

THE 3rd CENTURY MILITARY EQUIPMENT IN SOUTH-WESTERN SLOVENIA

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Abstract

The significant unrest that characterized the final decades of the 3rd century lead to intensive control over communication routes and to the fortification of the most important settlements in the south-eastern Alpine area. Two assemblages originating from south-western Slovenia are presented to achieve a better understanding of the period. The hoard from Prelovce near Malovše dated to the second half of the 3rd century and consisted of horse harness decoration, a military belt, and a combat knife. The hoard may suggest army movement or military control of the main road. A group of sixteen graves was found in Javor near Dolnji Zemon, and the majority of them originate from the second half of the 3rd century. The grave goods in two graves indicate a military affiliation of the deceased; a female grave containing silver jewellery corroborates the special social position of the whole group. It is possible that a military detachment was stationed at Javor near Dolnji Zemon, and controlled the road from Tarsatica to the Postojna basin.

Keywords: South-western Slovenia, second half of the 3rd century, Prelovce near Malovše, Javor near Dolnji Zemon, hoards, graves, horse harness decoration, combat knives, jewellery

INTRODUCTION

The final decades of the 3rd century are characterized by increasing control over communication routes and by the fortification of the most important settlements in the south-eastern Alpine area. The settlement of Castra (Ajdoščina) on the Aquileia–Emona road was protected with new fortification walls in the middle of the 270s or in the 280s.¹ The activities intensified at the Ad Pirum (Hrušica) pass in around 275.² Based on the coin finds, the building of the Ad Pirum fortress was

dated in the 320s.³ The fortress at Nauportus (Vrhnika) might date at the end of the 3rd century.⁴ On the basis of coin finds it is presumed that the principia in Tarsatica were constructed at the end of the 270s or during the 280s.⁵ The short-lived Pasjak fortress on the Aquileia–Tarsatica road was in use around year 270.⁶

In contrast to the fortifications, there are very few finds of military equipment from the second half of the 3rd century in south-west Slovenia. Apart of some

† The curator of Goriški muzej Nova Gorica Beatrice Žbona Trkman, who contributed the analysis of the Prelovce hoard, passed away in 2015.

¹ Osmuk 1990, 189–190; Kos 2012, 267–276, 285–288; Kusetič 2014, 98–100; Kos 2014, 125–126.

² Kos 2012, 272–276, 285.

³ Kos 2012, 276, 287; Kusetič 2014, 84–97; Kos 2014, 126–127; Kos 2015; Ciglencečki 2015, 393–394.

⁴ Horvat 1990, 74–77, 185–187; Pröttel 1996, 139.

⁵ Bekić 2009, 220; Kos 2012, 287.

⁶ Starac 1993; Kos 2012, 285–287; Kusetič 2014, 47–48; Kos 2014, 127; Ciglencečki 2015, 412–413.



Fig. 1: Sites mentioned in the text.

objects from Castra⁷ and Ad Pirum,⁸ the rare stray finds appear on the hilltop sites.⁹ They may be an indication of a short-term military occupation of strategically positioned hilltop posts, a phenomenon that is observed all over the south-eastern Alpine region.¹⁰

To achieve a better understanding of the 3rd century period, a hoard from Prelovce near Malovše in the Vipava Valley will be presented and discussed, along with a cemetery from Javor near Dolnji Zemon in the Reka Valley (Dolina reke Reke).

A HOARD FROM PRELOVCE NEAR MALOVŠE

A group of objects was discovered in Prelovce (Fig. 2), on the low ridge between the villages of Črniče and Malovše in the Vipava Valley.¹¹ Several objects and some human bones were unearthed during road repairs in April 2012 and were later found in a secondary position by Benjamin Purger, a local archaeological enthusiast, who donated them to the Goriški muzej (Museum of Nova Gorica). The find spot is located near the small chapel on the northern side of the modern road, and on the crossroads with the cart track leading along the ridge from the village of Batuje towards the hamlet of Slejki.¹²

⁷ Svoljšak et al. 2013, 72: Figs. 6; 7 (double knobs).

⁸ Petru 1974 (breastplate of a mail shirt); Giesler 1981, Pl. 19: 17 (belt buckle).

⁹ Double knobs: Laharnar 2012, 203, Pls. 15: 52; 22: 163; 28: 7 (Gradišče na Čepni, Gradišče above Gornja Košana, Ulaka, Sv. Ahac). Hexagonal mount: Laharnar 2012, Pl. 24: 26 (Gradišče above Knežak). Incendiary javelin: Horvat 2002, 146, 161–162, Fig. 6: 8; Pl. 21: 1 (Grad near Šmihel).

¹⁰ Ciglonečki 2008, 486–487.

¹¹ The ridge represents the edge of the accumulation zone of an immense Pleistocene Selo landslide (Košir, Popit, Verbovšek 2015).

¹² Approximate location: GK koordinates Y 406.014, X 84.991

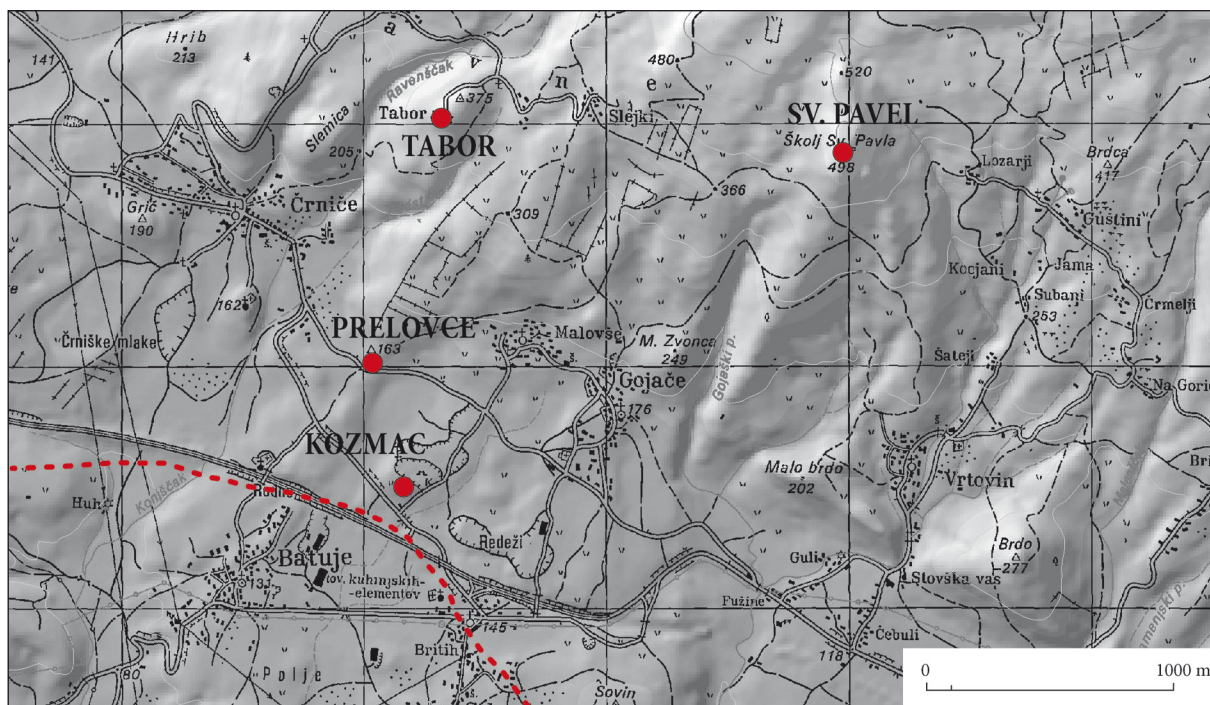


Fig. 2: The geographical position of Prelovce, the Roman Aquileia–Emona road, and the Late Roman settlements in the vicinity.

A brief field survey showed no settlement traces in the immediate vicinity and the area is not suitable for agriculture. In the past the location may have had the same function as today: the border area between two small agricultural zones (belonging to the villages of Črniče and Malovše) and the crossroad of several routes.

The surrounding region that extends on the southern foothills of Čaven was densely populated in the Roman and Early Medieval periods (Fig. 2). The prehistoric fortified settlement of Kozmac was also occupied in the Late Roman period, and is located 450 m south of Prelovce.¹³ Sv. Pavel above Vrtovin was an important hilltop settlement dating to Late Antiquity and the Early Medieval period.¹⁴ A Late Antique settlement was probably located on Tabor above Črniče.¹⁵

The old path leads along the ridge from the modern main road of the Vipava valley to Prelovce and further towards the settlements located higher on the slopes of Čaven. This path may represent an old natural track connecting the Roman road in the valley¹⁶ with the hilltop settlements at Tabor and Sv. Pavel.

Catalogue

The finds are kept in the Goriški muzej.

1. Strap mount in the form of a lion. Length 4.3 cm. Copper alloy. Inv. no. 10543. Fig. 3: 1.
2. Buckle with the loop in the form of the letter T. Decorated with grooves. Probably belonging to a belt. Copper alloy. Diameter 3.4 cm. Inv. no. 10553. Fig. 3: 2.
3. Strap mount in the form of a disc with a boss. Decorated with two concentric grooves. Copper alloy. Diameter 2.7 cm. Inv. no. 10552. Fig. 3: 3.
4. Strap mount in the form of a pelta. Copper alloy. Diameter 3.8 cm. Inv. no. 10544. Fig. 3: 4.
5. Strap mount in the form of a pelta. Copper alloy. Diameter 3.8 cm. Inv. no. 10545. Fig. 3: 5.
6. Strap mount in the form of a shell. Copper alloy. Diameter 4.3 cm. Inv. no. 10546. Fig. 3: 6.
7. Strap mount in the form of a shell. Copper alloy. Diameter 5.1 cm. Inv. no. 10549. Fig. 3: 7.
8. Strap mount in the form of a shell. Copper alloy. Diameter 5.1 cm. Inv. no. 10548. Fig. 3: 8.
9. Strap mount in the form of a shell. Copper alloy. Diameter 5.5 cm. Inv. no. 10547. Fig. 3: 9.
10. Strap mount in the shape of a hexagon with concave indentations. Copper alloy. Height 7 cm. Inv. no. 10550. Fig. 3: 10.
11. Discoid strap mount of copper alloy. Diameter 6 cm. Inv. no. 10551. Fig. 3: 11.
12. Ring of copper alloy. Diameter 2.4 cm. Inv. no. 10556. Fig. 3: 12.
13. Ring of copper alloy. Diameter 2.5 cm. Inv. no. 10554. Fig. 3: 13.

¹³ Harej 1988–1989.

¹⁴ Svoljšak 1985; Bitenc, Knific 2013–2014.

¹⁵ Zavrtanik 1984.

¹⁶ General works about the road through the Vipava Valley: Vidrih Perko, Žbona Trkman 2003–2004, 20–22. The road section below Prelovce: Rutar 1899, 29; Svoljšak 1967, 99; Osmuk 1987; Osmuk 1991; Osmuk 1996. The road map: Svoljšak et al. 2013, 80.

