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Vadzim Belâvec, Inga Głuszek

THE DISCOVERY OF *TERRA SIGILLATA* VESSEL FRAGMENTS IN BELARUS

Abstract: The present article conducts an analysis of *terra sigillata* pottery finds from the Republic of Belarus. A number of fragments of these vessels were discovered at four sites from the Late Roman Period in southern Belarus. At three of these locations—the Wielbark Culture cemetery at Pâtrovichy and the Kyiv Culture settlements at Hačën’ and Abidnâ—fragments of *terra sigillata* vessels were reused as pendants. The artefacts discovered in Belarus are analysed within the framework of research on the adapting of *terra sigillata* by barbarian societies in *Germania Magna*. The influx of this pottery type into areas occupied by the Kyiv Culture population in the Upper Dnieper Basin is also discussed.

Keywords: *terra sigillata*, Roman period, Belarus, Wielbark Culture, Kyiv Culture

The Cultural Situation in Belarus in the Second–Fourth Centuries

During the Roman Period, the territories that form modern-day Belarus constituted a distant periphery of the European *Barbaricum*, situated along the southern border of the extensive so-called Eastern European Forest Zone Cultural Province.¹ As an integral part of this ‘forest’ world, settlements belonging to the Late Striated Pottery and Dnieper-Dvina cultures, from the Early Iron Age, occupied most of present-day Belarus, including its central and northern regions [Fig. 1c–d]. During the early phase of the Late Roman Period, groups belonging to the post-Zarubinci horizon inhabited the southern lands of the country.² However, significant changes took place there at the turn of the second and third centuries. These transformations were instigated by the incursion into the Bug River basin in phase B₂/C₁ by settlers of the Wielbark Culture, who were advancing towards the northern shores of the Black Sea. The newcomers displaced the local population, and gradually took over larger and larger territories. By the beginning of the Migration Period, the Wielbark Culture stretched over the entire south-western part of Belarus [Fig. 1a].³ At the beginning of the third century, the crystallisation of the Kyiv Culture took place. Its Polesia and Upper Dnieper (Abidnâ-type) groups occupied the area from the middle reaches of the Pripyat River to the Dnieper River basin, developing on the substrate of heterogeneous post-Zarubinci horizon groups [Fig. 1b].⁴

¹ ŠUKIN 1994, pp. 21–23, fig. 1:6.

² BĂLICKAÂ 2016; BELÂVEC 2016a, with further reading.

³ A review of the literature on the Wielbark Culture in Belarus: BELÂVEC 2007; 2016b.

⁴ Cf. BĂLICKAÂ 2016; DUBICKAÂ 2016; 2023; IL’ŪTIK 2016; BELÂVEC 2019.

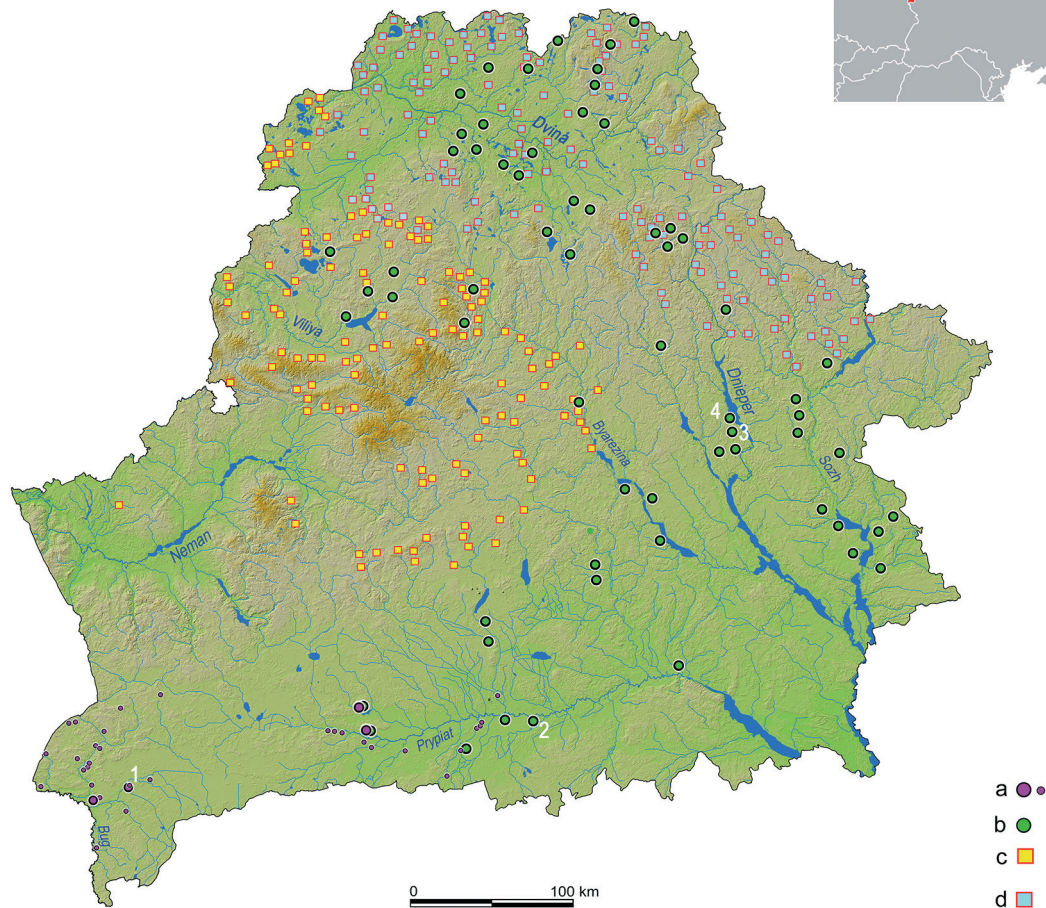


Fig. 1. Sites with *terra sigillata* finds (1–4) against the background of Late Roman Period settlement in the territory of present-day Belarus. Key: a – excavated (large dots) and not excavated sites or chance finds (small dots) of the Wielbark Culture; b – sites of the Kyiv Culture (after LOPATIN, FURAS’EV 2007; DUBICKAÂ 2016, with additions); c – hillforts of the Late Hatched Pottery Culture (after EGOREJČENKO 2006); d – hillforts of the Dnieper-Dvina Culture (after ŠADYRA 1999). Sites with *terra sigillata*: 1 – Pâtrovičy; 2 – Hačën’; 3 – Abidnâ; 4 – Tajmanava (drawing by V. Belâvec)

There was also a resettlement of the Kyiv Culture groups upstream of the Dnieper to the borderlands of the hillforts of the Late Hatched Pottery Culture and Dnieper-Dvina Culture, which were already in decline at this time.⁵ This settlement movement gained particular momentum at the turn of the third and fourth centuries, when it was joined by the related Kyiv Culture societies from the middle reaches and left bank of the Dnieper, who abandoned their settlements under pressure from the population of the Černâhiv Culture.⁶

⁵ For the current state of the discussion on the decline of these cultural entities, see: EGOREJČENKO 2006, pp. 109–112; LOPATIN, FURAS’EV 2007, pp. 75–79; DROBUŠEVSKIJ 2015.

