

The Location of Graves and Grave Goods in Paulje Necropolis, NW Serbia, between 13th - 6th Century BC

by Dimitrije Madas

About ten necropolises of tumuli type well known in the literature for a long time are situated in the NW part of Serbia, in the valley of the river Jadar. Recently discovered the necropolis of Paulje site, is situated near the Brezjag village, 14 km NE from Loznica and 140 km SW from Belgrade (fig. 1).

The first excavations of the necropolis of the Paulje site were done at the end of 19th century (Valtrović 1882). The work was continued recently during 1989, 1990 (Madas 1990), and completed in 1995. In this period seven mounds of the necropolis were completely explored and marked from A to G. Archaeological luck varied, and the most valuable results, were attained in tumulus A during the first year of the excavation.

The necropolis of Paulje site is located in fertile valley of the small Korenita river and consists of about fifty mounds of different size. Today one part of necropolis is under cultivation. In that zone some of the mounds were destroyed by intensive cultivation and erosion. Another part of the necropolis is situated in woodland, so there for all mounds from that zone are preserved. Looking at the preserved part of necropolis, small groups (between 3 and 5) of mounds could be separated and in each group one mound was dominant. The dimension of tumuli is usually about 12 m in diameter and 1 m in relative height, while larger ones could have diameter up to 17 - 20 m and height up to 1.2 - 1.5 m. In excavated tumuli only one kind of burial were noted: the

cremation on the pyre. Only different forms of grave goods have a particular meaning helping us in explanation of funerary custom. But, many details are not completely clear. Let us look briefly at the situation of each mound.

TUMULUS A (R-19 m, H-1.1 m)

(fig. 2, 5, 8).

In the tumulus A, remains of bonfire were not found, but only one circular pit with a border made of reddish burn soil. On the western side the mound there was a large urn filled with remains of burnt human bones. The central grave of the mound was marked with 24 peace of personal belongings and garments of a buried. On the North and East side from that place a couple of bracelets and upper arm bracelets was found. So, the area with grave goods covered over approximately 6 m² including shards of deliberately broken ceramic vessels. The area with grave goods was covered with a thin layer of small stone peace. The traces of burning are obvious on some metal grave goods (bracelets), that infers burning cremated body.

TUMULUS B (R-15 M, H-1.9 M) (fig. 2)

On the level approximately 0.5 m below the peak of the tumulus one iron knife was found, as well as traces of a fireplace and small stone formation mixed with ashes on of relative level of 0.9 m below the peak.

TUMULUS C (R-21 m, H-1.9 m) (fig. 2)

In the central of the tumulus C slab-like stone, as symbolic mark of center, was found on

approximately 0.4 m of relative height, as well as two large spears on .7 m of relative height. A big bronze needle (1.1 m length), and remains of extensive burning place (ashes, small burned bones) were discovered North of center. The first was found on the Southwest side and another on Southeast side on relative level of 1 m. the urn was not discovered so we can conclude that burned body was left on the pyre.

TUMULUS D (R-14 m, H-0.8 m) (fig. 3)

In the Western part of the mound almost on its surface a bronze bracelet was on relative level 0.6 m. A grave was found in the central part on the same level. The grave was made of two units : a irregularly shaped pile of river lenses mixed ashes and fragmented ceramic urn. Both of the units were covered with river lenses on area of around 2 m².

TUMULUS E (R-15 m, H-1.0 m) (fig. 3)

In the central part of tumulus E, marked with a stone an irregular pile of stones, ashes and unburned bones was found, as well as large ceramic vessel which was used as an urn.

TUMULUS F (R-18 m, H-1.1 m) (fig. 3)

The pyre was located in the central part of the mound, on the level from which formation of the tumulus was indicated. Remains of cremated corpse were left on the burning place, and the urn was absent. 2.5 m from the central part of the Southwest and the Northeast peace of two small ceramic vessels were found. On the relative level 0.3 m an iron spearhead surrounded by traces of a small fireplace were discovered.

TUMULUS G (R-16 m, H-0.9 m) (fig. 3)

The pyre was located in the central part of the mound, on the level from which the formation of the tumulus was started. It was characterized by obvious traces of ashes and charcoal. On the Northern side from the center, on the level of the pyre, fragments of large ceramic cup were found with ornamented tape-like handle. On the Northeast two iron spearheads were found.

According to the previously presented results from the archaeological excavations we can conclude about some typical burial customs and funeral process :

- cremation was the only way of the burial;
- the pyre was always located in the central part of tumulus with obvious traces of ash and charcoal;
- the tumulus was always situated on remains of the pyre;
- the descendants formed tumulus after the ignition, burning and cooling pyre using fine soil for covering the remains of burned body and remains of the pyre itself;
- all graves from the tumulus were covered with a tinny level of small stones and pebbles. In that manner graves were isolated, in magical and symbolic sense of the earth which came over all of it;
- in all tumulus we noted grave goods and small peace of ceramic pots which were broken over a grave during a funerary process.

