

Udmurt State University  
Institute of history and culture of the Priuralye peoples  
Materials and researches of the Kama-Vyatka  
archaeological expedition

**Art and archaeological investigation  
of the woodland of East Europe**

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Udmurt State University  
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**Art and archaeological investigation of the woodland of East Europe**

Managing editor I.G.Shapran, Candidate of history

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Materials, wich present in collection, demonstrate the great variety of scientific interests of the archaeologists of the Udmurt University. The authors of the collection hope that their researches, wich direct on comprehension of archaeological sources discovered by the Kama-Vyatka archaeological expedition during the 30 years, will be useful and actual for colleagues, who work in analogous problematic.

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**Irina Shapran**

**Mari woman's traditional costume of the Vyatka basin  
in XVI – early XIX centuries  
(on the basis of archaeological data)**

Traditional costume is one of the most significant sources for answering questions in the sphere of ethnical history of any nation. It wasn't drastically modernised and preserves most steadily the succession of the traditions of the past. The costume complex can be considered a border between material and spiritual culture, because a lot of elements of clothes and decorations demand imagination, creative work, and mental and emotional forces. The levelling influence of migration factors told on the development of the costume complex, woman's one in particular, much slower than on the development of housekeeping and farming, tools and houses. Therefore, in spite of the clear variety of woman's clothes and decorations between ethnic groups and inside them we have a possibility to define common and individual features and components. Some features are traced back to the most ancient times and indicate the common basis and correlation during the early stages of the cultural development; others are connected with later periods and indicate the independent development of directions.

The given research focuses on woman's costume of Vyatka-basin Mari people. Main sources for the work were materials from Mari burial monuments of XVI-XIX centuries located in the Vyatka basin (at present Kirov oblast and adjacent districts of Nizhegorodskaya oblast, Russian Federation). The historical peculiarity of the region and the specific character of its archaeological monuments were noted more than once in different scientific works (Lechinskaya N.A., 1995; Shapran I.G., 1995; 1995a; 1995b; 1996).

**Head-dresses.** Woman's head-dresses give maximum ethnical information under certain circumstances. They are: availability of types, presence of design details, and combination of certain decoration types (Shapran I.G., 1993). Head-dresses' remains were found near the head of dead people in all Vyatka Mari burials, but the detailed reconstruction of each sample is a rather complicated task due to the poor preservation of organic parts and changes in the interlocation of constituent parts.

Analysing head-dresses, we proceed from the modern ethnographic classification of Mari population on the territory under study (fig.2). The first group consists of speakers of the north-western dialect of the Mari language. They live within Sanchursko-Yaransky ethnographic

district. In spite of their language heterogeneity and complexity they feel their integrity through belonging to one community – “*sorokan mariy*”, i.e. to the Mari wearing only the *soroka*. This territory includes Grekovo, Tonshaevo and Bolshie-Oshkary cemeteries. The second group is Mari population of the Urzhum-Vyatka region. Their dialects are various, but they relate themselves to “*shymakshan mariy*”, i.e. the Mari wearing the *shymaksh*. To characterise head-dresses of this group, we used data from Melet 1, Kadochniki and Urzhum-nolya cemeteries. However, head-dresses of both groups belong to a later period and are mainly known due to modern ethnographic sources (Kozlova K.I., 1978; Molotova T.L., 1992). Late medieval archaeological materials let us trace remains of other head-dresses. To single out certain types from our materials, we used samples found in the Melet 1 cemetery, a cemetery that provides reliable sex and age data. The classification of the head-dresses' types is based on the age principle: *takya-cap* – a girlish head-dress; *forehead band* was used by girls (separately) and women (as a part of a head-dress); *shurka*, *shymaksh* and composite *sharpan-nashmak* belonged only to woman's head-dresses.

*Girlish takya-cap* (8 pieces; Grekovo, graves 93, 118, 297; Kadochniki, grave 13; Melet 1, graves 24, 29, 39, 147) is a tight-fitting spherical head-dress. Samples found in late medieval graves were made as a rule of a crimson fabric and decorated with coins, glass beads or embroidered with gold or silver lace (fig.2-1).

The first ethnographic notes about the *takya* of Mari girls were made by Pallas in the second half of XVIII century (Pallas P.S., 1788, p.29-37). But, according to Gagen-Torn's and Sepeev's data (Gagen-Torn N.I., 1960, p.157-158; Sepeev G.A., 1975, p.185), at the turn of XIX-XX centuries the *takya* was registered only among Malmyzh and eastern Mari girls. That fact allowed them to speak about the later borrowing of the *takya* by the Mari. Archaeologists dispose of much earlier findings and that is why they have their own opinion on the matter: some researchers connect the appearance of the similar head-dress on the Mari territory with ancient Chuvashian population that came to the Volga basin in III-V centuries (Gening V.F., 1963, p.55). Khalikov (Khalikov A.K., 1971, p.19) and Starostin (Starostin P.N., 1971, p.53) believed that the ancient Mari population borrowed the *takya*

through Imenkovo tribes. However, we can probably follow the same logic when analysing the autonomous appearance and development of forehead bands among different peoples and analysing the takya's origin. The cap-like shape as the most convenient one could appear independently and almost synchronically among various peoples living in similar nature and climate conditions. Moreover, such logical conclusion is proved by facts, e.g. the reconstruction of Ananyino head-dresses always includes a tight-fitting cap (Khalikov A.K., 1962, p.64). One more argument in favour of the independent origin and development of this head-dress is that the takya-caps found in late medieval Mari burials on any territory, like Azelino and Pyanoborye burials, have no *shishak* (pompon) and ear flaps and by this differ from Turkic ones.

*Girlish forehead band* (15 pieces; Melet 1, grave 22). Due to the specific character of archaeological monuments to register and reconstruct this head-dress was the most complicated task. Using ethnographic analogies, taking into consideration reconstructed samples from adjacent territories (Nikitina T.B., 1992, p.47) and basing upon artifacts from graves, I suppose that the forehead band was a stripe of fabric, as a rule of a red colour and 2.5-3 cm wide, decorated with embroidery, beads or coins, more frequently – combined. Its ends were fastened by buttons or tied on the back of the head, sometimes reaching the back as in the sample from grave 37, Kartukovo reconstructed by Nikitina (Nikitina T.B., 1992, p.12). To the back part of the band two beads threads going down along the plait to the waist were attached (fig.2-2).

Remains of similar head-dresses of ancient Mari girls (IX-XI centuries) were registered by Arkhipov (Arkhipov G.A., 1961, p.127-138); details of the analogous head-dress are also traced in V-VII centuries materials – Ml. Akhmylovo, grave 88 (Nikitina T.B., 1992, p.47). Ethnographic data at the turn of XVIII-XIX centuries register two variants of this head-dress: a band woven of woollen threads and decorated with glass beads and coins, and a band with a leather base and coins. By the end of XIX century the girlish forehead band changed from a head-dress into a decoration consisting of coins, beads and glass beads (Molotova T.L., 1992, p.33-34). The forehead band is widely spread among many nations and everywhere is deeply rooted. Belitser is right saying that "these primitive types of head-dresses could develop independently among different nations at early stages of their economical and cultural development and gradually modify" (Belitser V.N., 1951, p.59). The forehead band is also an integral part of woman's head-dresses.

*Mari woman's head-dresses* are divided into the following types in ethnographic researches: a soft towel-like "*sharpan*", spade-shaped "*soroka*", carcass pointed "*shurka*" and "*shymaksh*" (churik, kalpak) (Molotova T.L., 1992, p.34). Taking into consideration ethnographic sources, we should note that the main and most important

part of woman's head-dress was an embroidered towel that partly or completely covered the hair. In graves it isn't preserved, that's why we can only rely on those hard parts of head-dresses or metal decorations that will allow to reconstruct the lost using ethnographic parallels.

Our work on creating standard samples of woman's head-dresses was also based on Melet 1 materials. We managed to trace the following rule. Woman's graves (age up to 45) contain a certain constant set of artifacts (fig.5): birch bark fragments and crimson canvas remains attached to the birch bark by bronze needles (fig.5-12). At the scull of a buried woman there is a forehead band – a stripe of dense fabric 3-4 cm wide, encased with gold or silver lace for hardness and decoration. On the back the band was fastened by a syulgama (fig.5-13). The peak of the rigid frame was a head pendant consisting of three-five bronze or silver beads (each made of two hemispheres) threaded on a leather small strap or cord and crowning with a blue glass beads brush that goes out of a larger hemisphere (fig.5-7-11). All these are constituent parts of woman's head-dress known in ethnographic literature as a "*shurka*": "*shur*" means horn, literally "*shurka*" means "horned" (Molotova T.L., 1992, p.34).

From the materials of the Vyatka-basin monuments we singled out 63 pieces that undoubtedly belong to the given type (fig.3-1). The head-dress had a birch bark base in the form of a truncated cone 30-40 cm high and 10 cm wide in its upper part. Its frame was covered by a crimson fabric decorated with rows of beads, glass beads and coins (fig.5-1-4). In the centre there was a head pendant. From the top this hard head-dress was covered with a headscarf, that is proved by small syulgamas located at sides. The smaller end of the scarf was put on the birch bark frame from the front to the pendant and was attached to it by a bronze pin with a ball-shaped pinhead, sometimes in addition was attached by a syulgama. The larger end of the scarf was put down on the back, and two other ends – on shoulders (fig.23, 24). It should be noted that while reconstructing this type of on the basis of different Vyatka-basin monuments, one automatically pays attention to the striking constancy and exactness of the elements of the dress from monument to monument. Probably, the territorial difference in design could be traced by such nuances as embroidery, glass beads decorations etc., which are hardly possible to identify on the archaeological level.

Some ethnographers who refer to XVII-XVIII centuries travellers' notes in their researches believe that the *shurka* is the most ancient head-dress characteristic for all ethnographic groups (Kryukova T.A., 1956, p.136). In some areas it was later followed by the *soroka* and *sharpan*. One more argument in favour of the *shurka* "antiquity" is that in the second half of XIX century a small group of non-christened plains Mari in Urzhum uyezd and eastern Mari used such head-dress in marriage ceremonies. Fragments of a high birch bark-based head-dress were

found in all Vyatka Mari monuments, no matter what zone they are located in: the "*sorokan mariy*" (Grekovo) or "*shymakshan mariy*" (Tyum-Tyum, Melet 1, Kadochniki) zone. These monuments have also a number of peculiarities concerning the burial ceremony (Shapran I.G., 1984).

Materials of XVI-XVIII centuries cemeteries researched by Nikitina on the territory of the mountainous and plains Mari's residence do not register any remains of shurka-type high birch bark head-dresses, although birch bark, especially combined with non-ferrous metals, is usually very well preserved. Earlier Mari materials and late medieval materials from the territories inhabited by other ethnographic Mari groups (1268 graves on mountainous and plains territory) have no evidence proving the presence of a head-dress analogous or at least similar to the shurka. On the contrary, adjacent Udmurt territories disposed of such head-dress. This fact allowed Nikitina to state that Mari women borrowed the first high birch bark head-dresses from Udmurt women, that is why they are so close to *ayshony* (Nikitina T.B., 1992, p.50). Written and ethnographic sources register similar head-dresses mostly among the Vyatka and eastern Mari and only as an exception in other areas (Kozlova K.I., 1978, p.302), that could result from the later development.

The pointed *shymaksh* (fig.3-2) is believed to be the later form of the shurka (Kryukova T.A., 1956, p.136). To some degree it looks like its smaller variant (Molotova T.L., 1992). It was a rectangular piece of cloth (55x20 cm), one edge of which was sewed together. On the head it was fixed by a birch bark or felt cap. All the head-dress was decorated with a rich embroidery. The shymaksh is one of the most widely spread Mari head-dresses that was used not only by women but also men (Krizhovoblotskiy Y., 1891, p.522). According to ethnographic materials, the earliest shymaksh samples were a bit different: they had no hard fame (Molotova T.L., 1992, p.35). Probably, this very type (soft one) could co-exist with the shurka. The hard-cap shymaksh of the plains Vyatka (Urzhum uyezd) and eastern Mari (woman's prevalent head-dress of the latter) is probably a later phenomenon that resulted from the merging of two head-dresses – hard-frame shurka and soft ancient shymaksh (Molotova T.L., 1992, p.35). The Vyatka Mari wore the shymaksh with the pointed part above the forehead. Over the shymaksh they put canvas triangle scarves (*kum lukan shovyach*). As a result of the research of the Vyatka monuments the artifacts from graves 3, 4, 9, 26, 43, 141 (Melet 1) and grave 11 (Kadochniki) (i.e. the cemeteries located on the territory of the ethnographic group "*shymakshan mariy*") can be related to this head-dress type.

The *soroka* is not an archaic Mari woman's head-dress (Nikolskiy N.V., 1920, p.470). For example, in some settlements of Pizhanka district, Kirov oblast people

remember that before the *soroka* there was the *shymaksh*. There the Mari call the *soroka* "*marya vuy*" (Russian head). It is well-grounded by Kryukova (Kryukova T.A., 1968, p.62) that Yaran Mari women borrowed the idea of this head-dress from Russian women and then transfer it to others; that is how it appeared on the modern territory of Mariy El. They decorated the borrowed form of the head-dress with their own ornamental motifs. Molotova refers to museum funds and notes some cases when an old shymaksh was changed into a *soroka* (Molotova T.L., 1992, p.36).

The *nashmak* is an integral part of woman's head-dress *sharpan-nashmak* (fig.3-3). It is put on the parietal part for fixing the sharpan towel on the head. The *nashmak* is a narrow canvas strap 3-3.5 cm wide, up to 25 cm long. Earlier samples were decorated with glass beads, beads and coins, which were gradually substituted for by embroidery. The sharpan's most popular decoration was embroidery and a gilded lace sewed along the edges of the main fabric in the form of a geometrical or vegetative pattern. Ethnographic parallels provide us with the sharpan's dimensions: it was a towel 2x0,3 m.

On the basis of cemeteries' materials it is difficult to define whether the *nashmak* was a separate part of a head-dress or was used only in addition to the sharpan. The following findings in Vyatka materials (Melet 1, graves 77, 127; Kadochniki, grave 12; Grekovo, graves 18, 30) can indicate the sharpan: bronze pins *vuy ime* that attach the *nashmak* to the sharpan, and beads at the skull and back that could decorate the sharpan's ends. According to the pins' location relative to the skull and ethnographic literature we can suppose two ways of the connection between the sharpan and *nashmak*: by two pins at temples or by several pins round the head.

**Decorations and parts of costume.** Detachable decorations were compulsory for the Mari costume. Unlike men's costume, woman's set of detachable decorations, festive and ritual one in particular, was various and included decorations of the head and head-dresses, neck-and-breast (all kinds of necklaces and collars), breast (*syulgamas*, separate or combined), shoulder, waist and hand (bracelets and rings) decorations.

The head-set consists of forehead and back-of-the-head decorations, temple and ear pendants, and ear-rings. The forehead decoration ("*vuy ime*" or "*nashmak onchyl*") is a narrow strip of fabric with bronze slugs and plates, or silver coins or coins' imitations sewed in line. In Vyatka materials these forehead decorations were registered together with head-dresses and are included into our typology as forehead bands (see the text above; fig.5-14-17).

Back-of-the-head decorations are *syulgamas* attached to a head-dress or, according to ethnographic information, to hair on the back of the head; in literature they are known

as "*vuy shirkama*" (a *syulgama* with pendants made of coins). This type of decoration was spread only among Mari girls and women of Urzhum uyezd, Vyatka province. Archaeological materials also include *syulgamas* with pendants made of beads (Grekovo, grave 43).

The carcass high head-dress *shurka* was always decorated with a head bronze or silver pendant (63 pieces; see the description above). Three head-dresses (Melet I, graves 30, 38, 107) are also decorated with bronze chains (fig.6). Similar decorations of head-dresses with chains were found by Arkhipov in materials of XII-XIII centuries Rutka (grave 16) and Vyzhum III (graves 11, 13, 17, 21) cemeteries (Arkhipov G.A., 1986, p.18). Such head decoration made of chains keeps the traditions of the ancient Mari of IX-XI centuries. (Arkhipov G.A., 1973, p.17-18; Arkhipov G.A., 1984, p.143, fig.9).

Temple decorations are numerous and diverse pendants (313 pieces). By the form they are divided into types, and their structural features let us speak about subtypes.

