

ZIRIDAVA  
STUDIA ARCHAEOLOGICA

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# A Grave with Roman Imports in the Cemetery of Opushki in the Crimea<sup>1</sup>

Igor' Khrapunov, Anastasiya Stoyanova

**Abstract:** This paper publishes grave no. 226 in the cemetery of Opushki, located in the central sub-mountainous area in the Crimean Peninsula. The interest to the said assemblage comes from the combination of Roman and barbarian artefacts among the grave goods. The burial was accompanied with a sword with ring pommel, large set of arrow-heads within remains of a quiver, belt fittings, a brooch, remnants of threads made of gold foil, a bronze basin of the type Eggers 70, clay hand-formed censer, and other goods. This grave belongs to the Middle Sarmatian archaeological culture and, according to the combination of artefacts, dates to the second half of the first century AD. The complex under publication differs from Sarmatian graves in the steppe in the lack of burial mound, its location within a large flat cemetery, and the dead body orientation with the head to the east. These features possibly result from the sedentism of the Sarmatians in the sub-mountainous area of the Crimea. From prestigious grave goods in this grave and numerous synchronous burials of harnessed horses around it, there are reasons to interpret grave no. 226 as the burial of a famous person, who held an outstanding position in the collective.

**Keywords:** Crimea; Middle Sarmatian culture; Opushki cemetery; grave.

The cemetery of Opushki is located in the centre of the sub-mountainous area on the Crimean Peninsula, about 15 km east of modern Simferopol (Pl. 1/2). Its feature is the concentration of monuments related to various archaeological cultures within the same cemetery<sup>2</sup>. Grave no. 226 is located within the Late Scythian sector, where the most striking grave constructions are burial vaults containing repeated interments, but other types of graves also occur. Just near the grave under publication, there are many funerals of harnessed horses of the same type, dating within the first and second centuries AD (Pl. 1/1).

Grave no. 226 is particularly interesting because its grave goods combine Roman and barbarian artefacts. The construction of this grave is typical of the cemetery of Opushki and many other burial grounds. It was a flat grave of oval ground-plan, oriented from the west to the east. The grave measured 2.7 × 0.8 m on the floor level; it is 1.0 m deep in the bedrock and 2.0 from modern ground surface. There is a plunderers' pit disturbing walls of this grave and destructing the eastern part of the burial, where the dead person's head laid. The skull is missing. A part of horse's grave no. 229 fell down to the grave under study. The stones covering grave no. 229 moved down to grave no. 226 and appeared in its filling (Pl. 2).

The dead body laid on the bottom of the grave, extended, head to the east. The deceased's arms were tightly pressed to the body, the foot brought close to one other (Pl. 3). On the chest, there was a *lunula* brooch (Pl. 3/1; 5/1; 7/3) and remains of gold embroidery with threads turned of foil (Pl. 3/2, 6; 7/5). Just near the right femur there laid a sword with ring pommel and red-painted wooden scabbard (Pl. 3/10; 5/18; 7/6). At the sword grip, there were bronze knobbed ring (Pl. 3/3; 5/2), small badge (Pl. 3/5; 5/5), and a bead (Pl. 3/4; 5/2). Across the right femur, there laid a bronze strap-end (Pl. 3/7; 5/11; 7/4). On the right knee, there were remains of gold embroidery (Pl. 3/12). At the left knee, there laid a bronze ring (Pl. 3/8; 5/10). To the left of the leg bones, there was a spot of red leather measuring 0.12 × 0.9 m (Pl. 3/9).

At the tibiae and fibulae there were a bone artefact (Pl. 3/13; 5/13), bronze badges (Pl. 3/13; 5/6), and clips (Pl. 3/14, 15; 5/7, 8). At the foot there were a bronze basin (Pl. 3/11; 6/3; 7/2) containing a

<sup>1</sup> The reported study was funded by the Russian Foundation for Basic Research according to the research project no. 19-59-23001 "The Population of the Sub-Mountainous Crimea and the Great Hungarian Plain in the Roman Period: Migrations and Contacts."

<sup>2</sup> Храпунов, Мульд 2005; Храпунов и др. 2009; Храпунов, Стоянова 2013.

bone of animal, a bronze clip (Pl. 3/18; 5/9, 15), a bronze bracket (Pl. 3/19; 5/10), various fragmented bronze ware (Pl. 3/22–24; 5/4, 16), a bone artefact (Pl. 3/16; 5/14), and a great number of iron arrow-heads joint together by corrosion (Pl. 3/17; 6/1, 2). These arrow-heads featured remains of rotten wood. At the foot of the dead there were a hand-formed ribbed censer (Pl. 3/20; 7/1), a knife (Pl. 3/21; 7/7), and bones of an animal. The infill of the grave contained a fragment of an iron artefact (Pl. 5/17).

### Grave goods

*Bronze basin* (Pl. 6/3; 7/2). The diameter of its top edge is 22.7 cm, the height is 7.0 cm. On the outer side of the vessel, below the rim, on either side, there are symmetrical traces of grey metal, possibly tin. This basin belongs to the type Eggers 70. Hans Jürgen Eggers has established this type according to the sole find in Repow (Bohemia) and has dated it to Stage B2<sup>3</sup>. Vessels of the kind continue to be rare finds. Jürgen Kunow's corpus of Roman imports in Free Germania mentions five specimens, with one type determined tentatively. Eggers 70 basins occur in Jutland, Mecklenburg, Slovakia, and south-western Poland<sup>4</sup>. Aleksandr Simonenko has mentioned three finds, which he calls Eggers 70 bowls, in Sarmatian graves in the Northern Black Sea Area. One occurred in the cemetery of Novofilippovka, and two in the cemetery of Ust'-Kamenka. In Simonenko's opinion, these assemblages date from the first century AD<sup>5</sup>. It should be mentioned that vessels from Sarmatian graves have pronounced base and the walls curved in the other way than the basin which Eggers used for his classification. However, Eggers' corpus misses the vessels more similar to the finds from Sarmatian graves than the basin of type 70. According to the drawing, the vessel from Opushki exactly corresponds to the basin from Repow. The list of the above-mentioned analogies could be enlarged with the finds from Sarmatian graves of Cazaklia, Mocra, and Novo-Podkreaž<sup>6</sup>.

Ulla Lund Hansen has related the basin of the type Eggers 70 to Stage B, i. e. 1–150 AD, in her own timeline developed for Scandinavia<sup>7</sup>.

*Sword* (Pl. 5/18; 7/6). The edges of its blade are parallel, narrowing at the point, the cross-guard is straight, and the pommel is ring-shaped. Dimensions: total length 50 cm; blade length 36 cm, blade width 3.3 cm; cross-guard length 5.0 cm, cross-guard width 1.5 m; hilt length 8.5 cm, width 1.5 cm; fragmented pommel diameter 5.0 cm. The sword was placed in a wooden scabbard, plated with red leather.

