

The Gothic invasions of the mid-3rd c. A.D. and the Battle of Abritus: coins and archaeology in east-central Barbaricum*

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In the *Numismatic Chronicle* for 2013, A. Bursche put forward the proposition that the imperial treasury was seized by the Goths when in A.D. 251 they crushed the Roman army at Abritus.¹ Most of the plundered Roman gold was presumably in the form of coin (ingots are neither excluded nor confirmed). This gold has now been traced with some confidence to archaeological sites of the Wielbark and the Chernyakhiv cultures, in particular to grave assemblages dated to the second half of the 3rd c. (phase C1b-C2 of the Late Roman period).² This had even broader consequences, since the capture of an enormous amount of gold by the barbarians could have been the immediate cause of the deterioration of the *aureus* under Decius' successors.³

The conclusion that the Roman imperial treasury was captured by the Goths at Abritus is based chiefly upon analysis of the evidence of coin finds, above all the *aurei* of Decius and his immediate predecessors recovered from barbarian contexts and then those identified in museum collections. These finds evidently cluster in Pomerania, E Poland and W Ukraine, territories settled in the second quarter of the 3rd c. by people of the Wielbark culture, and in the territory of the Chernyakhiv culture. Outside this area, and including the territory of the empire itself, the same finds category is hardly recorded. Nearly all of the coins are pierced, the hole having been made from the obverse, usually above the emperor's head, but some of them were cut up. The analysis of large numismatic collections from east-central Europe has also shown that pierced *aurei* are mostly issues of Decius. According to the first-named author, the crucial argument validating the proposition that the *aurei* of that period derive from plunder is that they had been deliberately cut up. This was a practice commonly employed by Germanic troops with regard to plunder, one that is documented forcefully in the bog deposits of the Baltic Sea region, particularly S Scandinavia.⁴ The materials and conclusions presented in 2013 were expanded upon to

* *Frequently cited:*

Bursche 2013 = A. Bursche, "The battle of Abritus, the Imperial treasury and *aurei* in Barbaricum," *NC* 173 (2013) 151-71.

Магомедов 2001 = Б. В. Магомедов, *Черняховская культура. Проблема этноса* (Lublin 2001).

Мызгин 2016 = К. В. Мызгин, "Готские войны, римские монеты и черняховская культура," *Stratum plus* 4 (2016) 153-71.

Мызгин 2018 = К. В. Мызгин, "Ауреусы, антонинианы и провинциальная бронза. Готские войны III в. и черняховская культура в свете монетных находок," in М. В. Любичев and К. В. Мызгин (edd.), *Хронология и монетные находки позднеимперского времени и эпохи Великого переселения народов. Актуальные археологические исследования в Центральной и Восточной Европе* (Ostrogothica-Serie [Hefte], вып. 3; Харьков 2018) 36-55.

1 Bursche 2013, an article that was awarded the "Gilljam Prize for third-century numismatics" by the Royal Numismatic Society. With some modifications and additions, a Russian-language version was published by him in 2016: "Битва при Абрите, императорская казна и ауреусы в Барбарикуме," *Oikum* 5 (2016) 127-40.

2 Cf. Магомедов 2001, 70-71.

3 Cf. Bursche 2013, 163-64.

4 Ibid. 162.

some extent in 2018 by Bursche with B. Niezabitowska when they published gold coin finds, one of them a cut-up *aureus* of Decius, recovered from a grave assemblage at Ulów in Tomaszów Lubelski district, SE Poland.⁵ Meanwhile, in two Russian-language publications⁶ K. Мызгин reported on many new finds, adding to the materials originally presented by Bursche. Among these were 56 recent finds of *aurei* from Ukraine which he attributed to the outcome of the Battle of Abritus.⁷ The same author then analysed their geographic spread,⁸ noting the absence of *aurei* of this time horizon east of the Dnieper (Дніпро) river. In his view, this was explainable by the differences between the archaeological cultures on that river's two banks around the middle of the 3rd c.⁹ In the light of the most recent analysis by M. Любичев (M. Lyubichev),¹⁰ to the east of the Dnieper the Chernyakhiv culture is observed in its mature form only from the beginning of the 4th c.

The proposition concerning the capture by the Goths at Abritus of the imperial treasury has met with a favourable reception.¹¹ Here we propose to argue our case further using a larger pool of new, partly-still-unpublished sources (archaeological and numismatic in particular) from central and W Ukraine, to present a broader background and show the repercussions of this incident. A new source, invaluable for our purpose, is the so-called *Scythica Vindobonensia* (see below). In addition, we mean to make an in-depth comparative analysis of the steadily growing pool of cut-up *aurei*, even of cut-up gold *multipla*, recovered on the territory of the Roman empire;¹² these are analysed in the Appendix.

Our focus is on what is today north and east Poland, western Belarus and Ukraine. We shall start by describing the archaeological, numismatic and written sources relevant to

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- 5 A. Bursche and B. Niezabitowska, "Two antique gold coins from Ulów in Roztocze," in B. Niezabitowska-Wisniewska *et al.* (edd.), *Studia barbarica*, vol. II (Lublin 2018) 249-61.
 - 6 Мызгин 2016 and 2018.
 - 7 Ibid. 142-43.
 - 8 Мызгин 2018, 41-42.
 - 9 Ibid. 2018, 47.
 - 10 М. В. Любичев, *Ранняя история днепро-донецкой лесостепи I-V веков* (Ostrogothica-Serie [Bände] 2; Харьков 2019) 184-85 and 254.
 - 11 R. Bland, "What happened to gold coinage in the 3rd c. A.D.?", *JRA* 26 (2013) 273; id., "The gold coinage of Philip I and family," *RN* 171 (2014) 95-99; M. Kulikowski, *Imperial triumph: the Roman world from Hadrian to Constantine, AD 138-363* (London 2016) 150-54; M. Wilczyński, "Wizygoci w rejonie Bałkanów w teorii i praktyce politycznej dworów późnego Cesarstwa Rzymskiego," *Vox Patrum* 66 (2016) 302; A. Hostein, "Note sur les dariques de Cniva (*Dexippus Vindobonensis*) et autres curiosités 'barbares'," *RN* 174 (2017) 48; A. Ziolkowski, "Trasfondo de la crisis del Imperio Romano en el siglo III," in D. Santos (ed.), *Aspectos de la historia del Imperio Romano: textos de Morstein-Marx, Rosenstein, Mattingly, Ziolkowski, Grey y Drinkwater* (La Plata 2017) 67-95; B. Mees, "Early Gothic numismatic [h]rustis and γοUVΘ/ιουv," in *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Deutschen Sprache und Literatur* (Berlin 2018) 452; W. Heizmann, "Das Gold der römischen Kaiser," in H. Sahn, W. Heizmann and V. Millet (edd.), *Gold in der europäischen Heldensage* (Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde, Ergänzungsbände 109, 2019) 301; G. A. Cecconi and A. Hostein, "L'imperatore Decio, *Germanicus Maximus*. A proposito di un'iscrizione recentemente scoperta in Palazzo Vecchio a Firenze," *CahGlotz* 19 (2019) 73-86.
 - 12 R. Raynaud, "Les aurei découpés, catalogue et étude," *Bull. Cercle d'Etudes Numismatiques* 47.2 (2010) 246-63; "Les aurei découpés: supplément 1, Gordien III," *ibid.* 48.1 (2011) 335; "Les aurei découpés: supplément 2, Auguste, Gallien," *ibid.* 48.3 (2011) 388-90; "Les aurei découpés: supplément 3, Maximin II Daia," *ibid.* 49.1 (2012) 31-32; "Les aurei découpés: supplément 5, Faustine II," *ibid.* 51.2 (2014) 258-59; "Les aurei découpés: supplément 6, Gordien III," *ibid.* 53.2 (2015) 36; "Les aurei découpés: supplément 7, Dioclétien," *ibid.* 54.2 (2017) 28-29; "Médaillons romains découpés: Gordien III (Rome, 243) et Gallien (Siscia, 264)," *ibid.* 55.2 (2018) 24-25.

our topic, followed by a comparative analysis and conclusions which may have significant implications for historical interpretation, problems in numismatics and archaeology, as well as for some issues of methodology.

Archaeology

Around the middle of the 3rd c. A.D., we observe significant changes in the archaeological map of settlement in east-central Europe which in their origin go back a century or so earlier. This proposal is substantiated in the first place by horizons of cemeteries that we can attribute to specific archaeological cultures, since settlement sites have not been sufficiently investigated archaeologically and afford no chronological markers. The second half of the 2nd c. (the so-called phase B2/C1 in the central-European chronological system) is a time of decline for cemeteries on the right bank of the middle Vistula, cemeteries previously used by the people of the archaeological Przeworsk culture. These communities are commonly identified with the tribal confederation of the Lugii, the *Lugiorum nomen* of the written sources, who would later become the Vandals.¹³ These burial sites are replaced, on a wider scale from the early 3rd c. onwards (during phase C1a), by cemeteries and settlements of the Wielbark culture people, which spread as far as Волинська область¹⁴ (NW Ukraine). The new cemeteries in that region were being established in the same period as that in which the mortuary sites used by communities of the Wielbark culture fell out of use across much of N Poland, in Pomerania and northern 'Greater Poland' in particular. These gradually unfolding processes are widely understood to document a shift in settlement, caused by the southeastwards migration of the Goths, previously established in the north.¹⁵

13 K. Godłowski, "Gegenseitige Beziehungen zwischen der Wielbark- und der Przeworsk-Kultur. Veränderungen ihrer Verbreitung und das Problem der Gotenwanderung," in J. Kmiecinski (ed.), *Peregrinatio Gothica* (Archaeologia Baltica VII; Łódź 1986) 125-52; id., "Germanische Wanderungen im 3. Jh. v.Chr. bis 6. Jh. n.Chr. und ihre Widerspiegelung in den historischen und archäologischen Quellen," in E. Straume and E. Skar (edd.), *Peregrinatio Gothica* III (Oslo 1992) 53-57; id., "Die Barbaren nördlich der Westkarpaten und das Karpatenbecken — Einwanderungen, politische und militärische Kontakte," in *Das römische Reich und seine Nachbarn im Bereich der Karpaten* (= Specimina Nova 11.1, 1994) 65-89; J. Kolendo, "Central Europe and the Mediterranean world in the 1st-5th centuries A.D." in P. Urbańczyk (ed.), *Origins of central Europe* (Warsaw 1997) 5-21; id., "Die antiken Schriftquellen zur ältesten Geschichte der Wandalen," in A. Kokowski and Ch. Leiber (edd.), *Die Wandalen. Die Könige, die Eliten, die Krieger und die Handwerker* (Holzminen 2003) 49-74; J. Andrzejowski, "The Przeworsk culture. A brief story (for the foreigners)," in U. Lund Hansen and A. Bitner-Wróblewska (edd.), *Worlds apart? Contacts across the Baltic Sea in the Iron Age* (Copenhagen 2010) 59-110; B. Kontny, "Przeworsk culture society and its long-distance contacts, AD 1-350," in A. Rzeszotarska-Nowakiewicz (ed.), *The past societies. Polish lands from the first evidence of human presence to the Early Middle Ages, 500 BC–500 AD*, vol. 4 (Warszawa 2016) 165-73; J. Andrzejowski, "The Gothic migration through Eastern Poland — the archaeological evidence," in A. Cieśliński and B. Kontny (edd.), *Interacting barbarians: contacts, exchange and migrations in the first millennium AD* (Neue Studien zur Sachsenforschung 9, 2019) 225-37.

14 Oblast refers to the district in modern Ukraine.

15 Godłowski 1986 (supra n.13); R. Wołagiewicz, "Die Goten im Bereich der Wielbark-Kultur," in Kmiecinski (supra n.13) 63-98; Godłowski 1992 (supra n.13) 66; Godłowski 1994 (supra n.13); Kolendo 1997 (supra n.13); A. Kokowski, "Die Masłomęcz-Gruppe. Ihre Chronologie und Beziehungen innerhalb des gotischen Kulturkreises — Ein Beispiel für den kulturellen Wandel der Goten im Verlauf ihrer Wanderungen," *BerRGK* 78 (1997) 643-833; V. Bierbrauer, *Archäologie und Geschichte der Goten vom 1.-7. Jahrhundert* (Frühmittelalterliche Studien 28, 1994) 76-98; V. Bierbrauer, "Gepiden in der Wielbark-Kultur (1.-4. Jahrhundert n.Chr.)? Eine Spurensuche," in A. Wesse (ed.), *Studien zur Archäologie des Ostseeraumes. Von der Eisenzeit zum Mittelalter*

Around the middle of the 3rd c. (phases C1b-C2), a new archaeological entity apparently took form in the barbarian territories of SE Europe, one known as the Chernyakhiv culture.¹⁶ The process of its emergence presumably began in the region between the middle Dniester (Дністер) and the upper reaches of the Southern Bug.¹⁷ A decisive rôle in these developments was played by people of the Wielbark culture.¹⁸ Artefacts found in the earliest of the grave assemblages of the Chernyakhiv culture in this region (e.g., the cemeteries at Ружичанка [Ruzhychanka], Чернелів-Руський [Cherneliv-Rus'kyi] and Косанів [Kosaniv]) date to phases C1b and C1b/C2, and greatly resemble forms known from the Wielbark culture.¹⁹ Next to a pronounced element of the people of the Wielbark culture which is noted at this early stage of the Chernyakhiv culture, some scholars have recognized the impact of other Germanic communities, traced to the Przeworsk culture,²⁰ Scandinavia,²¹ and some other population groups identified with Late Sarmatian and Late Scythian societies.²²

Both the Wielbark and the Chernyakhiv communities were bi-ritual in their burial rites, practicing inhumation and cremation, the ratio of the two varying from one region to the next. Unlike what is seen in the Przeworsk culture, male graves identified with the

(Neumünster 1998) 389-403; M. Maczyńska, "Wielbark-Kultur," in *Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde* 34 (2007) 1-20; A. Kokowski, "Die Wielbark-Kultur — Goten in Mittel- und Osteuropa," in Lund Hansen and Bitner-Wroblewska (supra n.13) 111-39; A. Cieśliński, "The society of Wielbark culture, AD 1-300," in Rzeszotarska-Nowakiewicz (supra n.13) vol. 4, 227-28; Andrzejowski (supra n.13); A. Bitner-Wróblewska and M. Maczyńska, "Hic Suebiae finis! Die südliche Ostseezone in der Spätantike und in der Völkerwanderungszeit," in Cieśliński and Kontny (supra n.13) 21-36.

16 Bierbrauer 1994 (supra n.15) 98-117; Магомедов 2001, 134-39; A. Kokowski, "The Goths in ca. 311 AD," in A. Kaliff and L. Munkhammar (edd.), *Wulfila 311-2011* (Uppsala 2013) 75-77; cf. G. Fuchs-Gomolka (ed.), *Die Sîntana de Mureş-Černjachov-Kultur* (Kolloquien zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte 2; Bonn 1999).

17 Магомедов 2001, 139; М. Б. Шукин, "Феномен черняховской культуры эпохи Константина—Констанция, или что такое черняховская культура?" *Stratum plus* 4 (1999) 68-69; id., *Готский путь. Готы, Рим и черняховская культура* (St. Petersburg 2005) 132.

18 Магомедов 2001, 115-18; О. В. Шаров, "Ранняя фаза черняховской культуры," in О. В. Шаров (ed.), *Петербургский апокриф. Послание от Марка* (St. Petersburg 2011) 338. See also M. Strocen', "Z historii badań wczesnych stanowisk kultury czerniachowskiej," *Folia Praehistorica Posnaniensis* 19 (2014) 175-87.

19 О. А. Гей and И. А. Бажан, *Хронология эпохи «готских походов» (на территории Восточной Европы и Кавказа)* (Moscow 1997) 46; Шукин 2005 (supra n.17) 132-33; Шаров 2011 (supra n.18) 328-33; О. В. Гопкало and А. С. Милашевский, "О содержании раннего этапа культуры Черняхов-Сынтана-де-Муреш," in Д. Г. Савинов (ed.), *Ранний железный век от рубежа эр до середины I тыс. н.э. Динамика освоения культурного пространства* (St. Petersburg 2017) 44-45; et al.

20 Магомедов 2001, 118-19.

21 J. Werner, "Dančeny und Bangstrup. Untersuchungen zur Černjachov-Kultur zwischen Sereth und Dnestr und zu den 'Reichtumszentren' auf Fünen," *BJ* 188 (1988) 241-86; B. Магомедов, "The Chernyakhov People's contacts with Scandinavia and the Crimea," in I. Chrapunov and F.-A. Stylegar (edd.), *Inter ambo maria: contacts between Scandinavia and the Crimea in the Roman period* (Simferopol 2011) 176-86; A. Kaliff, "The Goths and Scandinavia: contacts between Scandinavia, the southern Baltic coast and the Black Sea area during the Early Iron Age and Roman period," in P. F. Biehl and Y.Yu Rassamakin (edd.), *Import and imitation in archaeology* (Langenweissbach 2008) 223-41.

22 О. А. Гей, "Проблема выделения скифо-сарматских элементов в черняховской культуре," *Stratum plus* 4 (2001-2) 296-314; Магомедов 2001, 120-24.

Gothic communities are exceedingly rarely furnished with weapons, and contain a relatively small number of iron objects.²³ A remarkable custom noted in a number of burials of the Wielbark culture in phases C1-C2 is the deliberate defacement of grave-goods, prior to their deposition in the grave, by cutting, breaking or forceful bending — gold objects in particular. The best-known examples of this practice, dated to the first half of the 3rd c., are cremation burials identified at Sapolno in Człuchów district (Pomerania), where fragments of a gold arm-ring of Scandinavian type were found inside a grooved bronze cauldron, Eggers type 44;²⁴ at Pilipki in Bielsk Podlaski district (E Poland), furnished with cut-up gold jewellery deposited inside a heavily-defaced grooved bronze cauldron, again of Eggers type 44 (fig. 1);²⁵ at Czarnówko in Łębork district (N Poland), where the grave assemblage no. R373 included, *inter alia*, fragments of gold Pomeranian-type arm-rings and yet another imported cauldron, Eggers type 44;²⁶ and in another burial at Brzostowo in Piła district (PL) which included 3 cut fragments of a gold ingot.²⁷ In the assemblage from an inhumation burial²⁸ at Ulów, the *aureus* of Decius (struck for Herennia Etruscilla) was found with cut-up gold wire and gold foil (fig. 2; map 1). Another assemblage, found

23 See the works cited in n.15: Wołagiewicz 1986; Kokowski 1997; Bierbrauer 1994, 82-117; Bierbrauer 1998; Mączyńska 2007; Kokowski 2010; Cieśliński 2016, 232-37.

