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On the Find of a Phalera Made from the Medallion of a Hellenistic Cup in Barrow No. 20 of the Noin-Ula Burial-Ground (Northern Mongolia)

Mikhail Treister

German Archaeological Institute, Berlin, Germany

mikhail.treister@dainst.de

Abstract

The paper explores a unique *phalera* (horse brass) found in Noin-Ula Barrow No. 20 (Northern Mongolia). The form and decoration of the medallion, its style and the composition of the scene (depicting a satyr chasing a maenad – a subject which can be traced back to metal-working of the 4th century BC) – show that the *phalera* must have been made between the late-2nd or mid-1st century BC, most probably in a Pontic workshop and from the medallion of a silver plate, a *phiale* or a conic cup, perhaps manufactured in Asia Minor in the second half of the 1st century BC. The *phalera* was placed in a Hunnu burial-ground no later than in the middle of the 1st century AD, since a Chinese lacquered cup dated to the fourth year of the Yuanyan Era (9 BC) was found in the same grave. The *phalera* is to date the easternmost find of Hellenistic silver plate.

Keywords

Noin-Ula barrows – *phalerae* of horse harness – Hellenistic toreutics (metalwork) – satyr – maenad – Early Imperial art – nomads of Eurasia – the Hunnu – imports

1 Context of the Find

The harness of the horses buried in Barrow No. 20 of the Noin-Ula Burial-ground in Northern Mongolia included, along with Chinese silver plaques

* Podbielskialle 69-71, D-14195 Berlin. Private: Weißenburgstraße 59, D-53175 Bonn, Germany.



FIGURE 1 A silver decorative medallion used as a phalera from Barrow No. 20 in the Noin-Ula burial-ground (Northern Mongolia). Obverse (reproduced from: Polos'mak et alii 2011, III, fig. 4, 406).

bearing a depiction of unicorns and dragons,¹ two silver *phalerae*, one of which was decorated with a chased depiction based on a mythological subject of undoubted Hellenistic workmanship (fig. 1). In a published monograph of the barrow there is a special section devoted to these *phalerae*.² In view of the unique nature of this find, we consider it necessary to return to its analysis and offer the reader our own version of its attribution, remaining well aware of the preliminary nature of this analysis, since it is based only on illustrations and descriptions from the first publication.

1 Polos'mak et alii 2011, 92-109.

2 Polos'mak et alii 2011, 110-117. The *phalera* examined in this article is held in Ulan Bator together with other finds from the barrow.



FIGURE 2 *A silver decorative medallion used as a phalera from Barrow 20 in Noin-Ula (Northern Mongolia). Reverse (reproduced from: Polos'mak et alii 2011, 113, fig. 4, 41, top right).*

In the publication it is noted that “Although no trace of a backing or fastening was found inside this plaque, to judge from its arrangement it was part of a horse’s harness. The diameter of the item is 14.31 cm. The inner disc was made from virtually pure silver, while the frame around it with a width of 6.4 mm was made from an alloy. The frame was attached to the disc by four small silver nails. When subsequently used as a *phalera*, ten uneven round holes were made through the outer edge of the frame. The reverse of the item had been chased with the subsequent addition on the front side of engraved details, gilding and amalgamation” (figs. 1-2).

Further on the authors point out correctly that the object in question is a re-used medallion from a silver vessel, dish or cup and then, without undertaking any analysis, they classify it as belonging to works of the Pergamon School

of the second half of the 2nd century BC, only comparing the depictions on the plaque with the relief from the Pergamon Altar (because the depictions on both the plaque and the altar had been worked in high relief). They also specify that “the main similarity is in the skill with which the figures arranged at complicated angles are executed and, in general, in the air of tragedy to be found both in the images on the altar and in the figures depicted on the silver plaque: the stern expression of the female face and the grimace of desperate suffering on the male face are not in keeping with the content of the scene, which at first glance seems playful”.³ When stressing the unique nature of the find, the scholars note that parallels for the way the frame is fastened to the plaque are provided by two emblems from the Mzymta Hoard discovered in the vicinity of Sochi. “One of them, which bears a depiction of Scylla, has been worked in high relief and is most probably an emblem made at the Pergamon School (it is interesting to note that these items were also used as *phalerae* by their last owners), just like the reliefs from Miletopolis near Pergamon, which had previously served as decorations for the floors of silver vessels and bore depictions of the head of Silenos and Demosthenes (mid-2nd century BC)”.⁴

It was only after the authors had completed their attribution of the medallion under discussion that they proceeded to its description, which is cited below on the basis of the photographs and descriptions published in their book.

It is apparent that the principles, on which the attribution of the medallion from the Noin-Ula burial-ground was based, cannot stand up to any criticism of a modern scientific nature. Without carrying out an analysis of the subject or the individual elements of its composition, of the style and technique of the depiction, the authors classify the find from Noin-Ula as a work of a specific art school and assign it a fairly precise date. The mention of plaques from the Mzymta Hoard as parallels in view of the technique used for fastening on the frame is correct, however the attribution of the Scylla emblem from Mzymta as an item of the Pergamon school (without any reference to the preliminary publication of this plate and our short analysis of it) is just as unfounded as in the case of the medallion from Noin-Ula.⁵ It is not clear what the link might be between the medallion from Noin-Ula and the medallions in the cups from Miletopolis known to the authors from M. I. Maksimova's publication of 1948,

3 Polos'mak *et alii* 2011, 112.

4 Maksimova 1948, 213-214.

5 See Zhuravlev *et alii* 2009, 453-455, fig. 2, 1. Incidentally there is no proof that the finds from the Mzymta Hoard were used as *phalerae* by their last owners: see Zhuravlev *et alii* 2009, 435, note 95.

in which the depictions of the latter are not even given. To be fair, we should point out that in their description of the *phalerae*, in some cases the authors of the monograph do cite parallels. They compare, for example, the arrangement of the upper edge of the goat-skin on the chest of the female figure with the arrangement of the skin on the statue of the Satyr with a Panther in Brussels,⁶ pointing out that it was a work of the Roman period, a replica of a sculptured group dating from the second half of the 2nd century BC. Yet most digressions of this kind (we are not now planning to go into the question as to the significance of analysis of those elements) with extremely rare exceptions (for example, the comparison of the expression on the female face and the medallion with a bust of Artemis from the former collection of E. Stathatos)⁷ are not accompanied by references to publications of antiquities with substantiation of their attributions and dates, which is inadmissible in serious academic publications. The authors draw the conclusion that the female figure in the scene – Artemis – has been depicted as an “ordinary nymph” and that the male figure is a satyr and then they draw attention to the Dionysiac nature of the scene.⁸

2 Description

The medallion consists of two parts: a disc with a chased depiction and a narrow profiled frame, round the outside edge of which there are ten round holes positioned at roughly equal intervals, while along its inner edge the frame is attached to the disc by four pins (figs. 1-2).

On the round disc a scene has been depicted with a female (left) and a male (right) figure (figs. 3-5). The young and beardless naked man is shown sitting on the skin of a lion or panther laid out on a rock. In the foreground is the head of an animal with its front paws stretched out forwards and complete with claws: the hind paws of the animal and part of its tail curved round in an arc (the fur of the skin has been worked with fine notches) are also visible. The male figure is depicted in a seated position and his right leg is stretched forward, while his left leg is bent at the knee; his left hand is drawn back on to the horizontal surface of the rock and it supports the figure. The man's right arm, stretched out and bent slightly at the elbow, is taking hold of the woman's shoulder, while she tries to break free from his grasp, pushing with her left

6 Polos'mak *et alii* 2011, 112.

7 Polos'mak *et alii* 2011, 114.

8 Polos'mak *et alii* 2011, 114.



FIGURE 3 A silver decorative medallion used as a phalera from Barrow No. 20 in the Noin-Ula burial-ground (Northern Mongolia). Obverse. Detail: satyr and the maenad (reproduced from: Polos'mak et alii 2011, 110, fig. 4, 40a).

hand against her attacker. She is pushing against his chin as a result of which the man's head is thrown back. Behind the male figure's back, his tail can be seen curved in an arc. On his head he wears a gilded wreath of ivy leaves.

The female figure is also depicted in a seated position: she is leaning slightly towards the left and her head is presented almost *en face*, turned slightly upwards and to the right. Her torso is shown *en face*, while the lower part of her body and her legs are depicted in a three-quarter turn to the left. The woman's right arm has been lowered on to her knee and it grips the edge of her cloak. The wrists and right forearm of the woman are decked out with bracelets, the edges of which are marked out with parallel chased lines (figs. 3-5). The chest



FIGURE 4 *A silver decorative medallion used as a phalera from Barrow No. 20 in the Noin-Ula burial-ground (Northern Mongolia). Obverse. Detail: satyr and the maenad (reproduced from: Polos'mak et alii 2011, 115, fig. 4, 42).*



FIGURE 5 *A silver decorative medallion used as a phalera from Barrow No. 20 in the Noin-Ula burial-ground (Northern Mongolia). Obverse. Detail: satyr and the maenad (reproduced from: Polos'mak et alii 2011, 113, fig. 4, 41).*

of the woman is partly covered by a cloak consisting of a goatskin tied in place with a knot, and its ends (one of which is complete with hoof) cover the upper part of the woman's belly. The surface of the skin has been worked with fine parallel notches, to provide a hairy effect. The upper end of the skin passes diagonally across the woman's chest, leaving her right shoulder free and drawn in with a series of zigzag projections. On the left shoulder the cloak is held in place by a round convex brooch (fig. 4). The edge of the cloak is held in the woman's right hand and it covers the figure's left leg (its surface is presented as a series of zigzag folds). It hangs down forming a long end with vertical asymmetrically arranged folds. The other end of the cloak cast over her left shoulder flutters above it almost vertically upwards: the surface of that end of the cloak, which ends in a sharp angle, is fashioned with lengthways folds and on one side the edge is turned inwards. The authors of the publication are of the opinion that the fluttering end of the cloak in actual fact depicts the upper part of a bow⁹ protruding above the back of the figure, but it is very difficult to accept this hypothesis (figs. 3-5).

