

# VIVERE MILITARE EST

FROM POPULUS TO EMPERORS - LIVING ON THE FRONTIER  
VOLUME I

TABULA TRAIANA

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BELGRADE 2018

*VIVERE MILITARE EST*  
FROM POPULUS TO EMPERORS -  
LIVING ON THE FRONTIER



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## **PREFACE**

Miomir Korać, Director  
*Institute of Archaeology, Belgrade*

The border of the Roman Empire with the outer world consisted of a row of military strongholds built along its 7,500 kilometres of length: from Britain, over the Rhine and the Danube, all the way to the Middle East and Africa. Today, all of these monuments make up part of the UNESCO World Heritage list.

During the 1st century AD, after having founded the provinces of Pannonia and Moesia on the territory of modern Serbia, the Roman Empire established a fortification system with watchtowers and roads (*limes*) along the Danube. In time, cities and smaller settlements developed around them. Apart from the strategic importance of the Danube valley, especially at the end of the 3rd and in the 4th century, huge urban complexes developed in this region, like the legionary forts of Singidunum (Belgrade) and Viminacium (Stari Kostolac), the capital of the province, but later on also Naissus (Niš), with the nearby imperial residences of Mediana, Horreum Margi (Ćuprija) and others. Sirmium (Sremska Mitrovica) holds a special place, for a while also being one of the capitals of the Roman Empire, along with fortified palace complexes in Romuliana (Gamzigrad) and Šarkamen.

During the 17th century, interest in Roman sites grew in this region. The earliest archaeological research was initiated at the end of the 19th century, conducted by the earliest Serbian archaeologist with a university degree. During the last hundred years, numerous sites along the Danube have been excavated, especially during the extensive construction projects of the hydro power-plant in Đerdap (Iron Gates). Research of the large legionary forts of Singidunum and Viminacium continue to the present day.

The intense life that developed on the outskirts of the Roman Empire, in military and civilian settlements, is best reflected in the numerous remains of its material culture. The event of the XXIV Limes Congress in Belgrade and Viminacium encouraged Serbian experts to present our research to the world's scientific elite. Readers are presented with two volumes, with papers intended to show everyday life along the Limes and its hinterland. The excavations in Đerdap represent a

starting point in the study of fortifications, military infrastructure, road networks, but also all of the other aspects of life on the Roman border. Apart from studying the military and its strategy, civil engineering, crafts or arts, researchers have also investigated spiritual culture, Roman religion and cults, as well as the early Christianity of our region. During the last decades, there has been huge progress in the investigation of not only the military, but also the private aspect of life on the Roman border along the Danube valley. Anthropological and archeo-zoological research has revealed answers regarding the influence of historical circumstances on the social and health status of rural, urban and military populations, their paleo-demographic structure, economic relationships and diet, levels of health care, everyday crafts and habits and their relationship with children, but also a reconstruction of their funerary practices.

All of the research has been and will continue to be focused on one goal - understanding the unique nature of the Limes, what it was like to actually live on the borders of the Roman Empire. We hope that with this publication, we have made at least one significant step towards this goal.

## **STATE PROPAGANDA AND ART: MONUMENTS FROM THE SERBIAN SECTION OF THE LIMES REGION\***

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The best representatives of Roman Empire state propaganda are the structures built by the emperors, their portraits, coins issued in their names and works of applied art. In different historical periods, these monuments carried a different political message. The monuments of art from the Serbian section of the Limes and its hinterland clearly show that this region was of exceptional importance, not only for the defence of the Empire but also for the consolidation of the official imperial propaganda. The large number of porphyry sculptures found in the territory of present day Serbia reveals the importance of that territory from a strategic-propagandistic point of view. Despite being situated within palatial complexes, these sculptures were erected at exceptionally important strategic locations where the presence of the army and activities connected with its actions were clearly confirmed.*

**KEY WORDS: ROMAN ART, ROMAN STATE PROPAGANDA, PORTRAITS OF ROMAN EMPERORS, PORPHYRY SCULPTURES.**

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\*This article is the result of the project Romanisation, urbanisation and transformation of urban centres of civil, military and residential character in Roman provinces in the territory of Serbia (no 177007) founded by Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia.

The best representatives of Roman Empire state propaganda are the structures built by the emperors, their portraits, coins issued in their names and works of applied art. In different historical periods these monuments carried a different political message. Bearing in mind that the protection of the frontiers was always one of the priority tasks, the considerable number of monuments discovered in the centres along the Limes and in its hinterland were great artistic achievements but also played a significant part in the imperial propaganda. The monument which denotes Trajan's strategic preparations for the war against the Dacians on the Danube represents a distinctive work of art. Trajan renovated and widened the road along the Danube, the construction of which had started as early as the reign of Tiberius. The restoration or construction of the section through the Iron Gates is attested by the inscription known as the "Tabula Traiana", from AD 100. Placed on a rock above the Danube in the Lower Gorge and carved in the shape of a temple facade with a tympanum, it reveals a complex iconographic composition. Below the tympanum is a frieze with an eagle and winged genii. Below the tympanum is the inscription tablet shaped as a *tabula ansata* whose triangular ends are decorated with rosettes and behind them are the dolphins. The tablet with the inscription is supported by a nude male, a personification of the Danube, i.e. the river god (*fluvius*) Danubius (Fig.1).<sup>1</sup> The fact that Danubius is supporting the inscription plaque emphasises that the emperor is celebrating his successful war against the Dacians in the presence of the river god, who helped him to achieve the victories under the protection of Jupiter.

In his first war against the Dacians (AD 101-102), Trajan defeated the Dacian king Decebalus, but failed to capture his capital city, *Sarmisegetusa*, and conquer his kingdom. It was obvious to both sides that the peace that was concluded was only a short-lived armistice. Trajan used the lull between the first and second Dacian war to reinforce the Danube limes and prepare a new campaign. The most important of his architectural undertakings was the construction of a bridge across the Danube, connecting the fortress of *Pontes* in *Moesia Superior* and the fortress of *Drobeta* in *Dacia*. The basis of the bridge, engineered by the architect Apollodorus of Damascus, according to the depictions on Trajan's column in Rome and on the coins, consisted of 20 stone piers supporting the wooden superstructure. Part of one of those stone piers is visible today at Kostol, i.e. at the

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1 Hirschfeld 1874, 418; Petolescu 1986, 343-344.



Fig. 1 – *Tabula Traiana*, Iron Gates-Donja Klisura (documentation of the Institute of Archaeology Belgrade)

site of *Pontes*. The bridge was built to facilitate access to the Dacian territory. A bronze head of Trajan's father, found near the bridge pier in the Danube river in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, demonstrates the importance of the site of *Pontes* and the bridge itself. This monument, a powerful, robust, but also rounded-off sculpture, is representative of the veristic style of Trajanic portraiture (Fig. 2). The portrait, dated according to the stylistic characteristics to the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> and the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, is a superb work of art, hollow-cast, with traces of gilding, and is 29 cm high. It was formerly attributed to Trajan's biological father. However, it



Fig. 2 – Portrait of Trajan's father, bronze, Kostol - Pontes (documentation of the National Museum in Belgrade)

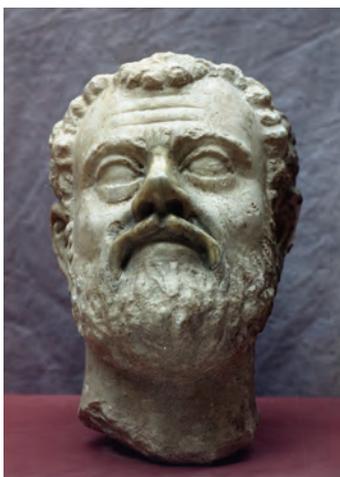


Fig. 3 – Portrait of Albinus, marble, Karataš - Diana (documentation of the National Museum in Belgrade)

could be part of the life-size statue of Trajan himself that was displayed on the upper section of the final arch of the bridge.<sup>2</sup>The turbulent situation in the Danube Limes involved the restoration of existing forts and the construction of new ones along the Danube. In the urban centres near the military camps the works of the state propaganda were erected to extol the Roman values in a situation when the protection of the territory from the barbarian penetrations was a very important goal. Marble and bronze heads of the emperors are the testimony that imperial statues were important parts of residential structures. A marble head, identified as a representation of Emperor Albinus (193-217 AD), was found in the military camp of *Diana* (Karataš).<sup>3</sup> This part of the monumental sculpture was modelled in an art style characteristic of the time of the late Antonines (Fig. 3). A fine bronze head of Emperor Macrinus, found in Boleč (*Mons Aureus*) near Belgrade, reveals very clearly the tendencies of late Severan art. Its short hair and thick long beard are treated in a very fine, graphic way (Fig. 4).<sup>4</sup> This is a fine portrait of the emperor who ruled only one year (217 AD). A marble head of a larger than life size statue represents a strong and determined middle-aged man who is looking into the distance with wide open eyes (Fig. 5). According to analogies from the numismatic material, this head is identified as a representation of the emperor Carus (282-283 AD). The other reason for such an interpretation is the finding place of the head. It was found at *Margum* (Dubravica), a military camp and urban centre on the banks of the Mlava river, in the region where Diocletian defeated the usurper Carinus, the son of Carus.

Portraits of Trajan, or his father, of Albinus, Macrinus and Carus, found in the centres situated in the Serbian part of the Danubian Limes, had been made in the traditional style of the contemporary Roman art. However, since the age of Diocletian and the establishment of the Tetrarchy (293 AD), imperial portraits experienced a radical change in style. Sculptures of emperors became frontal, carved from a single block, with cubic heads without any individual features, but with big, wide open eyes, bordered by heavy eyelids. The dominant eyes with the graphically modelled corneas and the drilled pupils suggest gazing far into the distance, while the face lacks any expression. This form of imperial portrait in

2 Popović 1987, 176, cat. 104; Ratković 2007, 238-239, cat. 2007; Ratković 2015 2015, 113-117.

3 Rankov 1987, 209, cat. 170.

4 Kondić 1972, 51-59, Fig. 1-10; Popović 1987, 209-210, cat. 171; Popović 2013, 288, cat. 18.

plastic art and on coins was supposed to express the new idea regarding the power of the ruling collegium, and also the new moral values. New imperial portraits were intended to represent the political morality of tetrarchs, i.e. they were the physiognomic expression of the need for order, discipline, moral values and ruling in accordance with the Roman tradition. Red porphyry, the hardest stone on Earth, was the ideal material for the manifestation of the new ideology. Porphyry sculptures reflect the imperial idea of that time in the most radical and most consistent way; they are the proof of the legalising of a new wish to send a clear and powerful message to the whole Empire regarding the virtues of the collegium of four rulers and about their unity.<sup>5</sup> This was achieved by using imperial figures deprived of any individual facial characteristics that were emanating the idea of the equality and similarity (*similitudo*) of the Augusti, who were brothers (*fratres*), and of the Caesars, who were their sons (*fili Augustorum*).<sup>6</sup> At the same time, these figures were supposed to symbolise the concord of the emperors (*concordia*), and the legality of the four rulers.

However, while the statues of emperors in the time before the Tetrarchy had been erected in the military camps along the Danube and in nearby civil settlements, the porphyry sculptures from the time of the Tetrarchy, judging by the finds discovered so far, were not erected in the military centres on the Limes but in the imperial palaces situated in the hinterland, i.e. in the north-eastern part of modern Serbia (*Felix Romuliana* – Gamzigrad; Šarkamen) or in the Pannonian section of the Limes (*Sirmium*) (Fig. 23). An exception is a fragmented porphyry head allegedly found in Tekija (*Transdierna*), which is nowadays in a private collection (Fig. 6). Considering the lack of data about the circumstances of its discovery and the exact finding place of this head, the question is being asked whether it was really found in Tekija, where it could have arrived during transportation from Egypt across the Mediterranean Sea, the Black Sea and further, along the Danube, or it was found in some other place nearby, as a part of some other sculpture, maybe the one from Šarkamen.<sup>7</sup> The head represents a very good example of the ‘hard style’ of tetrarchic art. The wide open eyes with heavy eyelids are dominating, and the deep horizontal wrinkles on the forehead give the face a

<sup>5</sup> Smith 1997, 183.

<sup>6</sup> Laubscher, 2000, 217.

<sup>7</sup> Popović 2017, 88-89.

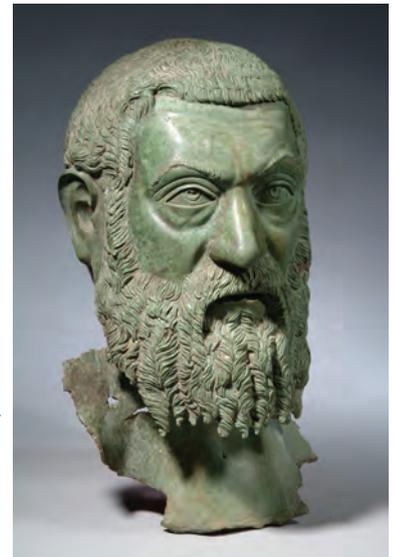


Fig. 4 – Portrait of Macrinus, bronze, Boleč, *Mons Aureus* (documentation of the City Museum Belgrade)



Fig. 5 – Portrait of Carus, marble, Dubravica - *Margum* (documentation of the National Museum, Požarevac)



Fig. 6 –Portrait of a tetrarch, fragmented, porphyry, Tekija-Transdierna (private collection)



Fig. 7 –Portrait of Galerius, porphyry, Gamzigrad – Felix Romuliana (documentation of the National Museum, Zaječar)

severe and serious expression, indicating rage and threat. These stylistic characteristics connect the head from Tekija with the bust from *Athribis* in Egypt, which is identified in literature as a representation of Galerius, Diocletian, Licinius or Maximinus Daia.<sup>8</sup> There are also similar dilemmas regarding the identification of the head from Tekija, defined as the head of Licinius,<sup>9</sup> i.e. of Galerius or Licinius.<sup>10</sup>

Porphyry sculptures discovered in the imperial palaces belong to different types of figural compositions and have been discovered in different archaeological contexts.<sup>11</sup> A large number of partially preserved sculptures come from Galerius' fortified palace of *Felix Romuliana*, which is, according to its architectural decoration, a distinctive monument of the tetrarchic ideology.<sup>12</sup> Without doubt, the most important is the portrait of the emperor Galerius (293-311) (Fig. 7). Galerius' portrait, although showing the main characteristics of a tetrarchic portrait, horizontal wrinkles on the forehead and wide open eyes, gazing far into the distance, is characterised by softened and drooping facial features; it might be even said by its certain individuality. However, what distinguishes it most from other tetrarchic portraits is the insignia on his head. It is a combination of the triumphal crown (*corona triumphalis*) and the crown of imperial priests. On the crown, medallions designed for precious stones, symbols of a triumphal crown, alternate with busts of the tetrarchs, i.e. of the gods whose earthly representatives they are. Diocletian is represented as Jupiter, Maximianus Herculus as Heracles, to the left of Diocletian is Constantius Chlorus in a paludamentum, and to the left of Maximianus Herculus is Galerius in scale-armour (Fig. 8).<sup>13</sup> A crown with the busts of gods could only be worn by imperial priest, so this insignia defines Galerius as the supreme priest in the service of his divine family. This insignia also has a triumphal character, defined by the jewels in it and by the fact that Victoria is crowning the emperor with it. Only the fingers of the right hand of this goddess are preserved on the crown and fragmented parts of the body probably also belong to her: a wing, right hand and right foot (Fig. 9 a-b).

