

УНИВЕРСИТЕТ ВЪРХША АНТРОПОЛОГИЧЕСКАЯ ШКОЛА



«На одно крыло — серебряная, На другое — золотая...»

Сборник статей памяти Светланы Рябцевой

*Под редакцией
Р. А. Рабиновича и Н. П. Тельнова*

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HIGH ANTHROPOLOGICAL SCHOOL UNIVERSITY



‘ONE HER WING IS SILVER, THE OTHER ONE IS MADE OF GOLD...’

Selected papers in memory of Svetlana Ryabtseva

*Edited by
R.A. Rabinovich and N.P. Telnov*



KISHINEV
2020

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Светланы Станиславовны Рябцевой
посвящается



In memory of Svetlana Ryabtseva

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I. Tentiuc, V. Bubulici

Early medieval miniature axes in Carpathian-Dniester region. The issues of dating, origin and functionality

Keywords: Carpathian-Dniester region, early Middle Ages, miniature axes, iron, bronze, dating, origin, functionality, semantics

Ключевые слова: Карпато-Днестровский регион, раннее средневековье, миниатюрные топоры, железо, бронза, датировка, происхождение, функциональность, семантика

I. Tentiuc, V. Bubulici

Early Medieval Miniature Axes in Carpathian-Dniester Region. The Issues of Dating, Origin and Functionality

The article considers the iron and bronze miniature axes of the early medieval times found in the Carpathian-Dniester space. These artifacts belong to the category of objects found in different regions of Northern, Central and Eastern Europe, as well as in the southeast of the continent, which date back to the 9th/10th—12th centuries. This period is characterized by a gradual warming of the climate, significant economic and demographic development of Europe, as well as a sudden increase in the activity of the Vikings, who combined armed attacks with trade activities, controlling the East European trade routes along the rivers to the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea. The spread of Christianity, the apocalyptic fear of the approach of the year 1000 and the end of the world, the spread in Scandinavia of the cult of St. Olaf (Haraldson), the Norwegian king killed by the axe (1030), which became a symbol of his martyrdom and an iconographic attribute, gave rise to new waves of pilgrimage to the Holy Places. The routes of pilgrims who carried miniature axes with them could cross the regions east of the Carpathians, where other objects associated with the pilgrimage were discovered. It should be noted that the weight of miniature axes practically coincides with the fractions of the Baghdad “ounce” of the 9th—10th centuries, and this suggests that they could also be used as weights bringing good luck to Scandinavians in commercial transactions.

И. Тентюк, В. Бубулич

Раннесредневековые миниатюрные топоры Карпато-Днестровского региона. Вопросы датировки происхождения и функциональности

В статье рассматриваются железные и бронзовые миниатюрные топоры раннесредневекового времени, выявленные в Карпато-Днестровском ареале. Эти находки являются частью идентичных артефактов, найденных в разных регионах Северной, Центральной и Восточной Европы, а также на юго-востоке континента. Хронологически миниатюрные топоры относятся, в общих чертах, к IX/X—XII векам. Период характеризуется прогрессивным потеплением климата, важным экономическим и демографическим развитием Европы, активизацией викингов, которые сочетали вооруженные нападения с коммерческой деятельностью, контролируя речные торговые пути Восточной Европы между Балтикой и Черным морем. Распространение христианства, апокалиптический страх приближения 1000 года и конца света, распространение в Скандинавии культа Святого Олафа (Харальдсона), норвежского короля убитого секирой (1030), ставшей символом его страстей и иконографическим атрибутом, породили новые волны паломничества к святым местам. Некоторые маршруты паломников, снабженных миниатюрными топорами, могли пересекать регионы к востоку от Карпат, где были обнаружены и другие вещи, связанные с паломничеством. Следует отметить, что вес миниатюрных топориков практически совпадает с фракциями багдадской «унции» IX—X веков, и это заставляет нас предположить, что артефакты могли использоваться и в качестве «гирьки», приносящей удачу в коммерческих сделках скандинавов.

Overview

One of the most appreciated tools and weapons of man since ancient times was an axe. The double quality of the piece, the manufacture of which required special efforts and a true mastery and skill, highlighted the ax among elitist pieces, giving birth to a large number of shapes and models, some of which were real works of art made of stone or metal.

