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## **Scythian Mirrors in the Carpathian Basin**

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M. PARDUCZ

## SCYTHIAN MIRRORS IN THE CARPATHIAN BASIN

Not long ago we had the opportunity to sum up the recent results of research of the Scythian period being in progress in Hungary<sup>1</sup>. At that time the new results of the Soviet research relating to this period were not yet known to us. Although it is evident that these results decisively affect the research in this direction in the Carpathian basin. This time, owing to lack of space, we raise merely in outlines those questions in connection with a group of the characteristical Scythian objects, which are essentially influenced by the results of Soviet research.

Those bronze mirrors manufactured at Olbia and spread over the huge territory from the Ural range to the Carpathian basin are the objects of special interest of research<sup>2</sup>. Different types of these mirrors were already known comparatively in great number in the Carpathian basin; but recently some new specimens have come to light deriving from scientific excavations. This latter fact is therefore important in the Carpathian basin, because so we can definitely refer to the culture to which these mirrors belong. First of all we shall describe the new specimens, unpublished so far, and then attempt to group them according to the sites of all the mirrors known by marking these on the map.

<sup>1</sup> M. Párducz, *Les nouveaux résultats de notre recherche de l'époque scythe*. „Conférence archéologique de l'Académie Hongroise des Sciences”. Budapest 1955. (Further: Párducz 1955) pp. 110—124. — This summary of the results of the Vekerzug excavations obtained so far may be found with more detailed explanation: M. Párducz, *Le cimetière hallstattien de Szentes-Vekerzug*. „Acta Arch. Hung.” II (Budapest 1952) pp. 143—169; M. Párducz, *Le cimetière hallstattien de Szentes-Vekerzug II*. „Acta Arch. Hung.” IV (1945) pp. 25—89; M. Párducz, *Le cimetière hallstattien de Szentes-Vekerzug III*. „Acta Arch. Hung.” VI (1955) pp. 1—22. (Further: Vekerzug, Vekerzug II, Vekerzug III).

<sup>2</sup> I. Reichl. *Die Spiegel der podolischen skythischen Kultur*. (In the work of T. Sulimirski, *Scytowie na zachodnim Podolu*. Prace Lwowskiego Towarzystwa Prehistorycznego 2 (Lwów 1936) pp. 150—162. (Further: Reichl.); N. N. Bondar, *Torgovie snoshenijia Olbii so Skifet*. „Sovëtskaia Archeologia” XXIII (1955) pp. 58—80. (Further: Bondar).

1. Szécsény (Pl. XXVIII, fig. 1). We know only so much of its occurrence, that it came to light from a small crevice on a rocky part. There was nothing beside it. The length of the mirror together with the handle is 32.10 cm of which 12.2 cm is taken by the handle. The diameter of the disc is 17.9 cm. The slightly slanting everted rim of the disc is 1—1.1 cm high. The handle joins the disc with a piece imitating a Doric capital. The handle terminates in the figure of a stepping panther or wolf. The animal stands on a socle, which is divided by three parallel horizontal ribs. It is soldered to the handle by the means of this socle. The soldering is slightly loosened. The animal's long tail is curled up. The parts of the body are roughly depicted; the ears, eyes, and mouth are only marked. The back of the handle is divided by three ribs and on the front in each of the two grooves dividing the three ribs a thin rib is visible as well.

2. Tápiószele.<sup>3</sup> The mirror shown on Pl. XXVII. figs. 1 a—b came to light as a stray find in the area of the Scythian cemetery when preparing the soil of the vineyard on K. Rhedey's land. The rimmed disc is of bronze and the handle of iron. The handle terminates in volutes. The total length of the mirror is 24 cm.<sup>4</sup>

3. Tápiószele, grave 84. This grave was unearthed in the course of the excavation in 1951. The cremation grave was at the depth of 125 cm (Pl. XXIV, fig. 2). The diameter of the circular pit was unusually great (about 300 cm). The grave-goods were placed roughly along the diameter from the north-west to the south-south-east. In the soil of the grave from the depth of 60 cm downwards — reckoned from the surface — small potsherds occurred. The burnt human bones were placed in three heaps on the bottom of the grave. But it was observable that these heaps were about 25 cm above the actual bottom and under them the space was filled with black soil. Probably a part of the grave-goods were placed in the grave and partly covered before the bones were strewn into it. Grave-goods: 1. Grey pot made on the wheel, texture refined (Pl. XXVI, fig. 1). Sharply and deeply pouched. In the curve of the neck a rib runs round. 2. Bottleshaped vessel (Pl. XXVI, fig. 15), its surface shining as graphite. Above the belly horizontally six grooves run around. Partly on the belly and partly on the lower part of the vessel bands, consisting of three incised lines,

<sup>3</sup> Here the exploration of the cemetery of the Scythian period has been in progress since 1938. The publication of the results obtained so far may be soon expected.

<sup>4</sup> Á. Bottyán. *Szkiták a magyar Alföldön* (Scythians on the Hungarian Great Plain). „Régészeti Füzetek”, 1 (Budapest 1955). (Further: Bottyán) p. 54, Pl. XV, figs. 1—1a.

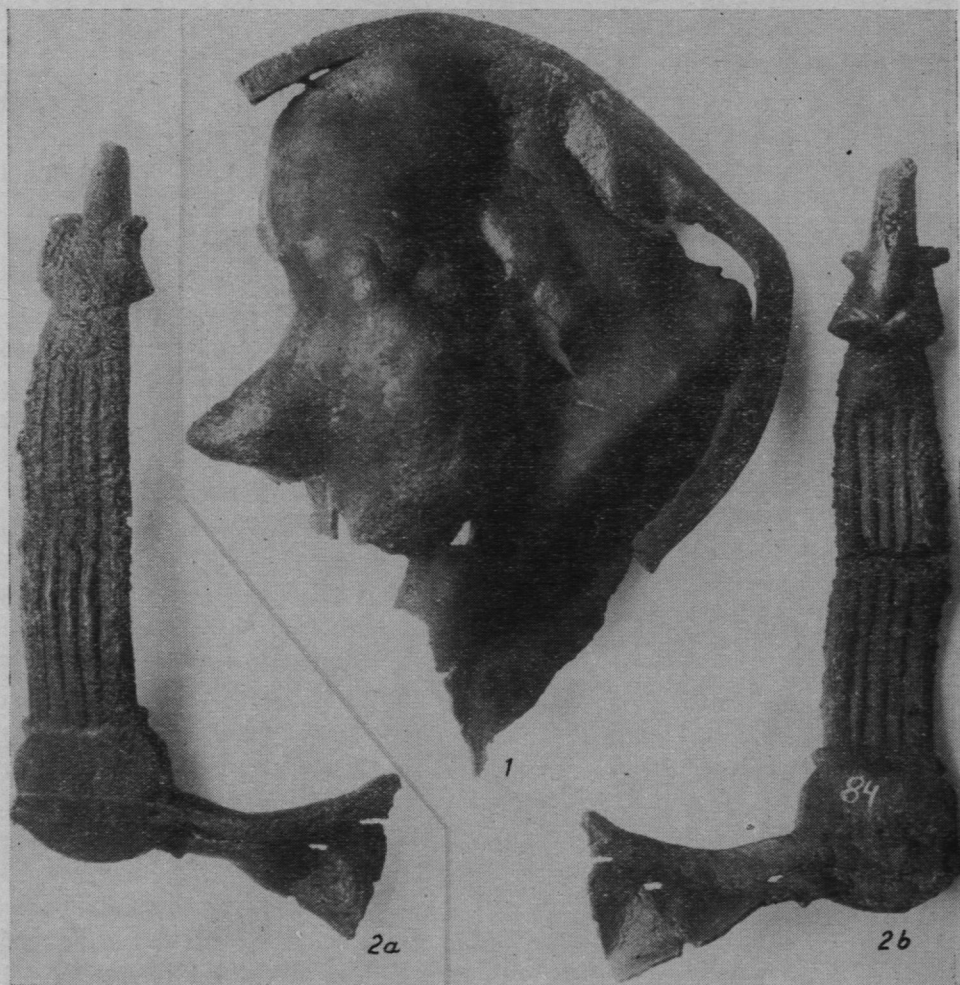
TABLICA XXIV



Tápiószele, grave 84.