Both the male and female figure have been beautifully modelled: both have been executed in high relief, virtually in the technique of sculpture in the round (fig. 5): this applies in particular to the head of the woman (fig. 6). Both the male and the female head have been portrayed with details which make them vividly expressive.

N. V. Polos'mak and her co-authors describe the face of the female figure as follows: "The woman's face is oval-shaped with large eyes under horizontal brows. The straight nose is softly rounded at the end: if we look at her face in profile, the nose is not at all Greek, but perhaps it was slightly flattened when the item was being used. The mouth is small with full lips that are tightly pressed together, forming small vertical folds at the corners. The gilded diadem (*tainia*) separates the curls from the smoothly combed wavy hair with a straight parting. The hair is arranged in rolls arranged down the sides of the face and it is raised up at the back of the neck: a cutting tool has been used to depict a lock curling in towards the cheek. There is a smooth hoop round the figure's neck. Between the brows above the bridge of the nose an *urna* (Sanskrit) or third eye has been depicted with a precise round indentation – a symbol of the essence of the spirit and spiritual insight".¹⁰

Insofar as it was not possible for us to work directly with the original *phalera* from Noin-Ula, we have only been able to turn to the fairly high-quality illustrations published in the monograph, *The Twentieth Barrow from Noin-Ula*.

9 See Polos'mak *et alii* 2011, 112.

10 Polos'mak *et alii* 2011, 112.

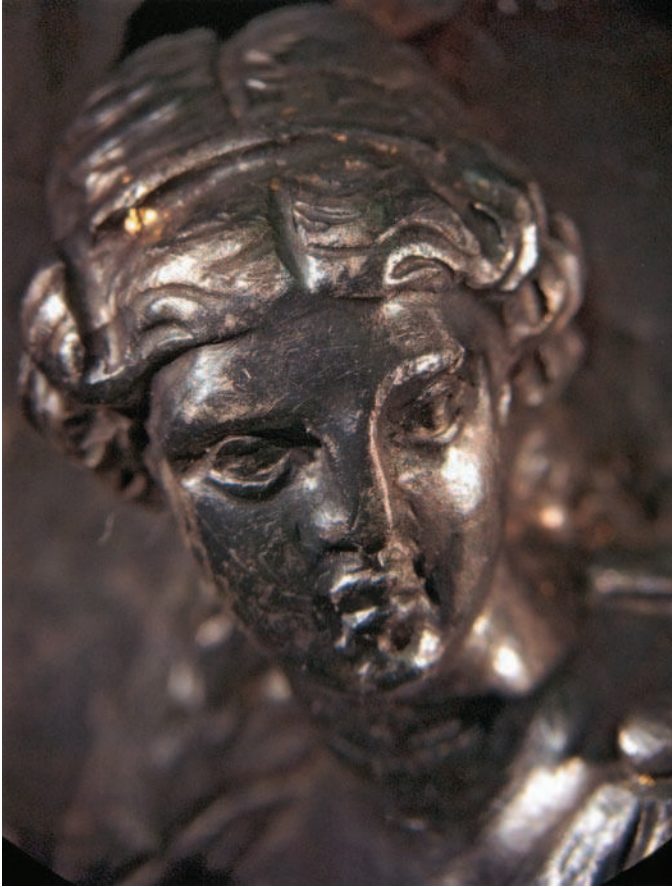


FIGURE 6 *A silver decorative medallion used as a phalera from Barrow No. 20 in the Noin-Ula burial-ground (Northern Mongolia). Obverse. Detail: head of the maenad (reproduced from: Polos'mak et alii 2011, 116, fig. 4, 43).*

In a number of instances it was difficult to judge how accurate the descriptions provided by the authors of the publication actually were. Nevertheless, despite considerable effort, it proved impossible to pick out the “smooth hoop” on the woman’s neck in those photographs. It was also impossible, even in a detailed photograph, to discern “the precise round indentation” above the eyebrows and above the bridge of the nose (fig. 6).

There were also some attributes within the field of the relief. Below the male figure and slightly to the right of the left foot of the female figure, which is reclining on a ridge of rock, there lies a hooked stick (*a lagobolon* or *pedum*

(figs. 1; 4). The authors of the publication note: “The crook is decorated with a pattern reminiscent of the markings on a snake’s skin”.¹¹ Its lower end is covered with claws from the paw of the lion or panther skin, on which the male figure is sitting. To the left of the female figure stands a *thyrsos* on a rock leaning slightly to the right: it rises up behind the head of the female figure. The surface of the staff bears a rhomboid pattern. There is a pine-cone at the top of the staff (figs. 1; 3-4). To the left of the *thyrsos*, on the same ridge of rock against a background of a vertical shield stands a herm on a faceted base which widens out towards its sculptured upper part depicted in profile facing right. The draped figure is of a beardless youth with his right arm bent at the elbow and a long phallus curving upwards (fig. 1). The depiction of the herm, according to information provided by the authors, was gilded.¹²

3 Function of the Plate

The medallion from the Noin-Ula burial-ground belongs to a group of silver medallions bearing depictions of mythological scenes. Some of these medallions adorned dishes with an out-turned horizontal rim. Although the precise find-spots for such dishes are usually unknown, as a rule they are in one way or another associated with the East. Apart from the dish from the Pomerance Collection¹³ and the Calenian dish held in Brussels¹⁴ these vessels are as follows: a silver dish with a medallion depicting Dionysos, Ariadne and Silenos – in the collection of the J. Paul Getty Museum, which M. Pfrommer dated to the 2nd or 1st century BC¹⁵ (stands close to the dish from the Pomerance Collection on the grounds of its shape, dimensions and the fashioning of its edge in the form of an Ionian *cymatium*)¹⁶ and a silver dish from Fayum.¹⁷ Pfrommer also

11 Polos'mak *et alii* 2011, 113.

12 Polos'mak *et alii* 2011, 113.

13 Oliver 1977, 16-20, figs. 3-4; *Cat. Toledo* 1977, 90, No. 53 assigned a date at the end of the 2nd century BC; Pfrommer 1993, 64; 98, note 774: 2nd century BC; *LIMC* VIII, 1997, s. v. Mainades (I. Krauskopf & E. Simon), 789, No. 80, Prittowitz & Gaffron 1999, 184, pl. 59, 2.

14 Mus. Cinqnantenaire A 1028: *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum*. 3 IB/IIIN, pls. 4 and 5 (Belgique 142); Courby 1922, 247-248, note 37; Züchner 1942, 116; Matz 1956, 26; Hausmann 1981, 211-212; 213, fig. 79.

15 Pfrommer 1993, 64-66, 218-219, note 127; Treister 1997, 128-131, figs. 7-8; Treister 1999a, 568-569, fig. 5.

16 Pfrommer 1993, 64.

17 Ahrens 1968, 233, No. 5, fig. 7; Oliver 1977, 19: 2nd century BC; Hausmann 1981, 217-222, fig. 81; Pfrommer 1993, 64, 98, note 772.

assigns to this group a glass bowl with a medallion on which a hunting scene is depicted – possibly of Alexandrian workmanship, found in Tresiliko in Calabria and dated to the beginning of the 2nd century BC¹⁸ – and a bronze bowl discovered in a shrine in Begram.¹⁹

Other medallions bearing depictions of mythological scenes decorated *phialai* of the Hellenistic period dating from the 3rd century BC onwards. It is to this group that the famous *Coppa Tarantina*,²⁰ in particular, belongs. A silver *phiale* found in a hoard (or burial) in Inner Asia, possibly on the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan is decorated with a medallion depicting Silenos with a *kithara* sitting on a dog²¹ and a medallion on its own with a depiction of Pentheus being torn apart by Bacchae, which is held in a private collection in Geneva.²²

Finally there are medallions with multi-figure mythological compositions in relief which decorated the lids of *pyxides* originating from Southern Italy or Sicily and dating mainly from the 3rd century BC. The figures depicted include Artemis, Apollo and Zeus (or deified rulers of the Ptolemaic dynasty?),²³ Penthesilea fighting Achilles,²⁴ Eirene and Plutos²⁵ and Nereides.²⁶

If we bear in mind the size of the Noin-Ula medallion, it is difficult to assume that it could originally have decorated a *pyxis*, since the medallions decorating vessels of that kind are usually significantly smaller.

The medallion with a depiction of Scylla originating from Southern Italy,²⁷ which, at least when being reused, decorated a conical cup,²⁸ has a diameter of 10.5 cm. A medallion of similar dimensions is that decorating a dish with

18 Pfrommer 1993, 64; 98, note 776.

19 Pfrommer 1993, 64; 98, note 777.

20 Delbrueck 1912, 325-316, figs. 31-32; Nachod 1918, pls. iv-v; Pfrommer 1987, 162-163, 249, Kbk 17 with bibliography, pl. 35a; Hausmann 1995, 88-97, fig. 2; Schwarzmaier 1997, 94-95, note 511, 168-169, pl. 19, 2; Platz-Horster 2003, 222-223, 231-232, 280, pl. 38, 1.

21 Baratte 2002, 19-21, note 2, fig. 5.

22 *LIMC* VII, 1994, s. v. Pentheus (J. Bažant & G. Berger-Doer), 310, No. 27: c. 150 BC; cf. Baratte 2002, 21-23, No. 3, fig. 6.