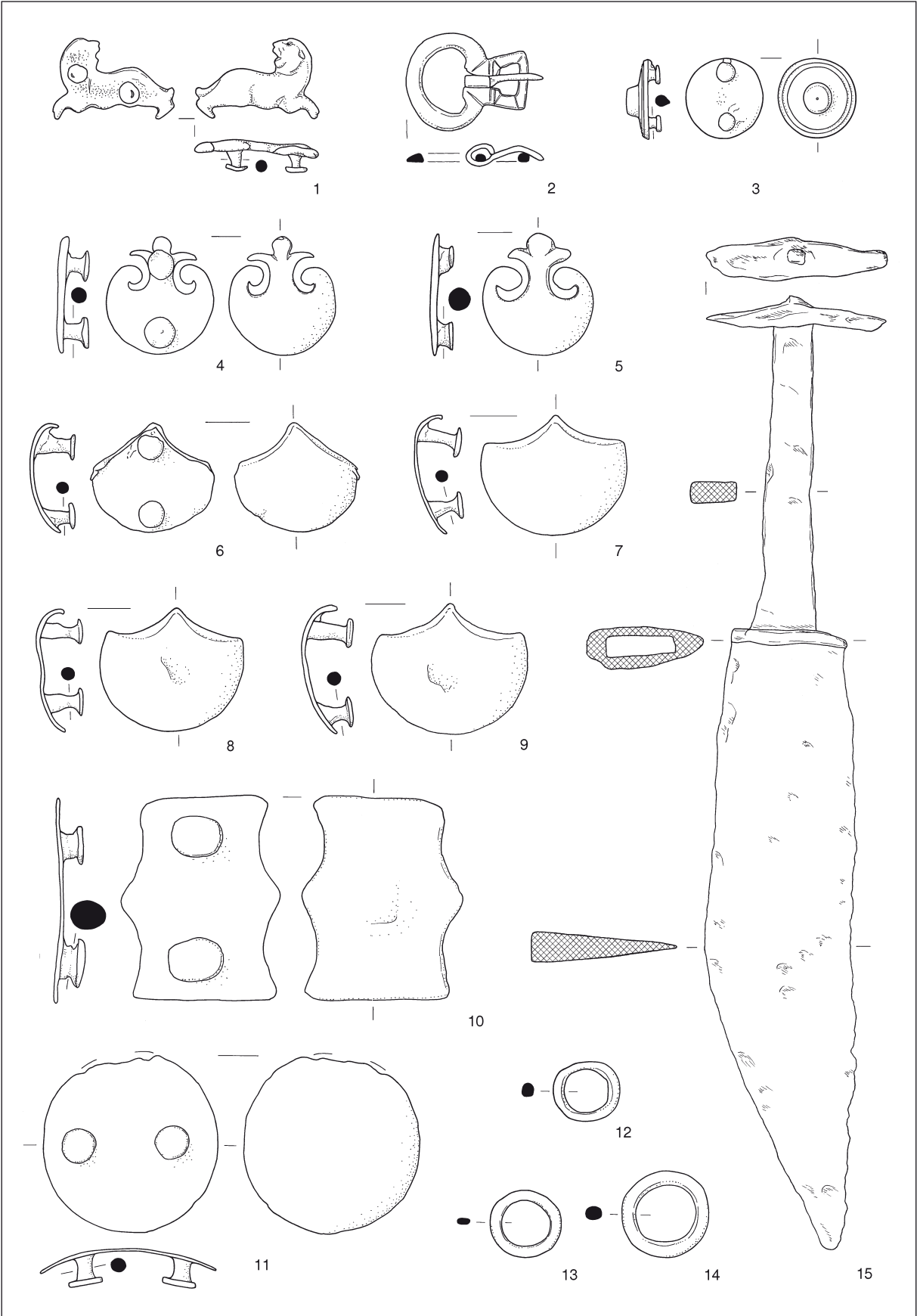


Fig. 3: Prelovce. 1–14 copper alloy, 15 iron. Scale 1:2.

14. Ring of copper alloy. Diameter 3 cm. Inv. no. 10555. *Fig. 3: 14.*

15. Iron knife. Blade length 21.7 cm, hilt length 11.7 cm (altogether 33.4 cm); blade width 5.1 cm. Inv. no. 10557. *Fig. 3: 15.*

16. Fragments of a ceramic vessel, probably an oil lamp. Depurated clay, orange, soft, powdery surface. Inv. no. 10558. *Fig. 4.*

17. A human bone, right femur, probably female.¹⁷

The decorative strap mounts are massive, cast integrally with all the details and each has two large knobs on the back side (*Fig. 3: 1,3–11*). Based on the large dimensions, manufacture, and forms (pelta, shell, plain disc, disc with a boss, and hexagon with concave indentations) the mounts are typical for horse harness decoration during the second half of the 3rd century and are widely distributed.¹⁸ On the other hand, the mount in the form of a lion is rare (*Fig. 3: 1*). A very similar lion strap mount was found at the Late Antique settlement of Homec near Breginj¹⁹ and two analogous lions are known from Spain (sites: Mengibar, Sanlucarejo).²⁰

The belt buckle with the loop in the form of the letter T (*Fig. 3: 2*) was used in the late 2nd and 3rd centuries and is often connected with the military.²¹ The large iron

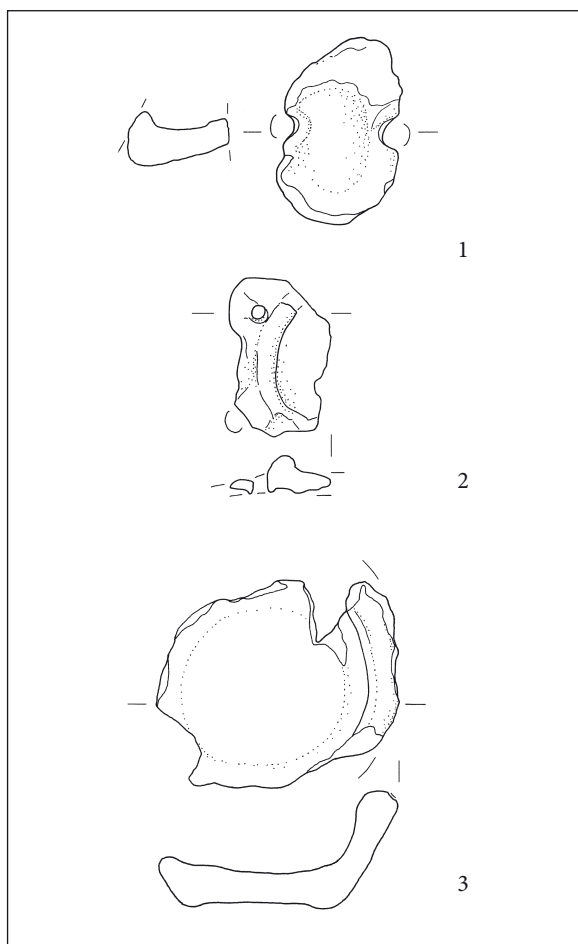


Fig. 4: Prelovce. Pottery. Scale 1:2.

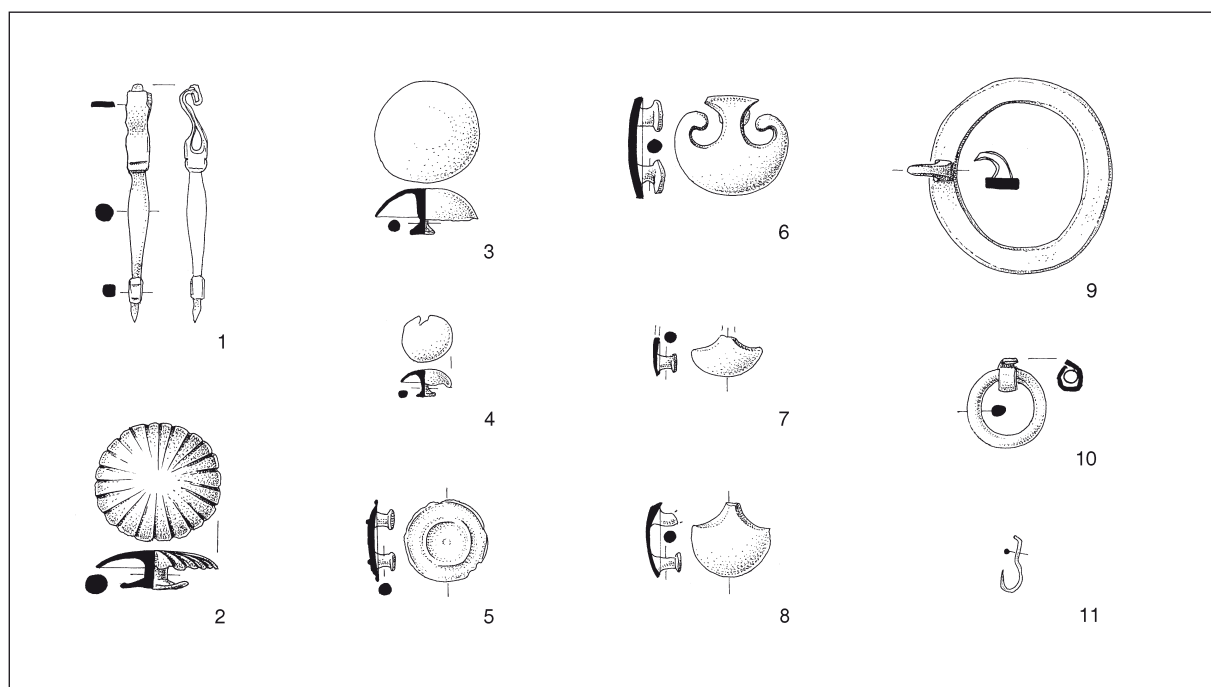


Fig. 5: Unec, grave 79. Copper alloy. Scale 1:2.

knife (*Fig. 3: 15*) is supposed to be worn on the belt (for more information about the knife see below).

All the objects from Prelovce are dated to the same period – the second half of the 3rd century. Two functional units can be discerned within the group: the military belt with a knife and an incomplete horse harness. It is not possible to distinguish between military and civilian horse equipment in the 3rd century,²² however, the combination of both parts points to a military context. The objects were probably lost or hidden near a secondary communication route. The human bone indicates the existence of a cemetery and is not necessarily connected with the hoard, especially since items of horse harness usually do not appear in 3rd-century graves.

Mounts similar to those in the Prelovce hoard were found in Grave 79 at Unec (*Fig. 5*),²³ which contained a complete 3rd century cingulum. The mounts in the form of a pelta, shell, and disk (*Fig. 5: 5–8*) are much smaller than those from Prelovce (diameters 2.2 cm, 3 cm, 2.1 cm, 1.9 cm). The grave also contained a belt buckle in

the form of a ring with a hook (*Fig. 5: 9*), a small ring (*Fig. 5: 10*), three knobs of various sizes (*Fig. 5: 2–4*) and a strap terminal (*Fig. 5: 1*). The belts with ring buckles were used from the first half of the 3rd century until the period of the tetrarchy. They were an element of military dress, but were not exclusive to the military.²⁴

The 3rd century mounts and double knobs, both belonging to horse harness or to military belts, were found at several sites in the nearby area: in the Notranjska region,²⁵ at Hrušica,²⁶ in Aquileia,²⁷ and in Joannis in Friuli.²⁸

²⁴ Schnurbein 1995; Bishop, Coulston 1993, 152–153; Gschwind 2004, 164–170; James 2004, 60–62; Ciugudean 2011.

²⁵ Laharnar 2012, 203, Pls. 15: 52; 22: 163; 24: 26; 28: 7.

²⁶ Ciglencečki 1994, Pl. 1: 10: shell mount, diameter of 2 cm - part of a belt.

²⁷ Buora 2002, 47–49, Pl. 2: 2–4, 6, 7.

²⁸ Strazzula Rusconi 1979, 84, Pl. 8: 10, 13.



