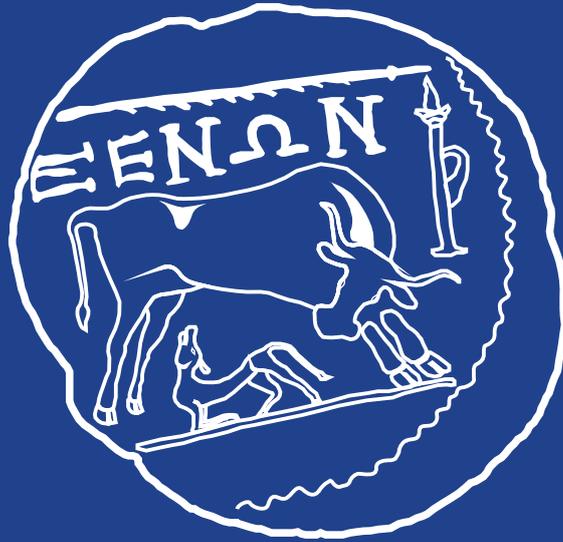


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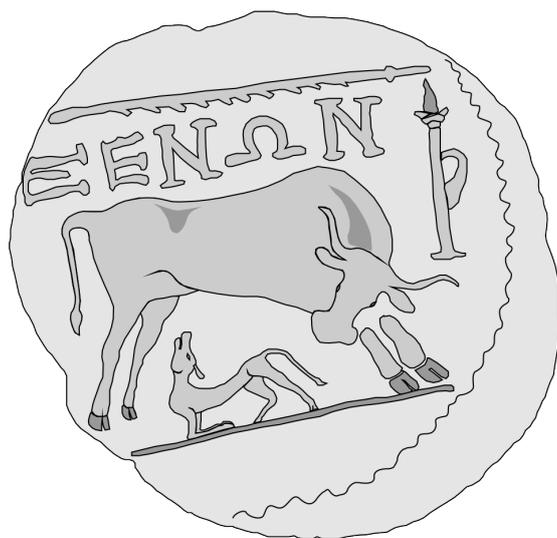
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This volume is dedicated to Florin Draşovean at 70 years

Acest volum este dedicat lui Florin Draşovean cu ocazia împlinirii a 70 de ani



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Illyrian Drachmas and Late La Tène Iron Items Discovered at Monoroștia – *Dâmbu lui Hârtici* (Arad County)

Ioan Cristian Cireap

Abstract: Some relatively recent discoveries have added a new spot on the map of the La Tène period in the Lower Mureș valley. It is about 4 Illyrian drachmas and some iron objects. This brief note aims to introduce these findings to the scientific community.

Keywords: Illyrian drachmas; Dacian tools; adze; tent peg; scissors.

Introduction

In the fall of 2021 and early 2022, Răzvan Codruț Drăgan, authorized metal detector holder, discovered several artifacts¹ near Monoroștia, Bârzava commune, Arad County.

The finds date from several prehistoric and historic periods; of these, we will present those that can be attributed to the late La Tène. It consists of 4 Illyrian silver drachmas and the following iron items: an adze, a scythe ring and two other pieces for which we propose the following attributions: a Roman tent peg and a scissors.

Some time after these discoveries, I set up a meeting with their finder and he showed me the area where they were made.

The discoveries were made on a low-elevation, wooded hill called *Dâmbu lui Hârtici*, which is located to the right of the Monoroștia valley, about 1.5 km northeast from the village. The coins were