8 Kiss 1984, 95-97.

9 Sreјović 1959, 253-263.

10 Sydow 1969, 143; Bergmann 1977, 158, 166, 166-167; Kiss 1984, 96.

11 Popović 2017, 47-53; 72-74; 82-86.

12 Popović 2017, 67-73 (with quoted literature).

13 Sreјović 1994a, 47; Sreјović 1994b 151.

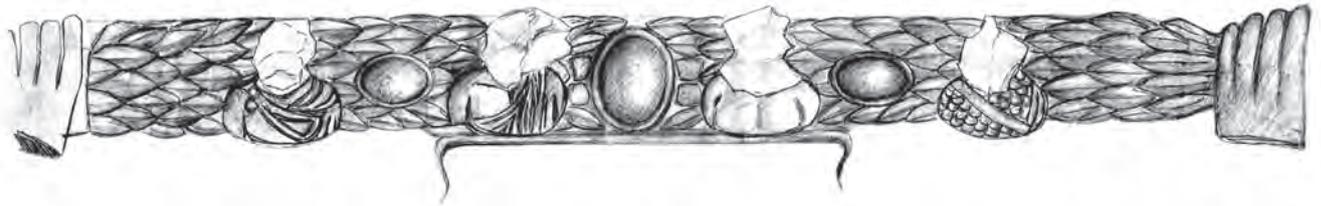


Fig. 8 - Insignia on the  
Galerius head,  
Gamzigrad -Felix  
Romuliana  
(drawing A. Premk)

The height of Galerius' head (34 cm) shows that the emperor's statue was of a larger than life size, i.e., if the sculpture was standing, the height would have been around 2.5 m. It is supposed on the basis of the corresponding dimensions that, besides the head, a porphyry hand of the left arm, in which there is the earthly globe, also belongs to that sculpture, (Fig. 10), so the colossal figure would represent Galerius as the cosmocrator. This is an iconographic solution that we also encounter on the representation of Diocletian in the temple of Amon, in Luxor,<sup>14</sup> and, later, in the representations of Constantine the Great, on coins<sup>15</sup> and on the colossal bronze statue from the Capitoline Museum.<sup>16</sup> According to the female hand on the wreath on Galerius' head, this emperor-cosmocrator is being crowned by Victoria. We could partly reconstruct the appearance of Galerius' statue on the basis of the description of one, regrettably destroyed, work of art. Namely, from the written sources we learn that a bronze statue of such an iconographic design was erected in honour of Galerius in the vestibulum of the palace in Antioch.<sup>17</sup> Although there is an opinion that this sculpture was made after AD 305, based on the supposition that only Augusti, and not Caesares, were allowed to be represented as cosmocrators,<sup>18</sup> we think that it was erected on the occasion of Galerius' victory over the Persian emperor Narses, at the end of 297, when, after the conquest of Armenia and the incursion into Mesopotamia, Diocletian

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14 La Rocca, 2000, 19, fig. 15; Del Bufalo 2012, 77, fig. 97.

15 Lo Cascio, 2000, 338, fig 1.

16 Ensoli, 2000, 71-81; Presicce, 2005, 139-155, fig. 12-13.

17 *Amm. Marc.*, XXV, 10, 13.

18 Seston, 1946, 182, note 4. But, the earthly globe can be also observed as a symbol of cosmic power of all the tetrarchs. After the opinion recently set forth, Galerius is wearing its image on his armor, in the scene of sacrifice on the frieze B I 17 from the triumphal arch in Thessalonica (Dušanić 1995, 85), which, in its turn, confirms that this symbol was in the artistic representations being connected with him when he was still Caesar.

Fig. 9 - Parts of Victoria's figure: a) wing; b) right arm, right foot (documentation of the National Museum, Zaječar)

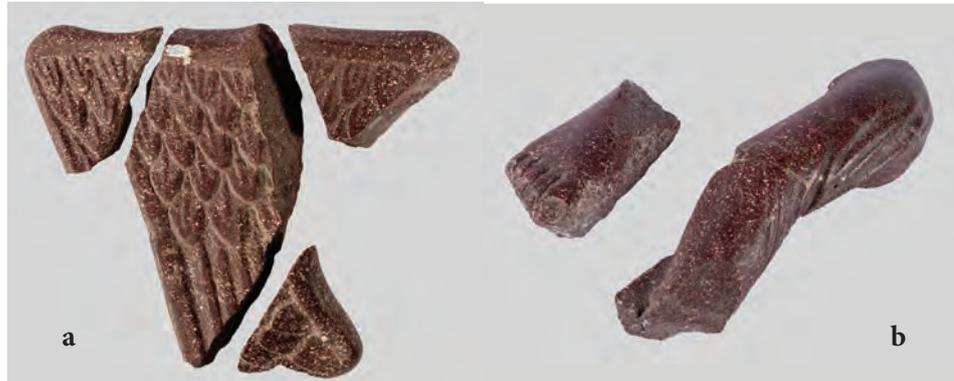


Fig. 10 - Left hand with globe, porphyry, Gamzigrad -*Felix Romuliana* (documentation of the National Museum, Zaječar)



organised for himself a triumphal welcome in Antioch.<sup>19</sup> It is possible that Galerius, inspired by that statue from Antioch, commissioned a porphyry sculpture, intending to place it in *Romuliana*, the place of his birth and in the future imperial complex where he intended to retire after the celebration of his *vicennalia*. However, that statue represents him not only as a cosmocrator and triumphator, but, according to the wreath on his head, also as the highest priest. Answers to the questions of when and on which occasion the statue conveying this complex message was erected, have to be sought in the analysis of the historical circumstances, and also of the ideological – propagandistic aspects of power at the time of the First Tetrarchy. Such an iconographic pattern could have been the result of Galerius' triumph over the Persians in 297 and of the impression that the luxury of Oriental courts and customs had on him, so it is not impossible that the statue was placed in Gamzigrad in the following year, i.e. in 298,<sup>20</sup> although the reason for that act could also have been the celebration of the triumph of the tetrarchs in Rome in 303.<sup>21</sup> However, there is an opinion that the sculpture of Galerius from Gamzigrad was part of a composition representing Victoria crowning two Augusti, a scene whose iconography is known from the coins minted in 293 in Cyzicus and Antioch,<sup>22</sup> and also from the pilaster on the eastern gate of the later fortress in Romuliana.<sup>23</sup> According to this theory, the porphyry group consisting of two Augusti and Victoria was erected in the period between 306 and 311, and represents Galerius to the right, and Severus or Licinius to the left of Victoria.<sup>24</sup> On the basis of the dimensions of the foot, which we assume belongs to Victoria, the height of her figure would be around 80 cm, which would fit into the dimensions of the supposed composition with the imperial figure of about 250 cm that she is crowning (Fig. 11). However, as only the wing, right foot and part of the right arm of Victoria's figure are preserved with the hand holding the back segment of the crown on Galerius' head, the position of her left arm could not be determined with any certainty, all the more so because the remains of another wreath and/

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19 Eutrop., IX, 25.

20 Popović 2007, 291.

21 Srejšović 1994a, 47; Srejšović 1994b, 152.

22 RIC V.2, 251, no 292; 290, no 601 (Cyzicus); 254, no 313, 291, no 615, 616 (Antioch).

23 Srejšović 1994b, 146, fig. 8-9; Laubscher 2000, 247, Abb. 25-26.

24 Laubscher 2000, 242-250.

Fig. 11 - Possible view of  
the scene Victoria crowning  
Galerius and Severus  
or Licinius (drawing B.  
Popović)



or of an imperial head with it have not yet been found. If this is a composition depicting two emperors being crowned by Victoria, which was erected in 298 or 303, then to the right of the goddess would have been a sculpture of Diocletian, while Galerius would have been to the left of the goddess. Although we find the second solution more probable, considering the symbolism of the insignia as a combination of the triumphal crown and the crown of the imperial priests – most often represented among finds from Asia Minor, and the circumstance that the triumph of Diocletian and Galerius over Narses was celebrated in Antioch, the fact that Victoria is holding the crown on Galerius' head in her right hand, does not speak in favour of such a solution.

The fortified palace and the memorial complex in Šarkamen, at the site of Vrelo, can, most probably, be linked with Maximinus Daia, Galerius' nephew, who wished to build a residential and sacral complex in this place like the one in *Romuliana*.<sup>25</sup> Fragments of a porphyry figural composition have been found at this site on a few occasions. The sculpture could be relatively well reconstructed (Fig. 13), because parts of the pedestal, parts of lateral sides of the throne, and parts of the body of the sitting figure were found (Fig. 12 a-g).<sup>26</sup> It has become clear that these are parts of a sculpture of the *Emperor on the throne* type and also to the same type belongs the sculpture from Alexandria that was allegedly representing Diocletian.<sup>27</sup> The lateral sides of the throne of both sculptures were decorated with the ellipsoid and rectangular fields, modelled in relief, imitations of sockets for gems and cameos. This system of decoration, enriched with the addition of rhomboid sockets, also appears on the edges of the cloak of the Šarkamen sculpture. Similar motifs also appear on other similar tetrarchical monuments, such as a fragmented belt (?) from *Sirmium*<sup>28</sup>.

Finds of porphyry sculptures from *Sirmium* shed new light on the ideological-propagandistic system of the age of the Tetrarchy. In the course of archaeological excavations of the northern section (on site 85) of the palatial complex in *Sirmium* that started in 2002, fragments of porphyry were sporadically registered in 2004 and 2005, making it entirely clear, with the find of a fragment of a skull

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25 Popović 2017, 80-83 (with quoted literature).

26 Јанковић 1981, 88-92, сл. 4.

27 Delbrueck 1932, 96-98, Taf. 40-41; Del Bufalo 2012, no S 42.

28 Popović 2016, 380, cat. 8; Popović 2017, 126, cat. 8.

Fig. 12 - Sculpture of the type Emperor on the throne, fragmented, porphyry, Šarkamen: a-d) parts of the left lateral side of the throne – back leg and lateral surface; e) part of the sculpture next to the left ankle consisting of a pedestal for the feet and of the cloak edge; f) left foot of the figure; g) part of the shoulder in a cloak (documentation of the Museum of Krajna, Negotin)





Fig. 12 - Sculpture of the type Emperor on the throne, fragmented, porphyry, Šarkamen: a-d) parts of the left lateral side of the throne – back leg and lateral surface; e) part of the sculpture next to the left ankle consisting of a pedestal for the feet and of the cloak edge; f) left foot of the figure; g) part of the shoulder in a cloak (documentation of the Museum of Krajna, Negotin)

with an auricle in 2012, that a porphyry sculpture or a figural composition is in question. The exceptional finds of the head and the bust on a globe, registered in 2014, have confirmed that a complex porphyry composition is in question. The porphyry fragments were found around an octagonal structure, the marble bases of four columns of which were also registered (Fig. 14). After the conservation of 50 porphyry fragments, it was concluded that there are parts of three heads, one bust on a globe and another bust, probably identical but fragmented, fragments of sculpture and of the architectural composition. Two fragmented heads were imperial portraits (Figs. 15, 16) and one belongs to an Egyptian priest (Fig. 17). The analysis of the fragments of porphyry sculptures from *Sirmium* has confirmed that they were made in different periods, representing at least two archaeological horizons. The first one is related to the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> – the first years of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, i.e. to the rule of Diocletian and his Caesar Galerius (fragmented head of the emperor, Fig. 15), while the other one, from the middle of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, belongs to the reign of Constantius II (fragmented head with a diadem in the hair, Fig. 16). It is difficult to draw a conclusion as to when the head of the Egyptian priest (Fig. 17) was made. The most interesting sculptures in this find are the busts of emperors on a globe. A preserved bust of an emperor on a globe (Fig. 18) was placed on an ellipsoid pedestal with a protrusion for fixing the globe to it, which was fitted into a square opening at the base of the globe. The bust is depicted in armour, with a cloak thrown over it, folded around the neck and clasped with a fibula on the right shoulder. Only one bulb of the fibula is preserved. We can draw the conclusion, based on this, that it belongs to the early variant of bulbous fibulae with a poorly developed bulb, of the type Keller 1 / Pröttel 1 A, dated to the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup>

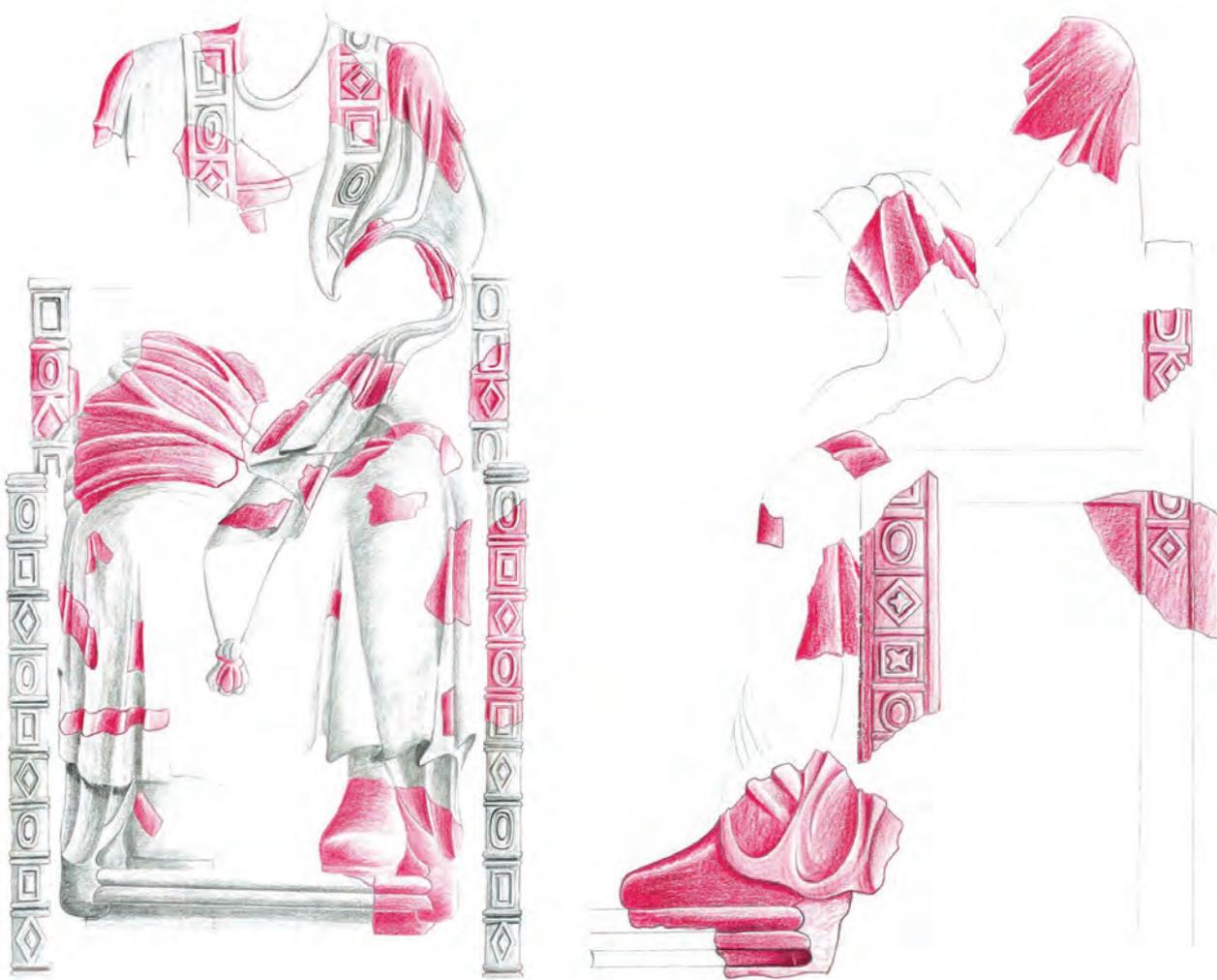


Fig. 13 - Reconstruction of view of the statue of the type Emperor on the throne, Šarkamen (drawing by A. Kapuran)

– the very beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>29</sup> Of great importance for the chronological determination of the busts and for their possible identification could be the representation on the single preserved medallion on pilaster A (Fig. 19), the architectural ornament of the eastern gate of the later fortress in Gamzigrad (*Romuliana*), depicted in the form of a military standard (*signum*). In three out of five round medallions which create this military standard there are two busts in each: of two

<sup>29</sup> Keller 1971, 32-35, fig. 11; Pröttel 1991, 349-353, Fig. 1 A.

