

## VIEWS ON THE PRESENCE OF MONETARY SIGNS AND COINS IN THE PRE-ROMAN SETTLEMENTS OF FLORIILE-ADÂNCATA (ALIMAN COMMUNE, CONSTANȚA COUNTY)

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### Abstract

The archaeological and monetary information regarding the fortified settlement at the Adâncata I point and the open settlement at the Adâncata II point comes entirely from chance finds. At this stage of research, the numismatic record surpasses by far all the other finds, even the ceramic material, being relevant for establishing a basal chronology whilst underlining the economic and commercial importance of the local center, especially its recognized political *status* in the area. Part of the monetary discoveries coming from the fortified settlement ended up in the numismatic collections of the National History and Archeology Museum from Constanța, through purchases made in the 1990s and early 2000s. During the same time span, some artefacts entered private collections in Constanța. Other pieces, illegally unearthed with metal detectors, came to our attention throughout the last decade (long after the moment of their discovery), when they were taken into custody and brought for numismatic expertise by other authorized institutions. Together the two settlements cover dozens of hectares, which is extraordinary considering the concentration of the archaeological and monetary finds. All published and unpublished discoveries known from the area of the above-mentioned settlements belong to a large tribal center of the local population in the southwestern Dobrudjan territory, in the extreme northeast of Thrace. These discoveries, archeological as well as monetary, are specific to the 5<sup>th</sup>-1<sup>st</sup> centuries BC.

**Key words:** monetary signs, coins, Floriile, fortified settlements, Istros, Tomis, Kallatis, Dobrudja, 5th-1st century BC.

### Introduction

The lack of systematic archaeological research in the fortified settlements located not far from the locality of Floriile (Aliman Commune, Constanța County) is partially affecting the correct interpretation of the field information, the hitherto published finds, as well as the working hypotheses and sometimes the chronology established for the respective sites. Also, the use of the monetary finds as a main argument for the in-depth research of the presence and diffusion of pre-Roman coinage in these settlements in particular and in the indigenous territory of Dobrudja in general, i. e. the phenomenon of circulation and penetration in local environments - inside and outside the *chora* - during the pre-Roman times, runs into some inherent methodological limitations. There are multiple reasons for this: everything that has been published so far does not have a very clear findspot, many findings are not yet known to the few specialists working on the topic and the pieces of information in regards to the location of the unpublished coins are sometimes far from satisfactory. However, at this stage of research the coinage surpasses all the other finds, even the ceramic material, being relevant for establishing a preliminary

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chronology and also for determining the economic and commercial importance of the local center, including its political status in the area.

Some of the monetary finds from the fortified settlement have found their way into the numismatic collections of the Museum of National History and Archaeology, mostly through acquisitions made in the 1990s and early 2000s. On the other hand, others entered private collections in Constanța during the 1990s and occasionally I had the chance to see and identify them<sup>1</sup>. Other pieces came to our attention long after their discovery, during the numismatic expertise and subsequent reports carried out at the request of the judicial authorities, who confiscated and brought into institutional custody significant lots of coins discovered illegally with metal detectors in the area over the last decade. Discoveries with clear archaeological contexts, especially those of monetary deposits or hoards, became more and more of an exception for the numismatists, considering that almost all of them were discovered by dilettantes, following legal and illegal surface researches. For the published coins from Floriile, knowing the archaeological context or making any association with other finds was impossible. As of this day, we can state very clearly that a high percentage of their total can be added to the long list of the national movable heritage objects illegally extracted from their *in situ* context, this action being a direct cause for the loss of the archaeological information<sup>2</sup>.

As the number of finds known strictly from the academic publications has increased steadily even though most of them were unearthed back then between 1993 and 2000, we decided to collect all the pieces of information referring to monetary finds, in order to draw out the overall numismatic perspective for the most relevant settlements of the Floriile complex (Pl. 1), more exactly the two archaeologically distinct points conventionally called Adâncata I and Adâncata II (Pl. 2), the best known for the south-western and southern Dobrudjan territory.

### **Archaeological information**

The first archaeological information from the area is known from 1972-1973, when materials specific to the pre-Roman period were discovered. Thus, an amphora produced by the workshops of Heraclea Pontica between the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century and the end of the first quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC is published as a result of a chance find, which may have come from the funerary inventory of a tomb located in the heart of a now extinct village called Adâncata (Irimia 1983 91-92, no. 1). The first coins from the fortified settlement corresponding to the point Adâncata I were published in 1994 (Talmațchi 1994 231-233).

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<sup>1</sup> At that time, the chance to collect technical data, take pictures and write exhaustive descriptions of the coins and monetary signs found in Floriile (points Adâncata I and Adâncata II) was due to the late archaeologist, colleague and university lecturer Dr. Mihai Irimia, a remarkable personality for the pre-Roman archaeology in Dobrudja. He was constantly in contact with a number of collectors and other “antiquities enthusiasts” in the late 1990s and the first part of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, many of whom donated to the museum an abundance of pottery and other artefacts of scientific interest, collected from the surface of many open and fortified settlements populated by the indigenous communities in the south-central and south-western half of Dobrudja, specific to the 5<sup>th</sup>-1<sup>st</sup> centuries BC.

<sup>2</sup> The archaeological discoveries made since 1993 and, in general, those until the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, would have belonged, according to the reports of my colleague Mihai Irimia, to Radu Diaconu and Romeo Frățilă (they were initially considered by my colleague from the Constanța museum as “passionate amateur archaeologists from Constanța” according to Irimia 1999 73; Irimia 2000 102 and Irimia 2005 319, note 1, and later presented as “two passionate antiquities seekers from Constanța [...] who used metal detectors for this operation”, according to the same Irimia 2007 152). This situation clearly explains the lack of any archaeological context regarding the monetary discoveries made until 2007-2008.

What is known about Floriile (general point Adâncata) from the perspective of scientific interest through the lenses of archaeology? We can answer this question by adding up some of the pieces of information that have been recorded based on a series of observations made on the field survey, in close correlation with the local relief. The primary conclusion was that the area represents the largest center of the particular Getic population inhabiting the Pontic territory, together with important traces of Greek communities settled here for various reasons. The group of settlements has been chronologically categorized as it follows: an aboriginal fortified Getic settlement called Adâncata I (Irimia 2007 150) and a second open settlement of the same population, parallel in evolution with the first, called Adâncata II (Irimia 2007 150-151).