Fig. 6: Javor near Donji Zemon, 0.5 m lidar derived digital elevation model (Edisa Lozić; courtesy of Boštjan Laharnar and the Narodni muzej Slovenije).

JAVOR NEAR DOLNJI ZEMON

The *Javor*²⁹ Plateau is a well-protected promontory 80 m above the Reka and the small valley of Osojnica. The slopes are very steep on three sides, however there is an easy approach from the west. The clearly visible ramparts are an indication of a prehistoric settlement, extending around 450 m from the north-west to the south-east (Figs. 6; 7).

The settlement is divided into four parts (Figs. 6; 7). The upper terrace is named *Gradišče*³⁰, and has an elongated oval form encircled by a strong rampart (240 x 110 m). The entrance is on the north. Another area enclosed by a rampart (160 x 65 m) extends on the north-eastern slope of *Gradišče*.³¹ At the north-western side of *Gradišče* and about 5 m lower, there is a flat terrace – *Rovan* – that is protected with a semi-circular

rampart on the northern side (155 x 135 m). The entrance through the rampart is visible on the western side. West of the entrance to the *Rovan* area there is a smaller terrace which was probably also fortified.³²

The site of *Javor* and its archaeological finds were first mentioned by a local enthusiast Josip Potepan.³³ Alfons Müllner described and made a sketch of *Gradišče*, the upper settlement area.³⁴ Subsequently the site was briefly described several times.³⁵ A previously unknown north-eastern enclosure was recognized only a few years ago.³⁶ The visualization of the lidar data has allowed the recognition of the full extent of the settlement (Fig. 6).³⁷

³² Müllner 1880, XXV–XXVII, Fig. 12; Ciglencečki 1987, 72; Šašel, Urleb 1975, 152; Poklar 2010.

³³ Potepan Škerljčev 1872, 254–255; Čeligoj 1995.

³⁴ Müllner 1880, XXV–XXVII, Fig. 12

³⁵ E.g. Rutar 1890, 122–123; Moser 1903, 27; Ciglencečki 1987, 72–73; Šašel, Urleb 1975, 152; Urleb 1984, 41; Horvat 2005, 234–236; Pugelj 2007, 24–31; Pugelj 2010, 163–166; Laharnar 2012, 84–86.

³⁶ Poklar 2010, the sketch of all four parts of the settlement.

³⁷ Lidar data has been processed according to Štular,

²⁹ Also called *Javornik* or *Javorje*.

³⁰ Also called *Gradina* (pers. comm. Franc Poklar) or *Nadgradišče* (Pugelj 2010, 164).

³¹ The area is named *Skleda* by Poklar; Archive IZA ZRC SAZU.

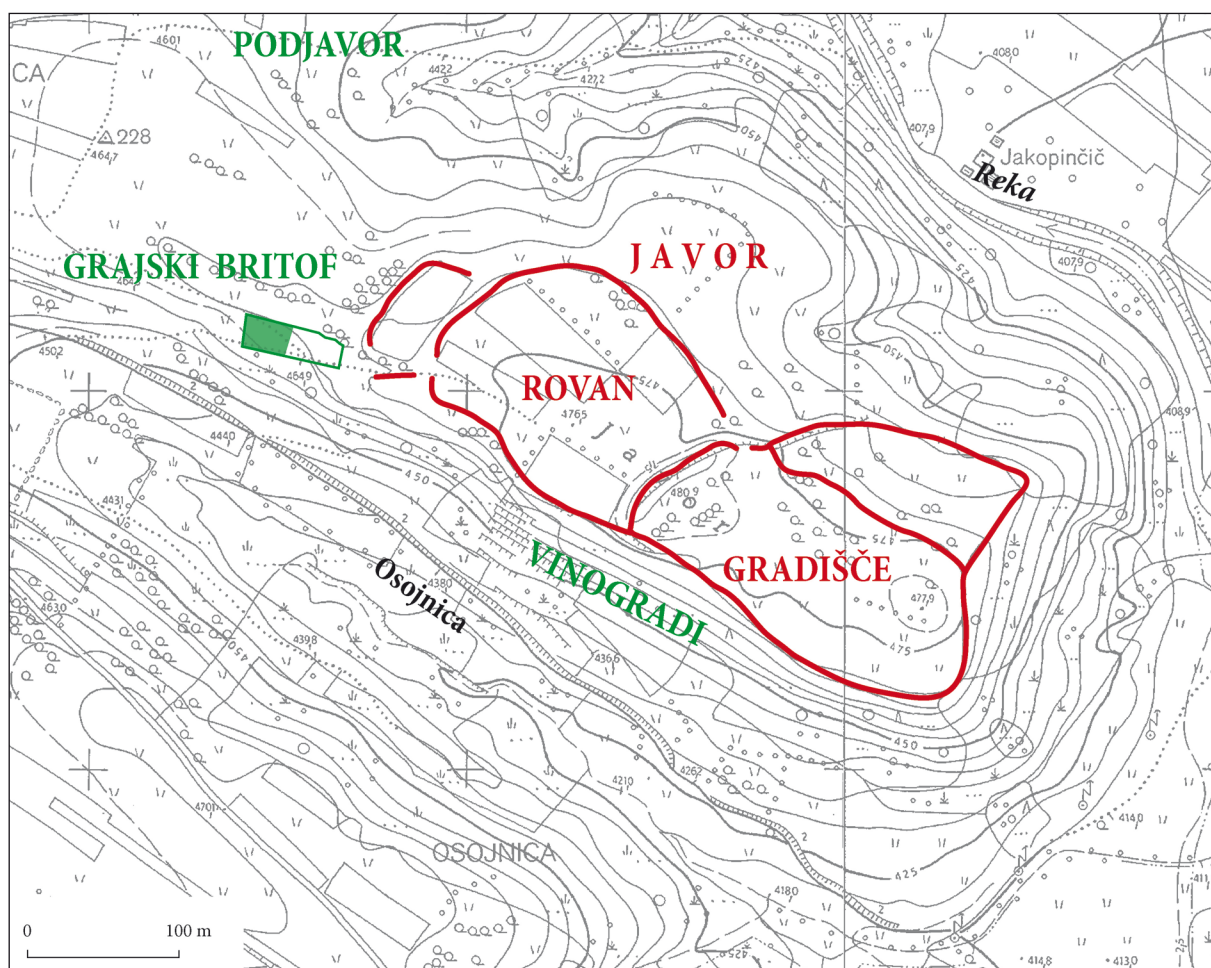


Fig. 7: Javor near Donji Zemon. The settlement and the cemeteries. Grajski britof: position of plot no. 1245 and the location of the Late Roman graves.

The chronology of the settlement is based only on stray finds gathered during the fieldwork. It is believed that the ramparts have an origin in the prehistoric period.³⁸ However, Potepan mentioned that the rampart walls were built with mortar,³⁹ and the local enthusiasts discovered a wall made with the same technique in the Gradišče area.⁴⁰ The preliminary results of the geophysical investigation in the interior of Gradišče indicate that the buildings were placed in rows.⁴¹ Late Antique finds (bricks, ceramics, glass) were discovered in the settlement area during the extensive field survey.⁴²

All the stray finds originate from the areas outside the ramparts. A bronze shaft-hole axe, found below Gradišče and dated to the 9th century BC, is the oldest artefact and might be connected with the beginning of the settlement.⁴³ The bronze pendant with a double spiral is also prehistoric.⁴⁴

Many artefacts were discovered around 1850 during the earthworks for vineyards that extended on the steep south-western slope of Gradišče – *Vinogradi* (Fig. 7). The finds that did not survive probably originated from prehistory and the Roman period, maybe from the graves.⁴⁵

Potepan discovered an inhumation grave in 1884 near the western entrance to the settlement on the *Grajski britof* plot (Fig. 7).⁴⁶ Carl Moser, who named the area *Vinograd*, excavated there in 1886 and found several graves.⁴⁷ The new evaluation of their finds is presented below.

Between 1886 and 1890 Potepan found a whole urn and an iron spear at the southern edge of the settlement.⁴⁸

Lozić 2016. On average 5.7 ground points have been interpolated into 0.5 m DEM. Complex visualization combines SVF and SLRM, cf. Štular et al. 2012. (Data source: web service eVode at <http://evode.arso.gov.si/indexd022.html?q=node/12>, GKOT D48 file GK443_44.)

³⁸ Ciglencečki 1987, 72–73.

³⁹ Potepan Škerljčev 1872, 254.

⁴⁰ Poklar 2010.

⁴¹ Mušič et al. 2013.

⁴² Ciglencečki 1987, 72.

⁴³ Šinkovec 1995, 33, no. 5, Pl. 1: 5; Trampuž Orel, Heath 1998, 237, Fig. 3.

⁴⁴ Guštin 1979, Pl. 1: 15.

⁴⁵ Potepan Škerljčev 1872, 254: “Bones, charcoal, urns, fragments of coarse and fine ceramics, ceramic plates with inscriptions, two oil lamps, smith slag, bronze coins, a brass finger ring, golden ear rings, ceramic necklace beads, knives, querns.” See also: Potepan 1884. Müllner 1880, XXV–XXVI mentions among the finds: “bricks, fragments of glass vessels and of decorated bronze vessels and bronze fibulae.” Topography of the cemetery *Vinogradi* also Rutar 1890, 123.

⁴⁶ Potepan 1884.

⁴⁷ Moser 1903, 26–29.

⁴⁸ It did not survive and is not precisely located. Rutar 1890, 122–123.

A cemetery from the early imperial period was located in *Podjavor*,⁴⁹ north of the settlement, where several archaeological objects were discovered during fieldwork (Fig. 7). An urn that contained burnt bones, several amorphous pieces of bronze, and a silver arm ring was found in 1934/35. It was covered by an irregular stone slab bearing a partly damaged inscription: [...Vi]ndici / an(or)um) IXXXX.⁵⁰ The spherical stone lid of an urn was discovered in *Podjavor* along with the urn and a pair of gold earrings.⁵¹

An inscribed stone was found on the field below Gradišče in 1930, however the precise find location is unknown. The first line has letters: [S]ACRV[M], only M was partly visible on the second line.⁵²

Several Roman coins and other small finds are kept in the Narodni muzej Slovenije without exact find locations known.⁵³

Considering the distribution of the cremation graves as well as the probable settlement traces it seems that the Roman settlement was located on the *Javor Plateau*.

GRAJSKI BRITOF CEMETERY

Being informed of the stray finds, Josip Potepan excavated at *Grajski britof* (Figs. 7; 8) on 25th January 1884 and discovered a rich inhumation grave (Grave 7; Fig. 10: 3–9).⁵⁴ Several finds were given to various people; the rest went to the Naturhistorisches Museum in Vienna at the request of Carl Moser.⁵⁵ It is possible to identify only those objects that were sent to Vienna.

Carl Moser excavated there on 13th September 1886 and found sixteen graves and several stray finds.⁵⁶ He published a sketch of the cemetery (Fig. 8) and a catalogue of selected finds.⁵⁷ The finds are kept in the Naturhistorisches Museum in Vienna.

The exact location of Moser's excavation was described by Rutar, so it is possible to identify it on modern maps. The excavation area was located near the western entrance to the settlement and it can likely be identified with present-day plot no. 1245, cadastral community *Dolnji Zemon* (Fig. 7).⁵⁸ The plot was named *Vinograd*

⁴⁹ *Podjavori* in Pugelj 2007, 30–32; Pugelj 2010, 166.

