

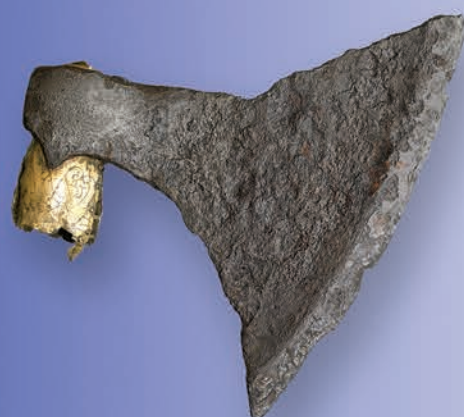
Hoarding and deposition in Europe from later prehistory to the medieval period – finds in context

London (UK), 12-14 June 2019

Edited by Isabelle BERTRAND, Emma DURHAM,
Jenny HALL, Jackie KEILY and Matthew G. KNIGHT

instrumentum

Bulletin du Groupe de travail européen sur l'artisanat et les
productions manufacturées de l'Antiquité à l'époque moderne



H.S.

2022

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Hoarding and deposition in Europe from later prehistory to the medieval period – finds in context

Introduction

The papers in this volume were presented at the conference *Hoarding and deposition in Europe from later prehistory to the medieval period – finds in context*. The conference was held at King's College, The Strand, London from 12-14 June 2019. It was a joint venture between *instrumentum* (the Europe-wide finds group), the Later Prehistoric Finds Group, the Roman Finds Group and the Finds Research Group. Not only was this the first time that an *instrumentum* meeting was held in the UK, but it was the first joint meeting for all three British finds groups. It was also an opportunity to meet many of our European colleagues in person for the first time.

We had 127 participants from all over Britain, as well as France, Italy, the Netherlands, Austria, Romania and the Czech Republic. Over the three days, 32 papers were presented and of these 13 are published here, with a post-conference conclusion by Richard Bradley. The combination of papers ranging from the later prehistoric to medieval periods and from a wide range of geographic areas led to stimulating discussions both within the lecture hall and during the breaks. We also had posters on display from British and French participants, the majority of them by PhD students, and many participants commented on how much they enjoyed talking to the students about their work.

The conference was very much a joint effort with many different organisations contributing. It would not have been possible to hold the conference in London without the help of John Pearce and Alessandra Esposito of King's College London who made all the arrangements at the College and ensured the smooth running of the event. Jenny Hall and Jackie Keily worked with the Museum of London to provide two free excursions – a curator-led tour of the Secret Rivers exhibition at the Museum of London Docklands and a walking tour of London sites (including the Roman walls, fort, amphitheatre and mithraeum) led by MoL staff. With the help of the Roman Society we were able to pay expenses for all speakers who were not funded through their place of work. We were

also able to fund a number of PhD students from the continent who would not have been able to attend without this help.

Structure of the volume

These proceedings capture the breadth of research presented and we are delighted to include contributions from students/early career researchers through to those well-established in their respective fields. Hoarding and deposition is a dynamic field of study and encompasses a complex range of practices. As such, a key advantage of approaching this topic from a broader geographic and chronological scope is that key themes across time and space can be observed and the impact of new discoveries can be set in their wider contexts. For this reason, the volume has been split into three sections:

- New discoveries: casting fresh light on depositional practices;
- Deposition in wet contexts;
- Hoarding and deposition: process, meaning and practice.

Each section includes examples of case studies from different periods across Europe, which we hope illustrates similarities and differences that emerged. The volume concludes with an invited contribution from Richard Bradley who succinctly highlights the long-term nature of depositional practices, which stretch even beyond the scope of these proceedings.

Research into hoarding and deposition has long captured the imagination of archaeologists and a key aim of the conference was to demonstrate the vibrant state of this topic and the new directions it is going in. While editing the contributions it became clear that our understanding continues to widen and change with every new approach taken, much like deposition itself.

Isabelle BERTRAND, Emma DURHAM,
Jenny HALL, Jackie KEILY and Matthew G. KNIGHT

H.S. 2022

Hoarding and deposition in Europe from later prehistory to the medieval period – finds in context

Late Iron Age silver hoards from Dacia

Abstract

The paper analyses the practice of burying structured assemblages consisting of silver jewellery and costume accessories, which are frequently accompanied by silver coins and sometimes also by bronze or silver drinking-related vessels, in Late Iron Age Dacia. Their composition and functional structure, as well as their contexts of discovery, suggest that the assemblages were more likely symbolic burials which almost always contained only the material markers of the social status and function of certain women belonging to the local elites. Through this practice these 'mistresses of the sacred' remained symbolically present in the local collective memory, perhaps as a mnemonic means of consecrating a certain location, or to confirm the legitimacy of the community or of the ruler, or to claim certain lands or boundaries as ancestral and protected by supernatural powers.

Keywords

Late Iron Age Dacia, silver hoards, bodily ornaments, metal drinking-related vessels, late Republican denarii, symbolic burials, ideology materialization

Résumé

Cet article analyse la pratique consistant à enfouir en Dacie, au cours de la fin de l'âge du Fer, des ensembles de bijoux en argent et des accessoires du vêtement, fréquemment accompagnés de monnaies en argent et, parfois également, de vaisselle à boire en bronze ou en argent. Leur composition et leur structure fonctionnelle, comme leur contexte de découverte, suggèrent que ces assemblages étaient vraisemblablement des sépultures symboliques qui contenaient presque toujours les marqueurs matériels du statut et de la fonction de certaines femmes appartenant à l'élite locale. Avec cette pratique, ces "gardiennes du sacré" demeuraient symbo-

liquement présentes au sein de la mémoire collective, peut-être comme un moyen mnémorique de consacrer un lieu, ou de confirmer la légitimité de la communauté ou du chef, ou pour proclamer certains territoires ou frontières comme ancestraux et protégés par des puissances surnaturelles.

Mots-clés

Âge du Fer final en Dacie, dépôts d'argenterie, parures, vaisselle liée à la boisson, deniers de la fin de la République, sépultures symboliques, matérialisation d'une idéologie

Introduction

The practice of burying structured assemblages consisting of silver jewellery and costume accessories, which are frequently accompanied by a variable number of silver coins and sometimes also by bronze or silver drinking-related vessels, is a particularity of the so-called 'Dacian horizon' of the Late Iron Age in Transylvania and to the south of the Carpathians ⁽¹⁾. These assemblages were usually interred in isolated places, away from any settlement or burial ground, though not too far from a centre of power. More often than not, the metal artefacts were intentionally damaged before burial by cutting, smashing, and/or folding them. In some cases, a ceramic or metal vessel was used as the container, but the use of other kinds of packaging, made of organic materials, cannot be excluded. With only two exceptions, no osteological remains have been identified. These assemblages are known in Romanian archaeological literature as 'Dacian silver hoards', even if bronze vessels or other artefacts of foreign origin were also included, and the ethnic or social identity of those who owned

or interred them has been automatically assumed based on the location of the finds (fig. 1) ⁽²⁾.

Different interpretations have been proposed for these assemblages through time, although a couple of distinct approaches that only take into consideration certain components persist. Many studies mainly focus on their chronology due to the frequent presence of Hellenistic and/or Roman silver coins and metal vessels of Mediterranean origin. The first systematic analysis was performed by K. Horedt, who divided this phenomenon into three distinct chronological horizons which were based on the typological evolution of certain categories of locally-made jewellery and their association with the respective foreign coins (Horedt 1973). His chronology and other subsequent attempts to modify it are discussed below. Several hoards have also been interpreted as indicators of the commercial exchanges established by some of the indigenous communities with the Mediterranean world, again due to the presence of foreign artefacts (e.g. Glodariu 1976, 27-37, table 3; for a critique of this stereotypical interpretative model, see Egri 2014a, 172-75). Other means through which these artefacts could have arrived in the region, including mercenary activity, stipends and diplomatic gift exchanges, only recently have been taken into consideration (Egri 2014a; 2014b).