Swords with ring pommel were distributed throughout the entire area populated by the Sarmatians, as well as far away of it. In the first and the first half of the second century AD, the Sarmatians used mostly swords of the said type. However, the earliest swords appeared among them earlier, and the latest finds were sporadically used in the Late Sarmatian period<sup>8</sup>. Swords with ring pommel frequently occur in Crimean cemeteries<sup>9</sup>. There are Sarmatian graves containing swords with ring pommels in wooden scabbards plated with red leather, similarly to the Opushki find<sup>10</sup>.

The position of sword in grave, close to the right thigh, pinpoints the tradition documented by archaeological<sup>11</sup> and iconographic<sup>12</sup> sources: swords were fastened to the thigh, almost always to the right one, by straps, in a way to have the sword tip above the knee joint.

Across the femur, almost close to the sword, there laid a *bronze strap-end* (Pl. 5/11; 7/4). According to its position in the grave, it was related to the fasteners of the sword to the leg. Its shape reminds a spoon. The edges of the plate of this artefact are bent, in one point to cover one other, overlapping. This artefact measures 4.3 × 1.5 cm. Therefore, the strap fastening the sword to the thigh was no more than 0.5 cm wide.

<sup>3</sup> Eggers 1951, 143, 166, 167, Taf. 8/70.

<sup>4</sup> Kunow 1983, 130, 138, 140, 147, 150; K 9. 136, 159, 271, 300.

<sup>5</sup> Simonenko *et al.* 2008, Кат. 62.1; 63. 4; 123. 1 = Симоненко 2011, 60, Кат. 10. 1; 58. 1; 59. 4; рис. 38/1, 2.

<sup>6</sup> Bârcă 2009, 88, 106, 107, Fig. 7/ 1, 2.

<sup>7</sup> Lund Hansen 1987, 30, 90.

<sup>8</sup> Хазанов 1971, 5–12; Скрипкин 1990, 62, 63, 120–124; Симоненко 2010, 32–43; Sadowski 2004; Bârcă, 1999, 99, 103.

<sup>9</sup> Пуздровский 2007, 129–131.

<sup>10</sup> Хазанов 1971, 12; Симоненко, Лобай 1991, 10; Беспалый, Лукьяшко 2018, 215.

<sup>11</sup> Хазанов 1971, 13; Храпунов 2015, 228, 234.

<sup>12</sup> Трейстер 2010, 486, 488, 498, 500, 514, 521.



The so-called spoon-shaped strap-ends (sometimes also called pendants, clips, or clasps) were relatively widespread amidst the Sarmatians. According to the generally accepted opinion, first put up by Anatoliy Skripkin, they came to Sarmatia from the east, in the second century BC. They occurred both in the Early and Middle Sarmatian cultures. In the Early Sarmatian period, these artefacts were made of iron, bronze, and bone, though in the Late Sarmatian period, many of the strap-ends in question were gold, covered with intricate ornaments<sup>13</sup>. It is worth mentioning that strap-ends originating from Sarmatian assemblages in the steppe, despite the common morphological pattern, are not the same as the Opushki find. The difference is the form of the lower ending. The finds from barrow graves in the steppe often have it rectangular rather than circular in plan as that in the Opushki find. The finds parallel to the Opushki artefact occurred in the Late Scythian cemetery of Ust'-Al'ma, in burial vaults nos. 690 and 791. Aleksandr Puzdrovskii called them "parts of the fasteners of sword-belt and bow-case"<sup>14</sup>. Important is similar location of strap-ends in Opushki and in burial vault no. 791 in Ust'-Al'ma. One artefact laid on the right femur, close to a scabbard (the scabbard type could not be determined, since it was destroyed by those who looted this burial vault), and another near the quiver. According to the publishers, this burial vault dates from the last third of the first century AD<sup>15</sup>.

Spoon-shaped strap-ends could be interpreted as an element of the Sarmatian culture. Nevertheless, it is important to consider another group of artefacts.

The Crimean finds resemble a specific type of Germanic strap-ends. Klaus Raddatz was the first to establish them as a separate group JIII according to the bog find in Thorsberg (North Germany, Schleswig Holstein State)<sup>16</sup>. Renata Madyda-Legutko in her classification of strap-ends in the Przeworsk culture initially attributed them to group II, type 5<sup>17</sup>, and in most recent classification to group III, type 8<sup>18</sup>. The difference is that Germanic strap-ends consisted of a plate with doubled and riveted end for insertion of the strap. Their ending was bowl-shaped, similarly to Crimean finds. Strap-ends of Madyda-Legutko's type 8 appeared in the Przeworsk culture area, mostly in western Poland, in the Oder and Elba areas, in Schleswig-Holstein, Denmark, Western Balts' area, i. e. north-eastern Poland and Kaliningrad region of Russia; one strap-end is found in southern Sweden, and the most southern finds originate from modern Czech Republic<sup>19</sup>. Crimean finds are generally synchronous to the ones from the areas populated by Germanic and Baltic peoples. In Central and Northern Europe, they are related to Stage B2b-C1a, i. e. to the most part of the second and the early third centuries AD. The overwhelming majority of strap-ends of the type in question originate from burials of men. The size of Crimean strap-ends corresponds to the smallest pieces from Germanic lands. In contrast to the Crimean, most of Germanic artefacts are of iron, with a few of bronze. According to the ornamentation presented on some artefacts, the outer side was the convex part of the "bowl." In the grave in Opushki under present study, the strap-end laid with concave side up.

Therefore, the analogy to Germanic strap-ends is incomplete, and the distribution areas of Sarmatian and Germanic end-pieces do not coincide. However, the similarity of specific lower body of the finds in question is beyond any doubt, thus allowing one to infer that Germanic craftsmen knew some Sarmatian specimens.

There is another case testifying to the contacts of the Przeworsk culture people and the submountainous Crimea population in the second half of the second and the first half of the third century AD. This is the case of the artefacts woven of iron rings which are usually interpreted as chain mail fragments. They originate from synchronous graves of women in the territory of modern Poland and in the Crimea. This specific rite seems to reflect the contacts rather than independent development in two distant areas<sup>20</sup>.

At any rate, it is important to pay attention to the similarity of Germanic and Sarmatian strap-ends with the view to find an explanation in the future.

<sup>13</sup> For the publications listing the assemblages with the finds of spoon-shaped strap-ends see: Скрипкин 2000, 22, рис. 5/13, 14; Otchir-Goriaeva 2002, 360, 372, 374, Abb. 6, 3, 4; 11; Власкин и др. 2018, 60–61.

<sup>14</sup> Пуздровский 2007, 139, рис. 91/II, 1, 2.

<sup>15</sup> Пуздровский, Труфанов 2017, 57, рис. 117/10, 11; 118/8, 9.

<sup>16</sup> Raddatz 1957, 99–101.

<sup>17</sup> Madyda 1977, 385, 386.

<sup>18</sup> Madyda-Legutko 2011, 66–69, tabl. XXIX. 5–11.

<sup>19</sup> Madyda-Legutko 2011, mapa 16.

<sup>20</sup> Храпунов 2010, 551, 552.

