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ROMAN MILITARY EQUIPMENT FOUND BY CHANCE AT OCNIȚA

Liviu Petculescu

Abstract. *The Roman items the author dealt with in this paper include weapons and armour (nos. 1–5 and probably 23), personal equipment (nos. 6–11), cavalry equipment and horse harness (nos. 12–21), possibly civilian and unidentifiable items (nos. 22–24) and a late Roman buckle (no. 25). The similarities between these objects and those from the occupation layers of the Roman forts dated at the end of the 1st century AD are evidence of their origin in a siege camp at the foot of the hill where the Dacian fortification was located. The presence of lorica segmentata fittings in this assemblage together with the parallels of the most personal equipment found in Vindonissa fortress point to the quartering of a legionary vexillation in this camp. And the large proportion of horse gear among all the military equipment suggests the inclusion of a cavalry detachment in the besieging force of the Dacian fort.*

Keywords. *Roman military equipment, lorica segmentata fittings, Roman horse harness, Ocnîța, siege camp, 1st century AD.*

The archaeological site at Ocnîța (Vâlcea county) was one of the most important Dacian center south of the Carpathians mountains during the 1st century BC – 1st century AD. Consisting of a hillfort and a civilian settlement at the foot of the hill it was the residence of one *basileus* leading a small Dacian kingdom extended in the hilly land near the Olt river.

The excavations carried on in this site between 1961–1981 produced significant results including the discovery of many native and Roman small finds¹. The Roman military items produced during these excavations were published partly and cursorily in Berciu's monographs but also in full into a separate article².

Now, another assemblage of objects found in or around Ocnîța by a detectorist and housed at Vâlcea County History Museum from Râmnicu Vâlcea is available for research. In this paper I deal with the Roman military items included in this assemblage which complete the range of military equipment from Ocnîța. Unfortunately, as there is no recorded information on the precise find spot of any of these new finds, I must limit myself only to typological, chronological and distribution considerations which considerably diminishes the meaning of my inquiry.

Among these objects there are all the categories of military equipment: weapons and armour, personal equipment, cavalry equipment and horse harness.

Weapons and armour

The weapons are represented by only one item, a trilobate tanged arrowhead (no.1). Two other examples of this type of arrowheads were unearthed in the Ocnîța civilian settlement

¹ BERCIU 1981.

² PETCULESCU 1994.

and so it is possible that no. 1 was also found at the foot of the hillfort³. Anyway, since at Ocnîța, the same as in the other Dacian sites of the period, the larger socketed arrowheads with flat barbed blades were by far more frequent than the trilobite tanged ones, I think that no. 1 was probably an “imported” Roman weapon or even the evidence of the presence of the Roman soldiers on the spot of its discovery.

The armor’s elements are represented by four fittings of *lorica segmentata* (nos. 2–5).

No. 2 is most probably part of a shoulder lobate hinge of a Corbridge type *lorica* dated from the early Claudian to the Hadrianic period⁴. The very numerous shoulder fittings of this kind included by Thomas in the types F iv and F v were met all over the Empire⁵. From no. 2 is left only a fragment of a half of the entire item and so one cannot exclude its attribution to a fully lobate hinged buckle. However, as Thomas knows only one buckle of this type at Baginton, this identification is hardly probable⁶.

The fragmentary no. 3 doesn’t allow to specify whether it was the lobate hinge of a buckle or of a strap belonging to a Corbridge type *lorica*⁷.

The fragmentary round ended fixing plate no. 4 is also a fitting of a Corbridge type *lorica*. It was part of a hinged buckle or of one of the much frequent hinged straps⁸.

No. 5 is a fixing plate with two rivets unusually placed side-by-side. As from the parallels of this rare hinged strap two originate in Dangstetten fortress, it seems that it is a fitting characteristic of the older Kalkriese type of *lorica segmentata*⁹. However, no. 5 is so narrow, only 14 mm of width, that it fits better to the straps of Corbridge type and thus its dating is debatable¹⁰.

Personal equipment

This category of military items is represented by six pieces: two belt buckles, a button-and-loop fastener, a button with loop, a button with double loop and a strap fastener (male).

No. 6 is a hinged D-shaped buckle with internal vestigial volutes made of solid cast copper alloy. On the buckle there are traces of its original white metal coating and of its missing iron tongue. It belongs to form A of Deschler-Erb¹¹.

No. 7 is a hinged D-shaped buckle with internal and external volutes of Deschler-Erb form B¹². It is a solid cast item at variance with the other buckle of this form discovered at Ocnîța by Berciu, made of a thin metal sheet and decorated with dotted motifs¹³.

Both forms were dated from the Augustan until the Flavian period¹⁴. However, there are hints for a longer duration of these buckles. So, one form A piece originates in the auxiliary fort

³ PETCULESCU 1994, 62–63, Fig. 3/5, notes 2–4 the discussion of the arrowheads at Ocnîța.

⁴ BISHOP/COULSTON 2006, 95,98, fig. 56/4; ALLASON-JONES/BISHOP 1988, 109 the dating of the Corbridge hoard.

⁵ THOMAS 2003, 65–75, figs 48–50.

⁶ THOMAS 2003, 19, fig. 7 Baginton type A v.

⁷ THOMAS 2003, 19–20 Colchester, Ristissen, Sisak and Vindonissa hinged buckles of type A viii; 30–31 Carnuntum and Oberstimm lobate hinged straps of type B v.

⁸ THOMAS 2003, 18, fig. 5 hinged buckles of type A iii; 27, fig 16 hinged straps of type B iii.

⁹ THOMAS 2003, 31–32, fig 21 only three hinged straps of type B iii; SCHÖNBERGER 1985, 435, no. A 54 dating of Dangstetten fortress from 15 BC to 9–7 BC; BISHOP 2002, 23–29 the Kalkriese type.

¹⁰ DESCHLER-ERB 1999, 36, 144–145, nos. 234–249, pl. 14/234–249 broader hinged straps with side-by-side rivets considered to belong to a distinct type of *lorica* contemporary to the Corbridge type.

¹¹ DESCHLER-ERB 1991, 22–23, 141 Fundliste 2 Form A.

¹² DESCHLER-ERB 1991, 22–23; 141–142 Fundliste 2, Form B.

¹³ PETCULESCU 1994, 69, no.7.

¹⁴ DESCHLER-ERB 1999, 41. MÜLLER 2002, 40–41; 183 nos. 459–466, pl. 42/459–466 eight examples of

at Dormagen built between AD 80–90¹⁵. Besides as at Stabiae, Herculaneum and Pompeii were found only belt buckles of forms A (2 examples) and B (3 examples, among two of silver), it means that at least until AD 79 they were not yet replaced by the later types in the regular military equipment¹⁶. Consequently, it is almost certain that the hinged D-shaped volute buckles were used in the Roman army at least until the end of the Flavian period but probably still in Trajan's period.

The much greater number of form A buckles compared to those of form B is due to their simpler shape facilitating the mass production necessary to equip the private soldiers¹⁷. And as the decorated or silver made examples belong usually to form B means that they were considered outstanding, respectively luxury fittings, which correspond with their smaller number. Anyway, the presence already in the Augustan period of both these forms proves that form B was not a derivation of form A but from the beginning they were two distinct variants of the same type.

The button-and-loop fastener no. 8 has a very small hemispherical head with a shank continuing at right angle with a long triangular loop. Its poor decoration consists of two transverse small grooves near the head and crisscross incisions on the frame of the loop.

I know only one distant parallel of no. 8 discovered at Vindonissa with a similar small head but a very short rectangular loop¹⁸. Thus, the Ocnîța piece is difficult to be classified, yet it probably represents a variant of Wild type VII- fasteners without a special head¹⁹.

