

EPHEMERIS NAPOCENSIS

XXIII

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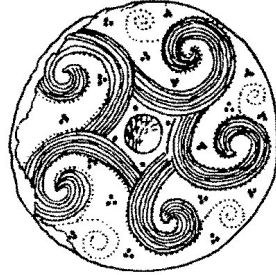
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THE ITEMS IN THE SARMATIAN GRAVE AT LEHLIU (CĂLĂRAȘI COUNTY) AND ITS DATING ISSUE*

Vitalie Bârcă¹

Abstract: *The object of this article is related to the items from Lehliu (Călărași county), consisting of an agate pendant rendering a male of eastern features in cross-legged position (“Turkish style”) and a bronze brooch with returned foot, originating from a cremation grave dated by Gh. Bichir during the first decades of the 3rd century AD. Upon the brooch analysis, it was noted it belongs to a variant dating to the second half of the 1st century – early 2nd century AD and that a large number of such brooches come from the Sarmatian barrow cemetery at Ust’-Kamenka, which pertained to the novel wave of Sarmatians arriving from the east starting with mid 1st century AD. In what the pendant is concerned, it was concluded that the features of the rendered individual, his sitting position and anthropological type, dress and hairstyle point to features specific to the eastern populations from Central Asia, including those nomad Iranian. Analogies for the individual’s features, sitting position, hairstyle and dress on a series of items, the Sarmatian environment included, point to a dating of the item in the 1st century – early 2nd century AD. Based on such observations, it was reached the conclusion that the two items at Lehliu belonged to an individual in the group of Sarmatians coming from the east starting with mid 1st century AD, who arrived in the Danube mouths area sometime in the second half of that century.*

Keywords: *Sarmatians, brooches, pendants, the north-Pontic area, the Romanian plain*

The date when the Sarmatians entered and settled the Romanian Plain is object of debate in the Romanian archaeological literature. Researchers’ views over time vary between placing respective time in the second half of the 1st century AD and the period of the Marcomannic Wars. For instance, Gh. Bichir believed this process occurred after the Romans abandoned in AD 117–118 great part of the Romanian Plain (Muntenia and south Moldova)², territory which to that point belonged to the province of Moesia Inferior. A post AD 117–118 dating was also recently accepted by C. H. Opreanu³ and C. C. Petolescu⁴.

A later dating was argued by Gh. Diaconu⁵ and I. Bogdan-Cătănicu⁶, who maintained the process occurred during the Marcomannic Wars. V. I. Grosu considers that the Sarmatians

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² BICHIR 1971a, 142–143; BICHIR 1971b, 283; BICHIR 1977, 191; BICHIR 1996, 304.

³ OPREANU 1998a, 63–64; OPREANU 1998b, 73–74.

⁴ PETOLESCU 2000, 323–324.

⁵ DIACONU 1980, 284.

⁶ BOGDAN-CĂTĂNICIU 1997, 140, 142

entered Muntenia after AD 102⁷ and I. Ioniță tends to believe that the Sarmatians entrance into and settling of Muntenia occurred only after Dacia was conquered⁸. Subsequent to the review of the same archaeological data, but also of those provided by the written ancient sources, R. Harhoiu⁹ and M. Babeș¹⁰ placed the arrival of the Sarmatians in the Romanian Plain in the second half of the 1st century AD. This view was later agreed with also by Gh. Niculescu¹¹ and C. C. Petolescu¹².

A special view is that often asserted by L. Oța, that the arrival of the Sarmatians in the Romanian Plain was a rather lengthy process subsequent to which Sarmatian groups entered this geographical area over a period comprised between the end of the 1st century AD and early 2nd century AD¹³ or the last decade of the 1st century AD and the first decades of the following century¹⁴.

In what we are concerned, as suggested on several other occasions¹⁵, we believe that some of the Sarmatian remains in the Romanian Plain might date to sometime in the second half of the 1st century AD based on certain detailed and comprehensive analyses, like for instance that of the “Buzău hoard”¹⁶, obviously in the event it originates in the Buzău county territory¹⁷, or on the observations related to several Sarmatian graves in the east-Carpathian area¹⁸. Concurrently, we suggest that the entrance of the Sarmatians in both the east-Carpathian area as well as the Romanian plain should not be regarded as massive and violent, but rather as a lengthy and gradual process.

Moreover, we appreciate that currently, it is often difficult to isolate graves from the end of the 1st century AD from those dating to early 2nd century AD and that, in the current state of research, one may not speak yet of a Sarmatian effective inhabitancy of the Romanian Plain during the second half of the 1st century AD¹⁹.

The lack or scarcity of Sarmatian finds in Muntenia during the 1st century AD seems rather surprising should we keep in mind that plain areas are precisely what these nomads of the steppes were accustomed with and which corresponded to the needs of their pastoral economy, place from where they could also carry out raids to the right of the Danube²⁰. However, should we take into account archaeological facts and the information supplied by the ancient literary sources, it may be noted that the western limit of the space inhabited by the Sarmatians in the

⁷ GROSU 1996, 252.

⁸ IONIȚĂ 2010, 792, 793.

⁹ HARHOIU 1993, 46–50. In his study dedicated to “Buzău hoard”, R. Harhoiu attempted to review the dating of several graves from Muntenia (Harhoiu 1993), yet this chronological re-framing was rejected by Gh. Bichir (BICHIR 1996, 297–312).

¹⁰ BABEȘ 1999, 234 sqq. Within his ample study of 1999 M. Babeș reduced the dating of certain Sarmatian graves from south Moldova and Muntenia from the first half of the 2nd century AD to the second half of the 1st century AD.

¹¹ NICULESCU 2003, 184–186.

¹² PETOLESCU 2006, 124.

¹³ OȚA 1999, 887; OȚA 2007, 51. This moment of the Sarmatian entrance in the Romanian Plain is related by the author to the wars waged by Domitian and Trajan with the Dacians.

