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(Seit der Bronzezeit bis zur Spätantik)

ANCIENT JEWELLERY AND COSTUME IN COURSE OF TIME

(From the Bronze Age to the Late Antiquity)

Jewellery and the Costume Decorations in the Cremation Graves from Viminacium

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Keywords:Viminacium, Moesia Superior, necropolis, jewellery, costume decoration, earrings, fibulae, pins, rings, pendants, belt plates.

Abstract: At the graveyard of Viminacium explored in the year 1979, 115 graves with cremation were excavated. Among them in 36 graves were found jewellery and costume decorations. For their manufacturing most often used, as a material was bronze, while there were only some specimens made of silver or gold. Predominantly used techniques were bronze perforating and decoration with enamel. Most frequent items were bronze fibulae, rings, bracelets and pendants. Only earrings and few beads were made of gold. The jewellery is mostly of cheep local production intended for the lower and middle classes of Viminacium's society.

Close to the contemporary village of Stari Kostolac, at the confluence of river Mlava with Danube, was situated Viminacium, an important military and civil centre of the Upper Moesia¹. The Roman town was located at the important military route leading from Singidunum to the south, towards Naissus. This area were crosscutting three roads, connecting the town to the east, west and south regions of the Roman Empire. Viminacium was an important military and civil Danubian port too².

The camp of the Legio VII Claudiae was erected at the right bank of Mlava, and settled almost continuously from 1st to 4th century. A civil settlement which traces have been confirmed archaeologically to the west of the camp was established beside the military one, as it was noted in epigraphic sources.

Viminacium can be found on all Roman maps, the so-called itineraries. For example on *Tabula Peutigeriana* (dating around the year 340), it appears under the name of *Viminatio*, in *Itinerarium Antonini* it appears as *Viminacio* and *Euminacio* and in *Itinerarium Burdigalense* as *Civitas Viminacio*.

In the course of 500 years, the cemeteries have been established beside the camp and *canabae* encompassing a chronological span between 1st and 4th century³ (Plan 1).

The territory of the southern necropolises was endangered during the building of the steam power plant "Kostolac B". Extensive protective excavations took place between the years 1977 and 2003. During this period nearly 13.000 graves were examined, in which were found more than 30.000 objects that had been put there as a grave inventory. Among these object made of clay, iron, bronze, silver, lead and gold there are more than 700 worlds unique. Therefore, numerous discovered graves with a wide chronological scope enable us to reach conclusions regarding the historical, economical, but also artistic development of Viminacium, as well as regarding the social standing of its inhabitants.

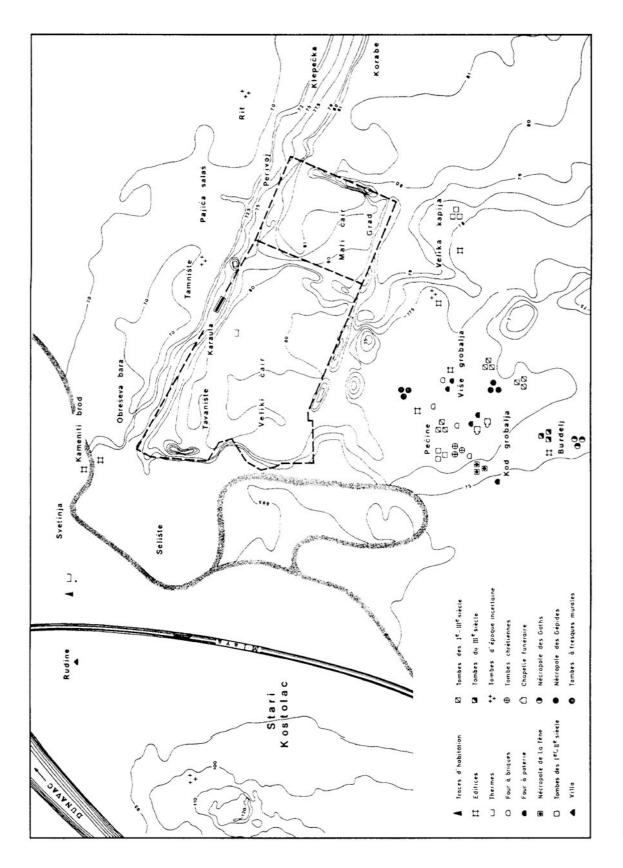
The Viminacium cemeteries contain the following types of cremation graves, according to their form and construction: graves in the form of shafts with circular or rectangular ground plan with the depth between 2 and 10 m; mainly ceramic urns - (one of bronze, and one of glass); rectangular and ellipsoid (simple) pits with bottom and sides burned (average size of the ground plan is $1.90 \text{ m} \times 1.10 \text{ m}$, and the pit depth is 0.40 - 0.50 m) and graves with two level pit, similar in form to the previous type, but with a smaller inner pit (average size of the ground plan is $2.20 \text{ m} \times 1.20 \text{ m}$ and inner pit size is $1.00 \text{ m} \times 0.60 \text{ m}$, while the depth reaching 0.50 - 0.70 m).