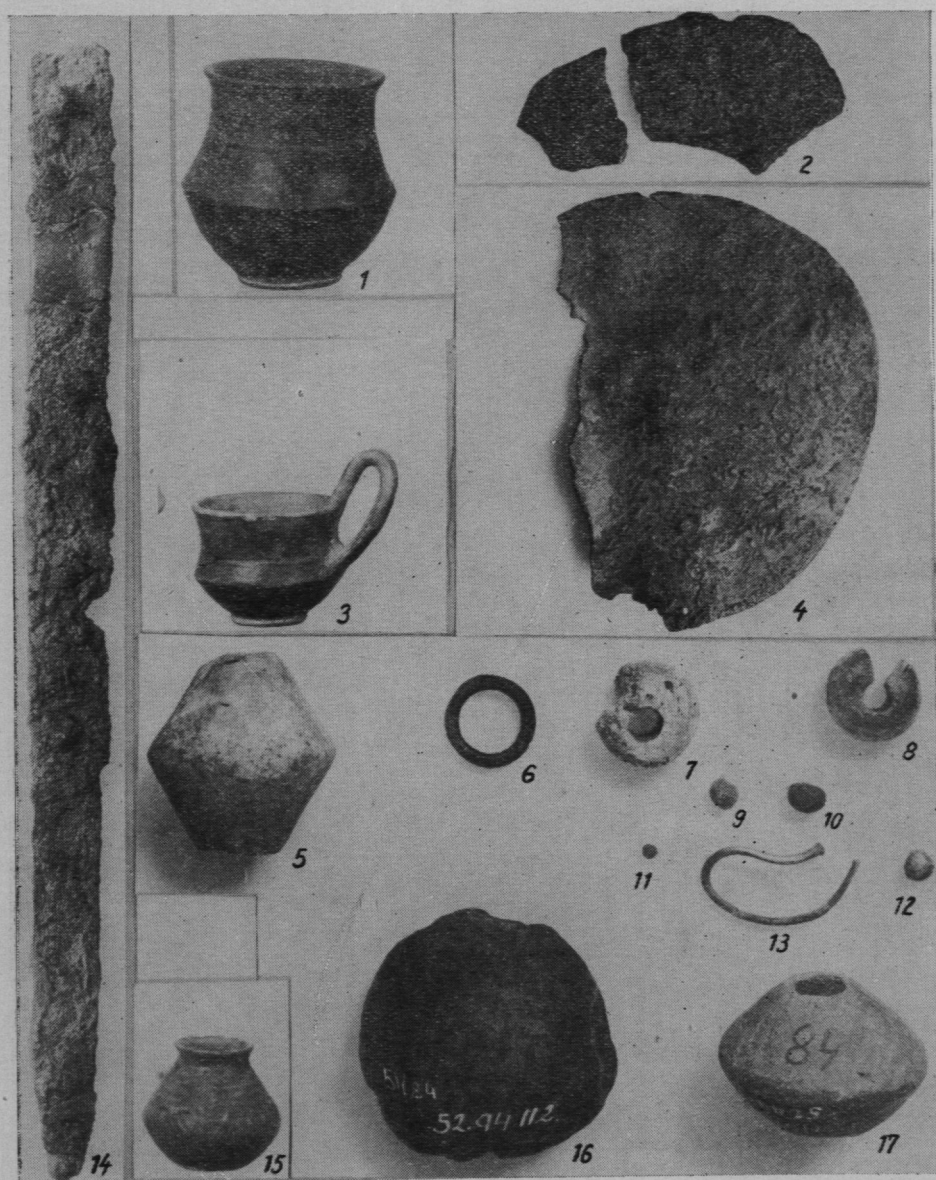


TABLICA XXV

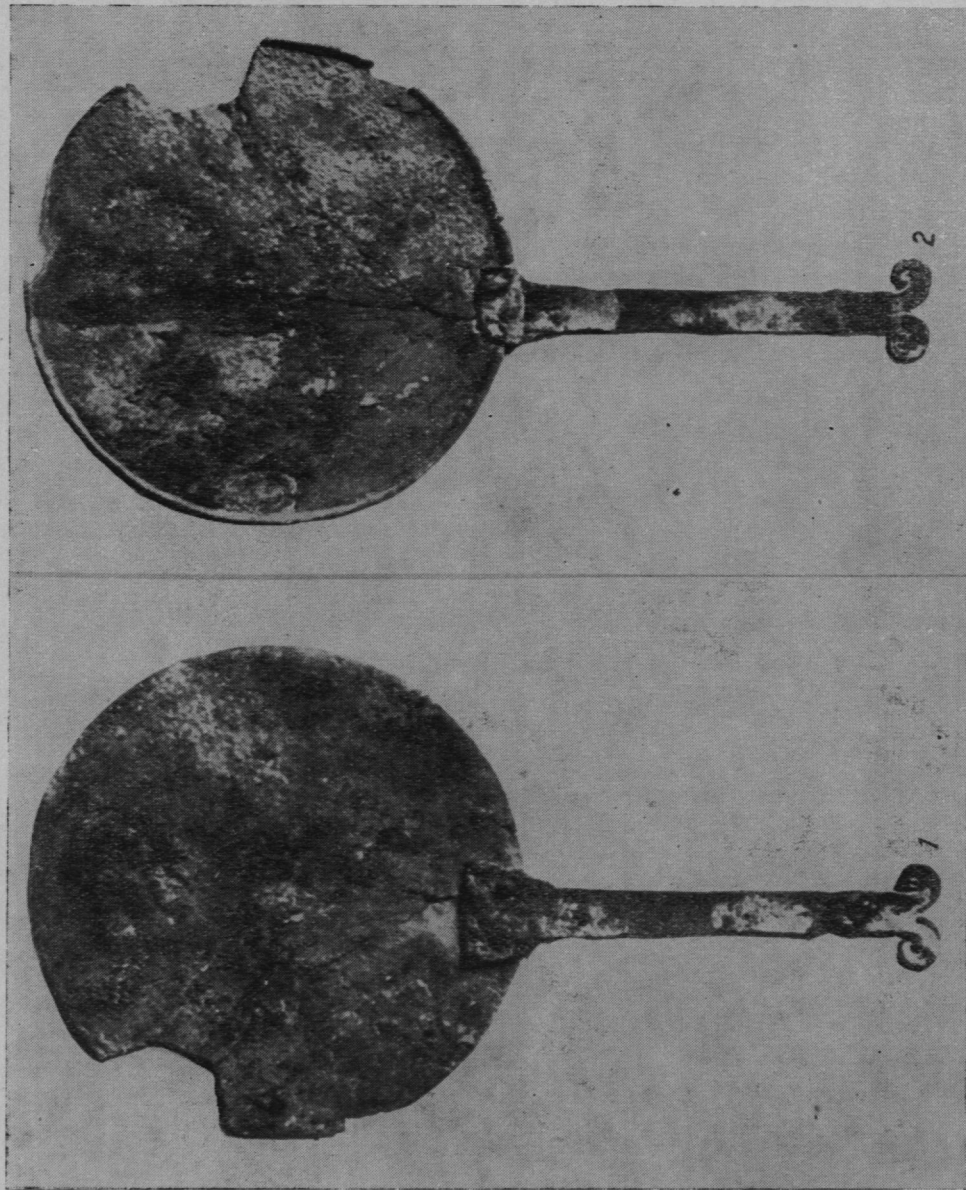


Tápiószele, grave 84.

