

HELMETS OF THE CHALCIDIAN SHAPE FOUND IN THE LOWER DANUBE AREA

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Abstract: The present paper presents 31 helmets of the Chalcidian type, all discovered in the Lower Danube area, most of them chance discoveries. A classification of the helmets in the studies area is presented, using the shape of the upper part of the helmet as the main criteria. Consequently, the author distinguishes two main types: with an ellipsoidal contour or with a rounded one. Chronologically, both types belong to the end of the Vth century and mainly the IVth century BC. They are representative for the military elite in the area. The Chalcidian helmet type might have served as a model for parade helmets, e.g. Agighiol, Peretu, etc.

Cuvinte cheie: Regatul Thraciei, Dunărea de Jos, coifuri, calcidic.

Rezumat: În lucrarea de față sunt prezentate 31 de coifuri de tip calcidic, descoperite în aria Dunării de Jos, majoritatea, în condiții întâmplătoare. Se propune o clasificare a coifurilor din aria de studiu, luând drept criteriu în principal forma calotei. Se disting astfel două variante: cu contur elipsoidal și rotund. Cronologic, ambele variante se încadrează în intervalul sfârșitul secolului al V-lea și, mai ales în cuprinsul secolului al IV-lea a. Chr. Ele sunt reprezentative pentru elitele militare din zonă. Tipul de coif calcidic a servit foarte probabil ca model pentru coifurile de paradă de tip Agighiol, Peretu etc.

A whole series of bronze helmets of the Chalcidian shape have been discovered on the archeological sites of the lower Danube area during the last 100 years – but, it seems to us, they have received too little attention so far. The recent finding of yet another item pertaining to this series, in the vicinity of Balș, Olt County, entitles us to take up again this theme and to present all the items in the series as a whole (map, fig. 1)¹. At the same time, we consider it timely and important to start a discussion on the significance of this category of defence weapons, characteristic for the standard war equipment worn by the military elites of the area situated between the Carpathians and the Danube; they are to be regarded together with the well-known Illyrian helmets of Gostavăț, Olt County² and Berzovia (formerly Jidovin)³, of the Caraș Severin County (which should be added to the Ocna Mureș, County Alba discovery⁴) as well as regarding them together with the helmet at Găvani, Brăila County⁵, a variant of the Attic helmets. The findings in this series and area date back to the period between the 5th - 3th centuries BC, a flourishing period for the Thracian Kingdom of the Odrysians and for the peripheral areas where their influence could be felt. We shall present in the following paragraphs, in alphabetical order, the helmets which were found in the area mentioned, and which we consider to be of the Chalcidian type. The present paper is basically grounded on using only the description and illustration of the literature quoted⁶.

¹ A succinct presentation of the current research was presented in the AO 22, 2008, p. 7-13.

² D. Berciu, *Le casque gréco-illyrien de Gostavăț (Oltenie)*, Dacia N.S. 2, 1958, p. 437.

³ B. Milleker, *Délmagzarország Régiségleletei*, Timișoara, 1899, p. 92, fig. 90-91; Berciu, *op. cit.* p. 441-443.

⁴ Berciu, *op. cit.*, p. 441 fig. 3.

⁵ N. Harțuche, F. Atanasiu, *Catalogul selectiv al Colecției de arheologie a Muzeului Brăilei*, Brăila, 1976, p. 191.

⁶ We have also used the recently published book by Emilian Teleagă, *Griechische Importe in den Nekropolen an der unteren Donau. 6. Jh. – Anfang des 3. Jh. V. Chr.*, Marburger Studien zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte Bd. 23, Rahden/Westf., 2008 (the further quotes from it will be given as: Teleagă, *Griechische Importe...*).

1. *Bahovica*, Loveč County, Bulgaria. An accidental find, as it appears in a grave. The helmet's cheek-guards are missing. There are, however, visible traces of the initial cheek-guards' replacement by a plate with a jagged upper part. Height: 25.7 cm (fig. 2, 1, after a photograph by Teleagă). Teleagă, *Griechische Importe...* p. 440, pl. 127, 5-9, with literature.

2. *Balș*, Olt County. A stray find, as it appears in the hamlet of Mirila (about five km distance east from the town of Balș), village of Bobicești; we are not aware of any context it might be associated with. Approximate height: 35 cm; the calotte, made of bronze sheet, has an ellipse-shape, and it is delimited in its front part by a curvilinear threshold-rim, tapering in the form of a narrow angle pointed upwards. The arcades are given prominence by a protruding stripe and they converge at the beginning of the nose-guard. The cheek-pieces have a toothed structure in front, and they are rounded off at the back. The neck-guard is spliced and has rounded corners (fig. 2, 2). The helmet is conserved in the History Museum of Slatina. We have received this data from Alexandru Vulpe, who also made the colour photograph of the helmet available to us; he prompted us to use the information and illustrate the piece in the present article.

3. *Braničevo*, Razgrad County, Bulgaria. Tumular necropolis with cremation graves. The bronze helmet was found in the 10th Barrow, in the principal grave, built with boulders (4.68 x 4.35 m); it had been deposited together with a rich inventory of ceramic objects and metal objects (among others, including a bronze appliance decorated with animal patterns, a silver cup with the names Teres and Amadokos inscribed on it, a bronze pale, an amphora of Thassos, a kantharos with a black finish, a mirror and a bronze fibula of the Thracian type). This helmet is damaged in the lower front part; where the cheek-pieces should be, a little hole is visible, possibly from a rivet. The calotte is rounded. Height: 20.2 cm (fig. 2, 3). I. Dremsizova, *Mogilnjat nekropol pri c. Braničevo*, *IsvestijaSofia* 25, 1962, p. 173-177, fig. 11.

4. *Budești*, Călărași County. A random finding, made possible by the excavation of the Argeș River sand-bed, at cca. 2 cm further in depth from the current level of the river. The helmet was found whole, just a little bit bashed in by the excavator scoop, around the occipital zone. The calotte is ellipse-shaped. The helmet was fashioned from a beaten bronze sheet and it is 25 cm in height; its longitudinal diameter is of 25 cm, and its lateral diameter is 17 cm. The bronze sheet is thicker in its lower part and has reduced dimensions in its headpiece part. The cheek-pieces, whose three sides are finished with a toothed pattern and which have a trapeze form are fastened with three rivets to the body of the helmet (fig. 2, 4, after Panait and a colour photograph). The piece is at the City of Bucharest Museum. P. I. Panait, *Coiful de la Budești*, CAB 4, 1992, p. 325-334, fig. 1-4 (wrongly considered to be of the Corinthian type); this helmet was also exhibited and illustrated in colour plates on line: museum.ici.ro-mbucur-english-coif.htm.

