



COMMUNICATIONES
ARCHÆOLOGICÆ
HUNGARIÆ

2025

COMMUNICATIONES
ARCHÆOLOGICÆ
HUNGARICÆ

2025

Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum
Budapest, 2025

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MNMKK Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum Régészeti Tár
H-1088, Budapest, Múzeum körút 14–16.

A folyóirat cikkei elérhetők / journal access: <http://ojs.elte.hu/comarchhung>
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ISSN 0231-133X (Print)
ISSN 2786-295X (Online)

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THE HUNS IN THE CIMMERIAN BOSPORUS

Michel KAZANSKI¹ 

The history of the Cimmerian Bosphorus in the Hun Period (last third of the 4th–second third of the 5th century) remains largely unknown. Hun-style artefacts in the Eastern Crimea and the Taman Peninsula (arrowheads, bone bow plates, some sword types, and a diadem) and the presence of elements of burial ritual elements characteristic of the steppe zone (the placement of saddles and arrows into the grave, accompanying horse graves) in the funerary practice of the Bosporan population from the late 4th–mid-5th century are scarce evidence, reflecting only an episodic presence of Huns in the Cimmerian Bosphorus. These artefacts and phenomena were associated primarily with the ‘elite’ and ‘military’ strata and, apparently, did not reach the bulk of the Hellenised population.

A kimmer Boszporusz hun kori története (4. század utolsó–5. század középső harmada) nagyrészt ismeretlen. A Kelet-Krímben és a Tamany-félszigeten hun stílusú tárgyak (nyílcsúcsok, íj csontmerevítők, bizonyos kardtípusok, diadém) és a sztyepp zónára jellemző temetkezési rítuselemek (nyereg és nyilak sírba tétele, lovas sírok) ritkák a boszporuszi népesség sírjaiban a 4. század vége és az 5. század közepe között, ami arra utal, hogy a hunok csak epizód szereplők voltak a kimmer Boszporusznál. E tárgyak és jelenségek az “elit” és “katonai” rétegekkel álltak összefüggésben, és nyilvánvalóan nem jutottak el jelentősebb mértékben a hellenizált népességhez.

Keywords: Cimmerian Bosphorus, Great Migration, Huns, archaeological traces, weapons, diadem, burial rite

Kulcsszavak: Kimmer Boszporusz, népvándorlaskor, hunok régészeti nyomai, fegyverzet, diadémok, temetkezési rítus

Although it has been the subject of many discussions, the history of the Cimmerian Bosphorus in the Hun Period (last third of the 4th–second third of the 5th century) remains enigmatic in many ways. I have also have focused on it in several studies (Kazanski 2019; Kazanski 2020; Kazanski 2021a; Kazanski 2022). This article is an attempt to characterise and interpret the scarce archaeological record possibly associated with the presence of the Huns in the Cimmerian Bosphorus.

It still remains unclear where the route taken by the Huns for their migration to the Northern Black Sea Area passed and what was the connection between that and the Cimmerian Bosphorus (for primary sources and secondary literature, see Vasiliev 1936, 23–30; Tortika 2003). Eunapius (347–after 414) mentions that various explanations circulated at his time on how the Huns appeared in Europe; he

laid out the details in the part of his *History* that did not survive (*Eunapii Fragmenta*, 41). The account of Ammianus Marcellinus (ca. 330–after 395), written down most likely in the 390s (*Ammianus Marcellinus* XXXI. 2. 12, 21), informs that the Huns, when they appeared in the steppes of Eastern Europe, first attacked the Alans who lived around the Tanais, i.e. the Lower Don area; the Bosphorus is not mentioned there. However, a few late ancient writers report on that the Huns passed the Cimmerian Bosphorus and that their first victims were the local ‘Scythians’, i.e. the Goths. This version first appeared in the work of Sozomen (ca. 400–450), according to whom the Huns initially lived behind the ‘Great Lake’ (certainly the *Maeotis*); one day, when hunting and driving a bull or a doe, they crossed this lake by a ford, discovered a new country, and attacked the Goths who lived there (Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica*, VI. 37).

► Received 12.6.2025 | Accepted 5.10.2025 | Published online 29.12.2025

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It should be noticed, however, that this legend does not mention the Cimmerian Bosphorus directly, though the *Maeotis* could be passed, in the right season, also near the estuary of the Don. Yet Zosimus in his *Historia nova*, written between 450 and 502, indicates that he had found somewhere an account on that the Huns passed the Cimmerian Bosphorus when it was covered by the silt deposited by the Tanais.¹ Following the plot with the crossing of the Bosphorus, Zosimus informs that the Huns attacked the 'Scythians' who lived near the Istrus, i.e. the Goths (Zosimus, *Historia Nova*, IV. 20. 3,4). Later on, historians in the Age of Justinian retold this version. Amongst them, Jordanes listed the peoples who got under the blow of the Huns when they crossed the *Maeotis*: *Alpidzueros, Alcildzueros, Itimaros, Tuncarsos, Boiscos* (*Iordanis de origine actibusque Getarum*, § 126). Some researchers believe that the Huns appeared in the Bosphorus only in the late 4th century, after they invaded the Northern Black Sea Area (see, e.g., Gadlo 1979, 13, 14; Ajbabin 2011, 68).

A. A. Vasiliev thought that the account of the passage of the Huns through the Cimmerian Bosphorus reflected some reality and that the Hun hordes

could migrate to the West simultaneously by the Lower Don and the Strait of Kerch (Vasiliev 1936, 23, 24). According to him, the Goths laid control on the Bosporan Kingdom as late as ca 400 (Vasiliev 1936, 21–23; see also Wolfram 1990, 92; the date was possibly even earlier, from 342/343 on? – see details at Kazanski 2021b). Although many scholars do not like this interpretation, no logical counter-hypothesis has been suggested. Let me remind that, in 404, the king of the Goths personally requested for a new bishop to be sent to his subjects: to reach them, there was need to sail to the Cimmerian Bosphorus, as John Chrysostom put it (Vasiliev 1936, 23).²

As the available sources contain no direct account, we do not know whether the Cimmerian Bosphorus was a subordinate to the Huns in the first half of the 5th century. Some details can be taken from Priscus of Pannonia's account of the raid by some 'royal' Huns (Priscus called them 'Scythians'), headed by Basich and Kursich, against Iran in the 420s–430s. The Huns advanced from the steppes of Scythia, controlled by kings Ruas and Attila at the time; they passed deserted lands, then a lake (Maeotis, as those who informed Priscus believed, though it

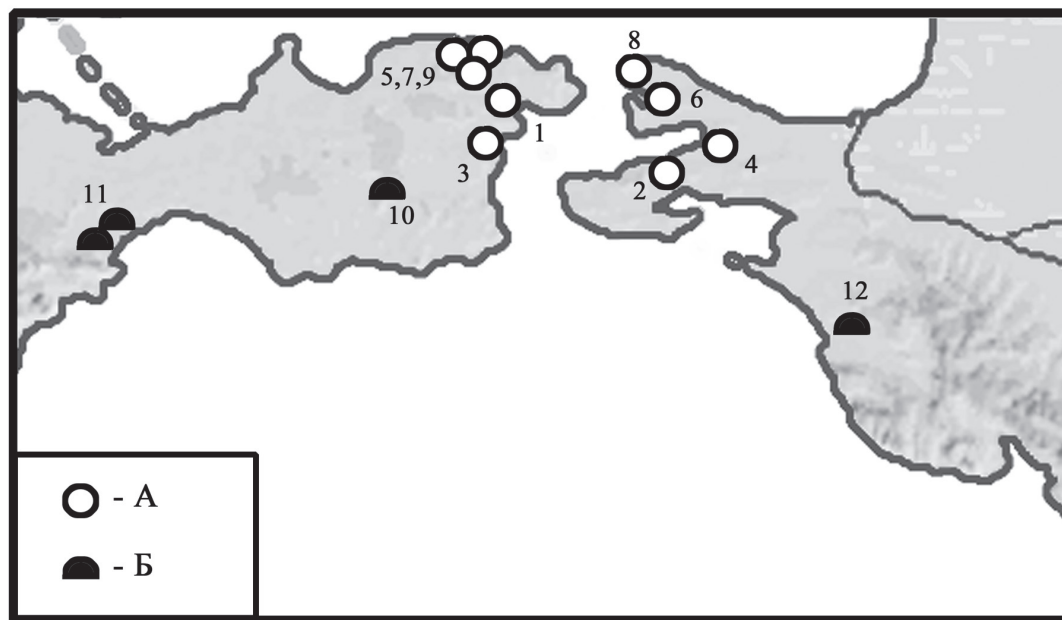


Fig. 1. Map of Hun Period sites at the Cimmerian Bosphorus mentioned in the text. A: Sites of the settled population; B: sites of the nomads. 1: Kerch–Panticapaeum–Bosporus; 2: Phanagoreia; 3: Tiritace; 4: Cepi; 5: Sirenevaia Bukhta; 6: Batareika I; 7: General'skoe; 8: Il'ichevka; 9: Strozhilovo; 10: Marfovka; 11: Feodosiya–Theodosia; 12: Buzhor (approximate positions due to the scale of the map)

1. kép. A kimmer Boszporusz szövegben említett hun kori lelőhelyei. A: A letelepült népesség lelőhelyei; B: a nomádok lelőhelyei. 1: Kerch–Panticapaeum–Bosporus; 2: Phanagoreia; 3: Tiritace; 4: Cepi; 5: Sirenevaia Bukhta; 6: Batareika I; 7: General'skoe; 8: Il'ichevka; 9: Strozhilovo; 10: Marfovka; 11: Feodosiya–Theodosia; 12: Buzhor (a térkép méretaránya miatt a lelőhelyek helyzete hozzávetőleges)

