

**International Connections of the Barbarians  
of the Carpathian Basin in the 1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D.**

Proceedings of the international conference  
held in 1999 in Aszód and Nyíregyháza

*A Kárpát-medencei barbárok nemzetközi kapcsolatai az I-V. században  
Az 1999-ben Aszódon és Nyíregyházán megrendezett nemzetközi konferencia anyaga*

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Múzeumi Füzetek (Aszód) 51.  
ISSN 0580 3705

Jósa András Múzeum Kiadványai 47.  
ISSN 0133 8110

ISBN 963 7220 43 7

The publishing of this book was supported by:  
The National Cultural Fund (*Nemzeti Kulturális Alapprogram*)  
Raiffeisen Bank (*Raiffeisen Bank*)  
Museum Directorate of Pest County Museums (*Pest Megyei Múzeumok Igazgatósága*)  
Council of Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County (*Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg Megye Önkormányzata*)

Published by Jósa András Museum, Nyíregyháza  
and Osváth Gedeon Museum Foundation, Aszód  
Published in 500 copies of A4 size, 29,25 printed sheets  
Typography: Erika Pristyák  
Printing works: Kapitális Bt, Debrecen

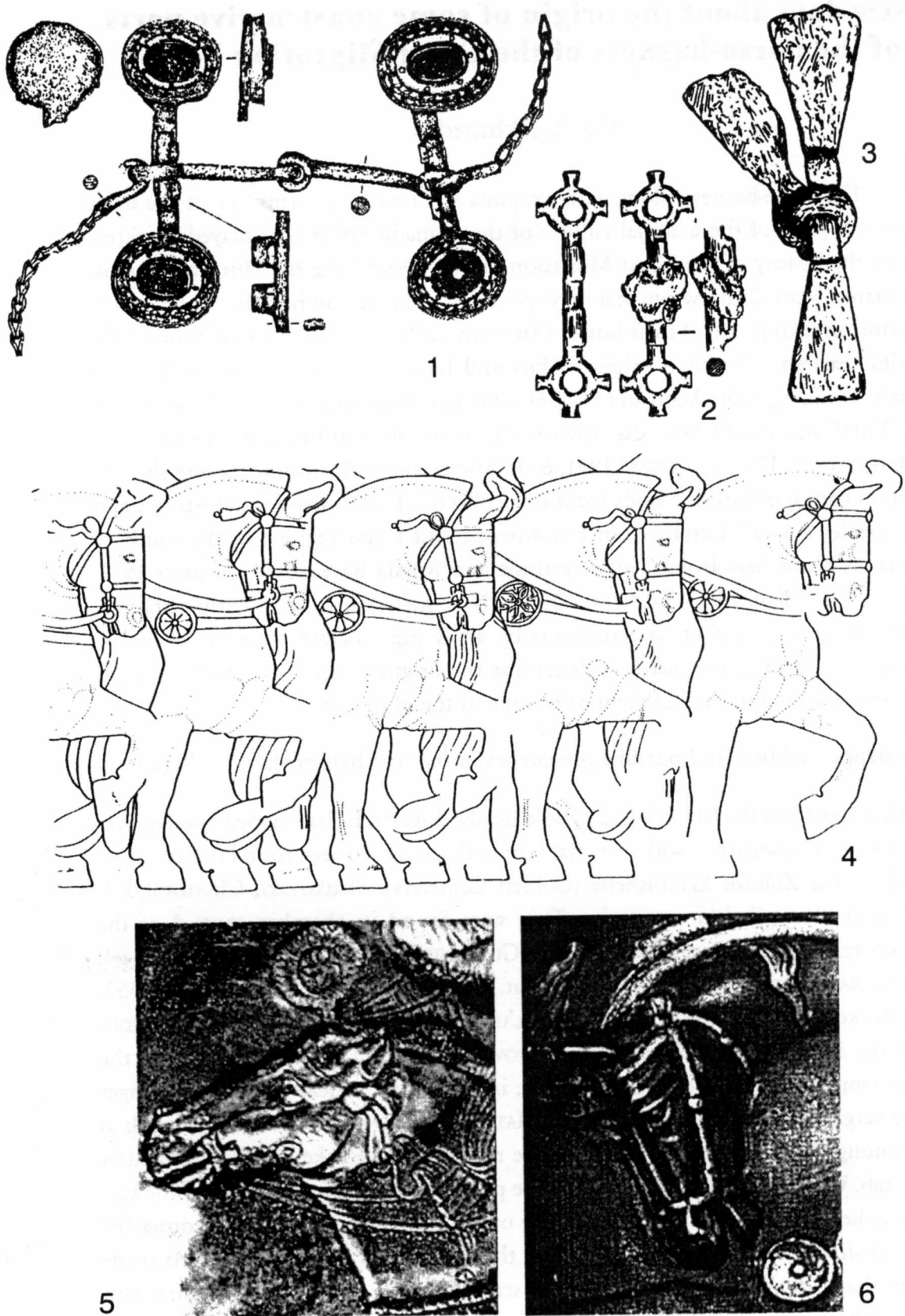
## **New data about the origin of some constructive parts of the horse-harness of the Great Migration Period**

