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ISOLATED MIGRATION-PERIOD FINDS: THE BRONZE FIBULA FROM RADOAIA (SANGEREI DISTRICT, REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA)[1]

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Abstract: The article presents a 5th-century AD bronze fibula donated in 2020 by a local resident to the Sangerei Museum of History and Ethnography (Republic of Moldova), together with several archaeological heritage items discovered at various locations in the vicinity of the village of Radoaia (Sangerei district, Republic of Moldova). In all likelihood, the artefact originates from the archaeological site Radoaia II (Sangerei district), which preserves evidence of habitation dating to the Late Roman period. The fibula under discussion was cast in bronze and features a semi-circular arched bow in cross-section. It is fitted with two terminal plates, one triangular and the other lozenge-shaped, both decorated in the *Kerbschnitt* (chip-carved) technique. It belongs to the *Prša-Levice type*, according to J. Werner's typology, a type predominantly distributed in the Middle Danube region and in Crimea. This category of fibulae is dated to phases D2/D3 (AD 430–470) and is attributed to Germanic populations. The Radoaia specimen, which is typologically comparable to the find from Parcani (Soroca district), represents, together with the latter, the first discoveries of this type within the Prut-Dniester interfluve. The closest geographical analogies have been identified in the Migration Period cemetery at Botosani — *Dealul Caramidariei*, dated to the 5th century and attributed to the Ostrogoths.

Key words: *Radoaia; bronze fibula; Prsa-Levice type; 5th century AD; Ostrogoths.*

Compared to other historical periods, the transitional interval from Late Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages — corresponding broadly to the 5th century—remains among the least archaeologically documented across a vast area of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe situated beyond the frontiers of the Roman Empire, including the Carpathian-Dniester regions. The causes are multiple and complex, including the impact of the Hunnic invasion, the profound crisis experienced by the Roman Empire and the territories within its sphere of influence, the successive movements of various population groups, as well as possible climatic changes that occurred at the end of the 4th century and the beginning of the 5th century AD. However, even when considered together, these phenomena cannot be regarded as sufficient to have caused the complete disappearance of the local population or the transformation of these regions into a *terra deserta*, a hypothesis advanced

[1] "Ion Niculiță" Center for Archaeology, Moldova State University. 01.15.01. "Prehistoric and Ancient Archaeological Heritage in the Forest-Steppe of the Republic of Moldova: interdisciplinary research and scientific development".

by some archaeologists and historians, often influenced by certain ideological premises[2].

In contrast to this hypothesis, archaeological evidence — both earlier finds and those resulting from recent research — indicates that in the 5th century AD human habitation in the Carpathian–Dniester region continued, albeit in distinct and less uniform forms than in previous periods. From an ethno-demographic perspective, however, these data do not support the idea of the exclusive existence of a local, sedentary, compact, and homogeneous population of Daco-Roman origin, as is still maintained by some scholars[3].

Among the archaeological remains datable to the first half or the mid-5th century, discovered or recovered during the last decade by the National Archaeologic Agency, are an inhumation grave containing two gold *cloisonné* appliqués, investigated at Costesti-Garlea, as well as two bronze fibulae fitted with triangular and rhombic plates, originating from Parcani (Soroca district) and Radoaia (Sangerei district) (Fig. 1, 1). The dress accessory from Parcani has already been introduced into scholarly circulation[4], while the funerary complex from Costesti-Garlea is presented and analysed in a study currently in press.

In the following pages, we will focus on the fibula from Radoaia, which typologically falls into the same category as the piece from Parcani but which belongs to a distinct variant. Both specimens, very likely discovered with the aid of metal detectors, have undergone chemical analyses, the results of which will be examined comparatively within this article.

The context of the discovery of the Radoaia fibula, as well as the circumstances of its recovery, are closely related to a larger assemblage of archaeological materials that have entered the collections of Sangerei Museum of History and Ethnography in recent years. In 2020, several archaeological heritage items discovered by a local resident at different points around the village of Radoaia (Sangerei district, Republic of Moldova), dating back to the late 1990s, were added to the collections of Sangerei Museum of History and Ethnography. Some of these artefacts, mainly fibulae, originate from the area of the *Radoaia II* archaeological site.

Radoaia II site was first reported in 1954 by P. Gritenko and subsequently surveyed through field surveys in 1993 by V. Bicbaev, and in 2024 by staff of the National Archaeologic Agency. Investigations have shown that the site contains predominantly habitation remains datable to the 4th century AD, belonging to the Santana de Mures-Cernjachov culture. The settlement is located approximately 0.5 km southwest of Radoaia village, on the northern slope of the Solonet River valley, on a small promontory situated at the confluence of two streams flowing into the river, extending over a length of about 600 m and a width of more than 200 m (Fig. 1, 2; 2).

The fibulae transferred to the Sangerei Museum of History and Ethnography, presented as originating from *Radoaia II* site, are made exclusively of bronze and belong to

Fig. 1. Location of the *Radoaia II* site (Radoaia village, Sangerei district) and Parcani (Soroca district) (1); geo-topographic setting of the *Radoaia II* site (2).

different types, most of them fragmentary[5]. Among these dress and personal adornment items, some representing rarities or even unique specimens, one fibula stands out, cast in a mould and distinguished by its morphological and decorative features.

