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Petru Ureche



# Studies

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## ANCIENT HISTORY

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### THE SMALL HOARD FROM HERINA. DYRRACHIUM COINS AND SILVER BRACELET

**Abstract:** The increase of legislation flexibility with the opportunity to receive a fair amount of award for reporting the discovery of ancient artefact, has led to the raise of hoards' number in the last decades in Romania.

This paper is focusing on a small such discovery that consists of 20 drachms of Dyrrachium and one Latene silver bracelet.

The combination of coins and silver bracelet in the vicinity of a Dacian settlement may suggest a symbolic value and a statue of the former owner. The lack of a container and a certain archaeological context does not allow, at the moment, to figure out whether the hoard was buried in an emergency situation or is result of a votive offering.

**Keywords:** *hoard, drachms of Dyrrhacium, silver bracelet, Herina.*

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The convergence approach between the legislation on the statute of metal detecting in Romania and the increase of understanding on the meaning of protecting the cultural heritage from the side of metal detectorists has led in the last decade to the increase of reported hoards discovered by metal detecting.

The present paper is focused on one of these discoveries.

A small hoard was found on the 13<sup>th</sup> of June 2021, by Dan Abrudan, while metal detecting at circa 500 m from the Tăuș Hill Peak, on the right bank of the Valea Viilor Creek, locality of Herina, Bistrița-Năsăud County, Romania (see map).

The hoard consists of 20 drachms of Dyrrhachium and a silver bracelet with snake head-shaped ends (see catalogue). The distribution of magistrates is as follow: Perigenes and Damenos – 1; Meniskos and Agathionos – 1; Meniskos and Archippos – 2; Meniskos and Dionysios – 4; Meniskos and Kallonos – 3; Meniskos and Lykiskos – 2; Meniskos and Philotas – 3; Zenon and Purba – 1; Zenon and Philodamos – 2; Zenon and Charopinos – 1.

According to A. Meta dating of the coinage of Dyrrhachium,<sup>1</sup> the earliest coin was minted in the period of 120-80/70 BC, magistrates Perigenes and Damenos while the rest belong to the same chronological segment of 80/70 – 60/55 BC (see catalogue).

The dating of the silver bracelet covers a large chronological segment of LT D1-D2 (125-75 BC).

<sup>1</sup> META 2015.

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Therefore, the deposition of this hoard may have occurred mid-1<sup>st</sup> century BC.

The hoards containing drachms of Dyrrachium have been found in a very large number on the territory of pre-Roman Dacia. Already by 1985, according to N. Conovici<sup>2</sup> and C. Voicu,<sup>3</sup> 87 hoards and over 50 findspots of single finds have been discovered on the Romanian territory of Romania, totalling between 12 to 13,000 pieces. Since then, the number has strongly increased. The number of coins within hoards can vary from ten to thousands (e.g. Deva hoard).<sup>4</sup> At the same time, the coins of Dyrrachium have been found in hoards either entirely consisting of such issues or beside Thasian tetradrachms and Republican denarii (e.g. Arcuş)<sup>5</sup>.

Such a large number of hoards and single finds, their main concentration on the territory of pre-Roman Dacia, together with the presence of a large number of imitations may raise the question whether some of the coins of Dyrrachium – and, probably, the case of the coins Apollonia, too – were not, in fact, produced in Dacia? There are a series of arguments for previous cases, as shown below.

There is already quite a rich bibliography on the phenomenon of coin production through copying/imitating on the Dacian soil. The massive reproduction of Philip II tetradrachm (the horse rider type) is already a long-term certified phenomenon not only among the Dacian tribes but Celtic ones, too. In the case of the Dacian tribes, there are even two main phases of production following the degrading quality of design.<sup>6</sup>

The massive presence of the Republican denarius in pre-Roman Dacia – both hoards and single finds –, second after Italy<sup>7</sup>, beside the war<sup>8</sup> and the trade explanations<sup>9</sup>, has received in the last decades more credit as a result of a local coin production. The metal analyses,<sup>10</sup> imitations' presence,<sup>11</sup> the discovery of coin-dies<sup>12</sup> and spoilt cast republican denarii<sup>13</sup> are all arguments for a massive production of copied Roman republican denarius.<sup>14</sup>