Type I (293 pieces). A one-piece pendant is made of bronze, silver or iron wire bent into the form of the interrogative mark, the end of which is looped as a rule. Without beads or with 1-2 glass or one crystal, amethystine or metal (bronze, silver) pivoted beads.

Subtype a (49 pieces). Non-beaded bronze (45 pieces, Grekovo, grave 15; fig.7-12) or iron (4 pieces, Grekovo, grave 110; fig.7-24, 25; Kadochniki, grave 21) pendants.

Subtype b (14 pieces). Made of bronze wire, beaded with 1-2 opaque glass beads (Grekovo, grave 106, fig. 8-6; Kadochniki, grave 39, fig.9-7).

Subtype c (93 pieces). A bronze or silver wire is beaded with roundish or cut, opaque glass or crystal beads; there are also pendants with metal beads made of two hollow hemispheres (Grekovo, grave 77, fig.8-1; Kadochniki, grave 13, fig.9-11). To secure tightly from both ends (sometimes only one end) the beads are fixed by a small ordinary (or ornamental for silver pendants) wire curved around the main rod.

Subtype d (134 pieces). It differs from the previous subtype by the following: besides the wire, the beads are also fixed by ordinary (fig.8-3) or ornamental (fig.8-10, 17, 18) small rings.

Subtype e (2 pieces). A bead is pivoted on a silver wire and fixed from both ends by small double grainy ornamented rings and open-work silver holders (Grekovo, grave 125; fig.8-22, 23).

Subtype f (1 piece). The modification of type I is a temple pendant from grave 101, Grekovo cemetery, the end of which is curved in the form of a three-part flower-eyelet (fig.7-1).

Type 2 (19 pieces). Two-piece temple pendants.

Subtype a (18 pieces). Temple pendants consist of open wire rings, to which a rod with a pivoted crystal (fig.7-22) or amethystine (fig.7-23) bead is coiled by a

wire of a smaller diameter. In most cases the beads are made of opaque glass (fig.7-4).

Subtype b (1 piece). A rod was attached to a ring by curved outer loop (fig.8-9).

Type 3 (1 piece). A wire temple pendant in the form of an open ring with a short looped end and a pivoted bead and two grainy ornamented rings (Kadochniki, grave 11; fig.9-16).

Ring-shaped temple pendants were found in Kartukovo cemetery of the mountainous Mari, and in Maly Kugunur of the plains Mari (Nikitina T.B., 1992, p.52). Similar temple rings are often registered in northern Rus monuments dated X-XIII centuries (Sedova M.V., 1981, p.13), in Novgorod layers dated XIV-XV centuries (Levashova V.P., 1968, p.24), and in Azmetyevskiy cemetery of the Bulgar period (Kazakov E.P., 1977, p.99).

Temple pendants in the form of a question mark in all above-mentioned modifications were most widely spread in Vyatka Mari cemeteries. These decorations were usually worn by one on each side of the head, near temples. They were attached to a head-dress or hair by a large ring. The earliest samples of Mari region were found in Malo-Sundyrskiy urban site. T.A.Khlebnikova believes that their origin is connected with the Bulgar culture (Khlebnikova T.A., 1967, p.169). Analogous decorations were found in the layers of Bulgar monuments dated XIII – early XV centuries (Nikitina T.B., 1992, p.52). Since the middle of II millennium AD these decorations became widely spread among the Finno-Ugric peoples of the Volga and Kama region. In XVI-XVIII centuries cemeteries of the Udmurt (Shutova N. I., 1992, p.18-20), Mordva (Goryunova E.I., 1948, p.80) and Chuvashian nations decorations similar in shape were frequently found. They were a part of national clothes of these nations (Belitser V.N., 1951, p.74; Volkova L.A., 1988, p.157; Vorobyeva N.I. and others, 1956, p.135) till the beginning of XX century.

On the basis of samples found in burial monuments of XVI-XVIII centuries we can make a conclusion that unlike most other nations, the Mari women wore these decorations as temple not ear decorations (Nikitina T.B., 1992, p.52). Later, since late XVIII - early XIX centuries temple decorations transformed into ear (Molotova T.L., 1992, p.42). Temple pendants are frequently found by one in a grave: Grekovo – 24 graves out of 86, Kadochniki – 15 single and 19 pairs. Sometimes temple pendants are used as *syulgama* pendants in a breast decoration (Kadochniki, grave 89, fig.14).

The chin decoration (1 piece) is a bronze chain from Melet I (grave 57; fig.5-3). Its length is 44 cm; the chain's fragments 1.5 cm long have 10 bronze coin-shaped pendants attached to the main part of the chain and decorated with a dot ornament in the form of a cross.

Ethnographic literature (Gagen-Torn N.I., 1960, p.76) traditionally divides neck decorations according to their

function into two categories: 1) neck decorations connected with a shirt design are used as detachable collars; 2) neck pendants-decorations. Following this idea, we shall distribute all artifacts available to several types.

Type 1 (5 pieces, Grekovo, graves 122, 132, 171, 195). Original neck decorations consist of a crimson stripe (2-2.5 cm wide) decorated with a gilded lace and 1-3 silver close-ended bells-pendants at one of the ends (fig.10-1-3, 6), or a red (?) silk band with 2 close-ended bells at each end (Grekovo, grave 83; fig.10-4). They were used not only by women, but also men and differed by the shape of the close-ended bells. Similar findings are registered in the burial monuments of the mountainous Mari dated XVII – early XVIII centuries (Nikitina T.B., 1992, p.53). Analogous necklaces – collars are known among the Kazan Tatar, Bessermian (Gagen-Torn N.I., 1960, p.93, 95) and Mordva (Belitsker V.N., 1973, p.125-126).

Type 2 (24 pieces). Neck-and-breast decorations.

Subtype a (18 pieces). A composite necklace made of beads or beads and coins (Grekovo, graves 16, 28; fig.10-11-19).

Subtype b (6 pieces). The decorations are made of various bronze pendants attached on a crimson leather or twisted woollen band. They are united into one group on the basis of their function.

1. Bronze slugs (2 pieces). One is a slug 3.2-cm diameter decorated with a geometrical ornament (Grekovo, grave 23; fig.9-9). A similar decoration is kept in N.G.Pervukhin's collection. The second piece is a slug 4.2-cm diameter with an eyelet and decorated with a vegetative ornament (Melet 1, grave 57; fig.9-5).

2. Two-piece bronze (2 pieces; Grekovo, graves 39, 118; fig.9-7, 8) decorations are made of an open ring and a soldered rod with pivoted bronze and glass beads on it. They are dated back to the second half of XVI – XVII centuries.

3. Horn-shaped pendants – threaders (2 pieces; Grekovo, graves 225, 84; fig.9-2, 6).

4. A wheel-shaped bronze cast en block pendant (1 piece; Grekovo, grave 23; fig.9-13) consists of two circles connected by radial lines, and decorated with a wavy ornament. It is dated back to the first half of XVII century.

5. A square bronze cast en block plate decorated with a sophisticated geometrical ornament (1 piece; Grekovo, grave 133; fig.9-14) and with holes along the perimeter. It was found near the chest of a buried man together with the remains of a thin bronze chain (destroyed) to which it was attached. It is dated back to the first half of XVII century.

6. A complex two-piece (1 piece; Grekovo, grave 209; fig.9-15) decoration consists of two pendants attached to one lace: one is round with an eyelet and the other is rectangular frame-type.

Syulgamas (455 pieces) are most widely spread and multi-purpose decorations found in Mari monuments. Mainly they were the part of woman's costume;

occasionally they are used as a shirt neck fastener in men's costume.

All syulgamas are oval, sometimes circular, with a moving catch. Most syulgamas are bronze, less are silver, and iron ones are not typical (Grekovo – 1 piece, Kadochniki – 3 pieces). Functionally all syulgamas are divided into sections, on the basis of the section form they are divided into types, and on the basis of the size – into subtypes (therefore their usage in separate costume parts).

Section A (417 pieces). Syulgamas used as fasteners.

Type 1 (173 pieces). Round wire, non-ornamented.

Subtype a (118 pieces). Small-size, 2.4 – 3.2 cm diameter, bronze or silver. They are used as fasteners in a head-dress and attach a scarf to a head-dress's frame part (fig.2-1).

Subtype b (23 pieces). Medium-size, 3.8-4.2 cm diameter, bronze or silver, one piece is iron (Grekovo, grave 192; fig.11-14). As a rule, they are used as an additional fastener in a head-dress to fix a scarf (fig.11-10, 11, 13, 15, 16; 13-18, 20).

Subtype c (32 pieces). Large-size, 5.5-6.2 cm diameter, bronze, one piece is iron (Kadochniki, grave 52). They are used as a fastener of a shirt collar; one syulgama is used in a head-dress to fix a forehead band on the back of the head, but that is an exception.

Type 2 (244 pieces). Plate-type, rectangular in section, ornamented. The ornament is a geometrical combination of hatched by cut lines and non-ornamented zones.

Subtype a (53 pieces). Small-size. The dimensions and function are the same as of type 1a. They are decorated with parallel hatches (fig.11-5) or double zigzag lines combined with hatched triangles (fig.13-5, 10, 14).

Subtype b (78 pieces). Medium-size. The dimensions are the same as of type 1b. They were used in a head-dress and as a shirt collar fastener. Decorated with parallel hatches (fig. 11-6), zigzag lines on a hatched area (fig.11-12) etc.

Subtype c (113 pieces). Large-size (6.5-7.5 cm). Used as a shirt collar fastener.

Section B (38 pieces). Syulgamas are used not as an ordinary shirt collar fastener, but as a basis for a breastplate. Breastplates consist of a plate-type rectangular in section ornamented syulgama (6.5-7.5 cm) and attached piece of leather decorated with beads and coins; ethnographic literature call them the *shirkama*. In monuments excavated on the Mari territory (mostly mountainous Mari districts) this decoration is registered as a rule in combination with the *pochkama* which fastens the collar, closes and decorates the breast at the upper part of the shirt collar cut. The *shirkama* is fastened closer to the lower part. Similar decorations were found in Arzebelekskiy and Otarskiy cemeteries of the plains Mari (Nikitina T.B., 1992, fig.19). Obviously, fibulae with mounted temple pendants and finger-rings from some graves of Kadochniki (grave 89; fig.14) and Grekovo (graves 67, 68, 75, 216) should be



considered a certain burial modification of the given breast decoration.

Two thirds of all syulgamas' findings in woman's graves are connected with head-dresses. Middle-size (type 2b), rectangular in section, plate-type syulgamas linked the ends of forehead bands. Small-size, round in section syulgamas attached a scarf or a towel to the main frame part of the head-dress. Sometimes the smaller end of the scarf descending onto the face part of the head-dress was fixed not only by pins but also small-size round wire or plate-type syulgamas.

Large plate-type and rarely round wire syulgamas used as collar fasteners almost always are located on the breast or near the right collarbone of the buried, occasionally near the left collarbone. This type of fasteners is most archaic and widely spread in late medieval Mari materials. Those syulgamas-fasteners existed till XIX century among most Finno-Ugric nations (Gagen-Torn N.I., 1960, p.78). Sometimes not one but two-three fibulae at once were used as a fastener (Kadochniki, grave 89; fig.14; Grekovo, grave 43; fig.23).

A constituent element of the Mari costume is a belt. Ethnographic data report about belts twisted and woven from woollen, silk and hemp threads (Molotova T.L., 1992, p.51). On the basis of a small number of buckles in burial findings, we can make a conclusion that belts without fasteners were more preferable.

Playing a very important role for the costume complex, the belt was used not only for practical but also for magical purposes. According to archaeological data, Mari belts of IX-XI centuries were provided with various devices for hanging household things (Arkhipov G.A., 1973, p.133-134). This tradition (for example, arrangement of knives near the waist) was also registered in burial monuments of next periods till early XIX century. The cult significance of the belt provided with different pendants-amulets is also well known. One of such talismans was *yupine*, a decoration consisting of a leather base to which cords (as a rule, odd quantity - from 5 to 13) were attached. Cords had copper cylinder holders sometimes combined with opaque green glass beads. 17 pieces were excavated in the graves of Grekovo cemetery (fig.3-18-22) and 2 pieces - in Kadochniki cemetery. Waist decorations found in XVI-XVIII centuries graves are very close to those mentioned in travellers' memos of XVIII century as "*upinem*" (Georgi I.G., 1799, p.55-67) or "*ipenem*" (Miller G.F., 1791, p.18). They consisted of knit woollen threads with threaded beads, shells and metal tubes. Leather back plates were known among the Mari since ancient times. The first examples were registered in burial complexes of IX-XI centuries (Arkhipov G.A., 1973, p.134). By the middle of XIX century such decoration fell out of use.

Buckles (22 pieces). Most buckles are frame-type. The only exception is a three-part iron buckle with a roundish

swivel ring (Grekovo, grave 110; fig.15-15). It dates back by money of Ivan IV till 1754.

Frame buckles (21 pieces) are divided into sections by the material, into types by the form and into subtypes by the ornament.

Section A (13 pieces). Copper buckles and a silver one.

Type 1 (2 pieces). With an oval receiving ring.

Subtype a (1 piece; Grekovo, grave 306). Non-ornamented (fig.15-1). Dated back by money of Ivan IV till 1547.

Subtype b (1 piece; Kadochniki, grave 22). It is decorated with parallel grooves (fig.15-2). There are similar buckles among the Udmurt materials of XVI-early XVII centuries (Shutova N.I., 1992, fig.35-5), they differ only by iron catches.

Type 2 (11 pieces). Heart-shaped copper buckles; one buckle is silver with an iron catch (Grekovo, grave 209; fig.15-4). The buckle side to which a belt was attached is round in section, other sides are flat.

Subtype a (4 pieces; Grekovo, graves 88, 191, 198; Melet 1, grave 23). Non-ornamented (fig.15-6-8).

Subtype b (7 pieces; Grekovo, graves 35, 60, 122, 133, 209, 246). They are decorated with grooves (fig.15-3-5).

Type 3 (1 piece; Melet 1, grave 7). The frame is rectangular bronze, the side to which the iron catch is attached is round (fig.15-10).

Section B (8 pieces). Iron buckles.

Type 1 (3 pieces; Grekovo, graves 42, 179, 208). Round, made of round wire (fig.15-13, 14).

Type 2 (2 pieces; Grekovo, graves 61, 291). Heart-shaped, their form is close to bronze buckles of type 2 (fig.15-11, 16).

Type 3 (1 piece; Grekovo, grave 60). Its outer perimeter is pentagonal and inner one is rectangular (fig.15-12).

Type 4 (2 pieces; Grekovo, grave 276; Kadochniki, grave 90). The rectangular frame is forged of a round rod (fig.15-9).

Bracelets (44 pieces). They are plate-type with a longitudinal section and open ends; bronze or silver. Four pieces (Kadochniki, graves 2, 10, 43; fig. 17-1, 3, 12; Melet 1, grave 23, fig.18-1) have drilled holes at ends, that were probably used for fastening bracelets on a wrist. By the ornament and pattern the bracelets are divided into types and subtypes.

Type 1 (3 pieces; Kadochniki, graves, 2, 26, 43). Non-ornamented (fig.17-1-3). They can be dated by coins to the middle of XVI century.

Type 2 (41 pieces). Ornamented.

Subtype a (5 pieces; Kadochniki, grave 26; Melet 1, graves 23, 57). A simple geometrical ornament consists of lateral and longitudinal lines and rhombi made with a certain thread pitch (fig.17-4; 18-3, 8). Judging by the graves that contained these bracelets and by the archaic way of ornamentation, they can be dated not later than to the first half of XVI century. Analogous bracelets were

found in Orekhovo cemetery (Semenov V.A., 1976). Similar hand decorations were widely spread in the Kama-basin medieval antiquities (Goldina R.D., 1985, tables IV.26, 28, 29).

Subtype b (33 pieces). They are decorated with a complicated pattern consisting of hatched geometrical figures and non-hatched zones (fig.16-12, 14-17; 17-6-11, 18-2, 4-7, 10, 11). Such bracelets were widely spread in the middle Volga-basin and Kama-basin (Goryunova E.I., 1948, table V.1-3; Nikitina T.B., 1992, p.57).