The fibula in question (Fig. 3, 1) was cast as a single piece, together with a relatively tall and slightly trapezoidal footplate, as well as the loop for mounting the spring, which is now broken[6]. The fibula preserves a strongly arched body,

[2] MATVEEV 2009, 44.
[3] POSTICĂ 2007, 247–249.
[4] VORNIC/CIOBANU 2019, 439–445.
[5] VORNIC/MATVEEV 2024, 381–390.
[6] The Parcani specimen was made in the same way, with the spring loop and footplate not soldered, as was initially believed (VORNIC/CIOBANU 2019, 440–441). It should be noted that fibulae of this type were fitted with a short spring made of bronze or iron wire, with the cord drawn underneath (WERNER 1959, 428, Abb. 5, 1c; GAVRITUKHIN 1994, 42,

Fig. 2. Aerial view from the southeast of *Radoaia II* site.

with a rhomboid plate at the lower extremity and a triangular plate at the upper extremity, both adorned with decoration.

The upper plate has the shape of an equilateral triangle, with corners accentuated by raised bosses. The external surface of the plate is divided into four recessed triangular fields of different sizes: two larger ones, with their bases facing each other, arranged centrally, and two smaller ones, with their apexes facing each other, located at the lower part of the plate. This type of ornament, produced either by incision-excision or by casting and subsequently finished through chasing, is known in the specialized literature as *Kerbschnittdekor* and consists of recessed geometric motifs, mainly triangles and rhombuses[7].

The fibula body is smooth and undecorated, with an approximately semi-circular cross-section, slightly concave on the inner face. The footplate is elongated and rhomboid, featuring three prominent bosses located at the lateral and lower extremities. Two of these, situated laterally, are similar in shape and size to those on the upper plate, while the boss at the lower end of the footplate, approximately triangular in shape, schematically represents the head of an animal (?), separated from the footplate by a transverse ridge.

Like the triangular plate, the rhomboid plate is decorated using the *Kerbschnitt* technique, divided into four recessed fields in the shape of a teardrop or ellipse, of different sizes: two larger ones arranged axially in the central area, and two smaller ones located laterally, each featuring a recessed vertical line. The fibula's foot, slightly trapezoidal in shape, is positioned at the upper part of the rhomboid plate, near the body, with a medium height.

Dimensions: total length of the fibula – 7.6 cm; length of the triangular plate – 2.3 cm; maximum width of the triangular plate – 2.5 cm; length of the body – 2.2 cm; width of the body – 0.5 cm; thickness of the body – 0.3 cm; length of the rhomboid plate (slightly deformed) – 3.6 cm; maximum width of the rhomboid plate – 1.9 cm; dimensions of the foot: 0.8 × 0.9 cm; diameter of the bosses on the triangular plate and the lateral bosses on the rhomboid plate: 0.5 cm; dimensions of the terminal boss on the rhomboid plate: 0.5 × 0.8 cm.

As can be seen from the description, the analysed dress accessory represents an exceptional discovery, being, after the Parcani specimen, the second attestation of this type of fibula on the territory of present-day Republic of Moldova. As highlighted upon the publication of the first piece of this kind from the Prut–Dniester region, fibulae with a triangular head and rhomboid foot, decorated in the *Kerbschnitt* technique, are completely absent from the inventories of settlements and necropolises attributed to the Santana de Mureș–Cernjachov culture[8]. This observation remains valid even though both known specimens were discovered on the surface of settlements attributed to this culture, a situation that at first glance might suggest a common cultural affiliation. The recent discovery, within a Sântana de Mureș–Černjachov-type settlement located in the northernmost part of the Prut–Dniester region, at Buzovicja/Buzovița

Fig. 2, 5; KHARALAMBIEVA/ATANASOV 1993, 106; HARHOIU 1997, Taf. LXXXIX, D).

[7] In the literature, the decoration observed on fibulae of the type from Parcani and Radoaia has been referred to by some authors as *Keilschnitt* (PÁRDUCZ 1959, 373-374; ZAHARIA/ZAHARIA 1969, 171; ZAHARIA/ZAHARIA 1975, 24; APARASCHIVEI 2019, 475), and by others as *false Kerbschnitt* (BÂRZU 1986, 91, 100). See also: WERNER 1959, 423, 428; AMBROZ 1970, 70; AJBABIN 1979, 23; GAVRITUKHIN 1994, 32.

[8] VORNIC/CIOBANU 2019.