5. *Cuptoare*, Cornea village, County Caraș Severin. A funereal finding of 1985, made on the occasion of the systematic excavations at an Eneolithic site which contained Sălcuța type ceramic material. The site is situated on the lower terrace of the "Sfogea" hill, on a promontory delimited by the Mehadia and Domașnea valleys. The helmet had been deposited on one side, with the right cheek-piece facing upwards, in a pit which also contained an overturned cup, found at a distance of 25 cm. There were some calcinated bones both inside the head-piece and surrounding it; it was conjectured that they were human bones, but we are not aware of them having been analysed, ever. The handmade cup was black, decorated with oblique channelling all over its outer curves, it was whole and showed no traces of secondary burning. The helmet is made of a beaten bronze sheet, cca. 1 mm thick; it has a round calotte and fixed cheek-pieces. The body of the calotte is delimited from the lower part of the helmet by a 3 mm thick threshold. The exact size of the helmet is not mentioned, but, judging by the scale accompanying the illustration, it should be 23 cm high and cca. 17.5 cm wide. The cheek-pieces have a toothed margin in front, tapering under a narrow angle, and the back of the piece is round (fig. 3, 5 after Oprinescu). A. Oprinescu, *Mormântul unui luptător get de la Cuptoare-"Sfogea"* (com. Cornea, jud. Caraș Severin), TD 8, 1987, p. 127-129, fig. 1-3; the author correctly considers it as being of the Chalcidian shape, adding, however, that it might be "a rarer variant of the Corinthian type".

6. *Făcău*, Mihăilești town, Giurgiu County. Discovered on the occasion of some land-irrigation works, together with four iron lance heads. The on-site research led to the specification of this finding's context: cca. 1 m in depth were found remains of calcinated bones (not analysed, so far as we know), sherds of ceramic objects, possibly being the remains of six pots -- of which it was possible to recover the form of three pots (a very amply rounded pot, a little cup and a miniature pot), four iron spearheads, a

ring-shaped piece (possibly a harness piece ?) and a mouth-piece for the horse harness – both made of iron. It is justly considered that the pieces pertain to an cremation tomb, but it is not possible to specify if it was of the barrow type. The finding-place is not very far (just about 10 km west away) from the well known Latène site of Popești. The helmet is partially damaged, especially in its lower part. This piece was made of a single bronze sheet, 1 mm thick. Owing most probably to some purposeful battering, the original ellipsoid form of the calotte is now nearby ogival and it looks almost tapering in contour, considering its axis of symmetry. Two rivets can be noticed at the frontline base, which presupposes that two cheek-guards used to be fastened here. Its height is of 25.8 cm, its width, 29.1 cm. The precarious condition of the piece raises doubts concerning the presupposition of its authors that some zoomorphic structures, a metal crown crest and a plume may have been attached to it (see fig. 3, 6 after Constantiniu-Lcahu). The piece was restored and is exhibited at the National Museum of Bucharest. M. Constantiniu, V. Lcahu, *Mormânt getic în preajma Bucureștilor*, SCIV 2, 1968, 19, p. 195-209, fig. 5; the helmet is presented as being of the “Attic type”. The rest of the context: fig. 2-4 (for the ceramic material), 6-7 (for the iron pieces)⁷. The restoration of the helmet was made by the application of a metal (bronze) coating over the originally restored items. The two sickle-shaped cheek-guards attached to the original edges of the calotte with five rivets don't have any support. Under this supposed form (H: 42.6 cm) the piece was illustrated by colour plates, in the *Istoria românilor* I, 2001, table 25, and it was also photographed by Teleagă (*Griechische Importe...* pl. 144, 1-4) as coming from Făcău.

7. *Judelnik*, Ruse County, Bulgaria. On the occasion of the local ground leveling, eight helmets were accidentally found. They were in a poor condition, being found at 20 m distance from two barrow graves; this in conjunction with the discovery in the area of several ceramic fragments led researchers to the conclusion that they might be in connection with part of the inventories in some disturbed barrow graves. All the pieces were made of same bronze sheet, though they differ in shape, six of them having ellipse-shaped head-pieces, while for the rest, it was not possible to tell the shape of the calotte, judging by their published photographs. Two of the pieces have the base of the head-piece decorated with a strip, one (see fig. 4, g) have decorations with the “a jour” motifs, while the last piece is decorated with a festoon of plaited spirals (fig. 4, d). One of the helmets featured several little holes all around the head-piece and in its upper part; they are probably the remains of a metal crest evidence that had been riveted in place, but has got lost. Three of the pieces have toothed-edged cheek-pieces. According to their authors, all of these helmets bear traces of having been repaired. The helmet height varies in Teleagă's measurements, ranging from 25 to 31.5 cm, with six items measuring cca. 28/29 cm (fig. 4, a/h, *apud* Ivanov). D. Ivanov, *Kolektivna nahodka na antični bronzovi šlemove ot Rusenko*, *Arheologija* Sofia, 14, 1972, p. 5; V. Dimova, D. Ivanov, *Antike Helme*, *Thracia* 3, 1974, p. 139, fig. 4 – 10 (the photographs are not very clear in any of these publications); rather better, more detailed images are to be found in Teleagă, *Griechische Importe...* pl. 152,8 – 159.

8. *Kălnovo*, Šumen county, Bulgaria. Funeral find. It was unearthed by mere chance, in the burrowed area of a tumular necropolis. The item lacks the lower part of the cheek-guards and the nose guard. The neck-guard features three holes, one in the middle and two on either of the sides. The calotte is ellipsoid and rounded. Height: 20.6 cm. (fig. 3, 8, after Teleagă). G. Atanasov, in *Istoričeski Muzej Šumen. Văuráženie ot drevna Trakija* (non uidi); Teleagă, *Griechische Importe...*, p. 439, pl. 160, 1-4.

9. *Kralevo*, Tărgoviște county, Bulgaria. Tumular necropolis (barrow 1, grave 2: Helmet and three lckytoi). The helmet is slightly ellipsoid, strongly rounded. Initially it had fixed neck-guards, which were subsequently replaced with some rectangular ones, fixed in shape by three rivets. Three holes can be noticed on the neck-guard, one in the middle, the others situated on the margins. The letters AB can be discerned on the right side of the helmet (see fig. 3, 9, *apud* Teleagă). Height: 23.8 cm. G. Ginev, *Mogila 1 ot necropola pti Kralevo, Tărgovișko*, *Arheologija* Sofia 43, 1, 2002, p. 32-42; Teleagă, *Griechische Importe...*, p. 440, pl. 164, 10-12, 165, 67.

10. *Lăvino*, Helmet of presumably Chalcidian shape discovered in north-eastern Bulgaria. As yet un-researched; quoted by Teleagă, *Griechische Importe...*, p. 237.

⁷ The mouth-piece of the horse harness was attributed to the V type, variant B, according to W. Werner, *Eisenzeitliche Trensen and der unteren und mittleren Donau*, PBF XVI/ 4, 1988, p. 41, table 21/138.

11. *Mortogonovo*, Razgrad county, Bulgaria. Fragments from a helmet of Chalcidian type; extant: the nose-guard, and a fragment of the lower calotte, on which can be noticed three holes and a rivet serving for the fixing of the cheek-guard. Teleagă, *Griechische Importe...*, p. 439, pl. 147, 5-8.

12. *Obretenic*, Ruse county, Bulgaria. On the occasion of some ground levelling works, there were discovered fragments from a bronze helm. It had been so deteriorated by the modern works that it could not be illustrated and it is not specified if it was of the Chalcidian type; Maria Čičikova quotes it, however, together with the this shape helmets in Bulgaria (*Trakijska grobnica od c. Kaloianovo. Slivenski okrăgi*, Iyvestija Sofia 31, 1969, p. 66 *et seq.*) It is believed to come from a warrior's grave, with a very rich inventory, consisting of 38 arrow heads, a bronze hydria of which several fragments were preserved, and pieces of a little bronze cauldron, and one harness piece in the form of a gryphon's head. V. Dimova, D. Ivanov, *Antike Helme*, Thracia 3, 1974, p. 139, fig. 4-10.