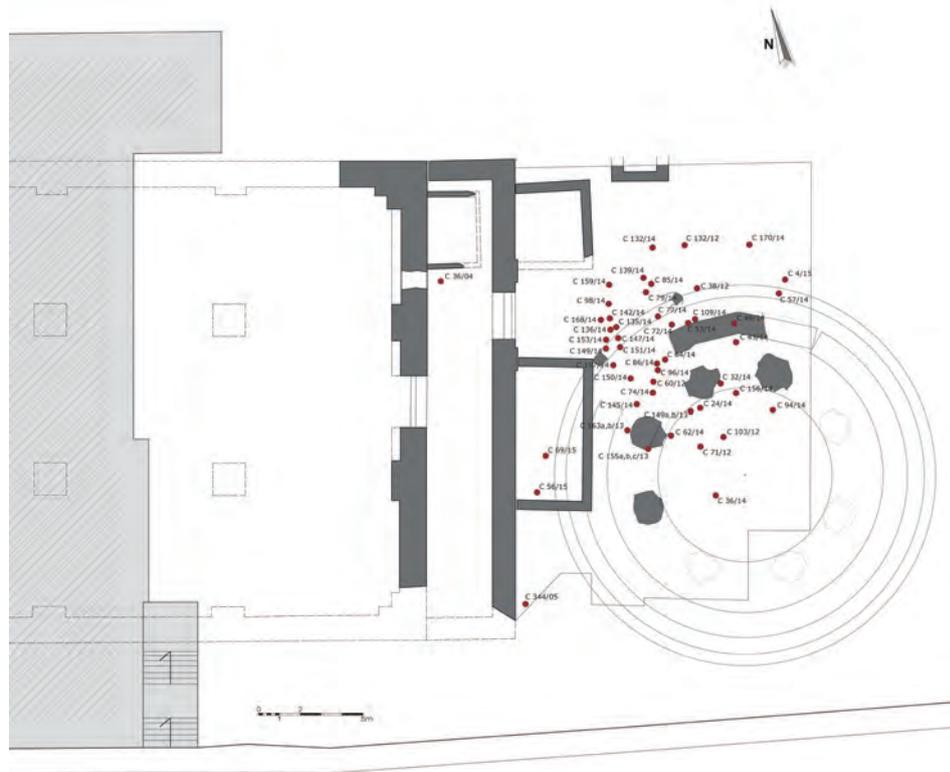


Fig. 14 - Octagonal building and finds of porphyry fragments, Sremska Mitrovica-Sirmium, northern part of palatial complex (plan by B. Popović)

Augusti – Galerius and Constantius Chlorus, two Caesares – Severus and Maximianus Daia, and of two older Augusti – Diocletian and Maximianus Herculus. They withdrew from their positions in 305 but they had the title *seniores Augusti*. This dates the erection of the pilasters in Gamzigrad to the period between their abdication on the Calendae of May 305 and the death of Constantius Chlorus in July 306. Their busts, represented in the lower medallion of this pilaster, were placed on a globe, bearing witness to the fact that even the porphyry busts depicted in such a way had a strong dynastic message. The imperial bust on a globe from Sirmium is from the same period or from a somewhat earlier time, when Diocletian and Maximianus Herculus were the ruling Augusti (293-305).<sup>30</sup>

Production of porphyry sculptures was in decline after the collapse of the second Tetrarchy. But herms with the figures of Constantine and Licinius (Fig. 20) could have been placed before July 25<sup>th</sup> of the 315, in Constantine's native city,

<sup>30</sup> Popović 2016, 371-390; Popović 2017, 49-67.



Fig. 15 - Head of a tetrarch, fragmented, porphyry, Sremska Mitrovica-Sirmium, northern part of palatial complex (documentation of the Institute of Archaeology Belgrade)



Fig. 16 - Head of an emperor (Constantius II?), fragmented, porphyry, Sremska Mitrovica-Sirmium, northern part of palatial complex (documentation of the Institute of Archaeology Belgrade)



Fig. 17 - Head of an Egyptian priest, restored, porphyry, Sremska Mitrovica-Sirmium, northern part of palatial complex (documentation of the Institute of Archaeology Belgrade)

*Naissus*, which was in Licinius' part of the Empire. This monument was intended to glorify the idea of the rule of these two emperors, i.e. of the Diarchy, and, at the same time, it would also mark Constantine's *decennalia*.<sup>31</sup>

During Constantine's autonomous rule, a bronze sculpture of him was erected in *Naissus* and the head of that sculpture is regarded as one of the masterpieces of the Late Roman art (Fig. 21). This bronze portrait depicts a young, energetic man crowned with an imperial diadem (*corona gemata*), the image of an emperor in triumph. The life-size portrait of an unpretentious man with open and expressive features reveals military strength, wisdom, power and invincibility, but it also conveys a reticence, which demands respect, as well as displaying the image of a visionary. The imperial diadem determines the time when the portrait was made to the period between the years 324 and 330, according to analogies on coins from the eastern mints. The portrait defines the image of an emperor of a new world monarchy.<sup>32</sup>

Conflicts with barbarians on the Danube Limes did not stop, even during Constantine's reign. Evidence of that is the magnificent cameo made of multi-layered onyx found in the village of Kusadak, near Mladenovac, around 55 kilometres to the southeast of the modern city of Belgrade, i.e. in the Limes region (Fig. 22). The dominant scene on the Kusadak cameo is the figure of a horseman in triumph that, by its pathos based on the expressionism of the Hellenistic epoch, clearly resembles the image of the heroic king Alexander the Great on the large mosaic from Casa del Fauno in Pompeii.<sup>33</sup> The analysis of the representation on the Kusadak cameo reveals that all the iconographic motifs of the relief – the emperor with a diadem as Alexander, the emperor on horseback as Sol-Helios-Alexander, the emperor as an equestrian, warrior-like Trajan i.e. Alexander, the enslaved barbarians under the horse's hooves, and the barbarians with hands tied behind their back – had been used on various monuments of Constantine's epoch, although carried over from earlier epochs. They are not mere decorative elements, but have a strong political – propagandistic message. Scenes from the civil war against Licinius in 324 were not depicted on the cameo, but there were scenes from battles with barbarians, probably Goths and Sarmatians, in which Constantine triumphed in 322 and 323,

31 Vasić 2001, 245-251.

32 Delbrück 1912, 121; L'Orange 1933, 64; Weitzman 1979, 16-18, cat. 10; Kondić 2013, 300, cat. 47. Cvjetičanin 2017, 198-201.

33 Weitzman 1979, 83, cat. 71; Kondić 2013, 301, cat. 46; Cvjetičanin 2017, 202-203.



Fig. 18 - Bust of an emperor on a globe with a pedestal, porphyry, Sremska Mitrovica-Sirmium, northern part of palatial complex (documentation of the Institute of Archaeology Belgrade)

obviously in accordance with the idea of an emperor as the protector of the state from enemies.<sup>34</sup>

A short survey of monuments of art from the Serbian section of the Limes and its hinterland clearly shows that this region was of exceptional importance, not only for the defence of the Empire but also for the consolidation of the official imperial propaganda. These ideas were demonstrated in various ways in different time periods. Imperial portraits from the time before the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century discovered so far had been located in the military camps and civil settlements next

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<sup>34</sup> Popović 2005, 435-446.



Fig. 19 - Representation on a medallion on pilaster A: Diocletian and Maximianus Herculius as seniores augustii, Gamzigrad - *Felix Romuliana* (documentation of the Institute of Archaeology Belgrade)



Fig. 20 - Portrait of a diarch, porphyry, Niš – *Naissus* (documentation of the National Museum Niš)

to the camps. The situation changed after Diocletian established a new ideological and political system – the Tetrarchy. Despite the fact that this emperor built a series of fortifications along the right bank of the Danube in the Pannonian section of the Limes and also visited garrisons situated in the lower Danube valley,<sup>35</sup> imperial sculptures and busts made of porphyry are missing in the military camps and they were erected within the imperial palaces (Fig. 23). This was in accordance with the state policy of the tetrarchic period. The large number of porphyry sculptures found in the territory of present day Serbia reveals the importance of the territory from a strategic-propagandistic point of view. Nevertheless, despite being situated within palatial complexes, these sculptures were erected at exceptionally important strategic locations. *Sirmium* was a military base and from there Diocletian and his Caesar Galerius waged wars against the barbarians.<sup>36</sup> The military presence at *Romuliana* was confirmed at the very end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and, after that, at the end of 4<sup>th</sup> century by the finds from graves outside the fortified palace,<sup>37</sup> while many military units (*cohortes I Cretum; I Aurelia Dardanorum*) were stationed in *Naissus* and there was also a workshop for the production of weaponry and military equipment.<sup>38</sup> The presence of the army and the activities connected with its actions resulted in economic progress and this was the basis for the development of artisan activities and, consequently, for the creation of the works of art of political and propagandistic character.

*Translated by Aleksandar Popović*

35 Seston 1946, 297.

36 Popović 2017, 33-35.

37 Petković 2009, 251-275; Popović 2010, 317- 326.

38 Vasić 2013, 91-93.



Fig. 21 – Portrait of Constantine the Great, bronze, Niš-*Naissus* (documentation of the National Museum in Belgrade)



Fig. 22 – Cameo from Kusadak, multi-coloured sardonyx (documentation of the National Museum in Belgrade)



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## **THE SLINGS AND ARROWS OF OUTRAGEOUS FORTUNE: LONG-RANGE FIGHTING UNITS ON THE ROMAN LIMES IN SERBIA\***

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The paper is dedicated to the problem of the presence and distribution of Roman archers and slingers in this part of the Roman Empire. The engagement of units specialised in archery are confirmed by written sources, epigraphic data and archaeological military equipment. The mention of Roman archers can be found, however rarely, mostly in later texts describing historical events in the Balkans during the turbulent late Roman period, but epigraphy, military diplomas in the first place, shed further light on the distribution on Roman archery during the Principate. On the other hand, slingers do not occur at all in sources, but the slingshots from Serbia are exceptional proof of their employment in this part of the Roman Empire. A remarkable number of clay and lead slingshots have been recovered during archaeological excavations, primarily from the Iron Gate fortifications situated at strategically important sites, but also from fortresses built for the control and protection of silver and lead mines.*

**KEYWORDS: ARCHERS, SLINGERS, AUXILIARY UNITS, ROMAN LIMES, SERBIA.**

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Fighting with long-range weapons was widespread in the armies of Antiquity and represented a tactical necessity whose neglect would most often result in heavy losses and defeat on the battlefield. Despite the traditionally negative attitude towards weapons that kill enemies from a distance, imperceptibly, suddenly and without any direct confrontation, the use of archers and slingers as primary long-range fighting forces would be adopted very early in the Roman army as well.<sup>2</sup> In this paper we will try to emphasise the presence, role and significance of these units of the Roman army on the Danube Limes in Serbia.

The available sources for the study of Roman archer and slinger units usually includes research from several different sources: representational monuments, written sources, epigraphy and archaeological finds of weapons and military equipment. Otherwise rare visual representations of archers and slingers and their weapons practically never occur among the archaeological findings that are treasured in Serbia.

## **ARCHERS (SAGITTARII)**

The first one (Fig. 1) of just two representations of archery weapons we would like to focus on in this matter actually does not originate from Serbia at all, but from the coastal regions of modern Albania - ancient *Durrachium* (Durrës).<sup>3</sup> The only reason why we refer to it is the fact that the skills and weaponry of gladiators and Roman soldiers often mutually influenced and developed one another. This is also one of the earliest presentations of the composite bow in the Balkans. It is depicted on one of the two stone slabs presently held in Belgrade, with reliefs showing gladiatorial fights in an arena. Purchased for the National Museum in Belgrade at the beginning of the last century, they are dated to the Augustian era and, similarly to the remarkable findings from Fiano Romano<sup>4</sup>, originally most likely adorned the tomb of some wealthy Roman or the amphitheatre in *Dyr-rachium*.

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2 Coulston 1985, 282-286.

3 Louis 1940, 358; Грбић 1958, 33.

4 [http://www.archeologia.beniculturali.it/index.php?it/142/scavi/scaviarcheologici\\_4e048966c-fa3a/135](http://www.archeologia.beniculturali.it/index.php?it/142/scavi/scaviarcheologici_4e048966c-fa3a/135) (04.06.2018); <http://etruriameridionale.beniculturali.it/index.php?it/271/fiano-romano> (04.06.2018).



The second, and considerably later, find (Fig. 2) represents a mere sketch of a bow and arrow incised on a 6<sup>th</sup> century bone plate from the Iron Gates fortress of *Diana*, at Karataš.<sup>5</sup> The bow is actually a part of a definitely non-Roman calendar scene with several, presumably, shamanic symbols given in a single row.<sup>6</sup>

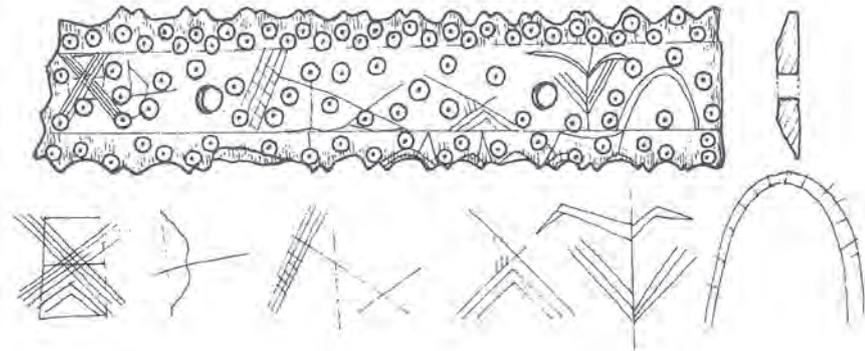
Fig. 1. Stone slab with gladiator, Durrës (*Dirrachium*), National Museum, Belgrade (after Grbić 1958)

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5 Petković 1995, 38, T. XXIII/4.

