

*E*TERNAL MEMORY TO WARRIORS! MILITARY CAMPAIGNS IN ANCIENT BARBARICUM FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF FUNERARY ARCHAEOLOGY: SELECTED EXAMPLES

Abstract:

Degree of recognition of the armament models in Barbaricum allows not only to identify certain cultural areas but also to capture the ordinary findings not exactly matching the indigenous pattern. Their interpretation, although burdened with uncertainty, allows depicting the phenomena on the detailed dynamic level, i.e. not as a manifestation of the cultural processes but a phenomenon of a limited scale or relating to small groups of warriors. Author discusses particular finds from different parts of European Barbaricum, i.a. a Celtic grave from Ciumești in Romania, a warrior cemetery from the 1st c. BC in Mutin on the River Szym, 1st/2nd c. AD double grave from Káloz in Pannonia, 2nd c. AD necropolis in Kariv (western Ukraine), Sudovian Culture grave from Szewajcaria by Suwałki, barrow 2 (early 3rd c. AD) and late antique necropolis at Čatyr Dag in Crimea. Basing on the chosen archaeological examples from different parts of the Iron Age Europe a mobility of a military character – practice mentioned in the written and ethnographic sources – is exemplified.

Keywords:

Barbaricum, warriors, retinues, Celts, Germans, migrations

Then the hobbits suddenly realized that people had looked at them with amazement not out of surprise at their return so much as in wonder at their gear. They themselves had become so used to warfare and to riding in well-arrayed companies that they had quite forgotten that the bright mail peeping from under their cloaks, and the helms of Gondor and the Mark, and the fair devices on their shields, would

seem outlandish in their own country. And Gandalf, too, was now riding on his tall grey horse, all clad in white with a great mantle of blue and silver over all, and the long sword Glamdring at his side.

J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Return of the King*

Proto-historical archaeology allows indicating many examples of the Barbaric peoples' migrations. Thanks to many years of strenuous studies on the typologies of artefacts and then their chronology, expansion, and context of occurrence it is possible to indicate the forms specific for particular cultural zones, periods of time, age, and gender. A particularly sensitive proxy, which is a subject to considerable morphological alternations connected with fashion fluctuations, are fibulae (e.g. Kostrzewski 1919; Almgren 1923; Völling 1994; Kunow 2002; Droberjar, Komoróczy 2017). Elements of belts also prove to be quite useful in this matter (Madyda-Legutko 1986; Madyda-Legutko 2011). Recently it has been managed to include into this field of research also military equipment, especially when it occurred that the most frequently encountered weapons, i.e. heads of pole arms (over the years treated as unclassifiable) very often are the perfect indicator for chronology. It was confirmed nearly simultaneously for the regions of Scandinavia (Ilkjær 1990) and the Przeworsk culture in the Roman Period (Kaczanowski 1995); later the same kind of studies have been performed in relation to current Polish lands in the Late Pre-Roman Period (Bochnak 2005; Łuczkiwicz 2006). Thanks to the detailed comparative studies in this area of expertise it is even possible to identify the 'trendsetters' of the military fashion. So, in the Late Pre-Roman Period the standards were dictated by the Celts, especially as refers to valuable weapons, indicating high social position of their owners. On the basis of the current research state it even seems that nearly all two-edged swords and corresponding scabbards from the Barbarian Europe were imports from *Celtica* (Bochnak 2014: 120). The attempts to distinguish local forms imitating Celtic originals came to nothing. Less decorative scabbards or those furnished with iron open-work applications for many years have been thought to be Germanic imitations; however, it occurred that they were manufactured in Celtic workshops, what was revealed by the discoveries from oppida (Bochnak, Czarnecka 2006). Differently appears the situation of Celtic helmets (see especially late forms of the Port type or western- and eastern-Celtic ones) as well as ring-mails: contrary to swords and scabbards they have been very rarely discovered beyond the regions of *Celtica* and Mediterranean civilizations (Bochnak 2014: 119–123; Hansen 2003: 120–122). Nevertheless, also in the native lands they were not a popular kind of a defensive weapon, especially in comparison with its expansion in the Roman Period (Schaaf 1988: fig. 19, 24, 25; Hansen 2003: 124–125, map 3–4). The Celtic shields are also extremely unique beyond the endemic zone: only few items of band-shaped umbones are known from the Przeworsk culture,

being an element of such shields (Bochnak 2014: 111–119; Bochnak 2017: 36). It has to be explained by the completely different development of this kind of defensive weapon. While the kind that has developed in the Germanic world was the one with a central shield-boss covering the opening in which the grip was placed, the kind of shield that definitely dominated among the Celts was the one bound by a vertical rib (*spina*), running in the axis of the weapon, a technological relic after the fighting sticks used for parring hits; only in eastern *Celtica* circular shield-bosses were used, inspired by the Germanic arsenal (Kontny 2019a: 195, 199–202).

Especially strong adaptation of Celtic designs characterizes the region of the Przeworsk culture, where not only the Celtic-type swords and scabbards occur abundantly, but also pole weapons, which at least at the beginning were inspired by the Celtic patterns (i.a. large dimensions of heads – cf. Bochnak 2005: 75, or the characteristic forms of butts, i.e. lower ferrules of shafts: Kontny 1999: 128–131). One might attribute it to the participation of the Celts in the formation of the Przeworsk culture as well as their physical presence during its continuation documented recently with the proofs for Celtic coin minting on the ‘Przeworsk’ Kuyavia and by the Prosna River (Rudnicki et al. 2009; Andrałojć, Andrałojć 2012). Apparently, the Celts brought in their dowry not only the know-how in the smithery techniques, but also multiple products, e.g. fibulae and forms of weapons.

