

TOMBS OF DACIAN WARRIORS (2ND - 1ST C. BC) FOUND IN HUNEDOARA-GRĂDINA CASTELULUI (HUNEDOARA COUNTY)

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Abstract. *The research and analysis of the items here has yielded valuable data on the profound changes experienced by the Geto-Dacian funerary ideology and practices, namely, on the way the dead were handled based on their age, sex and social status. The anthropological, paleozoological analysis, together with the weaponry found in three complexes, stand proof of the presence of Dacian warriors, including knights.*

General data on the site. One has found here, from the second Iron Age, 31 deposits with human bones, 7 item deposits and 5 agglomerations of materials, plus a number of isolated items (Luca 1999, p. 66-79, ill. VIII-IX; Luca *et alii* 2003, p. 143-144, ill. 64; 2004, p. 142-144, ill. 29; Sîrbu *et alii* 2005, p. 178-179; 2006₁, p. 176-177; 2006₂, p. 187-207; 2007). No pits were dug for the tombs. Instead they used, like they had before, the naturally occurring nooks in the dolomite. No unifying norms for depositing or orienting the dead were perceived. The 31 human deposits contained 53 individuals, 5 of which were cremated and 48 inhumed, and the complexes showed a number of features not found in ordinary tombs. Out of the 53 individuals, 38 are less than seven years old (20 of which were under one year!), only one is seven-to-fourteen years old and only 14 individuals, 9 of which were inhumed and 5 cremated, were over 14; all of the 38 children under seven years of age were inhumed. Of the inhumed dead, it was only in 25 cases that whole skeletons were found, whereas isolated bones from various body parts were found in 22 other situations. One skeleton had no skull.

The number of individuals in each deposit fluctuated, from one to six, regardless of whether they had been inhumed or cremated or whether there were entire skeletons or just isolated bones. The sex of the individuals could be determined in only 22 of the cases, 12 of which were male and 10 females, and one could perceive associations with certain kinds of items. One has found a rich and varied inventory, with wearable items accounting for most of it, obviously, but certain characteristics depended on the age, sex and state of skeleton; for instance, it was only in two cremation tombs that pottery was found, whereas weapons appear only in the tombs that include adults.

The complexes with human bones can be dated back to 150/125 BC-106 AD, but one can notice some differences. All the cremation tombs and only one inhumation tomb (C33Dead17) are from 150/125 – 50/25 BC, whereas all of the eight tombs with fibulae from 40/50-106 AD are children inhumation tombs (Sîrbu *et alii* 2007, fig. 69). As for the rest, the inventory makes it difficult to come up with a narrower dating.

Based on the whole of the data gathered, we can estimate that, between mid-2nd-middle/end of 1st century BC, one has found regular tombs here, almost all of them adult cremation tombs, whereas only children inhumation tombs can be dated, with certainty, back to 1st century AD, which is not characteristic of a regular necropolis. The relatively high number of dead, in a period when we are facing a “tomb vacuum” for almost the entire area inhabited by the locals (Babeş 1988, p. 5-22; Sîrbu 1993, p. 21-36), the lack of unifying norms for orienting and depositing the skeletons, the extremely high number of small children (almost 80% of the total) and the fact that almost half of the individuals are represented solely by isolated bones – the analysis of all these facts has yielded important data on the profound changes experienced by the Geto-Dacian funerary ideology and practices during 2nd c. BC-1st c. AD.

During the excavations of the important site from Hunedoara – *Grădina Castelului* (Sîrbu *et alii* 2007), one has found 3 complexes that consist of the vestiges of Dacian warriors (C12, C70 and C71). Although they were recently published in a volume dedicated to the site (Sîrbu *et alii* 2007, p. 24-25, 48-49, 195-196, fig. 7/5; 13/15; 14/6, 13; 34/9-11; 12; 42-44, 73-74), a separate analysis is required because C71 was found after the volume had been edited and it was only included in an *Addenda* (Sîrbu *et alii* 2007, p. 195-6) and because more detailed observations on the rituals, inventory and the importance of the discoveries are in order.

The warrior tombs

Complex no.12; S.V, cass. 2; -(35-40)cm.

Context of the discovery. The dead and the inventory were found at the depth of 0.32-0.35m, on an area of the stone that was relatively flat, on a thin layer of soil and broken dolomite; the bones, spread on a surface of 0.35-0.40m, were protected by dolomite blocs arranged in a circle and were covered with soil and broken dolomite. The inventory was found in various areas of the fitting out: the spearhead was west of the cremated bones, oriented SSW, while the curved battle knife was under it; the metal, bone and glass items were on top of or among the cremated bones; the fruit bowl fragments were above the dead, on a layer of soil 4-5 cm thick (Fig. 1/1-2).

The recovered cremated bones are from all of the body parts; one noticed that the vertebrae are less touched by the fire, which means the dead was not cremated lying on his back.

Therefore, in the funerary deposit, the items were placed following certain rules: the weapons were west of the cremated bones, with no traces of burning, while the fruit-bowls had been broken elsewhere and were deposited in fragments over the dead and the rest of the inventory.

As shown by the anthropological analysis, the recovered cremated bones, from all of the body parts, belong to a male 21-22 years of age. The cremation took place elsewhere and the bones of the dead were selected carefully, as there was no trace of the pyre in the deposit.

Anthropological analyses (Soficaru, Comşa, Stan 2007, p. 93).

The skeleton was cremated. The femoral wall has a maximal thickness of about 8mm and a very well outlined *linia aspera*, so it is possible that the individual could have been a male.

Cranial fragments (parietal, temporal, occipital) could not be identified, some of them being warped by the fire. The maxilla could be also recovered and reconstructed. The margins of the anthropin aperture have been destroyed. On its right half, a part of the first permanent molar was preserved. The palate was deepened. Together with that bone there were the ascending ramus of the mandible, partly destroyed.

Out of the spine, four fragmentary vertebrae and vertebral apophyses have been found. Rib fragments and metacarpals were also found.

The hip bone was represented just by small fragments. In depth, it could be observed that the bone was not highly affected by the action of the fire, maintaining its natural appearance and color.

From the long bones just diaphysis of the humeri, radiuses, ulnae, femora and tibiae could be recovered. Separately, two epiphyses have been identified, one of them of a humerus and the other one of a radius.

One of the pubic symphysis which was preserved in good conditions indicated an age of about 21-22 years.

It is interesting to mention here that the vertebrae were hardly affected by fire, so we can infer that the individual was not laid on its back while being burnt on the pyre.

Inventory (Sîrbu *et alii* 2007, p. 24-25, fig. 34/9-11; 35).

a) iron spearhead (L = 310mm, L. tip = 200mm, D. orifice = 23mm; MCC-Inv. A4734), with a long, slightly truncated body, the tip shaped like a willow's leaf and a median nervure (Fig.1/1; 3/8);

b) iron knife (L = 134mm; MCC-Inv. A4686) with a curved blade and a gush channel near the edge, triangular in section, short handle, rectangular in section, with an orifice and a bolt for affixing (Fig. 1/1;3/6);

c) round bronze chain link (D = 20x19mm, MCC-Inv. A4653), rhombic profile (Fig. 3/3);

d) round bronze chain link (D = 20mm; MCC-Inv. A4675), with defects from when the metal was cast, oval in section (Fig. 3/2);

e) bead (D = 17mm, H = 12mm; MCC-Inv. A4673), made of whitish glass, with a cylindrical orifice, painted blue and with "ribbed" decorations (Fig. 3/1);

f) bone handle (L = 70mm, D = 10mm, d = 8mm, MCC-Inv. A4683), cylindrical, with an orifice on the inside, decorated with motives consisting of two concentric circles with a dot in the middle, made by incisions, probably passed through fire (Fig. 3/7);

g) fragment from a similar handle, in terms of material, shape and decoration, but with a larger diameter (Fig. 3/4);

h) fragmentary iron item, probably a buckle tongue (L = 43mm; MCC-Inv. A4663), with a round and rectangular profile (Fig. 3/9);

i) fragmentary iron item, probably a buckle tongue (L = 49mm, MCC-Inv. A4655), with a round and oval profile (Fig. 3/5);

i) a fruit-bowl's cup (D = 230mm), made of semi-fine clay, hand-modeled, put through reducing burn, gray in color (Fig.3/10);

j) fruit bowl's cup (D = 300mm), made of semi-fine clay, hand-modeled, put through reducing burn, gray in color (Fig. 3/11).

One interesting aspect is the variety of the items - types, materials and uses - but suggesting a warrior's inventory.

Offering (?): burnt mammal bones, including the molar of a goat or sheep.

Dating: 125-51/25 BC.

Complex no. 71 Dead 31; S.X, c.4; -(24-36)cm.

Discovery context. In a natural nook in the dolomite, on top of a very thin layer of black-grayish, granulated soil, at a depth of 0.20-0.36m, one has found the following: an urn-mug, a lance head, a dagger in its scabbard, a decorative belt buckle and, on the edge of the nook's opening, a belt buckle (Fig. 2).

The nook's filling consisted of black-grayish, granulated soil too, in which small fragments of wood coal were found. The upper part of the nook was covered with layer of small fragments of crushed dolomite, spreading over the native rock on the northern and southern sides. The upper part of the deposit was affected by a medieval fitting out nearby, which could also explain, probably, the situation with the decorative belt buckle.