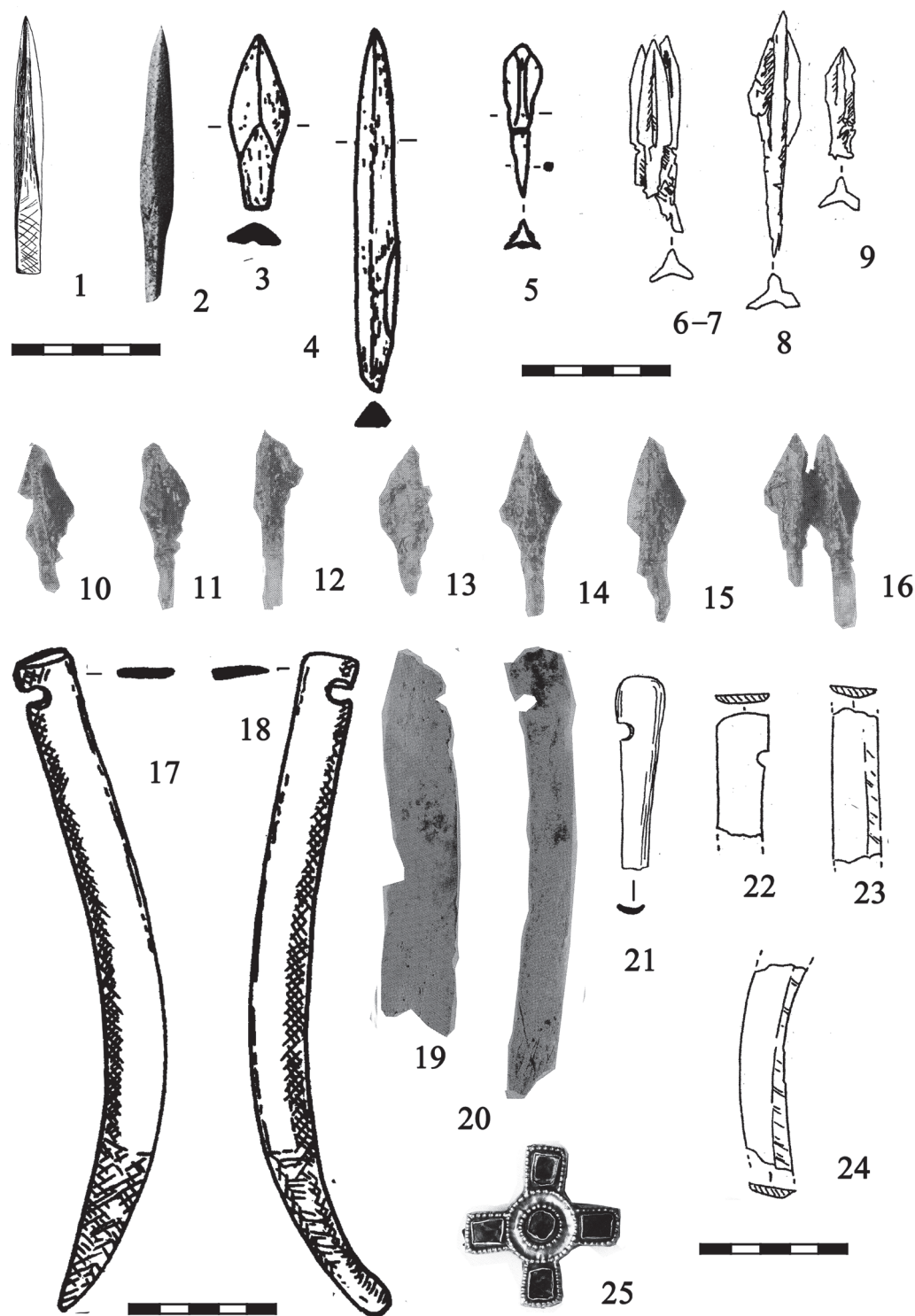


Fig. 2. Hun-style weapons and horse tack from the Cimmerian Bosphorus. 1: Batareika I (Sokol'skii 1968, Fig. 9); 2: Cepi (Sokol'skii 1968, Fig. 4); 3-5, 17, 18: Il'ichevka (Gavritukhin, Paromov 2003, Pl. 6. 52-55, 57); 6-9: Sirenevaia Bukhta, Burial Vault 23/11 (Maslennikov 1997, Fig. 53. 8-10); 10-16, 19, 20: Kerch, Burial Vault 154/1904 (Zasetskaia 1993, Pl. 19. 229, Pl. 57. 330); 21: Tiritace (Khazanov 2008, Fig. 18. 2); 22-24: Starozhilovo I, Burial Vault 4/4 (Maslennikov 1997, Fig. 11. 1-3); 25: unprovenanced finds (Damm 1988, Abb. 183) (2, 10-16, 19, 20, 25 - no scale)

2. kép. Hun stílusú fegyverek és lószerszámok a kimmer Boszporusztól. 1: Batareika I (Sokol'skii 1968, Fig. 9); 2: Cepi (Sokol'skii 1968, Fig. 4); 3-5, 17, 18: Il'ichevka (Gavritukhin, Paromov 2003, Pl. 6. 52-55, 57); 6-9: Sirenevaia Bukhta, 23/11. sz. sírkamra (Maslennikov 1997, Fig. 53. 8-10); 10-16, 19, 20: Kerch, 154/1904. sz. sírkamra (Zasetskaia 1993, Pl. 19. 229, Pl. 57. 330); 21: Tiritace (Khazanov 2008, Fig. 18. 2); 22-24: Starozhilovo I, 4/4. sz. sírkamra (Maslennikov 1997, Fig. 11. 1-3); 25: szórványleletek (Damm 1988, Abb. 183) (2, 10-16, 19, 20, 25 - méretarány nélkül)

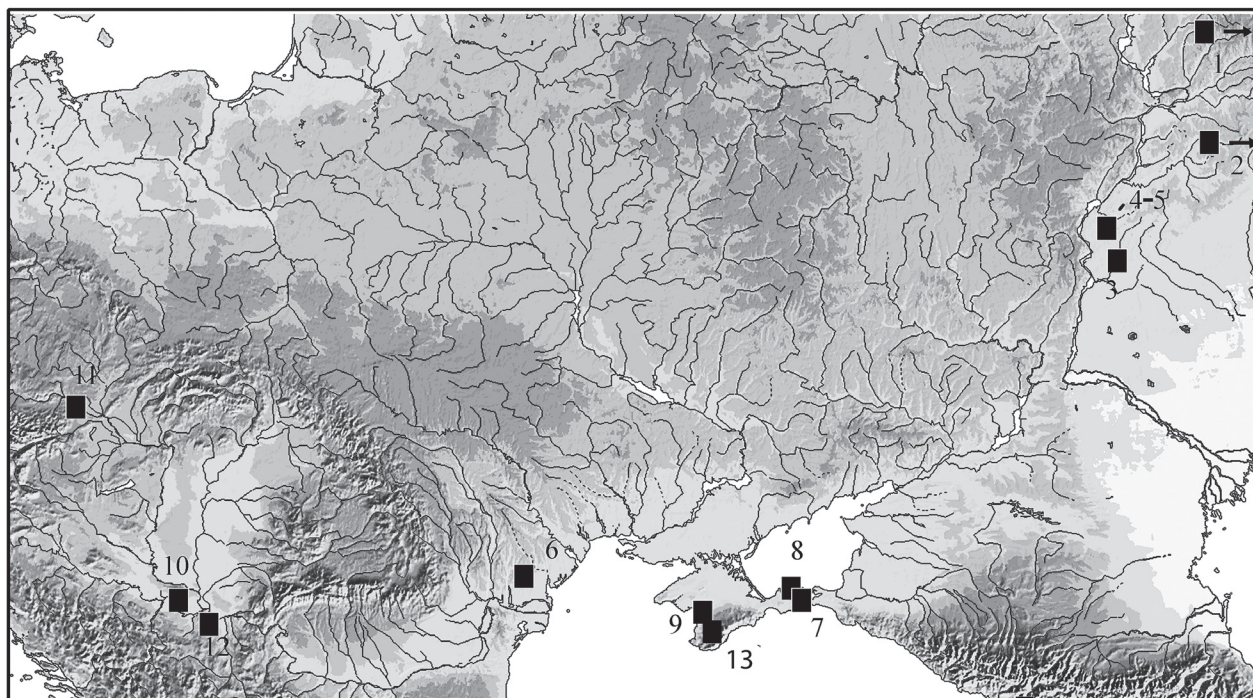


Fig. 3. Hun Period burials with bone bow plates. 1: Solonchanka; 2: Kyzyl-Adyr; 3: Zeel'man-Rovnoe; 4–5: Engels-Pokrovsk; 6: Kubei; 7: Kerch; 8: Starozhilovo; 9: Ust'-Al'ma; 10: Vranja; 11: Wien-Simmering; 12: Singidunum; 13: Almalyk-Dere (approximate positions due to the scale of the map) (after Kazanski 2018, Fig. 4) 3. kép. Hun kori sírok csont íjmerevítő lemezekkel. 1: Solonchanka; 2: Kyzyl-Adyr; 3: Zeel'man-Rovnoe; 4–5: Engels-Pokrovsk; 6: Kubei; 7: Kerch; 8: Starozhilovo; 9: Ust'-Al'ma; 10: Vranja; 11: Wien-Simmering; 12: Singidunum; 13: Almalyk-Dere (a térkép méretaránya miatt a lelőhelyek helyzete hozzávetőleges) (Kazanski 2018, Fig. 4 után)

might well also have been Sivash, or the swampland at the estuary of the Don, or the Strait of Kerch), and, fifteen days after, crossed the mountains (the range of the Caucasus) and invaded Iran. Priscus underlines that the 'royal' Huns could learn a possible way from Scythia to Media during this campaign. On the way back, the Huns passed the mountains again, but this time they turned aside from the previous route and appeared on the seashore, where fire broke out of an underwater rock. Historians have interpreted this account as a description of the gas and oil fields near the modern city of Baku (see, e.g., Artamonov 1962, 54); if so, the Huns returned to their lands in the steppe through the Pass of Derbent on the western coast of the Caspian Sea (Priscus, fr. 8 in Given 2014, 68, 69).³ This account allows the one to conclude that, by the 420s, the 'European' Huns of Ruas and Attila did not possess either the Cimmerian Bosphorus or the steppes of the North-eastern Black Sea Area, and did not even have reliable information on them (for details, see Kazanski, Mastyskova 2009, 123, 124). The situation changed a bit around 448, when Attila finally subjugated the Akateri Huns, who had only been his nominal subjects before and

had their own numerous leaders. The Akateri occupied the steppes in 'Pontic Scythia' (Priscus, fr. 8: Given 2014, 55, 56) east of the Dnieper (for details, see Artamonov 1962, 55, 56; Kazanski, Mastyskova, 2009). Learning that the Akateri established contacts with the Romans, Attila arranged a punitive raid, executed the traitors, and appointed his son Ellac to be the ruler of the Akateri (Priscus, fr. 8: Given 2014, 55, 56; see also Artamonov 1962, 55–57).