The fortified Adâncata I settlement was located about 3.5 km east of Floriile and 1.5 km south-west of the former village of Adâncata (Irimia 2004 178-179; Irimia 2005 320), identified at Dealul Cișmelei, on the northern plateau of Dedibal Hill (Pl. 3; Pl. 5) and it benefits from numerous archaeological finds. This settlement was considered an important residential center, fortified with earthen fortifications (*valla* - preserved until nowadays usually at a low height of less than 1 m) and adjacent ditches, which underwent several stages of evolution and development. The upper part of the settlement area, given its arrangement in relation to the terrain, coincides with a possible acropolis located in the south-western part of the plateau, with quadrangular sides of 150 x 150 m (Irimia 2004 178-179; Irimia 2007 150; Irimia 2010 94-95). This upper enclosure was also fortified by the construction of a substantial stone wall, which surrounded the entire perimeter, today preserved only by a simple bump about 1 m high. But archaeological remains can be found within a radius of about 1 km from a point considered by us central. For this first settlement, Adâncata I, it has been proposed to date it either between the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC and the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC – 1<sup>st</sup> century AD (Irimia 2007 152), or between the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC and the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 1<sup>st</sup> century BC (Irimia 2010 96), possibly also in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD (Irimia 2010 108). Two cremation tombs have been discovered near the settlement and their inventory is thought to belong to the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC (Chiriac, Iconomu 2005 209-217). We also note that its west-north-west and south-south-east sides are naturally fortified by the existence of steep gullies, which probably relieved the natives of further fortification. At the base of these deep gullies, in the proximity of the sole spring in the area where nowadays there is a water-fountain arrangement probably made in the late Ottoman period (Pl. 11, Fig. 20), the remains of stone constructions and archaeological material, mainly dating to the Hellenistic period, are visible on the surface of the land (Pl. 11, Fig. 21). I emphasize once again that this is the only existing water source within an extensive radius, hence it is very likely it covered the water needs of the pre-Roman settlement complex in the area of the mentioned points. A rich archaeological material has been collected from its surface: pottery (of Getic origin, hand-worked, wheel-worked, luxury Greek shreds, Greek-Hellenistic amphorae from Chios, Thasos, Heraklea Pontica, Mendos, Sinope, Samos, pseudo-Cos, Rhodos, stamped *amphorae* torches from Thasos, Sinope, Rhodos, Cos); several tools are worth mentioning, such as a coultter, a flat winged axe and a pewter (Irimia 2000 102-103 nos. 1-3; Irimia 2004 178-180; Irimia 2005 339; Irimia 2007 151-152); ornaments - a bronze fibula with a Thracian pattern (Irimia 2005 339); weapons - four battle arrowheads and a spearhead (Irimia 2005 339) (Pl. 12, Fig. 25); other miscellaneous pieces - a bronze bell *et varia* (Irimia 2005 340). Getic pottery includes several subcategories, such as bell-shaped vessels with handles, bag type vessels with knobs, deep bowls, bowls, cups and mugs, fruit bowls, pots, imitations of some Greek types such as kraters, *lekanai*, bowls and *pythoi*. The luxury Greek ceramics included mugs, bowls, *kantharoi*, *amphorae* and others (Irimia 2007 151). Furthermore, there were other pieces of pottery (two deep bowls, one of which is of Greek

workmanship), ornaments and clothing accessories (four rings from the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, a fibula from the mid-4<sup>th</sup> century BC, a fragmentary ring from the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, a glass paste bead with three human masks, which is thought to originate during the 4<sup>th</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries BC) from the inventories of two Getic tombs found in the vicinity of the fortified settlement, possibly dated in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. To these pieces coming “from the area around the fortress”, there can be added a bronze link, considered to be part of the category of belts or pendants, for which the context of its discovery is not known and which has been dated as the latest period of circulation to the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC – 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, although their production began in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC (Chiriac, Iconomu 2005 212). This necropolis could belong both to the fortified settlement and to the open one from the Adâncata II point. The settlement is delimited to the northwest by three tumuli and to the southeast by two other tumuli (Pl. 6-9).

The open Adâncata II settlement is located about 2 km away from the former village (Pl. 4), to the south-east, on a plateau with a certain slope and is delimited by two tumuli about 800 m apart. It is unfortified and organized in many *insulae*, each arranged about 500 x 250 m (Irimia 2005 341; Irimia 2007 150-151; Irimia 2010 96-97). It is positioned about 2.5 km away in a straight line from the fortified settlement mentioned above. No traces of fortification of the settlement are visible on the surface. The archaeological and numismatic material is rather similar to that in the area of the Adâncata I point, with minor differences. That is to say, here too are known the hand-worked Getic pottery, wheel-worked pottery, Greek luxury pottery, Hellenistic *amphorae* (from the same centers mentioned in the finds from the Adâncata I settlement, spindle whorls, etc). The end of this settlement is proposed for the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC (Irimia 2005 358), citing the lack of indigenous and Hellenistic pottery specific to the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC. Moreover, the author who published the ceramic material gathered from the surface surveys and donations later limits the dating to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC (Irimia 2010 97). We still consider these statements to be hasty, given the quantitative limitation of the available ceramic lot when compared to the size of the settlement, and especially by the lack of minimal correlation with the numerous monetary evidences. The latter point to a later date within the Hellenistic era, up to the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC. However, the autochthonous fortified settlement from the Adâncata I point and the open settlement from the Adâncata II appear to have evolved synchronously from the 5<sup>th</sup> century and especially from the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC onwards. The same situation is noted for the north of the Danube, in Moldova, for similar chronological/archaeological contexts (Teodor 1999 15-27).

Also worth mentioning are several other cast metal objects, discovered by chance, which were kept in the private collection of Ionel Matei in Bucharest, namely seven bronze plates in the shape of a stylized animal head, which were applied as ornaments on textile or leather materials. The zoomorphic motifs include a possible depiction of a stag, another in the form of a lion's head (dated to the 6<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> centuries BC), a wild boar - a combination between a stag, a waterfowl and a pig (dated to the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC), a head of a horse (from the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC) and lastly an ornamental detail of an undetermined object (Iconomu, Chiriac 2007 267-269) (Pl. 12, Fig. 22-23).

Within the fortified settlement, a Greek community seems to have lived at some point (Talmațchi 2005 19; opinion shared later in Irimia 2004-2005 357) and in our opinion their presence continued beyond the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC, possibly through its descendants even into the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC. This Greek community of the Classical and later Hellenistic periods was an active actor within the local community residing in the complex of settlements at Floriile, using mostly cast monetary signs for exchange, coins of precious or common metal, ornaments and other pieces of fashion wear, imported luxury pottery, and last but not least, contributing to the construction of the Adâncata I fortification. A possible source for all these influences that fueled the direction of the Greek trade for a



good while was the Istros colony. On the other hand, the possibility of the settlement complex functioning in the early period, especially from the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, as an emporium (Irimia 2005 357) remains to be proved by the means of archaeological excavations. At this stage of the research, the claim can be designated as more of a logical speculation, bearing in mind that the presence of an emporium does not particularly require a harbour and has foremost a commercial function (Counillon 1993 48-53).

All these considerations are based on the conclusions presented more than a decade ago in an extensive article dedicated to the problem of the Floriile fortifications, namely that many of the indigenous settlements discovered in the southwestern area of Dobrudja may have depended socially, politically and militarily on the large local center identified in the area (Irimia 2010 107-109). Tribal residences or political-administrative centers, such as the complex of Floriile settlements, seem to have represented places of refuge and safety in case of danger, beginning with the noble elite downwards. The two settlements together cover an area of several dozen hectares, extraordinary in terms of their size and concentrated archaeological and monetary finds. I must underline again that these considerations, at this stage of the studies, are based only on surface field survey.

### **Monetary information**

The monetary finds recovered in the last almost 30 years from the Adâncata I and Adâncata II points have been grouped either by hoards or by isolated finds, since each category is distinct and conveys different relevant aspects to the history of the indigenous communities in the area.

### **Monetary hoards**

There has been, based on the archaeological and numismatic discoveries, an intense human and commodities movement to and from the autochthonous populations. The greater the number of finds consisting of Greek luxury goods, the greater the chance of discovering actual monetary signs or coins. The most likely route for the arrival of goods in the fortified and unfortified settlements in the south-west of the Dobrudja territory is the Danube River. Although the geographical location of the points under consideration can be considered at the periphery of the Greek-Autochthonous relations, there is a close connection between the presence of the finds and the relevance of the settlements within the local world. In south-western Dobrudja, the local material culture differs markedly from that found in the coastal area and is very close to that known among the north Danubian Getae. We still do not envision the whole picture because of the lack of archaeological research in these fortified settlements, the documentation being uneven and objectively selective from the perspective of the finds. However, we cannot fail to note that the settlements of Adâncata and Izvoarele provided numerous and varied early Greek artefacts, some considered upscale.

