

«КЕЛЬТОСКІФИ»: ЕТНІЧНІ ПРОЦЕСИ ТА МІЖКУЛЬТУРНІ КОНТАКТИ У БАЛТІЙСЬКО-ЧОРНОМОРСЬКОМУ РЕГІОНІ (III СТ. ДО Н.Е. – I СТ. Н.Е.)

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Анотація. У статті розглядаються етнокультурні процеси III ст. до н. е. – I ст. н. е. на території України та прилеглих землях Центрально-Східної Європи. Ці процеси, зокрема, знайшли свій прояв у виникненні етнонімів «кельтоскіфи» та «бастарни». Автор має на меті показати, що давні греки та римляни використовували ці кабінетні назви для позначення варварського населення, яке, відповідно до тодішніх географічних концепцій, проживало на території Скіфії, але мало матеріальну культуру та звичаї, схожі з кельтськими, ї, принаймні певною мірою, могло користуватися кельтськими діалектами. Зазначено, що землями сучасної України проходила межа поширення племен давніх кельтів. Якщо група кельтських поселень та поховань на Закарпатті була близькою до інших локальних варіантів латенської археологічної культури на території сучасних Словаччини, Угорщини, Румунії, на землях східніше Карпат простежуються лише сліди кельтської військової активності та мікроміграцій, які не мали суттєвого впливу на динаміку культурної ситуації в регіоні. На рубежі ер в басейнах Дністра та Дніпра з'являються поєштити-лукашівська та зарубинецька археологічні культури, які поєднували ясторфські, латенські та місцеві традиції. Саме щодо них грецькі та римські автори використовували узагальнюючі етнічні терміни «бастарни» та «кельтоскіфи». Поява подібних змішаних груп населення була результатом інтенсифікації культурних контактів у балтійсько-чорноморському регіоні. Слід звернути увагу на описаний Плінієм Старшим у «Природничій історії» (NH. IV. 28) комунікаційний маршрут, який пролягав уздовж Дністра та Вісли та відігравав важливу роль в обміні престижними предметами, ідеями та технологіями між різними групами населення, які проживали на північно-східному пограниччі кельтського світу. Контактна зона, яка сформувалася уздовж цього маршруту, упродовж наступних століть відіграла вагомую роль у процесах етногенезу на теренах України.

Ключові слова: кельти; кельтоскіфи; бастарни; Скіфія; Пліній Старший; Клавдій Птолемей; латенська культура; латенізовані культури; торговельний маршрут; мікро-міграції.

'CELTOSCYTHIANS': ETHNICAL PROCESSES AND CULTURAL CONTACTS IN THE BALTIC-BLACK SEA REGION (3RD CENTURY BC – 1ST CENTURY AD)

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Annotation. The paper deals with the ethnocultural processes that took place in the 3rd century BC – 1st century AD on the territory of Ukraine and neighbouring lands of Central and Eastern Europe.

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These processes, in particular, have expressed themselves in the emergence of terms ‘Celtoscythians’ and ‘Bastarnae’. The author aims to show that ancient Greeks and Romans used these names to define barbaric population, which, was living on the territory of Scythia according to geographical concepts of those days, but had material culture and customs similar to Celtic and, to some extent, could use Celtic dialects. It is stated that the lands of present-day Ukraine were stretched across the distinct periphery of the ‘Celtic world’.