Different, non-Celtic zone covered northern Europe. Two-edged swords of the Celtic type were very rare here, on the contrary to the local one-edged forms, shorter and of the lower quality, deriving from the long, massive knives (Nicklasson 1997: 33, 61; Kaul 2003: 149–151). One might also encounter the circular shield-bosses (with the complete lack of the band-shaped ones); although many of those – especially dated to the older timespans of the Late Pre-Roman Period – indicate some local features (so-called archaic type shield bosses with a blunt apex – Łuczkiwicz 1997 – and, co-existing with them – shield grips with large round rivets plates). Although at the beginning of this period iron heads are present, they have a spine being in fact a socket ‘melted’ into the structure of a blade. They are a reference to solutions from the Bronze Age, resulting from technology of manufacturing, i.e. casting with core. What was acquired quite easily in examples made of copper alloy, in case of iron heads was difficult and maladjusted to the technology of forging.¹ Archaism of armament was expressed also in the attendance of heads manufactured from bone and antler (Martens 2001: 142–147, fig. 11–14),

¹ Skeuomorphism was a phenomenon to a wider range present in cultures of the ancient world, see e.g. the shape of the Khufu boat, resembling in many aspects the papyri boats (e.g. goblet-shaped ends of stem and stern, imitating those of reed beams in boats and reefs), although here represented in Lebanese cedar wood (Lipke 1984: 17, 19, 107, 139, fig. 52; McGrail 2001: 26–28, fig. 2.9).

the materials less persistent than metal, but cheaper, used very often in the Bronze Age and Early Iron Age (Kontny 1996), i.a. in the Przeworsk, Pomeranian, and West Balt Barrow cultures (Kontny 2021).

One might also pinpoint the zones in which Germanic and Celtic traditions had crossed, which led to creation of the mixed model. In the Oksywie culture one-edged swords dominated, and Celtic, two-edged forms – although present – constituted a minority, apparently not exactly fitting the local fashions, apart from the Lower Vistula Basin and Gdańsk Bay coast, where quite a large amount of them have been discovered (Łuczkiewicz 2018: 43–44, fig. 15–16). Some of those were re-made into one-edged forms (e.g. Podwiesie, grave 354S, see: Bokinić 2005: 68, tabl. CXXIII:8),² or shortened to the desired dimensions, parallel to one-edged weapons (Rumia, grave 67, see: Pietrzak 1987: 25, pl. LIX:67.a); the cases when two-edged weapons have been put in scabbards characteristic for examples with one cutting edge are also known (Łuczkiewicz 2006: 55, 75). Apart from that, one finds here solutions popular in the Przeworsk culture, i.e. similar forms of iron heads and butts (admittedly not all types, but a considerable majority), spurs, and shield fittings.

The mixed model might be recognized also in case of Elbe River Basin, especially since the half of the 1st century BC, when the ‘delayed’ Celtic influence arrived via the Przeworsk culture. From the cemeteries such as Grossromstedt or Schkopau both one- and two-edged swords are known (their proportion is similar), as well as shield fittings, similar to examples encountered in Przeworsk and Oksywie cultures. Differences, although visible, manifest at the level of burial rites in the over-representation of the shield fittings in the weapon-graves, often in pieces, not rarely without a company of other weaponry elements (see: Kontny 2002: 66–67, fig. 1–3, 15).

Similar seems the situation in selected regions of Jutland Peninsula, especially Vendsyssel region, where in the so-called Kraghede group one can encounter – in the similar proportions – both forms of swords and Przeworsk-types of shield fittings; some inspirations in pottery are also present. Influences from southeast had occurred earlier than in Elbe area (Martens 1992; Martens 1994).

On this background the region of eastern Europe seems rather poor, having still stayed – however receiving some trends from the La Tène culture (generally identified with the Celts) – in the shadow of the local tradition of so-called forest-zone cultures, which is expressed in the popularity of items of bone, antler, and stone. Up to recently from the most ‘latenized’ Zarubintsy culture there have been known only little more than a dozen iron heads of pole weapons as well as

² Examples of such behaviour are known also from Scandinavia and northern Germany (Martens 2011: 162, fig. 12).

solitary spurs (Raduș 2011); classifying knives and adzes as weaponries (cf. Raduș 2011: 21, tab. 3, 4) seems to be a misunderstanding.³ Indigence of weaponries cannot be ascribed only to the specific character of burial rites, because it is certainly present in grave inventories, only rarely. On this background the conspicuous one is Poienestî-Lukaševka culture in the interfluvium of the middle and upper Prut and Seret Rivers as well as by the upper Dniestr, having been in fact a Germanic implant in this region, interpreted by the migrations of the Bastarnae and Scirii at the end of the 3rd century BC. However, not a lot of pieces of weapons are known from there (Babeș 1993: 114–120), which might be in this case explained by the burial rites, excluding it nearly definitely from the set of grave goods. Sparse finds point to the Celtic model: the swords of the Celtic type from grave no 29 in Borosești (Babeș 1993: pl. 5:c–d), as well as burial in Răcău (Babeș 1993: pl. 44:1–15), and Corni-Hruba (Babeș 1993: pl. 44:19), band-shaped shield boss from the same feature in Borosești (Babeș 1993: pl. 5:e), chain belt for attaching sword, being a part of the deposit in Negri (Babeș 1993: pl. 42:28) or – supposed to have a combat use – knives with an asymmetric blade (Babeș 1993: 115, pl. 43:24, 44:18), known from eastern *Celtica* (Rustoiu 2016: 200–203, fig. 3). The latter have the most practical application (although rather not in battle), but also the symbolic one – they were probably used by the hosts of celebrative feasts for dividing meat (which is indicated by their shape, but also location in graves – next to the residues of meat portions); they were also an indicator for the high status of their bearers (Rustoiu 2016).⁴ However, it is hard to say if it really was a weapon typical of this culture; maybe – as it found its way to graves – it should be interpreted as characteristic for burials of the Celtic allies. To the abovementioned list one should add also the range of finds of iron heads originating from settlements, rarely from graves and hoards/deposits (Babeș 1993: 115, pl. 5:f, 22:6–10, 38:10, 42:1, 43:27). All that implies the advanced military model of that society, although – as it was already stated – it is impossible to have it fully reconstructed.

In the following timespan – the Roman Period – the structure of fashion designing centres in the field of weaponry changed. The fall of the world of the free Celts, connected with changing boundaries of the rising Roman Empire resulted in the domination of the influence from the Mediterranean, indicated also in the name of this time period in the central-European periodization. What

³ Argument over the non-military role of knives in the equipment of warriors as well as distinguishing adzes (tools) from socketed axes (weapons) – see: Kontny 2016: 38, 47–52; Kontny 2019: 128–129.