Near the sword hilt, there laid a *bronze knobbed ring* (Pl. 5/2), a *bead* (Pl. 5/12), and a small *bronze badge* (Pl. 5/5). The bead featuring ribbed surface, made of opaque white glass, measuring 1.4 cm in diameter (Pl. 5/12), corresponds to types 142<sup>21</sup> and OC XVI/2<sup>22</sup>. Perhaps this bead decorated a knot of sword or scabbard. The finds of beads near swords with ring pommels occur, but rarely, in Sarmatian graves in the steppe. The beads were located either at the sword hilt or at the end of the blade<sup>23</sup>.

It is still possible that the knobbed ring was related to the sword or scabbard decoration. Similar rings are common elements of grave goods from the first to third centuries AD, and sometimes occur among later finds. They are excavated in all Crimean cemeteries dating to the above-mentioned period. The purpose and origin of knobbed rings have been discussed in huge scholarship<sup>24</sup>. As a rule, they are excavated in graves of women, which, however, is not the case under present study. These artefacts were never used as finger-rings or bracelets. Perhaps this is the first case when a knobbed ring appeared almost close to the sword hilt.

*Quiver and arrow-heads* (Pl. 6/1, 2). All the arrow-heads are made of iron. They were located in the bronze basin shaped like a compact structure, with remains of rotten wood. Eduard Artemenko's restoration allowed us to understand that the wooden quiver contained 80 to 85 arrows. To be as precise as possible, the lower body of quiver was made of wood, strengthened with a thin iron band along the perimeter, measuring 3 cm in width. It is still possible that the top quiver was made of another matter, like leather, though no remnant of it survived. Therefore, plausible explanation is that the whole quiver was made of wood. Its lower body resembled a triangle. According to Aleksandr Puzdrovskii's observations on the remnants of wooden quivers from the cemetery of Ust'-Al'ma, these were cylindrical or resembled truncated cone<sup>25</sup>. The quiver or at last its lower body were painted red. All the arrow-heads were placed heads down, therefore the quiver was put into the basin vertically, and the arrows were feathers up.

Near the arrowheads in the bronze basin there laid a bone artefact in the form of truncated cone (Pl. 5/14). Another similar artefact but of smaller size (Pl. 5/13) accompanied four bronze badges in between of the dead person's shin bones. In the cemetery of Ust'-Al'ma, similar finds laid amidst the remnants of wooden quivers with arrow-heads. Aleksandr Puzdrovskiy has called them clasps and has interpreted these finds as rings to be put on the finger-tip to draw the bow string<sup>26</sup>. However, bone truncated-cone artefacts featuring rather narrow hole could not be rings<sup>27</sup>, nor clasps. Most likely, these were top beads of tassels put on thin straps hanging quiver to belt. Bone tassel beads of the same shape are rarely documented in warriors' graves from the Middle Sarmatian period, always one piece in a grave, close to arrowheads<sup>28</sup>. Fragments of fine bronze ware located below the bronze basin also suggest that there were straps fastening the quiver (Pl. 5/16). Perhaps these were remnants of strap-ends similar to the afore-described end-piece discovered close to the sword.

The arrow-heads have triangular head, tang, and three vanes. As far as one can judge by corroded specimens, their vanes are cut at right angle to the tang. The arrow-heads were 2.6–3.0 cm long, with their head measuring 1.8 × 1.2–1.4 cm (Pl. 6/2). In some case it became possible to measure the width of arrow-shaft, which was 0.5 cm. One can infer that the arrow-heads from grave no. 226 belong to the type predominant in the Sarmatian lands from the first century BC throughout the Middle and Late Sarmatian periods. It should be noted that there are very few Sarmatian graves in the steppe to contain quivers with so big number of arrows, comparable to the find in Opushki<sup>29</sup>. However, in the Late Scythian cemetery of Ust'-Al'ma the sets of the same as in Opushki or bigger amount of arrows have been documented several times<sup>30</sup>.

*Bronze brooch* (Pl. 5/1; 7/3). It has *lunula* plate, decorated with end-scrolls (one is missing) and three knobs along the outer edge. There is a hole in the centre encircled with two carved lines.

<sup>21</sup> Алексеева 1978, 71.

<sup>22</sup> Стоянова 2004, 276.

<sup>23</sup> Хазанов 1971, 13, прил. 2; Симоненко, 2010, 72; Ильюков 2000, 101.

<sup>24</sup> Glodariu 1984; Balke 1999; Журавлев 2014; Dębiec, Karwowski 2015; Гущина, Журавлев 2016, 103–107.

<sup>25</sup> Пуздровский 2007, 135.

<sup>26</sup> Пуздровский 2007, 135б рис. 91/IV, V.

<sup>27</sup> For details on the rings of the kind see: Хазанов 1971, 44; Симоненко 2010, 115–116, рис. 32/3–5.

<sup>28</sup> Беспалый, Лукьяшко 2018, 27, рис. 14/5; 92/7; Костенко 1993, 67, рис. 22/5.

<sup>29</sup> Хазанов 1971, 37–40; Симоненко 2010, 98–101.

<sup>30</sup> Пуздровский 2007, 137.

This hole kept an iron rivet of which only corrosion survived. The hinge and pin survived but fragmentary.

Emilie Riha has attributed all the *lunula* brooches, disregarding the variety of their forms, to type 7.5 of her classification. The find from Opushki cemetery corresponds to nos. 1542–1547 of her catalogue published in 1979, and nos. 2788–2794 of her catalogue from 1994. Although these brooches appeared in the first century AD, they were in use also in the second century AD, too. The researcher has interpreted *lunula* brooches as elements of female attire and has pointed out that they were too fragile for men in general and soldiers in particular<sup>31</sup>.

Viktor Kropotov has attributed the brooches analogous to the find from Opushki to group 16, form 6. He has dated these brooches discovered in the south of Eastern Europe to the second half of the first and the early second century AD<sup>32</sup>.

There are more classifications of brooches including the *lunulae* which were widespread in the Roman provinces, especially in Gallia and in the Rhine area, parallel to that from Opushki. Most often, they date throughout the 30s to 70s AD<sup>33</sup>.

In the cemetery of Opushki, the brooch from grave no. 226 is not the only find of the type<sup>34</sup>. There are more than 10 specimens of such brooches discovered in the Crimea. Noteworthy, all of them but one artefact from Chersonese and two pieces more from the Bosporean kingdom appeared in the sites related to barbarians<sup>35</sup>.

*Gold threads* (Pl. 3/2, 6, 12; 7/5). There are fragments of twisted gold foil which certainly contained a core of organic materials, most probably a thread that did not survive. Gold embroidery occurred in three places: on the chest, to the right and left of it, and below the right knee. From this location of threads we can suppose that gold embroidery covered separate elements of clothing rather than the whole costume. Since the embroidery occurred below the knee and not on it, there probably was a cloak, fastened with a brooch on chest, and embroidered on the chest on the front side and at the knee level behind. Less probably would be a reconstruction of embroidery of shoulder garments or trousers.