According to Procopius of Caesarea, the Tetraxitai Goths controlled the Eastern Crimea around the mid-5th century. At any rate, they were the only capable of stopping the Utiguri Huns at the Strait of Kerch, when the latter retreated from Europe.⁴ According to the agreement established with the Huns, the Tetraxitai Goths moved to the North Caucasus with them (Procopius, VIII. 5). In 548, a legation from the Tetraxitai came to Constantinople with the aim of getting a new bishop (Procopius, VIII. 4. 11–13). The Tetraxitai were a rather large people, participating with a troop of 2,000 – which counted as a big force at the time – in the war between the Utiguri and the Cutriguri Huns in 551 (Procopius, VIII. 18, 22). There also is another source testify-

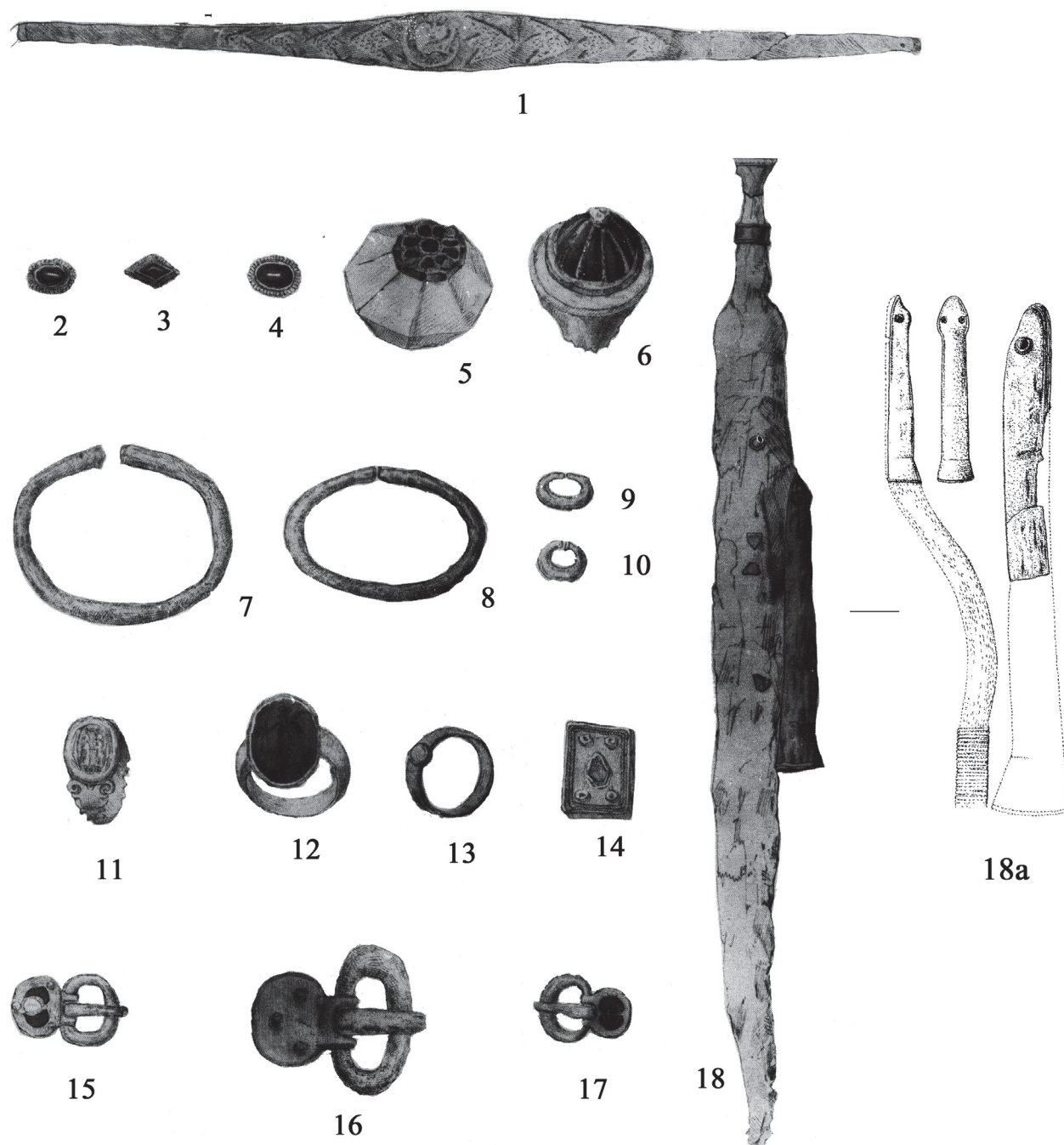


Fig. 4. Artefacts from the burial discovered in Kerch–Glinishche in 1896 and reconstruction of the bow (18a)
(1–18: Werner 1956, Taf. 15; 18a, Bóna 2002, Fig. 112)

4. kép. Az 1896-ban felfedezett Kerch–Glinishchei sír tárgyai és az új rekonstrukciója (18a)
(1–18: Werner 1956, Taf. 15; 18a, Bóna 2002, Fig. 112)

ing to the Gothic presence in the Caucasian coast: an anonymous *periplous* dated perhaps from the 6th century (the so-called *Pseudo-Arrian*), which mentions the people of the *Eudousianoï*, who spoke Gothic and Taurian languages and lived near the harbour of Pagras (*Continuation du Périple anonyme, Codex Londonienses*, § 22: Baschmakoff 1948, 139; Diller 1952, 130).⁵

As it was mentioned in several previous studies, very few artefacts representing the Hun 'steppe' tradition have been discovered in the close area of the Bosphorus thus far (Kazanski 2019, 258; Kazanski 2020; Kazanski 2021a). So far, the excavations have not discovered any trace of a Hun attack in Kerch–Panticapaeum–Bosporus, the capital of the former Bosporan Kingdom. To the best of my knowledge,

