

JEWISH HISTORICAL MUSEUM — BELGRADE

SCIENTIFIC MEETING

# MENOROTH FROM ČELAREVO

(Shorthand notes)





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The discovery of a large early medieval necropolis at Čelarevo, from the time of Avar. domination in the Panonian Plain, attracted exceptional attention of both Yugoslav and foreign experts.

The striking feature of the find were Jewish symbols engraved on brick fragments found above and within some graves in a part of the necropolis. The very fact of finding Jewish symbols within a necropolis left by a Mongoloid tribe put the acting archaeologists in front of a puzzle. It intrigued the curators with the Novi Sad City Museum, as well as all interested scientists. The question has been about the connection between those symbols and the Avars. Did some elements of Judaism enter into their faith, or is the necropolis a remnant from a still older or just a contemporary but not yet identified settlement, inhabited by various ethnic groups and among them also Jews, who arrived at the site on their century-old migrations.

Serious damages in the necropolis, unexplored surroundings, as well as a lack of written sources, held any more precise answers beyond the limits of possibilities.

The Yugoslav and foreign scientific community got an opportunity to get acquainted with the finds and questions at the exhibition „Menoroth from Čelarevo“, which took place in 1980 at the Jewish Museum in Belgrade in close collaboration with the Novi Sad City Museum, following the discovery of the necropolis. The exhibition catalogue, a well documented manuel, has been written by Radovan Bunardžić, the archaeologist who directed the excavations at Čelarevo. To try a next step in solving the problems related to Jewish symbols in an Avaric necropolis, the Jewish Historical Museum convened a round-table, in Belgrade on February 23rd, 1981, on the premises of the Federation of Jewish Communities in Yugoslavia. The meeting was attended by thirty Yugoslav scholars, mainly archaeologists and historians, as well as nine foreign scientists students of early mediaeval Jewish diaspora, the history of Judaized Crimean Khazars, as well as migration of various tribes into the Danube Valley in the early Middle Age. Unable to attend, nine foreign scholars sent in their discussion papers.

Prof. Dr Jovan Kovačević, Department Head for Medieval Archaeology at the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade, presided over the meeting.

The round-table discussions were followed by archaeology students from Belgrade and Zagreb.

We are pleased to express our gratitude to Blanka Kraus, who expertly handled simultaneous translations from and to the German language, as well as to Cvijeta Jakšić and Vida Janković who did the same in English. Their friendly efforts greatly contributed to smooth working at the meeting.

## LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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- Dr. Boško Babić, Institute of Old Slavic Culture, Prilep  
Stanimir Barački, National Museum, Vršac  
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Prof. Danica Dimitrijević, Faculty of Philosophy, Novi Sad  
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- Prof. Dr David Ayalon, Member of the Israel Academy, Institute of Asian and African Studies, the Hebrew University, Jerusalem  
Prof. Dr Miriam Ayalon, The Hebrew University, Jerusalem  
Prof. Dr István Bóna, The Ötvös University, Budapest  
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Prof. Dr Michael Heltzer, Haifa University, Haifa  
Doc. Dr Maria Miskiewisz, Institute of Archaeology, Warsaw University, Warsaw  
Prof. Dr Aleksander Scheiber, Theological Seminary of Hungary, Budapest  
Prof. Dr Đorđe Stričević, University of Cincinnati, Department of Fine Arts History, Cincinnati  
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- Dr Darina Bialekova, Archaeological Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, Nitra  
Dr Maria Comsa, Institute of Archaeology, Bucarest  
Prof. Dr Volker Bierbrauer, Institute for Prehistory and Early History, Bonn University, Bonn  
Zusia Efron, Mishkan Leomanut, – Museum of Fine Arts, Ein Harod  
Prof. Dr Ezra Fleischer, the Hebrew University, Jerusalem  
Dr Radu Harhoiu, Institute of Archaeology, Bucarest  
Dr L. I. Rahmani, Department of Antiquities, Jerusalem  
Prof. Simon Szysman, Historian, Paris  
Prof. Dr Yigal Yadin, Department of Archaeology, The Hebrew University, Jerusalem



**Aleksandar Mošić**, deputy president of the Federation of Jewish Communities in Yugoslavia, opened the scientific meeting addressing the audience as follows:

Honourable academicians, ladies and gentlemen, comrades, dear guests.

The Čelarevo finds have met with great interest of scientific circles both in Yugoslavia and in the world. Brick fragments with Jewish symbols found in this necropolis, a burial ground of Mongol population are unique in the world so far. We know very well that each fragment, every piece of clay, brick with whichever symbol engraved is but a great challenge to historians, archaeologists, and, in a general way, to the entire cultural world. It was this challenge that made the Jewish Historical Museum to turn to the Novi Sad City Museum seeking its cooperation and it was the same challenge that led the associates of the Novi Sad Museum to save, with great efforts and perseverance, what was still possible to save. It was unthinkable for our Museum to allow the Čelarevo finds to remain unknown to the wider scientific public. Hence its proposal to the Novi Sad Museum, to organize an exhibition and a round-table type scientific meeting. We were glad to learn that this proposal was readily accepted. The author of the „Menoroth from Čelarevo“ exhibition and of the catalogue's text is archaeologist Radovan Bunardžić. He and archaeologist Dragutin Vilotijević were instrumental in the Čelarevo digging. We wish to take this opportunity to extend our warm thanks to them. They had to invest much effort to save what still remained at that site, damaged to great extent by the operation of a brick plant. We are now meeting here around this table in an attempt to try to cast light on what we may call Čelarevo enigma. Our Jewish Historical Museum has no great hall in which it could welcome such a large gathering like this and it is therefore that the Federation of Jewish Communities in Yugoslavia, the founder of the Museum, has the privilege to offer its hospitality to the Museum, its contributing associates and the distinguished guests, to all of you,

and while extending welcome on behalf of the Federation I wish you a successful work and a pleasant stay in our midst. We are here from Yugoslavia, Poland, Hungary, Rumania, England, Israel and the United States. Our round — table is an impressive one, indeed. We approached Professor Dr Jovan Kovačević, who is the head of the Belgrade Faculty of Philosophy's chair for medieval archaeology, an outstanding expert of the Avar culture, requesting him to preside over this meeting and our thanks go to him for having accepted this responsibility. On behalf of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Fine Arts Professor Dr Radovan Samardžić wishes to say a word of welcome.

**Prof. Dr. Radovan Samardžić:**

This is a rather interesting gathering. Historians, and I am one of them, often envy archaeologists because their efforts are in a way great scientific adventures in the positive sense of that word and because entire civilizations unknown so far are discovered thanks to their ventures. At the beginning, entire civilizations are covered by a veil of unknown, everything is at the beginning enigmatic, but such gatherings as this one prove to be, as a rule, capable to solve many problems. It is an honour and privilege to extend to you warm welcome on behalf of the Serbian Academy of Science and Art, and particularly on behalf of academician Milutin Garašanin, the Academy's Secretary General who, much to his regret, could not arrange to be present.

I wish to stress that I am very glad to be here. For me, as for you, it is a privilege to attend such an interesting scientific meeting. But for me it is even more than that as I have been an associated contributor of this Museum for many years, worked in it, I cooperated with them and even published a few things in cooperation with them, and all that was a very pleasant experience for me. I am glad to see that this Museum marches ahead to become an important scientific institution, that its growth is marked by many important publications, and that the word about it at this hour goes around in the world as researchers came to sit around its table to busy themselves with important new discoveries.

On behalf of the Serbian Academy of Science and Art it is my privilege to extend greetings to this meeting, wishing you to achieve great success, good reception in the world, satisfactory results and solutions of problems which brought us here. May I be allowed to repeat how glad I am to be again here in the Jewish Historical Museum I cooperate with for so many years, on other problems, of course.

**Prof. Dr Jovan Kovačević:**

The Jewish Historical Museum has received several letters from colleagues who could not come. It is my proposal that Prof. Dr Nedomački should read for us some of those, which have a direct bearing on our work.

**Prof. Dr Vidosava Nedomački:**

I shall not, of course, read the letters the writers of which want us to know that they, too, are convinced that the Čelarevo finds are of great importance and that they are looking forward to see the results of our meeting. I shall read only those letters, or parts of them, which offer some views or suggestions for our discussion.

1. Prof. Simon Szyszman is of the opinion that the Čelarevo researchers should look at the finds through the light of the diffusion of biblical beliefs in the steppes of Euro-Asia. The regions north of Black and Caspian Seas had considerable contacts with the Danubian plainland. The Čelarevo drawings should be, no doubt, linked with the analogous drawings discovered on the gravestones in Taman region. Prof. Szyszman wants us, also, to remember the migration of Khaḅarian — Halician people who settled in Hungary after having left the Khazar territory. Cinamus, the 12th century historian said: „Isti Mosaicis legibus, iisque non omnino genuinis, etiamnum vivunt”, which means: „They live according to the laws of Moses, but not entirely so”. And further, Prof. Szyszman also mentioned that in his essay published in Prague in 1955, Stanislav Segert found some analogy between the Qumran community and the Moravian brotherhood, while N. Mešerskij pointed to the fact that the Essen's text were known in Kiev in the Middle Age. Prof. Szyszman has given in his letter detailed bibliographical data.

2. Dr L. I. Rahmani tells us that the number of bricks with Menorah, Shofar and Etrog (and Lulav and Mahta could perhaps also be there) is far too great to allow us to suppose that they came here by chance from a neighboring site. What these small bricks, always with the same symbols, were there for, if not to serve as headstones? — that is the essence of Dr Rahmani's question. The West-East orientation of the graves with heads turned towards the sacred city (Jerusalem) is the way Jewish graves are arranged. The inscription on brick marked Catalogue No. 110. (Plate XXVII) is, no doubt, Hebrew and it well may be the name *Jehuda*.

3. Prof. Dr Yigal Yadin, with reservation and until he has a chance to examine the finds in more details, says inter alia the following: „A compact group of 40–50 Jewish families lived in that settlement. It well may be that the settlement was within a Roman military camp. The dating and the identification of the group's origin is rather difficult. As the symbols are engraved in a stereotype, i.e. primitive way, two assumptions offer themselves: that the community members took to Judaism at a latter date, or, an assumption to the contrary, that the traditional symbols were preserved by the new generation only in a rudimental form, somehow schematically, whereby the simplified Shofar can serve as an indication. As to the origin of those people, two assumptions are, again, possible: they might had reached there from Crimea or some other part of Central Asia, or they might had arrived from Palestine, or Middle East, in their flight before the Omayyads. All this has to be, however, profoundly researched. There is no doubt that the presence in the 7th or 8th century of a Jewish group at the Danubian riverside is a great, perhaps a sensational discovery". Prof. Yadin stressed that the technical works were well done and clearly presented. In addition to Menorah, Shofar and Etrog are also engraved in the bricks. The brick registered in the catalogue as No. 110, Plate XXVII is engraved with Jewish letters *jod, vav, dalet* and twice „*he*“, while there is also at the end either the sign of a Shofar or some other letter. It could be the name *Yehuda* or *Yahve*. This is not a final conclusion.

4. Zusia Efron gave quite detailed assumptions relating to Čelarevo which boil down to the following: There were no direct contacts between the Mongolian nomad horsmen and the Jews. There is no evidence available so far which would lead us to conclude that any Mongolian tribe was Judaized or that Judaized Avars existed. As to the Khazars, in that case Judaism was adopted by the nobility only, and not by the masses. Therefore it is hardly feasible to make a Khazar-like case in this instance. The gravestones in Fanagoria near Taman on Crimea, engraved with Menoroth and other Jewish symbols, may well be of Carait and not of Khazar origin. The Čelarevo bricks with Jewish symbols may come from a forgotten or ruined necropolis of a small, culturally undeveloped Jewish community living there in the latter part of Roman or in the early part of Byzantine period. The design of the engraved Menoroth is in harmony with the bronze Menorah-schema. As to the other Jewish symbols we meet also the Etrog and the Shofar, but their design is much, too much, mis-shaped; it is clear that those who engraved these symbols never had an authentic Etrog or Shofar in their hand. It appears that the engraving was done thanks to certain remembrance which dictated that the

tombstone should be engraved with Menorah or some other Jewish symbols. It is possible that Mongol settlers found these bricks at a later time and put them in their graves. An even bolder imagination could advance an assumption that Jewish travellers when on their way towards the eastern parts of Asia might have had Judaized Asian tribes which might have had reached Čelarevo four centuries later. The inscription on brick catalogued under No 110 was done by Hebrew letters, but it is not sufficiently readable.

5. Dr Darina Bialekova advanced an assumption that the Menoroth from the 8th century graves at Čelarevo have to be considered what she calls secondary phenomenon and to accept them as originating from an older necropolis, serves to get a clearer notion of the necropolises belonging to second Avaric Khaganate. Dr Bialekova does not know of any similar Menoroth in the culture of Middle Asian Turkish nomads of those days. She is of the opinion that these Menoroth and the Čelarevo finds have to be considered as phenomena of the development of the Carpatian basin not clarified so far.

6. Prof. Dr Volker Bierbrauer is of the opinion that the Čelarevo necropolis shall, undoubtedly, play the central role in getting knowledge of the ethnic features of the Avars in the south-eastern part of Europe. The result of the anthropological analyses of the skeleton fund — that a Mongol population is in question — should be considered important data on Asian migrants of the late 8th century. Particularly exiting are the bricks with engraved Jewish symbols and in this connection the burrial modes.

7. Prof. Ezra Fleischer advanced the view that the word engraved in brick catalogued under No. 110 may be *Jehuda* and is written with Hebrew letters. The Jewish component of the site is thereby clearly confirmed. He thinks that we are faced with a fascinating enigma.

8. Dr Radu Harhoiu concurs with the dating although the head-stall mounts catalogued under Nos 91–92 would indicate that the necropolis might have lasted till the end of 9th century. As to the bricks with Menoroth Dr Harhoiu wants us to remember that the tree of life appears as a characteristic motif of nomad groups on the South part of Russia (of the Sarmat people, for instance, but in that case the tree of life is in combination with an eagle or with a deer). Whether Čelarevo was connected with a Khazar group, is a question which has to be put on the table. Therefore, the finds of M.J. Artamonov from Sarkel should be researched. Bibliography is added.