¹⁴ OȚA/SÎRBU 2009, 180–181.

¹⁵ SÎRBU/BÂRCĂ 1999, 93–94; SÎRBU/BÂRCĂ 2000, 261; BÂRCĂ 2002a, 111, 119; BÂRCĂ 2002b, 65, 81.

¹⁶ HARHOIU 1993, 41–51.

¹⁷ See to this effect Gh. Bichir’s view (BICHIR 1996, 301 sqq.).

¹⁸ BÂRCĂ 2006.

¹⁹ SÎRBU/BÂRCĂ 1999, 93–94; SÎRBU/BÂRCĂ 2000, 261; BÂRCĂ 2002a, 111, 119; BÂRCĂ 2002b, 65, 81.

²⁰ SÎRBU 1986, 193.

first half of the 1st century AD lies in the area east the Prut and north the Danube mouths²¹. In addition, it is also noteworthy that by early 1st century AD the Romans set forth the bases of the preventive “security space” enforced yet combined with the diplomatic treaties closed between the Roman empire and various dynasts. Such policy, as noted²², was mainly intended to diminish threats from the neighbouring Barbarian world and consisted in the establishment of a larger distance between the Danube and potential enemies. The result of such policy was supposed to be a significant frequency reduction of the Barbarian attacks from nearby territories.

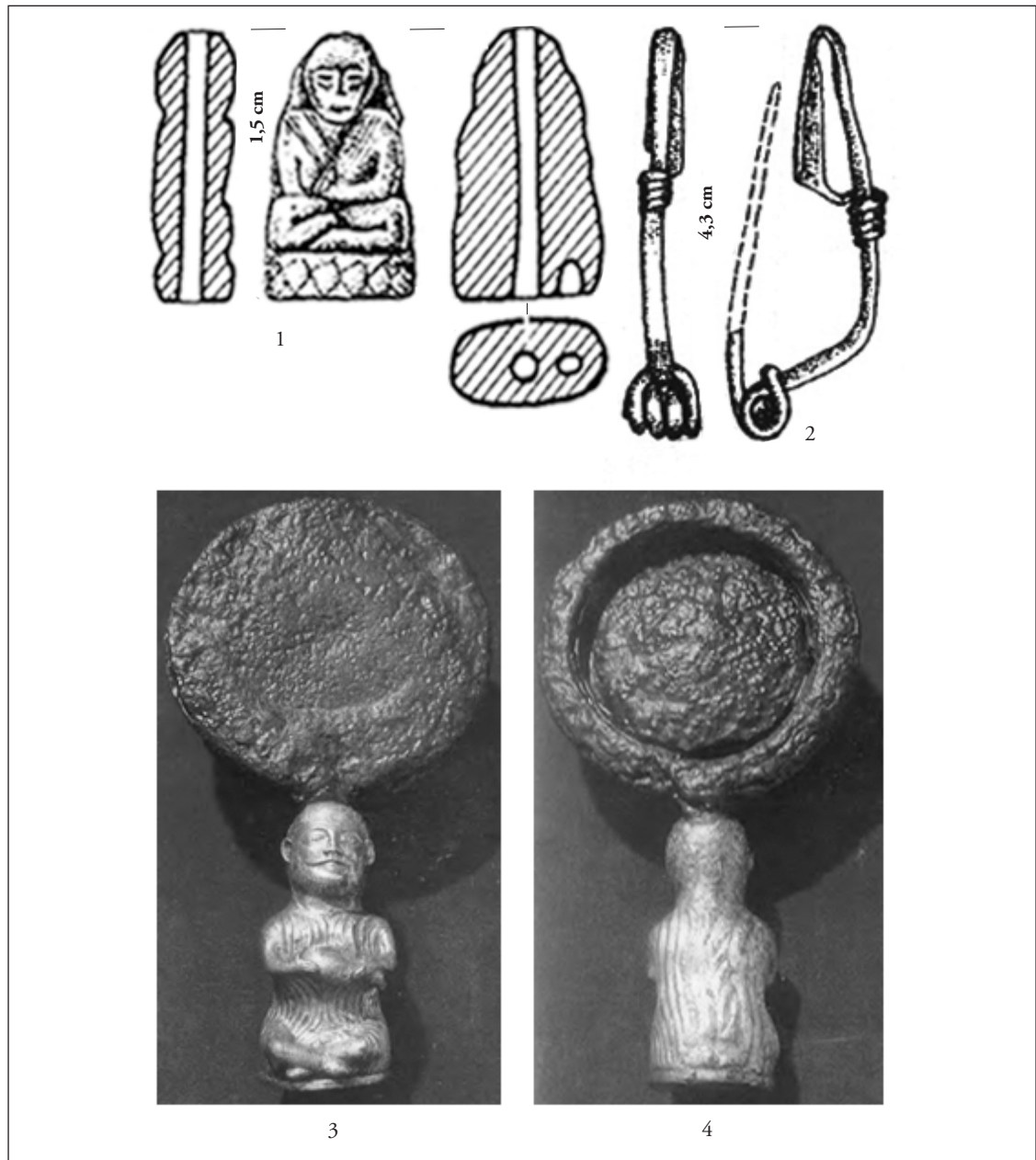


Fig. 1. Pendant (1) and brooch (2) of Lehliu (after BICHIR 1996). 3-4: mirror in the barrow at Sokolova Mogila (after KOVPANENKO 1986).

²¹ BÂRCĂ 2006; BÂRCĂ/SYMONENKO 2009.

²² OPREANU 1998a, 32.

The enforcement of the “security space” policy by the Lower Danube was also likely a cause deterring for a while the settlement of Sarmatian groups in the Romanian Plain, especially since they represented for a certain period of time, as resulted from the classical authors’ accounts²³, a danger for Roman possessions.