⁶ GAVRITUHIN, LOPATIN, OBLOMSKIJ 2004, pp. 40–44; cf. also: OBLOMSKIJ 2005; LOPATIN, FURAS’EV 2007.

Archaeological Context of *Terra Sigillata* Pottery Finds from Belarus

Between the first and fourth centuries, influences from the Roman provinces reached the territory of present-day Belarus to a very limited extent, via neighbouring groups in the Central European *Barbaricum*, the West Balt Circle, and the Sarmatian peoples. Consequently, the analysis of Roman imports does not represent a prevalent subject in the context of Belarusian archaeology. The dearth of attempts to characterise this issue is evidenced by the fact that only three, more or less detailed, attempts have been made.⁷ It is only recently that efforts have been initiated to catalogue and analyse distinct categories of Roman imports.⁸ The present article refers to the discovery of *terra sigillata* (hereinafter: TS) pottery. No complete vessels of this type have been discovered in Belarus, and their fragments are known only from sites dating to the Late Roman Period. The corpus of discoveries is, moreover, not extensive. We have obtained information regarding the discovery of TS vessel fragments from four archaeological sites located in the southern part of modern Belarus: at the Wielbark Culture cemetery in Pâtrovičy [Fig. 1:1] and at three settlements of the Kyiv Culture, Hačën' in the Polesia [Fig. 1:2], as well as Abidnâ and Tajmanava, the last two in the upper reaches of the Dnieper River [Fig. 1:3–4].

Pâtrovičy (Пятровічы, Žabinka distr.) necropolis is located in south-western Belarus, on the Muhavec River (a tributary of the Bug) [Fig. 1:1]. This site is distinguished by its status as one of a limited number of the Wielbark Culture cemeteries in Eastern Europe that have undergone comprehensive excavation. In the course of 12 seasons of research,⁹ a total of 96 cremation and inhumation burials were examined in an area spanning over 1600 m². These graves were dated to phases B₂/C₁–C₂ (with the possibility of extending into phase C₃) of the Roman Period.¹⁰

A fragment of TS pottery was discovered in grave no. 69, located in the north-western part of the site [Fig. 2]. The grave pit became visible at a depth of 0.23–0.25 m below the ancient ground

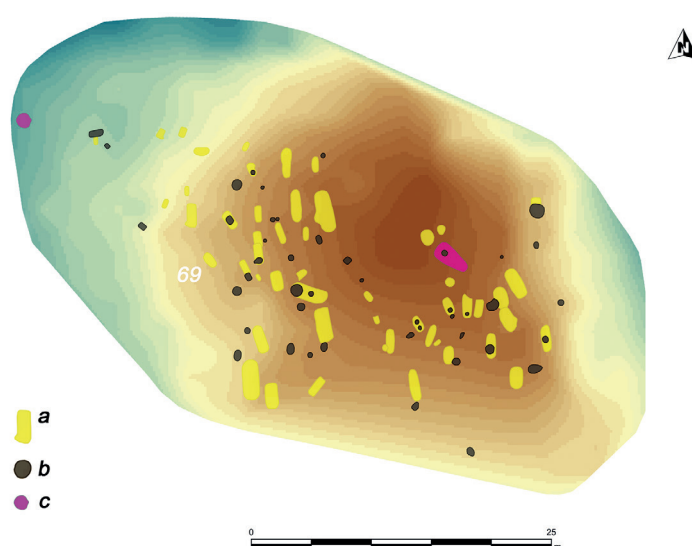


Fig. 2. Plan of the Wielbark Culture cemetery at Pâtrovičy with the marking of Grave 69.

Key: a – inhumations; b – cremations; c – other features (drawing by A. Cieśliński)

⁷ POBOL' 1971; RASSADIN 2000; BELJAVEC 2009.

⁸ BELÂVEC, CZARNECKA 2023; BELIAVETS 2025, *forthcoming*.

⁹ Excavations in the years 2000–2006, 2011, 2012, 2014–2016.

¹⁰ BELÂVEC 2006; 2007, pp. 310–330.

surface [Fig. 3]. Its outline was rectangular with rounded corners, and measured approximately 1.30×0.70 m. It was oriented along a north-west–south-east line. The pit, with a depth of 0.45–0.47 m, had almost vertical walls, slightly rounded at the base, and a flat bottom. The sediment was predominantly composed of light brown sand, with the northern and central parts displaying a transition in colour from greyish to black, indicative of an admixture of ash and fine charcoal. In the latter layer, a few small calcined human bones of an adult individual were found.¹¹ At a depth of approximately 0.22–0.25 m from the feature's upper surface, a melted glass object was also discovered [Fig. 3:1]. In the southern part of the pit, on the longitudinal axis, approximately 0.40 m north of the southern wall and 6–7 cm above its bottom, a fragment of a TS vessel was discovered. The artefact was uncovered together with a small iron object which, as a result of corrosion, had become attached to the edge of the pottery sherd [Fig. 3:2, 2a, 2b].