*A group of Celtic settlements and burials which occupied the Transcarpathian region was a rather typical sub-group of the La Tène culture, similar to those in nearby regions of Slovakia, Hungary and Romania. There are only traces of the ‘Celtic’ military raids and micro-migrations in the lands eastward of the Carpathian Mountains and they had no significant impact on the cultural situation in the region. At the turn of the eras, in the basins of Dniester and Dnipro, the new Poienești-Lukashevka and Zarubyntsi archaeological cultures emerged. Both combined Jastorf and La Tène traditions and local traditions. The Greek and Roman authors used the new ‘umbrella’ ethnic entities ‘Bastarnae’ and ‘Κελτοσκύθαι’. Such mixed groups of the population emerged as a result of intensifying cultural contacts between the Baltic and Pontic areas. One may pay attention to the communication route from Hellespont to the Baltic shores that Plinius the Elder described in his *Naturalis Historia* (NH. IV. 28). Apparently, the route following Dniester and Vistula played a significant role in exchange of prestigious artefacts, as well as ideas and technologies between various groups of population of the Northern and Eastern fringes of the Celtic world. The contact zone that formed along this route played an important role in the processes of ethnogenesis on the territory of Ukraine over the following centuries.*

Key words: Celts; Celtoscythians; Bastarnae; Plinius the Elder; Claudius Ptolemy; La Tène culture; Laténized cultures; trade route; micro-migrations.

State of the research. Many studies devoted to the ethnic identities (or ethnic labels) in antiquity appeared during the last decades [see, i. e., 12, 22]. However, the ongoing discussion seems to be never-ending. The Greek and Roman authors widely used umbrella terms, such as the ‘Celts’, ‘Galatians’, ‘Scythians’, ‘Germans’, to identify various groups of barbaric population. All these terms are cultural constructions which hardly reflect the real ethnic communities in the Iron Age Europe. Nevertheless, the scholars still use the word ‘Celtic’/‘Galatian’ for describing the peoples who either used to speak the Celtic dialects or exhibited some specific features of the material culture. The term ‘Scythians’, being an artificial cultural construction as well, is still used to identify the population of the Eastern Europe of the same period of time. Since the late Hellenistic period some Classical authors, who followed Posidonius as their

main source, invented the term ‘Celtoscythians’ [18, p. 240] to describe the ‘Celts’ and ‘Scythians’ who “met and mingled” in the North Pontic area (Plutarch Mar. 11.12; Strabo 11.6.2; Diod. Sic. 5.32.2). It is highly likely that this mixed barbarian population was also known to other Classical authors as the ‘Bastarnae’.

The paper¹ aims to show that the Greeks and Romans were actually right at least in terms of their own categories and concepts. There was indeed a group of population in the lands of today’s Ukraine, Poland and Moldova which combined some Nordic, Celtic, Balkan and Eastern European cultural elements. This population, which *looked like* the ‘Celts’, but used to live in ‘Scythia’, emerged due to the cultural transitions in

¹ The paper was read at the International Conference “Definition and Redefinition of Celtic Identities in the Ancient World. An Interdisciplinary Approach” (Edinburgh, 16th September 2022).

the basins of Dniester and Vistula rivers. Although the 'Celtoscythians'/'Bastarnae' could hardly be recognized as distinct ethnic communities, they probably shared some aspects of identity. At least because they had to form social networks and came into contact with the distinct 'other' [11, p. 108].

The main material. The lands of present-day Ukraine were stretched across the distinct periphery of the 'Celtic world'. The only region where the so called La Tène culture was sufficiently widespread is the Transcarpathian area which lies southwestwards of the Carpathian Mountains. The undulating terrain with its mild climate provided excellent conditions for cattle breeding and farming. The wetlands of the Upper Tisza basin offered large sources of both limonite and charcoal which were used in the Iron Age metallurgy. During the 7th – 4th centuries BC the Upper Tisza basin was occupied by the Thracian Kushtanovicia culture. In the 3rd – 2nd centuries BC the cultural situation in the region changed radically [5, p. 19-20]. New technologies for house building, pottery making and metalworking were introduced in the Upper Tisza area and new centers of economic and political activity emerged.

There are more than 20 La Tène sites in this region of Ukraine. The most notable of them is the one located on the Galish and Lovachka hills near the modern town of Mukacheve [2, p. 125–127; 21, p. 9]. This large rural settlement was a major center of craftsmanship, especially bronze and iron working, which was involved in the long-distance trade with other Celtic settlements of the Great Hungarian plain and Upper Tisza area [1, p. 134]. The traces of the coin minting [14] as well as some characteristic findings of military equipment (such as the

short sword with an X-shaped handle, long slashing swords and iron chain belts, horse bits and chariot fittings) give a lot of reasons to suggest a presence of the Celtic military elite on the settlement.

