

# Iron Artifacts

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## Knives

Iron knives occur quite often in early medieval settlements. In the majority of cases they are not chronologically 'sensitive'. Utilitarian knives were popular and universal, their dimensions and forms were quite similar and did not change almost at all in a longer period of time. Knives also often occur among grave goods at early medieval cemeteries, and Bodzia is no exception.

At Bodzia, 30 burials contained knives. The total number of the knives amounts to 33, and usually they were poorly preserved. The heavy corrosion did not allow the macroscopic technological features of the construction of their blades to be established. The length of the completely preserved knives ranges from 10.1 to 14.7 cm. The length of the preserved tangs is 3.0–6.3 cm and depends mainly on the size of the blade; usually the tangs are about a third of the length of the blade. The maximum width of the blades ranges between 0.8 and 2.2 cm. The widths between 0.8 and 1.2 cm are the most numerous with 16 specimens, which makes up half of the collection of the knives from the Bodzia cemetery.

The analysis of the above parameters did not reveal any relationship between the size of the knives from the cemetery at Bodzia and the sex or age of the deceased. From the typological point of view, the knives from the discussed set are standard artifacts (except for the knife with the luxury sheath from Grave D162, which is a subject of Chapter 13). It was possible therefore to use the simplified typological scheme elaborated for knives by Ryszard Rogosz for the site of Castle Hill in Szczecin in order to analyze them.<sup>1</sup> After a detailed analysis of the knives from the cemetery at Bodzia, it turned out that Rogosz's Type III did not occur in the investigated material. The basic type was determined for 26 specimens (and the type and variant, for 20 specimens). It was impossible to establish the type of 8 specimens, mostly due to their fragmentary state of preservation.

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1 Rogosz 1983.

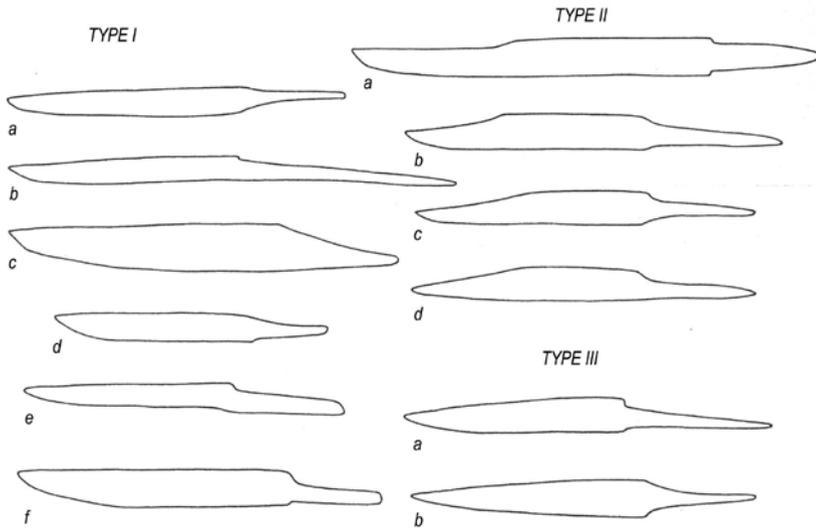


FIGURE 12.1 *Typological scheme of iron knives (AFTER ROGOSZ 1983).*

Type I. Knives of this type have relatively narrow blades, straight backs, slightly arched edges and one-sided or double-sided tangs. Depending on the way the tang was shaped they were classified as variants a, b, d, and f (Fig. 12.1). In all cases the tang is trapeze-shaped or rectangular in cross-section and is tapered which makes it possible to fit it into the handle.

Type II. These items are less numerous. Their blades have a similar shape to Type I but at the tip, the back is humped. At Szczecin (Wzgórze Zamkowe), knives Type II were found in the layers dated to the end of the 10th century. At Bodzia, two variants of Type II (b and d) have been distinguished.

Most frequent at Bodzia are the most common utility knives of Type I. There were 21 specimens of this type (Type I without a known variant—5 specimens, Variant a—6 specimens, Variant b—1 specimen, Variant d—1 specimen, and Variant f—8 specimens). Variants c and e were not found and determination of one specimen as Variant d is uncertain. Type I is common not only at the discussed cemetery but also at other medieval cemeteries, for example, at Dziekanowice near Ostrów Lednicki.<sup>2</sup> At Bodzia they were the most numerous in graves of men (11 specimens), followed by women (6 specimens), and children (5 specimens). There was no discernable connection between variant

<sup>2</sup> Wrzesiński 2000, 99.