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THE MIRROR WITH THICKENED RIM AND NAIL-SHAPED HANDLE FROM THE GETO-DACIAN SETTLEMENT OF POIANA (GALAȚI COUNTY, ROMANIA). NOTES ON ITS ORIGIN AND DATING

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Abstract: We discuss here the mirror discovered in 1987 following the archaeological investigations carried out in the Geto-Dacian settlement of Poiana (Galați county/RO). It belongs to the type of disc mirrors with thickened rim, central disc projection and nail-shaped handle. The item, singular in the east-Carpathian area, is the most western find of such mirror type. Subsequent to the analysis of all aspects related to such mirrors, it may be concluded that currently, the view according to which these are of Central-Asian origin is the most convincing theory.

First mirrors of the type emerged in the eastern Sarmatian environment during the final stage of the Early Sarmatian period (the 2nd – 1st century BC), while their maximum use period in the Sarmatian world lies in the 1st century AD, being discontinued in the Volga-Don region by late this time span. In the north-Pontic area west of the Don, such artefacts remained in use until early 2nd century AD, while the graves to which they belong, with one exception, date to the second half of the 1st century – early 2nd century AD.

In the north-Pontic Sarmatian environment west of the Don, these mirrors diffused, beside other eastern origin artefact classes, mainly owing to the entry and settlement of new migratory groups arriving from the east, with close contacts and relations with the Central Asian region.

Based on the fact that the majority of these mirrors were discovered mainly in graves from the region east of the Don, the dating of the features containing such mirrors as well as the Sarmatians' entry and settlement of the north-Pontic area west of the Don, the author here concludes that the item of Poiana, together with other eastern origin artefact classes, reached the east-Carpathian area most likely sometime in the second half of the 1st century AD, however no later than early 2nd century AD, as supported also by the context in which the specimen of Poiana was discovered.

Last but not least, the author here concludes that the mirror from the Geto-Dacian settlement of Poiana, beside other object categories of Sarmatian origin or mainly used by the Sarmatians discovered in the pre-Roman Geto-Dacian environment, furthermore evidence the Sarmatian presence in the east-Carpathian area during the 1st century AD, as well as the Geto-Dacian and Sarmatian relations.

Keywords: *mirrors, the Dacians, the Sarmatae, the Alani, Dacia, Poiana, the east-Carpathian area, the north and north-west Pontic area.*

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INTRODUCTION

Similarly to the case of other artefact categories, mirrors are of special interest, representing a class of objects of a higher value than other goods. Moreover, mirrors, alike other objects, often provide dating indications of some archaeological features. Also, they occasionally allow even a more accurate establishment of the chronological framing of other archaeological materials. On the other hand, the use of mirrors after their production cease, especially in the Barbarian world, provides information on their value, yet also on the fact that not everyone could afford to purchase and own such items.

Mirrors are objects well known among toiletries in both the Greco-Roman world and that Barbarian, being indispensable in several cultural environments of the Antiquity, on a spread area. The Geto-Dacians make no exception in this respect, since similarly to the Greeks, the Romans or other ancient peoples, including from this part of Europe, they frequently used such toiletries. Among the mirrors used by the Geto-Dacian¹ count both Greco-Roman origin mirrors and specimens, even though less in numbers, originating and used in other cultural milieus. Amongst the latter counts the disc mirror with thickened rim, central disc projection and nail-shaped handle from the Geto-Dacian settlement of Poiana² (Fig. 1-2), object of this article.

The mirror was discovered in trench N, at 0.60 m³ deep, subsequent to the systematic archaeological excavations conducted in 1987 by the Iași-based scholar Silvia Teodor. It was found fragmentary, lacking part of its body. At the time of its find, the mirror's surface was covered with a greenish-black patina that still survives today. The obverse of the specimen is flat, used as mirror, while the reverse has the edge marked by a wide and thickened rim, half-oval in cross-section, the central disc part displaying a slight projection. The half-oval cross-section nail-shaped handle is slightly pierced by the end.

The mirror's diameter is of 11 cm, the width of the thickened rim being of 1.4-1.5 cm, being 0.6 cm high, while the height of the central disc projection is 0.51 cm. The handle is 2.7 cm long and the maximum width is of ca. 1.1

¹ For mirror finds in the Geto-Dacian environment see GLODARIU 1974, 84-85, 249-250; CRIȘAN 1978, Pl. 123/14; BERCIU 1981, 50-51, Pl. 36/24-25, 38/6, 48/3; LUPU 1989, Pl. 27/14-17; CĂPITANU 1989, 103, Fig. 11/1-5; FLOREA 1993, 175, Fig. 1/2; CRIȘAN/FERENZI 1994, 387, Pl. V/12, 16, VIII/7-8; URSACHI 1995, 243-244, Pl. 209/27-32, 34-37, 332/27-30; SÎRBU 1996, 36, 100, Pl. 122/14-15; RUSTOIU 1996, 169, Fig. 107; TEODOR/NICU/ȚAU 1997, 30-31, Fig. 17/1-18, 18/1-5, 7-9; BOBI 1999, 183, Pl. CV/11 = CVI/11, CVII/1 = CVI/14; CRIȘAN 2000, 141, Pl. 111/16-18; DUPOI/SÎRBU, 2001, 40; SÎRBU/RUSTOIU 2005, 41, Fig. 50/10, 61/3, 68/5; BĂRBULESCU 2014, 71, Appendix 10, Pl. XLIX, LXIV, LXVIII; SCHUSTER/ȘERBĂNESCU 2014-2015 with complete bibliography.

² TEODOR/NICU/ȚAU 1997, 30-31, 80, cat. no. 357, Fig. 19; VULPE/TEODOR 2003, 67, 262, cat. no. 969, Fig. 135.

³ According to the depth at which the mirror was found, it belongs to inhabitancy level V of the settlement, dated by Silvia Teodor to the 1st century BC – mid 2nd century AD (VULPE/TEODOR 2003, 20-21.). Following an analysis of finds upon levels and from within features, it was concluded that level V at Poiana is characterised by materials datable to the 1st century AD, especially its second half. Subsequent to the analysis of artefacts from this level, it was noted it had two stages (V 1 and V 2), the first belonging to the first half of the 1st century AD and the second to the second half of the 1st century – early 2nd century AD (CRISTESCU 2013, 134-135).

cm⁴. The mirror is in the collection of the “Teodor Cincu” History Museum of Tecuci (Galați county) under inventory number MT. 5493.

The item was briefly published by Silvia Teodor and her collaborators ten years after its find⁵. In 2003, it was re-published without any further information in the monograph study titled *Piroboridava. Așezarea geto-dacică de la Poiana*⁶, and recently, it was mentioned in a study discussing the mirrors from the Geto-Dacian environment by C. Schuster and D. Șerbănescu⁷. All three publications mention that the mirror was silver plated and that the reverse had a relief decoration depicting two figures in a circular frame⁸. The mirror was originally dated to the 1st century BC and later to the 1st century AD. About the mirrors of Poiana, among which also the specimen discussed here, it was argued they represent import items from the Mediterranean area, most of Hellenistic origin⁹. Two decades ago, in a study addressing the entry of the Sarmatae by the Lower Danube and their relations with the Geto-Dacians, on the basis of technical data and drawing of the item where it was published in 1997, we ascribed the specimen of Poiana to the group of disc mirrors with thickened rim, nail-shaped handle without central projection¹⁰ (**type Khazanov IV¹¹; Skripkin 4.7¹²; Abramova 1¹³; Marchenko VII¹⁴**), rather frequent in the Sarmatae environment¹⁵. Chronologically, these are specific to the 3rd – 1st century BC, their great majority coming from 2nd – 1st century BC graves¹⁶.

⁴ In the publications where this mirror was mentioned, its diameter is recorded as being of 16 cm (TEODOR/NICU/ȚAU 1997, 80, cat. no. 357; VULPE/TEODOR 2003, 262, cat. no. 969). Measurements, a series of technical data as well as the images illustrating the mirror were provided by Radu Ciobotaru, whom we thank this way too for expediency and support.

⁵ TEODOR/NICU/ȚAU 1997, 30-31, 80, cat. no. 357, Fig. 19.

⁶ VULPE/TEODOR 2003, 67, 262, cat. no. 969, Fig. 135.

⁷ OPREANU 1998, 104, Fig. 23/1.

⁸ TEODOR/NICU/ȚAU 1997, 30-31, 80, cat. no. 357; VULPE/TEODOR 2003, 67, 262, cat. no. 969; SCHUSTER/ȘERBĂNESCU 2014-2015, 89.

⁹ TEODOR/NICU/ȚAU 1997, 31; VULPE/TEODOR 2003, 67.

¹⁰ BĂRCĂ 2002, 114-115, Fig. 13; BĂRCĂ 2002a, 69, Fig. 13. Mirrors of the type are in the shape of a disc with thickened rim, have nail handle, half-oval in cross-section on which the wooden or bone part was inserted. The maximum diameter of these mirrors reaches 20 cm, yet the great majority have a diameter comprised between 15 and 18 cm. The length of the metal handle part varies between 1.6 and 7.2 cm, yet predominate those with a length comprised between 3 and 5 cm. Rarely, the central disc part is decorated with a six-petal rosette framed by two or three concentric circles. Regarding the mirrors of the discussed type, it must be also mentioned they have the same shape and decoration type throughout the entire Sarmatae world, while most come from Sarmatae graves from the Don and Volga river basins, the Kuban region and north-Caucasus territories (Ciscaucasia) (for finds in these territories see MOSHKOVA 1963, 42-43, Pl. 28/8-12, 15, 17, 19; VINOGRADOV 1963, Fig. 15/8, 16, 23, 24/1, 3; ABRAMOVA 1983, 37, Fig. 1/10-11; ABRAMOVA 1993, 93, Fig. 31/1-19; MIROSHINA/DERZHAVIN 1988, 150, Fig. 4/1; ARKHEOLOGIYA SSSR 1989, Pl. 69/35-36; SKRIPKIN 1990, 95 (mention 37 exemplars), Fig. 35/11-14; MARCHENKO 1996, 21, Fig. 42/11, 50/7, 57/9, 62/13, 86/11, 88/4, 96/8, 98/5. GLEBOV 2019, 87-88 (mentions 55 exemplars from the Lower Don region), Fig. 2-3). For finds in the north-Pontic Sarmatae milieu west of the Don see BĂRCĂ 2006a, 91-93, Fig. 12/2, 14/6, 27/1, 33/1, 43/4; BĂRCĂ/SYMONENKO 2009, 73, Fig. 19/1-2.

¹¹ KHAZANOV 1963, 62, type IV, Fig. 1/IV.

¹² SKRIPKIN 1990, 95, 151, Fig. 35/11-14, 44/4.7.

¹³ ABRAMOVA 1993, 93, type 1, Fig. 31/1-19.

¹⁴ MARCHENKO 1996, 21, Fig. 4, type VII.

¹⁵ Although rarely, such mirrors were also identified in the late Scythian environment (SYMONOVICH 1983, 35, 97, Pl. XL/2; DASHEVSKAYA 1991, 40, Pl. 73/7).

