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and the Crimea in the Roman Period

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It was October of 2010 when the conference entitled "*Inter Ambo Maria: Contacts between Scandinavia and the Crimea in the Roman Period*" was held in the Crimea, in Gaspra village. It was initiated by the Department of Commerce, Transport and Cultural Affairs of Vest-Agder County Council (Norway), "Heritage of Millennia" Non-Profitable Foundation for History and Archaeology, National Taurida University (Simferopol, Ukraine), and Maria Curie-Skłodowska University (Lublin, Poland). Archaeologists of nine states met each other in the Crimea. The conference naturally resulted in the publication of this volume presenting revised papers by its participants.

The selection of the conference topic was absolutely logical. As it was reckoned years ago, the movement of the Goths and other Germanic tribes from Scandinavia to the Black Sea opened the way for contacts between two opposite parts of Europe. These contacts reflected in various categories of artefacts common to Northern Europe and the Black Sea area. Distribution maps of several types of artefacts have been compiled to indicate a definite diagonal line with one end in Scandinavia and another end in the Crimea. Concrete routes of the Germanics from Scandinavia to the Black Sea have also been reconstructed.

Despite of successes achieved, many problems related to contacts between Northern Europe and the north Black Sea area still remain unstudied or investigated insufficiently. In order to come closer to the solution of such problems, the conference was called and this volume is published.

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Eszter ISTVÁNOVITS, Valéria KULCSÁR

**FROM THE CRIMEA TO SCANDINAVIA
VIA THE GREAT HUNGARIAN PLAIN:
TRACES OF GERMANIC-SARMATIAN CONTACTS
ON THE BASIS OF FINDS OF SPHERICAL PENDANTS
AND OF OTHER PHENOMENA**

The present study is based on the first hand on some rare European finds of a characteristic kind of pendant. To give a broader review of common features connecting three remote regions — the Crimea, Hungarian plain and Scandinavia — in the Roman Age Barbaricum we shortly characterise other special traces of contacts.

Spherical openwork amulet-pendants

Spherical openwork pendants are usually evaluated as amulets. All of them were cast of bronze and supplied with a loop. From the point of view of technology, they remind rings and bracelets with knobs well known in the La Tène world. In our opinion, pendants found in Sarmatian and Late Scythian milieu came into fashion as a result of Celtic / general La Tène influence.

Spherical openwork pendants, sometimes called “pocket microcosmos” are widely known amulets of the Late Scythian culture of the Crimea (fig. 1), and sometimes are met in Sarmatian graves of the North Caucasus and of the Kuban region (Пуздровский 2007, с. 162). However, their main area of spread is the south-west part of the Crimean peninsula. Characteristic shape of these objects goes back to eight to sixth century Hallstatt prototypes from the Balkans, typically from Macedonia and Thessaly: so-called “bird-cage” pendants (Bouzek 1973, p. 60–62). Recently Lyudmila Ryzhova summarised the information on these kind of pendants found in the south-west Crimea (there were no finds in the rest of peninsula) and classified the types and variants of the pendants.¹ The dating of different types has shown that the earliest pieces reminding Celtic prototypes were in use in the first and second cen-



Fig. 1. Typical spherical openwork amulets from the Crimea (photo by the authors taken from the exhibition in the Bakhchisaray Preserve for History and Culture)

tury graves, while later types came into fashion at the late second and early third century and even younger pieces could be dated to late third or first half of the fourth century. She suggested that in the Roman Age globular openwork pendants reached the Crimea from the West, namely from western Roman provinces (Рыжова 2005). We cannot agree with the latter idea, because if it is correct, we would find the analogies and prototypes of our pendants at Roman territories, which is not the case. As we shall see in the following, only three such pendants of the type in question were found west of the steppe region, and all of them turned up at barbarian territory.

Publishers of Crimean Late Scythian cemeteries dealt with these strange type of objects in several works and suggested that they could be connected with ideas and beliefs on the sky sphere, solar and generally astral cults (Высотская 1994, с. 128–129; Богданова 1989, с. 52; Рыжова 2005, с. 285–286).

In the present article we do not focus on the sacral contents of these objects, taking this for grant-

¹ We are grateful to Nikita Khrapunov and Daniil Kostromichev who drew our attention to this study.

ed, and deal with their role as indicators of cultural relations revealed at a vast territory from the North Caucasus to Denmark.