Subtype c (3 pieces; Grekovo, grave 85; Kadochniki, grave 11). The bracelet surface is decorated with a vegetative pattern made of cut lines (fig.16-13, 17-5). One bracelet from Melet 1 is ornamented with a geometrical pattern combined with a vegetative one (grave 23; fig.18-1).

Finger-rings (170 pieces). It is the most widely spread category among hand decorations. They were found in man's, woman's and child's graves. By the way of production we divided rings into sections, and by the form – into types and subtypes.

Section A (127 pieces). Cast and wrought plate-type rings.

Type 1 (6 pieces). Plate-type, they have the same width at full length of the ring.

Subtype a (4 pieces; Kadochniki, graves 24, 64; Melet 1, graves 3, 102). Narrow plate-type (2-4 mm wide at full length) plain bronze rings with open ends (fig.21-1, 2; 22-1).

Subtype b (2 pieces; Grekovo, graves 246, 304). Wide plate-type (9-10 mm wide) rings. One ring is open-ended, at full length of the ring there are convex lines along edges (fig.19-1). Another ring is close-ended, convexities are combined with concavities at full width of the plate (fig.20-24).

Type 2 (4 pieces). Rings with a wide middle part.

Subtype a (1 piece; Kadochniki, grave 81). A close-ended ring, its widening middle part is decorated with two holes and two cavities along edges between them (fig.21-3).

Subtype b (1 piece; Grekovo, grave 266). An open-ended ring, its widening middle part is decorated with a hardly seen pattern of cut lines (fig.20-10).

Subtype c (2 pieces; Kadochniki, graves 86, 106). The rings have open ends and a geometrically decorated middle part. In the centre of one ring there is a straight line and four bundles of eyelashes inside an oval eye (fig.21-35). The second ring is decorated with cut hatched semicircles between parallel lines (fig.21-32).

Type 3 (114 pieces). Rings with a shield-shaped middle part. They are characterised by a narrow plate-type arc and a widening middle part in the form of a shield.

Subtype a (3 pieces; Grekovo, graves 80, 83, 246). They have an oval shield and close ends. The shield of one ring is decorated with a vegetative ornament in the

form of curls inside an oval eye (fig.19-24). Due to the poor preservation the pattern of two other rings is not clearly seen (fig.20-5, 6).

Subtype b (109 pieces). Rhombus shield and open ends; bronze and silver. The shields are decorated with geometrical patterns of straight and broken lines in various combinations (fig.19-2-23, 25, 26; 21-31, 34, 36-45; 22-2-11, 15). This group is most numerous (Grekovo, graves 23, 73, 83, 137, 139 etc; Kadochniki, graves 61, 69, 89 etc; Melet 1, graves 32, 49, 56 etc). They are found in many Mari monuments on the ethnical territory (Nikitina T.B., 1992, p.57).

Subtype c (2 pieces; Kadochniki, graves 28, 112). A rectangular shield is decorated with a cross inside a quadrangle; the ornament is made by grooves (fig. 21-46, 47).

Type 4 (3 pieces; Kadochniki, graves 5, 25, 94). A plate-type shield is soldered to a narrow plate base. In one case the rhombus-shaped shield and the ring's shoulders are decorated with a dot ornament (fig.21-48). The ends of the second plate-type ring are connected by a round plate-type shield with uneven edges (fig.21-49). The shield of the third ring is a rectangle with oval cuts at angles (fig.21-50).

Section B (37 pieces). Cast en block seal-rings or a cast ring with a soldered shield.

Type 1 (32 pieces). Rings with a round or oval shield.

Subtype a (20 pieces; Grekovo, graves 13, 122, 204; Kadochniki, graves 73, 55, 10, 117, 123, 73, 116). The rings have a zoomorphic ornament. A lot of rings depict various birds (fig.19-13-15; 21-8, 9, 12, 14, 22-24), on three rings there are walking lions (Grekovo, graves 76, 152, 151; fig.20-16-18); the shield of the ring from Kadochniki grave 123 is decorated with an anthropomorphic picture (fig.21-13).

Subtype b (10 pieces). Rings with a geometrical ornament. Two rings' shields are decorated with four cut circles with a dot in the centre (Grekovo, grave 51; fig.20-11); the side platforms of one of them are decorated with similar but smaller circles (Grekovo, fig.20-12). The shield of one ring is decorated with a cut herring-bone pattern (Grekovo, grave 246; fig.20-8). Some rings from Kadochniki cemetery are decorated with a pattern of cut lines (graves 24, 89; fig.21-7, 27) or shallow dents (grave 22; fig.21-28); the shield of one ring is decorated with Russian letters (grave 102; fig.21-5). Most rings are worn out or incomplete, therefore their ornament is difficult to read (e.g., Grekovo, grave 23, fig.20-3; Kadochniki, grave 89, fig.21-7).

Subtype c (2 pieces; Melet 1, graves 99, 115). Seal-rings with a vegetative ornament (fig. 22-16). One ring is decorated with two parallel dot lines (fig.22-24).

Type 2 (1 piece; Kadochniki, grave 11). It has a heart-shaped shield with an anthropomorphic picture (fig.21-10).

Type 3 (3 pieces). Rings with an octagonal shield.

Subtype a (2 pieces; Kadochniki, graves 8, 13). The shields are geometrically ornamented. One is decorated with an unclear pattern of cut lines (fig.21-4); on another there are six smaller circles with dots in a centre and the seventh double circle in the middle; all inside a larger circle (fig.21-17).

Subtype b (1 piece; Melet 1, grave 62). Its shield is decorated with a vegetative ornament (fig.22-20).

Type 4 (1 piece; Kadochniki, grave 112). The bronze ring with a rectangular shield; its perimeter is decorated with a geometrical pattern of short cut lines – they form a rectangle crossed by two diagonals (fig.21-47).

Section C (5 pieces). Bronze rings with inserts.

Type 1 (1 piece; Kadochniki, grave 134). It has a shield and a smooth insert made of octagonal colourless glass (fig.21-51). This type is close to a seal-ring.

Type 2 (1 piece; Kadochniki, grave 127). The rectangular shield has an oval hollow for a colourless glass insert (fig.21-52).

Type 3 (1 piece; Melet 1, grave 94). The hexagonal rectilinear shield has a deep oval socket for a dark-blue glass insert (fig.22-26).

Type 4 (2 pieces; Grekovo, grave 68; Melet 1, grave 112). A hollow 2.5-cm diameter bowl is attached to a bronze plate-type ring. The bowl is closed by a bronze plate decorated with a cut ornament. By the decoration form and character the insert is similar to bronze slugs (fig.20-25). It was found in the grave together with a punched kopeck of Vasilii III (1505-1533). The second ring differs from the first one by the form and diameter (2 cm) of the bowl for the insert, the insert is not preserved (fig.22-27).

Section D (1 piece, fragments; Grekovo, grave 279). It is a cast bronze ring with a soldered roundish cast socket with eight spots along the circle and the ninth in the centre (fig.20-21). On the basis of coin material it can be dated back to the middle-second half of XVII century.

The analysis of burial materials and their comparison with ethnographic data (Zadneprovskaya A.Y., 1982) allow us to single out decoration sets of six age groups: 1) children of age up to 5, 2) little girls from 8 to 14, 3) girls from 15 to 20, 4) brides and young married women, 5) married women of the fertile age, 6) old women.

Ethnographers note that the only decoration of children up to 5 years old irrespectively of the sex was a necklace made of beads or glass beads believed to be a "talisman" (Zadneprovskaya A.Y., 1982, p.129). However, archaeological data available add new items to this set. Besides a beads necklace, in grave 18 of Melet 1 there were found a bronze syulgama-fastener and a bronze temple pendant. They could be put as a gift or as a part of the breast decoration, as they were registered at the chest of a buried child of 2.5-3 years old.

The set of decorations for girls up to 15 included necklaces together with fibulae decorated with beads, glass beads and kauri shells. Judging by graves that are clearly sex and age defined, the assortment of decorations is much poorer. Detachable parts of a girl's costume (age 11; Melet 1, grave 49) are two temple pendants and a bronze finger-ring; the grave of a 9-year-old girl (Melet 1, grave 46) is accompanied only by an iron knife.

According to ethnographic data, a typical set of girls' decorations included *kosnik* (that attached the plait on the back to the apron), forehead bands and open-worked chains with back pendants made of bands. The decoration set of brides and young married women till the first pregnancy was similar to the girls' (Zadneprovskaya A.Y., 1982).

On week-days all women wore a limited number of simple decorations: ear-rings, finger-rings and syulgamas-fasteners that had a utilitarian purpose. But the festive-ritual decoration set of married women included different temple pendants, breast decorations, shoulder belts, various belt pendants and decorations put on a waist. Women after 40 years old put on a limited number of decorations even if they were invited for a marriage celebration (Zadneprovskaya A.Y., 1982, p.129). Usually they were temple and neck decorations and syulgamas-fasteners.

On the whole, it should be noted that sets of age groups differed by the character, variety and number of decorations. Together with decorations used by all age groups (temple pendants, rings, bracelets) there were specific decorations that can indicate a certain age community. These peculiarities traced by ethnographic materials, not so clearly but still are also registered in archaeological findings.

Little girls and old women used the least number of decorations' types. The richest and most various decorations set belonged to women of age up to 40-45. The number of the same decorations put at once was also different in age groups. Breast fibulae are especially indicative in this case. Little girls put on 1-2 fibulae, girls – 3-4, women – 3-5, old women – 1-3.

It is obvious that full sets of decorations consisting of 10 items according to ethnographic data could belong only to women from well-to-do families. Poor Mari women often had only 3-5 decorations. In XVIII century Miller noted that "instead of silver kopecks poor women wore tin coins similar to silver kopecks by the size and form" (Miller G.F., 1791, p.17). Speaking about the decorations of the costume of the second half of XIX century, Smirnov mentioned that rich Vyatka Mari women preferred silver fibulae (Smirnov I.N., 1889, p.202). His remark is illustrated by artifacts from grave 43, Grekovo dated the first half of XVII century (Shapran I.G., 1984, p.106). So, social and property status often determined

the number and diversity of decorations, their quality and materials.

Decorations of the Mari as well as other nations are multi-purpose. Besides their ethnic differentiating function and social and economical indicator, their magic function was also very important. This function was mainly ascribed to a specific group of decorations believed to be talismans. Their usage and omens and superstitions connected with them had traditional and stable character. Child's amulets were widespread among the Mari as well as many other nations, for children were believed to be mostly subject to evil forces. To protect from an evil eye a thread of beads or glass beads was put on child's neck. Beads and glass beads were sewed on a baby's shirt as a talisman to provide its teeth' cutting without pain (Zadneprovskaya A.Y., 1982, p.131).

Ethnographers also note that as a talisman the Mari often used various things that differed from others by a specific shape, colour or material, for example, kauri shells. A lot of them were attached to neck-and-breast and shoulder decorations (Zadneprovskaya A.Y., 1982, p.132).

Decorations accompanied the Mari woman during all her life, and even till late XVIII century she was buried in the full set of decorations. Later the character and number of decorations in a grave changed due to the changes in the burial ceremony.

Decorations were also used in sacrificial rites and as gifts for the dead. For example, in grave 11, Kadochniki there were found a bracelet and two finger-rings wrapped in a piece of birch bark. The custom to put decorations in addition to those on a costume is traced in Mari cemeteries of XII-XIII centuries (Arkhipov G.A., 1986, p.70).

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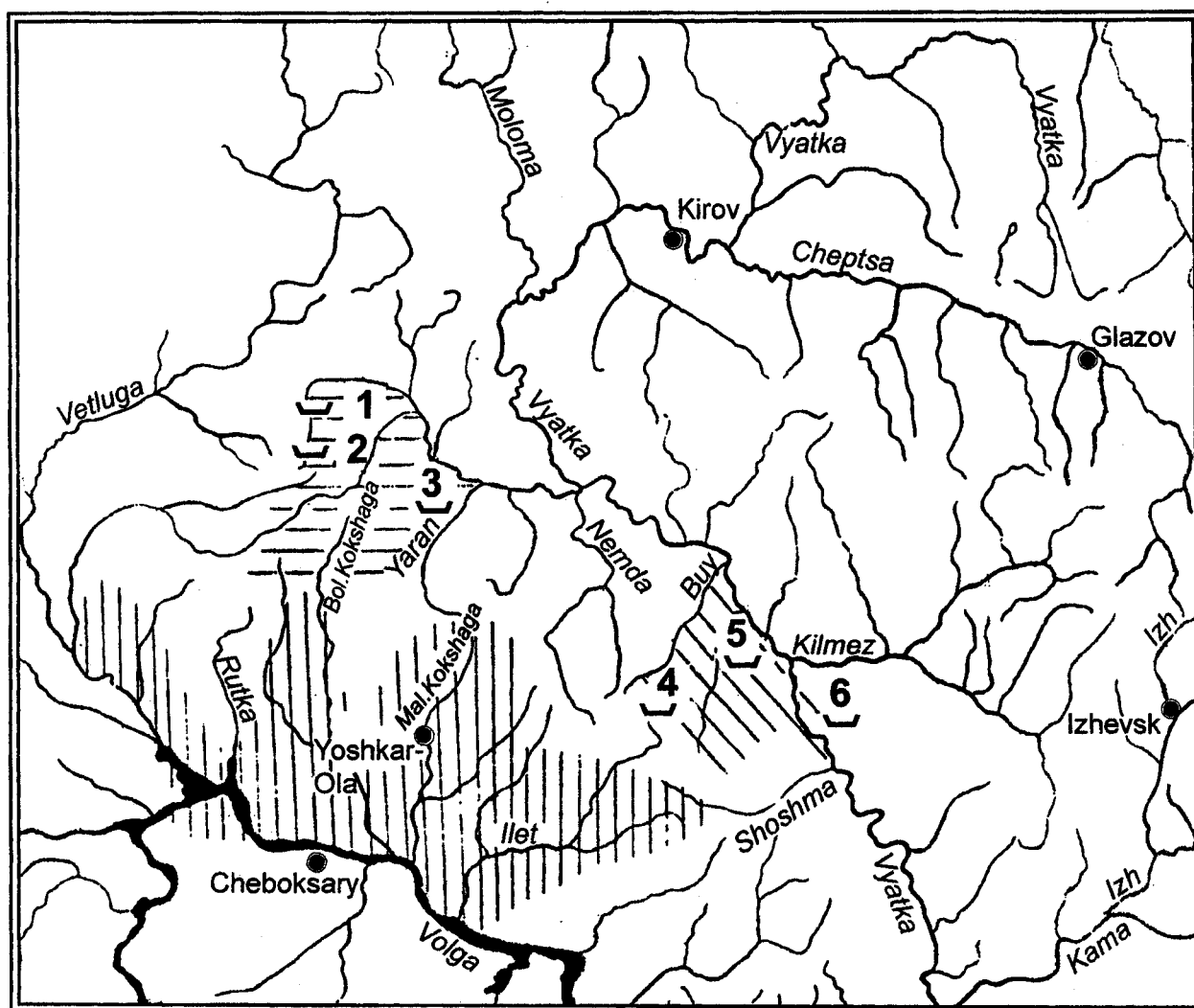


Fig.1. Mari cemeteries of XVI – early XIX centuries in the Vyatka basin: 1. Bolshie Oshkary; 2. Tonshaevo; 3. Grekovo; 4. Urzhum-nolya; 5. Kadochniki; 6. Melet I