This simple conclusions includes some very important details. From that point of view is evident two differentiate mean appearance :

I - in the first case, after cooling, ash and small peace of burned bones were left together with ash and charcoal of the pyre, in the area of pyre itself.

II - the second case is different only in one important detail: ash and peace of the burned bones were put into ceramic urns and buried together in central part, in "heart" of the pyre.

Grave goods were always put in zone of the graves or in the zone of central part of tumulus on the level of the pyre or on the top of the ash, under the stone cover. Only two pairs of bronze bracelets show visible traces of fire which means that peace were on the pyre together with a corpse (Benac, Čović 1956).

The differences in funerary ceremonies and the nature of grave goods show at the same time differences between male and female graves / tumulus.

*

*

*

The graves with arms and graves from our type of burial belong to men. And, the second type of burial, with urns and garments belong to women.

Only in one tumulus (Tumulus A) two graves female and male, but the other was from a later period.

According to the style of garments it's possible to date Paulje necropolis in period of Late Bronze Age (Bronze A - Hallstatt A - B, by Reinecke) or Iron Age I (according to M. Garašanin 1972). A pair of bronze bracelets from the second grave of the Tumulus A was dated separately, according to its style characteristics of the middle sixth century BC (Vasić 1986).

Considering the style and ornamental decoration of ceramic pots, jars and urns it is possible to recognize a source of influences. In this part of Western Serbia the style came from the NE, from Pannonian basin via Srem and Mačva. The Belegish culture flourished in Srem in the middle of the first millennia; so, the strong influence of that cultural and zone can be noted (Tasić 1983).

One more phenomenon which is common for all necropolis is this area draws attention. All necropolises of the Jadar valley were situated at plains near the river. That means that fertile soil was not very important for people from period, so agriculture was their marginal activity.

Dimitrije MADAS

*Zavod za saštitu spomenika kulture
YU-3400 Kragujevac*

Bibliography

- BENAC, A., ČOVIĆ, B. 1956, *Glasinac I*, Sarajevo, T-XXXII, sl. 3.
- GARAŠANIN, M. 1972, *Praistorija na teritoriji SR Srbije*, Beograd, T - 86, al. 1.
- MADAS, D. 1990, *Paulje - Bronzanodopska nekropola*, Loznica.
- TASIĆ, N. 1983, *Jugoslovensko Podunavlje od indoevropske seobe do prodora Skita*, Novi Sad - Beograd, 95, 97.
- VALTROVIĆ, M. 1982, *Praistorijske starine u Podrinjskom i Valjevskom okrugu*, Starinar, Beograd, p. 75 - 77.
- VASIĆ, R. 1986, *Srebrni pojas tipa mramorac u Narodnom muzeju u Požarevku*, Požarevac.

