

MASŁOMEĆZ, Hrubieszów commune

Excavation works conducted in Masłomecz in 1977 revealed a group of Gothic settlements and cemeteries from the Roman Period (the end of the 2nd – the end of the 4th century AD), resulting in the term Masłomecz group being coined. The settlement (site 8-9) is believed to be the largest in the Hrubieszów Basin and it may have served as the capital of the Masłomecz group. But the most important excavation works were carried out at a cemetery (site 15) between 1978 and 2002. The site, situated on a field belonging to the Mazur family, is in the shape of a rhombus, with corners oriented to the four cardinal points. At its centre was a square with a holy well and a repository for corpses. On the western side, the graves were aligned on the northwest-southeast axis; on the eastern side, they were located on arcs running from west to north-east. The site was most probably fenced. At the close of antiquity, in the middle of the 4th century, south of the centre, a layered cremation cemetery was created on levelled graves. The circular cemetery had a diameter of 13 metres, with a small pole-like structure inside. Beneath, there was a layer of smashed glass and clay vessels, and scattered remnants of costume. Excavation works led to the discovery of 536 graves, including fragmentary, inhumation, cremation and animal graves. These had been opened many times for ritual purposes. The deceased were interred in burial chambers, coffins, including those made from individual hollowed-out tree-trunks, ritual boats, or were laid straight into the ground. The graves usually featured vessels, ornaments, elements of costume and combs. The most famous artefacts among the vast array recovered were: fibulae in the shape of ducks, a gold plate depicting a man's face, Roman glass beakers, an amulet made from a human femur, and a necklace with a gold fastening found in grave no. 300. Graves of Sarmatian women, containing remnants of characteristic costume, were also recorded at the cemetery.

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