In recent years, the category of objects known in specialized literature as early medieval miniature axes has been of great interest. Most have been found in different regions of North, Central and Eastern Europe (fig. 1: A), but they are not missing in the south-east of the continent either (Paulsen 1956: 195—196; Даркевич 1961: 91—102; Макаров 1992: 41—56; Кусупера, Wadyl 2011: 122—129; Лесман 2014: 43—87; Меньшиков 2016: 239—252; Атанасов 2018:

пространение раннесредневековых миниатюрных топориков в Карпато-Днестровском и Дунайском регионе: 1 — Черновка; 2 — Буковка; 3, 4 — Сучава; 5, 6 — Пэхэрничень-Петруха; 7 — Кэрбуна; 8 — Пэкуял-луй-Соаре; 9 — Силистра. Условные обозначения: а — миниатюрные железные топорики; b — бронзовые миниатюрные топорики.

221—234; Yotov 2018: 467—484; Тюрк 2018: 165—182).

Currently, the number of early medieval miniature axes included in the scientific use through publication is approaching 200 objects. A significant number of such artifacts remain unpublished. The miniature axes identified in the process of archaeological investigations or by chance are usually made of bronze, but there are ones made of iron. The medieval artifacts found in well dated closed complexes allowed researchers to attribute them from the end of the 1st millennium to the beginning of the next millennium (Макаров 1992: 41—56; Лесман 2014: 43—87). Even though some of them mimic the shape of battle prototypes, the use of axes in this category as a weapon is excluded because of their very small size and light weight. It has also been found that many artifacts come from unknown locations¹.

Based on the technique of making (forging or casting), shape, ornamentation, the context of finding and the spreading area, the researchers have tried to establish the origin, dating, functionality, the cause of the spread in time and space, but also the semantics of the miniature axes.

In Romanian historiography, the problem of this category of objects was considered indirectly, being related to the exchange relations of the Eastern Romance people with the old Russian states or with the penetration in the Eastern-Carpathian space of objects of worship and ornaments (Spinei 1982: 100). Some axes were mentioned in the context of the involvement of the Vikings in long-distance trade, their connection with the Great Silk Road, with the penetration of the Norsemen from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea and the Lower Danube (Damian, Vasile 2011: 275—290; Dejan 2015: 213—216; Paraschiv-Talmațchi, Talmațchi 2013: 267). It has also been suggested that some of the artifacts belong to the category of tools specific to jewelry craftsmen or craftsmen who make small items (Bilavski 2016: 251).

Several objects representing the miniature iron or bronze axes belonging to the early medieval period were discovered in the Carpathian-Dniester and the Carpathian-Dniester-Danubian areas (fig. 1: B). These were found in Carbura (Ialoveni District) and Păhărnicești-Petruha (Orhei District), in the central part of the Prut-Dni-

ester interfluvium, in Suceava (Dejan 2015: 215), at Bukivka and Chornivka (Chernivtsi Oblast) in Bukovina or at Khorodnitsa in the Upper Dniester region (Paulsen 1956: 197; Власова 1962: 257; Макаров 1992: 54, nr. 46 and nr. 48; Kucypera et al. 2011: 147, nr. 107 and nr. 109; Kucypera, Wadyl 2011: 127). Artifacts representing the axes were also discovered in the Danube area, in Păcuiul lui Soare and Dristra (= Siliistra) (Diaconu, Vâlceanu 1972: 159; Атанасов 2018: 221—234; Yotov 2018: 467—484). The bronze axes from the latter region represent a local category that is distinct from the type I axes by N. Makarov's classification.

Typological aspects

Depending on the material from which they are made, the miniature artifacts representing the axes discovered in the Carpathian-Dniester area can be divided into two main groups: I. miniature artifacts made of iron and II. miniature artifacts made of bronze.

I. Miniature artifacts made of iron. They were made by hot forging or by casting². By their shape, the artifacts made of iron form two categories: 1. ones representing miniature axes and 2. miniature hammers.

I.1. Miniature iron axes. They were made by hot hammering. The shape of the blade allows us to distinguish three distinct types of axes.

I.1.1. The first type includes the axes with the blade of triangular shape in the longitudinal section. Some objects have a rectangular fixing hole; the thickened butt has the shape of a parallelepiped. An item of this kind was discovered at Păhărnicești-Petruha (Orhei) (fig. 2: 4). Other axes have a round-shaped handle fixing hole. Two pieces of this kind come from Suceava (Dejan 2015: 214—215, fig. 17; Bilavski 2016, pl. LV: 7, 9). The axe from Păhărnicești-Petruha, preserved intact, has a length of 5.4 cm and a weight³ of 33.75 g.