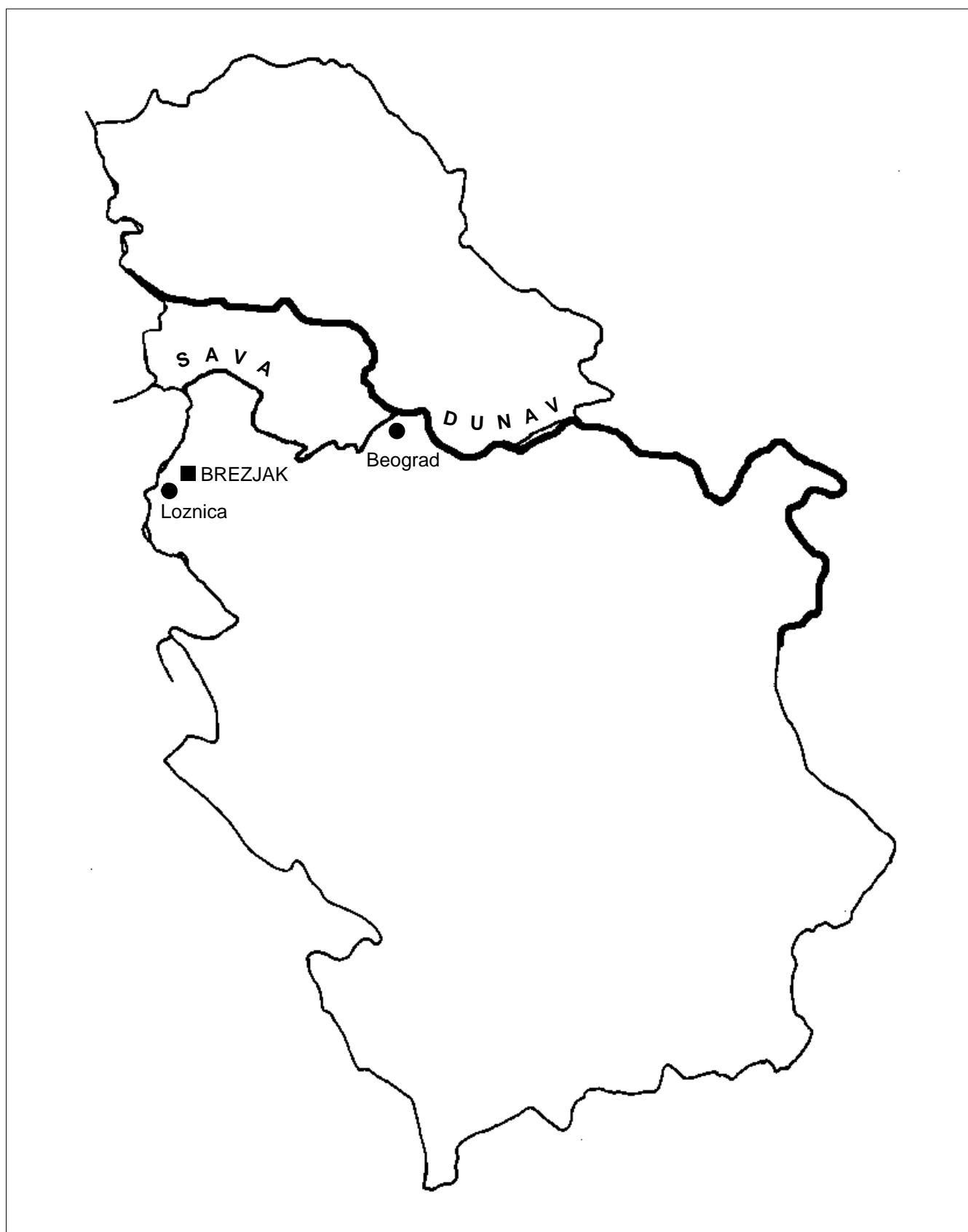


Fig. 1. Map of the NW Serbia. The location of the graves.