6 Petković 1995, 38.

Fig. 2. Bone plate with carvings, Karataš (*Diana*) (after Petković 1995)



### **Written Sources**

Ancient writers are also virtually silent when it comes to descriptions of this type of Roman auxilia on the Middle Danube Limes. While the slingers - *fundatores* are not mentioned at all, the mention of Roman archers can be found, however rarely, mostly in later texts describing historical events in the Balkans during the turbulent late Roman period. The reason for this is not that those units were not used in the Roman army during the conquest of the Sava and Danube valleys in the late republican and early imperial period, but the fact that the descriptions of available historical texts (Dio Cassius, Velleius Paterculus) are, at least when speaking about the territory of modern Serbia, often generalised and without much detail.

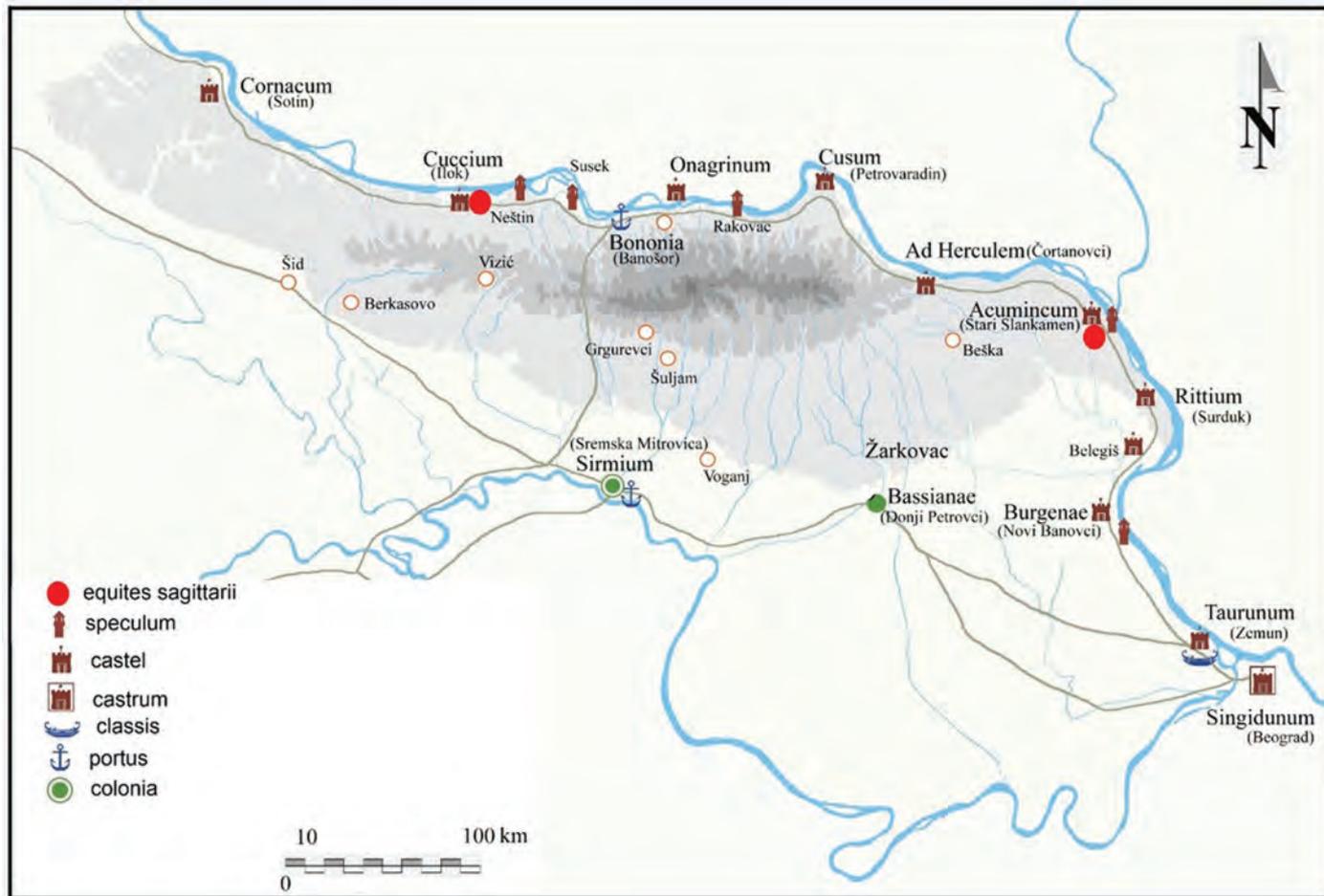
Among these Ammianus Marcellinus stands out, in which a well informed professional soldier gives a detailed description mentioning one cohort of mounted archers that Julian the Apostate found in Sirmium during his sudden campaign against Constantius II along the Danube to the southeast in 361 AD.

*Under the pretence of urgent necessity, but in reality because he still suspected their fidelity to him, he had sent into Gaul two legions belonging to the army of Constantius, with a troop of archers which he had found at Sirmium.*<sup>7</sup>

The presence of the archers on the Danube Limes in the late Roman period is also confirmed by Notitia Dignitatum (Map 1). The lists of units in the western part of the Empire mention troops of mounted archers (*equites sagittarii*) in *Cucium* (Ilok in Croatia) and *Acumincum* (Slankamen in Serbia)<sup>8</sup>. The list of units

<sup>7</sup> Amm. Marc. XXI, 9, 2.

<sup>8</sup> Not. Dig. XXXII, 7, 26, 16, 36.



Map 1. Roman limes in Serbia, Pannonia Inferior

deployed in the east (under the command of *Dux Moesia Prima*) for a section of the Roman frontier also states garrisons of cavalry archers (*cuneus equitum sagittariorum*) in two forts: *Tricornium* (Ritopek) and *Lederata* (Ram).<sup>9</sup>

### *Epigraphy*

Epigraphic monuments shed further light on the distribution of Roman archers in this part of the empire. One gravestone from *Sirmium* (modern Sremska Mitrovica) was erected in the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century by the prefectus *Iovius*

<sup>9</sup> Not. Dig. XLI 14, 17.

*Tusculanus*, the military commander of the Syrian *Ala I Augusta Ituraeorum Sagittariorum* stationed on the Lower Pannonian Limes in the fort of *Rittium* at modern Surduk, on the Danube.<sup>10</sup> Bricks stamped ADS also originate from Sirmium. This can be interpreted as an abbreviation for *Ala Dalmatarum Sagittariorum* (if not *Ala Decima Sirmiensis*).<sup>11</sup> Bricks with this stamp were also found in *Cornacum* (modern Sotin in Croatia).<sup>12</sup>

According to epigraphic sources, one more such unit might also have been temporarily stationed somewhere in the area of the south-eastern part of Lower Pannonia. Military diplomas and the other inscriptions indicate that *Ala I Thracum veterana (sagittaria)* was located in Lower Pannonia from ca. 118/119 to the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century.<sup>13</sup> The history of this unit is well documented. On the basis of epigraphic sources, it came from the East to Pannonia Superior, probably between 112-116, then transferred to Pannonia Inferior by 118/119 AD, where it remained at least until 251.<sup>14</sup> Its camp was in *Campona* near *Aquincum*, but it could have been temporarily stationed somewhere in the south-eastern part of Lower Pannonia during its participation in the reconstruction of the road from *Aquincum* to *Sirmium*.<sup>15</sup>

Besides the two legions that were permanently stationed in *Moesia Superior* (Map 2), a certain number of auxiliary units were also garrisoned in its territory. *Sagittari* were indispensable components of the Roman armed forces in the frontier zones and evidence of their early presence can be found in written sources. Accordingly, special attention should be given to *Tacitus*' description of operations during the *Thracian War* (AD 26) and his mention of *delectos sagittariorum*.<sup>16</sup>

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10 Brunšmid, Kubitschek 1880, 124; CIL III 10222; Mirković 1971, 72, No. 37. This unit is listed in military diplomas of Pannonia Inferior: AE 1983, 0784; AE 1983, 0788; AE 1983, 0787b; AE 1983, 0787a; AE 1983, 0787; AE 1947, 0037; AE 1944, 0102; AE 1999, 1316; Mirković 2008, 285-290; Roxan 1999, 249-273; Lörincz 1999, 173-175 etc. From the time of *Claudius* it was in *Arrabona*. Before *Trajan's Dacian Wars* it was settled in *Aquincum*, then transferred to the *Dacia* (CIL XVI 57), and finally moved back to Pannonia Inferior around 135 (CIL XVI 175), (Dušanić 1968, 99; Holder 2003, 107; Dautova-Ruševljan, Vujović 2006, 24).

11 Milošević 1971, 103.

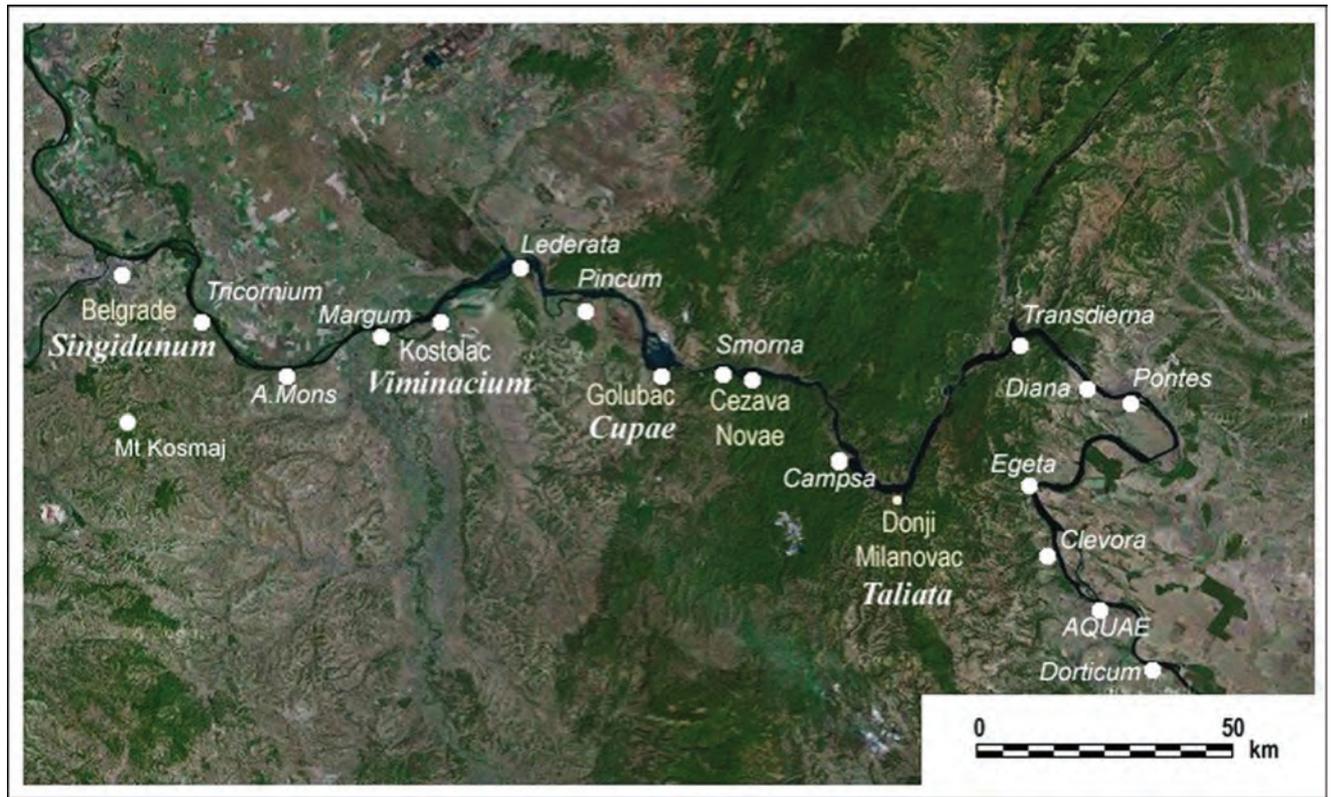
12 Ilkić 2005, 26.

13 Roxan 1999, 249-273; Mirković 2008, 285-290 = AE 2008, 1116; AE 1999, 1315; AE 2002, 1237, AE 2003, 1534 etc.

14 Roxan 1999, 249-273.

15 Spaul 1994, 224-225.

16 Tac. Ann. 4.47.



The earliest Moesian diploma is dated to 75 AD, but the first definite mention of *sagittari* is from the Antonine period. According to epigraphic sources, it seems that a certain number of auxiliary units stationed in Balkans were reformed in the Antonine period and complemented with large contingents of archers. On this occasion we will mention only those that were definitely part of the Moesian forces: *Cohors I Cilicum sagittariorum*; *Cohors I Cretum sagittariorum*; *Cohors II Flavia Commagenorum sagittariorum*; *Cohors I Antiochensium sagittariorum*.

The first mention of *Cohors I Cilicum* as a Moesian unit dates to 78 AD.<sup>17</sup> According to one inscription from Spain,<sup>18</sup> it might have been stationed in Moesia from the period of Claudius' reign.<sup>19</sup> Under the Flavians, the Cilician cohort was

Map 2. Roman limes in Serbia, *Moesia Superior*

<sup>17</sup> CIL XVI, 22= AE 1925, 0067. The full name of the cohort was *Cohors I Cilicum (equitata) sagittaria (milliaria)*. On its equitant status see: AE 1957, 193.

<sup>18</sup> Devijver 1982, 178.

<sup>19</sup> Wagner 1938, 119; Devijver 1982, 178.

probably stationed at Naissus, as indicated by the tombstone of a serving soldier which has been found there.<sup>20</sup> As an Upper Moesian unit it is listed on military diplomas from 93 to 100 and 115 AD.<sup>21</sup> The next mention is from Moesia Inferior, to where it was transferred during Hadrian's reign,<sup>22</sup> and from 145 it was determined as a *sagitta(rorum)*.<sup>23</sup>

By the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, the First Cohort of Cretans (*Cohors I Cretum*) may also have been garrisoned in Naissus. Its presence in Moesia is evidenced by epigraphic data, primarily military diplomas, but also with a great number of stamped bricks, which have been discovered along the Moesian Limes in Serbia.<sup>24</sup> It is suggested that this unit could have arrived in the pre-Flavian period, and was probably at first, i.e. before transferring to Dacia, garrisoned in Naissus. Still, this assumption should be taken with caution since the inscription from Naissus that mentions the *Cohors I Cretum* was erected by its veteran who might have left the place of service after an honourable discharge from the army.<sup>25</sup> By the end of Trajan's Dacian wars this cohort appears with the determinant *sagittariorum*.<sup>26</sup> On the basis of epigraphic data, it can be concluded that this unit was certainly in the province of Moesia Superior during Domitian's and at the beginning of Trajan's reign.<sup>27</sup> According to a military diploma from 110 AD, this unit, for a short time at least, had been garrisoned in Dacia, but soon after, certainly by the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, it was again in Moesia Superior.<sup>28</sup> It was probably stationed in Egeta during

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20 Wagner 1938, 119; Petrović 1979, 31, 83, no.33. CIL III, 8250

21 CIL XVI, 39 = AE 1897, 0108; Dušanić, Vasić 1977, 291-304, pl. 3-5 = AE 1977, 0722; CIL XVI, 46; AE 1998, 1616 = RMD 335; Eck, Pangerl 2005, 64, AE 2005, 1723. The unit might have been engaged in Trajan's Dacian Wars. The indication for this is the absence of military diplomas issued for Moesia Superior during that period (see: Benet 2011, 262).