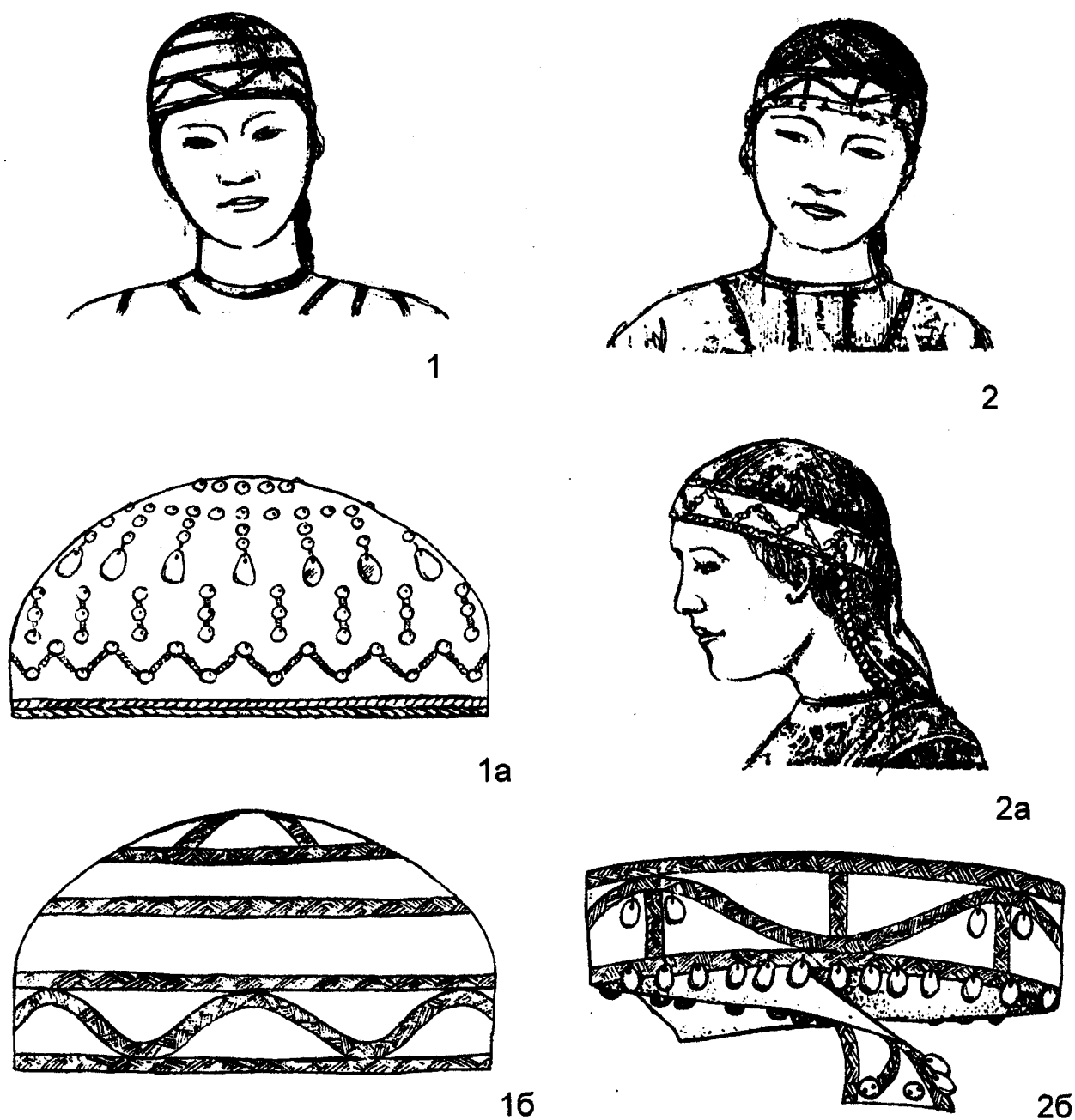
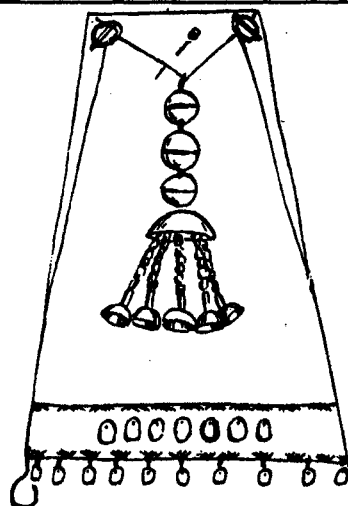


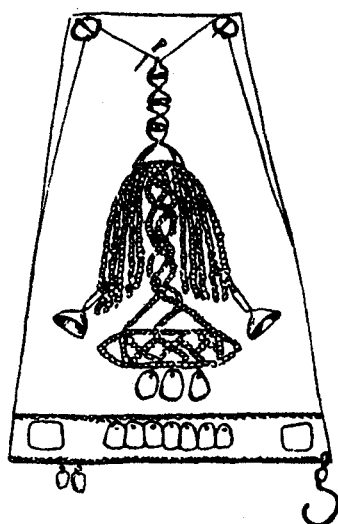
Fig.2. Girl's head-dresses



1



1B



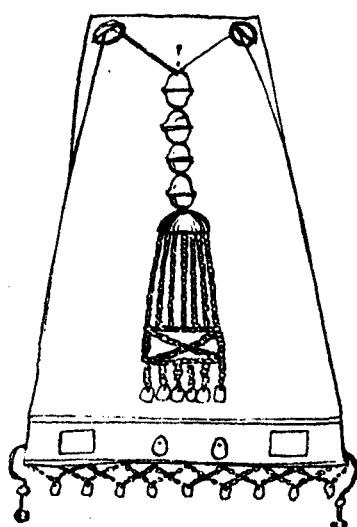
1a



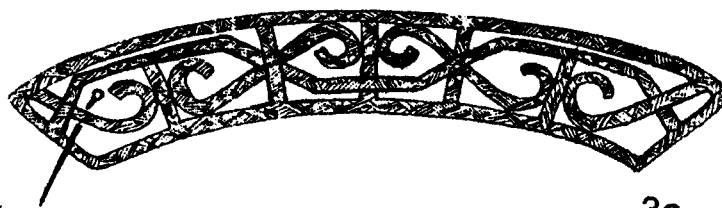
2



3



16



3a

Fig.3. Woman's head-dresses



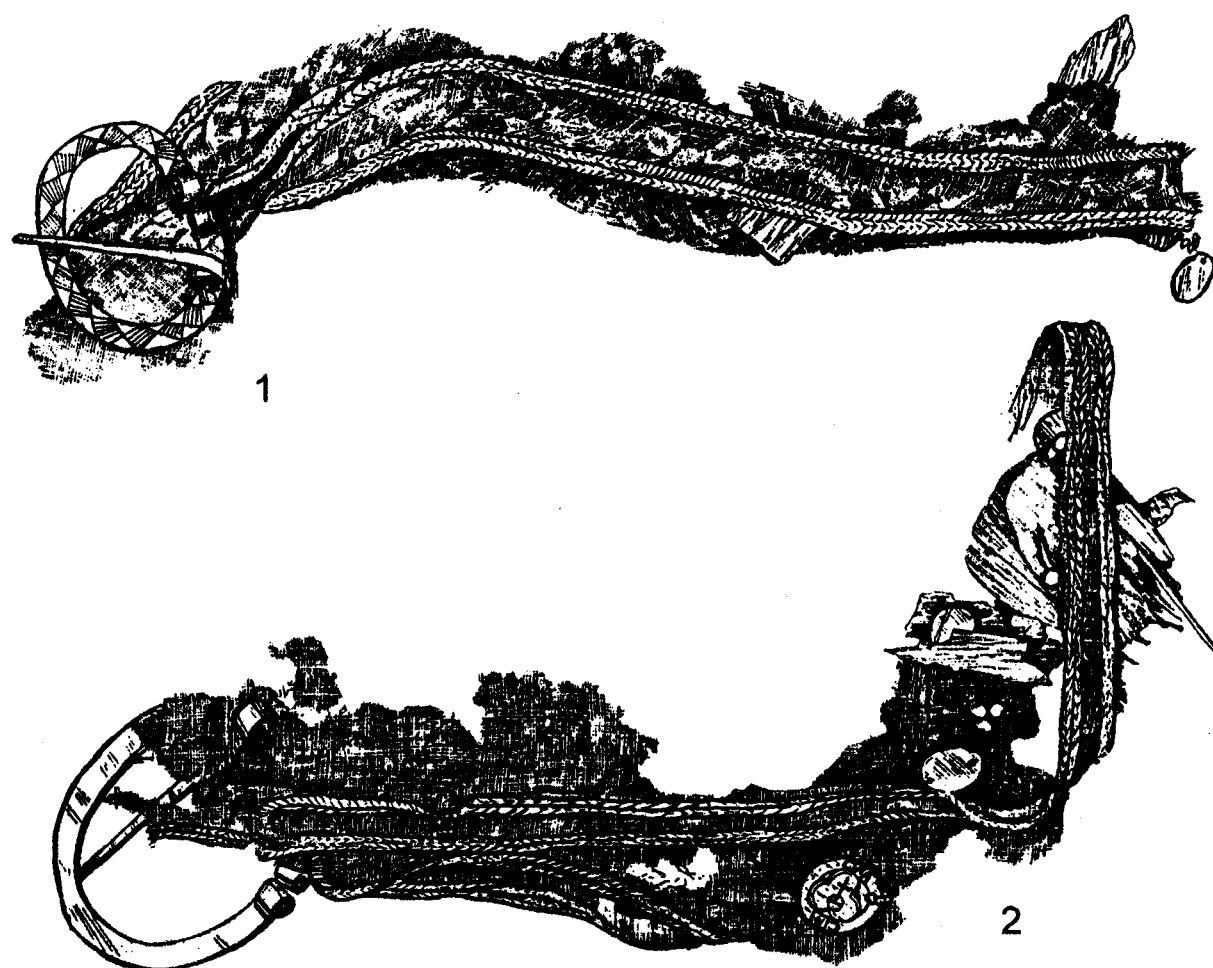


Fig. 4. Kadochniki cemetery. Head-dresses' parts – forehead bands: 1 – grave 4; 2 – grave 107