13. *Nerčina* (Mrcina), near Vršac, Vojvodina. Found by accident, with no further mentions. Preserved precariously; the photographs published indicate it was restored from several parts, some presenting small punctures which could be due to various attempted repairs. It is very likely that the helmet had been made from a single bronze sheet, being fashioned together with the cheek-pieces. The calotte is round in form. Height: 20 cm, as deducible from the photograph illustrated by Klaus Kilian (fig. 5, 13, after Tasić and Vasić). It is preserved in the Vršac Museum. N Tasić *Praistorija Vojvodine*, Novi Sad, 1974, p. 547, fig. 255-256; R. Vasić *The Chronology of the Early Iron Age in Serbia*, BAR Suppl. Series 31, 1977, p. 27. pl. 49-1. The helmet was illustrated by K. Kilian, *Trachtzubehör der Eisenzeit zwischen Ägäis und Adria*, PZ 50, 1975, plate 14; presented as coming from Zsidovina (the Banat region), supposedly being mistaken for the Illyrian helmet from Jidovin (Zsidovin), published by B. Milleker (*Délmagyarország Régiségleletei*, Timișoara, 1899, p. 92, fig. 90-91). H. Pflug (*infra, op. cit.*, p. 42), misquoting Uršac instead of Vršac.

14. *Pleven*, Bulgaria. Fragments of a bronze helmet said to be analogous to the Chalcidian type ones. Not illustrated. G. Tabakova Canova, *Novi nahodi v Plevenskija Muzej*, Arheologija Sofia 6, 1964, 4, p. 48.

15. *Razgrad*, Razgrad county, Bulgaria. Chalcidian type helmet with ellipsoid calotte. Mentioned as coming from a grave and described by Teleagă, *Griechische Importe...*, p. 436.

16. *Rogozen*, Montana county (formerly Mihailovgrad; cited also as Vraca), Bulgaria. Accidental finding in the vicinity of a site of the "Thracian" period (sic!). The calotte is ellipse-shaped. The cheek-guards are missing, but a group of three rivets holes let us suppose that they were fastened to the head-piece. Height: 23.5 cm; width: 16 cm (fig. 5, 16, after Nikolov). B. Nikolov, *Trakijski nahodki ot Severnozpadna Bulgarija*, Arheologija Sofia 32, 1990, 4, p. 20-21, fig. 7; 8.

17. *Ruec* (formerly Ūrükler), Tărvoviște, Bulgaria. Helmet with an ellipse-shaped calotte. At its base, the head-piece features a decorated strip; the details of the decoration cannot be described too easily in the published drawing. The cheek-pieces, shaped like wide sickles arc part of the helmet's main piece; a rivet can be discerned at their base, probably due to some repairs. Height: 33 cm; length: 26 cm; width: 16.5 cm (fig. 5, 17, after Velkov). The helmet belonged to a rich funereal inventory (consisting of bronze vessels, a bronze cladding piece, a lance head, akinakes, a fragment of a pot decorated with red figures etc.); this had been deposited inside a rectangular room, whose walls were made of fashioned stone, covering the mantle of a barrow grave. I. Velkov, *Novi mogilni nahodki*, Izvestija Sofia 5, 1928-29, p. 37-50, fig. 58.

18. *Sadovec*, Pleven County, Bulgaria. This seems to be an isolated discovery, of a bronze helmet deteriorated in its lower part (one part of the neck-guard and one part of the cheek-guard are missing). From the published photograph it results that the shape of the head-piece is ellipsoid, rounded and the sickle-shaped cheek-guard was part of the helmet body. Height: cca. 28 cm (fig. 5, 18, after Velkov, Danov). I. Velkov, Chr. Danov, *Novootkriti ctarini*, Izvestija Sofia 12, 1938, p. 440 *et seq.*, fig. 232; Teleagă, *Griechische Importe...*, p. 436, pl. 182, 1-4.

19. *Silistra*, Silistra County, Bulgaria. Discovered in the riverbed of the Danube River, near the town of Silistra. The helmet's calotte is ellipsoid and very much rounded. The cheek-guards are solid with the item body; two holes can be noticed on either side. They have a palm-leaf ornament engraved around them. Height: cca. 20 cm (fig. 6, 19, after Teleagă). P. Donevski, *Izvestija Varna* 10 (25), p. 285-286, fig. 1; Teleagă, *Griechische Importe...*, p. 438, pl. 187.

20. *Vărbica*, Šumen County, Bulgaria. A fragment of the back of the helmet (with one part of the neck-guard and the calotte); in the literature, this helmet is considered to pertain to the Chalcidian type. It was unearched while digging into a tumular grave (whose inventory included silverware and bronze

objects, an iron spearhead and remains of ceramic objects) B. Filow, *Die Grabhügelnekropole bei Duvanlij in Südbulgarien*, Sofia, 1934, p. 178, fig. 197.

21. *Vraca*, Vraca County, Bulgaria. In the inventory of tomb 2 of „Mogilanskata Mogila” were found several fragments of a helmet considered to be of the Chalcidian type, which was restored to its present shape by Brigitte Kull (*Tod und Apotheose. Zur Ikonographie in Grab und Kunst der jüngeren Eisenzeit an der Unteren Donau und ihre Deutung für die Interpretation von „Prunkgräbern“*, BerRGK 78, 1997, p. 248, fig. 27c, 17).

22. *Zahari Stojanovo*, Ruse County, Bulgaria. Chalcidian shape helmet, quoted in E. Teleagă, *Griechische Importe...*, p. 237, from the existing literature (*non uidi*).

23. *Zavet*, Razgrad County, Bulgaria. The calotte is ellipsoid. No cheek-guards have been preserved (and it is not sure that they were mobile) but a big part of the neck-guard is still in place. The item was unearched from one tomb of a destroyed tumulus. Height: 21 cm (fig. 6, 23, apud Teleagă). Teleagă, *Griechische Importe...*, p. 239, pl. 200, 1-3.

24. *Zimnicea*, Teleorman County. Discovered within the systematic excavations in the barrow grave necropolis, in a tomb with a room erected with unfashioned stone walls (the grave was published as C1M.D). The helmet was extremely damaged and was restored from several bronze sheet fragments which had traces of secondary burning. From the published illustration we deduce that the form of the calotte was round in all likelihood. There are no check-pieces, but the presence of a row of five or six rivet holes (as we could figure out from the unclear drawing) determines us to presuppose that these had been riveted together (fig. 6, 24 a-b, after Alexandrescu). The height of the restored piece, cca. 27 cm. The form recovered in the quoted work below (fig. 65-2; hier: fig. 6, 24 b) is largely hypothetical. In the grave inventory are also to be found: a Thracian fibula made of „white metal” (elektron?), ten iron spearheads, some in a fragmentary state, one bronze appliance, one clay water-pot made on a turning wheel, and three whole Thasian amphorae. A.D. Alexandrescu, *La nécropole gète de Zimnicea*, Dacia N.S. 24, 1980, p. 20, 55, fig. 65/1-2 (the helmet was considered to be of the „Attic” type).