Therefore, it seems that the Dacians, were adapting themselves to the most valuable currency on the market. Thus, while copying the Philip II's tetradrachm for the Hellenistic period and the Republican denarius when this is becoming the most circulated/hoarded denomination in the Balkans in the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC, why not doing the same for the drachms of Dyrrachium and Apollonia, filling the gap of coin production between the Hellenistic and the Republican currencies on the pre-Roman Dacian area? A horizon of

'Dacian' hoards has been already established for the end of 2<sup>nd</sup> century – mid 1<sup>st</sup> century BC.<sup>15</sup>

The presence of the silver bracelet in the same hoard with drachms of Dyrrachium is not a unique case. There are quite a number of hoards found in the LT Dacia consisting of both drachms and jewellery.<sup>16</sup> Especially bracelets "made of a silver rod and having flattened ends decorated with snake heads or geometric elements are encountered in a series of Transylvanian hoards belonging to the first horizon."<sup>17</sup>

According to M. Egri and A. Rustoiu, "the hoards of silver jewellery were always buried outside the settlements, but regularly close to some fortified centres or fortresses, thus illustrating a particular relationship with the local authority."<sup>18</sup> In the case of the hoard under study the findspot is 1.5 km from the Latène (BN-I-m-B-01352.01) and Hallstatt (BN-I-m-B-01352.02) settlement from Herina.<sup>19</sup> Following the same authors, another pattern of such hoards is their deposition at a very small depth, mainly 0.30-0.60 m.<sup>20</sup> Again, the Herina hoard followed this aspect, as it was discovered at a depth of circa 0.35m.

Despite the small number of coins (20), the presence of the silver bracelet may suggest a symbolic value and a possible social statue of the individual who owned it.<sup>21</sup> The sizes of bracelet (diameter: 6.5 cm) may suggest a female person.

It has been demonstrated that "upon the death of priestesses or when their function had ceased, their individualised jewellery sets, which must have been an intrinsic part of a specific ceremonial costume, were destroyed and buried in the vicinity of the communities."<sup>22</sup>

However, although this hypothesis seems very tempting, the small number of coins and just one bracelet – no set(s), this small hoard may be regarded as more as some private wealth. The absence of a container – it could have had one but of perishable material (textile or organic nature) – and a clear archaeological context, it is difficult to know whether this hoard was buried for an emergency reason or a votive offering with no intention of recovery.

<sup>2</sup> CONOVICI 1985, 40-41.

<sup>3</sup> VOICU 1986, 17.

<sup>4</sup> LUCA 2005, no. 153/4. Hoard of few thousand coins of Dyrrachium and Apollonia, dispersed.

<sup>5</sup> GĂZDAC/COCIŞ 2021, 27-29.

<sup>6</sup> PREDĂ 1973.

<sup>7</sup> CRAWFORD 1977, 117.

<sup>8</sup> CALLATAÏ 2000, 353-355; SPĂNU 2019, 175.

<sup>9</sup> CRAWFORD 1977.

<sup>10</sup> LOCKYEAR 2004; LOCKYEAR 2008

<sup>11</sup> CHIŢESCU 1980, 125-128.

<sup>12</sup> MEDELEŢ 1994a, 203-204, annex no. 4.

<sup>13</sup> POP 2008, 99, Fig. 91.

<sup>14</sup> RUSTOIU 2020, 14 with extensive bibliography.

<sup>15</sup> SPĂNU 2019, 171. The argument of 'Dacian' hoarding horizon was used "as the potential backbone of local periodization".

<sup>16</sup> EGRI/RUSTOIU 2014, 159; SPĂNU 2019, 172-177; RUSTOIU 2020, 17-20.

<sup>17</sup> EGRI/RUSTOIU 2014, 159.

<sup>18</sup> EGRI/RUSTOIU 2014, 165.

<sup>19</sup> <https://patrimoniubn.ro/sit-arheologic-herina/>, accessed on September 29, 2022.

<sup>20</sup> EGRI/RUSTOIU 2014, 165.

<sup>21</sup> EGRI/RUSTOIU 2014, 166.

<sup>22</sup> EGRI/RUSTOIU 2014, 166.