TABLICA XXVI



Figs. 1, 3, 5—17. Tápiószele, grave 84; fig. 2. Gyoma; fig. 4. Hatvan-Boldog.



Tápiószele, K. Rhédey's land. Scale about 1/2.



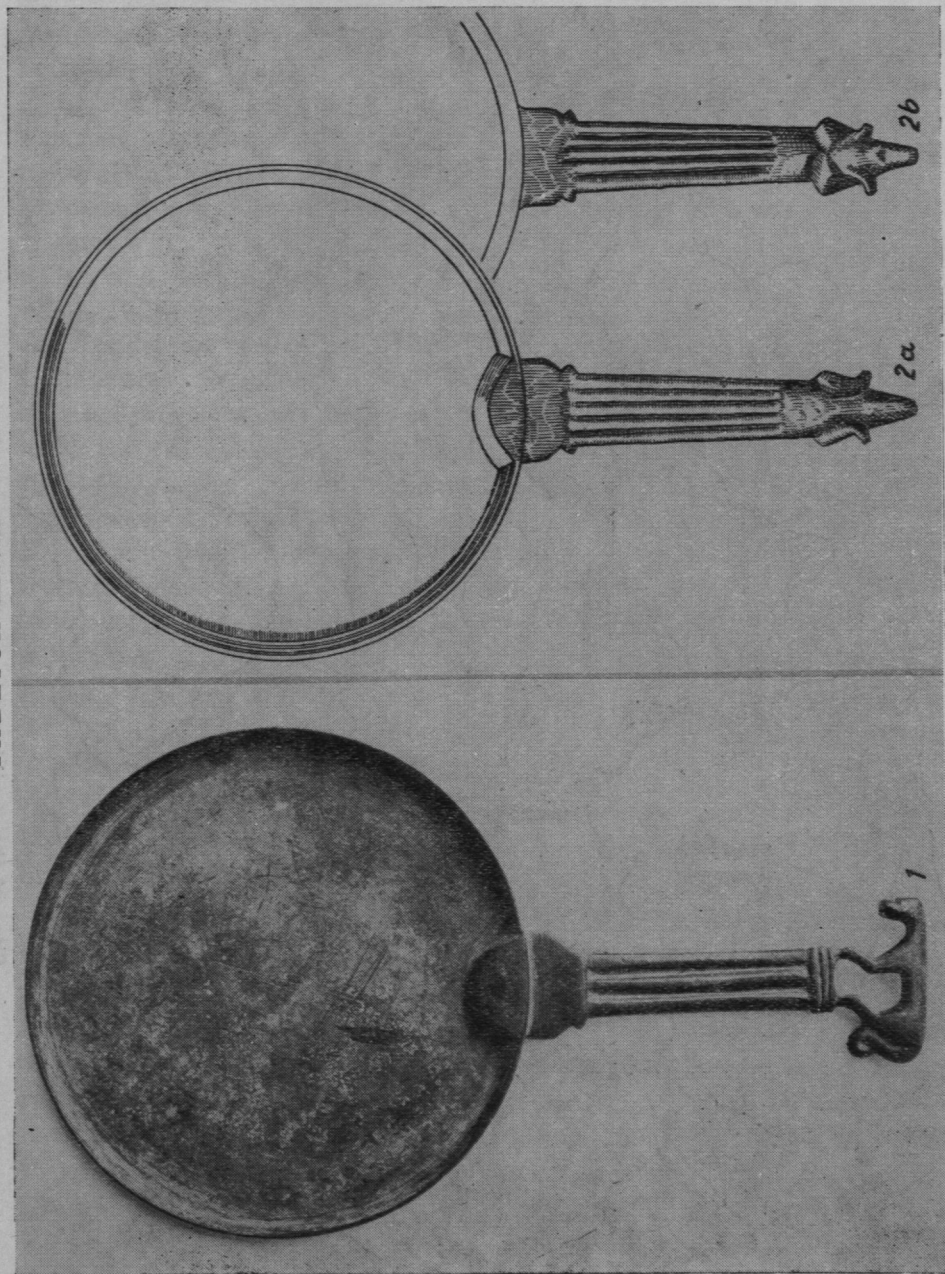
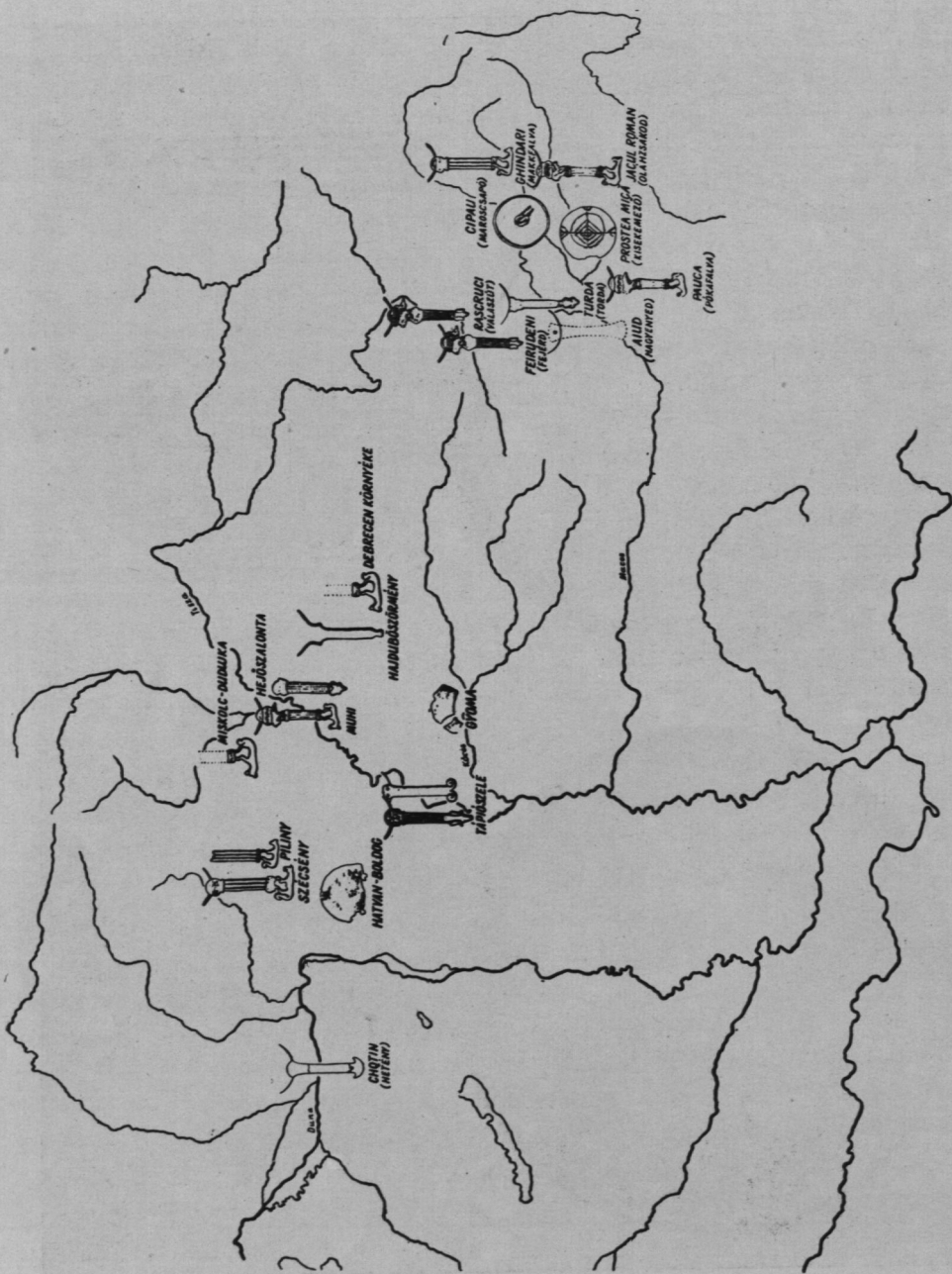


Fig. 1. Szécsény; fig. 2. Tápiószele, grave 84. Scale about 1/3.



