

# The Urartian materials from Sodk

Nora Yengibaryan\*

---

**Abstract:** *The Urartian tomb has been discovered by chance at the Sodk site, situated at the lake Sevan basin, in the Republic of Armenia. Different types of the ring, earrings, bracelets, the bronze medallion, a belt fibula and also the cowry beads had been found from the burial which is dated with VII-VI BC.*

**Rezumat** *Mormântul Urartian a fost descoperit din întâmplare în situl Sodk, situat în zona lacului Sevan, în Republica Armenia. Diferite tipuri de inele, cercei, brățări, medalionul de bronz, o fibulă de centură și de asemenea mărgelile, au fost descoperite în mormântul datat în VII-VI BC.*

**Keywords:** *Armenia, Urartu, medallion, belt, fibula, bracelet, earrings.*

**Cuvinte cheie:** *Armenia, Urartu, medalion, centură, fibulă, brățară, cercei.*

---

The collection of bronze objects was found in 1979 in the area Tigranaberd necropolis (S. Esayan 1979, p. 277), not far from Sodk gold mine, probably from the robbed burial. A group of bracelets is specific in the collection. There are few types of bracelets: made of wire with divergent ends (pl. 2/1,5-7, 9), segmented with approaching ends (pl. 2/10) and with curved center (pl. 1/15), made of sheet metal with non-decorated surface (pl. 2/4), with twisted ends and linear decorations (pl. 2/15). Another type of the bracelets are ones with schematic decorations of snake head on the ends (pl.1/11-13), and the same type of bracelets with additional linear decorations (pl. 2/3, 8) as well as one bracelet with natural image of snake-head (pl.1/6). These were widespread during VII-VI cc. BC (G. Tiratsyan 1988, 48).

There are two types of rings in the collection: two sharp ended items which can be used as earrings (pl.1/16) and snake-headed examples with linear decorations that look like rolled snakes (pl.1/10). That snake-headed ring could be made of bracelet fragment, though the snake-headed rings are known from Noratus and Karcahkhbyur necropolises (Sevan lake basin) (N. Yengibaryan 2002, pl. IX, fig. 15, pl. XVIII, fig. 4, 5).

Also three types of earrings were found here. The earring with a sharp end and the other one bent back and folded in the middle of the body (pl.1/7, 8) and the examples with a crescent shaped hanging part (pl. 1/5) date to the VII century BC and on, are known from tombs of Karchaghbyur, Golovino, Artashavan, Nerqin Getashen (P. Avetisyan *et alii*, 1998, pl. XIV, fig. 16, 20, H. Martirosyan 1954, pl. 13, fig. 36, O. Xnkikyan 2002, pl. 20, fig. 20; N. Yengibaryan 2002, pl. IX, fig. 17, 18, pl. XIV, fig. 14). The small semi-spherical earring with hollow body is of a special interest (pl. 1/9).

Another item of the collection is a fragment of necklace of thick folded flattened wire and with its edges bent back. The item was repaired and the broken part had been flattened and fastened with two iron nails (pl. 1/14). Such kind of repaired necklace fragment is known from the necropolis of Berd (S. Esayan 1969, p. 289).

Other specimens of the collection are two bronze hinged type fibulas with flat (pl. 1/2) and rhomboid (pl.1/3) centre, as well as two bronze tubes (pl. 3/2, 3). It was, supposedly, used either as an adornment for hair or it was hanged from the belt. A ring made of thick wire was for fastening of shoulder-strap belts (pl. 2/2). There were also 19 cowries among materials (pl. 1/4).

Like the fibulas, the medallion and belt from the collection are also Urartian materials. Medallions are a specific group of luxury artifacts (objects) in Urartian culture. The first example was excavated in Toprakh-Kale (B. Piotrovsky 1959, p. 181, fig. 45). Later, three silver medallions were unearthed in Karmir Blur (B. Piotrovsky 1955, pl. 5, 11, B. Piotrovsky 1970, № 85, 86, 87). Three (one gold and two silver) medallions were found accidentally (H.-J. Kellner 1991, no 3, 4, Urartu, 2004, p. 262). Urartian bronze medallions are known from Haykaberd (Chaushtepe) and Gimli (both have the same image, but the second one is not published) (H.-J. Kellner 1991, 164, no 1, fig.11).