⁴ Apparently, Dacian *sica* daggers of Transylvania and the lower Danube looked similar, but their morphology is different (the cutting edge is concave), and the archaeological context and decoration suggests their ritual application; supposedly Dacian national weapon has later developed from it (Rustoiu 2016).

seriously influenced the Barbarian world were changing fashions in the women clothing, having manifested in the demand for fibulae forms imported or modelled on the Roman originals, decorations of belts, popularity of glass beads, etc. It applied also to some aspects of elite's way of living, and manifested in the inventories of the so-called princely graves, by the Roman imports connected with wine consuming (Roman sets for drinking, with – worth noting – commitment to local drinking horns⁵) but also vessels (platters – however probably not used in the Mediterranean manner, for sacrifices – but also skillets, bowls, cauldrons, buckets). However, in the field of weaponry this influence has to be recognized as somewhat small, especially in comparison with the earlier influences of the Celtic model. Obviously, it does not apply to swords, which meaning for the barbaric armamentarium cannot be overpriced. It is expressed in the growing popularity of the Roman imported swords and their imitations. Already at the end of the Early Roman Period, i.e. about half of the 2nd century, the local one-edged swords were completely abandoned (Kontny 2009a: 15, diagram 11; Kontny 2019a: 35–37, with further literature). Naturally, it resulted from the better applied features of the Roman specimens, which must be connected with the sophisticated techniques of production (pattern welding). One should add here also Roman 'quality marks', producer's stamps, as well as encrusted decorations with motifs related to the Roman military ideology and beliefs (depictions of military signs, Mars, Victoria, laurel wreaths, palm leaves, etc.), which gave the owner the possibility to demonstrate his extraordinary position. This weapon corresponded with Barbarian fighting style; even long Roman *spathae*, suited for fighting from the horseback, the Germans used mostly in foot combat. However, the Roman shields, fitted for fighting in formation, and not the Germanic hit-and-run tactics, were not adapted in the reality of Barbaricum; the same applies certain type of javelins (*pila*). Likewise: daggers (*pugiones*), helmets, and body armour are encountered sporadically, and they are considered to be gifts or features of elites, rather than actual weapons with the real meaning for the world of warriors (Kaczanowski 1992; Kontny 2019a: 39–40). Besides, many of the helmets have been modified for the Barbarian fashion, i.e. they have been equipped with local decorations (Matešić 2015: 196–205); moreover, it concerned also the extraordinary decorated Germanic sword mounts, placed on Roman originals. On the other hand,

⁵ Curiously, in the Younger and Late Roman Period on the tables of the Barbarian noblemen glass drinking horns type Eggers 246–249 have occurred (Eggers 1951: 62), manufactured undoubtedly in provincial workshops, yet so far from Roman traditions. Indeed: the customer is always right! By the way, it is worth noting that among the similarly dated Germanic organic specimens the signal horns are also identified, of a nearly identical form (distinguished by the presence of a hole in lower fitting). Drawing a distinction between the first and the latter needs further studies, covering thorough examination of the artefacts.

the finds of most effective Roman armour, *lorica segmentata*, are not known from the regions extra limes at all, and also fragments of scale armour are encountered only in the context connected with the Marcomannic Wars, therefore: the actual presence of imperial troops in Barbaricum. A little bit more numerous are the ring-mails, but they too are not the category which an archaeologist would encounter very often. In addition, the number of specimens of the Roman provenance should be decreased because the construction features of some examples (from the lake sacrificial sites Thorsberg and Vimose) indicate their local manufacturing (Wijnhoven 2015; Matešić 2015: 208–223)! The real significance of this weapons is revealed by the examples of ring-mails from the Przeworsk culture: discovered in fragments in graves of women and children, having been most probably attached to robes as amulets, of the similar apotropaic function as miniatures of shields (along with which, *nota bene*, they are sometimes found). Narrow time frames of their occurrence allows formulating the hypothesis that the access to the ring-mails has taken place during the Marcomannic Wars, in which the warriors from the Przeworsk culture area participated (Czarnecka 1994: 246; Kontny 2019a: 40).

One could expect that the lack of standardizing influence of the Empire would have resulted in the differences in armaments of the cultural units of Central European Barbaricum being well-distinguishable. The differences are in fact less striking than in case of definitely more apparently distinct models of armament of the Sarmatians and Dacians, nevertheless – thanks to long-lasting studies – quite noticeable. One might assume that in those times the signatures of individuality in the armament of particular tribes, even inter-related, were very much legible and underlined probably by the details only slightly manifesting in the archaeological material, such as organic applications on the shafted weapons or painting decorations of shields. The differences were expressed first and foremost in using particular kinds of weapons, e.g. axes or socketed axes, which occurred only at particular terrains: axes in Elbe region in the Younger and Late Roman Period, in the West Balt circle, and probably in the Goth's cultural circle, socketed axes, on the other hand, in the Balt environment and further in the east of Europe, among the Ryazan-Oka Finns. Surely, what could be indicated as a distinctive feature are also sets of weapons (e.g. typical for Scandinavia pairs of heads, of which one with barbs). Unfortunately, this comparative tool cannot be employed in full, which results from uneven state of research as well as differences in funeral rites, disturbing sometimes the real picture of the past equipment. In case of cultures with a similar model of armour good proxies seem to be the heads of pole weapons, to a smaller extent also spurs, since swords and elements of shields have already proven more homogenic in forms. Heads of pole arms might even be acknowledged as a military counterpart of the pottery, treated as a good indicator of the affiliation to a particular cultural unit (Kontny 2019b: 351).

The comparisons are sometimes based on random, and not fully representative data. It is an effect of the lack of full picture of the issue of armaments in distinctive cultural units, but it is also necessary to underline the disproportion between the number of weapon finds from the Early Roman Period and the beginnings of the Younger Roman Period on the one hand, and the later times on the other. Being aware of those limitations, however, makes it possible to dare to indicate some regularities. What is especially noticeable is the impact the Przeworsk-culture weapons had on the neighbouring areas (Wielbark culture, Lubusz group, Marcomannic-Quadic area, Luboszyce culture, to some extent also the Elbe area and West Balt circle, specifically Bogaczewo culture) in the Early Roman Period, until the beginning of the Younger Roman Period. Starting from the C1 phase, especially its later time segment (since ca. 230), the position of the Przeworsk model has been in decline, and its place has begun to be exchanged by the Scandinavian pattern; although – as it seems – these influences are not as strong as in case of the Przeworsk culture of the Early Roman Period (Kontny 2019b).