Based on the stratigraphy, one can reconstitute some of the ritual: one has deposited the lance head, without the wooden part, to the east of the urn, and then, on top of it, put the dagger, still in its sheath, both of them with the tip to the south; from the belt, made of some organic material, only the buckle remained, which was pointing up because of the depositing of the urn-mug on it; the soil pressure broke the upper part of the mug and some of the bones fell north-east of it; the mouth of the mug, except for area with the handle, had been broken previously, as there aren't any of the missing fragments in the fitting out. One has found a decorative belt buckle on the edge of the nook that, obviously, also belongs to this complex.

Anthropological analyses (Andrei Soficaru). Almost all bones are white-blue and some cranial fragments are black.

Bones inventory: a) about 80 fragments from skull are preserved, with dimensions of 1 to 5cm (frontal, parietals, occipital, temporals, zygomatics, and sphenoid), b) there are 6 fragments from the mandible and one of them (preserved from mental protuberance to left second molar) has 3 dental alveoli, c) there are 2 maxilla fragments (right side), from first incisor to second molar, d) there also are 10 teeth fragments (incisors and molars), vertebral column = the axis (with entire dens), 2 cervical vertebrae, and 14 fragments of vertebral arches, e) 4 diaphysis fragments, possibly from the humerus, were identified from the long bones.

Sex determination: male (nuchal line, mental protuberance, supraorbital margin).

Age estimation: mature (coronal suture closed, deformed vertebral bodies, bony development on axis dens).

Inventory.

a) *The urn* consists of a mug (preserved H. = 149mm; H. with handle = 160mm; D. max. = 146mm; D. bottom – 64mm; MCC-Inv. A5039), wheel-modeled, made of fine clay, put through reducing burn, gray in color; its bottom is ring-like, prominent, the body is bi-truncated, with the shoulder at an angle, the neck is tall, the handle is slightly raised, shaped like a band, almost semi-circular in section, attached at the shoulder and the mouth (Fig. 9/3; 10/4). The edges of the upper part of the mug are dull, compared to those broken by soil pressure, meaning the vessel was ritually broken prior to the bones' being deposited; in fact, the parts missing from the mug's mouth were not found in the nook.

b) *Lance head* (L = 355mm; L tip = 245mm; D. orifice = 15mm; Weight = 210gr.; MCC-Inv. A5033); obviously, only the tip was deposited, because the wooden part did not have enough room in the nook; the item has the socket long and truncated, with two attaching orifices that are symmetrical and oval, with the active part shaped like a willow's leaf a more prominent median nervure close to the socket (Fig. 7; 10/3).

c) *Curved dagger*, well preserved (L = 275mm; L handle = 95mm; L tip = 185mm; D. button = 21x20mm; Weight = 85gr; MCC-Inv. A5034) (Fig. 8; 11); the handle is rectangular in plane and in section, with three oval attaching orifices, endowed with two hose, one slightly oval and with a button at the outside end, while the one next to the blade is flattened, both of them decorated with rings that are circular in relief; the blade is curved, triangular in section, with a deep groove close to the handle ("blood gush groove"); close to the middle, where the groove gets interrupted, the blade is adorned, by stamping, with two birds, probably eagles, marked at the middle and the extremities with three rings.

d) *Dagger scabbard* (L = 145mm; max. W = 34mm; D. button = 10mm; Weight = 40gr; MCC-Inv. A5035). Only the lower metallic part from the outside was preserved, made out of an iron plaque with the margins curved towards the inside and a truncated button at the end; the rest of the item, made of wood or leather, disintegrated (Fig. 8; 11)

d) *Belt buckle* (D = 56x54mm; Weight = 35 gr; MCC-Inv. A5036) is rectangular in plane and in section, with the corners rounded and the attaching end shaped like a hook (Fig. 9/2; 10/1). The buckle's pin (L = 50mm; Weight = 5gr), also iron, is truncated in plane and circular in section.

f) *Decorative belt buckle* (L = 144mm; W. max = 46mm; thickness of iron sheet = 1.5mm; thickness of plates, iron plus bronze = 3mm; Weight = 40gr; MCC-Inv. A5038) (Fig. 9/1; 10/1). The iron plate with the edges slightly arched, getting narrower towards the hook, whose tip is broken, while only half of the attaching hinge, at the other end, used to attach it to the belt by means of an iron chain mail, is preserved. Out of the ornamented bronze sheet, covering the iron plate, only certain portions have survived, with the most complete one being next to the hook; the decoration, made in the *au repoussée* technique, consists of five transversal embossed lines, preserved solely next to the hook, as the edges of the sheet and the middle of the item is marked by two embossed lines and, on the edges, one has made oval "semi-circles" consisting of two embossed lines; they were probably ornamental, since they take up the entire surface of the item. Based on the shape and decoration, the item is characteristic of the Dacian horizon from 2nd-1st century BC (Babeş 1983, p. 196-221).

Complex 70, Deposit no. 70; S22-S24; -(28-30)cm.

Context of the discovery. Natural nook in the dolomite (D=0.28-0.30m), irregular in shape, where one found two areas with burned fragments from a mail shirt, shield, probably a shield and a bridle bit; plus burned bones from a horse and a pig. The nook showed intense black traces of fire, which were in strong contrast to the white dolomite (Fig. 1/3).

Filling: black soil, containing plenty of ash and wood charcoal.

Based on the aspect of the depositing area and the manner in which the items were preserved, the cremation obviously took place elsewhere, separate from the dead, and only some of the horse and pig bones, as well as of the items, were deposited here.

Animal bones (El Susi 2007, p. 108). The sample contains about 130 burnt remainders, with slightly different coloring. Thus, from a former grouping that includes thirty fragments of black colour; six pieces are clearly from two or three thoracic horse vertebrae. The other twenty four bones are also from a

horse skeleton, given the same pigmentation as the six pieces. Unfortunately, the heavy damage inflicted by fire was an impediment to establishing their belonging to spine as well; as a result, the twenty five fragments were included in a group - bones from a large-size species - in our case, quite probably, horse. It looks like the vertebrae suggest a slaughtered animal over the age of 4-5 years (given the bone compactness). The second grouping of fifteen burnt fragments, ashen-white in color, suggests a small animal. Among them, one identified just one pig rib. It could be that the other fourteen are also from a pig; in any case, they were included in the category – bones of a small-sized species.

Inventory. One has identified the remains of a mail shirt, a shield, and, probably a bridle bit and a helmet, but there also other iron fragments from items that are difficult to identify; if the cremation had taken place in the nook, then the bottom and walls should have had traces of burning too, not just the areas that came in contact with the burned materials and the remains of the still-smoking fire.

a) Chain mail shirt made of iron, cut into small fragments, probably with a chisel, as one can notice traces of cuts on one, two, three or four of sides of the pieces preserved, and only a small part of the remains, folded, were put in the nook (Fig. 5;12). The chain mail fragments were not placed on the dead at the time of the cremation, as they chain mails preserved their initial shape, which means they were not exposed to strong fire; the traces of cremated bones on some of the chain mail fragments are the result of their being deposited in nook over the still hot cremated horse and pig bones. The chain mails are short and round (D = 5.5-6mm, W. thread = 1.5mm), both in plane and in section, and the weaving is one widespread at the time

b) Iron shield umbones. There are relatively many pieces (over 40), but very small, and their features (shape, thickness, number of layers, folding technique) mean they are from an *umbones*, probably hemispherical, or from the connection and attaching elements of the shield (rivets, edge) (Fig. 4/1; 6/1, 2, 13, 16; 11/11). Although the *umbones* fragments are very small, including those from the item's curvature, meaning it is very difficult to approximate its diameter, we believe it is around 10 cm).

c) Helmet (?). There are a few iron-sheet fragments, from a single sheet, that stick together, including one with a hinge, which could constitute an attaching element between the calotte and the mobile cheek-piece of a helmet.

d) Bridle bit (?). One has found a few fragments, including something that could be the end of a bridle (Fig. 4/5; 6/4), a potential indication of a bridle bit, which would make sense, given that the deposit includes horse bones.

There are also several small iron fragments, whose piece of origin is very difficult to identify.

What is interesting is that all the items had been fragmented and only parts of them were deposited in the nook, together with remains from the still-smoking fire. Since burnt horse and pig bones were found in the deposit, perhaps the fire remains are from their cremation.

Based on the closeness, complementary character and chronology of complexes C70 and C71, we can conclude they are both the vestiges of a knight. Also illuminating is the fact that the items deposited form a knight's war gear: the lance and the dagger are the offensive weapons, the chain mail shirt, the shield and, possibly, the helmet, are the defensive gear, a bridle bit and some wearable items.

With the help of both complexes, we can partially reconstitute the rituals.

The horse and the pig were cremated elsewhere, separate from the dead, while their remains were deposited in a nook, together with some of the intentionally fragmented chain mail shirt, shield and, possibly, a helmet and a bridle bit.

The dead, in turn, was cremated elsewhere, separate from his fighting equipment, and the burned bones, carefully selected (there are missing bone legs) were deposited in a mug, with the upper part broken, which was then deposited in another, relatively close nook.

Analysis of the discoveries

Location. The three complexes were discovered in the southern part of the human and item deposits, namely in the south-western (C12) and south-eastern (C70, C71) corners (Sîrbu *et alli* 2007, p. 235, fig. 21).

One has not found any traces of tumuli or special fitting outs; it was only in C12 that we find a circular fitting out made of boulders of dolomite.

Rite and rituals. Both the dead and the animal offerings were cremated separately elsewhere, as there are no traces of the pyre on the *Grădina Castelului* plateau. The vertebrae of the dead in C12 were slightly singed and the dead in C71 does not have any leg bones, meaning there was some selection involved for the bones of the dead on the pyre. In C70, one could notice that the remains of the pyre, on which the horse and pig were cremated, were deposited still smoking in the nook.