The bronze one from the discussed collection has the solar winged disk, crescents and eight-ended star ornamentation (pl.1/1). Thus Šivini, god of the Sun, Šelarde, god of the Moon, Sarde goddess of the planet/star Venus symbols were pictured. The medallion had a ring attached which

---

\* Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia Charents Str. 15, Yerevan.

was used for hanging. Only medallion found from Karmir blur has similar images (B. Piotrovsky 1970, № 87).

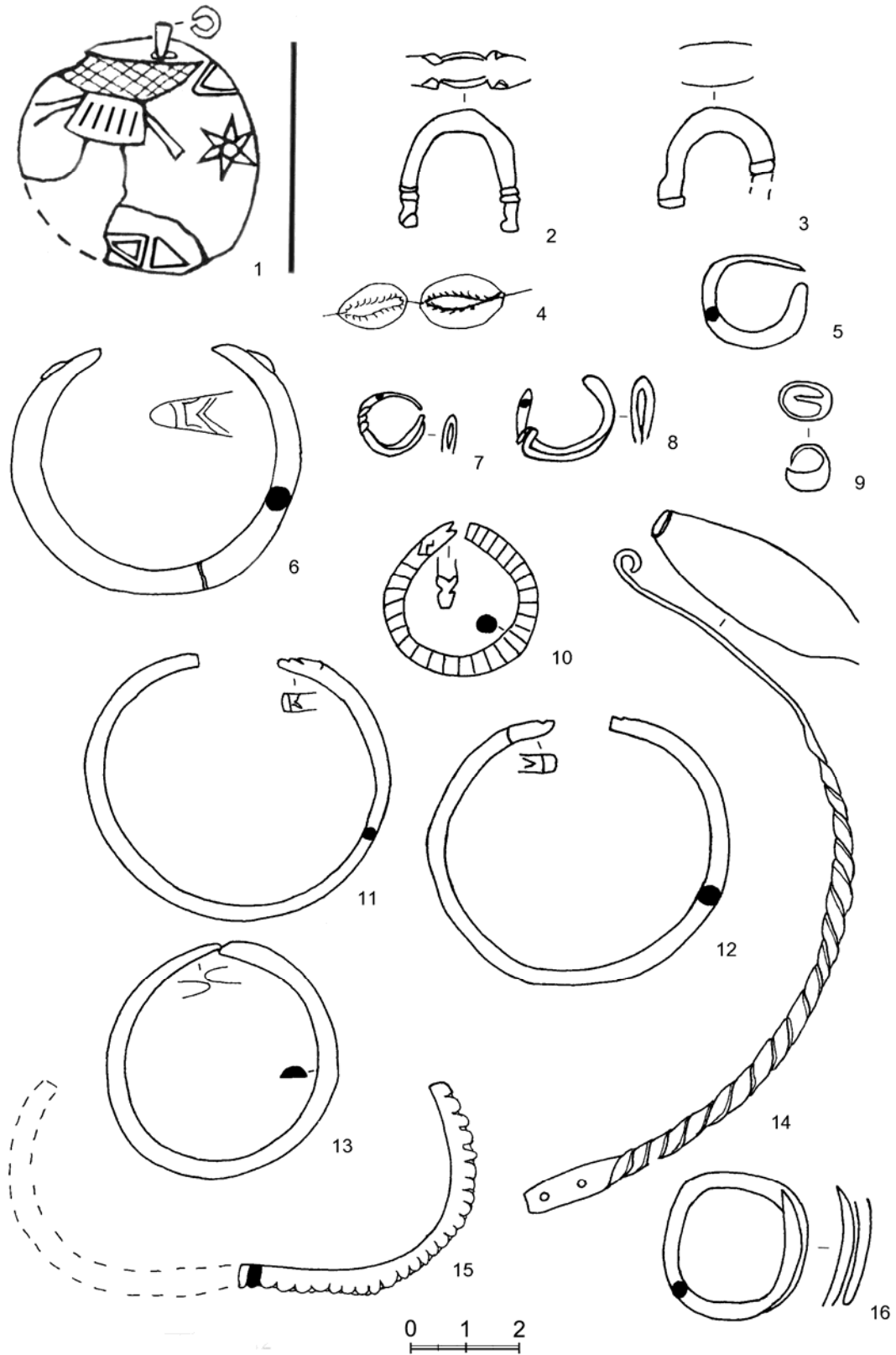
The Urartian belt made of bronze platter is almost completely preserved (pl. 3/4). It is decorated with five strips ornamented with dots. The buckle ring is on the right side where a stylized life tree is depicted. The belt was attached to the leather basis through the holes on the edges. The ring of the buckle is preserved but the hook is missing. Analogous belts are well known from Karmir Blur, Igdir and Western Armenia (B. Piotrovsky 1950, fig. 24; H. Martirosyan, 1954, pl. 4, fig. 1,2; S. Esayan 1984, Abb 75, 76, 77, 78, 79; A. Hori *et alii* 1982, fig. 59, 60). The analogs of the life tree were depicted on the belts from Zakim, Anipemza, Karmir blur (B. Piotrovsky 1944, fig. 95-97; B. Piotrovsky 1952, fig. 19; O. Taşyürek 1975, fig. 3; H.-J. Kellner 1991a, 71, Abb. 74, №297).

