

The modern administrative center of southern Bulgarian Black Sea coast, the city of Bourgas, is situated along the shores of the wide Bourgas Bay. The fertile Bourgas Lowland is located to the west. Three firths – Atanasovsko Lake, Bourgas Lake (Vaia) and Mandrensko Lake – are situated in the littoral zone around the city, fed by the rivers running through lowland. To the north the area is framed by the easternmost parts of Balkan Mountain range and to the south by Strandja Mountain, rich in polymetallic ores.

The economic potential and favourable environmental conditions of that particular Black Sea region facilitated its occupation by farming and stockbreeding communities as early as prehistoric ages. Traces of ancient settlements in lowland and by the seacoast could be seen near every modern town or village. Those are tells, open settlements and submerged through the millennia sites overflowed by lake- or sea-waters. Dozens of prehistoric settlements existed along seashore and on favourable for agricultural cultivation terrains by the rivers and lakes. Their inhabitants were occupied with agriculture and gathering, stockbreeding and hunting, sea- and river-fishing. Along with these subsistence activities, highly developed at that time were ceramic vessels production, house building, spinning, weaving, leather industry, mining and metal working. To execute all these economic activities people manufactured various stone, flint, bone, antler and copper tools.

Tell Bourgas is a part of this dense settlement system, which existed during prehistoric ages along the Black Sea coast. It is located to the northwest, 10 km from the city center, in Abadjiev chiflik locality, which falls within the farmland of Jitarovo prison (Jitarovo is one of the former names of Vetren village, currently a residential district of Bourgas). The tell is situated 1.4 km from the west bank of Atanasovsko Lake and 7.5 km from the sea shore. To the north of the tell, at a distance of about 300 m, runs a small river, Banevska (a.k.a. Ladjanska) Vada. It takes its source from the thermal springs

of Bourgas Mineral Spa and flows into Atanasovsko Lake. The surrounding terrain is at 8-10 m altitude with east-northeast inclination. The base of the tell is oval-shaped, with diameter of about 80 m and average height of 2.70 m.

The first notification about this site in the scientific literature we owe to Professor I. Galabov. After analysis of a surface finding, he assumed that it belongs to Bronze Age (1700-1580 BC) and represents "...block of fired clay with short Minoan inscription..." which describes kind, number and weight for transportation of a trade commodity – bronze ingots with "ox-hide" shape (Гълъбов 1956: 151-157; 1986: 669-676). In a later publication short notifications for site location and character are pointed (Гълъбов 1958: 7-12). Professor G. Georgiev corrected this assumption about presence of "Minoan inscription" and interpreted the object as anthropomorphic ceramic figurine dated to the Chalcolithic (Георгиев 1958: 106-110). Another surface finding (cult table with eyes) was published in 1967 but the location was wrongly pointed (Горов и др. 1967: сн. 7). The tell is also mentioned in scientific works by Professor H. Todorova (Тодорова 1984: 46; 1986: 273).

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In 2008-2009 Bourgas Municipality financed short term trench excavations of tell Bourgas (Класнаков и др. 2009: 77-80; 2010: 61-64). Those are the first and up to the present the only archaeological excavations of a prehistoric monument within the boundaries of the municipality. Members of the research team conducting interdisciplinary investigations were:

**Chief Assistant Miroslav Klasnakov MA** (RHM-Bourgas) – team leader in 2008-2009.

**Prof. Vasil Nikolov PhD** (NAIM-BAS) – scientific consultant in 2008-2009.

**Tatiana Stefanova MA** (NAIM-BAS) – deputy team leader in 2008.

**Alexander Chohadziev MA** (RHM-Veliko Tarnovo) – field researcher in 2009.

**Galina Samichkova MA** – field researcher in 2009.