### Sites of the Scythian mirrors in the Carpathian basin



enclose triangles following one another. 3. Grey pot with high handle, made on the wheel, texture refined (Pl. XXVI, fig 3). Above the sharp belly a rib is visible. 4. Globular blue glass bead (Pl. XXVI, fig 7). 5. Closed bronze ring (Pl. XXVI, fig. 6). 6. In the bottom of the grave a larger globular whitish glass-bead (Pl. XXVI, fig. 8). In the same place (Pl. XXIV, fig. 1) the following objects were found: 7. Fire-deformed bronze mirror with handle. The disc is bordered with a sharp rimmed rib (Pl. XXV, figs. 1—2). The handle has on both edges two wider and inside three narrower ribs. It terminates in a ram's head. At the joining to the disc a piece is visible resembling a Doric capital and inside the rim the semicircular formation exists too. Owing to the fragmentary condition the mirror could not be measured. The reconstructed mirror shown on Pl. XXVIII, fig. 2 a—b. 8. An iron knife, 21.5 cm long, the haft of which is disproportionately long, 13.5 cm (Pl. XXVI, fig. 14). On the haft there are the remains of three rivets. 9. Yellow spindle-whorl in the shape of a double truncated cone (Pl. XXVI, fig. 5). 10. Spindle-whorl lighter in colour and in the shape of a shorter double truncated cone than the former (Pl. XXVI, Fig. 17). A little farther the following objects were found: 11. Fragments of a coarse brick-red dish with inverted rim. It came to light so fragmentary that it is beyond reconstruction. Probably it was placed into the grave fragmentary and incomplete. 12. The electron ear-ring shown on Pl. XXVI, fig. 13. made of thin wire terminates in a knob. 13. One electron (Pl. XXVI, fig. 12) and three bronze drops (Pl. XXV, figs. 9—11). 14. 40 cm above the bottom of the grave came to light the one third of a large coarse brownish spindle-whorl (Pl. XXVI, fig. 16).

4. Hatvan-Boldog. At this site B. Pósta carried out excavations and he published the finds from here too.<sup>5</sup> He described the disc of the mirror in question, shown here too (Pl. XXVI, fig. 4), as an object of unknown purpose.<sup>6</sup> A. Bottyán considers it already a Scythian mirror.<sup>7</sup> It is 17.7 cm in diameter, only the half of it remained. It is deformed by fire and has no upturned rim. Probably it had a handle, at least, the hole of a rivet near the lower edge seems to suggest that, and the disc was broken out here too in a semicircle. Presumably this piece of the disc was broken out together with the handle. There is no trace of the material of the handle on the disc

<sup>5</sup> B. Pósta, *A Hatvan-boldogi ásatások* (The excavations at Hatvan-Boldog). „Archaeologiai Ertesítő”, 15 (Budapest 1895) pp. 1—26.

<sup>6</sup> B. Pósta, op. cit., p. 16, Pl. III, fig. 7.

<sup>7</sup> Á. Bottyán, op. cit., p. 55.

(e. g. iron-rust). B. Pósta assigns the earliest part of the finds coming to light here to the beginning phase of the Iron Age and dates to the same period an iron sword, a bronze ring with spiral-disc head, bronze bracelets, a bronze arrow-head, and the disc of a mirror<sup>8</sup>. This complex is united by the fact that their patina is quite similar and on every object the deforming traces of fire appear. He concludes of this group also without doubt that they derive from „cremation urn-burials”. We can agree with this determination and dating as well. The dish with inverted rim, shown on figure 23, page 13 of Pósta's publication, belongs certainly to such a grave from which the above objects may have derived. It can also be imagined that the finds and ashes were not placed in an urn but simply on the bottom of the grave. To this group of finds we can reckon still two spindle-whorls<sup>9</sup>, an electron coated spiral ear-ring with conical end,<sup>10</sup> and an iron axe<sup>11</sup>. According to our present knowledge we can consider it probable, that the parts of a chariot<sup>12</sup>, being among the finds, may be assigned to this group too. This makes one more of the chariot-burials of the Scythian period on the Great Plain. Besides the chariots of Szentes-Vekerzug and Gyöngyös this is our third site which contains parts of a chariot<sup>13</sup>.

5. Gyoma.<sup>14</sup> Among the objects of the renowned finds coming to light here are two fragments of a bronz mirror (Pl. XXVI, fig. 2). Unfortunately these fragments cannot render any particulars concerning form or original measurements.

In the following the literary data of the mirrors described so far are given. The map of sites (Pl. XXIX) illustrates also the types of the mirrors.

6. Feirudeni (Fejérd)<sup>15</sup>. 7. Prostea Mica (Kisekemező)<sup>16</sup>. 8. Ghindari (Makfalva)<sup>17</sup>. 9. Cipau (Maroscsapó)<sup>18</sup>. 10. Maros-

<sup>8</sup> B. Pósta, op. cit., Pl. III, fig. 2; Pl. II, figs. 18, 13 — 16; Pl. III, fig. 7; Pl. II, fig. 25.

<sup>9</sup> B. Pósta, op. cit., Pl. II, figs. 1 — 2.

<sup>10</sup> B. Pósta, op. cit., Pl. II, fig. 19.

<sup>11</sup> B. Pósta, op. cit., Pl. III, fig. 5.

<sup>12</sup> B. Pósta, op. cit., Pl. III, fig. 6, and Pl. II, figs. 21 — 22.

<sup>13</sup> Vekerzug, pp. 145 — 146, 149 — 150.

<sup>14</sup> L. Márton, *Skytha aranyelet gyomai halomsirból* (Gold find from the barrow at Gyoma). Arch. Ért. (Budapest 1905) 25. pp. 234 — 240, fig. 1. — Also see a part of the finds found here: M. Ebert, *Reallexikon der Vorgeschichte*. XII, Pl. 69, figs. a-f, m, o.

<sup>15</sup> M. Roska, *Der Bestand der skythischen Altertümer Siebenbürgens*. „ESA”, 11 (1937) pp. 167 — 203, fig. 15. (Further: Roska).

<sup>16</sup> Roska, p. 175, fig. 13 b.

<sup>17</sup> Roska, p. 179, fig. 18.

<sup>18</sup> Roska, p. 181, figs. 21: 2 — 2 a.

völgy<sup>19</sup>. 11. Aiud (Nagyenyed, town park)<sup>20</sup>. 12. Jacul Roman (Oláhzsákod)<sup>21</sup>. 13. Pauca (Pókafalva)<sup>22</sup>. 14. Turda (Torda)<sup>23</sup>. 15. Rascruți (Válaszút)<sup>24</sup>. 16. Chotin (Hetény)<sup>25</sup>. 17. Vicinity of Debrecen<sup>26</sup>. 18. Miskolc-Dudujka<sup>27</sup>. 19. Hajduböszörmény-Zelemér<sup>28</sup>. 20. Hejőszalonta-Temetősor dülő<sup>29</sup>. 21. Muhi-Kocsmadomb<sup>30</sup>. 22. Pilin<sup>31</sup>. 23. Hungary, exact site unknown<sup>32</sup>. 24. Hungary, exact site unknown<sup>33</sup>.