While the bones of the dead in C12 were deposited directly in the pit, those in Complex C71 were deposited in the urn first. In both C12 and C71, it should be mentioned, the lance heads and daggers were deposited on top of one another, with the tips towards the south.

The lances, dagger and curved fighting knife, present next to the dead, are in one piece and do not show any traces of burning or deterioration. It was only part of the fighting gear – the chain mail shirt, the shield, the helmet (?) and the bridle bit found next to the cremated horse that are fragmentary and deposited partially.

Age and sex. In both cases, the anthropological analyses have shown that we are dealing with adult men, something confirmed by the inventory found, characteristic of warriors. In fact, whenever weapons were found in the tombs and anthropological analyses were made, we are dealing with adult men (Sîrbu 1994, p. 133).

Offerings. In C12, we have found cremated mammal bones, including some from sheep/goats, and, in C71, from a pig.

The inventory found in the three complexes is diverse: a) offensive weapons – two lances, a sheathed dagger, a curved knife, b) defensive gear – a chain mail shirt, a shield, perhaps a helmet as well, c) clothing accessories – a decorative belt buckle, a belt buckle, plus what could be another two belt buckles, d) adornments – a glass bead, e) pottery – a mug and two fruit-bowls, f) bridle bit (?), g) miscellaneous – two bone handles and two bronze chain links. All in all, therefore, one has found around 20 items.

We will speak in more detail only about a few types of the items with a higher typological, chronological and, eventually, ethnic relevance.

Chain mail shirts, such as the one on C70D7, were found in the Dacian tumuli from Cugir-T2 (Crişan 1980, p. 81-87), Popeşti-T2, T3 and T4, Radovanu, Poiana-Gorj and Cetăţeni (Vulpe 1976, p. 201, 208, fig. 15/1, 18/6-8), namely both in south-western Transylvania and in Oltenia or Walachia, in tombs from the second half of 2nd c.-1st c. BC. Many instances from 2nd - 1st c. BC were found in tombs of the Panaghiurski Kolonii group from north-western Bulgaria (Torbov 2004, p. 57-69). Also, on the upper Tisa, in the necropolis from Zemplin, Tumulus 3, cremation tomb 78, belonging to an adult, one has found a chain mail shirt (Budinský-Krička, Lamiová-Schmiedlova 1990, p. 255, fig. 20a-b); the inventory is that of a Dacian warrior from the last decades of 1st c. BC – first decades of 1st c. AD. Since the chronology and diffusion of this type of item for the Celts and Dacians were recently discussed by Aurel Rustoiu (2006, p. 49-52), we believe there is no point in delving on them

Although the **curved daggers** (*sica*) of this type are rather numerous (Nicolăescu-Plopşor 1945-1947, p. 17-33, ill. I/6; III/3, 5-6; V/11; Wozniak 1974, p. 98-104; Popović 1989-1990, fig. 3/23; Sîrbu, Rustoiu 1999, p. 80, fig. 4), there are few items that were found whole, decorated and sheathed by means of systematic research. One has found 25 instances, in 20 localities, in the Geto-Dacian area north of the Danube (Sîrbu, Rustoiu 1999, p. 80, fig. 4, plus the new discoveries). The local origin of this weapon is proven by its presence in the Thracian area for almost half a millennium, from 3rd c. BC (Domaradzki 1986, p. 227) to the representations on Traian's Column or on artifacts dating back to after the Roman conquest (2nd c. AD), such as the plate discovered in Gârla Mare (Stângă 1996, p. 241, fig. 10/5, 11). Of these items, we would like to mention just those from Călăraşi, Cetate, Orodol (Nicolăescu-Plopşor 1945-1947, ill. I/6; III/3, 5, 6; V/11), Corcova (Sîrbu, Rustoiu, Crăciunescu 1999, fig. 2), from Oltenia, or Sofronievo, Altimir and Tărnava, from north-western Bulgaria (Wozniak 1974, fig. 10/3, 4; Teodossiev, Torbov 1995, fig. 21) and Ezerče (Radoslavna 2005, p. 277-283), next to Razgrad. Special attention should be paid to the decoration on the blades of these weapons, probably showing two affronté vultures, next to solar symbols (Fig. 8;11/1d). The presence of these affronté birds on the blades of the Geto-Dacian fighting knives

(Wozniak 1974, p. 100, fig. 10/1-4) was interpreted as a symbolic element in the ideology of the Dacian warriors and, therefore, as another argument for the cult role played by these weapons (Rustoiu 2002, p. 57-61). In fact, there is the well known scene of Decebal's suicide with a curved dagger, rendered very dramatically on Traian's Column (scene CXLV).

The lance heads are among the most common weapons found in the tombs from 2nd – 1st c. BC (Fig. 7; 10/3 since north of the Danube alone one has found over 60 instances, in more than 30 localities (Sîrbu, Rustoiu 1999, p. 80, fig. 8, plus the new discoveries). As for the items found here, we only want to remind the reader that they were deposited whole, not burned, not warped and without their wooden part.

As for the type of the iron **shield** found here, it is difficult to come up with some of the details, given the highly fragmentary state of the item; however, the presence of fragments with indications of curvature, including with the edge, points to a hemispherical *umbones*; there are also fragments from the outside edge, the rivets and the universal iron (Fig. 4/1, 3, 11; 6/1-2, 13, 16-17)). The number of shields found north of the Danube is not high, being under 10 (Sîrbu, Rustoiu 1999, p. 81, fig. 5). Various types of shields were found in Dacian tumular tombs, such as in Cugir (Crişan 1980, p. 85) and Popeşti-T4 (Vulpe 1976, p. 201, fig. 14/5), as well as in the group of flat tombs of the Padea-Panaghiurski Kolonii type (Sîrbu, Rustoiu 1999, p. 81, fig. 4) or in the Przeworsk culture (Bochnak 2006, p. 100, fig. 6).

The **decorative belt buckle** found here is type II, under the typology established by Mircea Babeş (1983, p. 214-215, 219-220, fig. 10); we also need to call attention to the similar item found in Simeria, in the bed of the river Strei (Pădureanu 2002-2003, p. 101, ill. I), not far from our item in Hunedoara. All in all, the some 25 decorative belt buckles from the Geto-Dacian group, of type I or II, were found in almost 20 sites, the large majority of them settlements or fortresses, but also in some “fields of pits” (Orlea, Sighişoara, Şura Mică), tombs (Hunedoara) or sacred enclosures (Pietroasa Mică-*Gruiu Dării*) (Babeş 1983, p. 196-221, plus the new discoveries). North of the Danube, one has found items similar to those from Hunedoara in Simeria, Sighişoara, Ostrovul Şimian, Orlea, Vlădiceasca, plus Altimir south of the Danube (Babeş 1983, fig. 10).

Since the main issues related to these types of items were analyzed in very much detail in the synthesis study by Mircea Babeş (1983, p. 196-221), we only want to call attention to the fact that their diffusion area (southern part of Transylvania and Moldavia, then Oltenia and Walachia) and their chronology (second half of 2nd c. – 1st c. BC) correspond to the only area from which we have evidence of Dacian tombs, flat or tumular.

Pottery. The number of ceramic vessels from 2nd - 1st c. BC is not very high, because many tombs were chance discoveries and these items were broken and dumped.

The mug used in C71 (Fig. 9/3; 10/4) is a type encountered rather often with the Dacians, either as an urn or as an offering vessel, wheel-modeled, as in Corcova (Sîrbu, Rustoiu, Crăciunescu 1999, p. 218, fig. 4/2), Brad (Ursachi 1975, p. 254, fig. 336/3; 355/5) and Chirmoşi (Şerbănescu 2006, p. 168-170, fig. 4/3-6), or hand-modeled, such as in Turburea-Spahii (Gherghe 1978, p. 17, fig. 3), Teleac (Moga 1982, p. 87-91), Blandiana (Ciugudean 1980, p. 428, fig. 4/1) or Zimnicea – C10M118, C14M1, C15M56 (Alexandrescu 1980, fig. 26/1, 2, 4). These vessel shapes are characteristic of the Dacian pottery of 2nd – 1st c. BC and encountered often in all the types of sites from this period.

Also, the two **fruit-bowls** (Fig. 3/10-11) are characteristic of the Dacian pottery of this period and are sometimes found in tombs as well, especially in the tumular ones, as is the case in Cugir (Crişan 1980, p. 83), Popeşti (Vulpe 1976, p. 194-202, fig. 3/2; 7/8; 10/1) ori Lăceni (Moscalu 1977, p. 333, fig. 3/1-2; 4/1).

Similar mugs and fruit-bowls, hand- or wheel-modeled, were found nearby, in the settlement in Hunedoara-*Sânpetru* (Sîrbu *et alli* 2007, p. 153, fig. 59/5; 60/4; 61/4, 6; 62/1; Sîrbu, Mariş 2008), as well as in other places on the territory of the Hunedoara municipality, so there is no doubt they are from the local Dacian community.

Since we have very few fragments from the helmet and the bridle bit, it is difficult to say what their type was and, consequently, what their analogies were.

There aren't many helmets found north of the Danube and they include those discovered in the tumular tombs from Cugir (Crişan 1980, p. 85) and Popeşti (Vulpe 1976, p. 201, fig. 12/1).

On the other hand, **the bridle bits** found in the tumular or flat tombs is rather high and we speak here of only three discoveries nearby, namely Cugir (Crişan 1980, p. 82), Călan (Rustoiu, Sîrbu, Ferencz 2001-2002, p. 113, fig. 4) and Blandiana (Ciugudean 1980, p. 425-432). Although the elements preserved do not offer enough for identifying the type, it probably was a bridle bit of Thracian origin, as found in the many Dacian tumular or flat tombs (Wozniak 1974, p. 109, fig. 11/10-17; Werner 1988; Zirra 1981, p. 115-172; Rustoiu, Sîrbu, Ferencz 2001-2002, p. 113-114, 116-117).