If we examine the territory of the European Barbaricum from the point of view of the “microcosmos” pendants, it comes out that these amulets got to very remote territories from their main region of spread. Analogies from a relatively close territory were found at the Great Hungarian plain. Pieces in question come from two sites.

Debrecen–Lovászzug

(Hajdú-Bihar county) (fig. 2–3)

A broken, egg-shaped, openwork bronze pendant decorated with knobs. Length: 2.4 cm.

The find got to the Déri Museum (Debrecen) as a present. Together with the find in question, the following objects — presumably grave goods from a female burial — were gathered from a disturbed barrow: four bronze bells, a belt-ring, two



Fig. 2. The find assemblage from Debrecen–Lovászzug

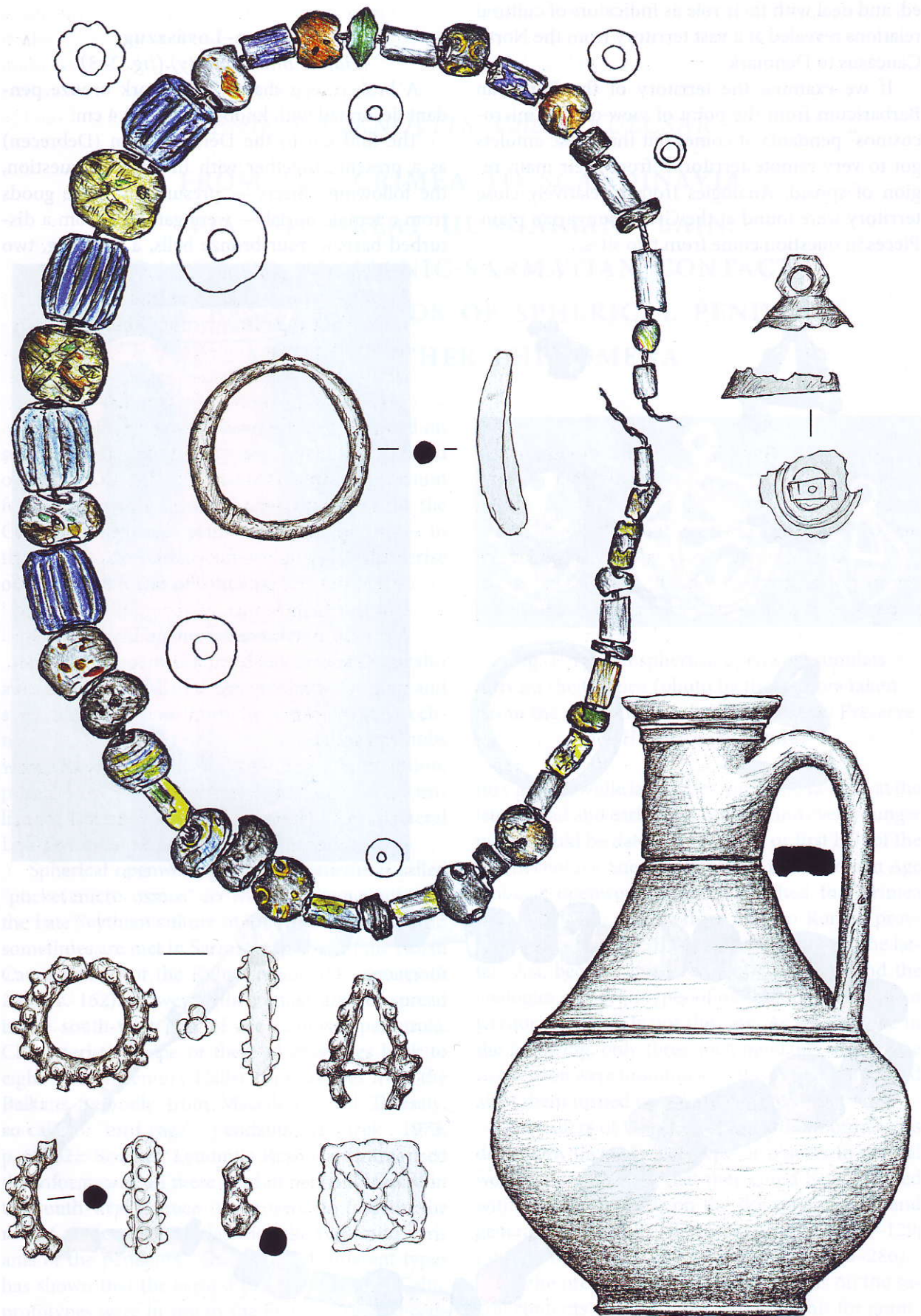


Fig. 3. The find assemblage from Debrecen-Lovászzug

rings with spherical knobs, a fragment of a golden sheet with pinched dots, 42 glass beads, a brick-red wheel-made jug. On the basis of the beads and rings with spherical knobs, the assemblage was dated to the late second or early third century (Istvánovits 1990, p. 95, táb. XII. 4) (fig. 1).

