Fig. 14. Više Grobalja G₁-1697, grave inventory

Miomir Korać - Snežana Golubović

KNIVES AND DAGGERS IN GRAVES FROM VIMINACIUM

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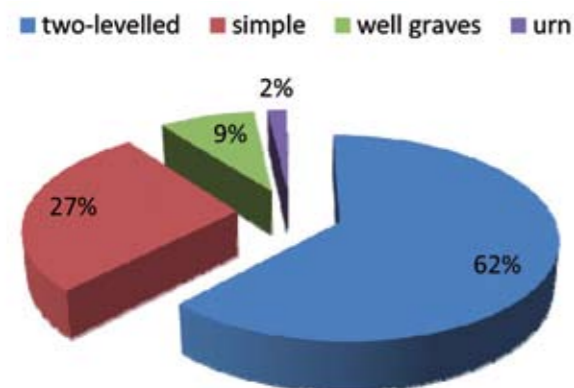
The rescue excavation of *Viminacium* cemeteries was conducted at the site of the present-day thermoelectric power plant and coal strip mine. From 1977 to 1997, cemeteries that extended south and east from the city of *Viminacium* were explored, and as of 2000 the section extending east from the military camp was also examined.¹ More than 14,000 inhumation and cremation graves with various grave goods were excavated. The oldest graves belong to the Celtic necropolis, testifying that the *Scordisci* inhabited this region prior to the arrival of the Romans. However, the highest number of burials dates to the period from the end of the first to the fourth centuries, during Roman domination.

¹ ZOTOVIĆ-JORDOVIĆ 1990; KORAĆ-GOLUBOVIĆ 2009.

During all long-term rescue work, as in more recent excavations, a certain number of daggers and knives were found in the graves. In this paper, only those found in graves from the Roman era will be encompassed herein.

The *Viminacium* cemeteries were biritual: both cremation and inhumation burials were registered. Given the immense number of all explored graves, the total of 89 knives and 5 daggers seems rather meagre. Also, even when considering the total number of knives found in the entire cemetery (345), the number of those found in graves is quite small. The remaining knives were found in different layers, pits or in sacrificial ditches.

CREMATIONS



The knives were found in 36 two-level pits (P. I, P. II, P. III; Table 1), 16 simple pits (P. IV, P. V; Table 2), five well graves and in one urn (P. VI).

The highest number of knives and daggers were found in two-level pits, the so-called graves of Mala Kopašnica-Sase type, which was to be expected since they are the most numerous of all grave types. In two graves, knives or daggers were the only inventory (P. I/1, P. III/29; Table 1/1, 29), while in other, considerably more numerous cases, the repertoire of grave goods was standard for this grave type and included coins and jewellery, which were often burned with the deceased, while the burial rites consisted of placing grave goods in the burned pits after laying the remains of the deceased. Typically for this grave type, the most common inventory besides the aforementioned were oil-lamps and ceramic and glass vessels. Ritual vessels, cosmetic implements, instruments, trunks and keys were also common finds.

The position of the knives in cremation graves is differed from case to case, and there is no rule. The same situation was found at the cemeteries of *Aquincum* and *Matrica*. Namely, the knives were placed at the bottom of the grave pits together with other grave goods² and all of them were dated to the second and third centuries as at *Viminacium*.

In the case of a two-level grave (Fig. 1) containing a knife, the other items in it included three jars, strigils and a bronze vessel. The knife was positioned along the eastern side of the grave, and in addition to this knife a belt set and second-century coin were also found in the simple pit. A cross-bow fibula and strigils were found in the grave under P. III/28; Table 1/28.

The most recent excavation at the eastern necropolis brought to light a two-level grave (P. II/16; Table 1/16) with a rich grave inventory consisting of a beaker, a pot, three iron rings, parts of a bronze bracelet and a quatrefoil gold appliqué. A small knife was placed alongside.

Seven knives were found in five well graves at different depths (P. VI/1-7). The appearance of these special units with a not completely defined function (burial, ritual or sacrificial) in *Moesia Superior* raises a number of questions, ranging from their indigenous form, origins and ethnic features to their religious significance. Based on an ideal reconstruction, the ritual included the placement of remains from the funeral pyre, which included soot, ash, large iron pins and the bowls used to put out the fire at the bottom of the grave. Then the remains of the deceased along with artefacts, which included personal items, coins, lamps, censers, and ceramic and glass vessels, were placed in the well. The material found inside was not very different from that found in other cremation burials at *Viminacium*, and it was Roman provincial in origin. Iron knives were found in a somewhat higher percentage in comparison to the artefacts recovered from graves of the same type in *Sirmium*. More specifically, weapons were found in 10 well graves excavated at *Sirmium*. These graves were slightly older than those at *Viminacium* and were dated to the early first and early second centuries.³ The presence of well graves in the territories of *Sirmium*, *Singidunum* and *Viminacium* coincides with the presence of the Gallic cohorts. It may be concluded that the well graves at *Viminacium* were a case of cultural borrowing that met the needs of a small ethnic community from the end of first to the end of the third centuries.⁴

In general, urn graves are rather rare at *Viminacium* and account for only 2.5% of all burials, so there it comes as no surprise that a knife was found in only a single urn (P. VI/8).

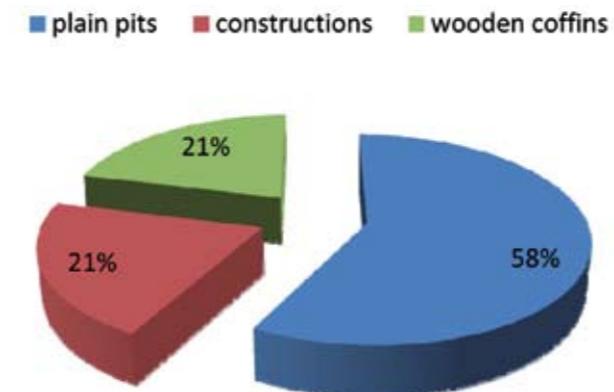
With regard to inhumation burials, knives were found in 11 plain-pit graves (P. VII; Table 3), in 5 graves constructed from bricks and stones (P. VIII/1-5; Table 4) and in four wooden coffins (P. VIII/6-9; Table 5).

² TOPAL 1993, P. 35, 36/41; P. 46/68; P. 50/73; TOPAL 1981, P. I/1; P. XXV/76; P. XXIX/83; P. LX/200.

³ MILOŠEVIĆ 1985, 178.

⁴ GOLUBOVIĆ 2008, 141

INHUMATIONS



Generally, inhumation graves appeared in the territory of *Moesia Superior* at the end of the first century.