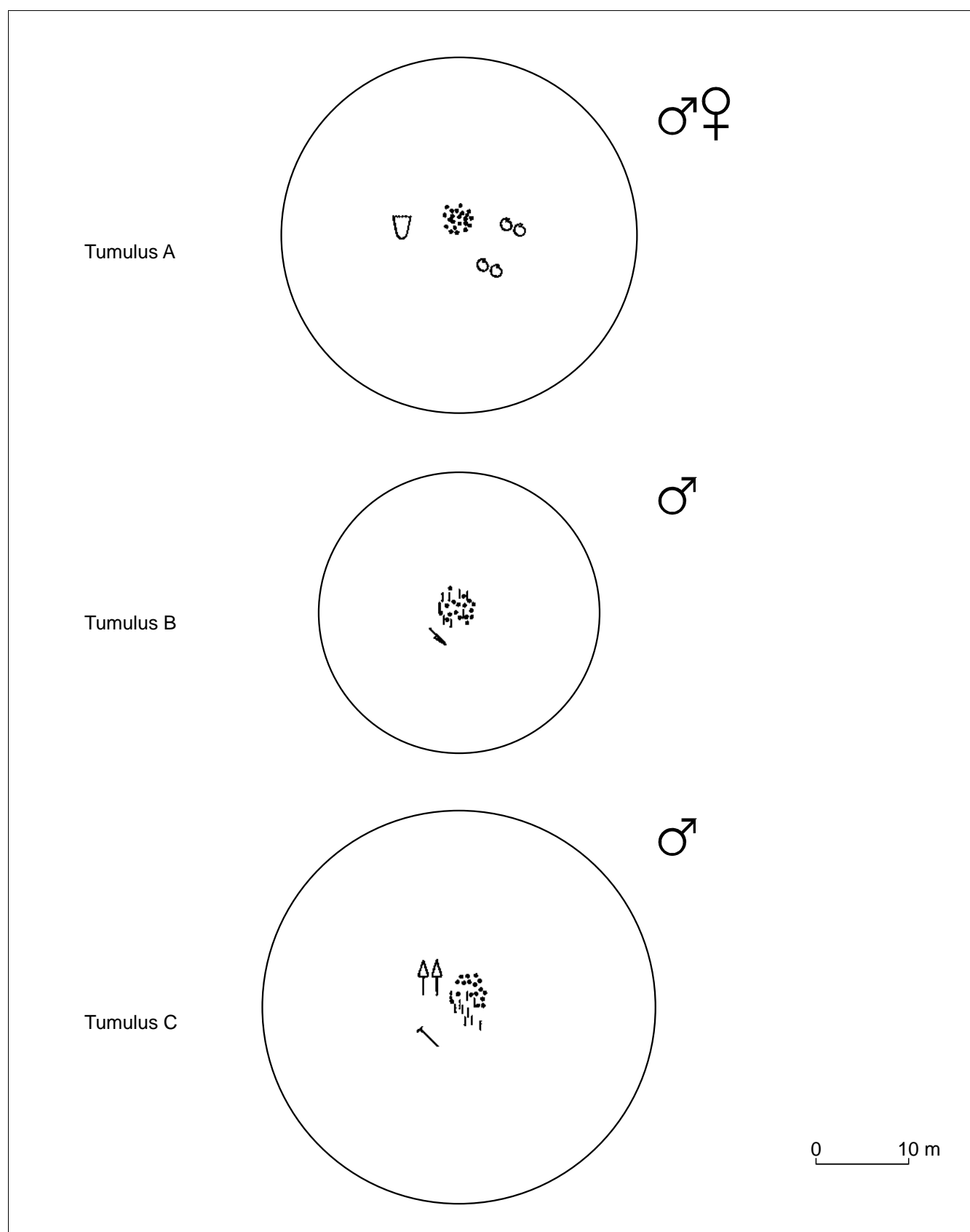


Fig. 2. The schematic situation and position of the grave goods in the excavated tumuli (A - C).

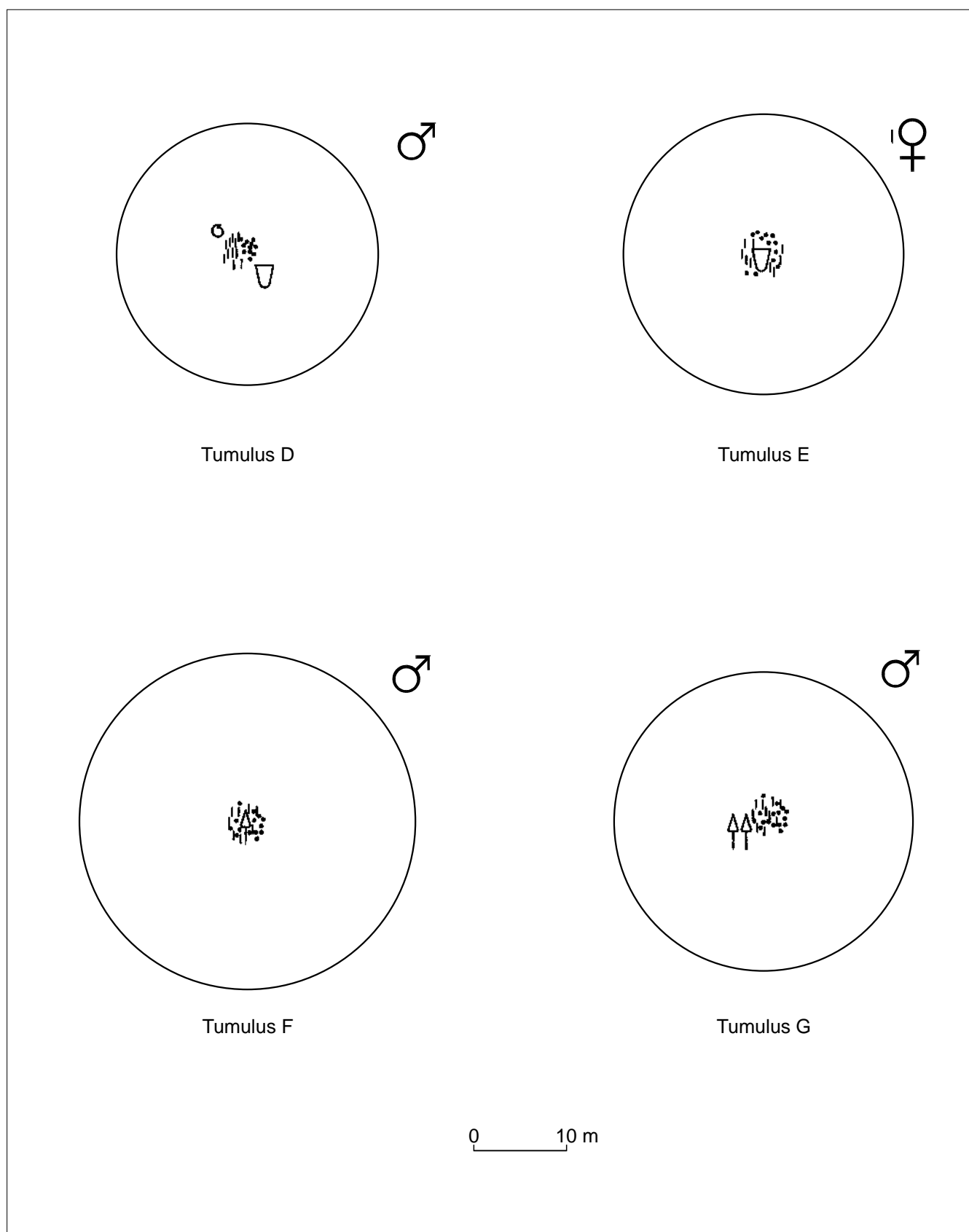


Fig. 3. The schematic situation and position of the grave goods in the excavated tumuli (D - G).