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## CATALOGUE

*Findspot:* Herina, Bistrița-Năsăud County, Romania; circa 500 m from the Tăuț Hill Peak, on the right bank of the Valea Viilor Creek.

### 1. Magistrates: Perigenes and Damenos



*Denomination:* drachm

*Weight:* 3.03g; *Diameter:* 16mm; *Axis:* 2

*Mint:* Dyrrhachium

*Dating:* 120-80/70 BC

*Obverse:* ΠΕΠΙ//ΓΕΝΗΣ

*Cow standing right, head left, suckling calf; in right field, corn-ear; exergue:* bunch of grapes.

*Reverse:* ΔΥΡ / ΔΑ-[ΜΗ]-ΝΟΣ around double stellate pattern.

*Catalogue:* Meta IV/72; Ceka 372; BMC 57

### 2. Magistrates: Meniskos and Agathionos



*Denomination:* drachm

*Weight:* 2.80g; *Diameter:* 18mm; *Axis:* 9

*Mint:* Dyrrhachium

*Dating:* 80/70 – 60/55 BC

*Obverse:* ΜΕΝΙΣΚΟΣ

*Cow standing right, looking left, suckling calf; above, eagle right with wings spread; exergue, rudder right.*

*Reverse:* ΔΥΡ / ΑΓΑ-[ΘΙΩ-Ν]ΟΣ

*Square containing double stellate pattern.*

*Catalogue:* Meta V/86; Ceka 316; BMC 30

### 3. Magistrates: Meniskos and Archippos



*Denomination:* drachm

*Weight:* 2.51g; *Diameter:* 16mm; *Axis:* 12

*Mint:* Dyrrhachium

*Dating:* 80/70 – 60/55 BC

*Obverse:* [Μ]ΕΝΙΣΚΟΣ

*Cow standing right, looking left, suckling calf; above, eagle right with wings spread; exergue, rudder left.*

*Reverse:* ΔΥΡ / [Α]Ρ-ΧΙΠ-ΠΟ[Υ]

*Square containing double stellate pattern.*

*Catalogue:* Meta V/86; Ceka 318; BMC 41

### 4. Magistrates: Meniskos and Archippos



*Denomination:* drachm

*Weight:* 2.44g; *Diameter:* 16mm; *Axis:* 12

*Mint:* Dyrrhachium

*Dating:* 80/70 – 60/55 BC

*Obverse:* [Μ]ΕΝΙΣΚΟΣ

*Cow standing right, looking left, suckling calf; above, eagle right with wings spread; exergue, rudder left.*

*Reverse:* ΔΥΡ / [Α]Ρ-ΧΙΠ-ΠΟ[Υ]

*Square containing double stellate pattern.*

*Catalogue:* Meta V/86; Ceka 318; BMC 41

### 5. Magistrates: Meniskos and Dionysios



*Denomination:* drachm

*Weight:* 2.39g; *Diameter:* 16mm; *Axis:* 6

*Mint:* Dyrrhachium

*Dating:* 80/70 – 60/55 BC

*Obverse:* ΜΕΝΙΣΚΟΣ

*Cow standing right, looking left, suckling calf; above, bird right.*

*Reverse:* ΔΥΡ / [ΔΙΟ-ΝΥ-ΣΙ]ΟΥ

*Square containing double stellate pattern.*

*Catalogue:* Meta V/86; Ceka 320

**6. Magistrates: Meniskos and Dionysios**



Denomination: drachm  
 Weight: 2.28g; Diameter: 16mm; Axis: 6  
 Mint: Dyrhachium  
 Dating: 80/70 – 60/55 BC  
 Obverse: ΜΕΝΙΣΚΟΣ  
 Cow standing right, looking left, suckling calf; above, bird right.  
 Reverse: ΔΥΡ / [ΔΙΟ-ΝΥ-ΣΙΟΥ]  
 Square containing double stellate pattern.  
 Catalogue: Meta V/86; Ceka 320

**7. Magistrates: Meniskos and Dionysios**



Denomination: drachm  
 Weight: 2.38g; Diameter: 17mm; Axis: 6  
 Mint: Dyrhachium  
 Dating: 80/70 – 60/55 BC  
 Obverse: ΜΕΝΙΣΚΟΣ  
 Cow standing right, looking left, suckling calf; above, bird right.  
 Reverse: ΔΥΡ / ΔΙ[Ο-ΝΥ-ΣΙΟΥ]  
 Square containing double stellate pattern.  
 Catalogue: Meta V/86; Ceka 320