The piece fits to type 3 variant C by Ryzhova. The dating of the closest analogy from the Chernorechenskiy cemetery, grave 18 (48) (Рыжова 2005, с. 284, рис. 4. 8) corresponds to the chronology of the Debrecen grave, while an also similar object comes from the much earlier (first century BC or first century AD) cemetery of Ust'-Al'ma, burial vault 590/5-6 (Пуздровский 2007, с. 160, рис. 145. 11).

Madaras-Halmok,

grave 473 (Bács-Kiskun county) (fig. 4)

A south-north oriented male (mat.) grave. Length of the grave-pit: 2.18 m, width: 0.88 m, depth: 1.18 m. The length of the skeleton: 1.73 m.

At the right wrist a cast, bi-conical, openwork bronze pendant was found. The loop is broken, the upper part is fragmentary. Length: 3.9 cm, diameter: 2 cm. Other finds: cylindrical iron object under the right clavicle, with broken ends, possibly an awl; at the upper edge of the left pelvis a *sestertius* from 244–251 AD; fragments of an iron object at the sacrum, perhaps pieces of a small buckle; cast bronze bell at the left wrist; iron knife at the upper part of the limb; iron spearhead at the right leg; arrowhead(?) beside the spearhead; brick-red wheel-made vessel at the right foot (Kőhegyi, Vörös 2011)² (fig. 2).

On the basis of the coin, the grave can be dated to the second half of the third century. The pendant does not fit to the classification of Ryzhova. Its shape is unusual; knobs typical for this type of decorations are practically missing.

We can assume that from Eastern Hungary, the westernmost territory inhabited by Sarmatians, we know only two finds of pendant-amulets in question. Opposite to the Crimea, here they do not belong to commonly used amulets of local population. Both of the pieces must have arrived here from the East. In the case of the Debrecen find, it is interesting to note that the pendant was found together with rings decorated with knobs that appeared in

the Hungarian plain after the Marcomannic Wars, probably with a new migration wave of Eastern population groups. That was also the period when the Sarmatians occupied the Upper Tisza region (Istvánovits 1990). The pendant and rings from the Debrecen find could belong to a person who just recently arrived from the Eastern steppe region where rings decorated with knobs (the same technique as in the case of the pendants) were similarly widely spread (especially in the Crimean Late Scythian cemeteries) (Пуздровский 2007, с. 162).

The piece from Madaras underlines the rarity of the pendant type in question. This is the largest known Sarmatian cemetery (632 graves) in the Barbaricum of the Carpathian basin, with no similar burial fields up to now. The fact that the spherical pendant from grave 473 was the only one of its kind in the great mass of find material is very typical. It is difficult to say whether the grave belonged to a newcomer, or the pendant was used as a "family relic" from some generations earlier, especially if we take into consideration that the Debrecen find can be 50–100 years elder, and that most of the Crimean graves containing spherical pendants do not exceed the middle of the third century (Рыжова 2005, табл. 3). Concluding from the unusual shape, it can be also suggested that the Madaras pendant was a local imitation of a Crimean amulet.

The third object we are dealing here with comes from a very distant territory, whether we consider the Crimea or Hungary. This is a spherical-shaped openwork pendant found in the famous bog-find from **Illerup**, section AAQP (Carnap-Bornheim, Ilkjær 1996, Plan 111/100. 2) (fig. 5).³ How this Late Scythian-Sarmatian, most probably Crimean amulet got to the possession of an obviously North Germanic warrior? Or perhaps it did not get to Scandinavia directly from the Crimea, but was transferred by the same people whose tribesman buried other similar pendants in the graves of the Hungarian plain?