Nonetheless, it is worth mentioning that the “security space” policy’s supreme goal was not to completely eliminate the danger for the territories of the Roman empire lying south the Danube, but rather to reduce it. Furthermore, we believe such policy did not either result in a firm control on possible infiltrations of Sarmatian groups in the Romanian Plain. In fact, it is not excluded that occasional small Sarmatian groups entered these territories, for short time intervals, pursuant to peaceful relations of the groups they belonged to had with the Romans, precisely with the approval and under strict Roman control.

The object herein consists of the items from Lehliu (Călărași county), comprising an agate pendant (Fig. 1/1) and a bronze brooch with returned foot (Fig. 1/2), which, according to Gh. Bichir²⁴, come from a cremation grave discovered by chance by a local inhabitant in 1963–1965. According to the scholar in Bucharest, the items reached professor D. Tudor via a student, who delivered them in 1975 without providing details related to the find spot and the name of the finder²⁵. Although the pendant is a rare and an extremely interesting item, in his ample study of 1977 Gh. Bichir published only the bronze brooch²⁶ and mentioned nothing about the pendant –amulet. The bronze brooch with returned foot was believed by the same researcher as an artifact dating to the first decades of the 3rd century AD²⁷. In connection to the agate pendant rendering a male of eastern features sitting in a crossed-legged position (“Turkish style”) on a decorated pedestal, Gh. Bichir argues it depicts Buddha. Furthermore, the author maintains the item has no analogies in the north-Pontic steppes, while the closest representations rendering Buddha sitting in this position come from Asia²⁸. Based on the presented analogies, but especially on the proposed dating of the brooch, the pendant-amulet was dated to the first decades of the 3rd century AD. However, we consider purely speculative Gh. Bichir’s statement that the Lehliu pendant denotes that the deceased’s religious belief was Buddhism and that some of the Sarmatians who entered the Geto-Dacian territory believed in Buddha²⁹.

Unfortunately, the chronological framing and assignment of these two items is not actually successful. For instance, the brooch at Lehliu (Fig. 1/2) belongs to a brooch type very well represented in the north-Pontic area of the first centuries AD. Such brooches with returned foot and wrapped to the bow were manufactured of a single metal wire. Their bilateral spring is formed of four coils and inner or outer chord. The bow is curved and the long returned foot is attached by wrapping, forming several coils. Most of the specimens are made of bronze and iron, however silver specimens are also found.

The brooches with returned foot and wound to the bow belong to group 15 of brooches in A. K. Ambroz’s classification³⁰ and to group 4 in that of V. V. Kropotov³¹. Within the group, A. K. Ambroz divided them based on certain morphological peculiarities, into four series (I, II,

²³ See to this effect Cassius Dio LIV, 20, 3; LV, 30, 4; Florus, *Bellum Sarmaticum*, II, 29, 20, *apud* FHDP I, 527; Ovidius, *Tristia*, I, 5, 62, I, 8, 40, II, 198, III, 3, 6, III, 3, 63, III, 10, 5, III, 10, 34, IV, 1, 94, IV, 8, 15–16, IV, 10, 109–110, V, 1, 13, V, 7, 13, V, 7, 56, V, 12, 58; Ovidius, *Ex Ponto*, I, 2, 45, I, 2, 58, I, 2, 77, I, 2, 112, I, 3, 59–60, I, 5, 49–50, II, 7, 72; Ovidius, *Ibis*, 637; Suetonius, *Tiberius*, 41.

²⁴ BICHIR 1996, 307.

²⁵ BICHIR 1996, 307.

²⁶ BICHIR 1977, 188 Pl. 22/1.

²⁷ BICHIR 1977, 188 Pl. 22/1; BICHIR 1996, 307 Fig. 2.

²⁸ BICHIR 1996, 307 with complete bibliography.

²⁹ BICHIR 1996, 308.

³⁰ AMBROZ 1966, 47 sqq.

³¹ KROPOTOV 2010, 65 sqq.

III, VI)³², and within the series, into variants³³. The same was applied by V. V. Kropotov, who assigned these brooches to group 4, which was divided into four series, and within the series into several variants³⁴.

All these brooches are mainly specific to the southern regions of Eastern Europe where they were in fact produced. They represent the best examined and spread brooch type in this immense geographical space and according to recent information, are represented in the southern part of Eastern Europe by ca. 2300 specimens³⁵, of which around 1700 belong to series I³⁶.

The item from Lehliu is made of a single bronze wire, has the bilateral spring made of four coils and inner chord. The bow is downward and is not strongly curved and the long returned foot is attached to it by wrapping, forming four coils. In the lower part, the foot is slightly wider than the rest of the body. The pin is fragmentarily preserved. The brooch length is 4.3 cm.

In A. K. Ambroz's classification, the brooch at Lehliu belongs to the second variant of series I characterised by downward, not very curved spring and a slightly wider foot by the extremity compared to the rest of the body³⁷. The same author included in this series brooches with both outer chord and inner chord, of which, according to the scholar, only part of the early specimens had inner chord³⁸. The brooches of the second variant were dated by A. K. Ambroz to the 1st century AD, especially in the second half of the 1st century AD, without though excluding the possibility of their use also by early 2nd century AD³⁹.

The large number of such brooches made of a single metal wire with inner chord identified over the last four decades allowed V. V. Kropotov⁴⁰ to frame all specimens in series II of brooches with returned foot wrapped around the bow. Within the series, they were divided, based on certain peculiarities, into four variants. The brooch at Lehliu belongs to form 2 of the second variant of series II copying largely the specimens of series I second variant 2 in both A. K. Ambroz and V. V. Kropotov's classifications⁴¹. Chronologically, the brooches of this variant are dated to the second half of the 1st century – early 2nd century AD, confirmed to this effect by the artifacts beside which they were found within the features. Finds of such brooches cluster mainly in the Lower Dnieper basin and Crimea, yet they are sporadically found also in the Kuban region and north Caucasus.