23 From a hoard in Taranto: Wuilleumier 1968, 348-350, pl. xx, 1, 3; Pfrommer 1987, 164-165, 262, Kbk 113 with bibliography pl. 33; Platz-Horster 2003, 222, 271, pl. 29, 3-4.

24 *LIMC* VII, 1994, s. v. Penthesilea (E. Berger), 301, No. 55a; Blome 1999, 71, fig. 92; Platz-Horster 2003, 221-222, 270, pl. 28, 1.

25 Bothmer 1984, 57, No. 101; Platz-Horster 2003, 222, 271, pl. 29, 1-2; Guzzo 2003, 59-61, No. 10 (with bibliography), fig. 34.

26 From the Tomba degli Ori in Canosa: Wuilleumier 1968, 360, pl. xxv, 3; *Cat. Milan* 1984, 58-62, No. 8; Morea 1989, figs. on p. 15, 43, 49; 38-39, 43, 45-46; Corrente 1992, 341, note 8; Guzzo 1992, 530-531, note 10; 537, fig. 105; 538; Krug 1998, 6-7, fig. 8; 10, fig. 11.

27 Bothmer 1984, 55, No. 95; Guzzo 2003, 51-52, No. 4 with bibliography.

28 Bothmer 1984, 55, No. 93; Guzzo 2003, 47-50, No. 2 with bibliography.

a depiction of Dionysos, Ariadne and Silenos, held in the collection of the J. Paul Getty Museum (10.3-10.5 cm)²⁹ and also a medallion with a depiction of Pentheus being torn apart by Bacchae found in a hoard in Inner Asia (10 cm), which used to decorate a *phiale*.³⁰ The medallion from a dish in the Pomerance collection is only very slightly larger (diameter *c.* 11.3 cm).³¹ Furthermore, the medallion from *Coppa Tarantina*³² and the medallion worked in relief decorating the Calenian bowl from Acarnania in Brussels³³ make it possible to state that medallions with multi-figure compositions decorating *phialai* and dishes of the Hellenistic period can have a diameter of up to 15-20 cm.

Apart from two exceptions (a *phiale* with a medallion bearing a bust of Heracles – d. 10.9 cm from a hoard found in Hildesheim³⁴ and a *phiale* with a medallion depicting a personification of Africa from Boscoreale³⁵ – d. 14.8 cm) the medallions decorating cups referred to above do not exceed 10 cm in diameter: their diameters range from 5 to 10 cm. So in general there is a certain tendency to be observed towards a decrease in size of the medallions used to decorate bowls during the Hellenistic and Early Imperial periods. The medallion from the Noin-Ula burial-ground with a diameter of 14.3 cm has dimensions significantly larger than the medallions of vessels from the Hellenistic and Early Imperial periods (apart from one exception – a medallion from one of the bowls in the Boscoreale Treasure). At the same time it should be noted that it is exactly the same size as the medallion with a hunting scene³⁶ from the Mzymta Hoard and its dimensions are smaller than those of the medallion with a depiction of Scylla³⁷ from the same source (17.1 cm) or the medallion with a similar depiction of Scylla exhibited in 2012 at a Christie's sale in New York.³⁸

29 See above note 15.

30 See above note 22.

31 See above note 13. The diameter of the dish is 15.6 cm (on the basis of the photograph the size of the medallion can be determined as *c.* 11.3 cm).

32 See above note 20.

33 See above note 14.

34 Pernice & Winter 1901, 25-26, pl. 3; Gehrig 1980, 14, pl. 3; *Cat. Hildesheim* 1997, No. 2; Gregarek 1997, 92-93, fig. 3; Erdrich 2002, 84, No. XX-05-9/3.2, pl. 8.

35 Héron de Villefosse 1899, 39-43, No. 1, pl. 1; Baratte 1986, 77-79.

36 Zhuravlev *et alii* 2009, 455-456, fig. 2, 2.

37 See above note 5.

38 *Christie's New York. Sale* 2565, June 8, 2012, Lot 94 (with the date *c.* 3rd century BC and indication of the fact that the item had been part of a private collection in London up until 1962). The surface of the medallion is gilded apart from Scylla's torso and the heads of the dogs.

4 Composition. Attribution. Subject and Style

The *lagobolon* (*pedum*) (fig. 4) must have been intended to indicate that the male figure is Pan. Incidentally, while the *lagobolon* was initially an attribute of Pan it was later adopted in scenes of the Dionysiac *thiasos* and also appears as an attribute of a satyr.³⁹

The panther(?) skin thrown over the left shoulder of the female figure which covers her left breast and is complete with paws below her breasts (fig. 3) often appears in Classical art as an attribute for a maenad together with a *thyrsos*. We could point for example to depictions on red-figure vases.⁴⁰ Maenads were depicted with kid's skins over their shoulders, as for example on a bronze *krater* from the Maikop Region, which is held in Berlin.⁴¹ Another very frequent attribute of theirs was a round *tympanon*.⁴²

This means that the group depicted on the *phalera* from Noin-Ula can be defined as a scene of a satyr attacking a maenad – a subject which had been well-known in Greek art ever since the Archaic period.⁴³ The female figure is not Artemis, as suggested by N. V. Polosmak and her co-authors, probably starting out from their incorrect attribution: they have interpreted the edge of the cloak above the shoulder of the female figure as the depiction of a bow.⁴⁴

This composition (with a female figure on the left and a seated male figure on the right) can be traced back to examples of Greek metalwork in the 4th century BC. The only difference is that the female figure in this instance has been depicted standing. In the scenes indicated below, the out-stretched arms of the figures are intertwined: in particular, on the medallion of a dish from the Rogozen Treasure, Auge's hand has been placed on the elbow of Heracles' out-stretched arm. We encounter this motif in reliefs decorating the lids of bronze mirrors: (1) a mirror assumed to be from Elis and held in the National Museum of Athens;⁴⁵ (2) a mirror assumed to be from Thessaly, held in the collection of Christos G. Bastis in New York;⁴⁶ (3) a mirror from the Loeb collection in

39 Geyer 1977, 164-170; Stähli 1999, 106, note 155.

40 *LIMC* VIII, 1997, s. v. Mainades (I. Krauskopf & E. Simon), 783-784, No. 7; 788, No. 64; 790, No. 92.

41 Züchner 1938, 12, fig. 10, pl. 6; Touchette 1995, 7-8, pl. 51, *a-d*; *LIMC* VIII, 1997, s. v. Mainades (I. Krauskopf & E. Simon), 783-784, No. 7, Barr-Sharrar 2008, 148, fig. 137.

42 *LIMC* VIII, 1997, s. v. Mainades (I. Krauskopf & E. Simon), Nos. 13, 33, 38, 40, 44, 50.

43 Stähli 1999, 161-201.

44 Polos'mak *et alii* 2011, 112.

45 Schwarzmaier 1997, 252, No. 43 with bibliography, pl. 6, *I*: c. 340 BC.

46 Schwarzmaier 1997, 333-334, No. 243 with bibliography, pl. 6, 2: c. mid-3rd century BC.

Munich.⁴⁷ The motif is also found on silver medallions: on a dish from the Rogozen Treasure,⁴⁸ on which the names of the figures were written and on a medallion assumed to have originated from Syria and held in the Czartoryski Collection in the Cracow Museum.⁴⁹ There is every reason to assume that this composition had been adopted for depictions of the scene with a satyr and a maenad⁵⁰ no later than the turn of the 4th century BC. The earliest example is an engraved depiction on a bronze mirror from the collection of the British Museum.⁵¹

A different composition is found on a silver medallion from a dish in the Pomerance collection, which is assumed to have originated from Asia Minor and has been dated by A. Oliver to the end of the 2nd century BC. A kneeling satyr, depicted in profile, attacks a bathing nymph, shown on the left, and embraces her. The nymph, depicted at a complicated angle and leaning with her right hand on the ground, has raised her left arm bent at the elbow in an effort to push away the satyr's head.⁵²

Another such scene is represented on the medallion worked in relief in the Calenian bowl (d. 21.5 cm), which originated from Acarnania and is held in Brussels.⁵³ To the left a satyr is depicted half-seated on a rock and leaning on it with his left hand: in his right hand he is holding a *lagobolon*. Opposite him there stands a nymph. With his outstretched right hand the satyr is pulling off the nymph's garments. The nymph is pushing him away with her right hand, which she has placed on the satyr's elbow. Behind the nymph's back there is a *hydria* on a column. In the opinion of U. Hausmann, as regards its style, the Brussels medallion is linked with the *Coppa Tarantina* medallion and dates most probably from the time around 200 BC or from the beginning of the 2nd century BC, to judge from the decoration on the *pyxis* lid.⁵⁴

Similar scenes in Roman decorative reliefs are interpreted by some scholars as a satyr's attack on Amymone, one of the Danaids and the heroines of Argos who, while searching for water, woke the sleeping satyr (Apollodorus II, 1, 4).⁵⁵ In these reliefs scenes are depicted with a variety of iconographies. A relief,

47 Schwarzmaier 1997, 305, No. 175 with bibliography.

48 Fol *et alii* 1989, 67-69, No. 4; Shefton 1989, 82-90, pl. XIVA, C; *Cat. Saint Louis* 1998, 176-177, No. 107; *Cat. Basel* 2007, 168-169, No. 120h.