9. The last letter comes from **Dr Maria Comşa**. She states that no evidence is available which would indicate that anything similar to Čelarevo was found in Pontian, Carpatian or Danubian region. Whatever else was found in that necropolis is characteristic of a latter Avar necropolis of the 8th century or possibly of the first decades of the 9th century.

**Prof. Dr Jovan Kovačević:**

I have a proposal. To give our deliberation a smooth run let us divide it into three phase.

First, our colleague Radovan Bunardžić would answer, and I would try to help him, questions of facts relating to the site if there are some problems in this respect. I was not present at the digging works but I had at my disposal for several month the excellent documentary material and a chance thoroughly to review it.

The second part of our deliberation could be focused on the necropolis itself, the archaeological material relating to the dating, questions relating to the origin of that material, to the features of style and other characteristic traits in it and, naturally, on the entire necropolis again, but looking at it now from the anthropological point of view. My suggestion is that we should not allow this part of our deliberation to last too long as we shall still have to busy ourselves with the most important third part viz. the coming to light of Menoroth in such a necropolis. It is here where we shall probably meet the most complex group of questions. With your permission I would start by following this procedure. In connection with the first group of questions we can't possibly believe, in my own view, that the bricks with engraved signs — Menoroth and other Jewish symbols — were brought there from an other site. To accept such a possibility we would have to stretch our imagination much too much. First, we would have to know of the existence of such a site, we would have then to know that there was a Jewish cemetery within that site, and anyhow, somebody would have to pick up those Menoroth (why to do that? — one could ask), to take them to Čelarevo and to put them into the graves. This seems to me impossible and I would suggest that those bricks with engraved Menoroth were not there by chance. The bricks have to be considered to be in direct relation with the cult of those interred in that necropolis.

**Prof. Dr, Đorđe Stričević:**

Are there other bricks without any sign?

**Prof. Dr Jovan Kovačević:**

No.

**Laslo Sekereš:**

As we have in the archaeological material some objects coming from and having the characteristic features of the late antique period it might be of interest for us to know which is the nearest late antique site and where the bricks came from? What may be expected in the nearest area around Čelarevo?

**Radovan Bunardžić:**

The nearest Roman site to the Čelarevo necropolis is that of Castellum Onagrimum, identified as back as some 60 years ago. Partial diggings were done at that site in the course of the last ten years. Except two bricks with Roman signs not a single other brick with whichever sign was found there. Consequently, as far as the left bank of the Danube is concerned, no other finds are available. On the right bank, in addition to Malata Bononia which is opposite to Onagrimum on the other side of the Danube, there are a few smaller Roman places towards Čerević, which were identified as Josista, and also a few non – identified ones. No marked bricks were found there, or for that matter signs on bricks or on any other profane objects.

**Laslo Sekereš:**

It may be purposeful to say what is the distance between these sites and Čelarevo and also, if possible, whether similar sites of the second Khagan Avar period were identified at or around Onagrimum. Is it possible to identify anything in the area inbetween?

**Radovan Bunardžić:**

Onagrimum is six kilometers far from Čelarevo downstream. At Onagrimum, or better to say at the fort, a few late Avar graves with exceptionally rich finds were discovered. However, these graves were not syste-

matically researched and therefore no documentation is available. A part of the material is in the Budapest Museum and, if my recollection is correct, there is also material from Begeč, i.e. from Onagrinum. For the time being we have no data from these materials.

**Prof. Dr Myriam Ayalon:**

I just wonder whether the rich findings which you mentioned in connection with other graves have not been investigated or not known so far. But would that mean that there were any bricks found elsewhere with no inscription at all?

**Prof. Dr Jovan Kovačević:**

No, there were no other bricks without inscription.

**Prof. Dr Bogdan Brukner:**

I have one technical question. Would an analysis of the composition of soil help us to solve the problem of where the bricks originate from? It seems to me that two things could be learned. If the analysis would bring out any ingredient which could be linked to the surrounding terrain, we could assume that those bricks, broadly speaking, were baked in that area. In other words, we would have to establish whether those bricks came from the neighbouring late Roman camp-sites. It is obvious that we shall have, in the course of our deliberation, to face the problem of whether the bricks *in situ* were brought there from far-away regions in the course of migration, or, which is another possibility, they have to be considered of local origin, in other words to originate from a local Roman camp-site. I suggest to have the soil composition of bricks with engraved signs made subject of analysis. It well might be that the question of origin shall be given an answer.

**Eugen Verber:**

I wanted to raise that same question, which was just raised by Prof. Dr. Brukner, but in a slightly different way. My question is whether the bricks belonging to the camp-site at the present-day Begeč have been



investigated, and whether the material from which both the bricks of the Roman camp-site at Begeč and those found at Čelarevo were made, is one and the same?

**Prof. Dr Jovan Kovačević:**

As you have seen, generally speaking, only brick fragments were found. Actually we do not have any brick in its original shape. No analysis was made. We yet have to do that. We can either have an analysis of the bricks themselves or we can compare them with some bricks from the neighbouring Roman sites. However, that would tell us only where the bricks were before the engraving was done.

**Eugen Verber:**

May I be permitted to ask: why before the engraving was done? Is it suggested thereby that the bricks were brought to Čelarevo without engravings, and that the engravings were done at this necropolis?

**Prof. Dr Jovan Kovačević:**

In my opinion those are fragments of old bricks, picked up somewhere and the engraving was done subsequently. That would mean that they were picked up before the engraving was done.

**Prof. Dr Alexander Scheiber:**

I should like to add something.

To the reading of Prof. Fleischer in Jerusalem, on Item No 110, in addition to *Jehuda* it could be read *Jehuda vai*, i.e. *Jehuda alas*. That means: it is remnant of an inscription of tombstone. I think to have seen here also Item No 121, also with a Hebrew inscription, reading *shahor*. The word means „black“ in English. I do not know the meaning of it here, but it is clear to read *shahor*, „black“.

**Laslo Sekereš:**

In connection with the material, or to be more clear, with the question of where that material comes from, we should have in mind

that until the present day nothing authentic was found anywhere, for instance an inscription or a sign marking a tomb of that era. We are still trying to find such a sign which would tell us that graves were marked in that period, too. This is a singular example of a sign in a material which escaped the tooth of time. We could perhaps find something similar at other localities as well. Given a good method, or luck, we may find a piece of wood, or a board, or something of the kind.

**Prof. Dr Jovan Kovačević:**

It seems to me, Prof. Scheiber, that there is no inscription on brick catalogued No 121. What we find on it is a Menorah base. We shall have a look at that when visiting the exhibition.

**Eugen Verber:**

On brick No 121 Hebrew letters are clearly visible. They are latter period square type letters in a stylized form. The letters are *shin*, *het*, *vav* which means „I see“. Or, it is also possible that the letters are *shin*, *het*, *resh* to stand for *shahor*, dark, black, as Prof. Scheiber suggested.

**Prof. Dr Jovan Kovačević:**

There were Avar tribes marking themselves with black colour.

**Prof. Dr. Đurđe Bošković:**

First, I suggest that we clarify one thing. The insision — the in-scratching of Menoroth — was done on brick fragments and not on complete bricks. There are fragments which clearly indicate that the shape of fragment commanded the composition of design. For instance, if we take the fragment on page 151, catalogued No. 106, it appears clear that the left side symbol is positioned higher than the right side one. The reason is simple. There was no room to put it symmetrically as would be required by the Menorah's axis of symmetry. Or, if we take the fragment No 158 on page 165: the fragment is small and the Menorah on that fragment is very small. It appears, therefore, obvious that the Menoroth were engraved in fragments and that fragments were taken from somewhere and

not pieces of complete bricks. It seems to me that there should not be any doubt about that. Secondly, the Menoroth were found in graves. My question is whether those fragments were used as objects of rite in the huts or tents of the interred while they were still alive and subsequently interred together with their remains, as was usually done with the arms and/or jewellery. It seems to me that this question should be clarified by all means. With this in view the settlement itself should be investigated as it was only partially or not at all researched so far.

**Prof. Dr I. Bona:**

Ich möchte erst einige Fragen stellen mich allgemein orientieren. Nach den letzten Untersuchungen im Jahre 1980 beurteilend, was meinen Sie Herr Kollege, wie gross war eigentlich dieses Gräberfeld, ungefähr wieviel Gräber hatte es ursprünglich? Die Ausbreitung bzw. Ausdehnung des Gräberfeldes hängt nämlich eng mit der Datierung, mit der Zeitgrenzen der Belegung zusammen. Ich frage also, wie gross könnte es eigentlich sein?

Die zweite Frage ist, nach welchem System sind die Funde für die hiesige Ausstellung ausgewählt, wieviel Prozent der Funde sind hier ausgestellt und was fand man noch in der zerstörten Gräbern? Die ausstellte Funde nämlich grössenteils aus ungestörten Bestattungen stammen.

**Radovan Bunardžić:**

Based on what remained from the graves the profiles, which we shall hopefully see tomorrow, would indicate that there were, most probably, over 800 graves in the necropolis. Nearly 200 were researched. Some 100 more graves we yet have to research. We arrived at the assumption, by using simple mathematics, that more than 500 graves were ruined. In the open profile which is now partly ruined there were 120 graves. If we reckon that at least three graves were in a row, as the graves are somehow in rows, it is then quite simple to conclude how many graves were, most probably, in the necropolis. As to selection of objects for this exhibition the answer is in the name of the exhibition „Menoroth from Čelarevo“. In addition, with the material now exhibited we wanted to offer an average selection, an average material, so that we can see how this necropolis generally looked like. We have selected some typical graves or group of graves which remained preserved and we have offered some

finds from the ruined part, too. You may be interested to know that the headstall mount (phalera) with representation of a bird of prey comes from the ruined part. There were quite a number of metallic finds but these could not be saved due to the operation of machines.

**Prof. Dr Michael Heltzer:**

I should like to draw your attention to the papers by Miesozersky about the Essen writings in Kiev, as I happen to know this work. Miesozersky says that the Greek translations of the Essen writings had some influence on the oldest Russian translations, which are for example the book of Henoah and some other things. They are nearer to the Essen writings than to the existing Greek apocrypha. But this is not to say that the Hebrew Essen writings were known in Kiev.

**Dr Maria Miskiewicz:**

You said that the bricks were found inside the graves *in situ*. My question is: what about the other finds from the graves? Were those gifts average to the whole cemetery, or did they occur only in the graves equipped with Menorah marked bricks?

**Radovan Bunardžić:**

The four graves in which we found bricks *in situ* had, speaking in relative terms, a rather modest accompanying secondary material. In addition to the two clasps and one animal astragalus we have two vessels which you have seen at the exhibition. In one grave we found only two bricks and nothing else, while from the fourth grave only one brick and two-three human bones were collected.

**Prof. Dr. Jovan Kovačević:**

One should not forget that this necropolis was plundered. We do not know when but we do know that the job was quite well done. All the grave were turned up and round so much so that we have only a few finds *in situ*. The room for decision-making is, therefore, rather limited,

And if we take into account that the necropolis, in its great part, was ruined by bulldozers, it becomes clear that we do not have at our disposal an abundance of data. But for these Menoroth the necropolis would not be of particular interest or add much to what we know about the Avar necropolises in the Carpatian valley.

**Eugen Verber:**

I would like to stress that what was found in these graves, viz. a Menorah together with Etrog and Lulav, fruit, that is to say with citrus medica fruit which the Jews use at a given holiday time as rite relics, and with palm leaf, that is to say these three symbols which appeared most frequently in these graves, — were found on European terrain for the first time, in this context at least, in the Jewish catacombs in Rome. Therefore, for those researchers whose primary interest is Judaism and not archaeology this find is of particular interest and rather strange and it is a question whether an accord of mind shall ever be reached. May I say one more word apropos the letter from Paris on the Essenes. I would add that Dr. Fluser, who is among the best students of early Christianity and of Qumran community Essenes, stressed in Jerusalem many a time his desire to be supplied with as much material on our Bogumils as possible, as in his view the Bogumils took over many a things from Essenes. I offer my apology for this digression. As some other sects were mentioned in this connection, my intention was to point to a possible link in this regard, too. The avenues in Europe of mutual influences are rather strange.

**Prof. Danica Dimitrijević:**

It is unfortunate that all these bricks were found, at least most of them, in an area where the graves were turned over. If we would have finds indicating in which graves the bricks were placed close to the bodies, that knowledge could serve to tell us, to some extent at least, in which cultural environment we may expect to find a tradition or custom to place bricks in graves. What we find in *Shahnama*, which, needless to say, is of later date, but for which Firdusi has surely made use of older Iranian books and/or sources, and what we find in those parts, which came down from Takiki, who remained true to Zoroastrianism, — all that, all those data we can take as safe, and they speak of custom in outer Iranian region, which would mean: Sofia, Horezmia, Toharistan. At more than 20 places the same formula appears time and again: „Ta couche sera la terre et ton

oreiller sera la brique"... „tous ont pour couche la terre et la brique..."  
... „die Grossen wie die kleinen werden zu Ende doch nur den Staub und einen Ziegel haben". Queen Azermidoct promises the people to rule rightly... „car a la fin notre oreiller à nous tous est une brique" etc. These also are King Yezdeghird's last words: „Finalement ta tête doit reposer sur une brique". It is indicated thereby that in the outer areas of Iran a custom to place bricks under the head of the deceased makes its appearance time and again. It is unfortunate that in no one of the Čelarevo graves was one single brick under the deceased's head found.

**Prof. Dr. Đorđe Stričević:**

One question only. You said that in one of the graves two bricks were found. Was that a grave for two?

**Prof. Dr. Jovan Kovačević:**

No. But let us revert to the facts.