Degree of recognition of the armament models in Barbaricum allows capturing the ordinary findings not exactly matching the depicted outline. Their interpretation, although burdened with uncertainty, allows depicting the phenomena on the detailed dynamic level, i.e. not as a manifestation of the cultural processes but a phenomenon of a limited scale or relating to small groups.

One might mention here especially the striking discoveries from Mutin by the Sejm River (e.g. Łuczkiewicz, Terpilovskij 2012; Terpilovskij, Zharov 2013; Terpilovskij, Žarov 2018). Relatively recently a small necropolis has been discovered there; several graves dated to the half and the earlier stage of the second half of the 1st century BC. What is striking, is the wealth of the equipment (**Fig. 1**): in every grave one can find the so-called full set of armament (a Celtic-type or Germanic one-edged sword, shield, pole weapon, often also spurs); the weapons have parallels in Germanic milieu, mostly the Przeworsk or Oksywie cultures but there are also Scandinavian traces (archaic type of shield boss with blunt apex). In many cases cremated human remains were placed in Roman bronze vessels (mainly situlae) or the bi-metallic cauldrons; besides, in five graves the Celtic helmets were discovered (two of which have been used as urns)! In barbaric warriors' graves bronze situlae occur very rarely and can be encountered mostly in eastern Germany and southern Scandinavia (Łuczkiewicz, Terpilovskij 2012: 165–166, fig. 11). The absolute exception are helmets of eastern-Celtic type: earlier only one similarly dated had been known from the non-Celtic context, discovered at the Przeworsk-culture necropolis in Siemiechów, grave 25 (Jażdżewska 1986; Jażdżewska 1994; Jażdżewska, Siciński 2017: 46–47, fig. 29:4) and one – although arising reasonable doubts in the matter of identification – case from Mała Kopanâ



Fig. 1. Mutin, grave 8 and 8A (after Terpilovskij, Žarov 2018).

in Transcarpathian Ukraine, connected also with the Przeworsk culture, originating rather already from the Early Roman Period (Kobal' 1997: 41, fig. 10, 11). However in the Przeworsk environment such discoveries do not single out that much; Mutin lies on the boundaries of Zarubintsy culture, in the 'demilitarized' (in archaeological sense) zone, in which the view of warriors armed to the teeth has probably risen a sincere admiration.⁶ Burying the dead with their attributes has extended this respect for the time after death.

Heretofore the author of the article was quite sceptical about the possibility to indicate in the archaeological sources the cemeteries of war band (retinue) members (Kontny 2003: 259–261), but this time it is hard to resist the impression that what is observed here is a place of burials of the dead connected by ties of military brotherhood. What comes to mind is the Tolkien's piece used as a motto of the hereby article, the depiction of the hobbits returning to Shire from the remote parts, braw in the military souvenirs from the adventures in the distant countries: armours, helmets, and shields from Gondor and Rohan. In case of Mutin warriors the precise chronology allows inferring in what events they have acquired weapons and fame. Influx of multiple Germanic tribes to Gaul under the command of Ariovistus (71–58 BC) and their further military activities by the Rhine River, confirmed by Julius Ceasar (Caes. *De bello Gall.* 1.1–6, 31–37), could be the possible explanation. The above-mentioned events engaged significant groups of warriors. As it is supposed, men from south-western Poland, Lubusz Land, northern Greater Poland, as well as the Havel and middle Elbe Rivers' basin participated in them, what is explaining the depopulation of those lands, occupied by the Jastorf culture people and the western concentrations of the Przeworsk culture. It took place

⁶ On the topic of the complicated cultural situation in eastern Europe of those times and the possible interpretations of the Mutin's cemetery phenomenon see: Łuczkiwicz, Terpilovskij 2012: 166–168 (paper published before the richest graves were announced to the public).

at the end of A2 phase of the Late Pre-Roman Period (before the 1st century BC) and continued in A3 phase (Godłowski 1985: 35, 139, 156). With a A2 phase one should connect also the occurrence of the Przeworsk culture enclaves in the west, far beyond the densely populated area of settlement of this cultural unit – in middle and western Germany (Rauchfuß 2017; Seidel 2017; Grasselt 2017; Knechtel 2017; Keller 2017; Knechtel et al. 2019, 284–289, fig. 16). However, the occurrence of at least a part of Przeworsk-culture materials preceded the activities of Ariovistus, which might explain the relative easiness of the migrations of groups originating from the Przeworsk culture through the lands inhabited – although in clusters – by their kinsman. Similar contacts with the region of northern Jutland might have led to changing the face of the aforementioned Kraghede group, located in the Vendsyssel region. It is reflected by equipping (since the A1 phase) graves with tools, weapons, but also large amounts of shattered pottery, eventually also in the presence of animal bones; to a small extent it has been reflected in the pottery style (Martens 2017: 155–156, with further literature). Therefore, the ease of participation of the Przeworsk culture society in the Ariovistus raids inscribes into the mobility of this group.

Participation in the events of this kind has probably broken some cultural-tribal barriers: along with a part of the Przeworsk culture area depopulates and disappears Gubin group in southwest Poland, assigned to Jastorf culture. Did the news about the recruitment or the first spoils of the Ariovistus wars moved towards the West also (probably just few) daredevils from the Sejms River area, in consequence gaining fame and spoils during the battles? It seems that it is a probable interpretation of the presence of the Celtic helmets accompanied by differentiated Germanic weapon sets that far towards the East.⁷ In this light it seems valid to interpret also the discovery of the helmet from Siemiechów in the similar manner. Taking into consideration the chronology of the cemetery by the Sejm one could take into account that the victorious return was only the beginning of the splendour for this group, which could celebrate the triumphs over some time, probably even the whole generation, before they begun to be buried either in this particular necropolis or its separated part (the site has not yet been researched in its entirety, that is why such possibility cannot be excluded). New light on Mutin interpretations will be shed by the anthropological analysis, providing the information the age when warriors have actually died.

⁷ R.V. Terpilovskij and G.V. Zharov have hypothesized that one deals with the Bastarnae (Celtic-Germanic?) formation by the Sejms River, which participated in the war activities from Gaul to the Carpathians, which was supposed to finally participate in the events by the lower Danube in 28 BC (Žarov, Terpilovskij 2014: 45–60; Terpilovskij, Zharov 2018: 500); however, it is in some inconsistency with the chronology of the necropolis. Moreover, Celtic and Jastorf ('Bastarnae') traces in armaments – naturally apart from helmets – are definitely absent here.

