

A BRONZE SICKLE FROM ZEBIL (SARICHIOI, TULCEA COUNTY)

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Even though, recently, a number of finds made in Dobroudja and attributed to the Late Bronze Age have been published, this historical period continues to be little known for the territory between the Danube and the Black Sea. In this paper we will present a recent find that can be attributed to the Late Bronze Age, and that will hopefully bring new information to complete the archaeological picture of this period. The discovery consists in a bronze sickle found by chance at Zebil (Sarichioi, Tulcea County). The object is part of the collection of Mr. V. Teliceanu, to whom we hereby express our gratitude for allowing us to examine it.

The sickle is strongly rounded, its exterior margin looks like a thickened vein, with a rather triangular profile. Towards the tip, the sickle is thinner, and the tip itself is rounded. The part used for fastening the handle, where the molding in a covered single-valve mould has also been made, is noticeably thicker than its rest and no marks of finishing can be seen. The artifact has a noble green patina with black-brownish shades and the limestone depositions have partially fallen out from the surface. It has a length of 15.3 cm, a maximum width of 2 cm and it weighs 0,090kg (Fig.1).

This type of sickle, also called „à patte”, can be found in numerous hoards dated to the end of the Bronze Age, but also as single find. In Dobroudja, the closest analogies are in the hoards from Constanța „Palas”¹, Gura Dobrogei² and Nicolae Bălcescu³. In the Southern part of Romania the hoards at Draja de Jos⁴, Olteni⁵ and Cârligu Mare⁶, and the single finds from Gumelnița⁷ and Pietroiu⁸ are

¹ IRIMIA 1968, p. 94-96, fig. 12/1-6, 13/ 1-4.

² ARICESCU 1965, p. 21-23, fig. 4/5-8.

³ ARICESCU 1965, p. 19-21, fig. 3/10-13.

⁴ PETRESCU – DÎMBOVIȚA 1977, p. 78 – 79, fig. 90/ 8-11.

⁵ PETRESCU – DÎMBOVIȚA 1977, p. 79, fig. 95/ 10-12.

⁶ PETRESCU – DÎMBOVIȚA 1977, p. 153, fig. 366/4.

⁷ ȘERBĂNESCU, TROHANI 1975, p. 535, fig. 4/7; the sickle discovered here was attributed by the authors to phase IV of Tei culture.

⁸ IRIMIA 1981, p. 363, 366, fig. 5/9.

known. In Transylvania, the only known similar sickles are those from the hoards found at Valea Largă⁹, Patinceu¹⁰ and Șpălnaca II¹¹. Other discoveries have been recorded in Moldavia (Romania) and in the Republic of Moldova, like the hoards from Negrești¹², Țigănești¹³, Dancu II¹⁴ and Chișinău I¹⁵; the most Eastern find for this type of sickles comes from the hoard of Orehovo (Ukraine)¹⁶.

There have also been numerous discoveries in Bulgaria, where sickles of this type were found as part of the hoards (Isperich¹⁷, Dičevo¹⁸, Suvorovo¹⁹, Vrbica I²⁰), or as single finds in Ruse²¹ and Tucaci²² regions.

The hoard from Tekirdağ, in the European part of Turkey, has a special chronological importance. This hoard contains swords, spearheads, double edge halberds, axes, 45 sickles and many bronze vessels. These objects come from different areas: one of the swords belongs to Sandars's type F of swords and can be dated to LH III B-C; another sword comes from Anatolia. The dagger with winged handle is of Canaan origin, with analogies in the house of the great Ugarit priest and in the shipwreck at Uluburun. The spearheads with split socket can also be found in the Aegean and Bulgaria, the same as the double edge halberds. The two winged axes come from central Anatolia, the socketed axes and sickles come from Eastern Bulgaria and Eastern Walachia, with ramifications in the North of the Black Sea²³.

Chronologically speaking, these sickles can be dated to the Late Bronze Age, taking into account the association with other categories of objects from the already mentioned hoards, but especially the association with the sickles found in the hoard from Tekirdağ. The spreading area is rather large, as it includes most part of Southeastern Europe; however, there can be noticed a higher concentration in the Southern part of Romania and North of Bulgaria (Fig. 2), which makes us assume that in this part there was a production center for these sickles. The area where the sickles were found corresponds to the area occupied at that time by the cultures Noua, Coslogeni, Zimnicea – Plovdiv and the final phases of Tei culture.

In Dobroudja however, the presence of such objects is rather strange, as we don't know any proper inhabitation on this territory at the end of the Bronze Age. The hoards from Constanța „Palas”, Nicolae Bălcescu, Gura Dobrogei, Medgidia²⁴

⁹ PETRESCU – DÎMBOVIȚA 1977, p. 72, fig. 71/3.

¹⁰ PETRESCU – DÎMBOVIȚA 1977, p. 65, fig. 57/8.