The exact function of these fasteners is not readily apparent and so, according to their discovery contexts, they were included in the horse harness or in the personal equipment²⁰. In fact, both functions are attested by the representations of fasteners as part of horse gear in the Arles frieze and one Auxerre statue and as suspension loop of a dagger sheath on a Flavian funerary statue from Solva²¹. Thus, I ranged no.8 among the personal equipment not primarily because the Solva monument is a veridical representation closer in space and time to the Ocnîța assemblage but since I must anyway have a position on this issue even if somewhat aleatory.

The button no.9 has a flat disc-head with a shank expanding at right angle in a circular loop. On the fragmentary head there are traces of its original white metal coating. Its parallels range among simple buttons with loop (einfache Ösenknöpfe) which are frequently met in almost all military contexts of the entire 1st century AD²². The buttons with white metal coating are naturally rarer but I know seven examples like the Ocnîța piece, among which five at Vindonissa and the other two in Augusta Raurica and Burghöfe respectively²³. The button no. 9 made of a thin sheet of metal seems too small and fragile for a harness fitting and consequently it was probably a military dress accessory.

No. 10 is a fragment of a small button with double loop made of a thin sheet of metal and thus it had probably a similar function as no. 9. Less frequent than the simple buttons with loop, the buttons with double loop have the same variation in size resulting in different specific

forms A and B from Haltern. SCHÖNBERGER 1985 427–428, A 10 datinf of Haltern fortress c. 8/7 BC- AD 9.

¹⁵ DESCHLER-ERB 1991, 141, Fundliste 2, Form A, no.1. SCHÖNBERGER 1985, 459, D 5 building date of the fort.

¹⁶ ORTISI 2015, 32–33; 123, no. 10 Stabiae form B, silver; 124, no.15 Herculaneum form B, silver; 124 no. 18 Pompeii, form A, copper alloy; 124, no. 19 Pompeii form B, copper alloy.

¹⁷ For example DESCHLER-ERB 1991, 141–142 Fundliste 2, forms A and B.

¹⁸ UNZ/DESCHLER-ERB 1997, 53, no. 2101.

¹⁹ WILD 1970, 141, 142, fig. 2/VII.

²⁰ GUI 2015, 233–235.

²¹ GUI 2015, 233, pl. 2/B2 Arles; 233, pl. 2/B3 Auxerre. MRAV 2015, 118–119, fig. 9 Solva.

²² DESCHLER-ERB 1999, 68, note 329.

²³ Vindonissa: UNZ/DESCHLER-ERB 1997, nos. 2060 (also *niello* decorated), 2062, 2066, 2071,2083. Augusta Raurica: DESCHLER-ERB 1999, 184, no.796 probably Flavian or Trajanic. Burghöfe: FRANKE 2009, no. 188, possibly Flavian or Trajanic.

functions²⁴. Close parallels in shape and size with no. 10 dated from the beginning to the end of the 1st century AD are met at Augsburg-Oberhausen, Vindonissa and Augusta Raurica²⁵.

The strap fastener no. 11 has a narrow slightly tapering body curved toward the lower end and finishing in a short transverse bar. Its upper half is split to take a 1.7 mm thick leather strap secured by two rivets with flat circular heads in place. On the front face of the item there is an incised X motif placed between the rivets' heads. Items of a somewhat similar shape are included among strap fasteners (male) type 8c in Bishop's classification of the 1st century AD horse harness²⁶. However, the rare examples of this type published so far are made of a sheet of copper alloy directly riveted on the leather strap and most of them have a larger body and transverse bar than Ocnîța piece²⁷. Consequently, no.11 which has a different fixing system to a merely 6.5 wide strap of leather represents a distinct variant of this type of fasteners. And as it looks too small and fragile for a horse harness fitting, I think it was an element of personal equipment, perhaps part of a small bag clasp. Anyway, the discovery of five fasteners of type 8c at Vindonissa, where *legio XI Claudia* was quartered until AD 101, suggests their use by the infantry soldiers until the end of the 1st century AD²⁸.

Cavalry equipment and horse harness

To this class of military equipment belong ten pieces: a spur, a fragment of a saddle plate, a female strap fastener, three junction loops, a strap mount, a narrow strip, a crescentic pendant, and a phallic pendant.

No.12 is a spur with short and widely splayed arms of semi-circular cross-section ending in flat thinner terminals turned outwards to form hooks. The medium-sized prick has a rectangular cross-section. The body of the item is slightly asymmetrical, probably resulting from the distortion process related to the breaking of the hooks extremities.

It belongs to the hook spurs, a very rare class of Roman spurs²⁹. However, in *Barbaricum* they are more largely distributed from the Late Pre-Roman Period until the Late Roman and Early Migration Period³⁰.

Among the small finds produced by the archaeological excavations at Ocnîța there are a lot of iron spurs. In the civilian settlement were found: a loop spur with long prick in the layer dated in the 2nd century BC; a hook spur and a stud spur, both with long prickles, in the layer dated in the 1st century BC; a stud spur with fragmented prickle in the layer dated in the 1st century AD³¹. Also, on the 2nd terrace of the hillfort, in a layer dated in the 1st century AD were discovered a stud spur with a long spur and a spur with short hooks and prick³². As all these spurs have parallels in the Thracian settlements of the 2nd century BC – 1st century AD from North-Western Bulgaria³³ it results that they were produced in workshops located on the Lower Danube, perhaps even at Ocnîța, and were part of the military equipment of the local horsemen.

²⁴ DESCHLER-ERB 1999, 68.

²⁵ Augsburg-Oberhausen: HÜBENER 1973,37, no.196, pl.11/2 Augustan. Vindonissa: UNZ/DESCHLER-ERB 1997, nos. 2148–2151 AD 16/17–101. Augusta Raurica: DESCHLER-ERB 1991, no. 99, AD 1–100; no. 100, c. AD 100–200; DESCHLER-ERB 1999, no. 819, AD 110–130.

²⁶ BISHOP 1988, 169.

²⁷ UNZ/DESCHLER-ERB 1997, 47, nos. 1802–1806 Vindonissa and parallels.

²⁸ SCHÖNBERGER 1985, 444, B 43 the dating of the presence of *legio XI* at Vindonissa.

²⁹ MANNING 1985, 69.

³⁰ NOVIČENCOVA/KONTNY 2015, 307–313.

³¹ BERCIU 1981, pl. 12/18 phase I; pl. 30/4, 7 phase II; pl.39/5 phase III.

³² BERCIU 1981, pl. 96/17, 24.

³³ TORBOV 1998, 54–63.

However, none of the iron spurs from Ocnîța is similarly shaped to no. 12 and so its dating and origin are debatable. As far as I know there are no exact parallels to the copper alloy spur from Ocnîța but some of its features are met on other hook spurs. So at Judziki in *Barbaricum* was found one iron example with widely splayed arms of bar-shaped cross-section and medium sized pyramidal prick, dated c. AD 70–150, and another similarly shaped piece but with open loops endings dated probably in the 1st century AD is part of the large assemblage of Roman military equipment deposited in the sanctuary at Gurzufskoe Sedlo in Crimea³⁴. Yet in Dacia province were found two iron hook spurs in the auxiliary forts at Gherla (Teleorman county) and Arutela (Vâlcea county) respectively and a copper alloy example which seems to be like no. 12 in another fort at Buciumi (Sălaj county)³⁵. Considering the above I think that the Ocnîța spur was probably a Roman item dated toward the end of the 1st century AD or even from 106 to 271, the duration of Dacia province.