22 The unit was transferred before 134 AD, see: CIL XVI, 78; Petrović 1979, 31.

23 RMD III, 165.

24 For military diplomas see: CIL XVI, 22; CIL XVI, 39; CIL XVI, 46; Dušanić, Vasić 1977, 291-304, pl. 3-5, etc. See also: AE 2011, 1118 (for more information see: Epigraphic database Heidelberg). Bricks with stamps of the *Cohors I Cretum* were found in *Drobeta* (Turnu Severin, Romania), *Vršac* (Banat, Serbia), *Lederata* (Ram, Serbia) and *Egeta* (Brza Palanka, Serbia), see: Wagner 1938, 127; Petrović 1979, 31; Petrović, Filipović 2015 etc.

25 Dušanić, Petrović 1963, 365= AE 1964, 0262; Petrović 1979, 31, 84, no. 034.

26 For ex. see: CIL XVI, 163= AE 1944, 0058.

27 AE 1977, 0722; AE 1897, 0108; AE 1912, 0128 etc.

28 According to a military diploma from 100 AD, the unit was still in Moesia Superior (CIL XVI,

the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. Besides the stamped bricks with the name of this unit, a dedication to *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) D(olicheni)*, made by the First Cohort of Cretans was discovered along with one inscription erected by its centurion.<sup>29</sup> According to one opinion, some detachments of *Cohors I Cretum*, might have been temporarily settled in Niševac (supposed ancient *Timacum Maius*), where a remarkable number of units' stamped bricks were recovered.<sup>30</sup>

During Domitian's reign, one more unit arrived and was only explicitly mentioned as a *sagittaria*<sup>31</sup> after the Dacian Wars. On the military diplomas from 96, 100, 101 and 103/105, *Cohors II Flavia Commagenorum* is recorded in Moesia Superior.<sup>32</sup> Within the troops of the newly-formed province of Dacia the unit was mentioned from 109 and 110.<sup>33</sup>

*Cohors I Antichensium* appears as a part of the Moesian troops on military diplomas from 75 AD.<sup>34</sup> It is listed on Upper Moesian diplomas from 93, 100 and 101<sup>35</sup> and constantly during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century.<sup>36</sup> With the determinant *sagittariorum*, it appears on diplomas from the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century.<sup>37</sup> As has been suggested, the camp of this unit could have been at the Iron Gate fort of *Novae* (modern Čezava).<sup>38</sup>

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46=AE 1912, 0128). As a Dacian unit it is mentioned in 110 AD on a diploma from *Porolissum* (CIL XVI, 163=AE 1944, 0058), than again as Moesian on diplomas from the time of Antoninus Pius (for ex. see: AE 1972, 0657; AE 1935, 0069= CIL XVI, 111).

29 Vučković-Todorović 1966, 176 =AE 1968, 0453; Mirković 1968, 115. For inscription of centurion from Egeta see: AE 1981, 0737.

30 Petrović, Filipović 2015.

31 For ex. see military diploma from Petrovac na Mlavi (AE 1991, 1331).

32 RMD I, 6; CIL XVI, 46; Eck, Pangerl 2008, 326-329, no.2, 338-345, no. 3-5, 329-337, RMD III, 143, CIL XVI 49 etc.

33 AE 1990, 860; CIL XVI, 163. For more information after transfer to Dacia see: Țentea 2012, 45-48 with cited literature.

34 AE 1980, 0788; Mirković 1968, 33.

35 CIL XVI, 39= AE 1897, 108; CIL XVI, 46=AE 1912, 128; Eck, Pangerl 2008, 338-345, no.3-5; Eck, Pangerl 2009, 562-566, no.18; RMD III, 143, Eck, Pangerl 2008, 329, 337.

36 112, 115, 132-133; 151, 157, 159, 160, 161 (Eck, Pangerl 2008, 355-363, no.8-9; Eck Pangerl 2005; 2008, 363-370, no.10; RMD IV 247; RMD V, 418, 419; AE 1998, 1315=Mirković 1999, 251, no. 4; CIL XVI, 111=AE 1935, 69; AE 1972, 0657).

37 AE 1972, 0657; AE 1999, 1315; AE 1998, 1617; AE 2008, 1712. Spaul (2000, 480-482) suggested that the unit was renamed the *Cohors I Hemesenorum*, after the Marcomanic Wars.

38 See ref. 57. According to one inscription from Drobeta (AE 1959, 309), dated to 103-105, it turns out that this unit probably participated in the construction of the fort at Drobeta (Țentea 2012, 38).

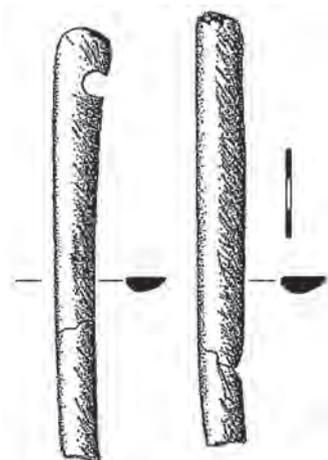


Fig. 3. Antler bow laths, Tekija (Transdierna) (after Cermanović, Jovanović 2004)

Fig. 4. Antler bow lath, Sremska Mitrovica (Sirmium)



The presence of mounted archers in the Late Roman period on the territory of then established province of Moesia Prima is confirmed by *Notitia Dignitatum*.<sup>39</sup> It seems to be worth mentioning one stamped brick from Viminacium with an inscription which can be interpreted as *Eq(uites) Sag(it)tari s(ub) c(ura) I[t]alici Br[--?]*.<sup>40</sup>

In addition to these units specialised in archery, it can be expected that soldiers in other troops also might have used a bow and an arrow, especially those stationed in the fortifications along the Danubian Limes, where the service of *sagittarii* was of great importance. This has been established by archaeological finds of archery equipment in several Roman forts that, up to now, have never had a confirmed garrison of *sagittarii*.<sup>41</sup>

Among the Roman weapons from the Iron Gates forts, antler bow laths from Tekija (Fig. 3) discovered within the early Roman fortification of *Transdierna* especially stand out (dated to 1<sup>st</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries).<sup>42</sup> They represent the earliest dated Roman composite bow laths in Serbia, representing the early presence of archers among Roman troops in the Iron Gates. The first garrison of the fort was *Cohors V Gallorum*, as confirmed by several brick stamps and one inscription on a bronze measuring vessel.<sup>43</sup> The overall shape of the Tekija laths resembles those from the Roman fort at Bar Hill, on the Antonine wall, in Britain, as well as to some of laths made in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century bone and antler workshop at *Porolissum* in Dacia.<sup>44</sup> Similar findings also originate from Gardun in Croatia (ancient *Tilurium*), dated to the late republican and early imperial period.<sup>45</sup>

One antler bow lath (Fig. 4) has been discovered in Sremska Mitrovica (site 52), in a Late Roman layer dated broadly to the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. Ancient workshops making various bone and antler products have been uncovered at several sites (sites 28, 44, 45, 50) in Sremska Mitrovica.<sup>46</sup>

39 See ref. 7.

40 Premerštajn, Vulić 1903, 56, Nr. 82.

41 Coulston 1985, 282-286.

42 Petković 1995, cat. no. 627, 628, 102, T. XXXVIII/ 1, 2; Cermanović-Kuzmanović, Jovanović 2004, 240, kat. 17.

43 Cermanović-Kuzmanović 1976, 39-41; Drča 2010, 26, 43-47 (especially 46).

44 Lóránt 2014, 99-120

45 Radman-Livaja 1998, 222-223, T I/ 1, 7.

46 Šaranović- Svetek 1980, 125-130, sl.1; Šaranović-Svetek 1981; Šaranović-Svetek 1989.

However, the local production of composite bow fittings has not been confirmed in Sirmium yet, although such a possibility cannot be completely dismissed.

An additional two laths, also considerably later in date (Fig. 5), originate from the Roman fort of *Pontes*, which once defended Trajan's bridge on the Danube.<sup>47</sup> They were found in the waste pits within the presumed settlement of *limitani* and dated to the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, the same as the fragmented laths from Čuprija (*Horreum Margi*)<sup>48</sup>, in the Morava valley.

Here, we should also mention the composite bow laths buried as offerings in late Roman warrior graves. Two finds of composite bow laths were uncovered in late Roman burials of federate warriors most likely of Germanic origin. The first was found at the site of Vranj by Hrtkovci in the vicinity of *Sirmium*, and the second in Belgrade (*Singidunum*). At the necropolis near Hrtkovci in Syrmia, a Late Roman grave was investigated with the remains of an inhumated 39-43 years old male buried with the bow (Fig. 6) and one biconical gray-baked ceramic vessel with polished geometric ornament. The skull was artificially deformed, belonging to the type of deformation characteristic of the Hunic and the Germanic population in Pannonia during the Great Migration period.<sup>49</sup> However, the grave from Hrtkovci was dated to the end of 4<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>50</sup>

Another find of Late Roman bow laths was discovered in a tomb (Fig. 7) of a 30 year old warrior of Germanic origin, buried in one of the Great Migration period necropolises of ancient *Singidunum* (Belgrade).<sup>51</sup> Several fractures and markers of occupational stress on the bones indicated heavy physical activity, the frequent use of weapons and long rides. The grave was dated by the numismatic finds and other grave goods to the fourth and fifth decades of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. The rich inventory in this grave (gilded silver belt buckle, glass cup) have led to the assumption that the deceased was a Germanic warrior serving as a Roman federate of higher social status buried with individual weapons (sword, dagger, spear and shield), supplemented with a bow and a set of trilobate tanged arrows in a quiver.



Fig. 5. Antler bow laths, Kostol (*Pontes*) (after Špehar 2010)

47 Petković 1995, cat. no. 629, 102, T. XXXVIII/3.

48 Petković 1995, cat. no. 631, 102.

49 Zoffman 1998, 104.

50 Dautova Ruševljan 1998, 98.

51 Ivanišević, Kazanski 2002; Ivanišević, Kazanski 2002; Ivanišević, Kazanski 2007, 124, Fig. 7.

Fig. 6. Bow laths from warrior grave, Hrtkovci - Vranj (after Dautova-Ruševljan 1998)

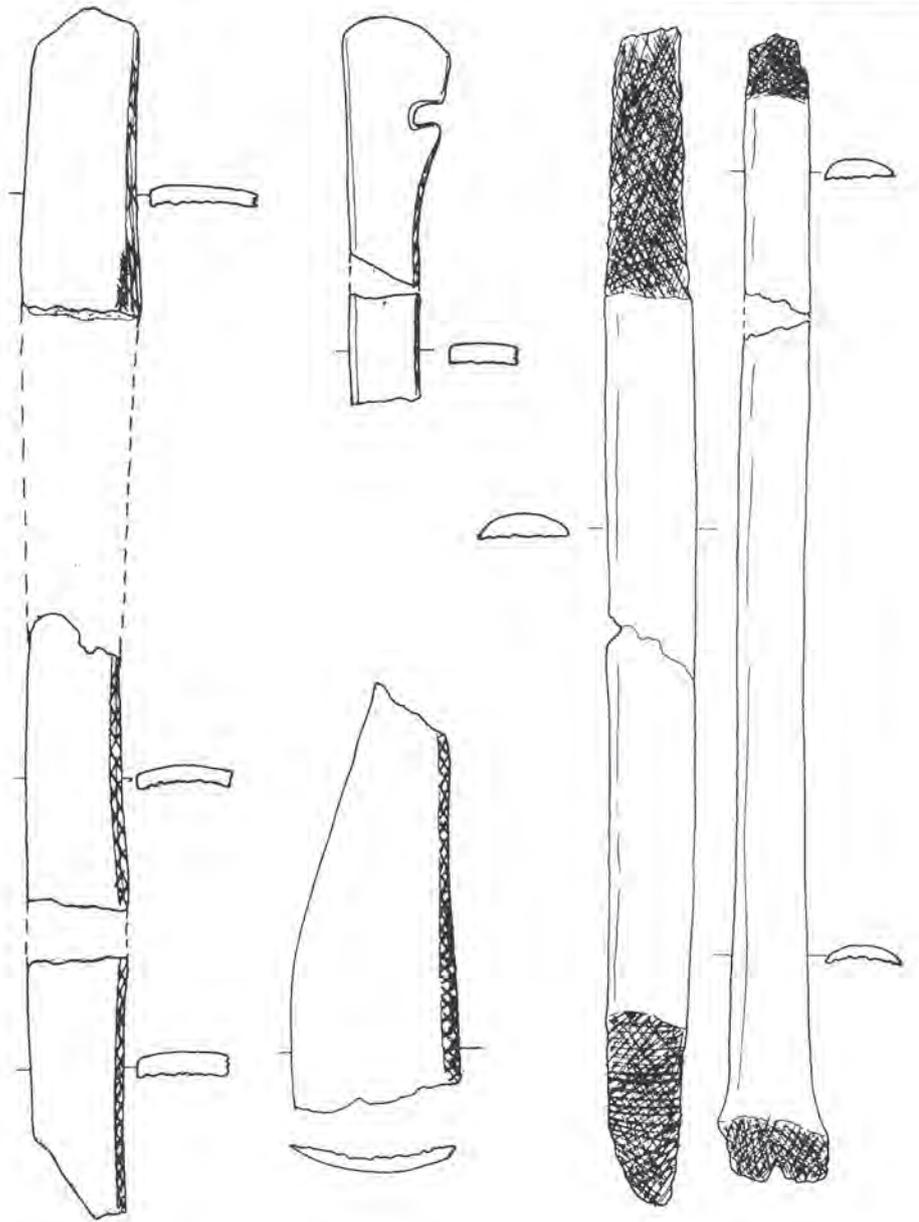
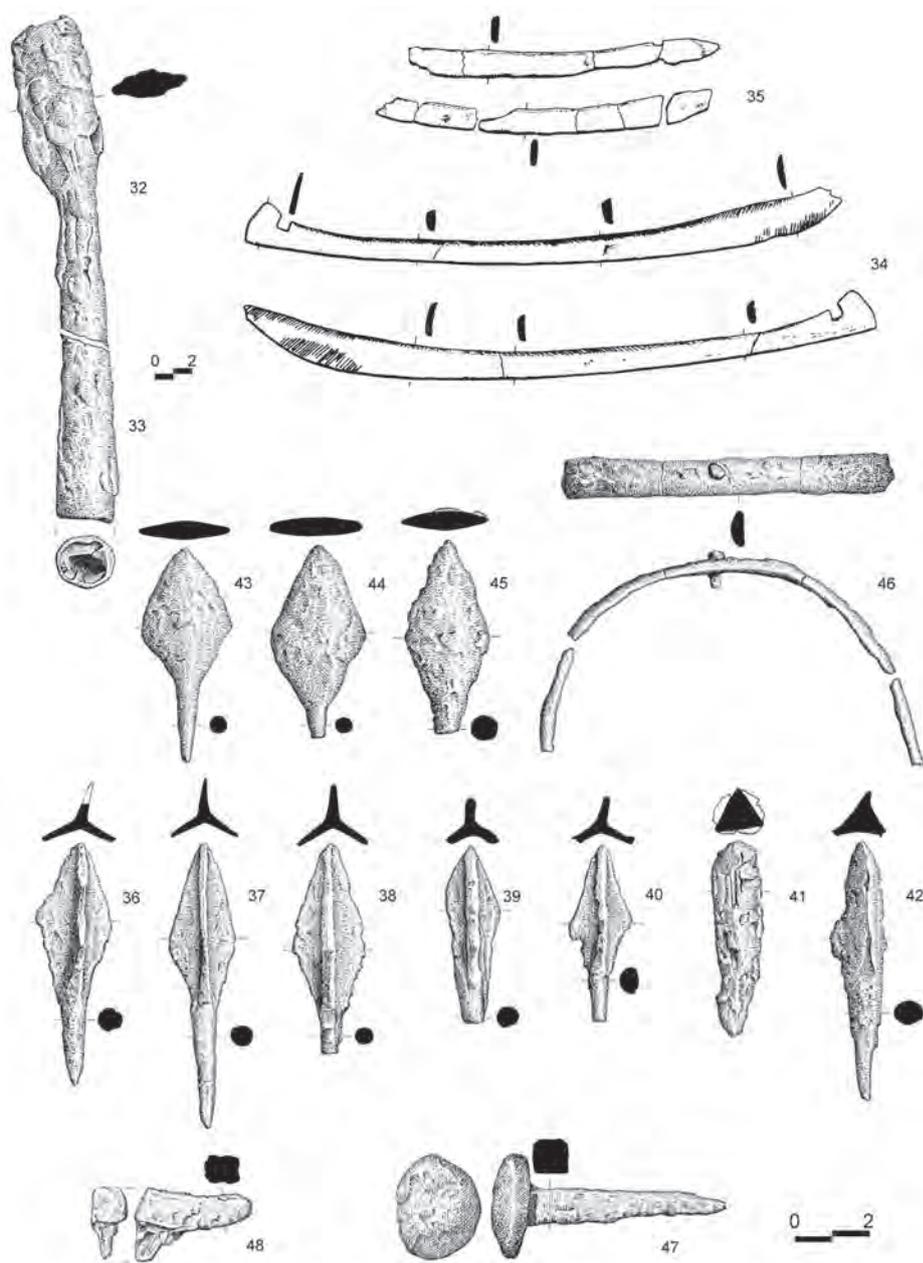