It is not difficult to group the mirrors according to their type on the basis of the papers of I. Reichl and N. N. Bondar<sup>34</sup>. We have a single mirror without a handle, that from Maroscsapó (Type I). The mirrors with handles may be classed in two groups: the one with ornamented handles (Type II), and the other with unornamented ones (Type III). The former are the common ones and their type frequently occur in the material of the Scythian period in Russia. All the mirrors mentioned here have a rim, except the specimens from Hatvan-Boldog and Kisekemező. The following varieties may be specified:

<sup>19</sup> N. Fettich, *Bestand der skythischen Altertümer Ungarns*. (In the work of M. Rostowtzev, *Skythien und der Bosphorus*. Berlin 1931. pp. 494—527.) (Further: Fettich 1931) p. 507, site 19. — „Az Erdélyi Nemzeti Múzeum Egyesület 1906—1908 évi Évkönyve” (The Annual of the Transylvanian National Museum Society for the years 1906—1908) informs us on p. 42 about „a nomadic (i.e. of non-Greek type) bronze mirror”.

<sup>20</sup> Roska, p. 173, fig. 8:5.

<sup>21</sup> Roska, p. 179, fig. 20.

<sup>22</sup> Roska, p. 179, fig. 17.

<sup>23</sup> Roska, p. 179, fig. 19.

<sup>24</sup> Roska, p. 193, site 47, see its description in M. Roska, *Thesaurus Antiquitatum Transsilvanicarum*. „I. Praehistorica.” (Kolozsvár 1942) pp. 298—299, site 31.

<sup>25</sup> M. Dušek, Chotin I. — *Skytske birituálne pohrebište*. „Archeologické Rozhledy”, VI (1954) pp. 311—316, fig. 145. — See the illustration of the grave at the bottom of page 143.

<sup>26</sup> Fettich 1931, p. 513, site 32.

<sup>27</sup> A. Leszih, *Scythian Finds from the County of Borsod*. „Folia Archaeologica”, I-II. (Budapest 1939) p. 76, fig. 5:2.

<sup>28</sup> Vezető Debrecen sz. kir. Város Déri Múzeumában (Guide to the collections of the Déri Museum of Debrecen). Debrecen 1939, p. 68, fig. 35. — „Jelentés Debrecen 1908.” pp. 20, 28. — For the last time J. Gy. Szilágyi has written about the Etruscan character of the mirror: J. Gy. Szilágyi, *Zur Frage des etruskischen Handels nach dem Norden*. „Acta Ant. Hung.” 1 (Budapest 1951—1952) p. 449.

<sup>29</sup> A. Leszih, op. cit., p. 76, fig. 5:3.

<sup>30</sup> A. Leszih, op. cit., p. 79, fig. 7.

<sup>31</sup> Fettich 1931, p. 511, site 26.

<sup>32</sup> Fettich 1931, p. 527, site 80.

<sup>33</sup> Fettich 1931, p. 527, site 81.

<sup>34</sup> The works of Reichl and Bondar referred to in note 2.

II. a) The handles of the mirrors from Hajöszalonta, Tápíószele grave 84, and Torda are ribbed and terminate in a ram's head. Their parallels and prototypes are known from Olbia (two specimens), Ulan-ERGE<sup>35</sup>, and Bucovina<sup>36</sup>. The joining of the handle to the disc of this type resembles a capital.

II. b) The handle is ribbed and terminates in a ram's head. At the joining to the disc the figure of a resting stag is visible. Such ones are in the Carpathian basin the specimens from Fejérd and Válaszut. Bondar shows their exact parallels from Olbia<sup>37</sup>.

II. c) This group is represented also by mirrors with ribbed handles but at the end of the handle there is the figure of a stepping panther (or wolf?) and at the joining to the disc the figure of a resting stag. To this group belong the specimens from Oláhzsákod, Pókafalva and Muhi. Bondar presents an entirely similar mirror from Pjatigor<sup>38</sup>, and Reichel points out a specimen from the barrow IV of Bratyszov of this type<sup>39</sup>.

II. d) The type of this group is related to the previous variety. There is only one difference that at the joining to the disc it is divided like a capital. Of our mirrors the specimens from Makfalva, Szécsény, and Piliny belong to this group. Bondar points out parallel mirrors from Russia, from Olbia<sup>40</sup>, Krimgircevkaja Sztanica<sup>41</sup>, the village of Preobrazsenszkij<sup>42</sup>, and Orszk (Bis-Uba)<sup>43</sup>.

The mirrors from the vicinity of Debrecen and Miskolc-Dudujka may have belonged to the group of mirrors of types c) or d). Only the animal-figures at the end of the handles remained.

The mirror, the fragment of whose handle is preserved in the Hungarian National Museum, belonged also to the types b) or c). The joining of the handle to the disc is observable. The figure of a resting stag is visible here<sup>44</sup>. The fragment of another mirror, preserved in the „Hungarian National Museum”, may have belonged to types a) and d)

<sup>35</sup> Bondar, p. 69, fig. 5 a; p. 73, fig. 10 a; p. 74, fig. 12 b.

<sup>36</sup> Reichl, Pl. XI, fig. 11. — Bondar, p. 69, fig. 5 a.

<sup>37</sup> Bondar, p. 72, fig. 9 a.

<sup>38</sup> Bondar, p. 71, fig. 7 a.

<sup>39</sup> Reichl, Pl. V, fig. 2.

<sup>40</sup> Bondar, p. 71, fig. 8 a.

<sup>41</sup> Bondar, pp. 70 — 72, 74, fig. 11 a.

<sup>42</sup> Bondar, p. 72.

<sup>43</sup> Bondar, pp. 73 — 74, fig. 11 b.

<sup>44</sup> Fettich 1931, p. 527, site 81.



from an unknown but certainly Hungarian site<sup>45</sup>. No particulars whatever are known about the mirror coming to light in the valley of the Maros from a site not accurately determinable. It seems probably that it may have belonged to one of the types enumerated here<sup>46</sup>.

II. e) We have classified to this group the mirror from Kisekemező, with ribbed ornament of peculiar type, because its handle was soldered to the disc.

The mirrors with unornamented handles make up the next group (III).

III. a) The iron handle is fastened to the disc with rivets. A characteristic specimen of this type is the mirror from Tápiószele (Pl. XXVII, figs. 1—2). The handle terminates in volutes. The specimen from Hetény may also be included in this group. Both ends of the iron handle are made of bronze. The lower moon-shaped part indicates perhaps the simplified form of the voluted ornament. The mirror found in the town park of Nagyenyed must have had an iron handle too. But we cannot reconstruct the form of the handle. This type is common in Podolia. Reichel mentions specimens from Grodek<sup>47</sup>, Bratyszov<sup>48</sup>, (this one is especially similar to that of Hetény), Postorovka<sup>49</sup>, Iwachnowce. From the last site even two are known<sup>50</sup>.

III. b) The mirror from Hatvan-Boldog must also have a handle, but the form of the handle is unknown. The circular hole at the edge of the mirror suggests that the handle was rivetted to the disc. We have no data whatever which would prove, that the handle was made of iron.

IV. Unfortunately only two fragments without any characteristic feature remained of the mirror from Gyoma. On the basis of these fragments we cannot determine of which type this mirror originally was.