⁵⁰ Gigante 1935–1936; Mirabella Roberti 1938; location: Poklar 2009b.

⁵¹ Uršič 1988; Poklar 2009a; Pugelj 2010, 166; Istenič 2014, 129, Fig. 155.

⁵² Degraffi 1931.

⁵³ *FMRSI* 3, 102, No. 51; *FMRSI* 4, 95–96, No. 36; Laharnar 2012, 84–86, Pl. 28: 11–12.

⁵⁴ Potepan 1884; Moser 1903, 26.

⁵⁵ Moser 1903, 26.

⁵⁶ Hoernes 1887, 41.

⁵⁷ Moser 1903, 27–29, Figs. 54–59. (Pečnik 1904, 187 and Pečnik 1912, 24 probably mentioned Moser's excavations as his own.)

⁵⁸ Moser 1903, 26, Fig. 59; Rutar 1890, 122; Pugelj 2010,

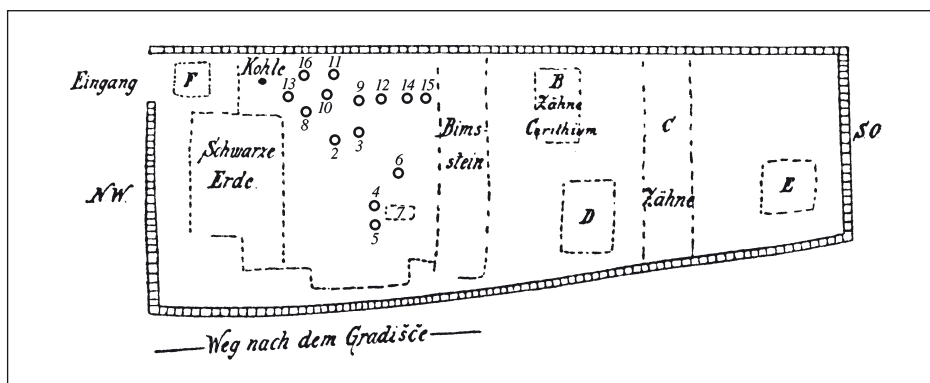


Fig. 8: Javor near Donji Zemon. Plan view of the cemetery by Moser 1903, 29, Fig. 59. Not to scale.

by Moser,⁵⁹ however the original name for the area is Grajski britof.⁶⁰

Catalogue

Very few information about the graves is found in the inventory book of the Naturhistorisches Museum in Vienna (NHMW), therefore Moser's report was the most important source for the reconstruction of the grave contents.⁶¹ Previously published identifications of the coins were also very helpful.⁶²

Grave 1

Source: Moser 1903, 27; Hoernes 1887, 41.

Probably cremation (Hoernes 1887, 41). Its position on the plan is not recorded. According to Moser it was located near Graves 7 and 2. It was only 0.5 m away from the latter (comp. Fig. 8).

1. Globular glass bottle with a cylindrical neck and broken rim. Diameter 8.5 cm. Based on the dimensions it is probably NHMW 19275. Missing.

2. Four coins of Probus. Missing. One of them may tentatively be identified as NHMW 19264: Probus, 276–282, Antoninianus, Siscia, RIC 767(H); *FMRSI* 1, 92, No. 76: 30.

3. Three coins. Not identified. Missing.

Grave 2

Source: Moser 1903, 27–28, Figs. 54–55.

Cremation; the few remains of burnt bones were put into the urn.

1. Silver finger ring that was put on the bow of the fibula. It has a smoothly swelling profile and a broad bezel that is set with an oval gemstone. The gem is almost flush with the surface of the ring and it has a lower layer of dark blue colour and a bright blue upper layer with engraved decoration. The motif is no longer discernible because of the damage. It is possible that

a standing human figure was represented. Moser identified the stone as chalcedony. Diameter 2.4 cm. NHMW 19230. Fig. 9: 1.

2. Silver crossbow fibula. The bow bears an inlay decoration of brightly coloured metal. The underside of each knob has a small hole filled with bright red metal. Length 6.3 cm. The fibula was found in the urn or in its immediate vicinity. NHMW 19229. Moser 1903, 27–28, Fig. 55. Fig. 9: 2.

3. Several thin silver foils that Moser described as pendants. They can probably be identified as seven fragments of silver sheet, NHMW 19233. The remains of three small holes are visible on the sheets. Small pieces of bronze and silver sheet are pasted near one of the holes, and a small bronze rivet survived in the other hole. Only the largest piece with a hole is presented in drawing (length 2.1 cm) – NHMW 19233 (b). Fig. 9: 3.

4–6. Moser lists several fragments of wire made of copper alloy. They are tentatively identified as the following objects: a fragment of a twisted wire (length 2.8 cm), NHMW 19241 (a), Fig. 9: 4; a fragment of a wire (length 3.4 cm), NHMW 19241 (b), Fig. 9: 5; a fragment (length 1.5 cm), NHMW 19241 (c), Fig. 9: 6.

7. Jar that was used as an urn. According to the Moser's description it could be identified as NHMW 19278. Fragment of the rim; coarse cooking pottery; wheel thrown; grey and brown colour; inclusions: bright colour, coarse, abundant; two incised lines at the top of the shoulder. Diameter of the rim 15 cm. Fig. 9: 7.

8. Iron knife. The badly rusted remains of the guard are probably visible at the top of the blade. The wooden plate partially survived on the tang. A separately made iron pommel was put on the end of the hilt. Surviving length of the blade is 24 cm, its width is 4.7 cm. The tang is 13 cm long. NHMW 19223. Moser 1903, 27, Fig. 54. Fig. 9: 8.

9. Coin of Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius or Commodus (for Faustina I, II or Crispina), 138–192, Sestertius, Roma, RIC? NHMW 19244. *FMRSI* 1, 91, No. 76: 5. The attribution to the grave is based on the Inventory book. The coin is not mentioned by Moser 1903, 27–28.⁶³

Grave 3

Source: Moser 1903, 28.

165–166.

⁵⁹ Moser 1903; also Pugelj 2010, 165–166.

⁶⁰ Pers. comm. Franc Poklar; Rutar 1890, 123; Poklar 2010.

⁶¹ Moser 1903.

⁶² *FMRSI* 1, 91–93, No. 76.

⁶³ A coin of Commodus (NHMW 19245) was also attributed to Grave 2 in *FMRSI* 1, 91, No. 76: 8. The attribution is based on the record in the Inventory book in NHMW, which is not very clear and in our opinion does not designate Grave 2.

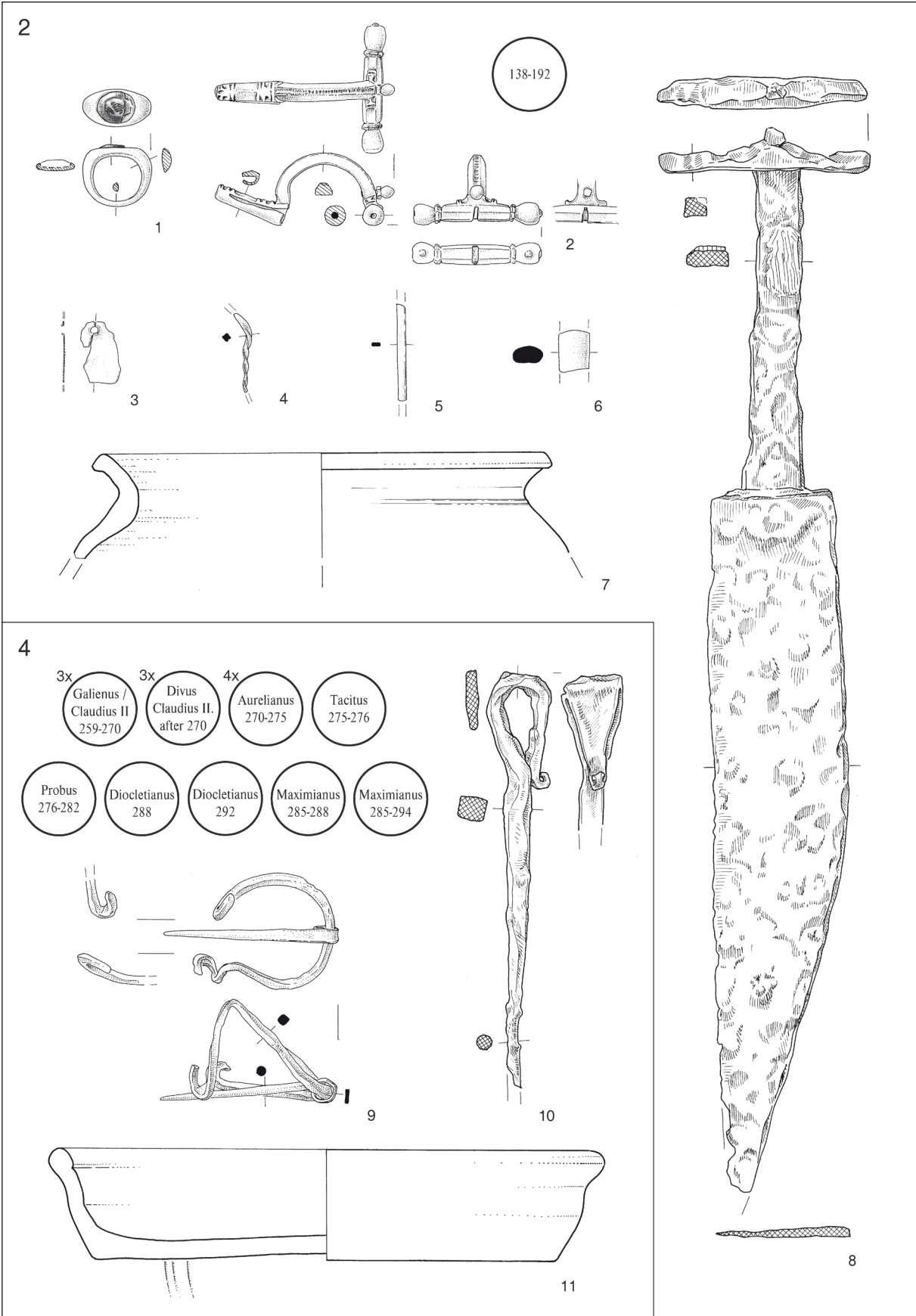


Fig. 9: Javor near Donji Zemon, graves 2 and 4. Silver 1–3; copper alloy 4–6,9; pottery 7,11; iron 8,10. Scale 1:2.

