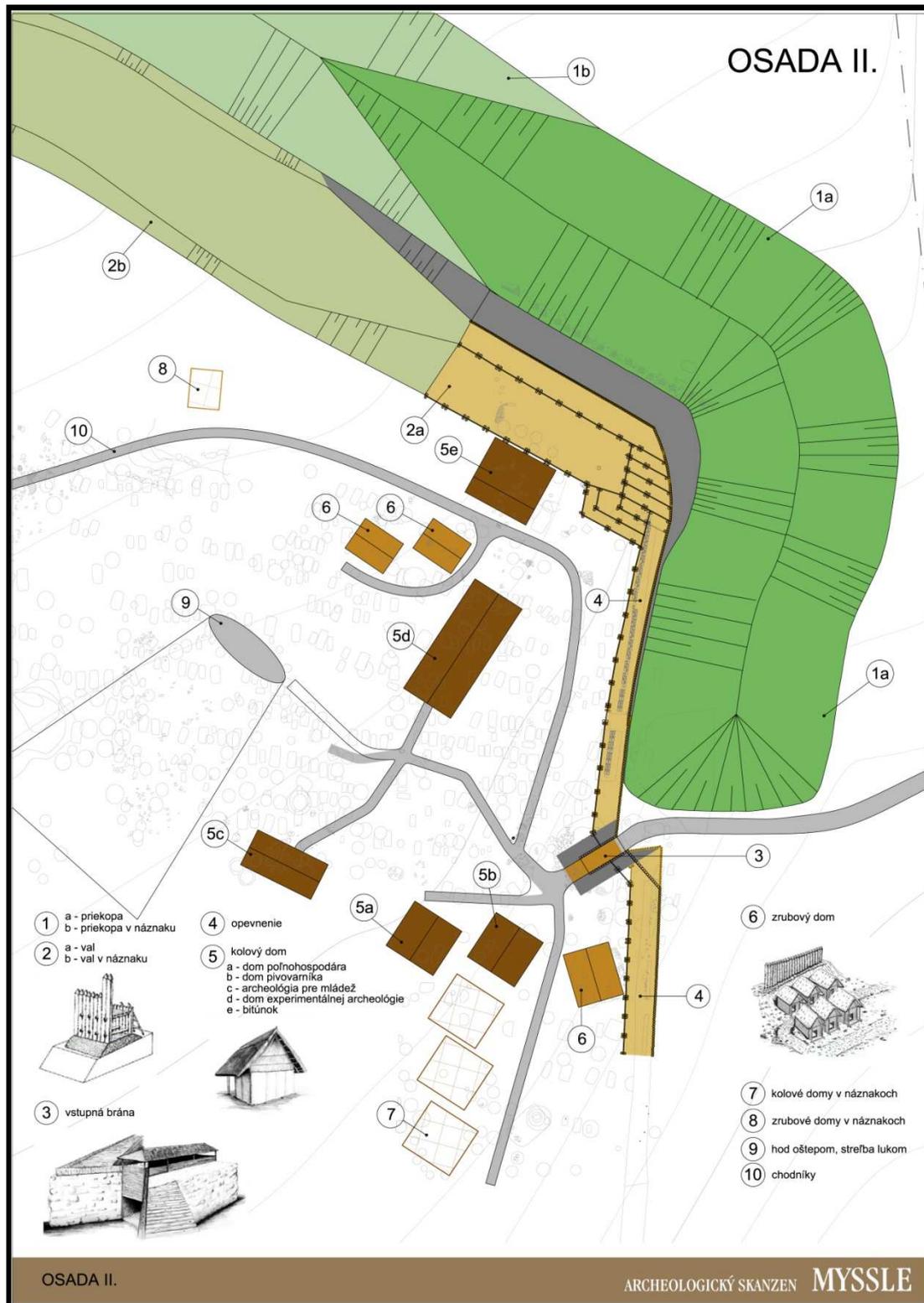


Fig. 8 Plan of village num. 2 in open-air museum

BIBLIOGRAPHY

MIHOK, L.- OLEXA, L.- BRIANČIN, J., 1998: Production of bronze age gold object. In: Carpatica-Zborník prác Užhorodskej univerzity. Užhorod.

OLEXA, L.-EUŠTÍK, J.-MIHOK, L., 1989: Metalografický rozbor predmetov z Nižnej Myšle. AR XXXXI. Praha. 86-90.

OLEXA, L., 2003: Nižná Myšľa- Osada a pohrebisko z doby bronzovej. Košice.