Since the earliest skeletal graves at *Viminacium* were dated using coins of Augustus and Trajan which may have been in circulation for a considerable period, the oldest inhumations may still be deemed as appearing at the end of the first century, and these were mostly burials without coffins or in wooden coffins. Graves with all manner of brick construction first began to appear at the onset of the second century. Thus far, based on researched units, plain grave pits or burials in wooden coffins account for 96% of all inhumations.⁵

The situation in *Viminacium* points to slightly different circumstances than at other Roman-era cemeteries in *Scupi*, *Ulpiana*, *Municipium DD*, *Naissus* or *Vinceia*. Namely, at these cemeteries luxurious graves were placed in a separate part of the town's cemetery, or they were at suburban villas, while this was the case in *Viminacium* only to a certain extent. In the excavated part of the necropolis, such graves were found together with graves without any inventory or with only a small number of grave goods. Luxurious graves are often attributed to a wealthy class of the immigrants from the eastern provinces of the empire, especially from *Asia Minor*.⁶ The general opinion is that inhumation graves at *Viminacium* are Oriental in origin, regardless of whether it is a matter of graves without coffins and no grave goods. At the cemeteries from this period, the percentage of children's burials varies from 86% in *Cambodunum*, through 41% in Gerulata, to 39.5% at *Viminacium* necropolis.⁷ In several cases, children were

⁵ KORAĆ-GOLUBOVIĆ 2009, 536.

⁶ JOVANOVIĆ 2000, 210.

⁷ KREKOVIĆ 1991, 76; KORAĆ-GOLUBOVIĆ 2009, 513.

buried with adults. In the case of cremations, children were sometimes cremated along with their parents. Nevertheless, children's inhumations, either without coffins, with wooden coffins or graves with stone or brick structures, appeared almost as a rule. Skeletal burials of children were either individual or together with adults. Among the 20 skeletal graves with knives and daggers, five were defined as children's graves and dated to the period from the end of first to the beginning of the fourth centuries. One child's skeleton was in a wooden coffin (P. VIII/7; Table 5/7) with a dagger on the chest (Fig. 2), while in another burial in a brick structure (P. VIII/3; Table 4/4/3), a balsamarium and a cross-bow fibula were found in addition to an iron knife. At *Aquincum*, twin three or four year-olds were found in a grave with brick structure. The inventory included jars, beakers, an unguentarium, bracelets, a pin and even three coins, which dated the grave into the middle of fourth, as well as one iron knife.⁸

The position of knives in inhumation graves is different. They could be placed at either the right or left side of the pelvis of the interred individual, or around the feet or lower extremities (Fig. 3), on the chest or even under the skull. The bones are mostly poorly preserved, and may be identified as either male, female or juvenile. In *Aquincum*, the knife was even found in female grave dated to the end of the third century.⁹

Cross-bow fibulae were found not only in male graves, either brick structures or in plain graves, but also in children's graves. They were dated to the fourth century based on the fibulae and other goods.¹⁰

Unfortunately, the brick structures in which knives were found have sustained considerable damage, so it was not possible to record the position of the knife in relation to the body of the deceased. One knife was found on the floor of a tomb with five burials (P. VIII/2; Table 4/2) and 114 coins from the latter half of fourth century, while the dagger was found in a brick structure without skeleton together with other items: a bronze button, a silver ring and third-century coin (P. VIII/5; Table 4/5). A knife and bronze buckle (Fig. 4) were found in a plundered, brick-built grave.

The knives found in cremation or inhumation graves were made of iron and are thus quite deformed due to corrosion. Conservation was not possible because

⁸ TOPAL 1993, P. 58/86.

⁹ TOPAL 1993, P. 69/112.

¹⁰ TOPAL 1993, P. 94/10; TOPAL 1981, P. XXV/75.

most of them are not available any more.¹¹ Based on the handle tang remains, it may be concluded that they had wooden or bone handles, in most cases un-preserved. Bone handles remained in only two cases (P. VII/9, P. VIII/6), but in many cases the traces of wood were quite remarkable. On some examples, the beginning or end of the handles were reinforced with bronze or silver pins (P. I/3; P. III/27; P. 5/10, 12), or a bronze ring around the cutting edge (P. IV/2). An extraordinary knife was found in a simple cremation pit, but unfortunately without sufficient skeletal remains to define the sex or age of the deceased. The knife handle is made of bronze, ending in a panther's head, while the body adorned with black and yellow enamel (P. V/14).

In inhumation graves, the most knives were found in plain pits, more than in brick- or stone-built graves and in wooden coffins.

It is interesting that the number of cremated bodies accompanied by a knife or dagger as the grave is significantly higher. Since these belong to the Mala Kopašnica-Sase type, the characteristic form for the indigenous population, the presence of these items may be explained as a component of relations between this indigenous population and newcomers. Since placement of weapons in graves was not a Roman custom,¹² these graves indicate that other burial rites of the indigenous people existed, but they were lost in the course of Romanization.

¹¹ The museum in Požarevac had been robbed several times over the past twenty years and we could not obtain any of the material to make new sketches or photos of knives and daggers.

¹² SCHÖNBERGER 1953, 53.

The results of anthropological analysis have shown that the knives and daggers were found in the graves of both men and women, as well as children. Undoubtedly iron as a metal and knives or daggers as items had special cult significance for a part of the heterogeneous population of Roman *Viminacium*.

Various types of knives and daggers were found at the cemeteries in *Viminacium*, but since it was not possible to ascertain the narrower function or exact type, the reason for their placement in graves remains clear. A similar situation was discerned at the cemetery in ancient *Doclea*, where knives were also found in cremation and inhumation graves, as in the graves of persons of undetermined sex.¹³ Knives were not only implements of in everyday use, as they could also serve as weapons. However, usually they were found in cremation or inhumation burials without grave goods, which could indicate soldiers. Their significance in children's graves may be explained differently, as perhaps planned soldiers carrier for the boy, or inheritance, or the wishes of the parents, etc., but thus far nothing can be stated with any certainty.

¹³ CERMANOVIĆ-KUZMANOVIĆ - VELIMIROVIĆ - ŽIŽIĆ - SREJOVIĆ 1975.

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Table 1 - Two-leveled graves (sites: P=Pećine; VG=Više Grobalja; NR=Na Rupci; KK=Kod Koraba)								
D=daggers, the rests are knives								
No. Plate	No. of in inventory	No. of grave/ year of excavation	Pottery vessel	Glass vessel	Lamp	Coin	Ornament	Miscellaneous
1/I	C-2420 - D	G1-171/1980 - P						
2/I	C-2294 - D	G1-137/1984 - VG Male				1		
3/I	C-6500 - D	G1-37/1979 - P	beaker		1			
4/I	C-6009 - D	G1-518/1982 - P	jar, beaker, pot	balsamaria	1	4	golden earring bronze brooch	
5/I	C-3065 - D	G1-366/1984 - VG Male				1		
6/II	C-639	G1-26/1978 - P	3 jars					Iron strigilis bronze vessel
7/II	C-4313	G1-507/1984 - VG	pot			1	iron ring, bronze brooch, gem, 3 bronze button, bronze belt set	iron strigilis,
8/II	C-4304	G1-507/1984 - VG	pot			1	iron ring, bronze brooch, gem, 3 bronze button, bronze belt set	iron strigilis,
9/II	C-11449	G1-1048/1985 - P	pot					2 bone pins
10/II	C-7908	G1-732/1983 - P	plate, bowl		1			
11/II	C-3548	G1-429/1984 - VG	beaker				bead	iron strigilis, led inkpot
12/II	C-9152	G1-1332/1985 - VG	3 jars, 4 pots, 2 beakers, censer		4			iron key, bronze mirror, bronze pincers
13/II	C-13138	G1-1130/1990 - P	2 bowls		1	1	golden earring	
14/II	C-4723	G1-571/1984 - VG	pot		1		2 bronze buckles, 2 bronze bracelets	bronze inkpot, bronze spatula
15/II	C-10900	G1-1002/1984 - P					bronze button	
16/II	C-414	G1-125/2007 - KK	beaker, pot				3 rings, golden appliqué, bronze bracelet	iron shoe nails
17/II	C-11836	G1-1740/1985 - VG	pot		1	1		bone pin
18/II	C-3117	G1-355/1984 - VG	3 jars, 2 pots, 2 plates	4 balsamaria	1	3		bronze casket, bronze mirror