Within the Sarmatian environment, brooches of this variant come from T 2 G 3 at Glubokoe⁴², T 7 G 1 at Vladimirovka⁴³, T 2 G 1 at Novofilippovka⁴⁴, Konskie Razdory⁴⁵, T 1 G8 at Dneprovsk⁴⁶, T 5 G1, T 6 G1, T 6 G2, T 12 G2, T 13 G1, T 31 G1, T 32 G1, T 49 G1

³² A. K. Ambroz included the Caucasian brooches dating to the 4th–7th century AD in series IV and V (AMBROZ 1966, 54–55, Pls. 9/9, 21 and 22/2, 4).

³³ AMBROZ 1966, 47–57.

³⁴ KROPOTOV 2010, 65–165.

³⁵ See KROPOTOV 2010, 65.

³⁶ KROPOTOV 2010, 68.

³⁷ AMBROZ 1966, 49.

³⁸ AMBROZ 1966, 48 sqq.

³⁹ AMBROZ 1966, 49.

⁴⁰ KROPOTOV 2010, 129–150

⁴¹ KROPOTOV 2010, 72–74, Fig. 31–32.

⁴² Cf. SHMAGLIJ/CHERNYAKOV 1970, 47–48, Fig. 65/13; GROSU 1990, 44–45; BÂRCĂ 2005, 127 Fig. 2/1; BÂRCĂ 2006, 126–127, 314, Fig. 58/6 and 172/1; BÂRCĂ 2011a, 12 Fig. 1/1; KROPOTOV 2010, 136.

⁴³ SIMONENKO 2008, 71, Pl. 88/5; BÂRCĂ/SYMONENKO 2009, 158 Fig. 58/15; BÂRCĂ 2011a, 12 Fig. 1/15; KROPOTOV 2010, 136 Fig. 40/11.

⁴⁴ SIMONENKO 2008, 80 Pl. 136/3; BÂRCĂ/SYMONENKO 2009, 158 Fig. 58/14; BÂRCĂ 2011a, 12 Fig. 1/14; KROPOTOV 2010, 137 Fig. 40/2.

⁴⁵ BÂRCĂ/SYMONENKO 2009, 158 Fig. 58/13; BÂRCĂ 2011a, 12 Fig. 1/13.

⁴⁶ SIMONENKO 2008, 67 Pl. 67/1b; BÂRCĂ 2011a, 13.

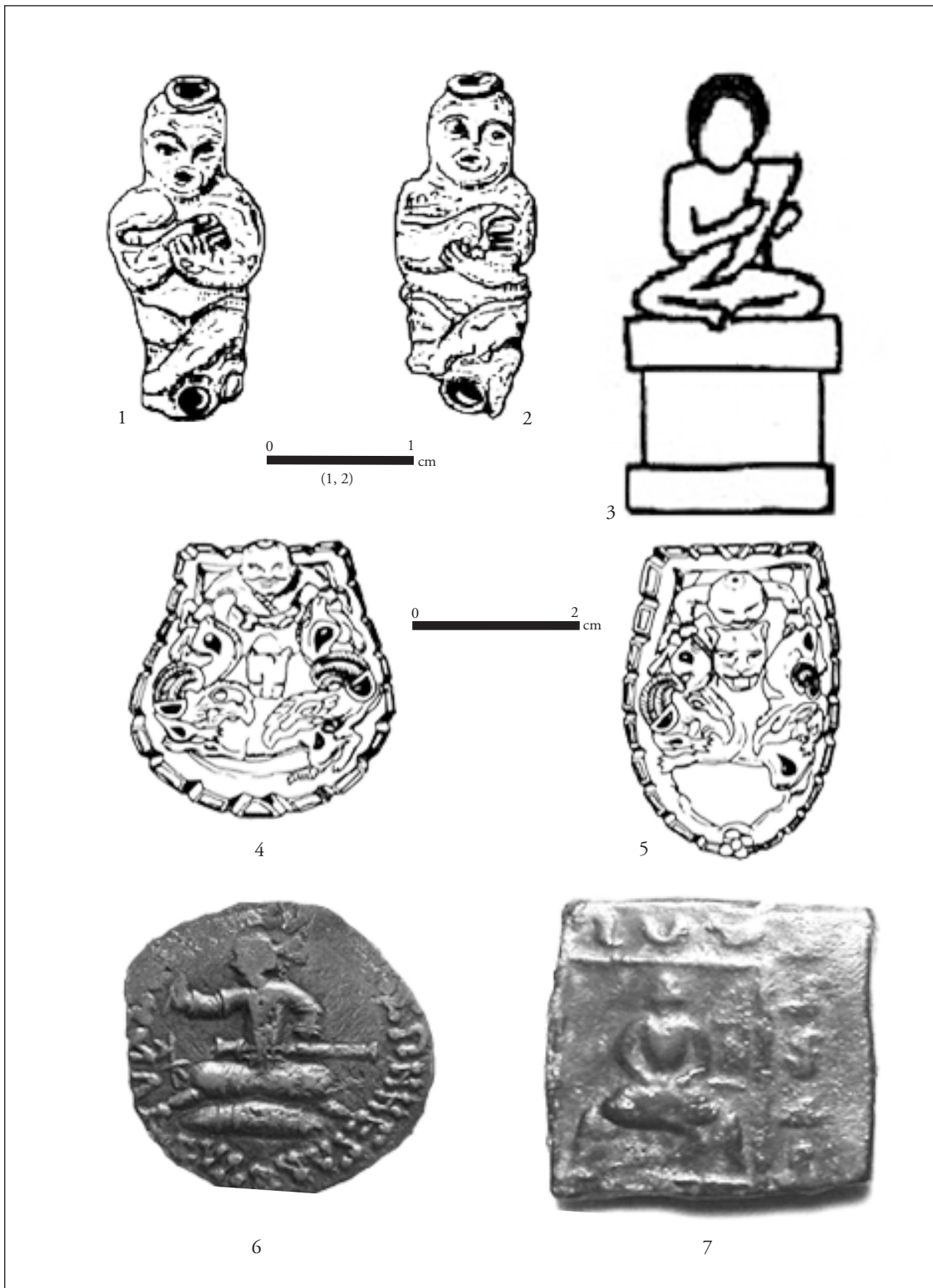


Fig. 2. 1-2: musician figurines in grave 2 at Tillya-tepe (after SARIANIDI 1989). 3: funerary monument at Phanagoria (after YATSENKO 1992a). 4-5: belt buckles in T2 M1 at Porogi (after SIMONENKO/LOBAJ 1991). 6-7: coins of the Indo-Scythian kings from the 1st century BC, Azes I (6), and Maues (7) (after <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:AzesI.JPG>; <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:MauesBuddhaCoin.JPG>).

