

# THE WATER GUARDIANS IN THE LOWER ARGEȘ RIVER BASIN. ABOUT THE PREHISTORIC AND GETIC FORTIFICATIONS

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**Abstract:** In front of the reader there are brought evidences regarding the attempts of the various communities of the Bronze and Early Iron Ages and Getic civilizations of controlling the commercial route on the banks (terrestrial route) and on the waters (aquatic route) of the Argeș River and its tributaries. There are studied the fortified settlements, Getic fortifications (*dava*), some series of objects (weapons) used in military actions and the “indirect” evidences (burials of the warriors and “princely” ones).

## Introduction

The range of the Lower Argeș – meaning the area of the artificial lake from Mihăilești-Cornetu (Giurgiu and Ilfov Counties), is unitary, when considering it relief (for details see Schuster 1997, p. 14-15; Schuster, Popa 2000, p. 11-13; Schuster, Popa 2008, p. 13; Schuster, Popa 2009, p. 11-12; Schuster *et alii* 2005, p. 10-11; Schuster *et alii* 2012, p. 11-12). Therefore, west of the river is the Teleorman Plain, part of the larger Romanian Plain, which, according to the specialists (Popescu 2005), was formed in eight phases, together with the replete of the Pliocene and Quaternary Lake. Decisive in this sense were the stages of forming the Pitești Plain, when the Danube had advances from the mouth of the Olt River towards the one of the Argeș, thus detaching the Boian and Burnas Plains from the Prebalcanic Highland, and when the space between Olt and Argeș had emptied itself from the waters of the Quaternary Lake. The Teleorman Plain has as subunits the Găvanu-Burdea and Burnas Plains (Ciulache *et alii* 2005; Basarabeanu *et alii* 2005).

East of the Argeș is situated the Ialomița Plain, which also encloses two subunits of the Lower Argeș, the Titu-Sărata and Vlășia Plains. It is notable that the first of the subunits comprises large interfluves, of which remarkable is the one between Argeș and Sabar/Dâmbovița (Grigore *et alii* 2005). The Vlășiei Plain reaches about 30 m relative altitude in the perimeter of Domnești, so that, further on, at Dobreni, Vărăști, Valea Dragului and Herăști it could reach 5-7 m relative altitude (Posea *et alii* 2005, p. 307-338).

When considering the hydrographic network of the central-western part of Muntenia, the Argeș River and its tributaries – Neajlov, Câlniștea, Dâmbovița, Colentina, Sabar - were the major aquatic arteries of the region (Ghinea 1996, p. 65; Ghinea 1998, p. 53; Schuster 1997, p. 16; Schuster, Popa 2000, p. 11; Schuster, Popa 2008, p. 13; Schuster, Popa 2009, p. 12; Schuster *et alii* 2012, 12). Given that the mentioned range was a forested one during the Prehistory and Getic time, it represented the main access route from the Danube towards the Meridional Carpathians. It led to some of the access passes towards Transylvania and towards the Northern Muntenia, to areas rich in salt.

We should mention here that the Argeş River, together with part of its tributary waters, in the past, did not follow the current route as today. It is obvious that the Argeş River had flown under its right terrace, unlike in present times, in some sequences, few kilometers away to the East. It is probable that the river did not flow into the Danube in the proximity of the today town of Olteniţa but, more to the West, at the Eastern limit of the Chirnogi village, while Sabar, Dâmboviţa, Colentina, Neajlov, Câlniştea, Glavacioc and Milcovăţ had tight meanders, their water content having a decisive role in their fluctuating course. A careful analysis of the old maps, but also of the satellite images, had shown that in some periods, the secondary rivers had other flowing mouths into the Argeş as, they moved, from one situation to another, either upstream or downstream from those in the recent times. We should not forget that there were also some lakes and spring, as well as seasonal running waters, which had also exerted an influence upon the habitation dynamics (Schuster 2011).

The archaeological investigations had documented the existence for the Bronze Age and afterwards for the Iron Ages, of a chain of settlements situated on the banks of the Argeş River. They could be found especially on its right one, but also on the valley of its tributaries.

### Fortifications

Among the archaeological sites discovered in the Lower Argeş Basin, some were fortified ones. Even if we have used the larger term of fortifications, it is obvious for Prehistory and we refer here at the Bronze Age, that we do not have all the necessary elements, which could pleat for this denomination. It is, more precisely, a discussion about the fortified settlements. It is just in the Getic time that we could discuss about fortifications proper, known in the specialized literature as *dava*.

### Bronze Age

For the *Early Bronze Age*, Glina Culture, three fortified settlements were unearthed in the larger Argeş River Basin (Pl. I/1), at Crivăţ (Budeşti town, Călăraşi County) and Popeşti-Nucet (Giurgiu County), both on the right bank of the Argeş, and on the Dâmboviţa River, a tributary of the Argeş, at Popeşti-Cioarinu (comm. Vasilaţi, Călăraşi County), the place where the Câlneau creek flows into the last mention river.

Regarding the first of the sites, the information is more clear (Berciu 1964, p. 269-280; Berciu 1966, p. 529-535; Schuster 1997, p. 190-191; Schuster, Fântâneau 2005, p. 57; Nica 2010, p. 53-54; Băjenaru 2014, p. 62, 141). Thus, the settlement estimated to have had a surface of about 0.60 ha, was discovered in 1962, subsequently, beginning with 1965, being investigated along three archaeological campaigns. The site was situated on a promontory of the right terrace of the Argeş, at its confluence with the *Genta Valley*, on the spot *La Izlaz*. When the research was done, in the proximity was the *Bodoc Lake*. Unfortunately, because of building the *Bucharest-Danube Channel* and of the need of earth for making dams, the promontory was destroyed.

Based upon the information provided by those who had done the research over there – Dumitru Berciu and Emil Moscalu -, in the site there were Getic vestiges, others coming since Hallstatt, Late Bronze Age (Tei IV-V Culture) and Early Bronze Age (Glina Culture), as well as few Eneolithic ceramic fragments of the Boian Culture. The Glina habitation was proven to have been the most consistent one, with a thickness, which varied between 0.10-0.60 m (Nica 2010, p. 55).

The community belonging to this manifestation had felt the need, even from the first moment of having functional settlements and of fortifying it. Given that the promontory was flanked to the North, East and West by the slopes of the *Genta Valley*, which at places had reached

an inclining angle of 45°, just the Southern side was fortified, where the distance between the Eastern and Western sides was of approximately 80 m (Nica 2010, p. 59). On that spot, a defending ditch was excavated. The archaeological sections had demonstrated that the ditch did not have unitary dimensions. *Cross-section III*, made over the central part of the ditch, had shown that this one, in this region, had the shape of the “U” letter, with an opening at the base of 2.20 m and of 4.40 m in its upper side, while its depth had reached the maximal quota of -1.70 m. At its Eastern and Western extremities, the ditch had the shape resembling the “V” letter, with a slightly rounded bottom and a depth of -1.50 m. in the area prospected by the *Section VIII*, the opening at the mouth of the ditch was of 3.80 m, while in its Eastern side (investigated by the *Section V*) of 2.40 m. As shown by Dumitru Berciu, it seems that the partial filling of the ditch was initiated even at the beginning of the first Glina habitation level, then continuing during the *Phase II*. This fact was attested by a hearth, discovered in the *Section III*, in the ditch, at the base of the *Level II*. The ditch was not strengthened by burning, while the earth taken out of it was not used for raising a new defending wall.

In 1997, Done Şerbănescu had informed us about the existence of a possible second fortified settlement of the Glina Culture in the wider range of the Lower Argeş (Schuster 1997, p. 202; Schuster, Fântâneau 2005, p. 57). We refer here to the one from Popeşti (comm. Vasilăţi, Călăraşi County), situated on a terrace promontory close to the *Cioarinu Forest*. Traces of the fortification elements that we had found on the field seem, more probably, to have belonged to the Getic settlement, so that their assignment to the Early Bronze Age should be reluctantly be accepted.