No. Plate	No. of in inventory	No. of grave/ year of excavation	Pottery vessel	Glass vessel	Lamp	Coin	Ornament	Miscellaneous
19/II	C-8651	G1-790/1983 - P	pot		1	1		
20/II	C-9302	G1-853/1983 - P			1		bronze ring	bone pin
21/II	C-11752	G1-1709/1985 - VG				2	2 bronze rings	
22/II	C-1895	G1-168/1984 - VG Adultus	plate			1	5 beads	bone jeton
23/III	C-1989	G1-198/1984 - VG Male - 30 years				1.	1	
24/III	C-3856	G1-454/1984 - VG	pot			2	bronze appliqué	bone jeton
25/III	C-3470	G1-396/1984 - VG	2 pots, beaker			2		bronze mirror, bone pin, bronze pin
26/III	C-12145	G1-1103/1986 - P	beaker	balsamaria		1		bronze lock, spindle-whorl, bone jeton
27/III	C-1177	G1-91/1979 - VG Female - 20 years					2 golden earrings	
28/III	C-1465	G1-96/1979 - P	3 jars				cross-bow brooch	iron strigilis
29/III	C-9531	G1-1391/1985 - VG						
30/III	C-9503	G1-1384/1985 - VG				1	bronze brooch, bronze ring	iron items
31/III	C-9158	G1-1344/1985 - VG			1	1		bronze item
32/III	C-8423	G1-1209/1985 - VG	1		1		bronze bracelet	bronze casket
33/III	C-6857	G1-950/1984 - VG	3 jars, pot,		1	2	6 beads	4 bone pins, 3 horse teeth
34/III	C- 32	G1-6/1988 - NR	3 jars		1	4	bronze appliqué	iron key, iron vessel, iron strigilis, bronze casket,
35/III	C-7316	G1-658/1983 - P	pot					iron tool
36/III	C-8679	G1-1271/1985 - VG					bronze brooch, bronze belt set	

Table 2 - Simple pits (sites: P=Pećine; VG=Više Grobalja)

No. Plate	No. in inventory	No. of grave/year of excavation	Pottery vessel	Glass vessel	Lamp	Coin	Ornament	Miscellaneous
1/IV	C-8735	G1-1274/1985 - VG	pot					
2/IV	C-4690	G1-580/1984 - VG						
3/IV	C-6221	G1-825/1984 - VG					bronze bracelet	
4/IV	C-6831	G1-944/1984 - VG						
5/IV	C-699	G1-68/1979 - VG	2 jars, 2 pots	2 balsamaria	1			
6/IV	C-6839	G1-952/1984 - VG	pot				bronze pincer	
7/IV	C-4843	G1-600/1984 - VG Female	pot				silver torques	
8/IV	C-10144	G1-1504/1985 - VG	jar, bowl, 3 pots, 3 plates			1	bronze belt set	bronze spatula, casket
9/IV	C-4640	G1-384/1982 - P				1	bronze belt set	
10/V	C-9262	G1-1361/1985 - VG	pot				iron buckle, 5 bronze rings, bronze button, bead	frg. bronze tin
11/V	C-5874	G1-781/1984 - VG				1		frg. bronze tin
12/V	C-3558	G1-420/1984 - VG	bowl, pot, beaker			1		stone palette
13/V	C-5999	G1-796/1984 - VG	2 jars			1		bronze key
14/V	C-4906	G1-572/1984 - VG		1 balsamaria		1	bronze - pendant, bracelet, ring, belt set	
15/V	C-8907	G1-1283/1985 - VG						
16/V	C-9503	G1-1384/1985 - VG				1	bronze brooch, bronze ring	

Table 3 - Plain graves (sites: P=Pećine; VG=Više Grobalja)

No. Plate VII	No. in inventory	No. of grave/year of excavation	Pottery vessel	Glass vessel	Lamp	Coin	Ornament	Miscellaneous
1	C-4896	G-1651/1982 - P	pot		1			
2	C-5023	G-1139/1982 - P				1		bronze pincer, bone pin
3	C-6938	G-2498/1982 - P						
4	C-4208	G-602/1984 - VG	pot				iron brooch	
5	C-11910	G-4889/1986 - P					2 iron buckles	2 stone tools
6	C-4321	G-1324/1982 - P					bronze ring	
7	C-5372	G-1900/1982 - P					silver buckle	
8	C-11950	G-2108/1985 - VG						iron pin, ring
9	C-11323	G-4215/1985 - P		balsamaria		1	necklace - 139 beads bracelet - 13 beads	
10	C-7254	G-1198/1984 - VG						
11	C-829	G-82/1979 - VG Infans I	pot, 2 beakers	balsamaria		1		

Table 4 - Graves with brick construction (site: P=Pećine)

No. Plate VIII	No. in inventory	No. of grave/year of excavation	Pottery vessel	Glass vessel	Lamp	Coin	Ornament	Miscellaneous
1	C-3236	G-969/1981 - P					bronze buckle	
2	C-11230	G-3971/1985 - P				114		brick with incised drawing and letters D and P
3	C-4879	G-1662/1982 - P		balsamaria			cross-bow brooch	
4	C-10786	G-3571/1983 - P	bowl, 2 jars, 2 beakers	balsamaria	1		bronze brooch, 400 beads	2 figurines
5	C-1178	G-291/1979 - P				1	2 bronze buttons, 2 rings, silver ring, 3 beads	

Table 5 - Burials in wooden coffin (sites: P=Pećine, VG=Više Grobalja)

No. Plate VIII	No. in inventory	No. of grave/year of excavation	Pottery vessel	Glass vessel	Lamp	Coin	Ornament	Miscellaneous
6	C-9469	G-1396/1985 - VG		balsamaria	1	1	2 bronze brooch, 5 bronze rings	
7	C-5400	G-1943/1982 - P	pot			1	pendant, 3 beads	
8	C-7333	G-2669/1983 - P		3 balsamaria, flagon		1		bone spatula and pin, bronze sewing pin
9	C-6487	G-1062/1984 - VG						



Fig. 1. Two-level grave with a knife and other items from the Pećine necropolis (Viminacium project documentation)



Fig. 2. Child's skeleton with a dagger on the chest in a wooden coffin from the Pećine necropolis (Viminacium project documentation)



Fig. 3. A knife placed by the lower extremities of the deceased from the Pećine necropolis (Viminacium project documentation)