All in all, the Iron Age sites of the Transcarpathian area, which declined by the 1st century BC due to the Dacian military activity, represent a group of the La Tène settlements rather typical for the Central Europe of the 3rd – 2nd centuries BC. There is little doubt that it was the Celtic expansion that caused the emergence of these settlements. In contrast, it is rather a complicated task to define how far-reaching the Celtic expansion was in the lands eastward of the Carpathian Mountains known as Scythia.

The Greeks used the terms Scythia and Scythians (which probably come from the Iranian languages) to label various groups of nomadic, semi-nomadic and settled population who belonged to different linguistic entities and obviously shared different cultural identities. One should pay attention to a purely geographical character of the term Scythia. Currently it is widely associated with the nomadic 'Royal Scythians' who dominated the North Pontic steppes. However, for many Classical authors, especially for those who belonged to the Posidonius' tradition, the Scythia extended far to the North. According to Strabo, it occupied the most northern part of the world which ended at the Northern Sea (2.5.17). At the same time, Diodorus Siculus notes that the rich in amber island Basileia is situated directly opposite "the part of Scythia which lies above Galatia" (5.23). Some scholars identify Basileia island with Heligoland which lies to the west from Denmark in Atlantic [10, p. 38]. Anyway, it is important to stress that the Classical authors considered at least the Southern Baltic littoral as a part of Scythia.

The 'Royal Scythians', who dominated the North Pontic area in times of Herodotus declined by the late 4th century BC. During the next decades there was a severe crisis which caused the abandonment of numerous Scythian and Hellenistic settlements. The power vacuum situation lasted until the Sarmatian tribes established their domination in the North Pontic area near 200 BC. At the same time both narrative and archaeological sources demonstrate a penetration of some groups of the population from the West.

The Greek epigraphic decree in honour of Protogenes informs us of the Celtic military activity in the North-Western Pontic area. It mentions the Γαλαται and Σχίροι military union threatening Olbia and nearby Scythian tribes [19, p. 37-40]. The Decree dates most probably to the late 3rd century BC. It is uncertain who were the Galatians mentioned in the document, however, it seems clear that the Σχίροι belonged to the same ethnic entity as the Sciri – an Eastern Germanic tribe located somewhere in Vistula basin.

Claudius Ptolemy (c. 90-168 AD) who used the sources dating to the turn of the millennium, mentions some Celtic place and ethnic names [15, p. 63, 102-103, 121; 25, p. 218-219]. Among them are Καρρόδουνον and Ἡρακτον in Upper Dniester basin (Claud. Ptol. 3. 5. 15) as well as the ethnonim ΒΡΙΤΟΛΑΓΑΙ and place names Νοτιόδουνον and Ἀλιόβριξ on the banks of the Lower Danube firth (Claud. Ptol. 3. 10. 7). As far as there are no serious reasons to accuse Claudius Ptolemy in misleading, the one might acknowledge that there were some groups of population in Lower Danube and Dniester areas that either spoke Celtic dialects or considered them prestigious enough to use them for naming their own settlements and tribal groups.

If to speak about the archaeological context of all those mentions in written sources, one must admit that there are no traces of definite La Tène settlements or burials in the region. However, there are a lot of isolated findings of the La Tène jewellery, coins and military equipment which can be divided in two major groups:

- 1) The early and middle La Tene (B2/C1);
- 2) The middle and late La Tene (C-D).