More such examples can be indicated. It is worth recalling e.g. the grave of the Celtic warrior from Ciumești in Romania (**Fig. 2**), dated to LTC1 phase in which, next to the magnificent helm with the figurine of a bird (falcon) with the movable wings, ring-mail, and weaponry typical for the Celts also the Greek greaves were discovered, completely incoherent with Celtic armoury and, what is more, requiring precise fitting to a specific leg, thus manufactured for the individual order (Rustoiu 2006: 44–53). It is explained with participation of the Transylvanian Celt, probably leading alongside himself a group of warriors, as the

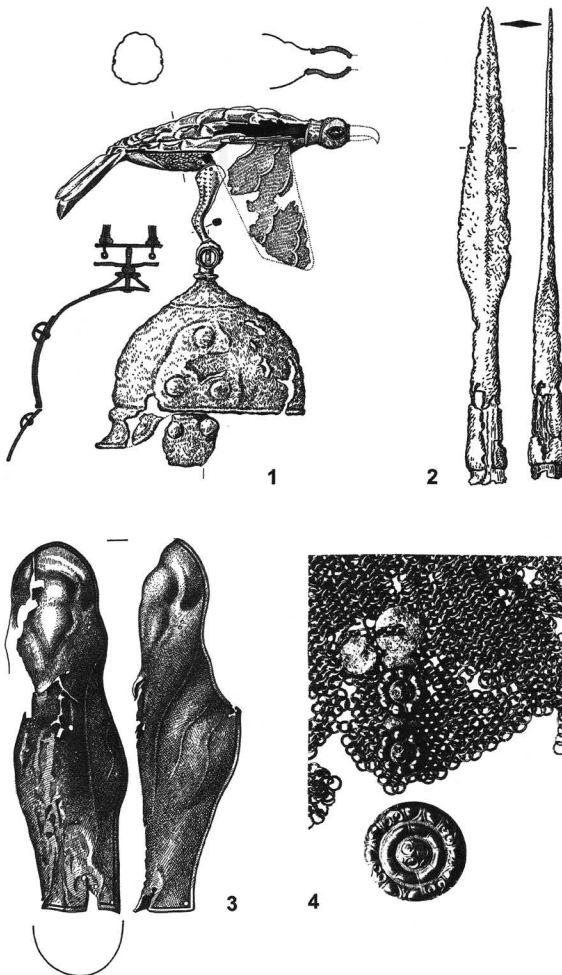


Fig. 2. Equipment of the Celtic grave from Ciumești (after Rustoiu 2016).

mercenary in wars waged by the Hellenistic (maybe Macedonian?) ruler in the second half of the 3rd century BC or maybe at the beginning of the 2nd century BC (Rustoiu 2006: 53, 63). Examples of employing Celtic mercenaries in the armies of the Mediterranean are given by multiple written sources (Rustoiu 2006: 53–63); however, very rarely it is possible to prove such a situation on the basis of archaeology. Besides, it has to be remembered that not all warriors were able to return to their motherland.

Different curious example has been provided by the recent discovery in Kariv, in Lviv Oblast (Onišuk 2018: 139–179, pl. II–XII; Onyshchuk 2019). Five graves dated to phases B2b and B2/C1 (2nd century) have been uncovered there, nearly all of them including weapons (**Fig. 3**). One's attention is riveted especially to the grave no 2, containing the cauldron-urn manufactured from copper alloy and decorated with handle-mounts shaped as Germanic busts with *nodus Suebicus*. What has been discovered here is also a bronze situla, glass goblet and a pair of glass bowls, as well as a Roman bell attached to a horse tack, fragments of a mouthpiece along with chain rein, spurs and fittings of drinking horns. Then, in grave no 1 – apart from weapons (shield fittings, five arrowheads) – remains of a horse along with a bridle and chain rein have been discovered, as well as spurs. Grave no 3 included i.a. a two-edged sword, three heads of shafted weapons type I,⁸ and elements of a shield. One has to wait for the more detailed elaboration of the finds from Kariv, but what is striking already is the co-existence of the Przeworsk culture features (ritual destruction of weapons, characteristic heads of pole arms) along with the Balt ones – elements of drinking horns decorated with enamel and elements of horse harness, and even the residues of horse in the grave inventory (in principle not encountered in the Przeworsk culture, apart from evidently nomadic connotations – see: Kontny 2009b), probably also the open-work wide belt fittings of type 5, variant 1 (typical for the Balt, although sometimes encountered also in the Przeworsk environment – Madyda-Legutko 2011: 73, 79; Madyda-Legutko 2018, fig. 11).⁹ Additionally, there is also a range of features common for both cultural regions (shield bosses, grips, heads of shafted weapons, spurs, double-tongue buckles). Similar exchange of cultural elements in the group of warriors is completely understandable, if only one bears in mind the possible multi-ethnic character of multiple Barbarian war bands in the Roman Period. Existence of such phenomenon is confirmed by Tacitus (*Ger.* 14.2), writing that during the time of peace noble youngsters in large numbers would follow tribes which wage some war, whereby this description appears in the context of inform-

⁸ According to Kaczanowski 1995.

⁹ Especially characteristic for the Balt world are the triangular openings (Madyda-Legutko 2009: 774, 780, 782, pl. I, II; Madyda-Legutko 2018: 35).



Fig. 3. Kariv, grave 2. Chosen artifacts from the furnishing (after Onišuk 2018).

ative characterization of the *retinue* institution. Discoveries from the aforementioned necropolis seem to illustrate this phenomenon well. Separate issue is connected with indicating specific events in which the group of Germanic warriors, including the Balts (grave no 1 with a horse) could have participated. The author of the site's publication opts for the Marcomanic Wars, stating a hypothesis that the warriors buried in Kariv are Barbarian runaways (including the king) from the Roman oppression of the terminal timespan of these wars (Onyshchuk 2019: 372–374). However, it is premature: the chronology of the necropolis indicates its use also before the time of those wars (subphase B2b), maybe even in the first place (grip-bars with distinct rivet plates, spurs type E1¹⁰); the lack of the full publication makes it impossible to refer to all categories of artefacts and therefore

¹⁰ According to Ginalski 1991.

to interpret the site comprehensively. Assuming the 'king-like' character of the wealthiest grave might also be an exaggeration.