**8. Magistrates: Meniskos and Dionysios**



Denomination: drachm  
 Weight: 2.51g; Diameter: 17mm; Axis: 3  
 Mint: Dyrhachium  
 Dating: 80/70 – 60/55 BC  
 Obverse: ΜΕΝΙΣ[ΚΟΣ]

Cow standing right, looking left, suckling calf; above, bird right.  
 Reverse: ΔΥΡ / ΔΙΟ-ΝΥ-ΣΙΟΥ  
 Square containing double stellate pattern.  
 Catalogue: Meta V/86; Ceka 320

**9. Magistrates: Meniskos and Kallonos**



Denomination: drachm  
 Weight: 2.72g; Diameter: 16mm; Axis: 9  
 Mint: Dyrhachium  
 Dating: 80/70 – 60/55 BC  
 Obverse: ΜΕΝΙΣΚΟΣ  
 Cow standing right, looking left, suckling calf; above, Nike flying right with wreath; exergue, thunderbolt.  
 Reverse: ΔΥΡ / Κ[ΑΛ-ΛΟ]-ΝΟΣ  
 Square containing double stellate pattern.  
 Catalogue: Meta V/86; Ceka 322; BMC 81

**10. Magistrates: Meniskos and Kallonos**



Denomination: drachm  
 Weight: 2.46g; Diameter: 19mm; Axis: 3  
 Mint: Dyrhachium  
 Dating: 80/70 – 60/55 BC  
 Obverse: [Μ]ΕΝΙΣΚΟΣ  
 Cow standing right, looking left, suckling calf; above, Nike flying right with wreath; exergue, thunderbolt.  
 Reverse: Δ[ΥΡ] / ΚΑΛ-ΛΟ-ΝΟΣ  
 Square containing double stellate pattern.  
 Catalogue: Meta V/86; Ceka 322; BMC 81

**11. Magistrates: Meniskos and Kallonos**



Denomination: drachm  
 Weight: 2.75g; Diameter: 18mm; Axis: 3  
 Mint: Dyrrhachium  
 Dating: 80/70 – 60/55 BC  
 Obverse: ΜΕΝΙΣΚΟΣ  
 Cow standing right, looking left, suckling calf; above, Nike flying right with wreath; exergue, thunderbolt.  
 Reverse: ΔΥΡ / ΚΑΛ-ΛΟ-ΝΟΣ  
 Square containing double stellate pattern.  
 Catalogue: Meta V/86; Ceka 322; BMC 81

## 12. Magistrates: Meniskos and Lykiskos



Denomination: drachm  
 Weight: 2.53g; Diameter: 17mm; Axis: 3  
 Mint: Dyrrhachium  
 Dating: 80/70 – 60/55 BC  
 Obverse: [ΜΕ]ΝΙΣΚ[ΟΣ]  
 Cow standing right, looking left, suckling calf; right, female figure standing facing (Isis?).  
 Reverse: [ΔΥΡ] / ΛΥ-ΚΙΣ-[ΚΟΥ]  
 Square containing double stellate pattern.  
 Catalogue: Meta V/86; Ceka 325; BMC 94, 95

## 13. Magistrates: Meniskos and Lykiskos



Denomination: drachm  
 Weight: 2.13g; Diameter: 17mm; Axis: 6  
 Mint: Dyrrhachium  
 Dating: 80/70 – 60/55 BC  
 Obverse: ΜΕΝΙΣΚ[ΟΣ]  
 Cow standing right, looking left, suckling calf; right, female figure standing facing (Isis?).  
 Reverse: [ΔΥΡ] / ΛΥ-ΚΙΣ-[ΚΟΥ]  
 Square containing double stellate pattern.  
 Catalogue: Meta V/86; Ceka 325; BMC 94, 95