On the other hand, the functional structure of these assemblages and their meanings, and the depositional practice itself, were only briefly discussed; in many cases these were rather stereotypically assumed to be ritual offerings to some unidentified supernatural beings (e.g. Glodariu, Moga 1994; Florea, Pupeză 2008, 291-92). More recently, a possible funerary character was also suggested, though based on different interpretative models (Medeleț 1993, 19-20; 1994, 200-1, 219-20; Babeș 2001, 749-50; Zirra 2017, 184; for a thorough contextual analysis of this hypothesis, see Egri, Rustoiu 2014). Lastly, one hypothesis, which still largely holds, connects the depositing of a hoard to one or another of the indigenous chieftains whose centre of power was closest to the place of discovery (e.g. the Sâncrăieni hoard: Crișan 2000, 69, 142-43, pls. 119-122; see also Florea 2004, 519; Spânu 2012, 133-34), despite the lack of relevant archaeological evidence. This is particularly the case of the hoards containing metal vessels – their presence was almost always equated with the supposed weapons-bearing, alcohol-drinking male identity.

However, a careful analysis of all the components of these hoards and their contexts of discovery points to a series of circumstances regarding their assembly, use and deposition. These particularities suggest that they are not just heterogeneous accumulations of valuable items, either buried for safe keeping or as offerings to an unknown supernatural being, but structured assemblages which were meant to define a particular identity construct and its role and perception within the local society.

Chronology

As mentioned above, Horedt first analysed these hoards systematically more than four decades ago, identifying three distinct chronological horizons based on the typological

evolution of certain categories of locally-made jewellery and their association with Hellenistic and/or Roman silver coins (fig. 2). Within this model, the first horizon corresponds to the Central European La Tène D1 (c. 125-75 BC), the second one to the La Tène D2 (c. 75-25 BC), and the third horizon to the Augustan and early Tiberian period (c. 25 BC - AD 25) (Horedt 1973, 151) ⁽³⁾. Nowadays, in spite of some recent attempts to divide these hoards into just two chronological horizons, each corresponding to a distinct La Tène D2 sub-phase ⁽⁴⁾, the chronology proposed by Horedt many years ago remains largely valid. From this point of view, several key features are important for understanding the manner in which the practice of depositing silver hoards evolved through time.

The great majority of these hoards contain silver artefacts belonging to only one female costume (fig. 3). The few exceptions include the Sărăcsău and Tilișca 2 hoards which contain two costume assemblages each; due to the size of the annular ornaments, one costume more likely belonged to an adult and the second to a child (fig. 4). From the functional perspective, these assemblages consist of ornaments for the head (earrings or hair spirals), neck (neck-rings or chains with pendants), limbs (bracelets and/or anklets) and body (belts and brooches) (fig. 2). Their fairly standardized functional structure and the fact that they were meant to be used by a single person, being then buried together at the same time, indicate that the assemblages were not simple accumulations of different valuables ⁽⁵⁾, but were meant to fulfil certain practical and symbolic functions which must have remained largely unchanged through time.

The typological analysis indicates that some of the components, like the brooches, bracelets and anklets, went through several stylistic transformations over time, while others had seen little change, so the latter could be less relevant for dating. This is the case of the Mediterranean type chains, the hair spirals, and the neck-rings, which have not been included in the present typo-chronological table (fig. 3). The same typological analysis also indicates that the rhythm of change from one type to another was different in the case of each category of ornaments, some types being adopted faster than others. As a consequence, some costume sets included both slightly old-fashioned elements and others of a newer type. These gradual changes (also noted in Zirra, Spânu 1992, though without further comments regarding its meanings) can be best compared in the annexed typo-chronological table. Some of these differences could be a result of the variable degrees of connectivity, including access to skilled craftsmanship, from one region or community to another, though others could simply stem from individualized stylistic preferences, including perhaps a certain degree of conservatism in what pertains to the female bodily ornamentation.

Lastly, another key feature that has chronological relevance is the frequent inclusion of certain types of Hellenistic or Roman coins, and/or silver or bronze vessels originating from the Mediterranean area, which were dated to the late Republican period.

On the basis of these observations, the hoards containing silver jewellery can be divided into three typo-chronological groups or horizons (fig. 3).

Site	Fortress / fortified settlement	Horizon	Bodily ornaments	Metal vessels	Ceramic vessels	Coins	Bibliography
Agârbiciu		I	2			5	Horedt 1945-47
Bălănești		2	10		I jar		Popescu 1969
Bistrița		I	6				Fettich 1953
București-Herăstrău		I	9	I mastos Ag, I situla Br		59	Popescu 1969
Cadea		2	5			170	Popescu 1945-47
Cândești	Cârlomănești	2	3			19	Matei 2019
Cehei	Șimleu Silvaniei	I	5			545	Chirilă, Matei 1986
Cehețel		I	14		I jar		Székely 1965
Cerbăl		2	21	I beaker Br	I	491	Fettich 1953
Cetățeni	Cetățeni	2	2			127	Spânu 2012; Mitrea, Rosetti 1972
Clipicești		I	2		I	25?	Mitrea 1972
Coadă Malului		2	4				Popescu 1954
Cojocna		I	9				Fettich 1953
Coldău	Beclean	2	4				Fettich 1953
Drăgești	Tășad	I	6		I	130	Chidioșan et al. 1978
Ghelința		2	5		I	12	Fettich 1953
Rociu (Gliganu de Jos)		2	11			11	Spânu 2012
Hetiur	Sighișoara-Wietenberg	3	4				Fettich 1953
Izvoru Frumos		2	2			13	Stângă 1992
Lupu		I	9	I mastos Ag			Glodariu, Moga 1994
Marca	Marca	I	2	I mastos Ag			Spânu 2012
Mădăraș		2	12				D. Cioată, pers. comm.
Măgura		2?	1			3	Mirea 2009
Mediaș		I	55?				Spânu 2012
Moigrad	Moigrad	I	4				Spânu 2012
Oradea 1		2	3				Medeleț 1994
Oradea 2		I	2				Fettich 1953
Oradea 3		I	10				Chidioșan, Ordentlich 1973
Peteni		3	7		I	39	Székely 1965
Poșaga de Sus		I	3			?	Spânu 2012
Remetea Mare		3	11			176	Fettich 1953
Sacalasău	Sacalasău Nou	I	2			31	Fettich 1953; Dumitrașcu, Molnar 1975
Sacalasău Nou	Sacalasău Nou	I	6+				Dumitrașcu, Molnar 1975
Săliște	Cugir	2	33				Spânu 2012
Sărăcsău	Cugir	I	22		I kantharos		Floca 1956
Sâncrăieni	Jigodin	I	3	7 mastoi Ag, 8 kantharoi Ag		I	Popescu 1958; Egri, Rustoiu 2014
Senereuș		3	7			10	Mărghitan 1976
Someșu Cald	Someșu Rece	2	2			438	Spânu 2012
Șaeș		2	8				Mărghitan 1976
Șeica Mică	Șeica Mică	3	11			356	Floca 1956
Tilișca 1	Tilișca	I	9				Lupu 1981
Tilișca 2	Tilișca	I	17	I situla (?) Ag			unpublished
Vedea		3	10	I Beaker Ag			Popescu 1937-40
Bohot		I		9 mastoi Ag, I situla Br			Venedikov 1961
Galiče		I	14				Fettich 1953
Gorni Dăbnik		I	2				Spânu 2012
Jakimovo		I	2	4 mastoi Ag, I kantharos Ag, I situla Br, I skyphos Br, I strainer Br			Milčev 1973
Sindel		I		10 mastoi Ag			Venedikov 1961

Fig. 1 – List of Late Iron Age silver hoards.