No. 13 is a fragment of a pierced saddle plate, made of a rim and two adjoining lozenge motifs with central rivet holes. It belonged to a row of lozenge motifs which were almost completely covered by the heads of the rivets fixing the plate to the leather³⁶. Such rows of fixing rivets bordered the long edges of narrow rectangular plates but were also centrally placed on some broad plates³⁷.

The pierced saddle plates were dated from the Augustan until the Flavian period³⁸. However, the Augustan examples from Haltern have a different ornamentation than the later pieces which are decorated with a combination of vegetal motifs and rows of lozenges supporting the rivet heads³⁹. And as a band of the characteristic lozenge motifs was discovered at Dura Europos held by the Romans between c. AD 114–117 it means that the plates like no. 13 were in use at least until the end of Trajan's reign⁴⁰.

Pierced saddle plates including lozenge motifs are quite common in the 1st century AD military contexts on the Rhine and Upper Danubian frontiers which is at least partly due to the heavy Roman military presence in these regions and to the intensive archaeological research in western European countries. For example, such items were found at Vechten, Rheingönheim, Augusta Rauricorum, Burghöfe and in greater number at Vetera and Vindonissa⁴¹. In the Lower Danubian region I know only two plates similar to no. 13: a chance find at Sucidava (Izvoarele, Constanța county) in Moesia Inferior where an auxiliary fort was built on the bank of Danube River probably during the Flavian dynasty and another piece discovered outside the Roman Empire, in the 1st century AD Dacian site at Hunedoara (Hunedoara County)⁴².

Besides, the archaeological excavations in the Ocnîța hillfort produced a narrow rectangular saddle plate with two circular projections having parallels among the harness fittings from

³⁴ NOVIČENKOVA/KONTNY 2015, 310, fig. 5/9 Judziki; 307–308, 317–318, fig. 3/4 Gurzufskoe Sedlo.

³⁵ Gresia: AMON 2004, 234, no.1, pl. 25/1. Arutela: AMON 2004, 237, no.3, pl. 25/2. Buciumi: CHIRILĂ/GUDEA/LUCĂCEL/POP 1972, pl. 115/4 poor drawing

³⁶ SCHALLES/SCHREITER 1993, pl. 44/Mil 69–72.

³⁷ ULBERT 1959, pl.19/19–20 both locations of the bands of lozenge motifs on Aislingen plates.

³⁸ BISHOP 1988, 94, 122–123, fig. 38/6 type 6. DESCHLER-ERB 1991, 35; DESCHLER-ERB 1999, 65–66 typology and chronology.

³⁹ MÜLLER 2002, 52, nos. 601–602.

⁴⁰ JAMES 2004, 11 chronology of the Roman presence at Dura; 100 no. 367 fragmentary plate.

⁴¹ Vechten: ULBERT 1959, 73, fig. 15/2. Rheingönheim: ULBERT 1969, 41, nos. 14, 16, pl. 28/14, 16. Augusta Rauricorum: DESCHLER-ERB 1991, no. 82; DESCHLER-ERB 1999, no. 732. Burghöfe: FRANKE 2009, nos. 657, 659, 661. Vetera: SCHALLES/SCHREITER 1993, nos. Mil 69–73. Vindonissa: UNZ/DESCHLER-ERB 1997, nos. 1878–1881, 1884–1888.

⁴² Sucidava: DIACONU 1974, 291, no. 6, fig. 1/8; GUDEA 2005, 441–442 the building of the auxiliary fort dated by brooches of the middle and the end of the 1st century AD. Hunedoara: C. MITAR pers. comm.

the Doorwerth hoard dated around AD 69⁴³. It results that the two differently shaped plates from Ocnița have different chronologies and/or production centres meaning that there may not be a unique explanation for their presence in or near the Dacian stronghold.

No. 14 is a female strap fastener cast in one-piece with an eight-shaped body ending in a “keyhole”, belonging to Bishop’s type 1b⁴⁴. This type of fasteners is quite common but most of them are hinged items⁴⁵. Among the fewer one-piece examples, I know close parallels to no. 14 only at Vindonissa and Nijmegen⁴⁶. Besides, an exceptional “keyhole” iron fastener inlaid with copper and silver was found together with other Roman military items in another 1st century AD Dacian stronghold at Poiana (Tecuci, Galați county)⁴⁷.

The characteristic 1st century AD harness fittings with eight-shaped body and dome headed rivets were dated from Iulio-Claudian until Hadrianic times and their maximum use during Flavian and Trajanic periods⁴⁸. So, a Flavian-Trajanic date is also probable for the Ocnița example.

No. 15 is part of an eight-shaped junction loop of Bishop’s type 1d⁴⁹. The fragment is made of the first rivet base continuing forward with a short narrowing flat extension ending in a broad relief band bordered by two narrower bands. Apart from the examples of this type known to Bishop, there are close parallels to no. 15 at Vindonissa, Burghöfe and Nijmegen which means that it has probably a similar chronology to no. 14⁵⁰.

The eight shaped junction loop no. 16 represent a variant of Bishop’s type 1⁵¹. It has a narrow and short body and a decoration reduced to two transverse incisions at the beginning of the loop. Almost identical items are met at Nijmegen and Burghöfe⁵². The vestigial decoration of these pieces seems to point to their later dating, probably during Domitian’s or Trajan’s times.

No. 17 is the end of a slim rectangular junction loop with a heart-shaped recess of Bishop’s type 6a⁵³. It bears traces of white metal coating and was decorated with niello inlay. The identification of this fragment as part of a junction loop is ascertained by the two shanks projecting from its back, as the numerous strap mounts of similar shape and decoration have only one shank of each end⁵⁴. How frequent these decorative strap mounts were, is illustrated by the discovery of an example of such item in the Dacian stronghold at Poiana (Tecuci, Galați county)⁵⁵. Close parallels to Ocnița example are met at Doorwerth, Aislingen and Burghöfe⁵⁶.

The horse harness fittings with white metal coating and niello inlay including *phalerae* and their junction loops were dated from Claudian to Flavian period⁵⁷.

⁴³ PETCULESCU 1994, 69, 74, no. 12.

⁴⁴ BISHOP 1988, table 9, fig. 54/1b.

⁴⁵ E. g. Burghöfe: FRANKE 2009, nos. 205–208, 213, 215–219. Vindonissa: UNZ/DESCHLER-ERB 1997, nos. 1832–1833, 1836–1850.

⁴⁶ Vindonissa: UNZ/DESCHLER-ERB 1997, no. 1851. Nijmegen: VAN DER VEEN 2020, 83, fig. 53/7.

⁴⁷ PETCULESCU/NICU 2000, 206, no. 20.

⁴⁸ BISHOP 1988, 100; FRANKE 2009, 22 e.

⁴⁹ BISHOP 1988, 102, table 7, fig. 50/1d.

⁵⁰ Vindonissa: UNZ/DESCHLER-ERB 1997, no. 1701. Burghöfe: FRANKE 2009, no. 294. Nijmegen: van der VEEN 2020, 87, fig. 56/7.

⁵¹ BISHOP 1988, 102, table 7, fig. 50/1.

⁵² Nijmegen: van der VEEN 2020, 87, fig. 56/14. Burghöfe: FRANKE 2009, nos. 287–288.

⁵³ BISHOP 1988, 102, table 7, fig. 51/6a.

⁵⁴ E. g. Burghöfe: FRANKE 1088, nos. 381–399.

⁵⁵ PETCULESCU/NICU 2000, 207, no. 20.

⁵⁶ Doorwerth: BROUWER 1982, nos 183, 187–189. Aislingen: ULBERT 1959, pl. 18/4, 6. Burghöfe: FRANKE 2009, nos. 268–273.