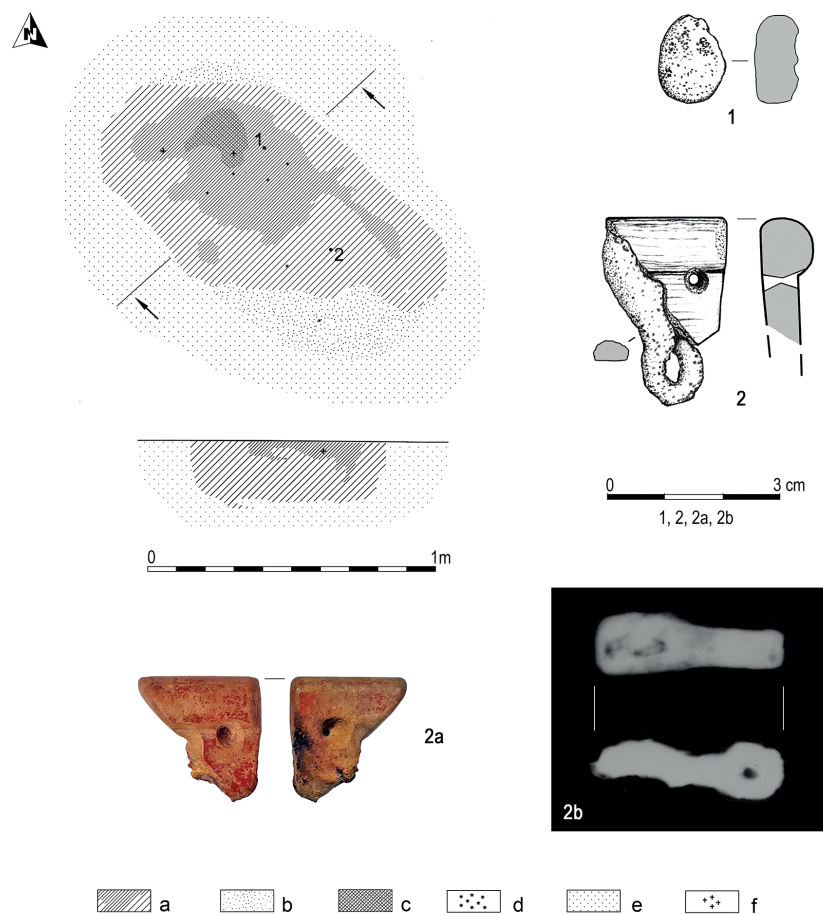


Fig. 3. Finds from Grave 69 in the Wielbark Culture cemetery at Pâtrovičy:

1 – glass bead; 2 – fragment of a *terra sigillata* vessel with a corroded iron object;

2a – fragment of a *terra sigillata* vessel; 2b – X-ray image of an iron artefact.

Key: a – sand of various shades of brown; b – yellow sand; c – soil saturated with coal and ash;

d – pieces of coal; e – light yellow calcareous sand; f – burnt human bones

(X-ray image, photo and drawing by V. Belâvec)

¹¹ The anthropological analysis was conducted by Dr Maurycy Łukasz Stanaszek from the State Archaeological Museum in Warsaw as part of a research project

funded by the Polish National Science Centre (DEC-2014/12/S/HS3/00202).

Finds description:

- 1) An opaque turquoise glass object, most likely a bead, significantly melted [Fig. 3:1]. Dimensions: height 1.6 cm, width 0.8 cm.
- 2) Fragment of a TS vessel [Fig. 3:2, 2a], shaped similarly to an equilateral right-angled triangle with a sharp corner cut off. Below the rim there is a hole with a diameter of *ca.* 2 mm, obtained by drilling the wall on both sides. The broken edges of the sherd were intentionally sanded and smoothed. Dimensions: height 2.2 cm, width along the spout 2.1 cm, thickness 0.6–0.7 cm.
- 3) An iron object [Fig. 3:2, 2b] of elongated trapezoid shape, slightly bent, with a narrower end curled into a loop; heavily corroded. X-ray photography revealed a flat rectangular cross-section of the object's wider, spatula-shaped edge and a likely semicircular cross-section for the curled part. Dimensions: length 3.2 cm, maximum width approximately 1.0 cm.

The absence of precisely dated artefacts precludes establishing the chronology of grave 69 with any meaningful precision, apart from placing it within the general framework of the site's use.

Despite the absence of unburned skeletal remains in grave 69, the feature should be interpreted as an inhumation burial, as it exhibits the shape, orientation, filling, and dimensions characteristic of standard graves of 'immature' individuals (children or adolescents) discovered at this site.¹² In the cemetery at Pâtrovičy, the absence of bone remains in inhumation graves of individuals within this age category is to be expected, given the destructive nature of the sandy soil, which is not conducive to the preservation of bone remains. It is hard to discern whether the layer of sand with a distinctly darker spot, filled with charcoal and ash, and containing a few burnt bones of an adult individual together with a glass artefact, could be interpreted as another cremation grave. In the cemetery at Pâtrovičy, as well as throughout the whole Wielbark Culture area, comparable finds are frequently recorded. The customs of the time allowed a cremation burial to be placed in an inhumation grave after a designated interval had elapsed.¹³ However, the layer in question, which exhibits burn marks, does not manifest a clearly defined or regular shape. No traces of cremation graves were found next to grave 69 that as a result of damage to which burnt bones could have ended up in the fill of the grave in question. Therefore, in this case, it is possible that the cremated remains of another, adult (?) individual were intentionally placed in the grave of an 'underage' person during the funeral ceremony.

Therefore, the fragment of the TS vessel can be considered part of the grave goods of an 'immature' individual. According to the burial customs of the Wielbark Culture, bodies were to be laid with their heads to the north. Thus, it seems likely that the object, made from a fragment of pottery, was deliberately placed near the feet of the deceased.

Despite its heavily worn surface, the fragment preserved a high-quality slip, which suggest the TS class. Owing to the fragment's small size, the vessel's form cannot be determined with certainty. Nevertheless, it seems to derive from a relatively large vessel, likely a bowl.¹⁴ It appears probable that the perforation beneath the rim was initially created for the purpose of vessel repair. In the context of the ancient world, there is a substantial body of documented cases that demonstrate analogous repairs. The process entailed the re-joining of fragments of a broken vessel through the drilling of holes in the vessel's walls, followed by the fastening of these fragments with metal wire or clamps composed of lead and tin or copper alloys.¹⁵ It is safe to assume that the specialised craftsmen who carried out similar repairs also worked in the provinces adjacent to

¹² A total of twenty graves with similar characteristics were discovered in the cemetery, measuring between 0.45–1.60 m in length and 0.30–0.70 m in width.

¹³ For similar practices in the Wielbark Culture, see: Skóra 2015, pp. 140–142.

¹⁴ Close to: Lloris 1990, p. 134, fig. 57:488.

