NEW DISCOVERIES OF SARMATIAN COMPLEXES
OF THE 1ST CENTURY A.D.
A SURVEY OF PUBLICATIONS IN VDI

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In 1992-1994 Vestnik Drevnei Istorii published several Sarmatian complexes unique in the Northern Black Sea region and held a round table by correspondence on the subject: Sarmatians: Their Role in the Historico-Cultural Development of Ancient Societies (New Discoveries) with the participation of scholars from Russia, Ukraine, the FRG and Great Britain.¹

The discussion focused on the reexamination of the assumptions about the role of the Sarmatian tribes in the political history of the South of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia of the early principate period. Maintaining


contacts both with the states of the East and the Roman empire, the Sarmatians exercised considerable influence on political developments in the ancient world and at the same time borrowed elements of various cultures of the East and the Mediterranean. The existing written sources give rather one-sided and incomplete information about the role of the Sarmatians in the political history of the ancient world. Russian and foreign scholars who have been discussing these important problems for a long time come to contradictory and at times mutually exclusive conclusions. Archaeology provides important material for the reconstruction of the material culture, burial rites of the Sarmatians. The large-scale archaeological studies, first of all in the Lower Don and Volga areas, in the 70s and the 80s have led to the discovery of unique archaeological complexes and new epigraphic materials which make it possible to consider some blank spots in the history of the Sarmatians at a qualitatively new level, namely their participation in the events of 35 A.D. in Transcaucasia described by Tacitus, problems of the Sarmatian tribes’ migration in the Northern Black Sea region in the 1st cent. A.D., questions of the existence of their political formations. The new finds also make it possible to raise the issue of the existence of Sarmatian anthropomorphic art, in particular, the Sarmatian school of toreutics and trace its evolution.

Brief characteristics of some of the complexes under consideration follow.

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