**Prof. Dr. Vidosava Nedomački:**

... I wish to put a question. Is it our intention entirely to exclude, from the very beginning of our discussion, the possibility that the Menoroth and other symbols were earlier inscribed on the brick fragments by somebody and that the Mongolian tribe found them with those inscriptions? Is it our intention to exclude a priori any possibility of an other necropolis'existence in which such fragments were in use and also the possibility that a Mongolian tribe found them on the spot and for reasons not known to us made them their own?

**Prof. Dr. Jovan Kovačević:**

In my view we can exclude such an assumption. That is at least what my conviction is. I do not see any reason for anybody to collect some marked bricks and to put them in his or her own kin's graves. We have to be very careful, any cult connected with the deads should not be taken lightly. In the cult of deads everything is strictly defined and there is no way to take there something and to put it in grave if that is not strictly within the limits of definite religious thinking.

**Prof. Dr Bogdan Brukner:**

I propose to get back to the start. In my view whatever was done so far, be that more or less systematically, we have to take into consideration in our further discussions. If we look into the technical documentation we shall observe that an entire part of the necropolis was researched. Let us focus our attention on the excavated part. We shall, actually, see that we have only three or four graves with Menoroth although a great many graves on a vast area were researched or identified. As for me, this is what is essential at this particular moment, because the abundance of bricks with Menoroth, which made us to get together here today, was found in the area which was, to the regret of all of us, devastated. I surmise, with great hopes I would add, that those our esteemed experts who know more about that period shall probably start with the assumption that what could be called a two ethnic groups necropolis is in question. In any case two rites have to be assumed as no Menoroth was found in a great part of the necropolis. Why no Menoroth in one part and too many in other part, that is the question which posed itself upon us. Is it perhaps possible to speak about a substratum which was some what older, more autochthonous as related to the other, in which exclusively Avar objects make the find? Consequently, we may perhaps give thought to a substratum which lived before the arrival of Avars and which perhaps had some connection with the post-Roman population.

**Dr Mirjana Ljubinković:**

After having read the catalogue and listening to what was said here so far, I would like to ask only one question. The Menoroth were mostly found in the disarranged graves, in those in which the dominant part of the material belong to a somewhat later time, reaching somehow the 9th century. (R. Bunardžić: We have a very limited amount of material!) You said that most of the Menoroth were found in those graves which very fact would indicate that it was at a later phase of the necropolis' existence that they were made use of. Is that so or not? It is not quite clear, that is why I am asking this question.

**Prof. Dr. Jovan Kovačević:**

The necropolis had been ruined to such an extent which does not allow easily to follow the phases of its development. As for me, I could

not see from the documentation available whether these four graves belong to an earlier or to a later phase of the necropolis' development.

**Prof. Dr. Đurđe Bošković:**

We are talking about the graves in which Menoroth were found. It is important, in my view, to note that three graves were in what appeared to be rows of graves. Those three are the ones marked Nos. 21, 230 and 256. Only the grave No. 231 was not completely in the rows. The mere fact that those graves were in rows allow us to date them as belonging to the same burial epoch.

**Prof. Dr. Jovan Kovačević:**

No doubt about that. Our question is how to relate the earlier burials to the later ones within the same necropolis and which phase the graves with Menoroth belong to.

**Prof. Dr. Đorđe Bošković:**

In all events to the rows in which they were found.

**Prof. Dr. Jovan Kovačević:**

By all means. But, is that the beginning or the end of the necropolis' life, that is what we are discussing, as the assumption is that about 800 graves are in question. It is obvious that the necropolis lasted for a long period. That being so, it has a longer chronological span, and therefore the question arises to which section of that span the Menoroth belong to. Could it be that the Menoroth belong to the early period only, or perhaps to the later period only. We have to put on record that we have no way to make a judgment as the necropolis was ruined much too much.

**Prof. Dr. Đurđe Bošković:**

The Menoroth, better to say the graves with Menoroth, could not have been so precisely included in the rows if those burials were done at



the end of the burial period, i.e. if those burials could be called the youngest ones. Being in the row makes them part of the row. Epochwise they belong, therefore, to the same period of time.

**Dr Gordana Marjanović – Vujović:**

I am not a student of that period but I observed in necropolises, somewhat younger ones, from the 10th to 12th century, which were not governed by any rule as to how the graves should be marked, I observed, I say, that one or two bricks appear, time and again, around the skeleton, or at head or feet. In my opinion such mark is always present when the grave was dug through layer containing such material. For some reason it gets back and finds its place near the deceased. That is not a mark, but somehow it was put there. By ethnographic material I consulted one could prove that this remained observed until a quite late period. It is explicitly stated in that material that the brick found during the digging were all collected and put on the top of the grave. This would mean that whatever is found shall be back in the soil somehow, at the spot where it was found.

**Prof. Dr Jovan Kovačević:**

Would Prof. Živanović be kind enough to give us some details which resulted from the anthropological analysis?

**Dr Srbojjub Živanović:**

After having done the first preliminary review of the skeletons in 1973, my judgment was that Mongolian population was in the question but I could not be sure in what category this population to be placed. It was therefore that systematic anthropological works were started in 1974. A total of 248 graves were then inspected and the preliminary results published in three articles. However, the results as a whole yet have to be published in the next monograph.

In my judgment the authors of the catalogue did not comprehend fully what in those three articles was said. First of all, whatever was said about the Čelarevo population and about the anthropological characteristics of that population was said, clearly enough, only with regard to those graves which were researched. If you look at the introductory pages

to which our distinguished colleague Brukner also referred to, — these pages will show you the size of the necropolis and how it was situated in the area, and you will also observe that only a part of the necropolis, or its one end only, was researched. Consequently, whatever I found out with regard to these Čelarevo people, i.e. that they were very similar, very homogeneous, that nobody belonging to any other population was interred there, that the genetic picture was one and the same and that this was a population which had made use of the necropolis during a period of some hundred or more years — all these things we cannot establish precisely, but we can state for all the same that the period of use of that part of necropolis could not be much too long. If I made a mistake, if the period lasted 150 years and not 120 years, that is not what matters, the essential fact is that it was in that period that the necropolis was used. Consequently, the anthropological results must not be applied to the entire necropolis until we can find, by new periferial diggings, at least at the necropolis borderlines, other skeletons as well, which then should be compared with the population already researched. In that way we could see whether the two were of the same type. That is number one.

My second point relates to the dating of the necropolis. We made an absolute dating, applying the C-14 method, on the basis of organic material extracted from the substance of the bones, which means the material was uncontaminated. We have done only one analysis from one single skeleton only which actually provoked my professional curiosity as I found on it some pathological changes of interest from a medical point of view. I do not know to which extent the skeleton in question is linked to the archaeological material, but I do know that the dating of that skeleton indicated the year 981 with a correction possibility of 66 years, plus or minus. That, again, should not be taken to mean that the entire necropolis is as old as that. It only means that the specific skeleton in question is of that age. In our researches which will follow, when we shall take material from other skeletons, too, we may be able to see with the help of archaeologist colleagues, how old were those skeletons which were linked to certain archaeological material. The work done so far has to be understood in this way as it relates only to one specific part of the necropolis.

May I now return to the anthropological picture or to the general characteristics of the Čelarevo skeleton. First of all, the population which made use of this part of the necropolis was an established population. This is evident from the number of grown ups as related to the number of elderly people and the number of children's skeletons, which was in normal proportions and so we have no reason to suppose that people were interred here after an epidemic or after a battle.

The number of wounds is minimal, practically negligible which allow us to conclude that those people did not wage a war or anything like that. The proportion is normal sexwise, too, a proportion between male and female characteristic of any normal Middle Age village society, so much so that we have no deviation in this respect either.

And further, we can say that we are dealing with a Mongolian population. In 1973 when I undertook this work my starting point was that these people were most probably Avars, because, first, it were the Avars in our region I knew most of, and secondly, that was our only experience and the possibility we could think of. However, very soon I found myself confronted with some interesting phenomena, namely the anthropological characteristics of these people appeared to be far more primitive as compared to Avars who, if we look at their evolution, appear to have had much finer characteristics, and the shapes were finer, too. That would mean, that we were confronted with a population which, at first glance, appeared to be older than it actually was. Later, when the dimensions' middle value index analysis was done and some other genetic characteristics analyses were also completed, it became clear that this was not an Avar population as we could not find in any way something parallel to Avar populations known to us. This is a Mongolian population we do not know anything at all about. Its basic anthropological characteristics correspond to the general picture of the North Mongolian group of people.

When I say North Mongolian group of people, we have to bear in mind that nearly the far greatest part of Asia is inhabited with the great Mongolian race and various North Mongolian tribes could migrate into the Middle Asian region or could migrate even to the South, too. Consequently, if I say that as to its race this is a North Mongolian tribe, this should not be taken to mean that they came there from North Mongolia, they might have come from Middle Asia, or from whichever part of the continent of Asia. Wherever they came from, anthropologically they were less developed than those other populations.

And finally, if we want to look at a parallel, we would have to do it with a population belonging to the 10th century because that one single skeleton was dated as belonging to that century. We could even go up to the 11th century, or take the beginning of the 10th century, plus or minus 120 years, the number of years that population lasted, which would mean that you can go down to the 8th century or up to the 11th century. In that period a great many different people were coming. We cannot parallel them with any Bulgarian tribe, as these skulls do not fit in their picture.

This may be a good time to show you how these Čelarevo skulls look like and how the usual Avar skulls, which we used for comparison, look like.

**Prof. Dr Jovan Kovačević:**

One thing only. In that good, although old, Liptakov's article on Mongoloid type in Avar population it is clearly stated that among the Avar graves and necropolises in Panonian lowland, you have Mongoloid graves, you have Europoid graves, you have mixed necropolises. Accordingly, the mere fact that a population is Mongoloid, does not allow us to state that they cannot be Avars. Among Avars there are Mongoloid types, indeed.

**Prof. Dr I. Bona:**

Die Awaren kamen aus Asien und deswegen ist es keine grosse Überraschung dass in einem Gräberfeld des Awarenreiches verschiedene Gruppen mit unterschiedenen mongoloiden Rassentypen in Erscheinung treten. In Ungarn, zum Beispiel, in dem Donau-Theiss Zwischenstromgebiet, also nicht weit von Čelarevo, es sind Gräberfelder in der Umgebung von Szeged und von Kiskőrös und in Ordas an der Donau wo die Population sehr starke mongoloide Züge gehabt hatte.

Hier spricht man über eine Kontroverse zwischen Awaren und „Mongolen“. Ich habe so gehört, dass in Čelarevo ein „mongolischer Stamm“ hat vertreten, eine „ganz andere Population“ als die Bevölkerung des Awarenreiches. Ich glaube diese Meinung ist nicht richtig. Die Bevölkerung des Awarenreiches war sehr bunt und gemischt, und man kann sehr gut vorstellen, dass in jener Bevölkerung auch unterschiedene Gruppen von mongoloiden Charakter waren.

**Dr. Slobodan Živanović:**

I would like immediately to answer that question on Mongolians and on Mongolian race, and on the status of Avars as related to the large Mongolian race. In general terms all the Avars are part of the large Mongolian race and I could not in necropolises, at least in those which I had the chance to see, and I did see quite a few, I could not, I say, observe in Slave necropolises and in Avar necropolises, the mixing of Avars and Slavs. (Screening of slides followed)

**Prof. Dr I. Bona:**

Zur Datierung paar Wörter. Ich glaube es ist unmöglich ein Gräberfeld mit 800 Gräber nur auf die letzte, späteste Periode der Awarenzeit datieren, auf ein oder zwei Jahrzehnten zu beschränken. In diesem Fall da müsste eine Pestilenz sein. Čelarevo ist ein ganz normales Gräberfeld mit Männergräbern, Frauengräbern, Kindergräbern und noch dazu mit Pferdegräbern. Das Gräberfeld muss eine frühere Phase haben und ich meine frühere Gräber waren wahrscheinlich in demgestörten Teile des Gräberfeldes.

Der grössere Teil der Funde stammt aus dem VIII. Jahrhundert bzw. vom Anfang des IX. Jahrhundert, das ist ganz klar. Ich glaube es sind hier doch einige Gräber die ein wenig früher sind. Der Katalog unter No. 78 gibt eine Scheibenfibel aus dem Grab 168. Diese Fibel hat wunderbar gute Parallelen in Ungarn und auch in der Slowakei. Parallelstücke sind aus Budapest-Rákos, aus Kecel und in der Slowakei aus Želovce und Prše bekannt. Es ist kein Zufall dass Frau Dr Bialekova in ihrem Brief hat das Gräberfeld von Čelarevo auf die ganze zweite Periode der Awarenzeit datiert. Diese Rundfibel oder Scheibenfibel kamen erst mit der sogenannten Blechgruppe vor, mit gepressten Rosetten und mit Blechriemenzungen bzw. Gürtelmuck zusammen, in solch'einer Gruppe die durch Zusammenhänge mit den münzdatierten Fürstengrab von Ozora-Totipuszta gut datierbar ist auf das letzte Drittel des VII. Jahrhundert höchstens auf Wende des VII/VIII. Jh.

Sehr wichtig sind hier die goldene Münzimitationen aus drei verschiedenen Gräbern (Katalog No. 88–90). Diese Blankstücke hat unlängst Frau Dr Eva Garam zusammengestellt in Archeologiai Ertesítő 1978, wo sie brachte 16 Vorkommen der Münzimitationen. Fast alle sind gut datierbar durch Blechgarnituren mit Säbel, durch Ohrgehänge von Igar-Ozora-Typ usw. Man kann sagen, die Blanken die hier in Gräber 77,130 und 265 ans Tageslicht gekommen sind, sich selbst datieren: diese sind die früheste Bestattungen vom Ende des VII Jahrhundert.

Ein Gräberfeld mit 800 Bestattungen musste einmal seinen Anfang haben. Dieser Anfang kann man ungefähr vom Ende oder vom letzten Drittel des VII Jahrhundert vermuten. Von dieser Zeit an ging die Belegung bzw. die Benützung des Gräberfeldes fort bis zum Ende des VIII. Jahrhundert oder bis zum Anfang des IX. Jahrhundert.

