

ACTA TERRAE SEPTEMCASTRENSIS

X, 2011

**“LUCIAN BLAGA” UNIVERSITY OF SIBIU
FACULTY OF HISTORY AND PATRIMONY
INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY AND VALORIFICATION OF THE
TRANSYLVANIAN PATRIMONY IN EUROPEAN CONTEXT**

**ACTA TERRAE
SEPTEMCASTRENSIS**

X

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Sibiu, 2011

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ISSN 1583-1817

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Content

Anamaria TUDORIE, TYPOLOGIC CATALOGUES AND DICTIONARIES FOR STARČEVO-CRIȘ POTTERY	7
Georgeta EL SUSI, ANALYSIS OF FAUNAL FROM SUBLEVEL IIa (VINČA A2-3) AT MIERCUREA SIBIULUI-PETRIȘ (SIBIU COUNTY)	17
Marco MERLINI, TĂRTĂRIA: A RITUAL-GRAVE TO CONSECRATE A NOVEL ANCESTOR IN A NEOLITHIC MEDIUM-SCALE COMMUNITY	47
Tibor-Tamás DARÓCZI, ASSOCIATIONS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS IN MIDDLE BRONZE AGE CENTRES OF THE EASTERN CARPATHIAN BASIN - ASPECTS OF POWER	113
Victor SAVA, ARCHEOLOGISCHE BEFUNDE IN DEM SIGHIȘTEL TAL (KREIS BIHOR)	141
Diana-Maria SZTANCS, Corneliu BELDIMAN, Viorica RUSU- BOLINDEȚ, Alexandru BĂDESCU, CONTRIBUȚII LA CUNOAȘTEREA INDUSTRIEI ANTICE A MATERIILOR DURE ANIMALE DIN DOBROGEA. ACE DE OS DESCOPERITE LA HISTRIA-SECTORUL BASILICA EXTRA MUROS	157
Elena-Cristina NIȚU, Review – <i>The Prehistory of Banat</i> (Editors-in-chief Nikola Tasić and Florin Drașovean), I. <i>The Palaeolithic and Mesolithic</i> (Edited by Florin Drașovean and Borislav Jovanović), EA The Publishing House of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest, 2011	185
Carol KACSO, Horia Ciugudean, Sabin Adrian Luca, Adrian Georgescu, Review – <i>Depozitul de bronzuri de la Dipșa</i>, Bibliotheca Brukenthal V, Sibiu, 2006	197

Carol KACSO, Review – Horia Ciugudean, Sabin Adrian Luca, Adrian Georgescu, *Depozitul de bronzuri de la Dipșa*, Bibliotheca Brukenthal V, Sibiu, 2006, 66 p., 13 fig., 80 pl. With contributions: Tobias Kienlin and Ernst Pernicka.

Carol KACSO

Muzeul Județean de Istorie al județului Maramureș, Baia Mare, Romania

Among the most spectacular hoards of the Transylvanian Bronze Age are the eight so called foundry or workshop hoards (Aiud, Band, Bicaz I, Bicaz II, Dipșa, Gușterița II, Șpălnaca II and Uioara), composed of fragmentary pieces but also, many fragments of ingots, junk or casting wastes. They are characteristic for a short sequence of time and manifest a tendency to be localised in Central Transylvania (Aiud, Band, Șpălnaca II, Uioara), while others are localised towards North-West (Bicaz I, Bicaz II), North-North-East (Dipșa) and South (Gușterița II). Although these hoards are in museums collections since long time, they are not published yet, or the publishing is delayed, due to certain motifs, among which the big number of objects and the difficulties to analyse and interpret the phenomenon, the lack of chemical analyses etc. Preliminary reports related to the content and the history of research, the partial expertise of some of them in PBF volumes or other publications replaced partially the lack of information. They must be published *in integrum*, at high international standards, due to the exceptional quantity of information contained by the bronze hoards, of extreme importance for the understanding of phenomena with a large special impact.

A first step in this direction is represented by H. Ciugudean, S. A. Luca and A. Georgescu, through editing the hoard from Dipșa, discovered in 1911, which is held almost entirely in the collections of the Brukenthal National Museum in Sibiu. Some pieces are held in the collection of the Natural History Museum in Vienna, some in the collection of the Evangelical Gymnasium and Museum in Bistrița.