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The helms included in *the Chalcidic type* have only relatively recently been defined as such. Already by the end of the 19th c., on the occasion of processing the materials derived from the old excavations at Olympia, Adolf Furtwängler had discovered a special helmet form which he connected to what was considered the Attic helmet, judging by the representations of the Greek ceramic objects. Furtwängler took over the “Chalcidian helmet” denomination from a category of Greek pots with black figures on them, and more precisely from one image to be found on a Chalcidic amphora exhibited in the Pergamon Museum, in Berlin; it represented a fighter wearing this kind of helmet, dated back to the second half of the 6th c. BC. While showing the close resemblances with the Attic kind of helmet, Furtwängler considered the Chalcidian type as deriving from the Attic one⁸. Subsequently, the archaeological literature manifests a kind of ambiguity as regards the terminology for the helmets of this shape; a frequent mistake was made in using the “Chalcidic” term, even in the well-known study on the Greek helmet authored by Erich Kukahn⁹ and also in some publications quoted in the catalogue above. In fact, we owe the description and definition of the Chalcidian helmet shape, and the first typological description of the known items, as well, to Emil Kunze¹⁰; he has been followed more recently by Hermann Pflug.¹¹

Kunze distinguishes the Chalcidian helmet type from the one known as “Attic” especially by the presence of an intermediate zone delimiting the head-piece from the cheek-piece and from the neck-guards and because the Chalcidian type helmets do not have the prominent thickening of the front, forehead zone. Consequently, the helmet of Chalcidian shape is characterized by the fact that its cheek-guards and forehead-piece form a single body, being also connected with the eye-arcade-piece, and then to the neck-guards¹². Kunze’s typology rests primarily on the form of the cheek-guards; he isolates seven groups.

⁸ A. Furtwängler, *Olympia Bericht* 4, 1890, p. 170.

⁹ E. Kukahn, *Der Griechische Helm*, Marburg/Lahn, 1936, p. 42 *et seq.*

¹⁰ E. Kunze, *Olympia Bericht* 8, 1967, p. 135-183.

¹¹ H. Pflug, *Khalkidische Helme*, in *Antike Helme*, Monographien RGZM 14, Mainz, 1988, p. 137-150; in fig. 2 are illustrated the five types of Chalcidian helmets, after Kunze’s description.

¹² Kunze, *op. cit.* p. 136.

Kunze started from the idea that their origin should be sought in one of the bronze smithies of Chalkis, in Euoboea, mentioned in ancient literature; from here it will have been taken over in all the Chalcidic colonies, especially the ones in Southern Italy. In support of this, can be invoked the fact that the oldest representations of fighters featuring such helmets are to be found on Chalcidic and “pseudo-Chalcidic” pottery, that is, wherever such pottery has been discovered.¹³ The most numerous Chalcidian helmets come from the South of Italy and Greece, including Attica. It is believed that, in the late archaic period, alongside the widespread Corinthian helms, helmets of the Chalcidian shape were also in use. The Chalcidian type is characterized by an easier construction, easier to handle thanks to the round outline of their cheek-pieces and to the wider front opening. This helmet type is considered to have appeared some time in the middle of the 6th century BC, but there are no extant helmets, dated back to this early period precisely. It has been noticed that, in the Greek world, the number of Chalcidian helmet finds decreases in the time span of and between the 5th and 4th c BC, but they continue in use at the same time in Macedonia and Thracia. The southernmost item of this type appears at Arzos, on the Herbos River, in Eastern Macedonia, in a barrow tomb featuring an inventory very rich in silver pieces and dated to the end of the 4th c. BC.¹⁴

It is within this typological category of the Chalcidian helms that, according to Pflug¹⁵, a particular Thracian and Chalcidian form appears, closely resembling Kunze’s types II and III¹⁶; they can be observed to spread in the Thracian regions of today’s Bulgaria, especially in the 4th c. BC.

On close inspection, of all the items of this type found in Romania we notice that, during their publication, some of these were erroneously classed either as pertaining to the Attic type (e.g., the Zimnicea helmet), or as pertaining to the Corinthian type (see the item at Budești); and this happened in spite of the fact that, by the form of their head-piece, by the ways in which their arcades or their nose-piece or their cheek-piece were given prominence, they clearly pertained to the Chalcidian type.

In the series of items found in the Lower Danube area, two variants can be distinguished, which differ mainly by the form of their head-piece (unfortunately, this characteristic can only be specified for the cases in which the front view of the helmet is also presented).

I. The majority of the helmets have an ellipse-shaped calotte; the ellipse-shape contour of the Făcău helmet is almost tapering, but this latter fact is due to a probably intended alteration of the form. However, even within this group there are recorded items whose calotte is ellipsoid, very much rounded (Kălnovo, Kravevo, Silistra, maybe also Zimnicea).

II. The helmets from Cuptoare and Nerčina have a round calotte. It should be noted that these two items are the only ones pertaining to the western part of the studied area.

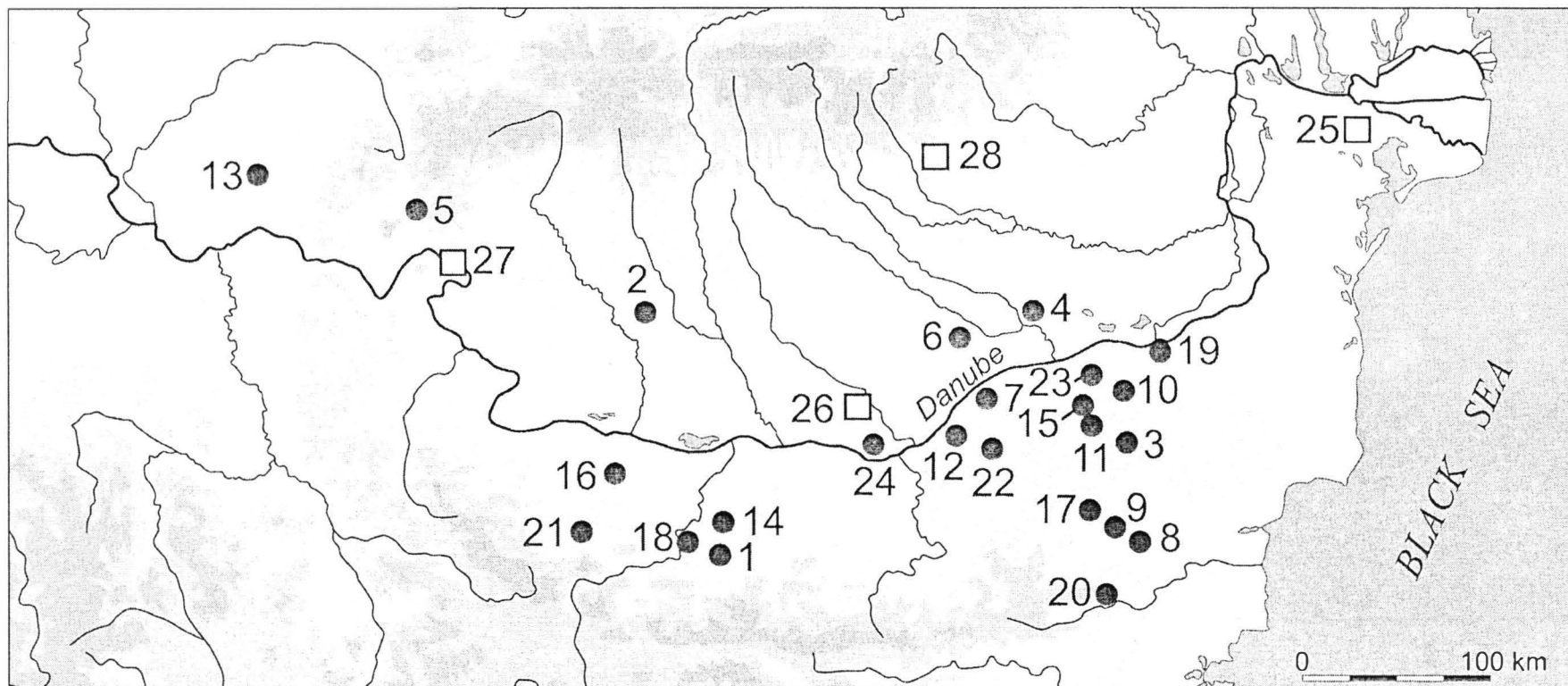
Similarly, the cheek-guards that are still extant have a slightly curving contour, on one side, (Baș, Cuptoare, Nerčina and seven of the helms of Judelnik), they are sickle-shaped (Rucec and Sadovec) or even rectangular in shape (Budești, Kravevo and Silistra). The cheek-pieces of the helmets from Făcău and Zimnicea had been fastened with metal rivets to the body of the helmet, while the ones of the helmets from Baș, Braničevo, Budești, Cuptoare, Nerčina, Rucec, and, in all likelihood, the ones from Judelnik (whose photographs are not very clear) had been wrought from the same bronze sheet. None of the items discovered in the area studied belongs for certain to type V (by Pflug), type VII, according to Kunze, the one, that is, with the mobile cheek-pieces (the restored model for the Făcău helmet cannot be taken into consideration). Actually, all the items whose cheek-guards have appeared as fastened in place with rivets are in all likelihood merely results of whatever additions due to their being repaired. In more than one of the helmets, the cheek-pieces have at least one of the sides ending in a toothed form: Baș, Budești (on all sides), Cuptoare, Nerčina and three of the Judelnik pieces. Similarly, the upper part of the cheek-guard added further to the repair of the helmet of Bahovica (1) had a jagged edge. As a rule, the helmets in our area of study do not seem to have been decorated. There are traces from a fringe featured at the base of the head-piece on two of the Judelnik helmets (7), and one on the helmet at Rucec (17) as well as on the engraved part of the cheek-guards pertaining to the Silistra helmet (19).