## 14. Magistrates: Meniskos and Philotas



Denomination: drachm  
 Weight: 2.55g; Diameter: 18mm; Axis: 2  
 Mint: Dyrrhachium  
 Dating: 80/70 – 60/55 BC  
 Obverse: ΜΕΝΙΣΚΟΣ  
 Cow standing right, looking left, suckling calf; exergue, hound running right.  
 Reverse: ΔΥΡ / [ΦΙ-ΛΩ]-ΤΑ  
 Square containing double stellate pattern.  
 Catalogue: Meta V/86; Ceka 331

## 15. Magistrates: Meniskos and Philotas



Denomination: drachm  
 Weight: 2.12g; Diameter: 17mm; Axis: 6  
 Mint: Dyrrhachium  
 Dating: 80/70 – 60/55 BC  
 Obverse: ΜΕΝΙΣΚΟ[Σ]  
 Cow standing right, looking left, suckling calf; right, torch; exergue, hound running right.  
 Reverse: [ΔΥΡ] / ΦΙ-ΛΩ-[ΤΑ]  
 Square containing double stellate pattern.  
 Catalogue: Meta V/86; Ceka 331

## 16. Magistrates: Meniskos and Philotas



Denomination: drachm  
 Weight: 2.12g; Diameter: 17mm; Axis: 6

Mint: Dyrrhachium

Dating: 80/70 – 60/55 BC

Obverse: [ME]ΝΙΣΚΟΣ

Cow standing right, looking left, suckling calf; right, torch; exergue, hound running right.

Reverse: Δ[ΥΡ] / ΦΙ-ΑΩ-ΤΑ

Square containing double stellate pattern.

Catalogue: Meta V/86; Ceka 331

**17. Magistrates: Zenon and Purba**



Denomination: drachm

Weight: 2.88g; Diameter: 19mm; Axis: 9

Mint: Dyrrhachium

Dating: 80/70 – 60/55 BC

Obverse: ΞΕΝΩΝ

Cow standing right, looking left, suckling calf; above, eagle right.

Reverse: ΔΥΡ / ΠΥΡ-ΒΑ; left, club

Square containing double stellate pattern.

Catalogue: Meta V/85; Ceka 360; BMC 112, 113

**18. Magistrates: Zenon and Philodamos**



Denomination: drachm

Weight: 2.73g; Diameter: 17mm; Axis: 6

Mint: Dyrrhachium

Dating: 80/70 – 60/55 BC

Obverse: ΞΕΝΩ[N]

Cow standing right, looking left, suckling calf; above, eagle right.

Reverse: ΔΥΡ / [ΦΙΛΟ-ΔΑ]-ΜΟΥ

Square containing double stellate pattern.

Catalogue: Meta V/85; Ceka 362; BMC 131, 132

**19. Magistrates: Zenon and Philodamos**



Denomination: drachm

Weight: 2.87g; Diameter: 16mm; Axis: 6

Mint: Dyrrhachium

Dating: 80/70 – 60/55 BC

Obverse: ΞΕΝΩ[N]

Cow standing right, looking left, suckling calf; above, lower part of the eagle right; exergue, hound running right.

Reverse: [ΔΥΡ] / [ΦΙΛΟ]-ΔΑ-ΜΟΥ

Square containing double stellate pattern.

Catalogue: Meta V/85; Ceka 362; BMC 131, 132

**20. Magistrates: Zenon and Charopinos**



Denomination: drachm

Weight: 2.92g; Diameter: 18mm; Axis: 3

Mint: Dyrrhachium

Dating: 80/70 – 60/55 BC

Obverse: ΞΕΝΩΝ

Cow standing right, looking left, suckling calf; above, eagle with spread wings.

Reverse: ΔΥΡ / ΧΑΡΟ-ΠΙ-ΝΟΥ

Square containing double stellate pattern.

