The Trade Connections of the Late Antique City of Zaldapa according to the Sphragistic Data

Ioto Valeriev

Regional Museum of History – Burgas, Bulgaria

The Late Antique city of Zaldapa is located in Northeastern Bulgaria into the lands of the Late Roman province Scythia (Diocese of Thrace). It is one of the largest Roman cities in these parts of the Balkan peninsula. Since year 2014 there are regular archaeological excvations in Zaldapa. Among the archaeological objects found during the excavations are also different late Roman commercial seals.

The main task of the paper that I intend to present are the trade connection of Zaldapa according to the sphragistic data. Into the paper are included seals found during the excavations and seals which were bought by the local people. Presented are seals with inscriptions of the provinces and cities in Western Asia Minor: Pamphylia, Dios Hieron (Lydia), Koloe (Lydia), Smyrna (Ionia), Tralleis (Lydia). Other seals are with images of Roman emperors (imperial sealings) and with religious and mythological images. These seals date into the 4th century AD. There are also two seals with monograms from 5th –6th century AD.

Some of the seals found during the excavations of Zaldapa are from layers dated with late roman coins from the middle of the 4th century. In the Balkan provinces of the Roman Empire such seals origin mainly from the Roman Limes and especially from the cities in the province of Scythia. From the northern parts of the lands of province of Scythia such seals are published by the Romanian archaeologists: Ion Barnea, V. Culica, C. Chiriac, L. Munteanu.

The seals from Zaldapa present additional information about the trade connections between Western Asia Minor and the Roman lands into the northeastern parts of the Balkan Peninsula.