¹⁵ Such repairs are known from various European and Middle Eastern regions (Dooijes, Nieuwenhuyse 2007; Dooijes, Nieuwenhuyse 2009; Milošavljević 2020), with substantial evidence from the Mediterranean and Black Sea areas in the Greek and Roman periods (Bilde, Handberg 2012; Öz 2024).

Barbaricum.¹⁶ Similar remains of TS have also been recorded in *Germania Magna*.¹⁷ Research has revealed that these artefacts have been found to be imported in a damaged state from the Roman Empire, or have been repaired on site, not necessarily with metal clamps. However, the presence of distinct indications of abrasion and wear on the edges of the TS fragment from grave 69 at Pâtrovičy suggests that the object may have been utilised as a pendant for a significant period.¹⁸

The iron object, joined with the fragment of pottery through layers of corrosion, could not, in all probability, have been a remnant of a repair clamp, if only because of its size. The object's dimensions exceeded the capacity of the drilled aperture, and the configuration of the twisted loop would have impeded the adhesion of the walls. Furthermore, the hypothesis that this object was a clasp used to suspend a pendant from the TS sherd appears improbable. In situ, the iron object was located in line with one of the walls of the pottery fragment, and its loop was not stuck in the hole in the vessel fragment [Fig. 3:2a]. Alternatively, it is possible that the two objects were connected by a plant fibre cord or a leather strap. In this case, it can be assumed that the iron object was a belt fitting, the upper part of which has completely corroded. It should also be taken into account that the discovery of these two objects in close proximity to each other may be interpreted as a result of them being deposited side by side, perhaps in some kind of organic container: a pouch or bag. However, even in this case, the function of the iron object in question remains unclear.¹⁹

TS vessels are comparatively uncommon in the Wielbark Culture, with a total of 23–25 finds (complete vessels or their fragments) having been found at a minimum of 21 sites, including 14 cemeteries (such as the one at Pâtrovičy).²⁰ In the majority of cases, these vessels are found in inhumation graves. In contrast, they are less frequently encountered in cremation burials, either in more or less complete condition or in the form of single fragments. They have been found in both richly equipped and less impressive burials.²¹

Pendants made from modified TS vessel fragments are extremely rare in the Wielbark Culture. According to the literature, only a single find has been recorded: a round pendant or bead, fashioned from a perforated wall fragment of TS, discovered in inhumation grave 217 at the Jartypory cemetery, site 2, presumably dated to phase C₂. There is no doubt that this pendant, together with the glass beads, was part of a bracelet.²² It is quite probable that another fragment of TS pottery, which was given a round shape and provided with a hole, was also used as a pendant. This fragment was found at a settlement in Masłomęcz, belonging to the Masłomęcz Group.²³ In the Przeworsk Culture, despite the significantly larger number of TS finds,²⁴ pendants made

¹⁶ RUPRECHTSBERGER 1992, p. 69; HALAMA 2018, p. 131.

¹⁷ Unmodified fragments with drilled holes—irregular in shape and lacking traces of grinding—are interpreted as repaired vessels (HALAMA 2018, pp. 130–131). In central Poland, such fragments were found at two Przeworsk Culture sites: in grave 2 at the Biała cemetery and in the cultural layer of the Spicymierz cemetery (TYSZLER 1999, p. 9; nos. 2.29, 2.30, p. 70; no. 23.3, pls. I:11, 12, LXXI:8; HALAMA 2018, p. 130).

¹⁸ For a comprehensive definition of traces of secondary modification of TS fragments in *Barbaricum*, cf. VOLKERS 2016, p. 241, figs. 2, 3.

¹⁹ The object may be a strike-a-light or a miniature imitation. Although iron tools were generally absent in Wielbark Culture graves, fire strikers are occasionally noted (SKÓRA 2015, pp. 69, 71, 90, 230, tables 24, 27), and are frequent in Przeworsk Culture burials (KOKOWSKI 1985; JONAKOWSKI 1996). Yet its small size (3.2 cm) and form do not fit known types of such tools. Corrosion

may have altered it, or it may have been an amulet or toy version. A similar, small strike-a-light with an eye set perpendicular to the long axis of the implement is known from the Kyiv Culture at Abidnâ (IL'UTIK 2016, p. 233, fig. 25:5).

²⁰ ANDRZEJOWSKI, PRZYCHODNI 2008, pp. 169, 171, 176, fig. 8; PRZYCHODNI 2010, p. 81; cf. also SKÓRA 2015, pp. 217, 301, Annex no. 4.10; SKÓRA 2020, p. 308, Annex no. 4.10.

²¹ As demonstrated in ANDRZEJEWSKI, PRZYCHODNI 2008, pp. 174–175; SKÓRA 2015, pp. 186–187; SKÓRA 2020, pp. 217–218.

²² ANDRZEJOWSKI, PRZYCHODNI 2008, pp. 174–175, footnote 81; ANDRZEJOWSKI 2024, pp. 96–97, pls. CXXXV:13, CCCXIX:217/13; ŻYTO 2025, pp. 109, 212, pl. 31:2.

²³ KOKOWSKI 2021, pp. 38, 161, no. LHR-3-10/9.3.

²⁴ In the early 2010s, the number of vessels within the Przeworsk Culture area was estimated at c. 392–395; cf. PRZYCHODNI 2010, p. 82.

from fragments of these vessels are also very rarely recorded. The following two discoveries from the Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship are worthy of particular attention: firstly, a diminutive five-sided fragment of a TS vessel wall, bearing a central perforation, unearthed in feature 42 in the settlement at Mierzanowice,²⁵ and secondly, a bead or diminutive pendant from the settlement at Pokrzywnica.²⁶

The production of pendants from fragments of TS vessels has been linked to the practice of reusing certain categories of Roman imports, a phenomenon that was widespread in *Barbaricum*. Analogous modifications were made to coins and fragments of glass vessels, which are also known from examples in the Wielbark Culture.²⁷ Secondary modification of TS vessel fragments was more widespread in the north-western, western, and southern parts of *Germania Magna*, where they were utilised for the fabrication of spindle whorls, boardgame tokens, work tools (smoothing tools for pottery, abrasive paste for finishing metal products, and dyes), and pendants.²⁸ The latter are most often found in the form of elongated triangles or polygons, with an aperture in the upper part for suspension purposes.²⁹ In none of the *Barbaricum* regions are pendants made from TS vessel fragments found in large numbers. The greatest number of these artefacts have been found in the coastal regions of *Germania Magna*, primarily in the Netherlands (at least five pieces from five sites)³⁰ and in southern Scandinavia (on Funen and Bornholm), where three such pendants were discovered at two sites.³¹ Further south, single pendants made from modified TS fragments have been recorded in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Saxony-Anhalt, and Thuringia, and they are more numerous in Bohemia and Moravia: six finds from six sites.³² The practice of creating pendants from TS fragments is linked to the aesthetics and prestige associated with ownership of these exotic artefacts, which were highly valued in *Barbaricum*. This may have been partly related to the widespread belief in ancient times that the material from which these vessels were made possessed healing properties.³³

Three further discoveries of TS fragments from Belarus originate from a different region—from the Pripyat River basin in Polesia and from the upper reaches of the Dnieper River—and a wholly distinct cultural environment.