Starting from the premise that, in those two spots fortified settlements of the Glina Culture had functioned, it is to be observed that, at Crivăţ, they were situated on a promontory that dominated and controlled at that time the flow of the Dâmboviţa River into the Argeş, while at Popeşti the old course flow of the Călnău River into Dâmboviţa, as shown by some paleochannels. Considering the up mentioned facts, it is possible that those two fortified sites of the Early Bronze Age will have controlled the access from the Danube towards the Argeş and Dâmboviţa and their tributary waters. Maybe, one of the reasons that urged those communities to fortify their settlements was the opportunity of supervising the commercial route of the salt from Northern Muntenia to the South, towards the Danube.

This is also possible for the fortified settlement from Popeşti-*Nucet*, situated on the Argeş River, if the Glina community (Vulpe 2005, p. 22), which might have played the same role (Schuster 1997, p. 203), did the first real fortification elements.

It is hard to say if the fortified settlements had a dominant role among the Glina sites of the respective ranges. It is certain that the density of the settlements of the Early Bronze Age in the area of the Lower Argeş Basin and its tributaries was rather frail, the archaeological investigations had resulted in the discovery of Glina archaeological materials at Adunaţii-Copăcenii, Băneşti, Bila, Cămineasca, Căscioarele, Chirnogi, Copaciu, Floreşti, Frumuşani, Ghimpaţi, Gomeni, Gostinu, Greaca, Iepureşti, Letca Nouă, Letca Veche, Mihăileşti, Milcovăţ, Mironeşti, Mogoşeşti, Naipu, Novaci, Nuci, Olteniţa, Piţigaia, Popeşti, Prundu, Scărişoara, Schitu, Stâlpu, Tangăru, Valea Plopilor, Varlaam, Vasilăţi, Vărăşti etc. (Schuster, Fântâneau 2005, p. 28,30, 33-34, 38, with lit.; Schuster, Popa 2000, p. 141-150; Schuster, Popa 2008, p. 23-44; Schuster, Popa 2009, p. 21-36; Schuster, Popa 2010, p. 33-34; Schuster *et alii* 2012, p. 81). Following their distribution in the field, it could be observed that most of them were concentrated towards the Central and Northern part of the Lower Argeş and in the area of the former Danubian lakes.

### *Late Bronze Age*

If, for the Middle Bronze Age there are not known fortified settlements, they are documented for the ending period of the Bronze Age. Therefore, in the already mentioned spot *Nucet* from Popești, the archaeological research had resulted in the investigation of a fortified site (Pl. I/1, IV/1-2). According to the specialists who had excavated there, in what they named the Fundeni-Govora Phase (in our opinion Tei IV-V), not long after 1400 BC, an earthen wall was raised and the extension of the ditch (valley) that separated to the south the promontory from the high terrace right of the Argeșului (Pl. IV/3) (Palincaș 1996, p. 239; Palincaș 1997, p. 175-176; Palincaș 2005; Fischer 1996, 289; Vulpe 2005, p. 22. See also Schuster, Popa 2010, p. 35-36). The wall (Pl. IV/4) was also in use subsequently, towards the end of the Bronze Age, during the time of the Zimnicea-Plovdiv community (according to Nona Palincaș, Radovanu in our opinion). The wood and brick wall was constructed by the deposition of clay „cakes”/daub or piling up of construction debris from the settlement, after that being covered with soil and the construction with logs and stones.

Downstream from Popești, another group of the same Radovanu Culture had also fortified its settlement (Pl. I/1, VIII, X/1-2). Thus, on the spot *Gorgana a Doua* a ditch situated along the edge of the plateau was discovered, which had a depth of 2.00 m, with its bottom of about 2.50 m and the opening in its upper side of 5.00 m (Morintz 1985, p. 7; Schuster, Șerbănescu 2007).

We should stress here that; north-west from the village is Crivăț, where, as already shown, the fortified Glina settlement had functioned. Therefore, the role of the Argeș guardian, in a zone of the commercial route, but also of controlling the flow of the Dâmbovița in the mentioned river, that most probably, was navigable, was taken over by the settlement from Radovanu during the Late Bronze Age. It is possible that, at that time, the mouth of the Dâmbovița will have moved towards southeast, as indicated by some paleobranches detected on the satellite images. Still, it is certain that, in the Bronze Age, the course of the Argeș, even if not at its flow into the Danube, but 17-20 km upstream as well as the access on the Dâmbovița were supervised. It is also to be mentioned the fact that, the northern side of the Lower Argeș Basin was also under control, exactly on the spot where a promontory of the terrace had strongly advanced into the river valley and created the most appropriate observation place, both up- and downstream of it.

The number of Middle Bronze Age (MBA) and Late Bronze Age (LBA) on the lower extended basin of the Argeș was even smaller than that of the Glina sites. Vestiges of that period were identified at Adunații-Copăceni-Dăneasca, Bila, Comana, Daia, Frătești, Izvoarele, Mihăilești-Tufa, Mironești-Coastă, *La Panait*, *Conacul lui Palade*, *Conacul Mironescu* and *Malul Roșu*, Mogoșești, Novaci, Schitu-Măgura lui Boboc and *La Vie*, Tangâru-Tell and *Măgura II* (Schuster, Popa 2010, p. 34-36, with lit.).

Together with the fortification element of some settlements, some other evidences regarding the warrior (offensive and defensive) character of some community members. We think here about the stone weapons (probably being used both for hunting and in their domestic activities) (Early Bronze Age: axes – Schitu-*La Conac*; Middle & Late Bronze Age: hammer-axes – Frătești, Izvoarele and Mogoșești, spherical bludgeon – Daia, Frătești and Izvoarele). For the EBA (Schuster, Popa 2010, p. 82-83, with lit., pl. LXV/2; Schuster *et alii* 2015, pl. III/2-4. IV/1) there are to be mentioned the metal objects from Schitu/Cămineasca (flat casted axes and copper axe with edge and transversal shaft hole – Pl. IV/2), Prundu (2 flat axes and a knife), and Gostinu (copper spearhead). Of course, the metal items belonging to the Tei Culture like swords (Reutlingen type, Giurgiu?; Pl. IV/1), daggers (Mogoșești – Pl. IV/7, Izvoarele, Greaca), axes (Gostinu, Izvoarele,

Mihăilești-*Tufa*), celts (Căscioarele-*Ostrovel*, Izvoarele, Izvoru – Pl. IV/3, Oinacu – Pl. IV/4-5, Popești-*Nucet*, Radovanu), knives (Frătești, Mogoșești – Pl. IV/6, Vâlcele), arrow heads (Popești-*Nucet*) (Schuster, Popa 2010, p. 75-76, 82-89 with lit., pl. LVI/1,3, LVIII/1, LIX/1-3, LX/3, LXVI/2, LXVII/1-3, LXVIII/5, LXIX/1-4, LXX/4, LXXI/2, LXXII/1,3,5, LXXIII/1) should not be omitted.

### **Early Iron Age**

The strategic importance of the promontory from Mironești-*Malul Roșu* was exploited also during the Hallstatt time, as here had functioned a fortification belonging to the Basarabi Complex (Pl. V/1-2) (Schuster, Popa 2008, p. 35-39, fig. 24-26; Schuster, Popa 2012, p. 22-25, 30-31; Schuster *et alii* 2012, p. 78). We refer to a wall of defense (Pl. V/3), which, at its bottom, had a layer of river stones (with a thickness that varied between 0.08-0.13 m), above which the earthen wall proper was raised, with earth brought from the plateau (being well battered and overlapped in several layers. The thickness of the wall had measured between 2.82-3.57 m on its base and became thinner towards its upper part, of 1.23-1.76 m. In the structure of the wall there were ceramic fragments belonging to the Cernavoda III and Cernavoda II cultures. Probably, over it, a wooden construction was raised (palisade?), that, because of a fire was burnt, providing a red color to the upper part of the earth. There were no traces of some poles or other wooden structures. On the upper side of the settlement, besides an exterior hearth, an assembly of vessels and a ritual pit, no other complexes were found. We consider that this was a refuge fortification, a fact that is back up also by the fact that in the proximity of the Basarabi discovery from the spot *Malul Roșu*, on the territory of the Mironești village, some complexes were documented (constructions, pits, hearths) on the spot *Conacul lui Palade* (Schuster, Popa 2012, p. 15-17, 20). An open settlement had functioned there.

