

VODNA-TAMNO ROCK COMPLEX

The width of the niche at the base of the Vodna Cave is 50 m, the formation is set into the rock at a distance of 24 m. In the middle of the cave there is a spring. The healing properties of its water, according to legends, resulted in the cult of the cave.

The first evidence of people living in the rock complex date back to the first half of the Stone-Copper Age (4800 – 4700 BC). The cave was used as a temporary abode and a local metalworking center. Fragmented pottery vessels, finds of bones, ceramics, as well as an adze made of the rare mineral jadeite were discovered. The adze was used as a tool for processing metal - copper and gold - and was made in the southern Alps. It is one of the first testimonies in the Balkans of the existence and practice of the most ancient metallurgy.

During the Hellenistic (3rd – 1st centuries BC) and ancient (2nd – 4th centuries) eras, the site functioned as a rock sanctuary. This is evidenced by the numerous ancient inscriptions, a stone altar in the center and the various grooves in the rocks and on the floor.

Fragments of Thracian pottery and animal bones are placed in shallow pits. Much more significant are the traces from the Roman era – 21 graffiti inscriptions carved in the cave walls. Mainly the names of the visitors are written, as well as the amount donated by them to the shrine. The cave is also interesting because it has a second floor, which, as part of the Vodna-Tamno Complex, was used by monks in the 10th -15th centuries. It includes a chapel, dwellings, three hermit cells, four other rooms and a small necropolis.

The last stage of the occupation of Vodna refers to the late Ottoman era (19th century), when the cave was used as a cowshed. By that time, the fame of the healing water among the surrounding population had already faded.

In 2014, in the Community Center "Prosveta - 1927" in the village of Tabachka, specialists of the Regional History Museum of Ruse organized the Vodna Cave Exposition. It includes six posters and presents massive ceramic material from five archaeological eras, discovered during the archaeological research in the Vodna-Tamno Rock Complex in 2005.

The complex can be reached following the marked paths from the village of Tabachka and the village of Cherven.