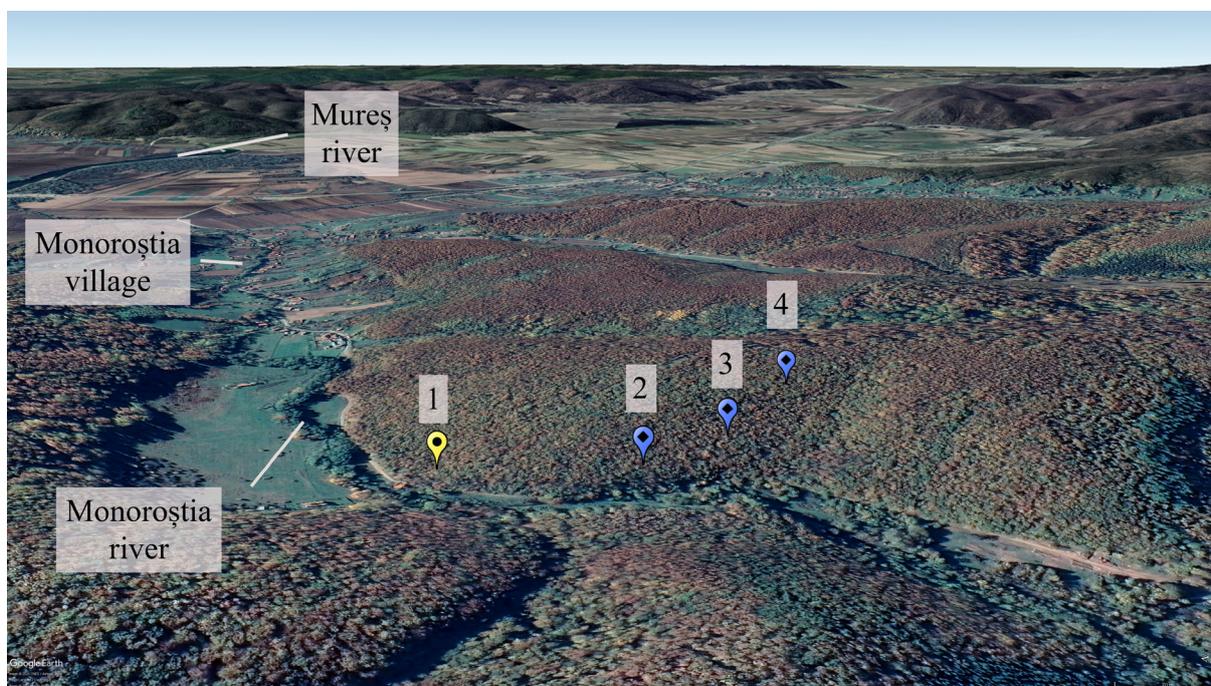


Fig. 1. Google Earth capture of the area where the discoveries were made, seen from the north-east:
1. Drachmas; 2. Adze; 3. Scythe ring and tent peg; 4. Scissors.

¹ They were handed over, in accordance with the law, to the Arad County Directorate for Culture, which in turn entrusted them to the custody of the Arad Museum Complex through the official reports 609/27.09.2021, and 62/31.01.2022.

first discovered², scattered over a range of several meters at the base of the hill (coordinates: 46° 6'49.63"N latitude, 22° 1'25.98"E longitude). Then, on a trail that climbs smoothly towards a plateau area, in a north-westerly direction, 200 m away, the adzel was discovered (coordinates: 46° 6'55.70"N latitude, 22° 1'22.50"E longitude); another 100 m further on, spread out from each other, were the scythe ring and what we think might be a Roman tent peg³ (coordinates: 46° 6'57.39"N latitude, 22° 1'18.58"E longitude). The item that we assume could be a half of a pair of scissors was discovered following the same direction, 130 meters apart (46° 6'57.84"N latitude, 22° 1'12.25"E longitude). Without exception, the pieces were shallow in the forest soil.

Items description. Discussions and analogies

*Illyrian drachmas*⁴

Although they were not clustered in a single spot, the discovery of the coins in such a small area, as mentioned above, shows with certainty that they got there during a single event (their hiding, their eventual ritual deposition, subsequent disturbance leading to their scattering, or simply their loss) and belong to a single lot. The coins are in a relatively good state of conservation, with varying degrees of deterioration; one is missing a fragment.

1. Drachma, Apollonia (Pl. 1, fig. 1).

Good preservation, a large portion broken off; minced, off-centered flan. Does not appear in Maier (!).

Av. ΑΡΙΣΤ[Ω ...?] Cow suckling calf, right. Pearl circle.

Rv. [Α]ΠΙΟ[Α] / [.....] – ΣΗ – ΝΟ[...]. Shrouded circle.

Reverse axis: 7.

Dimensions: 1.67 cm Ø. Weight: 1.8 g;

2. Drachma, Apollonia (Pl. 1, fig. 2).

Obverse very chipped, legend faded; reverse legible. Medium preservation, the reverse flank slightly off-centered. Possibly Maier 26 or 27 (at 57 the name on the reverse is too long).

Av. [ΑΡΧΗΝΟΣ] Cow suckling calf, left, looking right. Traces of pearly circle.

Rv. ΑΠΟΛ / [ΘΕΟ – ΔΟ] – ΤΟΣ or [ΜΗΝΟ – ΔΟ] – ΤΟΣ. Shrouded circle.

Reverse axis: 12.

Dimensions: 1.62 × 1.51 cm Ø. Weight: 2 g;

3. Drachma, Apollonia (Pl. 1, fig. 3).

Chopped, poor preservation, off-centered flan. Maier 31, but the legends of Av. and Rv. are reversed !

Av. [?]ΝΙΚΗΝ Cow suckling calf, left. Pearl circle.