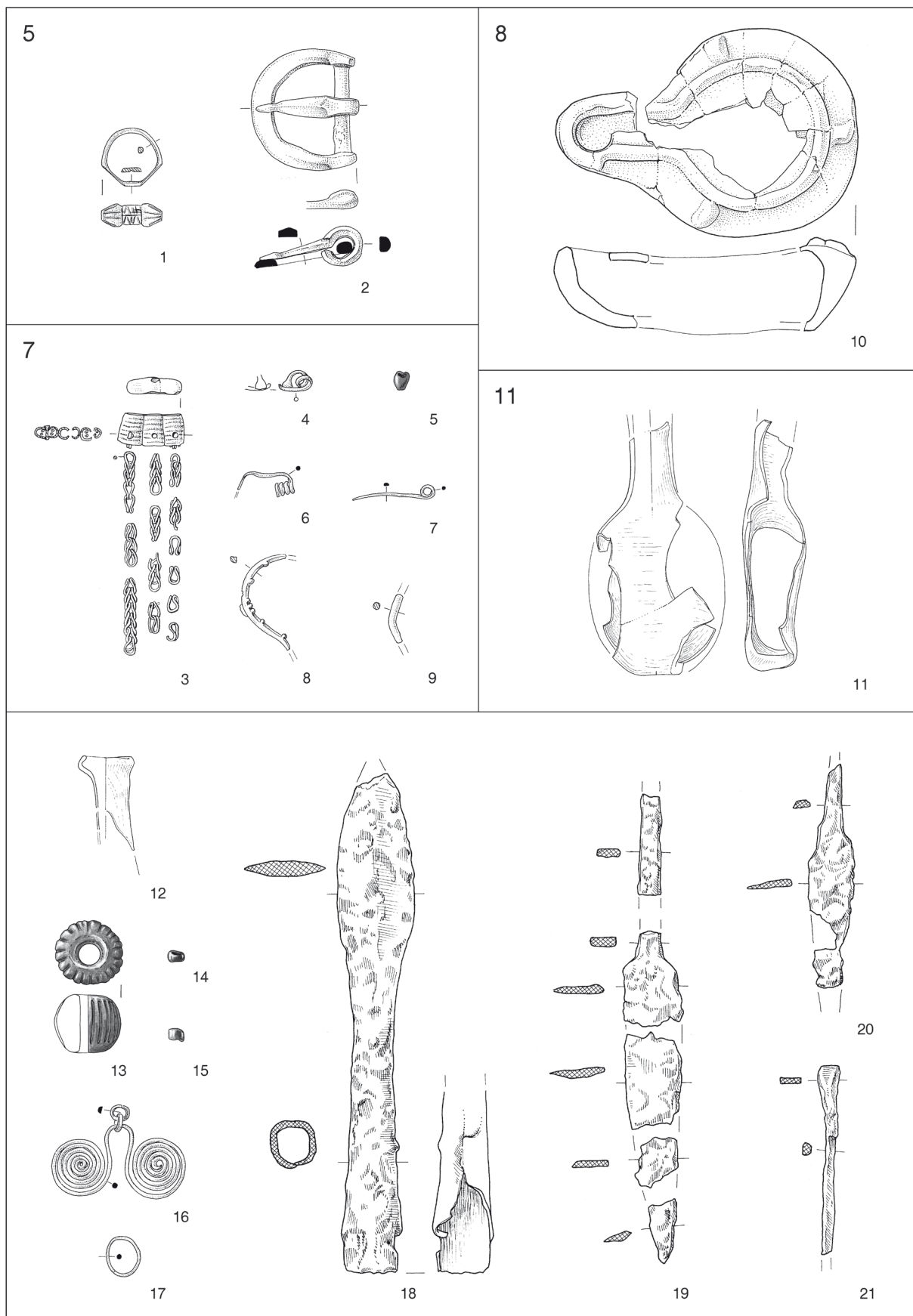


Fig. 10: Javor near Donji Zemon, graves 5, 7, 8, 11 and objects from various graves. Silver 1,3,4,8,9; glass 5,11– 15; copper alloy 2,6,7,16,17; pottery 10; iron 18–21. Scale 1:2.

Cremation.

1. Small terra sigillata vessel, broken into small pieces. It contained small amount of burnt remains. Not survived.

Grave 4

Source: Moser 1903, 28, Fig. 56; Hoernes 1887, 41.

Probably a cremation. Traces of burning and pottery fragments were dispersed in the surroundings.

1. Penannular fibula with upturned and rolled ends. A pin is preserved. Twisted. Copper alloy. Diameter 4.1 cm. NHMW 19237. Moser 1903, 28, Fig. 56. Fig. 9: 9.

2. Pointed object with a ring-loop. Surviving length 14.5 cm. Iron. It lay under plate no. 4. NHMW 19227. Fig. 9: 10.

3. Iron knife fragment. One of the two surviving knives: NHMW 19225 or 19226, Fig. 10: 19 or 20.

4. Plate, complete. Pottery fabric: light brown, inclusions: rare, red. Remains of red slip on the exterior of the rim. It is possible that the red slip was also on the interior of the plate. Rim diameter 18.5 cm. NHMW 19280. Fig. 9: 11.

5. Twenty-nine coins were found, however only 15 survived with exact location data (NHMW inventory book, determined in the *FMRSI* 1; *Table 1*). The missing coins from Grave 4 might be included in the group of coins without exact location data that are kept in the NHMW (see below).

Grave 5

Source: Moser 1903, 28, Figs. 57, 58.

Cremation.

1. Silver finger ring. The shoulders are decorated with engraved lines. The middle plate bears the engraved inscription: VIV(as) VT(ere) F(elix). Diameter 2.1 cm. The finger ring was found on the phalanx. NHMW 19231. Moser 1903, 28, Fig. 58. Fig. 10: 1.

2. Belt buckle. The frame was cast in one piece. Copper alloy. Diameter 4.2 cm. NHMW 19238. Moser 1903, 28, Fig. 57. Fig. 10: 2.

3. Crushed pottery vessel. Not identified.

Grave 6

Source: Moser 1903, 28–29.

Cremation, the remains were put into the urn.

1. A damaged pot made of “bad pottery”, used as a cinerary urn. Not identified.

2. An iron knife that lay across the urn. One of two surviving knives: NHMW 19225 or 19226, Fig. 10: 19 or 20.

3. Seven or eight bronze coins were found in the urn (Moser 1903, 28–29). Four of them were identified (*Table 2*). Three sestericii of Marcus Aurelius mentioned by Moser (1903, 28–29) are missing and are probably in the group of coins without exact location data in the NHMW (see below).

Grave 7

Source: Potepan 1884; Hoernes 1887, 41; Moser 1903, 26, 28–29, Figs. 52, 53.

The inhumation was discovered in 1884 by Potepan who mentioned some charcoal and a silver necklace as well as an oil lamp among the grave goods. Moser listed more finds, but not the oil lamp.

1. The remains of a silver necklace. The terminal spacer is made of three thin silver sheet tubes that were soldered

together and decorated with horizontal incisions. The top of the tubes is covered with silver sheet, while the lower ends are open. Each tube bears a small hole. In one of the holes there is a rivet still holding a chain. There were probably three chains coming out of the spacer. The chains, which only partly survived, have simple loop-in-loop construction. Spacer diameter 2.3 cm. NHMW 19232. Potepan 1884; Moser 1903, 26, Fig. 52. Fig. 10: 3.

2. A miniature silver fibula. Length 1.1 cm. NHMW 19235. Moser 1903, 26, Fig. 53. Fig. 10: 4.

3. A bead of opaque red glass. Length 0.6 cm. Possibly NHMW 19271 (a). Fig. 10: 5.

4–5. Two fragments of a fibula – part of the pin and part of the spring. Copper alloy. Surviving lengths 1.9 and 2.9 cm. NHMW 19236 (a, b). Fig. 10: 6, 7.

6. Thin gold sheet, damaged. Missing.

7. Fragments of a glass vessel. Unidentified.

8. Oil lamp. Missing. Potepan 1884.

Two fragments of silver wire were identified as belonging to Grave 7:

9. A fragment of silver wire with adhering drops of silver. Length 3.4 cm. Possibly NHMW 19234. Fig. 10: 8.

10. A fragment of silver wire. Length 1.7 cm. NHMW 19233 (a). Fig. 10: 9.

Grave 8

Source: Moser 1903, 29.

Cremation, in the urn.

1. Fragments of an oil lamp. Probably NHMW 19277. The pottery fabric is not visible, the protuberances on the disk are blurred, and the nozzle was burned. Length 10.6 cm. Fig. 10: 10.

2. Damaged ceramic pot that was used as the urn. Missing.

Grave 9

Source: Moser 1903, 29.

Cremation.

The bones of a pig were reported found among the cremated bones.

Grave 10

Source: Moser 1903, 29.

Cremation, in the urn.

The crushed ceramic urn did not survive.

Grave 11

Source: Moser 1903, 29; Hoernes 1887, 41.

Cremation.

1. Moser mentioned a glass oil lamp. It may possibly be identified as the flat bottle NHMW 19276. Height 8.8 cm. Two fragments of transparent white glass. Fig. 10: 11.

Graves 12 and 16

Source: Moser 1903, 29.

Cremations. Moser described them together without distinguishing the grave goods.

1. The remains of an iron “needle” were found in Grave 12 or 16. It might be NHMW 19228 (a). Length 6.7 cm, Fig. 10: 21.

2. Fragments of bricks or tiles. Not survived.

						Inv. no.	Bibliography
1–3	Gallienus or Claudius II.	Ant	259–270	?	RIC ?	NHMW 19255	<i>FMRSI</i> 1, 91, No. 76: 13–15.
4–6	Divus Claudius II.	Ant	after 270	-	RIC 266(K)	NHMW 19255	<i>FMRSI</i> 1, 91, No. 76: 10–12.
7	Aurelianus	Ant	270–275	Med	RIC 107(F)	NHMW 19253	<i>FMRSI</i> 1, 91, No. 76: 16.
8	Aurelianus	Ant	270–275	Sis	RIC 233(F)	NHMW 19253	<i>FMRSI</i> 1, 91, No. 76: 17.
9	Aurelianus	Ant	270–275	Cyz	RIC 367	NHMW 19253	<i>FMRSI</i> 1, 91, No. 76: 18.
10	Aurelianus	Ant	270–275	?	RIC ?	NHMW 19253	<i>FMRSI</i> 1, 91, No. 76: 19.
11	Tacitus	Ant	275/276	Ser	RIC 193	NHMW 19254	<i>FMRSI</i> 1, 92, No. 76: 20.
12	Probus	Ant	276–282	Ser	RIC 836(G)	NHMW 19266	<i>FMRSI</i> 1, 92, No. 76: 31.
13	Diocletianus	Ant	288	Tic	RIC 225	NHMW 19251	<i>FMRSI</i> 1, 92, No. 76: 43.
14	Diocletianus	Ant	292	Rom	RIC 166(C)	NHMW 19258	<i>FMRSI</i> 1, 92, No. 76: 44.
15	Maximianus	Ant	285–288	Sis	RIC 544(F)	NHMW 19252	<i>FMRSI</i> 1, 92, No. 76: 45.
16	Maximianus	Ant	285–294	Ant	RIC 622	NHMW 19252	<i>FMRSI</i> 1, 92, No. 76: 46.

Table 1: Javor near Donji Zemon. Grave 4. Coins. Determination after *FMRSI* 1.

						Inv. no.	Bibliography
1	Augustus	As	18–2 BC	Rom	RIC ?	NHMW 19246	<i>FMRSI</i> 1, 91, No. 76: 1.
2	Tiberius (for Divus Augustus)	As	after 22	Rom	RIC 95,6	NHMW 19242	<i>FMRSI</i> 1, 91, No. 76: 2.
3	Hadrianus	S	117–138	Rom	RIC ?	NHMW 19243	<i>FMRSI</i> 1, 91, No. 76: 3.
4–6	Marcus Aurelius	S	161–180	-	-	-	Moser 1903, 28–29.
7	Undetermined	S	1 st –2 nd cent. AD	Rom	RIC ?	NHMW 19246	<i>FMRSI</i> 1, 92, No. 76: 48.

Table 2: Javor near Donji Zemon. Grave 6. Coins. Determination after *FMRSI* 1.*Graves 13, 14, 15*

Source: Moser 1903, 29, Fig. 59.

These graves are marked on Moser's plan as points (Fig. 8), i.e. in the same way as other graves, though without any description. They were probably cremations.