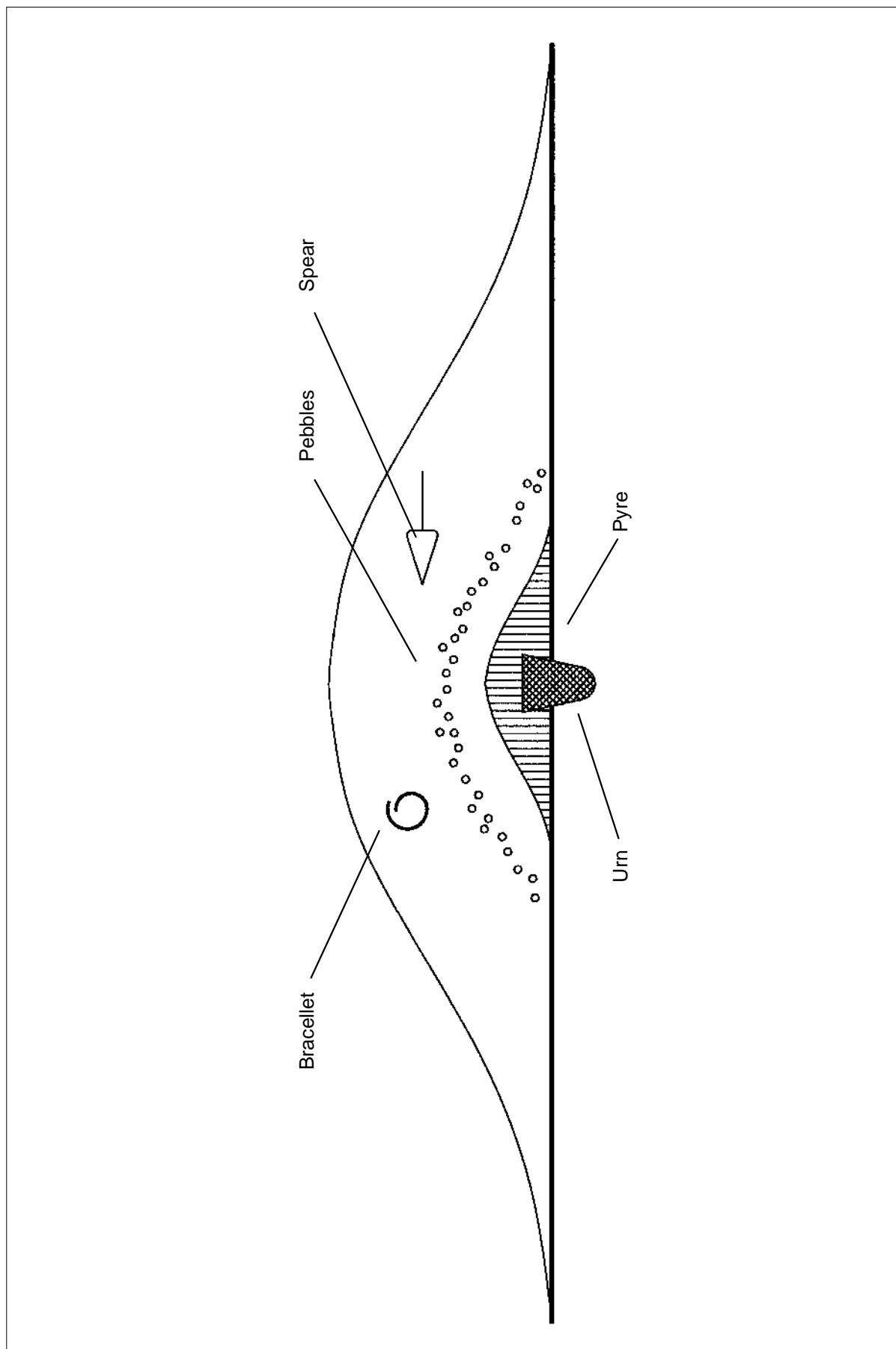


Fig. 4. The outline crossection of the mound which covered the pyre.