¹⁶ For the dating of such mirrors with all references see KHAZANOV 1963, 62-64; MOSHKOVA 1963, 42-43, group II, type 3; ABRAMOVA 1983, 34-

Access for examining the item at more than two decades after its publication, allowed us to note it is not silver plated, but made of a silvery-white alloy that can be polished and which received a silvery colour, as well as that on its reverse, there was no relief decoration rendering two figures. Its study allowed us to observe that even its diameter is smaller than previously argued and the fact that in its central part, the disc has a not very large projection. The latter is a key detail for the typological framing and chronological dating of the mirror. All these elements and observations, together with the edge width and height made us to analyse this item, singular on the territory of Romania, in fact also the most western find of such mirror type.

A FEW ASPECTS RELATED TO THE ORIGIN, DIFFUSION AND DATING OF THE MIRRORS WITH THICKENED RIM, CENTRAL DISC PROJECTION AND NAIL-SHAPED HANDLE

Mirrors in the type to which the item here belongs have the shape of a disc with thickened and rounded rim, central disc projection and nail-shaped handle, half-oval in cross-section, cast once with the disc or soldered. The frequent diameter of these mirrors is comprised between 10 and 15 cm, yet there are rare specimens with a somewhat larger diameter. The metal length of these mirrors' handle, over which the wooden or bone part was cased on, that no longer survives in its original form, varies between 1.2 and 6 cm¹⁷. Although much rare, in some of the Sarmatae graves are found exemplars with faceted thickened rim, these being ascribed to the second variation of this mirror type¹⁸.

Some of the first scholars expressing views related to their origin and presence in the Sarmatae environment were P. Rau and M. I. Rostovtsev. The first related the emergence of such mirrors in the Sarmatae environment of the Lower Volga to Caucasian influences¹⁹, while the second to the impulse of Central Asia²⁰.

Analysing all mirrors of the type, known to that date, A. M. Khazanov (type VIII in its typology) concluded that these originate in the East where they emerged for the first time and from where they reached the Sarmatae by early Christian era where they remained fashionable during the 1st – 2nd century AD²¹. A dating of all mirrors with thickened rim, central disc projection and nail-shaped handle from the Sarmatae milieu to the 1st – 2nd century AD was originally supported by scholar M. P. Abramova²². In a work discussing Sarmatian date remains from the Central-Ciscaucasian region, the same scholar

mentions the presence of two such mirrors in graves dated no later than the 1st century BC²³.

K. F. Smirnov also tended to support the view of the eastern origin of the mirrors. The author also believed they served as prototypes for the making of Sarmatae mirrors of the type, widely diffused with the Sarmatae populations and other populaces from southern Eastern Europe and Central Asia in the 1st century BC – 1st century AD²⁴.

Similar interpreting on this matter, yet different from the previous, belongs to B. A. Litvinskij, who noted the broad distribution of such mirrors in Central Asia as early as the 2nd – 1st century BC. Based on their large numbers discovered on the territory of Bactria, B. A. Litvinskij suggests they may be termed "Bactrian"²⁵. Furthermore, that these emerged in the 3rd century BC as a result of interplay between local mirror types (Central Asia) and those from the Near East and Central Asia, from where they reached the steppe nomads, and southwards, even India²⁶. In a slightly later work, drawn in collaboration with A. V. Sedov, B. A. Litvinskij places the emergence of the mirrors of the type in the 1st century BC in Central Asia²⁷. The origin of these artefacts in Central Asia is supported by a well argued analysis also by N. G. Gorbunova²⁸.

The Bactrian provenance was yet doubted by A. M. Mandel'shtam, who assumed all bronze mirrors of the Iron Age had belonged in general to the nomads, as well as that mirrors discovered following his investigations of Bactrian cemeteries are imports²⁹.

The origin of mirrors of the type was discussed in several studies by Yu. A. Zadneprovskij³⁰. He doubted the priority of Central Asia with respect to origin and concluded, based on their diffusion on a much spread territory, that their genesis must be sought for each region in part³¹. Yu. A. Zadneprovskij rejected the use of the term of "Bactrian type" and noted the broad distribution of these mirrors from the 1st century BC to the 2nd century AD in the steppes west and east of the Volga, northern Caucasus, northern Iran, the territories from Central and Southern Asia as well as in Vietnam³². The same author concluded that mirrors in this type from Southern Asia (India, Pakistan) reached those territories from Central Asia via the Yuezhi-Kushan nomads³³. Concurrently, Yu. A. Zadneprovskij assumed that Central Asian nomads and the Sarmatae received mirrors of the type beside other artefact classes from the artisan centres of the Kushan state³⁴.

A. S. Skripkin ponders that the provenance of these mirrors from Central Asia is most plausible, thus agreeing with A. M. Khazanov and B. A. Litvinskij's views, adding though, these might have been formed based on the mirrors

39, Fig. 1; ABRAMOVA 1993, 93, 95; SKRIPKIN 1990, 150-151; SKRIPKIN/KLEPIKOV 2004, 97-99, Fig. 2/3, 4/25-30; MARCHENKO 1996, 21; BÂRCĂ 2006, 91-93, Fig. 12/2, 14/6, 27/1, 33/1, 43/4; GLEBOV 2019, 87-88, group 2, Fig. 2-3.

¹⁷ KHAZANOV 1963, 64-65, Fig. 1/Type VIII, 3/5; SKRIPKIN 1990, 95, Fig. 36/5-10; MARCHENKO 1996, 22, Fig. 4/Type VIII, Variant 1, 78/3; SIMONENKO 2003, 48-49, Fig. 2/1-3; GLUKHOV 2005, 15, Fig. 7/4, 6-8, 8/2; MINEEVA/SKRIPKIN 2005, 51-53, Fig. 1; BÂRCĂ 2006, 151-152; BÂRCĂ/SYMONENKO 2009, 172-173; GLEBOV 2019, 88, Fig. 4/1-3.

¹⁸ SKRIPKIN 1990, 95, Fig. 36/11-12; MARCHENKO 1996, 22, Fig. 4/Type VIII, Variant 2, 78/3; GLUKHOV 2005, 15, Fig. 9/1. See also GLEBOV 2019, 88, Fig. 4/4.

¹⁹ RAU 1927, 91.

²⁰ ROSTOVITSEV 1918, 73.

²¹ KHAZANOV 1963, 64-65, type VIII.

²² ABRAMOVA 1959, 65.

²³ ABRAMOVA 1993, 93, type 2, Fig. 31/25-26.

²⁴ SMIRNOV 1968, 116-121; SKRIPKIN 1990, 145.

²⁵ Ascribing the term of "Bactrian" mirrors almost four decades ago was due to the fact at that date, most such mirrors came from the territory of Bactria (LITVINSKIJ 1971, 46; LITVINSKIJ 1978, 85).

²⁶ LITVINSKIJ 1971, 46.

²⁷ LITVINSKIJ/SEDOV 1984, 56.

²⁸ GORBUNOVA 1998, 283-296.

²⁹ MANDEL'SHTAM 1975, 141.

³⁰ ZADNEPROVSKIJ 1971, 133-141; ZADNEPROVSKIJ 1993, 88-92.

³¹ ZADNEPROVSKIJ 1971, 133-139.

³² ZADNEPROVSKIJ 1993, 88-92.

³³ ZADNEPROVSKIJ 1971, 134-135, 138; ZADNEPROVSKIJ 1993, 91.

³⁴ ZADNEPROVSKIJ 1993, 91-92.

with thickened rim, nail-shaped handle without central projection (**type Khazanov IV**³⁵; **Skripkin 4.7**³⁶; **Abramova 1**³⁷; **Marchenko VII**³⁸). He also mentions there are also other parallels between the material culture of the 1st century AD Sarmatae and the monuments from Central Asia, which are likely, evidence of the diffusion of these mirrors in this steppe region³⁹.

In the 1990- monograph, A. S. Skripkin argued that mirrors of the type (type 6.7 in his typology) emerge in the Sarmatae environment mainly no earlier than the beginning of 1st century AD. Based on the finds of that date, he proposed their dating as the 1st century – early 2nd century AD, mentioning though that the maximum use period lay in the 1st century AD⁴⁰. Exemplars of these mirrors with faceted edge were ascribed by A. S. Skripkin to the second variation. Somewhat more recently, after several mirrors of the type were discovered in a number of Sarmatian graves dated to the 2nd c – 1st century BC, A. S. Skripkin and O. I. Mineeva revised their view, placing their emergence in the Sarmatae milieu in a previous period, at least in the 1st century BC⁴¹. In the view of the same author, in the Volga-Don region, the maximum diffusion period lies in the 1st century AD, being disused by its end⁴².

In parenthesis, it must be mentioned that two of the mirrors mentioned by A. S. Skripkin and O. I. Mineeva for the early chronological framing of items in this type were dated, many years ago, by M. G. Moshkova to the 3rd – 2nd century BC. The said author specified that mirrors with thickened rim, central disc projection and nail-shaped handle are a natural occurrence in Sarmatian graves dated to the boundary between the 1st century BC – 1st century AD and the first two centuries AD in the Volga region, especially in the Don area and the Kuban region⁴³. Earlier dating of these mirrors was also accepted by V. B. Vinogradov and V. A. Petrenko⁴⁴.

Mirrors with thickened rim, central projection and nail-shaped handle from the Sarmatae graves of the Kuban region were analysed by I. I. Marchenko⁴⁵. Without stopping to their origin, the author notes that in the Sarmatae environment of mentioned region, these were used in the time span between the boundary of the 2nd – 1st century BC until mid 1st century AD, while those similar in shape, yet with faceted edge (**type Marchenko VIII.2**), in the 1st century AD⁴⁶. In the case of the items from the Kuban region, it was noted that earlier exemplars have a larger disc diameter (16 cm), while the central projection is poorly marked. The main group of such mirrors is formed of specimens with a diameter of 13 cm, those from the first half of the 1st century AD having a smaller diameter (10-11 cm), and soldered handle⁴⁷.

In the monograph dedicated to the Sarmatian remains

³⁵ KHAZANOV 1963, 62, type IV, Fig. 1/IV.

³⁶ SKRIPKIN 1990, 95, 151, Fig. 35/11-14, 44/4.7.

³⁷ ABRAMOVA 1993, 93, type 1, Fig. 31/1-19.

³⁸ MARCHENKO 1996, 21, Fig. 4, type VII.

³⁹ SKRIPKIN 1990, 152-153.

⁴⁰ SKRIPKIN, 1990, p. 152, 155, Fig. 44.

⁴¹ MINEEVA/SKRIPKIN, 2005, 52.

⁴² MINEEVA/SKRIPKIN, 2005, 53.

⁴³ MOSHKOVA 1963, 42, 43, Pl. 28/21-22.

⁴⁴ VINOGRADOV/PETRENKO 1976, 45-46.

⁴⁵ MARCHENKO 1996, 22-23, Fig. 4/Type VIII.

⁴⁶ MARCHENKO 1996, 23.