¹³ *Ibidem*.

¹⁴ Pflug, *op. cit.*, p. 141, fig. 7-8.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*.

¹⁶ Kunze, *op. cit.*, p. 138, fig. 2.



● Helmets of chalcidian shape.

□ "Parade"/ceremonial helmets: 25 Agighiol; 26 Peretu; 27 Iron Gates; 28 Coțofenești.

Fig. 1. The distribution of the helmets in the Lower Danube area.

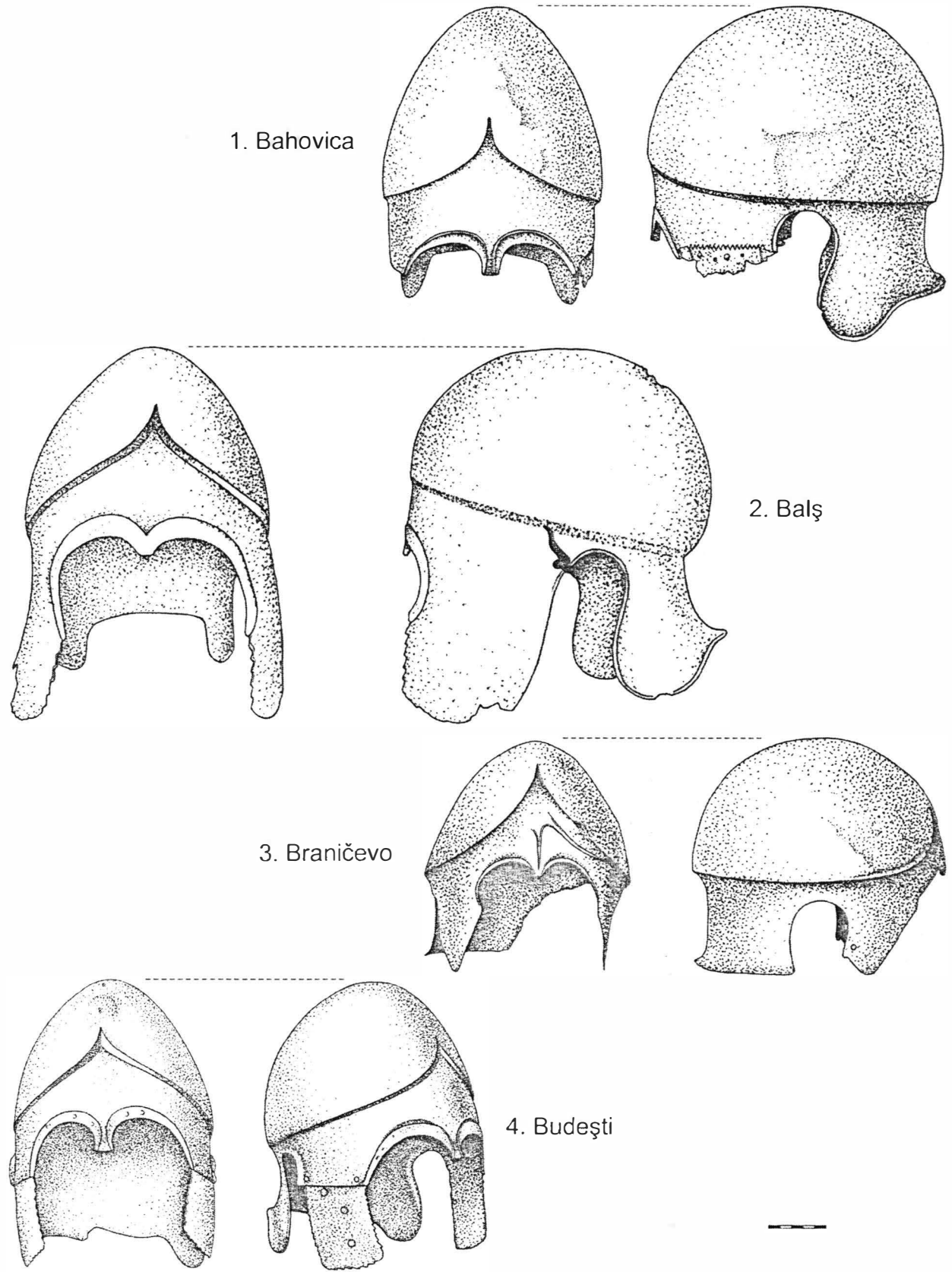


Fig. 2. Helmets of chalcidian shape from the area of the Lower Danube.