and T 71 G1 at Ust'-Kamenka⁴⁷ etc.). Concerning the specimens in the Sarmatian environment, one may note that more than half come from the barrow cemetery at Ust'-Kamenka⁴⁸ located on the right bank of Dnieper⁴⁹, which belonged to the novel wave of Sarmatians arriving from the east starting with mid 1st century AD⁵⁰.

In what the agate pendant is concerned (Fig. 1/1), things are simpler than Gh. Bichir believed. For instance, the depiction of individuals sitting in a crossed-legged position is found on a series of pieces dated to the second half of the 1st millennium BC from Central Asia⁵¹. This position becomes yet a frequent iconographic presence in this region only by the end of the 1st century BC. Within the Sarmatian environment, items rendering individuals sitting with legs crossed are represented by the male-shaped mirror handle from the rich grave in barrow Sokolova Mogila (Lower Bug region)⁵² (Fig. 1/3–4) and the collar/diadem in barrow 10 in the cemetery at Kobyakovo (near Rostov on Don)⁵³ (Fig. 3/2), depicting in the centre a male with a spear on his knees and a vessel in his hands, similarly to the individual on the mirror at Sokolova Mogila. The grave in the barrow at Sokolova Mogila dates to the second half of the 1st century AD (possibly, in the third quarter or even its last third)⁵⁴, and that in T 10 at Kobyakovo sometime in the second half of the 1st century – early 2nd century AD⁵⁵.

One of the figurines on the lid of the Sarmatian cauldron at Kal'mius⁵⁶ (Fig. 3/1) is also rendered in a cross-legged sitting position. Alike the above cases, there too the individual holds a vessel in his hands. In N. A. Bokovenko's typological classification, the given cauldron belongs to type I⁵⁷ and represents, beside other vessel categories, one of the innovations of the

⁴⁷ MAHNO 1960, 29–30, Fig. 12/1, 5; SIMONENKO 2008, 63, 65 Pls. 42/3g, 43/5 and 54/1a; KOSTENKO 1993, 15, 28, 30, 82, Figs. 4/5, 8/9, 9/10, 17/25, 26/15, 28/12, 41, 29/13, 20; BÂRCĂ/SYMONENKO 2009, 158 Fig. 58/12; BÂRCĂ 2011a, 12–13, Fig. 1/12; KROPOTOV 2010, 136–137, Fig. 40/4, 6–10, 12.

⁴⁸ KROPOTOV 2010, 131, 136–139, Fig. 41.

⁴⁹ KOSTENKO 1993.

⁵⁰ For the elements specific to the new wave of Sarmatians arriving to the north-Pontic area from the east see SIMONENKO 2000; BÂRCĂ/SYMONENKO 2009, 99–203.

⁵¹ See to this effect MARTYNOV 1955, 153–154 and Fig. 66/1–2; RUDENKO 1962, 15–16, 29, 36, and Pl. VII/1, 7; ARTAMONOV 1973, 44, 146, Fig. 48, 189–190.

⁵² KOVPANENKO 1986, 66–72, Figs. 70–73; SIMONENKO 2003, 48, Fig. 2/3–4. Mirrors of the type to which the specimen at Sokolova Mogila belongs are bronze made, their shape is of a disk with thickened rim, conical projection in the centre and pin-shaped handle. Their diameter varies between 10 and 16 cm, however specimens of larger diameter are also found. Mirrors of the type emerged in the Sarmatian environment by the end of the 1st century BC and were used extensively over the 1st century AD (see HAZANOV 1963, 64–65; SKRIPKIN 1990, 152, 155; MAKSIMENKO 1998, 131; GLUKHOV 2003, 92–93; BÂRCĂ/SYMONENKO 2009, 172–173). In the north-Pontic area, the dissemination of the mirrors of the type is related to the eastern impulse (Alanic) by mid 1st century AD (SIMONENKO 1993, 112 sqq.; SYMONENKO 1999, 11; SIMONENKO 2003, 49). Evidence to the fact is provided by the mirrors of the type from aristocratic graves, of obvious eastern features in the barrows at Sokolova Mogila (see KOVPANENKO 1986), Kamova Mogila (SIMONENKO/MEL'NIK 2004) or the grave at Troyany (see SIMONENKO 2008, 71, Pls. 84/2 and 85–87).

⁵³ GUGUEV 1990, 68–73; GUGUEV 1992, 121 sqq., Fig. 4–8; PROKHOROVA/GUGUEV 1992, 143–146, Fig. 5–6; MORDVINTSEVA 2003, 42–43, 89, cat. no. 69, Fig. 28; MORDVINTSEVA/TREJSTER 2007, I, 205–206, 211–212, II, 39, no. A109.3, III, Figs. 39 and 65.

⁵⁴ KOVPANENKO 1986, 127 dated the grave in the first half of the 1st century AD.

⁵⁵ PROKHOROVA/GUGUEV 1992, 159. In this work from 1990, V. K. Guguev dated the grave by the end of the 1st century – early 2nd century AD (GUGUEV 1990, 68), chronological framing also accepted by other authors (see MORDVINTSEVA/TREJSTER 2007, II, 39).

⁵⁶ SHTERN 1911, 43, Pl. V; SIMONENKO 1999, 165–166, Fig. 28/1; BÂRCĂ/SYMONENKO 2009, 184–185.