⁵⁷ BROUWER 1982, 164–165; PETCULESCU 1994, 69; FRANKE 2009, 22.

No. 18 is a variant of a narrow strap mounts of Bishop's types 1 and 2⁵⁸. It has a central rectangular part flanked by two waisted sections ending in circular areas. The strap mount has three rivet holes, one central and the two others at the circular endings. Only a part of its silver foil cover was preserved.

The item was analysed by the engineer Gh. Niculescu with X – rays' fluorescence. The results were for the metal base: Cu 68.72 %, Sn 14.65%, Zn 9.29%, Pb 6.27%, Fe 1.07: and for the silver foil: Ag 51.62%, Sn 24.90% Cu 13.05%, Pb 6.96%, Zn 2.17%, Au 0.90%, Fe 0,38%. The gold was mixed with silver in the ore used for making the cover foil and the iron originates in the soil where the object was deposited.

Even if the strap mounts of the related types Bishop's 1 and 2 are quite common in the Roman military sites of the 1st century AD, I don't know identical examples to no.18. However, close parallels to it are met at: Augsburg-Oberhausen dated in the Augustan times; Krefeld-Gellep deposited probably after the Batavian uprising; Vindonissa, one piece with five rivet holes and probably silvered⁵⁹. Consequently, cavalry fittings of similar shapes to Ocnîța example were fashioned all the 1st century AD but the chronology of the silvered ones seems somewhat shorter, from Claudius to c. AD 101⁶⁰.

No. 19 is a narrow strip with one rivet hole near each end. This fixing strip represent most probably the lower part of an eight-shaped junction loop as the ones found at Vindonissa, Burghöfe or Nijmegen⁶¹. Another strip of similar shape to no. 19 and provided also with two rivet holes was discovered in the Dacian site at Poiana (Tecuci, Galați county)⁶².

No. 20 is a flat crescentic pendant of Bishop's type 9g⁶³. In the middle of the item there are two small holes. The upper one was made for receiving the fixing rivet of the separately cast attaching loop and the lower one for hanging a smaller pendant inside the arms of the *lunula*. It has a poor ornamentation consisting in short file incisions across the borders.

The crescentic pendants are quite common in the Roman military and civilian contexts of the 1st–3rd centuries AD but the plain examples manufactured from thin sheet of metal seem to have been characteristic to the 1st century AD. However I do not know pieces with separately cast attaching loop very similar in shape and decoration to no. 20.

No. 21 is a three-dimensional straight phallic pendant with a large suspension loop of hemispherical section projecting from the upper part. The very numerous phallic pendants found in the 1st century AD Roman military and civilian contexts are almost of shape with one end representing a phallus and the other a clenched fist⁶⁴. And significantly, all but one 29 phallic pendants from Vindonissa belong to this type⁶⁵. Sometimes toward the end of the 1st century AD the three-dimensional single phallic pendants like no. 21 appeared, but as far as I know only one slightly arched example of this type discovered at Nijmegen is undisputable more precisely dated during the Flavian-Trajanic period⁶⁶. In the 2nd–3rd centuries AD the three-dimensional phallic pendants are common all over the frontier provinces of the Roman Empire. So, for example, in Roman Dacia five close parallels to Ocnîța item are met at Apulum, Gilău

⁵⁸ BISHOP 1988, 103–104, table 11, fig. 56/1–2.

⁵⁹ Augsburg-Oberhausen: HÜBENER 1973, pl.13/22. Krefeld-Gellep: FAHR 2005, 122, fig. 5/4. Vindonissa: UNZ/DESCHLER-ERB 1997, no. 1822.

⁶⁰ BISHOP/COULSTON 2006, 244 the dating of the silvered pieces of the cavalry equipment.

⁶¹ Vindonissa: UNZ/DESCHLER-ERB 1997, nos. 1701,1709. Burghöfe: FRANKE 2009, nos. 275, 278, 282. Nijmegen: van der VEEN 2020, pl. 87/8.

⁶² PETCULESCU/NICU 2000, 213, no. 24.

⁶³ BISHOP 1988, 98, table 6, fig. 47/9g.

⁶⁴ BISHOP 1988, 98, table 6, figs. 46/6a-e, 48/10a-e, types 6 and 10.

⁶⁵ UNZ/DESCHLER-ERB 1997, nos. 1611–1638.

⁶⁶ OLDENSTEIN 1976, 159–160, nos. 403–405, the single "Limesphalli"; van der VEEN, 2020, pl. 67/11, Nijmegen.

and Romula, among which three straight and two slightly arched, and in Pannonia 15 such pieces are published only at Carnuntum⁶⁷. And even if the Carnuntum examples are quite different in details to no. 21, and the slightly arched shape of 12 pendants is reminiscent to the crescentic phalli of the 1st century AD, all of them are certainly representatives of the same type of 2nd–3rd century AD fittings.

Consequently, the Ocnîța piece could date between the end of the 1st century AD and the abandonment of Dacia province in AD 271.

Civilian and unidentifiable items

Under this heading are gathered two small fragments of objects difficult to be identified together with one item which was not specifically used by the soldiers.

No. 22 is a large knife washer made of an oval domed plate tapering at one end, with a small rectangular hole in the centre for the end of the tang. It belonged to a knife or a razor handle probably of Manning's type 1d dated in the 1st century AD and part of the 2nd century AD⁶⁸.

No. 23 is a fragment of a flat elongated strip with a semi-circular expansion pierced in the centre by a rivet hole. So, it looks like a small fragment of a common 1st century AD shield binding. However as one can't prove that it is part of a binding strip of U-shaped cross-section this identification is probable but not certain.

No. 24 is a fragment of a rectangular flat strip with curved sides. A rivet with rectangular head and globular end is fixed in the strip.

Addendum

No. 25 is a small oval buckle with a rectangular plate made of a folded strip held in position by two rivets. The late Roman buckles with oval frame and rectangular plate dated in the second half of the 4th century AD are frequently met not only in the Empire but also in *Barbaricum*, especially in the area of Černjachov Culture belonging to the Gothic confederation⁶⁹. So, two buckles of this type were found in the Gothic cemetery at Târgșor (Prahova county) about 120 km eastward from Ocnîța⁷⁰. Yet, more significant is the discovery of another similar buckle at Ocnîța itself which is evidence for the presence of the Goths on the place of the former Dacian site⁷¹.

Discussion

Even considering that the detectorist could have selected the objects donated to Râmnicu Vâlcea Museum, it is obvious that this assemblage has some distinct characteristics. Thus, it contains fragments of *lorica segmentata* (nos. 2–5) and fittings of personal equipment of Roman soldiers (nos. 6–11) virtually unknown in barbarian contexts. Also, most of the cavalry equipment and horse harness (nos. 12–21) are unparalleled in the Dacian sites of the 1st century AD. And, significantly, all these items are small and/or heavily fragmented which is also the usual

⁶⁷ Apulum: TIMOFAN 2005, 205–206, figs. 1–2; BOUNEGRU/CIOBANU/OTA/ANGHEL 2011, nos. 80–81. Gilău: ISAC 1997, pl. 24/8. Romula: AMON 2004, 249, no. 23, pl. 30/7. Carnuntum: HUMER/KREMER 2011, nos. 1000–1014.

⁶⁸ MANNING 1985, 108.

⁶⁹ PREDA 1980, 39, pl. 15 the examples discovered in the cemetery at Callatis and the diffusion and dating of this type of buckles.

⁷⁰ DIACONU 1965, pl. 161/5, 7.

⁷¹ BERCIU 1981, pl. 102/9.

condition of the objects lost or discarded in the Roman settlements. Finally, it doesn't include large Roman weapons as the swords, daggers, and shields which in barbarian sites are usually thought to have been or plundered items or goods supplied to client kingdoms⁷².