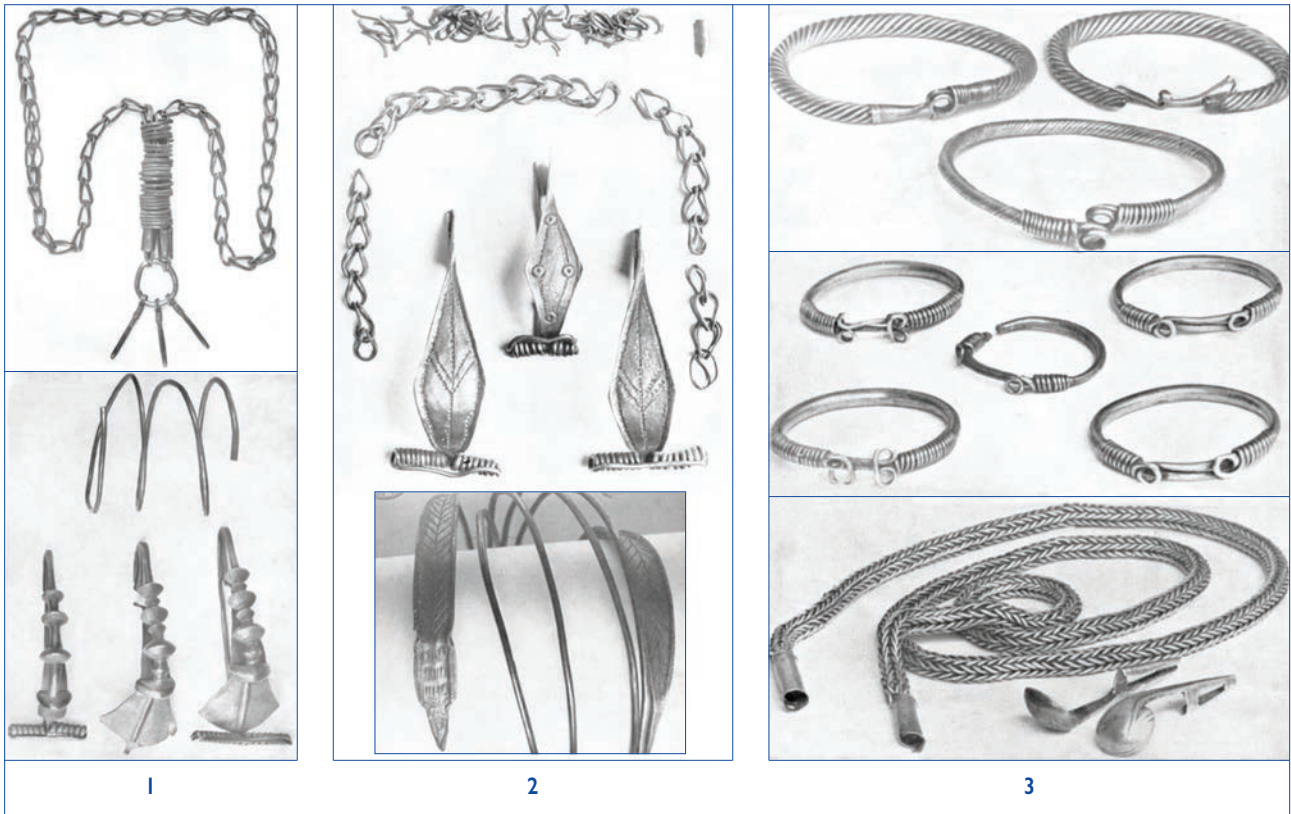


Fig. 2 – Typical sets of bodily ornaments from horizons 1, 2 and 3. 1. Cojocna; 2. Cadea (both after Fettich 1953); 3. Șeica Mică (after Floca 1956).

Hoard	Brooches (phalerae)	Brooches w/ knobs	LT D type brooches finds	Brooches w/ rhombic plate	Spoon-shaped brooches	Other types of brooches	Belts	Twisted bracelets	Bangles	Simple spiral bracelets	Spirals w/ palmettes	Bracelets w/ twisted ends	Earrings	Mastoi	Kantharoi	Late Republican vessels	Coins	Chronological groups	
București-H.																	Th		
Lupu																			
Sâncrăieni																		Dy,Th	
Agârbiciu																		Dy	
Cehei																		Dy	
Clipicești																		Th	
Tilișca 1																			
Tilișca 2																	Ag		
Drăgești																		Dy,A,RD (75BC)	1
Oradea 3																			
Cojocna																			
Săcălășău 1																		Dy,A	
Săcălășău 2																			
Cehețel																			
Bistrița																			
Sărmășag																			
Mediaș																			
Sărăcsău																			
Coldău																			
Ghelința																		RD (67BC)	
Săliște																			
Bălănești																			
Coadă Malului																			
Șaeș																			
Cadea																		RD (41/38BC)	2
Cerbăl																		RD (44/43BC)	
Rociu																		RD (81/76BC)	
Izvoru Frumos																		RD (81BC)	
Vedea																			
Remetea Mare																		Ag	
Remetea Mare																		Th,RD (16/15BC)	
Cetățeni																		RD (8BC)	
Șeica Mică																		RD (28BC)	3
Peteni																		RD (70/58BC)	
Hetiur																			
Senereuș																			

Fig. 3 – Chronology of the silver hoards from Late Iron Age Dacia.

The first group is defined by the presence of brooches with knobs of the middle La Tène type (fig. 2, no. 1). These are sometimes associated with late La Tène-type brooches having a bilateral spring, a plain or decorated bow and a rectangular, non-perforated catchplate. The phalera-type brooches with anthropomorphic decoration from the Herăstrău hoard and the phalerae from the Lupu hoard (fig. 7, nos 1-3) can be included in the same group. Regarding the annular ornaments, the hoards in the first group contain either twisted wire bracelets or simple massive bangles (the two types are never found together in the same assemblage). Sometimes they are associated with large silver spirals which could have been worn either on the upper arm or on the leg below the knee (for the latter possibility, see Medeleț 1993). Wire bracelets (or anklets?) having the ends twisted around each other already appeared during this horizon, though they became more popular during the following horizons.

There was also a marked preference for certain types of composite belts. Regarding the metal vessels, the hoards in this group sometimes contain Hellenistic silver cups of the mastos type and kantharoi, as well as some types of late Republican bronze vessels, for example situlae and beakers of the Gallarate type. Lastly, some hoards also contain Hellenistic coins: tetradrachms of Thasos, or drachms of the Illyrian colonies at Dyrrachium and Apollonia. In only one case, the latter issues are associated with Republican denarii, the latest dated coin being from 75 BC.

The Sărăcsău hoard, which contains two costume assemblages, one belonging to an adult and the second to a child (fig. 4, no. 1; Medeleț 1994, 217), with contents specific to the first horizon, includes one brooch with a rhombic plate on the bow, part of the child costume, which is specific to the second horizon. This particularity seems to suggest that the hoard was interred slightly later



Fig. 4 – The Sărăcsău (1) and Tilișca 2 (2) hoards (Photos: 1: I.V. Ferencz; 2: A. Rustoiu).

than other hoards from the same group, thus marking a transitional phase towards the second horizon in the evolution of this phenomenon.

The second group of hoards is defined by the presence of brooches having a rhombic plate ('shield') on the bow (fig. 2, no. 2). The brooches with a plate decorated with anthropomorphic motifs, found in the Bălănești and Coadă Malului hoards, can be included in the same group due to their morphological similarity. They are associated with spiral ornaments (hair spirals and large bracelets) having the ends decorated with punched palmettes and zoomorphic protomes, wire bracelets (or anklets?) having the ends twisted around each other, and earrings. The late La Tène-type brooches and the twisted wire bracelets continued to also be used in some cases. Some hoards of this group contain late Republican denarii with a latest issuing date of c. 40 BC.