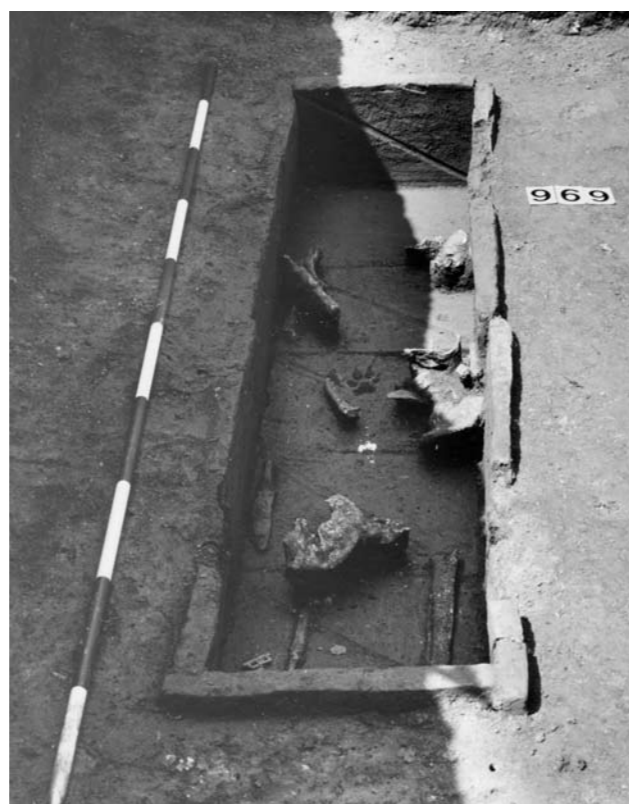
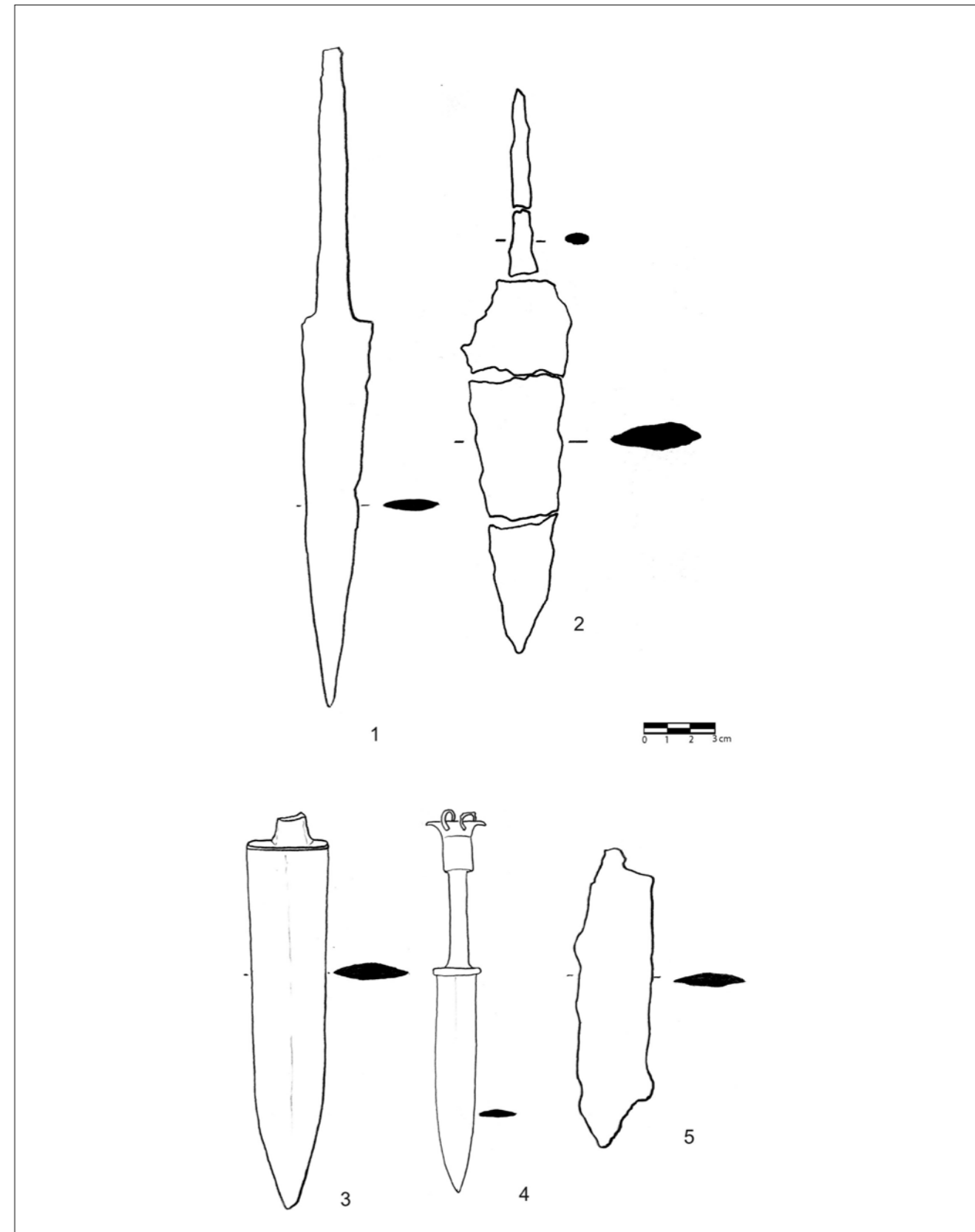
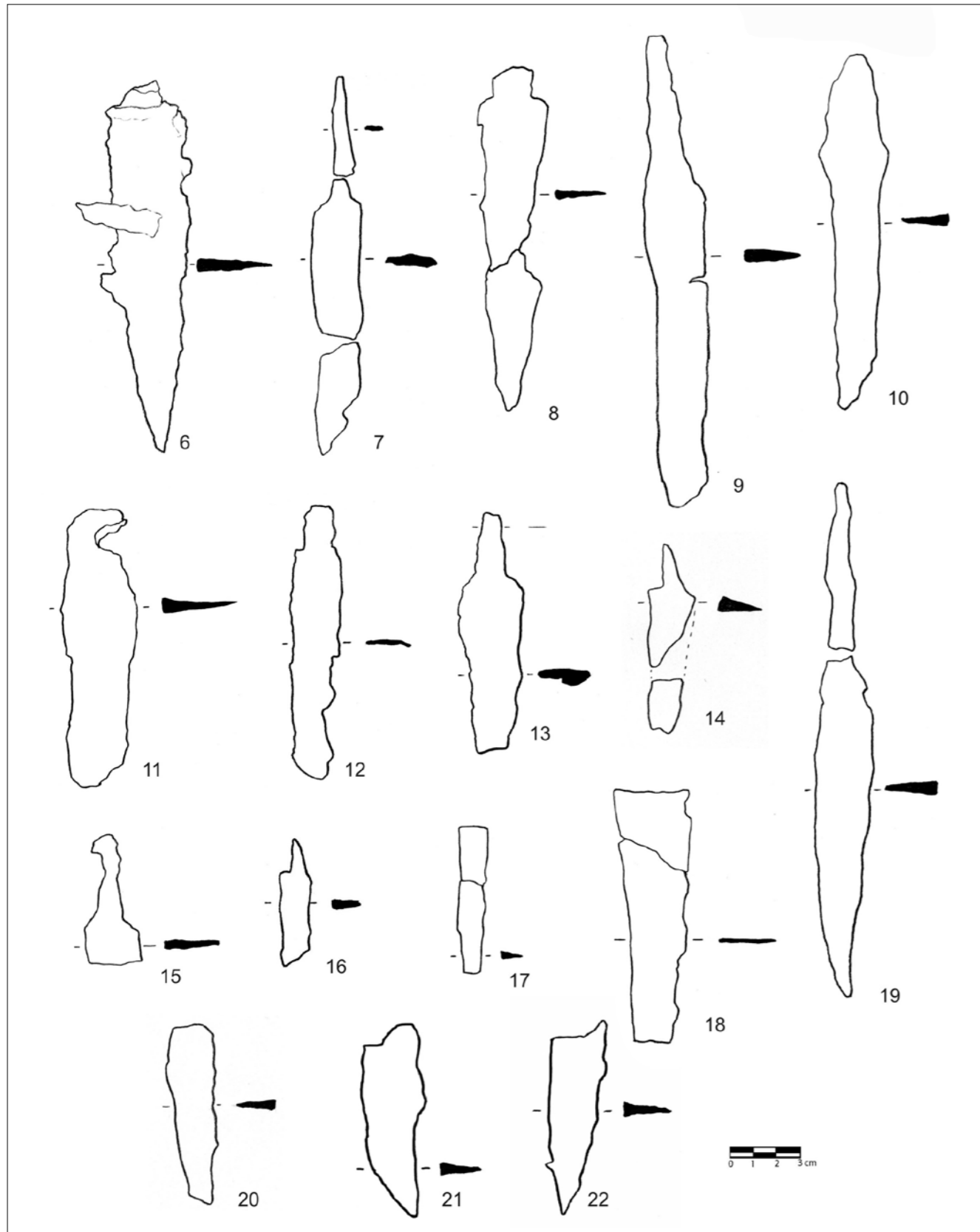