In the Adâncata I point, a hoard composed of about 70 leaf or grain type monetary signs cast at Istros for commercial purposes and two cast at Apollonia Pontica was discovered before 2002-2003 (Talmațchi 2002-2003 369-370 nos. 48-105; Talmațchi 2006a 82, no. 16; Talmațchi 2008a 212, nos. 1-10; Talmațchi 2010a 91-92, no. 17) (Pl. 14, Fig. 29). In 2003, another hoard consisting of 123 monetary signs, including one imprinted with the wheel symbol, was discovered in the Greek-Autochthonous settlement at the Adâncata I point (Talmațchi 2010a 83, no. 6).

Across the Polucci Valley (Pl. 10, Fig. 12), on the hill next to the one where the Adâncata I point is located, not far from a tumulus overlooking the valley, a hoard of 74 West Pontic monetary signs of the leaf or grain type (all of them befitting the category of

currency specifically minted for exchange purposes)<sup>3</sup> was discovered by chance. Together with the monetary signs mentioned above, the Olbian dolphins contribute to the shaping of specific aspects of the archaic and early classical Greek world. Moving forward, two hoards composed of Olbian dolphins were discovered on the Adâncata I site, both containing several dozen specimens (Pl. 13, Fig. 26-27). The first hoard (we will call it Adâncata 1) consisted of 28 pieces, and the second one (we will call it Adâncata 2) consisted of 32 pieces. Moreover, across the Polucci Valley, on the hill opposite to the Adâncata I settlement, not far from a tumulus overlooking the valley (Pl. 10, Fig. 19), a third hoard composed of 36 Olbian dolphins (we will call it Adâncata 3) was discovered by chance (Pl. 13, Fig. 28), about 250 meters away from the place where the already mentioned hoard composed of monetary signs in the shape of olive leaves was recovered. Some of these are inscribed with the abbreviated names of possible magistrates **API(XO)** and **ΘΥ**.

Proposing a chronological approach, I will commence the analysis of the coins with the Istrian mint, more precisely with the wheel type coin issues. In an article written during 2008-2010 and published in 2011, I made the following mentions: “[...] a small deposit of 29 bronze coins of the wheel type is worth mentioning, which increases the presence of this Istrian coinage type in the area under investigation” (Talmațchi 2011 56). I locate the place of discovery in the south-west of Dobrudja area, at Floriile-Adâncata point. Besides, in another note I mention that “the coins have different diameters and they have on the obverse the wheel pattern with four spokes depicted in relief, and on the reverse the legend **ΙΣΤ** (Pick 1898 type nos. 531, 533 and 534). Most of the specimens retained a small stalk as a consequence of the casting process in the molds” (Talmațchi 2011 56, note 60). Over time, through random information and acquisitions made by the Museum of National History and Archaeology in Constanța up to the mid-2000s, I published six specimens of the “wheel” type, which are believed to have been discovered as chance finds at Floriile (Aliman Commune, Constanța County) in the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Talmațchi 2003-2005 19, nos. 2-3; Talmațchi 2008a 212, nos. 11-13; these were mentioned again in Talmațchi 2013 8) (Pl. 14, Fig. 29). The six pieces were all made by casting and correspond to Pick 1898 catalogue no. 531. Since the end of 2009 and during 2010, the information received on these six Istrian coins was enhanced in the sense that five out of the six published pieces were identified as part of this hoard<sup>4</sup>. Unfortunately, I have not been able to find out exactly which five, the sixth being discovered as a stray find. From the data later received, it seems that the total number of pieces was 37, albeit the hoard was initially thought to have about 29 specimens. Only for a maximum of two pieces was there a question mark as to whether they were found together with the others or at a distance of a few dozen meters<sup>5</sup>. From what has been observed over the last decade, the “wheel” coins reflect Istros' policy of creating small commercial currency for the local environment. The last identified coin which would confirm this fact is the one discovered at Hagieni (Limanu Commune, Constanța County), near the future Dorian fortification of Albești (Albești Commune, Constanța County) in the Kallatian *chora* (Talmațchi 2009 87, no. 39; Talmațchi 2018 84-85, nos. 20-26).

Another category of the autonomous period Istrian coinage present in the Adâncata settlement complex is that of hoards consisting of silver Apollo type coins (with one of the

<sup>3</sup> All the pieces would have scattered immediately on the antiques market at the end of the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately, it is not possible to say exactly which five, the sixth being discovered as a stray find.

<sup>5</sup> Thanks to the efforts of our colleague Mihai Irimia, it has been possible to recover this last information, to which a detailed list of technical and descriptive data has been added, with photographs provided by their owner. Soon the hoard was published, an action postponed for almost a decade due to the death of the late Professor Mihai Irimia on 26<sup>th</sup> of February 2011.

two heads of the deity inverted). At an uncertain date, in any case before 2009, a monetary hoard consisting of 82 drachmas and Istrian subdivisions (70, respectively twelve) was discovered in unknown conditions<sup>6</sup>. Amongst those, a number of 27 specimens have been published, selected in such a way as to “contain not only specimens of each series in the hoard, but also of each stylistic variant”, belonging entirely to group IV, subgroups II-V (Dima 2014 64-66 table XIV; for the first-hand information about the hoard see Talmațchi 2011 56). The last specimens, as a *terminus post quem*, belong to the chronological interval 280/256/55 BC, the hoard arriving in the area at a not much later date, probably corresponding to the interval around the beginning of the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC (Dima 2013 35; Dima 2014 26). Relating to this hoard, there must be mentioned two more, both discovered in the second part of the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, consisting of about 28 and 36 silver Istrian pieces - drachms and their monetary divisions as well<sup>7</sup>.

The hoards containing silver and bronze coins from Macedonia are associated with several finds. Additionally, from the area of the Adâncata settlement complex, a hoard consisting of ten silver pieces of the Alexander III type drachms (and maybe a tetradrachm?), a drachma from Istros (Pick 1898 163, no. 426) and an Athenian old-style tetradrachm (Athena/owl type, dated cca. 454-404 or cca. 420-405 BC) (Talmațchi 2018 10, Pl. III, nos. 30-31) (Pl. 14, Fig. 31-32). No other information was known about a possible context or a more precise location<sup>8</sup>. It is possible that the ten Macedonian coins were discovered separately from the two specimens from Istros and Athena, but what is certain is that they were discovered in the same area. Therefore, we are not completely sure that the two pieces belonged to the same hoard, since the coins could have been easily mixed up with the rest by their original dilettante discoverers, who were less familiar with the rigour and accuracy of recording the context. The old-style Athenian tetradrachms are very rare amongst the finds from Dobrudja, the present one being issued towards the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, representing an exceptional find for this region (Talmațchi 2007 136, no. 1). The same rarity in discoveries is noticeable for the known monetary finds north of the Danube (Preda 1998 92). Its presence, whether or not it was part of the hoard, can be explained by the value and quality of the silver content. In the Adâncata II point, during the early 2000s, a small hoard composed of about 30 posthumous tetradrachms of the Alexander the Great type was discovered, out of which nine or ten pieces struck at Kallatis in the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC were recovered<sup>9</sup>.

At the end of the list, I must mention a small hoard consisting of several dozen Macedonian bronze coins, out of which ten pieces were recovered, nine being minted for Philip II and one for Alexander III (Talmațchi 2010b 89; Custurea, Talmațchi 2011 400-401, no. 7). This hoard is part of a larger hoards cluster buried on the occasion of Zopyrion's expedition, probably concurrent with the retreat of what remained of his army, the rest of the troops being decimated by the Goths and Scythians (Ruscu 2002 63). The meaning of the presence of Macedonian bronze coins minted in the name of kings Philip II and Alexander the Great in the West Pontic area, many of them posthumous, can only be understood in the context of political-military events. The territory between the Danube

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<sup>6</sup> On a preliminary analysis of the coins, they appear to belong to the third and fourth series of the coinage produced in the Istros mint in the autonomous period.