Thanks to this kind of detailed analysis, conducted for the Crimean necropolis Čatyr Dag, it was possible to acquire very interesting conclusions indicating the existence of the mixed war bands. The cemetery is distinguished among other Crimean necropoleis by cremation and in the same time presence of weapons, sometimes ritually damaged. The dead have been buried there in the second half of the 3rd and the 4th century. An attempt was made to explain the presence of weapons by the invasion of the Goths in the half of the 3rd century, even indicating the starting point in the area of the present-day Norway, but such conception has to be rejected, because among the Goths there was in principal a taboo for weapons in grave goods. What is more, the forms of weapons from Čatyr Dag as well as the character of the burial rites is far from the Scandinavian alleged origins. Instead the detailed elaboration of individual grave goods has allowed to reveal the presence of Przeworsk culture elements (sword of the Nydam-Kragehul type, subtype 2 and heads of shafted weapons, known however also from the Bogaczewo culture, accounted to the West Balt circle), West Balt (axe, one of heads) and Sarmatian ones (sickles, a sword with incisions in the base of the blade), but one could indicate here also features documented in the Pontic zone, with Roman elements (*dolabrae*, apart from the Roman context present numerously in Tsebelda culture in the area of Abkhazia). In case of some of the discovered items one cannot exclude their Scandinavian or 'Gothic' (Chernyakhov culture) provenance. Specific 'cultural cocktail' might be explained by the functioning of multi-ethnic warrior groups, the core of which had probably arrived here in connection with the Goths' invasion; however, the Gothic character of the group using the cited necropolis is rather doubtful. Therefore, those could have been Goths' brothers in arms, or the initial group of Goths was not numerous and has quickly overgrown with foreigners, joining them during the migration towards the South (snowball effect); potential for attraction in the Pontic zone seemingly had not decreased after arriving to the peninsula, and the group derived benefits from having resided in the new homeland probably significantly longer (Kontny 2013a).

Examples of graves of people, who gained experience in the service of Mars far from one's motherland, can be indicated also in different times and various areas. A perfect one is a warrior buried in the barrow no 2 at the necropolis of Sudovian culture (West Balt circle) in Sz wajcaria, near Suwałki (Kontny 2013b; Kontny 2019a: 123–124; see: Jaskanis 2013: 76–80, pl. CXVII–CXXV). A male ca. 55 years of age was buried non-cremated, although in accordance with local rules, but equipped with goods far from the average (**Fig. 4**). Along with a rare in the Balt environment sword (in this case it was a two-edged specimen of the Folkeslunda-Zaspy type, subtype 1, not of the highest quality – probably manu-

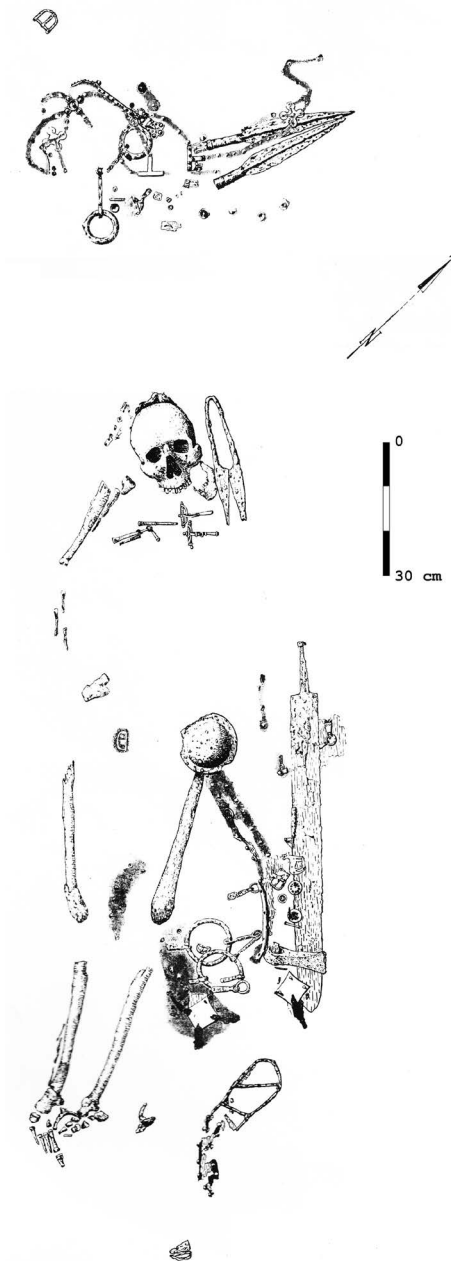


Fig. 4. Szwajcaria, barrow 2, grave 1 (after Jaskanis 2013).

factured in the area of the Przeworsk culture), occurred also a scabbard, tied with transverse clasps, so in the way foreign to the Przeworsk tradition, but confirmed among the Balts. Also the way it used to be attached, consisting of two rings with even ferrules, situated on both sides of the pendant was quite a *curiosum*: although technically such solution was known in the Roman Period, it was used for different purposes, e.g. attaching shield bands or joining pieces of leather strap of the waist belt. The aforementioned items have been accompanied by a *balteus* – a shoulder belt for attaching scabbard, studded with many appliques, not constituting any aesthetic entirety. The idea of such decoration originates probably from the Germanic environment, where, however, the sets create a comprehensive pattern. Due its uneven character and diversified origins (some are native to the local environment, and other, on the other hand, to the Przeworsk culture, Scandinavia or Elbe region), applications from Szwajcaria suggest the connotations with the present-day pin collections, attached to clothes or backpacks. They can be treated as souvenirs, reminding the owner participation in some events, but even more: impressing those, who would be able to decipher this cultural code, even if not entirely (which adds secrecy and splendour). Was it different then? One could assume that the fittings from Szwajcaria are in fact the souvenirs from military expeditions and wars waged on distant soil. This syncretism might be indicated also in other elements of equipment of this wealthy grave: shield is local, but one of two heads of shafted arms with broken poles is undoubtedly a Scandinavian import type Vennolum, and the second is a local product, although seemingly referring to the Przeworsk original in the field of typology and decorative motifs (the used technology of decoration, i.e. damascening with silver and filigree are not that common in the Przeworsk weapons). Apart from that there is a local shield and an axe (in fact not used as a weapon in the Przeworsk and Scandinavian environment, but eagerly so by Balt warriors), spurs, saddle, and two sets of horse headgear with eclectically combined fittings, among which there are an evident examples of Scandinavian decorations in shape of a human head or bird of prey. With northern Europe one might also connect fittings of the alleged organic bucket – a case for the headgear. The set might be dated to the later part of the C1b subphase, i.e. times ca. half of the 3rd century. Taking into consideration the above-mentioned data the author of the hereby article believes that the warrior from Szwajcaria participated in the wars waged in western part of the Baltic Sea basin in the subphase C1b. The areas of eastern Jutland or Funen were attacked quite often in these times, probably to gain control over the maritime trade which has started to be very profitable then. The classical course of the Amber Route lost its significance after the Marcomannic Wars, and Roman imports started to influx by the seaway. Because the only options of the route to the Baltic basin led through the Great Belt, the Little Belt and Sund, controlling the coasts of those