49 Shefton 1989, 83-84, note 3, pl. XVA; Schwarzmaier 1997, 45, 105, 108-109, pl. 31, I.

50 Matz 1956, 26; Shefton 1989, 84.

51 Schwarzmaier 1997, 47-48, 200, No. 136, pl. 85, 2: c. 300 BC.

52 See above note 13.

53 See above note 14.

54 Hausmann 1981, 226.

55 Hundsalz 1987, 63-67, 190-193, K 89-93.

which is close in its iconography to the scene on the *phalera*, is a relief from the theatre of Prusias ad Hypium in Bithynia, held in Berlin, which has been dated to the 1st century BC.⁵⁶ A similar date has been assigned to a fragmentary relief in the Arthur M. Sackler Museum (Cambridge, Massachusetts),⁵⁷ on which can be seen only the lower part of the figure of the maenad and the foot of the satyr's right leg which has been stretched forward. Yet it is clearly unlikely that these reliefs can be linked with the depiction of a satyr attacking Amymome, given that an important attribute of that scene is missing – namely the *hydria*, which Amymome had been taking with her so as to collect water.

It should be noted that in the relief from Prusias, as indeed on the medallion published here, the satyr figure seated on the animal skin is young and beardless. His pose and the rendering of one of his hands stretched out behind his back and on which he is leaning is comparable with those on the medallion. The pose of the maenad, on the other hand, is different: in the relief she is seen from the back. Nor is there any gesture of resistance. The satyr seizes the maenad by the arm, but she is not pushing him away. Besides, in the reliefs, each of the images provides a mirror image for the other: the figure of the satyr on the left and the figure of the maenad on the other. The composition also includes the maenad's *thyrsos* and the herm standing under a tree. Reliefs which have been dated to the time of Claudius or Nero⁵⁸ belong to another group. One of them originates from Herculaneum.⁵⁹ On the two reliefs both of the figures have been depicted standing: the maenad on the left and the satyr on the right. In both cases the satyr has been depicted with a beard. In both cases the maenad is pushing the satyr away with her hand in the same way as she does on the medallion from Noin-Ula. Scenes with a similar iconography have been found on sarcophagi,⁶⁰ on the discuses of lamps dating from the Early Imperial period⁶¹ and on a series of engraved and cast gems from that period, including a signed gem made of sardonyx by the stone-cutter Panaios held in the Cabinet des Médailles of the National Library in Paris.⁶² Prototypes for these

56 Blümel 1960, 27-28, fig. 3; Hanfmann 1966, 372, pl. 94, 2; Matz 1968, Beil. 2 (bottom); Tuchelt 1969-1970, 226, 235, No. 24; Fronig 1981, 47; Hundsalsz 1987, 64-65, 190-191, K 89; *LIMC* VIII, 1997, s. v. Priapos (W. R. Megow), 1032, No. 33a.

57 Hanfmann 1966, pl. 94, 1; Fronig 1981, 48; Hundsalsz 1987, 64-65, 191, K 90; *LIMC* VIII, 1997, s. v. Priapos (W. R. Megow), 1032, No. 33a.

58 Hundsalsz 1987, 65, 191-192, K 91-92 with bibliography.

59 Hundsalsz 1987, 65, 191-192, K 91.

60 Matz 1956, 28-30.

61 Matz 1956, 22, No. 2; Zazoff 1970, III, fig. 8.

62 Matz 1956, 22; Zazoff 1970, 104-113; *LIMC* VIII, 1997, s. v. Nymphet (M. Halm-Tisserant & G. Siebert), 895, note 51; on the Panaios gem, see also: Zazoff 1983, 320, note 92, pl. 94, 1.

date from the Late Hellenistic period, as scholars have already pointed out on a number of occasions. This applies, in particular, to a fragmentary group statue or a relief from the sanctuary of the Poseidoniasts from Berytus, which was discovered in Delos and dates from the period between the middle of the 2nd and the beginning of the 1st century BC.⁶³ A depiction with a very similar iconography is found on the applied relief of a bi-conical clay bottle from the collection of the Akademisches Kunstmuseum in Bonn, which was produced in a Pergamon workshop: the scene depicted on the relief is interpreted as a depiction of Heracles and Auge.⁶⁴ A similar applied relief is held in Würzburg: the scene on it is interpreted as a depiction of Heracles and Auge and it dates from the period c. 200 BC.⁶⁵ Scenes with a young seated satyr and a maenad attempting to stand up and pushing the satyr's head away are represented in marble sculptural groups of the so-called Townley group.⁶⁶ They date from the time of Hadrian.⁶⁷ It is suggested – first and foremost on the basis of a comparison of the style of the satyr heads with that of the friezes on the Pergamon Altar, that they can be traced back to an original from the second quarter or middle of the 2nd century BC.⁶⁸ The similar turn of the body, position of the legs (but not the right hand and the head) are found in the figure of Venus on a silver *skyphos* from Casa del Menandro in Pompeii, which has been dated to c. the middle or second half of the 1st century BC.⁶⁹ Venus is wearing a bracelet on her forearm and she is holding the edge of her garment against her knee. What can also be used for comparison are the execution of the lower part of her body and the turn of the legs of Venus on a silver jug found in Boscoreale, which has been dated to the end of the 1st century BC.⁷⁰

63 Picard 1921, 121-123, fig. 100; Marcadé 1969, 393-394, note 1 (with bibliography), pl. L, No. MN 3335; Charbonneaux *et alii* 1988, 321, fig. 353; Bruneau 1995, 59-61, No. 73, fig. 8; Marquardt 1995, 227-229, pl. 23, 3-4. On the dating of the sanctuary, see also: Meyer 1988, 203-220.

64 Hübner 1993, 55, 98, 190, No. 78a.1, pl. 11.

65 *Die Sammlung Kieselevff* 1989, 144, No. 227, pl. 90.

66 Stähli 1999, 75-107, 362-372, Nos. 3.1-3.8; figs. 41-45; 51-52; Andreae 2001, 185, fig. 142; 187-189.

67 Stähli 1999, 368.

68 Stähli 1999, 81-83, *cf.* LIMC VIII, 1997, s. *v.* Nymphai (M. Halm-Tisserant & G. Siebert), 895, No. 52a-b; dated to the first half of the 2nd century BC.

69 Stefanelli 1991, 151, fig. 126; 266, No. 66 – c. mid-1st century BC; Painter 2001, 58, M6, pl. 6; *Cat. Naples* 2006, 206-207, No. 290; bottom left illustration on p. 207: second half of the 1st century BC.

70 Simon 1986, 140, fig. 184; Stefanelli 1991, 137, fig. 102; 260-261, No. 39.

There are parallels to be found for the narrow descending ends of the garment, the bottom end of which is triangular in shape and which has small folds down the sides (fig. 4): on the medallion with a depiction of Athena from a cup originating from a hoard found in Hildesheim,⁷¹ as regards figures – Achilles in the scene with Priam on a cup from Hoby;⁷² Jason on a *kalathos* found in Wardt-Lüttingen of the Augustan period;⁷³ a dancing maenad on a silver cup from Vicarello, which has been dated to the 1st century AD;⁷⁴ Ariadne on one of the glass, so-called Ariadne, plates.⁷⁵ At the same time it clearly does not serve as a chronological indicator, since the edges of garments with folds (*Mantelzipfel*), similar to those depicted on the medallion from Noin-Ula, are also found on reliefs from the Early Classical period.⁷⁶ It is also worth drawing attention to the stele with a depiction of the scene of the banquet from the Manisa Museum, dating from the same period and probably originating from the mausoleum in Belevi.⁷⁷ Similar garment edges are reproduced on reliefs of the 1st century BC: on a votive relief from Mount Parnes held in the National Museum of Athens⁷⁸ and on a relief with a depiction of the Charites by Socrates held in the Vatican.⁷⁹

The other end of the garment is depicted behind the maenad's back as if it was fluttering because of her movement and pointing almost vertically upwards (figs. 3-5). It is evident that the garment reflects movement, even if it is conveyed with more or less straight lines. In the scene with the depiction of Pan and the Nymph on a bronze medallion from a chariot found in 1987 during construction work to the South of Khaskovo in Bulgaria:⁸⁰ the Nymph

71 Pernice & Winter 1901, 21-24, figs. 4-5, pls. 1-2; Gehrig 1980, 13, No. 1; *Cat. Hildesheim* 1997, 34-36, No. 1; Gregarek 1997, 92, fig. 2; Erdrich 2002, 83-84, No. XX-05-9/3.1, pl. 7.

72 Stefanelli 1991, 126, fig. 89; 256-257, No. 26; Baratte 1997, pl. 7, 2.

73 Künzl 1969, 358, 359, fig. 14; 344, fig. 18; Simon 1986, 231, figs. 291-292; Grassinger 1997, 126-128, figs. 1-3; Baratte 1997, pl. 8, 2.

74 Simon 1986, 147, fig. 193; Stefanelli 1991, 274-275, figs. 281, 283, No. 101.

75 *Cat. Cologne* 1988, 70-73, No. 32, photograph on page 72; first quarter of the 1st century AD.

76 Stročka 1979, 146, fig. 1; 148; 152; 156.

77 Polat 2005, 57, figs. 1-2.

78 Ridgway 2002, 224, 231, pl. 100.

79 Ridgway 2002, 232, pl. 107.

80 Petrov 2004, 185-187, fig. 9; *Cat. Basel* 2007, 147, No. 100. The medallion had been dated to the Hellenistic period, although a dating from the early centuries AD would appear to us more justified, bearing in mind the shape and decoration of the other elements of the chariot (Petrov 2004, 185-186, figs. 3-4), in particular, the discs decorated with rosettes using the niello technique. I. Petrov's dating was based only on his comparison of the depiction of Pan with another depiction on the relief from the Villa Albani.

is holding with her right hand the edge of her garment, which is fluttering and forming a semi-circle above her head and body.