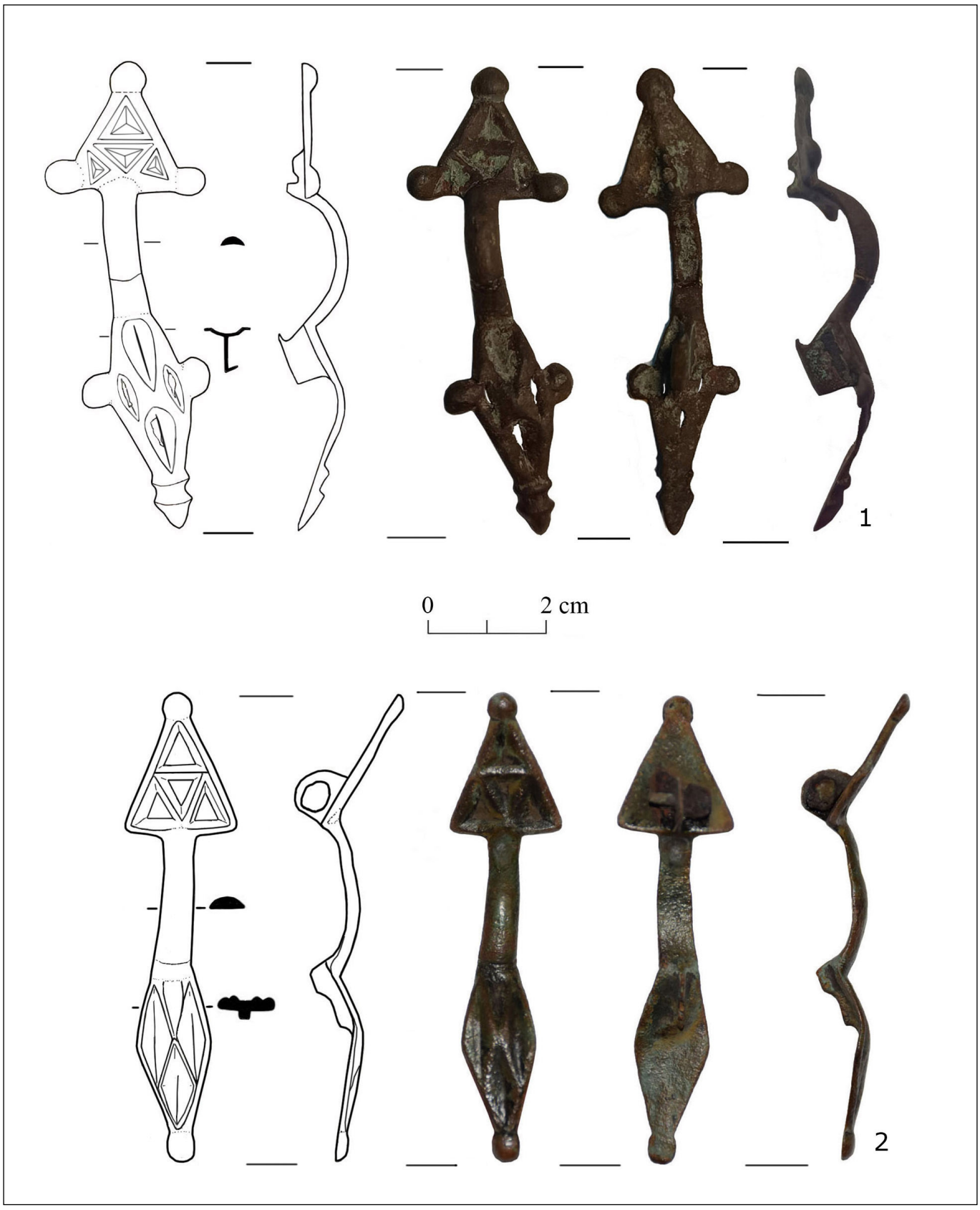

Fig. 3. Fibulae from *Radoaia II* (1) and Parcani (2).

(Chernivtsi region, Ukraine), of a Levice-type fibula[9], – although without knowledge of its exact context of origin – could, in turn, argue in favor of such an interpretation. Nevertheless, the data available so far do not convincingly support this hypothesis; on the contrary, they urge us to exercise the utmost caution. At the current stage of research, we consider that the fibulae of the type discovered at Parcani

[9] PETRAUSKAS 2022, 85.

Table 1. Results of the spectral analysis of the Radoaia and Parcani fibulae

	Cu	Sn	Pb	Zn	Ag	Sb	As	Fe	Ni	Co	Bi	Mn	Au
Rădoaia	92.33	0.97	3.35	2.44	0.21	0.07	0.10	0.14	0.12	0.04	0.12	0.10	0.00
Parcani	79.35	5.83	11.03	2.50	0.16	0.10	0.00	0.57	0.07	0.03	0.25	0.10	0.01

and Rădoaia belong to a different cultural horizon, later than that of the Sântana de Mureș–Černjachov type.

Archaeological research has shown, however, that for the late phases of the Santana de Mures–Cernjachov culture, other types of dress accessories are characteristic, particularly plate and semi-disc fibulae, predominantly made of silver and generally dated to the last quarter of the 4th century and the beginning of the 5th century AD.[10] In this context, the complete absence of fibulae with a triangular head and rhomboid foot from closed archaeological complexes with inventory specific to this culture clearly indicates the existence of a different cultural framework. Therefore, these pieces should be associated with the archaeological horizon of the Migration Period proper, being foreign to the Santana de Mures–Cernjachov cultural milieu, despite the context of discovery, which might at first glance suggest a different interpretation.

A comparative examination of Radoaia and Parcani fibulae (Fig. 3) shows that the two pieces are typologically close, yet not identical. They have generally similar dimensions, with the greater length of the Radoaia specimen being explained by the fact that the initially curved fibula arch was straightened, probably at the moment of discovery or afterward. Differences between the two pieces are, however, evident in the shape of the upper and lower parts, as well as in the execution of the decorative elements on the footplate.