Upstream on the Argeș, namely at Popești-*Nucet*, it was considered that another Basarabi fortification had existed. This one had overlapped the Bronze Age habitation (Palincaș 1997; Schuster, Popa 2012, p. 32-33, with lit.).

We should say here, that the two mentioned Basarabi settlements were defended by a ditch on one side and valleys or ravines on the other three sides. By their privileged position (Pl. I/2), both of them had controlled the route of the Argeș River, its valley, but also the flow of some tributary waters, like Neajlov and Sabar, in the Argeș.

### **The Getae**

It seems that at Crivăț (Călărași County), 1 km west of *Boldu Lake*, on the high terrace of the right side of the Argeș, a fortified settlement had functioned in the 4<sup>th</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC (Pl. II/1) (Schuster, Comșa 2018, p. 191, with lit.; Șerbănescu 2010, no. 15).

But the main Getic fortification, that controlled the access in the territory of the Lower Argeș, was the one situated on the north-eastern bank of the Danubian *Cătălui Lake*, in the former estuary of the Sboi creek, on the spot *D'aia Parte* of the Căscioarele village (Pl. II/1) (Șirbu 1994, p. 25-26; Șerbănescu 2010, no. 4; Măndescu 2010, p. 45, with lit., cat. no. 105; Șirbu, Damian 2017; Schuster, Comșa 2018, p. 191). Initially, in the second quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC (375-350 BC), that *dava* was endowed on its northern and eastern sides with a wooden and earthen wall, assembly complete with a ditch of large dimensions. Subsequently, probably between 340-310 BC, an adobe wall was raised around the entire site. Even later, at the passage period between the 4<sup>th</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC, the fortification had a stonewall on all its sides. The surface occupied by the site had reached about three ha.

Traces of some unfortified settlements for those two centuries were discovered on the Argeş at Radovanu-*Gorgana a Doua* and Popeşti-Nucet (Conovici 1985, p. 77; Vulpe 1997, p. 165; Vulpe 2005, p. 22; Măndescu 2010, p. 130, cat. no. 522; Schuster, Comşa 2018, p. 191), on its secondary rivers and creeks at Baloteşti-*Râul Vlăşia*, Bălăceanca-*La Malul Trăznit*, Bila-*La Fântână*, Budeşti-No. 3, Curcani-*Potcoava*, Letca Veche-*Tătar*, Luica-*Sârbi*, Naipu-*La Vest de Sat*, Răleşti-*Râul Parapancea*, Schitu-*La Conac* and Gaura-*Despei* etc. (Şerbănescu 2010, no. 23-24; p. 27, cat. no. 79; Schuster, Comşa 2018, p. 193), and in the proximity of the Danube, in the larger perimeter of the region at Chirnogi (*CAP, Grădiştea Chirnogi, Rudari, Rudărie, Şuviţa lui Vulpe*), Căscioarele (*Coinea I, Coinea II, Gheţarie, La Borovină, La Stână, Mănăstirea Cătălui, Şuviţa Hotarului, Valea Coşarului*), Greaca (*Canalul lui Basangeac, La Slom, Valea Fântânilor*), Prundu (*Lacul Greaca, Valea Morii, La Stână, Malul Molescului, Valea Balgiului*) (Schuster, Comşa 2018, with lit.). It could be observed, at least in the current stage of research, that most of the Getic habitation in 4<sup>th</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC was especially on the northern bank of the Danube. This concentration of sites was an evidence that the mentioned space had the proper economical, commercial and military conditions. The decline of the *dava* from Căscioarele is possible to have intervened together with the actions of the Macedonian king *Alexander the Great* and afterwards of the king *Lysimachus* (Sîrbu, Damian 2017, p. 184).

Subsequently, in the 2<sup>nd</sup>-1<sup>st</sup> c. BC / 1<sup>st</sup> c. AD, a “replete” could be observed regarding the *dava* system from the Danube towards the upstream Argeş. It seems that the fortification from Crivăţ (Pl. II/2) was in use, at least in part, during that time. Unfortunately, this assumption could not be documented in the field, because the site was destroyed because of the works at the *Bucureşti-Danube Channel*. In turn, on the same terrace from the right side of the Argeş, about 3 km downstream, at Radovanu (Pl. II/2, VIII), on the spots *Gorgana I* and *Gorgana II* (Pl. X/1-2), a real defensive system consisting of two *dava*, could be archaeologically investigated. It is not excluded that to those might have been added also the fortification on the spot *Jidovescu* (Pl. II/2), if this was really endowed with artificially created fortification elements (wall?, based upon the latest field research undertaken by dr. Alexandru Morintz; until recently this was considered as being “naturally fortified”: Şerbănescu 2010, no. 14; Schuster *et alii* 2015, p. 75-76).

The first fortification, the one located on the spot *Gorgana I* (Pl. VIII, IX/1), highly affected by the same anthropic interventions determined by the construction of the mentioned channel, had enabled the research of a ditch and also of a defending earthen wall (Schuster *et alii* 2014, p. 335-336, pl. II/2; Schuster *et alii* 2015, p. 73, pl. VI/1-2, X/1-2, XX; Schuster, Comşa 2018, p. 193, pl. II/3). This later one (Pl. IX/2) preserved on a curved line of approximately 40 m, was raised by successive earthen overlapped layers.

At Popeşti-Nucet, continuing the “tradition” of the Bronze and Early Iron Ages (?) of the foothill fortification on the Argeş, one of the most imposing *dava* from Central Muntenia was raised (Pl. IIX/2) (Vulpe 1997; Vulpe 2005, p. 19, 37, with lit.; Palincaş 1996; Palincaş 1997; Nicolăescu 2015, p. 53-55). This was in use between ca. 150 BC – *Augustan* epoch, but „*not later than the first years of our era*” (Vulpe 2005, p. 23).

Most probably, the end of the *dava* from Popeşti and Radovanu should be connected with the resettlement action of *Sextus Aelius Catus* of the period between 2-12 AD regarding 50.000 Getae south of the Danube (Vulpe 1955, p. 263; Vulpe 1960, p. 565-566; Palincaş 1997, p. 185; Vulpe 2005, p. 36-37).

The *dava* situated on the banks of the Argeş River had controlled a rather important territory, that, most probably, had included the entire area of the lower course of the Câlniştea,

Glavacioc, Neajlov, Milvovăţ, Ilfovăţ, Sabar, Cociovaliştea, Colentina, Cocioc, Dâmboviţa, Pasărea Rivers etc. Of course, it is hard to know how the microregions were distributed to the various *dava*. Probably, the limits of the domination territories were permeable, being tributary to the military power of the moment, belonging to one or another of the *Basilei*. In the extensive basin of the Lower Argeş, traces of unfortified settlements were found, of which, we could mention Adunaţii-Copăcenii, Băciu (several spots), Baloteşti, Bălăceanca, Băneşti, Bila, Blejeşti (several spots), Bragadiru, Bucşani (several spots) Bucureşti (several spots), Budeşti-Ciocârlia, Bufta, Cămineasca, Căscioarele (several spots), Chirnogi, Curcani, Dealu (two sites), Dobreni, Gălbinaşi, Grădiştea, Greaca (several spots), Letca Nouă, Letca Veche, Luica, Malu Spart, Mihăileşti, Milcovăţu, Mironeşti (several spots), Mogoşeşti, Negoieşti, Nuci-Palanca (a fortified settlement might have existed also here?), Olteniţa (two sites), Orăşti, Poşta, Prundu, Radovanu-Giroaia, Schitu (two sites), Tânganu, Valea Argovei, Valea Popii, Vasilaşi, Vlădiceasca (two sites) etc. (Leahu 1963; Leahu 1965; Morintz, Ionescu 1968, p. 103; Trohani 1975; Trohani 1976; Trohani 1983; Cantacuzino, Trohani 1979, p. 265-267; Turcu 1979, p. 44-46, 51, 59, 62, 64, 68; Turcu 1980; Turcu 1981; Trohani, Oancea 1981, p. 245, 247, 249; Comşa 1987, p. 14-15; Sîrbu, Damian 1996, p. 11, 20-24, 38; Sîrbu 1996, p. 62 64-67, 70, 74; Sîrbu *et alii* 1997, p. 238-242; Bem 2007, p. 4, 9, 11-12, 15, 17, 64; Alexandrescu *et alii* 2007; Măgureanu, Bojincă 2007; Schuster, Popa 2008, p. 24-28, 33, 39-40; Şerbănescu 2010, no. 1-3, 5-6, 8-9, 13, 21-22, 28, 30, 37; Schuster, Popa 2012, p. 44, 52; Schuster *et alii* 2012, p. 22-23, 25, 45, 48, 62, 75, 92; Schuster *et alii* 2015, p. 76; Nicolăescu 2015, p. 15, 18-20, 22-28, 32-33, 36-37, 41-42, 45-47, 49, 57, 59, 65, 69-73, 94-95, 107-109; Schuster, Comşa 2018, p. 194 and *Annex*, with lit.).