The last object of the collection is a leaf shaped dagger which is oval in section, with the hole for attaching the handle on the top (pl. 3/1). The dating of these materials is a little problematic because of the ceramics lack. The bronze dagger, divergent ends bracelets, cowry beads and the ring-earring with sharpening edges can be discovered from the earlier dated burial as well as from secondary burials.

The main part of materials is dated to VII-VI BC. Thus, the collection includes materials, possibly, from one or more burials.

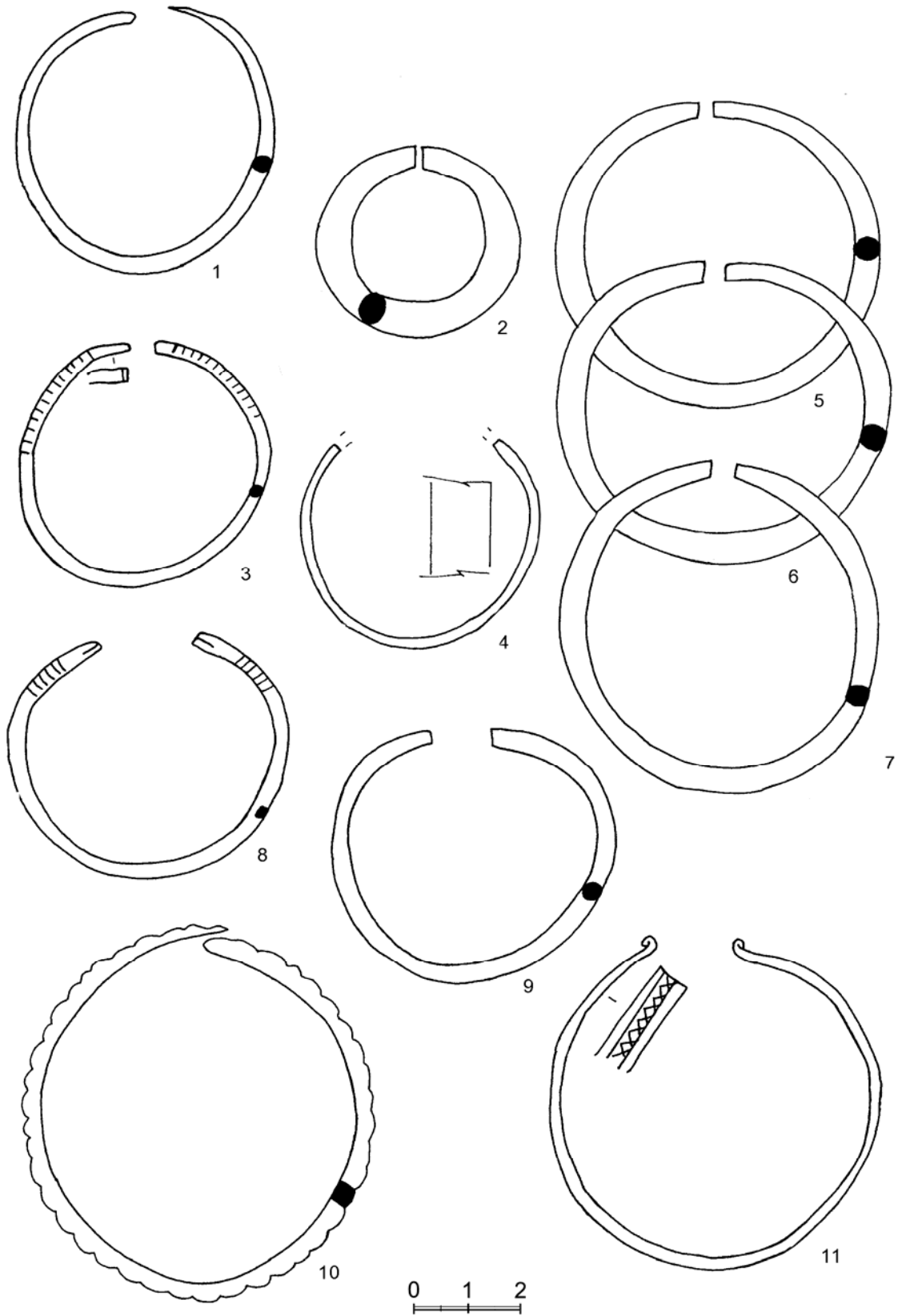
◆ References

- P. Avetisyan *et alii* 1998 P. Avetisyan, N. Yengibaryan, G. Sargsyan, Haiastani Norahait hnagitakan Hushardzanner. Artashavani Dambaranadast, *Handes Amsorya*, 1-12, p. 193-248 (in Armenian).
- S. Esayan 1969 Mogilnik Rannearmyanskogo Vremeni v Poselke Berd Shamshadinskogo Rayona, *Patma-Banasirakan Handes*, 4, p. 285-291 (in Russian).
- S. Esayan 1979 Urartakan Gotiyov Dambaran Zodic, *Patma-Banasirakan Handes*, 3, 277-280 (in Armenian).
- S. Esayan 1984 Gürtelbleche der älteren Eisenzeit in Armenien, *Beiträge zur Allgemeinen Vergleichenden Archäologie*, band 6, p. 97-198.
- H.-J. Kellner 1991 "Medallions and pectorals", R. Merhav (ed.), *Urartu a Metalworking Center in the First Millennium B.C.E.*, Jerusalem, p. 171-176.