⁴Zotović 1968, 19-30.

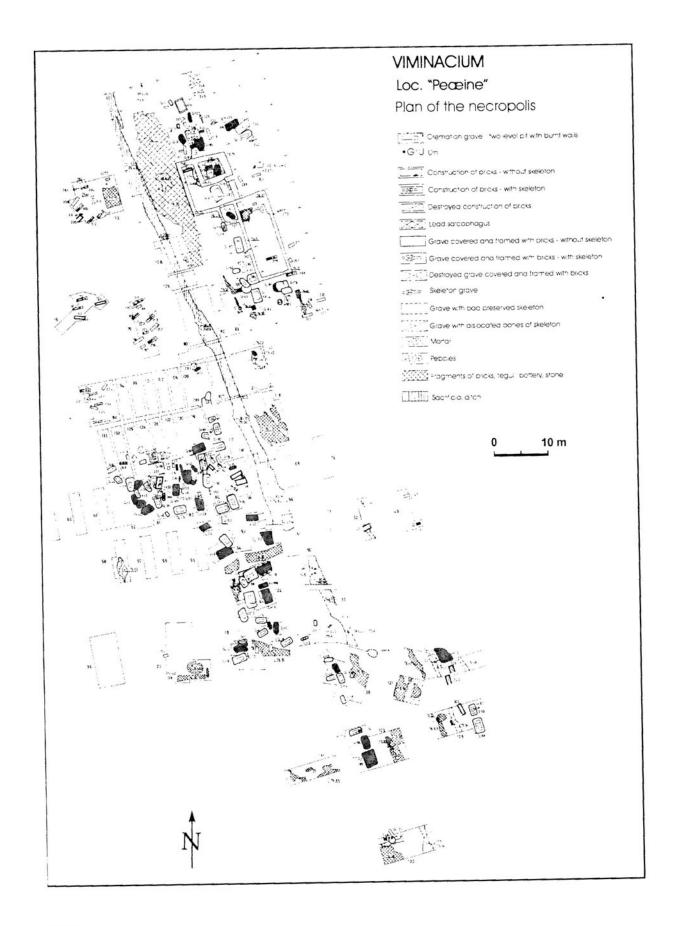
About the town see: Mirković 1968, 56: 1986.

About location of town and its port, see: Popović 1968: Mirković 1986, 75, 105.

³Jovanović, B. 1984, 63-93; 1985, 13-8. Southeast from contemporary ruins of Viminacium a large Celtic cemetery was excavated with 43 graves including 17 cremations. It was dated into the end of IV and the beginning of 3rd century BC. Both the cremations and the inhumations were registered. Cremation burials were placed into pits (1.50 x 2.20 x 1.60 m), and cremated bones were scattered in the west part of the burial pit. Pit walls were unburned. This burial procedure is different and cannot be related to the graves of Mala Kopašnica - Sase type.



Plan I.



Plan 2.

These two last mentioned types are the most frequent grave forms at the Viminacium cemeteries and are referred to as the Mala Kopašnica-Sase type, according to a typology established by M. Garašanin⁵. At the Viminacium cemeteries they appear since mid-first until mid-third century. There are a few varieties of these grave forms6. This type of graves with cremation, the most numerous at Viminacium, are registered already in the end of 1st century, within the cemeteries of large civil and military centres such as Emona, Poetovio, Domavia, Doclea, Ulpiana, Singidunum, Sirmium, Naissus, Stobi, Intercisa, Acumincum, Aquincum, Apulum, Brigetio, in the Rhineland and in Gallia.