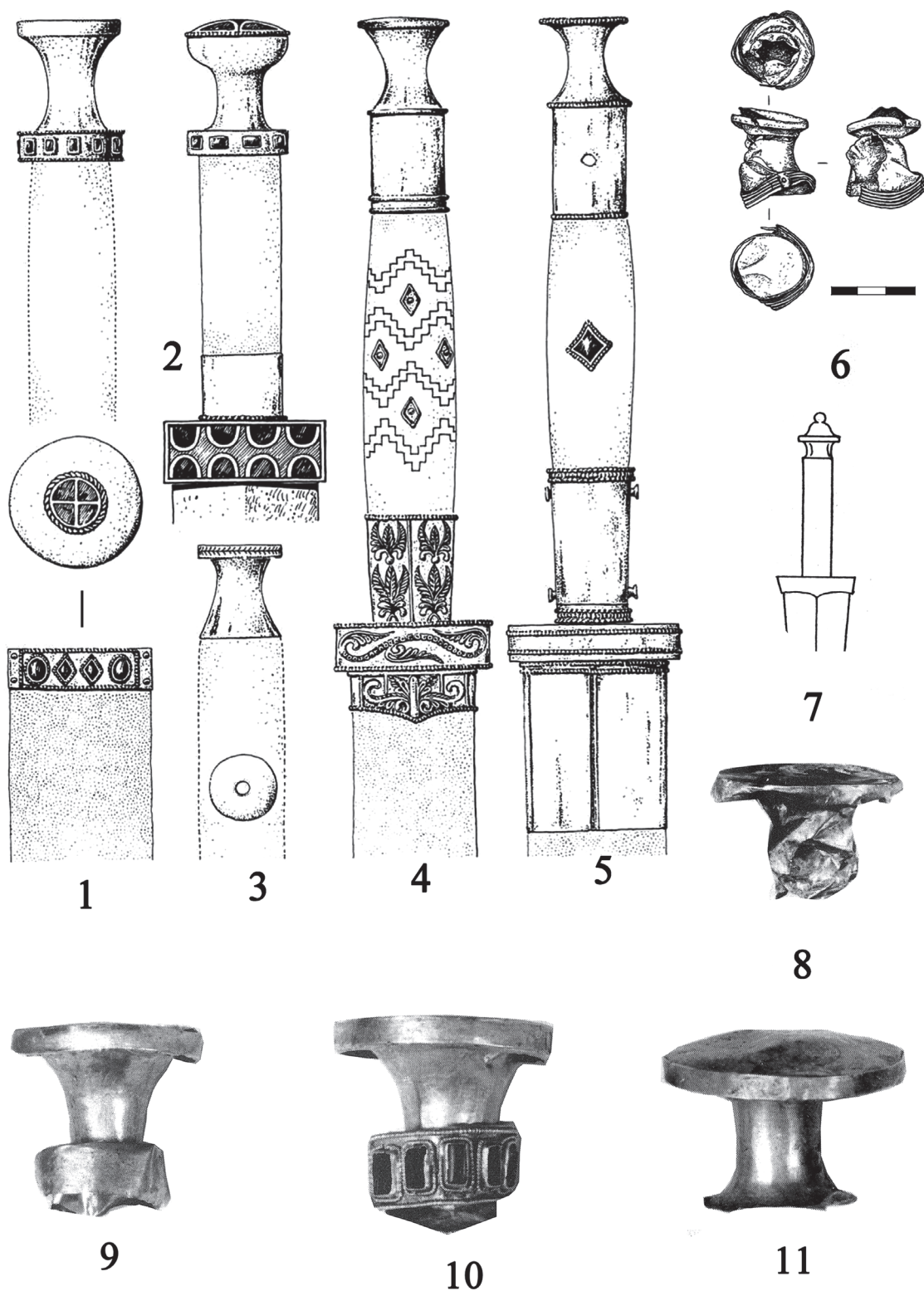


Fig. 5. Persian-style swords. 1: Sovkhoz Kalinina (Crimea); 2: Tsbilium (Abkhazia); 3, 8–10: Kerch (Crimea), Burial Vault 145/1904; 4: Turaevo, Barrow 5 (Urals); 5: Musliumovo (Urals); 6: Volch'i Vorota (North Caucasus); 7: Palmyra, image from 229 (Syria); 8: Kerch (Crimea), burial vault unearthed on Tarkhanskaia Road in 1914 (1–7: Kazanski 2019, Fig. 4; 8–10: Zasetkaia 1993, Pl. 17. 47. a–b; 11: Zasetkaia 1993, Pl. 62. 364. b)

5. kép. Perzsa stílusú kardok. 1: Sovkhoz Kalinina (Krim-félsziget); 2: Tsbilium (Abházia); 3, 8–10: Kerch (Krim-félsziget), 145/1904. sz. sírkamra; 4: Turaevo, 5. halom (Urál); 5: Musliumovo (Urál); 6: Volch'i Vorota (Észak-Kaukázus); 7: Palmyra, 229-ből származó ábrázolás (Szíria); 8: Kercs (Krim-félsziget), a Tarkhanskaia úton 1914-ben feltárt sírkamra (1–7: Kazanski 2019, Fig. 4; 8–10: Zasetkaia 1993, Pl. 17. 47. a–b; 11: Zasetkaia 1993, Pl. 62. 364. b)

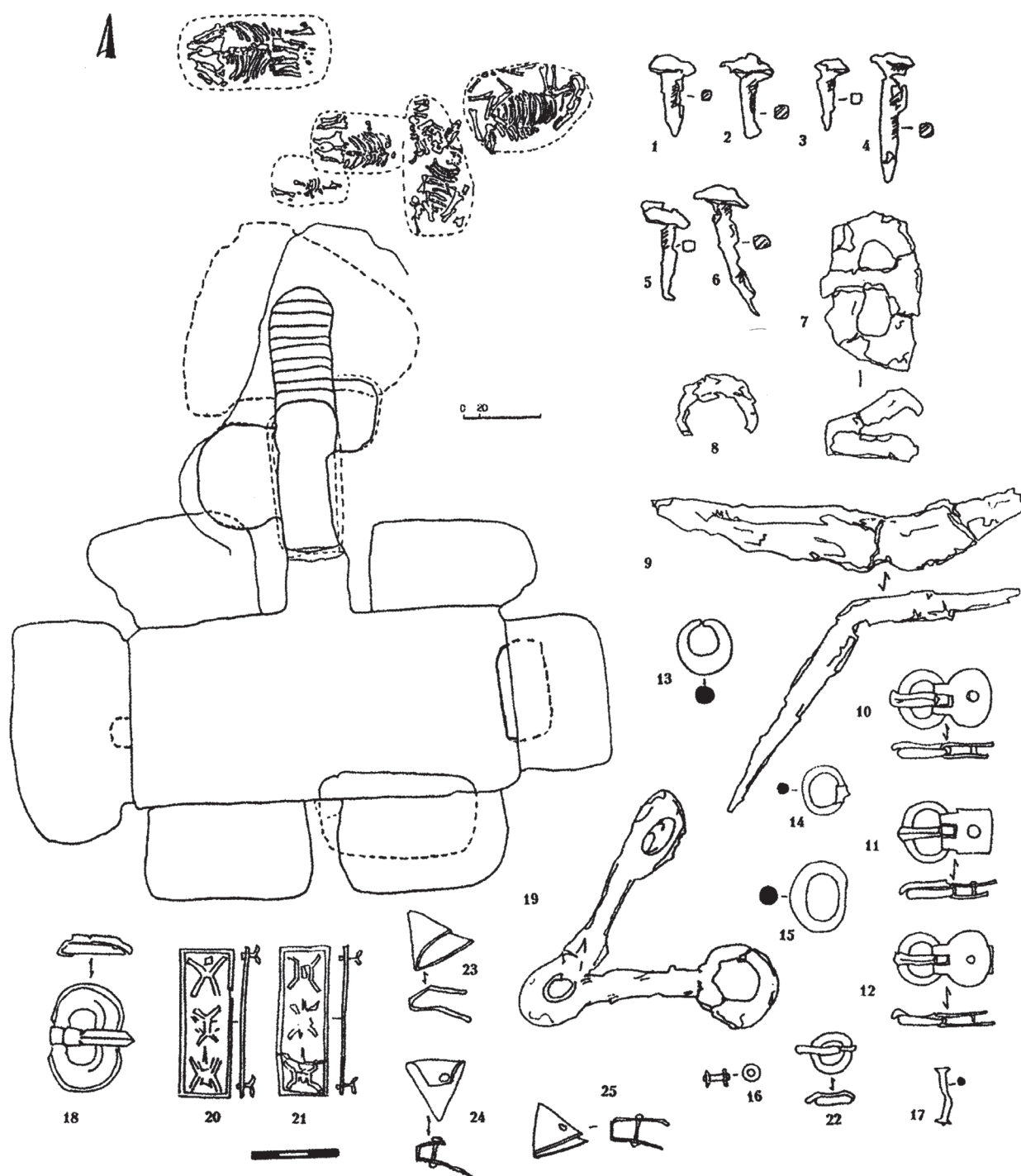


Fig. 6. Burial Vault 23/11 in the cemetery of Sirenevaia Bukhta and the finds from the horses' and the human's graves (Maslennikov 1997, Fig. 50. 54)

6. kép. Sirenevaia Bukhta 23/11. sz. sírkamrája, valamint a ló- és embersírok leletei (Maslennikov 1997, Fig. 50. 54)

traces of destruction and conflagration from the late 4th–first half of the 5th century in the territory of the Cimmerian Bosphorus have been documented in Phanagoreia and, possibly, Batareika I, Cepi, and General'skoe (all in present-day Russia) (Fig. 1. 2, 4, 6) (for details, see Kazanski 2009, 182, 183). The destruction layers in Cepi and Batareika I also con-

tained typical bone steppe-style arrowheads (see below) (Fig. 2. 1–2). Unfortunately, a great part of the Hun Period archaeological material retrieved in the Bosphorus area still awaits to be made available for research (for the respective sites and monuments, see Kazanski 2009, 181–216; Ajbabin 2011, 51, 52); therefore, it is still hard to discuss whether

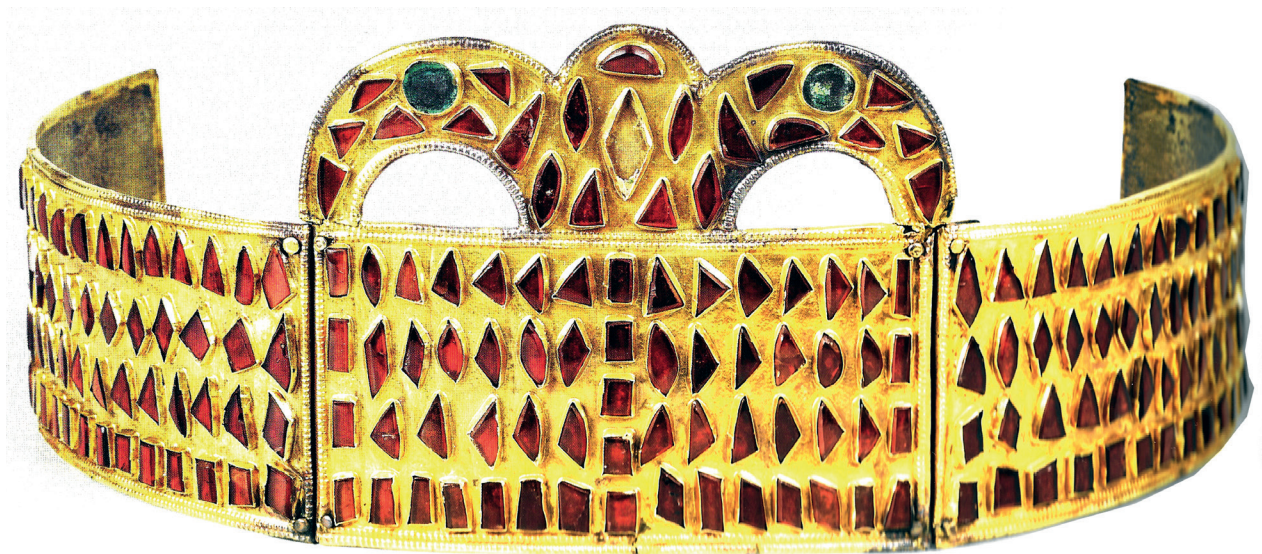


Fig. 7. Diadem from the burial vault unearthed on the Mitridat mountain in Kerch in 1907 (after Eger 2017, no. 32)
 7. kép. A kercsi Mithridatész-hegyen 1907-ben feltárt sírkamra diadémja (Eger 2017, no. 32 után)

there were actual traces of the Hun invasion, such as conflagration, destruction, and so on. Moreover, it might well be that the Huns occupied the Bosphorus and not destroyed the local settlements, e.g., if the outcome was decided by battles on the field or diplomatic actions.