Thus, the Parcani fibula has a single boss at the extremities of the plates, whereas the Radoaia specimen has two additional lateral bosses on both plates, and the terminal boss of the footplate has a distinct shape. Furthermore, the triangular plate of the Parcani fibula is narrower, while in the Radoaia piece it is broader, forming an equilateral triangle rather than an isosceles one. Differences are also observed in the decoration of the rhomboid plates executed in the *Kerbschnitt* technique: in the Parcani fibula, the decorative elements are predominantly rhomboid in shape, whereas in the Radoaia piece they are more elongated-oval.

Note that the morphological and ornamental differences are also reflected in variations in the metal composition. The chemical composition of the two Kerbschnitt-decorated fibulae discovered in the territory of the Republic of Moldova was determined by X-ray fluorescence spectroscopy (X-Ray Fluorescence, XRF), with analyses performed at the Institute of Applied Physics of the State University of Moldova[11]. Investigations were conducted using an X-Calibur spectrometer (Xenemetrix, Israel), at an acceleration voltage of 45 kV, without a filter, with a rhodium cathode and an SDD detector, under atmospheric conditions. Data processing was carried out using the XRS-FP software (developed by Crossroads Scientific). In the absence of reference standards for the analysed samples, the determination of chemical composition was based on the Fundamental Parameters algorithm, with the results presented concisely in Table 1 and Diagram 1, as well as the ternary diagram of the metal composition of the Radoaia and Parcani fibulae (Diagram 2), constructed following the method of J. Bayley & S. Butcher[12].

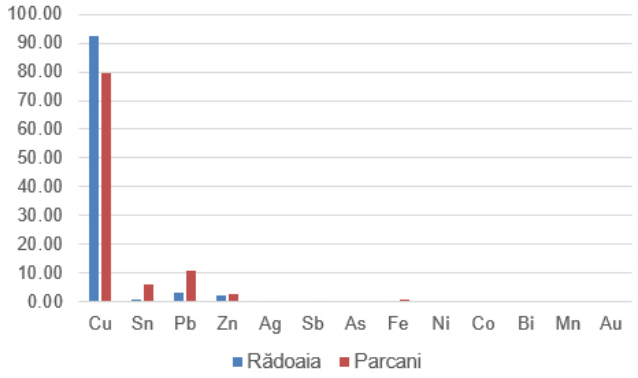

Diagram 1. Results of the elemental analysis by XRF (wt%).

The XRF analysis shows that the Radoaia fibula is made of a Cu–Sn–Pb–Zn alloy, corresponding to a complex bronze, known in the specialized literature as leaded bronze with a zinc addition. The very low tin content (below 1%) structurally approaches a modified α-brass; however, the presence of lead and zinc confers properties typical of bronzes intended for casting. The Parcani fibula also falls into the same category of complex bronzes, differing primarily by a higher lead content. An increased percentage of lead significantly improves the workability of the alloy and its behaviour under friction, but has the secondary effect of reducing mechanical strength. In this context, lead acts as a solid lubricant, giving the piece moderate wear resistance, suitable for objects subject to low mechanical stress. The compositional analysis of the alloys used for these two fibulae thus confirms an optimal technological choice for cast objects with a primarily decorative function. This type of alloy is characteristic of ornamental pieces, artistic objects, or components requiring properties favourable to casting and finishing, rather than high mechanical strength.

Although the first fibulae of this type were discovered and mentioned in the specialized literature as early as the late 19th century, they remained for a long time understudied scientifically, most likely due to the relatively small number of known specimens and the often-fragmentary

[10] For example: LEVINSKIJ 1999, 145, Ris. 27.

[11] We would also like to thank Engineer Lazari Dermenji for performing the spectroscopic analyses.

[12] BAYLEY/BUTCHER 2004, 178–179.

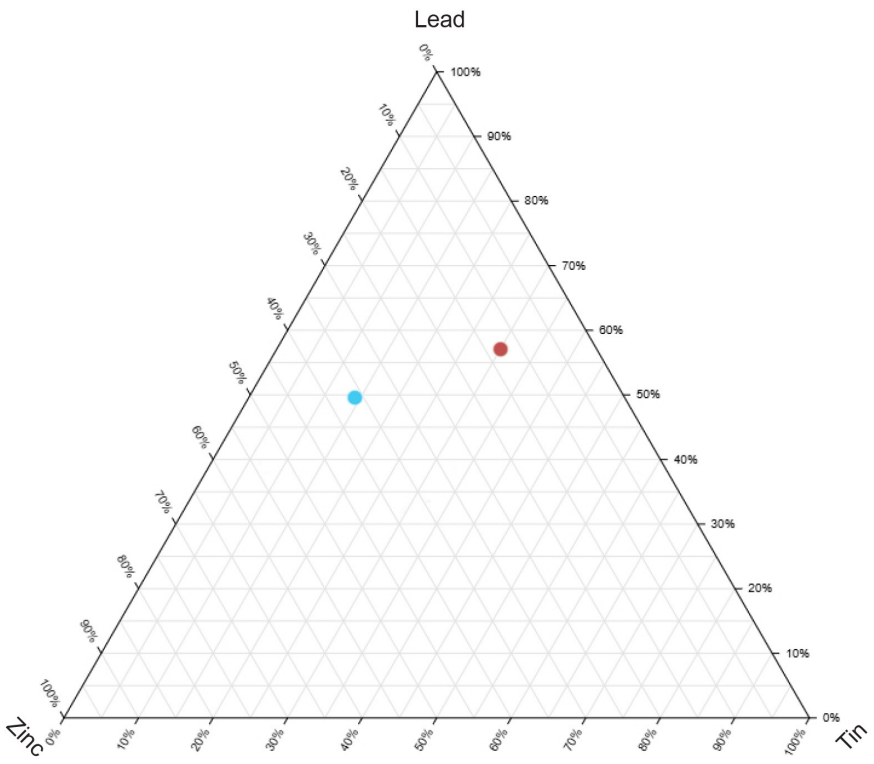

Diagram 2. Ternary diagram showing the chemical composition (wt%) of the fibulae.