24 E. Sprockhoff, "Ein ostgermanisches Brandgrab der römischen Kaiserzeit aus Sempohl," *Mainzer Z.* 23 (1928) 34-40; A. Bursche, "Moneta i kruszec w kulturze wielbarskiej w okresie późnorzymskim," *Przegląd Archeologiczny* 31 (1983) 66-67; M. Przybyła, S. Voroniatov and W. Bielawec, "Gold rings from Pilipki in Podlasie: some remarks on the connections between the Wielbark culture and Scandinavia at the close of the Early and in the beginnings of the Late Roman Period," in B. Niezabitowska-Wiśniewska *et al.* (edd.), *Studia barbarica. Profesorowi Andrzejowi Kokowskiemu w 65. rocznicę urodzin* (Lublin 2018) 162; J. Schuster, *Czarnówko, Fpl. 5. Acht Prunkgräber – Zeugnisse neuer Eliten im 2. Jh. n. Chr. im Ostseeraum* (Monumenta Archaeologica Barbarica XIX/2; Łębork-Warszawa 2018).

25 Among its contents: 23 fragments of a gold bracelet of the Pomeranian type, 2 fragments of a gold ring of the Scandinavian type, 3 fragments of a gold, S-shaped clasp of Blume type B, 2 gold settings for oval inlays; 1 gold *lunula*; a tiny lump of melted gold. See C. A. Дубинский, *Отчет Археологической Комиссии за 1913-1916 гг.* (Petrograd 1918) 166; J. Okulicz, "Studia nad przemianami kulturowymi i osadniczymi w okresie rzymskim na Pomorzu Wschodnim, Mazowszu i Podlasiu," *Archeologia Polski* 16 (1970) 468-69; B. В. Кропоткин, "Богатое погребение у д. Пилипки (Бельский уезд, Белостокское воеводство, Польша)," *Archeologia Polona* 14 (1973) 331; K. Burek, *Starożytnicy i archeolodzy. Z dziejów badań archeologicznych na Białostocczyźnie* (Olsztyn 1977) 44-45; Bursche 1983 (supra n.24) 66-67; V. Bierbrauer, "Ostgermanische Oberschichtgräber der römischen Kaiserzeit und des frühen Mittelalters," *Archaeologia Baltica* 8 (1989) 62-64; Z. L'vova and M. Ščukin, "Ripostiglio (tomba?) di Pilipki, Białystok (Polonia)," in V. Bierbrauer, O. von Hessen and E. A. Arslan (edd.), *I Goti* (Milan 1994) 64-65; Г. Семьянчук, "Гісторыя скарбы с вёскі Пiлiпкi," *Bel'ski gostinec'* 4.2 (2001) 8-12; Przybyła *et al.* 2018 (supra n.24); M. Przybyła, *Pressblechverzierte spätkaiserzeitliche Trachtbestandteile in Südsandinavien* (Copenhagen 2018) 643 and 645; Schuster (supra n.24) 117-19.

26 M. Mączyńska and D. Rudnicka, "Ein Grab mit römischen Importen aus Czarnówko, Kr. Łębork (Pommern)," *Germania* 82.2 (2004) 421-22; J. Schuster, "Złoty wiek – Czarnówko w okresie wpływów rzymskich i w okresie wędrówek ludów," in J. Andrzejowski and J. Schuster (edd.), *Okruch złota w popiele ogniska... Starożytne nekropole w Czarnówku i ich tajemnice* (Łębork 2014) 53-90, figs. 66-67; Przybyła (supra n.25) 643-44; Schuster (supra n.24) 17-19, pls. XVIII-XXI.

27 G. A. Crüger, *Über die im Regierungsbezirk Bromberg (Alt-Burgund) aufgefundenen Alterthümer und die Wanderstrassen römischer, griechischer, gothischer u. keltischer Heere von der Weichsel nach dem Rhein* (Mainz 1872) 25-26, 42, Tab. 2: 23-24; E. Blume, *Die germanischen Stämme und die Kulturen zwischen Oder und Passarge zur römischen Kaiserzeit. II. Teil: Material* (Würzburg 1915) 143-44; Schuster (supra n.24) 117-19.

28 Bursche and Niezabitowska 2018 (supra n.5) 249-61.



Fig. 1. Cut-up arm-rings found in a cremation grave at Pilipki in Bielsk Podlaski district (PL) (after Przybyła *et al.* 2018 [supra n.24] 160, fig. 1.1).

by amateurs, in the vicinity of Вернигородок in Вінницька oblast (UA), consisted of cut gold and a Hemmoor bucket.²⁹ In this context it is worth recalling that within Barbaricum gold arm-rings and finger-rings had the value of power insignia.³⁰ Also worth noting is that the deliberate destruction of grave-goods — weaponry in particular — was a tradition widespread among Germanic peoples but apparently in evidence in cremation burials of the Przeworsk culture.³¹ The same treatment was accorded to the spoils of war taken from

²⁹ O. B. Петраускас and C. B. Діденко, “Знахідки римських речей з північного Поділля (нові надходження до фондів Національного музею України),” *Oium* 6 (2019) 154, fig. 5.

³⁰ J. Werner, “Der goldene Armring der Frankenkönigs Childerich und die germanischen Handgelenkringe der jüngeren Kaiserzeit,” *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 14 (1980) 1-49; K. Andersson, “Romartida guldsmede i Norden III. Övriga smycken, teknisk analys och verstadsgropper,” *Aun* 21 (Uppsala 1995); C. von Carnap-Bornheim and J. Ilkjær, *Illerup Ådal*, vols. 5-8, *Die Prachtausrüstungen* (Århus 1996) 251-357; U. Lund Hansen, “Goldring,” in H. Beck and J. Hoops (edd.) in *Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde* 12 (Berlin 1998) 345-61; ead., “Gold rings — symbols of sex and rank. Necklaces and bracelets in Scandinavia and Continental Europe from the Late Roman and Migration periods,” in B. Magnus (ed.), *Roman gold and the development of the Early Germanic kingdoms. Aspects of technical, socio-political, socio-economic, artistic and intellectual development, A.D. 1-550* (Stockholm 2001) 157-88; N. Lau, *Pilgrimsdorf/Pielgrzymowo. Ein Fundplatz der römischen Kaiserzeit in Nordmasovien. Eine Studie zu Archivalien, Grabsitten und Fundbestand* (Neumünster 2012) 55-60; D. Quast, “Ein kleiner Goldhort der jüngeren römischen Kaiserzeit aus Černivci (ehem. Czernowitz / Cernăuți) in der westlichen Ukraine nebst einigen Anmerkungen zu goldenen Kolbenarmringen,” in M. Hardt and O. Heinrich-Tamáska (edd.), *Macht des Goldes, Gold der Macht. Herrschaft- und Jenseitsrepräsentation zwischen Antike und Frühmittelalter im mittleren Donaauraum* (Weinstadt 2013) 171-86; Przybyła, Voroniatov and Bielawec 2018 (supra n.24); Przybyła *et al.* 2018 (supra n.25) 639-47; Schuster 2018 (supra n.24) 117-20, tab. 2, with fig. 54.

³¹ K. Czarnecka and B. Kontny, “Traces of combat or traces of ritual destruction? The damage of

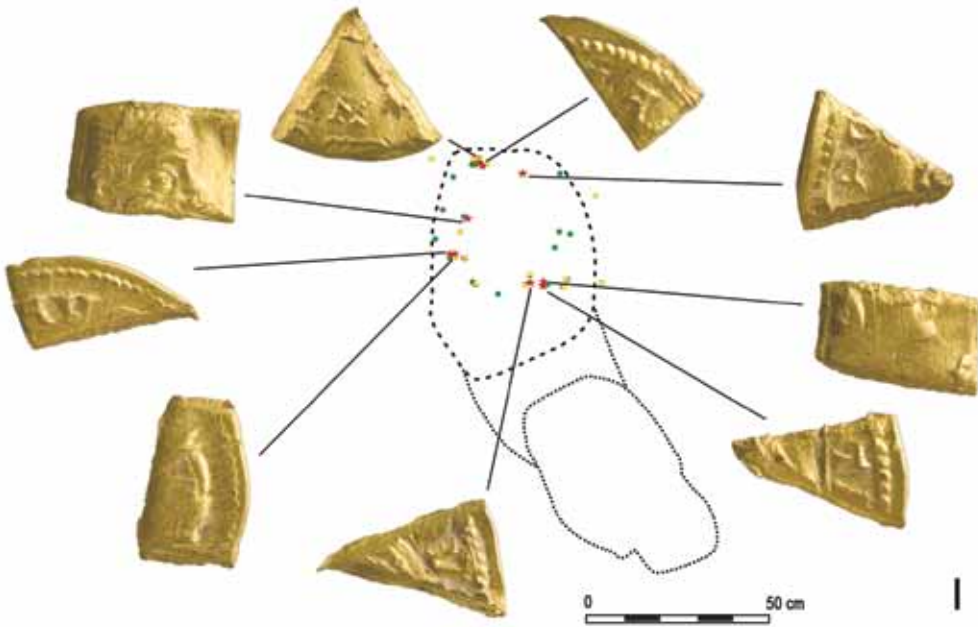


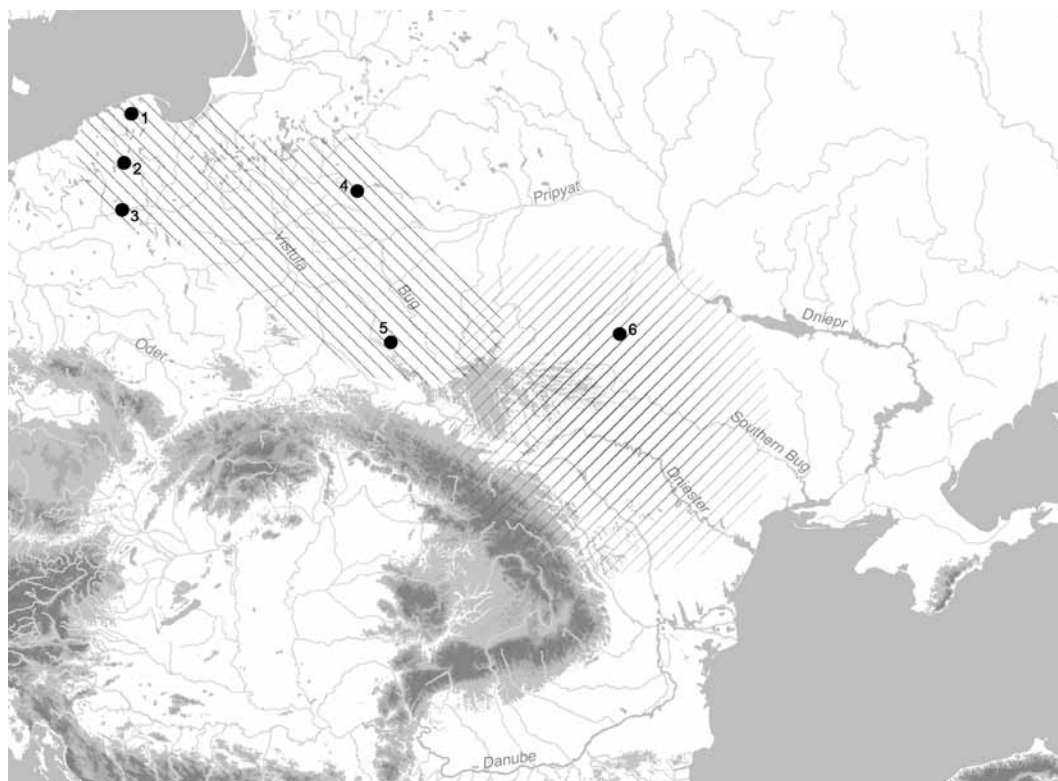
Fig. 2. Grave assemblage found at Ulów in Tomaszów district (PL) (after Bursche and Niezabitowska 2018 [supra n.5] 254, fig. 3A): I (above): fragments of an *aureus* of Decius (for Herennia Etruscilla) and the placement in the grave; II (below): cut-up gold items from the grave.



the fallen enemy. Cut up, broken and forcibly-bent military gear was cast into lakes; it has been recorded in bog sites mostly of the 3rd and 4th c. that have been identified in the vicinity of the Baltic Sea.³²

weapons in the Przeworsk Culture," in H.-J. Schalles and A. W. Busch (edd.), *Waffen in Aktion. Akten der 16. ROMEC* (Xantener Berichte 16, 2009) 29-40; B. Kontny, "The war as seen by an archaeologist. Reconstruction of barbarian weapons and fighting techniques in the Roman period basing on the analysis of weapon graves. The case of the Przeworsk Culture," *JRMES* 16 (2009) 93-132; Kontny 2016 (supra n.13) 174-99.

32 J. Ilkjær, *Illerup Ådal*, vol. 1-2. *Die Lanzen und Speere* (Århus 1990); id., *Illerup Ådal*, vol. 3-4.



Map 1. The distribution of grave assemblages with cut-up gold objects on the territory of the archaeological cultures connected with Goths and their allies (after Schuster 2018 [supra n.26], 118, Abb. 54, with additions): Right-hatched: area of the Wielbark culture in the mid-3rd to early 5th c. (after Cieśliński 2016 (supra n.15) 225, fig. 8). Left-hatched: area of the early Chernyakhiv culture in the second half of the 3rd c. (after Магомедов 2001, 287-88, figs. 88-89).

1: Czarnówko (PL)

2: Sapolno (PL)

3: Brzostowo (PL)

4: Pilipki (PL)

5: Ulów (PL)

6: Вернигородок (UA)

Many researchers believe that a major contribution to the emergence of the Chernyakhiv culture was made by its warriors who took part in the Gothic invasions in the mid-3rd c. O. A. Гей (O. A. Gey) and I. A. Бажан (I. A. Bahzhan) found that the medley of grave-goods observed in burials of the early Chernyakhiv culture is likely to represent plunder brought back from the wars.³³ Б. В. Магомедов (B. V. Magomedov) noted that the impressive quantity of Roman provincial objects dated to between the 2nd and 3rd c. might reflect participation in wars waged in the Roman provinces.³⁴ Nevertheless, it is also important to note that, within the pool of finds attributed to the early phases of the Chernyakhiv

Die Gürtel. Bestandteile und Zubehör (Århus 1993); von Carnap-Bornheim and Ilkjær 1996 (supra n.30); J. Ilkjær, *Illerup Ådal*, vol. 9-10. *Die Schilde* (Århus 2001); id., "Danish war booty sacrifices," in L. Jørgensen, B. Storgaard and L. Gebauer Thomsen (edd.), *The spoils of victory. The North in the shadow of the Roman empire* (Gylling 2003) 44-65; A. Rau, *Nydam Mose*, 1. *Die personengebundenen Gegenstände. Grabungen 1989-1999* (Aarhus 2010); T. Nowakiewicz and A. Rzeszotarska-Nowakiewicz, *Lake Nidajno near Czaszkowo in Masuria: a unique sacrificial site from late antiquity* (Warszawa 2012); T. Nowakiewicz (ed.), *Ancient sacrificial place in the lake in Lubanowo (former Herm-See) in West Pomerania* (Warszawa 2016); id. (ed.), *Ancient sacrificial place in former Lake Nidajno in Masuria. Results of laboratory analyses of selected finds* (Warszawa 2016).

³³ Гей and Бажан 1997 (supra n.19) 47.

³⁴ Магомедов 2001, 139.

culture, the objects described here account for only a small percentage. This is in conflict with the staggering amount of plunder seized, according to the written sources, in the Roman provinces during the Gothic invasions,³⁵ even if it is reasonable to suspect that their accounts are a rhetorical exaggeration.

Such conclusions about participation in the Gothic invasions of the 3rd c. by retinues (*comitatus*) recruited from communities of the the local Chernyakhiv culture have until recently been largely intuitive, based mainly on the analysis of written sources and substantiated only in a minor way by the materials found in archaeological assemblages. Of these, only a small percentage were dated to the early phases of the Chernyakhiv culture. As for the coin finds, they have been all but overlooked. The age of widespread metal-detector use has brought a major turnaround in this situation. Regrettably, the new evidence does not normally derive from authorized archaeological research but from illegal metal-detecting by amateurs. Information about these investigations collected by certain Ukrainian scholars, most notably И. А. Бажан and М. Е. Левада (M. Levada), either in person or via internet forums (particularly Violity) and social networks, has radically augmented the pool of SE European finds of Roman objects datable to the age of the 3rd-c. Gothic invasions.

This applies in the first place to the impressive number of finds of Roman bronze vessels, buckets of Hemmoor type in particular (Eggers 63), and strainers, both known in the days before metal-detecting from only a handful of finds.³⁶ These cluster between the upper reaches of the Southern Bug (Південний Буг) and the middle Dniester (Дністер).³⁷ It is obvious that these vessels, and other bronze objects found in association with them, are elements of grave furnishings in cremation burials (fig. 3; map 2). Typically, these vessels display marks of deliberate defacement, being bent and broken.³⁸ Various hypotheses have been ventured concerning the social status and origin of the community associated with this group of burials,³⁹ like that of a Roman military presence in the region.⁴⁰ However, a view more readily acceptable is the one put forward by M. Levada and M. Potupčik: the distribution of sites with Hemmoor type vessels probably documents the presence in the region of a local power centre, which is supported by finds of distinctive sumptuously-furnished burials.⁴¹

35 Cf. H. Wolfram, *Geschichte der Goten. Von den Anfängen bis zur Mitte des sechsten Jahrhunderts. Entwurf einer historischen Ethnographie* (München 1990) 55-62.

36 Cf. M. Levada and M. Potupčik, "Nowe eksponaty z okresu wpływów rzymskich w Muzeum Krajoznawczym w Winnicy" in J. Andrzejowski, C. von Carnap-Bornheim, A. Cieśliński and B. Kontny (edd.), *Orbis barbarorum. Studia ad archaeologiam Germanorum et Baltorum temporibus Imperii Romani pertinentia Adalberto Nowakowski dedicata* (Warszawa 2017) 411-12.