The necropolis taken for this study was explored in the year 1979 during the protective archaeological excavation (Plan 2). It comprised the territory of almost 39000 m², 115 graves with cremation and 146 with inhumation. The general overview point at that grave goods were added after placing the cremated remains into the burned grave pits. Regular grave goods were: lamps, coins, pottery and glass vessels. Coins and jewellery were most often burned together with the deceased. The adornments are found in 36 mostly grave pits with two level pit. The gender was possible to define only in three cases (G₁-95, G₁-99, G₁-115). Cremated persons were females about twenty years old and in one grave (G₁-99) together with the woman were buried cremated remains of a child.

Jewellery as the precious source for the study of spiritual and material culture of any people appears in a twofold aspect: utilitarian and religious-esthetical. The utilitarian aspect is reflected as being a part of clothes, with particular purpose in dressing or as a symbol of status in army, family, cult, and personality who wore them. Expansion of military, political and economic power of Rome resulted in blending with cultural impulses of subjugated peoples. It was reflected in all domains of life and in jewellery as well, and thus a general style was created, characteristic for each particular epoch.

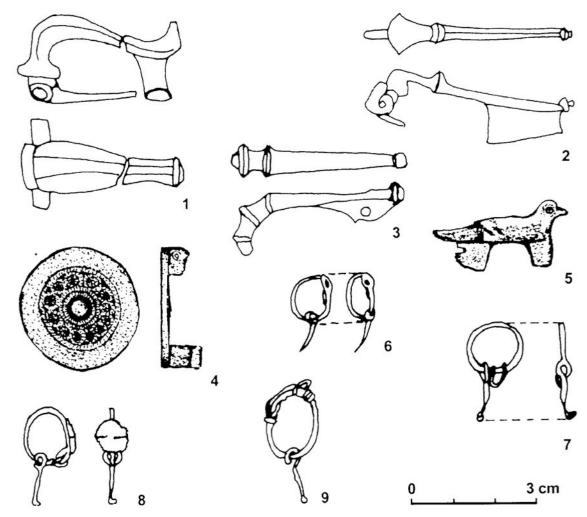


Plate I. Fibulae, earrings.

⁵Garašanin 1968, 6.

Plate-like enamelled fibulae (Pl. I/4)

In the grave of type en étage was found the circular enamelled fibula without a needle with the upper surface decorated by concentrical circles. In between are swells imitating the pearls. This type of fibulae is recorded in the territory of Gallic provinces, in the valley of Rhine, than in Pannonia, where certain types were products of the local workshops. This fibula is analogous to certain specimens from Rhineland area, classified by Exner into group III, while Fischer dated them to a period since Antonius Pius until Commodus⁷.

Elbowed fibula (Pl. I/1)

In the grave with simple, rectangular pit, an elbowed fibula with hinge was found. The fibulae of this type are characteristic for the eastern European provinces and especially in the regions of Sava and Danube rivers. Their presence at the limes is just as much as in the inner of the province. Diverse fundus of elbowed fibulae appears in the territory of the Upper Moesia and confirm their great popularity and use in clothes of the local population⁸. Judging to the finds, it could be said they are distinctive for the 2nd and 3rd century, especially for the III century⁹.

Intensely profiled fibulae (Pl. I/2, 3)

One intensely profiled fibula (Pl. I/2) and one more probably of the same type (T. I/3)¹⁰ were found in the graves dated by the other grave goods in the early 3rd century. This type of the Roman provincial fibulae appeared in the territory of Norricum and Pannonia during 1rd century, but they remained in use also in the 2nd century. A variety lacking a supporting stilt is recorded in 3rd century, and the specimens with two button-like thickenings at the bow are characteristic for the Lower Danube provinces and thus it may not be excluded that they were produced in Upper Moesia. Namely, of all fibulae types, intensely profiled fibulae are the most numerous and they highly surpass the number found in Dacia or Moesia Inferior. Some supposed¹¹ their production in the Pontes. Lederata or Drobeta at the Danube limes, while the others consider their production in the larger centres such as Singidunum or Viminacium¹².