Rv. [ΑΠΙΟΛ] / [ΑΥΤΟ] – ΒΟΥ – ΛΟΥ. Shrouded circle.

Reverse axis: 3.

Dimensions: 1.73 × 1.60 cm Ø. Weight: 2 g;

4. Drachma, Dyrrhachium (Pl. 1, fig. 4).

Good preservation, one portion broken. Maier 405.

Av. ΞΕΝΩΝ Cow suckling calf, right, looking left. In the right field quiver, above bird (?). Pearl circle.

Rv. [ΔΥΡ] / ΧΑΡΟ – ΠΙ – [ΝΟΥ] Shrouded circle.

Reverse axis: 7.

Dimensions: 1.79 × 1.87 cm Ø. Weight: 2.9 g⁵.

Iron items

As I said at the beginning, if for some of the items the functional attribution has been made with a high degree of accuracy, there are question marks regarding the identification of others. In spite of this, we considered it appropriate to present the hypotheses on the latter.

² It should be noted that three of them were discovered and handed over with the first lot of coins, while the fourth coin was unearthed in the same place in January 2022.

³ Suggestions on how to identify these pieces were offered by PhD Iosif Vasile Ferencz (The Museum of Dacian and Roman Civilisation Deva) și Bogdan Lăpușan (PhD student, The Romanian Academy Cluj-Napoca, "George Barițiu" History Institute). I am grateful to both of them.

⁴ The coins were identified by PhD Radu Ardevan, to whom I show my gratitude.

⁵ Maier 1908.

1. Adze (Pl. 1, fig. 5).

Relatively well preserved. It is of the type with longitudinally placed shank, with the upper flaps bent but not knotted; the blade is curved. The type in question probably evolved from an imitation of Celtic models. They are spread relatively uniformly in the area inhabited by the Dacians and date back to the 1st century BC – 1st century AD⁶.

Dimensions: length 11 cm; blade width 5.7 cm; width of the grip hole 3.2 cm. Weight: 166.5 g.

2. Scythe ring (Pl. 1, fig. 6).

Relatively well preserved. It has a plano-convex shape and helps to fix the scythe to the wooden shank⁷.

Dimensions: length 4.7 cm; height 3.8 cm; width 1.1 cm. Weight: 31 g.

3. Tent peg (?) (Pl. 1, fig. 7).

Relatively well preserved. Made from an iron bar, widened at one end, from which the hook was notched and twisted to hold.

Accepting this functional attribution has to be made with caution, but we should note the high degree of similarity with a piece found in a Roman military camp, identified and investigated in the mountainous area of the north-western Iberian Peninsula⁸ (see Plate 1). Also, we have been informed that a similar item was found in Ardeu.⁹

Dimensions: length 10.4 cm. Weight: 111.4 g.

4. Scissors (?) (Pl. 1, fig. 8).

Fragmentary preservation, missing the handle and the other arm. Made of iron, the edge is slightly curved towards the tip, which would have been sharp, but has disappeared, probably as a result of corrosion. Again, accepting this identification has to be made with some caution, but we consider that the piece discussed here exhibits the morphological features of a scissors.

Its provenance or imitation from the Celtic culture is indubitable; finds of similar pieces have also been made in the Lower Mureș valley, in the Celtic necropolis of Aradu Nou¹⁰.

Dimensions: item total length 15.7 cm; blade length 9 cm; blade maximum width 2.8 cm. Weight: 41 g.

Conclusions

All these finds come from a small area and fall chronologically into the late La Tène. These spatial and temporal indicators lead us to the conclusion of a human presence and various activities carried out by them in this sector of the Lower Mureș valley.

The presence of drachmas enriches the list of monetary discoveries. We correlate the Monoroștia drachma finds with finds containing this type of coins within a certain radius around our point: Căprioara (hoard)¹¹, Bruznic (isolated discovery)¹² – these two, in the Lower Mureș basin, Dieci (three hoard-type finds)¹³ and Gura Văii (hoard), in the Crișul Alb basin, which could be reached in a few hours by crossing the Zărand Mountains.

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⁶ Glodariu, Iaroslavschi 1979, 83-85. According to the typology established by Ioan Glodariu, our specimen belongs to category 1, type I, with muff.

⁷ Glodariu, Iaroslavschi 1979, 73-74. It is generally believed that these were used to fasten the tail; the lighter cuttlefish did not require this additional method of fastening the shank.

⁸ Pérez-Díaz *et al.* 2021, 4. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14662035.2021.1950995>.

⁹ Information kindly provided by PhD Iosif Vasile Ferencz.

¹⁰ Crișan 1974, 41.

¹¹ Berzovan 2017, 152-153, with the citations from there.