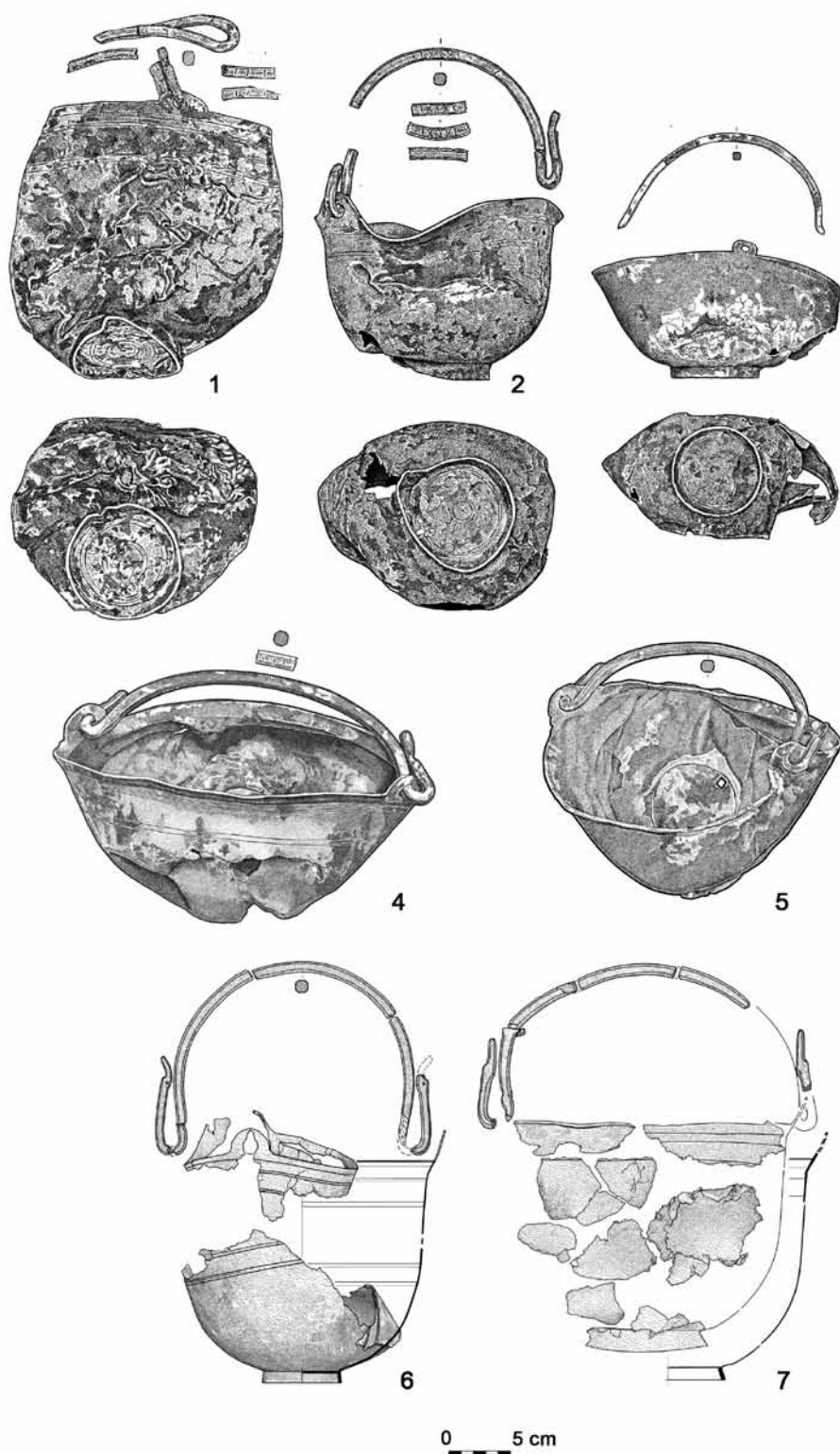
37 О. Надвірняк and О. Погорілець, "Нові знахідки бронзового посуду типу Hemmoor на Поділлі," *Oium* 4 (2014) 151-55; Levada and Potupčik *ibid.* 418, fig. 6; Петраускас and Діденко 2019 (*supra* n.29) 150, fig. 2.

38 О. В. Надвірняк and О. Г. Погорілець, "Про окрему групу трупоспалень на могильниках черняхівської культури (за матеріалами пам'яток України)," *Oium* 5 (2016) 41-49; Levada and Potupčik 2017 (*supra* n.36) 410-11; О. В. Надвірняк and О. Г. Погорілець, "О некоторых параллелях в погребальной обрядности Европейского Барбарикума в первой трети I тысячелетия н.э.," in М. В. Любичев and К. В. Мызгин (edd.), *Хронология и монетные находки позднеримского времени и эпохи Великого переселения народов. Актуальные археологические исследования в Центральной и Восточной Европе (Ostrogothica—Serie [Hefte], вып. 3; Харьков 2018) 233-45; Петраускас and Діденко 2019 (*supra* n.29) 161 and 163.*

39 Гопкало and Милашевский 2017 (*supra* n.19) 45.

40 Надвірняк and Погорілець 2016 (*supra* n.37) 49.

41 Levada and Potupčik 2017 (*supra* n.36) 412.



1: Баламутівка in Хмельницька oblast (О. В. Надвірняк and О. Г. Погорілець, "О некоторых параллелях в погребальной обрядности Европейского Барбарикума в первой трети I тысячелетия н.э.," in Любичев and Мызгин [supra p.37] 250, fig. 1)

2: Великий Жванчик in Хмельницька oblast (Надвірняк and Погорілець *ibid.* 256, fig. 7)

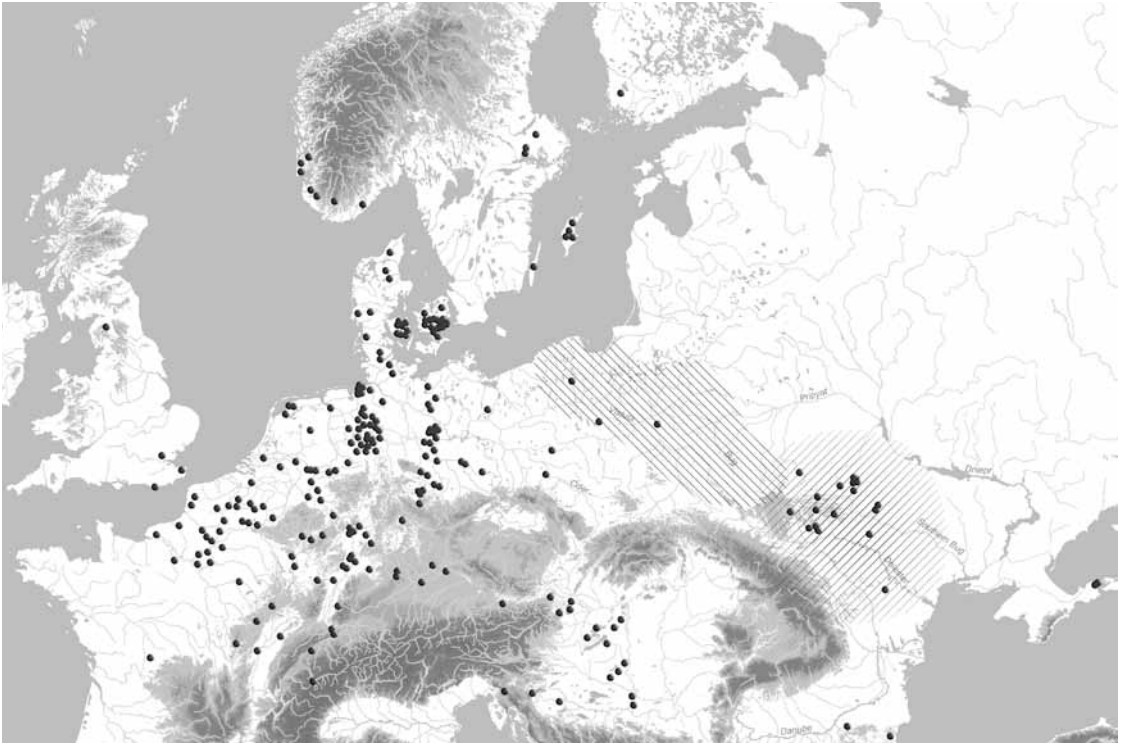
3: Баламутівка in Хмельницька oblast (Надвірняк and Погорілець *ibid.* 251, fig. 2)

4: Бар (environs of) in Вінницька oblast (Надвірняк and Погорілець *ibid.* 252, fig. 3)

5: Городниця in Тернопільська oblast (Надвірняк and Погорілець *ibid.* 253, fig. 4)

6-7: Криштопівка in Вінницька oblast (Levada and Poturčik 2017 [supra p.36] 416, fig. 5.5-6).

Fig. 3. Bent and cut-up Roman bronze vessels found in the territory of the Chernyakhiv culture, Ukraine.



Map 2. Distribution of finds of Roman bronze vessels Eggers types 63-65 within N part of the Roman Empire and Barbaricum (after Levada and Potupčik 2017 [supra n.36] 418, fig. 6; Петраускас and Діденко 2019 [supra n.29] 150, fig. 2).

We can follow this line of reasoning further and tie this group of burials to the participants in the Gothic invasions. This is supported in particular by a complete *aureus* of Decius (struck for Hostilian) and 19 fragments (cut-up and/or melted-down), which were found in grave assemblage no. 2 at Селище in Вінницька oblast (UA) (a cemetery published previously as “Білопілля” [Bilopillya]) next to fragments of a bronze bucket, Eggers type 63⁴² (fig. 4). According to the information we have, yet another assemblage, discovered either in Київська or Вінницька oblast, contained Roman bronze belt-fittings (buckles included), as well as complete *aurei* of Decius and Severus Alexander.⁴³ In a different assemblage, found in Хмельницька oblast (UA), a bronze bucket held 8 *aurei* (5 of Decius, 3 of Decius with a portrait of Herennia Etruscilla).⁴⁴ Also worth noting is the richly-furnished grave assemblage no. 265 known from the cemetery at Чернелів-Руський (UA) which includes imported glass vessels and an *aureus* of Philip the Arab struck for Otacilia Severa (fig. 5).⁴⁵ Consequently, it is entirely legitimate to link the cremation burials described here with the participants in the Battle of Abritus who later became the élite in the barbarian society back in their homeland.

The next rather remarkable and relatively numerous group of finds, which also may be seen to cluster between the upper reaches of the Southern Bug and the middle Dniester,

42 Cf. Петраускас and Діденко 2019 (supra n.29) 165.

43 Information from the treasure hunters' forum “Violity”: <https://forum.violity.com/viewtopic.php?p=12311790> (viewed 27 August, 2019).

44 Information from “Violity”: <https://forum.violity.com/viewtopic.php?t=1254649> (viewed 27 August, 2019).

45 І. П. Герета, “Чернелево-Руський могильник,” *Oium* 3 (Київ, Тернопіль 2013) 82, fig. 133, 2.

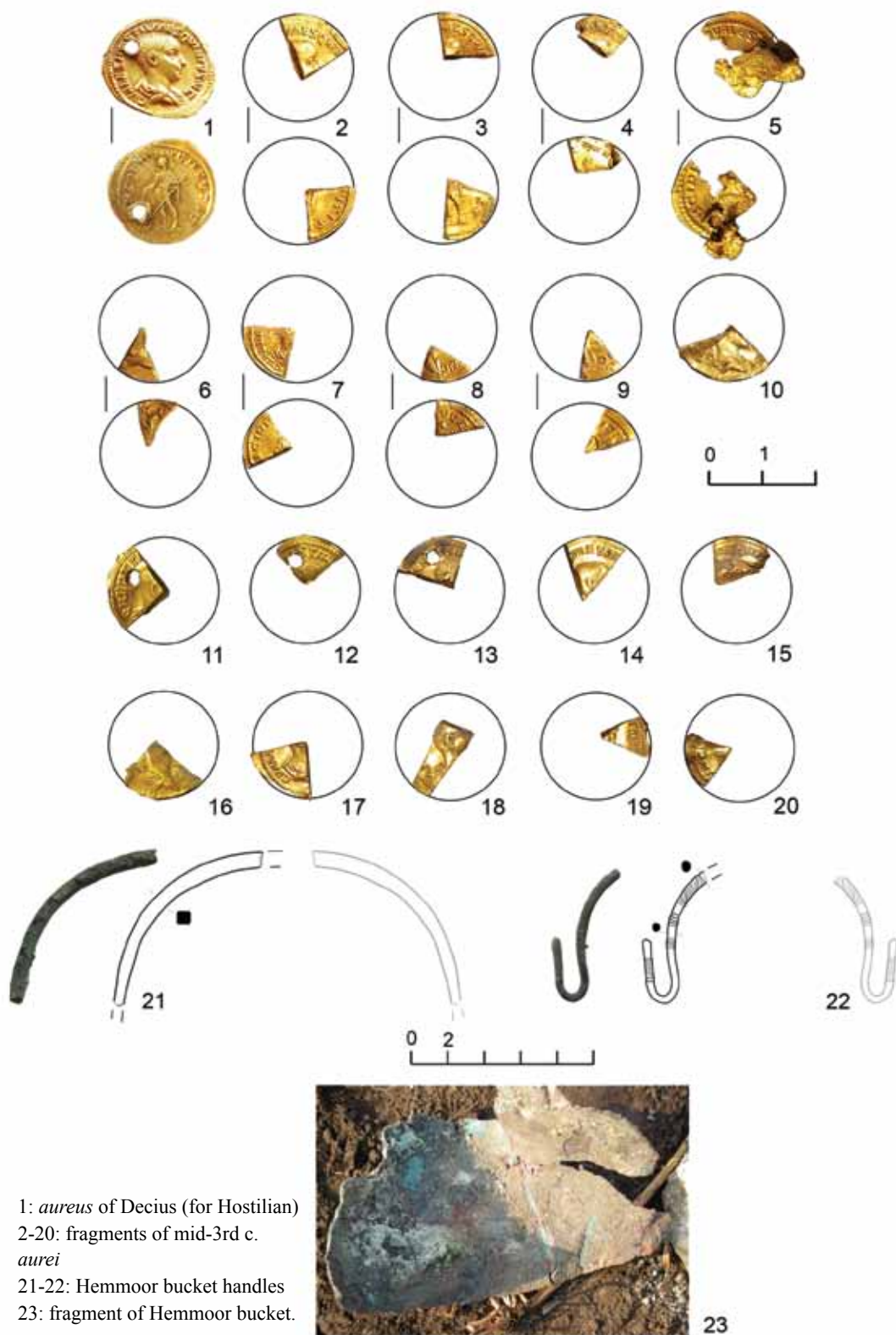


Fig. 4. "Assemblage no. 2", Селище in Вінницька oblast, UA (Петраускас and Діденко 2019 [supra n.29] 155, fig. 6.1-6).

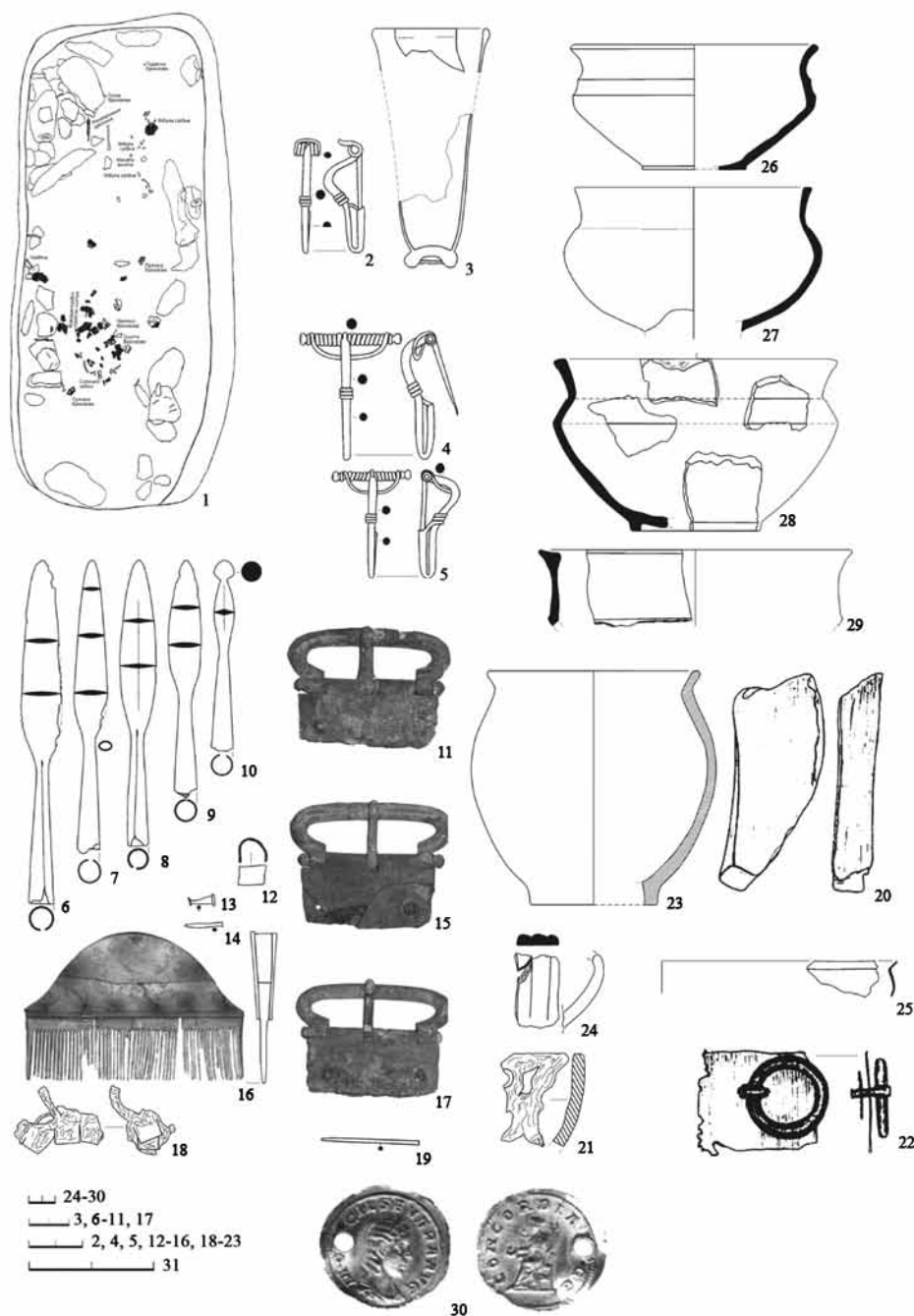


Fig. 5. Grave assemblage no. 265, Чернелів-Руський in Тернопільська oblast, UA (Герета 2013 [supra p.45] 240-43, figs. 133-36).

are fragments of Roman military diplomas. By early 2019, 39 specimens had been recorded (fig. 6; map 3).⁴⁶ It is of interest that they have quite a broad dating: the earliest were issued

46 О. О. Надвірняк, "Нові знахідки римських військових дипломів (diplomata militaria) з межиріччя Середнього Дністра і Південного Бугу," *Археологічні студії «Межибіж»* 4 (2015) 276-83; О. В. Надвірняк, О. Г. Погорілець and О. О. Надвірняк, "Римські військові дипломи на території Південно-Східної Європи," *Оіум* 5 (2016) 170-85; О. В. Надвірняк,



Fig. 6. Selected fragments of bronze military diplomas found in Ukraine in the territory of the Chernyakhiv culture (no common scale).

