

## DRAGONESQUE BROOCHES

Sorin Cociș, Vasile Marinoiu

Amongst the zoomorphic brooches the most interesting are the Dragonesques brooches.

The brooches of such type are enameled and curvilinear. Following the name of the type they are in the form of a stylized animal. The two ends of brooches represent a head with snout, eye and snout of a dragon eye, while the „S”-shape of brooch represents the body. The upper end, with the fixed end, looks to be the principal one as is bigger and better modeled than the other end. The pin is strongly bent out, its upper part being coiled around the neck, while the tip rested over the lower neck. The decoration is made of two parallel rows placed at the middle of the brooch. On the inner side of the rows there are 2 rows of small triangles. Two triskelles are placed on each side of the two rows.

The Dragonesque brooches are originated from Britain where they overwhelmed the other types<sup>1</sup>. Some of such pieces have been also found in the western and central parts of the Empire<sup>2</sup>. They are dated between mid 1st century and the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.

One piece of this type, variant 2 with lozenge motif, according to the typology by R. W. Feachem, have been found in the fort of Bumbești (pl. I/1). Here was the garrison of *Cohors I Aurelia Brittonum milliaria*<sup>3</sup>. It is possible that this brooch could have been brought here by a soldier from *Britannia*.

Beside the original type, a local variant had developed in Dacia (pl. I/2-8). Long time ago I have considered such pieces as brooches of „S”-shape<sup>4</sup>. At a closer look it can be noticed the flat non-enameled body with both ends as a stylized dragon head. The catchin sytem consists of spring, low cord and rectangular catchplate. Two variants of open cord (pl. I/2-4) and the cord placed through the body can be distinguished (pl. I/5-8). This local type is known in Dacia at Porolissum only, in which case we can presume the existence of a workshop here. As at *Porolissum* are attested Britannic troops, the hypothesis that the model for this type could have been a Britannic brooch cannot be completely excluded<sup>5</sup>. The only analogy available at the moment comes from the neighbouring area of *Barbanicum*<sup>6</sup>. The archaeological contexts indicate as the period of use the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. The bearers are probably soldiers.

<sup>1</sup> Feachem 1951, 32-44.; Snape 1993, 26.

<sup>2</sup> Feachem 1951, 34.

<sup>3</sup> Petolescu 1997, 80.

<sup>4</sup> Cociș 1987, 159-162.

<sup>5</sup> Petolescu 1997, 96.

<sup>6</sup> Dumitrașcu-Bader 1967, pl. XVI.

# CATALOGUE

1. (pl.I/1); Br.; green and red enameled; L=5.5 cm.; Bumbești; Fort ; M.J.TG.J. w.i.
2. (pl.I/2); Br.; L=3.5 cm.; *Porolissum*; M.J.Z. i. i.no. CC 106/1958; *Gudea, Lucăcel*, 1979, 336, pl. XII/137.
3. (pl.I/3); Br.; L=3.6 cm.; *Porolissum*; M.J.Z. i.no. CC 106/1958; *Gudea, Lucăcel*, 1979, 336, pl. XII/139.
4. (pl.I/4); Br.; L=3.4 cm.; *Porolissum*; M.J.Z. i.no. CC 106/1958; *Gudea, Lucăcel*, 1979, 336, pl. XII/140.
5. (pl.I/5); Br.; L=3.2 cm.; *Porolissum*; M.J.Z. i.no. CC 157/1958; *Gudea, Lucăcel*, 1979, 336, pl. XII/138.
6. (pl.I/6); Br.; L=3.4 cm.; *Porolissum*; Amfiteatru; M.J.Z. w.i.; *Bajusz, Cociș*, 1997, pl. IV/33.
7. (pl.I/7); Br.; L=3.5 cm.; *Porolissum*; M.J.Z. i.no. 893; *Bajusz, Cociș*, 1997, pl. IV/35.
8. (pl.I/8); Br.; L=3 cm.; *Porolissum*; D.I.A.B. w.i.; *Bajusz, Cociș*, 1997, pl. IV/34
9. (pl.I/9); Br.; L=3.6 cm.; *Porolissum*; Fort; M.J.Z. w.i.; *Gudea, Cociș, Tamba, Matei*, 2001, pl. VII/59.