¹¹ PETRESCU – DÎMBOVIȚA 1977, p. 108-112, fig. 200/2.

¹² PETRESCU – DÎMBOVIȚA 1977, p. 76, fig. 84/7.

¹³ PETRESCU – DÎMBOVIȚA 1977, p. 77, fig. 88/3.

¹⁴ DERGAČEV 2002, p. 34 sq., fig. 24/17-19, 25/24-27.

¹⁵ DERGAČEV 2002, p. 33-34, fig. 22/4.

¹⁶ ČERNYCH 1976, p. 88-97, fig. 20/10.

¹⁷ ČERNYCH 1978, p. 207, fig. 43/1-4.

¹⁸ ČERNYCH 1978, p. 207, fig. 43/5, 10, 12-15; 44/1-14, 45/1-13.

¹⁹ ČERNYCH 1978, p. 207, fig. 43/9, 11.

²⁰ ČERNYCH 1978, p. 224, fig. 57/1-20.

²¹ ČERNYCH 1978, p. 207, fig. 43/6-8.

²² ČERNYCH 1978, p. 207, fig. 43/14.

²³ HANSEN 2005, p. 304, fig. 1/13-57.

²⁴ NESTOR 1938, p. 175-189.

and the most recently published, the one from Casimcea²⁵, as well as a series of single finds at Sabangia²⁶, Medgidia²⁷, Beidaud²⁸ or Cerna²⁹ can be placed in the same chronological horizon.

Even though in Southeastern Romania, till now, there are documented settlements of the Noua and Coslogeni cultures, in Dobroudja, however, there haven't been identified settlements belonging to these cultures. The only archaeological records concern the discovery of Coslogeni type pottery, which is mostly a rough kind of pottery (kitchenware), found in settlements belonging to the Babadag culture³⁰.

Catalogue of finds:

1. Cârligu Mare (hoard – 1 piece; PETRESCU – DÎMBOVIȚA 1977, p. 153, fig. 366/4); 2. Chișinău I (hoard – 1 piece; DERGAČEV 2002, p. 33-34, fig. 22/4); 3. Constanța Palas" (hoard – 10 pieces; IRIMIA 1968, p. 94-96, fig. 12/1-6, 13/ 1-4); 4. Dancu II (hoard – 7 pieces; DERGAČEV 2002, p. 34 sq., fig. 24/17-19, 25/24-27); 5. Dičevo (hoard – 32 pieces; ČERNYCH 1978, p. 207, fig. 43/ 5, 10, 12-15; 44/1-14, 45/1-13); 6. Drajna de Jos (hoard – 4 pieces; PETRESCU – DÎMBOVIȚA 1977, p. 78 – 79, fig. 90/ 8-11); 7. Gumelnița (single find – 1 piece; ȘERBĂNESCU, TROHANI 1975, p. 535, fig. 4/7); 8. Gura Dobrogei (hoard – 4 pieces; ARICESCU 1965, p. 21-23, fig. 4/5-8); 9. Ispirich (hoard – 4 pieces; ČERNYCH 1978, p. 207, fig. 43/1-4); 10. Negrești (hoard – 1 piece; PETRESCU – DÎMBOVIȚA 1977, p. 76, fig. 84/7); 11. Nicolae Bălcescu (hoard – 4 pieces; ARICESCU 1965, p. 19-21, fig. 3/10-13); 12. Olteni (hoard – 3 pieces; PETRESCU – DÎMBOVIȚA 1977, p. 79, fig. 95/ 10-12); 13. Orehovo (hoard – 1 piece; ČERNYCH 1976, p. 88-97, fig. 20/10); 14. Patinceu (hoard – 1 piece; PETRESCU – DÎMBOVIȚA 1977, p. 65, fig. 57/8); 15. Pietroiu (single find – 1 piece; IRIMIA 1981, p. 363, 366, fig. 5/9); 16. reg. Ruse (single finds – 3 pieces; ČERNYCH 1978, p. 207, fig. 43/6-8); 17. Șpălnaca II (hoard – 1 piece; PETRESCU – DÎMBOVIȚA 1977, p. 108-112, fig. 200/2); 18. Suvorovo (hoard – 2 pieces; ČERNYCH 1978, p. 207, fig. 43/9, 11); 19. Tekirdağ (hoard – 45 pieces; HANSEN 2005, p. 304, fig. 1/13-57); 20. Tucaci region (single find – 1 piece; ČERNYCH 1978, p. 207, fig. 43/14); 21. Țigănești (hoard – 1 piece; PETRESCU – DÎMBOVIȚA 1977, p. 77, fig. 88/3); 22. Valea Largă (hoard – 1 piece; PETRESCU – DÎMBOVIȚA 1977, p. 72, fig. 71/3); 23. Vrbica I (hoard – 20 pieces; ČERNYCH 1978, p. 224, fig. 57/1-20); 24. Zebil (single find – 1 piece).