1: Лeticів in Хмельницька oblast, RMD-UA-023 (Надвірняк *et al.* 2016 [supra p.46] 183)

2: Зарічанка in Хмельницька oblast, RMD-UA-003 (ibid. 177)

3: : Носівці in Вінницька oblast, RMD-UA-008 (ibid. 179)

4: Калинів in Вінницька oblast, RMD-UA-024 (ibid. 184)

5: Деражня (environs of) in Хмельницька oblast, RMD-UA-005 (ibid. 178)

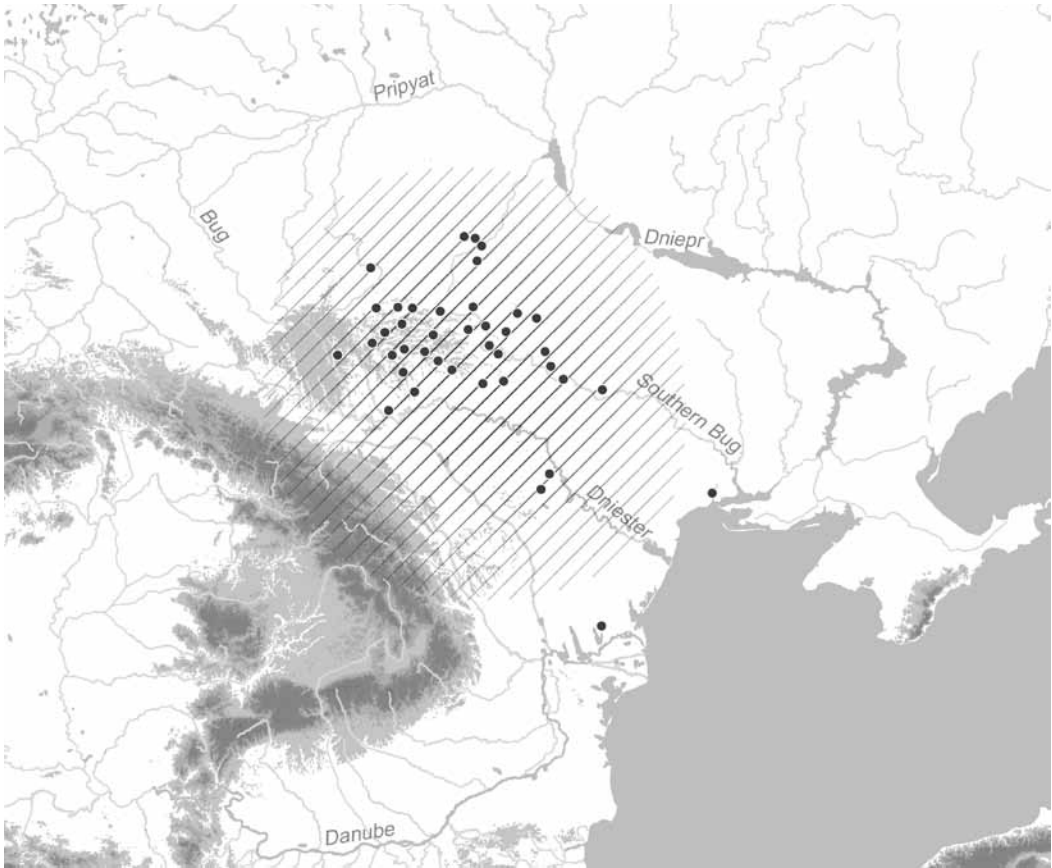
6: Вінницька oblast, RMD-UA-022 (ibid. 183)

7: Вінницька oblast, RMD-UA-018 (ibid. 181)

8: Хмельницька oblast, RMD-UA-017 (ibid. 181)

9: Вінницька oblast, RMD-UA-019 (ibid. 177)

10: Пільний Мукарів in Хмельницька oblast, RMD-UA-004 (ibid. 178).



Map 3. Distribution of finds of Roman bronze military diplomas in Eastern Europe (A. A. Надвирняк, "О некоторых вопросах хронологии римских военных дипломов (diplomata militaria) с «варварских» территорий юго-востока Европы," in Любичев and Мызгин 2018 (see foot of p. 195, Мызгин 2018, 105, fig. 1, with additions from Надвирняк *et al.* 2019 [supra n.46] 140-44).

by Flavian emperors (RMD-UA-012, A.D. 79-80; RMD-UA-008, A.D. 93), the latest date from the reign of Maximinus Thrax (RMD-UA-022/01, A.D. 236/237) and Philip the Arab (RMD-UA-010, A.D. 245-248).⁴⁷ Most of these diplomas were recovered not as part of any closed assemblages, which leaves open the chronology of their passing into Barbaricum. Even so, it is not unlikely that their presence there is associated with the Gothic invasions into the Balkan provinces and perhaps specifically with the looting of Nicopolis ad Istrum, Philippopolis, and veteran settlements in Thrace and Moesia.⁴⁸ The early date of many of

О. Г. Погорілець, П. Холдер (P. Holder) and О. О. Надвирняк, "Римські військові дипломи на території Південно-Східної Європи (частина 2)," *Oium* 6 (2019) 133-47. In March 2020 there are already 51 finds of Roman military diplomas.

⁴⁷ Надвирняк *et al.* *ibid.* (2019) 135-36.

⁴⁸ Cf. B. Gerov, "Die Einfälle der Nordvölker in den Ostbalkanraum im Lichte der Münzschatzfunde," *ANRW* II.6 (1977) 130-42; Wolfram 1990 (supra n.35) 55-58; B. Bleckmann, *Die Reichskrise des III. Jahrhunderts in der spätantiken und byzantinischen Geschichtsschreibung. Untersuchungen zu den nachdionischen Quellen der Chronik des Johannes Zonaras* (Munich 1992) 157-60; P. Heather, *The Goths* (Oxford 1997) 40; A. R. Birley, "Decius reconsidered," in E. Frézouls and H. Jouffroy (edd.), *Les empereurs illyriens. Colloque 1990* (Strasbourg 1998) 77; D. S. Potter, *The Roman empire at bay, AD 180-395* (London 2004) 245-47; J. Kolendo, "Novae during the Goth raid of AD 250/1 (Iordanes, *Getica* 101-103)," in T. Derda, P. Dyczek and J. Kolendo (edd.),

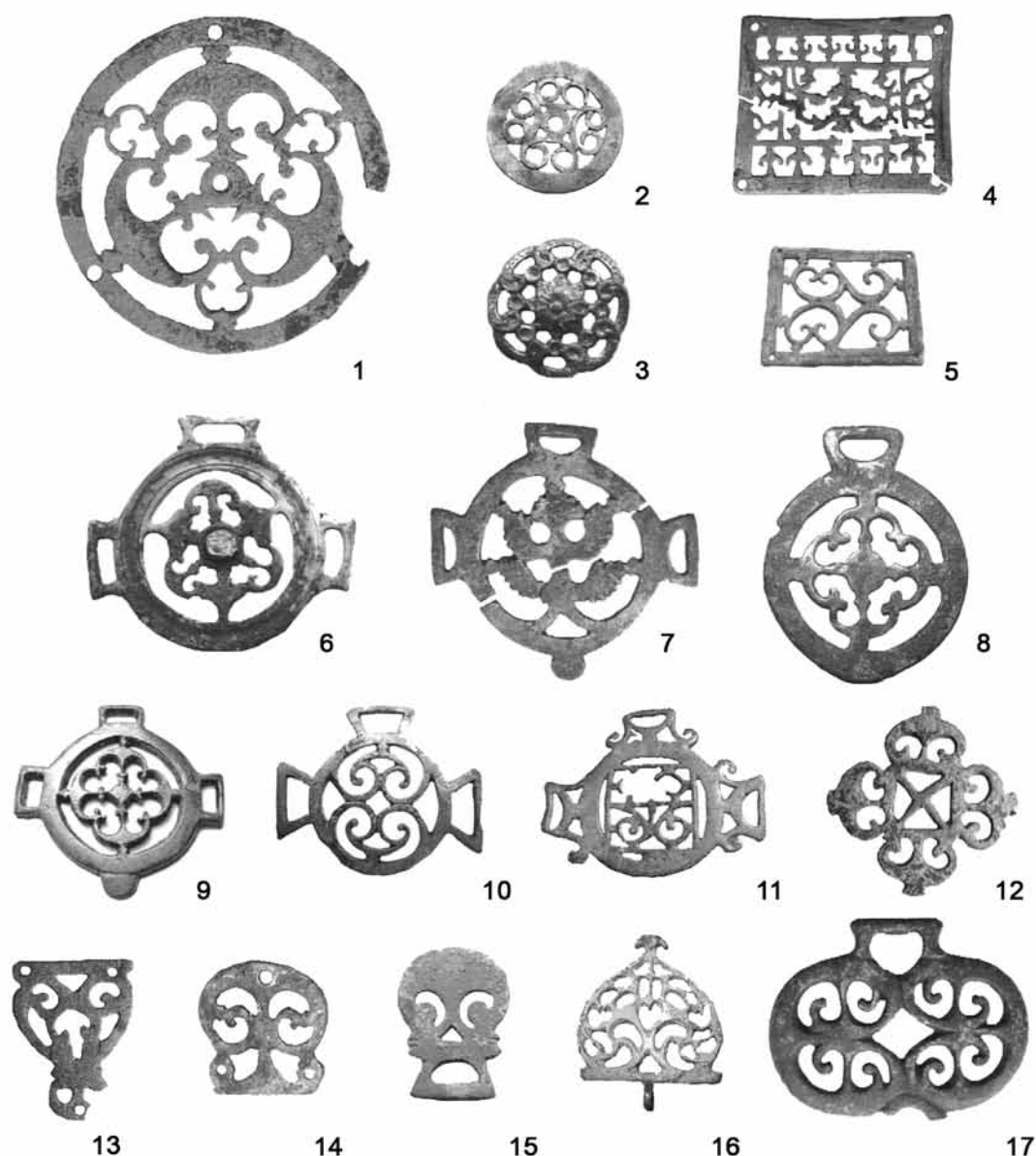


Fig. 7. Elements of Roman horse-harness and belt sets from different findspots in Ukraine.

0 3 cm

1: Хмельницька oblast (Бажан 2012 [infra n.51] 92, no. 4-82)

2: Вінницька oblast (ibid. 105, no. 4-115)

3: Вінницька oblast (ibid. 90, no. 4-76)

4: Житомирська oblast (ibid. 102, no. 4-106)

5: Хмельницька oblast (ibid. 102, no. 4-107)

6: Заливанщина in Вінницька oblast (ibid. 92, no. 4-83)

7: Вінницька oblast (ibid. 99, no. 4-100)

8: Central Ukraine (ibid. 90, no. 4-77)

9: Вінницька oblast (ibid. 89, no. 4-74)

10: Івано-Франківська oblast (ibid. 89, no. 4-75)

11: Тернопільська oblast (ibid. 94, no. 4-87)

12: SW Ukraine (ibid. 91, no. 4-78)

13: Хмельницька oblast (ibid. 99, no. 4-103)

14: Волинська oblast (ibid. 74, no. 4-43)

15: Вінницька oblast (ibid. 74, no. 4-42)

16: W Ukraine (ibid. 72, no. 4-37)

17: Вінницька oblast (ibid. 90, no. 4-76).

these diplomas is easy to explain: they would have been kept by families as a memento of their heroic ancestors, surviving for up to 200 years.⁴⁹ As for the barbarians, they probably treated the bronze diplomas mainly as a source of valuable raw material. The hypothesis that diplomas found within range of settlements of the Chernyakhiv culture testify to a Roman military presence in the territory between the Dniester and the Southern Bug is more than far-fetched, and it lacks any kind of foundation in the sources.⁵⁰

Also of Roman origin are many finds of bronze elements from horse harnesses and military belts recorded in our area of study that are dated to the end of the 2nd and the first three quarters of the 3rd c. (fig. 7).⁵¹ These elements of the personal equipment of Roman soldiers, auxiliary units in particular, presumably had been seized by the Goths after battles in which they were victorious. Only a few of these metal-detector finds made by amateurs, however, have been recorded by researchers.⁵² At Чернелів-Руський (UA), such items of military equipment were present in grave assemblages of the Chernyakhiv culture alongside typically barbarian pottery of local manufacture.⁵³

Novae: legionary fortress and late antique town, vol. I (Warsaw 2008) 117-18; A. Ziolkowski, "The background to the third-century crisis of the Roman Empire," in J. P. Arnason and K. A. Raafaub (edd.), *The Roman empire in context: historical and comparative perspectives* (Oxford 2011) 113-33; H. Wolfram, "Ostrogotha – ein mythischer Amaler erhält zumindest einen historischen Namensvetter," in J. Drauschke et al. (edd.), *Lebenswelten zwischen Archäologie und Geschichte. Festschrift Falko Daim* (Mainz 2018) vol. I, 447-57; Ziolkowski (supra n.11) 67-95; H. Wolfram, "Ostrogotha – Realität und Mythos," *Geistes-, sozial- und kulturwissenschaftlicher Anzeiger* 153 (2019) 93-100.

49 P. Weiss, "Ausgewählte neue Militärdiplome. Seltene Provinzen (Africa, Mauretania Caesariensis), und späte Urkunden für Prätorianer (Caracalla, Philippus)," *Chiron* 32 (2002) 491-543; И. Боянов, *Римските ветерани в Долна Мизия и Тракия (I-III в.)* (Sofia 2008); P. Weiss, "Eine *honesta missio* in Sonderformat. Neuartige Bronzeurkunden für Veteranen der Legionen in Germania Superior unter Gordian III," *Chiron* 45 (2015) 23-75; M. A. Speidel, "Maximinus and the Thracians – Herodian on the coup of 235, and ethnic networks in the Roman army of the third century CE," in V. Cojocaru and A. Rubel (edd.), *Mobility in research on the Black Sea region* (Cluj-Napoca 2016) 335-61; P. Weiss, "Die Militärdiplome unter Marc Aurel und Commodus. Kontinuitäten und Brüche," in V. Grieb (ed.), *Mark Aurel – Wege zu seiner Herrschaft* (Gutenberg 2017) 135-54; M. A. Speidel, "Soldiers and documents: insights from Nubia. The significance of written documents in Roman soldiers' everyday lives," in A. Kolb (ed.), *Literacy in ancient everyday life* (Berlin 2018) 179-200.

50 Надвірняк et al. 2019 (supra n.46) 139.

51 Cf. И. А. Бажан, *Ойум. Часть 1. Альбом древностей этих мест* (КСАН 4; Moscow 2012).

52 This issue requires further in-depth studies. Cf. J. Oldenstein, "Zur Ausrüstung römischer Auxiliareinheiten," *BerRGK* 57 (1976) 51-284; M. Gschwind, "Pferdegesschirrbeschläge der zweiten Hälfte des 3. Jahrhunderts aus Abusina/Eining," *SaalJb* 49 (1998) 112-38; E. M. Chapman, *A catalogue of Roman military equipment in the National Museum of Wales* (BAR 388; Oxford 2005); B. Bishop and J. C. N. Coulston, *Roman military equipment from the Punic Wars to the Fall of Rome* (Oxford 2006); S. Hoss, "Zu einigen Dekorationsmotiven des 2. und 3. Jahrhunderts auf den Beschlügen von Soldatengürteln, Schultergurten und Fibeln," in P. Henrich et al. (edd.), *NON SOLUM ... SED ETIAM. Festschrift Thomas Fischer* (Rahden 2015) 199-206; S. Matešić, *Das Thorsberger Moor 3. Die militärischen Ausrüstungen. Vergleichende Untersuchungen zur römischen und germanischen Bewaffnung* (Köthen 2015); H.-U. Voß, "Beschlägteile vorwiegend militärischer Verwendung im mitteleuropäischen Barbaricum zwischen Rhein und Oder – Formenspektrum und Fundkontext," in id. and N. Müller-Scheeßel (edd.), *Archäologie zwischen Römern und Barbaren. Zur Datierung und Verbreitung römischer Metallarbeiten des 2. und 3. Jahrhunderts n.Chr. im Reich und im Barbaricum – Ausgewählte Beispiele* (Bonn 2016) 711-33.

53 Гепера (supra n.45) figs. 135.1 and 136.1-4; cf., with a typology of Chernyakhiv culture pottery, Маромедов 2001, figs. 24, 28-30 and 32-34.

Coins

By early 2019, the total of 254 finds of *aurei* from the territory of east-central Barbaricum⁵⁴ attributed to the outcome of the Battle of Abritus included issues of Gordian III, Philip the Arab and Decius (some bearing a portrait of a family member) (map 4);⁵⁵ thus, only 6 years after the first publication, the number has increased nearly fivefold. The vast majority originate from what is today Ukraine (212 coins, 81.23%), a much smaller number was recorded in Poland (44 coins, 16.86%), and just a handful in Belarus (5 coins, 1.92%). This proportion of finds could, however, largely be the result of uneven modern recording. While a significant number of finds made in the 21st c. in Ukraine were recorded because amateur metal-detectorists are active on internet portals, the reporting of new finds in Poland and Belarus has been much more restrained — to say the least.

The largest group are issues of Decius (192 coins, 75%), the second largest those of Gordian III (50 coins, 19.5%), the smallest those of Philip the Arab (14 coins, 5.5%) (fig. 8).⁵⁶ The *aurei* from Poland and Belarus attributed to the outcome of Abritus were found on lands of the Wielbark culture, interestingly enough; only 7 were recorded on lands of the Przeworsk culture (3 Gordian III, 4 Decius, of which two are for Herennia Etruscilla).⁵⁷ In Ukraine, their distribution coincides mostly with the lands of the Chernyakhiv culture, in part also with that of the Wielbark culture. Elsewhere in central Europe, finds of *aurei* of Gordian III to Decius are very rare.⁵⁸ Consequently, we may link finds of this group of *aurei* with the Goths and their allies in full confidence.