The expression of the warrior character of the Getae from the Lower Danube, are not only the fortifications. A series of funerary monuments, which contained as grave goods weaponry items, are also evidences with regard to this aspect of some members belonging to such communities, which were real military elites (Sîrbu 2006, p. 126). For the 4<sup>th</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC we mentioned here the burial from Făcău (Giurgiu County) (Pl. VI/1-5), a village situated on the left bank of the Ilfovăţ River (Constantiniu, Leahu 1968; Lazăr 2009, p. 14-15; Teleagă 2008, p. 23, pl. 144/1-4, cat. no. 75; Măndescu 2010, p. 76, cat. no. 225; Schuster *et alii* 2012, p. 36-37, pl. XV/2, LXII; Schuster, Comşa 2018, p. 192). It is not excluded that the personage inhumed here might have been a leader of a small political formation in the range of the Ilfovăţ-Argeş, thus, keeping in our mind the fact that the *dava* from Popeşti-Nucet, dated early in the 2<sup>nd</sup> BC-1<sup>st</sup> c. AD, is located about 8 km north-east from Făcău.

It is also possible that the find of a helmet at Budeşti (Pl. D/1) (Panait 1992) during the excavations for the *Bucharest-Olteniţa Channel*, in the range of the Dâmboviţa River, might have attested, in fact, the existence of a warrior/*Basileos* burial, not far away from the *dava* from Crivăţ, and not to have been a *Flussfund* (as believed by Lazăr 2009, p. 16).

About a “*princely*” burial of the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC, it was discussed in the case of the funerary find discovered in a tumulus from the Argeş meadow (destroyed in 1961) at Chirnogi (Şerbănescu 1999). Given its rich inventory (Pl. VII/1-4) (golden applique, *situla* of gilded silver, *thassian* amphora, *askos* vessel, all being imports or having influences from south of the Danube), it was considered that it belonged to a *Basileos* of a Getic tribe (or to a tribal union? - the presence in the respective burial of some typical Getic item – a mug, a pitcher, a dish – confirming its ethnic assignment), which was controlling the lower courses of the mentioned river and Mostiştea, but also of the Danube Valley between these two.

Also at Chirnogi, but on the *Terasa Rudarilor* spot, a Getic necropolis of the 2<sup>nd</sup>-1<sup>st</sup> c. BC was found (Şerbănescu 2006, p. 168-171). This was considered to have belonged to warriors. The

grave goods in majority of burials was composed of pottery, but in one of them (*Burial no. 50*) remaining ornamented pieces of a helmet could be recovered (Șerbănescu 2006, p. 170, fig. 4/1).

For the 2<sup>nd</sup>-1<sup>st</sup> c. BC especially *Burial no. 4*, as well as *Burials nos. 2-3* in the tumular necropolis from Popești were remarkable by their military expression (Vulpe 1976; Vulpe 2005; Schuster *et alii* 2012, p. 36, with lit., pls. LIII-LVI), situated not far (1,5 km), downstream of the *dava* from Popești-Nucet.

We have seen above that some of the burials had as grave goods (also) defensive and offensive weapons: helmets – Făcău (Pl. B/1) (Vulpe 2001, p. 479, pl. 25; Schuster *et alii* 2012, pl. XV/2), Popești (Pl. XI/1-3) (Vulpe 1976, fig. 12, 17 - reconstruction proposal; Borangic 2015, p. 422 = 442, pl. II/1 – reconstruction proposal), Budești (Pl. XII/1) and Chirnogi-*Terasa Rudarilor-Burial no. 50* (Pl. XII/2) (Șerbănescu 2006, p. 170, fig. 4/1; Borangic 2015, p. 422-423, 442, pl. III/1) -, chain mail – Radovanu (Pl. XII/5) (Schuster *et alii* 2015, 2-3) and Popești-*Tumulul nos. 2-4* (Vulpe 1976, 201, 2006, 209, 212-213, figs. 15/1, 17-19, 18/6-8), part of a shield (*umbo*) (Vulpe 1976, p. 201, 203, fig. 14/5), swords – Popești-*Tumulul 2* and *Tumulul 4* (Pl. XI/4) (Vulpe 1976, p. 198, 201, figs. 5/12, 13, 15/13-14, 16, 20), daggers of *sica* type - Radovanu (Pl. XII/6) (Velcu 1937, p. 55; Vulpe 1976, p. 209, fig. 18; Sîrbu 1993, p. 73, fig. 12; Borangic 2009, p. 47-48; Borangic 2011, p. 185-186, pl. XXVIII/1-3; Borangic 2013, fig. 1/b; Borangic 2016, p. 148; Schuster *et alii* 2015, pl. XIX/1; Sîrbu, Borangic 2016, p. 85 = 175, figs. 8/4, 33/3), Popești (Pl. XI/5) (a scabbards was also found; Vulpe 1976, p. 201, 213, figs. 14/1-2, 15/12; Sîrbu 1993, p. 73, fig. 7/8, 9; Borangic 2016, p. 47, pl. XVII/3a-b; Borangic, Bădescu 2014, p. 50; Sîrbu, Borangic 2016, p. 84 = 174-175, fig. 15/1), spear – Făcău (Pl. VI/5) (Constantiniu, Leahu 1968 p. 201, fig. 6; Schuster *et alii* 2012, p. 37, pl. LXII/4), Popești-*Tumulul 2* (Vulpe 1976, p. 198, fig. 5/15) and Radovanu (Pl. XII/3-4) (Vulpe 1976, p. 205, fig. 18/2-3; Schuster *et alii* 2015, pl. XVI/5-6), arrow point – Popești-*Tumulul 4* (Vulpe 1976, p. 201, fig. 11/5), knives – Popești-*Tumulul 2* and *Tumulul 4* (Vulpe 1976, p. 198, 201, figs. 5/11, 11/3),.

From the Giurgiu County, somewhere on the territory of the Izvoru village / formerly Corbii Ciungi (comm. Vânătorii Mici), come an new *sica* dagger (Pl. XII/7) (Trohani 1981, p. 97-98, fig. 1; Borangic 2009, p. 50, pl. IX/4; Borangic 2016, p. 148, pl. XXXVI/8; Borangic, Bădescu 2014, p. 5; Sîrbu, Borangic 2016, p. 78-79 = 169, figs. 8/2, 31/1). That locality was situated on the Neajlov River, as already mentioned, this being a tributary of the Argeș River, with which it runs in parallel (the distance between those two rivers being of about 3 km). Given that, the place where the weapon was found is not known for certain, we could not find if this was part of a funerary inventory, or is an item coming from a settlement. Still, it is certain that the recent diagnostic research (2015; C. Schuster and A. Morintz) had resulted in the find on a spot situated East of that village, close to the *Highway A.1*, of Getic ceramic fragments of the 2<sup>nd</sup>-1<sup>st</sup> c. BC.