The hoard is published in Bibliotheca Brukenthal Series, with contributions of T. Kienlin and E. Pernicka and the introductory words of K. Kristiansen, who draws attention to the importance of Transylvanian hoards for the late Bronze Age. K. Kristiansen underlines that the monograph is a very important contribution to the better understanding of the role of Central Europe and the Balkans in an epoch characterised by the crisis of the Aegean economy.

Dipșa monograph is composed of five chapters: 1. Introduction; 2. Catalogue of items; 3. The typological-chronological analysis of the items; 4. General considerations regarding the hoard from Dipșa; 5. Data related to the composition of some objects from the hoard of Dipșa, the latter one by T. Kienlin and E. Pernicka. A short abstract in English and the bibliography are added. The 13 figures are inside the text and the plates are located in the final part of the book.

In the introductory chapter there are information related to the history of research, mentioning the year of discovery and of purchase of the majority of items for the Brukenthal collection, the old and the new inventory numbers, the others locations

for preservation of objects. It is admitted the possibility that some of the items may be lost, but the quantity of lost items could not be big, so the real number of bronze objects of the Dipșa hoard must be close to the one known in the present – 611 items with a total weight of 94.77 kg. There authors remember the scholars that studied the hoard *in integrum* or only some of its components and draw the attention to the errors in components or dimensions of the discovery. The archaeological site where the hoard was discovered is a hillside and, although the low height of the hill, the discovery is framed in the category of “high altitude hoards”. This conclusion appears to be less justified if we take into consideration the altitude of other hoards (in Transilvania: Păltiniș, Crasna Vișeuului, Moisei etc). I believe that a more careful research should have been developed, maybe with metal detectors, to verify if there are other depots, as in the case of the two hoards from Bicaz, at a distance of only 40 m one from another and also of the hoards from Uioara and Șpălnaca II (the distance is also reduced, information N. Vlăsa).

In the catalogue of items, there are described the pieces of the depot, with details of shape and decoration, dimensions, plate, place of preservation, inventory number, bibliography. Unfortunately, this type of presentation is not preserved for the ingots and fragments of ingots, which do not have a detailed description other than weight and dimensions and the bibliography.

The chapter related to the typology and chronology of the Dipșa hoard starts with the statistic analysis of the macro-structural composition of the hoard, resulting that 44% of the hoard is represented by ingots, 36% tools, 6% jewellery, 4% weapons, 10% other categories of items. Probably these are the real percentages, counting a total of 100%, unlike the data from graph 4 (ingots 43%, tools 34%, 5% jewellery, 4% weapons, 11% other categories of items), with a total of 97%. From the point of view of the objects' weight, the ingots come once again first making up 78 % of the total weight of the hoard. The authors underline the typological features of the items and the chronological limits of the hoard. Many of the items belong to a stage older than the ensemble of the hoard. Most of them are fragments and were preserved for their value as metal or for their symbolic value. Among them we can count one disk butted axe and one double-armed axe, the latter a very rare object for Transylvania, arrived here as an import piece from Piliny region.

Of great importance for establishing the importance of the Dipșa hoard are the conclusions regarding the state in which the pieces were deposited, particularly the celts. It was observed that many celts were deformed, fragmented and intentionally broken with the hammer. These actions can not be linked with metallurgic practices. They were practiced with the purpose of permanently cancel the function of the objects, which are prepared to be deposited for always in the ground. Similar actions took place in the case of other types of objects from Dipșa: pendants, metal pots. Identical procedures were observed in the case of other discoveries.

As general approach, it can be observed that the typological-statistical analysis of the objects from Dipșa contains pertinent and very clear, well documented observations. There are few observations to be mentioned. I believe that the permanent references to the so called horizons or hoard series Uriu-Domănești and

Cincu-Suseni drop to a certain extent the value of the chronological appreciations. It was already proven that there are no homogenous hoard horizons for the Reinecke Br D or Reinecke-Müller-Karpe Ha A₁ period in Transylvania, as the hoards were hidden in the ground on large areas, due to troubled times. There are, in exchange type of deposits with a limited territorial extent. One of them is the Uriu-Ópályi type, from the region of Superior Tisza River, a different type by comparison with the one in Central and Southern Transylvania or the ones in the region of Inferior Mureş River and Criş River.