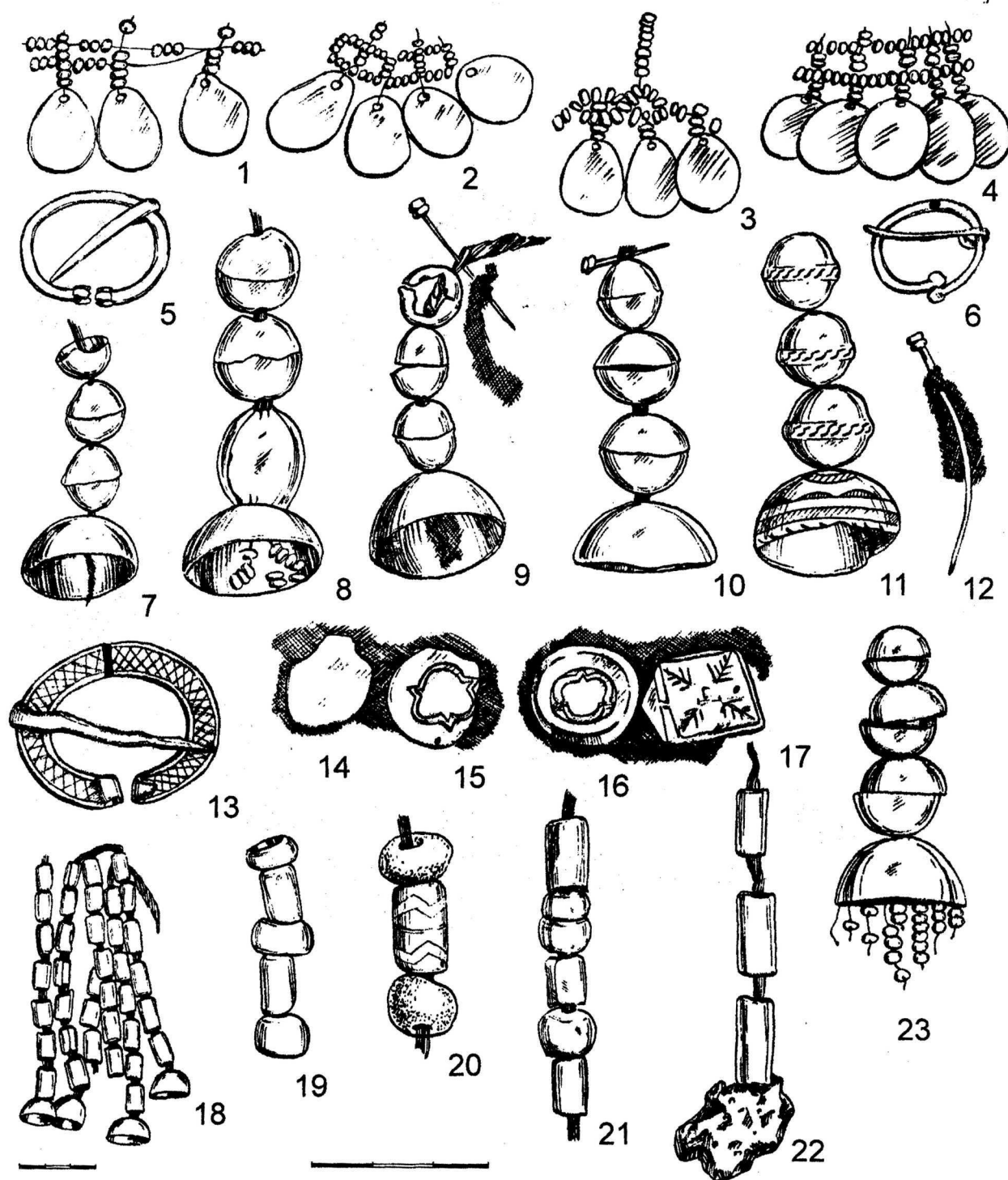


Fig.5. Parts of woman's head-dresses and waist decorations

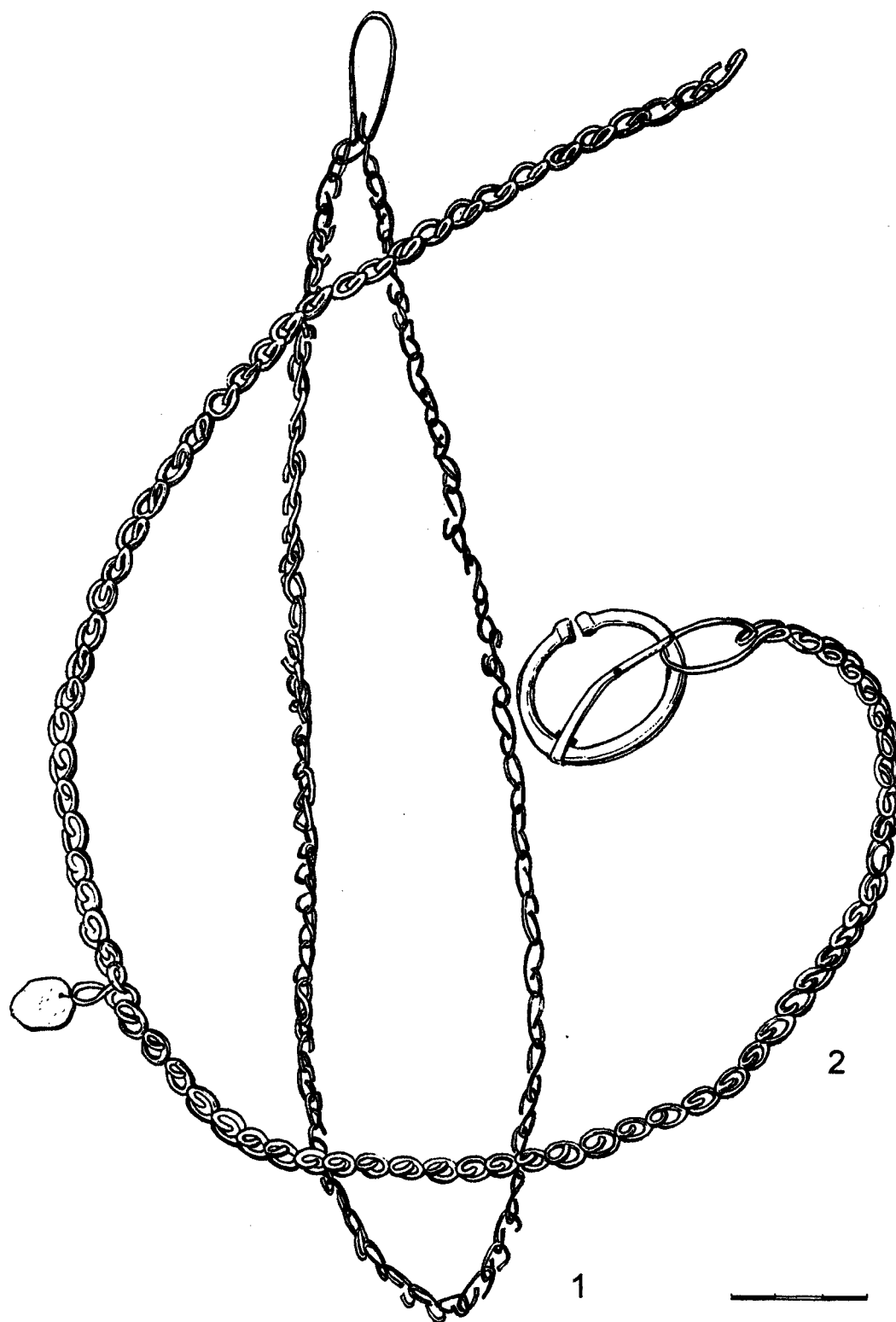


Fig. 6. Bronze chains

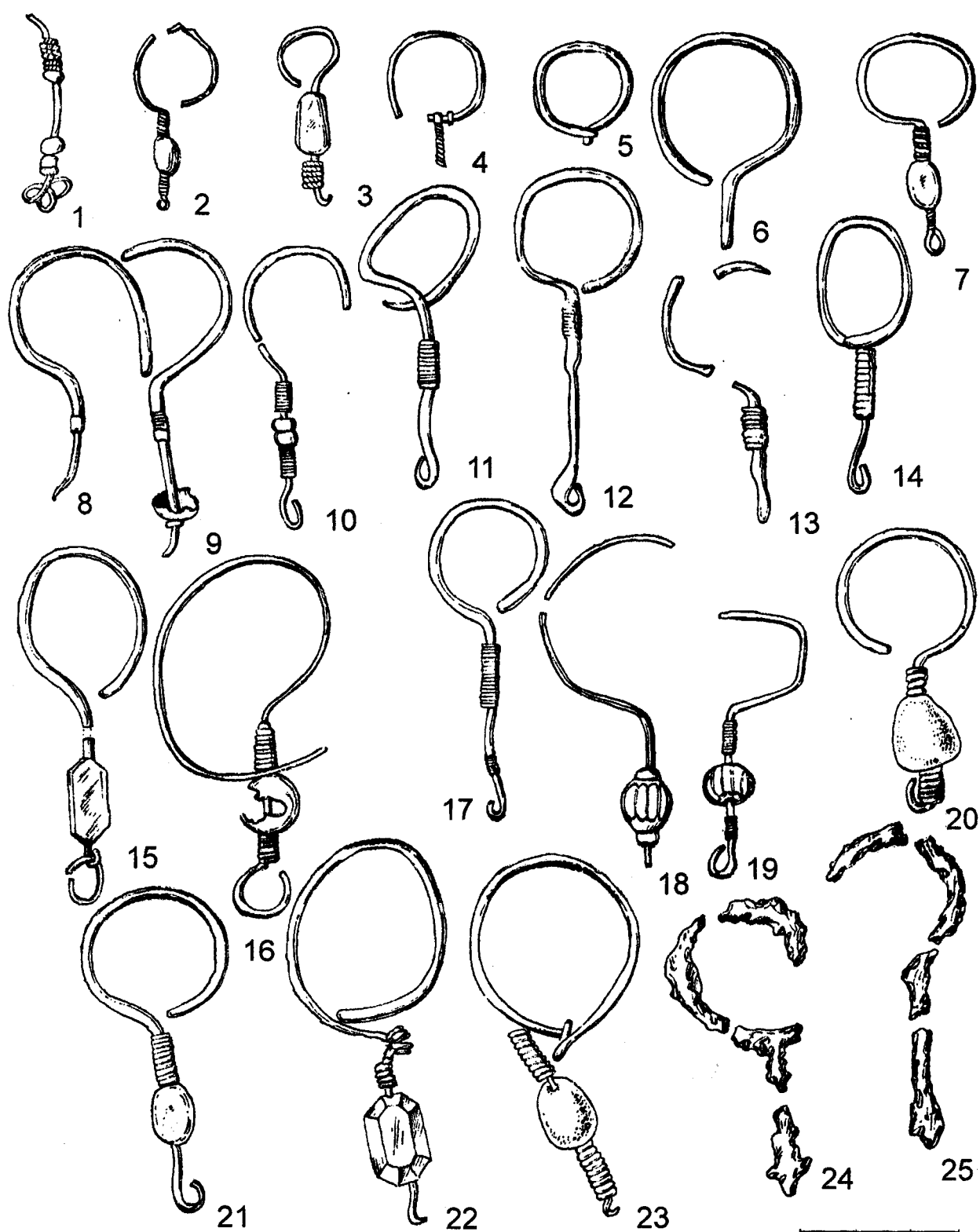


Fig. 7. Grekovo cemetery. Temple pendants

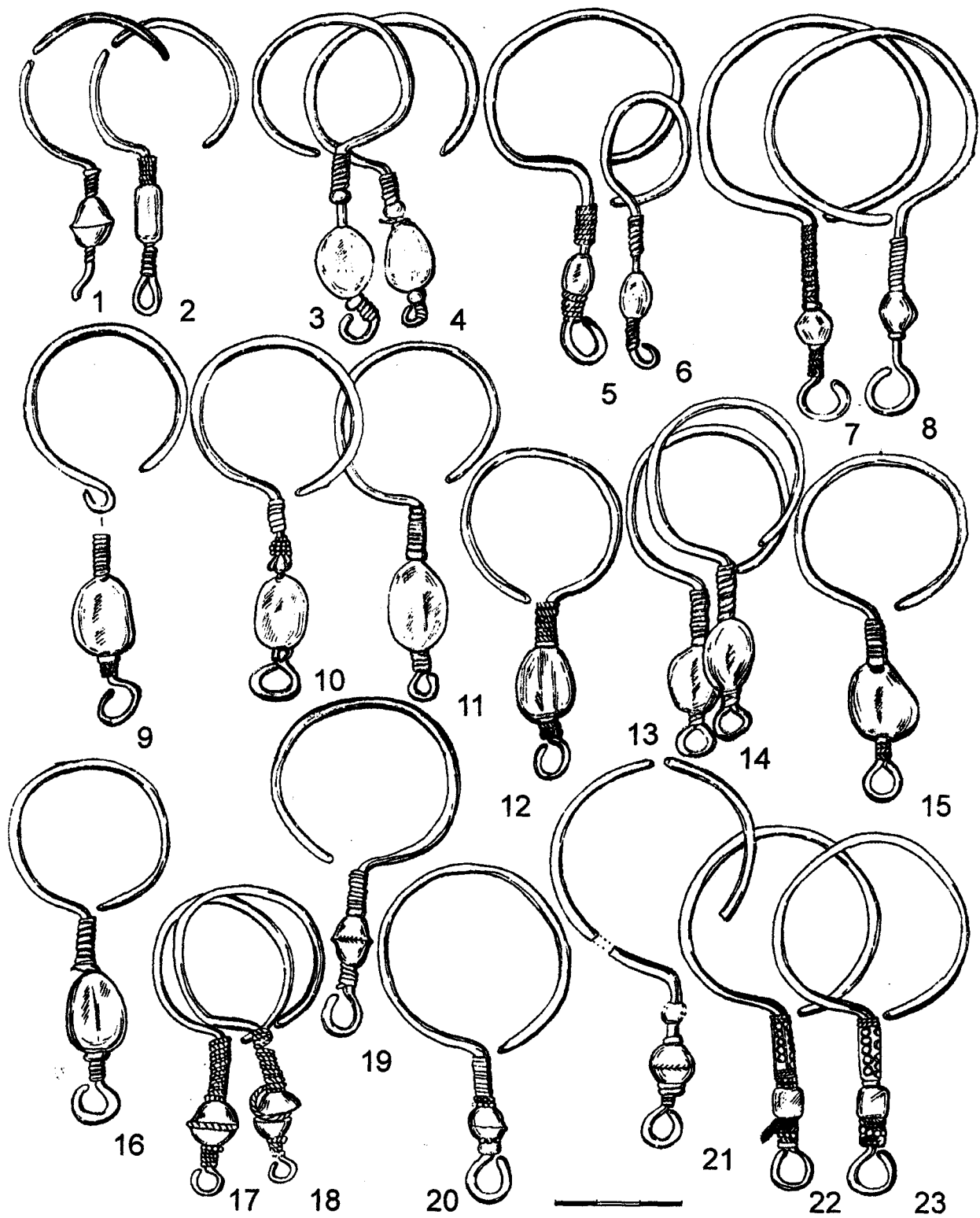


Fig. 8. Grekovo cemetery. Temple pendants

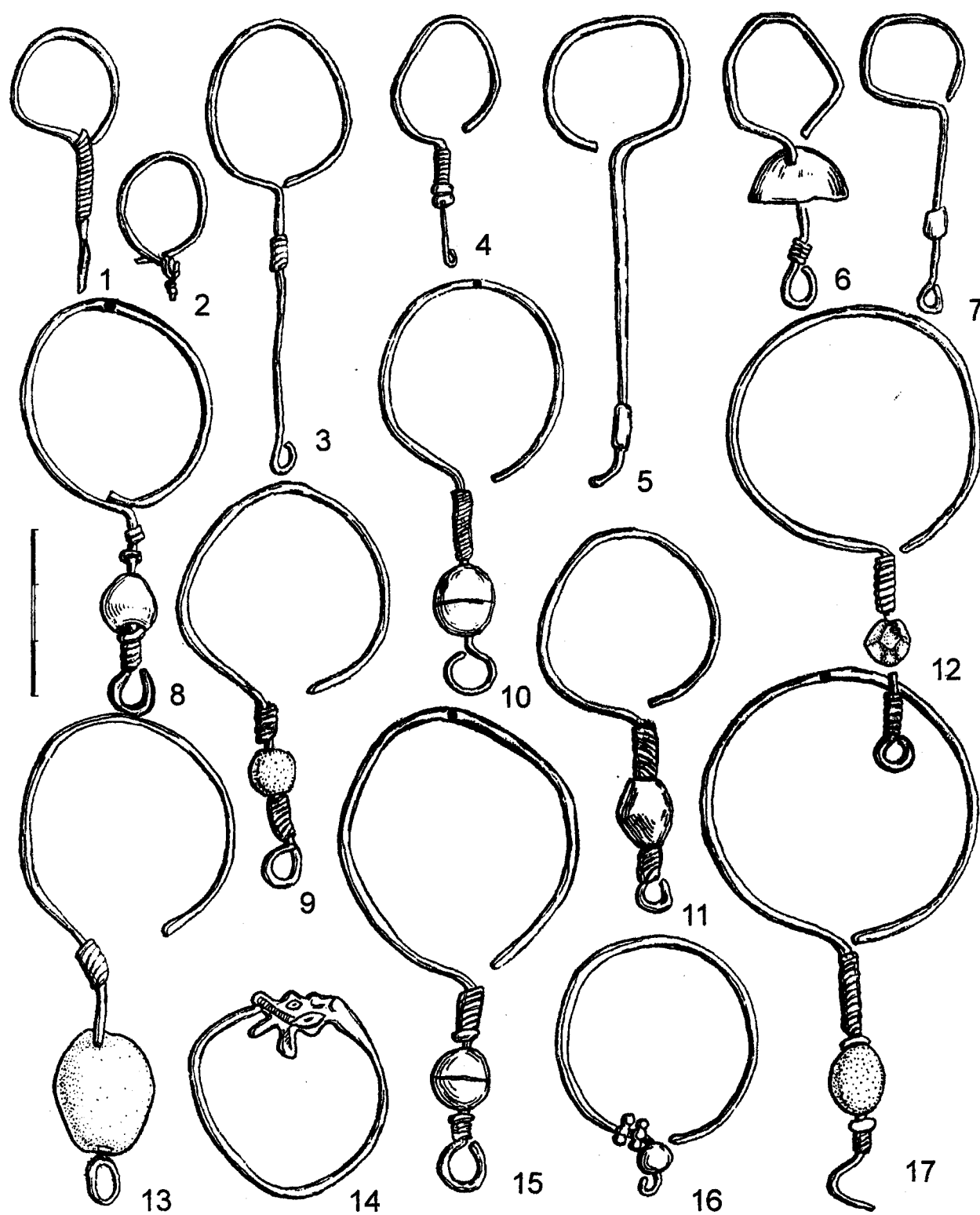


Fig. 9. Kadochniki cemetery. Temple decorations and pendants