From at least the fifth and fourth century BC on, gold embroidery was rather widespread in the Greco-Roman *oecumene*, as well as in China and possibly in Iran. Thence embroidered artefacts started their way to barbarians. Most archaeological discoveries of remains of gold embroidered artefacts date to the Roman period<sup>36</sup>. Regarding the sites bearing cultural, chronological, and territorial proximity to the cemetery of Opushki, it is worth mentioning golden threads made in the same technique as the finds under study and discovered in Greek cities in the Northern Black Sea Area<sup>37</sup>, in the Late Scythian cemetery of Ust'-Al'ma<sup>38</sup>, and in some rich graves dating mostly to the Middle Sarmatian culture<sup>39</sup>.

It would be difficult to explain how the gold-embroidered cloths appeared in the sub-mountainous area of the Crimea. The great number of Greco-Roman imports in the sub-mountainous cemeteries of the Crimea and the cemetery of Opushki in particular could point to the Greek cities as possible distribution centre. However, one should not forget the well-known fact that Chinese products found their way to the Sarmatians in the Middle Sarmatian period. There are such finds in the Crimea<sup>40</sup>. Therefore, this route was also possible.

*Hand-formed censer* (Pl. 7/1) features truncated cone in shape, with projected base and two ribs on the body. Its top edge is 11.5 cm in diameter, the bottom 8.5 cm in diameter, and the height is 9.0 cm. It corresponds to section I, type 2, variant 3 of Aleksandr Glukhov's classification<sup>41</sup>. According to generally accepted opinion, ribbed censers are striking feature of the Middle Sarmatian culture. Most

<sup>31</sup> Riha 1979, 43, 45, 183, Taf. 58; Riha 1994, 10, 19, 155, Taf. 40.

<sup>32</sup> Кропотов 2010, 305, 314, 318.

<sup>33</sup> Hellström 2018, 119.

<sup>34</sup> Храпунов 2012, fig. 76.

<sup>35</sup> Кропотов 2010, 318; Hellström 2018, cat. nos. 550. 2; 554; 766. 8; 929. 2; 1003. 1.

<sup>36</sup> For the review of written and archaeological sources on the gold embroidery, its technique and technology see: Gleba 2008; for the archaeological sources, mostly from the Eastern Europe, see: Яковчик и др. 2018, 227–229.

<sup>37</sup> Трейстер 2015, 155, 156; Журавлев и др. 2017, 167, 168, 204–210.

<sup>38</sup> Крупа 2007, 159–161.

<sup>39</sup> Ковпаненко 1986, 46–50; Елкина 1986, 132–135; Дворниченко, Федоров-Давыдов 1993, 143, 145; Мордвинцева и др. 2010, 43; Засецкая 2011, 265.

<sup>40</sup> Зайцев 2013, 103–107.

<sup>41</sup> Глухов 2000, 30.

often, as in the case under study, they were placed at the foot of the dead person, which, according to Glukhov's idea, had some sacral sense<sup>42</sup>. A considerably big number of these censers occur in the Crimea<sup>43</sup>. Similarly to the graves in the steppe and in the sub-mountainous Crimea, ribbed censer contained a smaller censer. An example could be synchronous grave no. 179 in the cemetery of Opushki<sup>44</sup>.

*Bronze clip* (Pl. 5/15) is made of bent plate fastened with a rivet. It measures 1.1 × 0.6 cm. Similar clips are especially numerous in different sites dating for the first to fifth century AD. They were put on long edges of straps and rims of wooden vessels. Therefore, they sometimes contained rotten leather or wood<sup>45</sup>.

*Bronze badges* (Pl. 5/5, 6) are hemispherical, measuring 0.7 cm in diameter. One of these badges is discovered on the hilt of the sword and four pieces, in fragments, were in between of the shins, along with a bone tassel bead. Hemispherical bronze and silver badges were widespread in the Sarmatian and adjoining areas. Although they used to have a fastener soldered to the inner side to secure them to the organic base, in some cases and this one in particular such a fastener is missing. The badges decorated leather artefacts or wooden pieces covered with leather. There are 41 specimens parallel to the badges in question discovered in grave no. 1 of the cemetery of Luchistoe 2, almost synchronous to grave no. 226 in Opushki<sup>46</sup>. They were used from about 1 AD throughout the fourth century AD<sup>47</sup>.

The badges from grave no. 226 are among the smallest of the finds. One artefact decorated sword hilt, the rest were probably related to the straps securing the quiver.

### Chronology of the assemblage

The cycles of use of all finds from grave no. 226 capable of dating coincide in the first century AD. The beginning of the century could be excluded due to the brooch, since according to all the researchers the *lunula* brooches were not in use in that moment. Therefore, the second half of the first century AD is the most acceptable date for the assemblage in question, also because of the brooch. All the remaining grave goods could be used together yet in the first half of the second century AD. Therefore, if this brooch was in use for a long period, the first half of the second century AD could not be excluded from the grave chronology. The closer to 100 AD, the more probable is the dating.

### On the cultural attribution of the buried person

The sword, the way of its fastening, arrows, strap-end, censer, and the presence of animal bones and the knife in the grave are striking features of the Mid Sarmatian culture which determine the cultural belonging of the dead person. Excavations of rich Middle Sarmatian burials, similarly to grave no. 226, discover bronze Roman vessels and clothes embroidered with gold threads. The difference of the grave goods in the burial under present study from the Middle Sarmatian tradition is the Roman brooch. Although *lunula* brooches are absent in Sarmatian graves in the steppe, they often occur in the Crimea. Therefore the clasp discovered on the dead man's chest supplies his cloth with the "Crimean colouring." Quite obviously, the grave in the cemetery of Opushki differs from Sarmatian burials in the steppe with the lack of barrow mound, location within big flat cemetery, and the eastern orientation of the deceased. These features possibly developed due to the sedentarisation of the Sarmatians in the Crimean sub-mountainous area<sup>48</sup>.

<sup>42</sup> Глухов 2000, 35.

<sup>43</sup> Пуздровский 2007, 127, рис. 83.

<sup>44</sup> Стоянова 2018, 86, 87.

<sup>45</sup> See e. g.: Гущина, Засецкая 1994, 34; Храпунов 2002, 44; Храпунов 2011, 14.

<sup>46</sup> Лысенко и др. 2015, 316, 317, with parallel finds and bibliography; Мульд, Масыкин 2003, 12, рис. 4/8.

<sup>47</sup> See e. g.: Мошкова 1978, 76, рис. 3; Гудкова, Фокеев 1984, 36, рис. 10/7, 8; Максименко, Безуглов 1987, 183, рис. 2/6; Безуглов 1988, 103, рис. 2/14; Гущина, Мошкова 1990, 31, рис. 4/13, 14; Мульд 2001, 54, рис. 3/2; Храпунов 2002, 16, рис. 73/16; Храпунов 2006, 110, рис. 3/2; Храпунов 2011, рис. 8/12; 11/4, 6, 7; 15/5, 9, 10, 22; 17/19, 22; 27/10–26, 28; Мульд, Масыкин 2003, 12, рис. 4/8.

<sup>48</sup> Храпунов 2004, 130–133.