V. The Etruscan mirror of Hajduböszörmény would be of greatest interest, if we could be certain, that it really derived from Hungary. A merchant from Hajduböszörmény sent this in, but could give no particulars as to site and occurrence. As long as other objects of Etruscan origin do not come to light on Hungarian territory, we cannot admit the derivation of the mirror from a site in Hungary.

Thus, within the region of the Carpathian basin, we keep in evidence in total twenty-four bronze mirrors and fragments respectively. The ana-

<sup>45</sup> Fettich 1931, p. 527, site 80.

<sup>46</sup> Fettich 1931, p. 507, site 19.

<sup>47</sup> Reichl, Pl. IV, figs. 1 a-b.

<sup>48</sup> Reichl, Pl. IV, fig. 2 a.

<sup>49</sup> Reichl, p. 157.

<sup>50</sup> Reichl, Pl. X, fig. 11, Pl. XII, fig. 2.



logies enumerated leave no doubt that the prototypes of the majority of the mirrors or even some of them found here derive from Olbia<sup>51</sup>. Bondar assigns the date of the mirrors — following B. N. Grekov — to the time from the second third of the sixth to the first quarter of the fifth century b.o.e.<sup>52</sup> According to Bondar the mirrors prove the commercial relations between Olbia and Hungary, or more precisely the Carpathian basin<sup>53</sup>, which were occasional and finally terminated in the second half of the fifth century<sup>54</sup>. The determination of Grekov and Meljukova is essentially the same, regarding the group of north-western Dniester (Podolia) resembling the Scythian culture of the wooded steppe. The typical Scythian objects, coming to light here, may be assigned to the period from the end of the seventh to the beginning of the fifth century, such as weapons, horse-trappings, mirrors, and a small number of objects in animal style<sup>55</sup>. Elsewhere Meljukova with regards to the district of the Middle-Tisza and Transylvania, assigns the appearance of the objects of the Scythian culture and of their imitations also to the beginning of the seventh century and their disappearance to the end of the sixth and the beginning of the fifth centuries<sup>56</sup>. Thus for the present the stand-point of the Soviet research seems to be uniform in this chronological question. Likewise the Soviet experts dealing most recently with this question (at least with whose works we had opportunity to get acquainted) roughly agree in the explanation of the appearance of the characteristic Scythian objects found in the Carpathian basin.

The description of the problems and results of the most recent Soviet manifold research of the Scythian period is beyond the task of this paper<sup>57</sup> but in the course of summing up the Hungarian material these will be also made use of. Nevertheless the examination chiefly of some of

<sup>51</sup> Bondar, p. 60.

<sup>52</sup> Bondar, p. 59.

<sup>53</sup> Bondar, p. 63.

<sup>54</sup> Bondar, p. 72.

<sup>55</sup> B. N. Grekov i A. N. Meljukova, *Ob etnicheskikh i kulturnikh razlichiiach v stepnikh i lesostepnikh oblastiakh evropeiskoi chasti SSSR v Skifskoie vremia*. (Voprossi skifo-sarmatskoj archeologii, pp. 39—93). (Further: Grekov-Meljukova).

<sup>56</sup> A. N. Meljukova, *K voprosu o pamjatnikakh skifskoj kulturi na territorii srednei Evropi*. „Sov. Arch.” XXII (1955), pp. 239—253. (Further: Meljukova).

<sup>57</sup> P. D. Liberov, *Khronologia pamjatnikov Podnieprovja skifskogo vremeni* (Voprossi skifo-sarmatskoj archeologii, pp. 132—166. Further: Liberov — V. A. Ilinskaja, *Keramika skifskikh pogrebenii Posulja* (Voprossi skifo-sarmatskoj archeologii, pp. 168—185); A. N. Terenorshkin, *Kultura predskifskogo vremeni v srednim Podneprovie* (Voprossi skifo-sarmatskoj archeologii, pp. 94—11).

Meljukova's critical remarks<sup>58</sup> cannot be omitted, which are of basic importance from the point of view of the Hungarian research.

Those determinations, which wish to separate the Scythians of Iranian language from the population of Scythian culture, but not of Iranian origin and language, are most important for the research of the Scythian period in the Carpathian basin<sup>59</sup>. The language of the nomadic Scythians and that of those engaged in agriculture — described by Herodotos — was the same, they derived from the same ancestors<sup>60</sup>. The chief regions of the agricultural Scythians are the lower course of the Danube and the Dniepr; and that of the nomadic Scythians are the territories beyond the Dniepr and the coast line of the Azov Sea<sup>61</sup>. The archaeological finds bear witness to the uniformity of the customs of the settled Scythian tribes and of those leading a nomadic life<sup>62</sup>. The culture of the wooded steppe diverges from the cultural region of the steppe. The elements of the Scythian culture appear on this territory from the end of the seventh and beginning of the sixth centuries<sup>63</sup>, but „the tribes of the wooded steppe must not be considered to be real Scythians, but tribes not Scythian but regarding their culture resembling them”<sup>64</sup>.

Several attempts have been made to fix the regions of the Scythian tribes and those of non-Scythian of the wooded steppe. We shall not deal here with the description of these attempts, the criticism of these are given by Grekov-Meljukova<sup>65</sup>. Their division is for us the newest and the characterization of the individual groups show that the significant results obtained so far mean yet the beginning<sup>66</sup>. They specify six groups of the regions of the wooded steppe, these are: 1. the district of the north-western Dniester, 2. Moldava, 3. the district of the Bug, 4. Kiev, 5. the district of the Szula, 6. the middle course of the Don.

So far merely one or two fundamental problems were mentioned, but these are of great importance for our research work as well. It must be stated that concerning these problems we cannot as yet speak about, in every respect, satisfactory final results. The contemporary written sources

<sup>58</sup> In Meljukova's work already quoted.

<sup>59</sup> Grekov-Meljukova, p. 40.

<sup>60</sup> Grekov-Meljukova, p. 42.

<sup>61</sup> Grekov-Meljukova, p. 44.

<sup>62</sup> Grekov-Meljukova, p. 45.

<sup>63</sup> Grekov-Meljukova, p. 60 — 64.

<sup>64</sup> Grekov-Meljukova, p. 56.

<sup>65</sup> Grekov-Meljukova, p. 60 — 64.

<sup>66</sup> Grekov-Meljukova, the map of the wooded steppe groups on p. 83; (fig. 9.); their characterization on pp. 82 — 90.

are laconic or say nothing then and there, when we should be most curious to know (e.g. about the extension of the Scythians towards the west or about their raids). We perfectly agree with the opinion that reliable conclusions cannot be reached in the ethnic and linguistic questions merely on basis of material culture<sup>67</sup>. Naturally, these considerations must make us very cautious when we examine the question of the Scythian ethnic group within the Carpathian basin.

We have already referred to Bondar's determination, who speaking about the spread of the characteristic Scythian mirrors within the Carpathian basin, thinks absolutely of commercial relations. Meljukova goes further and seeks the chief reasons for the development of the relic-groups of the Scythian period along the Tisza and in Transylvania in the cultural and probably in the ethnic relations existing with the regions of the West-Ukraine and with that of the middle course of the Dnieper<sup>68</sup>. Thus the actual role of the real Scythians of Iranian language in the Carpathian basin may be attributed, at the most, to certain smaller raids and the significance of the people of the Ukrainian wooded steppe non-Scythian, but of Scythian culture, increases on our territory. Meljukova mentions among the works dealing with the problems of the Scythian period in Central-Europe the study of T. Sulimirski<sup>69</sup> as the most recent one. However, since 1936, the number of finds which may be classified here has considerably increased coming to light from scientific excavations and astray finds. Quite a number of publications have dealt with the material, so that to day we can view several questions differently relating to the period.