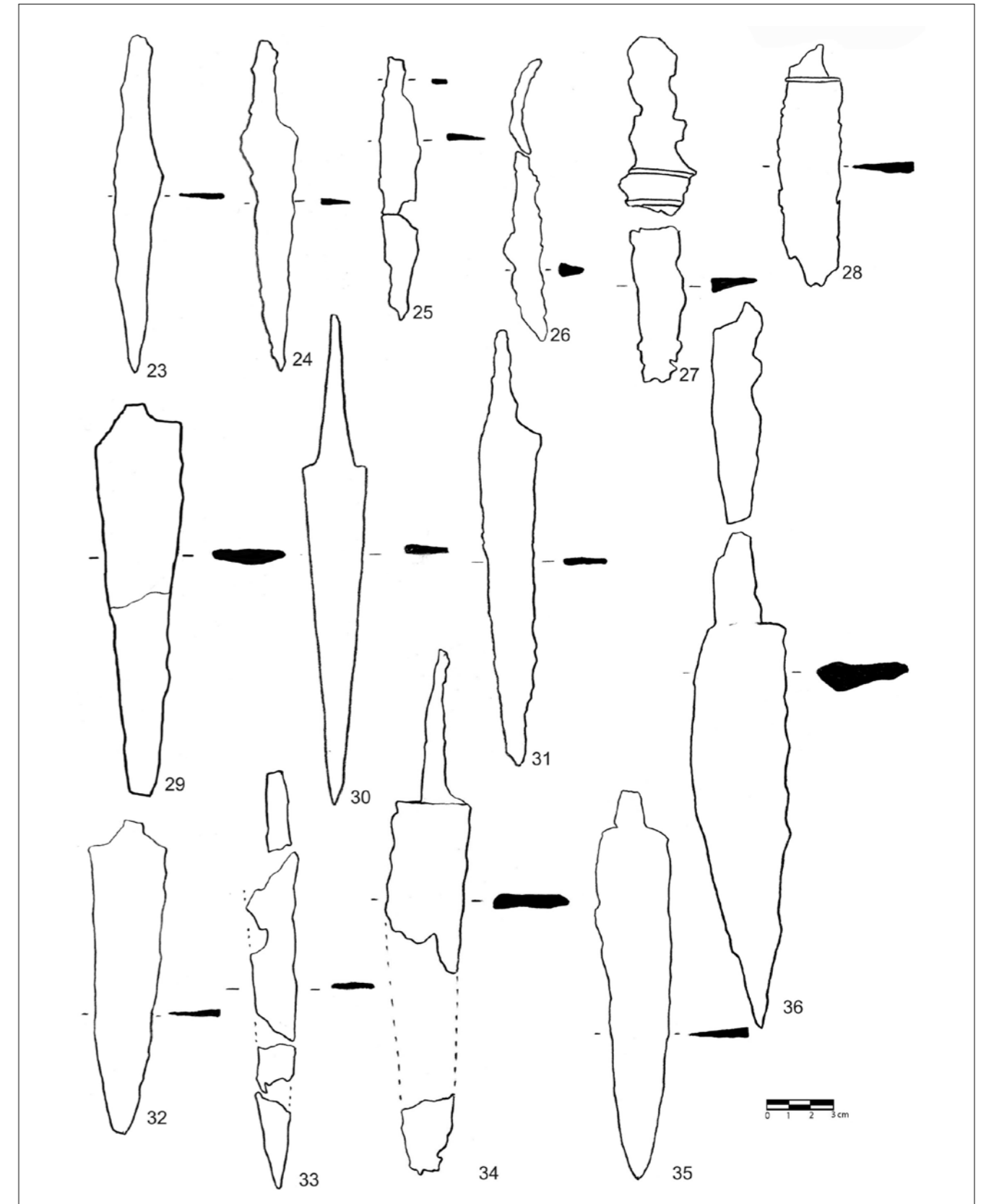
Fig. 4. A looted grave with a knife and bronze buckle from the Pećine necropolis (Viminacium project documentation)