Mir scheint also ganz normal die Datierung dieses Gräberfeldes. Das Vorkommen der Bruchziegel mit Menoras die ganz klar jüdische Symbolen sind, muss im Rahmen dieser Datierung lösen. Die Bevölkerung von Čelarevo tritt früher auf als hier bisher vermutet war, die Belegung des Gräberfeldes soll nicht vom Ende des VIII. Jahrhundert sondern schon

vom Ende des VII. Jahrhundert annehmen, von einem Zeitalter an, wann im Awarereich grosse und gut bekannte Völkerbewegungen waren.

#### Dr Maria Miskiewicz

I'd like to speak about the pots found on the cemetery. The chronology of pottery should be useful in defining the chronology of the whole cemetery. Prof. Bona thinks that the site appeared about VIII century. The pots shown in a guide, especially on pages 134 and 135 at left, can be joined to Roumanian early medieval pottery. They are very similar to the pottery from Ipotești-Cindești culture, and on the other hand they have many connections with Korčak pottery from western Russia. Such type of pottery we can place on second part of VII century, or even earlier. And because of that I think we ought to put the beginning of the cemetery at least in the middle of the 7th century.

#### Prof. Dr Michael Heltzer

Without taking any stand on this question, for I am not a specialist, but I have seen similar objects in the Kerch museum on the Crimea, and also in the vicinity of Kerch, at the archaeological reservations. There are a lot of such „matzevot“ with the same type of the Menorah, the lulav and the etrog. Most of them are uninscribed. On a small part of them we have seen the letters *shin*, *lamed* and *mem*, with the meaning *shalom*, but without any personal names.

And naturally the grave-stones are made of the material which was accessible. If there are no stones, then people make brick. But there is a soft limestone. They are of soft limestone, possibly approximately of such size as the biggest brick exhibited here. There are no scientific publications about their dating, but it is supposed that they have to be from the time of the „Völkerwanderung“. So, I was very pleased to hear what prof. Bona said.

On the other side, it is very dangerous to link them with the Karaites in those regions. If we put aside all the apologetic Karaite falsifications of tomb inscriptions, which were made by Firkowich at the end of the 19th century, we see the really well dated Hebrew inscriptions from the necropolises at Chufutkale and Mangupkale in the Crimea dated not earlier than the end of the 12th century. They are in Hebrew, but it is impossible to say if they are Karaite or Jewish non-Karaite. Therefore, this question, I think, has generally to be put aside, speaking about our topic.

**Prof. Dr Myriam Ayalon**

I would like to follow up the line started by professor Miskiewicz as referred to the pottery. Looking at plate 7, item No. 3, I was struck by one of the pots which seems to be odd or unique out of the whole lot. If I am right, it is the only one with the trefoil spout. And I wonder how significant this is; whether it is some kind of alien ceramics, namely not connected with the whole lot, whether that could lead us to some other considerations, such as the possibility of import.

**Prof. Dr Jovan Kovačević**

This pot was found in the grave.

**Prof. Dr Myriam Ayalon**

Yes, yes, I understand it well. That I understood, and that is why it struck me. It is the only one glazed and typologically it has a trefoil spout which is distinct from all the others. And I wonder whether this indication would orient us toward any new origin, in other words, may we consider this as an import, at one point, or on the other side, is this an indication as to other ceramics in the area or in the vicinity, outside Čelarevo.

**Prof. Danica Dimitrijević:**

It should be emphasized at outset how difficult is to make a judgment on the duration of the necropolis as, and I wish to stress it again, we have no closed grave units and we cannot therefore identify either the beginning or the end.

I would like to revert now to what Profesor Bona said. In that same female grave with those metal buckles, which he dated as early ones, there was a yellow dish, handpainted under the clear influence of Iranian ornaments, I speak of those medallions which are, if we give credit to the researches of Eva Garam and Darina Bialekova, our colleagues, and just that was the subject matter of their dissertations, — those yellow ceramics which are dated to belong to a, relatively speaking, later period. Accordingly, it is not the end of 7th century we have to speak of, it may be even the second part of the 8th century.

Those yellow ceramics are rather prevailing in this necropolis although other types are represented as well, and I do think that in this respect it is rather difficult to make a final judgement, as we have no grave units.

If we now turn to the metal material out of all what is exhibited and published, and that is not the entire material, the greater part should be placed on the early developed 8th century. We have here belt sets with „Blatnica“ type ornamentation which is characteristic of the end of 8th century and of the transition period linking that age with the 9th century.

May I tell a few words about the representation of animals. Heads of boar and horse made by this same goldsmith technique were found in some Avar graves and in Hungary and Slovakia, but these finds are exceptionally rare. We do not have many of them. Here, in the necropolis we deal with, as far as I know, we have two boar heads, one horse head and a very specific shape, the head of an eagle and this one, you have undoubtedly observed, is greatly different of those few eagle representations in Avar material, of which we have really very few. There is one made of golden plate found in a khagan grave in Kumbabony, but that is of a quite different type. In this case we have an eagle of the Turul-type. What the catalogue says to be a wing is actually an ear and that is a shape, a zoological type which can be found, several of them on golden dishes, on jugs, pitchers, and that is the mark of St. Miklosh. This was not an Avar custom. However, if we would enter here today into the problem of St. Miklosh, that would lead us too far as many theories were advanced. In my view, however, we can, at least, say that the material presented to us appears to belong to a later period, rather than to an earlier one. It well may be that some specific pieces could be singled out as belonging to the 7th century. We can also state that a necropolis with 800 graves could not be formed during a short period of 20 to 30 years. In that respect we should not have any doubt.

As to the burial rites, the shape of the grave-pits, the orientation, my opinion is that in this respect there is no deviation of what we know to be the Avar mode, but also the mode of various Turkish peoples, if we only make some effort to look into the Soviet literature. Other Turkish nomads, too, follow the same pattern. In our case the Menoroth, the brick fragments with Menorah are the only deviation.

I submit that an analysis of archaeological material only, will not solve the problem of this necropolis. Historical sources shall have to give a greater contribution as the necropolis, at first glance, appears to be Avar; how long was it made use of, hundred years more or less, shall be undoubtedly a question for the future researchers to answer. If we take



the grave rites the necropolis could be Avar, again. But we should say also that in one grave, for instance, there were small circular applications which were made by the use of press technic, the representations that of birds and lions, and we know that at that time the Avars did not use any more such mounts. Of special interest is the band tied around the neck of those animals. An analogy can be found in the Iranian material. Animals with such band tied are, as a rule, linked to Zoroastrianism and are considered as hypostases of certain Iranian gods. This is a signal that this population was under strong influence of the Iranian art, or at least of outer Iran. Nothing of the sort can be found in the case of Avars.

I would like also to point to two sites in the close vicinity of Čelarevo, which should not be considered to mean that there is a direct connection, but it might, for all the same.

First, in his contribution titled *Vremja i puti proniknovenija Ku-fičeskij monet v srednje Podunavje* Kropotkin, using Barta's writing as source, stated that an Abasidian dirchem belonging to caliph Al Hadi was found in the village Buljkes, called Maglić today — and the distinguished colleagues know that this is not far from Novi Sad. The coin was forged 785/7 in the city Medinad as Salam. Both authors, Barta as well as Kropotkin, are united in pointing out that this is the oldest Turkish money found in the Panonian lowland or on what was later the territory of the Hungarian kingdom. It is not probable that the coin was brought here by the Arpadian settlers, as a difference of over hundred years has to be reckoned with. It is easier to assume that it arrived with a later migration which we do not know of enough as yet.

Another site is Kovilj, east from Novi Sad, where a horsman's grave was found. According to the material this could be registered as an Avar grave had it not been a sabre found in this grave unit. The sabre was ritually bended, a custom not registered as an Avar custom so far, if my memory does not fail me. This is a custom of the Celtic people of the Laten-period while in the periods we are giving consideration to, when we talk about the period of great migrations, we find it from time to time in old-Hungarian graves, on our territory, for instance in Horgoš, and it was quite a long time ago that Bela Pošta had registered such phenomena as finds on the territory the Hungarians came from and where they lived before they migrated to the Carpathian ravine.

That would mean that we do have in vicinity of Novi Sad some finds which do not fit into the Avar pattern and make us to think of some other substratum which settled in the Panonian lowland before the Hungarians arrived.

**Prof. Dr Zdenko Vinski:**

I do not have too much to tell. My colleague Danica Dimitrijević has anticipated many questions I intended to ask. I am interested in one more question only: Is it possible to indicate what is the numerical proportion between the sets which we may consider as belonging to the 8th century and the so called „Biatnica“. I do not mean piece by piece, but approximately.

**Prof. Dr Jovan Kovačević:**

It may be possible but they were not counted. May I now propose to start discussing what is our main subject, the bricks, the brick fragments with engraved Menoroth found in this necropolis. As for me, the mere fact that Menoroth were found in graves which were surely not Jewish graves, naturally aroused my interest very much. It is quite clear that those graves are not Jewish graves: people are buried with their horses, with full belt sets, with ceramics, while Jews bury their deads without anything, just in a canvas. The population was not Jewish, that is for sure, but they have obviously some elements of Jewish custom made their own. I would draw your attention to Josephus Flavius and quote a few words not from his Jewish Wars but from his Jewish Antiquities. He said that „the enthusiasm of masses of people had been aroused for a long time by Jewish rites, and there was no Greek city in which our custom would not be found spread or any barbarous population which would not take over some of its elements. Such are the weekly rest on Saturday, or the fasting, or the lighting of lamps and many our religious eating habits“. This would mean that it was possible for a population to take over some Jewish customs or religious rites without taking completely to Judaism. These are the so called *metuentes*, or *semono ton teon*. These are the men or women who associated themselves with and partly accepted the religion of Moses but did not completely take to that religion. We know of an inscription from Pula where it was said: „Matri pientissimi religionis Iudaeitae metuentes“. These metuentes may well be a population which accepted partly the Jewish customs. They were persecuted very much by the Christian church, particularly in North Africa. Whenever the metuentes were pagans the church do not worry very much and did not take steps to get rid of them, but if they happened to be Christians, this was considered by St. Augustine as a great danger. Mention was made even of North African bishops who cultivated some Jewish customs. I would like to hear from our distinguished colleagues from Israel as to whether in

theory, at least, there is a possibility for a population to accept only partly Jewish customs? And secondly, and I am sure that it came to the mind of all of us, there are the Khazars. We are all surely tempted very much to associate our case with the Khazars, but if we do a bit more in depth thinking the matter is not as simple as that. Can we assume that a Khazar clan got rid of the rest and joined the Avars at a given time. Anyhow, we know that among the Khazars, too, only the upper social layer was Jewish, and therefore it is hardly possible to assume that the entire Čelarevo clan, even if we would accept that they were Khazars, could have Jewish symbols. And who else they could be? In the letter of Prof. Szyszman, which was read here, mention was made of Kinam, the Byzantine writer of the 12th century. Here is what Kinam said: „The Huns, namely, practice Christianity, (the Huns are the Hungarians) – while these here are even now guided by the laws of Moses, although not in their quite clear form“. However, in an other paragraph Kinam said that the same people believed that their religion was the one practiced by the Persians. We have an other author, and a quite interesting one, who has been very rarely consulted. I speak of Drutmar of Aquitaine, a benedictine monk from Korvey in Westphalia, who wrote, for the monks of Ardennes, a commentary on the Gospel according to Matthew. He was probably well informed, therefore, of what the situation in the Carpathian ravine was. He, too, naturally, when talking about history, started with Gog and Magog, and continued to say: „Gentes Hunorum que ab et gazari vocantur“ – that they were circumcised and belonged to Moses' religion and that they were strong. It is rather difficult to date this text, most probably around year 800.

I would return to what I said at the outset. Can we be given any explanation of joining Judaism but partly only, and to do that by using symbols, as for instance the Menorah. I have in mind only non-Jewish population turned Jewish, and we don't have too many of these. I know of two Arabian tribes (Auz and Hazraj) expelled from Medina by Mohammed because they were followers of Manat, the fourth Bedouin god. They were evicted and Mohammed distributed their land among his followers. We can list here the Berbers, they were non-Jewish who took up Judaism.

Prof. Dr Michael Helzer

Darf ich jetzt ein Paar Wörter sagen. Also das das nicht jüdische Menschen vom jüdischen Abstand sind ist sicher und selbstverständlich. Das waren in bestimmten Sinne Prozeliten. Was der Herr Professor jetzt gesagt hatte das das Pagenen waren, denk ich nicht, weil wir haben in den Gräbern nichts ausgesprochen paganisches.

Das dessen Judaismus vielleicht nicht vollständig dogmatisch war, das ist selbstverständlich und anders kann es nicht sein, und gerade die Zitate aus Flavius und des Kommentators des Evangeliums ist sehr gut. Andererseits aber kann man es in keinem Fall vergleichen und binden mit den Jüdischen Stämmen in der Arabischen Halbinsel in der vorislamischen Zeit. Weil dessen Abstammung scheinbar, wie wir jetzt wissen, von babylonischen Exil kommt und rein Jüdisch war, weil wir auch jüdische Monumente früherer Zeit von manchen Jahrhunderten vor dem Islam heute von der Arabischen Halbinsel haben.