It is clearly visible that the earliest La Tène artefacts in the region had their prototypes in Thrace. These include the double-spring Duchcov brooches of the Pestrup type (also known as a Paukenfibul type) which were produced extensively in Seuthopolis and Sboryanovo until the middle of the 3rd century BC. [14, p. 18]. One should point out the findings of the lead coins from the Dniester estuary. They most probably belong to the rare type of coins which were produced in North-Eastern Bulgaria in the 3rd – 2nd centuries BC by a mixed Celtic/Thracian population (Zaravetz hillfort, Veliko Tarnovo etc.) [21, p. 43-44].

Special attention should be paid to the oval shield and sword with an X-shaped handle representations on the coins of Leucon II, the ruler of Bosporan kingdom. We don't know exactly why he started to produce coins containing depictions of the 'Celtic-like' military equipment. However, one can find very similar depictions on the coins produced by the Greek colonies of the West Black Sea littoral, such as Kabyle, Odessos, Arkovna, Apros and Mesambria [20, p. 113-121]. From the middle of the 3rd century BC the Celtic kingdom in Thrace flourished under the rule of Karvaros and most of the Greek colonies have paid him a tribute. Despite the traditional close links between the Bosporan ruling dynasty and Thrace, it is hard to imagine that

the Hellenistic kingdom in Crimea could become a client state of a Celtic chieftom. However, the coins of Leucon II may reflect some kind of relations between both states. As far as the Bosporan economy depended to a much extent on the maritime trade of wheat, fish and slaves to the Greek mainland, its ruling dynasty might have been interested in Kavaros' activity to force Byzantium to unblock the Black Sea straits during its war with Bythinia and Rhodes in 220 BC.

In any case, it seems clear that the increasing quantity of the LT B2/C1 artefacts in the lands eastward of Carpathians and the emergence of the oval shield representations in the Bosporan kingdom all coincide

with the rise of Celtic military activity in the Balkans, particularly in Thrace (Table 1).

From the early 2nd century BC the Greek and Roman sources point to the emergence of the so-called Bastarnae tribal group in the North-Western part of the Pontic littoral. The Bastarnae are known for their invasions of Thrace, and I support a suggestion that the Zarubyntsi and Poieniști-Lukashevka culture bearers may be identified with the Bastarnae who settled in the lands of today's Moldova and Ukraine shortly after the raids of the early 2nd century BC. Most Classical authors define the Bastarnae either as the Celts or as the Germans and thus the real ethnic background of this tribal group