<sup>7</sup> Unedited, the information came from the collectors Radu Diaconu and Vasile Mihalache, both of them living in Constanța.

<sup>8</sup> However, although the Macedonian coins are not yet published (only the pieces of Istros and Athena saw the light of print), there is the possibility of recovering all the data of interest for their publication as well.

<sup>9</sup> The information came from two collectors living in Constanța: Mihai Bogdan (president of the Numismatic Society of Constanța in the '90s) and Dr. Gheorghe Andreescu.

and the Black Sea was incorporated into the Macedonian state as an outcome of the Philip's II quest encompassing the West Pontic territory. This context favored the prerequisites for developing an economy open to the southern markets, as suggested by the monetary discoveries (Preda, Nubar 1973 52). It is quite possible that the new framework imposed by the Macedonian authority was beneficial both economically and commercially, ensuring a network between the West Pontic colonies of Dobrudja with many centers of the Hellenistic world.

Before proceeding to another category of coins, it must be noted the discovery made in 1999 of a small hoard composed of five or six late Lysimachos type staters struck at Istros, Kallatis and Tomis, in the area of the Adâncata I settlement. These staters were issued in reduced attic standard and were used for paying the recruitment of mercenaries to support the military aims of Mithridates VI Eupator in the war against the Roman Republic<sup>10</sup>.

A relevant fact for understanding some technical aspects regarding the diffusion of the Istrian and Macedonian coins of the autonomous period in the Florile complex could be the short (9-10 km) distance to the Danube, as well as the possibility that this complex of settlements had a direct connection with the river in Antiquity (Irimia 2004-2005 348). In the pre-Roman period, the Danube was for the Istro-Pontic territory the main route for economy and commerce, both for the local population and the West-Pontic colonies.

Another category of coins is that belonging to the Geto-Dacian mint. At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, on one of the slopes of the hills bordering the Polucci valley, about 2 km from the Adâncata I and II points, a hoard of seven Alexander III-Philip III Arrhidaeus type drachmas was discovered<sup>11</sup>.

Finally, the last categories of pre-Roman coins included in the hoards discovered in the area belong to tetradrachms from Macedonia Prima and Thasos. Throughout the 1990s, in the area of Adâncata I and II settlements, a small monetary hoard was discovered. It consisted in six Thasian silver pieces with the legend **ΗΡΑΚΛΕΟΥΣ ΣΩΤΗΡΟΣ/ΘΑΣΙΩΝ** and one from Macedonia Prima with the legend **ΜΑΚΕΔΟΝΩΝ/ΠΡΟΤΗΣ** and the monograms **ΣΑΡ** / **ΚΡ** - **ΤΥΕ** inside the wreath. The Macedonian tetradrachm was issued between the years 158-148 BC, while the Thasian ones are dated between the years 148-80/70 BC<sup>12</sup>.

### Stray monetary finds

The stray finds monetary signs are insignificant in quantity. In this regard, I mention five monetary signs of the olive leaf/cereal grain type from the Adâncata I point (Talmațchi 1995-1996 261, no. 3; Irimia 2004 180, nos. 1-2; Talmațchi 2003-2005 19, no. 1). Also, across the Polucci Valley, at the base of the hill vis-a-vis the Adâncata I settlement, in an arable area, three Olbian dolphins were discovered at some distance from each other<sup>13</sup>, while an additional piece was unearthed in the area, most probably at the same moment, before 2007 (Talmațchi 2008b 14; Talmațchi 2013 8).

<sup>10</sup> Unpublished; the information comes from Dr. Gheorghe Andreescu; from the same collector I know about the discovery of another hoard, also composed of late Lysimachos-type staters with the initials of some West Pontic mints from Dobrudja, near the Getic fortification of Dunăreni, Muzait point, in 1994-1995.

<sup>11</sup> They came into the possession of some private collectors from Constanța (R. Diaconu, Gh. Andreescu etc.).

<sup>12</sup> The information came from the coin collector Radu Diaconu.

<sup>13</sup> It is quite possible that they were unearthed along with other ancient materials (ceramic fragments, small and medium-sized pieces of stone, etc.) from the upper part of the hill in the chaotic falls due to erosion in the context of extreme natural phenomena.

The silver coins minted at Istros are also present in the form of isolated finds, be it drachms or divisions of it. In this regard, I mention five drachms and three divisions (Mitrea 1965 158, no. 24; Buzdugan, Mititelu 1960 403, nos. 44, 48; Talmațchi 1994 231, nos. 1-2; Talmațchi 1995-1996 261, no. 1; Talmațchi 2001 122, nos. 21-22; Talmațchi 2006a 94-95, no. 2; Talmațchi 2013 8). From the category of bronze coins issued at Istros during the autonomous period I mention: four wheel type coins (Talmațchi 2008a 212, nos. 11-14; Talmațchi 2013 8), five specimens of the Apollo type, thirteen River God type specimens, one Demeter type (Talmațchi 1995-1996 261, no. 2; Talmațchi 2001 125, no. 40; Talmațchi 2003-2005 19, nos. 4-15, 20, 16-17; Talmațchi 2006a 94-95, no. 2; Talmațchi 2008a 212, nos. 15-17; Talmațchi 2013 8) (Pl. 14, Fig. 30) and two Athena type (Talmațchi 2008a 212, nos. 19-20). From the mint of Kallatis there are two bronze Herakles type coins (Talmațchi 2003a 212, no. 20, nos. 18-19; Talmațchi 2013 8) and one Herakles type drachma (Talmațchi 2008a 212, no. 18; Talmațchi 2013 8).

Two Great God type coins countermarked with a large module, one Dioscuri type, five Zeus type and one Demeter type from the Hellenistic-age Tomitan mint are among the discoveries from the Adâncata II point (Talmațchi 2008a 212-213, nos. 21-29). From the Mesembrian mint there are two Corinthian helmet type diobols (Talmațchi 2003-2005 20, nos. 20-21; Talmațchi 2013 8) and from the Thracian Chersonese a silver piece (Talmațchi 2003-2005 20, no. 22; Talmațchi 2013 8). From the Kingdom of Macedonia there were found an Amphipolis tetradrachm, a drachm issued at Lampsacus during the reign of Alexander the Great and eight bronze pieces from the time of Philip II (five) and Alexander the Great (three) (Talmațchi 1994 231, no. 3; Talmațchi 2001 132, nos. 92-93; Talmațchi 2002-2003 370 no. 106; Talmațchi 2003 30 nos. 100-101; Talmațchi 2003-2005 20, nos. 23-24; Talmațchi 2006a 169, no. 14; Talmațchi 2006b 87 no. 16; Talmațchi 2008a 213, no. 30; Talmațchi 2008c 8, no. 1; Talmațchi 2013 8).

Another monetary subcategory of the stray finds is represented by the so-called Scythian coins. A silver coin (a division, possibly a hemidrachma) struck for Atheas, belonging to the general type, comes from the Adâncata I point (see Draganov 2015 pl. 1, nos. 15-16). Four large denomination bronze coins were discovered at the Adâncata II point; three were struck for the king Kanites: two common types (see Draganov 2015 pl. 7, nos. 84-98) and the third of another type (see Draganov 2015 pl. 8, nos. 99-104); we add one for king Sariakes (according to Draganov 2015 pl. 63-64, nos. 940-957) (Talmațchi 2017 168)<sup>14</sup>.