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The horse-harness, along with weapons and jewellery, forms one of the most important parts of the material culture of the nomadic tribes that played an active role in the history of the Great Migration Period. Describing the Huns and Alans, Ammianus Marcellinus wrote that they spent day and night on horseback and spared no effort in taking care of their horses (Ammian. XXXI. 2. 7, 19). The question of the possible eastern - Pontic - origin of bits and harness decorations from different burials belonging to the Alans and from Hunnic assemblages of horizon D2 (according to J. Tejral) has already been discussed in the archaeological literature (TEJRAL 1973, 59; BAKAY 1978, 171; GODŁOWSKI 1991, 674). The grave-goods from these burials have much in common with the finds from rich collective burials from the Bosphorus and the so-called "royal" burials from forest-steppe and forest regions in the south of Russia, as researchers from Central Europe and Russia have noted (AMBROZ 1981; AMBROZ 1989; KISS 1995; ZASETSKAIA 1993). New material, only recently obtained, enables us to expound these statements by analysing separate parts of the horse-harness. To do this, we must first determine the origin of the bits with bar-shaped cheek-pieces that appeared in Central Europe in the Hun Age.

The steppe tradition and possible prototypes in the first half of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium

Cheek-pieces from the late 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> c. typologically close to the bar-shaped cheek-pieces of the 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> c., sometimes with wide flat terminal parts, have been found in Sarmatian burials at the Zolotoe kladbishche (Golden Cemetery), Sladkovski, Chertomlyk I, Novy and Novonikolski cemeteries. They were found in chamber grave 4 of the Chernorechenski cemetery in the Crimea (GUSHCHINA-ZASETSKAIA 1992, ris. 3, 93-94; GUSHCHINA-ZASETSKAIA 1994, 11, tab. 14, cat. 136, tab. 40, cat. 368, tab. 56, cat. 555; MAXIMENKO-BEZUGLOV 1987, ris. 2: 9, 12; IL'UKOV-VLASKIN 1992, ris. 29: 6; MEDVEDEV 1990, ris. 3, 12: 4, 18: 2, 33: 6; BABENCHIKOV 1963, 117-118, tab. XV: 8-15), in the forest-steppe and steppe regions of Eurasia, in the chronologically close assemblages of the Sargat Culture in Western Siberia (MATIUSHCHENKO-TATAUROVA 1997, ris. 54: 3) and among the Hunnic materials from the region beyond Lake Baikal (KONOVALOV 1986, tab. VI: 1). All these facts testify to the possible eastern steppe origin of the bar-shaped cheek-pieces from the 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> c. The origin of these cheek-pieces is connected with bar-shaped cheek-pieces with loops in the central part and terminal parts made in the shape of discs, rings, triangles or stylised griffin heads and the ones with terminal parts decorated with relief mounts plated with gold foil that were found in the richest assemblages. The cheek-pieces of this type come from the Sarmatian burials of the second half of the 1<sup>st</sup> c. B.C. - early 2<sup>nd</sup> c. A.D. from the Don and Lower Volga regions, the Northern Caucasus and the Crimea (fig. 1: 1-2) (BESPALYJ 1992, ris. 4; PROKHOROVA-GUGUEV 1992, ris. 8: 45; IL'UKOV-VLASKIN 1992, ris.16: 4, 20: 1, 21: 1, 24:



**Fig. 1**

1: "Dachi" (after BESPALYJ 1992), 2: Ust'-Labinskaja grave 43 (after GUSHCHINA-ZASETSKAIA 1994), 3: Ust'-Labinskaja grave 31 (after GUSHCHINA-ZASETSKAIA 1994), 4: Bishapur, fragment (after HERRMAN 1980), 5: Detail of a hunting scene with the crown prince on a dish (Teheran Museum) (after GHIRSHMAN 1962), 6: Detail of a hunting scene with Shapur II on a dish (State Hermitage). (after TREVER-LUKONIN 1987)

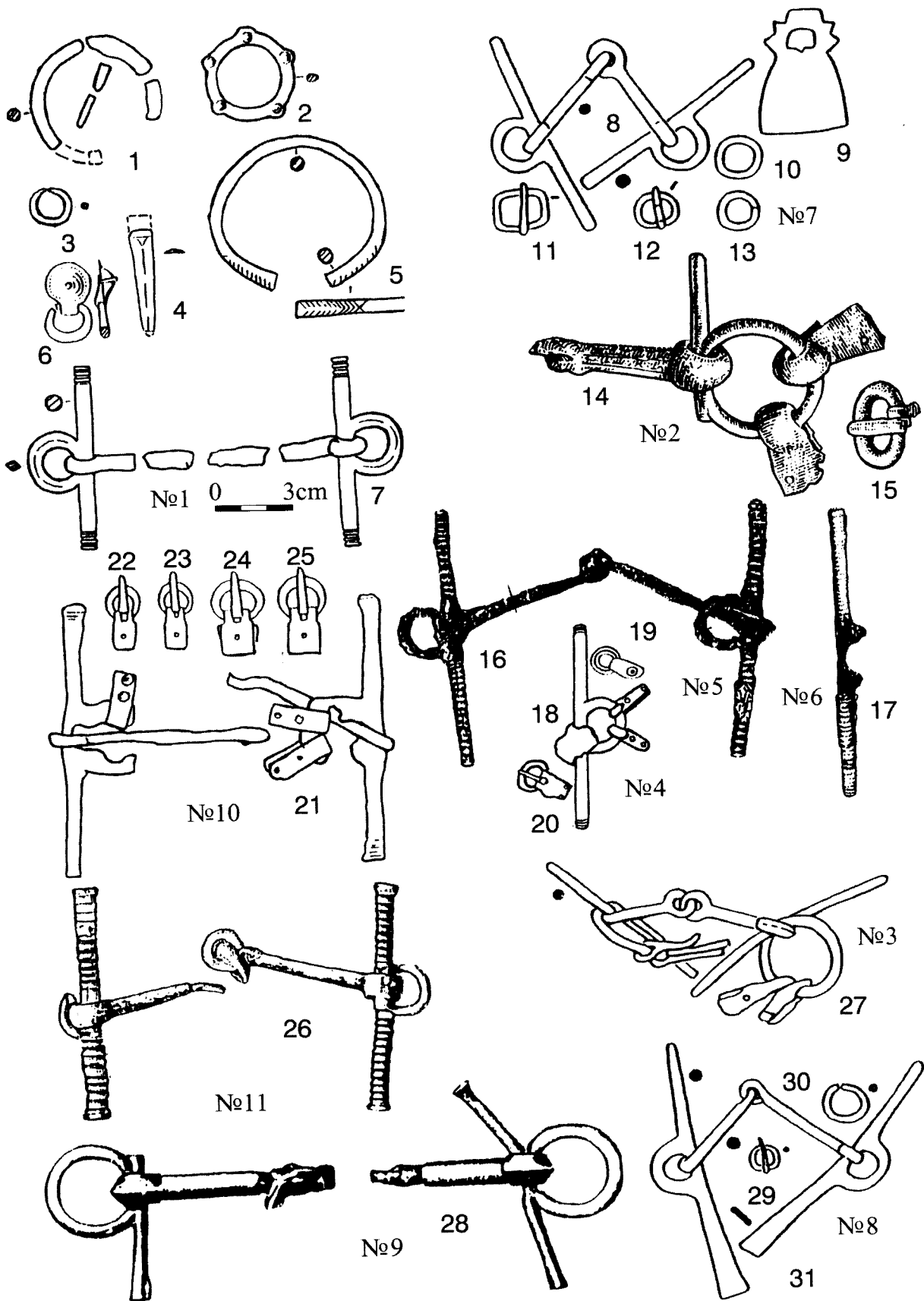
2; 25: 7; ZASETSKAIA 1979; GUSHCHINA-ZASETSKAIA 1992, ris. 3: 23, 25; GUSHCHINA-ZASETSKAIA 1994, tab. 49, cat. 472; KANTEMIROV 1981, 64-67; DASHEVSKAIA 1991, 41, tab. 75: 6; MORDVINTSEVA 1998). There are images of cheek-pieces with wide terminal parts on the silver vessel from Kosika (DVORNICHENKO-FEDOROV-DAVYDOV 1993; TREISTER 1997, fig. 28-32) and the bone plate from Orlat depicting a battle of the K'ang-chü cataphracts (Samarkand region) (PUGACHENKOVA 1987, ris. 57, 63). Nonetheless, it should be noted that ring-shaped cheek-pieces are more typical of the final period of the Late Sarmatian Culture (MOSKOVA 1989, 198; ABRAMOVA 1997, 115).