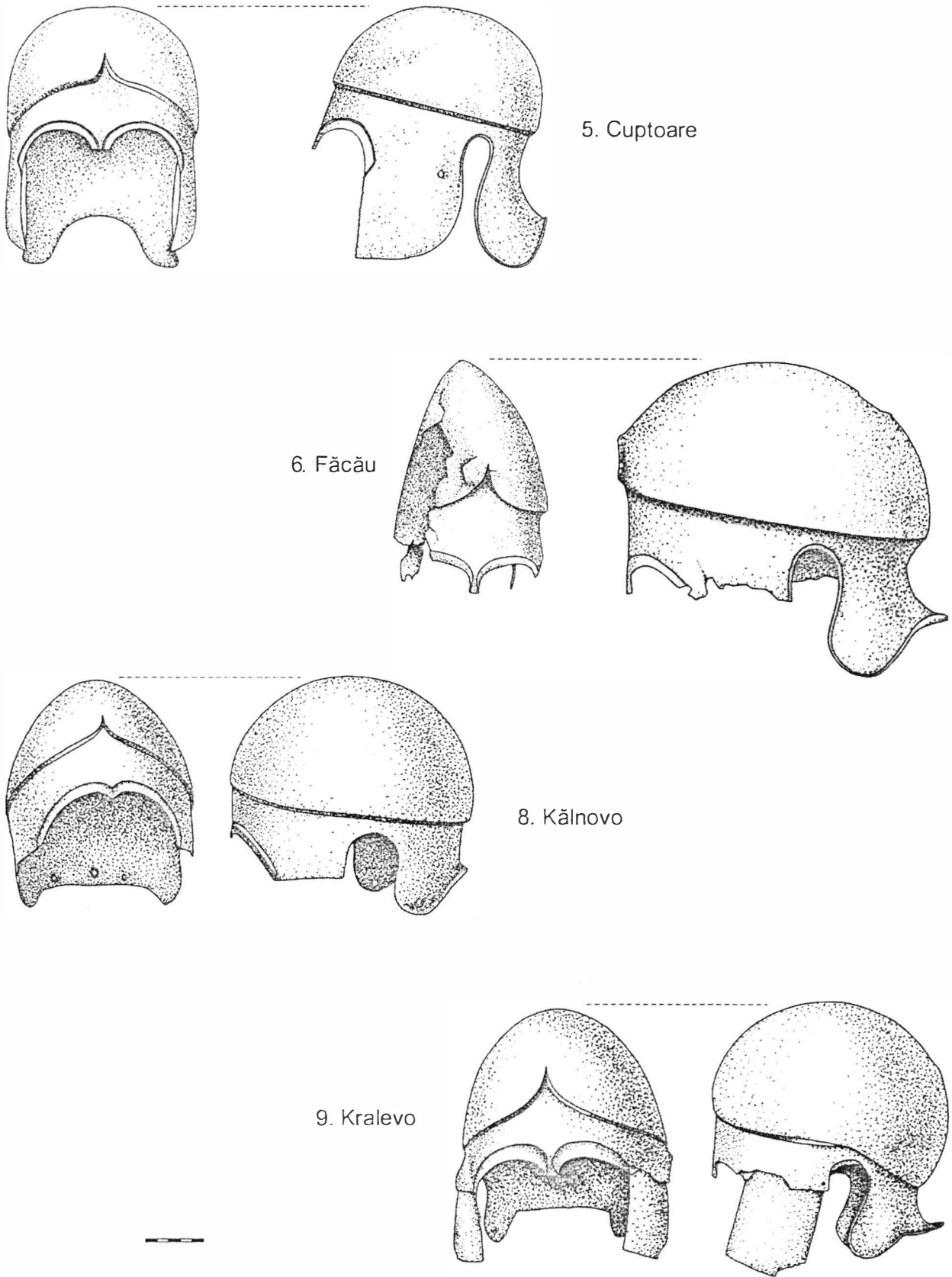


Fig. 3 .Helmets of chalcidian shape from the area of the Lower Danube.

7. Judelnik

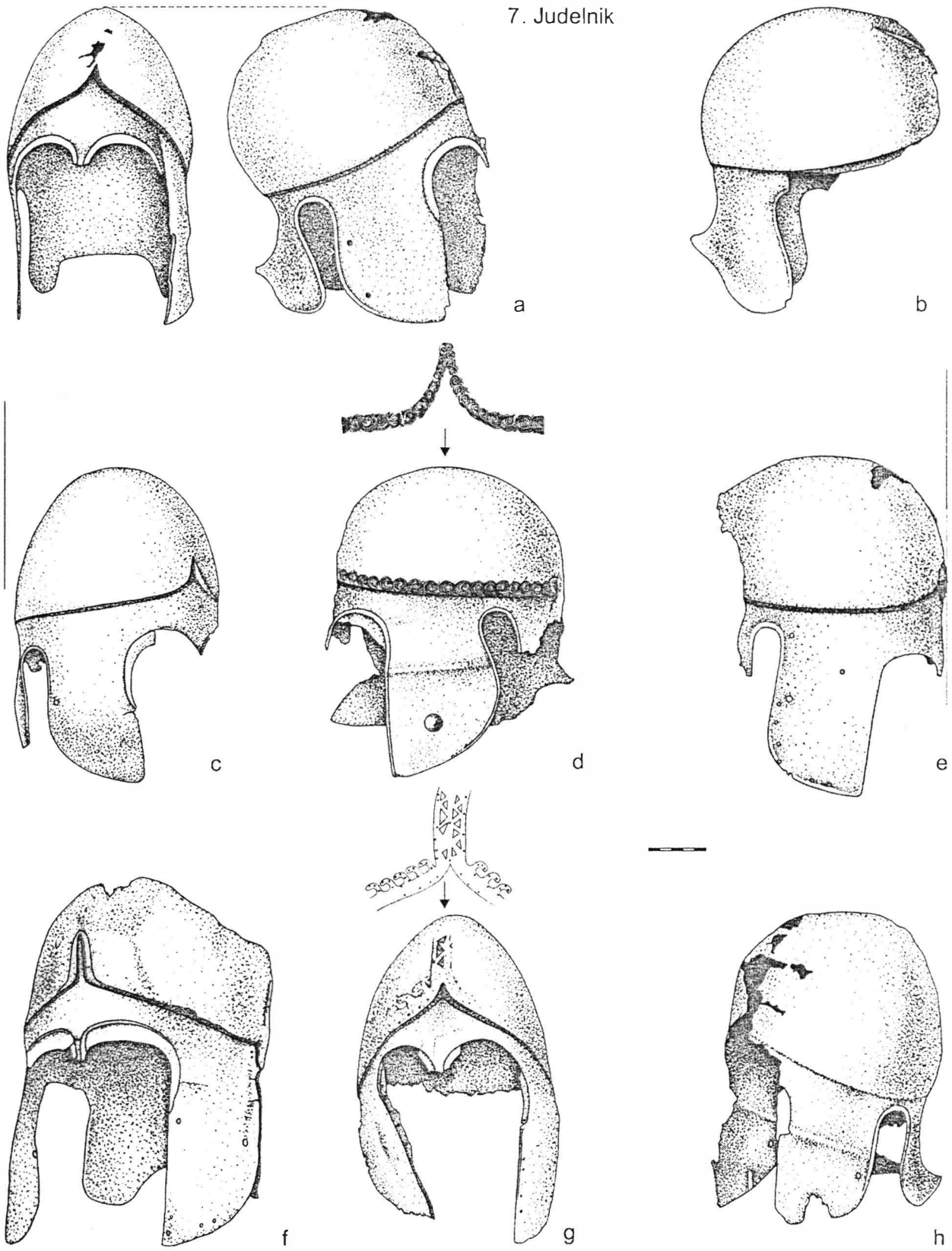


Fig. 4. Helmets of chalcidian shape from the area of the Lower Danube.