The depots took place successively during some religious ceremonies. The situation is partially different in the chronological epoch of the foundry hoards given the conditions of the cultural levelling which happened on large areas. Even so, the difference between the depots, buried to the ground successively are important, so it can not be discussed about a layer of hoards, formed by the simultaneous burying of materials, but more likely about different types of hoards. At least two types of hoards are clearly differentiated: Uioara type – which includes the Dipşa hoard and the Suseni type, the latter one gathering the smaller hoards, with less finite objects and ingots. A careful analysis of the composition of the depots will allow the defining of other types and subtypes, maybe even territorially marked.

There are to be mentioned some observations regarding the analyses of the items. In presenting the researchers which took care of the sickles with hooks (*Hakensicheln* not *Hackensicheln*), I think that M. Roska should not be avoided. M. Roska was the first to create a history of research concerning this type of sickles, he made a list of discoveries of this kind together with the list of celts of Transylvanian type, but also of the archaeological sites where these two types of artifacts are associated, he draw a map of their expanding region (in ESA, XII, 1938, p. 153 and the following).

The dagger pl. XXIX/3 belongs to the type of daggers with hilt and pommel, close to the Tenja type from the group D of daggers with hilt and pommel from Central Europe, according to the classification of R. Peroni (in *Badische Fundberichte*, 20, 1956, 69 and following). This type is found in Transilvania mostly in the Uioara type of hoards (ex. Guşteriţa II [M. Petrescu Dâmb o ƚaj in PBF XVIII, 1, Munchen, 1978, pl. 115, 260], Uioara [M. Petrescu Dâmboviţa, in PBF XVIII, 1, Munchen, 1978, pl. 192, 784, 790-792]), but it appears also in the frame of other discoveries (the former county of Szolnok, Doboka [A. D. Alexandrescu, in *Dacia N.S.*, X, 1966, 179, no. 124, pl. XIII/8, which is considered here a fragment of sword]). Some of the daggers mentioned by the authors (the ones from Galoşpetru, Căpleni II and Foeni), belong to a different type of daggers with hilt and pommel, the Rozavlea type, close to the Garlasco type from group C of Peroni, its characteristic being that the blade is shortened under the straight or slightly arched shoulders, and enlarged approximately at the middle of its height (C. Kacso, *CommArchHung*, 1993, 39 and following). The artefacts from Şpálnaca II and Uioara, mentioned also by the authors, are different from the Dipşa dagger. Considering the clear typological differences, the mentioning of these pieces is not useful in the context of the analysis of the dagger from Dipşa, nor related to the

daggers discovered in Transylvania, which can be included mostly in the Peschiera type, especially since most of artefacts of this kind are ignored.

In the category of bracelets (pl. XXXII/1-3) only one of the three artefacts is finished. The authors consider that, in some extent, there are analogies with the unfinished bracelets from Gârbău and Suceava. They mention the opinions of the authors who published the discoveries (T. Soroceanu, A. Hänsel). The artefacts from Dipșa are not connected to the discoveries mentioned above, the unfinished bracelets having a triple weight and the finished one a double weight by comparison with the artefacts from Gârbău and Suceava. In general, these artefacts can not be connected with jewellery but with bronze bars, even though their shape is of open link. Bars of this kind appeared in the Transylvanian deposits of the Uriu period, for example at Gurăslău (M. Moga, *Dacia S.V. XI-XII*, 1945-