Zoomorphic bone fibula (Pl. I/5)

Zoomorphic fibulae were very numerous in the territory of Upper Moesia and appear in all provinces of the Roman Empire. They were used over a long time-span, since 2nd century until the Late Roman period. Representation of animals has apotropaic or cult-magical meaning. The representation of dove is considered to be a substitution or attribute to Aphrodite, the protector of marriage and the domestic heart. As dove is one of her most adored symbols perhaps the fibula in the shape of dove from the grave en étage (G₁-27) should be considered in that meaning, too¹³. What makes the fibula in the shape of the bird-dove also unique is the bird figure made of bone while the rest is of bronze. Another bone elbowed fibula at the territory of Upper Moesia is found in the tumulus at the graveyard of Ulpiana and dated into end of 2nd or beginning of 3rd century. The assignment of these fibulae made of bone is doubtful. Namely, used as a brooch this object would be quickly damaged. However, it could replace more expensive bronze fibula as the grave good. Perhaps the economical reasons prevailed. But, there is also possibility of replacing the metal object with those made of bone in the Cult of dead according to certain believes of Thracians¹⁴. There is also one specimen of zoomorphic bone fibula at Nimfeum in Gorsium so their specific meaning remains unclear¹⁵.

⁶Jovanović, A. 1984, 103.

⁷ Petrović 1997, 98, Cat. No. 214.

⁸ Petrović 1997, 112.

⁹ Bojović 1983, 65.

¹⁰ Unfortunately, only non-precise drawing was available while some items disappeared in robbery of the Museum in Požarevac. Among them was described fragment of bronze fibula.

¹¹ Jovanović, A. 1978, 52.

¹² Bojović 1983, 41.

¹³ Nikolovski 2001, 60. The silver-plated ring with a rare sacred image impressed on a head was found in the grave with cover made of teguli. The impression at the rectangular head was probably the sign of a wedding procedure but here instead of images of the fiance and fiancee was presented by a central figure of dove as the attribute of Aphrodite – reduced image of a shrine of Aphrodite Paphos in Cyprus.

¹⁴ Petković 1995, 54.

¹⁵ Biró 1987, 36, Fig. 12, 85.145/765-3. The author remarks the lack of analogy for the fibula and does not give any chronology.

Earrings (Pl. I/6, 7, 8, 9)

Earrings as very popular female adornments in the Roman period represent a form of the precious object which was used over a long time span and obtained by succession from generation to generation. All specimens found in graves with cremation are manufactured of gold. Golden earrings found in graves with cremation of Mala Kopašnica - Sase type (G1-41/17, G1-38/3, G1-40/3, G1-4/3) are in the form of rings with pendants. Pendants are shaped as the thin bronze wire with one or more pearls at the end. In most of the cases the pearls are missing. This type and its variance are characteristic for the period of the 2nd and 3rd century AD, with a rare continuation into the early 4th century AD.

Pendants (Pl. II)

On the territory of Viminacium were found a variety of very popular decorative objects that were used to be attached to the soldier's belt (pendants, plates, rivets). The type of bronze pendants found in graves with cremation - a leather band pendant with the metal part which served for riveting to the base (Pl. II/7, 10), the pendant in the rhomboidal shape with the button at one end and the fragmented loop on the other were in use during the 2nd and 3rd century and have been often found along the Danube limes¹⁷. The analogous pendants from the territory of Singidunum are dated into period from 2nd till 4th century¹⁸, while the one from our site could be dated into end of 2nd century. The other type of pendants, in this case silver one, is one with a slot at its upper, flat part for the leather band, which was than rivet together (Pl. II/9). The longer part was made in the shape of leaf with a button like end.

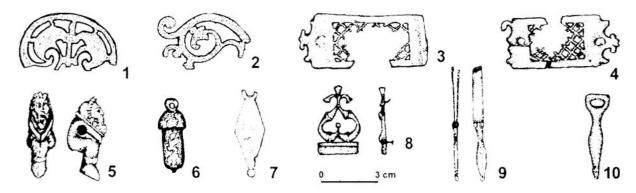


Plate II. Pendants, belt plates.

The one close pad shape ornament found in the grave (Pl. II/8) is made of silver, too. Such ornaments were quite often in use on the limes territory in Germany that date from 2nd to 3rd century¹⁹, just as the analogous pieces from Singidunum. According to the other grave goods and the stratigraphy, the one found in grave at Viminacium is dated into 1st half of 2nd century.

The bronze pendant in a shape of acorn (Pl. II/6) was used as an amulet and had apotropaic function. The same function probably has the bronze pendant, which represents captured barbarian from the same grave. The rope was wound round the neck and the legs of the sitting male figure. Several specimens like this were found in Carnuntum and Köln. They were presumed to be manufactured at the same workshop in Köln. Accordingly, the specimen from Viminacium could be an import from the northern provinces²⁰.