### On the social status of the buried person

Grave no. 226 contained prestigious artefacts. Primarily, there was Roman bronze basin, an extraordinary rare find in the Crimean foothill cemeteries from the Middle Sarmatian period. The exception is the cemetery of Ust'-Al'ma from the second half of the first to the early second centuries, where several Roman bronze vessels were found. They accompanied rich graves with abundant goods, particularly gold and silver where, from the Middle Sarmatian culture. The inflow of Roman imports and other expansive and prestigious goods documented in Ust'-Al'ma cemetery is local and yet not explained phenomenon.

More or less synchronous to the Opushki find are three bronze scoops from the cemetery of Bel'bek IV<sup>49</sup>.

Two Roman bronze vessels more probably occurred in the secondary barrow grave near Konstantinovka village<sup>50</sup>.

Since the basins were extremely rare, such a property possibly much enhanced the owner's prestige in the eyes of his peoples. Among the prestigious artefacts, there was the quiver holding 80–85 arrows which stood in the basin. At any rate, nothing of the kind has been documented in Opushki cemetery so far. The third symbol of prestige was the sword. Finally, probably the most striking distinctive feature of the dead person was his cloths embroidered with gold threads.

We can state that grave no. 226 contained the burial of an outstanding member of the collective, who held an extraordinary position.

Grave no. 226, the richest of all funerals excavated in the cemetery of Opushki, dates from the Middle Sarmatian period. However, we should bear in mind that many graves were plundered. The one under present study was plundered only partially, though many of the graves were looted completely or almost completely. Therefore, any comparative characteristics of graves remains relative in many regards.

In the period when the burial was made into grave no. 226, vaults with repeated burials and undercut graves were actively used. Nevertheless, the outstanding person accompanied with the set of prestigious goods was interred into a simple ground pit. Perhaps it was made intentionally, in order to mark the grave underlying its specific status, which was never possible for burials into the vault. It is still possible that numerous graves of harnessed horses located near grave no. 226 and synchronous to it witnessed the prestige of this area within the cemetery.

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<sup>49</sup> Гущина, Журавлев 2016, 65, 66, 156, 187, 188.

<sup>50</sup> Орлов, Скорый 1989, 72, 73.

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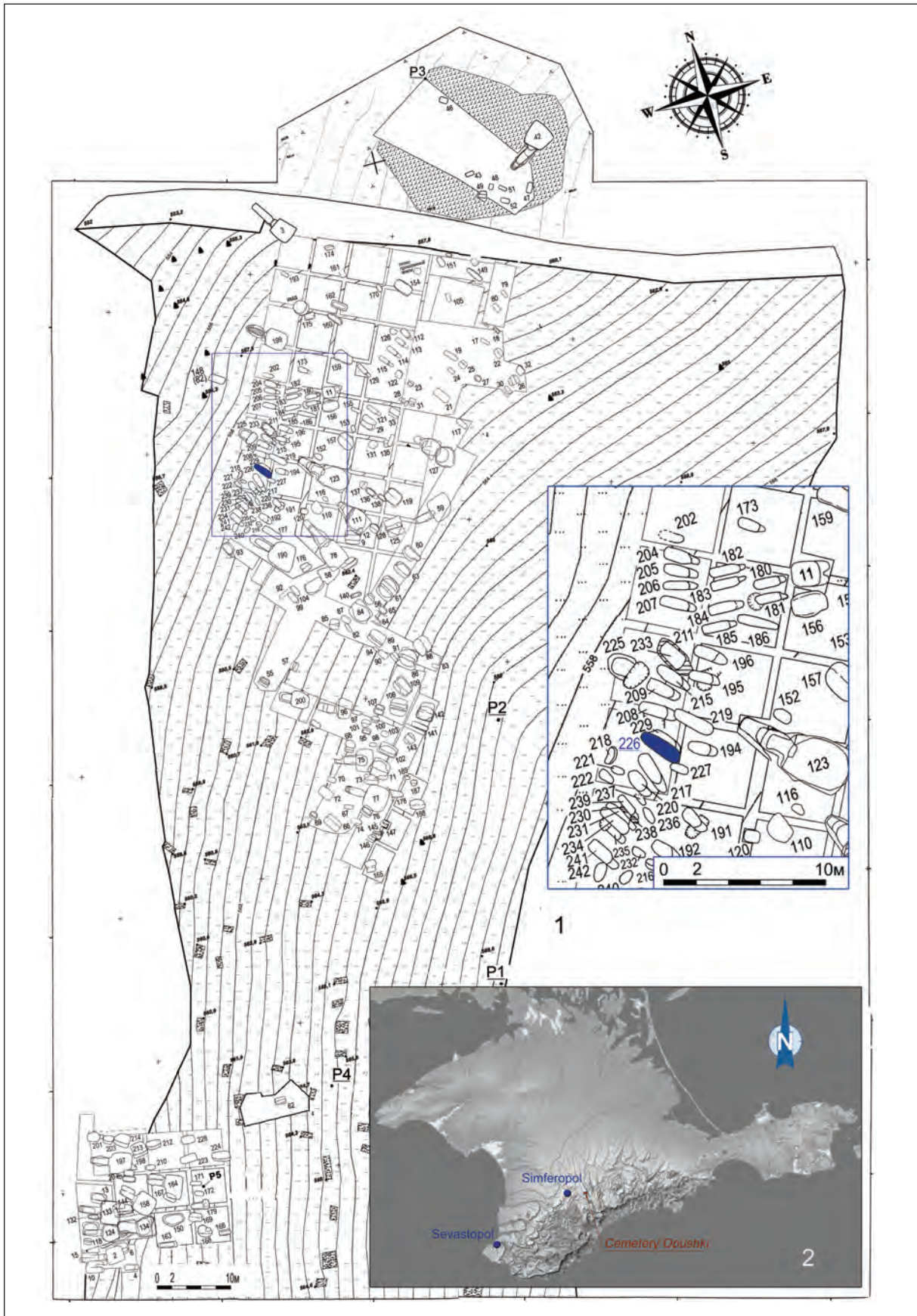


Plate 1. Opushki cemetery (Simferopol area). 1. Ground plan of the cemetery, indicating grave 226. 2. Location of the site.