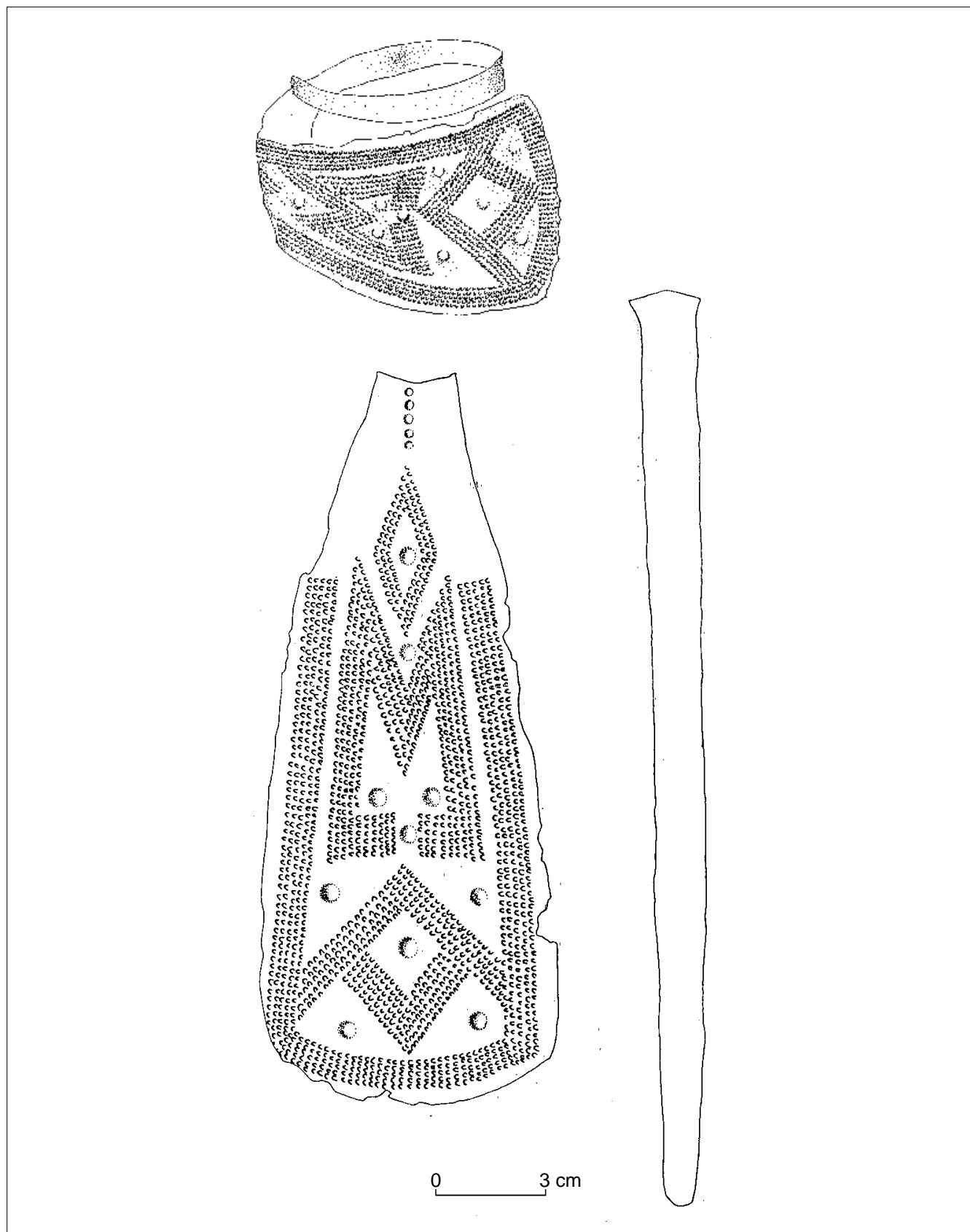


Fig. 5. The thin bronze bracerlet from tumulus A - secondary grave (6th century BC).