⁴⁷ MARCHENKO 1996, 23.

from the Don river basin, V. E. Maksimenko mentioned that mirrors of the type are specific to the Sarmatian graves of the end stage of the Prohorovka period, also arguing these continued to be used in the Middle Sarmatian period, definitively disused likely by late 1st century AD⁴⁸.

An examination of these mirrors from Sarmatian funerary features in the Volga-Don interfluvium was carried out twice also by A. A. Glukhov⁴⁹. Similarly to A. S. Skripkin and I. I. Marchenko, the author ascribed exemplars similar in shape, yet with faceted edge to the second variation. The use period of these mirrors in the analysed area is placed in the 1st century AD, with the note they were rather popular in its first half, as well as that by late 1st century AD, they became unfashionable. A. A. Glukhov mentions though that certain finds of such mirrors may be dated to an earlier period⁵⁰.

The most recent analysis of the emergence in the Sarmatian environment of mirrors with central disc projection and nail-shaped handle was made in a study discussing mirrors from the early Sarmatian period from the Lower Don by V. P. Glebov⁵¹. The author agrees with the term of “Bactrian” type mirrors and notes, subsequent to the analysis of the funerary features where such toiletry objects were discovered that they are present in a few Sarmatian graves dated to early – first half of the 2nd century BC⁵². The same author agrees, without yet mentioning this, with the maximum diffusion period of these mirrors in the 1st century AD, also admitting that in the Sarmatae milieu, specimens with faceted edge date to the 1st century AD⁵³.

Mirrors of the type from the Sarmatian graves on the territory of Ukraine (the north and north-west Pontic area) were analysed by O. V. Symonenko. Thus, in a study tackling Chinese elements and those of Central Asian origin in the north-Pontic milieu west of the Don, the reputed Kiev-based scholar infers that mirrors with central disc projection and nail-shaped handle originate in Central Asia⁵⁴. Entry of the type mirrors in the Sarmatian environment is related by the same author to the eastern impulse (Alanic) of the 1st century AD⁵⁵, also mentioning that in the north and north-west Pontic area these come from graves with marked eastern features belonging to the “Eastern wave” of the second half of the 1st century – first half of the 2nd century AD⁵⁶. The resemblance of the mirrors from the graves in the Nogajchik (Chervonoe) and Sokolova Mogila (Kovalevka) barrows with those of Bactria indicate in O. V. Symonenko’s view, the possibility these were imported from there.

⁴⁸ MAKSIMENKO 1998, 131.

⁴⁹ GLUKHOV 2003, 91-93, 95, Fig. 1/Type 6.7, 3/4, 6-8, 4/1-2, 5/6; GLUKHOV 2005, 15, 46-47, Fig. 7/4, 6-8, 8/2, 9/1.

⁵⁰ GLUKHOV 2003, 93.

⁵¹ GLEBOV 2019, 88, 89-90, Fig. 4/1-4.

⁵² GLEBOV 2019, 89.

⁵³ GLEBOV 2019, 90. Originally, V. P. Glebov and I. A. Gordin dated the grave (T 5 G 7) from the Pirozhok cemetery (Lower Don), from where comes the single to date current mirror with faceted edge, to the 1st century BC (GLEBOV/GORDIN 2006, 210).

⁵⁴ SIMONENKO 2003, 48-49. See also SIMONENKO/MEL’NIK 2004, 277; SIMONENKO/MEL’NIK 2012, 2012, 301.

⁵⁵ SIMONENKO 2003, 49; SIMONENKO 2004, 145; SIMONENKO/MEL’NIK 2004, 277; SIMONENKO/MEL’NIK 2012, 2012, 301.

⁵⁶ SIMONENKO 2003, 49; SIMONENKO 2004, 145; SIMONENKO/MEL’NIK 2004, 277-278; SIMONENKO/MEL’NIK 2012, 301. See also SIMONENKO 1993, 112-113.

Last but not least, we wish to mention also the view expressed by Yu. Zajtsev and V. Mordvintseva⁵⁷ when discussing the grave goods and dating of the grave in the Nogajchik barrow. The two authors argue that mirrors of the type further the development of the mirrors with thickened edge, nail-shaped handle without the central disc projection (**type Khazanov IV⁵⁸, Skripkin 4.7⁵⁹, Abramova 1⁶⁰, Marchenko VII⁶¹**) and that it is hard to believe they are imports from Bactria. Based on the large diameter and poorly marked central projection, the same scholars concluded that the mirror from the Nogajchik barrow belongs to the early development period of the mirrors with thickened rim, nail-shaped handle and central disc projection, pointing to the period by late 2nd century – early 1st century BC.

In the north and north-west Pontic area (on the territory of Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova), mirrors of the type are currently represented only by six exemplars. These come from the grave of Troyany⁶² (Fig. 4/2), G 3 in the Sokolova Mogila barrow (Kovalevka)⁶³ (Fig. 5), G 9 in the Kamova Mogila barrow (Radionovka)⁶⁴ (Fig. 4/1), G 18 in the Nogajchik barrow (Chervonoe, Crimea)⁶⁵, T 2 G 2 at Primorskoe (Ukraine)⁶⁶ and T 14 G 3 at Dumeni (Republic of Moldova)⁶⁷.

Based on the artefacts together with which the mirror was discovered⁶⁸ and their dating, we believe that the Troyany grave dates sometime to the second half of the 1st century AD – early 2nd century AD, possibly only by late 1st century – early 2nd century AD⁶⁹.

The rich grave in the Sokolova Mogila barrow was dated by the scholars to the first half of the 1st century AD⁷⁰, the first half – mid 1st century AD⁷¹, mid/third quarter of the

1st century AD⁷² or the second half of the 1st century AD⁷³, possibly the third quarter or even its last third⁷⁴.

In the second half of the 1st century AD⁷⁵ or by late 1st century – early 2nd century AD⁷⁶ is dated the grave in the Kamova Mogila barrow. On the nail-shaped handle of the mirror in this grave was attached a rectangular wooden handle. On either sides of the mirror were preserved traces of fabric, while on the spot of its find, the print of the exterior side of the casing made of twisted straws. Above the mirror was attached a rectangular piece of birch bark with orifices in the corners and traces of fabrics on the inside. All these indicate, according to the authors who published the piece, that its box was made of twisted straws (the back side) and birch bark (the front side), both sides being lined with fabric⁷⁷.

The small cemetery to which belongs T 2 G 2 Primorskoe is dated to the second half of the 1st century – early 2nd century AD⁷⁸. In this chronological interval was also dated grave no. 3 in T 14 at Dumeni⁷⁹, although a chronological framing by late 1st century – early 2nd century AD seems today more plausible. Regarding the mirror at Dumeni, whose diameter is of 10 cm, it must be argued it does not have a nail-shaped handle⁸⁰, similarly to the item in G 57 from the Khanka'sk cemetery from the Central-Ciscaucasian region⁸¹. In the case of the Dumeni grave, a handmade pottery cup is notable, whose zoomorphic handle depicts a boar⁸².

Regarding the mirror in the grave from the Nogajchik barrow we wish to mention that the rich grave goods evidence an earlier dating than the first half of the 1st century AD⁸³, as

⁷² SIMONENKO 2003, 48; BÂRCĂ 2006, 136; BÂRCĂ 2009, 97, 98; BÂRCĂ 2011, 10; BÂRCĂ/SYMONENKO 2009, 137, 140, 156.

⁷³ SIMONENKO 2011, 43-44.

⁷⁴ BÂRCĂ 2015, 41; BÂRCĂ 2019, 142.

⁷⁵ SIMONENKO 2003, 48; SIMONENKO/MEL'NIK 2004, 275-279.

⁷⁶ SIMONENKO/MEL'NIK 2012, 303.

⁷⁷ SIMONENKO 2003, 48; SIMONENKO/MEL'NIK 2004, 273; SIMONENKO/MEL'NIK 2012, 297.

⁷⁸ SIMONENKO 2003, 48.

⁷⁹ BÂRCĂ 2006, 151, 309, 480. V. I. Grosu dated T 14 G 3 at Dumeni in the 1st century – early 2nd century AD (GROSU 1988, 86) or the 1st – 2nd century AD (GROSU 1995, 152).

⁸⁰ It is possible that the Dumeni mirror had the handle attached by soldering. It broke at some point later, which would explain the fact it is missing.

⁸¹ ABRAMOVA 1993, 93, Fig. 31/25.

⁸² Pottery vessels with zoomorphic handles spread in the Sarmatian world starting with the 1st century AD (SKRIPKIN 1990, 207). Typologically and according to their execution manner, this class of Sarmatian vessels has close parallels in pottery features from Central Asia. B. A. Litvinskij related the existing zoomorphic handles on the pottery from Central Asia and that Sarmatian to the diffusion of some religious manifestations, among which an important role was played the cult of Farn (LITVINSKIJ 1968, 109-111). It is believed that this cult, related to Zoroastrianism, was likely formed in Central Asia, while the early 1st century AD is the start stage of their distribution in the Sarmatae environment (SKRIPKIN 1990, 208). For a series of finds of metal and wooden vessels with zoomorphic handles see KURCHATOV/BUBULICI 2003, 300-301; KOROLKOVA 2003; MORDVINTSEVA/TREJSTER 2007, I, 47-48; DEMIDENKO 2008, 21-23; BEZUGLOV/GLEBOV/PARUSIMOV 2009, 62, 79-80; ZASETSKAYA 2011, 160-195; KRIVOSHEEV 2020; BÂRCĂ 2006, 162-164, 178-179; BÂRCĂ 2012; BÂRCĂ 2020, 84-85.

⁸³ For the rich furnishing of this grave and its analysis as well as expressed view in relation to its dating see ŠČEPINSKIJ 1994, 87-106; SIMONENKO 1993, 70-74, 117 (late 1st century – early 2nd century AD); SIMONENKO 2003, 48 (late 1st century AD); SIMONENKO 2006, 137-152; SIMONENKO 2007, 57-66 (not earlier than the second half of the 1st century AD); SIMONENKO 2011, 36, 71-74, 87-88, 94-96, 107-109, 116-123, 159, 212-216, cat. no. 106 (late 1st century – early 2nd century AD); TREJSTER 2000, 182-202; MORDVINTSEVA/ZAITSEV 2003, 193-258; ZAJTSEV/

⁵⁷ ZAJTSEV/MORDVINTSEVA 2003, 87; MORDVINTSEVA/ZAJTSEV 2003.

⁵⁸ KHAZANOV 1963, 62, type IV, Fig. 1/IV.

⁵⁹ SKRIPKIN 1990, 95, 151, Fig. 35/11-14, 44/4.7.

⁶⁰ ABRAMOVA 1993, 93, type I, Fig. 31/1-19.

⁶¹ MARCHENKO 1996, 21, Fig. 4, type VII.

⁶² SIMONENKO 2003, 48, Fig. 2/2; SIMONENKO 2008, 71, cat. no. 91, Pl. 85/2; SIMONENKO 2011, 208; SIMONENKO/MEL'NIK 2012, 301; BÂRCĂ 2006, 152; BÂRCĂ/SYMONENKO 2009, 172-173.

⁶³ KOVPANENKO 1986, 66-72, 127, Fig. 70-73; SIMONENKO 2003, 48, Fig. 2/3.