- H.-J Kellner. 1991a Gürtenbleche aus Urartu, *Prehistorische Beonzeneefunde, Abteilung XII, Band 3*, München, Fronz Stiner Verlag Stuttgart.
- H. Martirosyan 1954 *Raskopki v Golovino*, Yerevan (in Russian).
- A. Hori *et alli* 1982 A. Hori, S. Miyashita, K. Ishida 1982, "Studies on the Urartian bronze objects Japanese collections (1)", *Bulletin of the Ancient Oriental Museum* 4, Tokyo.
- Urartu 2004 F. Özdem (ed.), *Urartu: War and Aesthetics*, İstanbul.
- B. Piotrovskij 1944 *Istoiyya I kultura Urartu*, Yerevan (in Russian).
- B. Piotrovskij 1950 *Karmir-blur I. Rezultaty raskopok 1939-1949*, Yerevan (in Russian).
- B. Piotrovskij 1952 *Karmir-blur II. Rezultaty raskopok 1949-1950*, Yerevan (in Russian).
- B. Piotrovskij 1955 *Karmir-blur III. Rezultaty raskopok 1951-1953*, Yerevan (in Russian).
- B. Piotrovskij 1959 *Vanskoe Carstvo (Urartu)*, Moskva (in Russian).
- B. Piotrovskij 1970 *Karmir-blur. Albom*, Leningrad (in Russian).
- A. Taşyürek 1975 *The Urartian Belts in the Adana Regional Museum*, Ankara, Donmez offset.
- G. Tiratsyan 1988 *Kultura Drevney Armenii (VI v. do n. e. IVv. n. e.)*, Yerevan (in Russian)
- O. Xnkikyan 2002 *Syunik During the Bronze and Iron Ages*, Barrington.
- N. Yengibaryan 2002 De Graves of the Urartian period of Karchaghbyur, R. Biscione, S.Hmayakyan, and P.Parmegiani.(eds.) *The North-Eastern Frontier Urartians and Non-Urartians in the Sevan Lake Basin*, Roma, p. 417-454.