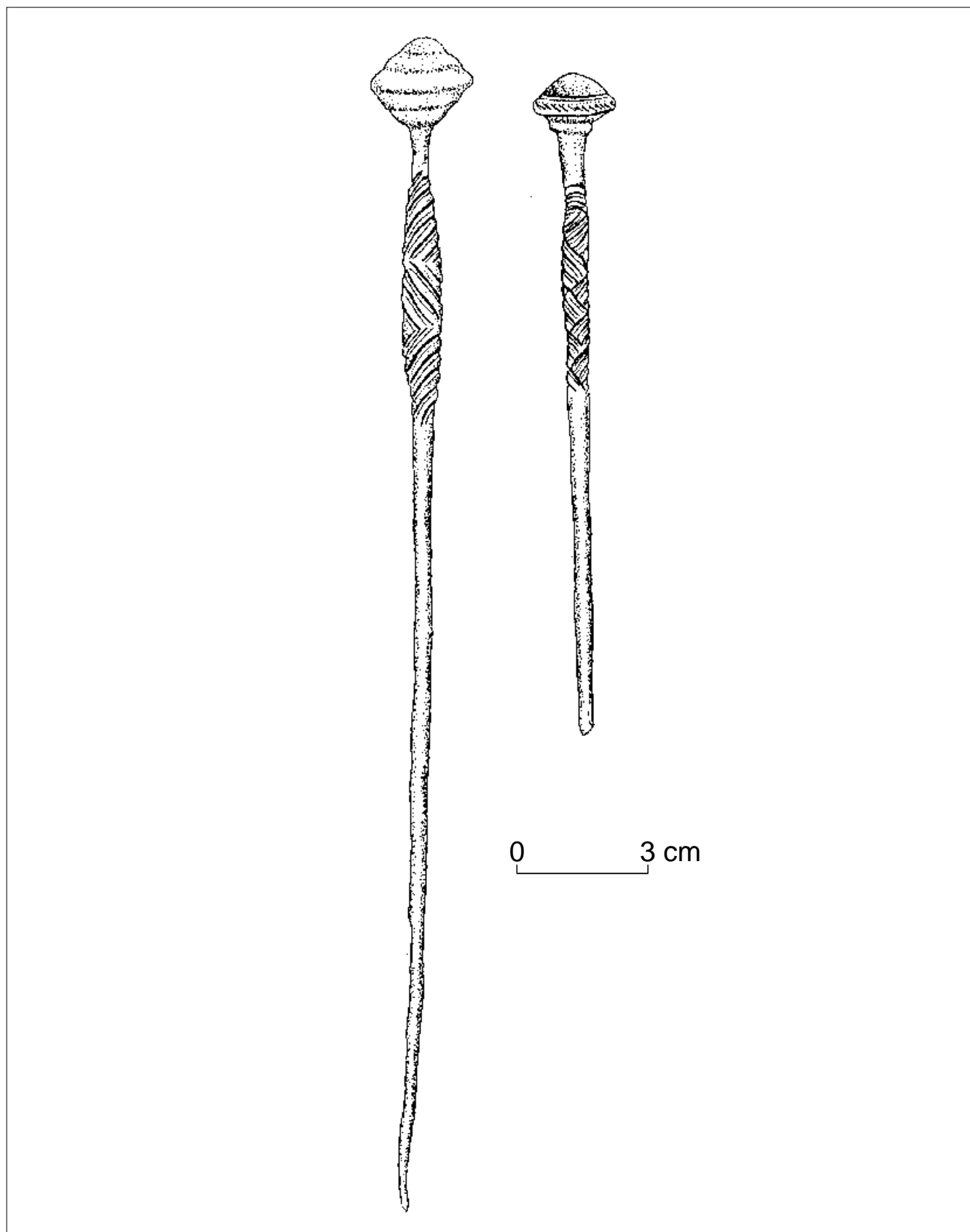


Fig. 6. Two bronze needles from grave A (Bronze A - Hallstatt A-B, acor. Reinecke).