² A small number and the diversity of forms did not allow developing a generally accepted typological chain of the iron objects. Most often, the researchers include the iron axes in the group of atypical artifacts, with original shapes (Макаров 1992: 52; Kucypera, Wadyl 2011: 123).

³ Only the weight of objects preserved in their entirety is indicated.

¹ The conditions of discovery of many axes in the Prut-Dniester region are not always clear.



Fig. 2. Early medieval miniature axes of iron and bronze in the Carpathian-Dniester region: 1, 2, 5 — the location is unknown; 3 — Cărbuna (Ialoveni District); 4, 6 — Păhărnicieni-Petruha (Orhei District).

Рис. 2. Раннесредневековые миниатюрные топоры из железа и бронзы в Карпато-Днестровском регионе: 1, 2, 5 — место находки неизвестно; 3 — Кэрбуна (Яловенский р-н); 4, 6 — Пэхэрничень-Петруха (Оргевский р-н).

Because of the hardness of the metal from which they were made, these objects are generally devoid of ornament. Exception is one of the two axes from Suceava, which is endowed with a decoration consisting of point-shaped incisions obtained with the help of a punch with a blunt point (Dejan 2015: 214). The ornament forms zigzag lines and circles. The decoration is made only on one side of the blade, probably on the exposed side, if the axes were worn on the belt.

I.1.2. *The second type* consists of the axes with a narrow and elongated head, with a wide asymmetric blade (fig. 2: 3, 6). They have the handle fixing hole of round or quasi-triangular shape. There are three artifacts of this kind. Two were found in the central part of the Prut-Dniester area, at Cărbuna (Ialoveni)⁴ and at Păhărnicieni-Petruha (Orhei). Another axe comes from northern Bukovina, from Chernivka (Chernivtsi Oblast). The axe from Cărbuna (fig. 2: 3) is 5.6 cm long and weighs 14.33 g, and the one from Păhărnicieni-Petruha (fig. 2: 6) is 8.0 cm long and weighs 34.49 g. The object discovered at Chornivka (Chernivtsi Oblast) (Возный 2014: 59, рис. 1: 8; 2: 10; Возный, Федорук 2013: 56, рис. 1: 8), with the butt damaged in ancient times, has a narrow head and the wide blade asymmetrically extended downward. The blade of the axe from Chornivka is perforated. Such holes threr are on some battle axes discovered east of the Carpathians, such as those from Siliștea Nouă (Suceava county) or Fedești (Vaslui county) (Spinei 1994: 130, fig. 4: 1, 2). A similar axe was found at the site of Sigtum (Stockholm) (Sweden), in the cultural layers belonging to the second half of the 11th century (ca. 1057—1077). The artifact has a length of 4.4 cm and a weight of 8.0 g (Edberg, Söderberg 2018: 48, fig. 7). An amulet representing the axes of this type was discovered at Dristra (Атанасов 2018: 232, fig. 16)⁵.

I.1.3. *The third type* is represented by a single artifact discovered in the Prut-Dniester area. The iron ax has a narrow and elongated head and a well-profiled blade that broadens symmetricaly with respect to the longitudinal axis of the head (fig. 2: 2). The bit is flared, with a triangular profile; it resembles the shape of an axe amulet of Thor. The handle fixing hole is oval-elongated, the butt being damaged in ancient times. It represents bardiche type battle axes. It has a length of 4.7 cm and a weight of 17.35 g.

I.2. *Miniature iron hammer.* The only object in this category comes from an unknown locality in the Prut-Dniester area. It is made by casting, has triangular shape in the longitudinal section, with the rectangular fixing hole (fig. 2: 5). The butt is shaped like a parallelepipedic body. The opposite part of the hammer head is narrowed and bent towards the handle, thus having the shape of a beak

⁴ It is necessary to mention that the axe from Cărbuna (Ialoveni) was accidentally found along with the remains of a chain mail, an iron torc, and a fishing hook (See fig. 3: 1—4).

⁵ The explanation for the illustration of the amulet erroneously indicates that it is made of silver, which does not appear from the description of the axe in the Catalog/Adenda of the study (Атанасов 2018: 232, Офр. 16).