Weapons were not found just in the burials, but also in the settlements, being either of *dava* or unfortified type: Radovanu-*Gorgana II* (fragment of a chain mail, a spear fragment, dagger, conical arrow points or in three-edges, handle of a dagger and knives) (Șerbănescu 1985, p. 27, fig. 4/12; Șerbănescu 1998), Radovanu-*Gorgana I* (arrow point; Schuster *et alii* 2015, pl. XIV/5), Căscioarele-*D'aia Parte* (spear points and arrow, Șerbănescu 1998), Vlădiceasca (dagger; Trohani 1976, p. 97, fig. 6/1), Popești-*Nucet* (fragmentary swords, daggers and scabbards, arrow points, knives) (Vulpe 1959a, p. 342, fig. 11/2-3; Vulpe 1959b, p. 314, fig. 13/3-9; Vulpe 1961, p. 330, fig. 6/5; Trohani 1997, p. 208-209, pls. XV/15, XVI/1, 15-16, XVII/1, 4, 14; Palincaș 1997, pl. 7/5-8). These weapons were used both in the battle and for hunting (Borangic 2018, p. 201), but in our opinion, in the case of the knives, in the civilian, non-warfare life as well.



In the burials (Pl. VI/4) (Făcău, Chirnoşi-*Terasa Rudarilor-Burial no. 49*, Radovanu-*Burial*, Popeşti-*Tumulus no. 4*) (Vulpe 1976, p. 203, 207, 209, figs. 11/1,4, 16/1,15, 18; Şerbănescu 2006, p. 168-169, fig. 3/1-4), but also in the settlements, being either fortified or not, some harness pieces were found, that proof that the Getae in the region of the Lower Argeş had used the horse (also) for riding. This fact was also stressed by the spurs used by horse riders (Bragadiru, Chirnoşi, Popeşti, Radovanu-*Gorgana II*, Vlădiceasca) (Vulpe 1966, pl. 29; Trohani 1975, p. 153, fig. 3/1; Trohani 1997, p. 209, pl. XVII/2; Turcu 1979, p. 105, pl. IX/1; Şerbănescu 1998).

## Conclusions

The archaeological research had documented an intense and constant human habitation both in the Prehistory and Getic time in the Lower Argeş Basin. This fact was determined by its strategic position, by the hydrographic system that connected the Danube with the hilly region of Northern Muntenia rich in resources and we refer here to the salt. A good part of the Lower Argeş could be used for navigation with rather shallow boats, the same like some of its tributaries, like Neajlov, Câlniştă, Sabar, Teleajen (Schuster, Morintz 2006, p. 35). This transportation means was used on these river courses until the Late Medieval Period and Modern Epoch.

In order to control the riverbanks and valleys, the various communities had considered appropriate their fortification from the side of the settlements. This fact was proven by a series of sites beginning with the Eneolithic times (i.e. Radovanu-*La Muscalu*; Schuster *et alii* 2015, p. 68-69, with lit.) and going further in the Bronze, Early Iron Ages and during the Getic civilization.

It is very probable that these fortifications might have also had a political, economic and religious role. Some evidences in this sense had reached us just for the Getic time. A further backing up of this idea was that the Romans, who had crossed the Danube from the today Bulgaria and had military activities in the region of the Lower Arges, had totally annihilated the *dava* from Radovanu and Popeşti.

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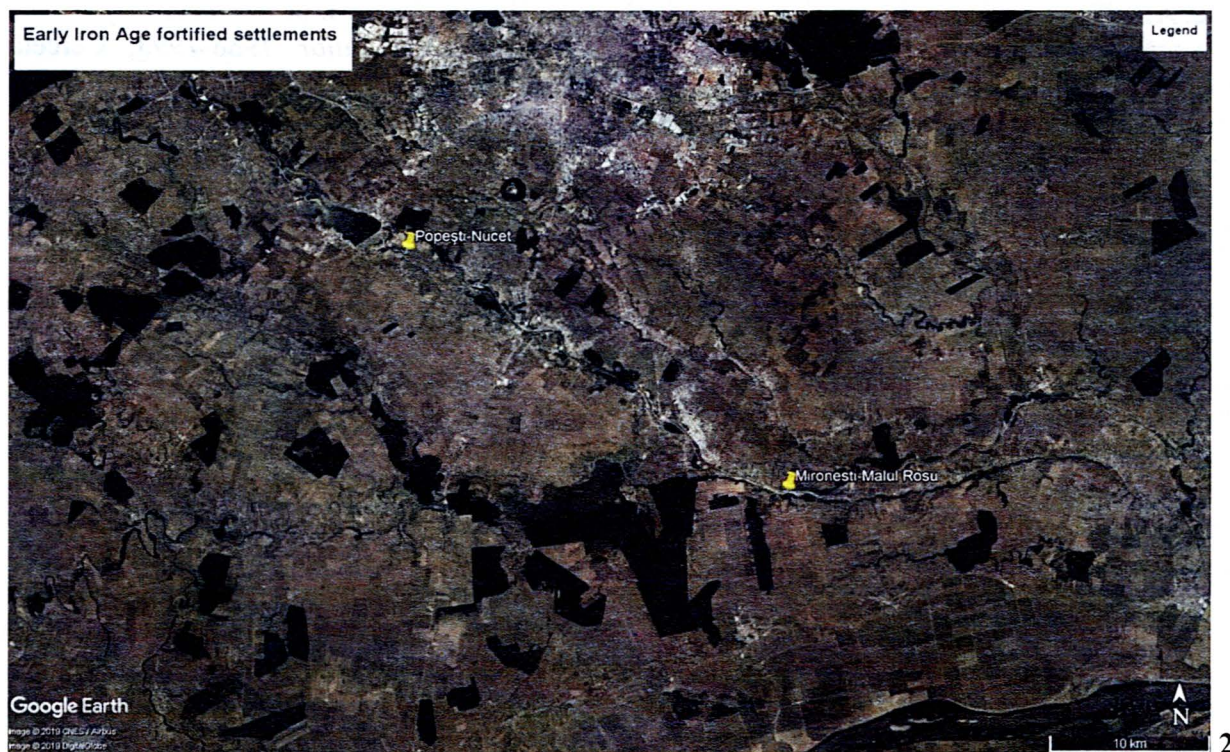
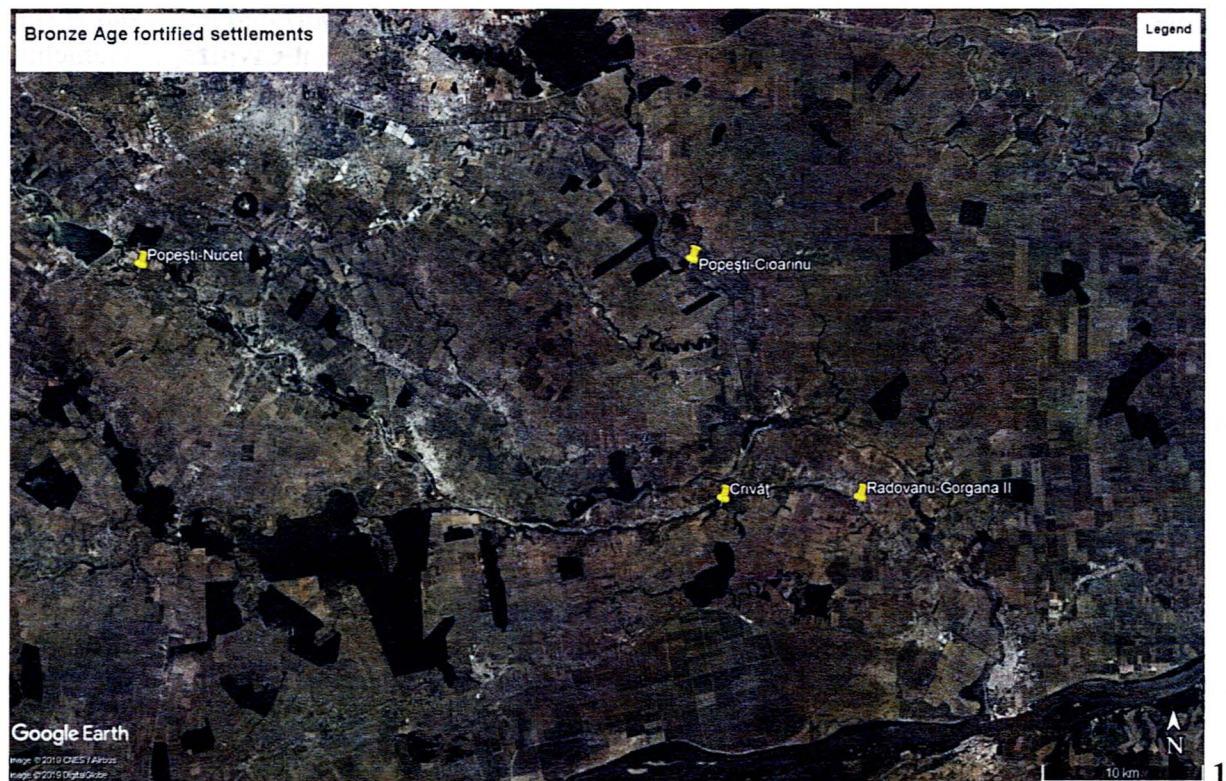
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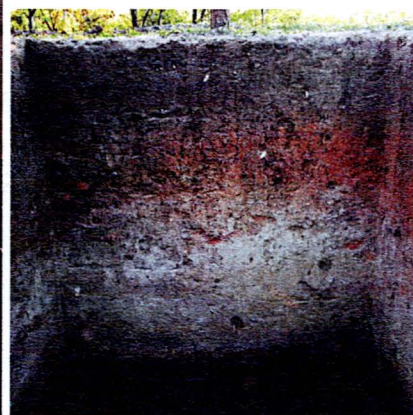
Pl. I. 1 = Bronze Age fortified settlements (Crivăț, Popești-Cioarinu?, Radovanu-Gorgana II, Popești-Nucet), 2 = Early Iron Ages fortified settlements (Mironesti-Malul Roșu, Popești-Nucet?).