⁶⁴ SIMONENKO 1993, 85-86; SIMONENKO 2003, 48, Fig. 2/1; SIMONENKO 2004, Fig. 7/36; SIMONENKO/MEL'NIK 2004, 273, Fig. 2/7; SIMONENKO/MEL'NIK 2012, 297, 301, Fig. 2/8; BÂRCĂ/SYMONENKO 2009, 173, Fig. 62/5.

⁶⁵ SIMONENKO 1993, 74, 85; SIMONENKO 2003, 48, Fig. 2/4; ŠČEPINSKIJ 1994, 93, Fig. 3; 11; ZAJTSEV/MORDVINTSEVA 2003, 78-79, Fig. 4/11, 13/1.

⁶⁶ SIMONENKO 2003, 48.

⁶⁷ GROSU 1988, 86, Fig. 4/2; GROSU 1990, 62, Fig. 12B/3; GROSU 1995, 152, Fig. 9B/6; BÂRCĂ 2006, 151, 309, Fig. 52/2, 186/6; BÂRCĂ/SYMONENKO 2009, 172, Fig. 62/6.

⁶⁸ GROSU 1990, 61; SIMONENKO 2008, 17, 71, cat. no. 91.1, Pl. 85-87; SIMONENKO 2011, 208, cat. no. 94; BÂRCĂ/SYMONENKO 2009, 166, 184-185, 188, Fig. 60/22, 68/4.

⁶⁹ V. I. Grosu dated the grave by late 1st century – first half of the 2nd century AD (GROSU 1990, 61), while O. V. Symonenko to the second half of the 1st century – early 2nd century AD (SIMONENKO 2001, 57; SIMONENKO 2003, 48).

⁷⁰ KOVPANENKO 1986, 127.

⁷¹ MORDVINTSEVA/TREJSTER 2007, III, 79-81, cat. no. A250.

well as that the thickened edge of the mirror is decorated with semi-spherical projections, which differentiates it from the rest of the mirrors in the type.

A FEW FINAL NOTES

Given the archaeological realities, in the current state of knowledge it may be concluded that the first mirrors with thickened edge, central disc projection and nail-shaped handle emerged in the Sarmatae milieu from the territories east of the Don and Volga in the final stage of the Early Sarmatian period, being known in 2nd – 1st century BC. The period of their maximum use in the Sarmatian world is placed in the 1st century AD, being disused in the Volga-Don region towards its end. In the case of the north-Pontic area west of Don, finds are indicative of the use of these artefacts until early 2nd century AD, the graves in which they emerged being dated, with one exception, to the second half of the 1st century – early 2nd century AD.

Subsequent to the analysis of all aspects related to the mirrors of the type it may be concluded that currently, the view according to which these mirrors are of Central-Asian origin is the most convincing. These were distributed in the north-Pontic Sarmatian environment west of the Don beside other eastern origin artefact classes, mainly subsequent to the entry and settlement in this area of new migratory groups arriving from the east, who had contacts and close relations with the region of Central Asia. In the graves of this group are present a series of marked eastern elements and features⁸⁴, also noticeable in the case of the majority Sarmatae graves from the north and north-west Pontic area, whose grave goods included mirrors with thickened edge, central disc projection and nail-shaped handle. Among the mirrors of the type stands out the item of Sokolova Mogila. On the nail-shaped handle was attached a figurine made of gilded silver rendering a cross-legged sitting male (“Turkish sitting”)⁸⁵. The figure is dressed in a long coat with wide and short sleeves, wearing seemingly short boots. In the bent and alongside the body hands it holds a rhyton. The face of the man exhibits marked eastern features – large almond eyes, slightly flattened nose, long moustache with slightly turned ends, short curly beard (see Fig. 5/1-4).

The entry and settlement of these new migratory groups in the north-Pontic area west of the Don, confirmed by the archaeological finds and the accounts of ancient

written sources, occurred starting with mid 1st century AD, in the second half of the same century they being present in the north-west Pontic area as well⁸⁶. On the basis of all aspects, we wish to mention, as previously stated elsewhere⁸⁷, that the primary role within these new groups of migrants settled in the north and north-west Pontic area was held by the Alani⁸⁸.

Based on the fact that the majority of these mirrors were mainly discovered in graves from the region east and southeast of the Don, territories inhabited by the Siraces, Aorsi and Alani, the dating of the features comprising such mirrors as well as the entry and settlement of the Sarmatae in the north-Pontic area west of the Don, we may conclude that the item of Poiana, beside other eastern origin artefact classes⁸⁹, reached the east-Carpathian area most likely sometime in the second half of the 1st century AD. When and under which circumstances it reached the settlement of Poiana is difficult to say, yet it is obvious that this occurred no later than the early 2nd century AD. Above stated are also supported by the fact that the mirror from the settlement of Poiana was discovered at 0.60 m deep, which corresponds to the second stage of level V of the settlement. The analysis of the artefacts of this stage has shown they date to the second half of the 1st century – early 2nd century AD⁹⁰.

The mirror from the Geto-Dacian settlement of Poiana, beside other Sarmatian origin object classes or used mainly by the Sarmatae discovered in the pre-Roman Geto-Dacian environment, furthermore evidences the Sarmatian presence in the east-Carpathian area during the 1st century AD⁹¹. The close exchange relations between the Geto-Dacians and the Sarmatae as well as the presence of the latter in the mentioned area are confirmed by a series of artefact classes from the Geto-Dacian milieu within Sarmatian graves, as well as the presence in the Geto-Dacian environment of certain Sarmatian type artefact categories⁹². We wish to mention in this respect some brooch types, like the strongly profiled brooches of small sizes produced by the workshops operating in the settlement of Brad and Poiana discovered in several Sarmatian graves from the east-Carpathian area⁹³. Also, we mention here the Sarmatian cauldron identified in the settlement of Pietra Șoimului (Calu)⁹⁴. Another example is represented by the tamgas, mainly used by the new wave of Sarmatians arriving in the north and north-west Pontic area from the east starting with mid 1st century AD, they being also

MORDVINTSEVA 2003, 61-99 (early – first half of the 1st century BC); ZAJTSEV/MORDVINTSEVA 2004, 17-25 (first half – mid 1st century BC); ZAJTSEV/MORDVINTSEVA 2007, 343 (1st century BC with emphasis on the second third or mid this century); MORDVINTSEVA/TREJSTER 2007, II, 52-55 (first half – mid 1st century BC); PUZDROVSKIJ 2004, 303, note 1 (not earlier than the reign of Augustus); PUZDROVSKIJ 2007, 84-85, 199 (not earlier than 30-20 BC); BÂRCĂ/SYMONENKO 2009, 135, 137, 139 (1st century AD).

⁸⁴ For the elements and specificities of the new wave of Sarmatae arriving in the north-Pontic area from the east see SKRIPKIN 1990, 207-209, 217-218; SIMONENKO/LOBAJ 1991; SIMONENKO 2000; SIMONENKO 2001; SIMONENKO 2003; YATSENKO 1993; BÂRCĂ/SYMONENKO 2009, 99-203; BÂRCĂ 2003; BÂRCĂ 2006; BÂRCĂ 2012; BÂRCĂ 2013; BÂRCĂ 2015; BÂRCĂ 2018; BÂRCĂ 2019 with complete bibliography.

⁸⁵ For a series of artefacts with depictions of figures with eastern facial features, sitting with crossed legs from the Sarmatae milieu see BÂRCĂ 2013a, 249-253; BÂRCĂ 2015, 40-42 with complete bibliography; BÂRCĂ 2020, 85.

⁸⁶ For the entry and settlement of new Sarmatian tribes in the north-west of the Black Sea, a time well recorded in ancient literary and epigraphic sources see BÂRCĂ 2006, 244-262; BÂRCĂ 2013; BÂRCĂ/SYMONENKO 2009, 348-364.

⁸⁷ Cf. BÂRCĂ/SYMONENKO 2009; BÂRCĂ 2003; BÂRCĂ 2006; BÂRCĂ 2013; BÂRCĂ 2015; BÂRCĂ 2020.

⁸⁸ These represented a very powerful group militarily, succeeding in a short time to politically control other Sarmatae in the region.

⁸⁹ Among examples we mention the bronze cauldrons of Mokra (T 2 G 2) and Slobozia (left to the Lower Dniester), as well as that from the Geto-Dacian settlement of Pietra Șoimului (pre-mountain area of the Eastern Carpathians). For their discussion, yet also of the other cauldrons from the north and north-west Pontic Sarmatian environment see BÂRCĂ 2020.

⁹⁰ CRISTESCU 2013, 134-135.

⁹¹ For the Sarmatian funerary remains of the 1st century AD from territories east of the Carpathians see BÂRCĂ 2006.

⁹² See BÂRCĂ 2002; BÂRCĂ 2002a.

⁹³ BÂRCĂ 2011, 16-18.

⁹⁴ For the discussion of this cauldron in a broader context see BÂRCĂ 2020.

those who contributed most to their diffusion in the steppes of Eastern Europe. The rather large number of tamgas from the pre-Roman Geto-Dacian environment, on mainly locally produced items, also proves the existing relations between the two peoples, as well as their cohabiting, within the same area, over the course of the second half of the 1st century – early 2nd century AD⁹⁵. In fact, the tamgas amid a sedentary populace located outside their basic use area is represent evidence of contacts between the representatives of both the nomad and sedentary populations, while their large number is indicative of systematic contacts between these⁹⁶. The settlement of new Sarmatian groups in the east-Carpathian area led to cohabitation between the Geto-Dacians and the Sarmatae and the set up of economic, political and military relations⁹⁷, which led to the establishment of alliances, recorded by both the written sources and monuments like Trajan's Column and Tropaeum Traiani.

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⁹⁵ For the tamgas in the pre-Roman Dacian milieu see BELDIMAN 1990, 139-151; BABEȘ 1999, 223 sqq.; BABEȘ 2005; BĂRCĂ 2002, 115-117, Fig. 15-16; BĂRCĂ 2002a, 70-80, Fig. 15-16; BERZOVAN/PĂDUREANU 2010, 57-66; BUDIHALĂ 2012, 93, Pl. XIII/6.

⁹⁶ For an ampler examination see VORONYATOV 2014.

⁹⁷ In fact, neither the written sources nor the archaeological finds suggest a massive and violent entry of the Sarmatae in the Geto-Dacian territory, but rather of groups of individuals, subsequent to trade exchanges or mixed marriages or of larger or smaller groups established among the local communities. For more details related to the relations between the Geto-Dacians and the Sarmatae in the 1st century – early 2nd century AD see SÎRBU/BĂRCĂ 1999; SÎRBU/BĂRCĂ 2000; BĂRCĂ 2002; BĂRCĂ 2002a; BĂRCĂ 2006b.