A different sub-category of coins is the Geto-Dacian one. In the beginning of the 2000s, several Geto-Dacian coins specific to the second phase activity of the North Danube mint were discovered in the area of the Adâncata I settlement. We begin with a Dumbrăveni type coin found in unknown conditions<sup>15</sup>. Furthermore, at the base of the hills covering the Adâncata I and II settlements, in the Polucci valley, more precisely in the Turkish fountain area, in the soil drained from the slope, in 1999-2002, two Geto-Dacian coins of the Adâncata-Mânăstirea type were discovered<sup>16</sup>. Some other eight Geto-Dacian tetradrachms of the Vârteju-București type and three of the Inotești-Răcoasa type were discovered at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The findspot was the western brink of the Polucci valley, at about 850-900 meters away from the Adâncata I and II points, and they did not constitute a separate monetary hoard<sup>17</sup>. The only examples in this category that are not imitations of Philip II tetradrachms are the Alexander's III and Philip's III Arrhidaios coinage. Their presence is noticed among finds

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<sup>14</sup> The information was provided by the coin collector Dr. Gh. Andreescu.

<sup>15</sup> The information was provided by the coin collector Dr. Gh. Andreescu.

<sup>16</sup> The information was provided by the archaeologist Dr. Mihai Irimia.

<sup>17</sup> The information was provided by the archaeologist Dr. Mihai Irimia.

on both sides of the Danube, in approximately equal quantities (Preda 1998 215-216). Alexander III and Philip III Arrhidaeus coins were probably issued by Thracians from the area of the present-day Ruse-Razgrad-Târnovo (Preda 1973 342) or perhaps north of the Danube, by the means of the itinerant Getic workshops in the lower Argeș area (Preda 1998 216). Their circulation up to the north of Danube reflects the good relations between the various Getic tribes and unions of tribes (Preda 1980 337). Such coins are issued from the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC to the end of the same century (Preda 1973 343). At the same time, in certain contexts it is possible that such specimens also circulated in the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC (Preda 1998 216). We note in this regard two silver coins of this type found before 2000 (Talmațchi 2008d 494-405, no. 5, 495, no. 8; Talmațchi 2013 9).

At the Adâncata I and II points several stray finds of tetradrachms from Thasos and Macedonia Prima date in the early 1990s and in the latter part of the 1990s. Detailed information on technical data was recovered for a number of three Thasian and one Macedonia Prima piece (with **Α** inside wreath), issued around 158-148 BC<sup>18</sup>. Likewise, during the 1990s four drachms struck in Illyria, at Dyrrhachium and Apollonia, were discovered in unknown conditions in the area of the same settlements. Those from Dyrrhachium were minted in 120-80/70 BC and 80/70-60/55 BC, while those from Apollonia in 80/70-48 BC<sup>19</sup>. Last but not least, we mention the accidental discovery of three Roman Republican denarii, probably near Adâncata I and II settlements, struck in 91, 67 and possibly 32/31 BC (Talmațchi 2010c 26, nos. 15, 27, nos. 21, 30, no. 45). This long list of isolated finds cannot be concluded without mentioning that there are several dozen other silver and bronze coins not yet published, belonging to centers such as Olbia, Istros, Tomis, Kallatis, Odessos, Mesembria and the Macedonian Kingdom.

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The survey through all the monetary signs and coin findings in the area of the two Floriile settlements allows us to briefly formulate some important observations on their importance within the local communities.

Although not coins by definition, the so-called pre-monetary signs partially reflected structural changes in the economy and society of the Greek centers on the Black Sea coast and their relatively immediate surroundings. Subsequently, from around the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC to the first part of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, the local communities residing at the edge of the monetary circulation pool are considered by us as peripheral. The discovery of West Pontic monetary signs of the two categories in the peripheral Greek-autochthonous environment in relation to similar colonies suggests the economic directions of the Greek community in the extreme North-East of Thrace, leading us to a better understanding of the complex regional background of the 6<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> centuries BC.

The monetary hoards belonging to the mint of Istros provide clues to the diffusion directions of silver and bronze pieces. Some entered the area towards the second part of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, in the early 4<sup>th</sup> century or after the middle or early 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. It is quite possible that the wheel-type coins found within the hoards were introduced on the market simultaneously with the monetary signs. If until the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC Istros and its products dominated the trade in the area, after the conflicts with Lysimachos, the place at the head of the commerce was taken by Kallatis (Condurachi 1954 75, 77; Conovici 1979 92; Conovici 1980 52). Thus, in the period of the 3<sup>rd</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> centuries BC, amidst a staged economic and monetary decline of Istros, the influx of Kallatis coins revives (Talmațchi

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<sup>18</sup> The information was provided by the coin collector Radu Diaconu, through his colleague Dr. Mihai Irimia.

<sup>19</sup> The information was provided by the coin collector Radu Diaconu, through his colleague Dr. Mihai Irimia.

2004 176). Kallatian or other centers' goods and monetary issues entered the local market through the routes from south-Dubrovnik to Danube and from there up to the northern lands. It was more practical to connect the roads with the local fortified or open settlements, where there was an indigenous nobility in charge and a reasonable population density for that period.

The monetary hoards listed in this paper have various possibilities of arrival in the local environment, different local meanings and final destinations. What do these findings tell us? The hoards discovered in the local *mise en scène* point towards two possible phenomena. Firstly, we encounter the hoarding as a result of the gold lots and silver coins penetration, a case where we can see the materiality of this process. Secondly, we notice the existence of smaller or larger scale commercial transactions, which we can deduce by reconstructing the process with the aid of archaeological and historical sources.

The hoards could belong to the merchants who were paid on the spot or dispossessed by violence, they could be tributes to a local authority with the purpose of them fixing problems concerning the city, they could be the result of robbery expeditions in the Greek environment (especially in the case of hoards containing precious metals) etc. The findspots gave us an overview of the space in which the Greeks coming from the coastal poleis of Dobrudja exercised some kind of control or simply influenced in their interest possible local exchanges. If the penetration of coins was based on economic and commercial factors, it meant that the city in question enjoyed the trust of its economic and commercial partners. I emphasise once again that, as we can see at Floriile, there was a direct correlation between the impact and speed of coin penetration and the nature of the local situation, the existence of a wealthy local milieu, the flourishing trade and the expectations and demands of the local noble elite. There was undoubtedly a strong connection between currency and what we call the local environment, as coinage was either regarded as an instrument of exchange with monetary attributes or rather a special totem.

Among the coins discovered in the Adâncata I and Adâncata II points, there are also Istros pieces of the category called *fourrées*, in fact bronze pieces that were intentionally covered by the issuing authority with a thin silver layer. We do not know to what extent these coins were also intended for the domestic market; we would rather think their production was strictly to ensure an economic policy towards the local population. It was a way of payment in order to cover the value of the goods taken from the natives. Did the West Pontic cities issue such coins at some point because of the economic crisis or were them deliberate measures, regardless of the existing situation, given that these coins were intended for the local environment? Probably the reason for their presence must be sought in the political and economic matters specific to the age in question (Depeyrot 2002 18). This attempted fraud would not have been an unusual instance for the mints of the West Pontic area or of the Greek world (Poenu Bordea 1996 355).