The above-mentioned bone arrowheads may be a primary focus of any discussion of Hun-style artefacts discovered in the Cimmerian Bosphorus from non-burial contexts. These are relatively small, flat, elongated leaf-shaped, with a wide tang (Fig. 2. 1–3). It has already been mentioned that similar arrows were found in Cepi and in destruction layers at Batareika I (Sokol'skii 1968, 261, Fig. 4. 9; Kazanski 2009, 182; Kazanski 2021a, Fig. 2. 1–4), as well as at the fortified settlement of Il'ichevka on the Taman Peninsula (Russia), where a bone javelin-head was also unearthed (Fig. 2. 4) (Nikolaeva, 1986, 186, 187, Fig. 1. 8–9; Gavritukhin, Paromov 2003, 154, Pl. 62. 52, 57). Their parallels appear in the archaeological material of the steppe in Kazakhstan and the Southern Urals (Botalov, Gutsalov 2000, 129, Fig. 18. I. 1–17, II. 40–44, Fig. 20. I. 1–4), but none have been found yet in the Eastern European steppe, although some have been retrieved from the Hun Period layers of Tanais (Shelov 1963, Fig. 10) and contexts associated with the settled neighbours of the Hun steppe (e.g., Starostin 1967, Pl. 16). However, Ammianus Marcellinus, who possessed information concerning primarily the Huns in 'Europe,' mentioned that they led long-distance attacks with arrows with heads made of bone (*Ammianus Marcellinus*, XXXI. 2. 9). Any-

way, there is need to substantiate that all such arrows discovered in the Bosphorus from contexts dated to the late-4th and the first half of the 5th century belonged to the Huns. Actually, the bone arrow- and javelin-heads discovered in Il'ichevka might well date from the post-Hun Period, as the main destruction layers on this site date from the 6th century (Gavritukhin, Paromov, 2003, 154).

It would be even more difficult to relate the Huns with the trilobate, rather massive iron arrowheads, widest at the middle (Fig. 2. 5–16). These arrows were widely used by the Huns, so they are well-known from late-4th–first half of the 5th-century steppe burials (Zasetskaia 1994, Fig. 4, Type 3b). These arrowheads inflicted wide, open, excessively bleeding wounds to the enemy and, what is also important, their horses. In the Cimmerian Bosphorus, these artefacts were uncovered in funeral contexts, like Burial Vault 154/1904 (Zasetskaia 1993, Pl. 47, no. 217; Zasetskaia 2024, no. 170) and Tomb 176/1904 in Kerch (Zasetskaia 1993, Pl. 57, no. 330; Zasetskaia 2024, no. 260), and the mid-5th-century Tomb 23/11 in Sirenovaia Bukhta (Maslennikov 1997, Fig. 53. 8–10) (see below) (Fig. 2. 6–16), as well as in the settlement layers, such as Il'ichevka mentioned above (Fig. 2. 5) (Nikolaeva 1986, 186, Fig. 1. 3; Gavritukhin, Paromov 2003, 154, Pl. 62. 53) and Taraktash (Myts, Lysenko 2001, Fig. 2. 1–2). However, steppe-style trilobate arrows spread quickly across Europe: varied peoples populating vast lands from Gaul to the forest zone in present-day Russia used such weapons in the 5th–7th century (Kazanski 2009, 102; Kazanski 2014). There-

fore, the chronological position and cultural attribution of trilobate arrows from the layers of Bosporan settlements is far from unequivocal. Anyway, the appearance of such arrows amongst the goods in Hun Period graves in the Bosphorus reflects most likely the influence of steppe burial rites (for the numerous cases among the Huns, see Zsatskaia 1994), as the type is not present in earlier burials there.⁶

Bone plates from so-called 'Hun-type' composite bows with wide end plates are frequent finds of the Hun Period archaeological record throughout Europe (*Fig. 2. 17–24*). The 120–150 cm long bows with bone plates were the main weapon of the Huns (Alföldi 1932, 18–26; Zsatskaia 1994, 35–36; Bóna 2002, 117–121; Kazanski 2012, 193–194). B. Anke collected the finds of bow remains with bone plates (Anke 1998, Karte 5, Fundliste 4). Although several recent discoveries can be added to this list, two main distribution areas could be outlined from the data it contains: the steppe in today's Russia and Ukraine, and the Middle Danube Region. Bone bow plates of the type were found in Cimmerian Bosphorus in non-burial contexts in the already mentioned fort of Il'ichevka (Russia) (*Fig. 2. 17–18*), where at least a part of them was related to the post-Hun Period destruction layers (Nikolaeva, 1986, 187, *Fig. 1. 11*; Gavritukhin, Paromov 2003, 154, Pl. 62. 54–55), and Tyritake, Crimea (*Fig. 2. 21*) (Khazanov 2008, *Fig. 18. 2*). Bows with bone parts originated from Asia (Werner 1956, 46–50; Khazanov 2008, 78–83). Peoples of the Eastern European steppe, particularly the Sarmatians and the Alans, also used composite bows in the 1st–4th century, i.e. before the arrival of the Huns (Werner 1956, Taf. 37. 2; Karte 4; Khazanov 2008, 84–85), and such weapons were also popular in the 'Late Sarmatian Period' (2nd–4th century) in the steppe zone in the Southern Urals and Northern Kazakhstan, areas which the Huns certainly crossed during their migration to the West in the 4th century (Khazanov 2008, 73–75). 3rd-century bone bow plates in the Roman West reflect the continuity of this weapon type in the Roman Empire (Khazanov 2008, 84–85; Kazanski 1991, 135). Some bow plates discovered in Late Imperial contexts feature widened ends (see, e.g., Bishop, Coulston 1993, *Fig. 43. 2, Fig. 74. 1*). Bows with 'Hun-style' ends have been retrieved from 3rd–5th-century contexts in the Danube fort of Tropaeum Traiani on the outskirts of Adamclisi in Romania (Chiriac 1997).

These findings alone cannot be considered cultural markers, but their occurrence in a funerary

context might be significant for identifying the 'trace' of a Hun presence. Such artefacts in the Cimmerian Bosphorus are known from Burial Vault 154/1904, Grave 3 in Kerch (Zsatskaia 1993, Pl. 49, no. 229; Zsatskaia 2024, Catalogue no. 182) and Tomb 4/4 in Starozhilovo I (Crimea) (Maslennikov 1997, *Fig. 11. 1–3*) (*Fig. 2. 19–20, 22–24*). Burials from the Great Migration Period with bone bow plates are known from sites of both the steppe peoples and the 'settled' barbarians, particularly the cemeteries at Almalyk-Dere and Ust'-Al'ma in the Crimea (*Fig. 3*) (Kazanski 2018, Appendix, no. 9, 13, *Fig. 4*). Settled peoples perhaps adopted the rite of putting bows into graves from steppe burial rituals of nomadic communities, amongst whom it was undoubtedly a social marker. It is particularly known that the bows were power symbols in the 'Hun Empire' (Harmatta 1951; László 1951).⁷

A bracket with zoomorphic end from the grave discovered in 1896 in Kerch-Glinishche (Shtern 1897, 1, *Fig. 7*) is usually interpreted as a part of sword holder fastened to scabbard (*Fig. 4. 18*). However, the find could also be an end-piece of a bow plate (Anke 1998, Taf. 37. 1; Bóna 2002, *Fig. 113*) (*Fig. 4. 18a*). Moreover, it can be associated with the gold plates in the 'princely' graves and commemorative assemblages of Hun Period nomads, which are consensually interpreted as bow plates, particularly the pieces from Jakuszowice in Poland, Skeleton 8 of Novogrigor'evka and Novoivanovka (Ukraine), Kubei (Russia), Pécsüszög, Bátaszék, and Pannonthalma (Hungary) (Werner 1956, 49–50; Anke 1998, 62–65; Bóna 2002, 131–133; Fodor 2017 with references), as well as a plate from Skeleton 1 (8) of the Alan cemetery of Berezovskii-2 on the outskirts of present-day Kislovodsk (Russia) (Savenko 2014, 117–119). However, the identification of some of these finds as bow plates is questionable (for details, see Komar 2013, 90–91; Savenko 2014, 128), and the find from Kerch could also hardly be part of a bow, or at least this interpretation requires additional arguments.

'Persian' parade swords, certainly brought from the East, are probably also part of the find material associated with the Huns in some way (see Bóna 2002, 199, *Fig. 104*; Kazanski 2019a, 118–120; Kazanski, Mastykova 2023, 166). These swords and daggers have their hilt ending in a concave 'neck' sometimes capped with a hemispherical pommel (*Fig. 5*).⁸ Their prototypes are well-known from the Near East, particularly Palmyra (Syria), from the

year 229 (*Fig. 5. 7*). Such weapons were found in the Bosphorus area in the burial vault discovered in 1896 in Kerch-Glinishche and the secret compartment of Burial Vault 145/1904 in Kerch-Gospital'naia, the burial vault found on the Kertch-Tarkhanskaia Road in 1914,⁹ and Burial Vault 315/2019 in Phanagoria, Crimea (Shtern 1897, *Fig. 7*; Zsetskaia 1993, Pl. 17, no. 47; Pl. 62, no. 364; Zsetskaia 2024, no. 29, 301; Voroshilov, Voroshilova 2019, *Fig. 2. 2*; Kazanski, Mastykova 2023, *Fig. 6. 3, 8–10*) (*Fig. 4. 6, Fig. 5. 3–8, 11*). Several stray finds and ones without information on their findspot are also known from this region (e.g., Damm 1988, no. 103). Apart from the Cimmerian Bosphorus, swords and scabbards representing the Iranian tradition were discovered in burial sites of settled communities in Abkhazia (Tsibilium cemetery), the North Caucasus (cemetery of Volch'i Vorota), the vicinity of Kislovodsk, and in Ingushetia, the Middle Dnieper Region (the Volnikovka burial), the Hun burial at Sovkhoz Kalinina in the Crimea, and somewhat older graves in the steppe zone (middle or the second half of the 4th century), such as Musliumovo in the Southern Urals (*Fig. 5. 1–2, 4–6*). To the best of my knowledge, no 'Persian' sword with a hemispherical pommel and a concave 'neck' has ever been found in Central and Western Europe.