In contrast to the finds in Poland and Belarus, the findspot is known for only a handful of the *aurei* found in Ukraine. Nearly all are recent finds by amateur metal-detectorists and their only record comes from public internet sources. The only well-documented *aurei* previously published are three specimens issued between 238 and 251 found at Бронниця in Вінницька область;⁵⁹ at Чернелів-Руський in Тернопільська область, in grave no. 265,⁶⁰ and at an unknown locality in Волинська область.⁶¹ For the remainder of the Ukrainian finds, we have at best only general administrative data about their findspot. Nevertheless, even with such a limited record at hand, we can still make a statistical analysis of these finds and grasp some common patterns in their distribution. A decided majority of mid-3rd c. *aurei* were discovered between the middle course of the Dnieper and the middle course

54 This refers to finds from the territory of Gothic societies (cf. fig. 8 here).

55 In the early 1990s, R. Bland mentioned 399 *aurei* from that period with a known weight (196 of Gordian III, 75 of Philippus, 128 of Decius): "The development of gold and silver coin denominations, A.D. 193-253," in C.E. King and D. G. Wigg (edd.), *Coin finds and coin use in the Roman world* (SFMA 10; Berlin 1996) 83, table 2.

56 We disregard here finds of mid-3rd c. *aurei* from outside the territory identified with cultures belonging to Goths and their allies.

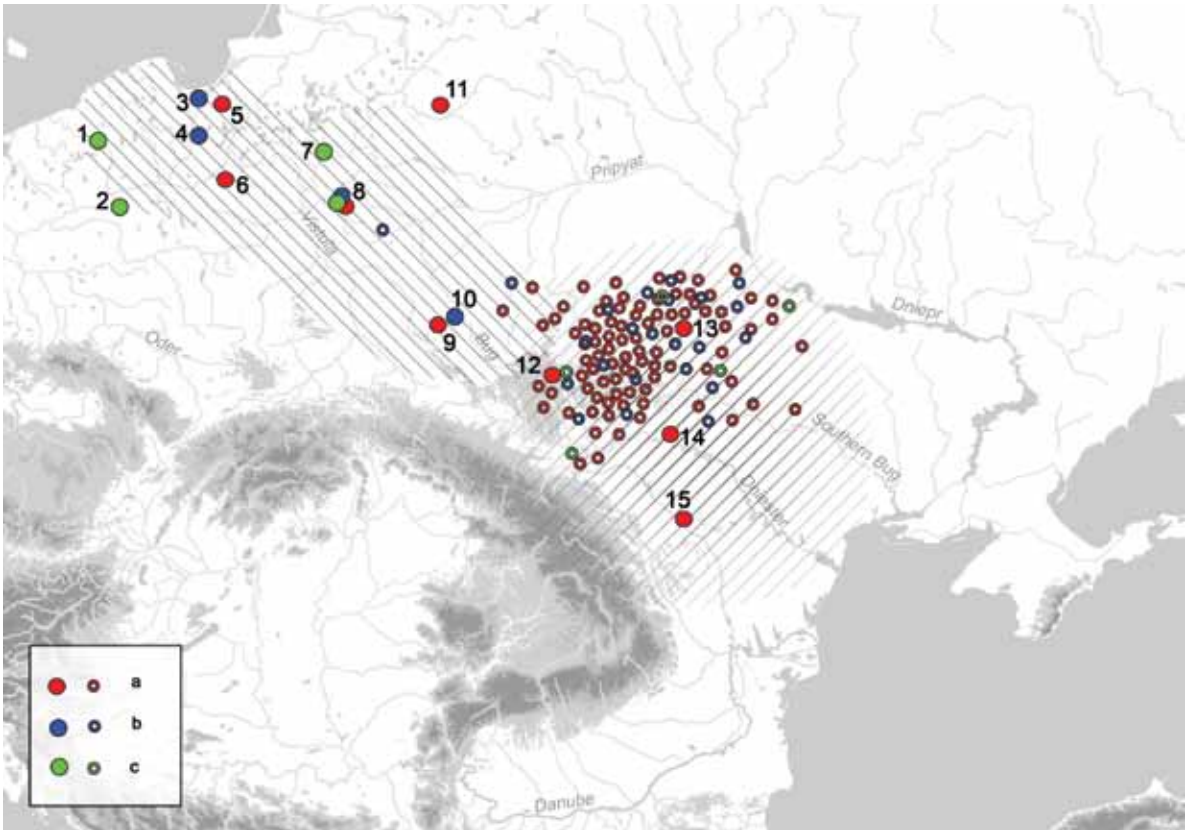
57 Bursche 2013, 157. A pierced *aureus* of Decius minted for Herennia Etruscilla was recently found at Gaški in Gniewkowo district, a central place of the Przeworsk culture in Kuyavia (north Poland) (pers. comm. K. Balbuza). Only 7 *aurei*, 4 of Gordian III and 3 of Decius (including 4 pierced), were known from the territory between the Oder and Rhine beyond the *limes*.

58 Bursche 2013, 158.

59 В. В. Кропоткин, *Клады римских монет на территории СССР* (Свод археологических источников Г4-4; Moscow 1961) 50, no 264.

60 І. П. Герета, "Археологічні відкриття у Чернелів-Руському у 1994 році," *Наукові записки Тернопільського краєзнавчого музею* 2.1 (1997) 26; Герета 2013 (supra n.45) 82, fig. 133.2.

61 A. Bursche, *Later Roman-Barbarian contacts in central Europe: numismatic evidence* (SFMA 11; Berlin 1996) 160, no 97.



Map 4. Distribution of finds of mid-3rd c. *aurei* on the territory of cultures connected with the Goths and their allies. Key: a: *aurei* of Decius; b: *aurei* of Gordian III; c: *aurei* of Philip the Arab; dot: finds with a known localization (published coins); circle: finds with a very approximate localization (unpublished coins);

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1: Miastko (PL) | 6: Rypin (PL) | 11: Шучин (environs of) (Belarus) |
| 2: Tarnowo (PL) | 7: Zbójna (PL) | 12: Чернелів-Руський (UA) |
| 3: Lubieszewo (PL) | 8: Stara Wieś (PL) | 13: Селище (UA) |
| 4: Kwidzyn (environs of) (PL) | 9: Ulów (PL) | 14: Бронниця (UA) |
| 5: Leszczyna (PL) | 10: Gołębie (PL) | 15: Morenii Vechi (Moldova). |

of the Dniester in Хмельницька and Вінницька oblasts, as well as in the southern region of Житомирська oblast, but only a small number of gold coins of that period has been recorded west of the Dniester, and not a single specimen east of that river (map 4).⁶²

The pool of finds from the territory of the archaeological cultures connected with the Goths and their allies also offers a broader statistical perspective on the finds of *aurei*. The information amassed to date includes at least 510 finds, specimens struck between the reigns of Augustus and Diocletian. Finds of coins of Gordian III, Philip the Arab and Decius issued within a period of 13 years account for not less than 41.5% of all finds, and within this pool the *aurei* of Decius alone make up 31% (fig. 9).⁶³ At the same time, it needs

⁶² Мызгин 2018, 41 and 47.

⁶³ Left out of these statistics are five 3rd-c. gold medallions found in the lands of the Wielbark and Cherniakhiv cultures: *biniones* of Elagabalus, Severus Alexander and Gallienus, and *quaterniones* of Philip the Arab and Gallienus: A. Bursche, *Złote medaliony rzymskie w Barbaricum. Symbolika prestiżu i władzy społeczeństw barbarzyńskich u schyłku starożytności* (Światowit Suppl., Warszawa

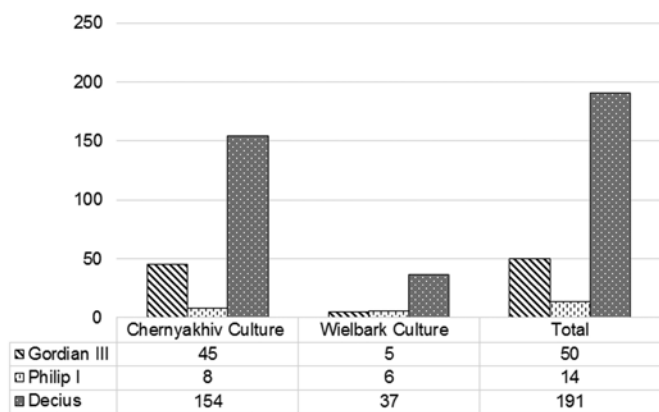


Fig. 8. Mid-3rd c. *aurei* found on the territory of cultures connected with the Goths and their allies.

stressing that *aurei* of the 1st and 2nd c. are represented by a very small number of finds, in contrast to *denarii* of the same period which make up an absolute majority of the coin finds recovered in Gothic territory.⁶⁴

A large number of mid-3rd c. *aurei* which we have identified in auction catalogues, as well as in several public museum and private collections, may lack provenance but they are pierced, which suggests they

may be attributed to the outcome of Abritus. This is further supported by the fact that the largest number of them is recorded in collections formed in east-central Europe.⁶⁵ To the large number of examples discussed in the article in *NC* 2013, we can now add many more coins, especially those identified in auction catalogues.⁶⁶

Next to the *aurei* found in the territory of cultures connected with Gothic communities, another remarkable group are finds of Roman provincial coins: about 670 pieces, which include unpublished materials⁶⁷ from Ukraine (map 5).⁶⁸ The analysis of the published and more recent finds has led МЫЗГИН to make an interesting observation about their geographical distribution: worth stressing is the fact that the Dnieper marks a clear divide in the distribution of the finds of these provincial bronzes. Discovered on its right bank, mostly between the middle reaches of the Dnieper and the Dniester, these are issues of

1998) 107-10, 230, 236, 239-40 and 257-58.

64 Bursche 1996 (supra n.61); K. В. Мызгин, "Римские монеты в ареале черняховской культуры: проблема источников поступления," *Stratum plus* 4 (2013) 221.

65 E.g., in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kyiv, Lviv, Warsaw, Vienna and Berlin; the conclusion that the pierced *aurei* in these collections derive from barbarian finds is confirmed by two letters written by Karl Bayer in 1877 and discovered by K. Balbuza in the archive of the Berlin Münzkabinett. Many coins in his collection came from finds from the territory of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. In his letters, Beyer is offering to sell J. Friedländer two pierced *aurei* of Decius, one of them struck for Herennia Etruscilla, mentioning that the latter was found in the Podolia Governorate of the Russian Empire (present-day Ukraine), and that nearly all of the Roman gold coins found "at home" (= in our lands) are marred by having a hole: "Anbei erlaube ich mir einen im Gouver. Podolien gefundenen Aureus der Kaiserin Herennia Etruscilla zu übersenden. Er ist leider gelocht, ein Fehler, den fast alle bei uns gefundenen römischen Goldmünzen haben". Cf. K. Balbuza, "Karl Beyer und das Numismatische Kabinett in Berlin. Antike Münzen aus der Sammlung des polnischen Numismatikers," *Gymnasium* forthcoming.

66 E.g., an *aureus* of Philip the Arab (for Philip II): Heritage Auctions, auction 3041 (13 August, 2015) lot 32095; an *aureus* of Decius: Roma Numismatics Ltd., E-Sale 35 (3 May, 2017) lot 938; and the other one: Obolos by Nomos, Auction 12 (31 May, 2018) lot 771.

67 Only coins from accurately located finds have been marked on the map. In fact, many more provincial coins come from this area but they lack a closer provenance.

68 Cf. K. Myzgin, "Finds of Roman provincial coins on the territory of Eastern Europe: Balkan cities mintage," in V. Ivanišević, B. Borić-Brešković and M. Vojvoda (edd.), *Proc. Int. Numismatic Symposium "Circulation of the antique coins in Southeastern Europe", Viminacium 2017* (Belgrade 2018) 90.

provincial mints in the Balkans and the NW and W regions of Asia Minor; the same mints are represented in coin finds from the Wielbark culture territory. The coins (about 25)⁶⁹ found on the left bank of the Dnieper, on the other hand, mostly originate from towns in N and central Asia Minor.⁷⁰ It is at the same time remarkable that the chronological distribution of the coins struck in the towns of Lower Moesia, Thrace and Macedonia ends with Philip the Arab — that is, the time when the activity of mints in these provinces would have been interrupted by Gothic invasions.⁷¹

Secondary treatment of *aurei*

More often than not, the *aurei* found in the lands of Gothic settlement show evidence of re-use by the barbarians. There may be a hole or a loop, or signs of deliberate defacement: melting down, cutting into fragments, hammering or scratching of the surface. Some of the coins that originally were pierced would at a later date be cut up. A much smaller series of cut-up *aurei* are suspected of being finds from Roman provincial territory.⁷² Apart from just 7.63% of 1st to 3rd-c. *aurei* found in the lands of cultures connected with Goths and their allies, the remainder had a hole (82.97%) and/or a loop (9.39%).⁷³ Statistical analysis of this pool deriving from the lands of the Chernyakhiv and Wielbark cultures has demonstrated that the *aurei* were pierced, or had a loop attached, invariably above the emperor's head (at the 12 o'clock axis) or slightly off-centre (at 10 or 11 o'clock). The situation is the same if we confine analysis of placement of the holes to the coins of Gordian III, Philip the Arab and Decius. Figure 10 shows just the pierced coins from finds in Poland, Belarus and Ukraine because only three looped coins of these rulers have been recorded:

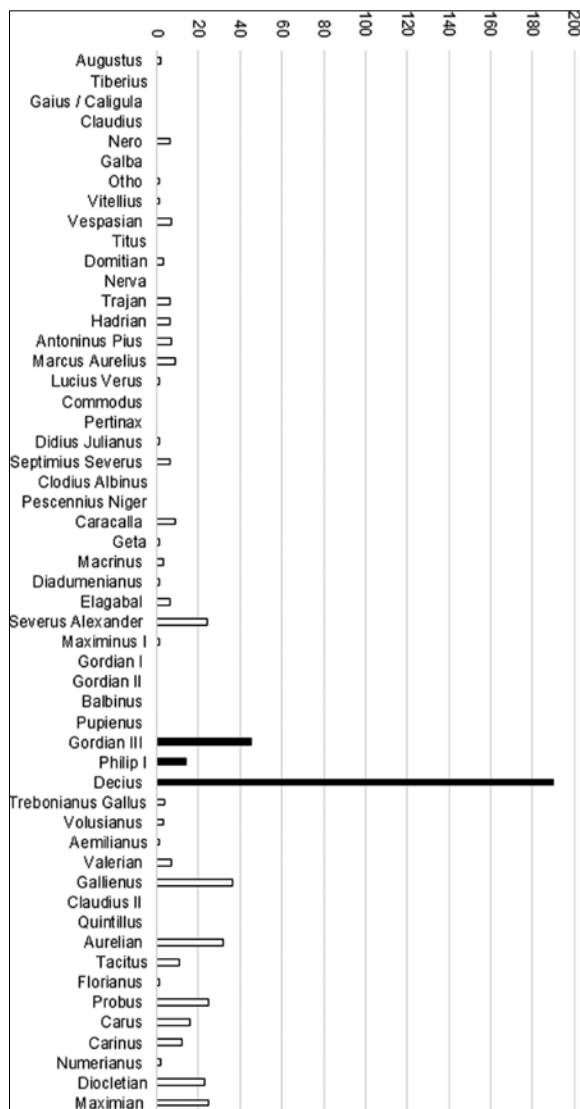


Fig. 9. 1st- to 3rd-c. *aurei* found in the territory of cultures connected with Goths and their allies.

Black columns: *aurei* connected with the Battle of Abritus.

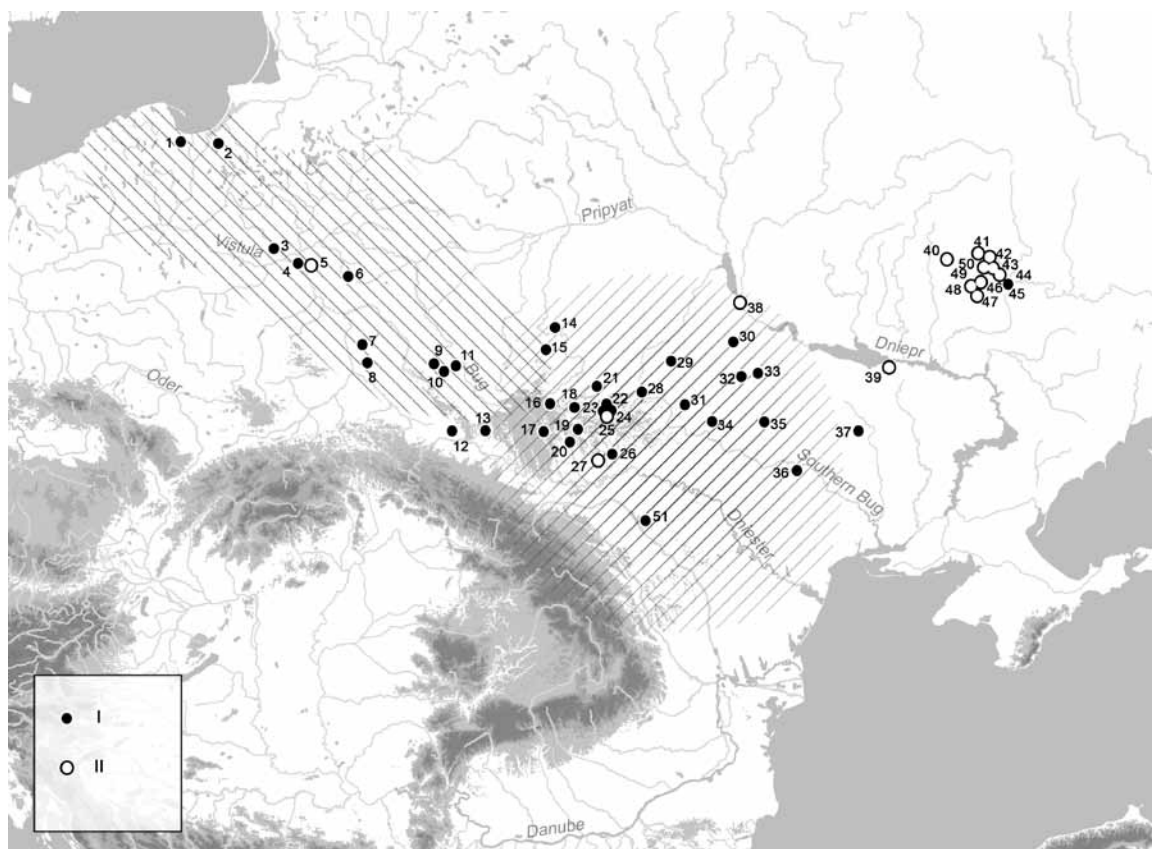
⁶⁹ Ibid. 95, Graph 8.