Point G

Moser mentioned that a lot of charcoal and a Roman coin were found at point G. The point was probably designated on the plan view as "Kohle" (Fig. 8; Moser 1903, 29, Fig. 59). The coin was not identified.

Point F

Iron spearhead. Damaged; surviving length 17.4 cm. Isolated find, 0.75 m deep. The find spot was marked as a

point F on the plan view (Fig. 8). NHMW 19224. Moser 1903, 29, Fig. 59: F.

Objects without grave attribution

– Rim of a balsarium. Naturally coloured glass. Diameter 2 cm. NHMW 19274. Fig. 10: 12.

– Bead of bright blue, opaque glass. Diameter 2.4 cm. NHMW 19270. Fig. 10: 13.

– Bead of blue, transparent glass. Diameter 0.6 cm. NHMW 19271 (b). Fig. 10: 14.

– Bead of dark green, transparent glass. Only half survived. Diameter 0.5 cm. NHMW 19271 (c). Fig. 10: 15.

– A pendant in the form of a double spiral with the remains of a chain (two links survived). Copper alloy. Diameter 4.7 cm. NHMW 19239. It was described along with the objects

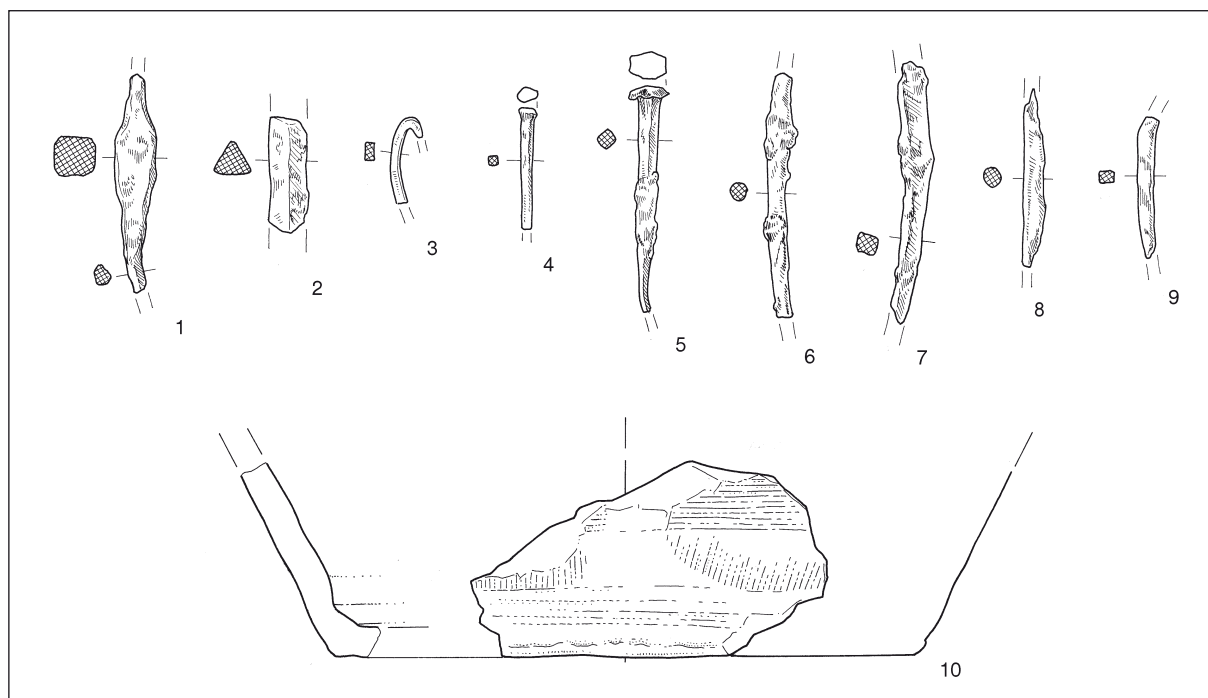


Fig. 11: Javor near Donji Zemon. Objects from various graves. Iron 1–9; pottery 10. Scale 1:2.

from Grave 7, however Moser doubted that it belonged to that grave (Moser 1903, 26). Fig. 10: 16.

– Ring. Copper alloy. Diameter 1.4 cm. NHMW 19240.

Fig. 10: 17.

– Iron knife, very damaged, five pieces. Surviving length approx. 15 cm. NHMW 19226. Fig. 10: 19. (Grave 4 or 6)

– Iron knife, very damaged. Surviving length 7.8 cm. NHMW 19225. Fig. 10: 20. (Grave 4 or 6)

– Iron object. The point is broken off. Surviving length 6.6 cm. NHMW 19228 (a). Fig. 10: 21. (Grave 12 or 16)

– Fragment of an iron object. Length 5.8 cm. NHMW 19228 (d). Fig. 11: 1.

– Fragment of an iron object. Length 3.1 cm. NHMW 19228 (i). Fig. 11: 2.

– Fragment of an iron object. Length 2.3 cm. NHMW 19228 (j). Fig. 11: 3.

– Iron nail. Surviving length 3.2 cm. NHMW 19228 (c). Fig. 11: 4.

– Iron nail. Surviving length 6 cm. NHMW 19228 (b). Fig. 11: 5.

– Fragment of an iron nail. Length 6.5 cm. NHMW 19228 (h). Fig. 11: 6.

– Fragment of an iron nail. Length 7 cm. NHMW 19228 (e). Fig. 11: 7.

– Fragment of an iron nail. Length 4.7 cm. NHMW 19228 (f). Fig. 11: 8.

– Fragment of an iron nail. Length 3.7 cm. NHMW 19228 (g). Fig. 11: 9.

– 16 fragments of the base and walls of a pot. The smooth surface is grey and brown, the core is orange. Inclusions: abundant, bright colour, large, medium, and small. Light brush decoration. Possibly handmade. Base diameter 15.2 cm. NHMW 19279. Fig. 11: 10.

– Fragments of bright red enamel or glass. NHMW 19272.

– Fragments of two amber beads. Elongated form. Surviving lengths 1 cm and 0.5 cm. NHMW 19273.

– There are many coins kept in the Naturhistorisches Museum in Vienna without exact find data. The majority probably originate from the graves at the Grajski britof location, although some of them could be stray finds from the other cemeteries surrounding the settlement or from the settlement itself. The range of the coins is between Marcus Aurelius (165–169) and Constantius I (297–298). Out of 25 coins, only four are from the 2nd century, all the others range from Tacitus (275–276) to Constantius I.⁶⁴

CHRONOLOGY OF THE GRAVES

Grave 1

The chronology of the grave is indicated by the coins of Probus (276–282).

Grave 2

The ring (Fig. 9: 1) has a slightly flattened shoulder, which is the characteristic of the Guiraud 2 e type that is common in the second half of the 2nd and first half of the 3rd centuries, but it also appears in later contexts.⁶⁵ The crossbow fibula (Fig. 9: 2) belongs to Pröttel type I B, which first appears in the 260s, however the peak of its production and use was between approximately 280

⁶⁴ FMRSI 1, 91–92, No. 76: 4,6,8,9,21–29,32–42,47.

⁶⁵ Guiraud 1988, 79; Guiraud 1989, 181, 203; Johns 1996, 42–44; Horvat, Milič, Tomanič-Jevremov 2001, 318.

to 320.⁶⁶ The 2nd century coin is not useful for dating the grave.

The grave can be dated to the end of the 3rd or to the very beginning of the 4th century. It was probably a male burial based on the crossbow fibula and a large knife (*Fig. 9: 2,8*).

Grave 4

The latest coin from the grave gives a date after 292 and the other grave goods are consistent with this.

The penannular fibula with upturned, rolled ends (*Fig. 9: 9*) can be attributed to Anton Höck's form 1a. The main characteristics of its form are the rhombic cross section of the ring and the use of bronze. Form 1a was distributed in Britannia and on the continent – mainly along the Danube River in Germania Superior, Noricum, and in the both Pannonian provinces. It appeared in the south-eastern Alpine area as well; otherwise it was extremely rare in the interior of the empire. Form 1a was worn by both men and women, and is primarily dated to the 4th and first half of the 5th century, with a concentration in the second half of the 4th century. The earliest example of this fibula form is dated into the second quarter of the 3rd century.⁶⁷ Grave 4 from Javor gives a relatively early chronological position of the fibula form.

Pointed objects with a ring-loop (*Fig. 9: 10*) appear in 4th century male graves in Pannonia⁶⁸ and Dalmatia.⁶⁹ They were discovered in Late Roman settlements in a wide geographical area, e.g. in Moosberg near Murnau in Raetia⁷⁰ and in Mogorjelo in Dalmatia.⁷¹ In the south-eastern Alpine area, they are common in the many Late Roman/Late Antique settlements and graves, e.g. Hrušica (Ad Pirum),⁷² Nadleški hrib,⁷³ Brinjeva gora,⁷⁴ Ajdovski gradec above Vranje,⁷⁵ Gradec at Prapretno,⁷⁶ Mali Njivč⁷⁷ and Kranj.⁷⁸ They continue to be used in the Early Medieval period.⁷⁹ The pointed objects with a

ring-loop were probably the part of male outfit, however their function is not evident from form alone. They were often interpreted as awls⁸⁰ or sometimes as tools for sharpening blades.⁸¹ On the other hand, they are similar to objects that were part of fire starting equipment of the Germans in eastern Central Europe.⁸² The pointed fire starters of somewhat different form are common in Scandinavia.⁸³

The plate form (*Fig. 9: 11*) has a long tradition and was produced in several variants contemporaneously. It developed in the second half of the 1st century and was in use until the end of the 3rd century.⁸⁴ It was found at Hrušica⁸⁵ in the area where settlement intensified in the second half of the 3rd century.⁸⁶ The analysis of pottery from Tonovcov grad shows that the form was no longer in use by the second half of the 4th century.⁸⁷

Grave 5

The finger ring (*Fig. 10: 1*) has a sharp keel or carination that is typical for 3rd century rings (form Guiraud 3 f).⁸⁸ The heavy belt buckle (*Fig. 10: 2*) has a very good comparison at Tonovcov grad.⁸⁹ It was also discovered at Dura Europos, where Simon James thinks that it may have been part of a horse harness.⁹⁰ Thus, the grave can probably be dated to the second half of the 3rd century.

Grave 6

The latest coins from the grave were minted under Marcus Aurelius.

Grave 7

The silver necklace (*Fig. 10: 3*) consisted of a triple chain. The chains have single loop-in-loop or foxtail construction that is made of folded links in a figure-eight form that pass through each other in series.⁹¹ The chains were kept parallel by a terminal spacer made of three tubes soldered together and decorated with horizontal engraved lines.

An almost identical silver necklace was found in Cerknica, in cremation Grave 40 (*Fig. 12*). The clasp of the necklace is a simple hook-and-eye device that was made of bronze. The grave also contained a silver

⁶⁶ Pröttel 1988, 349–353; Gschwind 2004, 193; Paul 2011, 39–43. The crossbow fibulae in Friuli: Schierl 2008.

⁶⁷ Höck 2013, 338, 342–346, 352, 359–362, *Fig. 4* (distribution map).

⁶⁸ Somogyiszil, *Graves* 86, 112, 140; Burger 1979, 45, 51, 57, *Pls.* 17: 86-2; 20: 112-2; 23: 140-4. Keszthely-Dobogó, *Graves* 3, 47–48, 75, 84; Sági 1981, 11, 22–24, 44, 49–51, *Figs.* 2: 8; 7: 11; 28: 4; 33: 3.