The hoards belonging to the third horizon sometimes still include brooches having a rhombic plate on the bow, though the group is primarily defined by the presence of spoon-shaped brooches (fig. 2, no. 3). These

assemblages also include spiral ornaments having the ends decorated with punched motifs, and bracelets (or anklets?) having the ends twisted around each other. Among them, the Vedeia hoard contains a silver beaker of the Gallarate type, which seems to have remained in use for a longer period. Some of the hoards also contain silver coins usually dated to the second half of the 1st century BC and the Augustan period.

The Remetea Mare hoard (fig. 5) stands out among these discoveries due to the presence of some earlier dated artefacts, like the silver bangles specific to the first group and the Thasos tetradrachms. At the same time, the hoard contains a series of later dated brooches, which do not appear in other contemporaneous assemblages. Most specialists, including Horedt (1973, 133, fig. A2b-c) and Spânu (2012, 45-46, Type 2.1.1), ascribed these brooches to the late La Tène type which is sometimes encountered in hoards belonging to the first and second groups. However, they belong to other types, including the brooches with a large bilateral spring and the chord attached to the bow, which have been

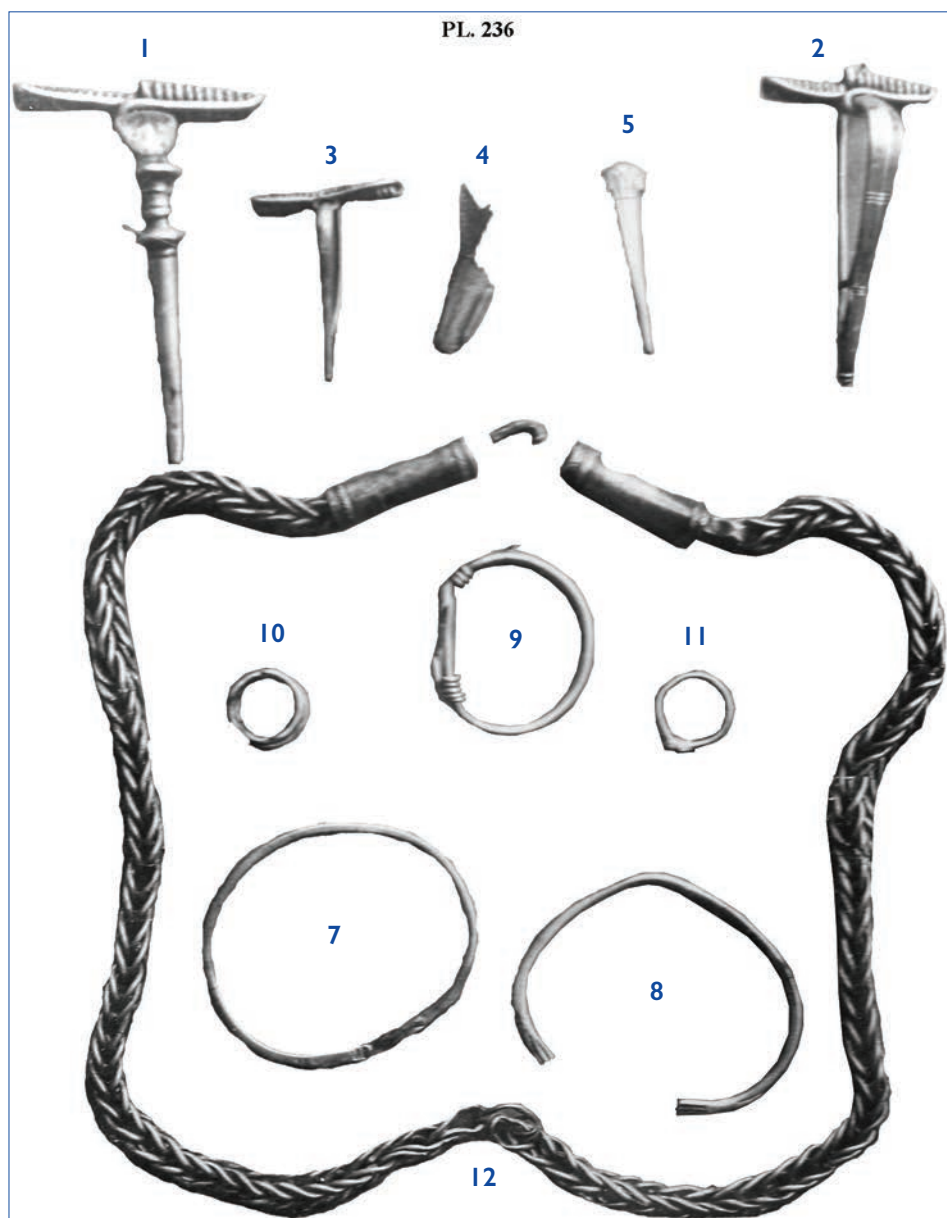


Fig. 5 – The Remetea Mare hoard (after Fettich 1953).

found in settlements from pre-Roman Dacia in contexts mainly dated to the 1st century AD (Rustoiu 1997a, 43-44, Type 10), or the unusual brooch having two knobs on the bow, which probably imitates similar brooches of the Norican-Pannonian type made of bronze (Garbsch 1965, Type A 236a-c), dated to the 1st century AD. Aside from that, the Remetea Mare hoard has an unusual functional structure, pointing to a slightly different style of bodily ornamentation that reflects perhaps the manner in which this phenomenon has evolved at the periphery of the area controlled by the Dacian kingdom in the first half of the 1st century AD.

Regarding the absolute chronology, a series of artefacts belonging to these hoards offer some relevant data for each of the aforementioned groups. Thus the middle La Tène-type brooches with knobs (fig. 2, no. 1), which are specific to the first group of hoards, represent the later regional 'interpretation' of the iron or bronze brooches having large spheres on their foot, which are dated to the La Tène C1-C2 (see, for example, Dizdar 2009, 295-97, pls. 4-5) in the eastern 'Celtic' area of the Carpathian Basin (Rustoiu 1997b, 152-53, fig. 2). A similar origin could be presumed for the silver or bronze brooches of the Jarak type, which are specific to the hoards and funerary inventories from the Scordiscian area in modern Serbia (Božič 1981, 320, 328, pl. 4/43; Guštin 1984, pl. 50.1); these are contemporaneous with the aforementioned brooches with knobs from pre-Roman Dacia. The Jarak-type brooches are dated to the La Tène D1 (corresponding to the so-called Beograd 3 horizon; Božič 1981; 2008, 145-46; Guštin 1984). Similar brooches have been found in a hoard hidden under the floor of a house belonging to the first level of habitation at Židovar (north-eastern Serbia), being dated to the first half of the 1st century BC (Jevtić *et al.* 2006; Rustoiu *et al.* 2017, fig. 13). On the other hand, the radiocarbon dating of some charcoal fragments recovered from the funerary pyre of a tumulus burial located near the Dacian fortress at Cugir, which contained a panoply of weapons and a ceremonial chariot specific to the La Tène D1, as well as a bronze situla of the Eggers 20 type, indicates a date range between 195/95 BC and 160/50 BC (Teleagă 2014). Likewise, the presence of Hellenistic coins and rarely of the late Republican ones, as well as that of the metal vessels of Mediterranean origin, provide supplementary arguments for the dating of the first group of hoards to the 150/125-75/50 BC (see the absolute dating of the Central European La Tène D1 in Rieckhoff 1995 and Rustoiu 1996).