Bits of this type were used in Iran. Nearly all the bits depicted on the relief showing the triumph of Shapur I in Bishapur have bar-shaped cheek-pieces with widened flat terminal parts, which, according to G. Herrman, were typical of a standard Sassanian bit of the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. (fig. 1: 4) (HERRMAN 1980, 38, text fig. 3, fig. 1-3). Cheek-pieces from Bishapur differ by the loops, which served only to fasten a cheek-strap, and the reins, which are fastened in a separate ring fixed in a bit-ring. Cheek-pieces of this type are also depicted on the relief portraying the triumph of Shapur I in Naqsh-e Rostam, in the scene of the investiture of Varahran I in Bishapur. The horse of a horseman defeated by Hormizd II in Naqsh-e Rostam has a bit with bar-shaped cheek-pieces with wide terminal parts. The image is dated to the early 4<sup>th</sup> c. (GHIRSHMAN 1962, fig. 205, 211, 220). Cheek-pieces of this type were depicted on Sassanian dishes: one from the Hermitage with a scene of Shapur II hunting lions dating to 310-320, and the 4<sup>th</sup> c. dish from the Teheran Archaeological Museum depicting the lion hunt of a crown prince (fig. 1: 5-6) (TREVER-LUKONIN 1987, 107, 164, cat. 3, S-253; GHIRSHMAN 1962, fig. 248, 250). Bits depicted in the later pictures belong to other types.

#### Cheek-pieces in Eastern Europe in the Early Hun Age. Straight bar-shaped cheek-pieces

The earliest examples were found in grave 206 of the Abramovo cemetery (the Arzamas District of Gorky Region) excavated by M.F. Zhiganov in 1969-1973 (ZHIGANOV 1976, 41, 45-46).<sup>1</sup> The assemblage of grave 206 includes cast bronze bar-shaped cheek-pieces with a large ring, rhombic in cross-section, and parts of an iron bit (fig. 2: 7). The ends of the bar, circular in cross-section, are decorated with vertical corrugation. The assemblage also contains a circular umbo-shaped buckle-loop with a ring (fig. 2: 1-6), a narrow strap-end with two sloping surfaces, a cast ring with bulges and several penannular brooches with tube-shaped ends. Buckle-loops with rings had first appeared in the Northern Caucasus in the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. (MALASHEV in print) and remained in use until the Hun Age. Strap-ends, similar to the one described above, also date to the same period. In the cemeteries of the Riazan'-Oka region, strap-ends of this type have been found in much earlier burials. In grave 75 of the Korablino cemetery they were found together with concave fibula with narrow inverted foot of variant 2 (AKHMEDOV 1995, 98, fig. 3: 19-21), which had been in use during the second chronological period of the Cherniakhov Culture. The assemblage also included so-called "warrior" fibulas

<sup>1</sup> The material from the excavations was prepared for publication by V.N. Shitov, who kindly provided the author with drawings of the artefacts from grave 206.