Whatever is the answer, the mapping of these objects once again draws our attention to the fact that there have been some connections for several centuries between these three regions in the Roman period. Recently, more and more signs of these relations have been recognised.

² We are grateful to Gabriella Vörös for her kind permission to use the manuscript of the book now in print.

³ Here the pendant can be seen only on a large-scale ground plan drawing of section AAQP. According to the kind information by Jørgen Ilkjær, the pendant will be published in the Illerup volume 14–15 by Andrzej Kokowski.

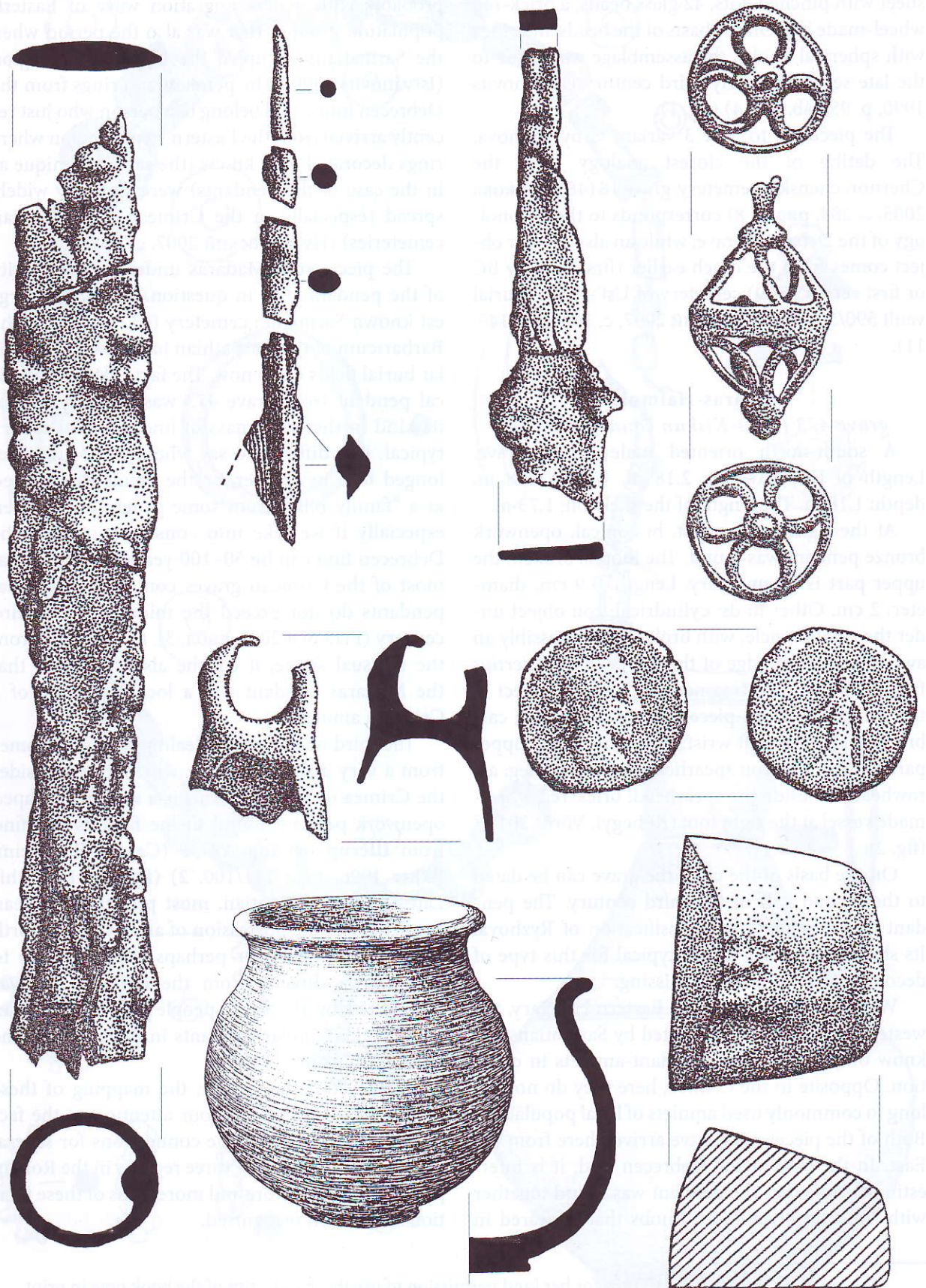


Fig. 4. The find assemblage from Madaras-Halmok