1. So, first of all, we have to emphasize the question of the local population. N. Fettich discusses thoroughly the metal material of the Scythian period of the Carpathian basin in his monograph dealing with the finds of Garcsinovo<sup>70</sup>. He determines on the one hand that a considerable part of the specimens of the types regarded as characteristic Scythian objects are local imitations, and, on the other hand, he definitely alludes to those forms which came into existence under the influence of the local population<sup>71</sup>. He likewise definitely points out that „the westward Scythian movements was not a destructive campaign, but even in its first

<sup>67</sup> Grekov-Meljukova, p. 50.

<sup>68</sup> Meljukova, p. 253.

<sup>69</sup> T. Sulimirski, op. cit.

<sup>70</sup> N. Fettich, *Der skythische Fund von Gartschinovo*. „Arch. Hung.” (Budapest 1934), 15, (Further: Fettich 1934) pp. 38—50.

<sup>71</sup> Meljukova determines the same, p. 248.

steps was a process of significance in the history of civilisation which enriched the local culture with oriental elements"<sup>72</sup>.

A. Bottyán formed his opinion in these questions based on a more complete material<sup>73</sup>. He calls the Scythian group of the Tisza district that of the Great Plain on the basis of the extension of the finds and divides it into three sub-groups: viz. that of Zöldhalompusztá; Tápiószentmárton and Gyoma<sup>74</sup>. First of all the different burial rites and besides that the intensive analysis of the complete archaeological material (pottery, metal objects, etc.) served as basis for the division<sup>75</sup>. He refers very positively to the fact, that the different burial rites appearing in exclusive areas are the proofs chiefly of the indigenous population, living together with the Scythians. This makes it evident that the picture drawn by Meljukova<sup>76</sup> of the groups of the Scythian period in the Carpathian basin can be made more precise and should be divided into those of Kustánfalva, Transylvania and the Great Plain. On the area of the latter three sub-groups are also provable. This fact is significant, because it is possible, that cultural and ethnic influences reached these regions from different parts of the Soviet Union.

Owing to the results of the excavations at Vekerzug we could proceed one step further. Namely, it was determinable, that each of the cemeteries on the area of all three sub-groups on the Great Plain are the cemeteries of the natives of Hallstatt D, and that the population coming from the east, called by us Scythians, lived together with them since the middle of the sixth century<sup>77</sup>. Their burial rites, showing similar traits to those of the natives, makes it more difficult to distinguish them. Attempts were made to determine the burial rites, which can be considered undoubtedly as oriental. Judging by these rites and forms of some objects we thought first of the arrival of the contemporary cultures from the Kiev (environs of Kanev) and Poltava (district of the Szula) provinces or rather of the immigration of the peoples carrying these cultures<sup>78</sup>. These results successfully complete the determination of the Soviet research affecting us, naturally apart from the fact, whether we regard the ethnic group of the

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<sup>72</sup> Fettich 1934, p. 50. — See Meljukova's remarks relating to this, p. 239.

<sup>73</sup> Bottyán. The manuscript of the young Hungarian author lost in the second world war was ready in 1943, but it was published only in 1955 exclusively in Hungarian.

<sup>74</sup> Bottyán, pp. 10—11.

<sup>75</sup> Bottyán, pp. 64—71.

<sup>76</sup> Meljukova, p. 245.

<sup>77</sup> Párducz 1955, pp. 116—117.

<sup>78</sup> Vekerzug, pp. 166—167; Vekerzug II, pp. 72—73.



Great Plain and Transylvania deriving from the east as Iranian Scythians or as a people of Scythian culture, but of another ethnic group.

2. It is a very important determination of the Soviet research, that in some regions of the wooded steppe cremation was an ancient rite current already in the times previous to the appearance of the Scythian elements. The inhumation burials of the Scythian period (e.g. in the group of Kiev, the right bank of the Dnieper) could not displace the former rite<sup>79</sup>. This determination makes it possible, that the dating of our cremation graves, containing characteristic Scythian objects, could be fixed more accurately. Namely hitherto we could not place their beginning earlier than in the fourth century, chiefly due to M. Rostovtzeff's conclusions<sup>80</sup>. The existence of this burial rite is decisive in the question of derivation of the Hungarian relic-groups, presenting cremation<sup>81</sup>. In Hungary in all of the cultural groups of the Scythian period the cremation burial plays a significant part. Several variants are known (in urns, scattered ashes, etc.). Here, in the first place, we do not wish to deal with this part of the question, but with the fact, that the sites of the Scythian period in the county of Szabolcs, classed into the sub-group of Tápíószentmárton, show an uniform and separate group. Their peculiarity is that they know exclusively cremation burials. In the majority the burnt ashes are placed in cask-shaped urns with ribbon ornaments. The forms of the pottery ware agree almost entirely with the material of the cemetery of Kustánfalva<sup>82</sup>. Another similar feature is that in this group there are very few characteristic Scythian objects<sup>83</sup>. For the present there is one difference, namely we have not yet encountered barrows belonging to this group in this region. On sandy territory and used for agriculture lower barrows easily disappear. We revise our opinion on the basis of the above mentioned facts that the influence of the Kustánfalva group extended merely to Carpathian Ukraine<sup>84</sup>. Undoubtedly this culture was spread considerably on the open area to the south-west

<sup>79</sup> Grekov-Meljukova, pp. 84, 86. — Liberov, pp 155—157.

<sup>80</sup> M. Rostowtzev, op. cit., p. 442, note 2.

<sup>81</sup> Meljukova, p. 246.

<sup>82</sup> J. Böhm — J. M. Jankovich, *Skythové na Podkarpatská Rusi*, Praha 1936. The most typical similarities besides the high-handled mugs are dishes with inverted rims (Pl. XI, fig. 6), dishes with curved rims (Pl. XIII, fig. 1), one-handled jugs (Pl. XV, fig. 3), and cask-shaped urns (Pl. XVI, fig. 5; Pl. XIX, figs. 2—3).

<sup>83</sup> Meljukova, p. 246. — Grekov-Meljukova determine the same in respect to the group of the north-western Dniester too (p. 82).

<sup>84</sup> Párducz 1955, pp. 118—119.



of Carpathian Ukraine. Up to date the number of sites belonging to this group are nearly ninety (chiefly at Nyiregyháza and in its immediate environs). At present it is not possible to define how far the Kustánfalva group of the Scythian period extended in the south-west direction. In the County of Bihar and further one, to the north-west as well as to the west sites (greater cemeteries as e.g. at Tápiószele) are known where both inhumation and cremation burials occur. Here already the scattered ashes form of the cremation burial predominates. The original objects of Scythian type or their local imitation appear comparatively in great number at these sites and, what is the most striking, they occur in the cremation graves as well.

This fact is illustrated by the map of sites of the Scythian mirrors (Pl. XXIX). We must add too, that the bulk of the daggers, arrow-heads, cruciform ornaments of girdles or quivers, the horse- and chariot-burials appear on that area where the sites of the mirrors are. These facts suggest, that within the Carpathian basin the relics of the Kustánfalva group advance considerably towards the Hungarian Great Plain, but according to our present knowledge, we cannot assign to them such a general extension as we see Meljukova does<sup>85</sup>.

We must uphold our conclusions drawn so far, relating to the Vekerzug or Great Plain group, on the other regions of the Hungarian Great Plain. This conclusions applies equally to the territory of its extension in Hungary, its chronological position, the route by which it came here, and its relation to the Transylvanian group<sup>86</sup>.