⁷⁰ МЫЗГИН 2016, 165-67.

⁷¹ МЫЗГИН (supra n.68) 91-92.

⁷² Cf. the Appendix below.

⁷³ For earlier observations, cf. J.-P. Callu, "La perforation de l'or romain," in H.-C. Noeske and H. Schubert (edd.), *Die Münze. Bild – Botschaft – Bedeutung. Festschrift für Maria R.-Alföldi* (Frankfurt 1991) 99-121.



Map 5. The distribution of finds of Roman provincial coins on the territory of cultures connected with Goths and their allies (published coins) (after Г. В. Бейдин, “Римские провинциальные монеты на территории Украины в ареале черняховской культуры,” *Древности* 11 (2012) 149, fig. 1 for Ukraine and Moldova [with our corrections], and with the map for Poland prepared by D. Milutinović). Key. I: Balkan provincial coinage; II: Asia Minor provincial coinage.

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1: Gdańsk (PL) | 17: Коцубинчики (UA) | 36: Первомайськ (UA) |
| 2: Łęcze (PL) | 18: Бронівка (UA) | 37: Зеленівка (UA) |
| 3: Stare Nadratowo (PL) | 19: Сатанів (UA) | 38: Київ (UA) |
| 4: Warszawa (environs of) (PL) | 20: Хардинківці (UA) | 39: Калантаїв (UA) |
| 5: Kołoząb (PL) | 21: Шимківці (UA) | 40: Зеньків (UA) |
| 6: Węgrów (PL) | 22-25: Маліївці (UA) | 41: Хрущова Микитівка (UA) |
| 7: Pliszczyn (PL) | 26: Стара Ушиця (UA) | 42: Павлове (UA) |
| 8: Kraśnik (PL) | 27: Думанів (UA) | 43: Хворостове (UA) |
| 9: Tomaszów Lubelski (PL) | 28: Петриківці (UA) | 44: Пасіки (UA) |
| 10: Hrubieszów (environs of) (PL) | 29: Рейки (UA) | 45: Нижній Бішкін (UA) |
| 11: Gródek (PL) | 30: Малополовецьке (UA) | 46: Старі Валки |
| 12: Стрий (UA) | 31: Брацлав (UA) | 47: Таранівка (UA) |
| 13: Крилос (UA) | 32: Кочевате (UA) | 48: Явтухівка (UA) |
| 14: Рівне (environs of) (UA) | 33: Чернін (UA) | 49: Соколове (UA) |
| 15: Пересопниця (UA) | 34: Крутогорб (UA) | 50: Перекип (UA) |
| 16: Збараж (UA) | 35: Юрківка (UA) | 51: Costești (Moldova). |

one of Philip the Arab and two Decius (one for Herennia Etruscilla). It is quite likely that the practice of making holes in gold coins, first observed on *aurei* late in Nero's reign, spread within Barbaricum only from the middle of the 3rd c.⁷⁴

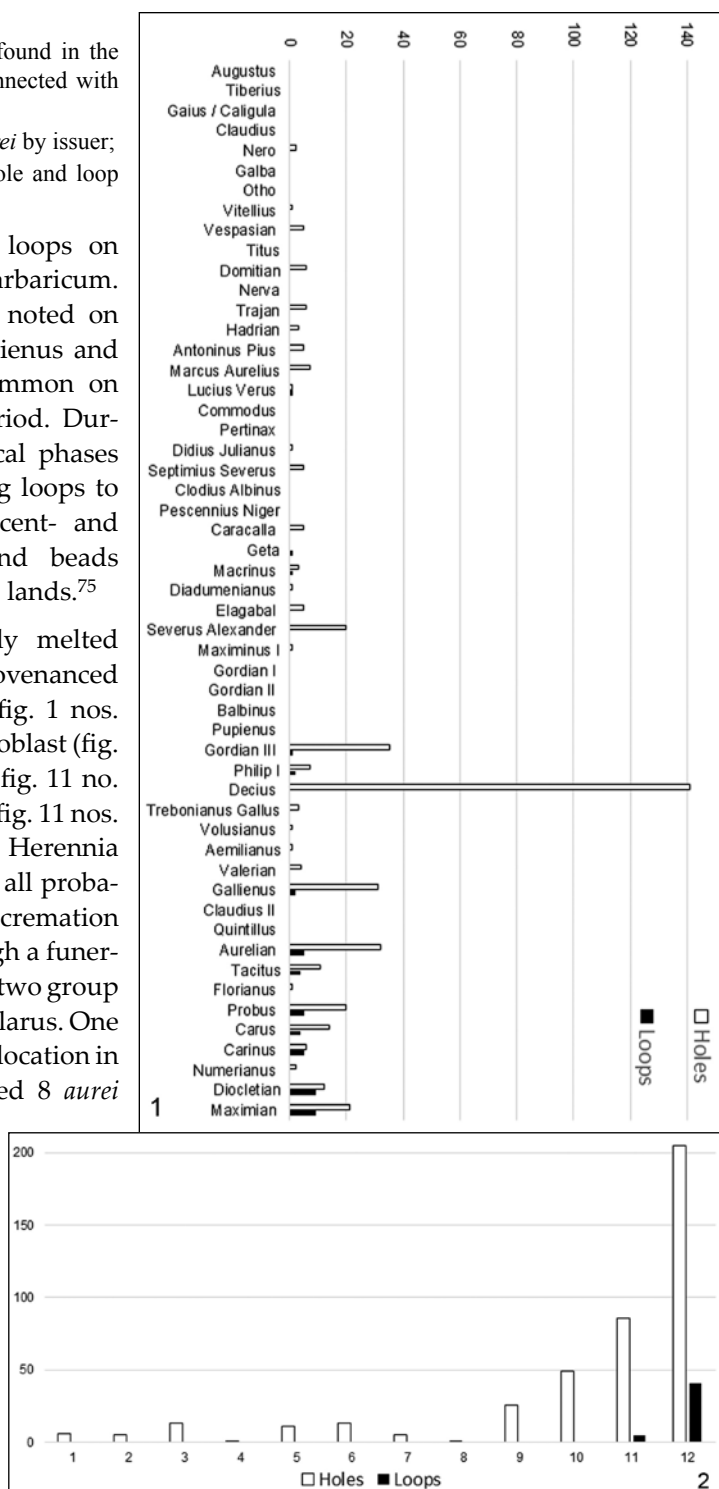
74 For more, see A. Bursche, “A unique aureus of Faustina II with the legend *mater castrorum*

Fig. 10. Pierced and looped *aurei* found in the territory of Barbaricum cultures connected with Goths and their allies:

10.1: ratio of pierced and looped *aurei* by issuer;
10.2: ratio of 1st-3rd c. *aurei* by hole and loop position.

Also of interest are the loops on numismatic finds from Barbaricum. Their larger number is first noted on coins and medallions of Gallienus and Aurelian. They are most common on coins from the tetrarchic period. During this period (archaeological phases C2-C3), a fashion in attaching loops to many gold ornaments, crescent- and bucket-shaped pendants, and beads became widespread in Gothic lands.⁷⁵

Several *aurei* are partially melted (fig. 11). At least 8 are unprovenanced finds from central Ukraine (fig. 1 nos. 1-7 and 9), 1 is from Київська oblast (fig. 11 no. 8), 1 is of Gordian III (fig. 11 no. 1), and 8 are issues of Decius (fig. 11 nos. 2-9), three of them struck for Herennia Etruscilla (fig. 11 nos. 7-9). In all probability these coins derive from cremation graves and had passed through a funerary pyre. This is suggested by two group deposits from Ukraine and Belarus. One of these, from an undisclosed location in Хмельницька oblast, included 8 *aurei* struck in the reign of Decius (fig. 11 nos. 10-17), three of them with a portrait of Herennia Etruscilla. Six of these coins have evidently been affected by high temperatures (cf. fig. 11 nos. 10-11 and 14-17). Reportedly, these coins were discovered together with a bronze vessel of Eggers'



from a Late Roman area of hoards in the southern Baltic region," in C. Găzdac (ed.), *Group and individual tragedies in Roman Europe. The evidence of hoards, epigraphic and literary sources* (Cluj-Napoca 2020) 133-48.

⁷⁵ Cf. Bursche 1998 (supra n.63) 145-55; К. В. Мызгин, "О времени появления ушек на золотых римских монетах в Барбарикуме," *Stratum plus* 6 (2015) 131-40.

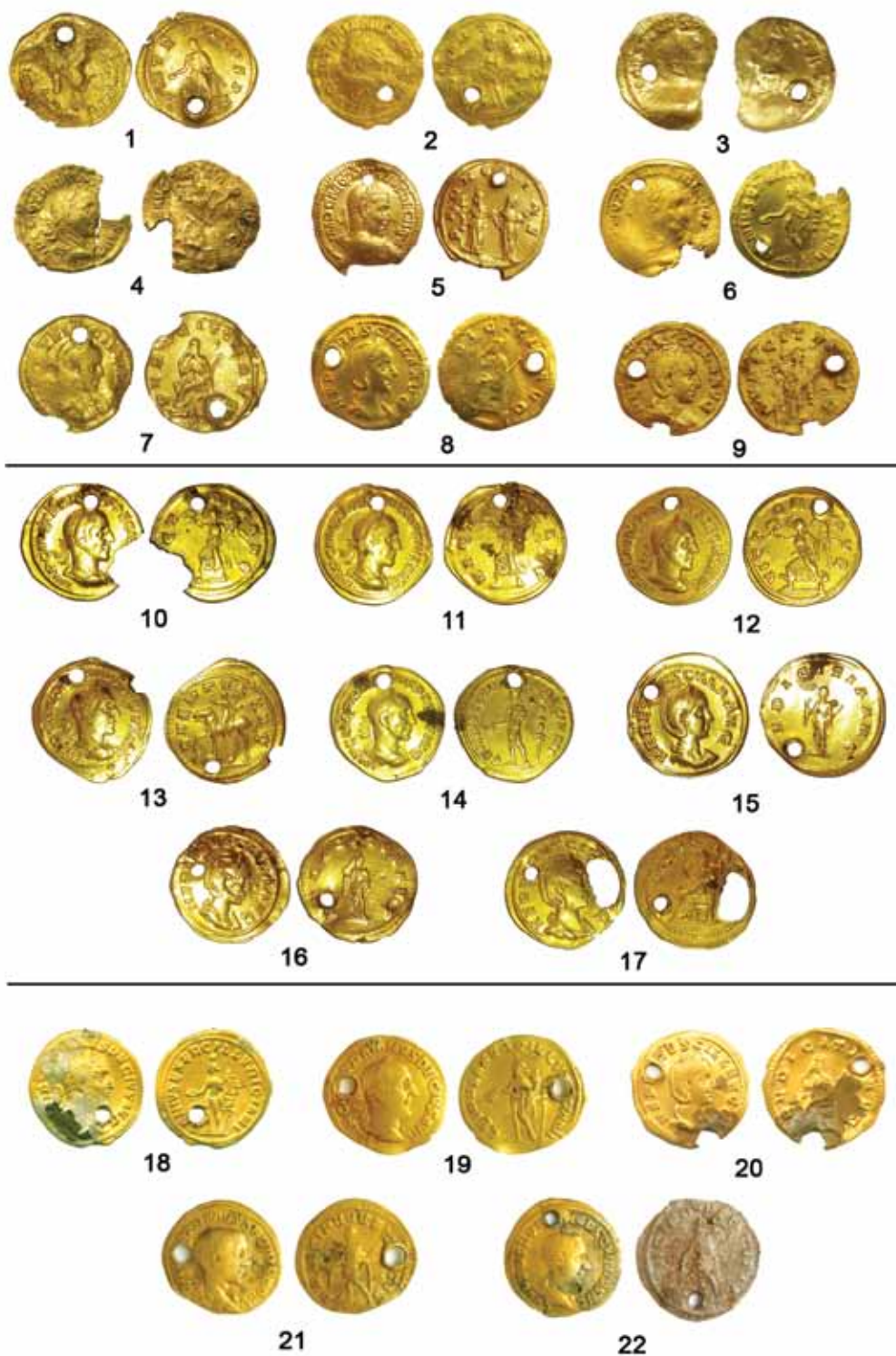


Fig. 11. Partly-melted *aurei* found in the territory of cultures connected with Goths and their allies.

1-7: Ukraine (location unknown)

8: Київська oblast (UA)

9: Вінницька oblast (UA)

10-17: Хмельницька oblast (UA)

18-22: Щучин, environs of (Belarus).

type 63, partly melted and with cut-marks.⁷⁶ Similar preservation is shown by *aurei* of Decius (2 are for Herennius Etruscus, 1 is for Herennia Etruscilla) from an undisclosed location in the vicinity of Шучин in Гродненская область, Belarus (fig. 11 nos. 18-22); they were found together with lumps of melted gold.⁷⁷

Two coins with portraits of Decius and Herennius Etruscus from an unknown context have on their surface a large number of deep, deliberate scratches.⁷⁸ The medallion of Philip the Arab from the Zbójna hoard also retains marks of deliberate mutilation, presumably by hammering.⁷⁹

The pool of finds from the lands of cultures connected with Goths and their allies includes 74 cut-up fragments of at least 59 *aurei* ranging from post-reform issues of Nero to Carinus, but with a marked domination of issues of Decius. The approximate archaeological context is known only for 4 of these finds. A deposit buried in a cemetery of the Wielbark culture at Stara Wieś in Węgrów district (E Poland), already published at length by Bursche in NC 2013, consisted of 4 pits arranged in something like a half-circle that held 28 fragments of 22 quartered *aurei*, some with a hole: 1 Gordian III, 2 Philip the Arab (1 of them for Otacilia Severa), and 19 Decius (some for Etruscilla and Hostilian). The inhumation burial no. 19 in another cemetery of the Wielbark culture at Ulów site 7, Tomaszów Lubelski district, SE Poland (see above), held 9 fragments of an *aureus* of Decius struck for Herennia Etruscilla. As the fragment containing the part of the coin above her portrait is missing, it is unclear whether this specimen had a hole. The same assemblage included 28 fragments of deliberately cut-up wire and gold foil.⁸⁰ Nineteen fragments from 19 different(?) *aurei* of Decius, some with a portrait of Hostilian and Herennius Etruscus and some of them pierced, belong to the grave assemblage no. 2 found in a cemetery of the Chernyakhiv culture at Селище in Вінницька область (W Ukraine) (the location was formerly published as “Білопілля”). Some of these fragments are partly melted, indicating they had been exposed to a cremation pyre. The same burial also contained a complete, pierced *aureus* of Decius (for Hostilian), as well as deliberately defaced fragments of a bronze bucket of Eggers’ type 63.⁸¹ Finally, the burial assemblage no. 1 in the cemetery Йосипівка (Yosypivka) in Львівська область (UA), included a fragment cut out of an *aureus* of Nero; this grave produced no grave-goods other than fragments of pottery, the cemetery being dated only broadly to the Late Roman period.⁸²

We have also recorded 17 fragments of *aurei* from unprovenanced finds in Ukraine, six of them pierced. They include: 1 Domitian, 1 Septimius Severus, 2 Severus Alexander, 3 Gordian III, 7 Decius, 1 Gallienus and 1 Carinus (fig. 12).⁸³ Lastly, two *aurei* of Decius, one of them for Etruscus, both with a hole and partly cut, or prepared for cutting into pieces, are separate finds that lack a more specific provenance.

76 <http://forum.violity.com/viewtopic.php?t=1254649> (viewed 12 August, 2019).

77 И. Шталенков, “Новые находки античных монет в Беларуси,” *Банкаўскі веснік* 2 (2017) 68; 69, fig. 2, Table 2.

78 These coins were recovered in Хмельницька область (central Ukraine).

79 Bursche 1998 (supra n.63) 72-73 and 257-58, pl. I, 334.1.

80 Bursche and Niezabitowska 2018 (supra n.5) 249-61.

81 Петраускас and Діденко 2019 (supra n.29) 165.

82 Ю. Ревера, “Фрагмент ауреуса Нерона з пам’ятки у Львівській області,” *Наукові студії. Історико-краєзнавчий музей м. Вінники* 5 (2012) 245-51.

83 This last, rare coin, with a hole, was reportedly found near Київ. This may have led Raynaud (2014 [supra n.12]) to identify its context of discovery with medieval Rus’, but that is incorrect. Twelve more *aurei* of Carinus have come to light in Ukraine (cf. <http://www.rgcb.lach.edu.pl>).