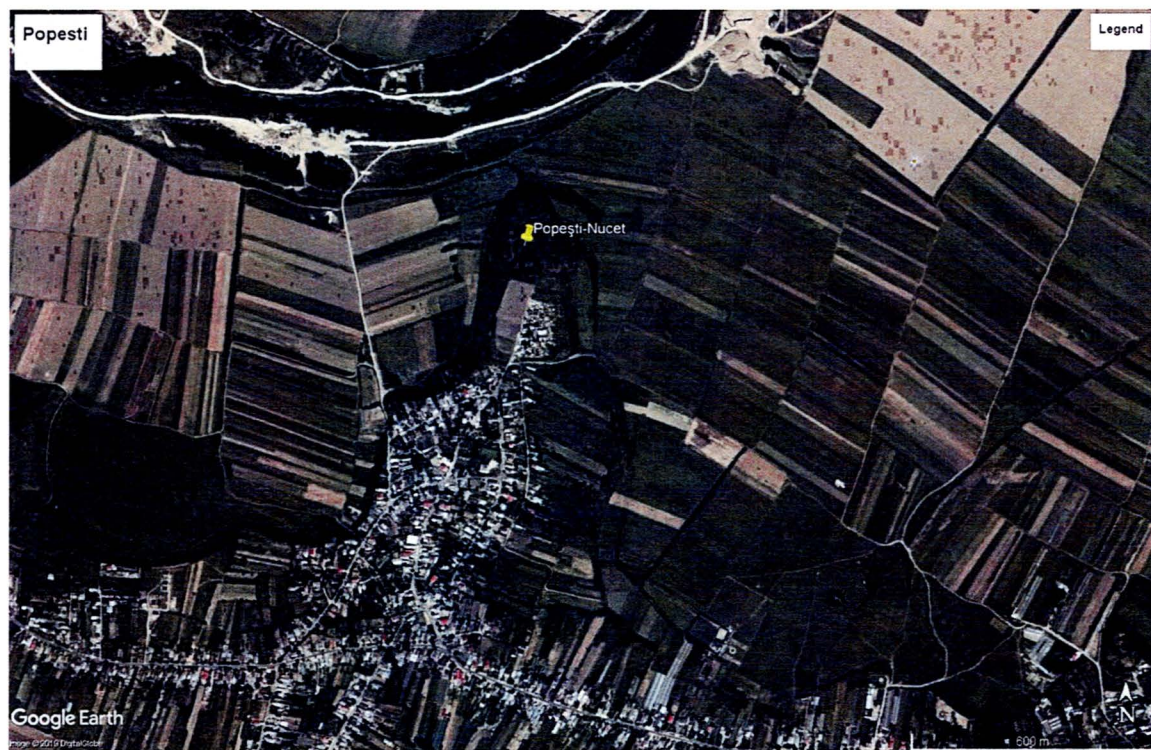
PI. II. Getic fortresses: 1 = 4<sup>th</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC, 2 = 2<sup>nd</sup>-1<sup>st</sup> C. BC/1<sup>st</sup> c. AD.





**Pl. III.** Mironești: 1 = image of the fortified settlement from *Malul Roșu* and the settlement from *Conacul lui Palade*, 2 = *Malul Roșu* promontory, 3 = trench through the Basarabi wall. Photos by C. Schuster.