A noteworthy fact is the discovery of a silver divisional coin struck for Atheas - a hemidrachm - belonging to the first Scythian kingdom. In the numismatic bibliography the respective silver coins (drachms and divisions) were considered to be issued for the king Atheas and, implicitly, dated to the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC (Alexandrescu 1967 88). Taking into account the reasonable frequency of monetary finds with the name of this Scythian ruler (Draganov 2015 33-50, 51-61, 156-161, Pl. 1-3), any consideration of these coins as historical forgeries, as it was claimed almost 45 years ago (Gerasimov 1972 3-16), already becomes puerile. The additional presence of bronze coins struck for the kings Kanites and Sariakes, of the second Scythian kingdom, provides new data of historical interest on the development of local communities in the Hellenistic period, particularly the referral to Scythian royal chieftains who held the title of βασιλεύς. The so-called Scythian coins seem to be "prestige" coins dedicated to a royal authority or to a Scythian noble

adstratum and it seems they were completely excluded from the coin circulation in the first place. Scythian chieftains were commanders of mercenary Scythian troops; hence the coins represented a form of tribute or a diplomatic gift (Avram 1991 121-122, 128-130). They truly became useful for the market especially after the disappearance of the alleged Scythian kingdom or towards its end, when the Greek cities countermark them by mechanical printing alongside their own coins. Then they were introduced into an internal monetary system, differing in value from one city to another towards the second part or the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC and the first part of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC.

In conclusion, the monetary discoveries made in the south-western corner of Dobrudja suggest the possible existence of the Getic military power-based centers in the area. These centers attracted like a magnet coins as well as various merchants from the Black Sea coast or the Macedonian world. The discovery in the local environment of gold coins, of Macedonia and Istros silver issues and so on has rightly been attributed to the existence of inter-tribal political and economic relations with the colonies on the Pontic seaside and the southern Balkan world (Oberländer-Târnoveanu 1978 68; Mihăilescu-Bîrliba 1990 64). We cannot exclude that the occurrence of some coins, especially the precious metal ones, was the result of plundering expeditions.

This paper has been written in order to define as scientifically as possible a new chapter in the pre-Roman period monetary research of Dobrudja in the area of Floriile, since the pieces of information on archaeological finds (at least those gathered by the Constanța Museum specialists during field research) are relatively less explained, especially in regards to the contexts of discovery (if they existed). The area of the Floriile settlements (Aliman Commune, Constanța County), in the Adâncata I and II points, has provided numerous archaeological and monetary vestiges. Those that came to the academic attention have already been published. Unfortunately, 99.99% of them come from simple field research carried out by the specialised staff of the museum in Constanța, or from illegal interventions with metal detectors. But obviously, in the context of the situation at Floriile, considering the absence of archaeological research of any kind (preventive or systematic), numismatic material that does not come from well-regulated dwellings also plays an important role in studying the presence and diffusion of money. This area remains a topic open to research, which is bound to be supported by the appropriate authorities for the protection and enhancement of the existing historical heritage, including financial support for archaeological research. However, it is important to also point out that there are some significant logistical difficulties at the moment, which would make it difficult to carry out systematic archaeological campaigns.

The general functioning period for the two settlements belongs to the 5<sup>th</sup>-1<sup>st</sup> centuries BC, but the segment abounding in archaeological and monetary finds seems to be the 4<sup>th</sup> century and most of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. For the time being, we cannot minimize the evolution of the open settlement Adâncata II only for the 5<sup>th</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> centuries BC on the grounds that the amount of ceramic material from the site is far too small and extremely unvaried. It is a dating solution that hides many risks beyond the particularities of each individual site. The fortified Adâncata I settlement represents a pole of prestige and power for a number of important communities in the south-west of Dobrudja. The numerous monetary discoveries, and I refer only to those known to the scientific world, are rich and varied. They belong to the sphere of Greek imports, which in one way or another accompanied the abundant trade products. The main recipients were representatives of the aristocratic elite, who seem to have been interested in the new culturally relevant models of the time, namely Greek and Macedonian.

The lack of corroboration between the archaeological data with the monetary findings obstructs the in-depth considerations, so we lack the insight of the quantitative and qualitative analysis regarding the economic and commercial process. Our contribution



is bound to the numismatic analysis of all the discoveries and the identification of the historical-economic consequences in the context of the developing relations between the local and the Greek world. In the absence of any archaeological excavations that can provide us with some reasonable certainty, we do not wish to make any further considerations, as they might turn into suppositions or speculations unsupported by tangible evidence.

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### **Explicația planșelor / Explanation of the plates**

Plate 1 – Fig. 1 - The location in Dobrudja of the pre-Roman settlements in the Floriile area (Aliman commune, Constanța county).

*Planșa 1 – Fig. 1 - Localizarea în Dobrogea a așezărilor preromane din zona localității Floriile (com. Aliman, jud. Constanța).*

Plate 2 – Fig. 2-3 - Satellite views with the location of the pre-Roman settlements from the “Adâncata I” and “Adâncata II” points.

*Planșa 2 – Fig. 2-3 - Vederi din satelit cu localizarea așezărilor preromane din punctele „Adâncata I” și „Adâncata II”.*

Plate 3 – Fig. 4 – Location of the fortified settlement called “Adâncata I”.

*Planșa 3 – Fig. 4 - Localizarea așezării fortificate numite „Adâncata I”.*

Plate 4 – Fig. 5-6 - Images of the open settlement “Adâncata II” from the fortified settlement “Adâncata I”

*Planșa 4 – Fig. 5-6 - Imagini ale așezării deschise „Adâncata II” de pe așezarea fortificată „Adâncata I”.*

Plate 5 – Fig. 7-8 - Images of the fortified settlement “Adâncata I” from the open settlement “Adâncata II”.

*Planșa 5 – Fig. 7-8 - Imagini ale așezării fortificate „Adâncata I” de pe așezarea deschisă „Adâncata II”.*

Plate 6 – Fig. 9-11 - Satellite images (9 and 11) and from the site (10) with tumulus no. 1.

*Planșa 6 – Fig. 9-11 - Imagini satelitare (9 și 11) și de la fața locului (10) cu tumulul nr. 1.*

Plate 7 – Fig. 12-13 - Satellite images of the tumuli nos. 2 and 3.

*Planșa 7 – Fig. 12-13 - Imagini satelitare cu tumulii nr. 2 și 3.*

Plate 8 – Fig. 14-15 - Satellite and on-site image with tumulus no. 4.

*Planșa 8 – Fig. 14-15 - Imagine satelitară și de la fața locului cu tumulul nr. 4.*

Plate 9 – Fig. 16-17 - On-site and satellite image of tumulus no. 5.

*Planșa 9 – Fig. 16-17 - Imagine de la fața locului și din satelit cu tumulul nr. 5.*

Plate 10 – Fig. 18 - View of the Polucci valley towards the fortified and open settlements; Fig. 19 - View of the hill from the open settlement, across the Polucci valley, with a tumulus and the site of the discovery of the Olbian dolphins.

*Planșa 10 – Fig. 18 - Vedere a văii Polucci către așezările fortificată și deschisă; Fig. 19 - Vedere a dealului dinspre așezarea deschisă, peste valea Polucci, cu un tumul și locul descoperirii delfinilor olbieni.*

Plate 11 – Fig. 20 - Images of the site of the boot that serves the spring in the area; Fig. 21 - Detail with traces of stone walls located towards the base of the hill that holds at the top the acropolis corresponding to the fortified settlement.

*Planșa 11 – Fig. 20 - Imagini cu locul cișmelei care deservește izvorul din zonă; Fig. 21 - Detaliu cu urme de ziduri de piatră aflate spre baza dealului care deține în vârf acropola corespunzătoare așezării fortificate.*

Plate 12 – Fig. 22-25 - Different archaeological objects specific to the 6<sup>th</sup>-1<sup>st</sup> centuries BC discovered in the settlement complex at Floriile (22 and 23 apud Chiriac, Iconomu 2007; 24 apud Iconomu, Chiriac 2007; 25 apud Irimia 2004).