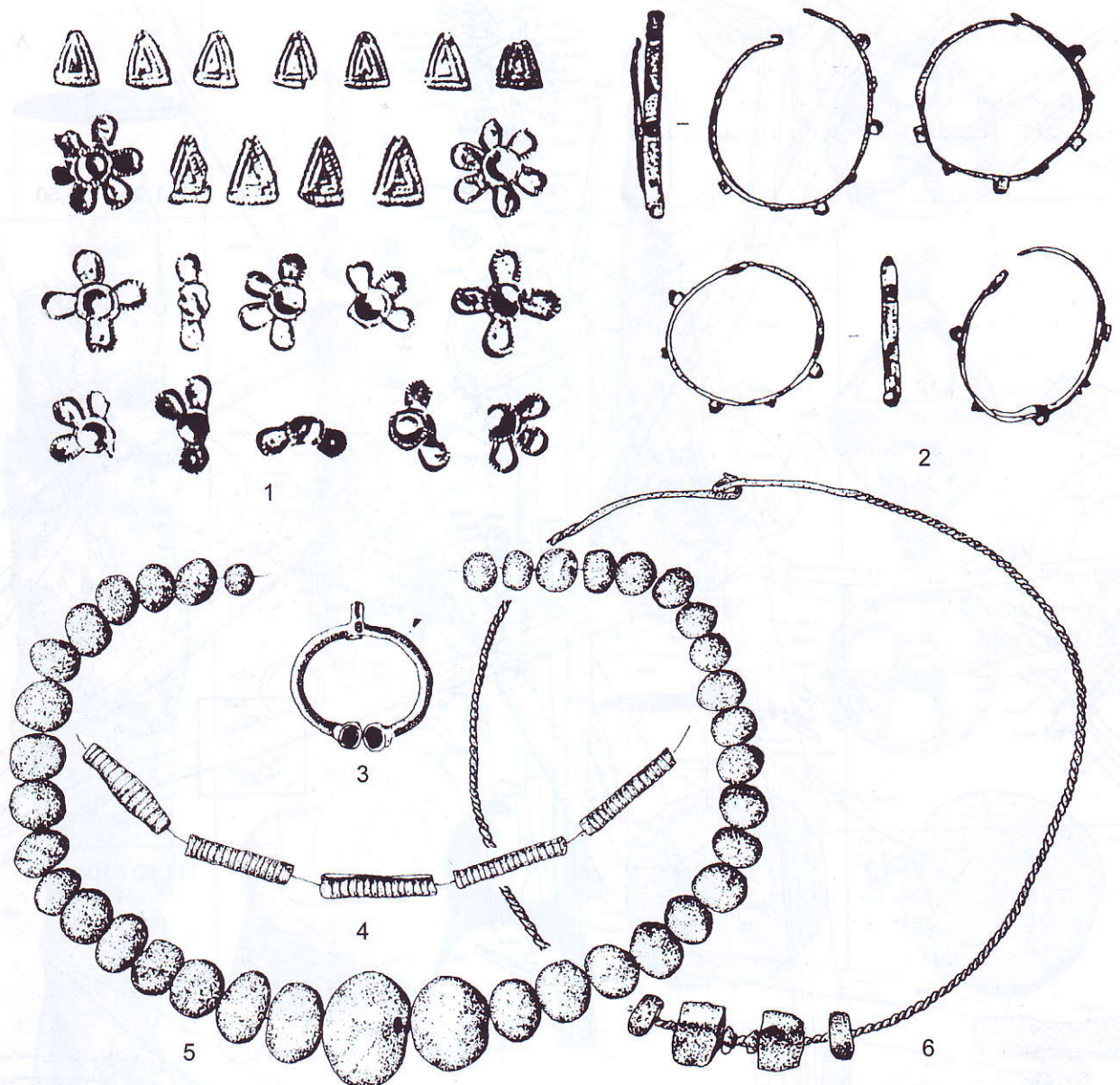


Fig. 6. Typical objects of the so-called "golden horizon" of the Great Hungarian plain

Crimean connections can be traced also in later Sarmatian sites. As we have already pointed out, in the period following the Marcomannic Wars (late second and early third century) a new eastern wave reached the Carpathian basin. In Sarmatian archaeological material, it is manifested by the find of a group of belt-sets characterised with the so-called "Sarmatian buckles" frequently accompanied by the La Tène style rings with knobs (Istvánovits 1990) very widely spread in the Late Scythian assemblages of the Crimea (e. g.: Пуздровский 2007, с. 160).