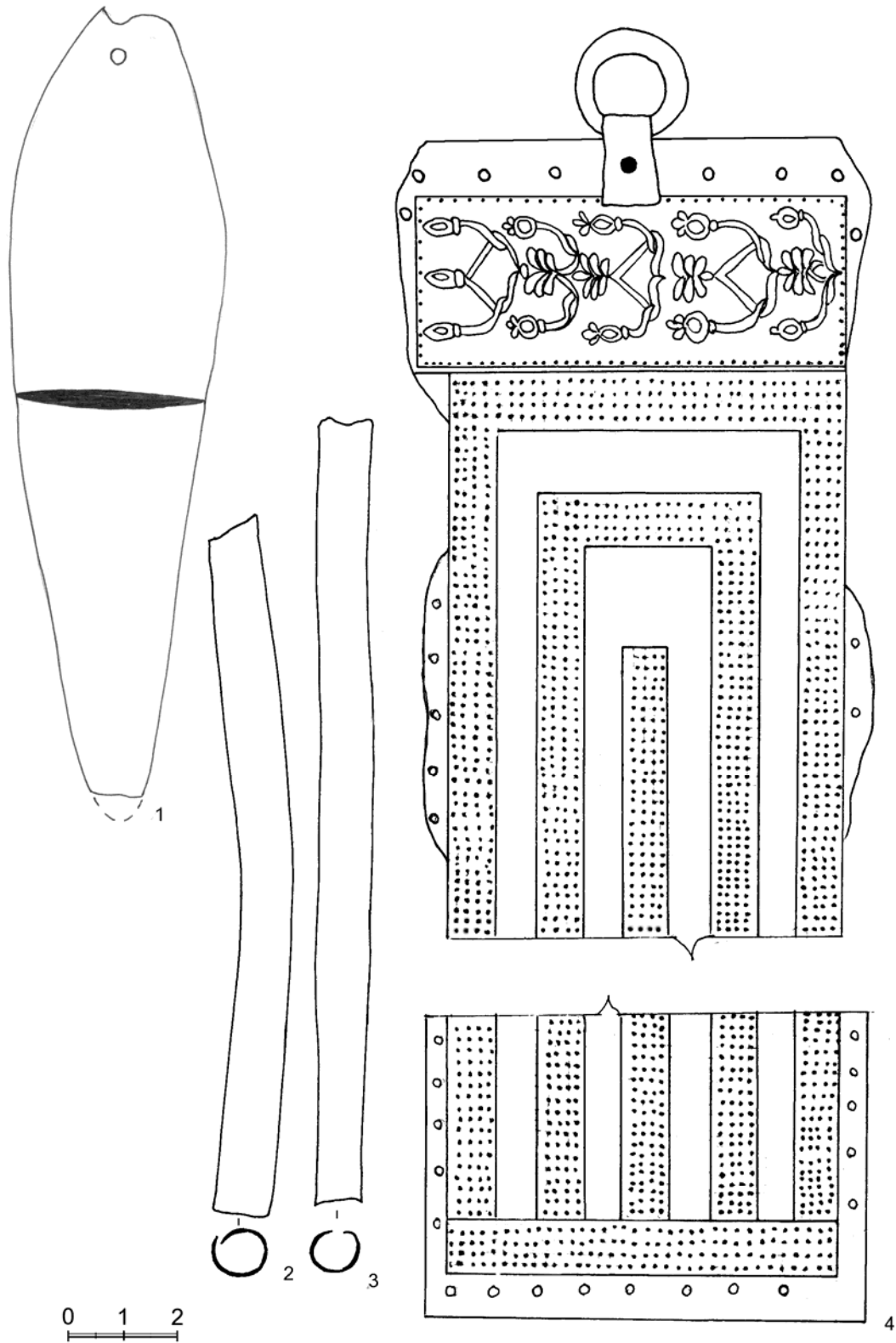


**PI. 1.** 1 – medallion, 2-3 – fibula, 4 – cowry beads, 5,7-9 – earrings, 6,11-13, 15 – brățară, 10,16 – inel, 14 – colier.

1 – medalion, 2-3 – fibulă, 4 – mărgel, 5,7-9 – cercei, 6,11-13, 15 – brățaret, 10,16 – ring, 14 – necklace



PI. 2. 1, 3-11 – bracelets, 2 – shoulder - strap belts.  
1, 3-11 – brățări, 2 – inel de curea.



Pl. 3. 1 – dagger; 2-3 – tubes; 4 – belt.  
1 – pumnal; 2-3 – tuburi; 4 – centură.