Based on the origin of the items discovered, we believe six of them are Dacian (pottery, dagger with scabbard, curved knife and decorative belt buckle), as the rest of the artifacts are “supranational” goods. Suffice to reopen the issue of the item deposit found in Veliki Vetren, where one has found complete sets of weapons, military gear, clothing accessories and harness items (Stojić 2003, p. 31-86).

We need to make clear that these tombs are not the only ones found in *Grădina Castelului* because, from the second half of 2nd c-first half/mid-1st c. BC we have C18Dead13a, C30Dead16a, C33Dead17, C34Dead18, which is evidence of a well documented tomb landscape for this period. Save for one case (C33Dead17 – inhumed adolescent), we are always dealing with inhumed adults, but without any representative inventory (Sîrbu *et alii* fig.37/2, 10).

From Complex 21 Deposit 2, we have two sword accessories: a) a scabbard fragment from a bronze Celtic sword of the “pencil-case” type, (Sîrbu *et al.* 2007, p. 43-44, fig. 41/10), called that way because a part of it slid in the other, dated back to La Tène D (Zachar 1974, fig. 5/2, 7; tab. 1); we know of many similar instances in the south of Gallia, but also in areas that are closer, such as tomb 108 from the necropolis in Zemplin (Budinský-Krička, Lamiová-Schmiedlova 1990, p. 260, ill. XV/30), and b) an iron item shaped like an “S”, from a sword sheath’s armor (Sîrbu *et alii* 2007, p. 43-44, fig. 41/12), used for reinforcing it close to the guard, with many analogies among items from La Tène C2-D (Zachar 1974, fig. 5/3, 5; tab. III/4; Łuczkiwicz 2006, p. 36, fig. 5/3).

Two other deposits, C24D4 and C25D5 (Sîrbu *et alii* p. 45-47, fig. 39; 41/9-10), containing both weapons and wearable or harness items, are probably from 1st c. BC too.

All of the weaponry items with a narrower dating, belonging to the second half of 2nd c-1st c. BC, were found together with adult dead or in deposits and they document the presence of warriors here.

The presence of these Dacian warrior tombs, next to other tombs, deposits and isolated Dacian deposits and items from 2nd-1st c. BC are evidence of the existence of local communities in the area. In fact, the lack of Celtic discoveries from the Hunedoara valley, as well as other valleys from southern Transylvania (Sîrbu 2007₁, p. 149-150) and the presence of Dacian materials from 4th - 3rd c. right in *Grădina Castelului* (C22Pit1, C46Dep6) point to the presence of Dacians in the area even during this period (Sîrbu *et alii*, p. 47-48, 50-51, fig. 41/5-8; 14).

Although one has produced some new data on the situation from the middle Mureş during 4th c. BC-1st c. AD (Ferencz 2006, p. 113-128; Gheorghiu 2005), it still leaves unsolved many of the major problems connected to the history of this area, in particular the relations between the Dacians and the Celts.

Discoveries with this sort of weapons are known from tumular tombs, such as those in Popeşti, Radovanu, Lăceni or Cugir (Vulpe 1976, p. 193-215; Moscalu 1977, p. 329-337; Crişan 1980, p. 81-87; Babeş 1988, p. 5-8; Sîrbu 1994, p. 123-160), as well as in the flat ones from the Padea-Panaghiurski Kolonii area in northern Bulgaria, north-eastern Serbia, southern Romania and south-western Transylvania (Nicolăescu-Plopşor 1945-1947, p. 17-33, ill. I-V; Zirra 1971, p. 223-227, fig. 23; Wozniak 1974; Dimitrova, Gizdova 1975, p. 39-87; Popović 1989-1990, p. 165-176; Sîrbu 1993, p. 22-25; 71-79; Sîrbu, Rustoiu 1999, p. 77-91; Theodossiev 2000; Rustoiu 2002, p. 11-61; Torbov 2004, p. 57-69; Sîrbu, Arsenescu 2006, p. 163-186). The area with flat Dacian tombs from 2nd - 1st c. BC kept expanding as the research went, the clearest example being the tombs in Chirnogi (Şerbănescu 2006, p. 165-179) and Ezerče (Radoslavna 2005, p. 277-283).

Since many have analyzed the problems associated with these tombs, especially those cited earlier, we need not discuss them yet again. We only want to make a number of observations. It has generally been considered that the tombs with similar items south of the Danube belong the Scordiscians and that those north of the river are from the Dacians, but the analysis of the whole of the discoveries points, maybe, to another reality.

The discoveries between the Balkans and the Danube be they “field of pits”, such as in Bagachina (Bonev, Alexandrov 1996, p. 39-50, fig.74-105, ill. XXX-XLVII) or Russe (Varbanov, Dragoev 2007, p. 243-264), or treasures, such as in Galice (Nikolov 1988) or Jakimovo, or other types of items characteristic of the lay or warrior aristocracy (large fibulae with knots and multi-spiral silver bracelets, daggers with eagles), prove that the Geto-Dacians represented the main demographical and political forces in the area during 2nd – 1st c. BC (Sîrbu 2006, p. 102). Of course, the presence of Scordiscian communities from the second half of the 3rd c. until mid-1st century BC, in particular in north-western Bulgaria and north-eastern Serbia, next to the Thracian ones, is visible in a number of discoveries (Wozniak 1974, p. 76, map 2; Sladić 1986; Popović 1989-1990, p. 165-176; 2000, p. 83-111).

Things are much clearer north of the Danube, where the archaeological inventory from settlements, fortresses or cult sites is almost entirely Dacian, with the Celtic items (graphite vessels, wearable items, mostly fibulae) accounting for no more than 0.5% of the total (Sîrbu, Arsenescu 2006, p. 167-170). That's the way it is with most of the settlements and fortresses in Socol (excavations by Caius Săcărin), Stenca Liubcovei, Divici (Gumă, Rustoiu, Săcărin 1997, p. 401-427), Schela Cladovei (Boroneanț, Davidescu 1968, p. 253-260), Groșani (Popilian, Nica 1998, p. 43-95), Sprâncenata (Preda 1986), Spahii (Gherghe 1978, p. 15-31), Ocnia (Berciu 1981) or in the Căscioarele area (Sîrbu *et alii* 1996), not to mention southern Transylvania, a region with many Dacian settlements and fortresses (Daicoviciu, Ferenczi, Glodariu 1989).

When the ethnic character of some archaeological discoveries from the area is analyzed, one must, first and foremost, take into account the archaeological material from other settlements, fortresses or cult sites because some categories of inventory from tombs, such as weapons, wearable items or prestige goods are “supranational”.

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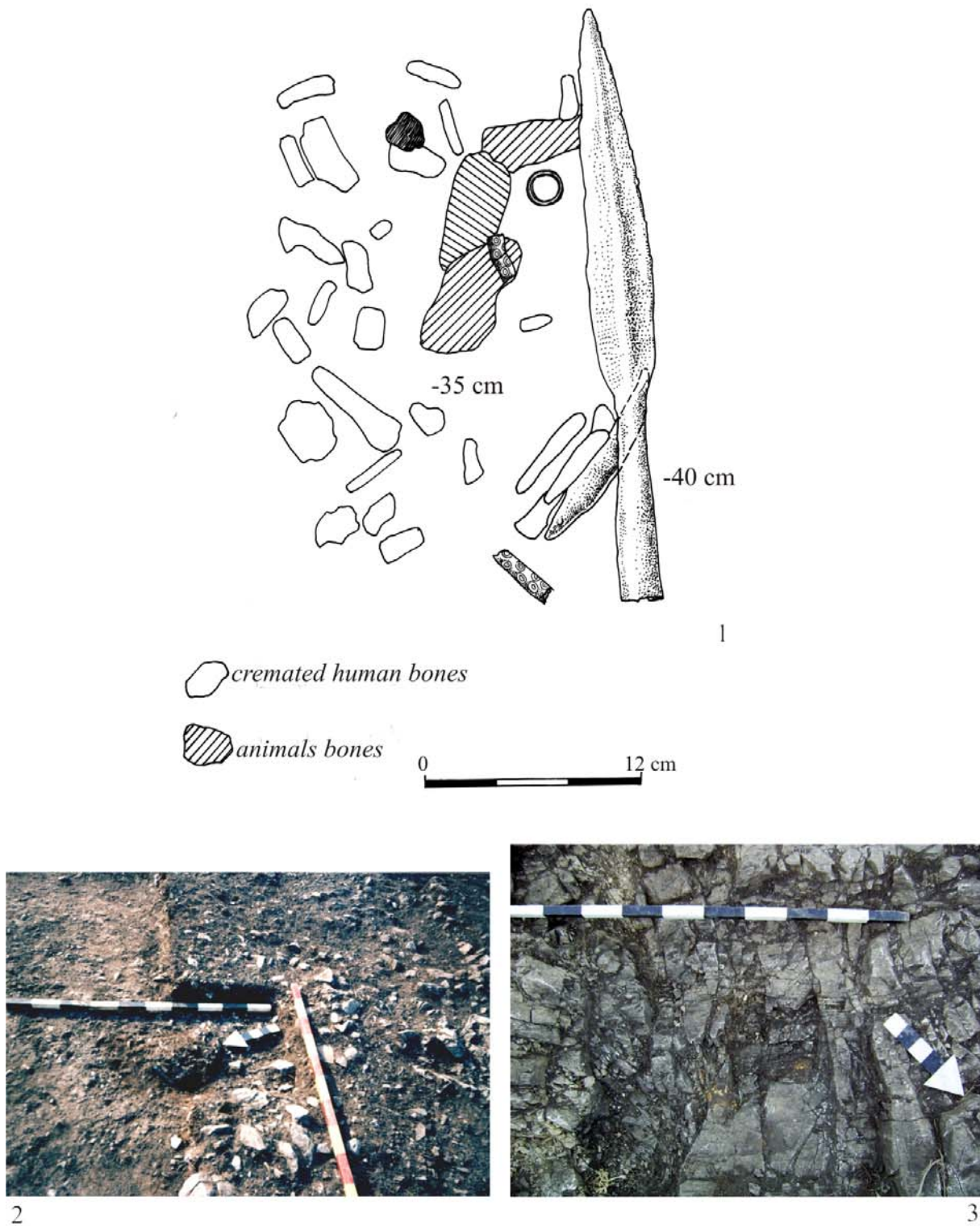


Fig. 1. Hunedoara-The Castle's Garden.. Complexes nos. C12 D7 (1-2), C70 (3).