Igor' Khrapunov devoted a special study to the contacts between the Crimea and the Carpathian basin in the Roman period. He pointed out the phenomenon of putting a ring onto fibula pin, a tradition

widely spread in the Crimea in the third and fourth century and hardly known outside the peninsula (except for a similar find in Tanais) with the only analogy in the Hungarian cemetery of Felsőpusztaszer, grave 620. Several other similarities (fibula types rare in the Crimea and common in the Hungarian plain, cowrie shells with bronze wire rings, etc.) refer to contacts in the period of the late Empire.

We have to add our own experience gained in the archaeological exhibitions of the Central Museum of Taurida, in Simferopol, considering the colour glass beads of the third and fourth cemeteries of Druzhnoye and Neyzats. These bead sets are very similar to the types widely spread in the material of the Sarmatians of the Carpathian basin.

Connections between the Hungarian Plain and Scandinavia

At the same time, there were several relics of Sarmatian-Scandinavian connections revealed in the Hungarian plain.

On the first place we have to mention the famous shield boss from the north-eastern part of the Great Hungarian plain, from Herpály, the connections of which are very diversified, but show several Scandinavian relations and the closest analogy comes from Lilla Harg, Sweden (Fettich 1930; most recent summary: Carnap-Bornheim 1999). However, based on the finding circumstances of the Herpály shield — barrow, horse bones and Sarmatian type beads in the neighbouring barrow — we tend to think that this was not a Germanic, but a Sarmatian elite burial with an imported, or more probably, presented piece of luxurious weaponry (Istvánovits, Kulcsár 1994, p. 416).

A similar phenomenon can be suspected in the case of the Geszteréd elite grave found in the same region (fig. 7). According to Claus von Carnap-Bornheim, the scabbard chape of the Geszteréd sword finds its close analogy in the Thorsberg bog-find and in a burial from Skuttunge, Sweden (Carnap-Bornheim 2001, S. 132–133).

In the Sarmatian elite grave from Tiszalök dated to the third century, a buckle of North Germanic type was found (fig. 8). Its analogies are known from Illerup and Thorsberg. From the same burial (and, probably, from the same belt) fittings with pipe shape ending remind similar objects from also Thorsberg and Vimose. It is highly probable, that the prototype of the Tiszalök sword strap came from the Germanic world, or it can simply be a Germanic product (Istvánovits, Kulcsár, Carnap-Bornheim 2006, p. 100). All the cases listed above relate to a well palpable system of connections between the members of Scandinavian and Sarmatian elite of the Hungarian Plain. As we shall see in the following, these connections were not unidirectional.

In Scandinavia, we also have traces of contacts with the Sarmatian world. In the already mentioned Thorsberg bog-find, a total of nine glass sword-pendants (so-called “magische Schwertanhänger”) of more or less conical shape were found. Further pieces are known from the Vimose bog-find and several Swedish warrior burials dated to C1 period. Such pendants practically always found beside the hilts of the swords are widely known from the steppe Late Sarmatian finds (Безуглов 2000, 172). There are also pieces known from the Sarmatian milieu of the