⁶⁹ Kaštel Sućurac: Kamenjarin 2014, 45–46 (the ring-loop was incorrectly reconstructed).

⁷⁰ Garbsch 1966, *Pl.* 35: 3,4,11,14–17.

⁷¹ Busuladžić 2014, 122, *Prilog* 47: 144–145.

⁷² Giesler 1981, 178, *Pl.* 25: 265.

⁷³ Nadleški hrib: Laharnar 2013, 137, *Fig.* 13: 4.

⁷⁴ Ciglenečki 1994, *Pl.* 2: 11.

⁷⁵ Ciglenečki 1994, *Pl.* 8: 12.

⁷⁶ Bausovac 2003, *Pl.* 3: 2,3.

⁷⁷ Istenič 2015, *Pl.* 3: 32,33.

⁷⁸ Stare 1980, *Pls.* 26: 6; 32: 3; 62: 4; 99: 2.

⁷⁹ Bitenc, Knific 2013–2014, 158.

⁸⁰ E.g. Sági 1981, 102–103; Bitenc, Knific 2013–2014, 158.

⁸¹ Bausovac 2003, 317.

⁸² Peškař 1967.

⁸³ Ilkjaer 1993, 242–256; Blankenfeldt 2015, 176–184.

⁸⁴ Plesničar-Gec 1977, 54–55; Plesničar-Gec 1972, *Pl.* 52: 18 (Grave 187, end of the 3rd century), *Pl.* 53: 8 (Grave 189, second half of the 3rd century); Krajšek, Stergar 2008, 252.

⁸⁵ Giesler 1981, 89, 212, *Liste* 23, *Pl.* 39: 13–19.

⁸⁶ Pröttel 1996, 133–137.

⁸⁷ Modrijan 2011, 170 ff.

⁸⁸ Guiraud 1988, 80; Guiraud 1989, 185–187, 203; Johns 1996, 48–49; Horvat, Milič, Tomanič-Jevremov 2001, 319–323.

⁸⁹ Milavec 2011, 40, *Pl.* 7: 2, no context.

⁹⁰ James 2004, 77–78, *Fig.* 37: 58.

⁹¹ Johns 1996, 91, 195–196.

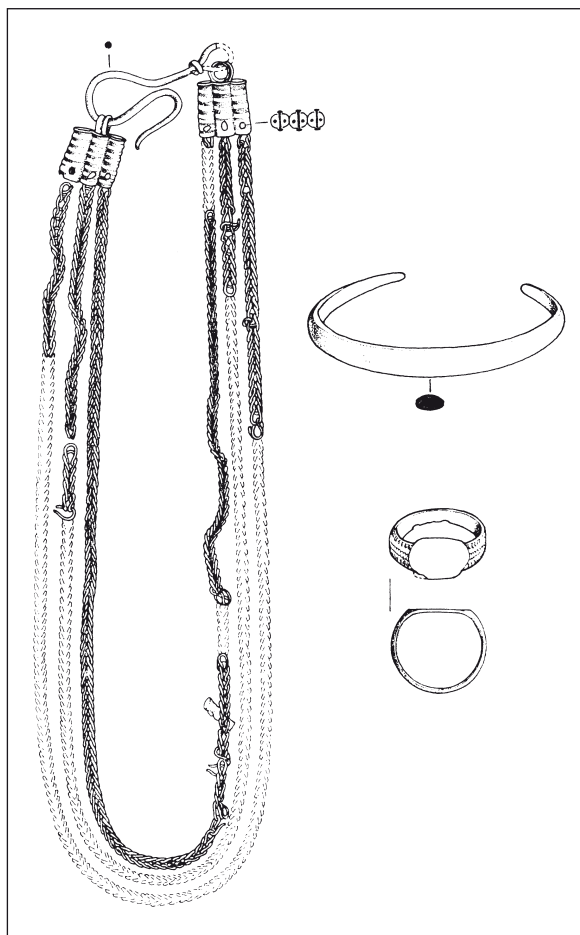


Fig. 12: Cerknica. Silver jewellery from grave 40. Scale 1:2. After Urleb 1983, Pl. 28: 6–8.

finger ring and a silver bracelet.⁹² The solid open-ended bracelets with tapering ends and with an oval cross section were found in the Drnovo 2 (the last coin minted in 260),⁹³ Szalaczka 2 (the last coin minted in 258),⁹⁴ and Oberdorf (the last coin 258–259)⁹⁵ hoards.

The necklaces with triple or fourfold chains are relatively rare in the Roman world.⁹⁶ Terminal spacers can have the form of a small box, such as those on a silver necklace with a triple-strand chain from the Aesica (Great Chester) hoard.⁹⁷ Spacers made of three well elaborated tubes are part of a short gold choker made of three chains found near Carlisle and dated into the second half of the 2nd century.⁹⁸ The simple terminal spacers of the necklaces from Javor and Cerknica are not very common. The best comparison for them is

the necklace from the Hettingen hoard.⁹⁹ The hoard is probably dated into the first half or the middle of the 3rd century.¹⁰⁰ On the other hand the clasps of simple necklaces were often made in the form of a tube with horizontal decoration.¹⁰¹ It seems that the artisan only combined three simple tube clasps in a spacer when producing the necklaces of Javor, Cerknica and Hettingen.

Necklaces from Javor and Cerknica can probably be dated to the second half of the 3rd century. However, the inhumation in Javor indicates a date in the late 3rd or the beginning of the 4th century.

Grave 8

The poor quality lamp (Fig. 10: 10) belongs to the basic type Loeschcke X and can be dated to the Late Roman period (3rd–4th century).¹⁰²

At least three cemeteries were located around the settlement of Javor. The early Roman graves were found in Podjavor, the late Roman graves at Grajski britof, while the possible Roman cemetery in the Vinograd area is not precisely dated (Fig. 7).

The sixteen graves from Grajski britof represent a very homogenous group. Fifteen of them were cremations, one grave was an inhumation. Six graves (1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8) can be dated more precisely: Grave 6 to the second half of the 2nd century or later, Grave 5 to the second half of the 3rd century, Graves 1, 2, 4 and 7 to the end of the 3rd century, and Grave 8 to the late Roman period generally. Most of the coins that could not be attributed to individual graves probably derive from the Grajski britof cemetery and were minted between the reigns of Marcus Aurelius (165–169) and Constantius I (297/298), with a strong concentration from the last quarter of the 3rd century.

Cremation was used in Javor until the very end of the 3rd century, which is in contrast with Emona where inhumation already prevailed in the second half of the 3rd century.¹⁰³ The long persistence of cremation in Javor may be a sign of strong local traditions.

Four graves from the end of the 3rd century have outstanding grave goods (Graves 2, 4, 5, 7). The special social position of the deceased person is indicated in Grave 2 by a silver crossbow fibula, a silver signet ring, fragments of silver, and a combat knife (Fig. 9). The combination of

⁹⁹ Martin-Kilcher 2008, 344, Anhang 7.7

¹⁰⁰ Martin-Kilcher 2008, 85–86.

¹⁰¹ E.g. Modrijan 1962, Fig. 1; Martin-Kilcher 2008, 63–64, 347, 350, 351, 353, Figs. 2.25, 2.26; Anhang 7.9, 7.12, 7.13, 7.15.

¹⁰² Istenič 1999, 153.

¹⁰³ E. g. Plesničar-Gec 1972, the graves dated by coins in the second half of the 3rd century: inhumation 187, 189, 213, 219, 222; cremation 206.

⁹² Urleb 1983, 310, Pl. 28: 8.

⁹³ Miškec, Pflaum 2007.

⁹⁴ Járdányi-Paulovics 1953, Pl. 27: 7a, 7b, 8.

⁹⁵ Modrijan 1962, Fig. 1.

⁹⁶ Martin-Kilcher 2008, 79–83.

⁹⁷ Johns 1996, 91–92, Fig. 5.4.

⁹⁸ Johns 1996, 91–92, Pl. 16

the fibula and the knife seems to be a sign of the military status of the deceased.¹⁰⁴ The belt buckle in Grave 5 may also be an indication of military outfit. It was accompanied by a silver finger ring (*Fig. 10*). Grave 4 contained 29 coins. Grave 7 was probably that of a female and contained a silver necklace, glass beads likely from a necklace, and a small silver fibula of a unique form (*Fig. 10*).

The closely related graves (in space, time, and grave goods) demonstrate the relatively high social position of the group, which was probably connected with military service. The presence of a rich female grave could be a sign of a family group.

Deposition of the knives and other tools in the male graves, along with the individual pieces of silver or gold jewellery in the female graves, was a traditional practice during the Early Imperial period in the Notranjska and Kras regions.¹⁰⁵ However, the knife from Grave 2 was probably a combat knife and its form was certainly not local (see below). The fashion of putting rich jewellery into female graves became generally widespread in the late 2nd and 3rd centuries,¹⁰⁶ and Grave 7 fits this pattern. It seems that tradition and innovation came together in the cemetery in Javor at the end of the 3rd century.

COMBAT KNIVES FROM PRELOVCE AND JAVOR

The form of the large knives found in Prelovce and Javor is very characteristic (*Fig. 3: 15; 9: 8*). The knife from Prelovce is 33.4 cm long; the blade is 21.7 cm long and 5.1 cm wide. The knife from Javor is 37 cm long; its blade is 24 cm long and 4.7 cm wide. The cutting edge of the blade is straight, the spine forms an angle approximately in the middle, so that the blade tapers to the point. The guard was made of iron, but was badly preserved in both cases. The handle has a long tang (11.7 and 13 cm) with a separately made iron pommel placed at the end (6.3 and 7.4 cm long). The pommel from Javor was moulded, though any signs of possible moulding are not visible on the Prelovce pommel because of the corrosion.

A very well preserved knife from cremation Grave 61 at Unec (*Fig. 13*) is another example of this type. It is a bit smaller (total length 29.6 cm; the blade is 19.6 cm long and 3.5 cm wide). The iron guard and pommel are both very nicely elaborated. It seems that they demonstrate another characteristic of the type in addition to the blade form.

The same type of knife with an elaborated iron pommel and guard was found in the Late Roman male inhumation Grave 19 at Kaštel Sućurac in Dalmatia.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ Paul 2011, 34–39: the connection of the crossbow fibulae with the military and state officials.

¹⁰⁵ Urleb 1983, 314; Istenič 1987; Bavdek 2005.

¹⁰⁶ Rottloff 1995.

¹⁰⁷ Kamenjarin 2014, 14, 45–46. The length of the knife is 29.7 cm, length of the blade 19.9 cm, width of the blade 3.8 cm.