L= length

cm. = centimeter

i. no. = inventory number

w.i = without inventory number

pl. = plate.

Br.= Bronze.

D.I.A.B. = Depot of the Institute of Archaeology Bucharest

M.J.TG.J. = County Museum Târgu Jiu.

M.J.Z. = County Museum Istorie Zalău

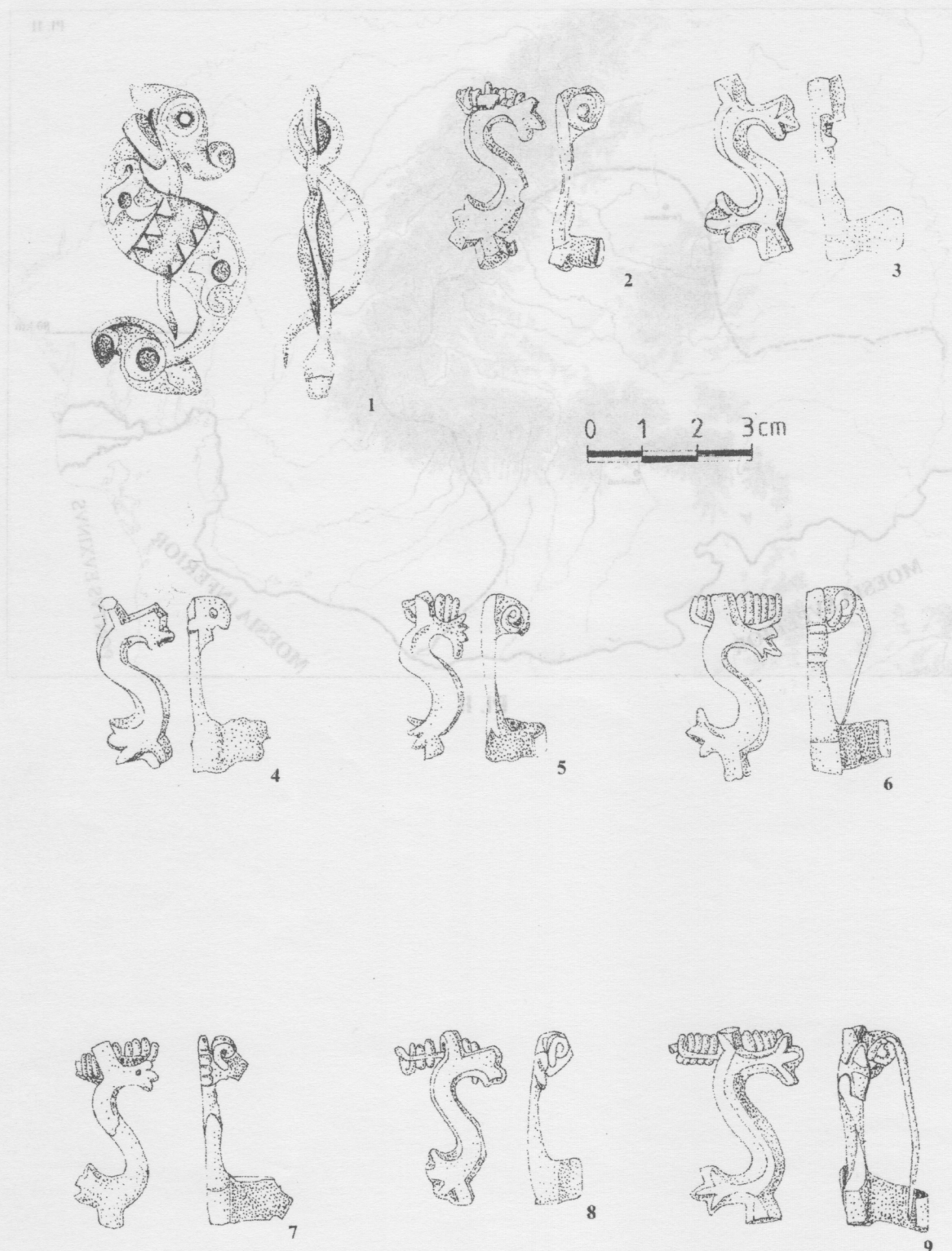
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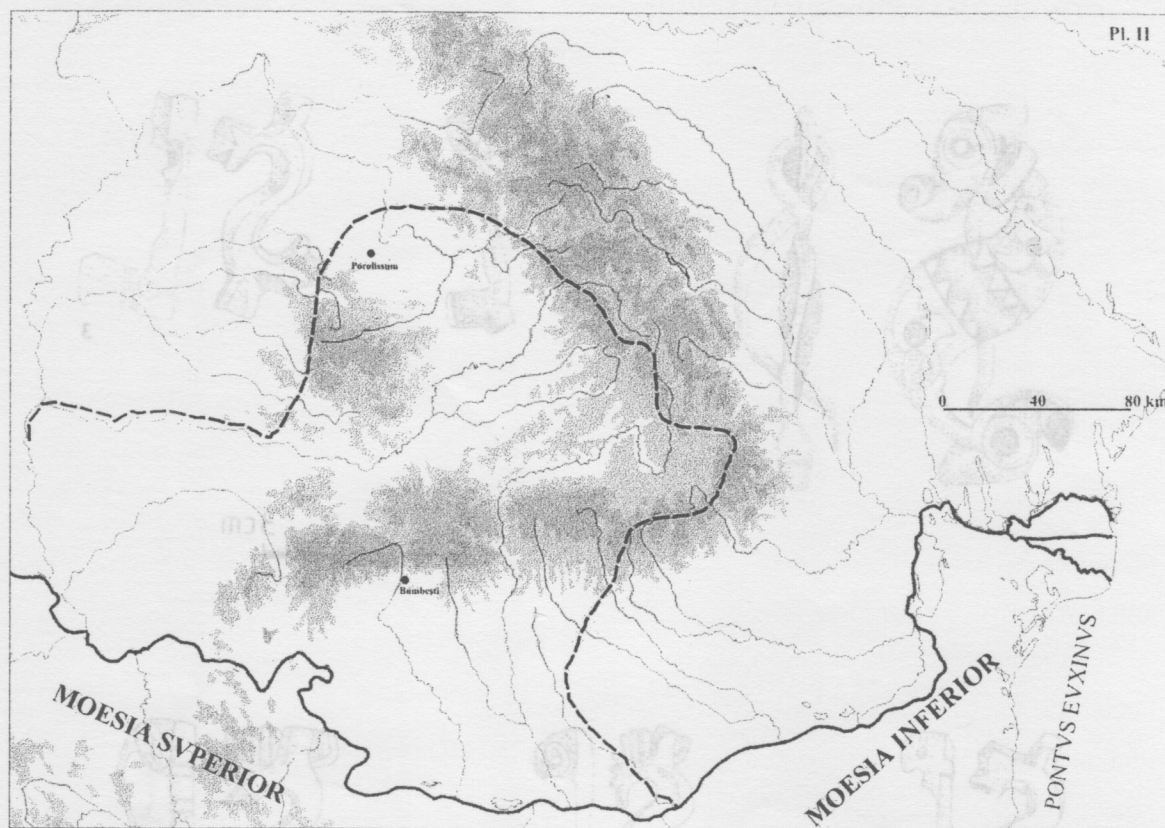
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1. Dragonesque brooches
2. Findspots of Dragonesque brooches





Pl. I



Pl. II