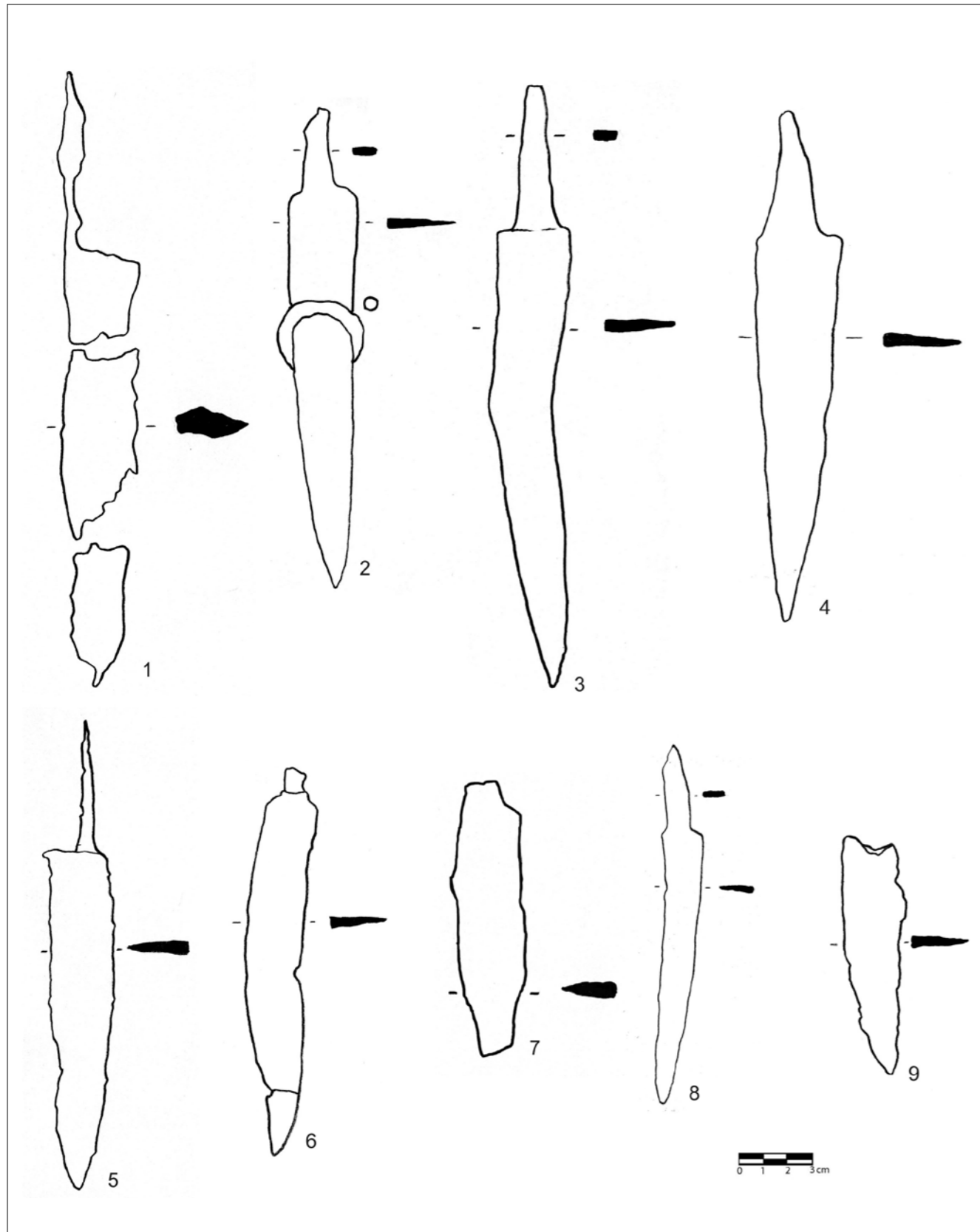
P. I. Knives from two-level pits – cremation graves (Viminacium project documentation)



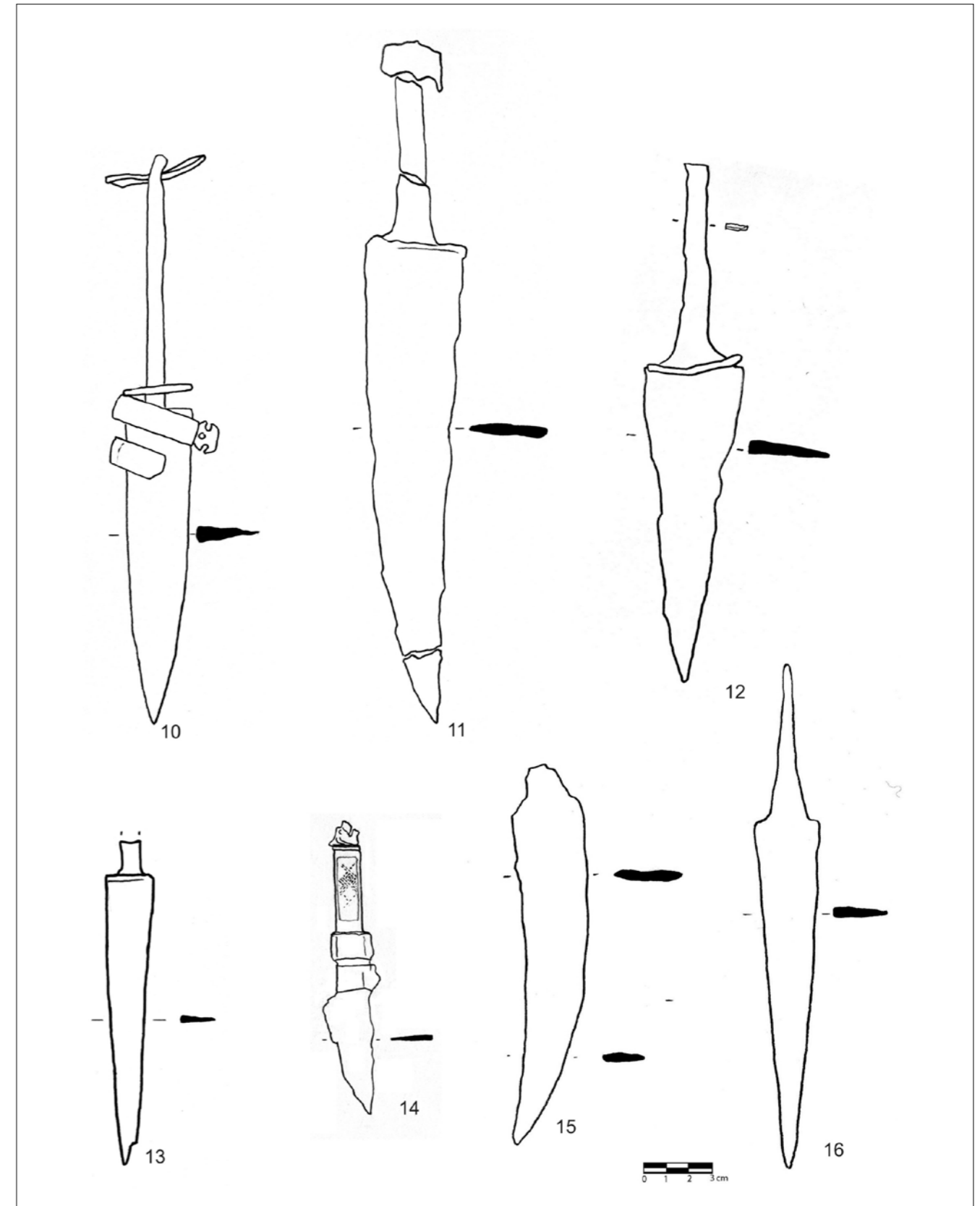
P. II. Knives from two-level pits – cremation graves (Viminacium project documentation)