All these mean that the Roman military equipment found by chance at Ocnîța need a different explanation than the military pieces discovered by Berciu in the Dacian hillfort⁷³. So, I think that the similarities between the items dealt with in this paper and those from the occupation layers of the Roman forts of the end of the 1st century AD are evidence of their origin in the siege camp at the foot of the hill where was located the Dacian fortification. The presence of *lorica segmentata* fittings in this assemblage together with the parallels to most of the personal equipment in Vindonissa fortress are hints for the quartering of a legionary vexillation in this camp. Then, considering that *legio XI Claudia* abandoned its Vindonissa fortress in AD 101 to participate to the construction of Brigetio legionary fortress and to fight against the Dacians in the region south of the Carpathians, where it remained even after AD 106 to build forts in the newly conquered territories annexed to Moesia Inferior it is tempting to assume that this legion was manning the siege camp⁷⁴. However, the presence of the soldiers of *legio XI* in this camp is only a hypothesis as among 2443 military equipment items published from Vindonissa it is normal to find many analogies to the Ocnîța objects. The large proportion of horse gear among all the military equipment of this assemblage point to the inclusion of a cavalry detachment in the besieging force of the Dacian fort. As the region south of the Carpathians mountains was conquered by the Romans most probably during the First Dacian War of Trajan, I think that Ocnîța fort was besieged and destructed in AD 101/102⁷⁵.

Two of the objects, the phallic pendant (no. 21) and the spur (no. 12) belong to types which appeared in the 1st century AD but lasted until the end of the 3rd century – and the Early Migration Period respectively. As among the pieces collected by the detectorist there are 4 drachmas from Apollonia and Dyrrhachium, 3 Roman republican denarii and two bronze coins issued by Tiberius respectively Hadrian it means that beside the military equipment from the siege camp the majority of the objects found by chance at Ocnîța originate at least from two sites: the Dacian tribal centre of the 1st century BC – 1st century AD and the small 2nd – 3rd century AD Roman settlement developed near the salt mine⁷⁶. Consequently nos. 21 and 12 could be dated during Dacia province. Yet, as these types of harness items are quite rare in civilian contexts and especially in rural settlements of Roman Dacia it is still possible that they were found in the siege camp. Finally, the 4th century AD Roman buckle (no. 25) is evidence of the local salt mine working during the Gothic confederation rule in the southern Carpathian region.

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⁷² PETCULESCU 1994, 71.

⁷³ PETCULESCU 1994, 70–71.

⁷⁴ SCHÖNBERGER 1985, 444, B43, the dating of *legio XI Claudia* at Vindonissa; LÖRINCZ 2010, 75–81 *legio XI* at Brigetio; MATEI-POPESCU 2010, 133–134, notes 1051–1055 the arriving of the legion in Moesia Inferior; ȚENȚEA/ MATEI-POPESCU 2016, 19–21 Drajna de Sus, 28–29 Târgșoru Vechi, 38–43 Voinești.

⁷⁵ FINK 1971, 217–227, no. 63 Hunt “Pridianum”; SYME 1971, 122–134 the datig of “Pridianum” and the possible conquer of Oltenia in AD 101–102.

⁷⁶ C. A. BĂRBULESCU pers. com.

CATALOGUE

The catalogue numbers correspond to the illustrations of the items. The measurements are made in mm and grams respectively. Abbreviations: L: length; W: width; H: height; T: thickness; D: diameter; Wt: weight.

The white metal coating is indicated on the illustrations of the items by dots and the silver foil by dots inside a contour line.

1. Arrowhead. Iron. Incomplete, part of the tang is missing, and the tip is blunted. L: 37.5; W: 11; Wt: 2.5.
2. Shoulder hinge of *lorica segmentata*. Copper alloy. Only part of one half of the lobate hinge survived. L: 18.5; W: 31; T: 1; D of the rivet heads: 4–4.5; Wt: 2.4.
3. Hinge of *lorica segmentata*. Copper alloy. Only half of the fitting survived, and I can not specify if it is part of a lobate hinged buckle or of a lobate hinged strap. L: 23; W: 16; T: 1; D of the rivet heads: 4.5–5; Wt: 2.9.
4. Hinge of *lorica segmentata*. Copper alloy. Only one rectangular half of the fitting survived, and I can not specify if it is part of a hinged buckle or of a hinged strap. L: 25; W: 19.8; T: 0.5; D of the rivet heads: 6–7; Wt: 4.2.
5. Hinged strap of *lorica segmentata*. Copper alloy. Only one incomplete rectangular half of the fitting survived. L: 20.5; W: 14; T at the hinge: 6; T of the strip: 1.2–1.7; Wt: 3.4.
6. Belt buckle. Copper alloy with traces of white metal coating. From the missing rod and tongue there are scraps of corroded iron. Complete. L: 27; W: 26; T: 2.5–6.5; Wt: 6.9.
7. Belt buckle. Copper alloy. Only half of it survived. L: 38.5; W: 27; T: 3–6; Wt: 6.7.
8. Button-and-loop fastener. Copper alloy. Complete. L: 49.5; W: 28.5; T: 1.3–2.8; D: 6–7; Wt: 5.6.
9. Button with circular loop. Copper alloy with small parts of the original white metal coating on the head. Less than half of the item survived. D: 13; H: 8.5; T: 1; Wt: 0.7.
10. Button with double loop. Copper alloy. Only the double loop survived. L: 16; W: 19; T: 1; Wt: 0.7.
11. Strap fastener. Copper alloy. Complete, bent. L: 34; W: 6.5; Wt: 2.8.
12. Spur. Copper alloy. Incomplete, the ends of the arms and of the prick are missing. L: 40; W: 66; T: 5. L of the prick: 14.5; T of the prick: 4.7–5; Wt: 12,1.
13. Saddle plate. Copper alloy. Only small part of the frame with two adjoining lozenge motifs survived. L: 20; W: 11; T: 1; Wt: 0.5.
14. Strap fastener (female). Copper alloy. Complete without the fixing rivets; bent. L: 62.5; W: 17; H: 8; D: 2.5; T: 1.5–2; Wt: 6.
15. Junction loop. Copper alloy. Only a small fragment of it was preserved. L: 25; W: 13.5; H: 4.5; D: 3; T: 1–1.5; Wt: 2.3.
16. Junction loop. Copper alloy. Bent and without the last part of the fixing strip and the rivets. L: 34.5; W: 9; D: 2.5; T: 1.5–3; Wt: 4.
17. Junction loop of a *phalera*. Copper alloy with parts of the white metal coating. The grooves which were originally filled with niello are apparent. Incomplete; only a small fragment of one end of it is preserved. L: 25; W: 8.3; T: 1.4–1.9; Wt: 2.2.
18. Harness strap mount. Copper alloy with parts of the original cover of silver foil. Complete; slightly bent. L: 64; W: 10.5; D: 2; T: 1; Wt: 3.1.
19. Fixing strip of a harness fitting. Copper alloy. One end is missing. L: 44; W: 7; D: 2; T: 1; Wt: 1.7.
20. Crescentic pendant. Copper alloy. Complete. The suspension loop and its fixing rivets are missing. L: 34.5; W: 30; T: 0.7; D: 1.5; Wt: 1.9.
21. Phallic pendant. Copper alloy. Complete. L: 38; W: 16.5; H: 21.5; Wt: 20.5.
22. Knife washer. Copper alloy. Complete. L: 18; W: 13; T: 0.5; D: 2–3; Wt: 0.7.
23. Mount. Copper alloy. Only a small part of it survived. L: 17; W: 11.5; D: 2; T: 0.6; Wt: 0.4.
24. Mount with rivet. Copper alloy. Only one end of it survived. L: 12.5; W: 14.5; H of the rivet: 9; T: 1–1.5; Wt: 1.6.
25. Buckle with plate. Copper alloy. Complete. L (entire): 32; Wt: 10.9. Buckle: L: 14; W: 22.5. T: 4–6.5. Tongue: L: 18; W: 4.8; T: 2.5. Plate: L: 20; W: 16; T: 1–1.7.