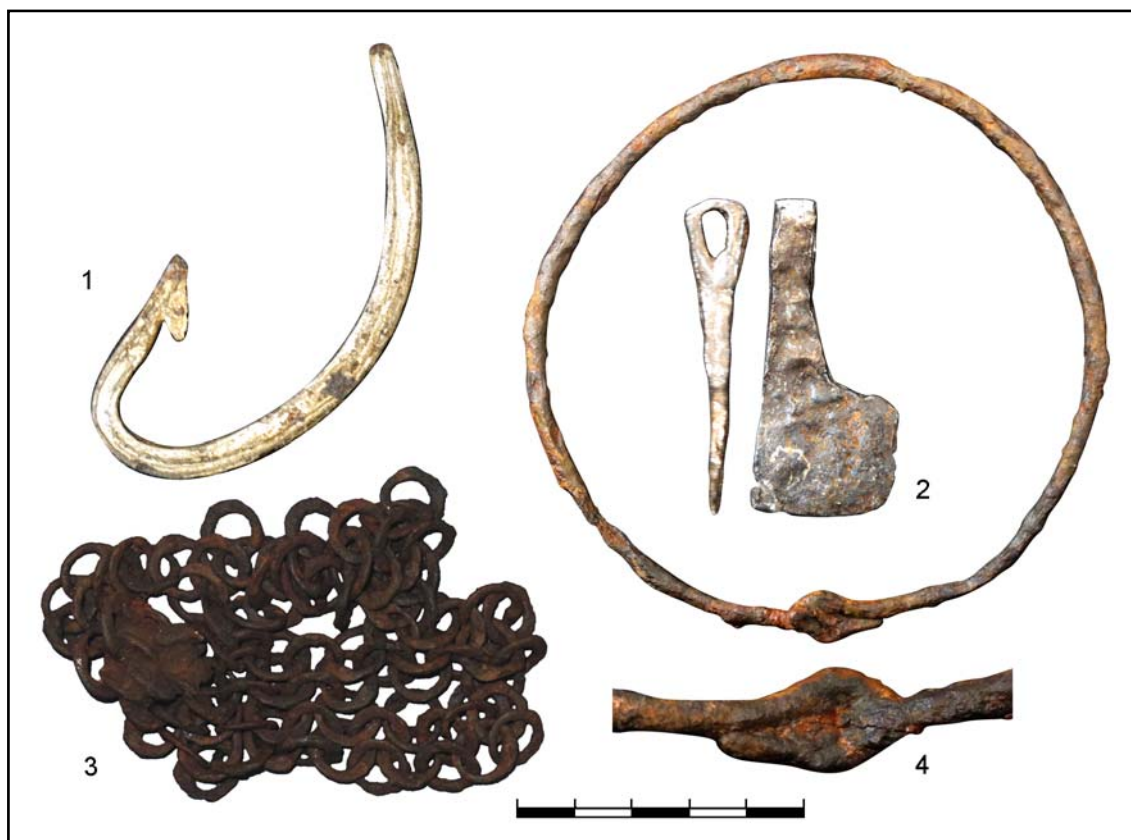


Fig. 3. A set (hoard (?)) of iron objects from Cărbuna (Ialoveni District): 1 — fishing hook; 2 — miniature axe; 3 — fragments of chain mail; 4 — torc.

Рис. 3. Комплекс (клад (?)) железных изделий из с. Кэрбуна (Яловенский р-н): 1 — рыболовный крючок; 2 — миниатюрный топорик; 3 — фрагменты кольчуги; 4 — гривна.

with the blunt end. The item has a length of 6.1 cm and a weight of 70.61 g. We have not identified any close analogies for this item. An amulet representing a similar hammer was found in Janów-Pomorski (Truso) (Poland). The difference is that the latter was cast in bronze together with the handle (Gardela 2016: 99—106).

II. Miniature bronze axes. In the Carpathian-Dniester area, a small number of bronze axes is known. Unlike iron axes that have a variety of shapes, those of bronze, much better researched by European historiographers, we can attribute to the known types: 1. axes with asymmetrical blade and 2. axes with symmetrical blade, of a pole-axe type.

II.1. Axes with asymmetrical blade. An axe from this category was found in an unknown locality in the Prut-Dniester area (fig. 2: 1). It is made by casting. The shape of the object mimics the bardiche type battle axe, has the elongated head, the wide, asymmetrical blade, the lower end of which is rounded inward. The item has a cylindrical butt, the back of which is extended horizontally and beautifully profiled. The passage from the

butt to the blade represents a short neck. On the neck there are two symmetrically arranged ribs. The lower end of the blade is strongly rounded inward, where it forms a heel that, together with the wings of the handle, creates a parabolic curve. The heel of the item is endowed with a quasi-circular spur. On both cheeks of the axe blade an incised ornament was made, representing a series of short lines made along the bit at a certain distance from it. The artifact belongs to the axes of type I by the classification of N. Makarov. It has many analogies in Scandinavia, Trondheim, Norway, Sigtum (Stockholm) in Sweden (Edberg, Söderberg 2018: 34—59), and also in regions of northwestern Russia, in Poland, Belarus, Ukraine and Hungary (Makarov 1992: 52—55; Kucypera et al. 2011: 103—176; Тюрк 2018: 165—182; Фюреди и др. 2018: 483—515), being the type with the highest number of finds. The item has a length of 4.0 cm and a weight of 7.91 g.