Catalogue: Meta V/85; Ceka 363

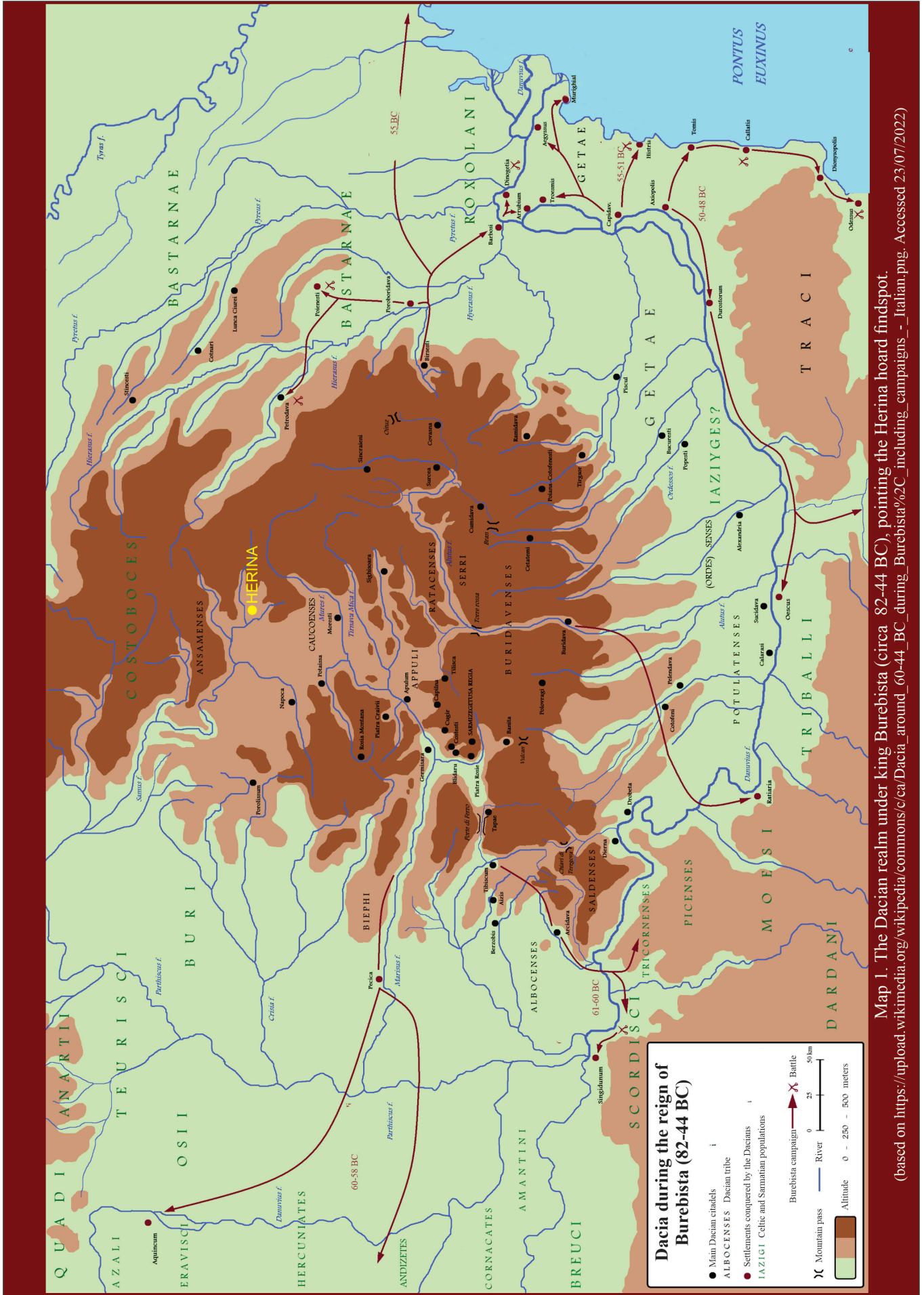
## Silver bracelet with snake heads'-shaped ends



*Weight:* 32.08g; *Diameter:* 65mm; *diameter section:* 12 mm

*Dating:* 1<sup>st</sup> century BC

*The artefact is made of a based silver rod. The ends were flattened in a triangular shape. The head snake symbol is emphasized through incised decoration: three parallel lines representing snake's mouth; a circle within a triangle for the head and eye. The snakes' body is defined by crossed lines delimited by three parallel lines.*



Map 1. The Dacian realm under king Burebista (circa 82-44 BC), pointing the Herina hoard findspot. (based on [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/c/Dacia\\_during\\_Burebista%2C\\_including\\_campaigns\\_-\\_Italian.png](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/c/Dacia_during_Burebista%2C_including_campaigns_-_Italian.png), Accessed 23/07/2022)