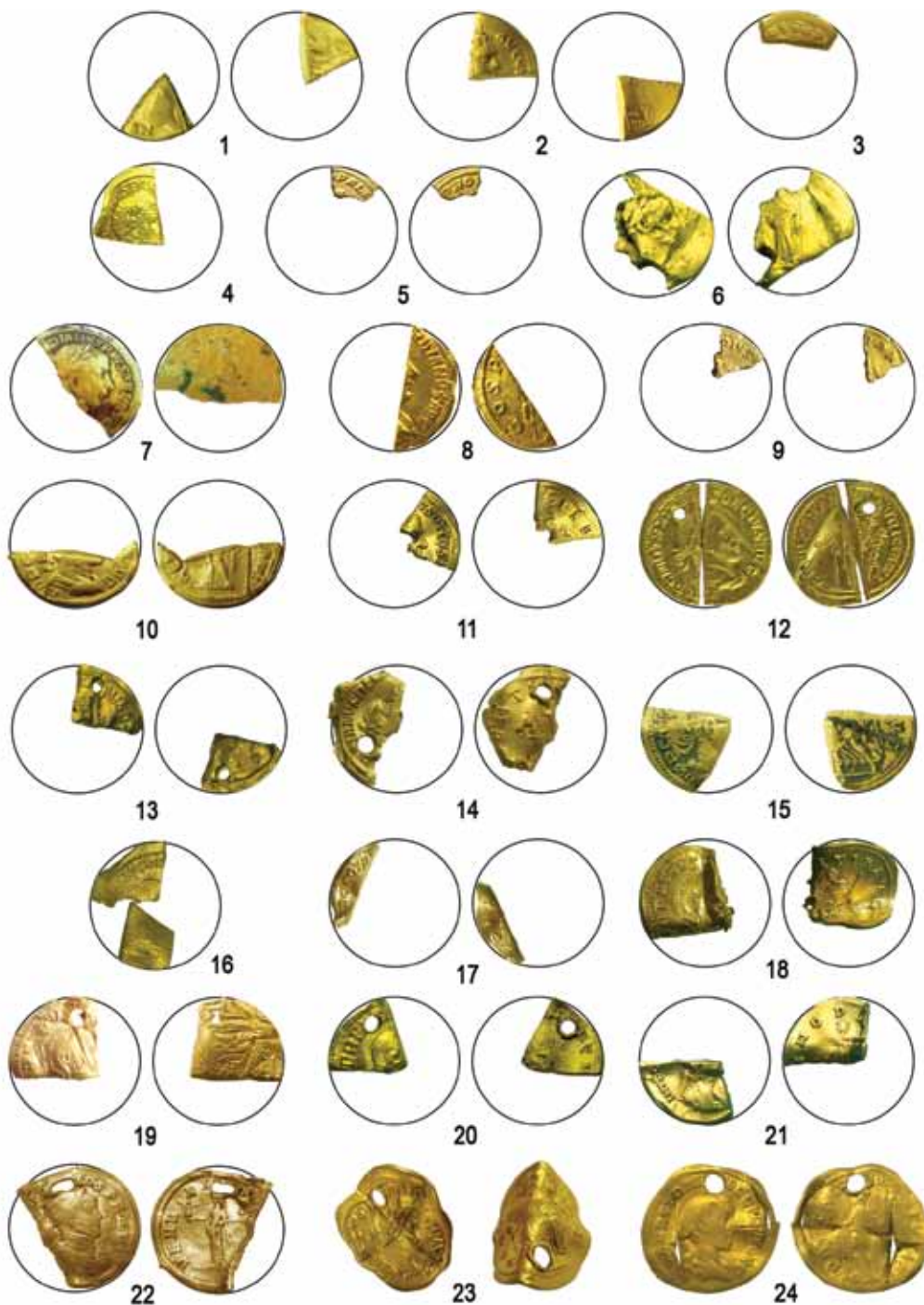


Fig. 12. Cut-up *aurei* found on the territory of cultures connected with Goths and their allies.

1: Йосипівка (UA)

2, 5, 7-9, 11-12, 14, 16, 18-19, 21-23: all Ukraine (location unknown);

3: Черкаська oblast (UA)

4: Одеська (?) oblast (UA)

6: Вінницька oblast (UA)

10, 13: Хмельницька oblast (UA)

15, 20: Житомирська oblast (UA)

17: Вернігородок (UA)

24: Рівненська oblast (UA).

1: Nero

2: Domitian

3: Vespasian?

4: Caracalla

5-6: Severus Alexander

7-9: Gordian III

10-17: Decius

18-19, 23: Decius (for Etruscilla)

20, 24: Decius (for Herennius Etruscus)

21: Gallienus

22: Carinus.

Sources:

1: after Ревепа 2012 [supra n.82] 250; fig. 1.

2-21: Internet-forum "Violity".

22: Raynaud 2013 [infra n.104] 135.

Scythica Vindobonensia

Quite a few reconstructions of the events that took place during the Germanic invasions of the Balkan provinces have been put forward.⁸⁴ When J. Grusková identified unknown fragments of the *Scythica* of Dexippus of Athens in the *Codex Historicus* gr. 73 (now in the Austrian National Library in Vienna) as the lower text of 4 palimpsest folios (192r–195v),⁸⁵ historians gained a new, invaluable account of the Gothic incursions into the Balkan provinces around the year 250, handed down — and this is crucial — by a contemporary. Using state-of-the-art technologies, the 4-years’ “*Scythica Vindobonensia*” project implemented by the Austrian Academy of Sciences helped decipher, publish and interpret successive fragments of this text.⁸⁶

Among the fragments now published is a remarkable passage (Folio 195r, ll. 29–30 and Folio 195v, ll. 1–2), marginal to the main narrative, which refers to the way coin was used in the Germanic environment and, more specifically, in the relationship between the ruler (Cniva) and his Gothic armed retinue (*comitatus*). This is the first ancient text to offer some insight into the rôle of coinage among the barbarians of the northeast. The first scholar to draw attention to the importance of this passage for the study of the function of Roman coinage outside the frontiers was A. Hostein.⁸⁷ According to this account, during the siege of Philippopolis Cniva was persuaded by one of the refugees from the lower city to make a direct attack. He sent 5 men on a night-time reconnaissance, men who had volunteered tempted by a reward in coin. In this context we find the following fragment:

Folio 195r (Martin and Grusková 2014 [supra n.86] p. 736) :

l. 29 (...) ἄθλα δὲ ἡ παρὰ τοῦ βασιλέως. τῶ μὲν

l. 30 πρῶτῳ ἀνελθόντι ; πεντακόσιοι δαρεικοί. δευ-

Folio 195v (Martin and Grusková 2015 [supra n.86] p. 38) :

l. 1 -τέρῳ δὲ τριακόσιοι. καὶ τρίτῳ τῶ μετὰ τοῦτον

l. 2 [---]τον. καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ὁμοίως.

84 Gerov 1977 (supra n.48) 131–37; Wolfram 1990 (supra n.35) 55–57; Bleckmann 1992 (supra n.48); Birley 1998 (supra n.46); D. Boteva, “On the chronology of the Gothic invasions under Philippus and Decius (AD 248–251),” *Arch. Bulgariae* 5 (2001) 237–44; K. Dimitrov, “Novae and the barbaric incursions in 238–251,” *Orpheus, J. Indo-European & Thracian Studies* 15 (2005) 79–98; Kolendo 2008 (supra n.48); B. Bleckmann, “Südosteuropa im III. und IV. Jahrhundert — ereignisgeschichtlicher Teil,” in *Online-Handbuch zur Geschichte Südosteuropas*. Bd. 1: Herrschaft und Politik in Südosteuropa bis 1800 (Regensburg 2016) 7–8.

85 J. Grusková, *Untersuchungen zu den griechischen Palimpsesten der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek. Codices historici, Codices philosophici et philologici, codices iuridici* (Vienna 2010); ead., “Further steps in revealing, editing and analysing important ancient Greek and Byzantine texts hidden in palimpsests,” *Graecolatina et Orientalia* 33–34 (2012) 69–82.

86 J. Grusková and G. Martin, “Ein neues Textstück aus den ‘*Scythica Vindobonensia*’ zu den Ereignissen nach der Eroberung von Philippopolis,” *Tyche* 29 (2014) 29–43; iid., “Zum Angriff der Goten unter Kniva auf eine thrakische Stadt (*Scythica Vindobonensia*, f. 195v),” *Tyche* 30 (2015) 35–53; iid., “Neugelesener Text im Wiener Dexipp-Palimpsest (*Scythica Vindobonensia*, f. 195v, Z. 6–10) mit Hilfe der Röntgenfluoreszenzanalyse,” *ZPE* 204 (2017) 40–46; iid., “‘*Scythica Vindobonensia*’: Geschichte und Ausblick. Mit einer Vorbemerkung von Otto Kersten,” *Geistes-, sozial- und kulturwissenschaftlicher Anzeiger* 153 (2019) 69–91; G. Martin and J. Grusková, “‘*Scythica Vindobonensia*’ by Dexippus(?): new fragments on Decius’ Gothic Wars,” *GRBS* 54 (2014) 728–54; cf. C. Mallan and C. Davenport, “Dexippus and the Gothic invasions: interpreting the new Vienna fragment (*Codex Vindobonensis Hist. gr. 73*, ff. 192v–193r),” *JRS* 105 (2015) 203–26; <https://www.oeaw.ac.at/en/byzantine-research/language-text-and-script/book-culture-palaeography-and-palimpsests/scythica-vindobonensia/>.

87 Hostein 2017 (supra n.11) 40–45.

“As prizes the king offered 500 darics to the first man to climb the walls, and to the second (195v) 300, and to the third after him [...], and to the rest similarly”.

As noted by Hostein, while this entire fragment has the nature of an anecdote and might be a literary turn drawn from earlier sources used by Dexippus, it may nonetheless refer, to some extent at least, to the reality of the age which was well-known to a contemporary of the events he was describing. Plainly, the word *dareikoi* used to describe gold coins in a text written around the year 250 is an anachronism. This is understandable given that its author was an Athenian in the habit of drawing on the terminology of Herodotus. In fact, there can be no doubt that around the middle of the 3rd c. *dareikoi* refers to *aurei*, the main gold denomination of that age.

The earliest and the normal way in which barbarian communities became acquainted with the function of coin was through military service as mercenaries. Army pay issued in coin by Hellenistic rulers, and additional gratifications awarded for special merit — to tribal leaders in particular —, were the main means for the Celts to become familiar with the rôle of coin.⁸⁸ However, in the present case we have a unique description of how coin may have been distributed within a single group made up of Gothic warriors, as part of the relationship between the chieftain and his *comitatus*.

That coins could have been used as a reward for merit shown on the battlefield by Germanic men in an even earlier period is suggested by the archaeological and numismatic context of finds in bogs of the Baltic Sea region. Of these, the best studied is Deposit A from site 1 at Illerup Ådal, Skanderborg Amt (E Jutland). It yielded one of the largest series of Roman coins yet recorded in Barbaricum, nearly all from a well-defined context. They are interpreted as elements of the personal equipment of a defeated troop (*comitatus*) of Germanic warriors which, following the battle, was cast into the lake by the victors on a certain day in the early 3rd c. The assemblage includes 194 *denarii*, ranging from Nero to Commodus, 4 barbarous imitations of *denarii*, and 1 *sestertius* of Antoninus Pius. A detailed analysis of the context of the coins demonstrated that most had been kept in pouches, one of the personal effects of the fallen warriors. In the part of the site investigated, there were at least 20 pouches holding between a single and not less than 28 coins (possibly as many as 71); typically, a pouch held between 1 and 6 *denarii*. The presence of a similar number of Roman coins in pouches worn on a belt has been confirmed by other bog deposits from Barbaricum, notably at Nydam and Thorsberg (Jutland). Probably the *denarii* had passed out of the empire during the final years of Commodus as subsidies paid to *superiores barbari*; they were then redistributed within Barbaricum.

Bursche's intuition in 2011 was that a larger group of *denarii* originally obtained by the leader(s) of a troop was subsequently shared among the warriors, rewarding merit in combat in accordance with the contribution each had made. It seemed to be the most logical explanation for what the archaeological record showed,⁸⁹ and it seems to be confirmed,

88 G. T. Griffith, *The mercenaries of the Hellenistic world* (Cambridge 1935) 78-79; D. Nash, *Coinage in the Celtic world* (London 1987) 13-21 and 42-46; M. Kostial, *Kelten im Osten. Gold und Silber der Kelten in Mittel- und Osteuropa. Sammlung Lanz* (Munich 1997) 10-11; G. Dembski, *Münzen der Kelten* (Vienna 1998) 13; J. Militky, “Die Boier und die Numismatik — Gegenwärtiger Stand der Forschung und die Möglichkeiten der Interpretation des Fundbestandes,” in M. Karwowski, V. Salač and S. Sievers (edd.), *Boier zwischen Realität und Fiktion. Kolloq. 2013* (Bonn 2015) 78; S. Nieto-Pelletier and J. Olivier, “Les statères aux types de Philippe II de Macédoine: de l'Égée à la Gaule, des originaux aux imitations,” *RN* 173 (2016) 171-229.

89 A. Bursche, *Illerup Ådal 14: Die Münzen* (Århus 2011) 83-84; cf. also Rau 2010 (supra n.32) 45-52;

even if indirectly, by the passage from the *Scythica Vindobonensia*. The same fragment provides the key to how *aurei* attributable to the outcome of Abritus, approximately the same date as that text, might have spread across practically the whole of Gothic territory.

Conclusions

Our analysis of the archaeological, numismatic and written sources has generated some interesting observations both about the Gothic invasions and about phenomena in territory outside the Roman frontiers that was settled by the Goths.

From the new finds of *aurei* of Decius and his immediate predecessors which have been surfacing at an exponential rate in W Ukraine, the hypothesis about the capture at Abritus at least of part, if not the whole, of the imperial treasury by Gothic detachments may be considered valid. The emperor must have determined that the *aerarium*, or at least a part of it consisting mainly of gold, would be safer under his direct supervision than left at Rome in the charge of the young Hostilian — that is to say, it was safer under the protection of the Roman army, above all Decius' praetorian guard. We may surmise that other emperors on campaign also took along a part of the treasury for running expenses (army payments in particular). The treasury carried by Decius was mostly gold, presumably several tonnes of it. Gold was easier to transport than silver, of which a much larger quantity would be needed when intended for *donativum* payments following victorious battles.⁹⁰ Similar to the *imperatores* of the Late Republic, the emperor probably travelled with a field mint, whose employees cast the flans and struck the coins. This interpretation is supported by the rather erratic weight of the *aurei* of even the same type issued by Decius (e.g., RIC 16a, 21a or 28a), where the difference exceeds 1.5 gm (something previously unheard of), as well as by the trimming of overweight flans and the careless manner of minting the coins.⁹¹ It suggests that the working conditions were difficult, even basic, and that the minting process was a rather rushed affair. If this is true, then in addition to the *aurei*, the treasury seized at Abritus by the Goths probably also included gold ingots.

The capture by the Goths and their allies of other types of loot in the Balkan provinces is also confirmed by finds in W Ukraine other than the *aurei*. Notably these include bronze vessels, military diplomas, metal fittings of Roman belts and horse harnesses, and provincial bronze coins. Within Barbaricum, bronze was a highly prized alloy, used in making clothes fittings, jewellery and many other everyday objects. At a slightly later period, plunder taken in the western provinces also consisted mostly of bronzes.⁹²

A. Bursche, "Roman coins from Illerup Ådal (Denmark)," in G. Pardini, N. Parise and F. Marani (edd.), *Numismatica e archeologia. Monete, stratigrafie e contesti. Dati a confronto* (Rome 2017) 466.

90 We are practically without sources that have to do with the transport of coins in the 3rd c.: cf. R. Wolters, "Geldverkehr, Geldtransporte und Gelddbuchungen in römischer Republik und Kaiserzeit: Das Zeugnis der schriftlichen Quellen," *RBelgeNum* 152 (2006) 23-49; J. Van Heesch, "Transport of coins in the Later Roman Empire," *ibid.* 51-61.

91 According to Bland 1996 (supra n.55) 72 and 97, fig. 14, the aim was to reduce the weight of the *aurei*. For a different view, see G. Radoslavova, G. Dzanev and N. Nikolov, "The battle at Abritus in AD 251: written sources, archaeological and numismatic data," *Arch. Bulgarica* XV.3 (2011) 28-31; Bursche 2013, 160.

92 E. Künzl, *Die Alamannenbeute aus dem Rhein bei Neupotz: Plünderungsgut aus dem römischen Gallien* (Mainz 1993); J. Kolendo and J. Trynkowski, "La main votive dolichénienne trouvée à Myszków et les butins de guerre des Barbares," *Novensia* 10 (1998) 251-64; E. Künzl, *Die Alamannenbeute aus dem Rhein bei Neupotz* (Mainz 2008).

Finds of *aurei* linked to the Battle of Abritus are noted everywhere on Gothic territory, from the N coast of the Black Sea to the S coast of the Baltic. Note, however, that to the east of the Dnieper we find no *aurei* of Gordian III, Philip the Arab or Decius,⁹³ no Roman bronze vessels in grave assemblages,⁹⁴ and no Roman military diplomas.⁹⁵ Locally-made gold objects are equally rarely encountered.⁹⁶ According to the currently accepted view, settlements of the Chernyakhiv culture extended to the left bank of the Dnieper only at the start of the 4th c.⁹⁷ The actual distribution of the *aurei* presumably was somewhat different than that currently recorded, there having been a much larger number in the N region settled by people of the Wielbark culture. Such a wide geographical spread of the gold coins raises questions about the distribution method. Given the passage in the *Scythica Vin-dobonensia*, it seems likely that they were shared out by Cniva and/or detachment leaders among the warriors who had fought at Abritus; perhaps, then, the non-monetary gold and other plunder were shared out in a similar manner. The detachments and warriors hailing from the entire territory settled by the Goths will then have returned home, some of them to the distant north, with the spoils of war. This was presumably the main source of gold for the manufacture of clothing fittings and jewellery, including arm-rings, neck-rings and finger-rings — objects of power and prestige when used locally. As noted, during the archaeological phase C2 (corresponding to the second half of the 3rd c.) there is a rapid increase of gold items in grave assemblages.

It is likely that the *aurei* were worn as pendants, possibly also as clothing fittings or as decoration on weapons. After a warrior died, they were deposited in his grave with his other personal effects. This is the reason for their frequency in Gothic lands, much higher than within the empire where they would have normally been melted down to make new coins. It is reasonable to suppose that most of the mid-3rd c. *aurei* derive from grave assemblages lost to post-depositional processes or disturbed by treasure-hunters. This would explain why so many are partly melted down: they had passed through the cremation pyre. For the same reason, the *aurei*, one imagines, were cut up when their owner died as a form of destroying them, just as with the rest of his personal effects (gold jewellery used to display his prestige, clothing fittings, military equipment, bronze vessels). Within Barbaricum, this is the first time that coins were treated in this manner, and on such a scale: in reality, this is a rare phenomenon. Only two later cut-up *aurei* have been recorded thus far: one of Gallienus and one of Carinus. This makes it probable that the cut-up *aurei* are the result of a special treatment accorded to the spoils of war by barbarians. One may imagine that they were destroyed before being placed inside the grave, as a way of marking in a symbolic manner the fact that the warrior being buried had taken part in the

93 Мызгин 2018, 41.

94 Cf. Levada and Potupčik 2017 (supra n.36) 418, fig. 6.

95 Надвірняк 2018 (supra n.38) 258-59, fig. 9.

96 Cf. K. N. Skvorcov, "Zniszczone pochówki z zawieszka lunulowatą z Półwyspu Sambijskiego," *Wiadomości Archeologiczne* 65 (2014) 281, fig. 5; K. Мызгин, "Late Roman period gold foil pendants stamped with anthropomorphic and zoomorphic ornaments from the Barbaricum," in A. Pesch and M. Helmbrecht (edd.), *Gold foil figures in focus. A Scandinavian find group and related objects and images from ancient and medieval Europe* (Munich 2019) 256, fig. 10.