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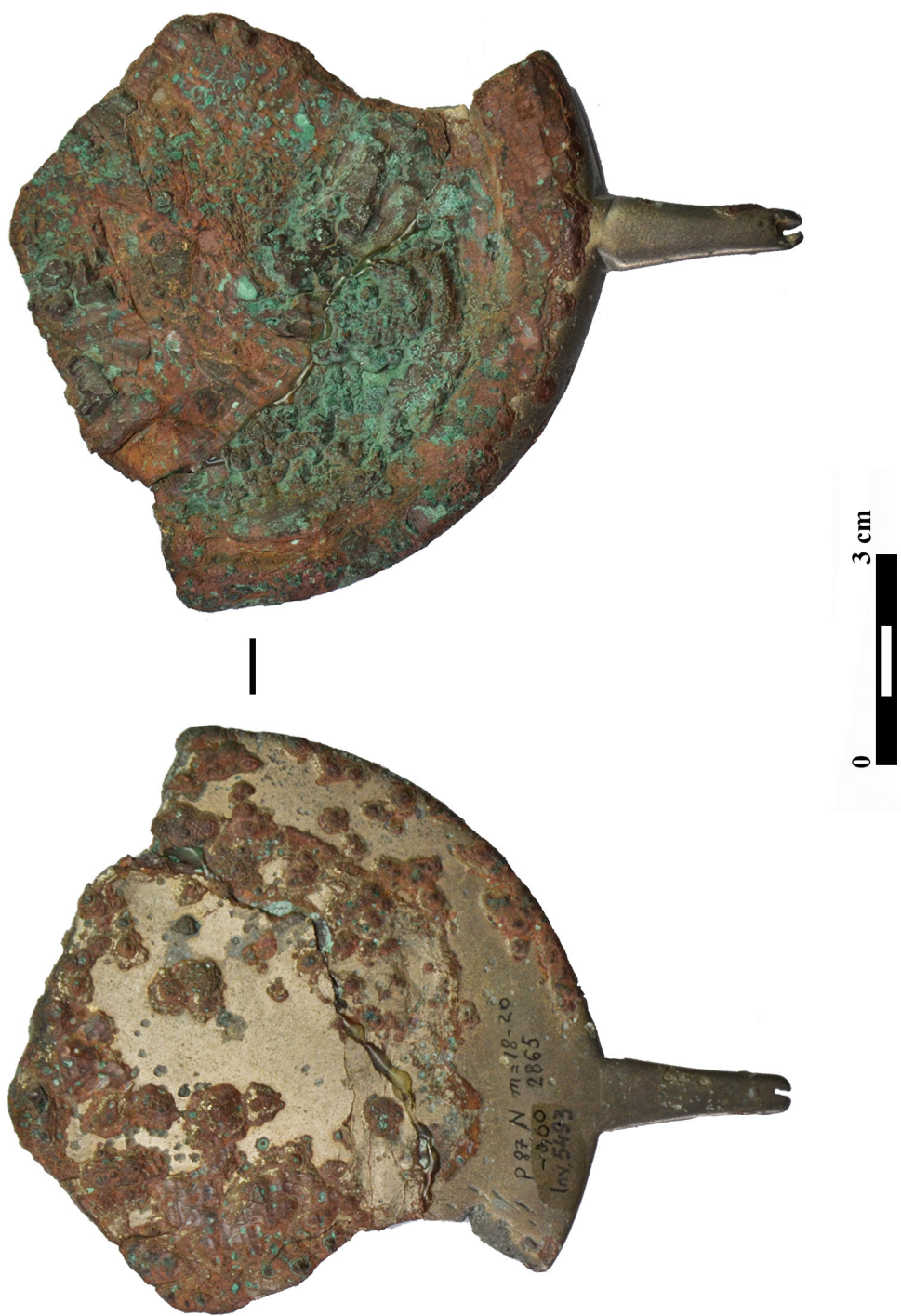


Fig. 1. Mirror from the settlement of Poiana (photo Paul Ciobotaru).

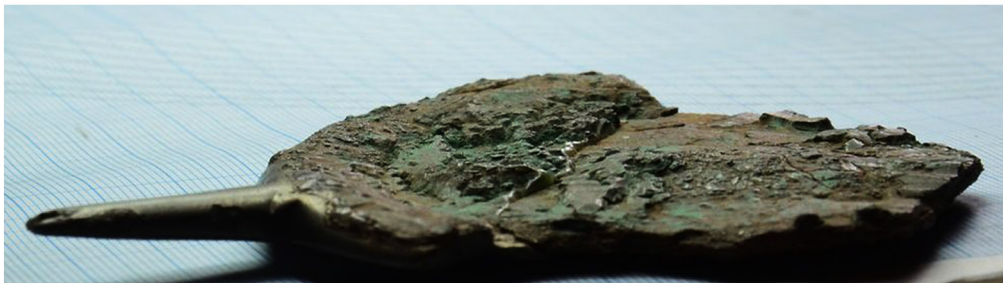
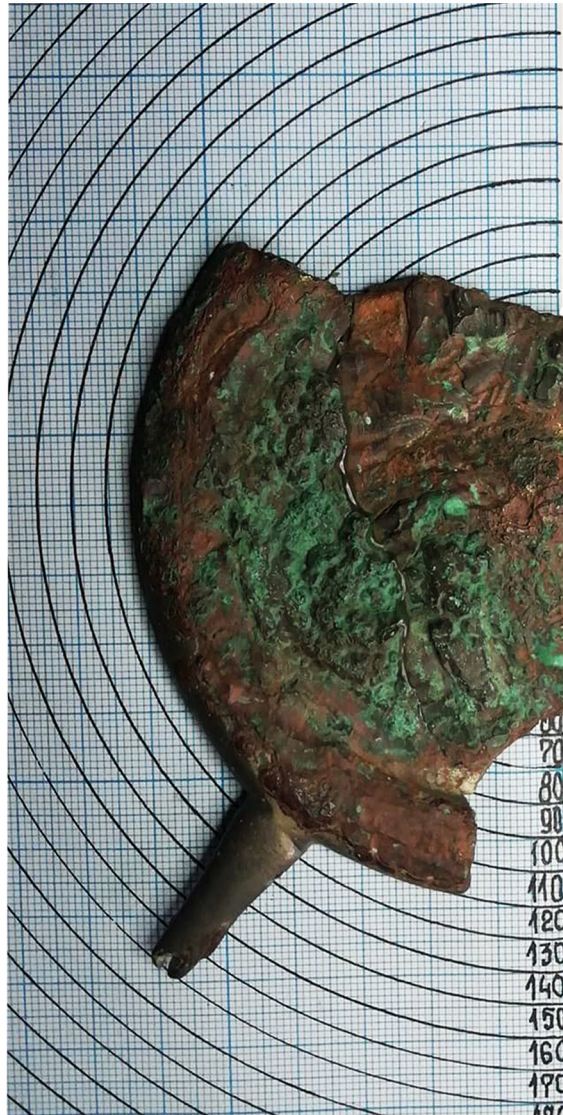


Fig. 2. Mirror from the settlement of Poiana (photo Paul Ciobotaru). Without scale.

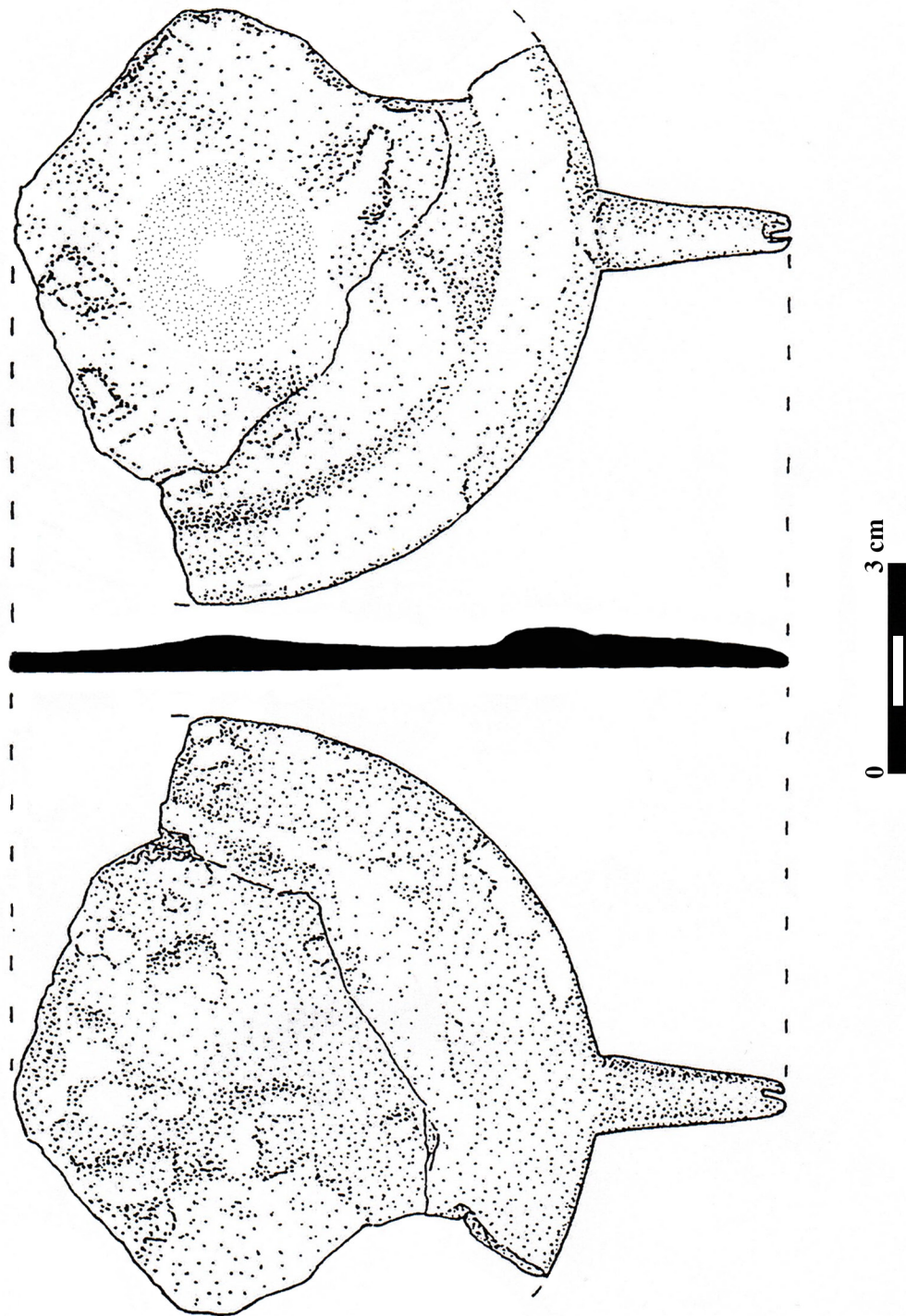


Fig. 3. Mirror from the settlement of Poiana (after TEODOR/NICU/ȚAU 1997 with corrections and completions).