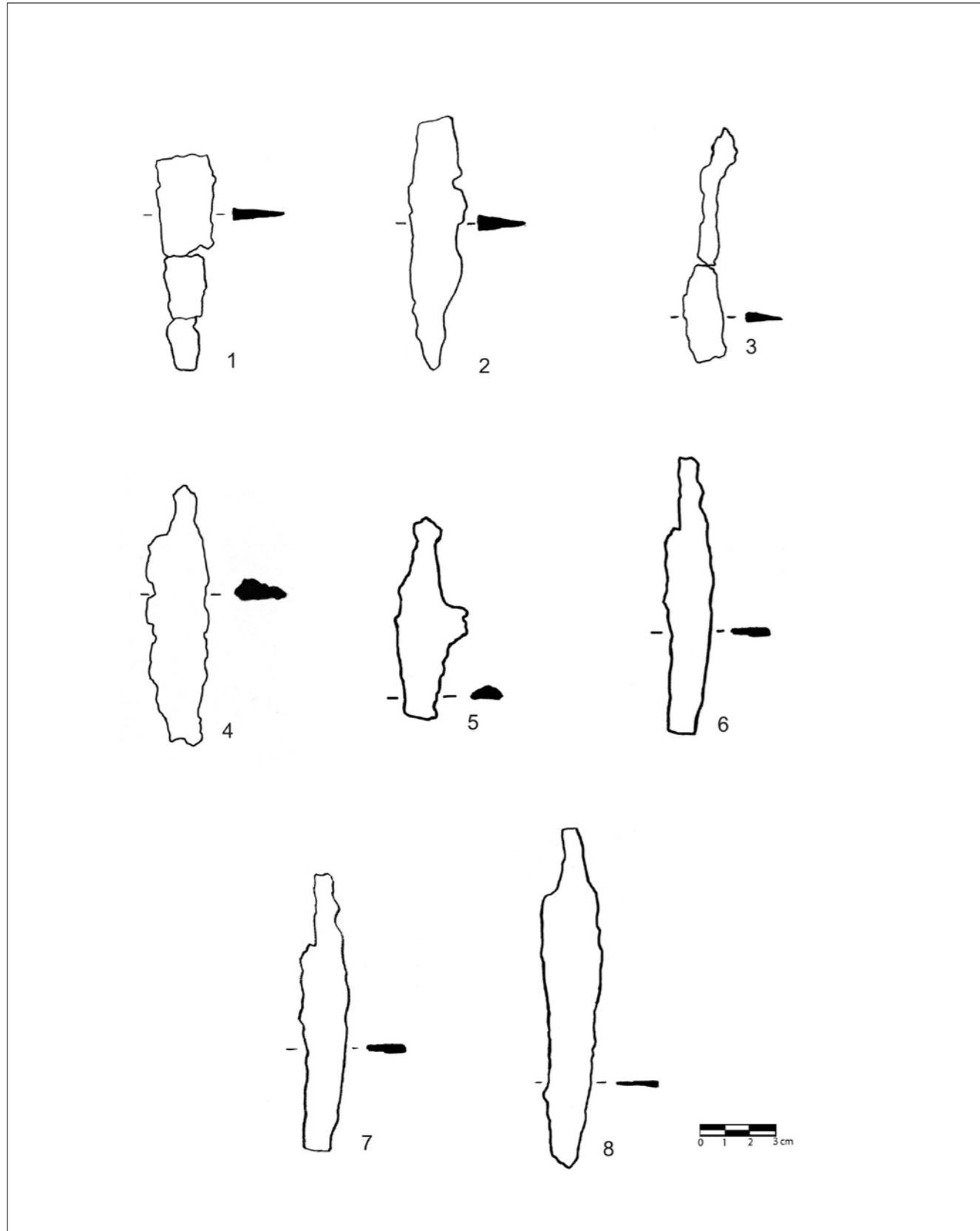
P. III. Knives from two-level pits – cremation graves (Viminacium project documentation)



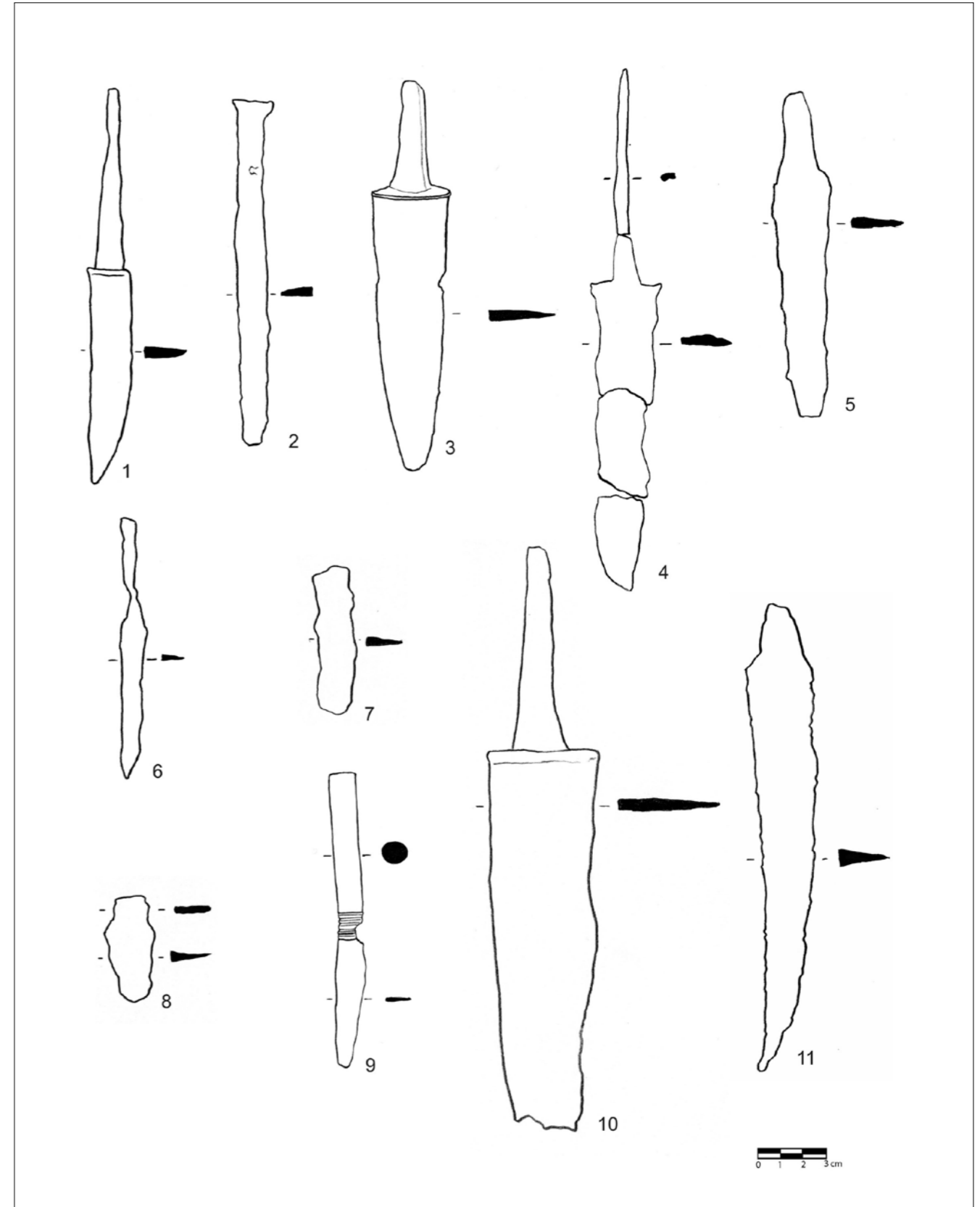
P. IV. Knives from simple pits – cremation graves (Viminacium project documentation)