**Prof. Dr Jovan Kovačević:** Doch in Čelarevo sind das Paganen.

**Prof. Dr Michael Helzer:** In Čelarevo sehen Sie nicht auser Pferdeschmuck rein paganische Sachen.

**Prof. Dr Jovan Kovačević:** Und Pferde in Gräbern!

**Prof. Dr Mihael Helzer:** Ja, das ist selbstverständlich nicht jüdisch, aber es gibt auch jüdische Striche.

**Prof. Dr Bogumil Hrabak:**

Jewish studies is my line, but, not this period. My studies are based on documentary evidence housed in archives. For the period in question such sources are, it goes without saying, not available. I do think, for all the same, that we have at our disposal here sufficient material to support some hypothesis with. In my judgment it is quite clear that this population is not a Jewish ethnic group. It is a group called at this meeting Mongolian, obviously not in the strictest meaning of that word, but to convey the idea that one of the Turanian nations is what we are talking about. From the point of view of language we have here four great groups: Mongolian, in the narrow sense, Manghurian which we can easily exclude, Turkish, where we have various groups among the Turks and one group which is the Finno-Ugrian family of languages. In that group, obviously, we have a number of sub-groups. However, we have no data enough to define that more clearly. And yet, I wish to point to some recent research works of a number of Hungarian historians as their studies somehow impose themselves upon us in these reasonings of ours. Namely, on the basis of certain documentation which they point to, some Hungarian historians advanced an assumption that there were migrations of Hungarians into the Panonian lowland in the 8th century as well. The great masses of Hungarians reached the Panonian lowland in 886. However, it

was not only the Hungarians, then barbarians, but all the rest, too. I do not reject this assumption, but I do not accept either. I only advance here a hypothesis. It well may be that our colleagues from Hungary could give us more details so that this assumption is not rejected by us *en bloc*. It can be stated with certainty that the great Hungaria, the great Magyar land, was somewhere on the river Volga. However, Hungarian researchers, Molnar and others, did define with more details the migration route covered in the period between the 5th and the 8th century by the Ugro-Magyars, that is of one branch of the Finno-Ugrian people. They happened to find themselves in the region under the Khazar rule, too. Therefrom they moved towards what is Northern Ukraina today. I do think, however, that the Čelarevo population should be sought out from that great group of Magyars which happened to be those days on the territory of the Khazar state.

**Prof. Dr. Alexander Scheiber:**

The Menorah, Lulav and Etrog are stylized in the same way as on Roman Jewish graves. That means, there is no relation whatever with Avaric graves. The stones and bricks were taken over from some Roman cemetery, and then in second place used for Avaric graves.

Accordingly, these remnants of tombstones are Jewish. I think that all the bricks are but fragments of tombstones. All the personal things were taken away, and then the bricks only used in Avarian graves.

**Prof. Dr. Bogdan Brukner:**

I would like to ask one question which I keep thinking about and which may be of help in seeking an answer to one of the basic questions – why do we have here Menoroth? Namely, at this particular moment we are interested in approaching the problem from two angles: first, and primarily, the anthropological-ethnical approach, and second, why were the Menoroth in those graves which we do not assume to belong to Jews, in the narrower sense of this word. In my judgment the two questions are closely linked together and one do not exclude the other. I would, namely, raise a question running somehow on this line: is it always imperative to link the material culture which is in this necropolis of a younger phase to what I would define as a particular, specific religious context? Because the characteristics of material culture very often are not in relation with or are linked to the ethnic particularities. We know, for instance,

that the christianization process was rather slow, and that many tribes demonstrated a tendency to maintain and preserve their etno-cultural characteristics: while accepting Christianity. With other words, it is probable that during a time span a heterogeneous necropolis came into being in Čelarevo (the older phase can be conceived only), a necropolis, which during its latter period belonged to similar but not identical ethnic block. Consequently, it could be assumed that part of the population of the settlement (which, to our regret, could not be found) belonged at the same time both to pagan and Judaized world. It is possible to accept a submission that groups of Jewish or Judaized people lived side by side with pagans in the same settlement and were buried in the same necropolis. Our interest is to learn how is it that Menoroth were found in Čelarevo? That is the key problem. The Menoroth are obviously not of Avar origin, neither can they be linked to Avaric belief or with Avaric cult of deads.

**Eugen Verber:**

Menorah, Etrog, Lulav, citron's fruit and palm branch in addition to the seven-branched candelabrum — when Jewish graves are in question, are never in the grave itself. They are always engraved in or carved into the tombstone, or somehow somewhere appear as a mark. Never in the grave but always on the grave or on the gravestone. Catacombs and cave burials also have their origin in the former Jewish state. In Beth Shearim catacombs are discovered, entire vaults are cut into some limestone rocks. Cave burial originate in the old Jewish state, it is part of old Jewish custom. It was only later that Jews started to put objects in their graves, that the grave started to be furnished, but only such objects as covers for eyes, mouth and ears. The origin of this custom should be sought after in the old belief of protection against demons.

We know, and there is evidence for this in the Talmud, that after their return from Babylon the Jews had a quite developed belief in demons, which they actually took over from the Iranians and Babylonians. Those were the „sheidim“ of all possible categories, angels and evil spirits of all ranks. We can read in the Talmud that „the angels' names they brought from Babylon“. Before that time, i.e. before the return from Babylon, one cannot find in Talmud such a developed world of demons, a demonology which was brought from the Middle East (Iran, Babylon). It well may be, and I wish to stress this point, that we have here a point to be researched as it may be that those bricks were not intended to be placed under the head, but to serve to fill in the holes through which a demon, as the old

belief run, could subsequently enter the grave. In my judgment, those Jewish symbols could not be engraved by the same people who had in their graves ornaments of such perfect design. I cannot conceive that somebody who can draw so perfectly, as shown by the design on the ornaments and on the horse mounts, which were found in these graves, and on the women's ornaments, on buckles and all the rest, where the design is so good, while we have such primitive design of Menorah, Lulav, Etrog and, I think, of one other symbol, that of Shofar, that is ram's antler, I do not believe, I say, that all that was made by the same hand. The two do not belong to the same culture, it is not the same art. I would stress particularly that Jews were buried wrapped in canvas and without anything, as Prof. Kovačević told us before. The custom of putting on the dead a white shirt, kitl in Yiddish, a derivation from Greek word hiton, is of later date. The man had to have this shirt since he was 13, and had to put it on twice yearly, on Yom Kippur, when one makes peace with the God and for the Seder, the first evening of the Pesah holiday. Later, some other symbolic little things, too, were placed in the grave, the most important of these, as far as our interest here goes, are the covers for the eyes, ears and mouth, to avert the demons. These are the things which, in my assumption, may be perhaps linked to Jewish tradition. One should particularly stress, and this is never stressed with strong enough emphasis, that Jews were never proselytizers, Jewish religion never propagated proselytism, it was never missionary and it is therefore, as Prof. Kovačević correctly pointed out, that so few people were converted to Judaism. The Jewish religion remained a national religion, it was placed in that category by the late Prof. Vuko Pavičević, too, a national religion linked to one nation only (one nation – one religion). I wish to underline particularly the assumption that it well may be, and that was stated also by our distinguished colleague Marjanović, that the brick fragments we came across at Čelarevo were put in graves by the new inhabitants or even that they put them back into the graves. In my judgment the answer should be sought after here somewhere. Had those people been Judaized or partly Judaized they would not be buried like that.

**Prof. Dr Jovan Kovačević:**

I would like to offer an explanation of why is the design of Menorah on bricks so primitive. We know that. The ornaments are the work of craftsmen, goldsmiths, while this was inscribed by a member of the clan.

**Prof. Dr Đorđe Stričević:**

First of all I am still a little bit confused by some suggestions which are sometime repeated, namely, that all these things were brought here and were here in secondary use. This was exactly the reason why I raised the question of whether brick fragments without inscription were also found? All the brick fragments found, the answer run, had inscription. Had they been brought here or found themselves here by some chance, at least two or three would be surely without any mark. Let us face it, 83 fragments, if my memory does not fail me, and that is quite a number. It is true, unfortunately, that the graves were turned up, but it is also true that we have here a great number of fragments. In four graves, which were not disturbed, which you excavated systematically, you found bricks with engraved symbols. This is also of great importance. I cannot believe, as was suggested here, that between these bricks and tombstones there is such an important difference. May you be reminded that a sarcophagus was found in Roman catacombs, I think in Via Torlonia. In its center a very nice Menorah was carved in, while four figures representing the four seasons were on the sides.

**Eugen Verber:**

The origin of those symbols do lead us to the Roman catacombs.

**Prof. Dr Đorđe Stričević:**

Also the frescoes recently found in some Roman catacombe have those same features which we have, in a primitive form, in Čelarevo. In Vatican Museum's great catalogue of glass objects (we are speaking here of drinking glasses of which, as a rule, only the bottom part remained and which have features engraved in gold, accompanied by short invocative texts and biblical motifs) some are obviously Jewish as they have those same marks which we find in Čelarevo and some other Jewish elements, too. There were also some small dishes which were placed in the graves for one reason or other. Christian graves thought us that such little dishes were there for food to be left on them for the deceased, as was convincingly demonstrated by Schneider and some other archaeologists, experts in early Christian era. I do not know whether the Roman Jews of the 3rd and 4th century practiced the same custom, but the fact remains that such little things with those same



marks which we see on Čelarevo bricks were found in Jewish graves. On the objects of this category belonging to the early Christian era, that is to say, on the ones which we believe to be Christian, the Old Testament motifs, such as prophet Jonah, or Suzanna, or Daniel among lions, are far more numerous than the New Testament salvation motifs. Very often we do ask ourselves: could it be perhaps that some of those objects which we lightly call early Christian are actually Jewish. I would stress only that it is always the burial which we are dealing with. But let me return to those glasses. I would like to hear whether anybody present could tell us something about them, as small objects with the same marks were placed in Čelarevo graves. A luxurious glass engraved in gold is obviously quite different of those brick fragments, several centuries separate them, and yet, in both cases they were placed in graves.

**Dr Dušica Minić:**

In my view it should not be assumed that the Menorah marked bricks in Čelarevo graves were there by chance, that they happened to get into the graves somehow. We should assume that they were placed there intentionally. I would like to point to a case which is of later date and relates to a necropolis at Đerdap, which we have only partly researched. I am speaking of a Christian necropolis, which was dated to belong to the 10th century, or possibly to the early 11th century and such a dating was based on an inscription of somehow smaller dimension and on some morphological traits of that inscription. In some 11–12 graves, which were excavated, there was at the head or in front of the feet an antique brick with an engraved cross. That is obviously a Christian symbol, and the brick was positioned in such a way that the deceased appeared to look at the symbol. The conclusion is that the grave was furnished with the brick. What I am speaking about was found *in situ*, exactly beyond the feet of each deceased. My point is that this could perhaps serve to explain the position of the Čelarevo bricks and of the Menorah symbols.

**Prof. Dr Alexander Schejber:**

We have two Hebrew inscriptions. The use of the Hebrew language is the best prove that they emanate from real Jews and not from Judaisantes.

**Prof. Eugen Glück:**

Ich glaube das Professor Scheiber hatt Recht wenn er sagt das in Čelarevo zwei Periode sind. Meine Meinung ist auch das in Čelarevo zwei Periode sind, eine römische Periode – und die Ziegeln sind jüdisches Arbeit, und die zweite Periode ist die Avaren Periode, oder bulgarische, oder ungarische, wie sie wollen. Ich glaube das Professor Bona hat Recht mit der Dattierung. Und wenn diese Datierung ist Recht, es ist unmöglich in Karpaten-Beken und in Panonienebene ein Judaisierungszentrum zu sein. Die Juden haben keine Mittel zu judaisieren eine andere Bevölkerung. Ich glaube das diese Ziegeln sind jüdisches Arbeit von der römischer Zeit.

**Prof. Dr Vojislav Jovanović:**

Speaking about such bricks with symbols which might have been placed intentionally and in connection with burial rites or cult of dead, on the one hand, and such bricks which could have got into by some chance, on the other hand, I wold like you to recall to mind, although the era is not the same, that very often when a material was available in the vicinity we came across stones under the head or bricks under the head, and this was systematically done in quite a great number of necropolises. This is a phenomenon identified at so called monks' necropolises within the monastery's cemeteries, where monks were buried. However the same phenomenon was identified in such necropolises, particularly in Istria, where not only men (monks) were burled but women and children, too.

**Prof. Dr Jovan Kovačević:**

Nemanja, too, was buried with a stone under his head.

**Prof. Dr Vojislav Jovanović:**

Yes, he wanted to be buried on the earth, on a mat made of cattail and a stone to be put under his head, so that he would die as a monk dies.

**Prof. Dr. Myriam Ayalon:**

I just wanted to add something in connection with glass, early Roman glass, mentioned before. We know some bracelets with a Menorah

stamp which are definitely Jewish, and apparently from tombs. They belong to the Roman burial traditions, as practised in Rome. They are not from the 3rd or 4th century but from the 5th century.

**Dr. Srboljub Živanović:**

While listening to what our distinguished archaeologists said, I am at a loss to understand one thing, namely, if we do have a biophysical method which tells us, at least for one skeleton, that it belongs to 10th century, why then we go in our discussions so much down to the 7th century, or even to the middle of the 7th century. In my view it would be more justified to come nearer to the 10th century, plus or minus 60–70 years, and to see whether the material found can be placed on this period, when the people who did make use of that material, actually lived. I do not say that they produced it, but it appears obvious that they used it.

**Prof. Dr. Jovan Kovačević:**

Let me answer this question immediately. Our experience with C-14 is rather poor.

**Dr. Srboljub Živanović:**

In that case I should add that the method of dating human organic material, isolated from the interior of bones, was recently published. By using this method excellent results are achieved and if any discrepancy would show up it is not so great and could not justify mistakes as great as several centuries. That could perhaps go as far as a few tens of years.

**Prof. Dr. Đurđa Bošković:**

It was said, with good justification, that the necropolis lasted quite long. Accordingly, Čelarevo was not the cemetery of a tribe on move, of a nomadic tribe, but of a tribe which was sedative, settled somewhere in the vicinity. This assumption is supported by such finds as the tools for tilling the land, as for instance the sickle. If that is so, we are then looking at Čelarevo without any connection with the life which was

going on here somewhere and which, in fact, produced the material used at burials. Unfortunately and to our regret, there is no other way for the time being to look at Čelarevo. It appears, however, that people lived here somewhere, and lived a sedative life. Consequently, our archaeology, and first of all every researcher who was doing work at Čelarevo, is called upon to find out where were the settlements. It makes no difference whether the settlement was on move, or temporary, but a settlement must have had existed there. Whether those people lived in huts or tents, makes no difference, but a settlement was obviously there, and traces of it should be there somewhere, at least in the narrow stratigraphic layer, so that this necropolis could be studied not in isolation from but within and in connection with the life around it. If we could track down at least part of the settlement which „fed“ the necropolis, it would be easier, it seems to me, to arrive at a judgment and also to approach that problem of Judaization, which might have occurred, its degree and scope.