Two rectangular plates (Pl. II/3, 4) could have been a part of a buckle or on some other part of the belt. In Singidunum they are dated from the end of the 2nd to the middle of the 3rd century²¹, while in Siscia the analogous pieces are dated into 1st and 2nd century²².

¹⁶ Zotović 1995, 235.

¹⁷ Tudor 1976, 130/13, 14; Zotović, Jordović 1990, T. CXVI/2.

¹⁸ Crnobrnja, Krunić 1997, 275, Cat. No. 488-9.

¹⁹ Oldenstein 1976, 178, T. 53/622-42.

²⁰ Fleischer 1966, 45/68.

²¹ Gudea 1997, 71; Oldenstein 1976,178, T. 62/780-97; Zotović, Jordović 1990, T. XXVI/12.

²² Grönke, Weinlich 1991, 61, Taf. 14/34.

Rings (Pl. III)

Assuming that rings were one of the most popular types of adornment in Roman period, worn equally by women, men and children their number in the graves of explored necropolis is considerably small.

Massive ring bands entirely decorated by large granulae (Pl. III/4, 5) were found in two graves. This type of rings are considered to be of Celtic or Illyrian origin. They were cast without finishing up. Quite often they appear in the inventory of early Sarmation graves. To the opinion of A. Vaday and B. Miklós concerning the grave find from the 2nd half of 2nd century from Szujokereszten, that they could represent a bell tongue. They remarked that such rings would have been impractical for wearing²³. Rings of this type are also well represented in the valley of Rhine²⁴. The specimen from Singidunum could belong to 2nd-3rd century on the basis of remaining archaeological material registered²⁵, just as in the case of founded in grave with cremation at Viminacium.

The bronze fingering (Pl. III/2) dated into a first half of 2nd century is of circular ring band above that stands a cassette for shaped stone that is missing.

The simplest bronze rings, wore as one or more at the same finger are quite often covering wide chronological span. Besides, they could be decoration at the belt, costume or at a wooden cassette (Pl. III/6, 7, 8, 9).

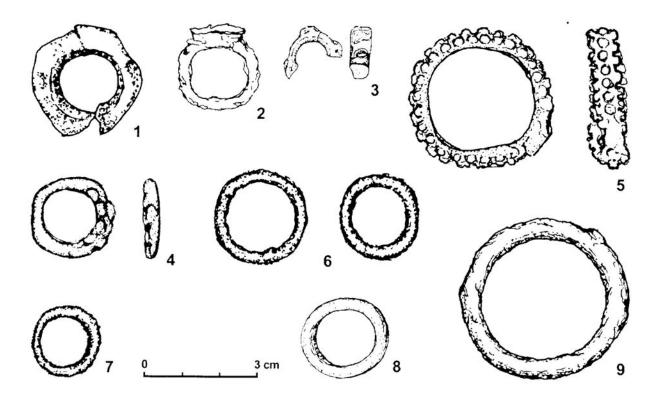


Plate III. Rings.

As jewellery worn on arms and rarely on feet bracelets were quite often. They appeared in Roman art and on some figural presentation of Venus²⁶. Only a few examples of armbands were found in the graves with cremation. A fragment of the bronze armband of open type manufactured of thick wire of circular section and thickened ends (Pl. IV/8) possibly with the ends in the shape of snake that were quite popular in the Roman time. The other armband of this type (Pl. IV/9) has the thickened ends without decoration. Bronze armbands of closed type in the form of chain (Pl. IV/11) is the type

Parrović 1997, 105.

Eakel 1913, Nr. 474-6, T. XXIV.

[.] rović, 1997, 105.

Pović 1997, 29.

often found at roman sites such as Emona, Siscia, Intercissa, Singidunum, Naissus, Scupi and are dated into 3rd and 4th century, while the specimen from Viminacium is dated into the middle of the 2nd century.

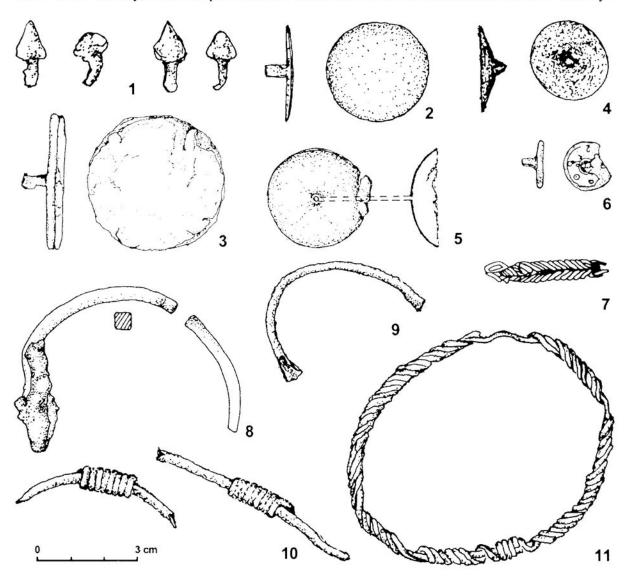


Plate IV. Clamps, buttons, bracelets.