**Fig. 2**

1-7: Abramovo grave 206, 8-13: Abgizdrakhu grave 29. (after VORONOV-SHENKAO 1982), 14-15: Stopchatov (after RUSANOVA 1993). 16-17: Pannohalma (after TOMKA 1986), 18-20: Pokirben grave 167 (after KULAKOV 1990), 21-25: Mertvye Soli (after NEFEDOV 1889), 26: Pécsüsözög (after ALFÖLDI 1932), 27: Apiancha grave 7/22 (after VORONOV-SHENKAO 1982), 28: Keszthely-Gátidomb (after HAMPEL 1905), 29-31: Abgizdrakhu grave 23 (after VORONOV-SHENKAO 1982)

with trapezoid-shaped narrow foot, which were widespread during the third period (according to O.A. Gei and I.A. Bazhan). These facts make it possible to date the burial to the first half or even to the first third of the 4<sup>th</sup> c. (GEI-BAZHAN 1997, 42-43, ris. 67: 23, 68: 34). The ring with bulges, according to A.V. Bogachev's classification, belongs to the first subtype, which had been in use until the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. (BOGACHEV 1998, 153). Brooches with tube-shaped ends are typical of group C2 of the Riazan'-Oka cemeteries (AKHMEDOV-BELOTSEKOVSKAIA 1999), which corresponds to the chronological horizon C2/C3 of the Cherniakhov Culture, according to O.V. Sharov (SHAROV 1992, tab. X). Bronze cheek-pieces with wide ends and large circular loops, similar to the ones found in grave 206, come from the Stopchatov cemetery of the Carpathian Barrow Culture (fig. 2: 14), which dates to the 4<sup>th</sup> - early 5<sup>th</sup> c. (RUSANOVA 1993, tab. XCIV: 3). Straight bar-shaped cheek-pieces also occur among the finds from Tsebelda Valley. The cheek-pieces from grave 7/22 of the Apiancha cemetery were made from a rolled rod (fig. 2: 27). One more example, from grave 29 of the Abgidzrakhu cemetery, has large circular loops for straps and reins made together with the bar (fig. 2: 8). The cheek-pieces from grave 23 of the same cemetery have a flat lower end (fig. 2: 31). The assemblage also includes a circular buckle with a straight, strongly projecting trunk-shaped spike (fig. 2: 29) that allows us to date the burial to the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> c. at the earliest (VORONOV-SHENKAO 1982, 134-136, fig. 6: 3, 12-14). Straight bar-shaped iron cheek-pieces were found in grave 4 of the Giliach cemetery (fig. 3: 7) (MINAEVA 1982, 230, ris. 5). In addition to the cheek-pieces, the assemblage includes buckles