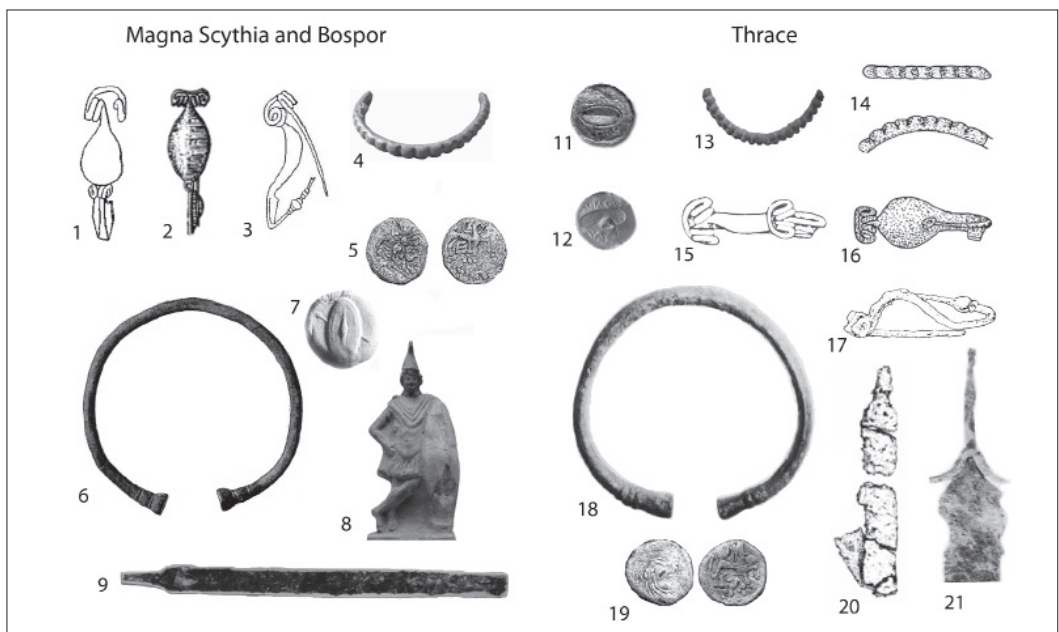


Table 1. Selected La Tène B2/C1 and related finds. North Pontic area: double-spring brooch from Panticapaeum (1); Duchcov fibula from Liplivae (2); bronze ribbed arm-ring from Pekari (3); lead coin from the Dniester estuary (4); bronze neck-ring from Melnykivka (5); Bosporan bronze coin of Leucon II (6); warrior with oval shield statuette from Panticapaeum (7); iron sword from Vyshchetarasivka (8). North Pontic area: Panticapaeum (1); Liplivae (2); Pekari (3); Dniester estuary (4); Melnykivka (5); Bosporan kingdom (6-7); Vyshchetarasivka (8). Thrace: bronze oval-shield coin of Apros in Thrace (1); bronze oval-shield coin of Kavaros (2); bronze arm-rings from Beshepe (3) and Arcovna (4); fibulae from Pchelinya (5), Sboryanovo (6), Pistiros (7); bronze neck-ring from uncertain locality in Thrace (8); Zaravetz type lead coin (9); fragmented iron sword, scabbard and fibula from Philippopolis (10).

still remains uncertain. However, it seems unlikely that the Bastarnae were a ‘people between the Celts and Germans’ with their own language and ethnic identity [8, p. 79]. The name Bastarnae is usually derived from the German word ‘bastard’, so it is highly doubtful that members of this tribal group referred to themselves as the Bastarnae. This supposition may be partially confirmed by the Tacitus’ evidence (Germania 46). Speaking about the Peucini, who were known to be a branch of the Bastarnae people, Tacitus stresses that the Peucini ‘were called by some Bastarnae’ (quos quidam Bastarnas vocant).

The Bastarnae ethicon was more likely a generic term used by the Greek and Roman authors to describe a mixed Western-like barbarian community which emerged in the lands of Scythia in the early 2nd century BC. The Κελτοσκούθαι is probably a similar pseudo-ethnic term which appeared in Classical sources at the same time, for the same purpose.

In the early 2nd century BC, the Przeworsk, Poienești-Lukashevka and Zarubyntsi archaeological cultures emerged in the lands of Eastern Europe. All three cultures are sometimes called the Latènized, because they combined the La Tène and Jastorf traditions in their aspects of material culture and ritual practices [3, p. 165-171]. The La Tène traditions of Middle and South-Eastern Europe influenced all three cultures to a great extent. The carriers of Poienești-Lukashevka and Zarubyntsi cultures adopted the wire middle La Tène brooches which are among the most widespread findings of the 3rd - 1st centuries BC metalwork in the Eastern Europe. The Zarubyntsi culture bearers used to wear the middle La Tène fibulae with the triangular stem-ending (the so-called ‘Zarubyntsi type fibula’). Outside

of the Zarubyntsi culture area similar fibulae are known only in the lands of Scordisci in Middle Danube area [13, p. 37-38]. Some other categories of goods imported from Mediterranean and Central European zone, such as Bargfeld type situlae, the La Tène wheel-made pottery etc. should also be mentioned. The La Tène influence is also evident in the funeral rite [4] and pottery-making of the Zarubyntsi culture [7, p. 340-47]. It is worth to mention the Bovshiv settlement in the Upper Dniester area where a half-dugout dwelling (2.4 x 2.4 m), a pit with pottery stove; some fragments of the La Tène wheel-made pottery of 2nd – 1st centuries BC as well as fragmented hand-made pottery of the Pomeranian or Poienești-Lukashevka culture were excavated [6]. It seems that it was a pottery workshop run by some craftsmen from the Central European Celtic lands who penetrated the area occupied by the Poienești-Lukashevka culture.