3. Meljukova<sup>87</sup> classes the parts of the chariot of the grave at Gyöngyös among the objects of local Hallstatt type of the Vekerzug or Great Plain group. There are such distinct differences between the chariots of the type of Vekerzug (to this belong that of Gyöngyös, and probably of Hatvan-Boldog) and those chariots of the western and northern Hallstatt period, which can be taken into account, that it would be difficult to accept this conclusion<sup>88</sup>. It is also very remarkable, that ornaments of the chariots (e.g. rattles) of oriental origin are associated with the chariot-burials. It makes no difference to the point, that these are partly local imitations. The fact is, that the horses buried together with the chariot and all the other horses of the Vekerzug or Great Plain group are tarpans of oriental origin<sup>89</sup>. The types of the iron bit occurring here

<sup>85</sup> Meljukova, p. 249.

<sup>86</sup> Vekerzug, pp. 156 — 169; Vekerzug II. pp. 60 — 89; Vekerzug III. pp. 14 — 18.

<sup>87</sup> Meljukova, p. 249.

<sup>88</sup> Vekerzug, pp. 167 — 168.

<sup>89</sup> Vekerzug, pp. 169.

have no local antecedents whatever. The question of its origin is fairly obscure. We cannot be quite satisfied by the comparison with the bridle-fittings from Sumejko<sup>90</sup>. The bronze bit from the Poltava district, published recently by Titenko, stands very close to our types as regards form<sup>91</sup>. It is very probable, that these two types are akin. The bronze rings ornamented with tiny circles from Balázsfalva and Pisk belong really to the local elements<sup>92</sup>. But we rather place these rings in the western Hallstatt culture on the basis of their occurrence at Regöly<sup>93</sup>. The same applies to the bronze grooved bracelet from the town park of Nagyenyed<sup>94</sup>.

4. The presence of the actual Scythians (nomads or agriculturists) in Hungary is an important question from the point of view of the Hallstatt research in Central-Europe. The already mentioned considerations suggest, that the Soviet research has not yet reached a final conclusion in this question<sup>95</sup>. We judge it worth while to take into consideration regarding the Hungarian material the following:

a) The gold stags from Tápiószentmárton and Zöldhalompusztá<sup>96</sup> derive from barrows of cremation-graves. This burial rite primarily indicates that these are the remarkable objects of a culture of the wooded steppe of Scythian character, but not of Scythian ethnic. According to the results of Fettich's examination neither the gold stags nor the other rich gold grave-goods are local products. Their isolated occurrence (they came to light from single graves) suggests, that they belonged to a person or persons (chieftain?) playing an important part. Presumably they are the symbols of power not known so far from the regions of the wooded steppe and for this reason we leave open the question, were the proprietors of Scythian culture only but of Iranian ethnic or real Scythians.

<sup>90</sup> Vekerzug, p. 166.

<sup>91</sup> G. T. Titenko, *Zakavkaskie umila, naidennye na Poltavshichine*, „Kratkie soobshchenija Instituta Arkheologii”, 3, Kiev 1954, pp. 77—80, 78, figs. 2—3.

<sup>92</sup> Meljukova, p. 249.

<sup>93</sup> The kind verbal information of I. B. Kutzián.

<sup>94</sup> Meljukova, p. 249. — See also e.g. S. Gallus — T. Horváth, *Un peuple cavalier préscythique en Hongrie*. „Diss. Pann.” II. 9, (Budapest 1939), Pl. LXII, fig. 6.

<sup>95</sup> See e. g. Liberov's remarks on page 165 just about the regions which interest us in respect of the material of the Carpathian basin.

<sup>96</sup> N. Fettich, *Der Goldhirsch von Tápiószentmárton*. „Arch. Ert. XLI (Budapest 1927), pp. 312—318. — N. Fettich, *La trouvaille Scythe de Zöldhalompusztá*. „Arch. Hung.” III (Budapest 1928).

b) The objects of the find of Gyoma came to light from a ca 12 m high barrow. A corridor was found of north-east and south-west direction, 2 m high, 3 m long and 80 cm wide, and of which western end had fallen in. Its three unimpaired sides and ceiling were covered with a framework pieced together from unstripped beams. The corridor was built on bare earth. The corridor itself was empty, whereupon the workers began to dig from above the north-western end, considered to have collapsed, and here were found the different parts of a skeleton, fragments of a coarse vessel painted red, fragments of mirror and gold objects already referred to in note 14. It seems probable that the wood-lined corridor was the entrance of a burial-chamber. We allude here to the gold objects<sup>97</sup> of the finds reconstructed in the shape of a whip-handle. If the reconstruction is right, then this objects may rather be included in the inventory of the finds of nomadic life. But the barrow of Gyoma suggests also, that the several hundreds of barrows on the area of the Great Plain may still cause great surprises in this question. As long as we have not explored a considerable part of these barrows we cannot draw conclusions regarded as final in the respect of the Scythian ethnic group either.

c) In 1953 a remarkable find of the Scythian period came to light at Ártánd (County of Bihar)<sup>98</sup>. Unfortunately nothing is known about the circumstances of its occurrence; we could only determine, that it relates to an inhumation burial. We should like to mention here only that this find, being just worked up, may be dated to the middle of the sixth century, and that the garment of the warrior, buried fully armed, was covered with more than a hundred gold spangles (rosetta-like) with geometric ornamentation. The fragments of the iron bit of usual type occurred too. The ornaments of the garment suggest relationship with the corresponding finds from the kurgan of Melitopol unearthed by Pokrovskhája<sup>99</sup>. This similarity is also very interesting for the reason that the horse-graves<sup>100</sup>, coming to light in the course of the exploration of the barrow at Melitopol, are the exact parallels of those of the Vekerzug type. In front of the horses' mouthes are iron bits with curved cheek-pieces. The kurgan unearthed by Smirnov in the west

<sup>97</sup> M. Ebert, op. cit., XII. Pl. 69, fig. o.

<sup>98</sup> A. Kralovánsky, *Az Ártánd-zomlinpusztai koravaskori sirlelet* (Grave-goods of the Early Iron Age from Artánd-Zomlinpuszta). „Arch. Ert.” 83 (Budapest 1956), p. 222.

<sup>99</sup> VDI 2 (52) 1955. pp. 191 — 199.

<sup>100</sup> VDI 2 (52) 1955. p. 194, fig. 3.

corner of the Crimean Peninsula (in the vicinity of Kalos Limen gorodishche) deserves attention also in respect of the find from Ártánd. The conical terminated, open bronze bracelet<sup>101</sup>, coming to light here, is the exact analogy of the pair of gold bracelets from Ártánd, as regards form. The experts, who published both finds, assign them to the fourth-third centuries and therefore we do not wish to draw far-reaching conclusions from the observations made so far.

d) Besides the aforementioned facts it deserves attention that the presence of the Irano-Scythian ethnic group in the Carpathian basin has been investigated on other lines as well. S. K. Szádeczky endeavoured to reveal linguistic evidences by the examination of the name of the river Tisza<sup>102</sup>. Among the evidences the presumed presence of the Scythian ethnic stratum of the Vekerzug or Great Plain group plays also a part. However, the other conclusions, and chiefly the linguistic ones, cannot be rejected without further consideration. In his study the question of the Agathyrs gains also significance, and at least in respect to Transylvania cannot be neglected.

In this paper we have wished merely to outline the questions concerning the Scythian period which are raised naturally by the most recent results of the Soviet research. These results and view-points set a whole series of new excavation-tasks before the Hungarian archaeological research.

*The manuscript was finished in 1957*

<sup>101</sup> VDI 4 (42) 1952. pp. 187—192, 191, fig. 4.

<sup>102</sup> S. Szádeczky-Kardoss, *The Name of the River Tisza*, „Acta Ant. Hung.” 2 (Budapest 1954), pp. 77—115.