The archaeological record of Kerch also comprises some polychrome cross-shaped bridle fittings of unknown provenance (*Fig. 9. 13*) (Damm 1988, 177–178, Abb. 183–184). Similar bridle mounts made of bronze, covered with gold foil, and inlaid with red stones and glass pieces are typical finds of Hun sites, including Zdvizhenskoe (Vozdvizhenskoe, Russia), as well as Skeleton IX of Novogrigor'evka, Sovkhoz Kalinina, present-day Feodosiya – Klementovka (Kliment'eva) Mountain (*Fig. 2. 25*) (Zsetskaia 1994, 42–43, Pl. 1. 1, Pl. 11. 4, Pl. 22. 6, Pl. 26. 2), and Grave 95 of Ust'-Al'ma in the Crimea (Puzdrovskii 2010, *Fig. 10. 5–8*). In I. P. Zsetskaia's view, these appliques were placed on where side straps crossed with front and nose straps of the headstall (Zsetskaia 1994, 42, 43). Although polychrome fittings are not known from a Hun context in Central Europe, the already-mentioned burial in Jakuszowice in Southern Poland contained cross-shaped fittings with no polychrome decoration (Godlowski 1995, Abb. 2. 2–3).

One of the elements adopted from the Hun steppe world in the Bosphorus region was probably the rite of placing a saddle into the grave. A Hun Period sad-

dle was found in Grave 5 in 165/1904, a 'family' (collective) burial vault, in the cemetery at Gospital'naia Street in Kerch. The wooden saddle was fitted with silver ornaments and nails with gilded heads; however, its type could not be determined (Shkorpil 1907, 49; Zsetskaia 1993, 97).¹⁰

In the archaeological record of the Hun Period, hard saddles are well-known finds of nomadic graves (Zsetskaia 1994, 45–50) and some elite burials of settled communities on the periphery of the steppe, such as Concești (Romania: Furașev, Shabalavina 2019, 159–162). Saddles first appeared in elite graves of barbarians in the Pontic-Caucasian steppe probably as early as the Late Roman Period. The 'chieftain's' grave at Kishpek (Kabardino-Balkaria), dated to the start of the 4th century, contained the remains of a poorly preserved wooden saddle. Catcomb 10, a collective (family?) burial of Alans in the cemetery of Lermontovskaia Skala 2 in the area of present-day Piatigorsk (Russia) chronologically neighbours the Hun Period. The tomb contained the remains of a woman and a young man with grave goods from the Hun Period and those of a man with grave goods from the post-Hun Period. The saddle and other parts of the horse tack discovered in the burial chamber belonged to either the 'Hunnic' or the 'post-Hunnic' man (Kazanski 2017, 204, 205).

Graves with saddles in the Late Roman West are related to a barbaric military environment. The burial of a military leader in Mundolsheim, Alsace, in the environs of Strasbourg is an excellent example. Its grave find assemblage comprised of a sword and an axe (which did not survive), parts of a belt and/or shoe set, and horse tack fittings. This burial dates from Phase D2 (380/400–440/450) or D2/3 (430/440–460/470) of the European Barbaricum timeline. Based on the analysis of the grave goods, the military officer buried there was of Northern Black Sea origin and most likely related to the settled Pontic environment. A 4th-century grave in Sarry, Marne District in northern Gaul contained, among others, a sword, a chain mail, and metal saddle parts. Wooden saddle elements were found in Grave 3 of the cemetery of Ballana in Nubia, dated to ca. 450/460. The chambered grave of the noble adult woman also contained sacrificed horses (Kazanski 2017, 204–205).

Some 'steppe'-style graves in the Cimmerian Bosphorus were furnished with a few horses. Horse burials were found at Burial Vault 23/11 in the cemetery of Sirenevaia Bukhta (*Fig. 6*), where the already

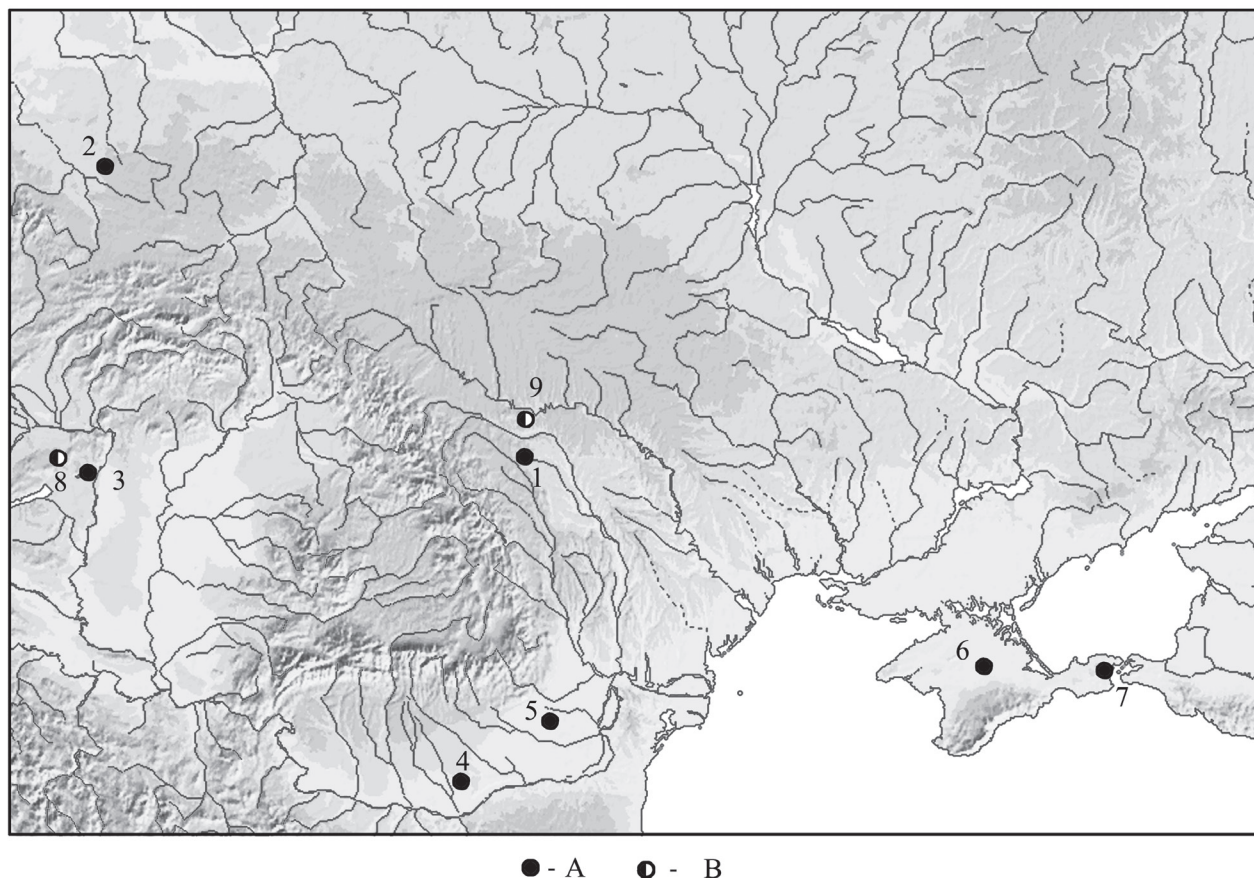


Fig. 8. A: Distribution of Kovrig's Type 2ba diadems; B: distribution of similar jewellery items with flat stone inlays.
 1: Buhăieni; 2: Höchracht-Jędrzychowice; 3: Budapest; 4: Dulceanca; 5: Gherăseni; 6: Sovkhoz Kalinina; 7: Kerch;
 8: Csorna; 9: Shurbanets' (approximate positions due to the scale of the map) (after Kazanski 2020)
 8. kép. A: Kovrig 2ba típusú diadémjainak elterjedése; B: hasonló, sík kőberakásokkal díszített ékszerek elterjedése.
 1: Buhăieni; 2: Höchracht-Jędrzychowice; 3: Budapest; 4: Dulceanca; 5: Gherăseni; 6: Sovkhoz Kalinina; 7: Kerch;
 8: Csorna; 9: Shurbanets' (a térkép méretaránya miatt a lelőhelyek helyzete hozzávetőleges) (Kazanski 2020 után)

mentioned trilobate arrowheads were also discovered. It was a large vault with two chambers, one of which was plundered but the other not; the second chamber contained at least five inhumations. Four west-east and one north-south-oriented pit graves of horses were found next to the tomb, to the north. One horse was laid on the side, while the others had been reclined in the pits. with horse bits and bronze buckles (Maslennikov 1997, 22–25, Fig. 50). Small buckles with an oval frame and buckle plate (Fig. 6. 10, 12) were also discovered in the vault. Their parallels are known from the famous 'princely' grave of Smolin in Southern Moldavia (*L'Or des princes barbares*, 2000, no. 22. 9), dated to Phase D2/D3, i.e. 430/440–460/470 in the chronological framework of the European Barbaricum (Tejral 2011, 15–17, 355), which, to some extent, also indicates the dating of the horse graves in Sirenevaia Bukhta. Based on its design, the burial vault, like to cemetery in general,

belonged to the local Hellenised population of the Cimmerian Bosphorus. However, its nearest parallel is a post-Hun Period burial in Malai (Grave 12 in Barrow 1) in the eastern Azov Sea region (Limberis, Marchenko 2011, 420–439). Generally, burial of horse skins and complete horses was widespread in the Hun steppe (Kazanski 2009, 99; Kazanski, Mastykova 2009, 116 with references), and this ritual reached Western Europe from there (Kazanski, Périn 2005, 293–295).