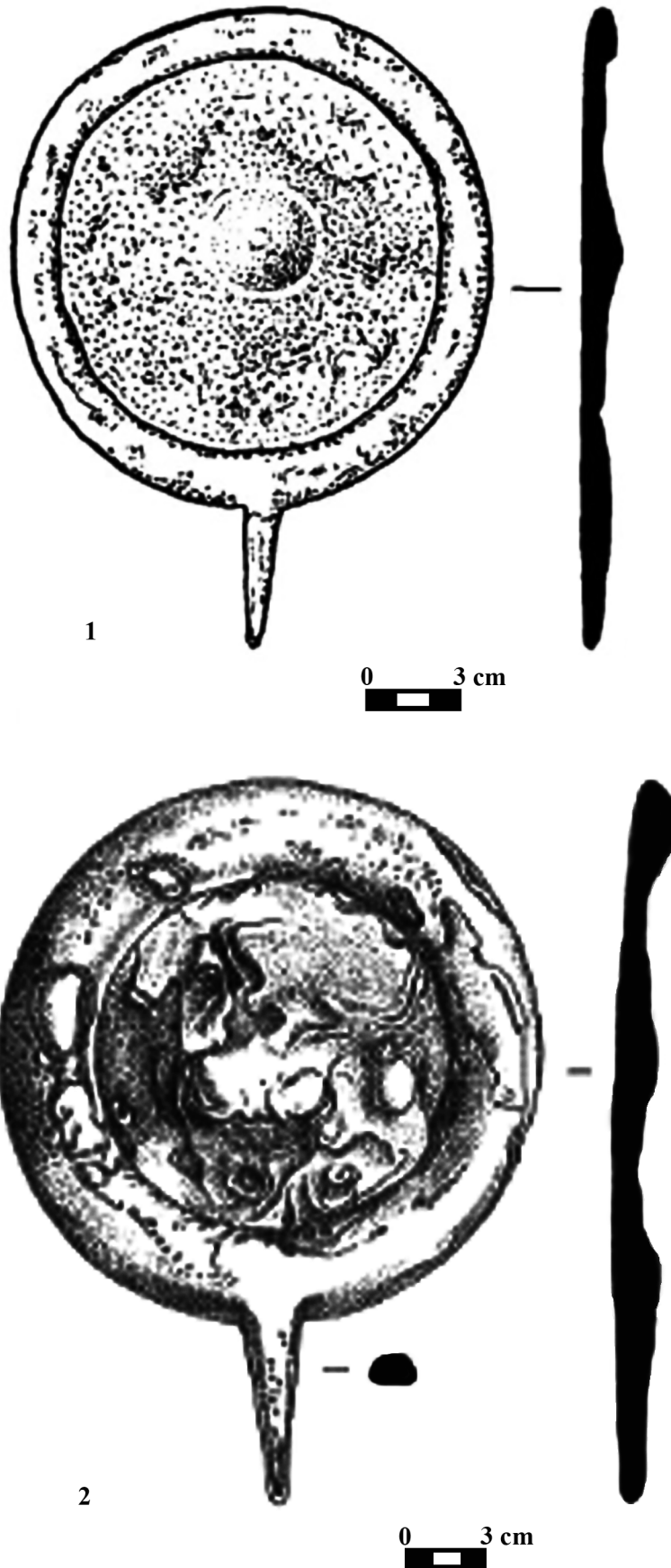


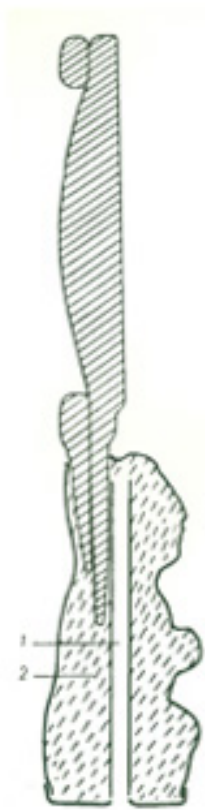
Fig. 4. Mirrors from the north-Pontic Sarmatae environment. **1.** Radionovka, Kamova Mogila barrow (after SIMONENKO/MEL'NIK 2004); **2.** Troyany (after SIMONENKO 2008).



1



2



3



4

Fig. 5. The mirror of Kovalevka, the Sokolova Mogila barrow (after KOVPANENKO 1986). Without scale.

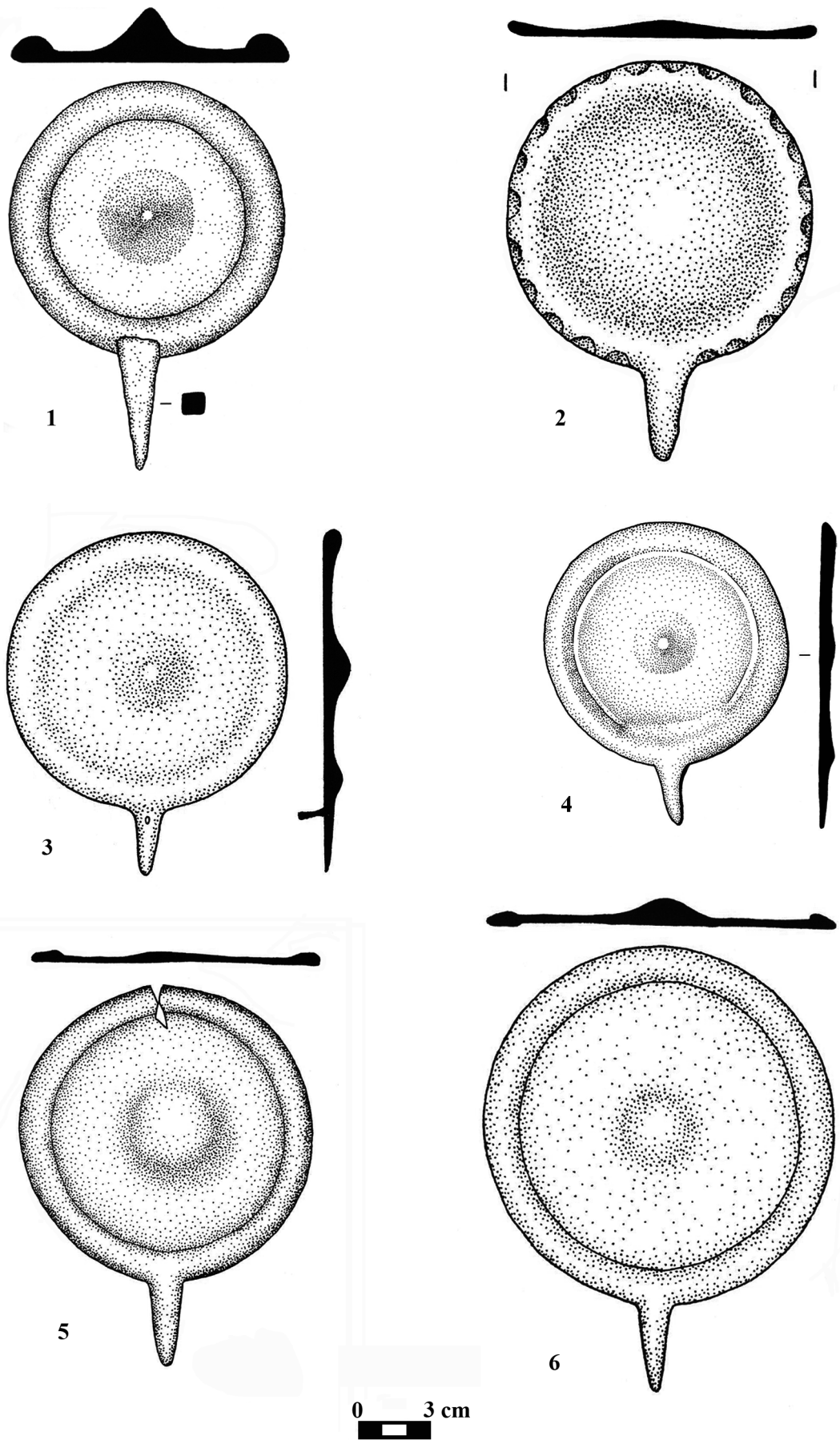


Fig. 6. Mirrors from the Sarmatae milieu of the Kuban region. **1.** Armavir, Tumulul Bolshoj; **2.** Armavir, T 1 G 5; **3.** Peschanyj, T G 10; **4.** Mihajlovskaya, T 9 G 25; **5.** Novokorsunskaya T 2 G 6; **6.** Barrow "Oval'nyj" G 15 (after MARČENKO/LIMBERIS 2008).

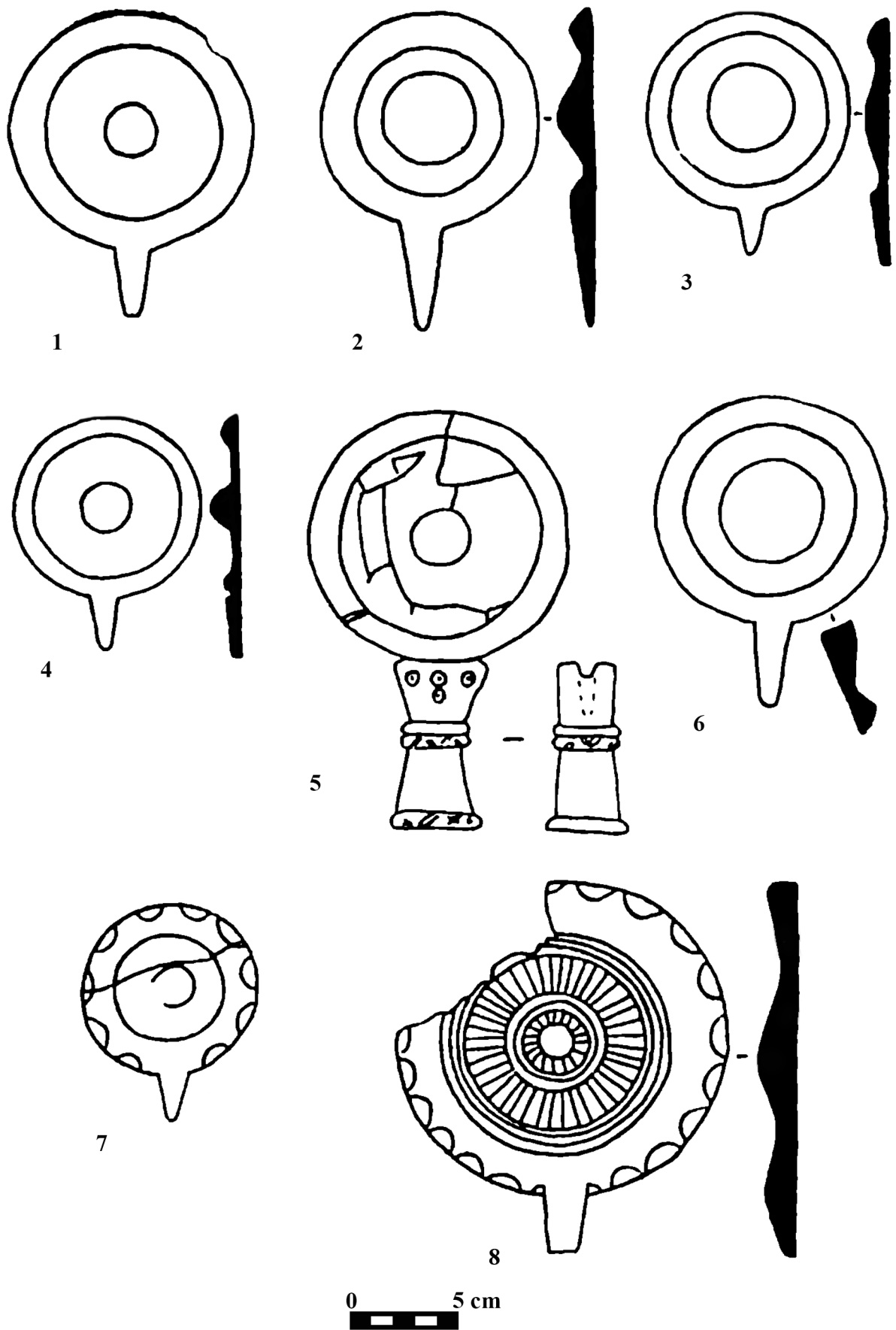


Fig. 7. Mirrors from the Sarmatae milieu of the Don-Volga interfluve (2-4, 6, 8), the territory to the left of the Volga (5, 7) and the region south the Urals (1). 1. Kardailovskij, T 19; 2. Zhutovo, T 79; 3. Khimkombinat, gr. B, T 4 G 5; 4. Pervomajskij X, T 10 G 5; 5. Novo-Lipovka, T 1 G 5; 6. Alitub, T 26; 7. Berezhnovka II, T 108; 8. Chikov, T 8 G 1 (after SKRIPKIN 1990).