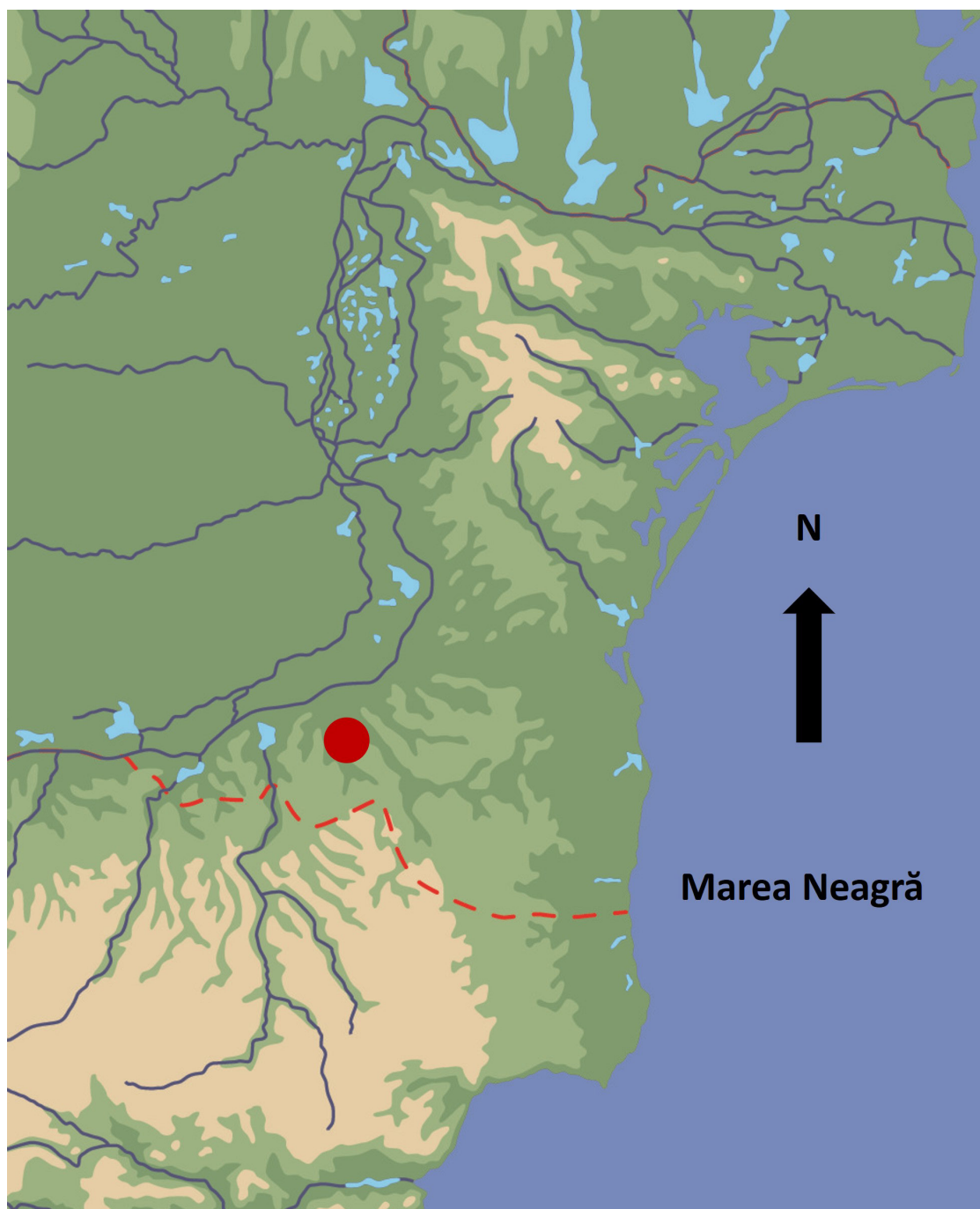
*Planșa 12 – Fig. 22-25 - Diferite obiecte arheologice specifice secolelor VI-I a.Chr. descoperite în complexul de așezări de la Floriile (22 și 23 apud Chiriac, Iconomu 2007; 24 apud Iconomu, Chiriac 2007; 25 apud Irimia 2004).*

Plate 13 – Fig. 26-28 - Treasures of Olbian dolphins discovered near the two settlements (26 - Adâncata 1 Treasure; 27 - Adâncata 2 Treasure; 28 - Adâncata 3 Treasure).

*Planșa – Fig. 26-28 - Tezaure de delfini olbieni descoperite în apropierea celor două așezări (26 - Tezaurul de la Adâncata 1; 27 - Tezaurul de la Adâncata; 28 - Tezaurul de la Adâncata 3).*

Plate 14 – Fig. 29 - Monetary signs of the leaf-type category; Fig. 30 - Histrian silver Apollo-type coin; Fig. 31 - Histrian bronze coins of the Apollo and River God Istros types; Fig. 32 - An Athenian tetradrachm of the Athena type discovered in the settlement complex at Floriile.

*Planșa 14 – Fig. 29 - Semne monetare din categoria celor de tip frunză; Fig. 30 - Monedă de argint histriană din tipul Apollo; Fig. 31 - Monede histriene de bronz din tipurile Apollo și Zeul fluvial Istros; Fig. 32 - O tetradrahmă atheniană de tip Athena descoperite în complexul de așezări de la Floriile.*



1.

Plate 1

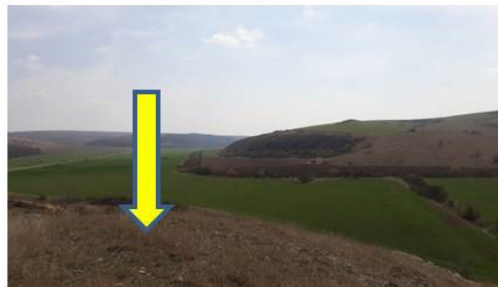


2.



3.





4.

Plate 3





5.



6.

Plate 4





7.



8.

Plate 5





9.

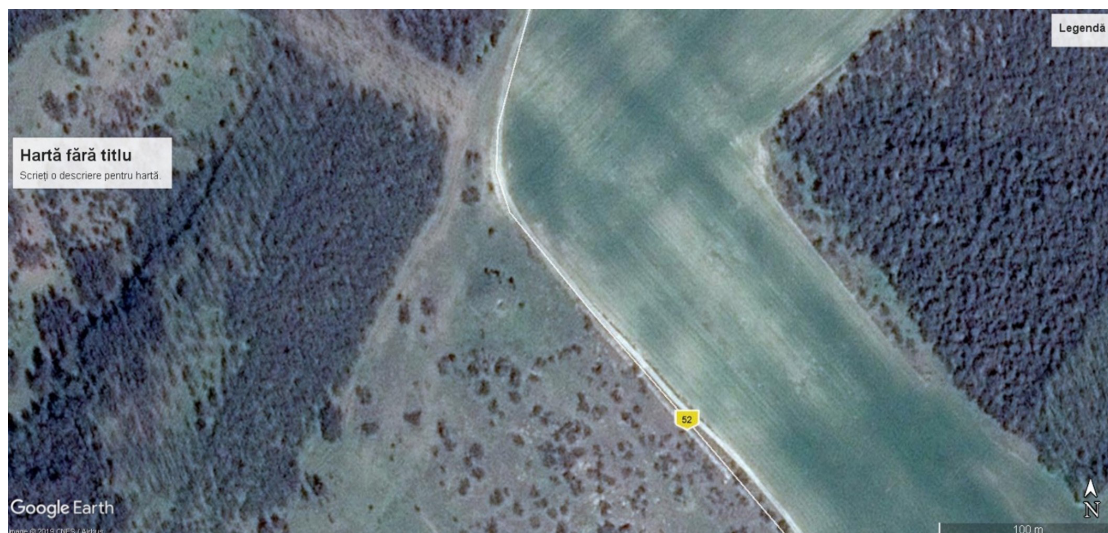


10.