The priapic herm depicted in the scene on the *phalera* (figs. 1; 7) is of the herm type with a draped body. In his classification of depictions of Priapus, W. R. Megow includes a small group of depictions⁸¹ under this type (D), including the priapic herm standing on a column in a scene with a depiction of a satyr and a maenad on a silver cup from Vicarello, which is dated to the Early Imperial period⁸² and also on the so-called Cup of the Ptolemies – a *kantharos* made of sardonyx held in the Cabinet des Médailles in the National Library in Paris, which has been dated to the 1st century BC.⁸³ It is plain to see that the pillar of the herm which broadens out smoothly towards the top and the fact that it is shown in profile link the depiction on the *phalera* with a whole series of depictions of priapic herms with a bare torso (Type C according to Megow's classification),⁸⁴ in particular on a two-sided relief with masks from the Villa Albani held in Munich⁸⁵ and on a stucco relief from the Villa Farnesina in Rome (c. 20 BC).⁸⁶ What also stands out is the frequent use of the motif of the priapic herm (although they differ in appearance) on the so-called reliefs with masks dating from the 1st century BC-1st century AD⁸⁷ and also on table silver – on *Maskenbecher*, in particular one from the Hildesheim Hoard (the cup has been dated to the late 1st century BC)⁸⁸ and on a *kantharos* from Berthouville.⁸⁹

A priapic herm, but not a young one and one with a beard, is to be seen on the silver medallion of a dish with a depiction of a seated figure of a girl with an eros (the medallion is held in the Antikensammlung Berlin and is assumed to have originated from Asia Minor and to date from the 2nd century BC)⁹⁰ and also on a silver casket from Italy, which is dated to the 2nd or 1st century BC.⁹¹ It is worth noting that profiled depictions of a priapic herm are to be seen

81 *LIMC VIII*, 1997, s. v. Priapos (W. R. Megow), 1033-1034, Nos. 53-61.

82 Künzl 1969, 336, 363, 364, fig. 26; Simon 1986, 146-147, figs. 192-193; Stefanelli 1991, 65, fig. 42; *LIMC VIII*, 1997, s. v. Priapos (W. R. Megow), 1033, No. 58.

83 *LIMC VIII*, 1997, s. v. Priapos (W. R. Megow), 1033, No. 57.

84 *LIMC VIII*, 1997, s. v. Priapos (W. R. Megow), 1031-1033, Nos. 24-52.

85 Cain 1988, 122, fig. 12; 199, No. 39; *LIMC VIII*, 1997, s. v. Priapos (W. R. Megow), 1032, No. 34.

86 Simon 1986, 132, figs. 174-175.

87 Cain 1988, 214-219.

88 *Cat. Toledo* 1977, 130-131, note 83; Stefanelli 1991, 178, fig. 171; 272, No. 93.

89 Cain 1988, 172, 173, fig. 57; *Cat. Malibu* 2014, 42-43, figs. 23-24.

90 *Cat. Toledo* 1977, 88, No. 50; Gehrig 1977, 5-9, fig. 1 (end of the 3rd century BC); *Cat. Bonn* 1979, 618-619, pl. 128; *LIMC VIII*, 1997, s. v. Priapos (W. R. Megow), 1039, No. 146; Baum-vom Felde 2005, 85.

91 Baum-vom Felde 2005, 84, fig. 10.

in reliefs with scenes of a satyr and a maenad from Prusias in Bithynia⁹² and also in the Arthur M. Sackler Museum.⁹³ The round object standing behind the herm (fig. 7) is most probably a *tympanon*. To this point no depictions of priapic herms against a background of such objects have previously been recorded, however it is worth pointing out that on the medallion of a *phiale*, from a hoard found in Hermoupolis, the head of the maenad is depicted precisely against a background of a *tympanon*.

Thyrsoi depicted on the Early Imperial table silver usually have smooth shafts and *tainiai* under the cone. They are also depicted in this way on the relief from Prusias ad Hypium⁹⁴ and on another relief of unknown origin held in the Arthur M. Sackler Museum.⁹⁵ The only examples known to me of the shaft of a *thyrsos* fashioned with rhomboid decoration as on the medallion decorating the *phalera* (figs. 1; 3-4), are on the fragment of an applied relief from Asklepeion in Pergamon⁹⁶ and on the matrix for a relief with a depiction of Dionysos, which also originated from Pergamon.⁹⁷ It can thus be seen that the composition on the medallion from Noin-Ula (fig. 1) can be traced back – as regards its general arrangement – to models of Greek metalwork of the 4th century BC. In the era of Hellenism this composition begins to be used in scenes with depictions of the attack on a maenad or nymph by a satyr. There are parallels for certain elements in the composition of the medallion – in particular the depiction of the figure of the satyr – and some details in the depiction of the maenad (the way she holds the folds of her garment, which forms a loop in her hand) and also the depiction in the scene of a priapic herm – in the relief from the theatre in Prusias ad Hypium in Bithynia, which has been dated to the 1st century BC in view of stylistic considerations.⁹⁸ At the same time depictions of maenads pushing away the head of satyrs with their hand are to be seen on reliefs from the time of Claudius or Nero.⁹⁹ Nevertheless, this gesture, which has been recorded on a Late Hellenistic medallion from the Pomerance Collection,¹⁰⁰ is represented in a series of sculptural groups of the Townley type, which can probably be traced to the prototypes from

92 See above note 55.

93 See above note 56.

94 See above note 55.

95 See above note 56.

96 Hübner 1993, 143-145, 207, No. 304, pl. 66.

97 Hübner 1993, 143-145, 207, No. 300, pl. 66.

98 See above note 55.

99 See above note 57.

100 See above note 13.



FIGURE 7
 A silver decorative medallion used as a phalera from Barrow No. 20 in the Noin-Ula burial-ground (Northern Mongolia). Obverse. Detail: herm (reproduced from: Polos'mak et alii 2011, 117, fig. 4, 44).

the second quarter or middle of the 2nd century BC from the Asia Minor (Pergamon?) school.¹⁰¹ Sculptural fragments from the House of Sanctuary of the Poseidoniasts from Berytos on Delos testify that such scenes were depicted in the art of Asia Minor from the middle to the second half of the 2nd century BC.¹⁰² Revealing in this connection is also the rendering of the staff of the *thyrsos* with rhomboid decoration, parallels for which we only know from applied pottery from Pergamon of the 2nd and 1st centuries BC.¹⁰³ Despite the fact that the origins of the composition found on the medallion from Noin-Ula are clear, it has certain distinctive features, for which there are

101 See above note 65.

102 See above note 65.

103 See above notes 95-96.

no parallels in the Late Hellenistic and Early Imperial works of art recorded to date, and this applies in particular to the pose of the maenad.¹⁰⁴ This makes it possible to assume that the composition goes back to a lost sculptural (relief) prototype from the second half (?) of the 2nd century BC. The lack of parallels and well-dated works of art prevents us from determining accurately the date of the medallion and its possible centre of production. For this reason we can only assign it a date within a relatively wide range – the 2nd or early 1st century BC – and suggest that it is with all probability the product of a workshop situated in the Eastern Mediterranean, possibly in Asia Minor.

5 Features regarding the Fastening of the Medallion from Noin-Ula

Medallions in cups of both the Hellenistic and Early Imperial periods were usually soldered to the floor of vessels and sometimes a thin rim round the medallion was used. A rim of this kind with traces of soldering on the inside is to be found on the medallion with the depiction of Scylla,¹⁰⁵ which decorated one of the conical cups¹⁰⁶ from the assemblage originating from the looters' trenches at Morgantina in Sicily or at Arpi in South Italy and dating from approximately 200 BC.¹⁰⁷ Similar rims hold in place at least one of the medallions (with a depiction of a male bust) from conical cups of the 2nd-1st centuries BC included in the hoard found in Yakimovo,¹⁰⁸ silver *phialai* of the second half of the 1st century BC or the early 1st century AD from the Sadovyi

104 There are parallels for the way in which the maenad holds the edge of her garment in her lowered hand to be found in images of Aphrodite, as for example in depictions found in friezes on *rhyta* from Old Nisa (Masson & Pugachenkova 1956, pls. xxiv, xxx, xxxiv-xxxv). There are numerous scenes of the Dionysian range in the friezes on the *rhyta* from Old Nisa. On the culture of Nisa, see: Invernizzi 2007. See also the marble statue of Aphrodite from Pharbaethos in Lower Egypt, which is held in the Louvre and is dated to the end of the 2nd century BC: Charbonneaux *et alii* 1988, 303, fig. 330.

105 See above note 27.

106 See above note 28.

107 Bothmer 1984, 54-60, Nos. 92-106; Guzzo 2003, 45-94.

108 On cups: Marazov 1979, 5-6, Nos. 1-4, 8-9, fig. 1; 10-17, figs. 2-4; *Cat. Montreal* 1987, 268-269, Nos. 494-497; Theodossiev 2000, 148; 235-236, figs. 145-148; Spânu 2013, 22, fig. 11, 1-2. On medallions: Marazov 1979, 12-15, fig. 5; Vasilev 1979, 72-78, figs. 5-6; *Cat. Montreal* 1987, 270, No. 500; *Cat. Saint Louis* 1998, 234, No. 200; Sirbiu & Barca 2009, 262, 264, No. 7, fig. 13, 4; they were published as *phalerae*, which had, perhaps, originally been used as medallions for vessels, although there is no doubt that they had definitely been medallions for cups.