archaeological contexts. This situation is, to some extent, surprising, considering that, as will be shown below, these fibulae are distributed across a relatively wide geographical area. It was only in the 1960s that these pieces attracted systematic attention from researchers, with the development of typological and chronological studies dedicated to the Migration Period. These studies allowed a more precise definition of their formal characteristics, chronological placement, and cultural significance.

The distribution area of triangular-headed, rhomboid-footed fibulae decorated in the *Kerbschnitt* technique covers a vast space in Central and South-Eastern Europe, with particular concentrations in the Middle and Lower Danube regions, as well as in the Carpathian Basin, but with well-defined peripheral extensions toward Crimea and the north Pontic zone. Of particular relevance is the presence of this category of pieces within the provinces along the Lower Danube of the Roman Empire, including Scythia Minor, from which at least ten specimens are known, originating either from incidental finds or from archaeological sites[13]. Such a geographic distribution reflects not only the circulation of relatively uniform dress models but also the increased mobility of human groups involved in the migratory processes of the 5th century AD, in which these pieces were worn, adapted, and disseminated.

According to one of the earliest systematic classifications of this category of dress accessories, proposed by M. Párducz for the finds attributed to the Hunnic period in Hungary, triangular-headed, rhomboid-footed fibulae decorated in the *Keilschnitt* or *Kerbschnitt* technique are classified as variant 1 of type II, a category well represented in the archaeological material of the Carpathian Basin[14]. The dating proposed by the author for this variant is broad, ranging from the late 4th century to the 5th century AD, and is primarily based on typological analogies, due to the absence of closed and stratigraphically secure archaeological contexts. Regarding the origin of this type of fibula, M. Párducz suggested, based on a specimen discovered at Kerch, the hypothesis of a Pontic development, considering these pieces as part of a set of objects brought from the east by population groups involved in the Hunnic migrations. According to the author, this hypothesis is supported by the finds from the cemetery at Csongrád, where several specimens of this type were identified[15].

A more detailed and rigorous analysis of this category of fibulae was carried out in the same year by J. Werner, in the context of the study of funerary complexes attributed to the 5th century AD in Slovakia[16]. Using the shape and decoration of the plates as the main criteria, the German archaeologist defined triangular-headed, rhomboid-footed fibulae decorated in the *Kerbschnitt* technique as a distinct type, which he named Prša–Levice, after the localities where two richly furnished Migration Period graves containing such pieces were discovered.

At the same time, J. Werner compiled a catalogue of the Prša–Levice type fibulae known at that time and supplemented it with a distribution map, which included 13 grouped findspots, with a single exception (Kerch, Crimea)—in the Middle Danube region and the Carpathian Basin[17]. Based on the analysis of archaeological contexts and correlation with other inventory elements, Werner concluded that the Prša–Levice type fibulae are chronologically placed in the middle and second half of the 5th century AD, associated with the Germanic environment, particularly the Ostrogoths, in the Middle Danube region toward the end of the Hunnic period[18]. At the same time, J. Werner proposed that the origin of the type should be sought in southern Russia, an interpretation based on the relatively high concentration of known finds at that time in the Crimean Peninsula. In this perspective, the spread of the Prša–Levice type fibulae in the Middle Danube region was explained by the westward movement of their bearers, in the context of the 5th-century AD Ostrogothic migrations[19].

[13] STANEV 2008, 221; APARASCHIVEI 2019, 474–478.

[14] PÁRDUCZ 1959, 373–374, Abb. 4/76; Taf. XI/5a–b; XXI/13,14; XXII/2; XXVI/9.

[15] PÁRDUCZ 1959, 373–374.

[16] WERNER 1959.

[17] WERNER 1959, 423, Verbreitungskarte nr. 1; 427–429.

[18] WERNER 1959, 429, 431.

[19] WERNER 1959, 429–431.

A different position regarding the origin of the type is proposed by A. Ambroz. His correlative analysis of monuments suggests a reverse movement, from the Danube area toward the northern Black Sea region[20]. This hypothesis was later revisited and developed by A. Aibabin, who examined the specimens discovered in Crimea as "fibulae with two plates decorated in the *Kerbschnitt* technique." Within his typology, these are included in Group IV and are chronologically placed in the second half of the 5th century AD[21].