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²⁵ SIMION 2003 a, p. 67-68, fig. 7/1-6.

²⁶ SIMION 2003 b, p. 20, fig. 5/3.

²⁷ IRIMIA, BELC 2002, p. 15-20; BADER 1990, p. 34-36, fig. 5/22.

²⁸ JUGĂNARU 1997a, p. 353-357.

²⁹ SIMION 2003 a, p. 68, fig. 7/9.

³⁰ JUGĂNARU 1997b, p. 103; IRIMIA, CONOVICI 1993, fig. 11/1,7, 12/ 1-4, 8-9, 13/1,3-5, 14/10; SIMION 2003 a, p. 63 sq.

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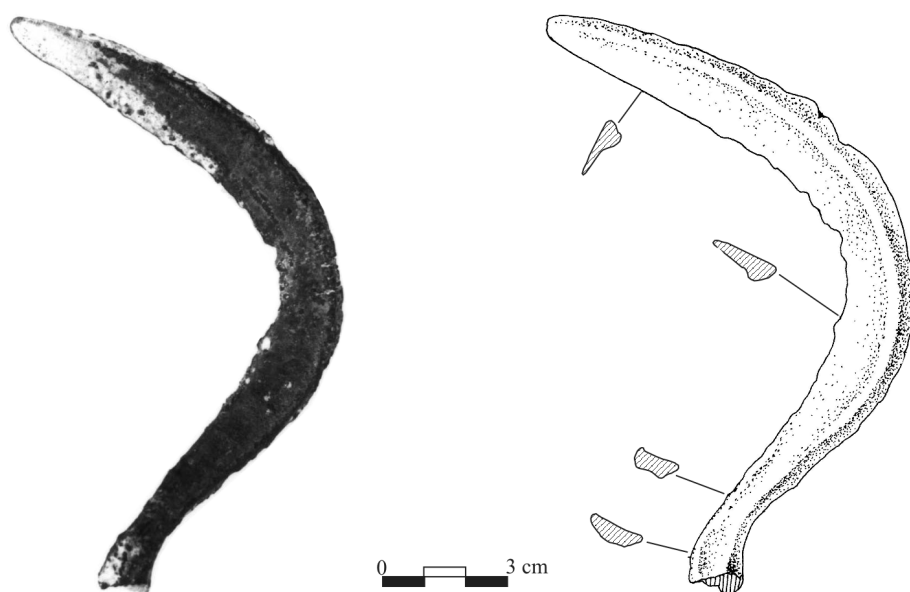


Fig. 1 - Bronze sickle discovered at Zebil.

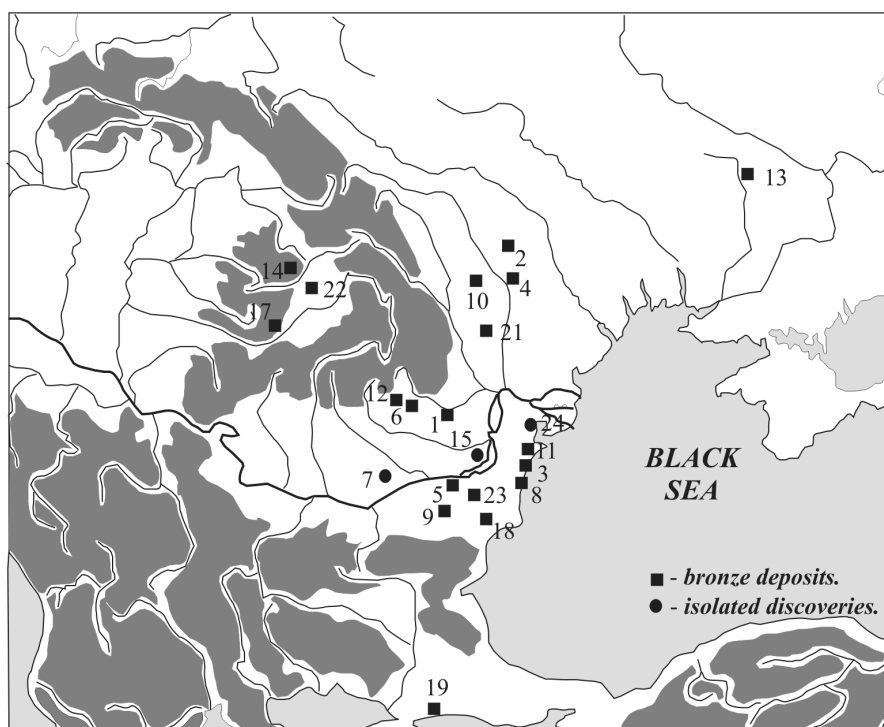


Fig. 2 - The spreading area of the sickles of „à patte” type.