Hačën' (Хацэнь, Żytkavičy distr.), Site 1, an open settlement located on the Scviga River, a right tributary of the Pripyat [Fig. 1:2]. This area was destroyed in the 2000s as an outcome of sand extraction. In the early 2020s, rescue excavations were carried out here.³⁴ A 44 m² section of the settlement was examined, revealing artefacts from the Zarubinci and Kyiv cultures. Associated with the Kyiv Culture was a number of features related to iron production and processing, as well as goldsmithing. In one of these features (pit no. 2 in trench 1), a pendant made from a fragment of

²⁵ ANDRZEJOWSKI, PRZYCHODNI 2008, pp. 174–175, no. 81. The interpretation was questioned due to the absence of grinding marks—cf. TYSZLER 1999, p. 63, pl. XLVI:6—though later the find was identified as a pendant, cf. PRZYCHODNI 2010, p. 82; TYSZLER 2012, p. 225.

²⁶ PRZYCHODNI 2010, p. 82, Annex 2, cat. nos. 233, 302; TYSZLER 2012, p. 225.

²⁷ ANDRZEJOWSKI *et alii* 2002, pp. 256–257, 258, fig. 6:5; SKÓRA 2015, pp. 301–302; SIDAROVICH, BACZEWSKI, NATU-NIEWICZ-SEKULA 2024, pp. 139–141, fig. 7:b, d, f, h, j, l.

²⁸ HALAMA 2011, pp. 370–371, 378–379; HALAMA 2018, p. 170; HEGEWISCH, MEYER 2014, p. 347; NÖSLER 2018, p. 234; NIEUWHOF 2020, fig. 6; with further reading.

²⁹ E.g., NIEUWHOF, VOLKERS 2015, figs. 2, 3; SCHULTE 2025, fig. 24:3–8.

³⁰ Pendants made from TS are more common in settlements than in graves. Their prevalence reflects the widespread reuse of vessel fragments in the second–third centuries; about 80% of the fragments show traces of secondary modification, cf. VOLKERS 2016, pp. 240–241; NIEUWHOF 2020.

³¹ LUND HANSEN 1982, pp. 87–90, figs. 9, 11, 15.

³² HALAMA 2011, pp. 370–371, 378–379; HALAMA 2018, pp. 165, 169; SCHULTE 2025, fig. 24:3–8, list 22.

³³ Cf. NIEUWHOF 2020; SCHULTE 2025.

³⁴ BÄLICKAÄ, BAJKOŬSKAÄ, HARYTANOVIČ 2025.

a TS vessel was discovered [Fig. 4]: trapezoidal in shape with traces of secondary burning, heavily worn.³⁵ Originally, the pendant had a longitudinal hole for hanging it; after it was damaged, a second hole was drilled from the front. The pendant from Hačën' is similar in its basic features to the find from Pâtrovičy discussed above.

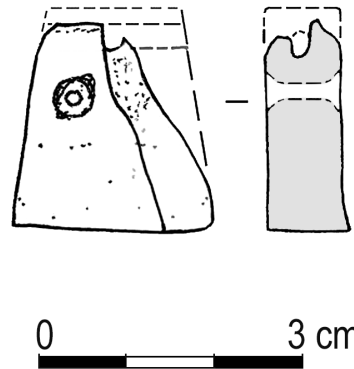


Fig. 4. Pendant made from a repurposed fragment of a *terra sigillata* vessel, discovered at the Hačën' settlement (after: BĂLICKAĀ, BAJKOŪSKAĀ, HARYTANOVİČ 2025)

Abidnâ (Абідня = Адаменка, Bychaŭ distr.), Site 1, a settlement and cemetery located on the Adamenka River, a right tributary of the Dnieper [Fig. 1:3]. The Abidnâ settlement existed for a short period, possibly spanning the end of the second to the beginning of the fourth century. It is considered a flagship site of the Upper Dnieper group of the Kyiv Culture. This extensive archaeological site, which is estimated to cover an area of around 16 ha, was studied by Leonid D. Pobol' in 1960, 1962 and 1964–1967. In an area of over 16,000 m², 29 semi-dugout houses and numerous utilitarian and sepulchral features were uncovered.³⁶

At least two fragments of TS vessels were discovered in the Abidnâ settlement.³⁷ Only one of these, found in house no. 20—a square, semi-dugout structure typical of the Kyiv Culture, measuring approximately 15 m²—has been published.³⁸ The house was destroyed by fire, which preserved a wealth of historical material illustrating the daily lives of its inhabitants. The archaeological site yielded 1095 fragments of handmade vessels, most of which were coarsely made [Fig. 5:18–26], as well as some with a polished surface [Fig. 5:27]. Other finds included thirteen spindle whorls [Fig. 5:9–17], a needle [Fig. 5:7], a probable awl [Fig. 5:8], a fitting from a knife sheath [Fig. 5:3], and a fragment of a crucible for melting metals. Ornamental and clothing items are represented by an iron fibula [Fig. 5:2] and a pair of pins that were used to fasten garments, typical of this region [Fig. 5:5, 6], as well as a belt buckle [Fig. 5:4] and an interesting pendant made from a modified fragment of a TS vessel [Fig. 5:1a, 1b].³⁹

³⁵ BĂLICKAĀ, BAJKOŪSKAĀ, HARYTANOVİČ 2025, pp. 118–119, fig. 10:6.

³⁶ IL'ŪTIK 2016; DUBICKAĀ 2016, pp. 284–286, with further reading.