1947, fig. 2, 3, 5) and Valea lui Mihai I (A. Mozsolics, *Bronze- und Goldfunde des Karpatenbeckens*, Budapest, 1973, 132, pl. 46, 19) but in a greater extent are present in the Transcarpathian Ukraine (Malaja Dobron' I-II, Podmonastyr' I, Podpoloz'e, Zmeevka II (J. Kobal', in *PBF XX*, 4, Stuttgart, 2000, 86, nr. 78-79, pl. 39, 9, pl. 75, A, 2-6, 93, nr. 114, pl. 45, B, 3-6, 94, nr. 116, pl. 84, C, 1, 100 and following., nr. 161, pl. 79, A, 1)) and Hungary (Nyíracád, Tizzaszentmárton (Mozsolics, *op. cit.*, 160, pl. 57, B, 16-18, 184, pl. 62, 5), Nagyhalász I-II (T. Kemenczei, *Die Spätbronzezeit Nordostungarns*, Budapest, 1984, 177, pl. 173, b, 1-2, pl. 173, c, 6), Sáradsány, Berkesz, Rétközberencs, Tizsanagyfalu III, Piricse II, Tizsádob, Csabdi (Mozsolics, *Bronzefunde aus Ungarn*, Budapest, 1985, 184, pl. 170, 8-10, 12, 14, 97, pl. 177, 13-14, 182, pl. 194, 1-10, 204, pl. 196, 6-7, 19, 176, pl. 200, 20, 203, pl. 203, 42, 107, pl. 247, 25).

Related to the ingots, the authors mention, mistakenly, that they are absent in the deposits of the Middle Bronze Age. In the deposit from Roșiori there are two fragmentary ingots (D. Popescu, M. Rusu, in *InvArch* 1, 1966, R12, 7-8) and in the deposit of the former Torda county, three, among which one very similar with one from Dipșa, with deep cuts (Mozsolics, *Bronzefunde der Karpatenbeckens*, Budapest, 1967, 171, p. 74, 7-9; the author mentions at p. 98 many other examples of ingots). Even though the majority of ingots are in fragmentary condition, it would have been important a typological presentation, including a graphic one. It would have been offered an important comparison base in handling other deposits, given the fact that in the case of the Uioara case, the ingots represent an essential element for understanding the role and signification of the hoards.

In the chapter with considerations related to the Dipșa hoard, several problems are approached. Discussing about the problem of the hoards with fragmentary pieces, the authors reach to the conclusion that the impressive accumulations of metal represent the propriety of some communities, and the presence of ingots is not relevant for connecting these hoards with metallurgic workshops.

Interesting are the attempts to establish the intervals of weights for the sickles and celts, in trying to detect unit measurement or, maybe, even a pre-monetary system. The results of the analysis of the Dipșa pieces did not lead to a firm conclusion in this matter, the research should be continued in Transylvania, on a larger statistic

base, especially since in Central Europe the existence of pre-monetary system is more and more obvious starting with the copper age. In this matter, there are studies on disk butted axes, without measurements on large series (A. Vulpe, in PBF IX, 2, München, 1970, 94 and following; M. Lenerz-de Wilde, *Fundberichte aus Baden-Württemberg* 20, 1995, 318; Kacsó, in T. Soroceanu (ed.), *Bronzefunde aus Rumänien*, PAS 10, Berlin 1995, 135).

A problem to whom there is dedicated a subchapter is the possible connection of the hoard with the salt exploitations in Late Bronze Age. In this context there are mentioned several other hoards located near salt regions, as well as other installations found in the area of salt exploitations in this period.

Among the latter ones, the authors mention some discoveries from the first half of the XIXth century in Valea Regilor (*Königstal*, *Királyvölgy*), located in the monograph as well as in other works at Ocna Salina. The problem is that there is no place under this name in Maramureş. It is possible that this problem appeared due to the translation of the Hungarian name *Aknaszlatina* (today *Solotvino*), which bears the name of Slatina in Romanian (see vezi I. Mihályi, *Diplome maramuresene din secolul XIV. si XV.*, Maramures-Sziget, 1900, 618 and following, note 2; R. Popa, *Tara Maramuresului în veacul al XIV-lea*, Bucuresti, 1970, 103 and following). This amendments is less important, especially since the location of *Valea Regelui* is also mistaken. I have shown recently (in V. Cavruc, A. Chiricescu [ed.], *Sarea, Timpul si Omul. Catalog de expozitie*, Sfintu Gheorghe, 2006, note 7) that it is located 4 km north from Nereşniţa de Jos. The correct location of the village is important in the context of this discussion, because at Nereşniţa there was discovered one bronze deposit, mentioned in the Dipşa monograph, and, more importantly located in a salt exploitation location (Kacsó, *op. cit.*, 101).