⁵⁷ BOKOVENKO 1977, 232–233, Fig. 3/II. Based on appearance and constructional elements, several variants may be indentified within this type. For cauldron finds belonging to the type see SKRIPKIN 1970, 207, Figs. 2, 3; BOKOVENKO 1977, 232, Fig. 3/I; 4 with complete bibliography and finds known at that date;

Mid Sarmatian period, brought, as believed, by the Alani⁵⁸. To his effect, one should mention that when found inside graves, the latter were of an obvious eastern character.



Fig. 3. 1: the cauldron at Kal'mius (after SHTERN 1911). 2: depiction on the collar/diadem in barrow grave 10 at Kobyakovo (after MORDVINTSEVA 2003).

It was believed that these cauldrons are dated within the limits of the 1st century BC – 1st century AD⁵⁹. This dating was established though based on the chronological framing of the Mid Sarmatian period agreed at the time. On the territory of Sarmatia however, there is no grave or feature that would contain cauldrons of the type dating with certainty to the 1st century

MORDVINTSEVA/SERGATSKOV 1995, 114–124, Fig. 3/1; MAKSIMENKO 1998, 111–112, Figs. 7/2 and 49/7–9, 11; RAEV 1986, 47–48, 51–52, Pls. 39 and 42/1; BESPALYJ 1985, 163, Fig. 2/2; BESPALYJ 1986, 77–78, Pl. 70/1; ILYUKOV 1986, 79–80, Pl. 71/1. For cauldrons of the type in the Sarmatian environment between Don and Dniester see KASHUBA/KURCHATOV/SHCHERBAKOVA 2001–2002, 208–209, 231–232 and Fig. 14/4; SIMONENKO 1993, 62, Fig. 19/2; SIMONENKO 2008, Pls. 15/2a, 38/2a, 39/3, 67/2c, 75/1, 79/3, 84/2; KURCHATOV/TEL'NOV 2010, 139–140, Figs. 1–3, BÂRCĂ/SYMONENKO 2009, 184–185, Fig. 68/2–5; BÂRCĂ 2011b, 45–46, Pl. I/5–8 with complete bibliography.

⁵⁸ SKRIPKIN 1990, 214.

⁵⁹ KAPOSHINA 1965, 50–51; BOKOVENKO 1977, 233; KOSYANENKO/FLEROV 1978, 203.

BC. Therefore, their dating should be placed, as mentioned on other occasions as well⁶⁰, during the 1st century (mainly in the second half) – early/first quarter of the 2nd century AD, although in certain cases it may be extended by mid 2nd century AD. A position similar to that of the individual on the pendant at Lehliu is also rendered on the jet pendant from the rich Sarmatian grave at Alitub (T 26 G 1)⁶¹, dating to the second half/last quarter of the 1st century AD⁶².

In a leg-crossed sitting position are also rendered the two musicians figurines from grave 2 in the cemetery at Tillya-tepe (north Afghanistan)⁶³ (Fig. 2/1–2), dating, most likely, sometime by the end of the 1st century BC – early/first half of the 1st century AD⁶⁴, while during the 2nd–3rd century AD is dated the life size ceramic statue rendering a warrior sitting with legs crossed from the ossuary close to Koj-Krylgan Kala⁶⁵ (Uzbekistan). One may also mention the fragmentarily preserved statue rendering a male coming from the ossuary in the cemetery near Burly Kala⁶⁶ (Autonomous Republic of Karakalpakstan, Uzbekistan). The leg-crossed sitting position is also found on the coins of the Indo-Scythian kings of the 1st century BC, Maues and Azes I⁶⁷ (Fig. 2/6–7), but also on a funerary monument of the 1st century AD at Phanagoria, whose individual holds a rhyton⁶⁸ (Fig. 2/3).

From the north-west Pontic Sarmatian environment we wish to mention herein the two golden belt buckles from T 2 G1 at Porogi (left Mid Dniester)⁶⁹, rendering each a male of mongoloid features (Fig. 2/4–5) alike on the pendant of Lehliu. To our knowledge, there is no analogy for the two belt buckles at Porogi. Technologically and typologically however, the two items are similar to those in some of graves at Tillya-tepe⁷⁰. A depiction close to that on the buckles is found on two golden pendants from G 2 at Tillya-tepe⁷¹, to which also belong the two figurines rendering musicians sitting with legs crossed⁷² (Fig. 2/1–2). However, given their production technique and similarities with the depictions on the items in the grave at Tillya-tepe, it is believed that those at Porogi have the same origin⁷³. According to S. A. Yatsenko, the mongoloid individual riding a panther rendered on the two belt buckles is the image of the Lord of the Animals in the Nart sagas existent event today with a series of peoples from north Caucasus⁷⁴.

The obvious eastern features of the individual on the pendant at Lehliu are similar to those of the individual on the mirror handle at Sokolova Mogila⁷⁵, the two musician figurines

⁶⁰ BÂRCĂ 2006, 166–167; BÂRCĂ 2011b, 45–46; BÂRCĂ/SYMONENKO 2009, 184–184.

⁶¹ MAKSIMENKO 1998, 121, Fig. 57/24; YATSENKO 1992a, 200, Pl. 6/4, tab. 1, no. 23. See for this pendant also RAEV 1986, the table by the end of the book illustrating the chronology of the princely graves in the Don area.

⁶² See for this grave RAEV 1986, 42–44.

⁶³ SARIANIDI 1989, 66 Fig. 23.

⁶⁴ The graves at Tillya-tepe date in the interval of the 1st century BC – 1st century AD. See to this effect SARIANIDI 1985, 54–55; SARIANIDI 1987, 268, 279; SARIANIDI 1989.

⁶⁵ RAPOPORT 1958, Fig. 3; RAPOPORT 1971, 70–73 Figs. 32–34.

⁶⁶ RAPOPORT 1971, 70.