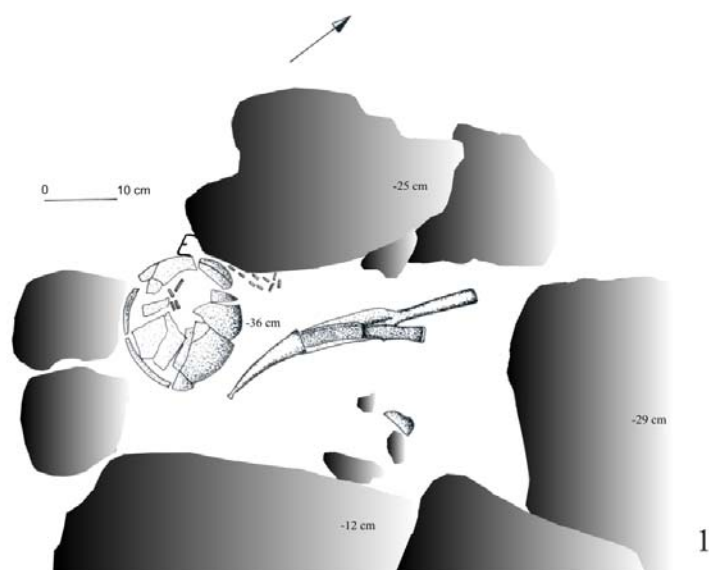


Fig. 2. Hunedoara-*The Castle's Garden*. Complexe no. C71D31.

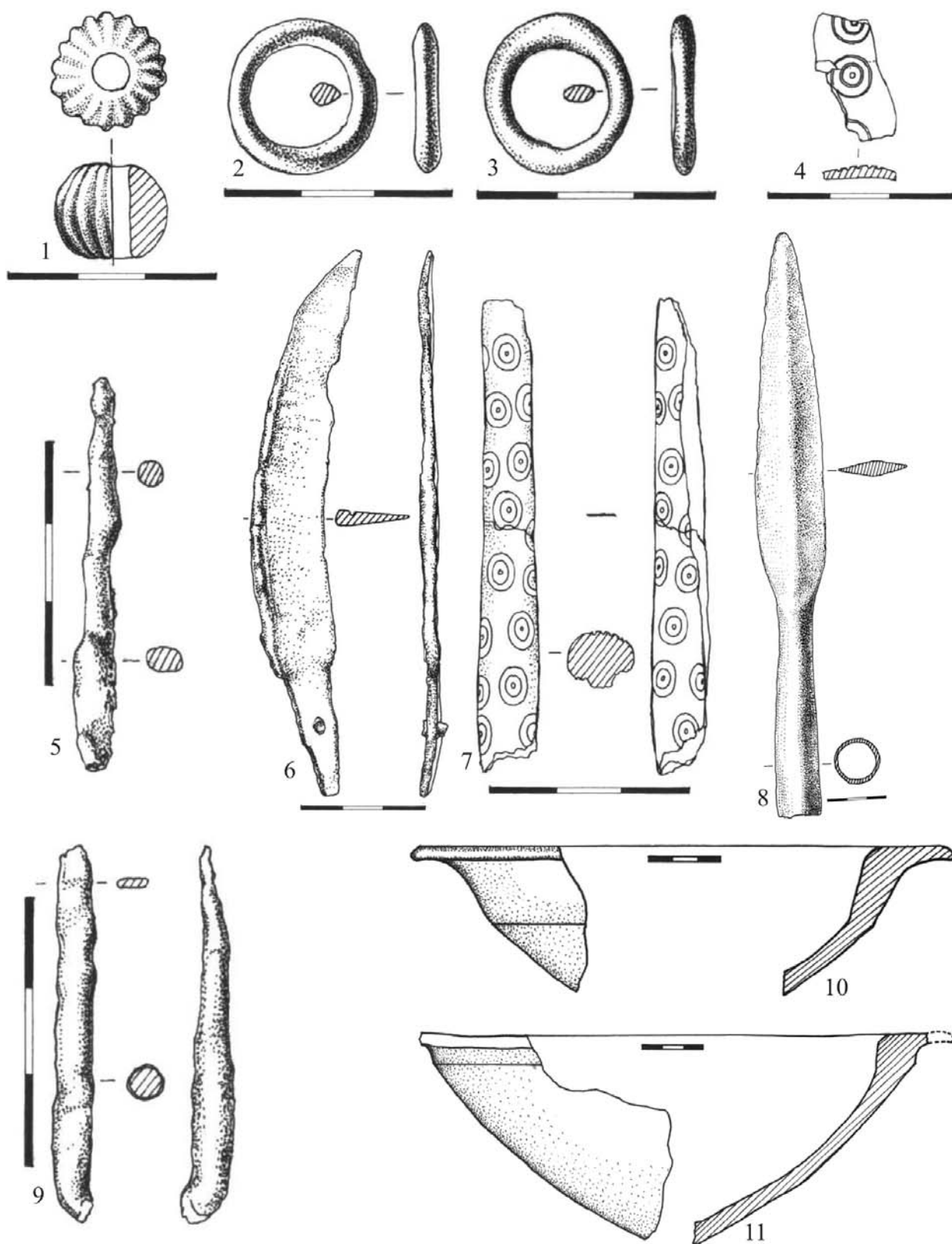


Fig. 3. Hunedoara-*The Castle's Garden*. Complexes nos. C12 D7.
 1 glass, 2-3 bronze, 5-6, 8-9 iron, 4, 7 bone, 10-11 pottery.

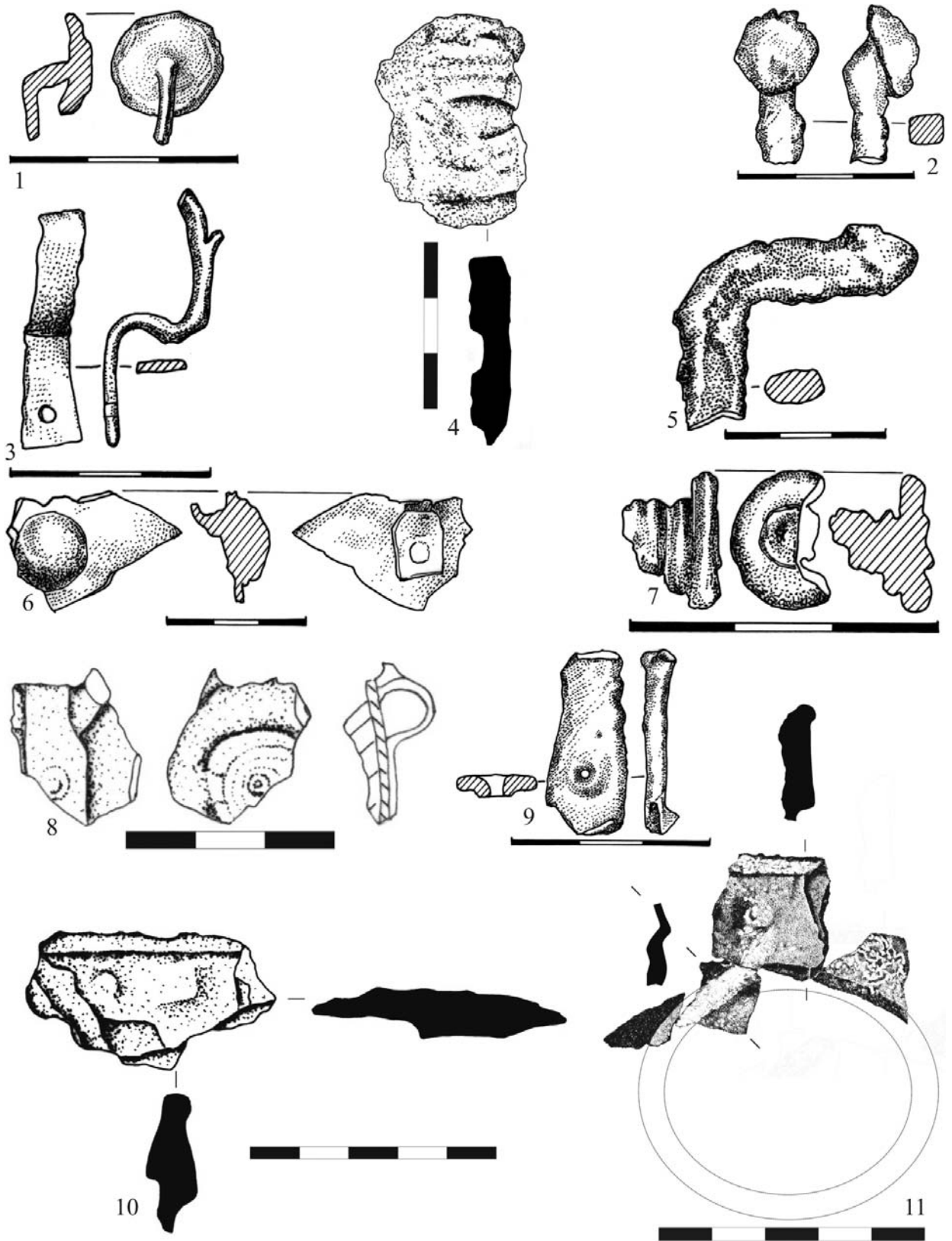


Fig.4. Hunedoara-The Castle's Garden. Complex no. C70 Deposit 7.