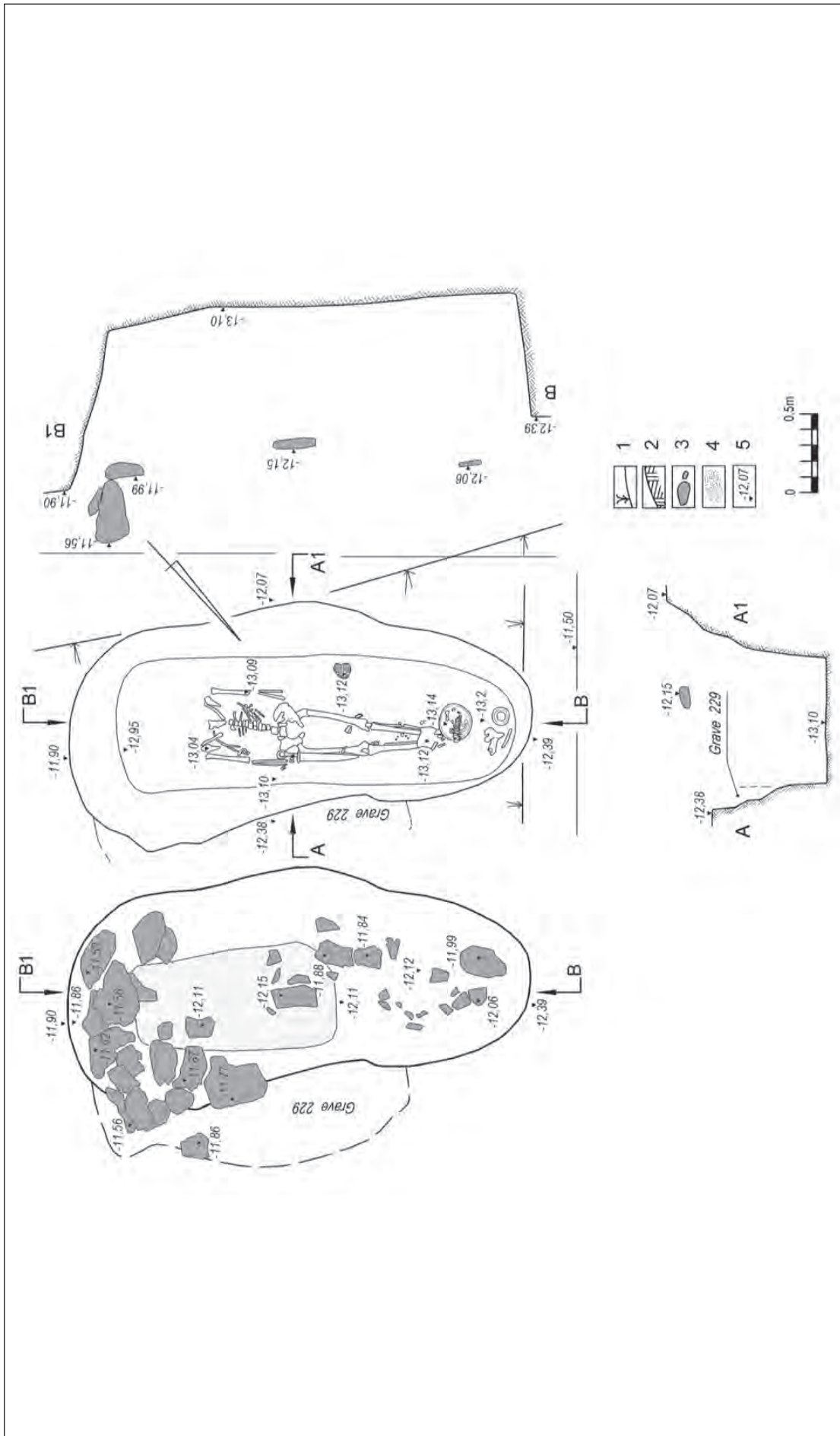


Plate 2. Opushki cemetery (Simferopol area), grave 226: ground plans and cross-sections (1. Topsoil; 2. Bedrock; 3. Stones; 4. Plunderers' pit; 5. Elevation points). Drawing: Stanislav Shabanov.

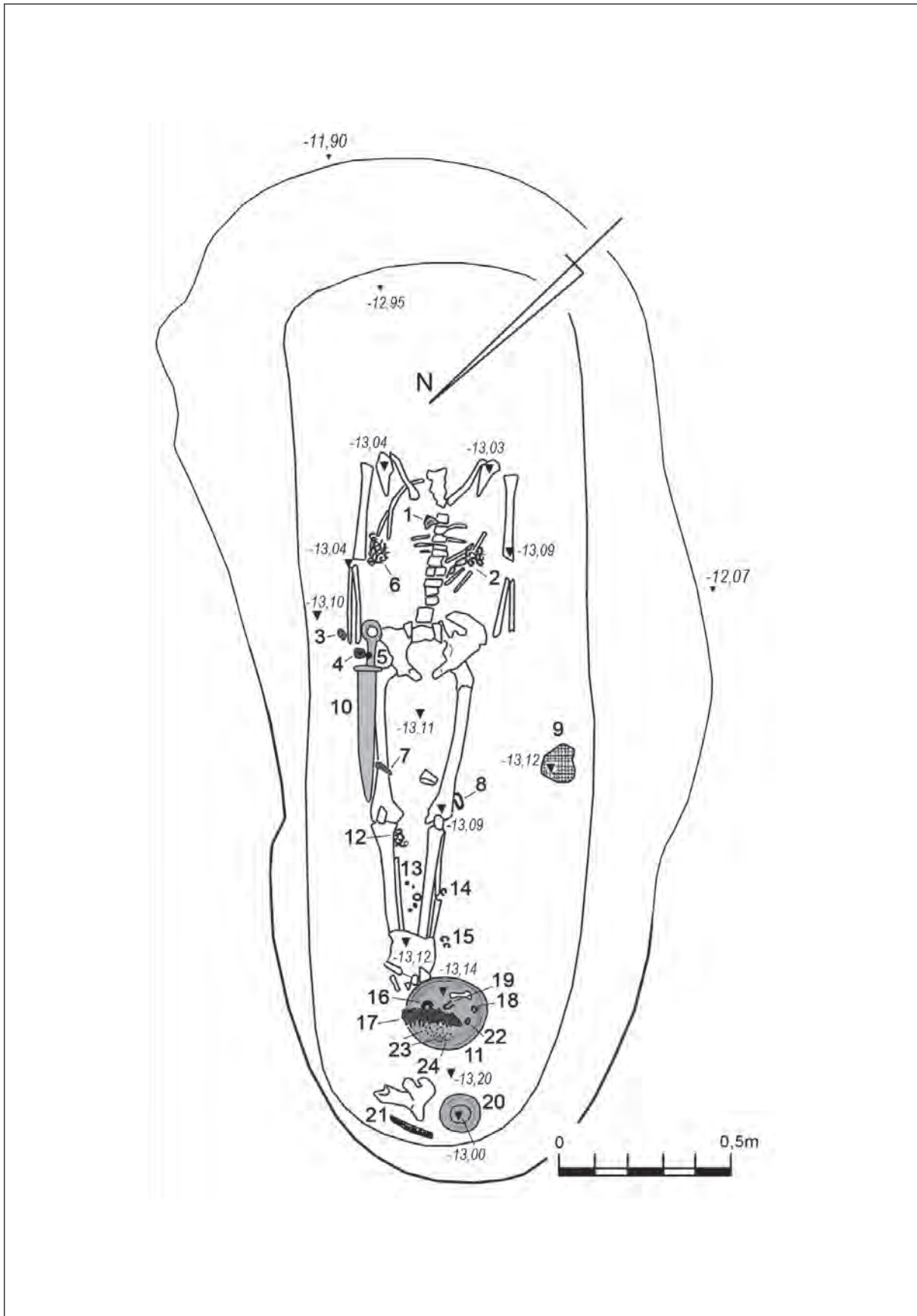


Plate 3. Opushki cemetery (Simferopol area), grave 226. Plan of the burial. 1. Bronze brooch; 2, 6, 12. Threads of gold foil; 3. Bronze knobbed ring; 4. Glass bead; 5. Bronze badge; 7. Bronze strap-end; 8. Bronze ring; 9. Ashes of leather; 10. Iron sword; 11. Bronze vessel; 13. Bone end-piece, bronze badges; 14, 15, 18. Bronze clips; 16. Bone end-piece; 17. Iron arrow-heads; 19. Bronze bracket; 20. Clay censer; 21. Iron knife; 22–24. Fragmented bronze ware. *Drawing: Stanislav Shabanov.*