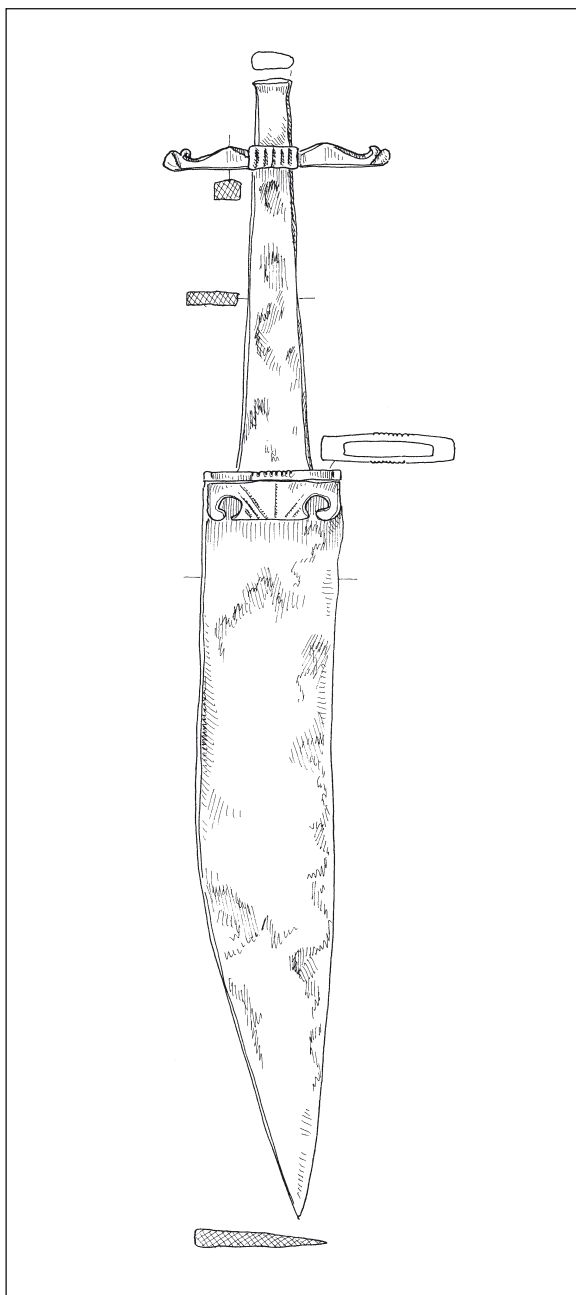


Fig. 13: Unec, grave 61. Iron. Scale 1:2.

The knife from Zilje in Bela Krajina was also discovered in a grave; unfortunately the grave inventory did not survive.¹⁰⁸ The knife from Panik near Bileća in the interior of Dalmatia can be attributed to the same type by the form of the blade and decorated guard. It was found near the villa rustica at Dračeva strana. The excavator assumed that it derived from a destroyed grave and indirectly dated it to the period after the destruction of the villa, at the end of the 4th century.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ Müllner 1900, Pl. 56: 2; about the location: Knez 1975.

¹⁰⁹ Čremošnik 1974, 126, 128, Pl. 24: 1.

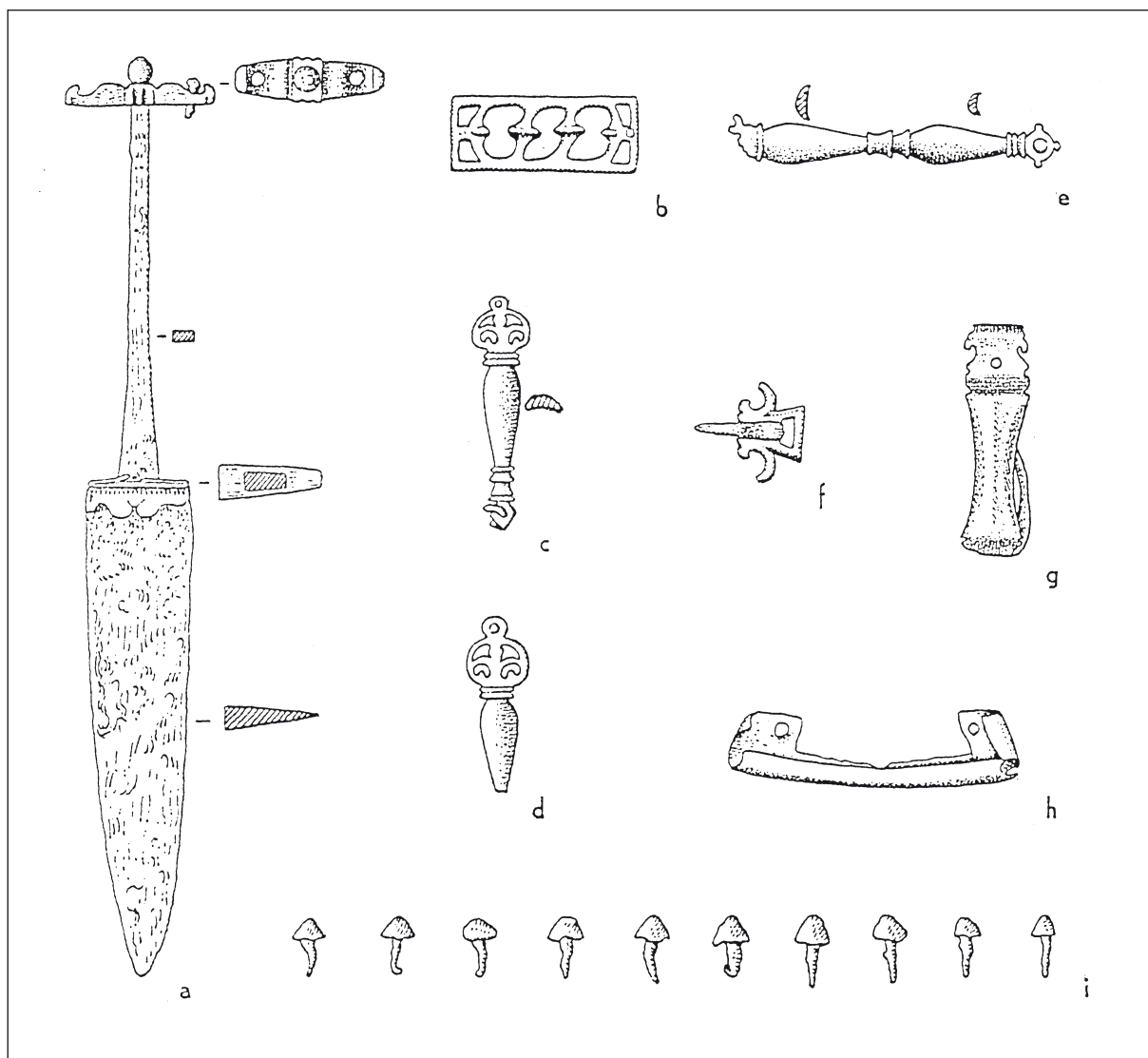


Fig. 14: Radvaň nad Dunajom-Žitva, grave 4. Iron and bronze: a; bronze: b–h; iron: i. Scale 1:2. After Hüssen, Rajtár 1994, Fig. 6: 4.

Based on the Prelovce and Javor finds, this type of knife is clearly dated to the second half of the 3rd century.

The aforementioned knives are similar to the knife from Grave 4 in Radvaň nad Dunajom-Žitva (Fig. 14), where a group of six cremation graves of Roman soldiers from the Marcomannic wars period was discovered.¹¹⁰ The knife has a decorated bronze guard and pommel. The tip of the iron tang passes through the pommel and there is a bronze knob. The cutting edge and the spine of the blade taper evenly toward the point. The total length of the knife is 24.5 cm. Knives with analogous bronze pommels were found in the cemetery of Novo mesto¹¹¹ and in the area of the military camp of Comagena in Tulln.¹¹²

The knife from Radvaň nad Dunajom-Žitva with its characteristic bronze decoration probably formed part of

the military equipment during the Marcomannic wars. It could be used both as an auxiliary weapon and as a utility tool. The uniform knives from Unec and other sites probably represent their further development in the second half of the 3rd century: they are larger, the decorated guard and pommel are made of iron, and the blade has an angular form. The use of these knives coincides with the abandonment of the uniform military daggers that were in use until the middle of the 3rd century.¹¹³

The local population in the Notranjska region has a long tradition of putting local forms of large knives in graves.¹¹⁴ It seems that the local knives were replaced by uniform knives in the second half of the 3rd century. These uniform knives had a wider geographical distribution and were probably connected with the army.

¹¹⁰ Hüssen, Rajtár 1994, 220, Fig. 6: 4a

¹¹¹ Božič 2008, 158–159, Fig. 80; Pl. 9: 2.

¹¹² Bachner, Lantschner 1993, 345, Fig. 120.

¹¹³ Reuter 1999; Fischer 2012, 193–196.

¹¹⁴ Urleb 1983, 314.

CONCLUSION

The Prelovce hoard consisted of two functional parts, one representing horse harness decoration and the other probably a military belt with a large combat knife. The composition of the find points to a military context. According to the typology of the strap mounts it can be dated to the second half of the 3rd century. The hoard was probably deposited near a secondary communication route but not far away from the nearby Aquileia–Emona main road. It might be a trace of army movement or of the military's control of the road. The date of deposition corresponds well with the increased military activity in the middle of the second half of the 3rd century, when the defensive walls of Castra (Ajdovščina) were constructed (about 9.5 km east of Prelovce), and settlement intensified at Ad Pirum (Hrušica).¹¹⁵

The Javor graves form a small group from the second half or end of the 3rd century, situated within a large cemetery surrounding the settlement.¹¹⁶ Graves 2 and 5, which contain the belt buckle, crossbow fibula, and combat knife, indicate the military service of the deceased. The Javor settlement had a favourable strategic position near the route connecting Tarsatica in the Kvarner Bay with the Postojna Basin, and it could have been an important point controlling traffic. Therefore it is possible that a military detachment was stationed in Javor or in the vicinity. The situation may be compared with the relatively close Gradina near Pasjak, where a fortress controlled the Tarsatica–Tergeste road around 270.¹¹⁷

The graves with similar grave goods to those from Javor appear in the second half of the 3rd century at Unec and Cerknica. The cemetery of Unec was founded in the first half of the 1st century and continued until the end of the 4th century. The male graves containing elements of military outfits and the female graves with jewellery were dated to the second half the 3rd and the beginning of the 4th centuries.¹¹⁸ The graves from Unec should be connected to the military in a similar way to those in Javor, especially since the position of Unec was important for controlling traffic routes. Two cremation graves with the same types of silver jewellery as found in Javor and Unec appear in the second half of the 3rd century in the cemetery of Cerknica.¹¹⁹

It seems that the outstanding graves from Javor, Unec, and Cerknica reflect the new role of the local population on the eastern border of Italy in the last decades of the 3rd century. It is possible that these men

were included in the newly organised defensive system of Italy and had certain military duties. It can be inferred from the rich female graves that their new social position reflected on their families as well.

The security problems in the south-eastern Alpine area in the last decades of the 3rd century resulted in the construction of fortresses on the main roads (Hrušica, Vrhnika, Gradina near Pasjak, Tarsatica, Velike Malence) and building of town walls (Castra). Several hilltop sites were settled; these short-term posts controlled the secondary routes (for example Tonovcov grad in the Soča Valley), and probably served as military outposts and temporary refuges (e.g., Veliki Vrh near Osrednek).¹²⁰ The military equipment from western Slovenia fits well into the image of the time. The control of routes is indicated by the hoard from Prelovce near Malovše as well as by the military graves from Javor near Dolnji Zemon and from Unec. The stray finds from the hilltop sites in Notranjska¹²¹ may imply that they functioned as observation and signalling posts.

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¹¹⁵ Kos 2012, 272–276, 285–287.

¹¹⁶ The similar cemeteries were excavated in Rodik, Žirje, Cerknica, Unec: Istenič 1987; Bavdek 2005; Urleb 1983; Vičič, Schein 1987.

¹¹⁷ Kos 2012, 285–287.

¹¹⁸ Vičič, Schein 1987; unpublished material from the Notranjski muzej Postojna.

¹¹⁹ Urleb 1983, Pls. 27–29.

¹²⁰ Ciglencečki 2008, 486–487, 513; Ciglencečki 1990; Ciglencečki 1997, 8–9.

¹²¹ See Introduction.

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