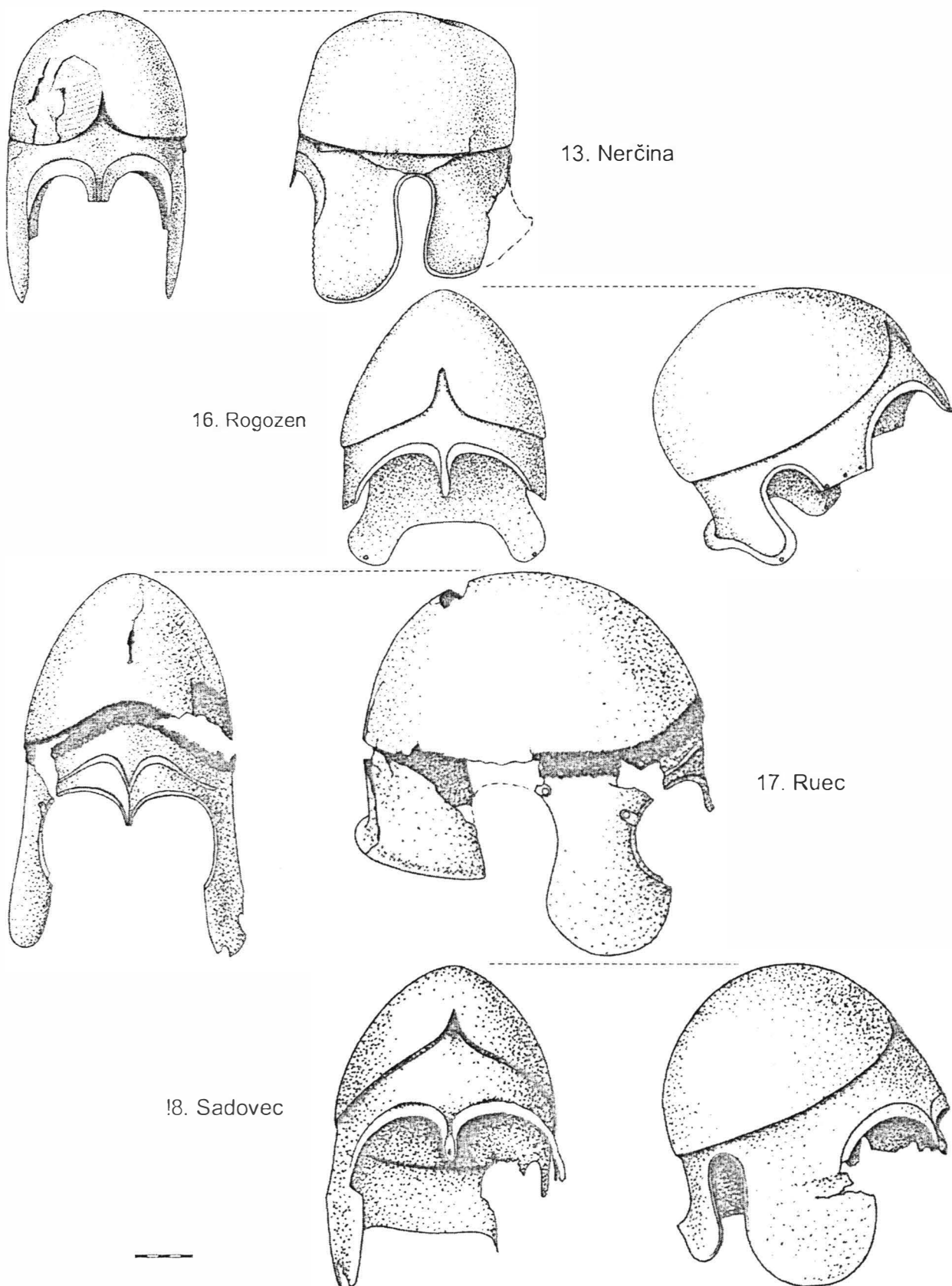
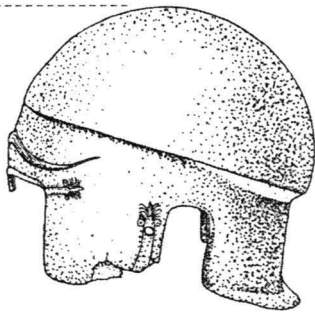
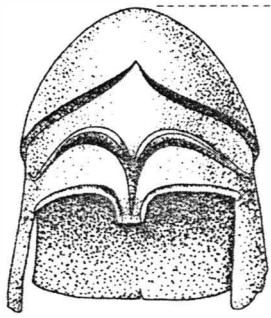
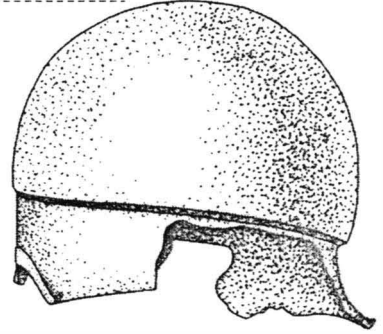
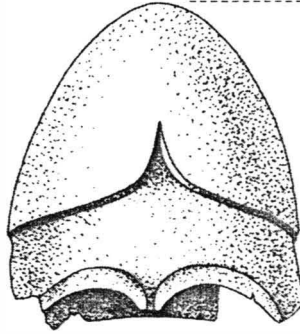


Fig. 5. Helmets of chalcidian shape from the area of the Lower Danube.

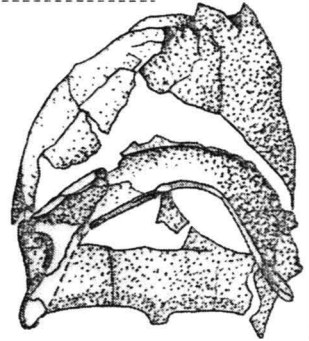
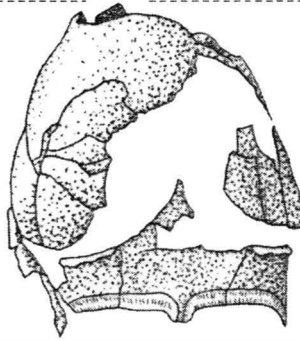
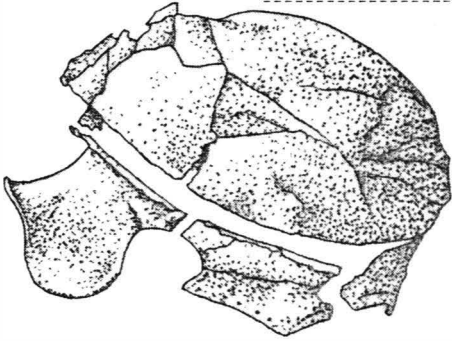


19. Silistra

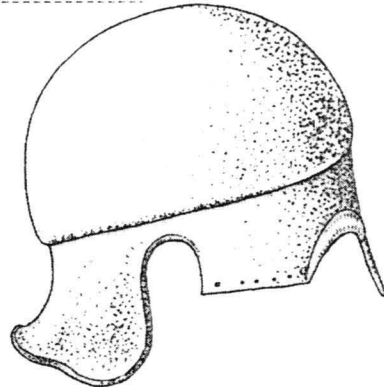
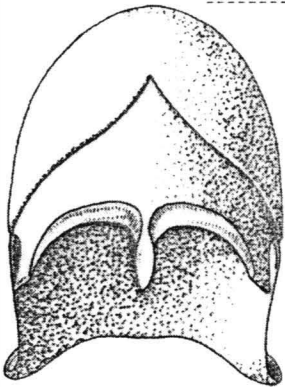
23. Zavet



24. Zimnicea



a



b

Fig. 6. Helmets of chalcidian shape from the area of the Lower Danube.