¹² Berzovan 2017, 152, with the citations from there.

¹³ Berzovan 2017, 160-161, with the citations from there.

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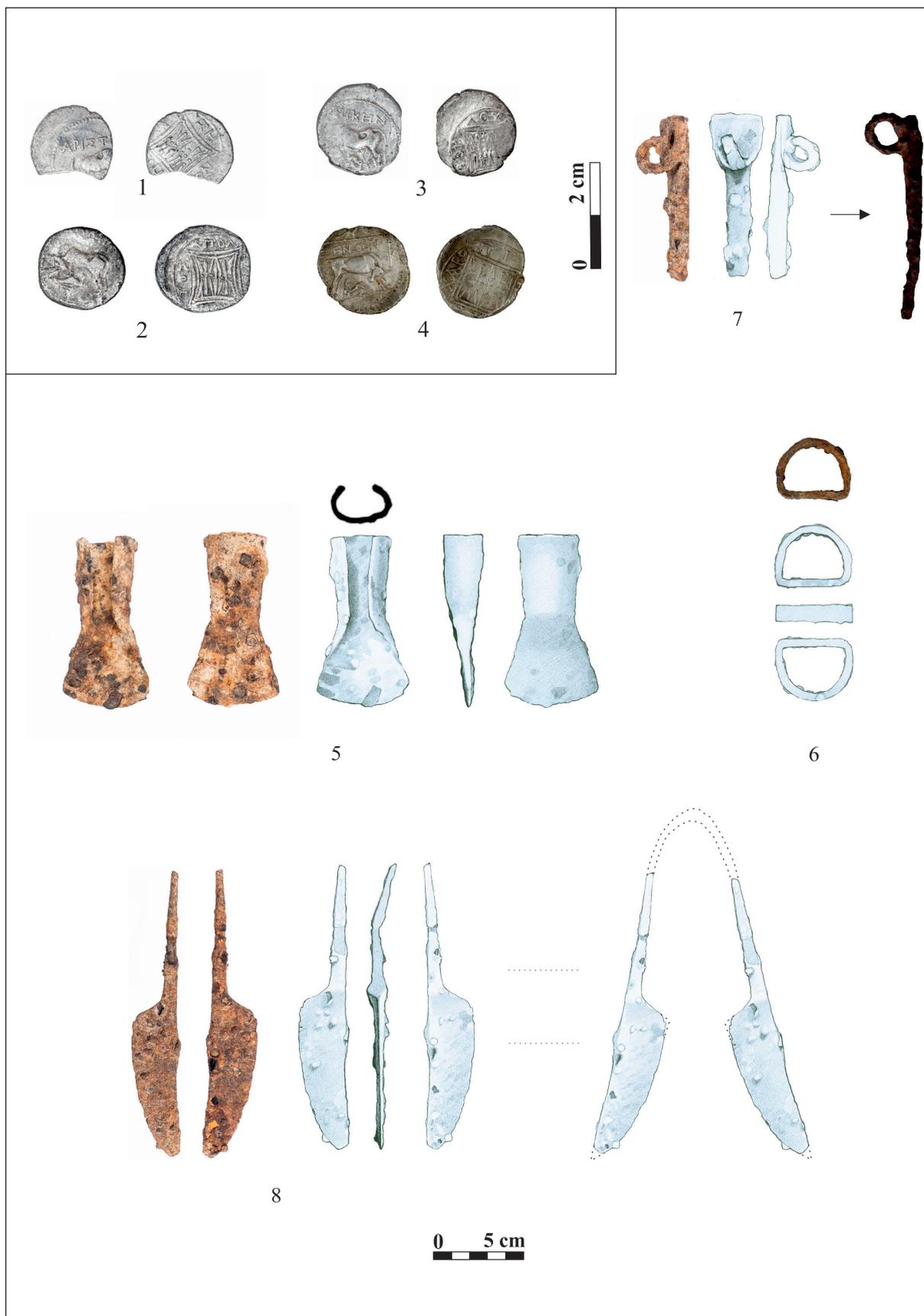


Plate I. Illyrian drachmas and iron items discovered at Monoroștia – Dâmbu lui Hârtici:
 1-3. Apollonia drachmas; 4. Dyrrachium drachma; 5. Adze; 6. Scythe ring; 7. Tent peg (?) with an analogy from the roman military camp A *Recacha*, in north-western Iberian Peninsula (after Pérez-Díaz et al. 2021).
 8. Fragmentary scissors (?) with an attempt of graphic reconstruction, including areas lost to corrosion.
 Photographs: Nelu Scripiciuc, Flavia Dragoș, Pérez-Díaz et al. 2021. Drawings: Daniel Preda.