Pins (Pl. V)

Men and women respectively paid great attention to their coiffure. Hair dying with dyes produced from plants and permanent waving were widely practiced²⁷. Besides their utilitarian purpose for hair fixing were also used as jewellery. Very sophisticated and elaborate female coiffures were decorated with ornamental pins, which kept hair in place. The pins were of very diverse shapes and mostly made of bone or bronze – in these graves prevail the pins with variously moulded head. Most common among all are the hairpins with spherical or biconical head. Bone pins found in the graves with a cremation are distinctive for the Roman Empire epoch. Typologically and chronologically, they fit well the known data about this kind of finds in the hinterland provinces. Bronze pins are considerably rare in comparison to the bone ones and mostly are found deformed used as a material in the funeral ritual.

The bronze pins (Pl. V/6) with a ring coiled in the shape of letter S and soldered round head has the analogous in those found in Siscia²⁸.

²⁷ Krunić 1997, 236.

²⁸ Koščević 1995, 20, Pl. 41, 417.

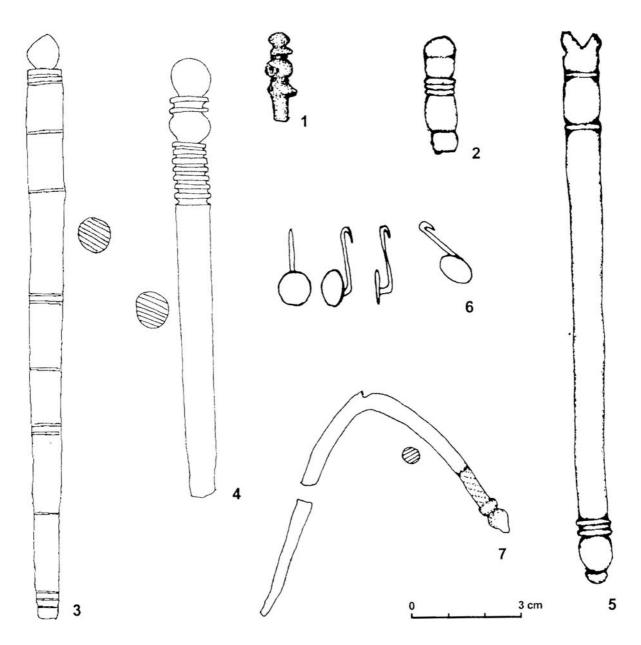


Plate V. Pins.

Beads (Pl. VI)

Usually one or two beads-pearls were found in the grave. In one case, in the cremated grave of young woman (G₁-95), 14 round beads of green glass paste were found together with the golden «pearls» formed by winding up golden wire (Pl. VI/13). Two were cast in bronze: in the shape of barrel (Pl. VI/1) and the one with the thickened rims. This type of pearl is quite rare at the territory of Upper Moesia and is considered to imitate those made of ceramic from 3rd and 4th century. Besides ornamental they had also apotropaic function²⁹. One rounded pearl with the ellipsoidal section, made of amber is dated into 1st half of 2nd century according to other archaeological material in the grave, while one «melonen» (Pl. VI/5) bead threated on two strings was made of non-transparent black glass paste is dated into the middle of 2nd century.

Few clamps manufactured of thin bronze sheet, with the plaque-like heads of various sizes could have been a part of costume. The smallest clamps with the conical heads were used for footwear fastening (Pl. IV/1).

²⁹ Cunjak, Marković-Nikolić 1997, 42. Golden beads in shape of barrels were found in the lead sarcophagus – grave is dated into end of 3rd or beginning of 4th century.