Plate 4. Opushki cemetery (Simferopol area), grave 226. 1. General view from the south-east; 2, 3. Details. *Photo: Stanislav Shabanov.*

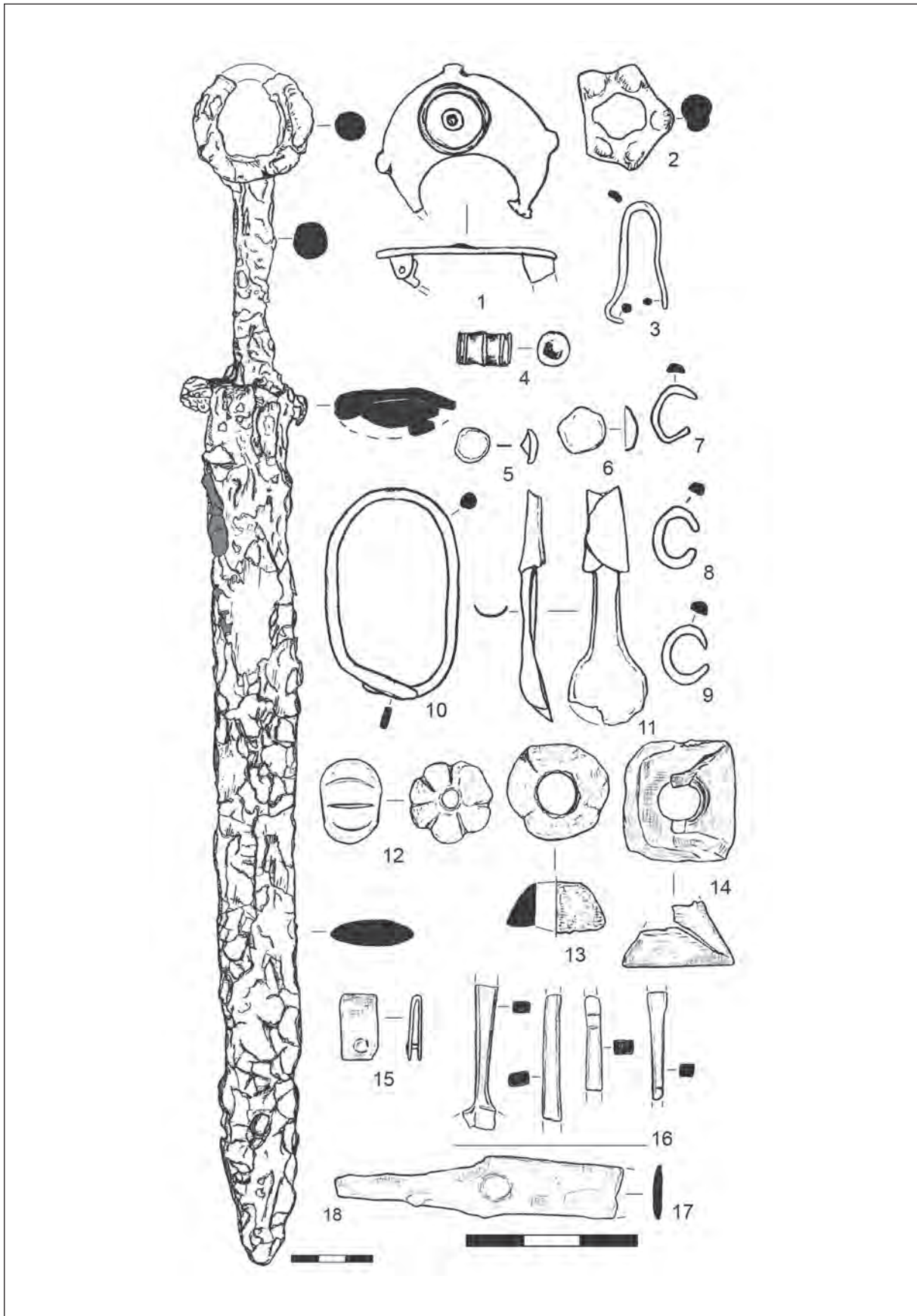


Plate 5. Opushki cemetery (Simferopol area), grave 226, grave goods. 1. Bronze brooch; 2. Bronze knobbed ring; 3. Bronze bracket; 4. Metal artefact; 5, 6. Bronze badges; 7–9. Bronze clips; 10. Bronze ring; 11. Bronze strap-end; 12. Glass bead; 13, 14. Bone end-pieces; 15. Bronze clip; 16. Fragmented bronze ware; 17. Fragmented iron artefact; 18. Iron sword. *Drawing: Stanislav Shabanov.*