The second group of hoards is characterized by the presence of the brooches having a rhombic plate on the bow (fig. 2, no. 2). The type originates from the Orlea-Maglavit-type brooches which were specific to the area occupied by the so-called Padea-Panagjurski Kolonii group, being dated to the La Tène D1; a date at the end of the 2nd century and the first half of the 1st century BC has also been suggested (Popović 1991; Rustoiu 1997a, 37-38; Zirra 2017, 62). Accordingly, the brooches with a rhombic plate have to be dated later, to the La Tène D2; Rustoiu (1997a, 44-46) and Zirra (2017, 70) dated them to the end of the 1st century BC. The same group of hoards also contains silver spiral ornaments (bracelets and hair spirals) having the ends decorated with punched palmettes and zoomorphic protomes. Similar ornaments made of gold have recently

been discovered in the Grădiştea de Munte area (Hunedoara County), in south-western Transylvania, the location of the Dacian kingdom's seat of power mentioned in ancient literature as Ζαρμισεγεθουσα τὸ βασίλειον (Ptolemy, *Geogr.* 8.11.4; see also Spânu 2012, 167-78; Rustoiu 2016, 73-81). The archaeological site at Grădiştea de Munte cannot be dated earlier than the middle or the second half of the 1st century BC (Glodariu 1995, 124-30; Rustoiu 2016, 76). At the same time, one spiral ring has been found in a context belonging to the second level of habitation of the aforementioned settlement at Židovar, dated to the 50 BC-AD 10/25 (Rustoiu *et al.* 2017, fig. 13). Some of the hoards also contain late Republican denarii that are dated not later than just before the Augustan period. Accordingly, the hoards belonging to the second group could be dated to the La Tène D2, corresponding to the 75/50-30/25 BC. It should be noted that the period during which these hoards were interred was significantly shorter than that of the first group's hoards. This pattern could also explain, at least partially, the smaller number of discoveries.

The third group of hoards still contains brooches with a rhombic plate on the bow, though the spoon-shaped ones are also included (fig. 2, no. 3). The latter brooches represent the local 'interpretation' of the brooches having the spring protected by a concave cover (*schüsselförmig*) which are encountered in Central Europe and northern Italy. Unlike the western examples, the brooches from pre-Roman Dacia were made of two separate elements: the body, and the spring with the pin, which were then soldered together. The spoon-shaped brooches appeared at the end of the 1st century BC and became popular in some areas of pre-Roman Dacia until the middle of the 1st century AD (see a wider discussion in Rustoiu 1997a, 48-50). At Židovar, such artefacts are associated with Jezerine-type brooches, while at Liubcova (Caraş-Severin County), on the left bank of the Danube's Iron Gates, the spoon-shaped brooches are present in the first phase of the settlement which ended at the beginning of the 1st century AD (Rustoiu *et al.* 2017, fig. 13). Lastly, a fragmentary brooch of the same type was found in grave 9 from the cemetery at Belgrade-Karaburma, which was dated to the second half of the 1st century AD (Egri 2016, 346, fig. 1). Regarding the end date of the third group of hoards, an important clue is provided by the absence of the strongly profiled brooches of Roman origin, which arrived in pre-Roman Dacia in large numbers only after the organization and consolidation of the province of Moesia, mainly in the second half of the 1st century AD (Rustoiu 1997a, 52-53). Lastly, these hoards sometimes include late Republican and early Imperial denarii. As a consequence, the third group of hoards could be dated to the Augustan-Tiberian period, corresponding to 30/25 BC-AD 25/30.

Summarising the above observations, the chronology of the three groups of hoards containing silver jewellery from pre-Roman Dacia covers the following periods:

- First group: La Tène D1, 150/125-75/50 BC;
- Second group: La Tène D2, 75/50-30/25 BC;
- Third group: the Augustan-Tiberian period, 30/25 BC-AD 25/30.

Functional structure and meanings

From the functional point of view, the hoards consist of objects belonging to only a few categories: silver jewellery and costume accessories, sometimes accompanied by metal drinking-related vessels, and silver coins. In some cases, the cut and folded metal objects were stashed in a ceramic handmade jar, and in one case a wheel-made kantharos was used. As previously mentioned, each hoard contains a single set of bodily ornaments, with the exception of two hoards from southern Transylvania – Sărăcsău and Tilișca 2 – which contain two identical sets, one for an adult and another for a child (fig. 4). The composition and functional structure of these sets indicate that the owners were more likely women. Though the structure points to a particular style of bodily ornamentation, the typological evolution of certain components illustrates various trends that appeared in the female costume at particular moments in time. The identity of the owners and the manner in which these ornaments were worn are also attested by a few iconographic representations. The most striking can be seen on three of the silver phalerae belonging to the Lupu hoard (fig. 7, nos 1-3 and 8, no. 1), on which female characters wearing large brooches with knobs are depicted (Spânu 1996; the characters have initially been identified as supernatural beings, see Glodariu, Moga 1994). Similar, though more schematic, images are also encountered on some ceramic relief-decorated hemispherical cups from Popești and Zimnicea in southern Romania (fig. 7, nos 4-5; Spânu 2006, pl. 3, 8; 2013; for their origin, see Egri 2018, 57-58) and Sexaginta Prista in northern Bulgaria (fig. 7, no. 6; Varbanov 2012, 71, no. 28, figs 1.1-2, 4.4), and on two bronze belt buckles from Popești (fig. 7, no. 7; Babeș 1983; Rustoiu 1996, fig. 81.5) and Poiana (Rustoiu 1996,

fig. 80.4). Though very little is known about Late Iron Age religion or mythology in Dacia, it has been presumed that these characters could illustrate different local mythological episodes (e.g. Sîrbu, Florea 1997, 86-87, 97-98; Spânu 2006; 2013). However, the female characters could also be identified as ‘mistresses of the sacred’ performing various rituals, including libations in which various types of vessels were sometimes used. In several scenes, these characters are also accompanied by fully armed male riders.

It is also worth noting that during the first and second horizons none of the types of ornaments included in these hoards were made of more common metals like bronze or iron. Furthermore, they are rarely discovered in settlements, for example a set of brooches, a neckring and a chain have been found together with half-finished items and silver ingots in a jeweller’s workshop from the settlement at Tășad in Transylvania (fig. 6; Chidioșan 1977; Toma 2013). Thus it might be presumed that their use was restricted to a certain social group within the local communities, quite small and having a particular status, and for whom they probably served as identity markers.

The presence of metal drinking-related vessels is also attested especially in hoards belonging to the first horizon (fig. 3). The most common form is the so-called mastos, a hemispherical or conical cup usually made of silver. Bronze beakers and situlae and silver kantharoi are also encountered. None of these forms is of local origin and many vessels were produced either in the Mediterranean world or in the Greek-speaking environment from the Balkans (see Egri, Rustoiu 2014). This is the case of some of the cups and kantharoi from the Sâncrăieni hoard (fig. 8, no. 2), or of the beakers from the hoards found