⁶⁷ See GARDNER 1886, 71, 83, Pls. XVII/5 and XIX/1. The coins read ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ ΜΑΥΟΥ and ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ ΑΖΟΥ. See the discussion on these coins in TARN 1984, 398–403.

⁶⁸ YATSENKO 1992a, 200, Pl. 6/3, tab. 1, no. 23.

⁶⁹ SIMONENKO/LOBAJ 1991, 19–21, Fig. 11/1–2, 12; SIMONENKO 2003, Fig. 5/3–4; SIMONENKO 2008, Pl. 131/14–15; BÂRCĂ 2006, 114, 351, Fig. 107/3–4; BÂRCĂ/SYMONENKO 2009, 150, Fig. 56/20–21.

⁷⁰ SARIANIDI 1985, 111, 145, Pl. 50/83.

⁷¹ SARIANIDI 1987a, 77, Fig. 4; SARIANIDI 1989, 59, Fig. 18; MORDVINTSEVA 2003, 82, cat. no. 2, Fig. 3.

⁷² SARIANIDI 1989, 66, Fig. 23.

⁷³ SIMONENKO/LOBAJ 1991, 52; BÂRCĂ/SYMONENKO 2009, 151.

⁷⁴ YATSENKO 1992, 71.

⁷⁵ KOVPANENKO 1986, 66–72, Figs. 70–73; SIMONENKO 2003, 48, Fig. 2/3–4.

in G 2 at Tillya-tepe⁷⁶ and the characters in the two plate-fasteners in the Siberian collection of Peter the Great⁷⁷.

The male individuals of mongoloid features on the mirror handle at Sokolova Mogila⁷⁸ and the plate-fasteners in the Siberian collection of Peter the Great are depicted with long moustaches, which is not specific to mongoloids, and neither is the beard worn by the individuals exhibited on the mirror handle at Sokolova Mogila and the collar/diadem at Kobyakovo. Although beard wearing is not very specific to the Sarmatian environment, it is though recorded on a series of artifacts⁷⁹. In what moustaches are concerned, it is worth mentioning they were worn rather often by the Sarmatians as evidenced by representations⁸⁰.

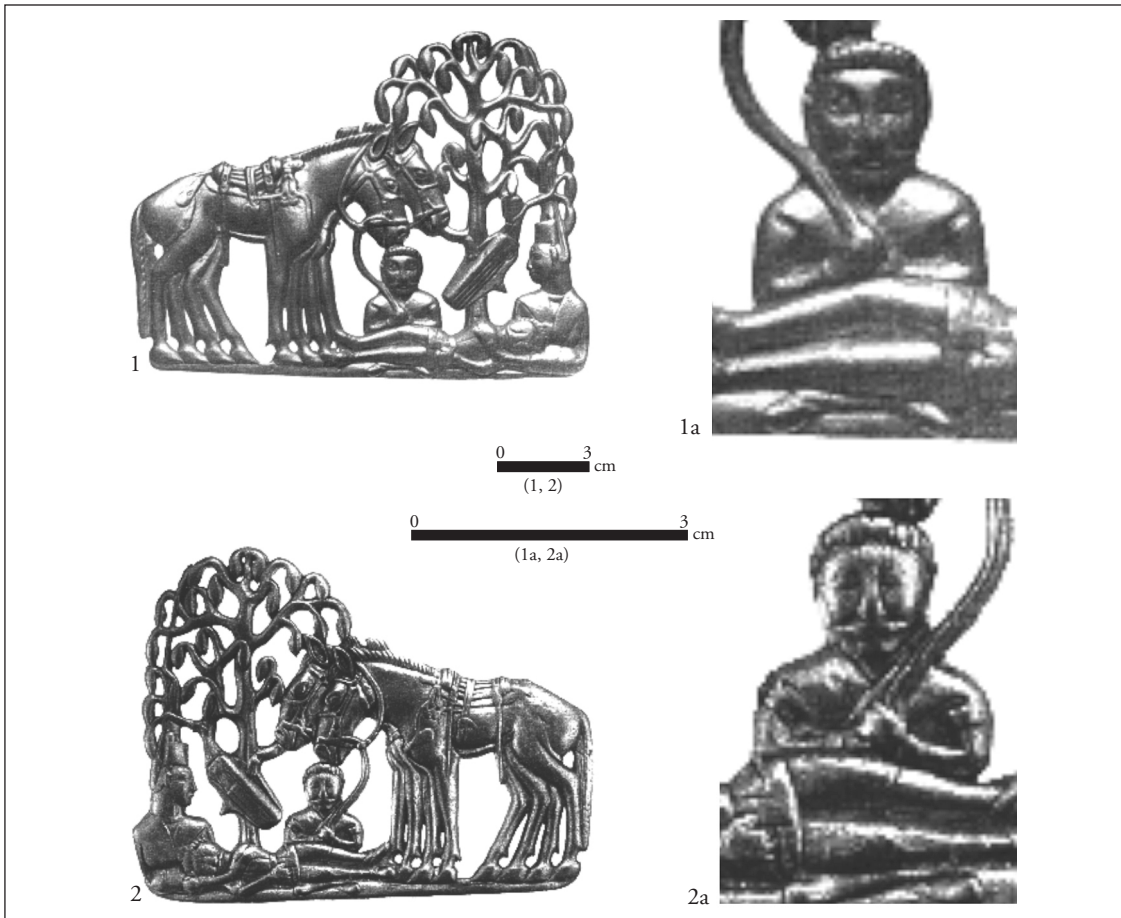


Fig. 4. Plate-fasteners in the Siberian collection of Peter the Great (after RUDENKO 1962).

In connection to the garment worn by the individual on the pendant at Lehliu, one may argue it seems not to exceed by much in length the waistband area and has a letter V-shaped

⁷⁶ SARIANIDI 1989, 66, Fig. 23.

⁷⁷ RUDENKO 1962, 15–16, 29, 36, Pl. VII/1, 7.