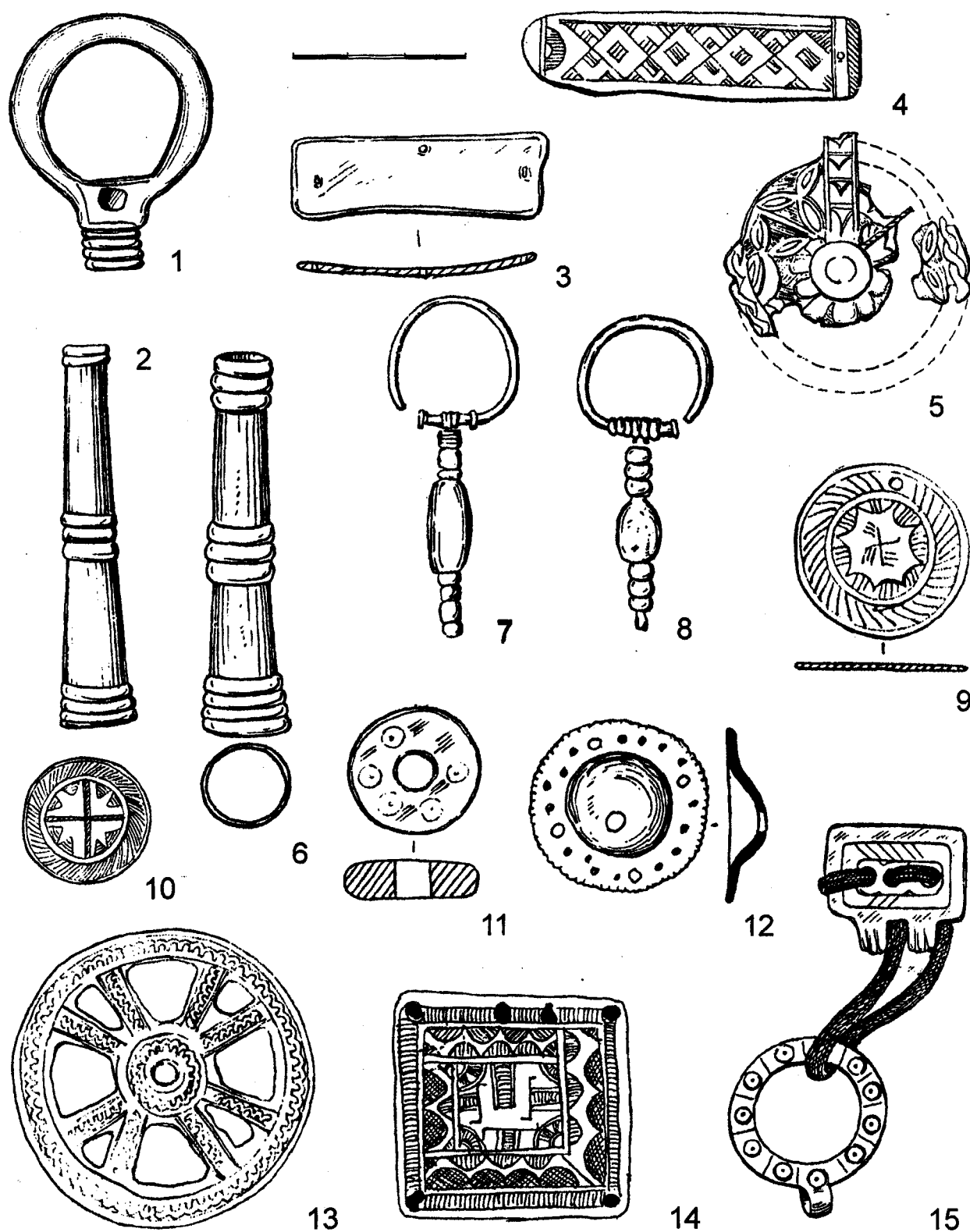


Fig. 10. Decoration parts of the woman's costume

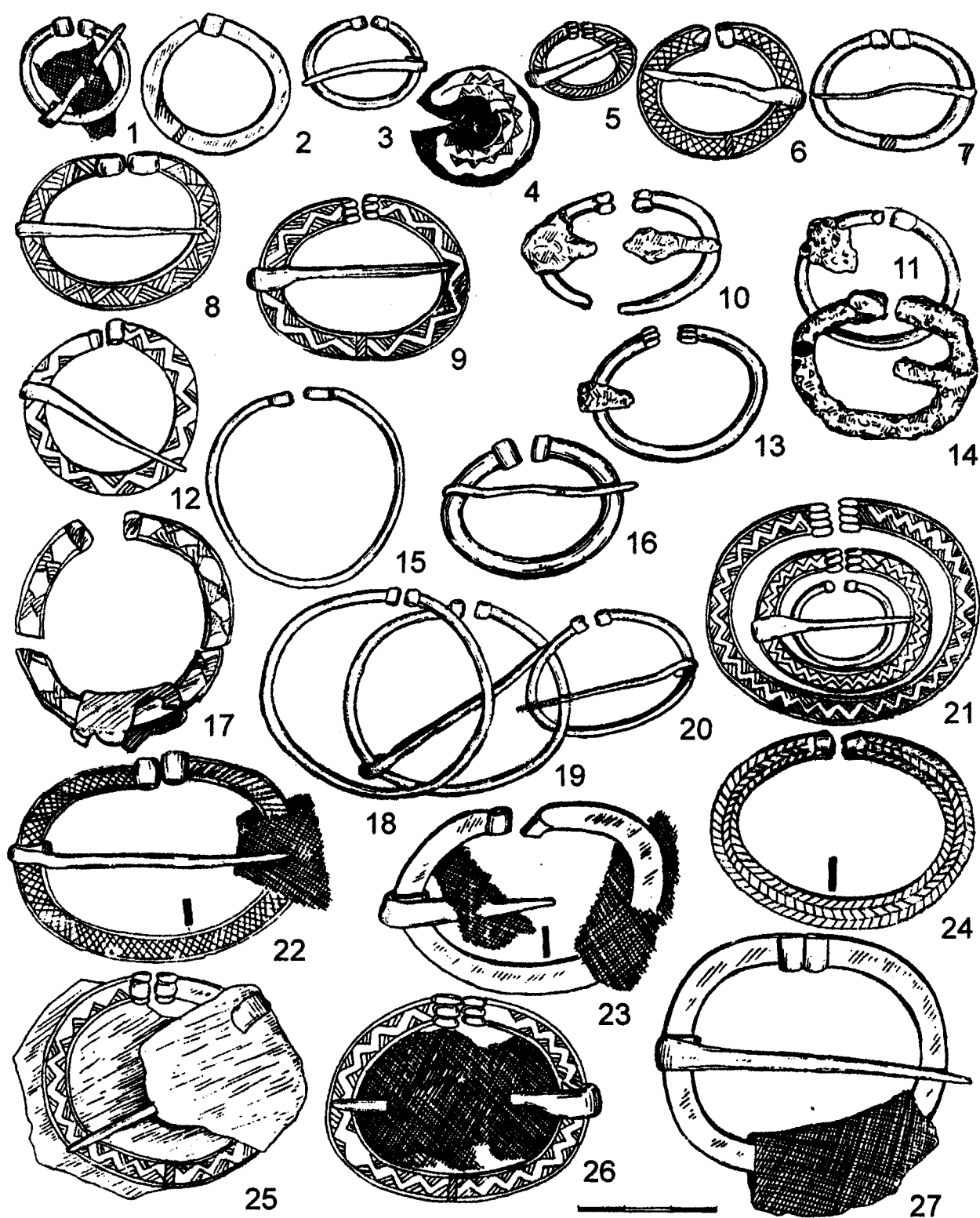


Fig. 11. Grekovo cemetery. Syulgamas



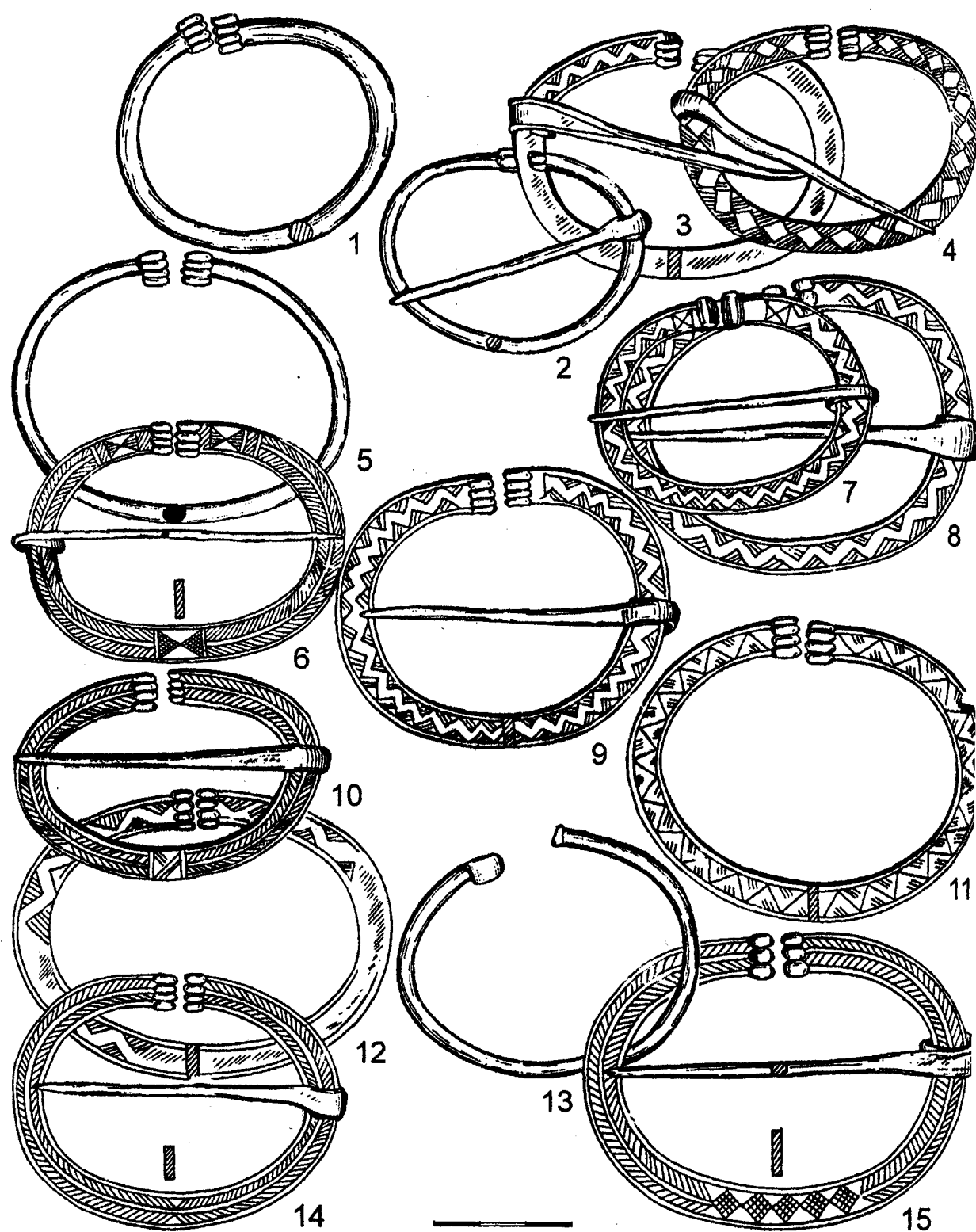


Fig. 12. Grekovo cemetery. Syulgamas

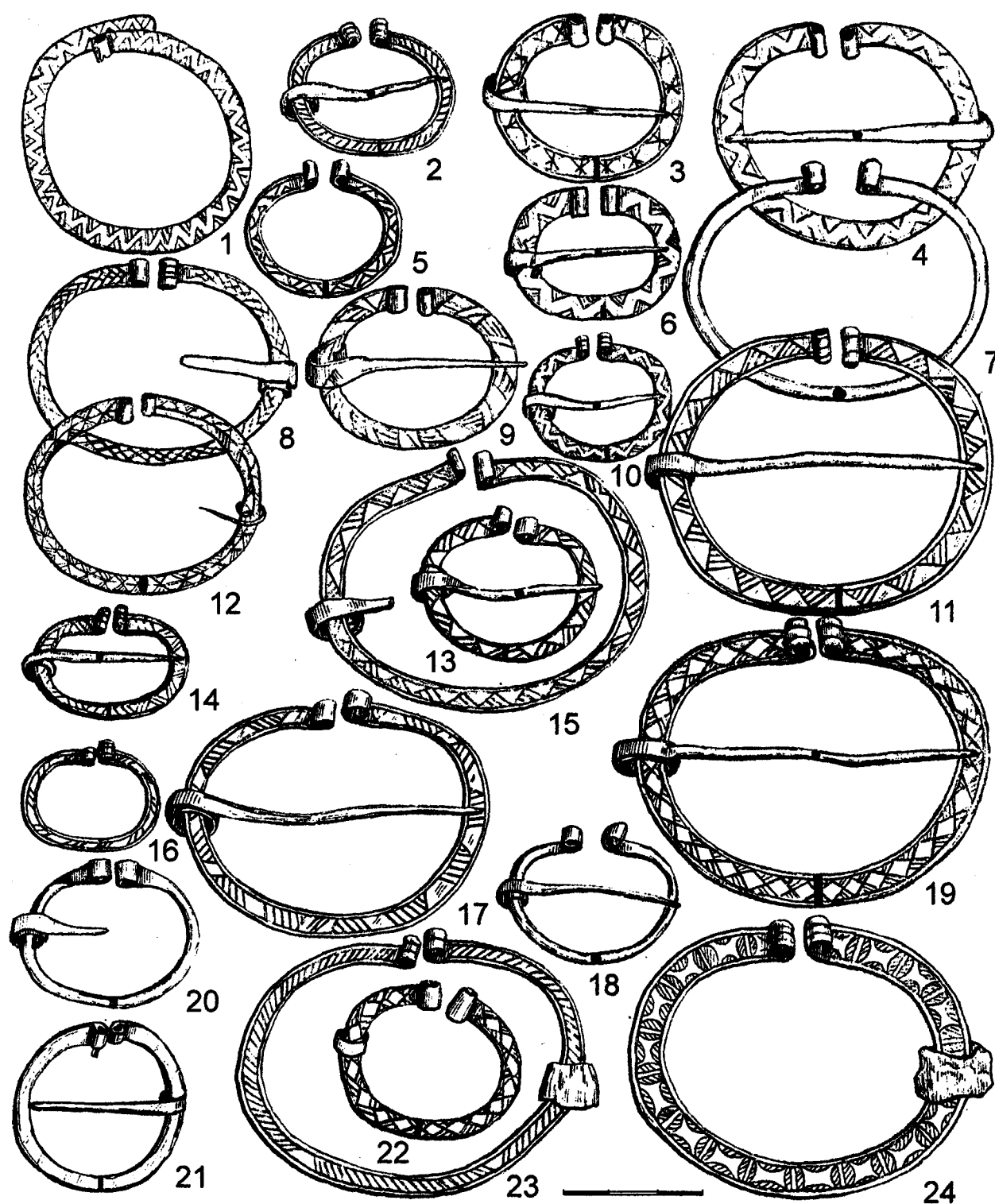


Fig. 13. Kadochniki cemetery. Syulgamas

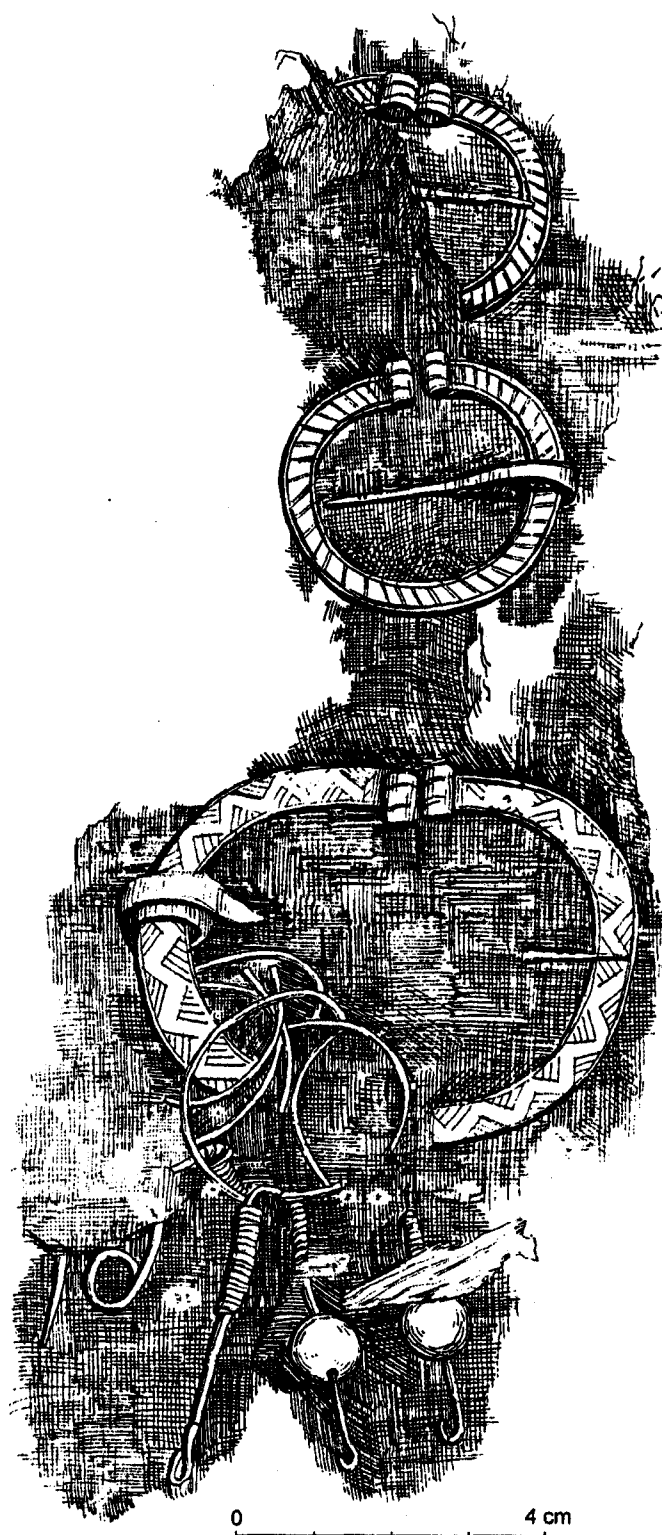


Fig. 14. Kadochniki cemetery. Grave 89. Breast decoration