³⁷ KROPOTKIN 1970, p. 85, no. 716; also POBOL' 1971, p. 236; DUBICKAĀ 2016, pp. 287, 317.

³⁸ POBOL', IL'ŪTIK 2001, pp. 109–110, fig. 1:20, 17, 34.

³⁹ This find has been mentioned many times in the literature: POBOL' 1970, pp. 172, 180; POBOL', IL'ŪTIK 2001, p. 110, fig. 34:10; BELJAVEC 2009, p. 176, fig. 5:1; IL'ŪTIK 2016, pp. 207–208, fig. 7:8, photos 4:1, 5:6; DUBICKAĀ 2016, p. 327, fig. 7:8.

This complex has been dated through a single-part iron fibula of Oscar Almgren's second series of group VI, with mixed features of types 158 and 170, that Vladimír Varsík describes as belonging to the subgroup VI, 2a [Fig. 5:2].⁴⁰ Such fibulae are common in the Przeworsk Culture in southern Poland and north of the middle Danube—in southwestern Slovakia and Moravia—but are less frequently recognised in Sarmatian areas of the Carpathian Basin. Among these varied fibulae, specimens closer to the Abidnâ specimen can be distinguished, which are stylistically earlier. The distinguishing characteristics of these fibulae include their narrow, pointed foot, which frequently terminates in a ball-shaped end, and arched, semicircular bow, which is relatively narrow and often polygonal in cross section.⁴¹ In the Przeworsk Culture, these fibulae were usually made of iron and are considered to be one of the markers of phase C₁ of the Late Roman Period, especially its early subphase C_{1a} (specimens with a 'stepped' foot are particularly characteristic).⁴² In south-western Slovakia and Moravia, fibulae of Almgren's subgroup VI, 2a appear before the middle of the third century, becoming most numerous in the middle of the century, before disappearing at the beginning of the fourth century. During this period, fibulae were usually made of copper alloys, while iron specimens are considered to be from an earlier period and are dated to the beginning of phase C₁.⁴³ Therefore, it can be suggested that the iron fibula from Abidnâ was most likely produced within the Przeworsk Culture in southern Poland or on the southern edges of the Carpathian Basin, and dates to phase C₁ of the Late Roman Period, most likely subphase C_{1a}.

The pendant made from a fragment of TS vessel [Fig. 5:1a, 1b] was discovered in the bottom part of house no. 20.⁴⁴ The pendant was made from a fragment of the bottom or wall of a TS vessel, which was given a round shape and drilled through the centre. The pendant is 22–23 mm in diameter and 5–7 mm thick, with a hole 2–3 mm in diameter. According to the opinion of experts from the State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, cited by Leonid Davydovič Pobol', the glaze used to cover this vessel is characteristic of TS from the second century.⁴⁵

Round pendants or beads made from TS fragments shaped into discs are very rare in *Barbaricum*. The pendant from Abidnâ is the closest analogue in terms of both form and territory to the find discussed above from grave 217 of the Wielbark Culture cemetery in Jartypory. Apart from the bead or pendant from the Przeworsk Culture settlement at Pokrzywnica mentioned above, only two further analogies can be cited from the Czech Republic (both in the Louny district of the Central Bohemian Region). One is a pendant from the Late Roman Period settlement at Hřivice (only known from a description).⁴⁶ As an analogy to the pendant from Abidnâ, one could also cite an artefact from a grave in Dobroměřice, although this is dated to the Migration Period. It is a rather roughly worked fragment of a TS wall with an irregularly shaped hole in the centre.⁴⁷ *Barbaricum* has yielded numerous artefacts made from modified TS fragments with a round shape and a wide hole, which are interpreted as spindle whorls.⁴⁸ However, the secondarily modified TS

⁴⁰ ALMGREN 1923; VARSÍK 2017, p. 321.

⁴¹ E.g., KOLNIK 1965, pp. 210–214, figs. 13:1, 18, 19, 14:11, 12, 16; PEŠKAŘ 1972, pp. 119–120, pl. 34:9–12; KACZANOWSKI 1987, p. 62, pl. XXVI:1–8; RODZIŃSKA-NOWAK 1997, p. 134, fig. 2b; RODZIŃSKA-NOWAK, MĄDYDA-LEGUTKO 2011, pls. LXVI/191:1, LXXI/208:2, CCLX/714:4, CCLXIX/724:1, CCLXX/727:2; VARSÍK 2017, figs. 8:9, 9:3, 10:8; ZEMAN 2017, fig. 31:12, pls. 62:6, 65:12, 157:4, 7; SOÓS 2019, fig. 6:8.

⁴² GODŁOWSKI 1977, pp. 28–29; GODŁOWSKI 1981, p. 98.

⁴³ PEŠKAŘ 1972, pp. 119–120; GODŁOWSKI 1992, pp. 26, 31–32, figs. 7:16, 9:2; TEJRAL 1998, p. 394; VARSÍK 2017.

⁴⁴ POBOL', IL'ŪTIK 2001, p. 110, fig. 34:10; DUBICKÁ 2016, p. 327.

⁴⁵ POBOL' 1971, p. 172.

⁴⁶ HALAMA 2018, p. 23: cat. no. 11.6, pp. 169, 170.

⁴⁷ HALAMA 2007, p. 196, fig. 3:1; 2018, p. 23: cat. no. 5.6, pp. 169, 170, Annex 5.

⁴⁸ See HALAMA 2018, pp. 165, 170. A similar find from the forest-steppe zone is known from the Šuklinka settlement, obl. Kursk, in Russia (KROPOTKIN 1970, p. 77, cat. no. 609, fig. 4:609).