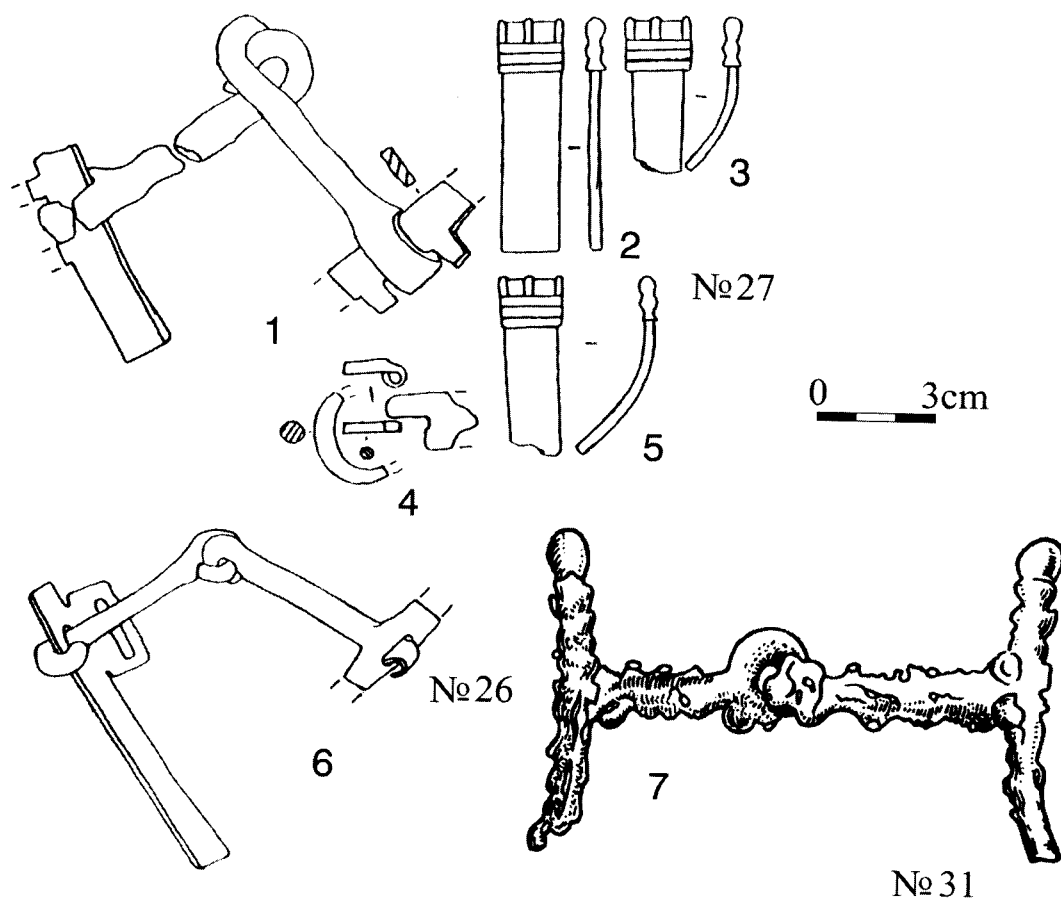


Fig. 3  
1-5: Abramovo grave 141, 6: Iragi (after ABAKAROV-DAVUDOV 1993), 7: Giliach grave 4 (after MINAEVA 1951)