On the other hand, there are a lot of artifacts (mostly jewelry) from the Poienești-Lukashevka sites in the Dniester area that has their origin in the Baltic region. As Mircea Babeș states, many “vestiges found in the settlements and cemeteries of the Poienești-Lukashevka culture, as well as a series of isolated discoveries (for instance Kronenhalsringe), remove all doubts concerning population movements between the Baltic and the Black Sea during the last two centuries BC”. Babeș suggests that these findings originated mainly in the Jastorf culture area, but probably also from the southern Scandinavian region, and must have crossed that territory which represents modern Poland [9, p. 128].

Another intriguing artifact is the bronze scabbard plate decorated with anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figures from the Przeworsk burial ground in Gryniv in the

Upper Dniester area. The scabbard comes from the rich grave No. 3 which is dated to the early decades of the 1st century AD. The burial rites of the grave No.3 display interesting mixture of the La Tène, Przeworsk and Wielbark traditions. The decoration of Gryniv scabbard consists of five sections; a beast of prey catching a long-necked bird, an eagle-headed griffin), an embracing couple, an undefined quadruped animal encircled by two plants or leaves and a horseman with a spear and a round shield neighbouring a similar leaf or a plant depicted upside down. Some parallels to the Gryniv's bronze plate decoration can be found in different art traditions, however the closest analogies come from the silver plates of the famous Gundestrup cauldron [16].

Both the late La Tène and Jastorf influences are evident in the area of the Zarubyntsi culture as well. The burial ground excavated in Mutyn (Sumska region of Ukraine) gives an intriguing example of the penetration of certain 'Western-like' war-bands far into the East. The Mutyn burial ground is located on the banks of the Seim river which is in the Middle Dni-pro area. Terpylovskiy attributes the Mutyn burial ground to the local cultural group of Kharyivka which presents a distinct combination of Zarubyntsi culture elements and some features of Jastorf and Przeworsk cultures [26]. About a dozen exceptionally rich warrior graves were excavated in Mutyn. All the burials are dated to the late 1st century BC. The graves contained 13 late La Tène swords, scabbards, spearheads, fragmented chain mail, round shield bosses and other items. The most impressive finds are five late-La Tène helmets. At least two of them belong to the Novo Mesto type, similar to the helmets from Bela Cerkva and Stara Gradiška in Slavonia, which were produced

during the 1st century BC by the Celtic Taurisci [23, p. 125-126]. Finds of such helmets from outside the Middle Danube region are rare, however one of them was found in a Przeworsk grave from Siemiechów (Poland) and three others came from the Sarmatian burials.