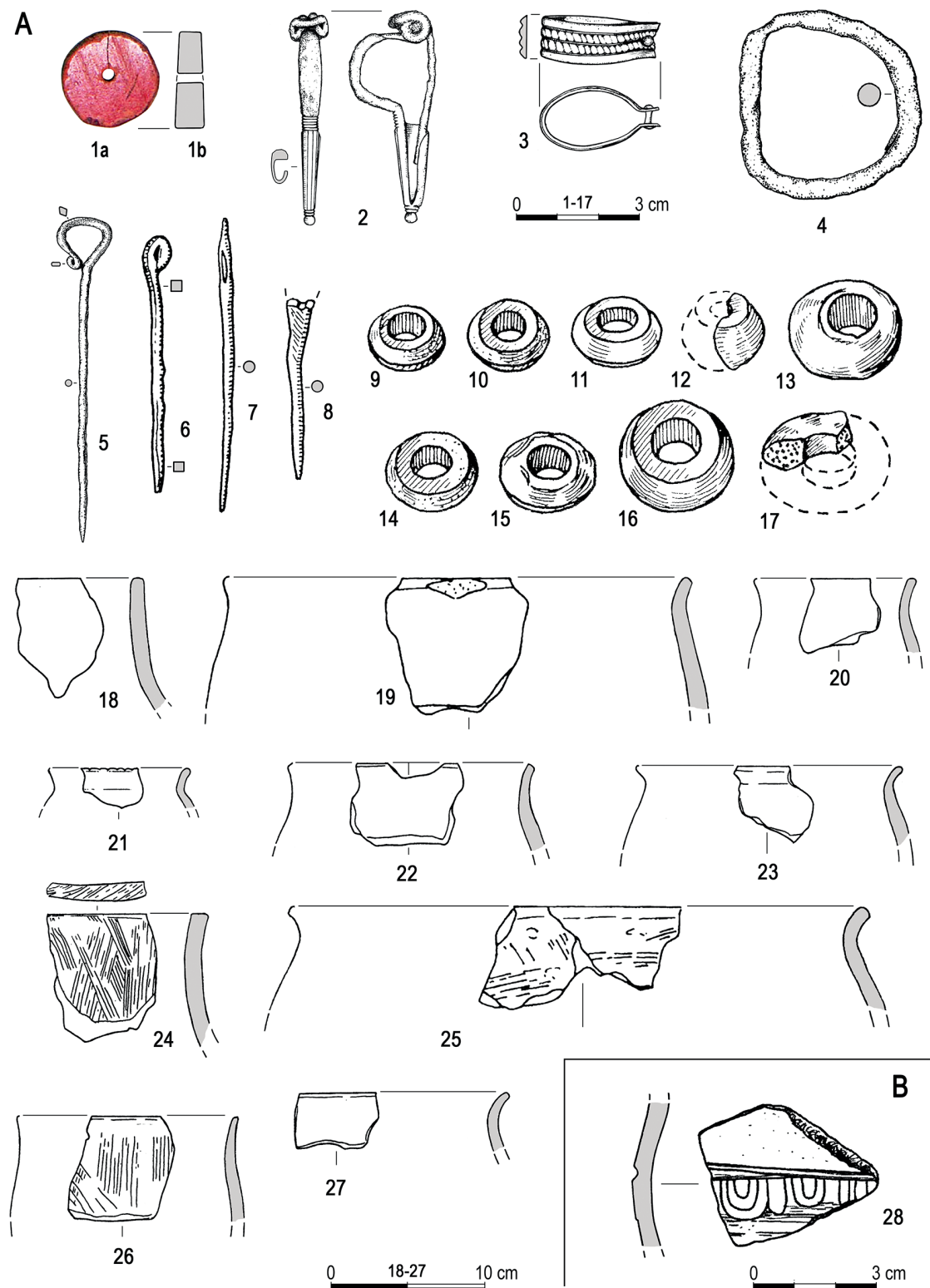


Fig. 5. Selected finds from semi-dugout house no. 20 in the Abidnâ settlement (A) and a fragment of a *terra sigillata* vessel from the Tajmanava settlement (B):

1, 9–28 – ceramics; 2, 4, 6–8 – iron; 3, 5 – copper alloy (1a – after IL’ÛTIK 2016; 1b, 2–5 – drawing by V. Belâvec; 6–27 – after POBOL’, IL’ÛTIK 2001; 28 – after DUBICKAÂ 2023)

fragment from Abidnâ was undoubtedly used as a pendant, as the diameter of the drilled hole is far too small for it to have been used as a spindle whorl.⁴⁹

Given the close similarity between the Abidnâ pendant and that discovered in the Jartypory cemetery, it is reasonable to suggest that the former was imported from the Wielbark Culture. There is clear documentation of contacts between the communities of the Wielbark Culture and the Kyiv Culture in Belarus.⁵⁰ However, it seems more likely that the idea of making pendants from modified TS fragments given a round shape arose independently in different parts of *Barbaricum*.

Tajmanava (Тайманова, Bychaŭ distr.), Site 1, a settlement of the Kyiv Culture, located on the Dnieper River [Fig. 1:4]. The area of the site is estimated at approximately 16 ha. The site was excavated between 1967 and 1983 by Leonid D. Pobol'. The excavation revealed 15 semi-dugouts, 36 buildings of utilitarian purpose, and numerous accompanying structures of various types across an area of over 22,000 m².⁵¹ This settlement was used for a significantly longer period than the one previously discussed at Abidnâ: throughout the entire Late Roman Period and the Migration Period.⁵²

The literature mentions the discovery of two TS vessel fragments at Tajmanava, only one of which has been published, originating from the cultural layer.⁵³ This is a fragment of the upper part of an open vessel, most likely a bowl, with no traces of secondary modification [Fig. 5:28]. The ornament on its exterior, in the form of the ovolo decoration, is a highly typical and widespread decorative motif on TS vessels, frequently forming the upper border of a plant and/or figurative ornament covering the lower part of the vessel. This decoration is a common feature of the Dragendorff 37 bowl type;⁵⁴ however, the shape of the sherd section also allows for other identifications of the original shape of the vessel. Consequently, the identification of the form and chronology of the vessel remains undetermined.

Conclusions

While the TS pendant unearthed in the cemetery at Pâtrovičy is a product that is less prevalent, it is nevertheless anticipated within the context of the Wielbark Culture and the Central European *Barbaricum* cultural circle.

The pendant from Hačën' is likely to reflect the connections between the populations of the Kyiv and Wielbark cultures in Central Polesia, a phenomenon that has been observed in this region on the basis of other archaeological finds.⁵⁵ Conversely, the discovery of fragments of TS vessels at the Kyiv Culture sites in the upper reaches of the Dnieper River merits further discussion.

⁴⁹ Spindle whorls of the Kyiv Culture have wider holes 10–15 mm (Fig. 2:9–17; see also: IL'ŪTIK, POBOL' 2005, p. 107), reflecting the use of heavier spindles and a spinning technique distinct from that of Central European *Barbaricum*.