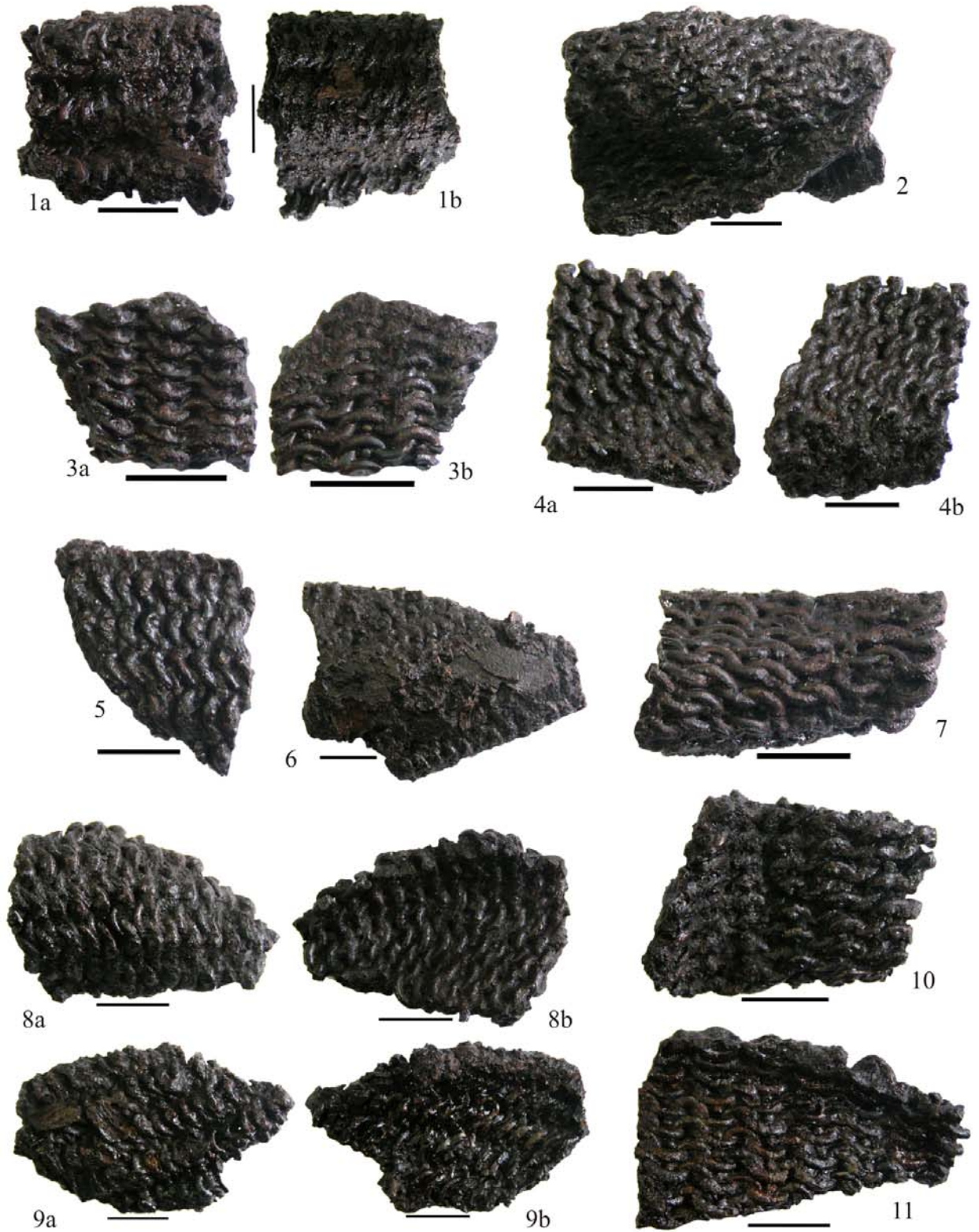


Fig. 5. Hunedoara-*The Castle's Garden*. Complexe no. 69, Deposit 7.
Fragments of the iron mail shirt.



Fig. 6. Hunedoara-*The Castle's Garden*. Fragments of the mail shirt, bridle bit, and *umboes* of shield.

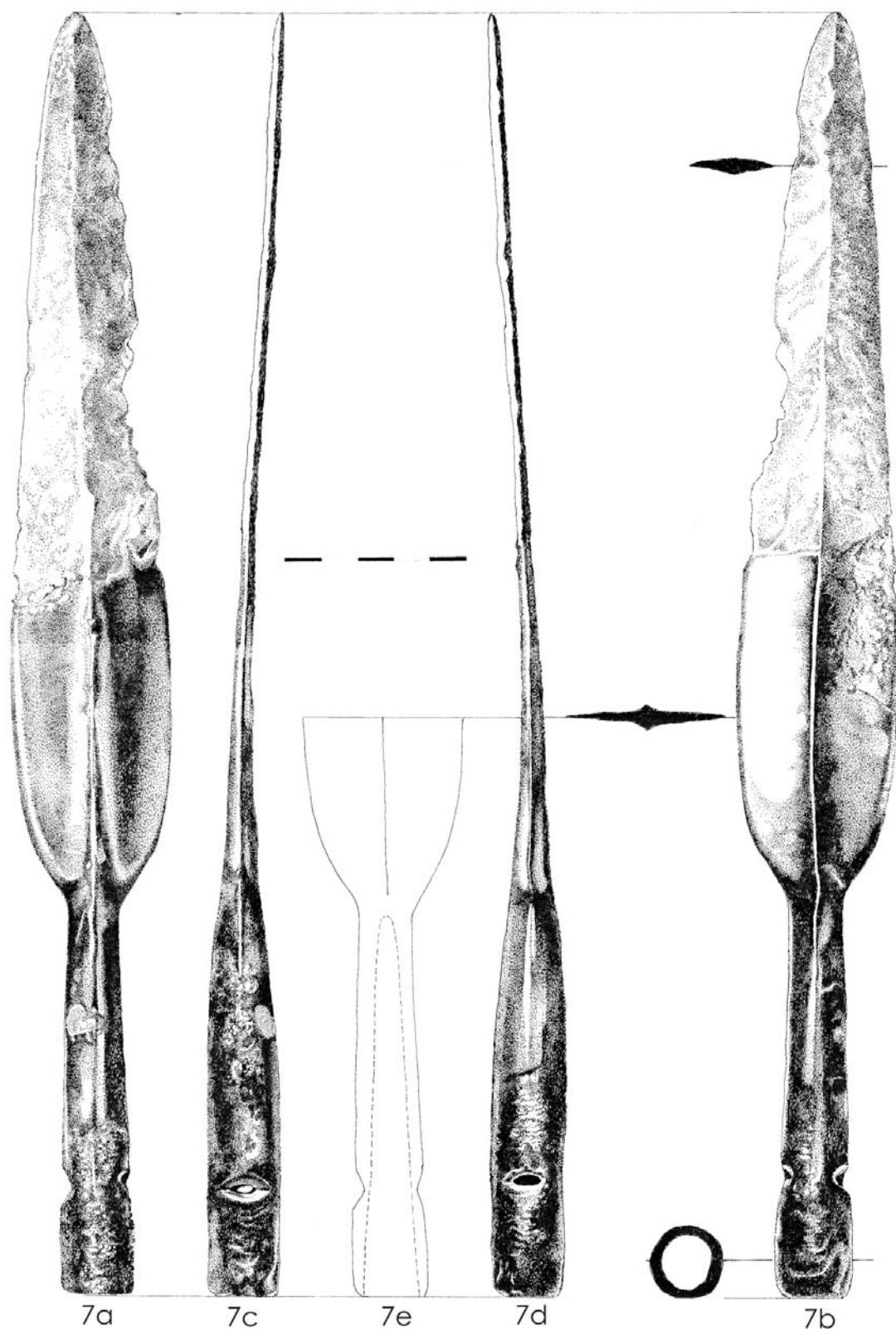


Fig. 7. Hunedoara-The Castle's Garden. Complexe no. C71D31. Iron spearhead.