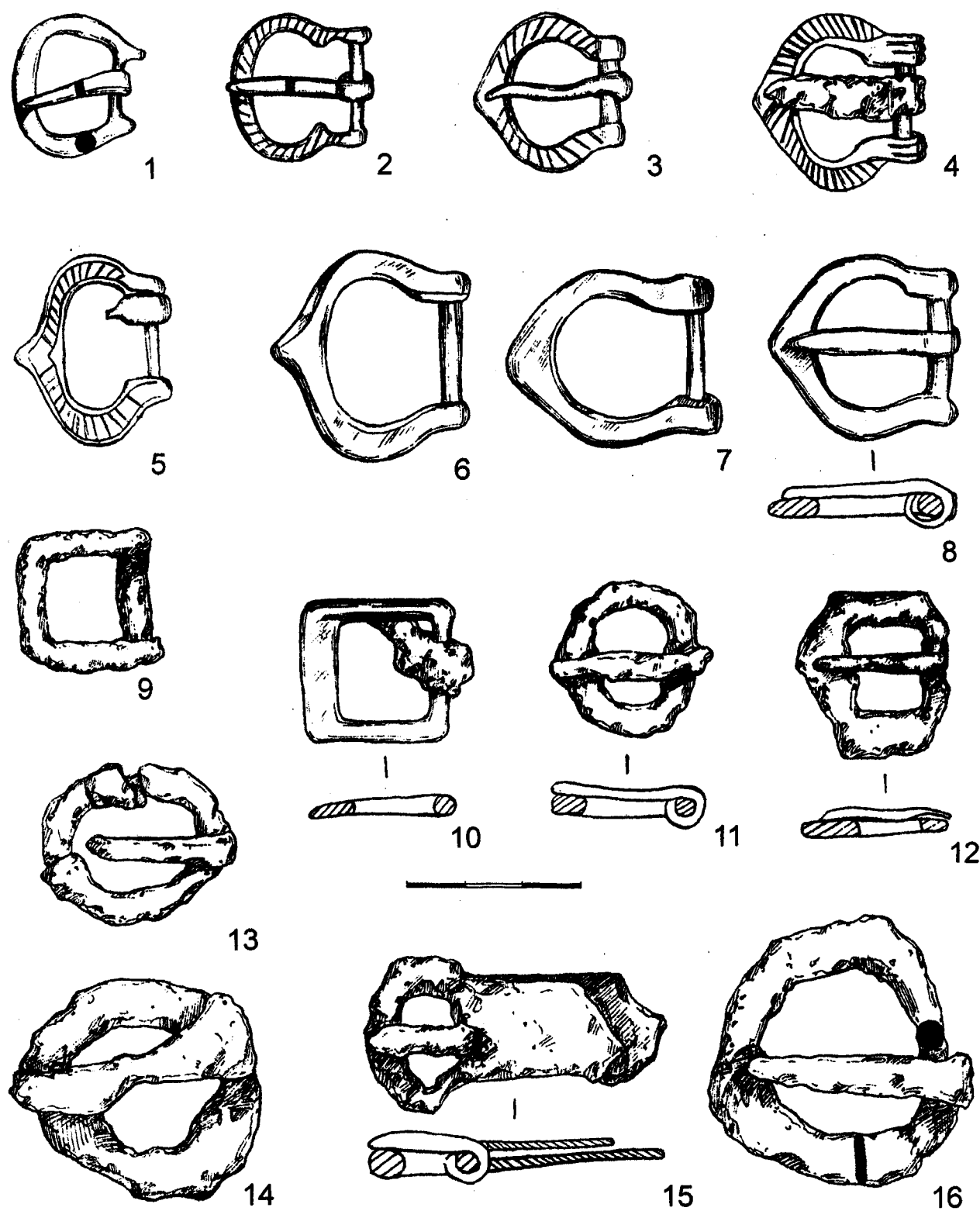


Fig. 15. Mari cemeteries. Copper and iron buckles

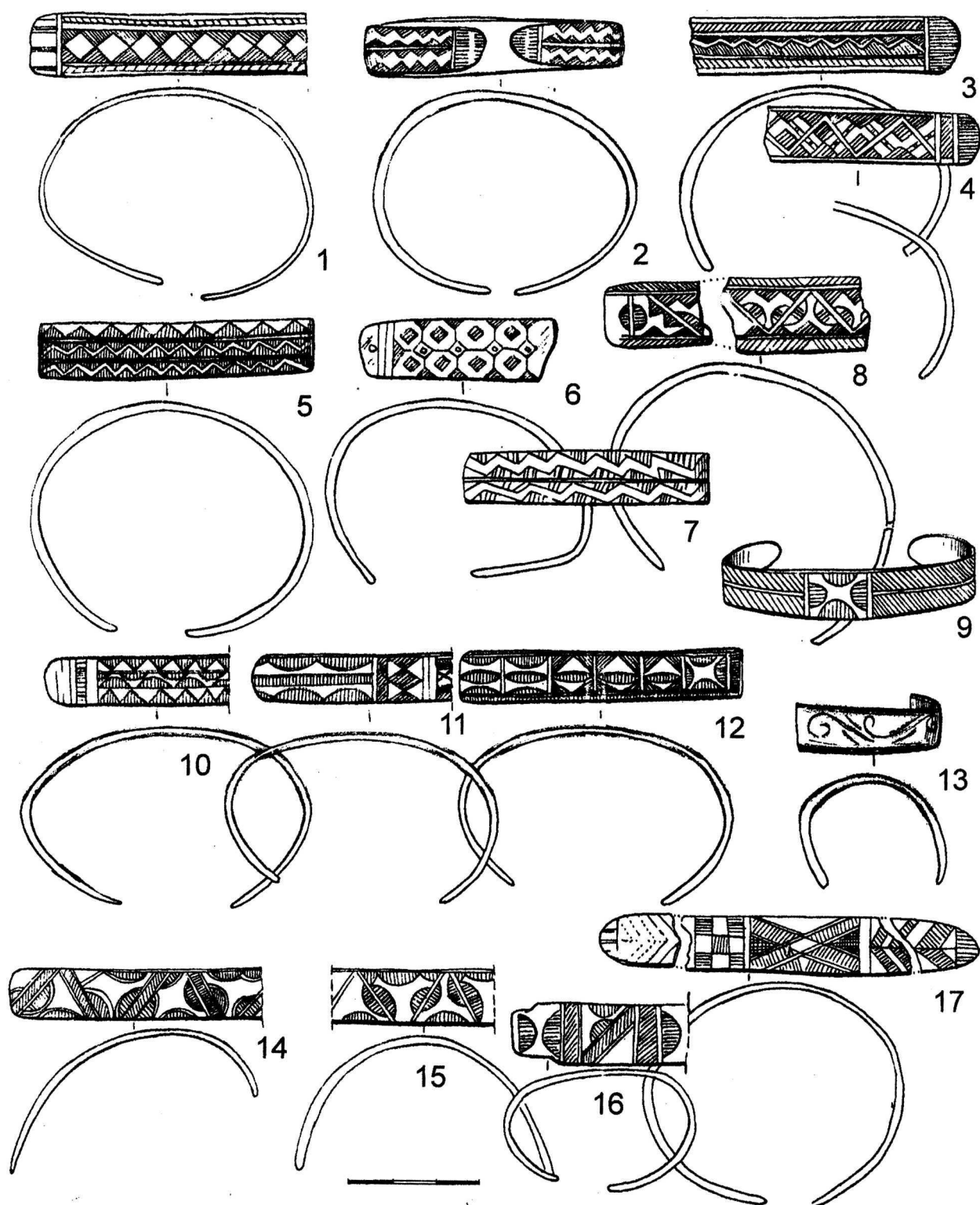


Fig. 16. Grekovo cemetery. Bracelets

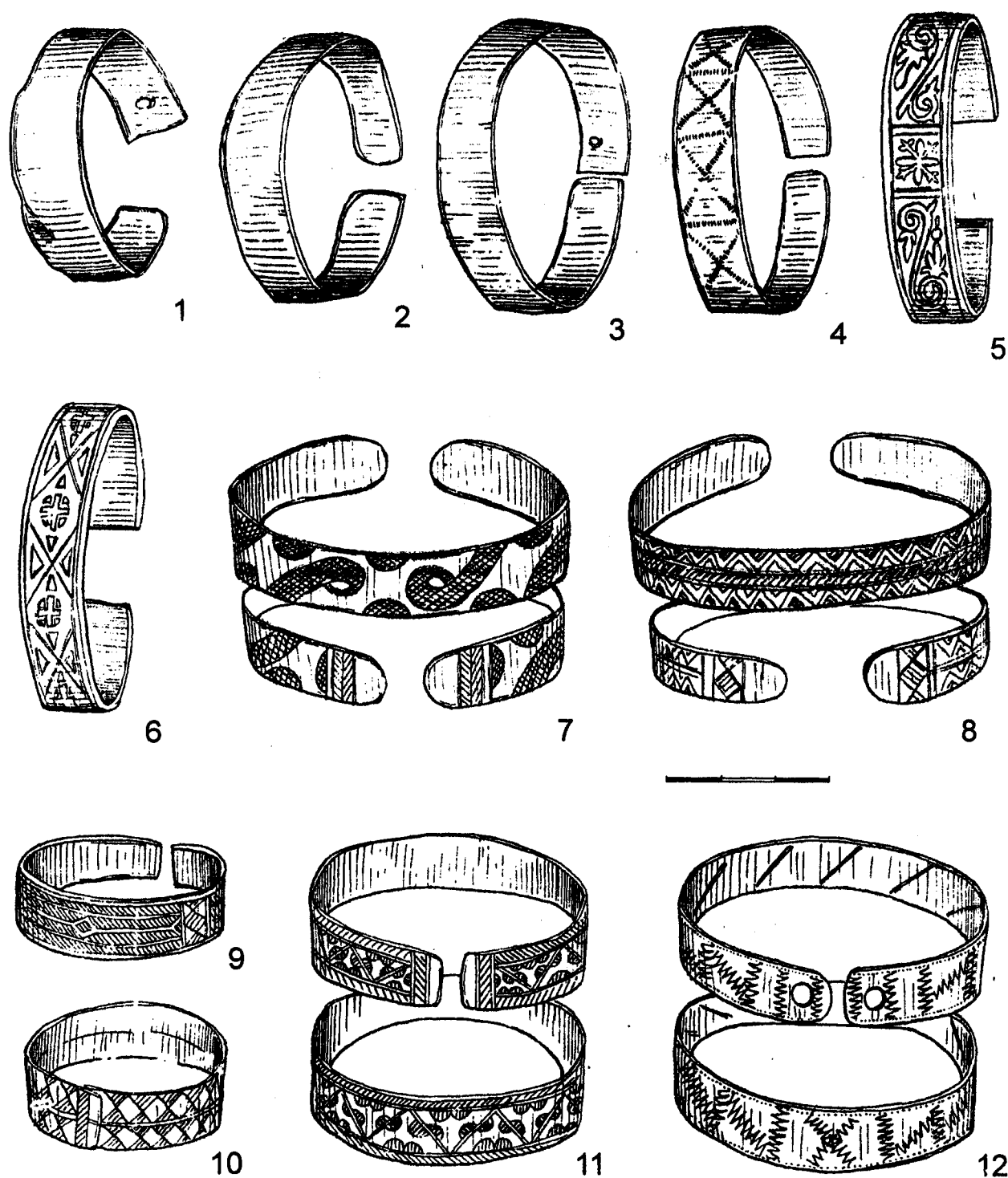


Fig. 17. Kadochniki cemetery. Bracelets

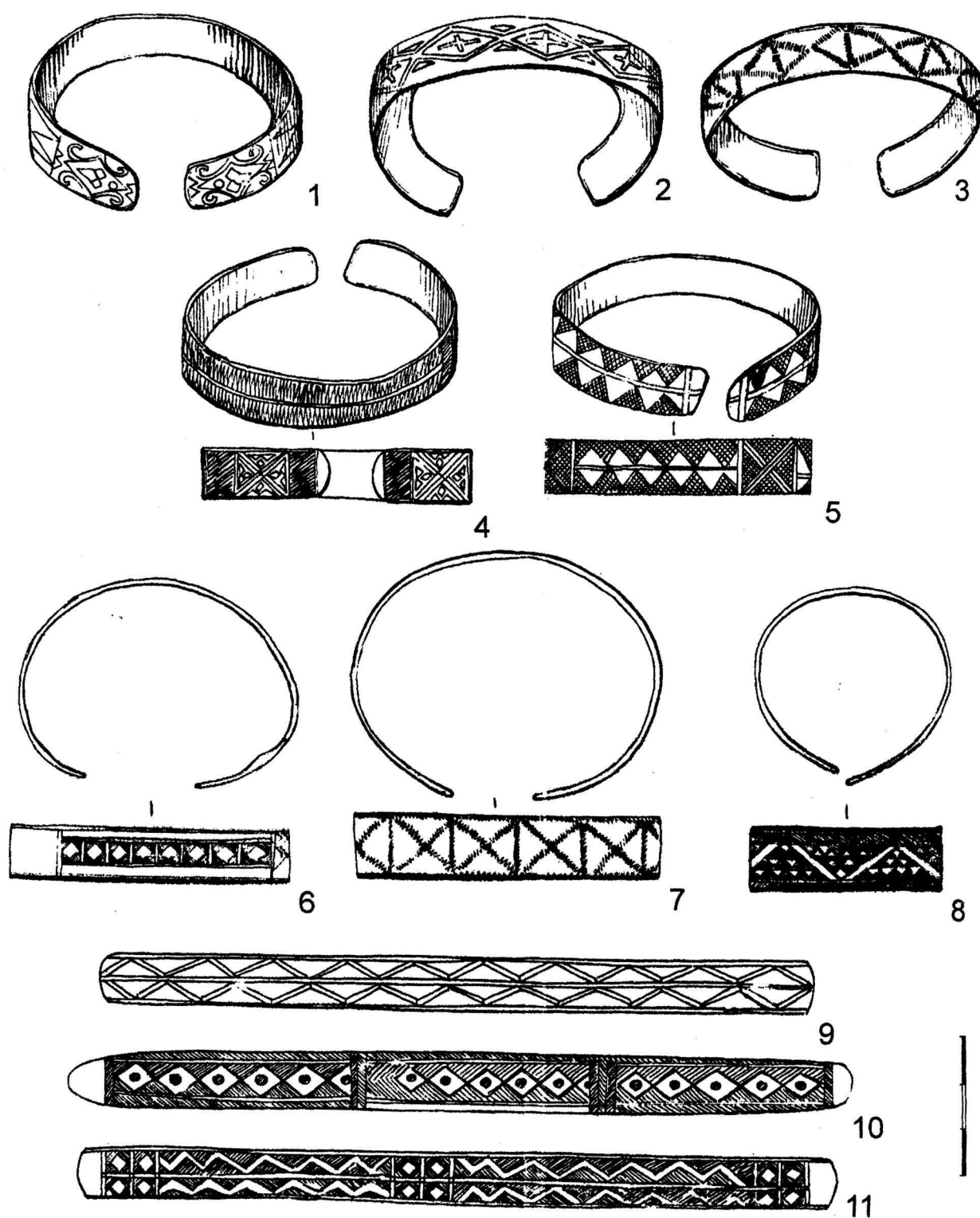


Fig. 18. Melet 1 cemetery. Bracelets

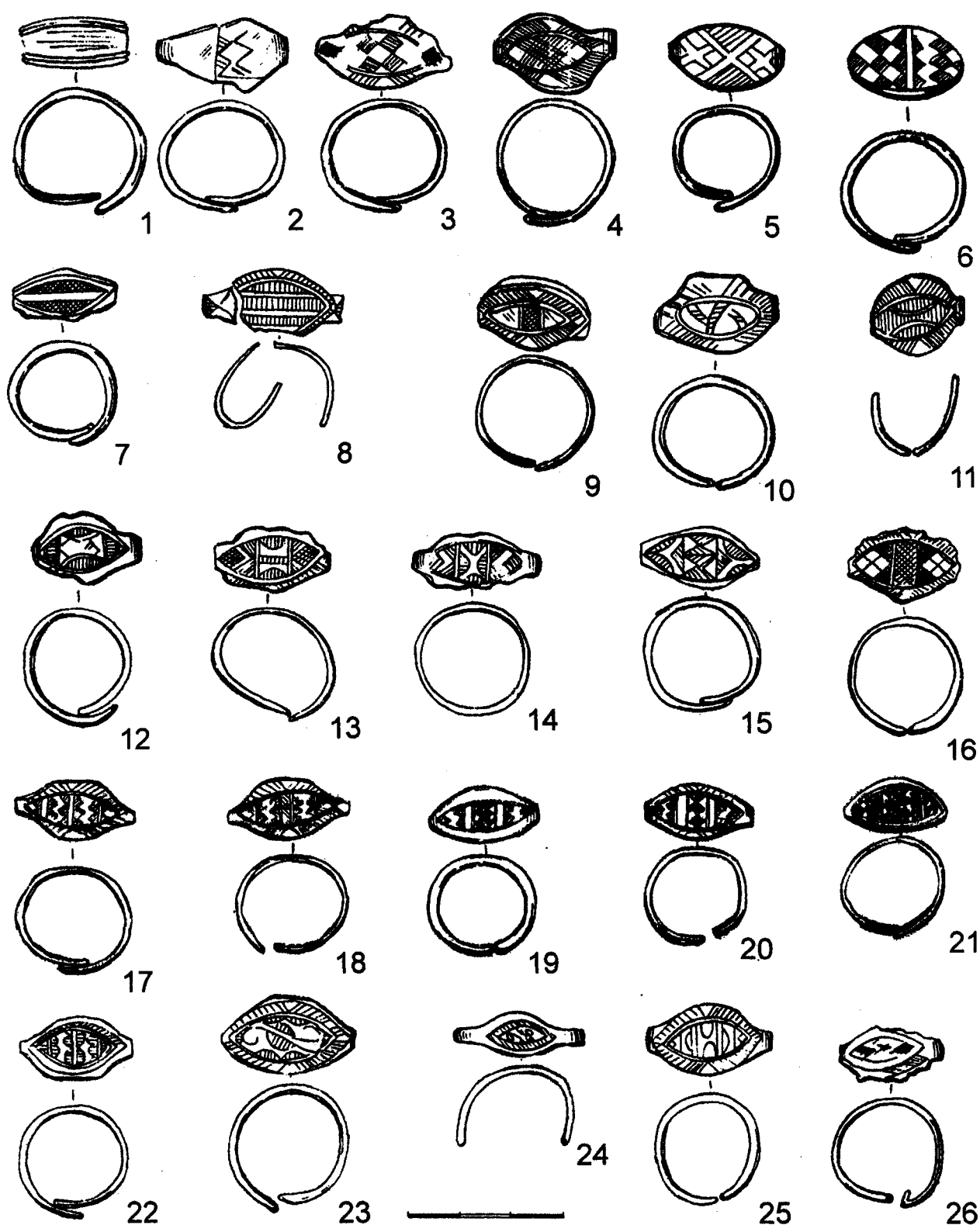


Fig. 19. Grekovo cemetery. Finger-rings