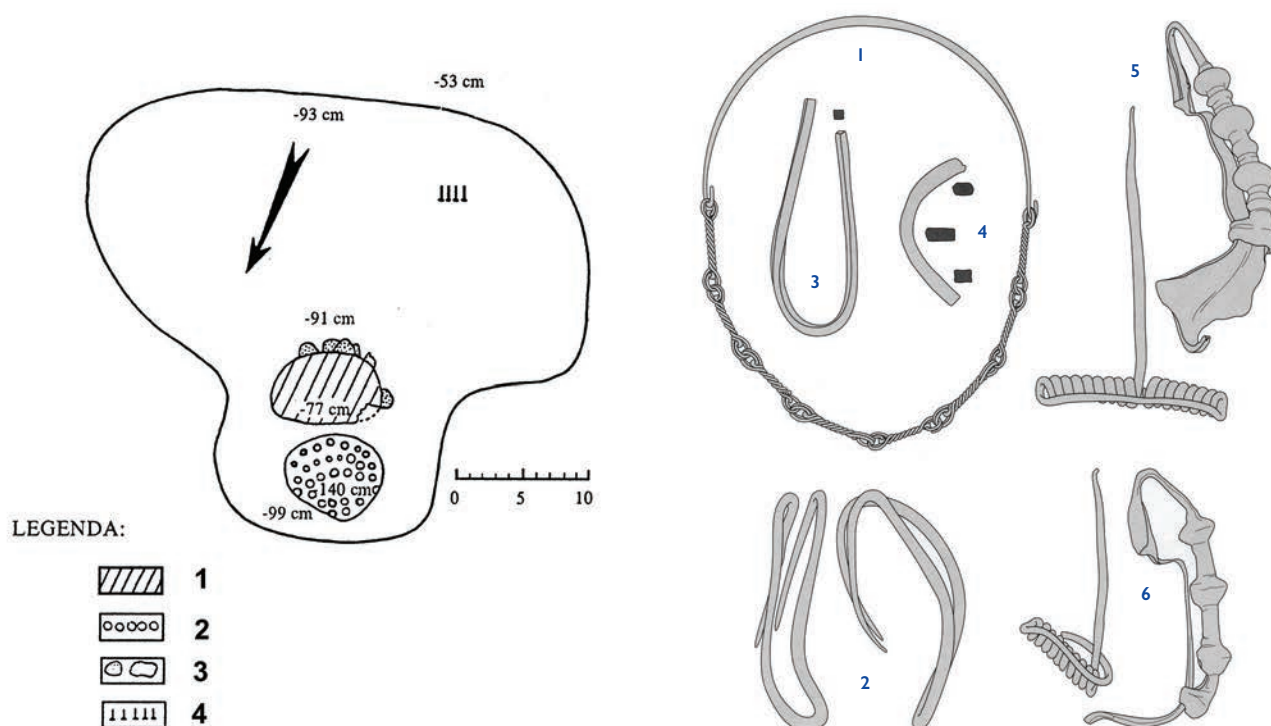


Fig. 6 – The jeweller’s workshop from the settlement at Tășad. On the plan: 1. hearth; 2. charcoal; 3. stone; 4. finished and half-finished objects made of silver (after Chidioșan 1977).



Fig. 7 – 1-3. Phalerae from the Lupu hoard (after Spânu 2012); 4 and 7. Ceramic relief-decorated hemispherical cups and bronze belt buckle from Popești (after Sirbu 2006); 5. Ceramic relief-decorated hemispherical cup from Zimnicea (after Spânu 2012); 6. Ceramic cup from Sexaginta Prista cast in the same mould as the cup from Zimnicea (after Varbanov 2012).



Fig. 8 – The hoards from Lupu (1) and Sâncrăieni (2).

at Lupu (fig. 8, no. 1) and Vedeia. On the other hand, some other vessels, like a few of the kantharoi from Sâncrăieni, were locally produced, either imitating Mediterranean forms or combining different features originating from the same region to obtain a hybrid form. Usually, only one or two vessels were included, either a single cup, or a cup and a beaker or situla. Still, some hoards contain several vessels: 15 at Sâncrăieni in eastern Transylvania, 10 at Bohot and Sindel, and 8 at Jakimovo, all in northern Bulgaria. Among them, the Sâncrăieni hoard stands out due to the unusual multiplication of the regular pair of vessels.

As in the case of the sets of bodily ornaments, some iconographic representations seem to indicate the manner in which these vessels were used. For example, one female character depicted on a silver phalera from the Lupu hoard, wearing the aforementioned brooches with knobs, holds one kantharos or amphora in the left hand (fig. 7, no. 2; Glodariu, Moga 1994, figs 9 and 20; Spânu 2002). Another kantharos is depicted on the tondo of a cup from the Jakimovo hoard (Milcev 1973; Marazov 1979; Spânu 2012, pl. 191.2), while on the aforementioned ceramic relief-decorated hemispherical cups found in different sites from the lower Danube basin the female characters hold drinking horns and paterae or cups in their hands (fig. 7, nos 4-6).

Hemispherical or conical cups, beakers, kantharoi and situlae made of bronze or silver are also attested during this period mainly in fortresses and large trading and manufacturing centres outside, but mostly inside, the Carpathians range, while a single Eggers 20-type bronze situla is known from a funerary context, tumulus 2 at Cugir, in south-western Transylvania (fig. 9; Rustoiu 2005; Egri 2014c, 56-58; 2019, 186-88, fig. 87, tab. 3; Mustață, Ferencz 2016; Căsălean 2019, 356-58). Bronze ladles and casseroles, silver strainers and more rarely bronze basins of Mediterranean origin, which are all missing from the hoards, have also been found in similar contexts. This could indicate that metal vessels having various origins were assembled and used according to different purposes which were all specific to the local environment. In nearly all cases, the functional structure of these sets is different from that of other assemblages of the same period identified in the Balkans (Marazov 2000, 229-60), Greece (Vössing 2004; Craven 2007, 7-31), northern Italy (Piana Agostinetti, Priuli 1985; Bolla 1991; Piana

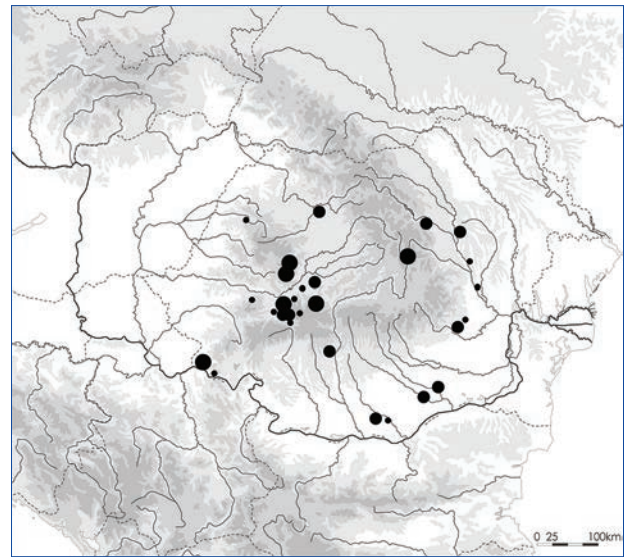


Fig. 9 – Distribution map of the late Republican – Augustan metal vessels in pre-Roman Dacia: small dots: single finds; medium dots: 2-3 finds; large dots: more than 4 finds (after Egri 2019).

Agostinetti 1998) or the Scordiscian area (Egri, Rustoiu 2008). The only possible exceptions could be the Bohot and Jakimovo hoards, whose inventories seem to suggest some Mediterranean influences; the first one is also missing the customary silver jewellery.

Many of these hoards also include silver coins, sometimes in large quantities, for example 545 coins at Cehei, 491 at Cerbăl or 438 at Someșu Cald, though there are also cases in which only one or two coins were found (fig. 1). Earlier dated hoards usually include drachms of Apollonia and Dyrrachium or tetradrachms of Thasos, while the later dated ones include late Republican denarii. In this context it is worth noting that several hoards containing only late Hellenistic, late Republican and/or early Imperial denarii are attested in the territory of pre-Roman Dacia and to the south of the lower Danube. Their presence has been interpreted as evidence of the commercial exchanges with the Mediterranean world, including the involvement in Rome's slave trade during the 1st century BC, or of the stipends received by various local chieftains (Lockyear 2008; Egri 2014a; for the local imitations see also Davis 2006 and Woytek et al. 2012).

Though these coins could have reached Dacia through many means, their role in the local society, including the tendency to imitate and hoard them, is still debated. In Romanian archaeological literature, they are usually related to the establishment of the Dacian kingdom under Burebista and its economic requirements (e.g. Glodariu 1976; Chițescu 1981, 9-26). However, there is no archaeological evidence supporting the hypothesis of a local monetised economy even during the kingdom period, and the small number of Roman bronze coins found in some settlements outside the Carpathians, close to the Danube, is more likely related to the more regular contacts with the Roman provinces across the river during the second half of the 1st century and the beginning of the 2nd century AD (Egri 2014a, 178-79). Instead, the identified patterns of distribution and deposition, as well as the presence of a significant number of more-or-less faithful imitations and of a handful of dies and moulds to produce them, seem to suggest that silver coins were more likely regarded as symbols of status (see also Lockyear 2004, 70), and perhaps their 'circulation' was strictly controlled within the local and regional networks of power and authority.