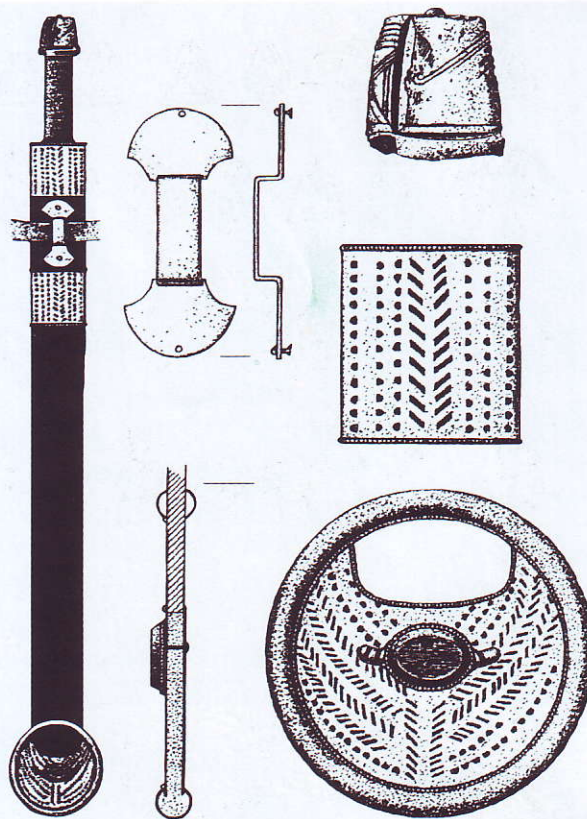


Fig. 7. Sword and its fittings from Geszteréd (Carnap-Bornheim 2001, Abb. 2)

Hungarian plain starting from the turn of the second century, but at much lesser degree (e. g.: Tari 1994, kép III. 2 — shell pendant; Dinnyés 1991, p. 156, kép 16. 10 — chalcedonic pendant). Following Joachim Werner, Klaus Raddatz suggested that these objects reflect an Iranian (Sarmatian) influence in the Germanic world that could spread through auxiliary units, pointing out the find of such pendant in the Roman fort of Zugmantel (Raddatz 1957/1958).

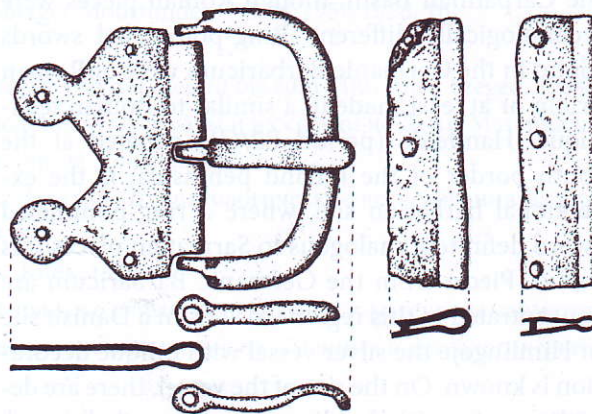


Fig. 8. Buckle and belt fittings from Tiszalök (Istvánovits, Kulcsár, Carnap-Bornheim 2006, fig. 6. 1–2)



Fig. 9. Sites mentioned in the text.

- 1 — Ust'-A'lma; 2 — Chernorechenskiy; 3 — Debrecen; 4 — Geszteréd; 5 — Herpály; 6 — Madaras;
 7 — Hamfelde; 8 — Thorsberg; 9 — Vimose; 10 — Himlingøje; 11 — Sætrang;
 12 — Skuttunge; 13 — Zugmantel

In this connection, we should mention the question of ring-pommeled swords. They were used both by the Sarmatians and Romans, but the former started to use them centuries later and there were reasons to suggest that these kind of weapons were overtaken by the Romans from the Sarmatians of the Carpathian Basin, though Roman pieces were technologically different. Ring-pommeled swords found in the Germanic Barbaricum were of Roman origin or at least made in a similar to Roman technique. Hamfelde (period B2/C1) situated at the south border of the Jutland peninsula, is the exceptional barbarian site, where a ring-pommeled sword definitely analogous to Sarmatian pieces was found. Pieces from the Germanic Barbaricum are concentrated in this region. Also from a Danish site of Himlingøje the silver vessel with unique decoration is known. On the rim of the vessel, there are depictions of people holding ring-pommeled sword. According to Ulla Lund Hansen, the Scandinavian appearance of these weapons was the impact of the Marcomannic Wars (that is to say, Scandinavian

warriors who took part in the war brought this swords home) (Lund Hansen 1995, S. 386–387; Istvánovits, Kulcsár 2008, p. 99–100, with further references).

All the examples cited above refer to elite men, warriors. They either received gifts from allies (Geszteréd, Tiszalök, Herpály) or used weaponry formed under the direct or indirect influence of Sarmatians (Thorsberg, Vimose, etc.). There is only one case of a female phenomenon, a woman buried with typical Sarmatian bead-set (coloured glass and spherical carnelian beads) in a rich chamber grave in Sætrang, South Norway (Slomann 1959, h. 18, 32; frontpiece photo). There was nothing more of eastern origin in the burial, so it is difficult to decide whether we should think of a Sarmatian wife or an exotic present: beads brought from a faraway country.