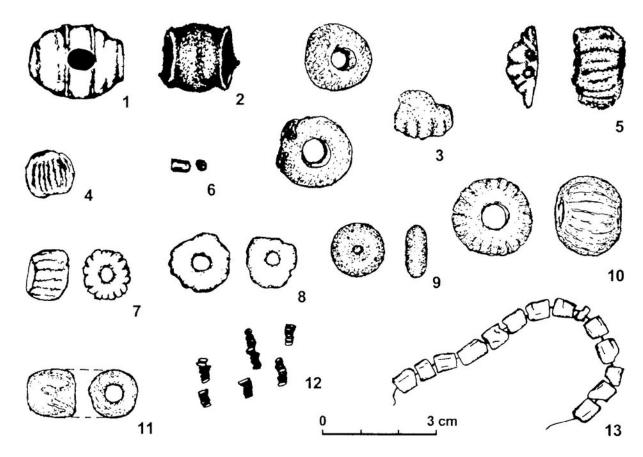


Plate VI. Beads.

Judging from the material found in graves with cremation it is possible to conclude that Viminacium craftsmen were able to achieve high standards in making bronze jewellery. Bronze as a material, offered the most probability for applying all crafting and ornamentation techniques. The techniques of bronze perforating were predominantly used, particularly in making belts and accessories, crafted in tiny detail, often decorated with enamel, with complicated web-shaped and floral motifs. Most frequent were bronze rings, fibulas, bracelets and pendants while all found earrings were made of gold. Jewellery making in Viminacium was apparently determined by the requirements and incomes of its wider inhabitants, in reality not having access to jewellery of high artistic importance³⁰. Conciderable concentration of skilful craftsmen in the mining district influenced to the artistic maturing of local craftsmen. Also among skilled craftsmen were people from Italic and Eastern-Mediterranean toreutic centres. A Syrian diaspora was formed in Viminacium at the end of the 2nd and the beginning of the 3rd century, through the settlement of people from Comagene in Syria³¹. These social circumstances undoubtedly reflected upon the import of goods from the East as well as on local manufacture.

Craftsmen from Viminacium used gold more frequently than silver in jewellery making. As a provincial capital, Viminacium dictated fashion, forming the taste of the broad population. Intensive manufacture, which can be followed from as early on as the beginning of the 2nd century, is confirmed by the rich collections of gold jewellery from the National Museum in Belgrade³² and the National Museum in Požarevac. Judging by the standard provincial forms, simple in making, this manufacture was intended for the lower and middle classes that comprised the largest part of Viminacium's inhabitants.

³⁰ Zotović 1995, 233-41.

³¹ Mirković 1968, 128.

³² Popović 1996.

Fibulae, earrings (Pl. I)

- 1. Fragmented bronze elbowed fibula. Length 4.0 cm, width 2.3 cm (G1108/1 C 1516).
- 2. Fragmented bronze intensely profiled fibula. A pin is missing. Length 5.1 cm (G161 C 1028).
- 3. Fragmented bronze possibly intensely profiled fibula. Length 4.1 cm (G196 C 1461).
- 4. Circular plate-like enamelled fibula. A pin is missing. R: 2.8 cm (G1110 C 1582).
- 5. Fibula in the shape of dove. The figure of dove is made of bone while the rest is made of bronze. Length 3.2 cm (G127 C 605).
- 6. Two golden earrings made of thin wire with the pendants of golden wire. Length with the pendant 2.0 cm (G141 C727).
- 7. Golden earring with the pendant of golden wire. Length with the pendant 2.4 cm (G₁38 C 700).
- Golden earring with the semi spherical decoration and the pendant of golden wire probably having on end a pearl of bead that is missing. Length with the pendant 2.2 cm (G₁40 - C 714).
- 9. Golden earring with the pendant of golden wire. Length with the pendant 2.9 cm (G₁4 C 130).

Pendants, belt plates (Pl. II)

- 1. The part of silver belt plate made in solid cast technique (G1-32 C 1373).
- 2. Bronze pad shape ornament made in solid cast technique. Length 5.0, width 3.0 cm (G132 C 667).
- 3. Fragmented rectangular bronze belt plate made in solid cast technique. Length 7.0 c, width 2.7 cm (G166 C 1078).
- 4. Fragmented rectangular bronze belt plate made in solid cast technique. Length 6.0 cm, width 2.7 cm (G166 C 1118).
- 5. Hollow cast bronze pendant in the shape of captured Barbarian. Height 4.3 cm (G131 C 658).
- 6. Bronze pendant in the shape of acorn. Height 3.7 cm (G131 C 659).
- 7. Fragmented bronze pendant of rhomboidal shape. Height 4.3 cm (G141 C 719).
- 8. Silver decorated belt plate made in solid cast technique. Height 3.5 cm (G199 C 1599).
- 9. Silver belt pendant. Height 6.0 cm (G199 C 1597).
- 10. Bronze belt pendant. Height 4.6 cm (G174 C 1115).