Fig. 7. Warrior grave with archery equipment, Belgrade (*Singidunum*) (after Ivanišević, Kazanski 2007)



Archaeological finds of archery equipment include arrows as well, most commonly diverse shaped iron tips that have been discovered along the Danube Limes in Serbia. However, unlike the elements of the composite bow, unless they are found in an explicitly closed context, the arrowheads themselves are an unreliable indicator of the presence or garrisoning of archers in Roman forts. In addition to the practical and popular shapes of arrowheads that existed almost unchanged for centuries, often very poorly preserved due to severe corrosion of the iron, their typological and chronological identification is very difficult. There is also the fact that being missiles intended for long-range fighting, the finds of the arrows discovered in the Roman fortifications might have equally been used by the Roman troops and fired by their enemies during the siege as well.

The most frequent findings from the excavated Iron Gates fortifications (Čezava, Boljetin, Saldum, Ravna and Rtkovo) are the trilobate tanged variations of arrowheads (Fig. 8), which originate mainly from the layers defined into the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>52</sup> In addition and represented to a lesser extent are the armour-piercing tanged bodkins of a rectangular cross-section (Fig. 9) and flat-bladed, socketed arrowheads (Fig. 10), used for hunting or in combat against mounted and unarmoured opponents. Most of them come from layers dating from the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Iron tip with a cage made of four bars, from the River Sava at Sremska Mitrovica (Fig. 11), is currently the only specimen of incendiary arrowheads from the territory of Serbia. Similar finds were detected among the Roman republican and imperial arms at Gardun (*Tilurium*) in Croatia, at Šmihel and Ptuj in Slovenia as well as at several other sites along the Roman frontiers from Britain (Bar Hill) to Siria (Dura Europos).<sup>53</sup> The preserved length (8.5 cm) of the iron tip from Sremska Mitrovica may also indicate that it belonged to the artillery missile variant; however, the unknown diameter of the socket damaged by corrosion does not allow a precise identification. In this regard it is interesting to recall one quotation made by *Priscus* in his description of the Hunic conquest of the Danube region in the mid-5<sup>th</sup> century. This early byzantine historian states that the Huns covered their siege engines with raw hides, as protection from the “fire-carrying objects”

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52 Vujović 1998, 107.

53 Radman-Livaja 1998, 219-222, T I/2 (Gardun); Horvat 2002, Fig.6/ 8 (Šmihel); Bishop, Coulston 2006, 134-135, Fig. 81/ 12, 33 (Bar Hill, Ptuj); 169, Fig. 108/ 8 (Dura Europos).

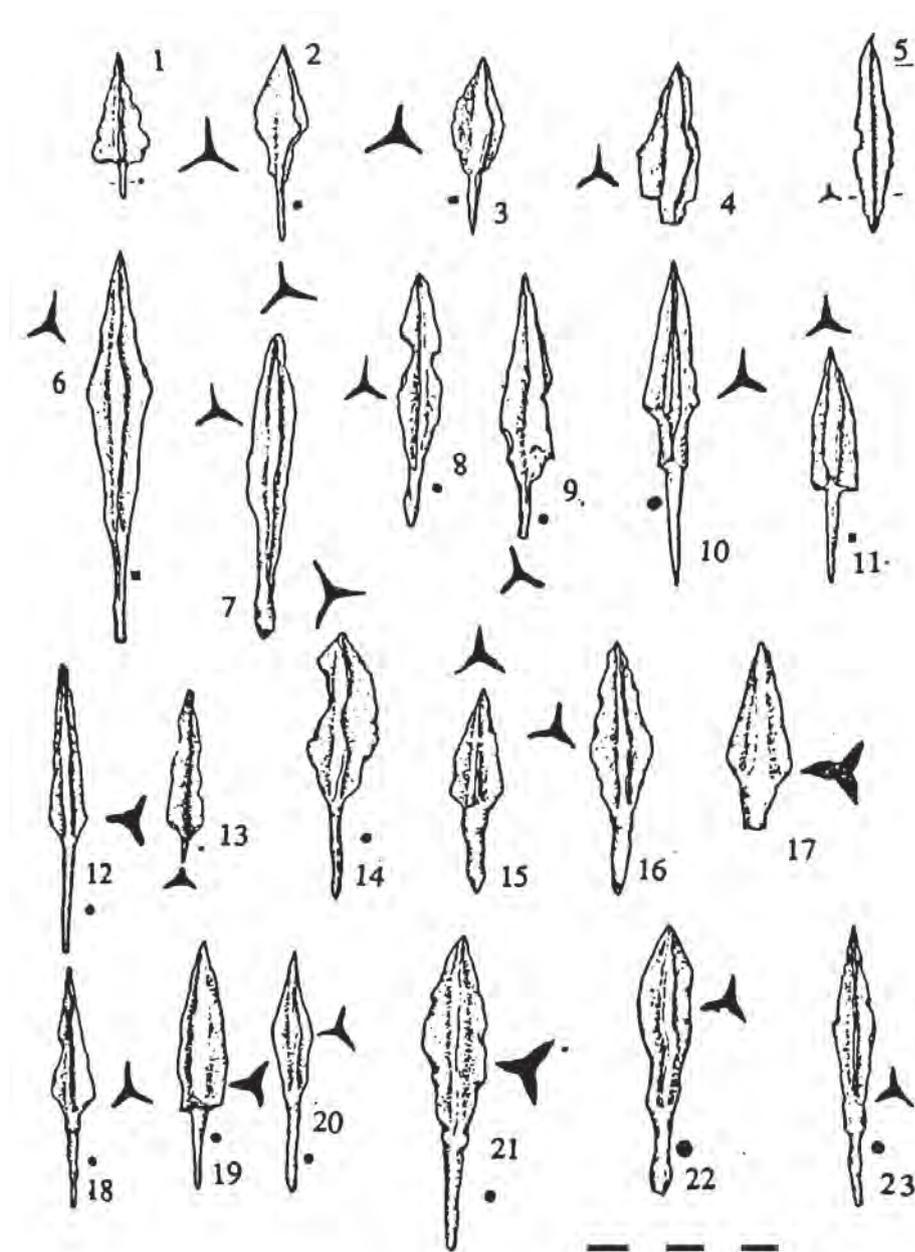
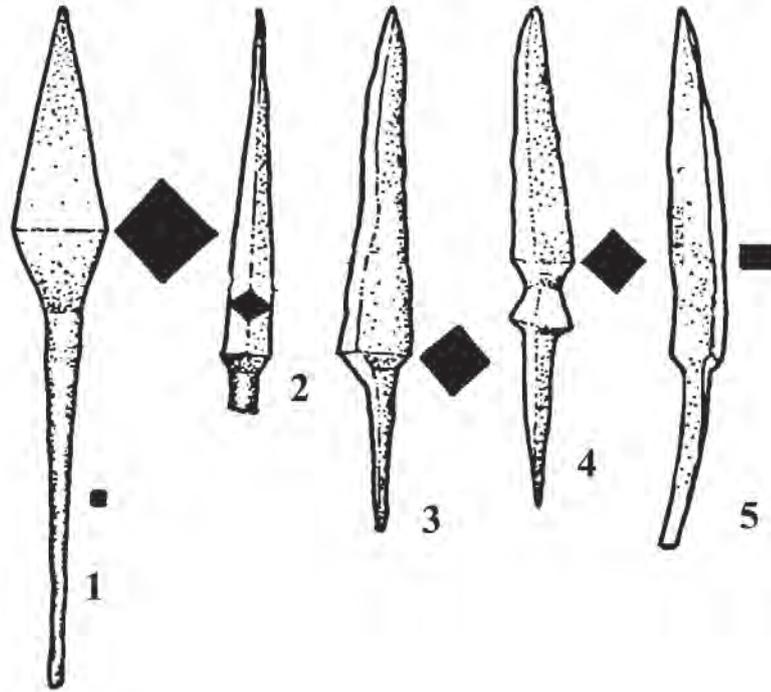


Fig. 8. Trilobate tanged arrowheads: 1. Židovar; 2, 3: Rtkovo-Glamija; 4, 7-9, 14: Čezava (*Novae*); 5: Ritopek (*Tricornium*); 6, 10: Saldum; 11, 19, 20: Ravna (*Campsae*); 12, 17, 21, 22: Boljetin (*Smorna*); 13: Dumbovo; 15, 16, 18, 23: Ravna by Knjaževac (*Timacum Minus*).

Fig. 9. Bodkins: 1-4  
Boljetin (*Smorna*); Ravna  
by Knjaževac (*Timacum  
Minus*)



hurled at them.<sup>54</sup> Incendiary arrows and missiles (*malleolos, falaricas*) with cages used to carry tow soaked in flammable oil (petroleum), sulphur or bitumen are mentioned by *Vegetius*<sup>55</sup> and especially by *Amianus Marcellinus*, who gave the best description of this weapon.<sup>56</sup> He also states that “median oil”, petroleum gathered from natural sources by local residents in Persia, was used for incendiary arrows.<sup>57</sup> However, in the continental part of Illyricum, with no natural sources of petroleum and limited import of such goods (if it ever existed at all), other more accessible combustibles were also available. Dry distillation (cracking) of certain types of naturally *resin-rich* woods such as conifers (pine, fir and spruce) or birch produced a *highly flammable* tar (pitch) that might very efficiently replace mineral oil.

<sup>54</sup> Византијски извори 1, 11-12.

<sup>55</sup> Vegetius IV, 18.

<sup>56</sup> Am.Marc, XXIII.4.14-15.

<sup>57</sup> Am. Marc, XXIII.6.37-38.

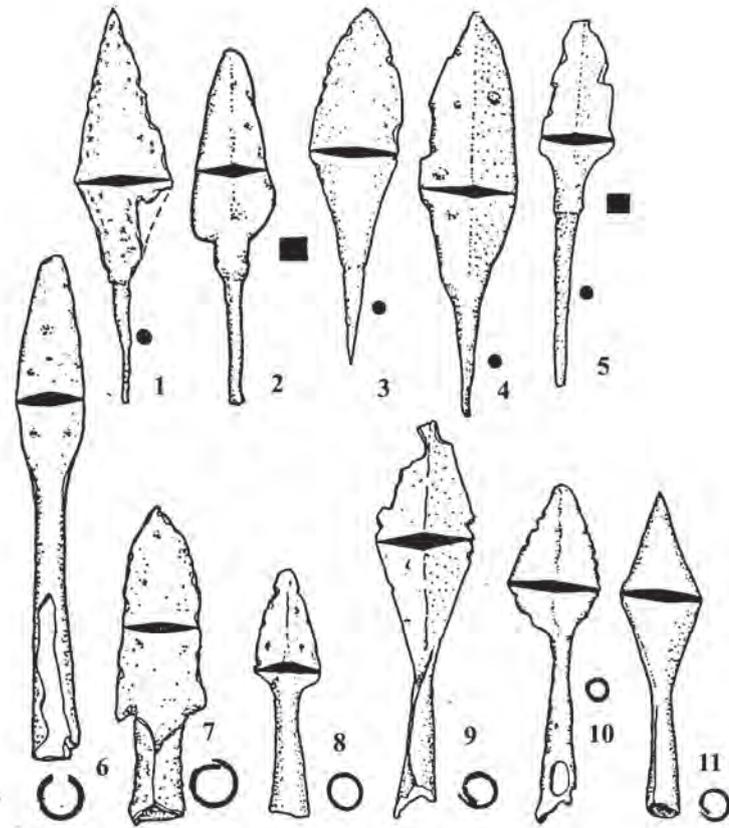


Fig. 10. Flat-bladed tanged and socketed arrowheads:  
 1. Ravna by Knjaževac (*Timacum Minus*); 3, 5, 8, 9: Ritopek (*Tricornium*);  
 2, 4: Boljetin (*Smorna*);  
 6, 7: Čezava (*Novae*); 10. Rtkovo-Glamija; 11: Ravna (*Camps*)

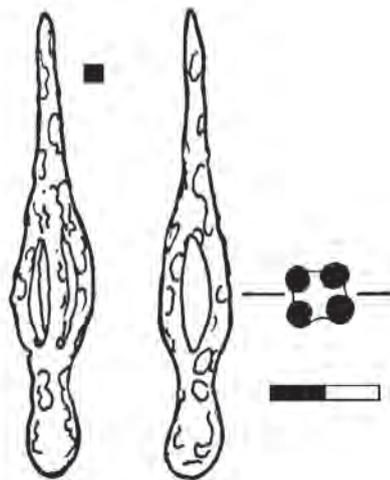


Fig. 11. Incendiary arrowhead, river Sava at Sremska Mitrovica (*Sirmium*)

## SLINGERS (*FUNDITORES*)

Lead and clay slingshots from Serbia are exceptional proof of the employment of slingers in this part of the Roman Empire. The majority of all lead slingshots from this territory are kept in the National Museum in Belgrade (Fig. 12). Unfortunately, the provenance of these lead slingshots is mostly unknown, but all of them belong to the same spindle-like form, with a circular cross-section and pointed ends (type Volling II b).