Contexts of discovery and distribution

The information regarding their contexts of discovery is quite scarce since the majority of these assemblages were found accidentally; in some early cases the inventory was only partially recovered, so these hoards are not included in our statistics though they are mapped to identify distribution patterns. A handful of finds (e.g. the Tilișca 2 hoard) are actually the result of illegal excavations, being later recovered by the police. Only some of the more recent discoveries were followed up by proper small-scale excavations which confirmed that such assemblages are buried outside the inhabited areas, frequently on hill slopes or river terraces, but close to a fortified settlement or a fortress, which could indicate a particular relationship with the local centres of power.

The presence of burnt bone fragments of unknown origin was only mentioned in the case of the two hoards found at Tilișca, but these were not recovered (Lupu 1981; 1989). In other cases, it is certain that no burnt remains were buried alongside the contents, though the pit was sometimes lined or covered with stones. In most cases, the hoards were buried at a depth of c. 30-70 cm, with the notable exception of the Lupu hoard (see the statistics in Spânu 2002, 86-87, fig. 2). This is similar to the depth range (c. 30-60 cm) of many graves belonging to the so-called Padea-Panagjurski Kolonii group found mainly in Oltenia and southern Transylvania (fig. 10; e.g. Nicolăescu-Plopșor 1945-47, 21-22, 27; Ciugudean, Ciugudean 1993, 77; etc.). These graves containing specific sets of weapons belonged to a military elite that apparently came from the south of the Danube to south-western Transylvania around the middle of the 2nd century BC, ending the Celtic control of the region and leading later to the establishment of the Dacian kingdom (Rustoiu 2008, 149-52; Popa 2018, 182-83). An outcome of their arrival was the establishment of a strongly hierarchic social structure within the local communities, in which the male identity often incorporated martial values, at least according to the patterns

observed in funerary inventories. Within this structure, another distinct social group consisted of high-status women who were buried according to particular funerary customs (Popa 2018, 146-58). At the same time, the presence of sacrificial instruments in some male burials suggests that some members of the military elite also fulfilled a religious function within the society (Rustoiu 2018b).

It has to be mentioned that the more common accidental discovery of many hoards has influenced quite significantly their distribution patterns, however, they are worth examining given the large-enough number of relevant finds. The distribution map (fig. 11) shows that during the first horizon (La Tène D1, 150/125-75/50 BC), the hoards tend to concentrate on the lower Danube basin, and in southern and western Transylvania and Crișana. Though this horizon is contemporaneous with the arrival of the Padea-Panagjurski Kolonii group and the establishment of their centre of power in south-western Transylvania, the distribution pattern of their burials (fig. 10; Popa 2018, figs 4.8, 5.9-5.10) and that of the hoards (fig. 11) are only overlapping in this region and on the lower Danube basin. Since the practice of interring silver hoards was most probably brought by these people from the south, the apparent absence of such finds from Oltenia could be the result of the present state of research. This hypothesis is supported not only by the absence of other later dated hoards, but mostly by the presence of a handful of silver jewellery with uncertain contexts of discovery, which could have come from plundered hoards. These include the brooches with knobs from Bârca and Întorsura, or the fragmentary belt

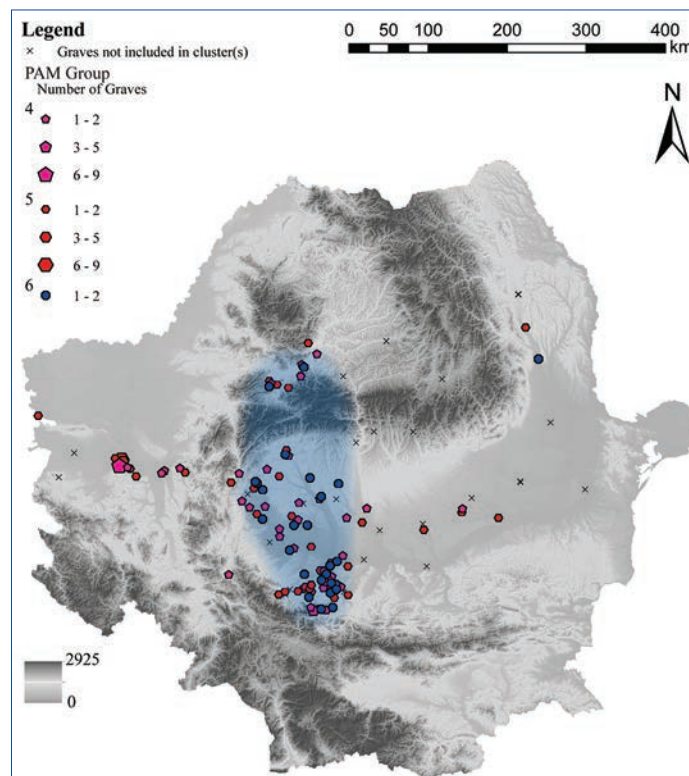


Fig. 10 – Distribution map of the main categories of graves containing weapons in Late Iron Age Dacia; blue shading: expansion area of the so-called Padea-Panagjurski Kolonii group (after Popa 2018).

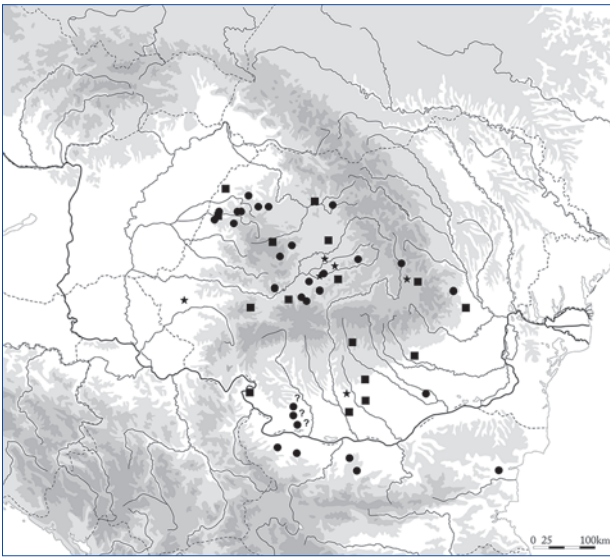


Fig. 11 – Distribution map of the silver hoards in Late Iron Age Dacia (dots: horizon 1; squares: horizon 2; stars: horizon 3).

buckle from Fântânele (all in Dolj County) (Spânu 2012). On the other hand, the absence of such burials from Crișana, where silver hoards have been found next to almost each hilltop fortress (another feature related to the incoming martial group) could suggest a selective adoption of the practice.

During the second horizon (La Tène D2, 75/50-30/25 BC), the silver hoards continued to appear mainly in Transylvania, though a few discoveries are also known from sites located along the main rivers south of the Carpathians. During the same period, the martial elites from south-western Transylvania greatly expanded their authority under Burebista, reaching the lower Danube and the north-western Black Sea coast (Ruscu 2002, 295-307; Rustoiu 2018a; Rustoiu, Ferencz 2018). Though very little is known about the way in which their kingdom was organized, archaeological evidence seems to suggest a highly hierarchical society, dominated by martial and theocratic elites using differentiated social practices, like elaborate feasting styles or monumental architecture, to maintain their status and authority (Egri 2014b; 2014c; 2019, 119-26). Aside from these practices, the interment of silver hoards could have also been adopted by some members of the local elites from the south and east of the Carpathians within the newly established system of control and authority, which seems to have only lasted in these regions until Burebista's fall.