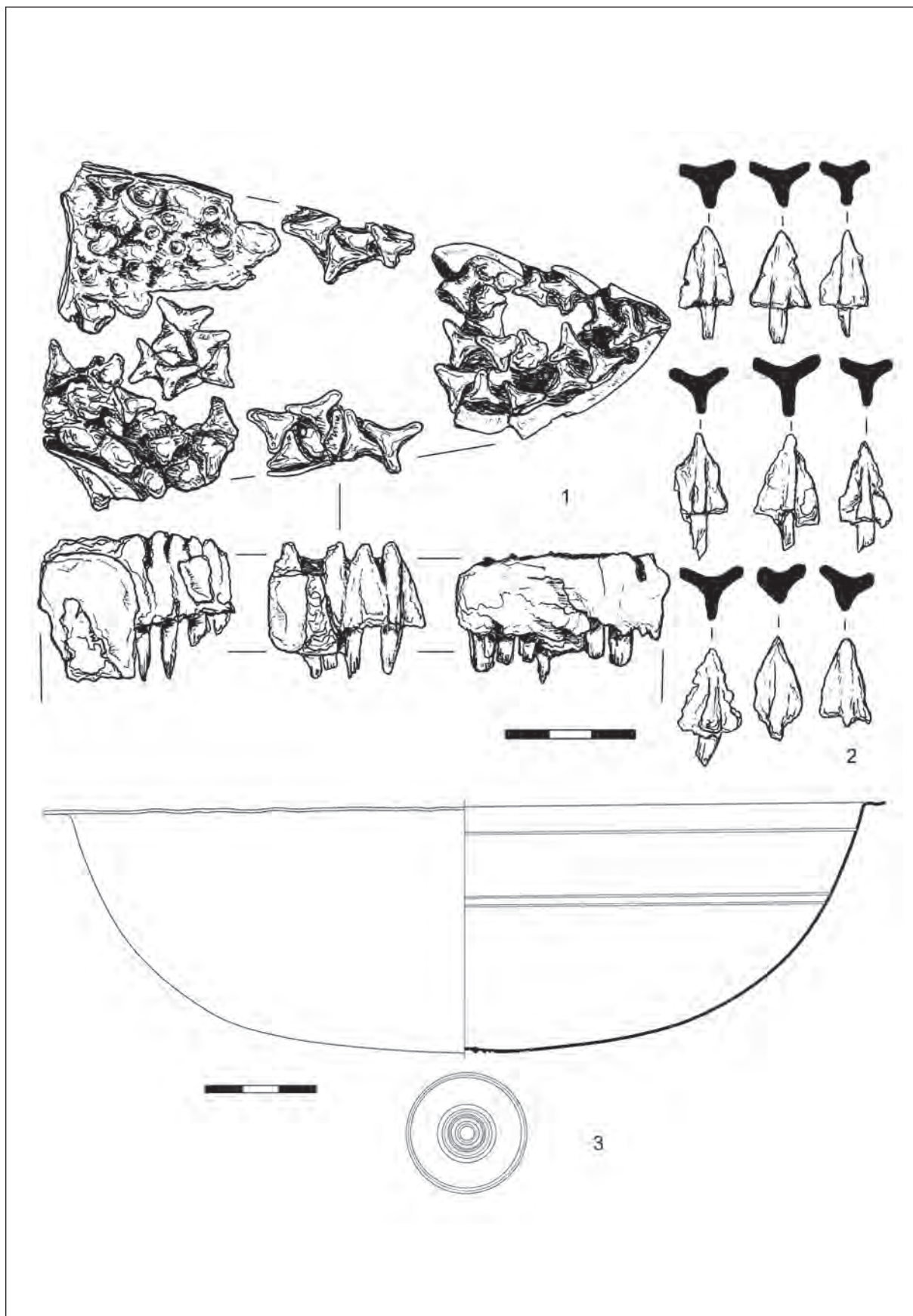


Plate 6. Opushki cemetery (Simferopol area), grave 226, grave goods. 1, 2. Iron arrow-heads; 3. Bronze basin. Drawing: 1, 2. Stanislav Shabanov; 3. Sergei Mul'd.



Plate 7. Opushki cemetery (Simferopol area), grave 226, grave goods. 1. Hand-formed censer; 2. Bronze basin; 3. Bronze brooch; 4. Bronze strap-end; 5. Threads of gold foil; 6. Iron sword; 7. Iron knife. *Drawing and photo: Stanislav Shabanov.*





# Abbreviations

ActaArchHung	Acta Archaeologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae.
AAC	Acta Archaeologica Carpathica, Cracow.
ActaMN	Acta Musei Napocensis, Cluj-Napoca.
ActaMP	Acta Musei Porolissensis, Zalău
AnArchRessoviensia	Analecta Archaeologica Ressoviensia, Rzeszów.
AAS at CEU	Annual of Medieval Studies at CEU, Budapest.
Apulum	Acta Musei Apulensis – Apulum, Alba-Iulia.
Alba Regia	Alba Regia, Székesfehérvár.
Antaeus	Antaeus, Budapest.
Arrabona	Arrabona, Győr.
ArhMed	Arheologia Medievală, Cluj-Napoca, Brăila, Reșița.
ArchBaltica	Archaeologia Baltica, Vilnius.
Arch.Inf	Archäologische Informationen.
ATS	Acta Terrae Septemcastrensis, Sibiu.
ArchÉrt	Archaeologiai Értesítő, Budapest.
Banatica	Banatica, Reșița.
BBMÉ	A Béri Balogh Ádám Múzeum Évkönyve, Szekszárd.
BUFM	Beiträge zur Ur- und Frühgeschichte Mitteleuropas.
BCMI	Buletinul Comisiei Naționale a Monumentelor, ansambluri situri istorice. București.
CommArchHung	Communicationes Archaeologicae Hungaricae, Budapest.
CCA	Cronica Cercetărilor Arheologice, Comisia Națională de Arheologie, București.
CIL	Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum, Berlin.
CMA	Complexul Muzeal Arad.
Dolgozatok	Dolgozatok az Erdélyi Múzeum érem- és régiségtárából, Cluj.
Dolg.	Dolgozatok a Magyar Királyi Ferencz József Tudományegyetem Archaeologiai Intézetéből, Szeged.
Dolg. ÚS	Dolgozatok az Erdélyi Múzeum Érem- és Régiségtárából, Új Sorozat. Cluj-Napoca / Kolozsvár.
EphNap	Ephemeris Napocensis, Cluj-Napoca.
HOMÉ	A Hermann Ottó Múzeum Évkönyve. Miskolc.
JAHA	Journal of Ancient History and Archaeology, Cluj-Napoca.
JAM	Jósa András Museum, Nyíregyháza.
JPMÉ	Janus Pannonius Múzeum Évkönyve.
JRGZM	Jahrbuch des Romisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums, Mainz.
KRRMK	Kaposvári Rippl Rónai Múzeum Közleményei, Kaposvár.
LMI	Lista monumentelor istorice, updated in 2015.
MittArchInst	Mitteilungen des Archäologischen Instituts der Ungarischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.
MOL	Magyar Olaj- és Gázipari Részvénytársaság / Hungarian Oil and Gas Public Limited Company
Marisia	Marisia, Târgu Mureș.
NyJAMÉ	A nyíregyházi Jósa András Múzeum Évkönyve, Nyíregyháza.
PBF	Praehistorische Bronzefunde. Berlin.
Przegląd Archeologiczny	Przegląd Archeologiczny, Wrocław.
Rad	Jósa András Museum, Archaeological Archive
RégFüz	Régészeti Füzetek, Budapest.

RKM	Régészeti Kutatások Magyarországon/Archaeological Investigations in Hungary, Budapest.
RAJ Arad	Repertoriul Arheologic al Mureşului Inferior. Judeţul Arad. Timişoara 1999.
RAN	Repertoriul Arheologic Naţional.
Sargetia	Sargetia. Acta Musei Devensis, Deva.
SCIV(A)	Studii şi Cercetări de Istorie Veche şi Arheologie, Bucureşti.
SGB	Studii de Geografie a Banatului, Timişoara.
SIB	Studii de Istorie a Banatului, Timişoara.
Slavia Antiqua	Slavia Antiqua, Poznań.
SlovArch	Slovenská Archeológia, Nitra.
SMK	Somogyi Múzeumok Közleményei, Kaposvár.
SovArh	Sovetskaja Arheologija, Moskva.
SRTM	Shuttle Radar Topography Mission.
StudiaUBB Historia	Studia UBB Historia, Cluj-Napoca.
SzKMÉ	A Szántó Kovács Múzeum Évkönyve, Pécs.
Századok	Századok, Budapest.
Terra Sebus	Terra Sebus. Acta Musei Sabesiensis, Sebeş.
Tibiscum S. N.	Tibiscum S. N., Caransebeş.
TransRev	Transylvanian Review, Cluj-Napoca.
ZalaiMúz	Zalai Múzeum, Zalaegerszeg.
ZSA	Ziridava. Studia Archaeologica. Arad.
Živa Antika	Živa Antika, Skopje.