**Dr Mirjana Ljubinković:**

This necropolis is quite a problem for us and I can understand those distinguished colleagues who started with the assumption that we have here an old necropolis which was digged up and the material was made use of again. And yet, one thing appears to be strange enough: those of us who made archaeology their profession know better that we hardly ever have only one category of objects from a given period of time. From the Roman time we have here only bricks. Had they put in the graves what they had found here, we would surely have here some other objects, belonging to that same Roman time, too.

It is quite an unusual thing, and surprising, too, that not one single, not even five, but as many as 83 bricks were found in a digged up necropolis — which also means that part of the material has gone to earth — and all have the same mark, while at the same time no other material belonging to Roman time or emanating from graves of that period was found. If we suppose that the necropolis was Roman, my question is: do we have any data telling us that Jews, within a Roman military camp, had a separate cemetery?

**Eugen Verber:**

If within a Roman military camp and in whichever capacity there was a Jewish population, it had to have, from time immemorial, a sepa-

rate cemetery. In principle, a Jew is never buried with members of other nations.

**Dr Mirjana Ljubinković:**

In that case I would ask those who know better whether any significance should be attached to the fact that only fragments of bricks were used. If that is a Roman time necropolis and Roman bricks taken from graves are used, why then, I would ask, only fragments were taken? I put this on the table as a problem: is there any significance in this? Why do we have 83 fragments and not a single piece of brick?

**Eugen Verber:**

I cannot answer the question historically. I can, however, say one thing. In the old Hebrew language spoken between the Old and the New Testament there is an idiom, which, if translated, would somehow run: „Broken clay pot“ and its meaning is: a broken man, a bankrupt man. That indicates heresy — *nishbar*, a broken jug of jar, a broken pitcher. That is an idiom from the Mishna period of the Hebrew language.

**Dr Mirjana Ljubinković:**

We could assume, therefore, that it was intentionally that the bricks were placed in the Čelarevo graves and this was one of the elements of the burial rite. This would be the conclusion. It is clear that Roman bricks were used. But it still remains an open question whether a cemetery was somewhere there before and whether the bricks were taken from it, and also, whether those people were somehow members of or adherents to the Jewish religion.

(End of the Morning session)

**Prof. Dr Jovan Kovačević:**

We are still discussing the most important problem which brought us here, namely how the Menoroth in the Čelarevo graves came into being and where they originate from.

**Martin Gabričević:**

We could hear here, twice in fact, that Jews were never proselytes. This may be correct in principle, but if we look at the historical facts we have to record this with some reservation at least, and not as a categorical proposition. If we go to the logical end we have to ask ourselves who, after all, Judaized the Khazars, who Judaized some Caucasian tribes, and who Judaized these Čelarevo people we are talking about? As mention was made here of Khazars and a proposition was made that the Čelarevo necropolis should be joined to Khazars, I would submit that in this connection we ought not bypass, as a historical source, „The life of St Cyril“, as published, with a rather critical note, by Dr. Grivec. This, first of all, because it brings to light that there were, undoubtedly, among the Khazars very learned rabbis, too, ethnic Jews with a very high level of theological knowledge. If we read the theological dispute between St Cyril and the rabbi, it becomes clear that the theological thought was on quite a high level, which must have radiated downwards, too, reaching not only those around the king and the narrow segment around the court, but perhaps wider down. If we wish to discover the truth, as we do, we should, it seems to me, approach this Khazar component from all aspects and do an in depth study. That would mean that the Čelarevo necropolis should be first of all placed in the framework of history. And secondly, all Khazar migrations, for which data are available, should be identified. We also have anthropological data on Khazars, why wouldn't we go to the end in identifying them. As far as I know, such anthropological analyses were done sometime before in Hungary by Professor Nemeskeri. The Khazar component — as we definitely know that they were Judaized — should

be given a very careful in-depth consideration from all aspects, and when the study is completed, to accept it or reject it. Why do we bypass the Khazars when we know for sure that they were Judaized, and why do we busy ourselves with theories for which we have no historical truth or any base.

**Dr Mirjana Ljubinković:**

In the legend on Vladimir the Russian it is recorded that he has deputed three missions to find out which is the best among the monotheistic religions. He had sent them to Jewish, Orthodox and Catholic people. This was at the time when the Russians were about to leave paganism and to take up monotheism. When the reports were in he decided that Orthodoxy suits him best. Accordingly, if we have such a record relating to Russia we can conclude that there were certain actions aiming at spreading Judaism, even though the Jewish people did not initiate them.

**Dr Boško Babić:**

I propose to revert and to discuss the problem of Menorah. First, I want to state that we witness here a uniform use of the terrain. That is a site, sepulchral by its character, everything is in connection with the graves of the necropolis. The site has no other character. This is of great importance. In the system of the excavated part the uniformity of the west-east orientation of the graves is clearly visible. There are only a few exceptions, some of the graves have a north-south orientation. Also, we have one deviation from the basic east-west line. It is obvious that some graves were subsequently digged, added in a way. The necropolis was in use for a longer period, that is beyond dispute. I would somehow strike a bargain between those who speak of early date and those who speak of a quite late period. Judging by the material, as far as my knowledge goes, the necropolis' history was quite longlasting. Several centuries, to be sure. The question of primary and/or secondary use of the Menorah marked bricks was raised here. This is rather essential for a judgment relating those Menorah and those bricks and for the purpose of placing them on a given time, actually to join them to the necropolis and the material recovered from it.

I would like to draw your attention to a very important point. We should ask ourselves what the essence of the problem is? We have put these Judaic marks, the Menorah and the other marks into the focus

of our attention. They are essential in certain sense, because they are representation of something, but the material itself is a great question mark for us. Because, if we take into consideration the marks only, then we can just say that the marks might have been put on any other material, and if that is so, there is no problem then. That would mean that the marks are of importance, but great importance should be attached also to the problem of whether all marks were on one and the same material. In each and every case the material is broken.

In connection with this thought I would like to draw your attention to the following. In my view Prof. Dr Bošković was on firm ground when he stated that the marks were so designed as to fit in the shape of the brick fragments. But the question remains whether the brick fragments, as such were found first and the marks were inscribed subsequently, or perhaps the marks were inscribed on bricks as they were primarily shaped and only subsequently were these bricks broken and fragmented. This is a rather important question. Traditional or religious belief of those times might have taught them how to break those bricks. It looks obvious that by breaking the piece they wanted to give it a proper shape so as to give shape to what was done. It is possible also that the breaking itself became a phenomenon and the fragments were left behind. That might have had some other meaning. I can, of course, only advance assumptions. But I do think that those pieces are not just by chance such as they are. We have fragments which appear to be part of a composition of those symbols in their entity. Simply, all this should be given careful consideration and an attempt should be made during the studies which will follow to make something out of it.

I have put on the table the following question: why just on that material, on bricks, and not on any other, and secondly, why we haven't got a heterogeneous material in this case?

I would like to take you back now to the ancient prehistoric times, to the beliefs of those times, to show you that pottery is also something which is linked to those higher powers, those divine rights. The basic powers which made the life possible were the earth and the sun. The result of fire and earth — emanation of deities. That was something like a guarantee. Those bricks with Jewish symbols obviously had some apotropaic meaning. That question of breaking is certainly connected with human destiny in a given time. Human remains are left in the earth, but what meaning they possibly can have? Not in the sense of any continuation of human life, or in a sense of the importance of that material for the continued life of the one who that material belonged to, or of anybody else, whoever, but in the sense that they can take up the role of abuser. In conspiracy with the demons they may exert devilish influen-



ce on the environment of the ground in which those remains are interred. I think that this question of the material should be further elaborated in the studies.

As to the dating of the material various influences were mentioned. Obviously, the Avaric component of the necropolis is not questioned, it is in fact the most marked. It is also with good justification that Iranian influence was mentioned with regard to some material of later date. I said already that it lasted for a long time.

I would add something to what our distinguished colleague Mi-skiewicz said when she spoke about pottery.

When we look at that pottery as a whole lot we can see, first of all, that certain shapes are unquestionably of late antique origin. We know that they lasted for several centuries, that is not disputed either. Those are, first of all, the pear-shaped jugs, and further we have to mention those glazed dishes with trefoil spout. It was said that the glazing technic was clearly antique. Look at the surface of those dishes and you will be satisfied that no such technic was available during the Middle Age. The history of pottery glazing is known to us, that of Caucasian origin, and later Roman and Byzantine. This one belongs to that lower circle.

And now, may I turn to the most essential. First, the pieces of Korčak type, referred to by our colleague. It is well known that those shapes do not last up to so late a period on those terrains. Further, the phases are also well known, the start was made by pottery completely hand made, then was the pottery which was, as the Polish people say, „optačana“, that is a pottery scraped in its upper part, while hand shaped in its lower part. We have here some pieces of such pottery, but the one belonging to an earlier period is beyond dispute. There is one, I shall call it Black Sea pottery, which do not belong to these terrains, which came from those upper terrains.

We do have great difficulties with dating Middle Age pottery. We do not know well the 6th century old Byzantine pottery. As far as I had chances to see, the later 9th and 10th century pottery is very similar to that six centuries old pottery which has its definite characteristics. I would draw attention to the deep incision, to the wavy lines on page 136 of the catalogue, the pot on the bottom of the page. That way of engraving and the wavy lines are to a great extent typical for the early Byzantine pottery. As far as I am concerned all that pottery, or, to be more exact, the greater part of what has been published could be placed on older dates.

**Prof. Dr. David Ayalon:**

First of all I would like to compliment our English language interpreter who performs superbly. This is no reflection on the other interpreters, but she is the only one to whom I listen.

Secondly, I would like to compliment the organizers of this meeting, especially for the catalogue which is the great tribute both to the archaeologists and to those who compiled it. If we did our home work well, we are now well prepared for this discussion.

Now, to the question of partial acceptance of Judaism. It is a long time since I left studies in Judaism, and really I am not an expert. But I think I could say something, since I deal specially with conversions in countries bordering on the lands of Islam. I think that by force of circumstances, whatever the Jewish Halakha is, or had been, there must have been converts to Judaism, who from the very beginning did not fulfil all the rites completely according to the Law. You see, it is a matter of logic and human nature. And this is an immense combination. If we look to-day, for example, at Christianity and Islam on their borders, we see for example in Africa, how pagan are both Islam and Christianity there. How they preserved pagan elements. It is also seen in Indonesia, where Islam still holds great elements of paganism.

This feature is particularly important in cases with people who belong to tribal structures, who belong to tribes, and which they guard very strongly. It is very difficult to eliminate them. Even if we look at the Beduins who were Islamized very long ago, they still up to these days have kept pagan customs and rites which are traced to many centuries ago. If we take into consideration for example the Christians amongst the Mongols, we have the evidence of two Christian Catholic priests who visited Mongolia, around the middle of the 13th century. There they saw the Nestorian priests and they were shocked by their paganism inside the steppe. It is impossible the other way. It goes this way even if one tries to follow the Law exactly. It takes a considerable time from the adoption of a religion until the real observance of it. It is simply impossible otherwise.

If we look now at the Khazars, we have an evidence, and this is a thing which is evident in itself not only among the Khazars, but among other people as well, practically among any of those who adopted monotheism on the borders of Islam. It is the ruling class, the rulers, who adopt the religion, and then it sinks down slowly into other layers. This is the way of taking it, of becoming a monotheist, as we know it. We know it about the Seljuks, and about the Khazars it is the same thing. We have a clear evidence of a Moslem source that conversion to Judaism was from the

top. And it is the same, exactly the same thing with the Mongols who adopted Islam in southern Russia. It is from the upper layer, and then it goes down very slowly. And we can not know how long it takes. The pattern of accepting only partial monotheism by marginal people is the feature which in my view can not be avoided under any circumstances, whatever the religion might be. And who was the rabbi who would tell those who decided to be Jews exactly how to perform Judaism? It is simply impossible.

And now about the particular things of proselytism. I think that the view on proselytism not having been the strongest feature of Judaism is pretty much true, but were there not some exceptions? Nobody can prove this point, because if we take the first thousand years of Jewish history in the Diaspora, we know very little about it outside the countries of Islam. Very little indeed. And who can be sure how the acceptance of Judaism was made in those days?

So, it is not sure at all that this strict approach had been the thing which characterized Judaism through its history. But let us suppose, for argument's sake, that converts to Judaism always had to observe the Law strictly, and that the tendency to proselytizing had always been weak among Jews. The obvious question which poses itself is: how did the Khazars become Jews?

This brings us to the findings in Čelarevo. The conversion of the Khazars was recorded in the sources, because it had been carried out on the comparatively large scale, and was connected with a realm ruled by Jewish converts. It might well be that conversions to Judaism, on a much smaller scale, both on the borders of Christianity and Islam, took place, which had never been recorded, and this might be the case in Čelarevo. Whatever the ultimate outcome of the study of the Čelarevo findings might be, the Jewish character of some of the symbols which they include can not be denied.

So this was one aspect, but I wanted to say something more about the Khazars. I have been dealing for a very long time with terminology in Islam, and particularly with names of all kinds of people on the Islamic borders, and I came to learn how uncertain and fluctuating this terminology might be. What I want to say, what I am driving at, is the fact that we do not know at all, if every time the Khazars are mentioned in the Moslem sources, they are referred to as exactly the same people. I shall take an other special example before coming back to the Khazars. I shall give the example of a term which is very near to the people of this area, i.e. Yugoslavia. And this is the term „Sagaliba“ which is the nearest to Slavs. It is almost certain that this term did not mean exactly the same thing in the sources which refer to it.