Barrow,¹⁰⁹ three cups from the Hildesheim Hoard – *phialai* with depictions of busts of Heracles,¹¹⁰ Cybele¹¹¹ and Attis,¹¹² two cups from the Hermoupolis Hoard: with a bust of a maenad¹¹³ and with a bust of Heracles,¹¹⁴ two cups from the Boscoreale Hoard: with a bust of a personification of Africa,¹¹⁵ with a portrait bust¹¹⁶ and also a cup with a gold medallion from Casa del Menandro in Pompeii.¹¹⁷ The last examples fall into the category of so-called “show silver”.¹¹⁸

Yet cases have been recorded, when medallions have been fastened in place using rivets, as occurred with the *phalera* published here from Noin-Ula (figs. 1-3). Six rivets holding a frame in place were used to fasten to the inside of an unpublished conical cup from a private collection in Britain a medallion with a bust of a maenad (d. 11 cm). Analysis of the shape and decoration of the vessel and the depiction on the medallion make it possible to date it to the 2nd or 1st century BC and classify it as an item originating from a Parthian workshop. Several other examples of the Hellenistic silver dishes, conical and shallow bowls with medallions showing, primarily busts of Dionysos or a maenad (but also that of Cybele and a Hellenistic ruler?) from the al-Sabakh collection in Kuwait have been published most recently: some of the medallions are fixed with 16 rivets,¹¹⁹ others with 6,¹²⁰ 8,¹²¹ or 12.¹²² Another medallion with a depiction of the head of Apollo¹²³ is fastened in the same way with

109 Treister 2007, 31-35; Mordvinceva & Treister 2007, vol. 2, 78-79, No. A244.1-9 with bibliography.

110 See above note 34.

111 Pernice & Winter 1901, 26-27, fig. 7, pl. 4; Gehrig 1980, 13-14, No. 14; Barr-Sharrar 1987, 138, H 15, pl. 70; 145; *Cat. Hildesheim* 1997, 37-38, No. 3; Gregarek 1997, 92, note 14; Erdrich 2002, 84, No. XX-05-9/3, pl. 9.

112 Pernice & Winter 1901, 26-27, fig. 8, pl. 5; Gehrig 1980, 16-17, No. 13; Barr-Sharrar 1987, 138, H 14, pl. 70; 145, 149; *Cat. Hildesheim* 1997, 39-40, No. 4; Gregarek 1997, 92, note 15; Erdrich 2002, 84, No. XX-05-9/3.4, pl. 10.

113 Pernice 1898, 8-11, pls. 1-2; Mielsch 1997, 41-43, figs. 1-2; 52-53, No. 1, note 33; Mielsch & Niemeyer 2001, 5-7, figs. 3-4, 24-25, No. 1, fig. 21.

114 Pernice 1898, 5-8, pls. 1-2; Mielsch 1997, 43-45, figs. 3-4; 53-54, No. 2, note 34; Mielsch & Niemeyer 2001, 7-8, figs. 8-9, 26-27, No. 3, fig. 24.

115 See above note 35.

116 Héron de Villefosse 1899, 44-47, No. 2, pl. 2; Baratte 1986, 37.

117 Painter 2001, 63, M14, pl. 14, 1; *Cat. Naples* 2006, 220, No. 36.

118 Painter 2001, 23-25.

119 Carter 2015, 133-139, No. 25.

120 Carter 2015, 150-153, No. 30.

121 Carter 2015, 140-143, No. 26; 147-149, No. 29.

122 Carter 2015, 145-146, No. 28.

123 Stefanelli 1991, No. 88, figs. 117-118; Painter 2001, 64, M15, pl. 15.

four rivets, positioned at regular intervals, to a silver mirror from the Casa del Menandro in Pompeii through a profiled rim: it is the only example we know of in which a rim has been used with rivets in order to fix a medallion in place in metal-working from the Early Imperial period.

The dating of the medallion from the Noin-Ula burial-ground and the culture from which it originates make it possible to shed light on the rim, which initially served to fasten the medallion to the cup using rivets (figs. 1-3). The closest parallel for this type of fastening is provided by silver medallions from the Mzymta Hoard, also found separate from the vessels they had decorated.¹²⁴ One detail stands out which links the two medallions: a narrow profiled rim has been attached to the edge of each medallion and along its central axis, at regular intervals from each other, eight round holes have been made through it from the reverse in order to fix the medallion in place. If our assumption to the effect that the medallions had originally decorated large cups is correct, they could have been part of vessels from one and the same service. On one of the medallions in the Mzymta Hoard there is a depiction of Scylla¹²⁵ and on the other a hunting scene.¹²⁶ Stylistic analysis of the medallions does not enable us to assign them a precise date, although it is most likely that they were made in the 1st century BC or 1st century AD, like most of the other artistic items fashioned in silver which were discovered with them in the same hoard. A medallion which falls into the same category as the specimen mentioned above with a depiction of Scylla (exhibited in 2012 at a Christie's sale in New York), also has a profiled rim with eight holes in it complete with surviving rivets.¹²⁷ The medallion has a similar structure: it is made of silver, is partly gilded and bears a depiction assumed to be a bust of Octavian in high relief (in the field of the medallion there are depictions of running and leaping animals. Sixteen rivets with rounded heads have been inserted into its narrow profiled frame). The origin of the medallion held in a private collection in London and displayed in 2014 at an exhibition in the Römisch-Germanisches Museum in Cologne ("14 AD – Römische Herrschaft am Rhein") is unknown. Most recently it was published as a piece kept in the Toledo Museum of Art.¹²⁸

124 Zhuravlev *et alii* 2009, 453-456, fig. 2.

125 D. 17.1 cm. Total weight 147.3 grams of high-quality silver (990 parts per 1,000). See above note. 5.

126 D. 14.3-14.4 cm. Total weight 100.7 grams of high-quality silver (990 parts per 1,000). See above note 36.

127 D. 16.9 cm. Total weight 170.9 grams. See above note 38.

128 Carter 2015, 149, fig. 2.14.

Another example of a medallion with a profiled frame, in which there are round holes made to fasten it in place, is a chance find made in the vicinity of Dushanbe. This bronze gilded medallion with a diameter of 14.5 cm has been worked in high relief and bears a bust of Dionysos. The medallion is complete with a backing in the form of a bronze disc. Its narrow (w. 0.45 cm) profiled frame has eleven round holes through the centre and in seven of these rivets have survived, which hold the lower and upper plate together.¹²⁹ Loops have been fixed onto the reverse side of the lower plate of the medallion: the number of these loops has not been indicated nor the places where they have been arranged but it would seem that in the field of the medallion, to the left of the head, two rivets have been positioned, which would obviously have held in place one of these loops. It is therefore evident that the holes in the frame had originally been most likely to have fastened the medallion to the vessel. While in the 1989 catalogue the medallion had been designated as a *phalera*, in a later catalogue entry published by G. Lindström it was referred to as an element of a ceremonial vessel (on the basis of the fact that the item was of workmanship too fine for it to have been used to decorate a horse's harness).¹³⁰ It is evident that G. Lindström, like the authors of the Dushanbe and Zürich catalogues, was unaware of the first article devoted to that particular artefact, published as far back as 1961 by K. V. Trever, otherwise questions would not have arisen, as the three surviving loops were clearly to be seen on the published drawing of the reverse of the object concerned.¹³¹ It is most likely that there had been six originally, as suggested by K. V. Trever.¹³² Accordingly there is every reason to assume that the medallion (its upper plate) decorated a vessel and that it was then used as the front plate of a *phalera*, to which a lower plate had been attached and that, with the help of rivets used to put the two plates together, the loops had been attached to the backing of the *phalera*.

The closest parallel for the image of Dionysos on the *phalera* among Greek and Roman bronze busts with a depiction of Dionysos (the portrayal of the hairstyle and wreath, the diadem with its ends hanging down on to the shoulders, the chiton and the himation) is probably a bust from the collection of Gilbert Denman in San Antonio (Texas), assumed to have originated from Asia Minor and dated to the last quarter of the 2nd or first quarter of the

129 Trever 1958, 24-29; Trever 1961, 98-109, figs. 1-5; Raschke 1980, 757, note 491; *Cat. Dushanbe* 1985, 83 (fig.), 100, No. 253; *Cat. Zürich* 1989, 54, No. 26; *Cat. Mannheim* 2009, 369, No. 270.

130 *Cat. Mannheim* 2009, 369, No. 270.

131 Trever 1961, 101, fig. 3.

132 Trever 1961, 98.

1st century BC on the basis of its stylistic features.¹³³ So while the medallions of the Mzymta Hoard were fastened in place with the help of eight rivets, the medallion from Noin-Ula examined here was fastened in place with ten and the medallion from the vicinity of Dushanbe with the help of eleven. It is precisely in this way that we should interpret the order in which the holes (ten) appeared round the edge of the medallion and the rivets (four) (*i.e.* not as interpreted by the authors publishing the *phalera*,¹³⁴ but the other way round).

6 The Secondary Use of the Medallion from Noin-Ula

How should we then interpret the appearance of four rivets arranged at equal distances from each other on the *phalera* from Noin-Ula? A circumstance which demands attention is that rivets have been recorded arranged in a similar way on certain other *phalerae*.

These include:

- 1) A *phalera* of similar dimensions (d. 15.5 cm) held in the Bibliothèque Nationale bearing a scene of an animal being torn apart and with depictions of other animals round the perimeter. On this object, which has been defined as a *phalera*, there are four holes not far from the edge arranged at equal intervals and in two of them rivets have survived.¹³⁵ An inscription has been incised round the edge with a dedication of King Mithridates to the temple of Artemis.¹³⁶
- 2) Extremely similar as regards its composition and style is a *phalera* from Helden in the province of Limburg in the Netherlands, which is held in Leiden. The circumstances of the find are unknown. It too has four holes in it spaced at equal intervals and in one of these a rivet has survived.¹³⁷
- 3) On a *phalera* (d. 17.8 cm) with a similar composition and fashioned in a similar style, which originated from Stara Zagora, there are five holes

¹³³ Barr-Sharrar 1987, 54, C85, pl. 28.

¹³⁴ Cf. Polos'mak *et alii* 2011, 112.