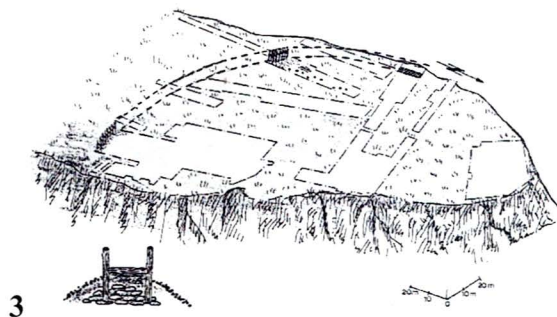




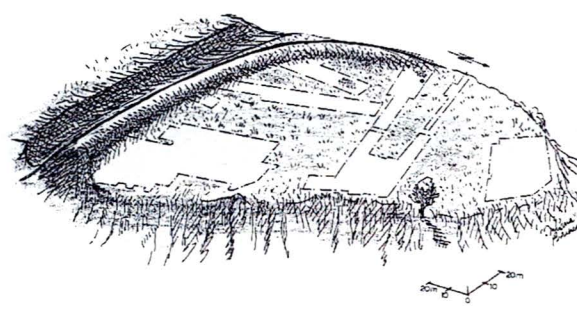
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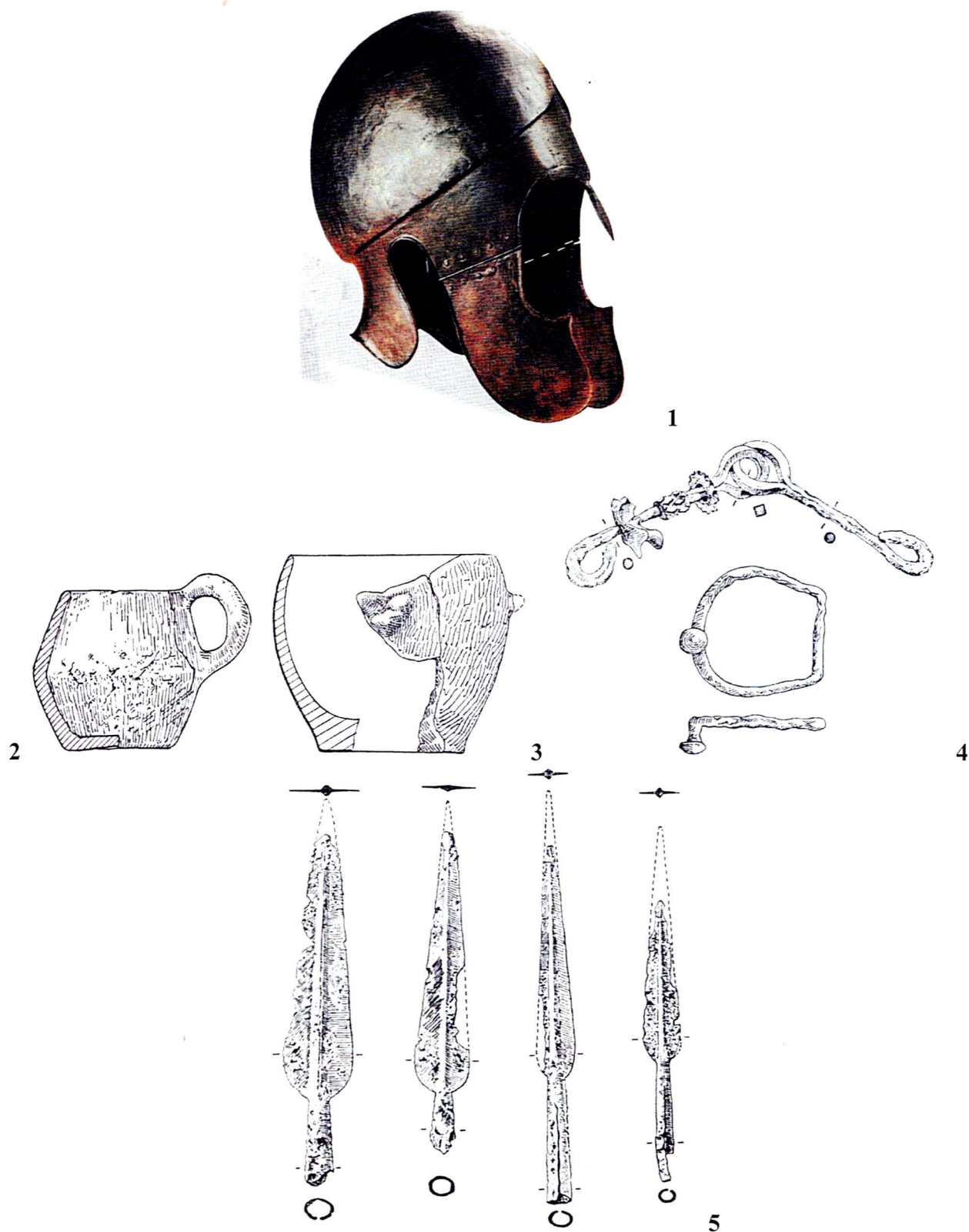
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Pl. IV. Popești: 1 = satellite image, 2 = Western view (photo by C. Schuster), 3 = fortification of the Fundeni-Govora Phase, 4 = fortification of the Zimnicea-Plovdiv Phase. 3-4 after Palincas 2005.

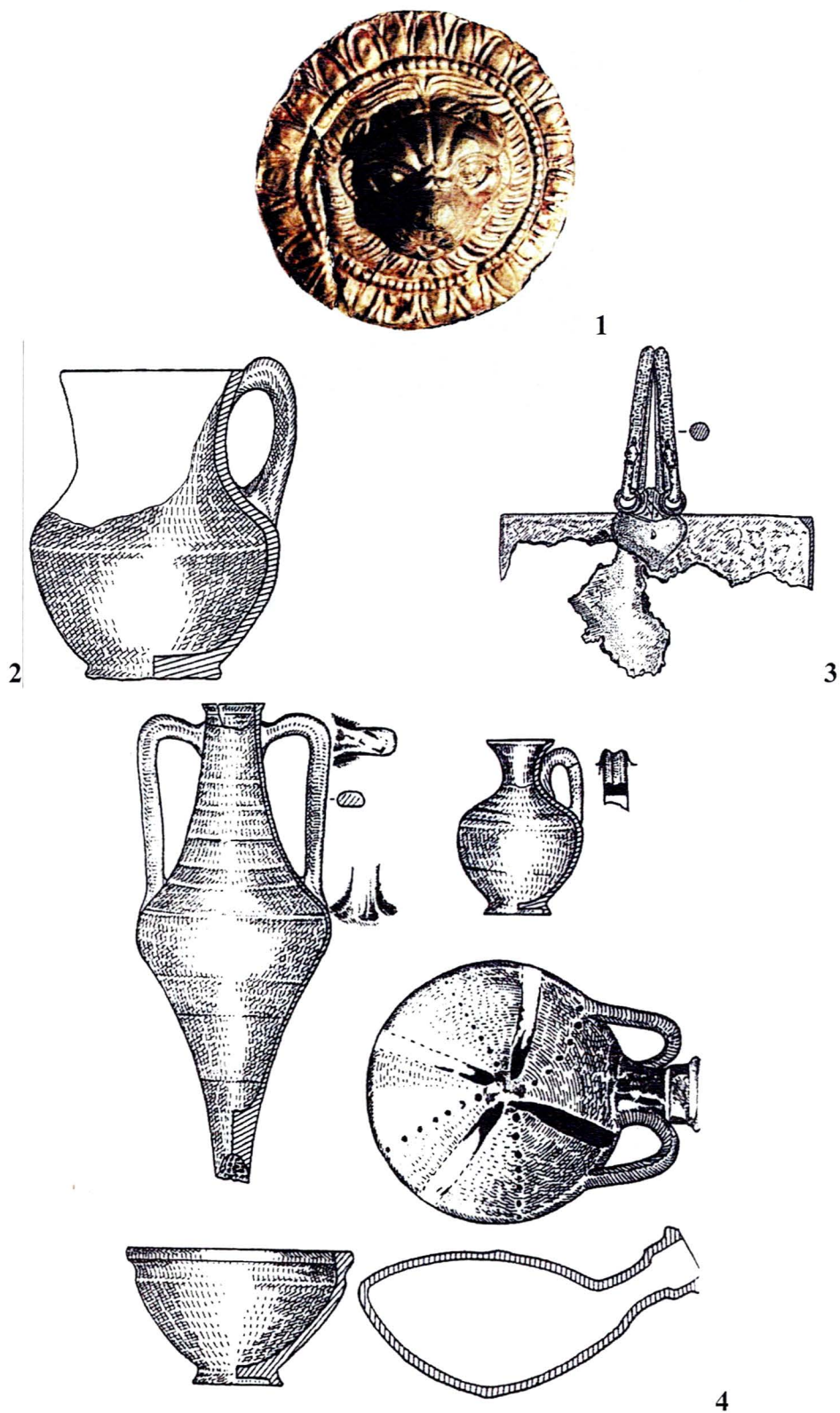




**Pl. V.** Bronze Age metal weapons: 1 = Giurgiu (sword), 2 = Schitu/Cămineasca (axe), 3 = Izvoru (celt), 4-5 = Oinacu (celts), 6 = Mogoșești (knife), 7 = Mogoșești (dagger). After Schuster, Popa 2010. Different scales.



**Pl. VI.** Getic burial from Făcău, 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC (1 after Vulpe 2001, 2-5 after Constantiniu, Leahu 1968). Different scales.



Pl. VII. Getic burial from Chirnogi, 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC (after Șerbănescu 1999). Different scales.





Pl. VIII. Radovanu-Gorgana I and Gorgana II: air photo from the Southeast (photo by C. Bem).