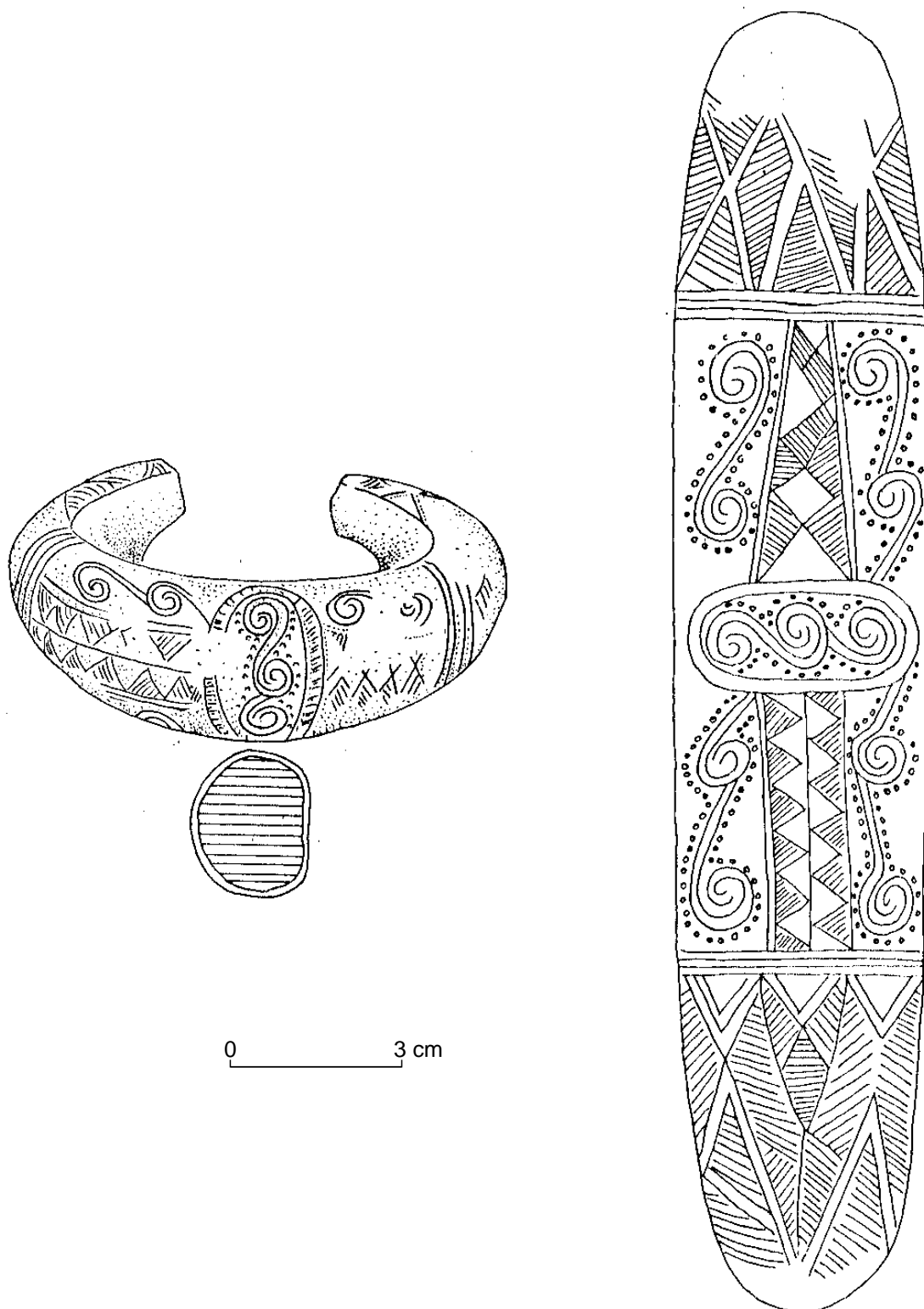


Fig. 7. Bronze bracer from grave A (Bronze A - Hallstatt A-B, acor. Reinecke).

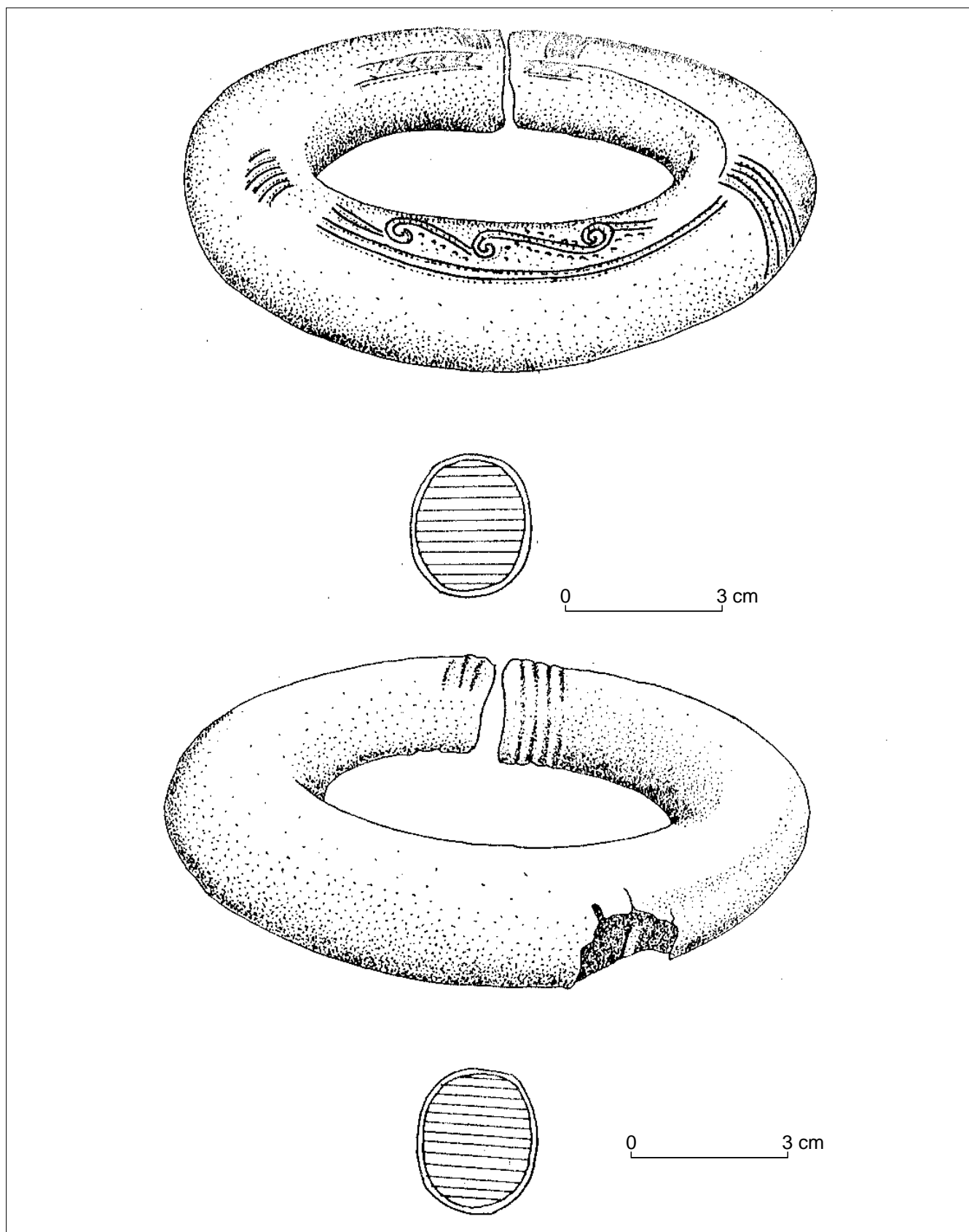


Fig. 8. Other type of bronze bracerlet from grave A (Bronze A - Hallstatt A-B, acor. Reinecke).