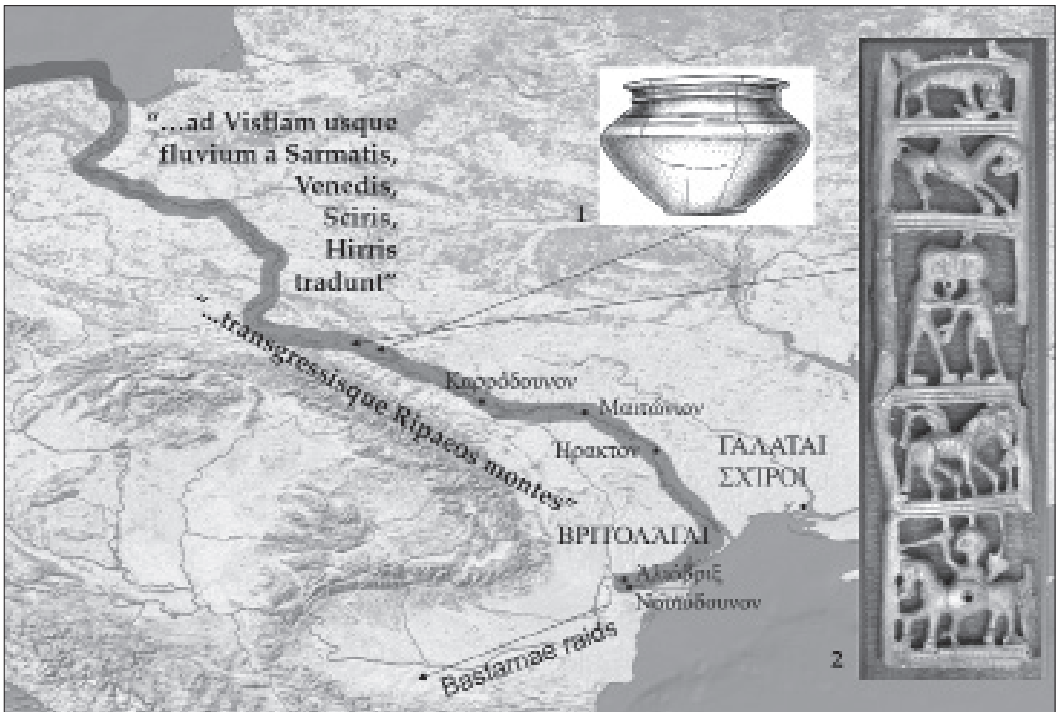
To sum up, it is highly likely that during the 3rd century BC there was sporadic military activity of the Celtic warbands from Thrace in the North Pontic area. Meanwhile, from the early 2nd century BC much more significant cultural transitions and population movements appeared in this area and nearby regions. They resulted in the emergence of the so-called Laténized cultures which combined some Northern ('Germanic'), La Tène ('Celtic') and probably some local post-Scythian elements. The pseudo-ethnic names such as Celtoscythians and Bastarnae appeared almost synchronously. The question is how all these cultural transactions between the Baltic Sea littoral, the North Pontic area and the Celtic enclaves in Balkans came into being? The answer could probably be found in the *Historia Naturalis* by Plinius the Elder (4. 13. 94-97):

Exeundum deinde est, ut extera Europae dicantur, transgressisque Ripaeos montes litus oceani septentrionalis in laeva, donec perveniatur Gadis, legendum. Insulae complures sine nominibus eo situ traduntur, ex quibus ante Scythiam quae appellatur Baunonia unam abesse diei cursu, in quam veris tempore fluctibus electrum eiciatur, Timaeus prodidit. Reliqua litora incerta. Signata fama septentrionalis oceani. Amalchium eum Hecataeus appellat a Parapaniso amne, qua Scythiam adluit, quod nomen eius gentis lingua significat congelatum. Philemon Morimarusam a Cimbris vocari, hoc est mortuum mare, inde usque ad promunturium Rusbeas, ultra deinde

Cronium. Xenophon Lampsacenus a litore Scytharum tridui navigatione insulam esse immensae magnitudinis Balciam tradit, eandem Pytheas Basiliam nominat. Feruntur et Oeoniae, in quibus ovis avium et avenis incolae vivant, aliae, in quibus equinis pedibus homines nascantur, Hippopodes appellati, Phanesiorum aliae, in quibus nuda alioqui corpora praegrandes ipsorum aures tota contegant. Incipit deinde clarior aperiri fama ab gente Inguaeonum, quae est prima in Germania. Mons Saevo ibi, immensus nec Ripaeis iugis minor, inmanem ad Cimbriorum usque promunturium efficit sinum, qui Codanus vocatur, refertus insulis, quarum clarissima est Scatinavia, inconspertae magnitudinis, portionem tantum eius, quod notum sit, Hillevionum gente quingentis incolente pagis: quare alterum orbem terrarum

eam appellant. Nec minor est opinione Aeningia. Quidam haec habitari ad Vistlam usque fluvium a Sarmatis, Venedis, Sciris, Hiris tradunt, sinum Cylipenum vocari et in ostio eius insulam Latrim, mox alterum sinum Lagnum, conterminum Cimbris.