straits has allowed to monitor the trade and gain profits from it. The proof of the conflicts centred in this region are mass sacrificial deposits offered by local societies from the captured, often additionally ritually destroyed weapons. We do not know what position in this war was obtained by the man buried in the barrow in Szwajcaria. Moreover, one has to take into account also other events: because he might have got the Przeworsk-culture equipment while fighting alongside 'Przeworsk' brothers-in-arms or against them, in the ancient war for Schleswig (preceding ca. 1,600 years the first German-Danish war for these lands), but also somewhere else. One seems sure: after the return to his motherland he was respected until his late years – the place where his earthly remains have been buried is the wealthiest grave or the Sudovian culture known until now!

Moreover, there is considerably more proof for the participation of the Przeworsk and Balt warriors in Scandinavian wars, although they originate from a completely different category of sites – lakes, into which the weapons captured on invaders were offered, indicating an ethnically diversified composition of warrior groups. Artefacts of a Przeworsk character might be identified in northern European sites like Thorsberg, Schleswig – deposits from phases B2b–C1a (Ilkjær 1993: 375–376, fig. 152; Blankenfeldt 2013: 32, fig. 4) – as well as Vimose 1 on Funen, from the early stage of B2 phase, and Vimose 2a, from the late B2 phase (Pauli Jensen 2011: 47, fig. 6–7). In case of the latter the Balt elements can also be pointed (Kontny 2017: 35–40, fig. 14–16), and this direction of connections is visible also in deposits significantly later in chronology. Hence, Balsmyr on Bornholm yielded five heads typical for the West Balt circle, however, all of them have originated from the late deposit from the former lake, which is dated to the turn of the Late Roman Period and Early Germanic Period, i.e. ca. 400 (Nørgård Jørgensen 2008: 110, fig. 67). With the environment of the West Balts one could connect also the heads resembling with dimensions and shape two-edged swords (type III according to V. Kazakâvičius), theoretically dated to the later part of the 5th century until the 7th century (Kazakâvičius 1988: 41, 42, fig. 15, map VII), although findings with the solid chronology might be assigned only to the earlier phases of this time span. They have developed most probably among Balt peoples (East Lithuanian Barrows culture), where they existed as an element of the grave equipment, although prototypes have been documented in nomadic environment.¹¹ Besides, they are known from northern European sacrificial sites – in lakes as well as on land (this new kind of sacrificial sites emerged in the Migration Period),

¹¹ Nomadic heads were manufactured from iron blade placed in the socket's incision and attached with rivets; such forms have been confirmed also i.a. in the Przeworsk culture area, but in those cases the leaf blades were produced from the broken swords, which carries a plethora of symbolic values (Czarnecka 2010: 123–124).

where they have been offered as trophy weapons, thus probably captured from the Balt arrivals. They have been, besides, very active in the basin of the Baltic Sea in the Early Migration Period, which is visible in expansion of multiple forms of fibulae (Kontny 2020: map 20.3–5, 7–8).

And one can yet suspect also the participation of the Wielbark culture warriors in multiple military enterprises. Presumptions are insofar well-based because probably neither the Balts, nor Przeworsk warriors had the means required for maritime transport, i.e. large oared boats known from Scandinavia (sacrificial site in Nydam – see: Rau 2013) but proven also in the area associated with the Wielbark culture (cf. Kontny 2019c: 174–175, footnote 13, with further literature). The peoples of the latter cultural unit seem the most obvious candidates to lead the assault on the Baltic islands, due to their half-seacoast location. Unfortunately, very little is known about weapons they used and – what is more – they probably copied Przeworsk and then Scandinavian patterns (Kontny 2019a: 89–91), therefore it would be difficult to identify it among the materials from the sacrificial sites.

Some curious conclusions may be also drawn from the analysis of some graves with double sets of armour. The examples known from the Celtic world indicate that two or even three people were buried there – maybe brothers-in-arms fallen in the same battle. On the other hand, examples from the Germanic world might have a different character: next to the interpretation proper for the Celtic model, some of them can be assumed (thanks to the anthropological analysis) to belong to just one warrior, whose status was supposed to be manifested by doubling his weapons (Czarnecka 2007). Although, those are examples of burials with the culturally homogenic weapons. On this background an exception is a grave from Káloz, Kom. Fejér in Pannonia (**Fig. 5**), which was supposed to include bones of two warriors: Elbe Germanic and Dacian, as well as a horse (Bóna 1955: 72, pl. XVII–XX; por. Bóna 1978: 278–280). This assemblage, dated to the turn of B1 phase or sub-phase B2a, i.e. the second half of the 1st and beginning of the 2nd century (cf. Bóna 1978: 280; Godłowski 1984: 340; Kaczanowski 1994: 138, 140; Miks 2007: 628–629) contained the following elements of weaponry: fittings of two shields – i.a. type 6 grip and shield bosses (one covered with bronze sheet) type 6 and 7b according to M. Jahn (1916), an axe,¹² two-edged Lauriacum-Hromówka-type sword (variant Hromówka), a head of the shaft weapon, and Dacian combat scythe *sica* (Bóna 1955: pl. XVII–XX; cf. also Böhme 1975: 181, fig. 9, 10; Godłowski 1984: 340, 342, fig. 6; Kaczanowski 1994: 138, 140, fig. 4;

¹² It does not have any well-established analogies apart from the find from another Pannonian grave with weapons, in Kemenesszentpéter (Palágyi, Nagy 2000: 17–19; Tejral 2001: fig. 22:10). Thus, it seems that what one deals with here is a local form.