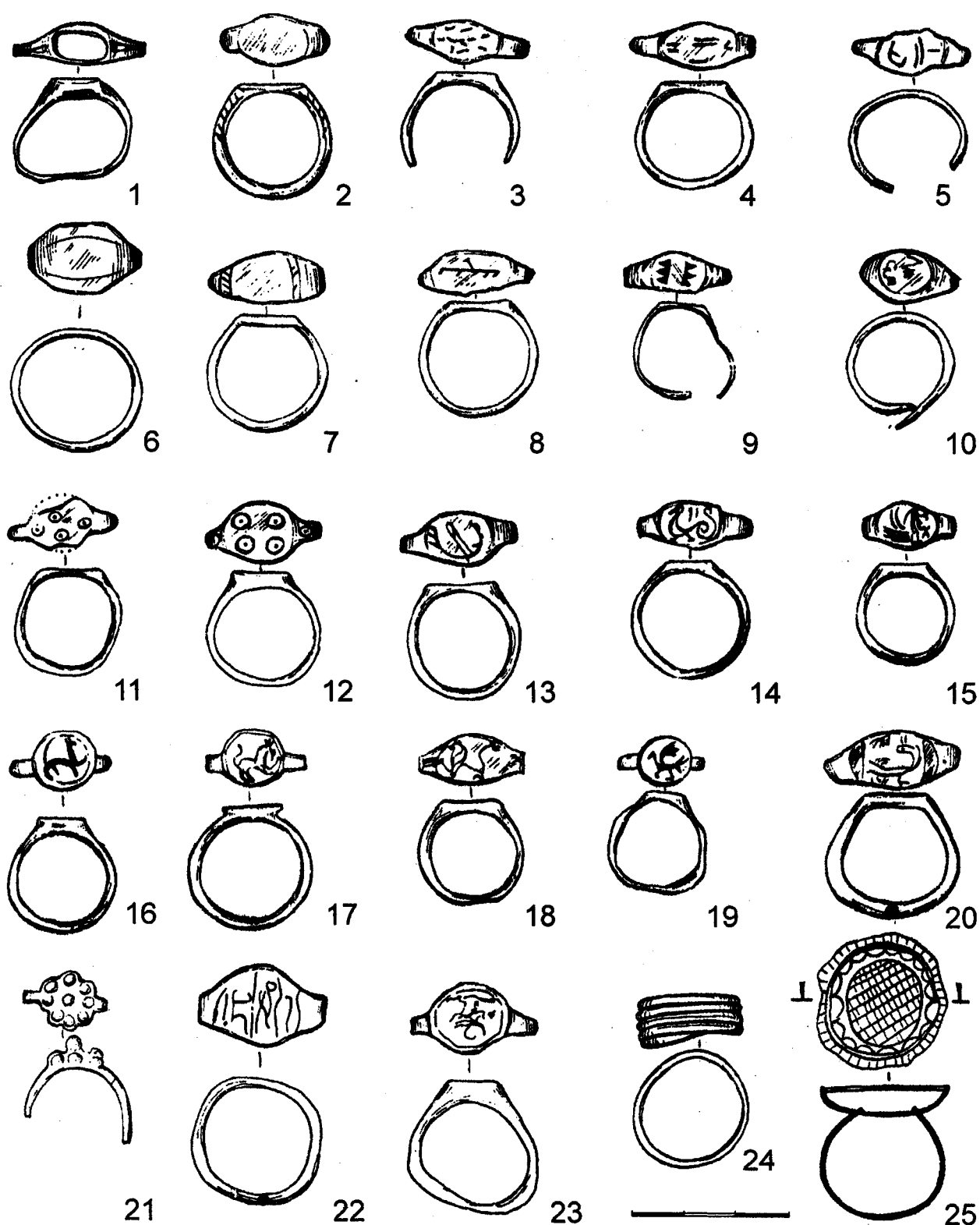


Fig. 20. Grekovo cemetery. Finger-rings

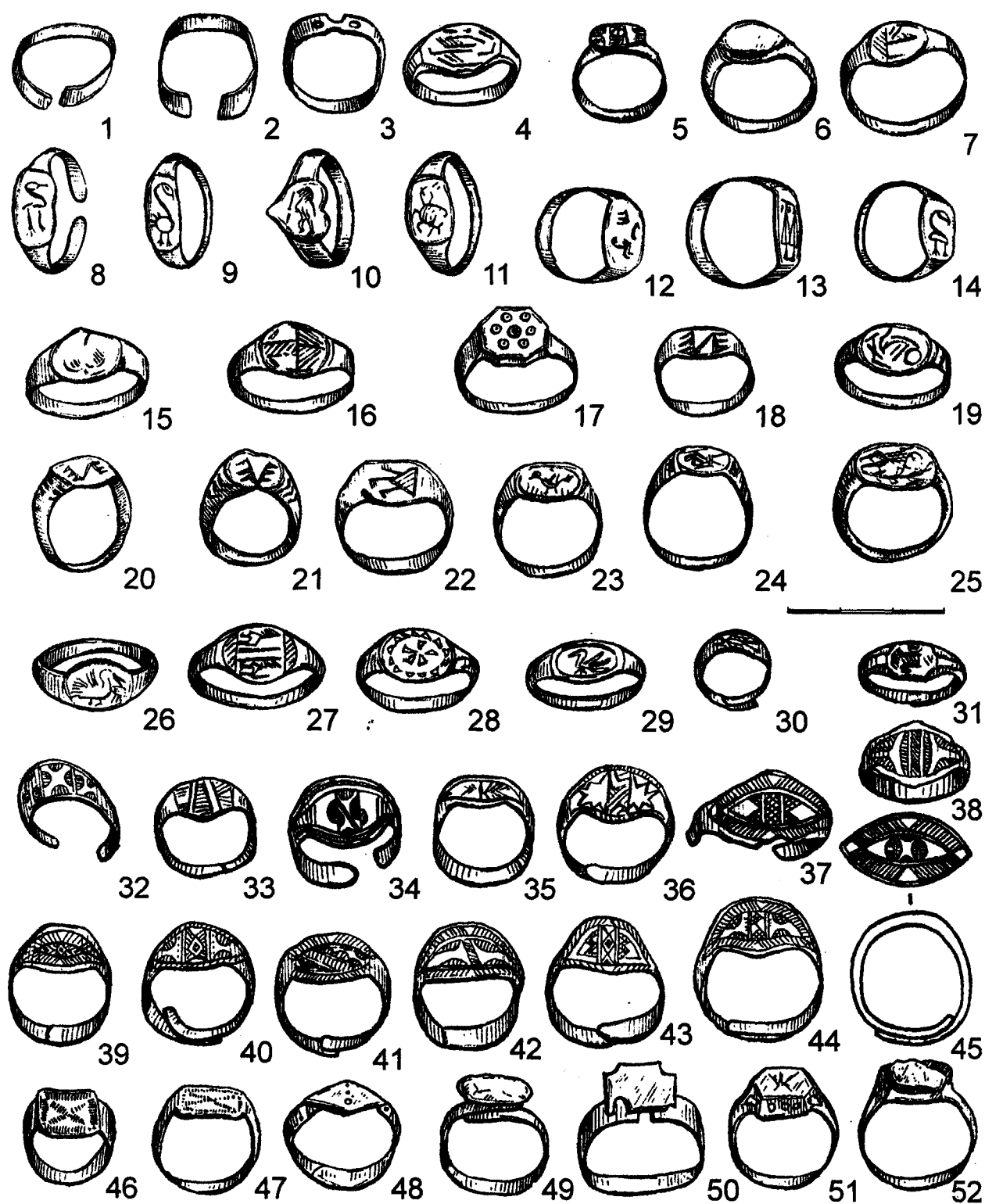


Fig. 21. Kadochniki cemetery. Finger-rings

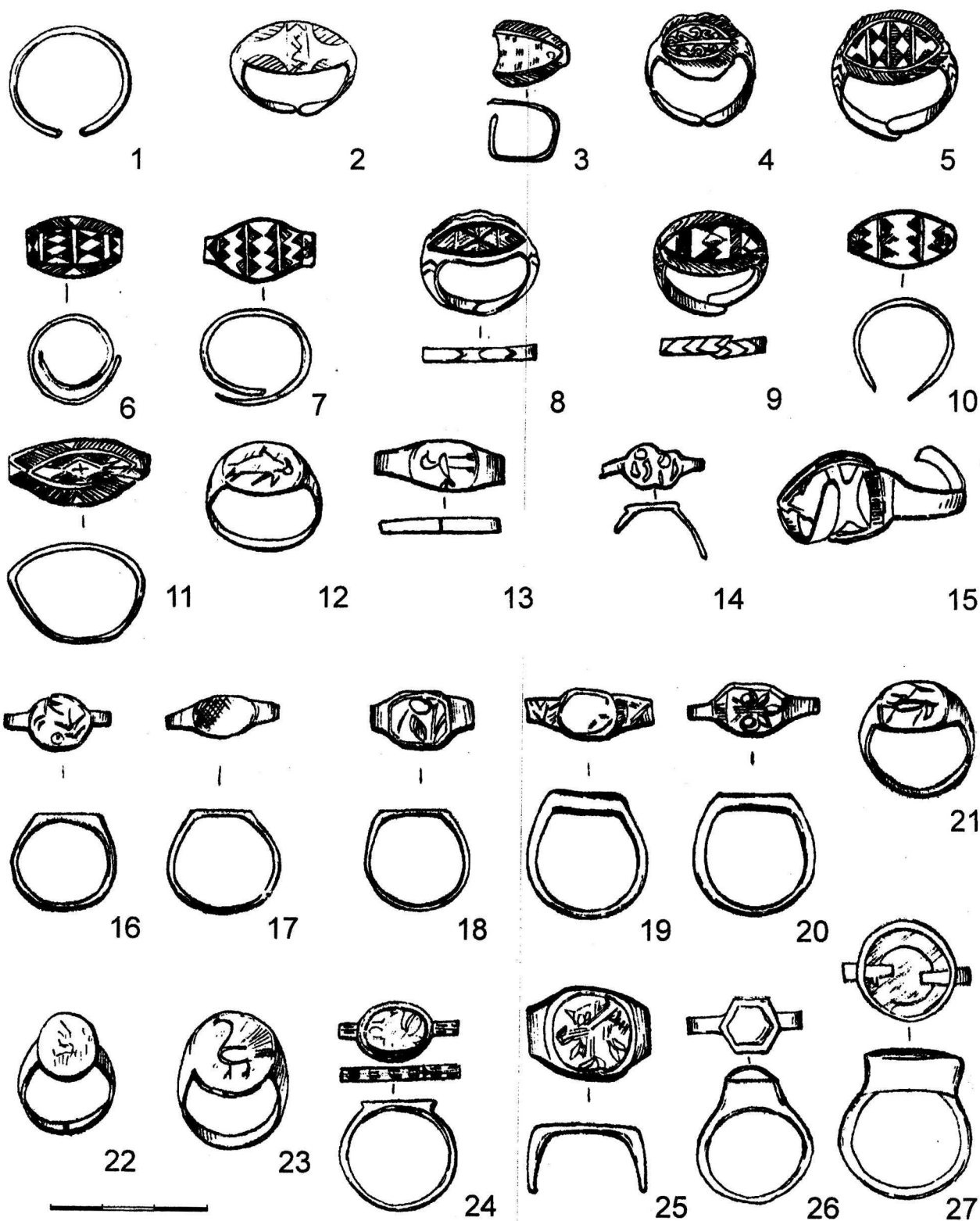


Fig. 22. Melet 1 cemetery. Finger-rings



Fig. 23. Reconstruction of the woman's costume (Grekovo, grave 43).

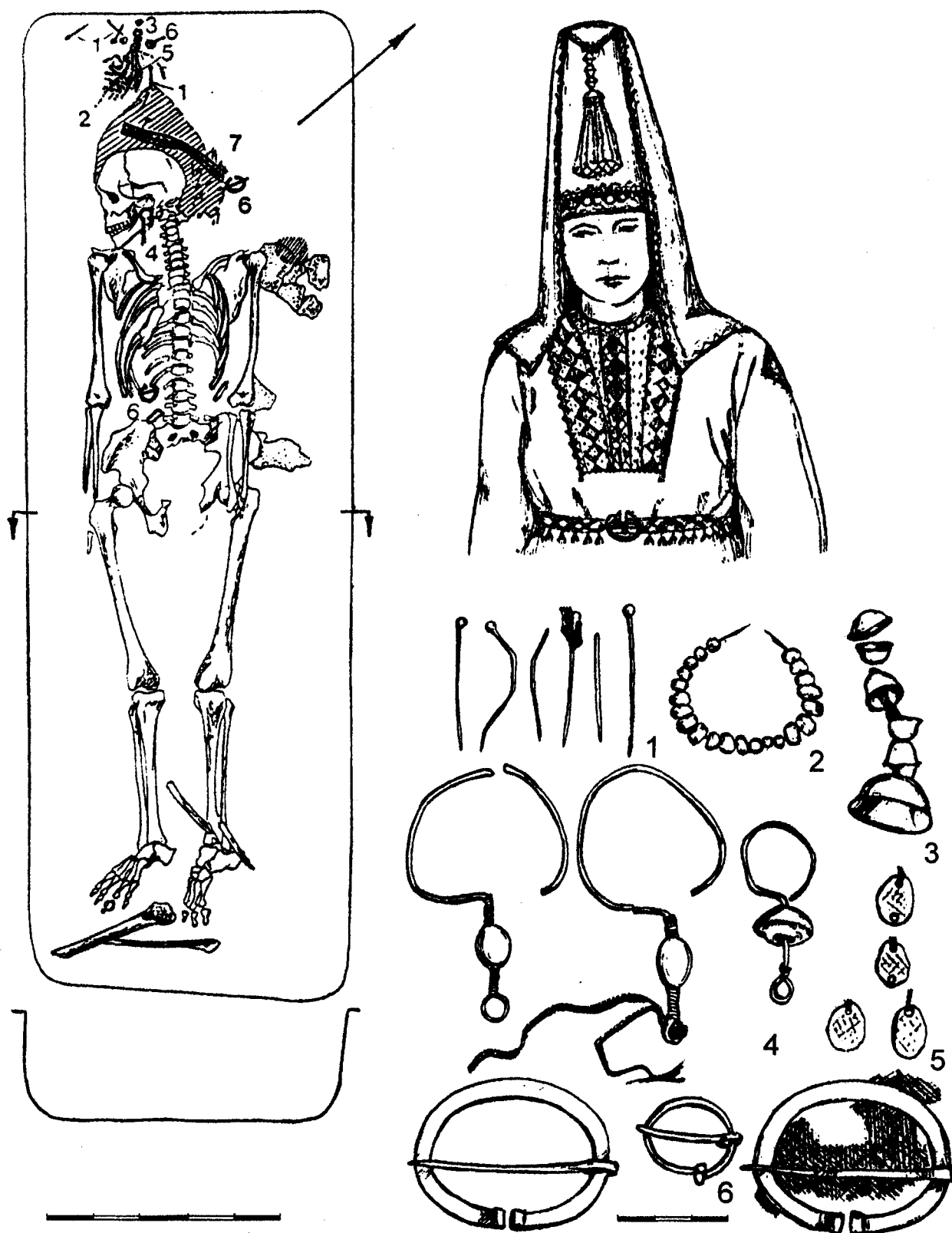


Fig. 24. Reconstruction of the woman's costume (Kadochniki, grave 4)