Pliny's text is a kind of an itinerary which has its starting and ending points in the Straits of Gades (or Gibraltar as we know it today). He describes the Mediterranean littoral, Italy, Alps and Balkans, islands of the Ionian Sea, then pays his attention to Hellespont, Dacia, Sarmatia and Scythia. But the most intriguing part of the book seems to be the one in which Pliny proposes his reader to leave the Black Sea, cross the Riphean mountains and come into the Northern Ocean (the Baltic Sea), where numerous islands lay opposite the shores of



Map 1. Communication route between Black and Baltic Seas (according to Plinius the Elder) and Celtic-looking place names in Lower Danube and Dniester area (according to Claudius Ptolemy).
1 - the La Tène settlement in Bovshiv; 2 - cremation burial №3 in Gryniv.

Scythia. He describes this way from South-East to North-West in terms of a boat journey (Map 1). In the next chapters of his work Pliny describes the lands of Cimbri, Germania, Gallia, Britain etc.

There is no doubt that in this particular context Plinius refers to Carpathians as Riphean Mountains, because there are no other mountains laying between Black and Baltic seas. He mentions Vistula as a kind of a natural boundary of this region, which is populated by Sarmatians, Venedi, Sciri and Hirri. But as far as Pliny describes his way from the South-East to North-West, it meant that the Sarmatians were first to be met, then came Venedi, Sciri and Hirri (the latter probably occupied the shores of the Baltic Sea).

It is possible that Plinius the Elder used some Greek itinerary in which the trade route from Hellespont to the Baltic shores was described. The mention of the Sciri ethnicon in this fragment is of particular interest as it is the first record of this tribe since the time when the Sciroi threatened Olbia according to the Decree of Protogenes. It seems that the Celtic place names mentioned by Claudius Ptolemy, as well as such important archaeological sites as Bovshiv and Gryniv, were situated along this route which passed from the Lower Danube area through the Dniester and Vistula basins to the Baltic Sea.

Conclusion. If to speak about the Celtic presence in the lands of today's Ukraine, one must admit that the situation differed significantly depending on the region. There was a group of settlements and burials, which occupied the Transcarpathian region during the 3rd – 2nd centuries BC. It was rather a typical sub-group of the La Tene culture, similar to those in the nearby regions of Slovakia, Hungary and Romania.

In the lands eastwards of the Carpathians there are only some traces of the 'Celtic' military raids and micro-migrations of craftsmen, mercenaries and women that had no significant impact on the cultural situation in the region.

At the same time, the so-called Latènized cultures, influenced by both 'Germanic' Jastorf/Oksywie cultures and the cultures of the Balkan Celts, flourished in the Eastern Europe from the 2nd century BC to the early 1st century AD. The Greeks and Romans mention the Celtoscythians/Bastarnae to identify the Western-looking population of this region, people of 'Scythia' who looked like 'Celts'/'Galatians' because of their appearance, military traditions etc. And they were right at least to some extent, because this population used material culture very similar to the Celtic/La Tène one. If to take into account Claudius Ptolemy's evidence, one should acknowledge that there were some groups of population in the Lower Danube and Dniester areas that used the Celtic dialects at least to some extent.

The cultural transition was possible due to the existence of the communication rout which passed from the Lower Danube area and North-West Black Sea littoral through the Dniester and Vistula basins to the Baltic Sea. It was used for exchanging individuals, artifacts, ideas and technologies between Southern, Eastern and Northern Europe and led to the emergence of new hybrid identities in the region.

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The lands of present-day Ukraine were stretched across the distinct periphery of the 'Celtic world'. The only region where the so called La Tène culture was sufficiently widespread is the Transcarpathian area which lies southwestwards of the Carpathian Mountains. The undulating terrain with its mild climate provided excellent conditions for cattle breeding and farming.