⁷⁸ The mirror in the barrow at Sokolova Mogila is believed by some of the authors as a possible import from Bactria (SIMONENKO 2003, 49), and by other scholars, based on a complex analysis of all features (hairsyle, dress, position with the vessel in hand etc.), as items reflecting the realities of Sarmatia in the first two centuries AD (YATSENKO 2000, 179).

⁷⁹ YATSENKO 1992a, Pls. 6/5 and 15/3; YATSENKO 2000a, Fig. 1/5.

⁸⁰ YATSENKO 1992a, Pl. 4/5; CICHORIUS 1896, Pl. XXXVII; TREJSTER 1994, Figs. 7–10; MORDVINTSEVA/TREJSTER 2007, III, Figs. 10–11.

neckline, decorated with stripes along the neckline cut. Unfortunately, in this case it is impossible to specify whether the coat was fastened or not and tied with a band or belt in the waistband area. Fastened or not, V-shaped neckline garments with a length that might reach to the knee, occasionally even lower, are a dress peculiarity specific to the immense territory inhabited by the Sarmatians in the chronological interval between the 4th/3rd century BC and 4th century AD⁸¹.

Last but not least, it is worth mentioning that although the pendant at Lehliu has no identical analogy to our knowledge, we believe that the item is of eastern origin. It is rather obvious from the rendered individual appearance. His sitting position and anthropological type, dress and hairstyle point to the fact its features are specific to the eastern populations from Central Asia, including those nomad Iranian.

Therefore, based on the above mentioned, one may conclude that the two items at Lehliu belonged to an individual within the Sarmatian group arriving from the east starting with mid 1st century AD⁸² and reaching the Danube mouths area sometime in the second half of this century⁸³. Given the above, one may also conclude that the deceased owner of these items was likely part of a group of Sarmatians who entered the Romanian Plain for a short period of time, subsequent to trade activities or following occasional entrances of the Sarmatians in these territories during their incursions on Roman possessions for plunder or other military events involving them in the second half of the 1st century – early 2nd century AD.

In what the Sarmatian presence in the Romanian Plain is concerned, we believe that in the current state of knowledge one may not firmly argue in favour of an effective inhabitancy of this area over the second half of the 1st century AD, like for the period of the 2nd – 3rd century

⁸¹ For V-shaped neckline garments (either fastened or not) like that of the individual on the pendant at Lehliu, the collar/diadem at Kobyakovo, the belt buckles at Porogi or the plate-fasteners in the Siberian collection of Peter the Great see YATSENKO 1992a.

⁸² The graves in this group are of eastern features and are significantly different from the rest of the Sarmatian graves in the north and north-west of the Black Sea. One of their specific features is the very rich funerary furniture composed of eastern origin items (jewellery made in animal style paralleled in the Bactrian art, parade weaponry, mirrors, including Chinese, precious wares, bronze cauldrons with zoomorphic handles etc.). Among specific elements are also deemed the main barrow burials, large rectangular pits or almost square with the dead placed along the walls or the square pits with the dead placed on a diagonal (see SIMONENKO 2000 and BÂRCĂ/SYMONENKO 2009). To them might have also belonged the niche-graves but also part of graves in common rectangular pits broadly spread all over the history of the Sarmatians (see to this effect RAEV 1989, 116–117 and SKRIPKIN 1990, 207–209, 217–218). Including tamga signs were mainly distributed by this wave of Sarmatians coming from the east, they also being the ones who mostly contributed in their dissemination in the steppes of Eastern Europe. In addition, we wish to mention, as we also did elsewhere (BÂRCĂ/SYMONENKO 2009; BÂRCĂ 2006; BÂRCĂ 2013), that in the current state of knowledge we may argue that the graves with obvious eastern features from the north and north-west Pontic area dated to the chronological interval between mid 1st century AD – early 2nd century AD are mainly of Alanic origin. Moreover, it is undoubtedly that the Chinese and Central Asian origin items (see SIMONENKO 2003, 45–65 and YATSENKO 1993, 60–72) emerged with the Sarmatians, including the Sarmatians in the north and north-west Pontic area, once with the arrival of the Alani who were using such artifacts much prior reaching these territories. For the graves belonging to the early Alani aristocracy in the north-west Pontic area like those at Kovalevka (Sokolova Mogila), Radionovka (barrow Kamova Mogila), Troyany, Kozyrka, Vesnyanoe, Hrușca, Mocra (T 2 M 2), Mihajlovka (T 3 M 3), Porogi etc. See KOVPANENKO 1986, 66–72, 127, Figs. 70–73; GROSU 1990, 53, 92, Fig. 16D; SUBBOTIN/DZIGOVSKIJ 1990, 19–21, Figs. 15/10–16 and 16/1–9; SIMONENKO/LOBAJ 1991; SIMONENKO 1997, 389–407; SIMONENKO/MEL'NIK 2004, 269–280; SIMONENKO 2008, 71, 73–76, 79, Pls. 85–87, 100–111, 118–119, 131–133; KASHUBA/KURCHATOV/SHCHERBAKOVA 2001–2002, 200–213, 226–242, Figs. 8–9, 11–17; DZYGOS'KYJ 1993, 74–75, 201, Figs. 33, 36/4–5, 37/2, 6, 8, 38, 43/1–6; BÂRCĂ 2006, 319–320, 329–330, 331–334, 348–353, Figs. 65, 75–77, 79–81, 97–111; BÂRCĂ/SYMONENKO 2009.

⁸³ For the penetration and settlement of new Sarmatian tribes in the north-west of the Black Sea, a time very well noted by the classical literary and epigraphic sources see BÂRCĂ 2006, 244–262; BÂRCĂ 2013; BÂRCĂ/SYMONENKO 2009, 348–364.

AD. We may though argue with certainty, based on the information provided by archaeological finds and literary and epigraphic sources that during the second half of the 1st century AD the Sarmatians inhabited territories in the north and north-west of the Black Sea⁸⁴.

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