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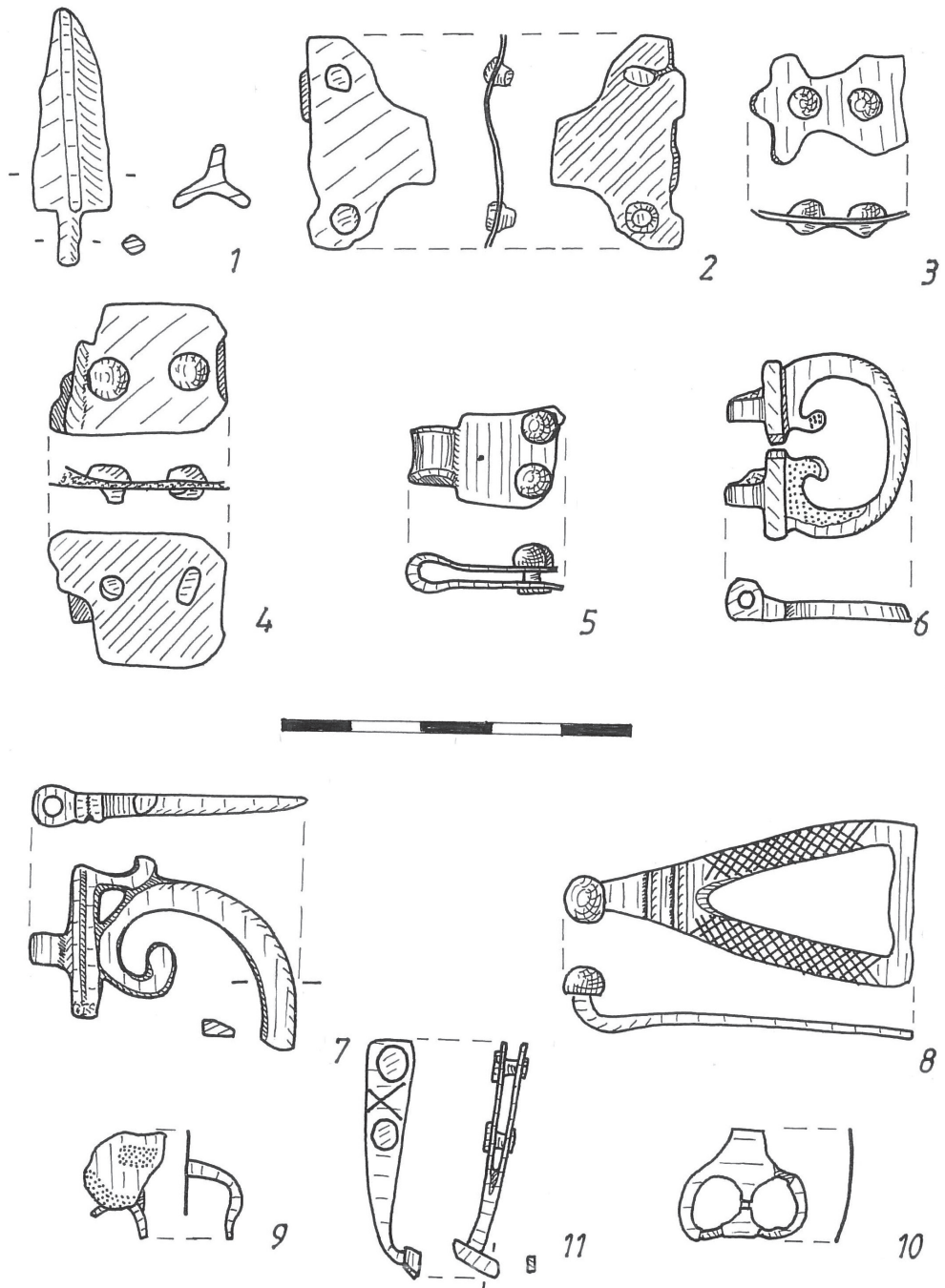


Fig. 1. Ocnîța. 1 iron. 2 – 5, 7 – 8, 10 – 11 copper alloy. 6, 9 copper alloy with white metal coating. Scale in cms.

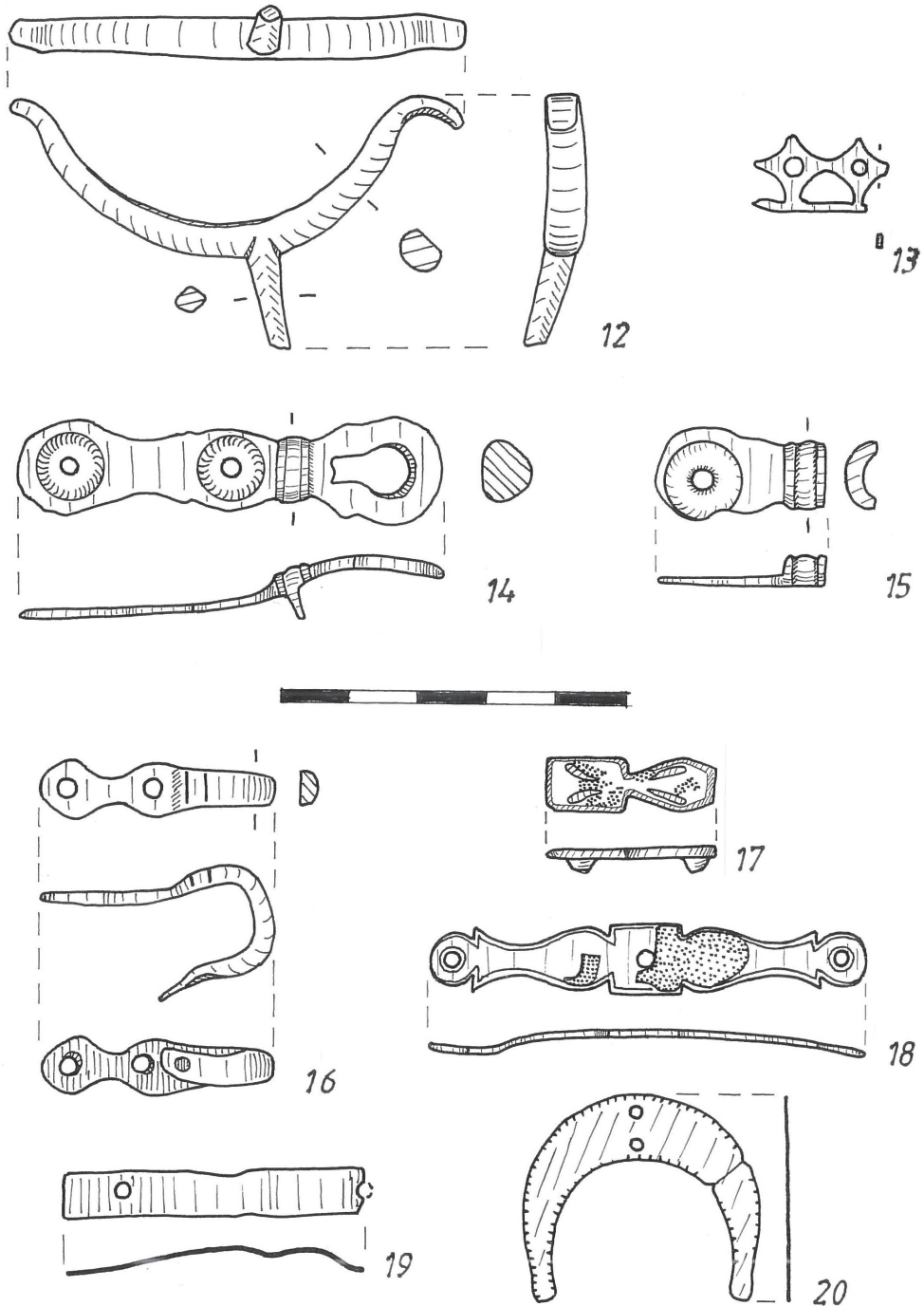


Fig. 2. Ocnîța. 12 – 16, 19 – 20 copper alloy. 17 copper alloy with white metal coating. 18 copper alloy with silver foil. Scale in cms.