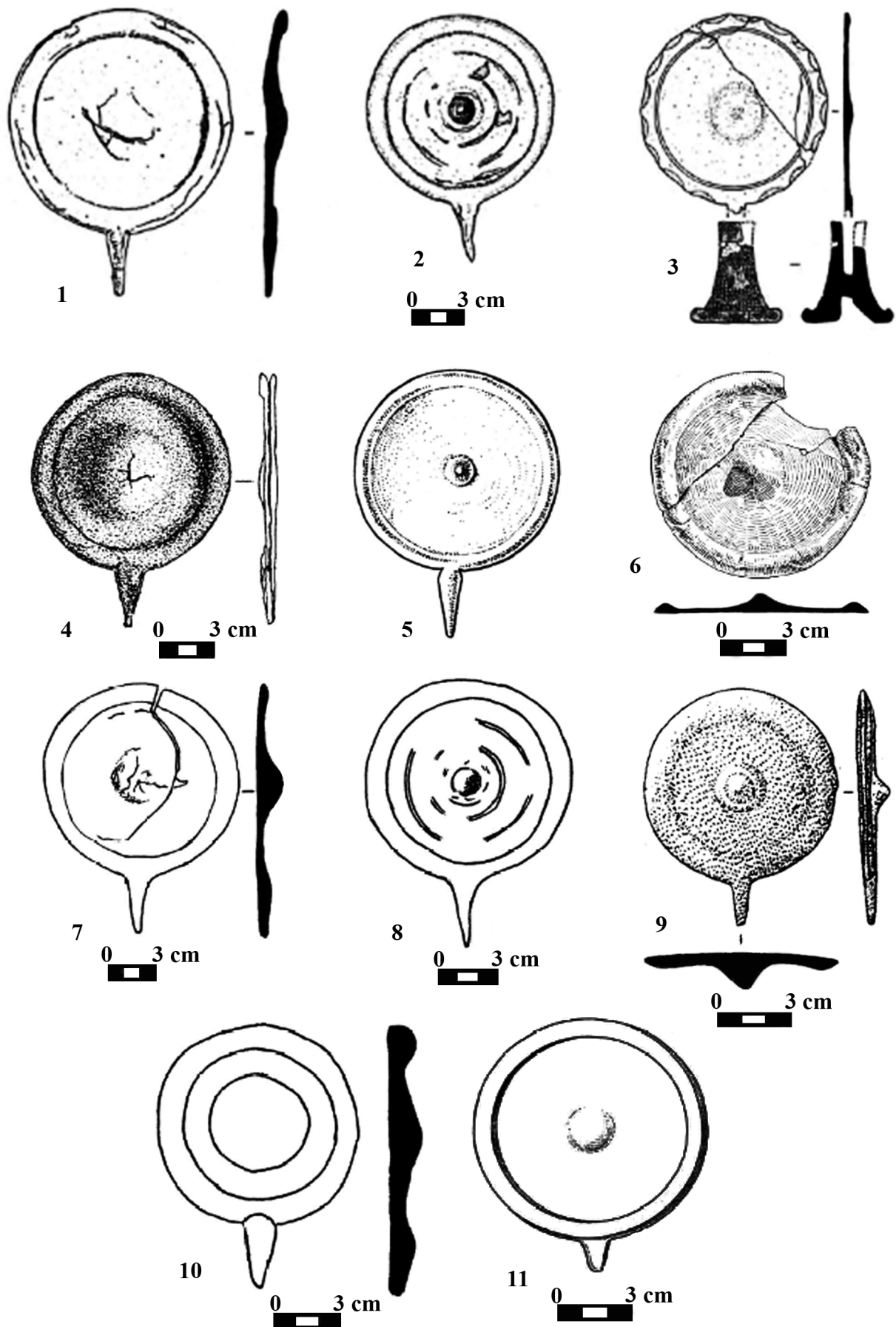


Fig. 8. Mirrors from the Sarmatae milieu of the Don-Volga interfluvium (1-8) and the region south the Urals (9-11). **1.** Podgornenskij I, T 1 G 13; **2.** Balabinskij, T 27, G 22, 25; **3.** Pirozhok, T 5 G 7 (după GLEBOV 2019); **4.** Pisarevka II, T 6 G 2; **5.** Zaplavnoe, T 8 G 9; **6.** Popov, T 30/6 M 8; **7.** Zubovka, T 9 M 9; **8.** Balabinskij I, T 27 M 25 (after MINEEVA/SKRIPKIN 2005); **9.** Solntse III, T 3 G 1 (după VINOGRADOV/TAIROV 1996); **10.** Kos-Oba, T 2; **11.** Abatskij, T 1 G 4 (after MINEEVA/SKRIPKIN 2005).

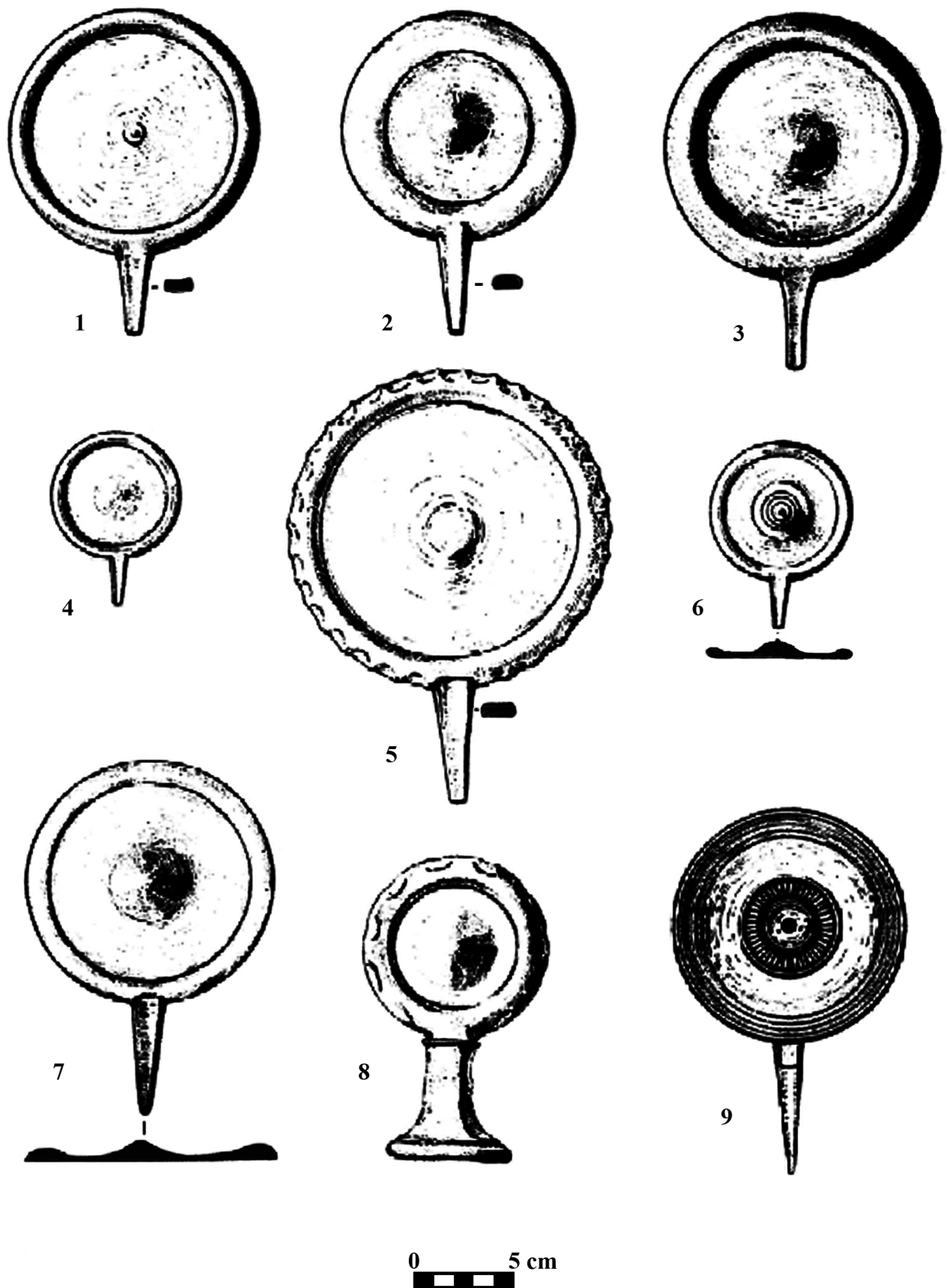


Fig. 9. Mirrors from the territory of India and Vietnam (9). 1-3. Taxila; 4-6. Kolhapur; 7. Reirch; 8. Patna; 9. Óc-Eo (after ZADNEPROVSKIJ 1993).