Rings (Pl. III)

- 1. Fragmented ring made of dark glass paste with elliptical head. R: 2.9 cm (G1119 C 1769a).
- 2. Bronte ring with the rectangular cassette. R: 2.3 cm (G141 C 729).
- 3. Two parts of ring made of lime-paste. R: 3.0 cm (G1102 C 1501).
- 4. Massive silver ring decorated by large granulae. R: 2.7 cm (G1119 C 1768).
- 5. Bronze silver ring decorated by granulae. R: 4.0 cm (C 730).
- 6. Two bronze rings. R: 2.0 cm, R: 2.3 cm (G135 C 676).
- 7. Bronze ring. R:1.6 cm (G122 C 512).
- 8. Bronze ring. R: 2.2 cm (G117 C 301).
- 9. Iron ring. R: 4.2 cm (G₁43 C 755).

Clamps, buttons, bracelets (Pl. IV)

- 1. Four little iron clamps with conical heads used for footwear fastening (G11 C 85).
- 2. Bronze clamp with rounded plaque-like head and shaft quadrangular in section. R: 3.0 cm (G189 C 1279).
- 3. Iron clamp with rounded plaque-like head and shaft quadrangular in section. R: 4.0 cm (G191 C 1295).
- 4. Fragmented bronze button. R: 2.3 cm (G128 C 642).
- 5. Fragmented bronze button with a spherical head. R: 2.8 cm (G161 C 1029).
- 6. Bronze clamp with rounded plaque-like head decorated with enamel. R: 1.4 cm (G191 C 1298).
- 7. The part of bronze chain. Length 3.7 cm (G125 C 563).
- 8. Fragment of deformed bronze bracelet quadrangular in section (G14 C 128).
- 9. Fragment of a bracelet made of thick bronze wire (G147 C 795).
- 10. Fragments of bronze bracelet with the ends formed of pleated wire (G147 C 796).
- 11. Bronze bracelet of closed type in the form of pleated wire. R: 7.5 cm (G₁47 C 797).

Pins (Pl. V)

- 1. Fragment of faceted bone pin head. Length 1.7 cm (G199 C 1608).
- 2. Fragment of faceted pin head. Length 3.0 cm (G1118 C 1730).
- 3. Ornamental bone pin with a small head in shape of ball. Length 15.5 cm (G110 C 177).
- 4. Fragmented ornamental bone pin with a small head in shape of ball. Length 12.0 cm (G112 C 193).
- 5. Fragmented ornamental bone pin. Length 15.0 cm (G129 C 651).
- 6. Two bronze pins with a ring coiled in the shape of letter S and soldered round. Length 2.2 cm (G141 C732).
- 7. Fragmented and deformed bronze pin with a head in shape of ball (G14 C 129).

Beads (Pl. VI)

- 1. Hollow cast bronze bead in the shape of barrel. Length 2.3 cm (G123 C 548).
- 2. Hollow cast bronze bead. Length 2.1 cm (G123 C 549).
- 3. Four beads made of paste. R: 1.8 cm, R: 1.6 cm (G132 C 660).
- 4. Bead made of dark paste. R: 1.0 cm (G124 C 535).
- 5. "Melonen" bead of black glass paste. Length 1.2 cm, width 2.0 dm (G185 C 1250).
- 6. Cylindrical bead of rounded section made of paste. Length 0.5 cm (G199 C 1614).
- 7. "Melonen" bead of non-transparent black glass paste. R: 1.2 I cm (G132 C 1372).
- 8. Two beads made of paste. R: 1.3 cm, R: 1.5 cm (G135 C 675).

- 9. Rounded plate-like bead made of amber. R: 1.3 cm (G141 C 736).
- 10. Rounded bead made of black paste. R: 2.0 cm (G190 C 1253).
- 11. Bead in technique "mille fiori". R: 1.2 cm (G163 C 1060).
- 12. Six beads-pendant made of thin golden wire. Length 0.5 cm (G195 C 1395).
- 13. Fourteen cylindrical beads made of green glass. R: 0.5 cm (G₁95 C 1392).

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