The distribution patterns of the silver hoards belonging to the third horizon (the Augustan-Tiberian period, 30/25 BC-AD 25/30) seem to confirm the hypothesis linking the spread of the practice of interring them with the expansion of the Dacian kingdom. Though the number of discoveries decreased significantly, there is a small concentration of finds in southern Transylvania, indicating that the practice still survived in the core region of the kingdom. At the same time, a few hoards that are slightly deviating from the common functional structure have been found in peripheral areas, one notable example being the aforementioned Remetea Mare hoard. This is also the period in which properly set-up burials disappeared almost completely across the entire Dacian

territory, though human remains have been discovered in various unusual contexts.

Discussion and conclusions

The silver hoards discussed here are clearly defined by the ways in which they were assembled, used and deposited. Leaving aside the ones not fully recovered, the hoards consist of sets of female bodily ornaments that have a unitary composition and functional structure. The sets were apparently made to order, very probably by a single artisan following specific rules. They were made for a single individual, most likely a woman. Only the Sărăcsău and the Tilișca 2 hoards contained two costumes, one belonging to an adult and another to a child. Due to the presumed ritual function of the adults, it has recently been suggested that the respective children were perhaps their apprentices, who were allowed to wear a similar costume as a sign of their future role (Rustoiu 2008, 133, note 83). Only the Remetea Mare hoard, which has a slightly different functional structure, seems to include some heirlooms perhaps handed down within this exclusively female social group, though the symbolic value of the silver in the local society should also be taken into consideration.

Both the composite elements and the metal from which these hoards were made were deliberately selected to convey certain concepts regarding the identity and social status of the owner. This hypothesis is also supported by the frequent inclusion of other relevant objects – the silver coins and the silver or bronze drinking-related vessels. The coins were more likely included as markers of status, connecting their owners with the local elites who controlled the silver coins' distribution, while the sets of metal vessels were meant to indicate the social function of these individuals within the local community. The iconography of a series of silver phalerae and that of some ceramic relief-decorated hemispherical cups, in which the female characters are sometimes accompanied by fully armed male riders, also point to the social connections between the owners of these particular costumes and the martial elites.

The same iconography seems to indicate that the social function of the individuals in question was related to certain ritual practices which more likely involved the consumption, in one way or another, of alcoholic beverages. Their psychoactive properties facilitated the temporary transformation of the self and the subsequent progression of the initiated individuals from the world of the living into another, populated by gods, ancestors or other supernatural beings. It has already been shown that in Transylvania the consumption of wine, which was always imported, was limited and perhaps controlled, being only accessible to some groups or individuals (Egri 2014c). This socially differentiated consumption pattern is attested by the restricted distribution of imported amphorae and drinking-related vessels, which were found almost exclusively in fortresses, large trading and manufacturing centres, and sanctuaries. It seems that the consumers were mostly members of the local elites, and perhaps the symbolic use of wine was meant not only to differentiate this group socially, but also to enforce the personal bonds between the rulers and their close followers.

Furthermore, upon the death of these ‘mistresses of the sacred’ or when their function had ceased, their ceremonial costume and the ritually-related instruments were destroyed and buried in the vicinity of the communities they served, perhaps within a formal ceremony (Egri, Rustoiu 2014). These objects had to be destroyed because they were part of the social persona of the owner, who was perhaps perceived as having exceptional powers, being able to get in contact with the supernatural world. The practice was not only meant to protect these objects from being taken over and used by uninitiated people, but also to transfer the material markers of the owner’s social persona into the otherworld. From this point of view, the presence of multiple pairs of vessels in the Sâncrăieni hoard could be interpreted either as an accumulation of ritually-related instruments which were all considered to be an integral part of the individual’s social persona, or as the material expression of a commemorative practice in which several individuals brought them as offerings for a prestigious ‘mistress of the sacred’.

Due to the scarcity of reliable archaeological data, it is often difficult to say whether the bodies of these individuals were buried together with their associated assemblages. The presence of burnt bone fragments is rarely mentioned, and these could well be the remains of meat offerings. In many other cases it is certain that no human remains were buried with these assemblages. A recent discovery from Transylvania could point to the manner in which their body was treated upon death. One late La Tène-type silver brooch that is similar to those included in hoards has been found on a hilltop at Geoagiu de Sus (Alba County; Popa 2010), in the core area of this phenomenon. The brooch bears traces of burning, which may suggest that the burnt remains of the owner were perhaps collected from the pyre and scattered on the hilltop. In this case, the brooch could have been collected accidentally with the human remains, while other silver components of the respective costume were probably treated in the same manner as other hoards discussed above. In this context, it is worth noting that the hilltops were always part of the symbolic landscape of the local communities, serving as visual points of reference for the unequal relationships between the dominating social groups, whose residences were always built on them, and the rest of the community, especially in Transylvania (Rustoiu, Berecki 2018).

It can be therefore concluded that the hoards in question were more likely symbolic burials which in many, if not all, cases contained only the material markers of these women’s social status and function within the indigenous communities. They are part of a wider phenomenon – the gradual disappearance of properly set-up burials at the end of the Late Iron Age, the last to disappear being the graves of the warlike elites, whose small cemeteries were always located in highly visible places, close to their fortresses and the communities over which they ruled. This hypothesis is also supported by the location of these hoards outside the settlements but close enough to maintain a symbolic connection with the communities and their rulers. Thus, even if these ‘mistresses of the sacred’ were physically dead, they remained symbolically present in the local collective memory, perhaps as a mnemonic means of consecrating a certain location, or to confirm the legitimacy of the

community or of the ruler, or to claim certain lands or boundaries as ancestral and protected by supernatural powers.

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Notes

(1) In Transylvania and Banat, the Late Iron Age is divided into the Celtic horizon (4th-3rd centuries BC) and respectively the Dacian one (2nd century BC - beginning of the 2nd century AD), whereas outside the mountains, the same period is divided into the Getic horizon (5th-3rd centuries BC) and the Dacian one, whose chronology matches the similarly named horizon in the former region, see Rustoiu 2018a.

(2) For the problematic use of ethnic identifiers in the Late Iron Age archaeology of this region, see Popa 2018, 191-93; Egri 2019, 28-30.

(3) A slightly modified model, consisting of three main chronological phases of the hoards containing silver jewellery, separated by two intermediary phases, was later proposed in Zirra, Spânu 1992. For a discussion regarding this model and other ideas proposed by the two mentioned authors, see Medeleț 1994, 213-21.

(4) D. Spânu later abandoned his own earlier chronological model, dividing the evolution of these hoards into just two groups by combining the second and the third group identified by Horedt into a single one (Spânu 2002; 2012; 2019). However, to support this new chronology, he chose to ignore a series of hoards, or only certain artefacts from other hoards, which did not fit into the suggested model. Several such errors can be noted in his typo-chronological table (Spânu 2019, 181, fig. 5): the Sărăcsău hoard, containing brooches with knobs specific to the first horizon but also one brooch with a rhombic plate (‘shield’) on the bow, which in his theory belongs to the second horizon, is not included; the neck-rings from the Sărmășag and Cehețel hoards, both belonging to the first horizon, are left aside because he dated this kind of jewellery to the second horizon, so the two suggested groupings would not be as neat as desired. All in all, these efforts to fit the chronology of the Dacian silver hoards within a particular time frame stem from his aim to use these discoveries as arguments for a series of a priori historical interpretations for which archaeological evidence is scant. This includes the idea that the local silver ornaments were all made exclusively of melted Mediterranean coins which supposedly reached pre-Roman Dacia massively only

after the defeating of Mithridates VI Eupator and the fall of the Pontus Kingdom.

(5) There are also a few exceptions, an example being the Remetea Mare hoard (fig. 5), but their rare occurrence does not affect this observation.

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