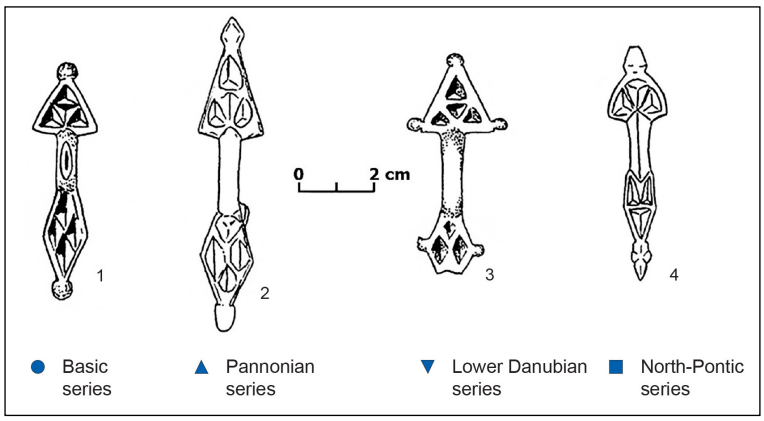

Fig. 4. Series of the Levice–Tokari type fibulae (after GAVRITUKHIN 1994). Levice (1); Halbturn (2); Botosani–*Dealul Caramidariei* (3); Tokari (4).

Among more recent and nuanced systematizations of this category of fibulae, particular attention should be paid to the work of Moscow-based researcher I. Gavrituhin, who took into account the accumulation of a significant number of new data and discoveries in the meantime. Starting from the premise that the shape of the upper plate is less relevant for typological definition than the overall morphology of the piece and the characteristics of its decoration, the author included both triangular-headed fibulae and semi-circular-headed, rhomboid-footed fibulae decorated in the *Kerbschnitt* technique within a single group. This group was named Levice–Tokari, the second component of the name corresponding to the locality of Tokari in Ukraine, where a fibula with a semi-circular upper plate was discovered[22] (Fig. 4).

The most numerous of these series, previously noted by A. Heinrich[23] and regarded as typologically primary—conventionally termed the "basic series"—is distributed in the northern and central regions of the Carpathian Basin. It comprises relatively small specimens characterized by a bow decorated with recessed ellipses or ovals provided with a vertically incised median line.

The other three series, conventionally termed Pannonian, Lower Danubian, and North Pontic, are distinguished by morphological features and by their areas of distribution. The Pannonian series is defined by the progressive elongation of the triangular headplate—initially by increasing its length while maintaining its width, and subsequently by enlarging its overall dimensions—bringing some specimens close to equal-armed fibulae. In the Lower Danubian series, the triangular head is retained but becomes markedly widened at the base, acquiring the form of an equilateral triangle, whereas the North Pontic series is distinguished by the adoption of a semi-circular upper plate. The specimen from Tokari illustrates the transition toward the latter series and highlights the genetic connection between the Pontic forms and the Danubian examples, as well as their Crimean analogies (Fig. 5).

Among the regional series, the Lower Danubian is the least numerous and probably short-lived, being attributed to the final horizon of the East Germanic circle in the area between the Dniester and the Lower Danube, represented by the cemetery type of Botosani–*Dealul Caramidariei*. The disappearance of this tradition has been linked either to the southward advance of the Slavs from the Eastern Sub-Carpathians or to the participation of the local East Germanic group in Theodoric's Italian campaign[24].

According to this classification, the fibula discovered at Parcani belongs to the Pannonian series, while the specimen from Radoaia may be attributed to the Lower Danubian series. This attribution is also supported by the geographical criterion, as the Radoaia findspot lies approximately 110 km east of Botosani–*Dealul Caramidariei* necropolis, the cemetery from which the benchmark specimens for this series originate[25]. Nevertheless, the Radoaia fibula displays certain decorative peculiarities—particularly in the treatment of the foot—that bring it closer to the bow ornamentation of fibulae belonging to the basic series, known mainly from finds in Slovakia and Hungary. This combination of features suggests multiple typological influences and likely indicates a local adaptation of established models.

The small Migration Period necropolis at Botosani–*Dealul Caramidariei* yielded 23 inhumation graves oriented with to the west or north. Some of the deceased exhibited artificial cranial deformation, a practice well attested among the Germanic populations of the Danube region. The generally modest grave inventory includes bead necklaces, earrings with polyhedral pendants, a "nomadic"-type metal mirror, pins, buckles, and two Prša–Levice type fibulae. On the basis of this assemblage, the necropolis is broadly dated to the 5th century AD, or more narrowly to the middle of that century, and is associated with the Germanic tribes of the Ostrogoths[26].

Two smaller groups of graves with similar inventories, including Prša–Levice type fibulae, were investigated in Romania within the Carpathian arc, at Bratei[27] and Fantanele–*Dealul Popii*[28]. The Germanic cemetery at Bratei was dated by its publisher to the first half of the 5th century

[20] AMBROZ 1971, 104.
[21] AJBABIN 1990, 19, 63.
[22] GAVRITUKHIN 1994, 32; GAVRITUKHIN 2013, 107–125.
[23] HEINRICH 1990, 95–96.
[24] GAVRITUKHIN 1994, 32–33, fig. 1B.
[25] ZAHARIA/ZAHARIA 1969, 171–173, fig. 3/1,2; ZAHARIA/ZAHARIA 1975, 205, 215, 216, fig. 11/1–2; 14/1 a–b, 2 a–b.
[26] ZAHARIA/ZAHARIA 1969; 1975; KAZANSKI 2009, 147.
[27] BÂRZU 1986, 89–104.
[28] DOBOS/OPREANU 2012, 13–21.