Researchers who have addressed the problem of miniature bronze axes believe that these objects mimic the shape of the type IV battle axes with profiled butt, according to the typolo-

gy proposed by Kirpichnikov (Макаров 1992: 43; Лесман 2014: 71). M.G. Aleshkovsky dates the battle axes belonging to this type the 11th—12th centuries (Алешковский 1960: 71—73), and B.A. Kolchin and A.N. Kirpichnikov attributes them to the 11th—13th centuries (Колчин 1985: fig. 97: 1—4, 6—8; 127: 19, 21—22; Кирпичников 1966: 61—72). Iron prototypes (battle axes) of them were also found on the island of Gotland (Thunmark-Nylen 1995: Abb. 75: 15, 148: 12; Idem 1998: Taf. 225: 11; Лесман 2014: 73—74).

II.1.2. The miniature bronze axes discovered in the sites of the Lower Danube region represent a local, distinct variant (Diaconu, Vâlceanu, 1972: 159, fig. 56: 1; Атанасов 2018: 221—234; Yotov 2018: 476—484). These, in our opinion, can be classified in a separate type of miniature bronze axes of the early Middle Ages. This type may include the axes from Păcuiul lui Soare and Dristra, and also from Preslav (Атанасов 2018: 223—224). They differ from the miniature axes of type I by the classification of N. Makarov in that they have a much narrower blade, and the dimensions of the handle fixing hole are disproportionate to the shape and dimensions of the item. Of these axes, the one from Păcuiul lui Soare is beautifully decorated and has a gilded surface. The axe blade is decorated with incised circles, with points in the middle. The artifact from Păcuiul lui Soare was attributed to the 11th century (Diaconu, Vâlceanu, 1972: 159), and the one from Dristra to the end of the 10th century (Атанасов 2018: 223—224).

II.2. *Axes with symmetrical blade, in the shape of a pole-axe.* A miniature bronze axe belonging to this type was discovered in Bukovka (Hlyboka Raion, Chernivtsi Oblast). In the north of Bukovina, two others coming from Terebovil (Zeleece) and Horodnitsa on the Upper Dniester (Paulsen 1956: 197; Макаров 1992: 54, nr. 46—48).

A miniature bronze axe belonging to this type was found in Bukovka (Hlyboka Raion, Chernivtsi Oblast), in the north of Bukovina, two others are from Terebovil (Zeleece) and Horodnitsa in the Upper Dniester region (Paulsen 1956: 197; Макаров 1992: 54, nr. 46—48). The item from Bukovka has a pole-axe-shaped blade symmetrically arranged on the axis of the head. The blade is endowed with two protuberances arranged symmetrically at the top (Власова 1962: 257, рис. 5: 10). It belongs to type II by the classification of N. Makarov. In the regions of Central Europe, an important number of bronze axes with symmetrical blade (Kucipera, Wadył: 2011, 122, fig. 1: n) is known, including variants cast in iron (Hensel 1979: 127—130, fig. 1; Edberg, Söderberg 2018: 49, fig. 7).

* * *

In this connection, it is worth mentioning that the most important and comprehensive process and phenomenon of the decades around AD 1000 was the spread of Christianity in Northern, Central and Eastern Europe, when the Scandinavians, Czechs, Poles, Russians and Hungarians, almost simultaneously, but independently from each other, accepted Christian dogma (Pál 2006: 53). At the same time, this is the period when fears of the imminent approach of the end of the world associated with the onset of AD 1000 generated panic and new waves of pilgrimage to Jerusalem and Bethlehem, the phenomena described by the chronicler Raoul Glaber (c. 985—1047). Being an eyewitness⁶ of events and considered to be the best narrator about the Year 1000, he believed that the apogee of “holy journey” occurred in 1033, when the millennium has passed since the crucifixion of Jesus Christ (Duby 1996: 15).