It is also necessary to reconsider the affirmation that the only foundry deposit unconnected with salt sources is the one from Aiud, which is still located 12 km from the salt spring from Ocnişoara and 20 km from Ocna Mureş. In exchange, the hoards from Bicaz can not be connected with salt exploitation, because of the large distance from any salt regions.

The conclusion of the authors is that it can be established a direct connection between the intensification of the salt exploitation in Late Bronze Age and the focusing of the biggest hoards in these areas of Transylvania. On one side, the affirmation about the connection of the hoards with salt exploitations is only partially justified. On the other side, there are other types of resources in Transylvania, including underground resources, which can explain the concentration of power-centers, where large accumulations of values were gathered, such as bronze deposits.

If we take into consideration the situation in Northern Transylvania, we can notice that there were underlined two power-centers. One of them at Lăpuş where there are present, in a small perimeter, one large tumulus necropolis as well as several contemporary settlements. Near Lăpuş, there were identified two bronze hoards, but also other isolated bronze artifacts. Some of them could belong to the category of "one-artifact deposits". The second deposit is located in the area of the settlements

Oarța de Sus and Bicaz, where there is an exceptional focusing of Late Bronze Age artifacts: several settlements, one tumulus necropolis, bronze hoards (including the two Uioara type of deposits from Bicaz, which were located very close to the necropolis). It is possible that other power-centers were located in the region of Suciul de Sus and Șomcuta (Kacsó, *RevBistritei* 19, 2005, 54; *idem*, *Angustia* 9, 2005, 108 and following.; *idem*, *RevBistritei* 20, 2006, 82 and following). The rising of the politic and religious center from Lăpuș, maybe because of the one in Suciul de Su, is due to the existence of important nonferrous ores in the Țibles and Lăpuș Mountains. Near Oarța de Sus and Bicaz there are no discoveries of this kind, but the region offered other advantages as the extensive graying places, maybe even the possibility to control commercial routes.

The lack of exhaustive researches prevent us from discussing the situation of the connection between the metal deposits and the salt resources in Maramureș, a very rich region in this kind of discoveries (among them a bronze hoard of very large dimensions, discovered in Tisa in 1970 with the occasion of the railway construction; the artifacts belonged to I. Mihály and “filled an entire horse wagon” but disappeared without a trace, one piece being salvaged—a spearhead [Kacsó, *SCIVA* 31, 1980, 300]) but also in salt, which was exploited already in bronze age. A direct link between the substantial increase of Late Bronze Age hoards and the salt exploitation can be supposed, in the sense of the increase of the number of communities and of their wealth, especially since some of them were located near salt exploitations or even inside salt exploitations. For the moment there were not identified any power center in this area.

In a rich territory such as Transylvania, the functioning of power-centers could have been conditioned by diverse factors, salt being one of them. The authors of the monograph agree that not all hoards in the areas with salt resources can be explained through the presence of these riches. The large discussion related to northern Transylvania had the purpose to prove the exact same thing.

The chapter related to the interpretation of the hoard from Dipșa is closed with some considerations related to its place in the framework of Late Bronze Age in Transylvania. According to the opinion of the authors, the Ha A₁ hoards from south-western and central Transylvania belong to the cultural group defined as Cugir-Band. Considering the cultural framing of the hoards from Dipșa, the authors do not express a trenchant opinion. It is not excluded the possibility that, in the eastern part of Transylvania, the late Noua culture could have survived until the beginning of Ha A

We must mention that, unfortunately, we noticed the lack of a discussion concerning the significance of the Dipșa hoard, even though there are relations to *Brucherzhorte*, to whom the discovery from north-east Transylvania belongs, as also the authors say, as well as to other deposit-categories.

The last chapter of the monograph is dedicated to the analysis of the composition of 49 objects of the deposit, the complete results are divided into two tables and two graphs.

The plates are composed of high-quality drawings of the finite artifacts and of the casting waste, as well as the color photographs of the place of discovery, of a part of the finite artifacts as well as of most of the ingots.

The monograph of the Dipșa hoard, described, analyzed and illustrated in a modern manner, it is certainly a successful initiative. It must be followed by the analysis of other hoards, poorly published or still unpublished, with the purpose to obtain the frame of a very important documentary source, the one of the metal deposits, essential phenomena for the Bronze Age.