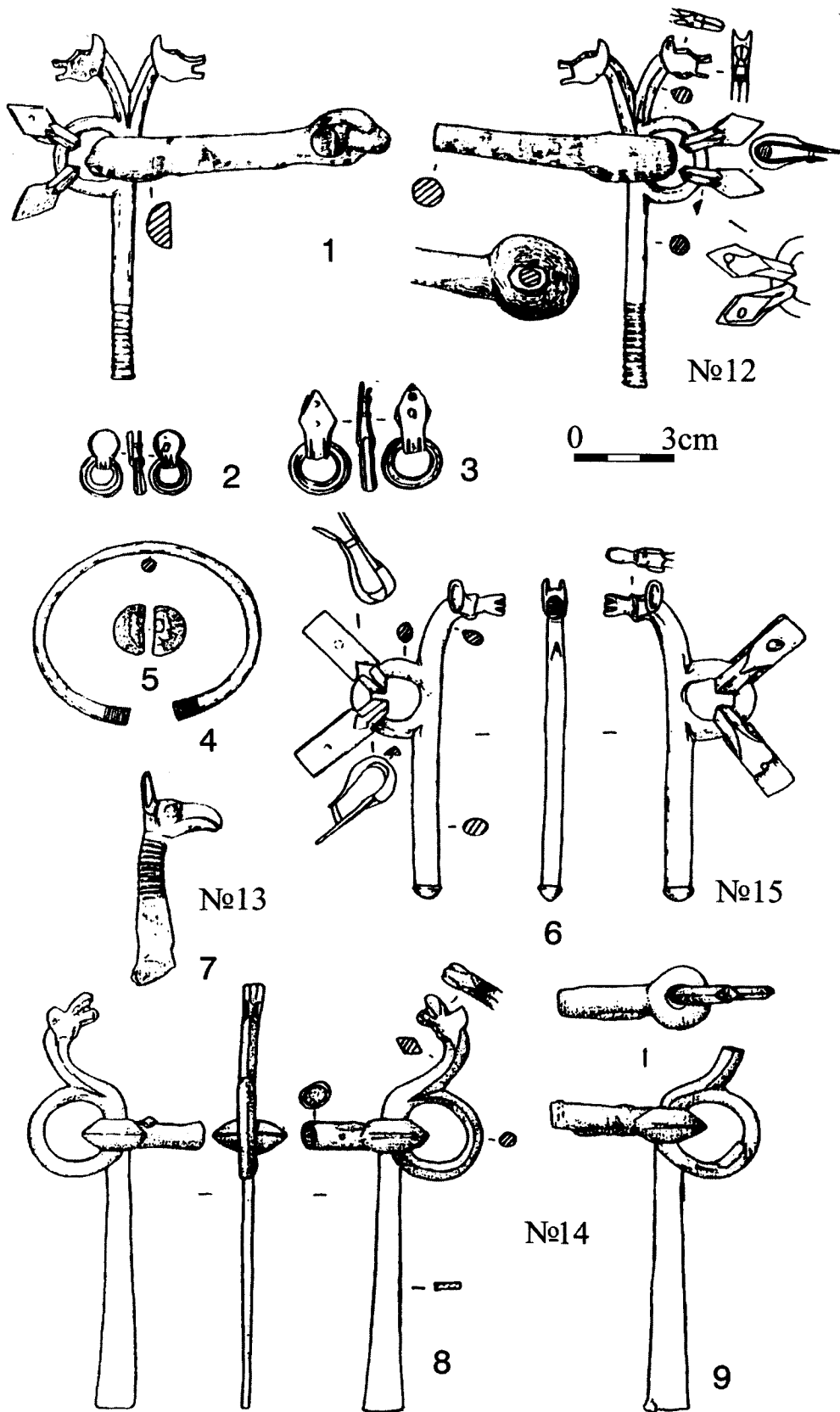


Fig. 4  
1-3: Kerch 1897, 4-6: Undrikh 1983, 7: Kerch 1905, 8-9: Kerch



with long trunk-shaped spikes and a glass vessel decorated with blue drops, which allows us to date the burial to the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> c. The straight bar-shaped iron cheek-pieces found in a burial at Mertvye Soli and cheek-pieces with wide terminal parts decorated with gold wire from the barrows of Brut (Northern Ossetia)<sup>2</sup> date to the same time (fig. 2: 21). Similar cheek-pieces were found in Keszthely-Gátidomb (without corrugation) (fig. 2: 28) and in Pécsüszög (with corrugation) (fig. 2: 26) (HAMPEL 1900, 110; HAMPEL 1905, II, 370; ALFÖLDI 1932, 60, Taf. 1-5), in the Roman military camp of Lauriacum (with corrugation) (LAURIACUM 1909, Abb. 36: 6) and in horse grave 6 of the Tymiany cemetery in Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodship.<sup>3</sup>

#### Cheek-pieces of the Bosphoran zoomorphic type

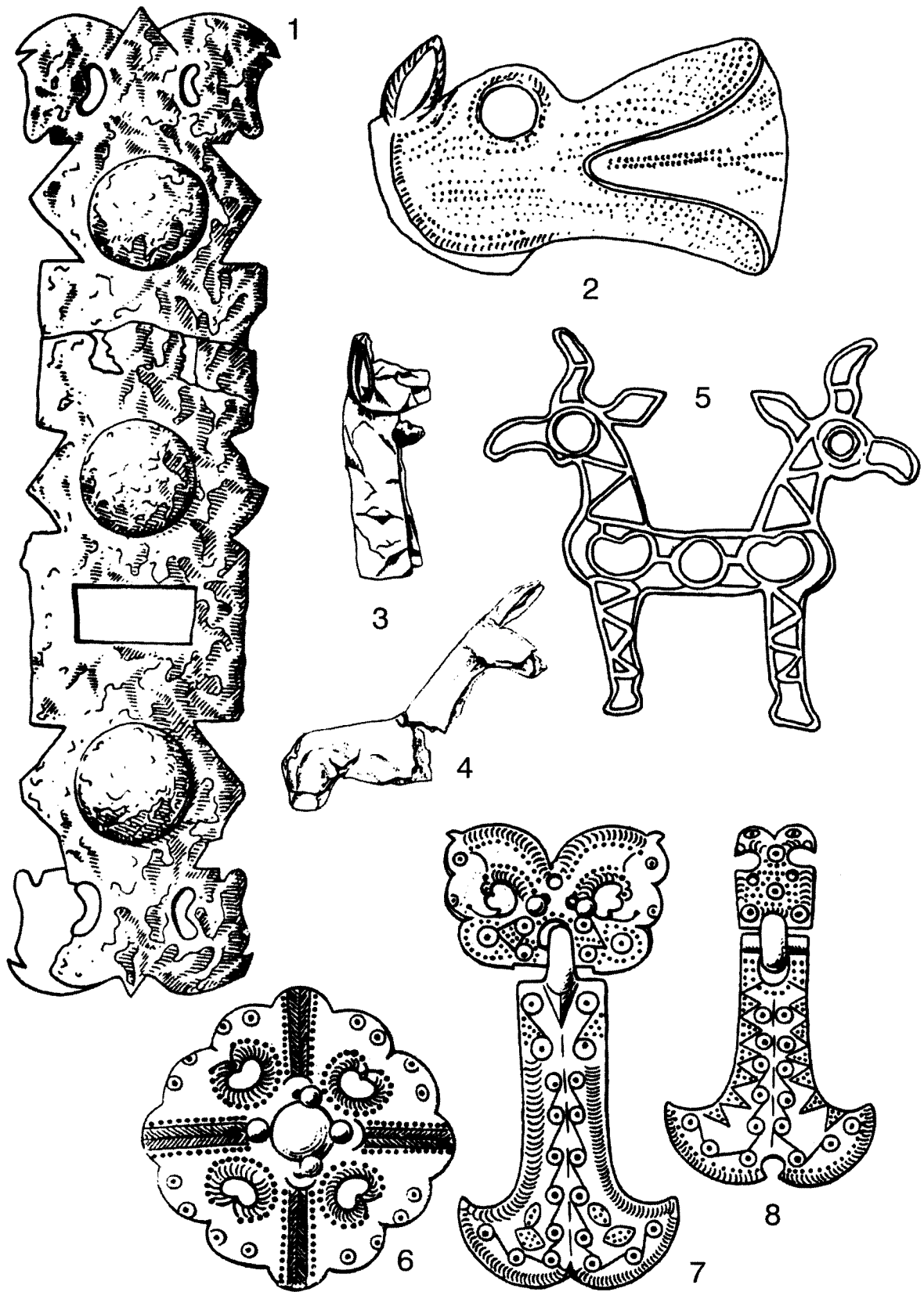
Included among the collections from the city of Kerch, which are now in the State Historical Museum in Moscow, are several parts of harnesses bought at a market in 1897 (GIM N 35122). The collection includes parts of bits that date to the period from the late 1<sup>st</sup> to the late 4<sup>th</sup> - early 5<sup>th</sup> c. (AKHMEDOV in print). A two-piece iron bit with bronze cheek-pieces is one of the latest examples (fig. 4: 1). The upper part of the cheek-pieces was made in the shape of two beast heads looking in opposite directions. The beasts have long ears, open mouths and brow-bones marked with sharp edges, necks with sharp edges at the back, smooth ribs on the sides and a rounded front part. In the middle of each cheek-piece there is a large fixed loop. The lower part resembles a bar, circular in cross-section, decorated with a number of relief rollers. The end is wide. Each ring has a rhombic silver strap-fastener.