Taking into consideration the multi-directional connections of the Sarmatians of the Hungarian plain, we can assume that if there were any direct contacts between the Crimean and Scandinavian

peninsulas, the meeting point could be somewhere in the middle: on the Sarmatian territory of Eastern Hungary. Further research may confirm or deny this suggestion.

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Эстер ИШТВАНОВИЧ, Валерия КУЛЬЧАР

**Из Крыма в Скандинавию через Большую Венгерскую низменность:
следы сармато-германских контактов на основании находок
сферических подвесок-амулетов и других явлений**

Резюме

Данное исследование ставит своей задачей обратить внимание на несколько фактов, указывающих на связи Крымского и Скандинавского полуостровов с Карпатским бассейном в римское время. В первую очередь речь идёт об ажурных сферических подвесках, иногда называемых «карманными микрокосмосами». В большинстве случаев они изготовлены из бронзы и снабжены петлёй для подвешивания. Они напоминают хорошо известные в латенском мире кольца и браслеты с шпечками. Эти подвески широко распространены в позднескифской культуре Крыма, реже встречаются в сарматских погребениях Северного Кавказа и Прикубанья (Пуздровский 2007, с. 162). Наиболее типичны они в Юго-Западном Крыму. Обобщающую статью по типологии и хронологии крымских находок опубликовала Л. А. Рыжова (2005).

Картографирование сферических подвесок в Европейском Барбарикуме показывает, что эти амулеты проникли в регионы, очень отдалённые от своей основной территории распространения. Ближайшие — в географическом плане — аналогии крымским амулетам найдены на Большой Венгерской низменности. Здесь они известны на двух сарматских памятниках: Дебрецен-Ловасзуг (Istvánovits 1990, p. 95, táb. XII. 4) (рис. 2–3) и Мадараш-Халмок, погребение 473 (Kőhegyi, Vörös 2011) (рис. 4).

В Венгрии, в отличие от Крыма, эти предметы не относятся к широко распространённым амулетам. По-видимому, обе подвески попали в Карпатский бассейн с востока.

Третий подобный амулет найден на территории весьма далёкой не только от Крыма, но и от Венгрии. Эта сферическая ажурная подвеска была обнаружена в знаменитой болотной находке Иллеруп в секторе AAQP (Carnap-Bornheim, Пkjær 1996, Plan 111/100. 2) (рис. 5).

Эти находки ещё раз обращают наше внимание на какие-то контакты, которые прослеживаются между тремя названными регионами в течение нескольких столетий в римскую эпоху. На это указывает уже всё больше и больше фактов. Среди них прямая связь между первыми языгами, переселившимися на Большую Венгерскую низменность в I в. н. э., и позднескифской культурой Крыма (Иштванович, Кульчар 2005) (рис. 6). На схожие явления (например, фибулы с кольцом на игле) в сарматских могильниках Крыма и Восточной Венгрии указал И. Н. Храпунов (Khrapunov 2001).

В то же время на Большой Венгерской низменности обнаружено немало памятников со сармато-скандинавскими связями. Аналогии деталям меча из с. Гестеред найдены в болотной находке Торсберг и в погребении из Скуттунге (Швеция) (Carnap-Bornheim 2001) (рис. 7). В курганном погребении в г. Тисалёк найдена северогерманская пряжка и зажимы ремня (Istvánovits, Kulcsár, Carnap-Bornheim 1996, p. 349–365) (рис. 8). Отдельно стоит упомянуть знаменитый умбон из с. Херпай, лучшей аналогией которого является щит из Лилла Харг (Швеция) (Fettich 1930).

В Скандинавии, кроме ажурной подвески из Иллерупа, также немало следов сарматского присутствия или влияния. Таковыми могут считаться стеклянные подвески мечей из Торсберга и Вимозе (Raddatz 1957/1958), находки мечей с кольцевым навершием и изображение такого меча на сосуде из Химлингое (Istvánovits, Kulcsár 2008, p. 99–100). К немногочисленным атрибутам женского костюма принадлежат цветные стеклянные и сердоликовые бусы сарматского облика из богатого погребения Сэтранг (Южная Норвегия) (Slomann 1959, h. 18, 32; цветная вклейка).

Дальнейшие исследования, возможно, помогут решить вопрос, реально ли говорить о посреднической роли сарматов Большой Венгерской низменности в контактах между варварами Скандинавии и Крыма римского времени.