

A DISC OF VĂLCITRĂN TYPE
DISCOVERED AT CĂLĂRAȘI, DOLJ COUNTY

- abstract -

The aim of this article is to publish a piece which is exceptional from all points of view: a metallic disc discovered by chance, in september 1969, at Călărași, Dolj county, Romania.

The piece was made in the shape of a silver disc, with a prominence (an „omphalos” or „umbo”) in the middle. The edge of the piece is slightly bent downwards. For the decoration of the disc, it seems that the *niello* technique has been used. The central boss was cast in bronze; on its surface were laid silver and gold thin sheets, which after hammering, took over the ornamental motifs of the bronze boss. At the base of the prominence there were made three concentric circles in relief, the one in the middle string-shaped. Above those circles, the boss is plated with a gold sheet and there are another concentric circles, the one in the middle is also string-shaped. Another string-shaped circle is on the upper side of this gold plated register. Next there follows a silver plated register without any ornament. The top of the piece is again gold plated; there are two circles at the base of the top which was decorated with twisted incisions. The bronze „umbo” is hollow cast and it was equipped at the base with a diametric rod.

The artistic manufacturing and also the use of noble metals indicate the exceptional value of the piece. The closest analogy of the disc from Călărași, in fact the only one, can be found among the pieces of the famous treasure from Vălcițrăn, in northern Bulgaria, where there are seven golden pieces, similar in shape and size. Recently, a new hoard with three similar discs has been put on display in the Bulgarian National Museum of History in Sofia (Boiana).

After enumerating the opinions regarding the significance of these pieces (*umbos* for shields, elements of mural decoration, timpani-tymbals, lids of vessels), taking also into account the existing analogies, the author concludes that we deal with lids of cult vessels.

CAPTION OF THE FIGURES

- Fig. 1. Metallic disc from Călărași, Dolj County, Romania.
- Fig. 2. Metallic disc from Călărași, Dolj County, Romania.
- Fig. 3. Metallic disc from Călărași, Dolj County, Romania.
- Fig. 4. Metallic disc from Călărași, Dolj County, Romania
- Fig. 5. Gold disc from the Vălcițrăn hoard, Bulgaria (after Al. Bonev)
- Fig. 6. Bronze *situla* with lid, discovered in Hallstatt, Austria (after *British Museum. A Guide ...*).
- Fig. 7. The locality Călărași, Dolj County, Romania, and the surroundings.