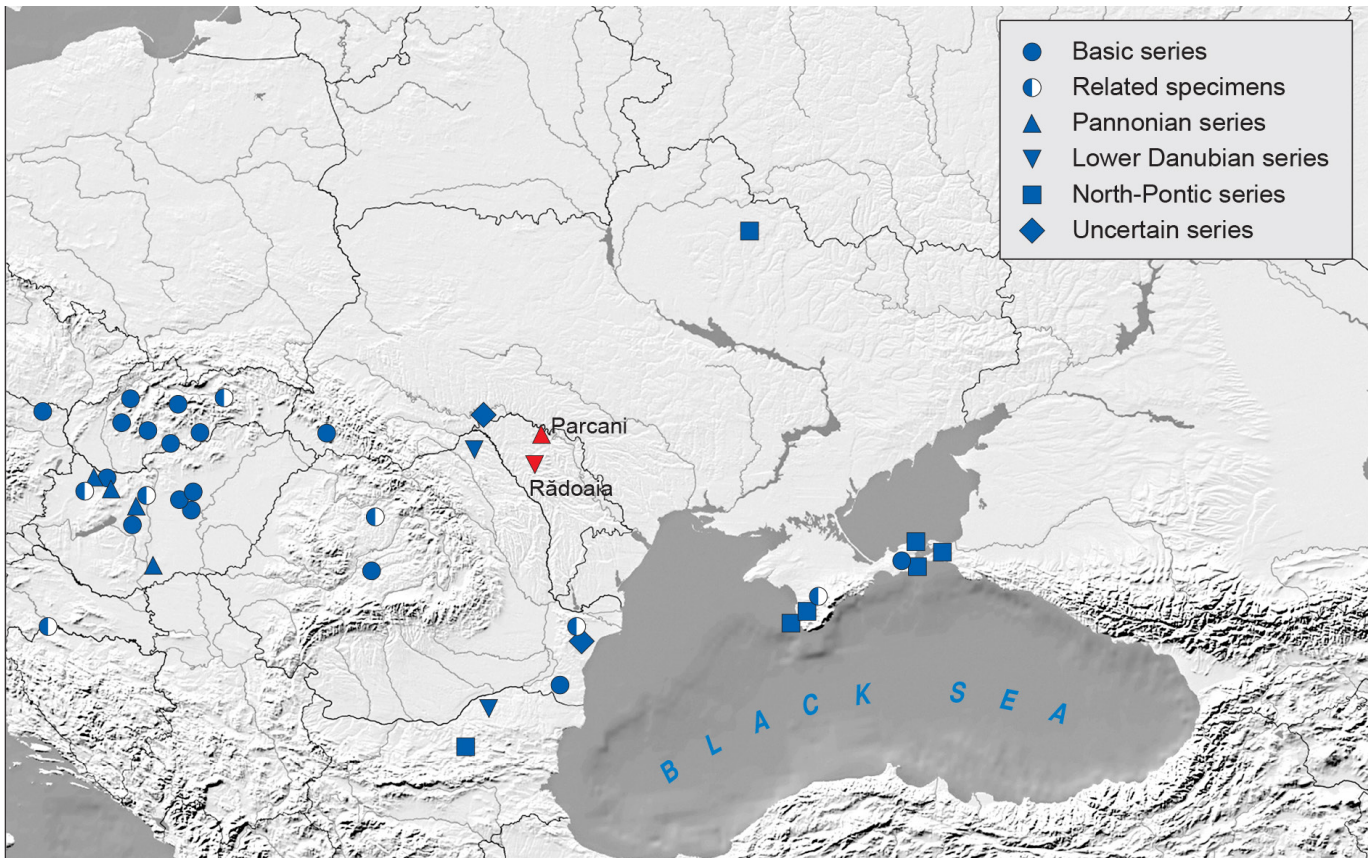

Fig. 5. Distribution of the Levice–Tokari-type fibulae (after GAVRITUKHIN 1994, with additions).

AD[29], while the second funerary complex was placed by Dobos and Opreanu "toward the middle or, more probably, in the second half of the 5th century."[30]

In his assessment, based primarily on the analysis of the fibulae, I. Gavrituhin dated the Botosani–*Dealul Caramidariei* cemetery to the D2/D3 chronological interval (430–470 AD), reflecting the final manifestations of the East Germanic tradition in the Lower Danube region[31]. The same chronological framework for the Migration Period antiquities from the Jijia Valley is also supported by M. Kazanski, who places the assemblage in phase D2/D3, corresponding to the middle third of the 5th century[32].

This interpretation of the finds from Botosani–*Dealul Caramidariei* only partially coincides with the view expressed by another scholar of the Migration Period, Radu Harhoiu[33]. In his study of the early Migration Period in the Carpathian–Danubian area, he discusses *Kerbschnitt*-decorated fibulae with triangular heads and rhomboid feet without distinguishing separate typological variants, integrating them instead into a broader dress horizon. From a chronological perspective, Harhoiu favours an early dating for some specimens, as early as the first part of the 5th century AD, based on associations with post-Černjachov and early Hunnic elements, as well as on North Pontic analogies. At the same time, he allows for the possibility that the pieces from Botosani–*Dealul Caramidariei* remained in use until the middle of the century.