Quite recently I published an article in which I showed just the opposite. There was a tendency among Islamists since the middle of the 19th century onwards to consider the term „Sagaliba”, which is nearest to „Slavs”, as including also people from western Europe, like Galicians, Calabrians, Germans and others. This tendency was presumably based on an evidence of a Muslim geographer from the second half of the 10th century. I proved that this geographer says precisely the contrary to what the scholars attribute to him. So this seems to support a conclusion about the sameness of the term „Sagaliba”. But what it really proves that this particular geographer meant a different thing than what had been attributed to him. So, about the term „Khazars”, which had been in use for several centuries, it is almost certain that it is not always the same thing. This has a very strong bearing on the study of the Jewish Khazars. This is one feature of the study of that subject.

Another feature is that this topic is loaded with emotions. It is an extremely emotional topic. It is emotional especially for the Jews, because of that craving for statehood, which is very natural. So there is an intention to amplify and exaggerate the whole phenomenon. It is emotional also in another way, in order to prove that all the Jews were Khazars, and have nothing to do with the land of Israel.

So, having these two things, I think that there were few subjects which had been so misused as this term of „Khazars” on all sides. First of all, this topic should be returned to its natural and somewhat smaller dimensions. I am not saying anything about the result which such a line will produce. I am only saying that according to our present knowledge and according to the studies of to-day, there is great tendency in different directions to exaggerate the whole Jewish aspect of the Khazars.

I would end my words with reference to an article which might be of use to some people here. I am sure, most of you know it. It is in the second edition of the „Encyclopaedia of Islam”. It has appeared already, and it is a very good article on the whole, although it suffers to some extent from the difficult problems which are connected with this subject. The basis was given by Prof. Bartold, but it had been greatly augmented and transformed by an American Jewish professor of the Rutgers University, by the name of P.B. Golden. And he is now writing a book about the Khazars. I hope he will skip some of the traps which are part of all these studies.

**Eugen Verber:**

I would add something to what our distinguished Prof. Ayalon said about the Khazars. There are many who think that the greatest confusion

with regard to Khazars was caused by that contraversial Koestler. It is not so. I know that it may look so if you read his „Thirteenth Tribe“, which was so much written about and so much misused, as Prof. Ayalon said. The point is elsewhere. The point is also in the following. We have got our first knowledge of Khazars from a Spanish-Jewish correspondence between Hasday ibn Shaprut and the Khazar king. However, as far as I know the authenticity of those letters, and there are at least two versions, is disputed by recent researches. Caution is called for, therefore. But, it is with regard to this unfortunate Koestler that I want to tell something. Instead of tending the sheep on his ranch in England after having been Bela Kun's commissar for culture and a quite good fiction writer, too, he wants to be a researcher, what was apparently his dream during the revolution and remained with him ever since. However, whenever he does something confusion starts to radiate. If he touches upon scientific subjects, he makes a mess. And this is not only with regard to the Khazars. As far as the Khazars are concerned there are still quite a few open questions in addition to what was already pointed to as incorrect. It appears that we are not the first, that our generation is not the first, which made this matter subject of discussion. Recently I read in the Brockhaus — Efron Jewish Encyclopaedia, which is the unsurpassed work as far as Judaism is concerned, the entry on „History of Jews in Poland“ and our distinguished colleague from Warsaw could, surely, tell us more about this subject. The entry starts like this: There is a theory that the Polish Jews are Khazars by origin because there are, the entry runs, townships and cities with Jewish names, and here several names are mentioned but I cannot remember them, and I did not bring my notes with me because I did not expect this matter to be discussed at this meeting. But anyhow, the point is that in the name, in the toponym, there is a Jewish part, not Khazaric but Jewish, and I repeat Jewish, and that is why it was thought that they were Khazars. This was, however, the entry runs further, disputed by others. I am speaking of the Brockhaus-Efron Encyclopaedia of 1911. As back as that, there were such thoughts and they were, again, seriously called in question.

In addition, if we return to what Prof. Živanović said, namely, that the skeleton he inspected belongs to the 10th century, then we may, possibly, take the Khazars into consideration. But if we are speaking about the 8th century that was the time when the Khazar kingdom still flourished, at that time it was not in decline, those days there was no Khazar migration. Therefore I wonder whether the Khazars should be taken into consideration. Be as it may, this is not, in my view, the most important problem. This the more as we shall not be able to resolve it. The problem is how shall we prove that these people were Judaisantes, or again, how

shall we prove that the bricks were in secondary use, and where they came from. I am not courageous enough to form a firm belief. I shall advance only one submission, based on what I know about Judaism and about religious laws and customs, which I referred to here in my conversations with my distinguished colleagues during the interval, namely, that the bricks must have had been, I think, in secondary use and not in first.

**Dr Maria Miskiewicz:**

I see that our discussion is going towards the conclusion that the signs of culture observed on the cemetery have some connections with Khazars. So, we should try to find out, did those Jewish signs come from Khazars directly and when it could happen. On the cemetery we can observe three ethnical components. One, connected with Avars, is exemplified by graves with horses and all those belt clamps found around the skeletons. The second one – I think – belongs to Slavic influences. It is the part of pottery and some rules of funeral rites. And the third one, with Menorah signs is linked to ethnical Jewish tradition.

Khazars had a lot of European connections and influences at that times, especially because of the trade. Many Jews lived in Khazar empire in relative tolerancy with other tribes. Khazars had also many political contacts with Byzantium and western Europe and because of that we should expect signs of their culture outside the borders of their state.

I think that here, at Čelarevo, we can look out for so – called „early small medieval tribe“ which came from easter part of Europe. They settled here in the middle of VII century and afterwards were growing in a kind of isolation. Because of that fact we can observe the signs of heterogenous cultural customs which became homogenous. It happened during using the same cemetery, even if at the beginning we can observe three influences and customs genetically descended with different ethnical groups.

**Prof. Dr Jovan Kovačević:**

The easiest solution is that these Menorah marked bricks were in secondary use. But when we are out on the terrain, speaking as an archaeologist, we have no evidence for such conclusion. It is quite clear that the Menorah marked bricks are joined to the necropolis and the cult of that very spot. Had there been above the necropolis an older layer with the Menorah marked bricks in it, it is quite impossible that no other

trace would have remained from such a layer, -- this, in my view, should be clear to everybody who has some, even limited, archaeological experience. Surely, some pottery would be found, money, unmarked bricks, etc., etc. These Menorah marked bricks were simply put in the graves. Can anybody imagine an Avar starting out in search of Menorah marked bricks in a Jewish necropolis, the existence of which, to be sure, is not known to us, and on a site which is not known to us either, that this Avar collected those bricks, took it back and placed them in grave. He wouldn't do that. He simply found brick fragments and lead by his way of looking at cult of dead inscribed the Menorah mark.

When it is said that those are elements of Judaization and that it is difficult to explain, I agree that it is difficult to explain, but this is a process of Judaization. This clan did accept somehow certain elements of Judaism. I did quote Josephus Flavius but all of us forgot him. He said that some barbaric people adopted what was the rite of light of the Jews, and some other Jewish customs, but not Judaism in its entity. That may mean that the process of Judaization had its phases and in this particular case the process might had stopped at its initial phase and did not progress further. This may be some primitive phase of Judaism which we came across archaeologically. On the other hand, the entire burial rite is completely non-Jewish; it is in fact that of Shamanism, northwest - southeast interment, the so called diagonal interment, consequently not according to decumanus. Diagonal interment cannot at all be Jewish as their graves are oriented towards Jerusalem, in whichever part of the earth they may find themselves. Just as Mecca is for Islam.

**Prof. Dr Vojislav Jovanović:**

For the sake of precise terminology, the bricks are, for all the same, in secondary use, as those who were buried did not make them. They have taken them as a ready made product. Bricks of whichever kind. The bricks our colleague Radovan Bunardžić found in the graves were not the product of the population which was buried, they belonged, probably, to the late antique era. Accordingly, they were in secondary use. If for no other reason, then due to the very fact that they were used in some construction. I just want to make sure that the term is used precisely and to avert any misunderstanding. (Prof. Dr Zdenko Vinski: At least four centuries past between the baking of bricks and their use at Čelarevo.) It is quite an other matter to say that they were intentionally used for the purpose.

**Dr Maria Miskiewicz:**

I am thinking now about the bricks which were found at the Khazars castle Sarkiel. Some of them were covered with engraved runic inscriptions. So, if we agree that at Čelarevo we have a cemetery connected with East European tribes, we should imagine that people staying here tried to preserve their customs. They were strangers, and had no possibility to keep old rules, so they had to adapt their customs to the surrounding entity. In such way we can explain why the bricks were put into the graves and why we have not Menorah candelabrum, but only decorated bricks with engraved Menorah symbols.

**Prof. Danica Dimitrijević:**

I think that I can join all those who spoke so far and said that the bricks were intentionally put in graves and that they did not happen to be there by some chance. The fact that 80 pieces were found is clearly a good enough evidence, and we do not know how many pieces were ruined by the brick plant. Those are Roman bricks, most probably from Castellum Onagrimum, which was the nearest site. As we know that there is no stone in the Southern part of Bačka or any other long lasting material, each brick was probably a precious thing.

Our distinguished colleague Dr Maria Miskiewicz just mentioned the bricks from Sarkiel. It is obvious that the custom of decorating bricks with engravings was very much a Khazar custom and their engravings were always secondary, in dry bricks, never in wet ones.

The Menoroth themselves, such as we see here, are actually most similar to those on the tombstones in Fanagoria, on the Taman peninsula. That is the same stylization and I think that some experts in epigraphy had quite rightly pointed to that fact.

I would, for all the same, revert to the written sources. Prof. Dr. Kovačević did mention this morning Kinam, believing, most probably, that this author is well known... (Prof. Dr. Kovačević: I expected Prof. Kalić to join us but she did not show up. We expect that she will tell us something.)... In one sentence Kinam says that even now they are following Moses' laws, although not quite clearly. Elsewhere he says, again, that they call themselves Hallsi, but they are of other religion, the one Persians follow. Whenever that part of Kinam's text is commented upon it is suggested usually that he had not the best knowledge of the situation in the Southern part of Hungary, and that he was somehow confused in this respect.



If we now take the new Soviet texts which are giving us the result of a very detailed analysis of frescoes and other objects of art in the outer Iran area, and that would mean Sofia and Horezmia — everyone is in agreement with the conclusion that here predominantly a very complicated syncretism had established itself and came to expression in both the texts and the creative arts, and consequently, as far as this area is concerned, it is not possible to speak about clear Zoroastrianism, or Buddhism, as in this religion there are even remnants of Shamanism. This, the conclusion runs, has to be explained by the large scale mixing of population in this area, by the various migrations and by the mutual influence of religions which superseded each other, so that these people accepted from each religion what was to their liking and rejected what was not.

It well may be that such an explanation would hold good for the Čelarevo necropolis, too: that those people still retained a part of their religious practices but they had also, on one way or other, adopted some elements of the Jewish religion.

It may be of interest to note that Abdul Hamid from Granada, who wrote about the same population, offered data very similar to those given by Kinam.

Another source, the anonymous notary of King Bela III, and I know that you shall immediately react by claiming this to be a very unreliable source, but anyhow, he speaks in very specific terms of a settlement in the close vicinity of Novi Sad. As far as this is concerned we can state the following. He says that the village Bakša, i.e. Baksafalva was established by new arrivals from the Bulgarian land, by Ismailites, led by great master called Ibaksh. The village of Baksafalva is almost the periphery of Novi Sad today, it is on the left bank of the river Danube, opposite Kamenica, between the medieval settlements Saint Marton, Vasaros Varad, and Zajod Čenej, on the east.

Although King Bela's anonymous notary is always considered as an unreliable source, it should be, for all the same, of some interest to note that of all the early Hungarian sources he is the only one who states that the Khazars — he calls them Kozars, according to Slovenian spelling — were settled on the area between the river Tisa, Transilvania, Maros and Samos before the arrival of the Hungarians. No matter how cautious we are when that anonymous notary of Bela III is in question, it is interesting for all the same that in a way both, Kinam and Abdul Hamid from Andalusia, and the anonymous notary of king Bela as well, are in agreement that a Turkish population, called by the sources Ismailites have to be reckoned with as far as the territory around Novi Sad is concerned. These people claim to be descendants of immigrants from Horezma. We

also have to take note of the fact that it was here, in the very vicinity, where the Abasidian dyrchem belonging to early era was found, and that somehow all these things can be put together, for all the same, into one whole although much remains to be desired.

As to the question of how the Khazars were Judaized there is such a huge literature on this subject that we are really not competent here, in my view, to enter into the problem. However, Tolstov who is persistently fighting against those who question the Judaization, keeps insisting on the migration of those people from Horezma who, after the Hursat uprising was crushed in the sixtieth or seventieth of the 8th century, lead by their rabbis, fled and reached the Khazar court and remained there until the Bulan – reform, the reform of chan Bulan, who was against such syncretic Judaism and made efforts to introduce true Jewishness resorting even to such measures as calling back the rabbis who happened to be outside the Khazar khaganate so that they could reform the syncretic religion which was brought in from outside. It is difficult to say whether or to what extent all these things are correct, but I do think they at least cast some light on the Čelarevo necropolis, and that the Khazar or Khabar – Ismailite question ought not be a priori rejected. This the more as there is no other solution in sight, at least I do not see it. It can be taken for granted that those people were interred in keeping with the pagan customs, it is also certain that those bricks were placed into the graves intentionally and the Jewish symbols on those bricks were intentionally and exactly engraved, and finally, that we have there moreover two Jewish inscriptions, too.