¹³⁵ Odebesco 1889, 513, fig. 214; Drexel 1915, 13-14, fig. 7; Rostovtzeff 1922, pl. 27, 1-2; Charrière 1971, fig. 323, Farkas 1973, 87, fig. 14; Schnurbein 1986, 414, 416, fig. 6; Hachmann 1990, 686, fig. 30; 688; 702-707; Pfrommer 1993, 70-71, note 25 with bibliography; Olmstead 2001, 49, 143; Harding 2007, 227-229, fig. 10.6.A.

¹³⁶ Drexel 1915, 15, fig. 8; 16-17.

¹³⁷ Drexel 1915, 12, 14, fig. 6; Rostovtzeff 1922, 136, pl. 27, 3; Hachmann 1990, 682-683, fig. 27; Pfrommer 1993, 71, note 25 with bibliography; Harding 2007, 227-229, fig. 10.6.B.

- spaced at equal intervals and in two of these rivets have survived.¹³⁸ There had probably been the same number of rivets in a second, fragmentary *phalera* found in Stara Zagora (d. 17.5 cm).¹³⁹
- 4) On one of two large *phalerae* (No. 8) (d. 16.4 cm) from a hoard found on the island of Sark, linked to the group examined here on the basis of its style, there are four holes not far from the edge and spaced at equal intervals from each other.¹⁴⁰
 - 5) On a small (d. 5.5 cm) bronze *phalera* with a depiction of a dog, fallen on to its front legs, and found in the Roman camp at Oberaden there are three holes.¹⁴¹
 - 6) *Phalerae* from Galiche have four holes round the edge and bear depictions of a female bust¹⁴² and a horseman.¹⁴³
 - 7) Although this *phalera* from Akhtanizovskaya with a depiction of the head of Medusa has been published on many occasions, scholars have not, as a rule, considered its structure.¹⁴⁴ Yet the first scholar to examine this *phalera*, A. Spitsʹyn, noted that the plaque had been fastened to a rather thin sheet of metal with the use of four silver pins.¹⁴⁵
 - 8) Remains of an iron backing from under rivets on the reverse are the distinctive feature of a silver *phalera* with a depiction of the head of a horse

138 *Cat. Cologne* 1979, 204, 210, No. 426; Marazov 1979, 64, fig. 39; Schnurbein 1986, 414, 417-420; fig. 7; *Cat. Montreal* 1987, 275, No. 506; Hachmann 1990, 684, fig. 28; Kaul *et alii* 1991, 17, fig. 11; Kaul 1995, 6, 14, fig. 14; *Cat. Saint Louis* 1998, 176, No. 106; *Cat. Bonn* 2004, 332, No. 312; Harding 2007, 209; Sirbu & Bârcă 2009, 265-266, No. 17.

139 Schnurbein 1986, 418, note 16; 420, fig. 8; *Cat. Montreal* 1987, 275, No. 506; Hachmann 1990, 685, fig. 29.

140 Hachmann 1990, 691, fig. 35; 696; 703.

141 Schnurbein 1986, 409-411, fig. 2, 418; Hachmann 1990, 688, fig. 32; *Cat. Rosenheim* 2000, 29, fig. 21; 320, No. 21a with bibliography.

142 Filov & Velkov, 1919-1920, 146-148; *Cat. Montreal* 1987, 260, No. 472; *Cat. Saint Louis* 1998, 178, No. 108; Spânu 2013, 17, fig. 3, 1 (d. 18.3 cm).

143 Filov & Velkov, 1919-1920, 146-148; *Cat. Montreal* 1987, 260, No. 473; *Cat. Saint Louis*, 1998, 179, No. 109; Spânu 2013, 17, fig. 3, 2 (d. 15.8 cm).

144 D. 17.5 cm; Spitsʹyn 1909, 33, fig. 21; Strong 1966, III: 1st century BC; Gorbunova & Saverkina 1975, No. 101; Marazov 1979, 51, fig. 28; *Cat. Leningrad* 1985, 40, No. 48; Mordvinceva 2001, 23, fig. 2, 47; 31; 72, No. 13, pl. 6: first half of the 2nd century BC; Vlasova 2009, 74, pl. IV, 2; 77-78, note 120 with bibliography; Sirbu & Bârcă 2009, 263, No. 1.2; Treister 2010, 570, fig. 56.

145 Spitsʹyn 1909, 20. V. I. Mordvintseva notes: "At the edge there are four holes with the remains of silver nails. Next to the nails on the reverse there are oxides and fragments of iron brackets, which are arranged over the cross of the axes. On the inside of the *phalerae* there is iron oxide" (Mordvinceva 2001, 72, No. 13).

from a Taganrog hoard. This *phalera*, which has a diameter of 11 cm, has four rivets spaced at approximately equal intervals from each other at a small distance from the edge and arranged strictly along the vertical and the horizontal axis of the depiction.¹⁴⁶

V. I. Mordvintseva classifies the *phalerae* with four rivets and two iron strips on the reverse, which were attached by four rivets to the edges or in the central parts, as *phalerae* worn on the animal's chest and she notes that convex *phalerae* of this kind are of quite large dimensions (d. 11-19 cm) and date from the 3rd-1st centuries BC.¹⁴⁷ The question as to whether these *phalerae* had been worn on the chest or not – bearing in mind the pair of *phalerae* found in Stara Zagora – remains open, yet the *phalerae* considered above have in common the fact that the silver discs were attached to backings made of iron or, possibly, leather. It is precisely this circumstance which explains the presence of rivets round the edge of the silver discs.

Of principal importance is the fact that the medallions referred to above had been deliberately made as *phalerae* and in some instances they can be assigned a fairly precise date in the light of their stylistic features. In particular, the *phalera* from Akhtanizovskaya can be dated to the end of the 2nd or first half of the 1st century BC.¹⁴⁸ The *phalera* from the Oberaden hoard can be reliably linked with a Roman camp, which was founded between 11 and 9/8 BC.¹⁴⁹ This circumstance enables us with a greater or lesser degree of confidence to date that *phalera* and other finds from Stara Zagora to a date range from the mid-1st century BC to the beginning of the 1st century AD.¹⁵⁰ Until recently the point of view which has held sway has been to the effect that the *phalera* from the National Library in Paris was made no later than the reign of Mithridates Eupator, *i.e.* 63 BC. This view had first been expressed by F. Drexel,¹⁵¹ although R. Hachmann was inclined to believe that the Mithridates mentioned in the inscription could have been Mithridates of Pergamon and, therefore, the *phalerae* could have made their way to the shrine of Artemis later as well, *c.* 46/45 BC.¹⁵² After R. Hachmann, G. Olmstead had also come round to that

146 Spitsyn 1909, 27, fig. 55; Mordvinceva 2001, 9, 77, No. 47, pl. 25; Leskov 2008, 197-198, No. 267; Sîrbu & Bârcă 2009, 266, No. 20.2.

147 Mordvinceva 2001, 46; Brustphaleren Typ 1.

148 For a survey of the various points of view on this subject, see: Vlasova 2009, 77-78.

149 Schnurbein 1986, 418.

150 Hachmann 1990, 713-714; Olmstead 2001, 55-58; Falkenstein 2004, 82.

151 Drexel 1915, 14-15.

152 Hachmann 1990, 712.

point of view: he too had noticed that the name of Mithridates was widespread in Asia Minor in the 1st century BC. In his opinion the *phalera* in Paris would have been unlikely to have a date earlier than 50 BC. It was even possible – in that scholar’s opinion – that these *phalerae* had ended up in Asia Minor as a result of Mark Antony’s invasion of Parthia in 36 BC.¹⁵³ So, in general, composite *phalerae* in the form of silver discs with iron or leather backings appeared most probably no earlier than the end of the 2nd century BC and were in use during the whole of the century after that. It is clear that the find from the Noin-Ula burial-ground with four rivets also belongs to that group. This *phalera* is the only one of those from the group examined here, which had not originally been a *phalera* (or rather its upper decorative was not originally a *phalera*) but the medallion of a vessel. It is possible that this fact indirectly indicates that the medallion was more likely to have been adapted as a *phalera* during the early rather than the late phase of the above-mentioned period, *i.e.* at the end of the 2nd or in the first half of the 1st century BC. Although most of the above-mentioned *phalerae* (Nos. 1-5) are similar in style, which makes it possible to suggest that they were manufactured, if not in one and the same workshop, at least in one and the same region, nevertheless widely different hypotheses have been put forward as to where they might have been made. For instance, while F. Drexel in his day had suggested that the Paris and Leiden *phalerae* had been made in Asia Minor, later the view that *phalerae* Nos. 1-4 had been made in Thrace or by Thracian craftsmen outside Thrace¹⁵⁴ came to predominate. Incidentally, in recent years, the hypothesis is being voiced more and more frequently to the effect that the said *phalerae* had been made in western workshops, which in the opinion of its supporters would, apart from anything else, explain the wide spread of these finds.¹⁵⁵ Yet when searching for a possible region where the *phalera* from Noin-Ula might have been made, it would be as well not to rule out either the West or North Pontic region or even Asia Minor, bearing in mind that structurally similar *phalerae* have been found in Galiche and also in the Taganrog Hoard and Akhtanizovskaya (Nos. 6-8).