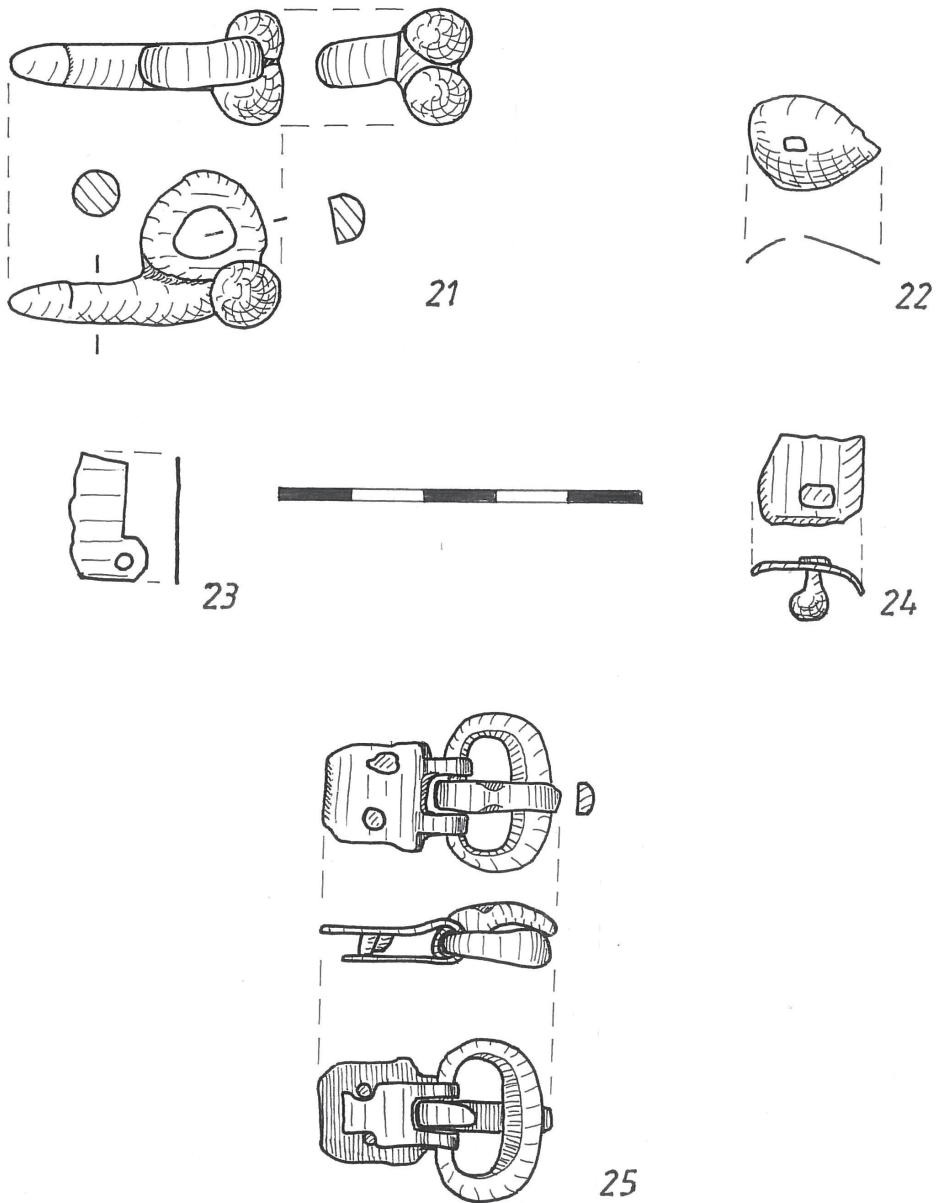


Fig. 3. Ocnîța. 21 – 25 copper alloy. Scale in cms.

ABBREVIATIONS THAT CAN NOT BE FOUND IN BERICHT DER RÖMISCH-GERMANISCHE KOMMISSION

Abhandlungen der Königlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin	= AKAWB
Acta Classica Universitatis Scientiarum Debrecensis, Debrecen	= ACD
Acta Ethnographica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae (Budapesta)	= Acta Ethnogr Acad Scien Hungaricae
Analele Academiei Române. Memoriile secțiunii istorice	= An. Acad. Române. Mem. Sec. Istor.
Analele Banatului (Timișoara)	= An. Banatului
Analele Dobrogei (Constanța)	= An. Dobrogei
Muzeulul Județean Vaslui (Vaslui)	= Acta Moldaviae Meridionalis
Muzeul "Vasile Pârvan" (Bârlad)	= Acta Musei Tutovens
Analele Universității București	= An. Univ. București
Analele Universității Iași	= An. Univ. Iași
Analele Universității „Dimitrie Cantemir” (Constanța)	= An. Univ. Constanța
Annales: économies, sociétés, civilisations (Paris)	= Ann. Écon. Soc. Civil.
Arheologia Moldovei, Institutul de Arheologie (Iași)	= ArhMold
Arkheologiya, Natsional'na akademiya nauk Ukraini. Institut Arkheologii (Kyiv)	= Arkheologiya
Annales Universitatis Apulensis (Alba Iulia)	= AUA
Annali di scienze religiose, Milano	= Annali di scienze religiose
Anuarul Institutului pentru Studii Politice, de Apărare și Istorie Militară	= Anu. Instit. Stud. Pol. Apăr. și Istor. Milit.
Archaeologisch-epigraphische Mitteilungen aus Österreich (-Ungarn), Wien	= AEM
Archiv des Vereines für Siebenbürgische Landeskunde, Hermannstadt – Kronstadt (Sibiu – Brașov)	= AVSL
Archaeologia Baltica Polonia = Peregrinatio Gotica (Łódź)	= Arh Baltica
Arheologia Medievală (Iași)	= Arh. Medievală
Antigüedad, religiones y sociedades, Huelva	= ARYS
Az alsóféhérmegyei történelmi régészeti és természettudomány évkönyve (Alba Iulia)	= AlsóTermÉvkönyve
Balcanica Posnanensia. Acta et Studia. Czasopismo wydawane przez UAM w Poznaniu	= Balcanica Posnaniensia
Buletinul cercurilor științifice studențești (Alba Iulia)	= BCȘS Alba Iulia
Buletinul Monumentelor Istorice (București)	= BMI
Instrumentum Bulletin du Groupe de travail européen	= Bull Instrumentum