97 М. В. Любичев, "Об этнокультурных процессах позднеимского времени в зоне днепро-донецкой лесостепи (в свете исследований археологического комплекса Войтенки)," in И. О. Гавритухин and А. М. Воронцов (edd.), *Лесная и лесостепная зоны Восточной Европы в эпохи римских влияний и Великого переселения народов* (Тула 2008) 257-90; Любичев 2019 (supra n.10) 184-85 and 254.

famous victory and was their only legitimate owner. The crushing of the Roman army by the Goths and the killing of the Roman emperor must have been a major event in the barbarian consciousness and self-identity. The gold coins seized on that occasion will have assumed the rôle of a symbol, a prestige object invested with the glory of a great victory. Holes were made in the *aurei*, always from the obverse, and as a rule above the head of the emperor or his family member. For the Goths, the imperial portrait seems to have played a rôle as an insignia; it confirmed their participation in the famous battle resulting in the defeat of the leader of their greatest enemy. At least in the case of the *aurei* of Decius and his immediate predecessors, the holes would have been made shortly after the capture of the imperial treasury. There is evidence, in the form of tools found with other warrior gear in the bog deposits, that some members of the Germanic troops were craftsmen, who will have included goldsmiths skilled enough to punch holes in the coins;⁹⁸ their more regular duty would probably have been to make repairs to armour, and it was they who made the holes in the *aurei*, perhaps even before the troops left Roman territory.

The practices of destroying the *aurei* connected with the Battle of Abritus and depositing them in graves on the lands of the Gothic peoples and their allies had momentous repercussions, for each new generation of warriors would have wished to own prestigious objects similar to those that had been so important for their forebears. However, the influx of later *aurei* did not satisfy this demand, which is presumably why the first Germanic imitative coins were born, the earliest of which date from the second half of the 3rd c. Nearly all were pierced and, over time, provided with a loop for suspension.

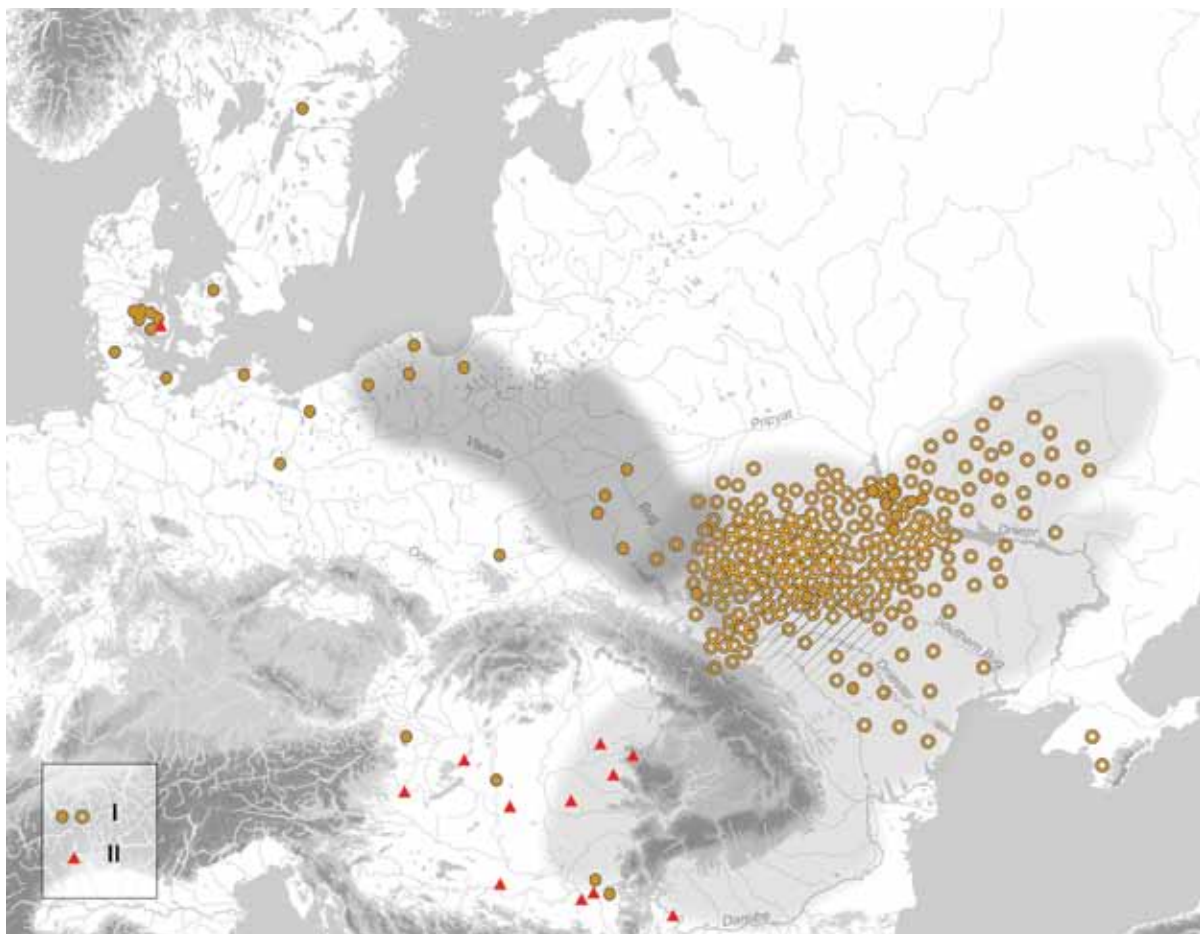
A clear majority of the early gold barbarous imitations have come to light on the lands of Goths and their allies; they cluster in central and W Ukraine, which is also the area with the largest pool of finds of original Roman *aurei* (map 6);⁹⁹ it is also the same region in which we find a concentration of Roman bronze vessels, military diplomas and Roman provincial coins from Balkan mints, looted presumably around 250 from the provinces on the Lower Danube. This same territory, lying between the middle reaches of the Dnieper and the upper and middle reaches of the Southern Bug and the Dniester, respectively, is traditionally recognized as the cradle of the Chernyakhiv culture. This presumably was the homeland of most of the warriors who were led by Cniva to storm Philippopolis and other Roman towns on the lower Danube, who prevailed at Abritus, and who came home back with their plunder.¹⁰⁰ It is plausible that they also brought with them to their barbarian homelands Roman captives, including some craftsmen with appreciable know-how. This could explain the major advances made in pottery, glassmaking, metallurgy, turning on a lathe, and so on in the Cherniakhiv culture.¹⁰¹ Could it be that it is here, in the

98 A. S. Dobat, *Werkzeuge aus kaiserzeitlichen Heeresausüstungsoffern. Mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Fundplätze Illerup Ådal und Vimose* (Århus 2008); Bursche 2011 (supra n.89) 22-23.

99 H. W. Horsnæs, "Networking in north-eastern Barbaricum. A study of gold imitations of Roman coins," in L. Bjerg, J. Lind and S. Sindbæk (edd.), *From Goths to Varangians. Communication and cultural exchange between the Baltic and the Black Sea* (Århus 2013) 94, map. 2; K. Мызгин, I. Vida and T. Więcek, "Gold imitations of Roman coins from collection of Hungarian National Museum in Budapest," in Niezabitowska-Wiśniewska *et al.* (supra n.24) vol II, 226, fig. 5; T. E. Więcek, *Złote naśladownictwa monet rzymskich z kręgu gockiego* (Ph.D. diss., Warsaw Univ. 2019).

100 Cf. Мызгин 2018, 46-47.

101 Glassmaking: Ю.А. Шапова, "Мастерская по производству стекла у с. Комарово (III-IV вв.)," *Советская археология* 3 (1978) 230-42; О. С. Румянцева, "Стеклоделательное производство в римское время и эпоху раннего средневековья: источники, факты, гипотезы," *Российская*



Map 6. Distribution of finds of gold imitations of Roman coins:

I (in gold): Chernyakhiv (eastern European) group of imitations; **II** (in red): Danubian group of imitations; dot = finds with known localization; circle = finds with a very approximate localization;

Dark grey: area of the Wielbark culture in the mid-3rd-early 5th c.

Light grey: area of the Chernyakhiv culture in the 4th-early 5th c.

Hatched: area of the Chernyakhiv culture in the second half of the 3rd c.

(after Horsnæs 2013 [supra n.99], 94, map 2; Мызгин *et al.* 2018, 229, fig. 5).

археология 3 (2011) 86-97; ead., "Стеклоделие за лимесом: новые данные об организации производства и хронологии мастерской в Комарове," *Stratum plus* 4, 141-64.

Pottery: А. А. Бобринский, *Гончарство Восточной Европы* (Moscow 1978); id., *Гончарные мастерские и горны Восточной Европы* (Moscow 1991); Магомедов 2001, 96-100; Э. Шультце and М. В. Любичев, "Об изготовлении гончарной керамики в черняховской культуре. Гончарный горн на поселении Войтенки (Восточная Украина)," *Археологія і давня історія України*, 2 (Київ 2010) 183-90; Э. Шультце (E. Schultze), М. В. Любичев and К. В. Мызгин (edd.), *Производство керамики в Восточной Европе: позднеримское время – раннее средневековье – новое время* (Ostrogothica-Serie [Hefte] 2; Харьков 2013).

Metallurgy: Г.А. Вознесенская, "Техника обработки железа и стали," *Материалы и исследования по археологии СССР* 187 (1972) 8-49; С.В. Паньков, "Про організацію виробництва заліза у племен лісостепової зони Східної Європи першої половини I тис. н.е.," in П. П. Толочко (ed.) *Стародавнє виробництво на території України* (Київ 1992) 94-116; Е. А. Черных and Т. Б. Барцева, "Спектроаналитические исследования цветного металла черняховской культуры," *Краткие сообщения Института археологии АН СССР* 121 (1972)

region settled by Gothic élites, that their power centre lay, and where the future “kingdom of Ermanaric” later came into being? Gothic leaders, and even rulers such as Cniva and Ostrogotha, came from such military élites.¹⁰² A major rôle in this process could have been played by the victorious wars and the plunder taken during them.

APPENDIX

Finds of cut-up *aurei* in Roman provinces

In 2010,¹⁰³ R. Raynaud published 12 fragments of *aurei* identified in auction catalogues and private collections. In a series of supplements,¹⁰⁴ he added to this list 7 more fragments of *aurei* and a single fragment of a unique *quaternio* of Gallienus. All are confined to the period between 67/68 and 308, with 3rd-c. issues forming the absolute majority.¹⁰⁵ Almost all are unprovenanced, with no details about their archaeological context. For most, we do not even know whether they were discovered on Roman territory or outside the frontiers, except for the fragment of a coin of Carinus found in Ukraine, and a fragment of an *aureus* of Postumus found in England;¹⁰⁶ provenance is given for two other coins, namely Hungary (a fragment of an issue Probus) and the Balkans (a fragment of an *aureus* of Diocletian), but the information is too general to establish on which side of the Roman frontier they were discovered.

Nonetheless, some of them at least definitely surfaced within a Roman province. Two fragments of *aurei* are the result of metal-detecting in England: the coin of Postumus mentioned above came to light at Deerhurst, Glos.,¹⁰⁷ and that of Probus at Middleton, Northants.¹⁰⁸ Fragments of *aurei* published by Raynaud show a chronological range different from the finds in Gothic territory: most are issues from the second half of the 3rd c. and start of the 4th, with no less than 8 confined to the period from 284/285 to 308. Meanwhile, except for two fragments, all the other specimens found in east-central Europe have been dated up to the year 251. Interestingly, among the 20 fragments published by Raynaud there is not a single issue of Decius, in contrast to the pool of finds attributed to the effects of Abritus where these types are very much in evidence.

The absence of fragmented *aurei* bearing evidence of a hole, so typical for the finds from Gothic territory (except for the coin of Carinus), may be due to selection by auction houses of better preserved, less damaged coins to attract potential buyers. For the same reason, the pool published by R. Raynaud is made up mostly of halves of *aurei* and other larger fragments. As such, this is not a representative sample, which makes that author's

95-103; Магомедов 2001, 93-96.

102 Wolfram 1990 (supra n.35) 389-90; “Kniva,” in *Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde* vol. 17.2 (2001) 34-37; id. 2018 (supra n.48); id. 2019 (supra n.48).

103 Raynaud 2010 (supra n.12).

104 See the works of Raynaud (2011a, 2011b, 2012, 2014, 2015, 2017, 2018) cited in n.12 above, as well as his “Les *aurei* découpés: supplément 4, Carin,” *Bull. Cercle d'Etudes Numismatiques* 50.1 (2013) 135-36.

105 We leave out the partly-cut *aureus* of Augustus which we believe to be of a different character: Raynaud 2011b (supra n.12) 389.

106 Raynaud 2010 (supra n.12) 248.

107 R. Bland and X. Loriot, *Roman and Early Byzantine gold coins found in Britain and Ireland, with an Appendix of new finds from Gaul* (London 2010) 159 no 202.

108 PAS NARC-B63118 (unknown to R. Raynaud).

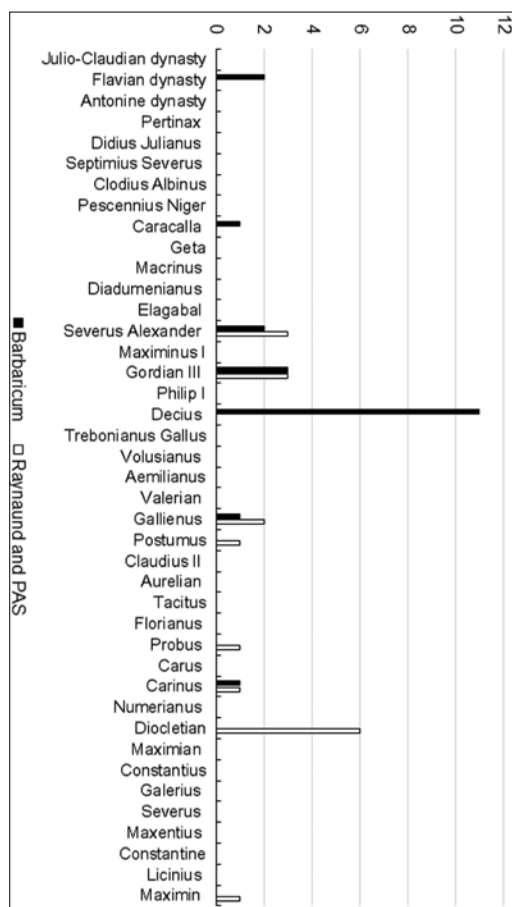


Fig. 13. Chronological comparison of cut-up aurei found in Barbaricum and those probably found inside the empire (according to Raynaud 2010, 2011a, 2011b, 2012, 2014, 2015, 2017, 2018 [all supra n.12] and the UK Portable Antiquities Scheme).

interpretation seems rather unlikely, especially given the dating of a large number of cut-up aurei to the late 3rd and early 4th c., a period relatively free from unrest on the frontiers and within the empire proper (excluding the episode of Carausius and Allectus).

In this situation the only acceptable explanation for this rather sporadic practice of cutting up gold coins must be economic. In a period of a fiscal crisis, with a shortage within

speculations about the weight ratios somewhat off the mark. In individual cases — for example, that of two fragments of aurei of Gordian III¹⁰⁹ — we presumably cannot hope for a conclusive identification of their provenance. Despite this, we may assume with some confidence that the cut-up aurei were found on Roman provincial territory and mostly had a later chronology than those found within Barbaricum (fig. 13).

The appearance within the borders of the empire of the practice of cutting up aurei is harder to explain because of the lack of information on their archaeological context, with only two fragments coming with a closer provenance. One possibility is that this custom is related to barbarian invasions of the western provinces and barbarians who served in Rome's auxiliary units. Such troops were often deployed by usurpers in their wars against legitimate emperors, as evidenced by the written sources and coin finds.¹¹⁰ One extraordinary aureus with a hole, an issue of Postumus now in the National Ossoliński Institute in Wrocław, has on its obverse a graffito in Greek ΓΟΥΝΘΙΟΥ (Gounthios), presumably the name of one of the officers of the *ingentia auxilia Germanorum* units attached to *legio X Fretensis* as the owner of the coin, Gunþijaz.¹¹¹ Perhaps after winning a battle the barbarians deliberately destroyed the looted aurei bearing the portrait of the defeated enemy. Yet this inter-

¹⁰⁹ Raynaud 2011a (supra n.12); id. 2015 (supra n.12).

¹¹⁰ J. Werner, "Bemerkungen zur Mitteldeutschen Skelettgräbergruppe Hassleben-Leuna. Zur Herkunft der *ingentia auxilia Germanorum* des gallischen Sonderreiches in den Jahren 259-274 n.Chr.," in H. Beumann (ed.), *Festschrift für Walter Schlesinger*, vol. I (Köln 1973) 1-30; Bursche 1996 (supra n.61) 115 and 127; id., "Functions of Roman coins in Barbaricum of later antiquity. An anthropological essay," in A. Bursche, R. Ciolek and R. Wolters (edd.), *Roman coins outside the Empire*. *Proc. Workshop 2005* (Coll. Moneta 82, 2008) 407; J. Bemmman, "Mitteldeutschland und das Gallische Sonderreich 260-274. Eine liebgewonnene These auf dem Prüfstand," *KölnJb* 47 (2014) 179-213.

¹¹¹ A. Degler, "Aureus of Postumus with owner's graffito (Gounthios)," in M. C. Caltabiano (ed.), *Proc. XV Int. Numismatic Congress: Taormina 2015* (Rome-Messina 2017) vol. 2, 723-26.

the provinces of good silver coin and of gold denominations smaller than the *aureus* (the latter fluctuating in weight), people in some special cases may have resorted to making payments in weighed gold. To obtain the equivalent of a pound of gold, its fraction or the required number of *scripula*, gold coins would be cut up. Nonetheless, this practice of cutting up *aurei* was probably very rare inside the empire, unlike what was happening in Gothic territory.

Consequently, what we have may be simply an extraordinary coincidence: *aurei* cut up during roughly the same period both within the empire and outside its borders, but for apparently different reasons. What is relevant from the numismatic point of view is that some of the gold coins that were cut up on both sides of the *limes* go back as far as the second half of the 1st c., post Nero's reform. This would mean that around the year 250 these *aurei* were still in regular use within the empire. But this is a topic that requires further study.

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