**Prof. Dr V. Nedomački:**

I would like just to remind you that a possibility for Asian population to be Judaized was present as back as the 8th century before our era, when the Assyrians captured the northern part of what was then the state of Israel and when masses of Jews were displaced by them. Consequently, if the Jews managed subsequently to get as far as China and to establish their communities there, it was then much easier for them to come into contact with various tribes in the far nearer areas of Asia Minor, the Southern part of Russia, the Caspian area, and to pass on to them some of their beliefs. To be sure these symbols are schematic to a great extent and we should, therefore, take note of what Z. Efron said in his letter, namely, and I quote: „Those who engraved these symbols never had an authentic etrog or shofar in their hand”. They designed the shofar just as the Latin letter „L” looks like, while if we study the

Jewish mosaics belonging to the Hellenistic era and those coming from the old Palestine, and those, too, which can be seen at Roman and Greek sites, all that looks quite differently. That would mean that this tribe, which was probably Judaized, but took over only some marginal ingredients of Judaism, kept to that design of symbols, following some tradition, some custom of passing on tradition from generation to generation, perhaps even without any knowledge of what those symbols represented.

**Prof. Dr Myriam Ayalon:**

May I just now add the following argument.

It seems that the date is constantly rising, starting at the 7th – 8th century, and we reached by now the 10th century. When going through the catalogue, it struck me to see that what was found in the four graves, which were excavated, and where all the material *in situ* was rather poor but for the bricks engraved by the Menorah, these would be actually the real indication about the quite admittedly Jewish nature. Whereas the other material which is considerably mixed up, could give a distorted view of this feature. One might have found a different division of material within the tombs initially had they been found *in situ* as well.

**Prof. Dr Jovan Kovačević:**

I think that this remark is correct, if I understood it properly. That element of Judaization, or the degree of Judaization should not be taken as valid for the whole population buried in this necropolis. It well may be that it holds good only for one part of the population. Had we found the entire necropolis and had we had the possibility properly to excavate it, we could have perhaps witness that only in the graves of richer people elements of Judaization were present – I do not believe that such would have been the case with the graves with horses – or with the graves of the poorer people. However, such a precise analysis is just not possible to make when we are faced with a necropolis such as the one at Čelarevo. We are left to guess.

**Prof. Dr Đorđe Stričević:**

The argument against the Khazar theory is, so to say, that of all Khazars only the upper strata were Judaized, or at least only a small

number of people, while the Čelarevo necropolis exposed something quite different. If we take the case of the Serbs, Bulgarians and Russians, we see, also, that the prince and the members of his family were the first to turn Christian. I shall mention one exception only, to my view a very important one, that of the early Christians. Christianity was the religion, first of all, of the urban proletariat, except, perhaps, in Edessa, or in some other cases on the East, where the upper layers started to adopt Christianity quite early, perhaps in the 1st century, or in the 2nd century, to be on the safe side.

**Prof. Dr Zdenko Vinski:**

When Christianity became the state authority it started to christianize all layers, as for instance in the case of the Croats.

**Prof. Dr Đorđe Stričević:**

But the comparison is not quite adequate as there was no mighty Jewish state from which the Khazars would take over the new religion. Surely, the prince and the aristocracy of a neighbouring barbarian land would take over Christianity from Byzantium, but Byzantium, was at that time a mighty state. But why some Khazars would... (Prof. Vinski: The king's court was Jewish.)... My point is that the Jewish symbols in the graves of poorer people, i.e. in the graves of those who were in the lower layers of the Čelarevo population, is not by itself enough to invalidate the assumption that we have here a case of adoption of „new“ religion, in its syncretistic form, of course. There was no mighty Jewish state those days, no such a mighty state the patronage of which would be accepted by some small princes, as it was the case with the spreading of Christianity from Byzantium out to Slav lands. This is a parallel, not quite adequate, to my view.

**Laslo Sekereš:**

You will, hopefully, agree with me that I had no chance so far to study this, what I would call cultural circle which we are giving consideration here today. Actually I had no reason to do such research. It goes without saying, therefore, that I am not prepared enough to enter into such details as would eliminate the mistakes I may perhaps make in

my discussion. However, as an archaeologist I have to give thought to these things as I may some day come across a similar necropolis and may have to find solutions. This morning we were given to understand, and that should be taken as a principle, that Jewish cemeteries have to be separated, that they cannot be in the framework of an other cemetery. Therefore, had Jews been present here, then the whole cemetery would be Jewish, or the other way round.

On the other hand, we have to think of these people interred here in the 8th century – according to some other views in the 7th century, and I think that both views are correct – we have to think, I say, what these people could find across the way, on the other bank of the river Danube; we have to give thought to some facts, that there were ruins here, wherefrom they have taken away bricks, all that what survived the Roman empire was still very much present here. Such presence in the vicinity, if not actual or material then psychological, made its appearance felt and influenced the people around in the area. I think I should draw attention to Pris Kretor who, while passing through and seeing sights in the court of Atilla, as back as the end of the 5th century, mentioned that there were people at the court such as Onegesia, let me mention only one, who demanded to have a separately bath made for him. And Pris mentioned also that the wood and stone for that bath were brought there from the Panonian lowland.

And I am putting the question to myself and wonder: is there a possibility that such a small community which lived in the Čelarevo area and had there its necropolis, had among its members such men as was Onegesia at the court of Atilla, men who had their own views, who – and I quote Pris again – put upon similar clothes but had also their cultural and possibly other inner demands which they themselves strived to be satisfied.

#### **Prof. Dr David Ayalon:**

I did not want to mention particular names, but since our colleague Verber mentioned the name of Koestler, I have to say that Koestler just copied that idea mainly from an Israeli scholar, a very well known Islamist by the name of A.N.Poliak, whose main speciality was the Mameluke period. I dedicated most of my work to the same field. He was a very great scholar, but I should say a misguided genius. He wrote a book called Khazaria in Hebrew. I don't know if it ever had been translated, and how many people here know about its existence. This man had an unusual insight, but at the same time he made terrible mistakes, which can be proved simply by the use of the sources.

I criticized him mainly on his major field of studies, the Mameluke period. And he did not have anything to answer. So if he made such mistakes in a field which he commended far better, and which is so well documented, how much bigger are mistakes in such a controversial field as Khazaria. Koestler just gave a very wide circulation to Poliak's unfounded ideas.

The book of Poliak is very important to side issues, which are not connected with the main thesis, and that is because he had been a scholar of immense knowledge. I should not write off the book as a source to read for other things, but not for his main theory.

**Pfof. Dr Bogdan Brukner:**

Even if we are all in agreement, in principle, that two conflicting religious cults are present in this necropolis, I would propose, for all the same, this conclusion to be accepted as only one of the possibilities. If we would concur with the anthropological analyses of our distinguished colleague, Prof. Živanović, who told us that basically one racial type is in question, that would lead us then to the phenomenon which was so convincingly explained by Prof. Ayalon from Jerusalem, and I for one accept this explanation. It seems to me, namely, that we should demonstrate a little bit greater flexibility when we use the terminus „Judaization“. I would say that we ought not be so strict in interpreting this term, that this term should not be understood always to imply something very strict in the cult of deads, and that no allowance can be given in this respect. This the more, in my view, as we are dealing here with a racial type, coming from faraway Euro-Asian areas, which must have adopted something from Judaism, while some other things it could not, by all probability, accept.

Accordingly, as far as I am concerned, these Menoroth simply prove that we have to think of a heterogenous – in the religious connotation – tribe, or a part of the clan, whose common feature is, perhaps in the widest meaning of that expression, just that racial trait which is not linked to what we would say is the Jewish race, in the narrow sense of this word.

Secondly, it may be a good idea to explore the possibility of researching systematically that part of the necropolis which is still preserved. Some questions we are struggling here with may get answer thereby. Can this meeting recommend such a systematic research, if funds can be made available, of course? There are some possibilities to identify at this necropolis the vertical stratigraphy, the precise relation between the center and the periphery of this necropolis.

And furthermore, speaking as an archaeologist, it is of great interest for me that this necropolis offers us possibility to make one step away from what has been the general thinking on the Great Migration, or on the end of it. This we may do in the context of discovering a population, or of a part of a population, which adopted Jewish symbols, brought them here and by this very fact pointed to the avenues of a religious cult, a part of which is the cult of deads, too, something unknown so far in this form in the Panonian Lowland.

**Eugen Verber:**

It well may be that I did not express my thoughts quite precisely when I spoke at the beginning of our morning session and said that Jews were never proselytizers, that Judaism as a religion is not aiming at proselytism. I wanted actually to say that Judaism has no missionary trait, it does not have a tendency to convert to Judaism those who are members of other religious groups. I do not wish to make you weary with all details, it would take us too far if I would start now to list all what the regulation, defined as back as the Talmudic era, require from those who wish to be admitted to Judaism and what all the wise man, the rabbi, wants him to comply with, which makes such conversion rather complex. I wish, however, to stress that it was not my intention to be exclusive when I spoke about proselytism, as we know of the Khazars, and of many other cases of accepting Judaism, and I would say that here again we see that there is no rule without exception. In my view our discussion, as far as this question is concerned, is coming near to a solution, which is acceptable, and I would particularly point to what a number of preceding speakers said when talked of partial acceptance of some Jewish symbols.

**Prof. Dr Jovan Kovačević:**

Is there anybody who wishes to tell something more? If the answer is no, allow me, please, to try to summarize this conversation of ours. I shall not find it easy, I did not take notes, my mistake, and have to try to do it relying on my memory.

It was suggested at the beginning of our discussion that the brick fragments marked with Menorah and other Jewish symbols got into the graves by some chance. That is to say that they were intended to be used for some other purpose. Such an opinion is based on what we may call the present status of the necropolis which has been very poorly preserved. As we have no Menorah marked bricks which can be with certainty said

to have been found in the graves except in four graves which, again, were plundered, one can make such a sceptical judgment and state that everything there is secondary, and even to go as far stating that here is a case of sheer chance, they were found somewhere and taken into the graves. Had you have a chance to look into the complete documentation or to participate in the excavations you would have seen clearly that the marked bricks can not be separated from the necropolis. Together with it they make an organic entity.

The Menorah marked bricks were put in the graves with intent, and that was done in the context of the cult of the dead practiced by the population interred in the Čelarevo necropolis. It seems to me, too, that we could conclude, also, that the presence of Jewish symbols in a non-Jewish necropolis suggests that the population in question was Judaized, but only to a very limited degree, on the surface only, probably more in the sense of a formal Judaization. It appears certain that Judaism did not make a break through, neither was Judaism accepted as a monotheistic religion. It is possible that those were beliefs near the very fine limits of Shamanist rites using some adapted Jewish symbols.

The third question which posed itself upon us runs somehow like this: who were those people who were interred at Čelarevo? As far as I could observe the Khazar theory did not have a smooth fare, but I observed also that there were some people here, among us, who supported that theory. I am a little bit afraid that the rejection may be motivated by Koestler's book, too, as people would hate to see this necropolis used as an argument in favour of his views. There are many arguments to refute them. That would be simple and there is no point in busying oneself with that. I even think that Koestler's theory was given to much attention at this table. Perhaps the most acceptable way of putting it would be to say that a certain Khazar clan, which in a given moment somehow broke off from its mother community, not a clan on the top, a prominent one which has completely adopted Judaism, but a clan which was Judaized to a limited degree only, and only casually, which has accepted the symbols as something very near to what an amulet is, and has done that within the sphere of its religious thinking.

May I now offer our thanks to our hosts for this very successful symposium, or better to say „round table“, and to register my deep conviction that conversations of this kind are far more profitable for science than symposiums or mass-congresses are.

I would once more offer thanks on your behalf to the Jewish Historical Museum and the Federation of Jewish Communities.

We are also grateful to the guests who attended our sessions.



Archaeologist Radovan Bunardžić, custodian of the Novi Sad City Museum has released the results of researches done at Čelarevo necropolis after the Scientific Meeting. In view the importance of these results they are published below to the benefit of the readers.

„It was the site's southern part, along the edge of the earlier ruined part, which was brought into focus during the researches done in the year 1981. The basic aim of these researches was to identify the direction of the necropolis' expansion and, if possible, the necropolis' southern border, too. On a relatively small area which was made use of with rather impressive density, 42 new graves, ending with No 310, were dugged up. The shape and form of the grave-pits, the mode of burial and the lack of any furniture, with the exception of a knife and a brick fragment with Menorah symbol engraved, which can be attributed to one grave, offers a quite new notion of what the burial mode was. If we look at this concentration of graves, at this new mode of burial as contrasted with what the Čelarevo necropolis has indicated so far, and at the nonexistence of plundered graves which is a rather important accompanying phenomenon, we are lead to think of certain separations within the necropolis. We have to ask ourselves whether we have to think of a substratum of older or possibly younger inhumations, or do we have to think of a separate population which belonged to the same period and if so, whether they buried their deads within the limits of a common necropolis but following their own rites and customs, and finally, whether we did meet here graves which never were dugged out and plundered. These are the questions which did not get an answer from what was found in the rather small number of graves researched in this zone. The detection and digging out of a smaller part of something like a pit or trench or possibly row (?) is also a fact which is far from being unimportant. This digging was done in the zone of necropolis that had a clear and definite function if judged by the movable finds in it and if brought into relation with the neighbouring graves.

During the three years period form 1981 through 1983 the area situated East from the ruined part of the necropolis was more intensively

researched and also deep digging was introduced. As a result a great number of additional brick fragments with Menorah symbol was found, so much so that the number of such brick fragments in the collection is now above 130. When a greater number of these finds were systematized a wider delimited zone was identified which, if looked at as part of the entire necropolis, appears to be different of other parts. In addition to its other specific features it has also some different elements as far as the configuration of the ground is concerned. The future field research should, by all means, proceed in this direction, too, with a view to obtaining new data which may confirm certain groupings of graves in which brick fragments with engravated Menorah symbol were found or, which may be of even greater importance, to get such new data which would give answer to the question of primary placing of such brick fragments in a given grave or of their relation to the deceased buried there.

On the plateau of Danube's old river bank, South—East from the necropolis, which is now a newly opened clay pit, movable finds made their appearance quite frequently felt and also the remnants of single house units came to light, but a clearly distinguishable cultural stratum, for the time being, at least, could not be discerned. We have, therefore, to assume that a once inhabited zone is in question, a zone which, on the bases of ceramics and other movable finds, can be timewise and, indeed, directly, linked to the necropolis."