The find-spot of a few of the slingshots (Fig. 12/ 6) has, however, been traced to the archaeological investigations of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century Roman fortress at Stojnik, on the Kosmaj mountain.<sup>58</sup> The fortress was built for the control and protection of nearby Roman silver and lead mines. The dimensions and weight of the lead slingshots from the Stojnik fortress, as well as other specimens of the same type from the National Museum in Belgrade, are almost identical.

Besides the mentioned lead examples from the National Museum in Belgrade, the largest find of clay slingshots originates from the Iron Gates. A total of 147 slingshots (Fig. 13) were discovered during archaeological excavations of the Roman military fort of *Novae*, at modern Čezava. This *castellum* was one of the first large fortifications in the gorge, situated at a strategically important site, 100 m from the river bank, where a port was established.<sup>59</sup> The site was a convenient crossing point of the Danube in the gorge. The greatest number of slingshots (90) was found around the southeast rampart, in a tower situated between *porta principalis dextra* and Tower IV.<sup>60</sup> Most slingshots were found in the layers dated, on the basis of other finds, to the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 3<sup>rd</sup> century.

The fact that there is no written confirmation that specialised units of Roman slingers were garrisoned in Moesia or Pannonia does not surprise, since such mentions are rare and late in date.<sup>61</sup> Besides the size of the forts (Stojnik – 5 ha; Čezava – 1.6 ha), as well as their strategic importance, the Roman units garrisoned in Stojnik and Čezava were confirmed as mixed units – *cohortes equitatae*. Epigraphic data confirms the presence of several such units, both in Kosmaj (*Cohors*

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<sup>58</sup> Vučković 2007, 297-322.

<sup>59</sup> Vasić 1984.

<sup>60</sup> Vučković 2009, 249-256.

<sup>61</sup> Not. Dig. Or. VII. 52

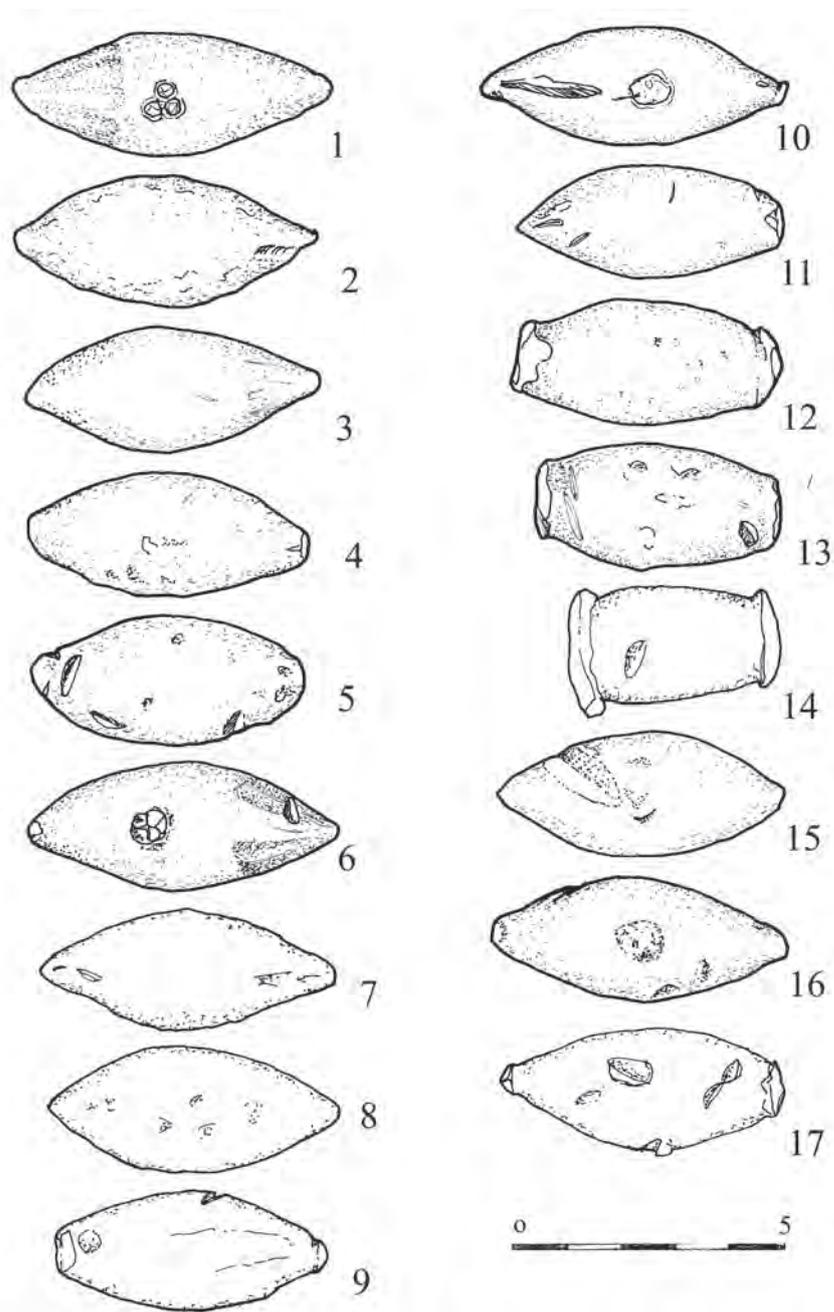


Fig. 12. Lead slingshots:  
Stojnik, Mt. Kosmaj,  
National Museum,  
Belgrade.

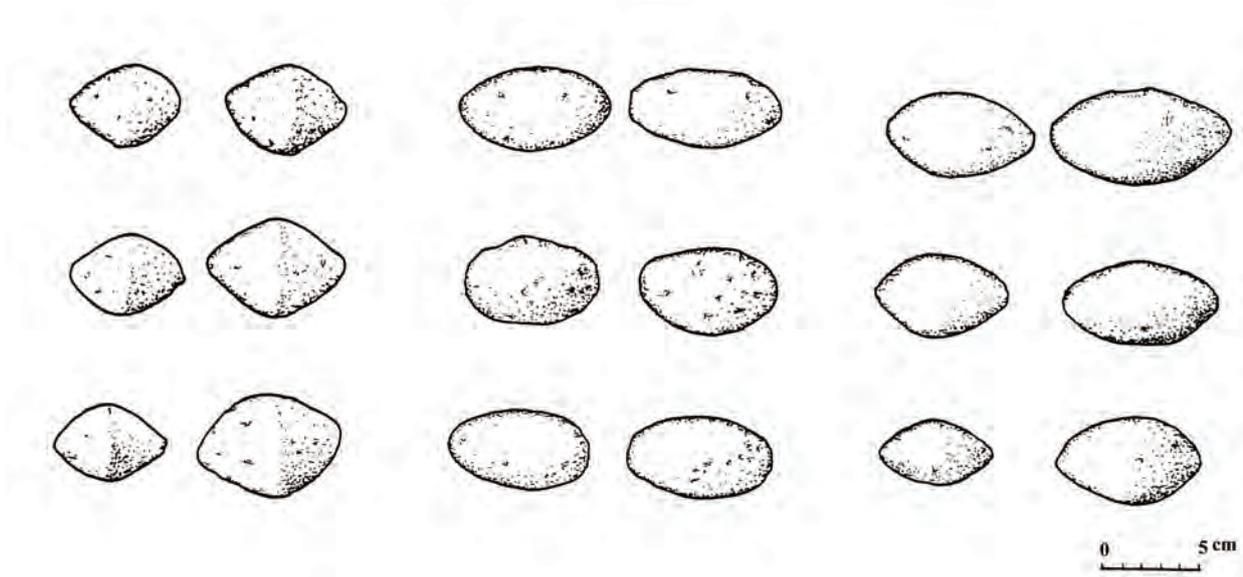


Fig. 13. Ceramic slingshots (*glandes latericiae*): Castrum Novae by Čezava.

*II Aurelia nova milliaria equitata civium Romanorum, Cohors I Aurelia milliaria nova Pasinatum civium Romanorum, Cohors V Callaecorum et Lucensium and Cohors I Ulpia Pannoniorum milliaria equitata*) and Čezava (*Cohors I Montanorum civium Romanorum* and, probably, *Cohors I Antiochensium*).<sup>62</sup>

## CONCLUSION

In spite of the fact that for the earliest period of the Roman presence in the Middle Danube area there is no written data on the engagement of archers and slingers, it is almost certain that these units were used during the Roman conquest of the Balkans and the consolidation of the Limes.

Ancient authors emphasise the importance of such long-range fighting troops in the preparation and support of infantry attacks in order to decimate the enemy and cause disorder in his ranks. Their role was especially important in the fight against unarmoured opponents and cavalry. Moreover, they played a special role in sieges and the defence of fortifications, making them essential to the monitor-

<sup>62</sup> Mirković, Dušanić 1976, 97, 98; Pribaković, Vasić, Rašić 1968, 109, Mirković 1975, 220-222.

ing and control of borders. Considering the effective range of their weapons, archers and slingers placed on ramparts and towers could control the coastal roads and the river banks, including the ports and the river itself. This could have been of great significance had an enemy attempted to cross the Danube, to make a deeper breakthrough and endanger the interior of the province.

Archers from Greece, Syria, Numidia and Crete, as well as the slingers from Commagene, Rhodes and the Balearic Islands, were widely engaged in the Roman army and considered the most efficient in the ancient world.<sup>63</sup> Therefore, it is not surprising that, since the time of the Antonine Emperors, when the garrisons in the fortifications along the Danube in what is now Serbia were referred to for the first time as *sagittariorum*, their cognomens clearly indicate an eastern origin. However, drilling recruits in archery and slinging was part of regular service, especially in the Late Roman army.<sup>64</sup> For Vegetius, long-range fighting units belonged to the fifth combat line that consisted of archers, slingers and artillery crews.<sup>65</sup> The same author recommends the deployment of these troops in naval battles, in which they could either support or hinder the landing of troops. Owing to their mixed composition and numbers, cavalry cohorts (*cohortes equitatae*) were used as universal troops trained for different kinds of combat, including slinging and archery. They were frequently utilised in war, along with infantry and cavalry in legions. In times of peace, they were also used on the edges of the Empire for the defence and control of the frontiers. As for the interior of the provinces, they were employed here for the protection of important strategic points such as mines, land and river communication lines, customs stations and larger urban centres. During the Late Roman period, the importance of light and effective troops of mounted archers increased, and they have been recorded in several fortifications along the Danube (Acumincum, Tricornium and Lederata).

From the middle of the 4<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, the finds of archery equipment in the graves of non-Roman warriors along the Danube limes in Serbia indicate a new defence strategy that implied the settlement and involvement of foederati (Huns, Goths and Alani), whose weapons and combat tactics corresponded to the immediate and urgent needs of the defence. That strategy,

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63 Davies 1977, 261.

64 Coulston 1985, 283-286.

65 Vegetius III, 14.

imposed by constant wars, internal conflicts, economic crises and epidemics, finally failed, ending with the destruction of the Roman Limes on the Danube and the devastation of the Roman fortifications and towns in 441-443.

*Translated by Miroslav Vujović and Jelena Cvijetić*

## APPENDIX I

### *Sagittarii in Roman provinces in Serbia*

<i>Province</i>	<i>Ala</i>	<i>Cohors</i>	<i>Camp</i>
<i>Pannonia Inferior</i>	<i>Ala I Augusta Ituraeorum sagittariorum</i>		<i>Rittium</i>
	<i>Ala Dalmatarum sagittariorum?</i>		<i>Sirmium</i>
	<i>Ala I Thracum veterana (sagittaria)?</i>		<i>?</i>
<i>Moesia / Moesia Superior</i>		<i>Cohors I Cilicum sagittaria</i>	<i>Naissus</i>
		<i>Cohors I Cretum sagittariorum</i>	<i>Naissus, Egeta</i>
		<i>Cohors II Flavia Commagenorum sagittaria</i>	<i>?</i>
		<i>Cohors I Antiochensium sagittariorum</i>	<i>Novae?</i>

## APPENDIX II

### *Emplacement of Sagittarii during the Late Roman period*

<i>Pannonia Secunda</i>	<i>Cuneus equitum sagittariorum</i>	<i>Acumincum</i>
<i>Moesia Prima</i>	<i>Cuneus equitum sagittariorum</i>	<i>Tricornium</i>
	<i>Cuneus equitum sagittariorum</i>	<i>Lederata</i>

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### **Abbreviation:**

AE..... *L'Anée épigraphique*

CIL..... *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*

ILS ..... *Inscriptiones Latinae selectae*

RMD..... *Roman Military Diplomas*

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## FIBULAE AND THE ROMAN ARMY ON THE DANUBE IN MOESIA SUPERIOR\*

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### ABSTRACT

*During the Roman period, fibulae, beside their primary function of fastening clothes, also functioned as jewellery and status symbols and, hence, were richly and diversely decorated. For this reason, the fibula exposed on the right shoulder, fastening a military cape sagum, pallium or paludamentum, could denote the military unit, rank or a kind of a decoration in the Roman army. The military fibulae from the Danube Limes of Upper Moesia (later Limes of the provinces of Moesia Prima and Dacia Ripensis) also have traits related to this region, specifically: the military character of this border province is reflected in the number and variety of types of military fibulae, most of these types were produced locally, while some also originated from the Danube Limes of Moesia Superior. The local production, intended for the army, began as early as the 2<sup>nd</sup> century and continued until the end of Antiquity, that is, until the first quarter/middle of the 7<sup>th</sup> century. Consequently, half a millennium of production of military fibulae in the lower Danube basin left a rich archaeological heritage in the area of present-day Serbia.*

**KEYWORDS: ROMAN FIBULAE, ROMAN ARMY, DANUBE LIMES, MOESIA SUPERIOR, MOESIA PRIMA, DACIA RIPENSIS.**

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During the Roman period, fibulae, beside their primary function of fastening clothes, also functioned as jewellery and status symbols and, hence, were richly and diversely decorated. This status and military aspect of fibulae can be traced back to prehistory.<sup>1</sup>

It is assumed that certain types of Roman fibulae were worn exclusively by men, whereas others were worn only by women, which is, to a degree, confirmed by grave finds. Nevertheless, the largest portion of simple, functional types was worn by both sexes. Due to the differences between male and female clothing, women most often wore one or more pairs of brooches on their shoulders, while men used to fasten their clothes, a tunic, toga or cape, with one brooch, most often on the right shoulder. In each case the fibulae were worn with the foot upward, fastened by the pin over a fold on the fabric, so that the ornamented area of the head, bow and foot was visible. For this reason, the fibula exposed on the right shoulder, fastening a military cape *sagum*, *pallium* or *paludamentum*, could denote the military unit, rank or a kind of decoration in the Roman army.