Medallions from imported metal vessels were re-used by nomads. There exist examples of such secondary use, although they are not numerous. In the female burial No. 1 in barrow No. 9 in the Valovji burial-ground in the lower reaches of the Don, which probably dates from the 2nd century AD, a bronze medallion was found bearing a depiction of Eros standing in front of an altar. Two holes had been made in the medallion. In this instance it was definitely

153 Olmstead 2001, 49.

154 Marazov 1979, 62-63; Schnurbein 1986, 418; Kaul 1995, 14.

155 Hachmann 1990, 715; Falkenstein 2004, 84-85.

not being used as decoration for horse harness, since it had been found next to the temporal bone of the deceased.¹⁵⁶

7 Specimens of Classical Metalwork in Nomads' Burials within the Territory of Siberia

We have already had the occasion to examine finds of silver *phalerae* and table silver at nomad sites ranging from the lower reaches of the Don and Western Kazakhstan to Western Siberia. Detailed analysis of these items has made it possible to suggest that *phalerae* from Volodarka and others with a similar structure (with three loops) found in Novouzensk and Sidorovka dated from no later than the first half or middle of the 2nd century BC.¹⁵⁷ Silver vessels from the Isakovka and Sidorovka burial-grounds also date from the 3rd or 2nd centuries BC.¹⁵⁸

If the *phalera* found in Barrow No. 20 in the Noin-Ula burial-ground is most likely to have been made in the period from the end of the 2nd to the middle of the 1st century BC, and possibly in one of the workshops of the Pontic region from a medallion which had once decorated a silver cup, which had probably been made by a craftsman from Asia Minor in the second half of the 2nd century BC, the fact that it ended up in the grave of a Hunnu in the Transbaikalian region which, to judge by the Chinese lacquered cup found in it, dated to the 4th year of the Yuanyan Era (or 9 BC)¹⁵⁹ should be assigned a date at around the very beginning of the Christian era and no later than the first half of the 1st century AD.¹⁶⁰ It is clear that the appearance of a *phalera* in Northern Mongolia should also be linked with other events.

Let us now pass on to the interpretation of this find provided by N. V. Polosmak and her co-authors with no further mention of their attribution of the cup to Pergamon and their dating of it to the second half of the 2nd century BC. These authors draw attention (with reference to an article by L. S. Klein published in 1979) to the fact that artistic artefacts made of silver were used by the Romans as diplomatic gifts. Furthermore it is suggested that the cup with the medallion had belonged to Marcus Licinius Crassus. He took it with him on an unsuccessful campaign to Parthia in 54-53 BC: "Crassus enjoyed incalculable wealth

156 Bezuglov *et alii* 2009, 32-33, fig. 15, 4; 83-84, photograph on p. 83.

157 Treister 2012, 94-95.

158 For more detail, see Treister 2012, 88-92.

159 Chistyakova 2009, 59-68; Miniaev & Elikhina 2009, 24-25; Polos'mak *et alii* 2011, 122.

160 Miniaev & Elikhina 2009, 27.

and he continued looting during the Parthian campaign. It is possible that the plaque, which at that time had been part of a cup or other ceremonial vessel had belonged specifically to Crassus (why precisely Crassus? – *M. T.*)... After the defeat it could have made its way together with captive legionaries and with other trophies as far as the eastern borders of the Parthian Empire”.¹⁶¹ It was specifically there at “the eastern borders of the Parthian Empire” – according to the authors of the monograph – that an *urna* or third eye was depicted, using a precise round indentation between the brows above the bridge of the nose (of a female person – *M. T.*).¹⁶² At the same time, however, the authors of the publication admit that “the chance character of this sign cannot be ruled out”.¹⁶³ After that they go on: “In accordance with the belief of the new owners, the wife depicted on the silver disc became a female manifestation of a deity with the rank of Buddha”.¹⁶⁴ It is suggested that the addition of the *urna* was perhaps carried out by “one of those Parthians, who was in charge of the Roman legionaries” and that it was precisely at that juncture that “the plaque was turned into a *phalera*”.¹⁶⁵ Later the story was to develop as follows (as suggested by the authors of the book): some of the Roman legionaries found themselves in Sogdiana in the troops of the Huns led by Zhizhi Chanyu. In the battle on the River Talas in 36 BC, Zhizhi’s troops were routed by the Chinese and some of the Roman legionaries were taken prisoner.¹⁶⁶ “It is possible that the silver plaque made its way to the capital along with other loot and was handed over, as a Chinese gift by this time, to the peaceable Huhanye Chanyu, the only remaining Hun ruler”.¹⁶⁷

What can be said regarding this interpretation in the light of the observations we have outlined above regarding the attribution and the dating of the medallion? It presupposes that the medallion had made its way to Parthia in the middle of the 1st century BC as a result of plundering by the Parthian army after their victory over the forces of Crassus, still being part of a vessel. In the opinion of the scholars who published the *phalera*, the adaptation of the medallion as a *phalera* had taken place somewhere after that on the eastern borders of Parthia between 53 and 36 BC. As has been demonstrated by the analysis outlined in this article, the transformation of this medallion into

161 Polos'mak *et alii* 2011, 114.

162 Polos'mak *et alii* 2011, 112, 114.

163 Polos'mak *et alii* 2011, 112.

164 Polos'mak *et alii* 2011, 112.

165 Polos'mak *et alii* 2011, 114.

166 Polos'mak *et alii* 2011, 115.

167 Polos'mak *et alii* 2011, 117.

a *phalera* could indeed have taken place in the middle or in the third quarter of the 1st century BC, although it is more likely, in our opinion, that this occurred somewhat earlier – in the period between the end of the 2nd century and the middle of the 1st century BC. At the same time there are no grounds for assuming that the transformation took place precisely on the eastern borders of Parthia. The story reconstructed by the authors of the monograph regarding the “third eye” of the female person cannot stand up to any criticism. The order in which they suggest that the holes in the frame of the medallion were made is incorrect and our observations regarding the spread of *phalerae*, from which the decorative discs were attached to the backings with the help of four pins, make it possible to assume that the modification of the medallion was most likely to have taken place in the Pontic region. Therefore there is no reason to believe that the medallion made its way to Parthia as part of a vessel, and even less so that it had belonged to Crassus, however attractive and tempting such an assumption might be.

At the very beginning of the 1st century AD and during its first half – *i.e.* in the period under discussion – quite a large number of objects of western origin made their way to the territory of Afghanistan, in particular to Begram and to a burial of the Tillya-tepe necropolis. In the context of our investigation it is also important to note that in three of the six burials in the Tillya-tepe necropolis Chinese mirrors of the Han era¹⁶⁸ were found with decoration incorporating eight arcs (*ming-kuang*), which became widespread in the era of the Eastern Dynasty of the Han.¹⁶⁹ In Begram, where the treasury contained many examples of bronze and glass vessels and also plaster casts of medallions from silver vessels,¹⁷⁰ Chinese lacquered caskets were found dating from the first half of the 1st century AD.¹⁷¹ Yet the fact that – to judge from our observations – the medallion had been made over into a *phalera*, most probably somewhere in the Pontic region, most probably rules out the above-mentioned route, which

168 Sarianidi 1985, 235, No. 2.34, pl. 145; 245, No. 3.70; 258, No. 6.31.

169 Finds of mirrors like these from the period of the mid-to-late Eastern Dynasty of the Hans, have been recorded in the provinces of Shaanxi, Henan, Shandong, Sichuan and Hunan. On mirrors of this type see: Higuchi 1979, 123-137, Nos. 63-64; *Cat. Taipei* 1986, 86-89, pls. 24-26; *Cat. Hong Kong* 1990, 246-247, No. 165: 1st-2nd centuries AD; *Cat. Cleveland* 2000, 37-38, No. 17.

170 In general, see Kurz 1954; Menninger 1996; *Cat. Bonn* 2010, 229-253, Nos. 158-190; 263-274, Nos. 210-227. On the glass vessels from Begram, see also Whitehouse 2001, 437-449; Mairs 2012, 1-14.

171 Pirazzoli-t'Serstevens 2001, 473-484.

initially had most likely made its way via the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean¹⁷² and then overland through Afghanistan.

We believe that it would be wrong to rule out the possibility that the *phalera* made its way to Northern Mongolia as a result of a chain of inter-tribal exchanges and gifts, which linked together the nomads of Eurasia from far-away territories. Such exchanges could have been the result of marriage between individuals of different ethnicity, particularly because the only anthropological remains found in the barrow were a few teeth belonging to a “young woman, whose anthropological type was similar to that of the modern populations of Azerbaijan, Dagestan and Western India”.¹⁷³ There is no doubt that it would be difficult to imagine the published medallion as a commodity for trade. Yet in burials of nomads situated in the northern section of the Great Silk Road, even if they belong to a somewhat later period, objects can be encountered which definitely fall into the category of prestige items, as for example a glass goblet decorated with a scene of a fight between gladiators found in a burial of the 3rd century AD in Lebedevka.¹⁷⁴ One way or another the published medallion is so far the easternmost find of a specimen of Hellenistic metalwork, which was found many thousands of kilometres from the area where it is assumed to have been manufactured: this is most likely also to apply to the Hellenistic textiles found both in the Noin-Ula burial-ground¹⁷⁵ and in Western China.

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172 Boardman 1994, 146; Mairs 2012, 1-14.

173 Polos'mak *et alii* 2011, 132.

174 Moshkova 2010, 346-347, 350, fig. 3; Treister 2013, 717-718, fig. 6; Moshkova & Treister 2014, 108-119.

175 Schaefer 1943, 266-267; Rudenko 1969; Stauffer 2007, 73-87; Jones 2009, 23-32.

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Abbreviations

ACSS	<i>Ancient Civilizations from Scythia to Siberia. An International Journal of Comparative Studies in History and Archaeology</i> (Leiden).
AM	<i>Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Athenische Abteilung</i> (Athens).
Bjb	<i>Bonner Jahrbücher</i> (Bonn).
BWPr	<i>Winckelmannsprogramm der archäologischen Gesellschaft zu Berlin</i> .
JbBerlMus	<i>Jahrbuch Berliner Museen</i> (Berlin).
JdI	<i>Jahrbuch des deutschen archäologischen Instituts</i> .
LIMC	<i>Lexikon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae</i> (Zurich, Munich, 1981-1999).