

**GERMANS IN THE SOUTH-WESTERN REGION OF CRIMEA
THROUGHOUT THE LATE ROMAN PERIOD AND THE GREAT
MIGRATION PERIOD.**

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Until the early 1990s objective data pertaining to the location of Germans in South-Western Crimea was unavailable as a result of the failure of then-modern day scientists to effectively discover and study the known necropolises. Up until that time, the discussion surrounding the topic was heavily influenced and manipulated by political ideologies and agendas.

Data from the excavations evidence that the Goths, restricted to the mountainous area of Crimea by Procopious of Caesarea, often buried women in Germanic costumes within burial structures typical of the Alans. Further, men were buried with heraldic belt seats that were popular among the Barbarians that served in the Byzantine army.

We analyzed the archaeological data of a number of burial grounds located on the slope of Chatyr-Dag mountain, on the Black River, Partenite, near the city of Charax, and near the village of Luchistoe. Dating back to the third century A.D, these necropolises are the oldest Germanic burial sites included within the analysis. Additionally, we relied on studies of burials near the village of Luchistoe dating back from the fifth to seventh centuries, A.D., that occurred simultaneously with the German burials in the Northern and Eastern Black Sea regions that further correlate with the Chernyakhov, Przeworsk, and Wielbark cultures in Poland.

Burials consisting of ashes in urns, the deceased standing in stone boxes, or involving pits covered in rubble or small pits filled with soil that were studied in the territory of South-West Crimea draw rather close parallels to the German burials of the Roman Period found in Norway. The aforementioned German cremations are characterized by the following remnants of religious rituals from South-West Crimea: the presence of ceramic and glass vessels, various equipment, the remains of food and a fire, and the custom of covering urns with tiles or vessels.

Many coins were found in graves near Charax, on the slope of Chatyr-Dag, and in Partenit, which is a customary feature of local rituals. This factor led to the conclusion of archaeologist Oleg V. Sharov that the burials belonged to the Germans.

The second group of burials, located in South-West Crimea, dating from the middle of the third century A.D., were performed according to the burial rituals of cemeteries found in the lower reaches of the Black River, Inkerman, Druzhne, and on the Mangup plateau as well as the necropolises of the foothills of Crimea - Nasac and Kursk

The entombments are T-shaped crypts, similar in structure to the catacombs found in Central Ciscaucasia on the burial grounds of Chegem and Lower Julat, which are also related to the Alans.

Items found in the inventories of necropolises in the territory of South-Western Crimea, such as pitchers and the most common types of weapons - double-edged swords and daggers with cutouts at the heels of the blade - correspond to the recorded findings of the Ciscaucasia and the Central regions of the North Caucasus. The study of this second group of monuments allows us to conclude that the burial structures being considered belong to the Alans. The nature of both groups of burials, according to the rituals of cremation and entombment, as well as the objects found in the graves, allow us to conclude that during the second half of the third

and fourth centuries both German and Alan settlers lived on the territory of South-Western Crimea.

Numerous imported belt buckles, fibulae, ornaments, red lacquer vessels, amphorae, and glass vessels found in the graves of the Germans and Alans of the second half of the third and fourth centuries allow us to ascertain the existence of an active trade of the local populations with Bosphorus and Chersonesus through their mediation with other cities of the Eastern Roman Empire.

In the burial complexes of the German population of Crimea in the fifth through seventh centuries, the most characteristic and complete of which is the necropolis near the village of Luchisty, there is a strong influence from the Alan culture. Though there are still rare burial grounds evidencing corpse-burning rituals in the fifth century, they disappear completely in a later period, giving way to rituals involving laying of the deceased. At the same time, the ethnic specificities of the German population can be traced mainly through children's and women's clothing.

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