The last element of the find material related to Huns is a diadem from Kerch, which had been the subject of targeted research before (Kazanski 2020) (Fig. 7). This artefact belongs to the group of typical Hun Period female ornaments used by steppe nomads; more than twenty such jewellery items are known today (for details, see Kovrig 1985; Zsuzsanna 1994, 50–58). The diadem in question was allegedly found on the north slope of Mountain Mi-

tridat, perhaps near Konstantinovskaia Street ('*rue de Constantinople*', today 23 May 1919 Street), in a burial vault ('*Katakombe*'), along with other goods with buckles and brooches amongst them (Damm 1988, 85–92; Damm 1996, 82–84; Eger 2017).

The 34.2 cm long diadem, like other specimens of the type, consists of three rectangular plates (Shipovo, Kanattas: Zasetskaia 1994, 52, 53). It has a bronze backplate, covered with gold foil and decorated with garnet and glass inlays in isolated cases. It belongs to Group 2B according to I. Kovrig's typology, which was basically accepted by I. P. Zasetskaia (Zasetskaia 1994, 56), i.e. diadems with no granulation but with the whole surface covered with flat sub-triangular, diamond-shaped, rectangular, and rarely round stones set close to each other in a few straight lines (Kovrig 1985, 124, 126). The diadems of this subgroup include finds from Buhăieni, Dulceanca, and Gherăseni (Romania), Jędrzychowice (Höchricht, Poland), Budapest (Hungary), and possibly Sovkhoz Kalinina (Kovrig 1985, Abb. 7). Flat stone inlays also appear in the diadems from Csorna (Hungary) and Shurbanets (Ukraine) (Kovrig's Group 2c) (Zasetskaia 1993, 56). This way, the diadem from Kerch is certainly of 'western' origin, related to the area controlled by Ruas and Attila, as almost all diadems of Kovrig's Group 2b (except for those found in Kerch and Sovkhoz Kalinina), as well as the diadems decorated with flat stones in general, were found west of the Dniester (Kovrig 1985, Abb. 13), most of them in the basin of the Lower Danube and the Dniester (Fig. 8). According to Priscus of Pannonia, Ruas (killed ca. 434) conquered this territory and subjugated the local barbarians, the Amilzouri, Itimari, Tounsoures, and Boiski (Priscus fr. 1 in Given 2014, 8).¹¹ However, one decorative element of the diadem from Kerch – the central composition featuring two bird heads – has its only analogue in the eastern part of the steppe, in the post-Hun Period (second third of the 5th–second third of the 6th century) burial in Shipovo in the Southern Urals (Kovrig 1985, Abb. 6; Zasetskaia 1994, Pl. 42. 1). In other words, the diadem in question was made with 'western' Hun technique but also features a symbol of the 'eastern' nomads. It may reflect the situation that had developed by 448, when Attila subdued the Akatiri Huns (see above). It was the time when the Cimmerian Bosphorus, after the raid led by Basich and Kurisch (see above) became under the power of Attila, which was the reason why Hun-style artefacts from the Danube Region found their way there.

This study concludes with a list of the 'Hun' monuments – graves and isolated artefacts typical to steppe nomads in the Hun Period – found in the area of the Cimmerian Bosphorus. This find horizon in the European Bosphorus includes the well-known burials of Marfovka (Fig. 9. 1–11) (Zasetskaia 1994, 177, Pl. 24; Ajbabin 1995, 207; Zastrozhnova, Sharov 2017), Feodosiya – Mountain Klementovka (Kliment'eva) / Kokliuk (Fig. 9. 12–18) (Ajbabin 1995, 207, Fig. 1. 7, Fig. 3. 3, 15–16, 25–26; Zasetskaia 1994, 178, Pl. 26. 1–5) and also a non-documented find from Feodosiya (Fig. 9. 19) (Zasetskaia 1994, Pl. 11. 8). The finds associated with Huns in the area of the Asiatic Bosphorus are also very few. This scarce record includes the fragments of a Hun-style cauldron from Buzhor in the vicinity of Anapa (Fig. 9. 20–22) (Novichikhin 2014) and a nomadic burial (Grave 3 in Barrow 35 of Kalininskaia) much farther, behind the Kuban River (Limberis, Marchenko 2011, 417–420, Fig. 2). Densely granulated women's jewellery from the Crimea (style Zasetskaia's Style 1) (Fig. 9. 1, 3–4, 9, 19), in the Hun Period is typical primarily of the eastern, tentatively 'Akateri (Akatziri) Hun' area (for details, see Kazanski, Mastykova 2009, 120, 121). The fragments of the cauldron from the vicinity of Anapa are most similar to the variant used in the eastern half of the steppe zone, namely in the Volga Region and the Urals (Novichikhin 2014, 168–169). These finds are corroborating evidence of the actual presence of steppe nomads in this area next to the Bosphorus and indicate a connection not with the 'royal' Huns under the Attila's dynasty but rather with the Akateri or a culturally close eastern group of steppe nomads.

* * *

In conclusion, relatively few the Hun artefacts in the Eastern Crimea and the Taman Peninsula and the presence of steppe-style burial rite elements at the Bosphorus in the late 4th–first half of the 5th century reflect only an episodic presence of Huns in the area of the Cimmerian Bosphorus. Moreover, the artefacts and funeral rituals in question are related primarily to the 'princely' or 'warrior' 'culture', indicating perhaps that they did not reach the bulk of the Hellenised population. The Bosphorus only entered the orbit of the 'Hun Empire' in the 440s, when Attila subdued the Akateri Huns.¹²

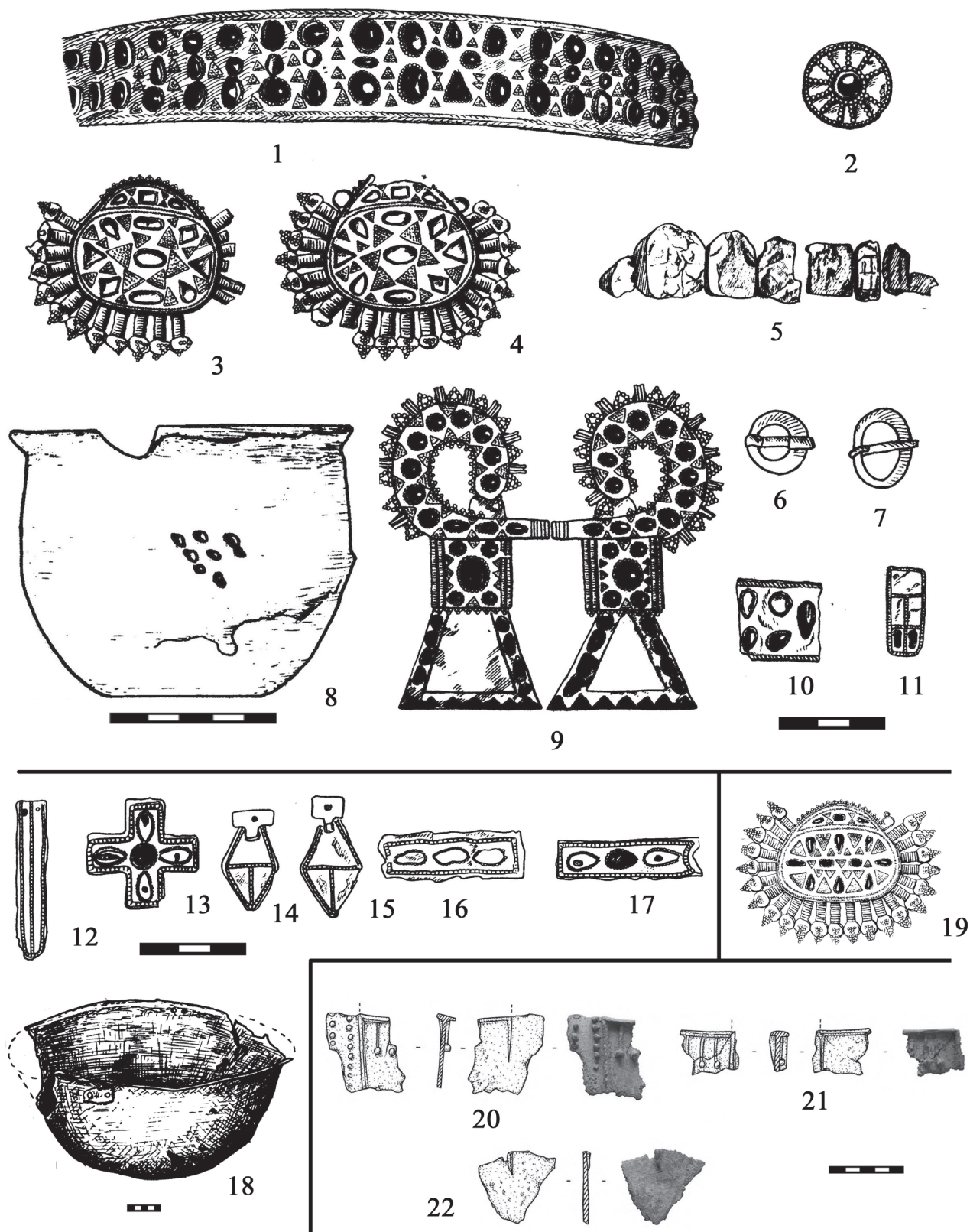


Fig. 9. Finds associated with Hun Period nomads from the borderzone of the Bosphorus. 1–11: Marfovka (Zasetskaia 1994, Pl. 24); 12–18: Feodosiya (Theodosia), Mountain Klimentovka/Kokliuk (Zasetskaia 1994, Pl. 26. 1–5; Ajbabin 1995, Fig. 3. 26); 19: Feodosiya (Theodosia), unprovenanced finds; 2–22: Buzhor (Novichikhin 2014, Fig. 1)