Regarding the genesis of these pieces, R. Harhoiu adopts a cautious position, suggesting that they did not necessarily originate in the Carpathian Basin but may reflect influences from the North Pontic milieu, in the context of the mobility of human groups during the first half of the 5th century AD. At the same time, he does not implicitly exclude the alternative scenario proposed by A. Ambroz and A. Aibabin, according to which the type may have formed in the Carpathian area and subsequently spread eastward. From this perspective, the finds from Moldova and the eastern Carpathian Basin may be interpreted as connecting links between Crimea and the Middle Danube, reflecting primarily the circulation of dress models and the mobility of their wearers rather than the crystallization of strictly delimited regional series.

A similar position—both regarding a North Pontic eastern origin and an early chronological placement in the first part of the 5th century AD—is expressed by L. Barzu. When publishing the Migration Period grave group from Bratei, she interpreted the fibulae decorated in the *Kerbschnitt* technique—termed by her *false Kerbschnitt*—as dress elements characteristic of the early Migration horizon, belonging to East Germanic populations, specifically the Ostrogoths[34].

On the occasion of publishing several Levice–Prša type fibulae discovered in northern Bulgaria, A. Haralambieva

[29] BÂRZU 1986, 102–104.
[30] DOBOS/OPREANU, 2012, 20.
[31] GAVRITUKHIN 1994, 32; GAVRITUKHIN 2000, 281; GAVRITUKHIN 2013, 107–125.
[32] KAZANSKI 2009, 147.
[33] HARHOIU 1997, 101–102.
[34] BÂRZU 1986, 100, 104.

and Gh. Atanasov argue that this type originated in the Central European Danubian milieu. They interpret it as the result of local imitations of silver plate-and-semidisc fibulae, emerging against the background of the mobility of East Germanic populations. From a functional perspective, the authors interpret them as elements of female costume, usually worn in pairs—an interpretation supported by the funerary contexts in which the pieces were discovered. Chronologically, the Levice–Prša type fibulae are dated to the 5th century AD, with the specimens from northern Bulgaria assigned an earlier date, in the first half of that century[35]. The same dating has been accepted for the specimens from *Ibida*, published and analysed by Dan Aparaschivei[36] and from Buzovița discovered by O. Petrauskas[37].

An approach from a different perspective—shifting the focus from questions of origin and strict typology to issues of function and sartorial circulation—has been proposed by V. Bierbrauer, one of the leading scholars of 5th-century Germanic antiquities and costume[38]. Without treating the Prša–Levice fibulae as a distinct typological category and without advocating a strictly Pontic origin, he integrates them into the Ostrogothic female dress horizon of the Danubian region, within the Danubian–East Germanic *koiné* of the Middle Danube. The emphasis is placed on personal mobility and on the circulation of dress forms within "open spaces" characteristic of the Migration Period, rather than on identifying specific production centers or narrowly defined areas of origin. From this perspective, Prša–Levice type fibulae do not belong to the sphere of elites and cannot be regarded as prestige items. Unlike sumptuous silver fibulae or *cloisonné*-decorated variants, these are cast pieces made of common alloys, of medium size, whose execution indicates an ordinary dress function. According to V. Bierbrauer, they should be interpreted as elements of a *peplos*-type female costume, worn by non-elite segments of East Germanic populations. Their distribution primarily reflects the mobility of their wearers and the diffusion of dress models, rather than the transfer of luxury goods or elite symbolic strategies.

Returning to the dress accessories from Radoaia and Parcani and synthesizing the data presented above, it must be emphasized that their interpretation is limited by the isolated character of the discoveries and the absence of secure archaeological contexts. Nevertheless, on the basis of the typological, decorative, and chronological criteria discussed earlier, we consider that both fibulae can be assigned to the same cultural and chronological horizon as the antiquities from the Botosani–*Dealul Caramidariei* necropolis, more narrowly dated to the middle of the 5th century AD.

The hypothesis cannot be excluded that these artefacts originally derived from funerary complexes located in the northern part of the Prut–Dniester area, comparable to those known at Botosani–*Dealul Caramidariei*, Bratei, or Fantanele–*Dealul Popii*. Such complexes may be attributed to small East Germanic communities, most likely Ostrogothic, which were, at least for a certain period, under the direct influence or political suzerainty of the Huns. In the absence of direct archaeological evidence, however, such an interpretation necessarily remains at the level of a working hypothesis, to be verified by future field research and contextualized discoveries. Regardless of these reservations, it must be emphasized that the fibulae from Radoaia and Parcani significantly enrich the still very limited map of secure finds from the territory of Moldova datable to the 5th century AD. At the same time, they provide new and relevant information regarding the circulation of dress elements, population mobility, and the intensity of cultural contacts during a major transitional period characteristic of the beginnings of the early Middle Ages, profoundly marked by migratory processes and by the reconfiguration of ethno-cultural structures in South-Eastern Europe.

[35] KHARALAMBIEVA/ATANASOV 1993, 106–109.
[36] APARASCHIVEI 2019, 477–478.
[37] PETRAUSKAS 2022, 85–87.
[38] BIERBRAUER 2008, 124–129.

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