There are several more cheek-pieces with zoomorphic ends. The most similar one is from the Undrikh cemetery in the Riazan' region.<sup>4</sup> The upper part of the silver cast cheek-piece seems to be a three-dimensional beast head with a mouth marked with triangular hollows, almond-shaped ears and a cheekbone marked with a relief roller. These stylistic devices slightly resemble those of the Scythian animal style. The upper part of the cheek-piece has an almond-shaped cross-section, and the back of the beast's neck has a clearly marked edge. The loop is round, with an oval cross-section. The lower part of the bar, oval in cross-section, has a bulge in the shape of a flattened segment. The fasteners for the straps and reins are of interest. They are rectangular, with the inner plates repeating the outline of the upper ones. The loops have two sloping surfaces and a triangular cross-section. The upper plate is decorated with a relief triangle (fig. 4: 6). Bridle-fasteners with similar design were found in the burials of the Hun Age: a warrior's burial from Mundolsheim in Alsace, belonging to chronological horizon D2 (KAZANSKI 1995, 119); and grave 1 of the Kurkli cemetery in Dagestan, where the triangles were a little bit larger (DAVUDOV 1969, ris. 18). Rectangular one-piece buckles with a concave spike found in the burial at Kurkli allow us to specify the earliest dating of the assemblage. Similar buckles come from the Kosanovo cemetery of the Cherniakhov Culture where they were discovered together with finds typical of the chronological group I (280-320) (SHAROV 1992, tab. IV: 71).

<sup>2</sup> Information provided to the author, by T.A. Gabuev, the director of the excavation.

<sup>3</sup> Excavations by K. Dąbrowski in 1969, K. Dąbrowski's archive – information kindly provided by V.I. Kulakov.

<sup>4</sup> Excavation by A.N. Gavrilov, 1983.



**Fig. 5**

1: Scythian Neapolis (after DASHEVSKAIA 1991), 2, 5: Kerch, burial chamber 6/1905. (after OAK 1905),

3: Novogrigor'evka (after ZASETSKAIA 1994), 4: Beliaus (after ZASETSKAIA 1994) 6-8: Kachin (after KUKHARENKO 1982)