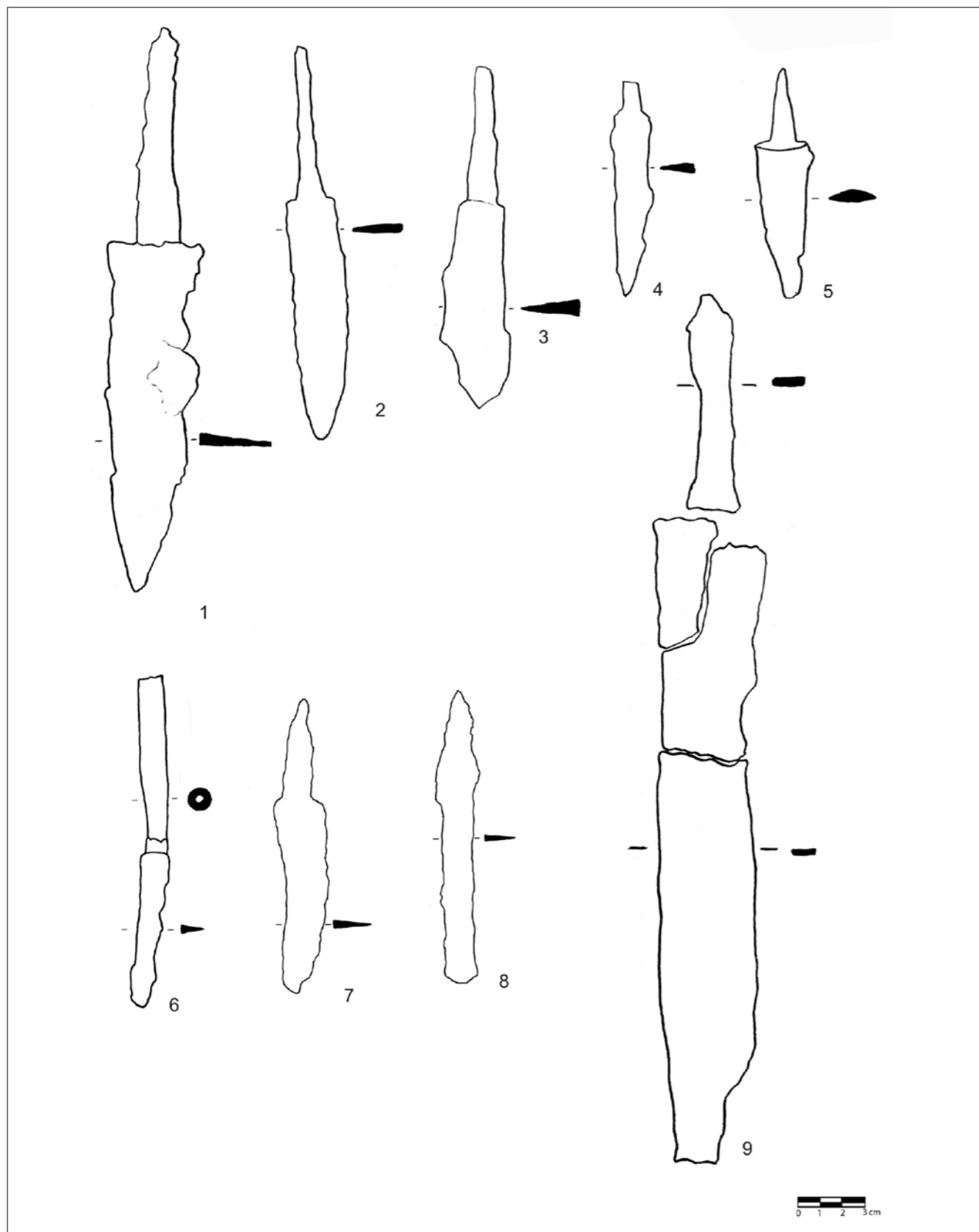
P. V. Knives from simple pits – cremation graves (Viminacium project documentation)



P. VI. Knives from five well graves and one urn – cremation graves (Viminacium project documentation)



P. VII. Knives found in plain pit graves – inhumation graves (Viminacium project documentation)



P. VIII. Knives from five brick or brick-and-stone structures and four wooden coffins – inhumation graves (Viminacium project documentation)

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ROMULIANA-GAMZIGRAD IN DER PROVINZ DACIA RIPENSIS - EIN NEU ENTDECKTES WAFFENGRAB

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DER FUNDPLATZ

Die Ruinen von Gamzigrad, Bez. Zaječar in Ostserbien (Abb. 1), wurden zuerst von dem Österreicher Felix Kanitz in den 60er Jahren des 19. Jh. beschrieben und als „riesiges Castrum“ bezeichnet¹. Auf der kolorierten Zeichnung von ihm erkennt man, dass die Umfassungsmauern mit den weit nach außen vorspringenden runden bzw. polygonalen Türmen noch sehr hoch erhalten waren, was sich bis heute kaum verändert hat. Auf dem Bild von Kanitz ist im Innenraum nur das Podium des sog. Großen Tempels deutlich auszumachen, während heute dort die Grundmauern mehrerer Gebäudekomplexe zu besichtigen sind. Seit 1953 finden hier regelmäßige Ausgrabungen statt, deren Ergebnisse gezeigt haben, dass es sich nicht, wie Kanitz angenommen hatte, und ein Kastell handelt. Vielmehr konnte die Anlage inzwischen als Kaiserpalast aus der Tetrarchenzeit identifiziert werden (Abb. 2). Auf einem Architekturfragment, das ursprünglich zu einem Zierfries über dem Osttor gehörte, fand sich die Inschrift *Felix Romuliana*², die auf den Kaiser Galerius (293-311 n. Chr.) schließen ließ, von dem die Schriftquellen berichten, dass er einen Ort ausgebaut und nach seiner Mutter Romula benannt habe³. Als wenig später noch

der Kopf einer überlebensgroßen Kaiserstatue aus rotem ägyptischem Porphyr gefunden wurde, die allgemein als Galerius gedeutet wird, bestätigte sich diese Annahme⁴. Ein besonderes Gewicht für die Interpretation der Anlage als Palast des Kaisers Galerius kommt aber einem reliefverzierten Pilaster zu, der ursprünglich ebenfalls das Osttor zierte: Hier sind in drei an einem *signum* befestigten Tondi die vier amtierenden Kaiser der Zweiten Tetrarchie - die Augusti Constantius Chlorus und Galerius sowie die Caesares Severus und Maximinus Daia - dargestellt, die das mit einer Zwiebelknopffibel zusammengehaltene *paludamentum* tragen, sowie im untersten Medaillon die zwei mit einer Toga bekleideten *seniores Augusti* Diokletian und Maximian Herculus⁵. Da diese personelle Konstellation an der Spitze des Römischen Reiches nur zwischen 305, als Diokletian und Maximian Herculus als Augusti zurückgetreten waren, und 307, als sich Letzterer erneut zum Augustus ausrufen ließ, bestanden hat, kann durch diesen Reliefpilaster die Fertigstellung des zur Palastumfassung gehörigen Osttores sehr genau in die Anfangsphase der Regierungszeit des Galerius als Augustus (305 - 311 n. Chr.) datiert werden.

¹ KANITZ 1891, 96.

² SREJOVIĆ 1985, 51 - 67.

³ Pseudo Aurelius Victor, epitomes de Caesaribus 40, 15-17; vgl. KUHOFF 2001, 761.

⁴ SREJOVIĆ 1992/93, 41-47.

⁵ SREJOVIĆ 1991, 179-185.