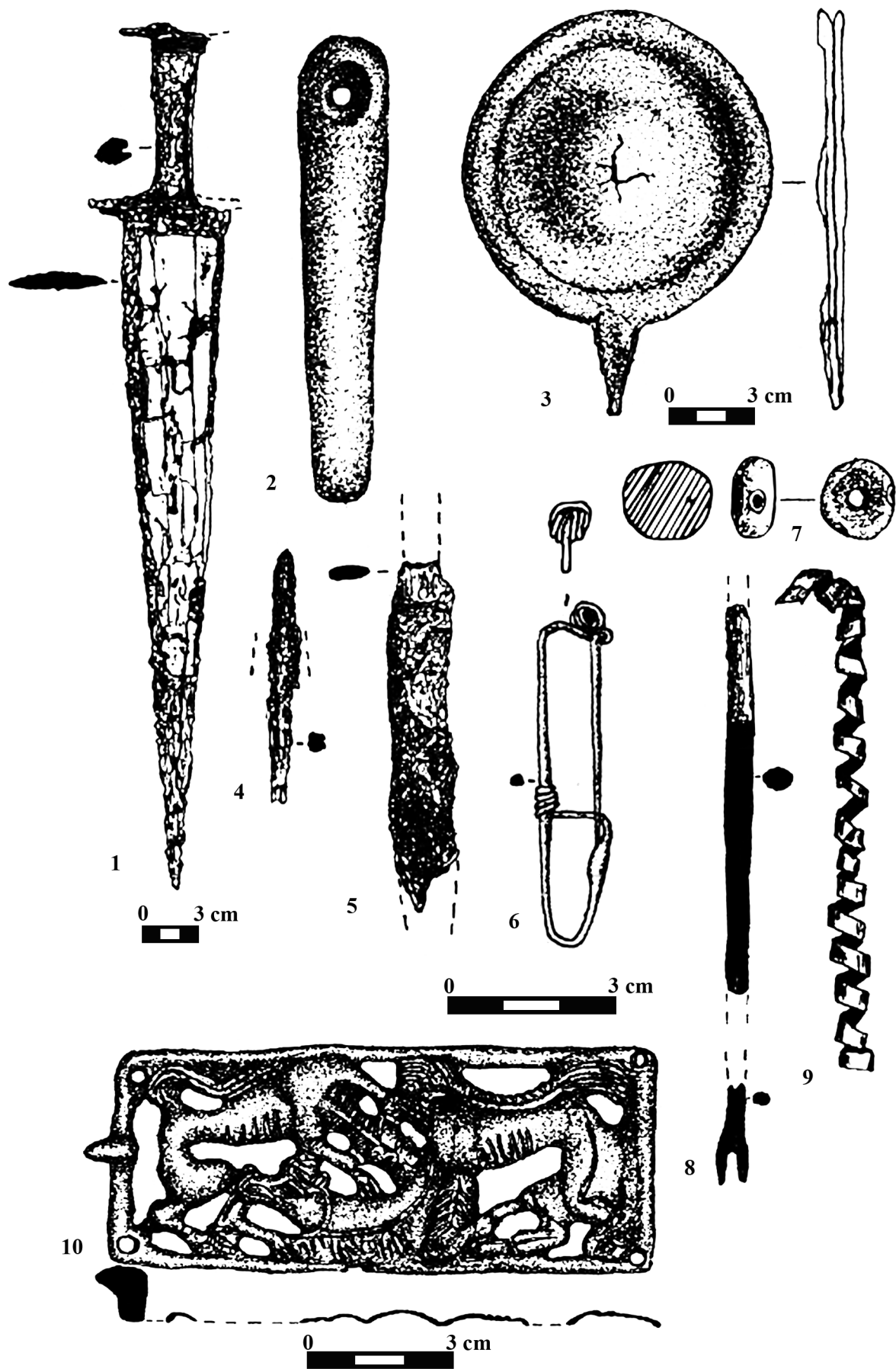


Fig. 10. Grave goods of T 6 G 2 in the Pisarevka II cemetery (after MAMONTOV 2002).

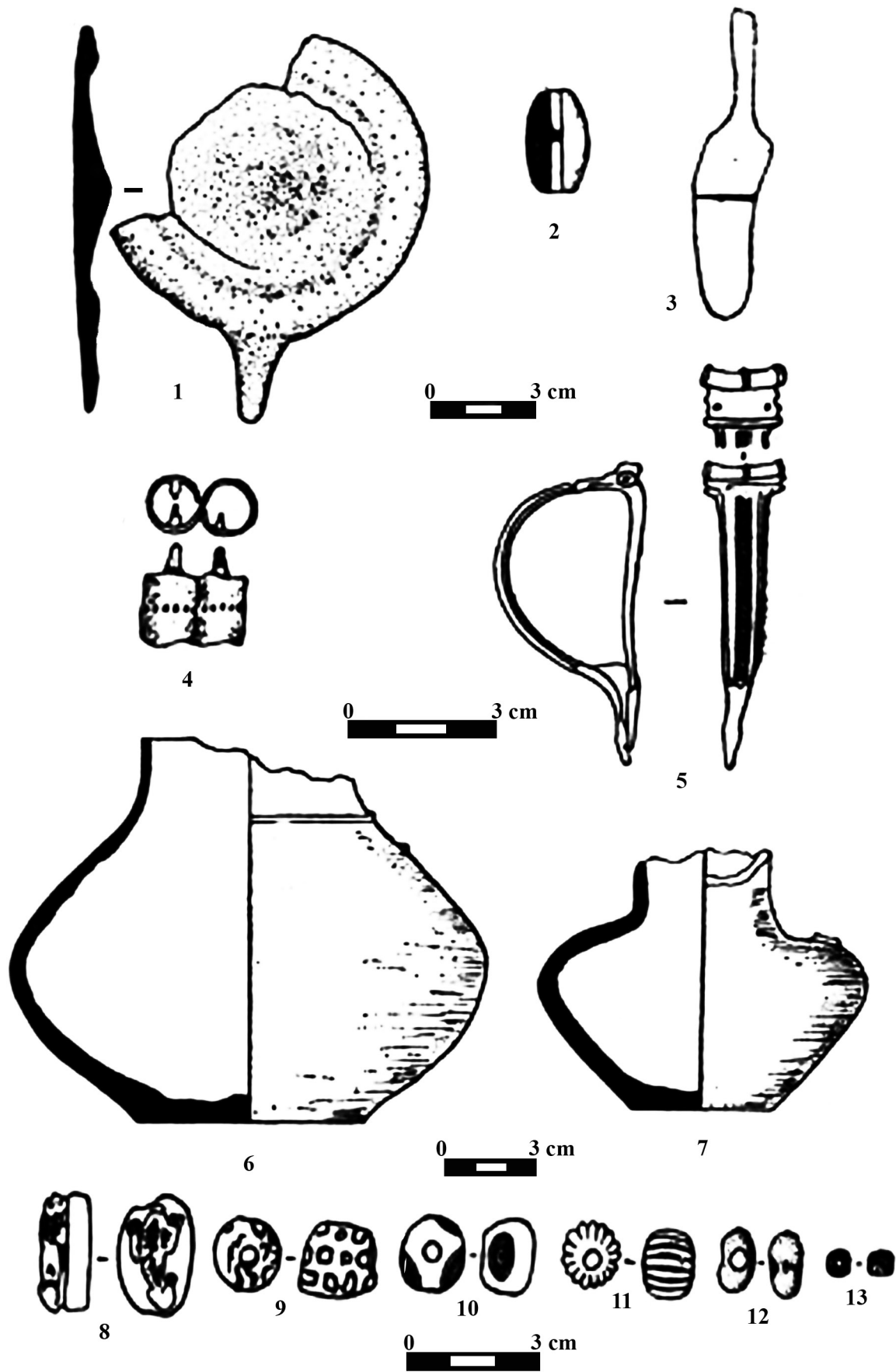


Fig. 11. Grave goods from the Sarmatae grave in T 11 from the Chertovitsk II cemetery (after MEDVEDEV 1990).

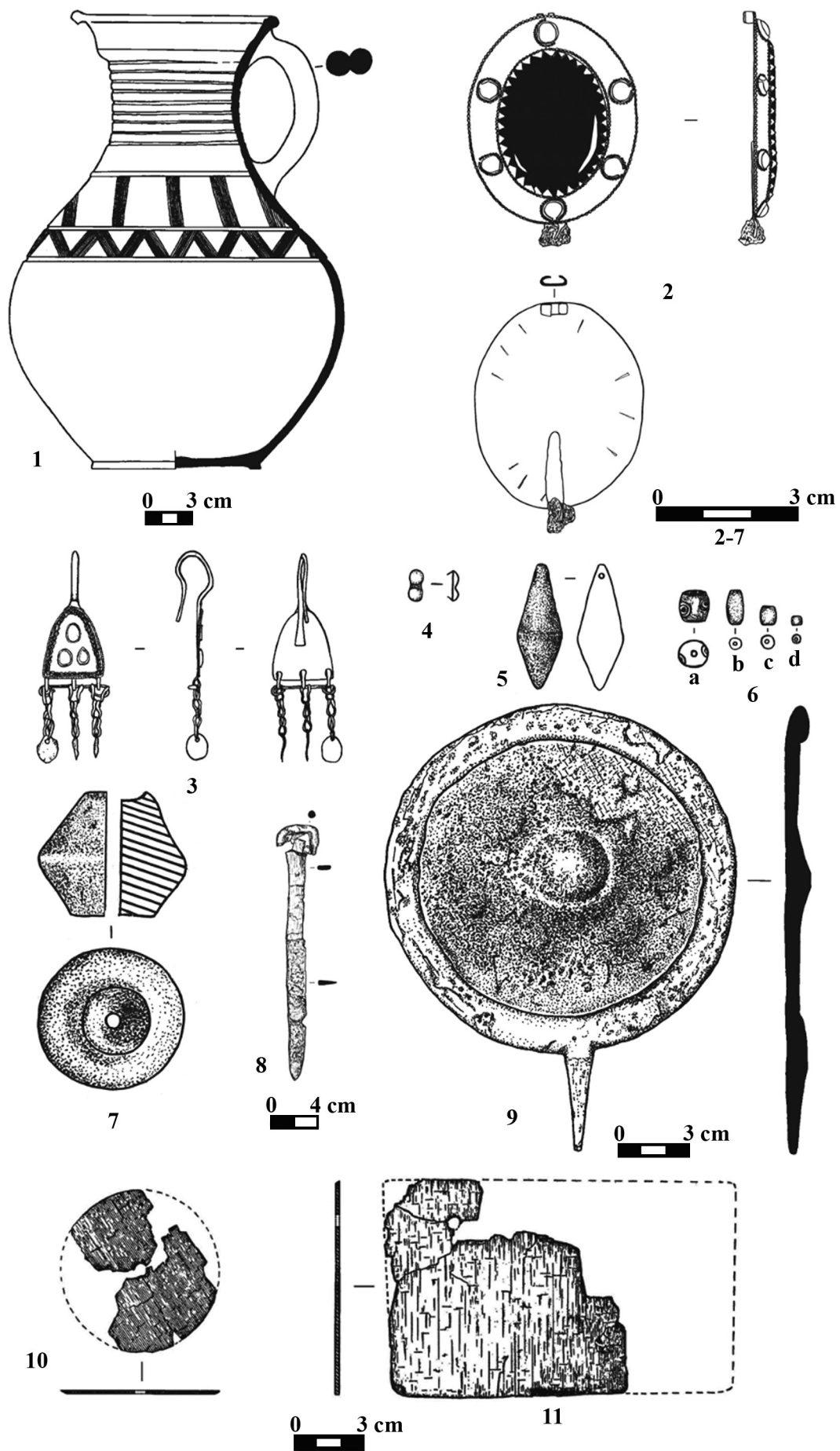


Fig. 12. Grave goods from the Sarmatae grave in the Kamova Mogila barrow (after SIMONENKO 2012).