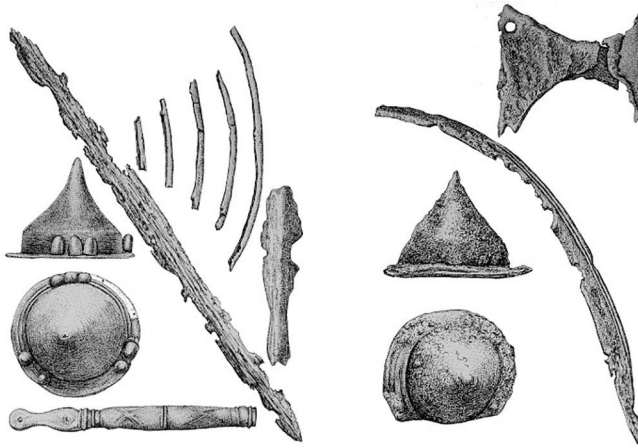


Fig. 5. Káloz. Chosen artifacts from the grave equipment (after Böhme 1975).

Miks 2007: 628–629, pl. 108:A333). The grave was dug unprofessionally in 1927, that is why over the years it has overgrown with multiple misunderstandings. It was attempted to join it with the Marcomannic Wars, or even their particular episode, i.e. holding the invasion of the 6,000 Longobards and Obii, who at the beginning of the war invaded the area of Upper Pannonia (Bóna 1955: 72; Fitz 1960, 63–65; Böhme 1975: 182). Such correlation is contradicted by somehow earlier chronology of the set (Godłowski 1984: 340; Kaczanowski 1994: 140). What is more, thanks to the precise analysis of the archaeological records it occurred that the burial does not at all refer to the discoveries from lower Elbe region, where the Longobards are being situated, because one deals here with a barrow grave, in which not only a couple of warriors were buried, but also a carriage and a horse (Palágyi, Nagy 2000: 16–17), and the elements of shield discovered here occur in multiple regions inhabited by Germans.¹³ More similar graves with weapons were discovered in Pannonia (not only inhumation, but also *bustum*-type, i.e. built in place of cremation), often with the richly decorated chair-shaped spurs, acknowledged as an indicator of a high range; however, they have been declared as the burials of Barbarian cavalymen, who in the late Flavian period and the turn of

¹³ A good cultural proxy could have been a head, but it has preserved in the condition making it impossible to ascribe it into the typology. In one of the publications among the assemblage of artefacts from the grave there is also a spur (Bóna 1955: pl. XIX:12), which, however – due to the biconical shape of body and an asymmetric yoke, should be ascribed to sub-group F3 or rather G1 according to J. Ginalska, dated to the Younger Roman Period (Ginalska 1991: 66–70), i.e. the second half of the 2nd and the first half of the 3rd century, thus it cannot be connected with other elements of inventory; it might be the residue of the secondary burial.

the 1st and 2nd century inhabited Pannonia (Tejral 2001: fig. 13); I. Bóna recognized in them the Eravisci, who were supposed to be connected with the grave from Káloz more particularly by the use of inhumation (1978: 278–279). In case of the grave from Káloz the situation is complicated by presence of the non-typical, Dacian weapon. M. Speidel declared that the double set of weapons indicate the vassal relationship of the buried warriors: the one equipped with a sword and bronze-decorated shield was supposed to be a horseman; he was accompanied by the footman squire (horse-hewer), specializing in attacks on horses and using in this purpose a curved sword (Speidel 2004: 170–171). It is supposed to be an illustration of the phenomenon described by Caesar (*De bello Gall.* 1.48.5–7) and Tacitus (*Ger.* 6.3), i.e. the co-operation of the foot soldiers chosen among the male youth and more experienced Germanic cavalry.¹⁴ However, such interpretation is not convincing, first and foremost because of the non-Germanic character of at least one piece of weapon. Therefore, how to explain the presence of Dacian weapons? Is it really the grave of a representative of the Pannonian post-Barbarian elite and a Dacian, fighting arm in arm? Or maybe rather the grave is a burial of two people of the same ethnicity, and *sica* is only a souvenir from the distant expedition? For this last solution stands the singular character of the foreign weapon. All other pieces of equipment, including the axe, have but local counterparts. What is more, the presence of weapons in Dacian graves is a complete sensation, what additionally stands by the non-Dacian character of the feature. It stays secret in what circumstances might have such souvenir got to a grave; the lack of clarity results also from quite a wide chronology of the feature. What comes to mind is a correlation with the Dacian Wars, waged both by Domitian and Trajan. After all, the Barbarians from Pannonia undergoing the Romanisation might have participated in those events, reinforcing the ranks of the auxiliary divisions.

The abovementioned examples have a selective character. This article does not aspire to comprehensively depict all of discoveries implicating the distant expeditions of a military character having been joined by the units or small groups of men (not in the meaning of migrations of peoples). The aim of the paper was to show – on the most spectacular examples from different parts of the Iron Age, i.e. the La Tène, Pre-Roman, Roman, and Migration Period – the practice mentioned in the written (e.g. Kontny 2019d, with further literature) and ethnographic sources (e.g. Turney-High 1949; Keeley 1996; Otterbein 2009). After all, currently it is assumed that the elites of warriors occurred in the Barbarian world much earlier, already in the Middle Bronze Age, which can be inferred i.a. from the improvement of weapons and occurrence of the military imports from

¹⁴ About this kind of co-operation first and foremost in the guerrilla or pillaging activities of the war bands – see: Kontny 2003: 254–255.

the Mediterranean in graves of warriors (Kristiansen 2018: 24–27). In the analysed period the researchers deal with the phenomenon of a very long tradition, strongly rooted in many Barbaric societies. Very often the multi-ethnic character of warrior groups has been conducive to the dispersion of fashions in the matter of weaponry, organization of soldiers, as well as the war rites. However, that is a whole other archaeological story...¹⁵

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¹⁵ This paper is a part of a research project led by Prof. Adam Ziółkowski from the Faculty of History, University of Warsaw, financed by the Polish National Science Centre, 2017/25/B/HS3/01299 ('Crisis of the Roman Empire in the 3rd c.: causes and reflection in ancient sources').

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