sur l'artisanat et les productions manufacturées dans l'Antiquité (Montagnac)	
Bulletin antieke beschaving Annual Papers on Classical Archaeology	= BABesch
Bulletin de l'Institut historique belge de Rome (Rome)	= BullInst Hist Belge (Rome)
Cahiers du Centre Gustave Glotz, Sorbonne (Paris)	= Cahiers Centre Gustave Glotz
Complexul Muzeal „Julian Antonescu” (Bacău)	= Carpica
Cercetări arheologice, Muzeul Național de Istorie a României (București)	= Cercetări Arheologice
Muzeul Municipiului București (București)	= Cercetări arheologice în București
Classical Philology (Chicago)	= Class. Philol.
Cronica Cercetărilor Arheologice din România (București)	= CCA
Cronica Numismatică și Arheologică (București)	= Cron. Numis. Arh.
Dacia. Recherches et découvertes archéologiques en Roumanie, București, I-XII (1924–1928); Nouvelle Série: Revue d'archéologie et d'histoire ancienne (București)	
Muzeului de Istorie Galati	= Danubius
Dialogues d'Histoire Ancienne, Paris-Besançon	= DHA
Dicționarul limbii române moderne (București 1958)	= DRLM
Documenta Romaniae Historica (București)	= DRH
Les Dossiers d'archéologie, Paris	= DossPar
Ethnic and Racial Studies (London)	= Ethnic and Racial Studies
Ephemeris Napocensis, Institutul de Arheologie și Istoria Artei, Cluj-Napoca	= EphemNap
File de Istorie = Revista Bistriței (Bistrița)	= FI (Rev. Bistriței)
Muzeul județean Ilfov (București)	= File de Istorie
Greek-English Lexicon (Oxford 1966)	= Greek-English 1966
Harvard Studies in Classical Philology	= Harvard Stud. Class. Studia Philol.
A Herman Ottó Múzeum Évkönyve (Miskolc)	= HOMÉ
Hrvatski arheološki godišnjak (Zagreb)	= Hrv. Arh. God.
Historica. Historia Antigua (Salamanca)	= Stud. Hist. Hist. Antigua
Il Mar Nero Annali di archeologia e storia (Roma)	= Il Mar Nero
Izvestija Russkogo Arheologičeskogo Instituta v Konstantinopole	= Izv. Ross. Arch. Inst. Konstantinopole
Jahreshefte des Österreichischen Archäologischen Instituts in Wien	= ÖJh
Journal of Ancient History and Archaeology,	
Institute of Archaeology and History of Art Cluj-Napoca	= JAHA
Jósa András Múzeum Évkönyve (Nyíregyháza)	= JAMÉ
Journal of Indo-European Studies (Washington DC)	= JIES
Journal of the Society for Ancient Numismatists	= Journal Soc. Ancient Numism.
Könyv és könyvtár, Budapest	= Könyv és könyvtár
Labeo Rassegna di Diritto Romano (Napoli)	= Labeo
Lateinisch-Deutsch Schulwörterbuch (Leipzig 1891)	= Lateinisch-Deutsch 1891
Lateinisch-Deutsch Handwörterbuch (Hannover-Leipzig 1918)	= Lateinisch-Deutsch 1918

Litua. Studii și comunicări. Muzeul Județean Gorj, Târgu Jiu	= Litua
M. M. Roxan, P. Holder, Roman Military Diplomas, London	= RMD
Materialy po arkeologii, istorii i etnografii Tavrii.	= MAIET
Krymskoe otdelenie Instituta vostokovedeniya NAN Ukrainy (Simferopol')	
Muzeul Municipiului București	= Materiale de Istorie și Muzeografie
Materiale și Cercetări Arheologice (serie nouă) (București)	= MCA (S.N.)
Mélanges de l'École roumaine en France (Paris)	= Mél École roumaine en France
Mélanges de l'Univ St Ioseph (Beiruth)	= Mél Univ St Ioseph (Beiruth)
Mémoires de la Société Historique et Archéologique de Langres (Langres)	= Mém Soc Hist et Arch Langres
Memoria antiquitatis Acta Musei Petrodavensis	= Memoria Antiquitatis
Revista Muzeului arheologic (Piatra Neamț)	
Monumenta Germaniae Historica (München)	= MGH
Mousaios Anuarul muzeului județean Buzău	= Mousaios
A Nyíregyházi Jósa András Múzeum Évkönyve (Nyíregyháza)	= Josa Andras Múz Évk
Muzeul Național de Istorie a României (București)	= Muzeul Național
Norba Revista de arte, geografía e historia (Cáceres)	= Norba
Numismatische Zeitschrift	= NZ
O Arqueólogo Português, Lisboa	= Arque. Português
Opțiuni istoriografice, Iași	= Opțiuni istoriografice
Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica, Lovaina (Leuven)	= OLP
Ostraka Rivista di antichità (Napoli)	= Ostraka
Institute of Archaeology of the Czech Academy of Sciences (Prague)	= Památky Archeologické
Patrimonium Apulense, Alba Iulia	= Patrim. Apulense
Rossijskaya Arkheologiya. Institut arkeologii Rossijskoj akademii nauk (Moskva).	= RA
Rad Muzeja Vojvodine (Novi Sad)	= Rad Muz. Voj.
RepArAb Repertoriul arheologic al județului Alba, Alba Iulia, 1995 [= Bibliotheca Musei Apulensis, II]	= RepArAb
Res Antiquae (Bruxelles)	= Res Antiquae
Revista de etnografie și folclor (București)	= Rev Etnogr și Folclor
Revista Bistriței	= Rev. Bistriței
Muzeul Municipiului București	= Revista de Cercetări Arheologice și Numismatice
Muzeul Național de Etnografie și Istorie Naturală a Moldovei (Chișinău)	= Revistă de Etnografie, Științele Naturii și Muzeologie
Revista de Istorie (București)	= Rev. de Istor.
Revista Facultăților de teologie din Patriarhia Română (București)	= Stud Teologice
Revista Muzeelor, București	= Rev. Muzeelor
Revue archéologique de l'Est et du Centre-Est (Paris)	= RAEst
Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes (Bucharest)	= Rev. Études SE Européennes

Revue Historique (Paris)	= Rev. Historique
Revue Historique du Sud-Est Européen (Bucharest)	= RHSEE
Revista Storica dell'Antichita (Roma)	= Riv. Stor. Antichita
Strabon (Iași)	= Strabon
Studia Archaeologica, Roma	= StArch
Studia Antiqua et Archaeologica (Iași)	= SAA
Studii și Cercetări de Istorie veche și Arheologie, Institutul de Arheologie "Vasile Pârvan" (București)	= SCIV(A)
Slovenská Archeologia. Archeologický ústav SAV (Nitra)	= SlovArch
Stratum plus, Vysshaya Antropologicheskaya Shkola (Chișinău)	= Stratum plus
Studia Universitatis „Babeș-Bolyai”, seria Historia, Cluj-Napoca	= Stud. Historia UBB
Studia historica. Historia Antigua (Salamanca)	= Stud.Hist. Histor. Antig.
Studia Thracologica (București)	= Stud. Thracologica
Studii și Comunicări Câmpulung	= Stud. Com. Câmpulung
Studium, Debrecen	= Studium
Symposia Thracologica (București)	= Symp. Thracologica
Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association, Atlanta	= TAPA
Transsilvania. Ein Beiblatt zum Siebenbürger Boten, Hermannstadt (Sibiu)	= TranssilvBB
Uniwersytet Im Adama Mickiewicza w Poznaniu, Seria Historia (Poznań)	= Uniw Adama Mickiewicza Poznan
Vestigia. Beiträge zur Alten Geschichte (München)	= Vestigia
Arkheologicheskij muzej-zapovednik "Tanais" (Rostov na Donu)	= Vestnik Tanaisa
Państwowe Muzeum Archeologiczne w Warszawie (Warszawa)	= Wiadomości Archeologiczne
Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins	= ZDPV
Zeitschrift für Geschichte	= Zeitschr. Gesch.

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