11.  
Plate 6





12.



13.



14.



15.





16.



17.

Plate 9



18.



19.

Plate 10





20.



21.

Plate 11

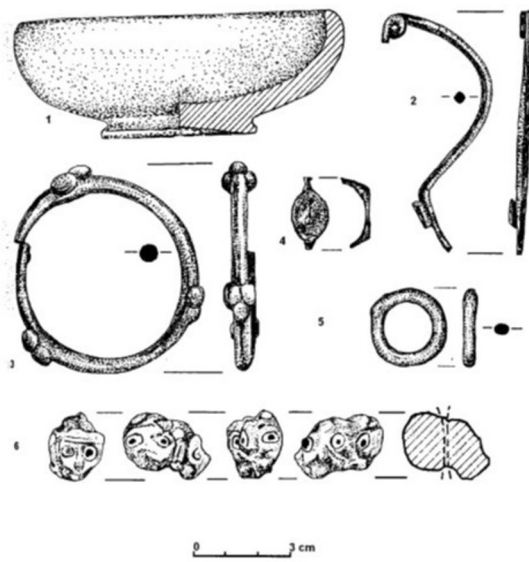




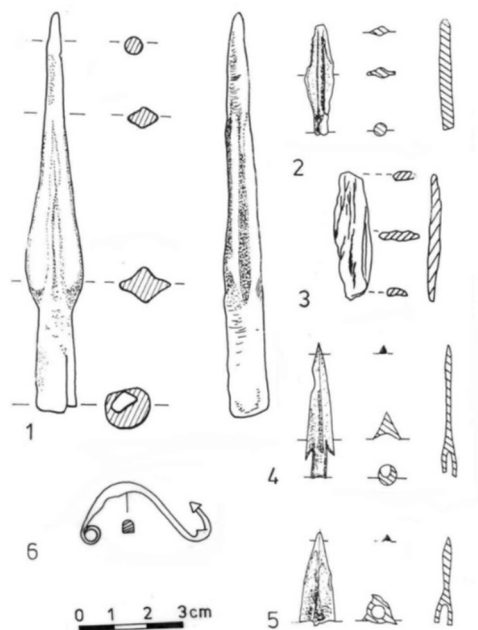
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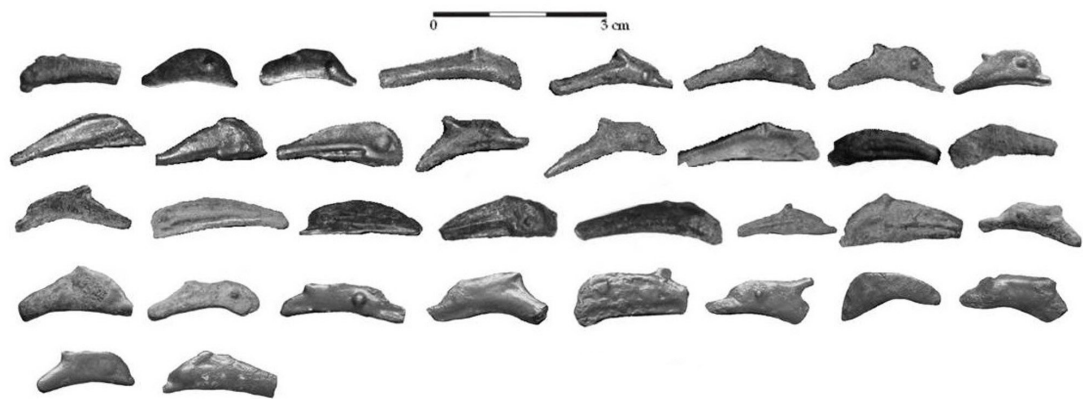
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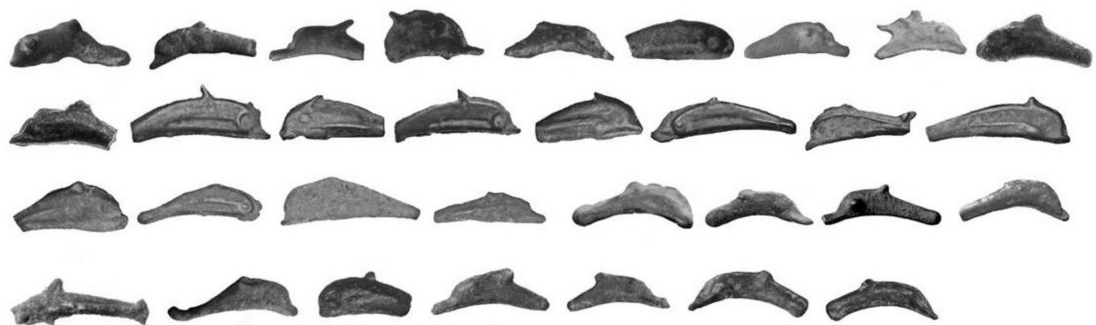
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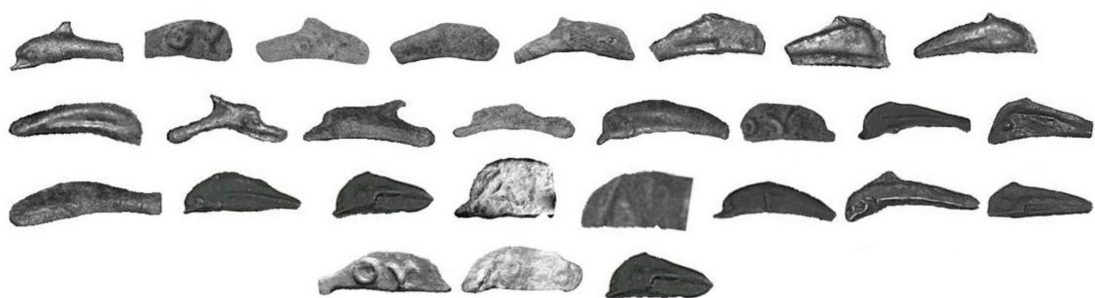
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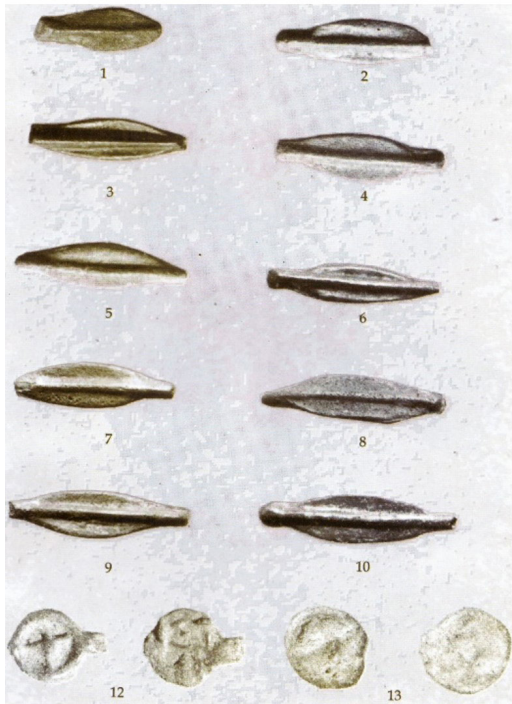
26.



27.



28.



29.



31.



30.



32.