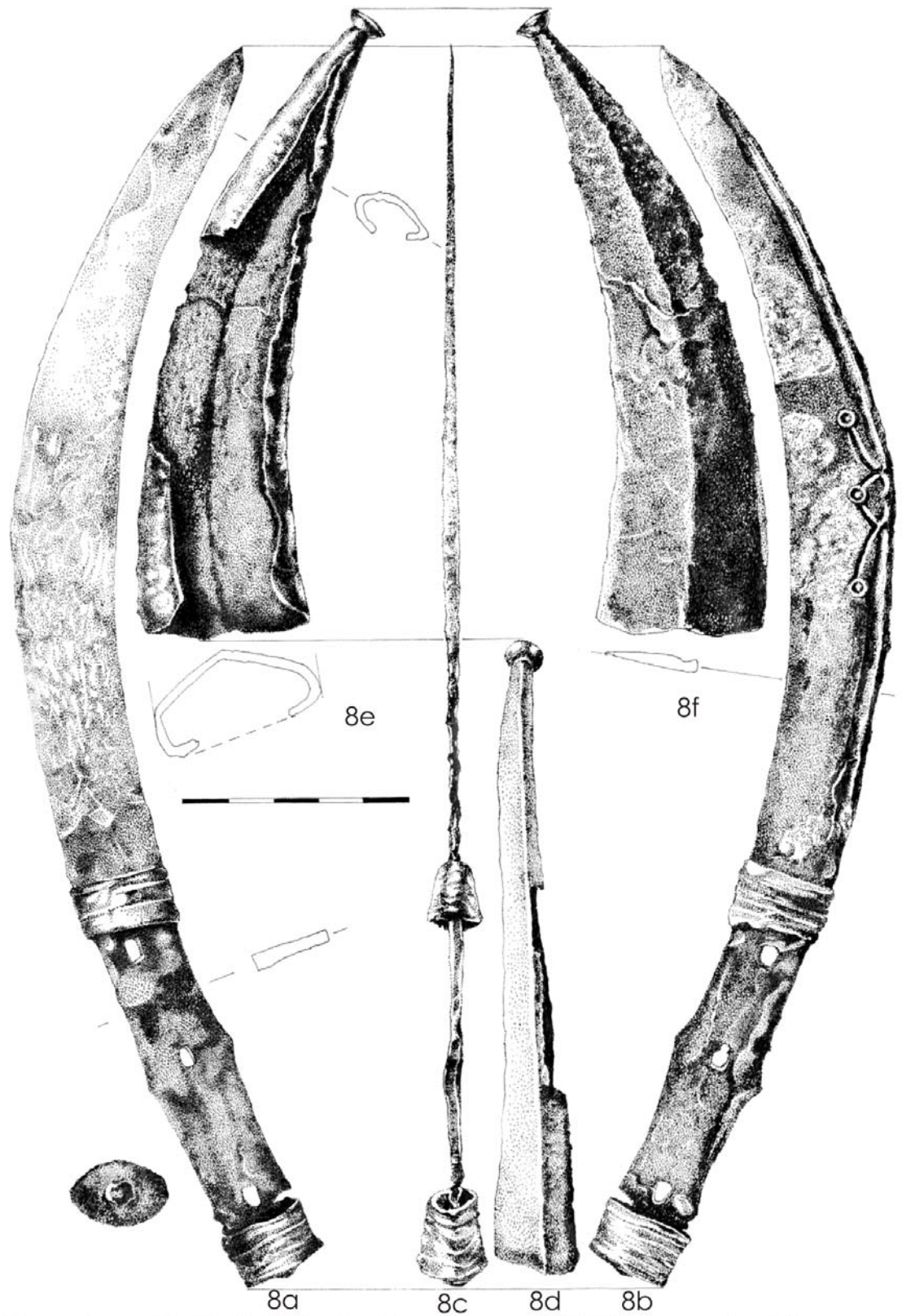


Fig. 8. Hunedoara-The Castle's Garden. Complex no. C71D31. Iron scabbard dagger.

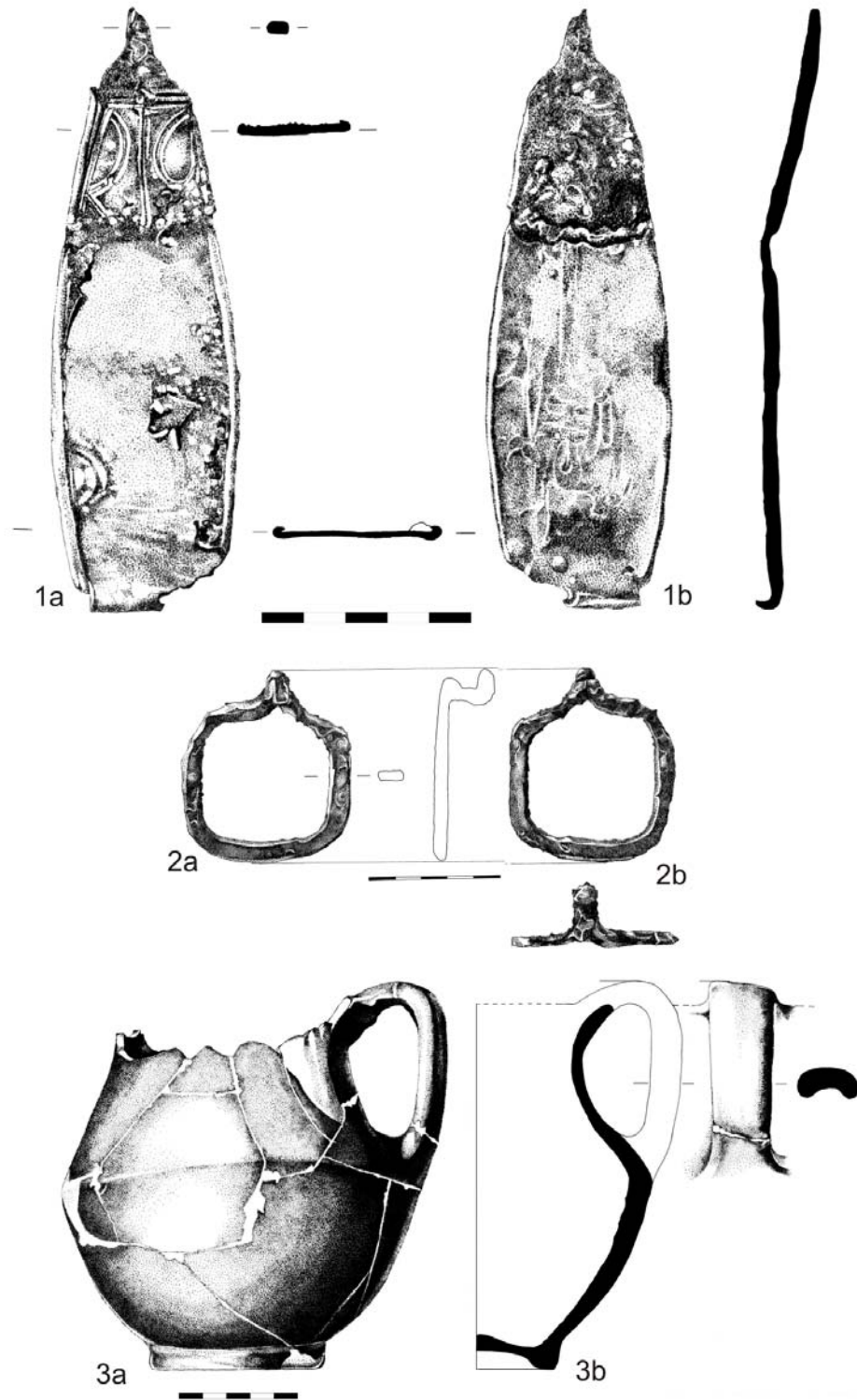


Fig. 9. Hunedoara-The Castle's Garden. Complexe no. C71D31. Iron and bronze buckle (1), iron buckle (2), pottery jug (3).