⁵⁰ BELÂVEC 2016b, with further references. Fragments of a Wielbark Culture handmade bowl were discovered at the Tajmanava settlement, see BELÂVEC 2016b, p. 427, fig. 14:1; DUBICKAÂ 2023, fig. 62:1.

⁵¹ For the complete publication, see: DUBICKAÂ 2023.

⁵² The early horizon of the site (third century) is linked to the autochthonous Upper Dnieper group of the Kyiv Culture. From the fourth century, the cultural profile changed with the influx of related groups from the Desna basin.

By the late fourth–early fifth century, materials of the emerging Kaločyn Culture appear (OBLOMSKIJ 2005, pp. 142–146; LOPATIN, FURAS'EV 2007, pp. 70, 90–91, fig. 31).

⁵³ DUBICKAÂ 2023, p. 146, fig. 78:2. The second TS fragment, now lost, was supposed to come from building no. 18 (DUBICKAÂ 2023, p. 146).

⁵⁴ For the shape see: DRAGENDORFF 1895, pl. III.37; for the ovolo decoration cf. Leibniz-Zentrum für Archäologie (LEIZA) database, serial nos. 2000909, 2002738, www1.rgzm.de/samian/home/frames.htm (accessed on 14.08.2025).

⁵⁵ See: BELÂVEC 2019, pp. 135–136.

Firstly, it is important to note that, with the exception of the finds from Abidnâ and Tajmanava, no fragments of TS vessels have been recorded at other sites of the Kyiv Culture. This may be partly due to the state of research: the settlements discussed here, located in the upper reaches of the Dnieper, are among the most extensively investigated sites of the entire Kyiv Culture. However, in the Dnieper basin, finds of TS fragments, albeit in small numbers, have been recorded in the earlier context of post-Zarubinci horizon groups in the Early and the beginning of the Late Roman Periods.⁵⁶ The influence of TS vessel shapes on the emergence of certain forms of tableware imitating foreign prototypes in this cultural environment is also unquestionable.⁵⁷ Consequently, the presence of TS fragments in the settlements of Abidnâ and Tajmanava appears substantiated, provided, as evidenced by the aforementioned complex of house no. 20 at Abidnâ, that they are associated with the early phase of development of the Upper Dnieper group of the Kyiv Culture, specifically phase C₁ (likely commencing from subphase C_{1a}).

At this juncture, it is pertinent to mention the other Roman imports that have been recorded in the aforementioned settlements of the Kyiv Culture. The most prevalent category is that of glass beads.⁵⁸ The set in question is representative of the Kyiv Culture, as well as the broader community of cultures in the Eastern European forest zone during the Late Roman Period.⁵⁹ Roman copper coins have been found in the settlements of the Upper Danube group of the Kyiv Culture, albeit on occasion.⁶⁰ In the course of excavations at the settlements of Abidnâ and Tajmanava, small fragments of wheel-turned vessels made of ‘red clay’—probably ancient amphorae—have been recorded.⁶¹ However, in terms of the connections between these communities and the ‘outside world’, the rarer imports that arrived in these areas from the provinces of the Roman Empire, as well as from other parts of *Barbaricum*, seem to be more indicative. In this context, it is noteworthy to mention the bronze handle from a box or bucket of the Eggers 72 or 75–78 type, which was discovered at the Abidnâ settlement. This artefact was likely imported from Pannonia.⁶² This is a unique find not only in the Eastern European forest zone, but also in adjacent Central European *Barbaricum*. In the upper reaches of the Dnieper, there are isolated Roman fibulae dating from the second half of the second century and the first decades of the third century, which should also be treated as imports from the Danube.⁶³ As previously mentioned, the fibula with mixed features of types A. 158/170, discovered in conjunction with a pendant from TS vessel in house no. 20 at the Abidnâ settlement, is believed to originate from southern Poland or the region north of the middle course of the Danube.

The findings for this part of *Barbaricum* are few and unique, indicating the existence of short-lived but active ‘south-western’ ties for this settlement in the second half of the second and early third centuries. These findings point towards the Carpathian Mountains and the Danube basin. It is possible that these imports are vestiges of expeditions or other long-distance activities of the people inhabiting the upper reaches of the Dnieper. It is evident that products from the Roman Empire reached the borders of *Barbaricum* as a result of indirect, chain-like contacts. These contacts became significantly more active at the turn of the second and third centuries. The mechanism of these ties is difficult to reconstruct. However, it seems probable that the aforementioned

⁵⁶ For instance, they have been recorded from settlements at Grini (Грині, obl. Kyiv, UA), see: OBLOMSKIJ 1996, p. 27, fig. 2:23; and Роцер (Почеп, obl. Brânsk, RU), see: KROPOTKIN 1970, p. 14 and p. 77: cat. no. 601, fig. 4:601.

⁵⁷ OBLOMSKIJ 2010, p. 23.

⁵⁸ IL’ÛTIK, POBOL’ 2010; DUBICKAÂ, POBOL’ 2014.

⁵⁹ BELJAVEC 2009, pp. 172–173.

⁶⁰ See: DUBICKAÂ 2023, pp. 147–148, with further reading.

⁶¹ IL’ÛTIK 2016, p. 207; DUBICKAÂ 2023, p. 145; however, these finds are not illustrated or discussed in detail.

⁶² See: BELJAVEC 2009, p. 176, fig. 5:2; BELJAVEC, CZARNEC-KA 2023, p. 126, fig. 4:4.

⁶³ BELIAVETS 2025, fig. 2:13, 14.

few but exotic imports of a broadly understood Danube and Carpathian origin can be observed in the context of the spread of loot in the second half of the second and early third centuries in increasingly remote parts of *Barbaricum*, which had been brought from the middle reaches of the Danube during the Marcomannic Wars.⁶⁴

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⁶⁴ Among the most notable recent finds illustrating the intensification of communication routes in Sarmatia Europea are the finds from the Kariv cemetery (Карів, obl. L’viv, UA), a site rich in Roman imports from phase B2/C1–C1a and artefacts of the Eastern European forest zone (Onyščuk, Schuster 2017; Onišuk 2021). The handle

attachment of the vessel, decorated with the head of a Suebian, may derive from a cauldron of Mušov-type. A similar example was found at Kulišejka (Кулишейка, Republic of Mordovia, RU) in the middle Volga basin (Ahmedov 2010; Schuster 2022).

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