1



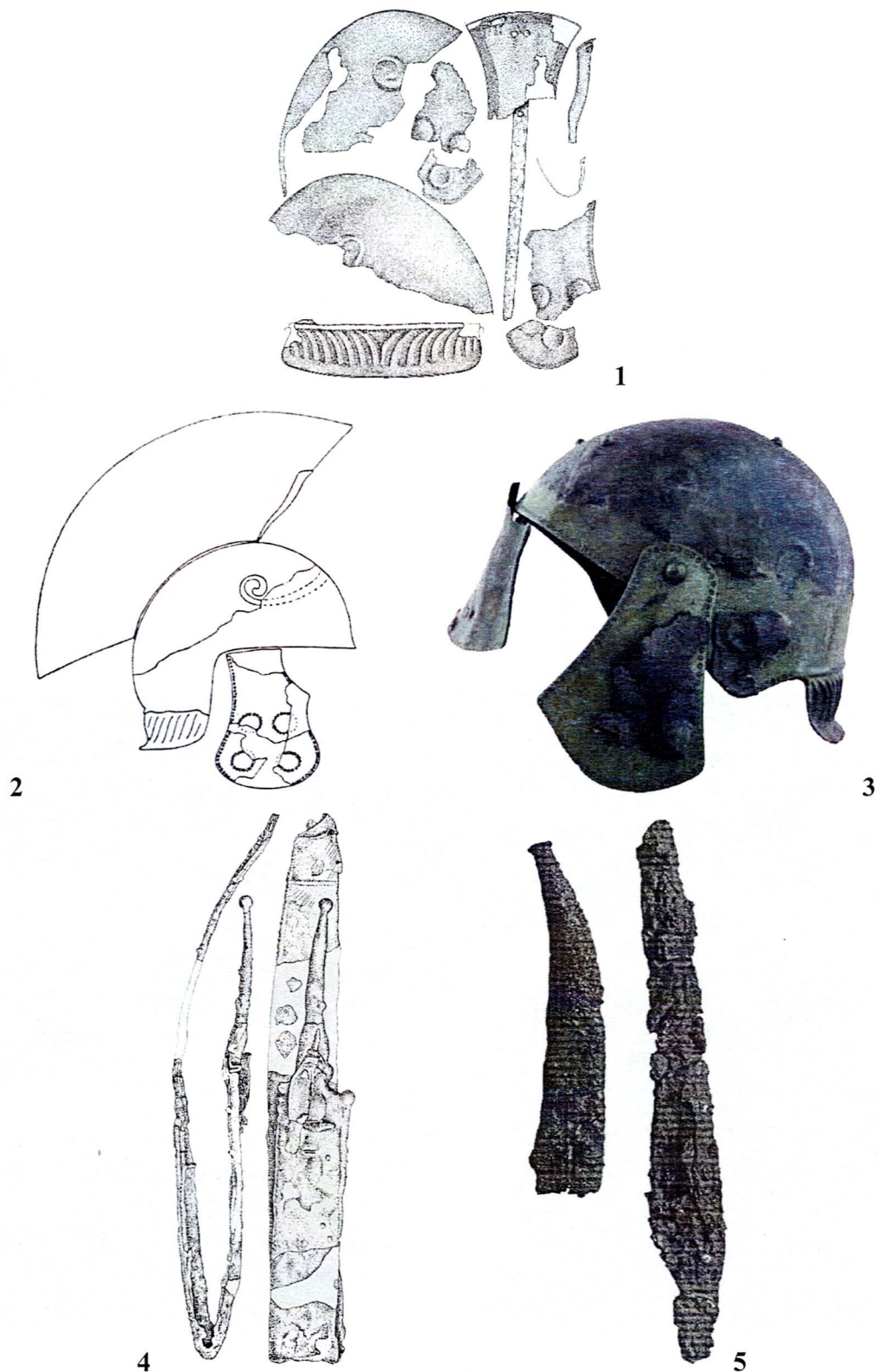
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**Pl. IX.** Radovanu-Gorgana I: 1 = air image (photo by C. Bem), 2 = image of the wall from Gorgana I (photo by George Chelmec).



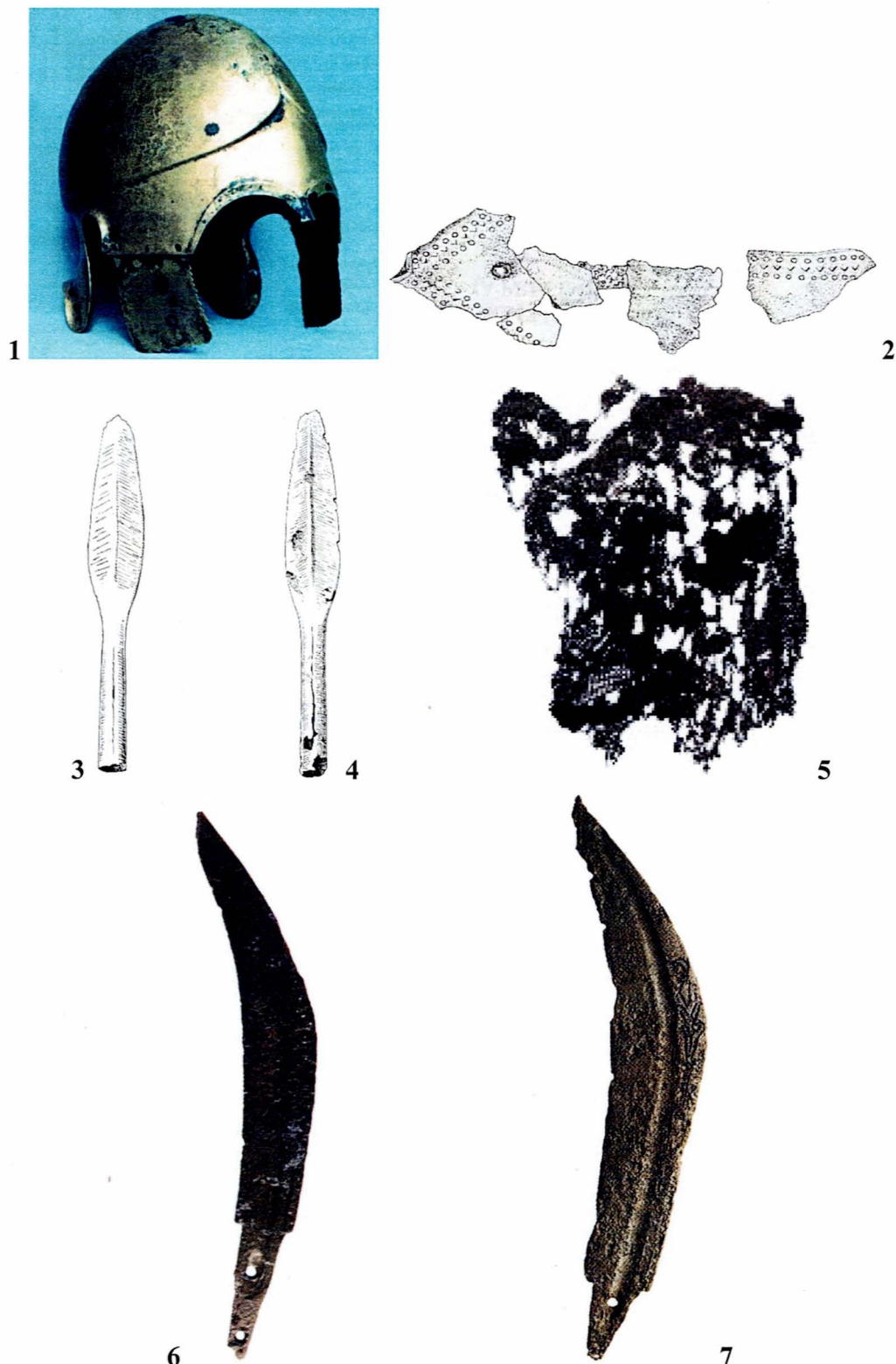


**Pl. X.** *Radovanu-Gorgana II*: 1 = image (photo by C. Schuster) and 2 = air photo from South-West (photo by C. Bem).



**Pl. XI.** Getic burial from Popești, *Tumulus* no. 4, 2<sup>nd</sup>-1<sup>st</sup> c. BC. 1-2, 4 after Vulpe 1976, 3 after Borangic 2015, 5 after Sîrbu, Borangic 2016. Different scales.





**Pl. XII.** 1 = Budeşti, 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC, 2 = Chirnogi-Terasa Rudarilor, 2<sup>nd</sup>-1<sup>st</sup> c. BC (after Şerbănescu 2006), 3-6 = Radovanu, 2<sup>nd</sup>-1<sup>st</sup> c. BC (3-4 after Vulpe 1976, 5 after Sîrbu, Borangic 2016, 6 after Borangic 2011), 7 = Izvoru, 2<sup>nd</sup>-1<sup>st</sup> c. BC (after Sîrbu, Borangic 2016). Different scales.