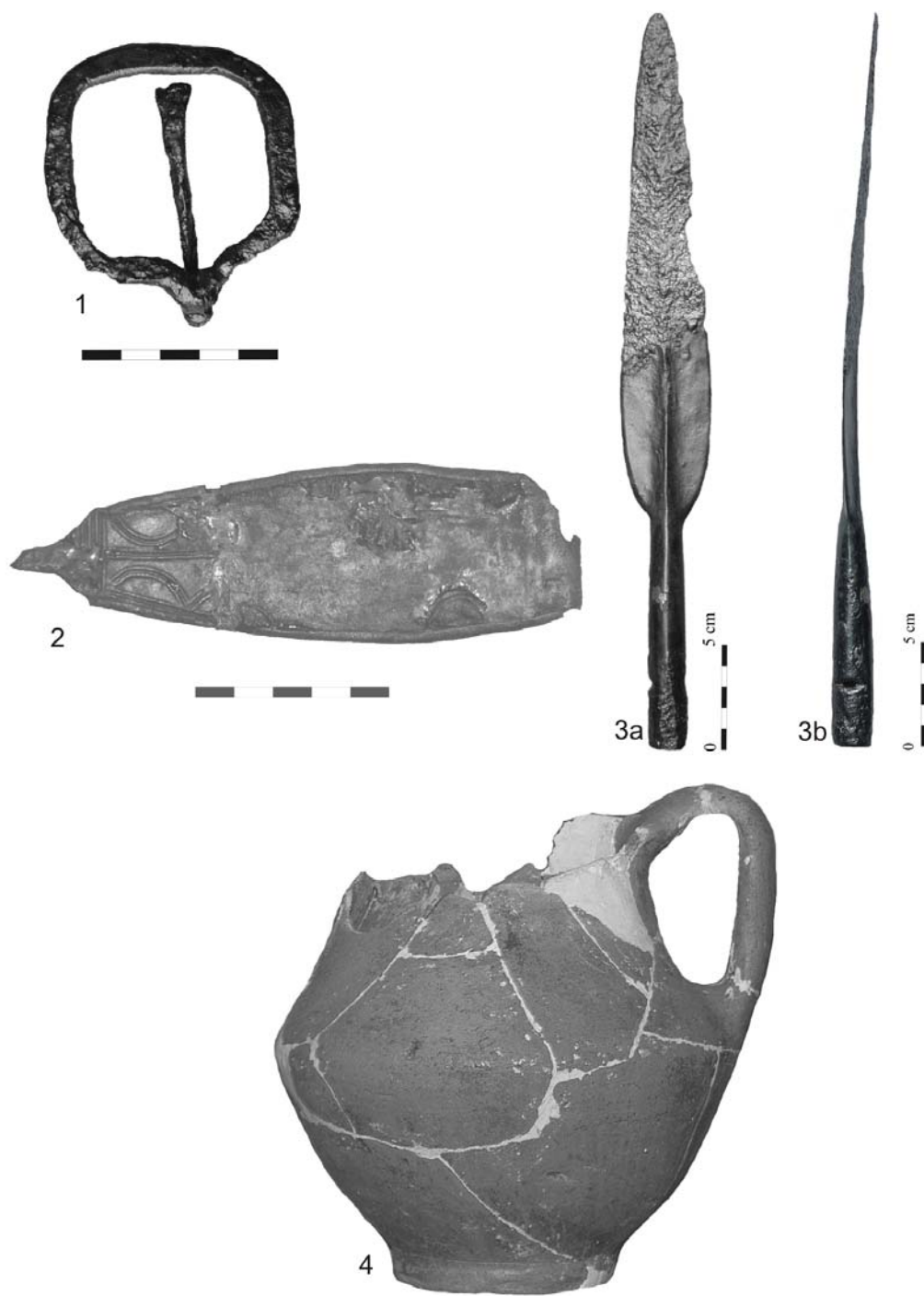


Fig. 10. Hunedoara-The Castle's Garden. Complex no. C71D31. Iron buckle (2), iron and bronze buckle (2), iron spearhead (3), jug (4).

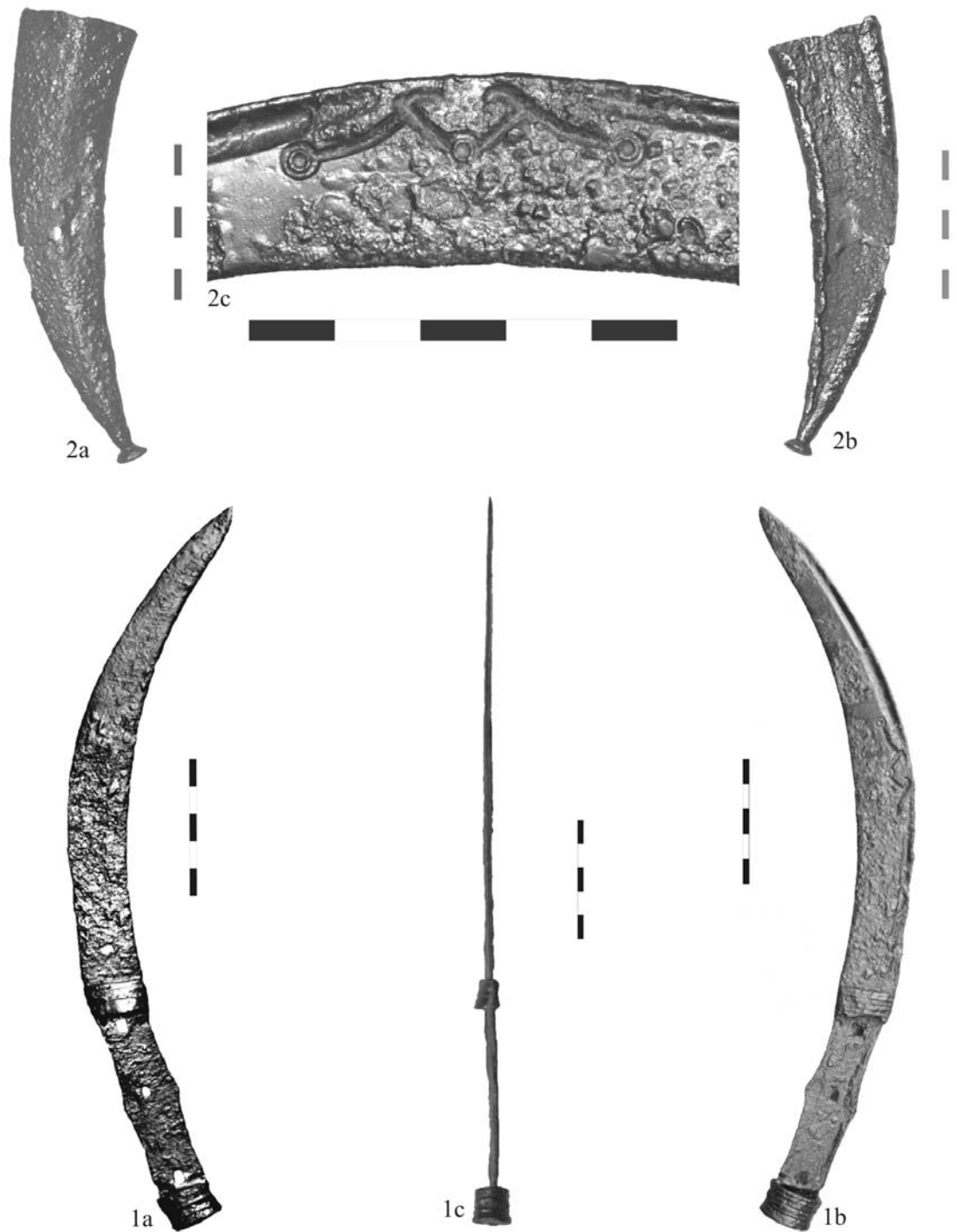


Fig. 11. Hunedoara-*The Castle's Garden*. Complex no. C71 D31. Dagger (1), scabbard dagger (2).

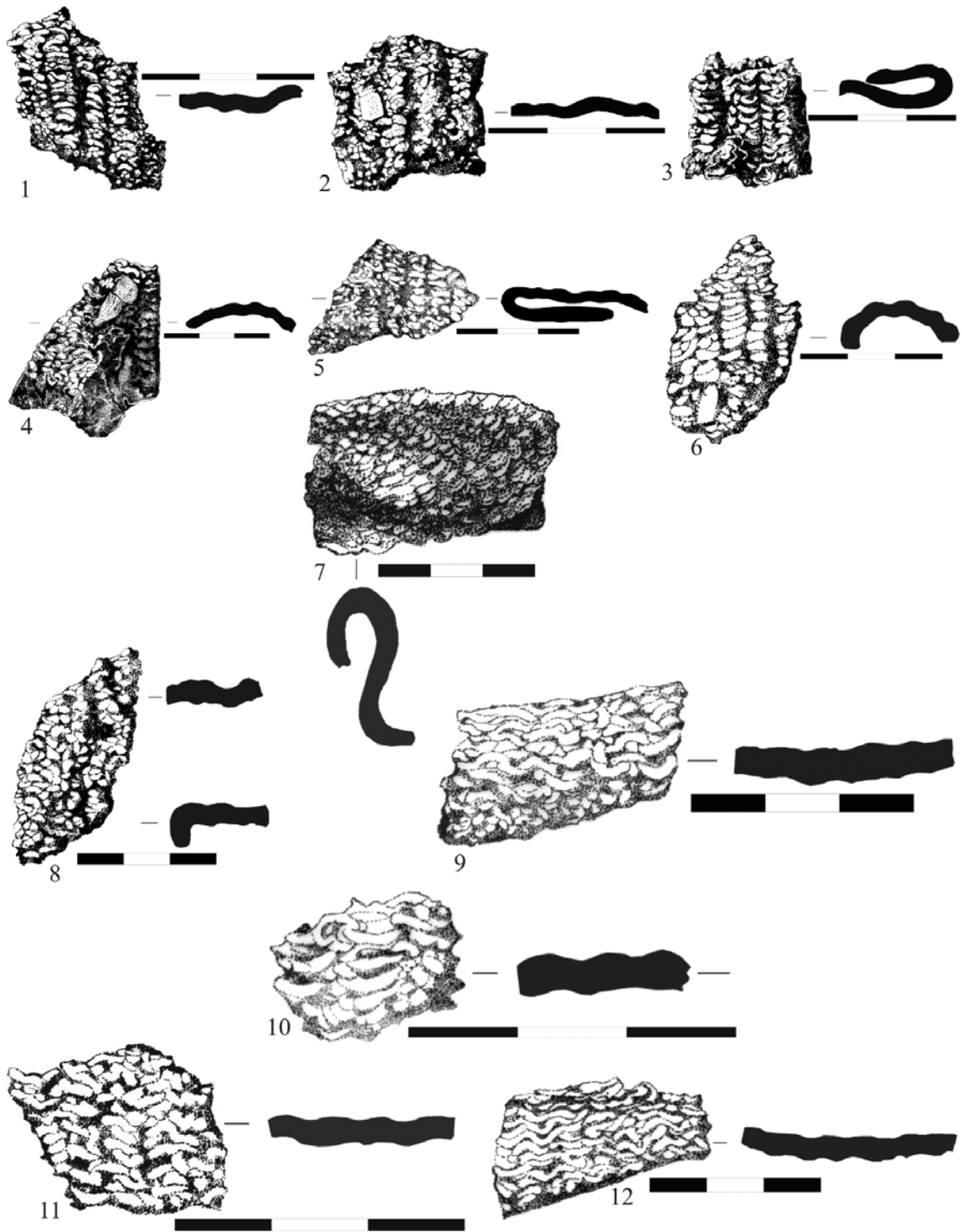


Fig. 12. Hunedoara-The Castle's Garden. Complexe no. 69, Deposit 7. Fragments of the iron mail shirt.