9. kép. Hun kori nomádokhoz köthető leletek a Boszporusz határzónájából. 1–11: Marfovka (Zasetskaia 1994, Pl. 24); 12–18: Feodosiya (Theodosia), Klimentovka/Kokliuk-hegy (Zasetskaia 1994, Pl. 26. 1–5; Ajbabin 1995, Fig. 3. 26); 19: Feodosiya (Theodosia), szórványleletek; 2–22: Buzhor (Novichikhin 2014, Fig. 1)

Notes

- 1 Actually, passing through the Strait of Kerch by a ford was hardly possible due to the terrain (for details, see Tortika 2003, 67, 68). However, the Strait could be passed on the ice when the winter was cold enough.
- 2 They could hardly be the Goths from the country of Dory, i.e. the south-western Crimea, who appear in later sources (for them, see Aibabin, Khairedinova 2017), as the communication with these Goths was easier by Chersonesus than the Bosporus. They could not be a group of Goths living by the Danube either, as scholars sometimes suggest because those tribes were Arian and not Orthodox Christians, so they did not need a bishop from Constantinople and the route to their lands led on land instead of water. As for the Bosporan Goths, Procopius of Caesarea's account on the Tetraxitai (see below) informs that they were Orthodox and got their bishop from Constantinople.
- 3 Some researchers believe that this raid passed along the eastern and not the western coast of the Caspian Sea. However, this hypothesis requires detailed arguments; anyway, Priscus' account makes it clear that the Huns in the 420s–430s had no information about the routes connecting the Northern Black Sea Area region and Iran; thus, they could not control the Cimmerian Bosporus.
- 4 According to Procopius, in this time the Vandals had already established themselves in North Africa; accordingly, the migration of the Utiguri must have taken place after 429, and most probably in the 450s, when Attila's 'empire' collapsed. The chronological position of the Gothic cemetery of Diurso in the vicinity of present-day Novorossiysk (Russia), the only site known so far which is generally accepted to be of the Tetraxitai, is an indirect evidence (for its chronology, see Kazanski 2002).
- 5 For their living place, see, for example, Ἀνωνύμου Περίπλους Πόντου Εὐξίνου (*Anonymi Periplus Ponti Euxini*), §64: “Ἀπὸ οὖν Σινδικοῦ λιμένος ἕως Πάγρας λιμένος πρώην ᾤκουν ἔθνη οἱ λεγόμενοι Κερκέται ἦτοι Τορίται, νῦν δὲ οἰκοῦσιν Εὐδουσιανοὶ λεγόμενοι τῇ Γοτθικῇ καὶ Ταυρικῇ χρώμενοι γλώττῃ.” See also A. V. Podossinov's translation: “<The space> from the Sindian harbour as far as the harbour of Pagras was earlier inhabited by the peoples called the Kerketai or the Toritai, but now here live so-called Eudousianoï who are using the Gothic and the Tauric language” (Podossinov, Anonymi 2037).
- 6 In the Cimmerian Bosporus, trilobate arrows are also known from burial context – Tomb 152/1904 (Zasetskaia 2024, no. 492) – from the post-Hun Period.
- 7 Emperor Marcian having a dream about the broken bow of Attila on the night when the great Hun ruler died (*Iordanis de origine actibusque Getarum*, § 255) is a piece of indirect evidence of the role played by the bow among the Huns.
- 8 Although Late Roman/Early Byzantine Period swords with a hemispherical pommel are also well-known (Kazanski 1991, 128, Fig. 3. 11), these variants do not have a 'neck' below the pommel.
- 9 The collection of the State Hermitage Museum contained also some hilts of unknown provenance from Kerch (Zasetskaia 2024, no. 627).
- 10 Another burial vault, 6/1905 in Kerch contained a mixed find assemblage (Shkorpil 1909, 3, 4) with artefacts typical of the Hun (e.g., Zasetskaia 1993, Pl. 3, no. 37) and post-Hunnic periods (e.g., Shkorpil 1909, Fig. 1). There also were remains of a saddle representing Zasetskaia's Type 4B2, typical of the Post-Hunnic Period (Zasetskaia 1994, Appendix 3, no. 17, Fig. 10. 17; Zasetskaia 2024, 245, 246, nos. 400, 401). The current paper does not include an analysis of post-Hun Period finds.
- 11 This list of peoples matches almost totally the list by Jordanes of the tribes whom the Huns attacked immediately after they crossed Maeotis: Alpidzuros, Alcildzuros, Itimaros, Tuncarsos, and Boiscos (*Iordanis de origine actibusque Getarum*, § 126) (see above). There are two possible explanations of the coincidence: either Jordanes' account was copied from Priscus, or the nomads of Maeotis were driven out to the Lower Danube Region around 375.
- 12 Translated by Nikita Khrapunov.

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A HUNOK A KIMMER BOSZPORUSZNÁL

Összefoglalás

Bár számos korábbi tanulmány foglalkozott már a kérdéssel, a Boszporuszi Királyság hun kori, a 4. század utolsó és az 5. század középső harmada közötti története számos tekintetben továbbra is ismeretlen előttünk. Jelen tanulmány a területről ismert, feltehetően a hunokhoz kapcsolható emléanyagot tekinti át, kísérletet téve annak értelmezésére is. Az útvonalat, amelyen keresztül a hunok eljutottak a Fekete-tenger északi partvidékére, egyelőre nem sikerült biztosan rekonstruálni, amint a vándorló népcsoport kapcsolatát a Boszporuszi Királysággal sem. Az írott forrásokból két lehetséges útvonal rajzolódik ki: az első szerint a hunok az Azovi-tengertől északra fekvő területekre a Don alsó folyásán átkelve jutottak el, míg a másik szerint a Kercsi-szoroson, azaz a Boszporuszi Királyság területén keresztül özönlöttek el a Pontus-vidéki sztyeppet. Ennek megfelelően egyes kutatók a Taman-szigeten a 4. század utolsó negyedéből származó emléanyagban megfigyelt pusztulási rétegeket a hunok megjelenésével hozták összefüggésbe, míg mások szerint a hunok csak a század legvégén, az északi Pontus-vidék invázióját követően jelentek meg a boszporuszi térségben. Jelenleg nincs meggyőző bizonyíték arra, hogy a hunok az 5. század első felében meghódították volna a Boszporuszi Királyságot. A területről származó, hozzájuk köthető emléanyag igen csekély, és a királyság egykori fővárosában (Panticapaeum vagy Boszporusz, ma Kerch) folytatott kutatások eddig nem bukkantak hun invázió nyomára. A korszakból származó pusztulási rétegek és tűzvészek nyomait csak a Taman-szigeten (az 'ázsiai Boszporusz' területén) lehetett megfigyelni; ezek leletei közt néhány hun típusú csont nyílhegy is előkerült.

A Boszporuszi Királyság területéről ismert sztyeppi vagy hun típusú leletanyagot elsősorban fegyverek (csont és vas nyílhegyek, csont íjlemez, kemény nyergek) és lószerszám-alkatrészek (kereszt alakú, polikróm berakásos kantárveretek)

alkotják. Mivel ezek a tárgytipusok önmagukban nem tekinthetők kultúrajelzőnek, a hunokhoz való kapcsolásuk kontextusuk alapján lehetséges: a csont íjlemez sárokban való megjelenése egy jellegzetes sztyeppi szokást tükröz. A Boszporuszi Királyság területén emellett előkerültek önálló, de emberi temetkezéseket kísérő lótemetkezések, illetve perzsa stílusú, bizonyosan keletről származó díszkardok is, melyek valamilyen módon esetleg szintén a hunokhoz kapcsolódhatnak. A ruhadíszek és ékszerek közül kiemelkednek a Kovrig Ilona tipológiája szerinti 2B csoportba tartozó polikróm ékkő- és üvegberakásos diadémok, a hun kori sztyeppi nomád előkelő nők viseletének jellegzetes elemei. Ilyen diadém került elő Kercs területén, egy a Mitridatész-hegyen feltárt sírban. Az ékszer párhuzamai a hunok által uralt terület nyugati felén koncentrálnak, ám díszítése központi elemének – stilizált, kifelé néző madárfej-pár – analógiái kizárólag a kelet-európai sztyepp keleti részéből ismertek. Másképp fogalmazva, a „nyugati hun” technológiával készített diadém „keleti hun” szimbólumokat foglal magába. E tárgy feltehetően a 448 utáni helyzet emléke, amikor Attila alávetette a sztyepp Dnyepertől keletre eső területein élő akatziri hunokat. Ez lehetett az egyetlen időszak, amikor a Boszporuszi Királyság rövid időre Attila hatalmába került, aminek következtében megindult a dunai területek felől a hun típusú tárgyak ide vándorlása. Összességében elmondható, hogy a Krím keleti vidékén és a Tamany-félszigeten előkerült csekély hun típusú leletanyag, valamint a sztyeppi temetkezési szokások megjelenése e területek funerális gyakorlatában a 4. század végétől az 5. század közepéig terjedő időszakban csupán a hunok rövid, epizodikus jelenlétének lenyomata a Boszporuszi Királyság történetében. E tárgyak és szokáselemek elsősorban az elithez és a katonai réteghez kapcsolódnak, és láthatóan nem befolyásolták a köznép anyagi kultúráját és temetkezési gyakorlatát.