The death of King Olaf Haraldson, the Norwegian baptist killed by an axe in 1030, coincided almost completely with the passing of a thousand years since the death of Jesus. This event oppressively affected the proselytes, increasing fear of the approaching Apocalypse and accelerating the pilgrimage⁷. The ax with which King Olaf was killed became a symbol of the martyrdom of the new saint and martyr of Scandinavia (Spinei 1973: I, 61—77; II, 259—282; Мельникова 1996: 92—106), and the miniature axe became an iconographic element bearing the same religious meaning as the cross on which Christ died. This explains the fact that in the closed archaeological complexes, including the burials, miniature axes were found, associated with crosses (Fuglesang 1989: 18; Меньшиков 2017: 118).

At the end of the 12th century and in the 13th century, the first miniature axes cast in lead or lead alloy appear. Researchers believe that their appearance may also be associated with the continuation of the pilgrimage to the Holy Places (Меньшиков 2017: 125). This is a category of objects that remains unknown in the East Car-

⁶ Raoul Glaber: “Many were going to seek the advice of certain people, the most worried of their time, about the significance of such a large flow of crowds to Jerusalem, as no past century had seen” (quoted by: Duby 1996: 184).

⁷ Evidence that the pilgrimage phenomenon has touched the Carpathian-Dniester space is the fact that during archaeological investigations in Iasi there were found two pilgrim ampullae, small containers made of lead or ceramics to hold holy oil or holy water. They belong to the 10th—11th and the 12th—13th centuries (Stratulat, Iațcu 2011: 18—19, no. 4 and no. 5 in the Catalog).

pathian space, but is abundant in many regions of Northern and Central Europe (Лесман 2014: 76). The lack of lead axes in the Carpathian-Dniester region is explained by the political instability caused penetration of the Cumans in the northern Danube and eastern Carpathian regions in the late 11th century. As a result, the trade routes, which in the 9th—11th centuries ran along the Dniester, Prut and Siret rivers to the Baltic and Black Sea regions and Constantinople, were changed (Tentiuc 2017: 119—130; Idem 2019: 117—121). The route was redirected through the Carpathian Basin, which became much safer after the Christianization of Hungary by 1000. Hungarian kings facilitated the passage of pilgrims to the Holy Places through the country (Pál 2006: 53—63). We consider that this explains the discovery of miniature axes in Hungary (Тюпк 2018: 165—182; Фюреди и др. 2018: 483—514) that were recently put into scientific circulation⁸.

Conclusions

The important socio-economic, political and cultural changes that took place at the end of the 1st millennium — the beginning of the 2nd millennium, the movements of populations, stimulated the circulation and exchanges of material and cultural values between the communities in different regions of Northern, Central, Eastern and South-

east Europe, but also throughout the Eurasian continent. Climate change has contributed to the impressive economic and demographic growth in Europe and the movement of the population from north to south and from east to west.

At all times, human communities have created artistic images of objects of particular importance for the entire community, made of stone, horn, burnt clay or metal. The North German communities, including the Scandinavians, maintained the custom of wearing a wide range of miniature objects, including axes, as a good luck charms. The spread of Christianity in the North, Center and East of the continent, but also the spread of the cult of St. Olaf, the Scandinavian martyr king killed by an axe just after the 1000th anniversary of the death of Jesus Christ, endowed an axe, a symbol of royal power in prehistoric times, with the power of the Holy Cross on which the Savior died, transforming it into an important Christian element for the Scandinavians. It was equated with the symbolic value of the cross, also considered an indispensable sign of pilgrims. At the same time, the weight of some miniature axes made of bronze or iron coincides with the fractions of the Baghdad “ounce” from this period, which makes us consider that these artifacts could also be used as lucky “weights” in the trading activities of the ancient Scandinavians.

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⁸ Hungarian researchers associate the presence of miniature axes in Hungary with trade relations between Hungary and Kievan Rus' (Тюпк 2018: 171—173) and to a lesser extent with the invitation by King Stephen I of mercenaries to guard the western borders of the state (Фюреди и др. 2018: 506—510).

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Ion Tentiuc (Kishinev, Moldova). Doctor of History. National Museum of History of Moldova¹.

Тентюк Ион (Кишинев, Молдова). Доктор истории. Национальный музей истории Молдовы.

E-mail: ion_tentiuc@yahoo.com

Valeriu Bubulici (Kishinev, Moldova). National Museum of History of Moldova².

Бубулич Валерий Григорьевич (Кишинев, Молдова). Национальный музей истории Молдовы.

E-mail: vbubulici@mail.ru

Address: ^{1,2} 31 August St., 121a, Kishinev, MD-2012, Moldova