Owing to the fact that the majority of the helmets presented here derive from funereal contexts, their dating seems not to come against serious snags. The helmet from Rucăr could be the oldest, as the grave inventory (i.e., the situla and bronze hydria, as well as the ceramic material with red figures) indicated a date of the second half of the 5th c. BC.¹⁷ The akinakes type would support the same dating.¹⁸ On the other hand, the type of harness mouth-pieces which were found here were used in the 4th c. BC, rather.¹⁹ It may not be a mere accidental thing that this helmet, which is probably the older of the series, resembles the most, through its decoration and the form of its cheek-piece, to the Greek helmets (of type II, according to Kunze). For the chronology of the Romanian pieces of the series, the most expressive is the case of the Zimnicea helmet. According to Alexandrina Alexandrescu, the grave dates to the end of the 4th c. BC, and the fibula could also indicate the beginning of the 3rd c. BC.²⁰ The rest of the graves, Braničevo, Kravevo, Făcău and Cuptoare – contain ceramic forms whose dating is vaguer: the 4th-3rd centuries BC, and are not of great use to us). It is therefore most plausible to date the helmets in this study to the interval between 450 and the beginning of the 3rd c. BC, but mainly, in the course of the 4th c.

Supporting the dating to roughly the same period are the extant gold or silver (and partially gold plated) ceremonial helmets in our area (here, on map fig. 1, 25-28): the series Agighiol (25), Peretu (26), “Porțile de Fier” (27) and the series Coșofenești (28), Băiceni – which have been dated back roughly to the 4th c. BC.²¹ These helmets were named helmets “of the Getian type” by Dumitru Berciu.²² As Emil Moscalu noticed, the model which inspired the form of these ceremonial helmets was the Chalcidian type helmet.²³

Ostensibly, this type of helmet, considered as part of the defense weaponry group, belonged to some prestigious warriors, of the military elites, i.e., they belonged to the leaders of the communities spread in the Lower Danube area. Although a direct relation with silver cups treasure of Rogozen (probably round 2, 5 km distance) and the discovery of the helmet cited above (16) could not be established, the existence of a Thracian chiefdom in this zone could be supposed.

When looking at the map (fig. 1), it can be noticed that there is a big concentration of findings of this kind in north-east Bulgaria. This is the area where the oldest written sources (Hekataios, Herodotus and Thucydides) identify the Getes, Crobydes or Terides. This is also the area where the actions of the Getian king Dromichaetes were recorded in the first decade of the 3rd century B.C; he was renowned for his confrontations with Lysimachos, the Macedonian king of Thracia. The archaeological findings of Sveštari and Sborianovo (Razgrad County) attest a powerful influence of the Greek civilization over the Thracian dynasts in the area.²⁴

Although this might be a little bit risky, it is possible to distinguish the helm-bearers in this category from the so called “parade”/ceremonial helmets; we could class the latter in the group referred to in the ancient sources as “kings” (*basileis*)²⁵. In fact what the social status of the respective warriors brings to the fore is the glory and monumentality of their tombs. It is for this reason that both the Rucăr tomb, and the tombs of Braničevo and Zimnicea have no lesser monumental status than the majestic tombs of Agighiol and Peretu. Also, we believe that all the helmets dealt with here have as their main function to represent the elevated status of their bearers. Given the very reduced thinness of their bronze sheet (similar to the silver one), their efficiency for fighting would have been little, even if the items had had a protective skin lining.

¹⁷ I. Venedikov, *Les situles de bronze en Thrace*, Thracia 4, 1977, p. 98 et seq.

¹⁸ A. Vulpe, *Die Kurzschwerter, Dolche und Sireitmesser der Hallstattzeit in Rumänien*, PBF VI/9, 1990, p. 53.

¹⁹ Werner, *op. cit.*, p. 35. pl. 16/113.

²⁰ A. D. Alexandrescu, *op. cit.*, p. 55. V.V. Zirra, *Bemerkungen zu den thrako-getischen Fibeln*, Dacia N.S. 40-42, 1996-1998, p. 29-53. type III: p. 42.

²¹ P. Alexandrescu, *Le groupe de trésors thraces du Nord des Balkans* I, Dacia N.S. 27, 1983, p. 45-66; II, Dacia N.S. 28, 1984, p. 85-98. fig. 2; 3 is inclined to date back the Agighiol tomb to the second half of the 4th c., without ruling out, however, the beginning of the next century.

²² D. Berciu, *Contribution à l'étude de l'art thraco-gète*, București, 1974, p. 46.

²³ E. Moscalu, *Das thrako-getische Fürstengrab von Peretu in Rumänien*, BerRGK 70, 1989, p. 159; an idea taken over by Brigitte Kull, *Tod und Apotheose. Zur Ikonographie in Grab und Kunst der jüngeren Eisenzeit an der Unteren Donau und ihre Bedeutung für die Interpretation von "Prunkgräbern"*, BerRGK 78, 1997, p. 282.

²⁴ A. Fol et alii, *The Thracian Tomb near the Village of Sveshtari*, Sofia, 1986.

²⁵ Cf. also Vulpe, in *Istoria Românilor* I, 2001, p. 455 and 479.

There is one special case to be pointed out: that of a helmet used as a funeral urn, in the site at Cuptoare (5). Bearing in mind the more general problem of the missing archaeological traces of the burials, to a large extent in the area between the Carpathians and the Danube in the Iron Age – a situation motivated, according to Alexandru Vulpe, by an ideology specific to the communities of this region²⁶ – the presence in some apparently nondescript, poor tombs of some items indicating prestige (such as a helmet is) could be understood in the light of this latter theory.

Another, more special situation is that of the eight helmets at Judelnik (7). Even though it is no longer possible to recover the context of their finding, the considerable number of items of the same kind, denoting prestige, which were found on the same site, rather suggests their having been deposited together, in a pit. In this hypostasis, that particular find should be regarded jointly with the type of hoards denominated as Thracian or Thracian and Getian, wide-spread in Thracia and the Lower Danube.²⁷

Mention should be made of two helmets dug from riverbeds: one from the Danube (at Silistra) and one from the Argeş (Budeşti). It is quite possible that in these two cases, the helmets were actually “intentionally deposited in the water-courses” (representing *Flussfunde*).

As regards the comparative analysis made in this paper between the Chalcidian helmets and the ceremonial or parade helmets of the Agighiol etc. series, there is yet one more question to ask: what was their source of inspiration? Bearing in mind the dating of the two groups of helmets, it is perfectly plausible to consider the Khalydic shape represented by this study area as a source to be imitated by the parade/ceremonial helmets of the so-called “Getian” type. By way of a conclusion, we can safely state that the type of helmet characteristic for the military elites in the Lower Danube area is the Thracian version of the Chalcidian helmet, an idea prefigured by Pflug²⁸, and supported by the items described in the present paper.

²⁶ Vulpe, in *Istoria Românilor* I, 2001 p. 442 *et seq.*; idem, *Zu den Grabsitten der älteren Hallstattzeit in Rumänien*, in (ed. F. Verse, B. Knoche *et alii*), *Durch die Zeiten...Festschrift für Albrecht Jockenhövel zum 65. Geburtstag, Rahden/Westf.*, 2008, p. 269-273; cf. for the situation in Oltenia: S. Lazăr, *Funereal Finds from the Late Hallstatt in Oltenia*, Drobeta 16, 2006, p. 179-191.

²⁷ See the map in Moscalu, *op. cit.*, p. 179, fig. 19.

²⁸ Pflug, *op. cit.*, *supra*.