Fibulae are indicators of economic and social fluctuations in the Roman state, and also of the status of certain populations or territories within the Empire. They were produced in large craft centres and imperial workshops, as well as in small, local ones. Being in demand goods of merchandise, widely traded, which is obvious by the distribution of certain types in relation to craft centres, they testify to the movement of the Roman army and its units as well as to Romanisation, following that move. Studied from an historical aspect, they can contribute to the knowledge of Roman military and political history. Moreover, considering the mass production of fibulae across the entire territory of the Empire, they were a suitable medium of imperial propaganda, so there also exist specimens with inscriptions celebrating the Emperor or with imperial portraits.<sup>2</sup>

The early imperial types of Roman fibulae on the Limes of *Moesia Superior* testify to the presence of the first garrisons, comprised of legionaries from Italy and western provinces of Gaul, Noricum and Raetia, and the beginnings of the Romanisation of the Moesian part of the Danube basin.

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<sup>1</sup> Dickinson 1997, 188; Vasić 1999, 13.

<sup>2</sup> Behrens 1950; Laur-Belart 1959; Иванов 1972; Јовановић 1976; Мирковић 1989; Поповић 2002; Васић 2002.

In the fortification at the site of Hajdučka Vodenica, in the horizon from the second half of the 1<sup>st</sup> and the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, an “eye” fibula (Augenfibel) was discovered (Augenfibel, Petković type 6 C).<sup>3</sup> (Pl. 1, 1) Interestingly, two specimens of the same type from *Moesia Superior* come from the Morava Valley, indicating the early onset of the Roman army from the south, via the Vardar and Velika Morava valleys. The specimen from the Limes comes from the horizon of the fortification construction on the Limes of *Moesia Superior* in the period of Domitian’s and Trajan’s Dacian wars.

The original provenance of type Petković 6 is the Rhine Limes and *Germania Magna*, the area bordered by the Rhine to the west, the Baltic Sea to the north and Vistula to the east, the territory of the free Germanic tribes. However, “eye” fibulae have been discovered across the Empire, in the border provinces along the Rhine and Danube, and also in the Roman provinces in the Balkans,<sup>4</sup> on the Baltic coast and in Scandinavia, on the north and the northern coast of the Black Sea and in the south.<sup>5</sup>

Created under the influence of the *Aucissa* type fibulae, this form was manufactured along the Rhine and Danube Limes, in Gaul, as well as in the Barbaricum region<sup>6</sup> during the 1<sup>st</sup> century. The fibulae of Petković<sup>6</sup> type were made of copper alloys, in rare cases silver or iron, and worn by both men and women.<sup>7</sup>

Interestingly, this type has not been registered in Roman Dacia, while among the brooches from the Roman provinces in Bulgaria, primarily from *Moesia Inferior*, it is very frequent.<sup>8</sup> Ana Haralambieva presumes the local manufacture of the variant Petković 6 C, which she dates to the second half of the 1<sup>st</sup> - the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, in the vicinity of the fort of *Appiaria* on the lower Danube.<sup>9</sup> This leads to an interesting conclusion that “eye” fibulae were present in the border provinces of the

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3 Petković 2010, 47-49, Cat. no.74, Pl. IV, 5.

4 Almgren 1923, Map 1; Kunow 1998, 112-117, Find lists, Figs. 6-7; Kovrig 1937, 112-113, Pl. III, 17-21; von Patek 1942, 195-196; Böhme 1972, 11, Pl. 1, 8-14; Bechert 1973, 17, Pl. 12, 117-119, Pl. 13 - 15; Ettlinger 1973, 68-69, Pl. 6, 4-6; Riha 1979, 68-70, Pl. 7, 193-209; Koščević 1980, 17-18, Pl. VII, 43-47; Хараламбиева 1997, 31-42, Pl. I - II; Genčeva 2004, Pl. XXIX, 4 - 5.

5 Almgren 1923, Map 1; Peškar 1972, 70-74, Pl. 3, 4-9; Амброз 1966, 35- 36, Pl. 6, 15, 20-21.

6 Kunow 1998, 106-110.

7 Kunow 1998, 111.

8 Genčeva 2004, 80.

9 Хараламбиева1997, 35-36.

Balkans until Trajan's conquest of Dacia, meaning that they could be linked to the Roman army of the 1<sup>st</sup> century on the Danubian Limes. It should be noted that, for the time being, fibulae of this type have not been registered among the finds from *Singidunum* and *Viminacium*, the legionary camps of *Moesia Superior*. This leads to the conclusion that Petković 6 type fibulae were worn by the soldiers of the units which comprised the garrisons at the forts on the Danubian Limes in the first half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century, before the arrival of *Legio VII Claudia* and *Legio IV Flavia Felix*.

*Aucissa* type fibulae in Upper Moesia (Petković type 8) generally come from the earliest horizons of Roman forts on the Danubian Limes: *Taurunum*, *Castra Tricornia*, *Viminacium*, *Translederata*, *Pincum*, Hajdučka Vodenica, *Diana* and Kurvingrad.

It is considered that the *Aucissa* type of brooches emerged at the passage from the old to the new era (the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC – the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD) in northern Italy, but it also appears in Dalmatia, on the Rhine Limes and in the Alpine Region<sup>10</sup> in the same period. During the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, it spread across the entire territory of the Roman Empire, from Britain in the west to Syria and Mesopotamia in the east and Africa in the south.<sup>11</sup> This type of fibulae is also frequent outside of the Empire, in Barbaricum.<sup>12</sup>

Recent research defines the *Aucissa* fibulae as an Early Roman, Mediterranean type of the second half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC, which spread to the west, north and east in the course of Roman conquests during the reign of Augustus.<sup>13</sup> It has been confirmed that Roman soldiers used to wear these brooches, sometimes manufactured in the small workshops within the forts, but they were also worn by women, as confirmed by grave finds.<sup>14</sup>

Regardless of the multitude of known signatures of the craftsmen on the *Aucissa* fibulae, it is extraordinarily difficult to locate the respective workshops, i.e. their

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10Almgren 1923, 109; von Patek 1942, 106; Behrens 1950, 8; Marović 1961, 112; Ettliger 1973, 21, 93–94, Karte 18; Feugere 1985, 323.

11 Behrens 1950, 6–7; Noll 1952, 396; Marović 1961, 106;

12 Амброз 1966, 26–27, T. 4, 9–23 – in the Caucasus in North Ossetia, in the Dnieper valley, in Azerbaijan, Dagestan, even in Siberia, classical specimens and local variants from the 2nd – 3rd centuries; Peškar 1972, 66 – 67, T. 1, 4 – in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, including the findings from the Celtic oppidum at Stare Hradisko.

13 Böhme-Schönberger 1998, 358 – 359.

14 Böhme-Schönberger 1998, 354 – 355.

affiliates. According to the concentration of the finds and the appearance of the distinct variants and sub variants, we could assume the existence of workshops which produced this type of fibulae in Pannonia and Dalmatia, in cities such as *Siscia* and *Salona*.<sup>15</sup>

Considering all the information mentioned so far, the provenance of the *Aucissa* fibulae cannot be ascertained; Gaul, the Alpine Region, northern Italy and the coastal region of Dalmatia should be taken into account as potential locations. In any case, the brooches of this type trace the routes of Romanisation and are very precise chronological indicators.

Although *Aucissa* fibulae, together with Italic *terra sigillata* and early ceramic oil lamps (Loeschke Types I, IV, Iványi Types I – II )<sup>16</sup>, are considered to be an Italic import, the possibility of their local production as early as from the middle of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD should not be ruled out. Interestingly, not a single specimen of type Petković 8 from the Limes of *Moesia Superior* has a workshop signature. Hence, there is a possibility that these brooches were manufactured locally, in smaller workshops or the affiliates of larger Pannonian and Dalmatian centres, along the border of *Moesia Superior* on the Danube, by the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> and the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century.

The finds of fibulae from Bulgaria, from the *Ratiaria*, *Almus*, *Augusta Traiana* and *Novae* forts, of which only two have a workshop signature,<sup>17</sup> suggest the possibility of local production of the Petković 8 type.

*Aucissa* fibulae (Petković type 8) from the Limes in *Moesia Superior* can be dated to the second half of the 1<sup>st</sup> and the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century according to the finds with an ascertained archaeological context:<sup>18</sup>

variant A (Pl. 1, 2) has been discovered in *Viminacium*, in the layer of the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, in the fort at Hajdučka Vodenica, in the layer from the end of the 1<sup>st</sup>- beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, and in Kurvingrad, in the layer from the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century;

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15 Marović 1961, 106 et seq; Košćević 1975, 51.

16 Iványi 1937, 10–11.

17 Genčeva 2004, 38–39, Pl. IX, 6 – 10, Pl. X, 1 – 4 – The author assumes that these brooches of the later variant, from the second half of 1st - 2nd century, were imported from Pannonia and Dalmatia. The specimens with the signature AVCISSA or AVCSSA could have also been produced in a local branch of these workshops.

18 Petković 2010, 53-54.

Variant B (Pl. 1, 3) has been discovered in *Viminacium* in the layer of the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, and in *Diana*, in the layer from the second half of the 1<sup>st</sup> - beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century.

Variant C (Pl. 1, 4) has been discovered among the grave goods on the tibia of the inhumated child in tomb G – 1677, in the necropolis of “Više grobalja” in *Viminacium*. Unfortunately, there were no other finds in this grave, nor in that of the inhumated deceased, G – 1676, which was located above G- 1677. The grave G – 1676 can be, most likely, dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, and the *Aucissa* fibula is undoubtedly the product of a local workshop.<sup>19</sup>

Plain brooches with a hinge and a smooth, strip-like bow (Petković type 9) are very frequent in the horizons of the 2<sup>nd</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries in *Moesia Superior*, where the highest concentration of finds is along the Danube Limes of this province (68%), predominantly at two sites: *Viminacium* (44%) and *Diana* (15%).<sup>20</sup>

The finds from the archaeological units, dated according to coins and other movable artefacts, comprise slightly less than a half (48%) of all discovered brooches of type 9 from *Moesia Superior*. According to these finds, the simple, hinge brooches from *Moesia Superior* are dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries. It can be noted that type Petković 9 was produced during the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries, with the earliest variant A (Pl. 1, 5) produced from the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> to the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, variant B (Pl. 1, 6) during the entire 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> century, and the latest variant C (Pl. 1, 7) from the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century.

Scientific literature supports the opinion of our authors that this type of fibulae developed from the *Aucissa* type by simplifying the basic form.<sup>21</sup> Also, the Danubian provinces of *Moesia Superior* and *Inferior* and *Dacia* were the original provenance of the production of this type of brooches. The possible craft centres for their production are the Danubian forts of *Diana* and *Drobeta*.<sup>22</sup> According to the large number of finds of this type of fibulae, *Viminacium* was also, likely, a centre for their production.

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19 Two brooches from Bulgaria (Nicopolis ad Istrum, Pavlikeni) are very similar to the specimen from grave G – 1677 at the necropolis “Više grobalja” – *Viminacium*. – Genčeva 2004, Pl. XI, 10, Pl. XII, 2; Also, direct analogies have been found in the already mentioned fibulae from Romania (Augusta Traiana, Copaceni) - Cociş 2004, Pl. XLVI, 667, Pl. XLVII, 670.

20 Petković 2010, 56-58.

21 Jovanović 1978, 53; Bojović 1983, 22 – 23; Grbić 1996, 88 – 89; Cociş 2004, 79 – 83.

22 Popescu 1945, 487; Jovanović 1978, 54; Grbić 1996, 87 et seq.

Most of the type Petković 9 fibulae found in the necropolises of *Viminacium* belong to variant C (27%), which would point to their local production. From the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, besides being a legionary camp and the administrative centre of the province, *Viminacium* became a large city centre with well-developed industry and trade. Besides the already confirmed ceramic workshops,<sup>23</sup> other crafts must have flourished too, as demonstrated by the variety of finds from the necropolises.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, the period from the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> – the first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, when the production of type Petković 9 C fibulae was most intense, coincides with the period of a flourishing economy in *Viminacium* and the operation of workshops producing the local *terra sigillata*.

Although they have been found in large numbers on the Limes of *Moesia Superior*, the plain hinge brooches resembling the *Aucissa* type cannot be directly linked to the Roman army. Based on grave finds, it could be concluded that they were worn by both sexes, and by both adults and children. This is a plain, functional type of brooch, predominant in the Roman army on the Limes as well and is related to Severus' renewal of the Danubian border.<sup>25</sup>

Hinge fibulae with a plate head and short, large, slightly arched, cast bow, profiled with a longitudinal rib (Pl. 1, 8; Fig. 1) (Petković type 11) are only characteristic of the provinces on the Lower Danube: *Moesia Superior*, *Dacia* and *Moesia Inferior*, and appear only sporadically in *Pannonia*.<sup>26</sup> This type emerged through the development of plain hinge brooches (Petković type 9), with the addition of new elements typical of Gaulic hinge brooches, such as the segmented cast bow, and the elements of *Noricum-Pannonian* strongly profiled brooches (Petković type 13), like the longitudinal rib and the plastic thickenings on the bow, as well as an elongated catch plate. Deana Grbić considers this type the latest derivate of the *Aucissa* fibulae, which was produced during the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and during the 3<sup>rd</sup> century.<sup>27</sup> This opinion is accepted in the scientific literature, except that Petković type 11 is dated to the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> - the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup>

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23 Bjelajac 1990, 147; Redžić 2007, 78-79; Raičković 2007, 48-50.

24 Зотовић, Јордовић 1990; Korać, Golubović 2009.

25 Petković 2010, 58-62, Tabela 1.

26 Bojović 1983, 46-47; Grbić 1996, 88-89; Genčeva 2004, 44-45, Pl. XIII, 4-9, type 15 v; Cociş 2004, 81-83, Pl. L - LIII, type 14 d; Kovrig 1937, Pl. XIV, 141, 143.

27 Grbić 1996, 89.

Figure 1: Type Petković 11,  
Karataš – Diana.



century.<sup>28</sup> In *Moesia Superior*, these brooches are characteristic of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century; they appear during the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century and continue to the first decades of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. If this dating is compared to the chronology of this type in *Dacia* and *Moesia Inferior*, it seems that our specimens are somewhat later, i.e. that they were used over a longer period. In that context, it can be assumed that new workshops for the production of Petković type 11 opened during the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century in *Moesia Superior*, taking over the production from *Dacia* due to the instability and, eventually, the abandonment of this province.<sup>29</sup>

Regardless of the abundance of Petković type 11 fibulae on the Danubian Limes of *Moesia Superior*, it is difficult to directly link them to the Roman army, as in the case of the plain hinge type of brooches (Petković type 9). Beside the fact that they have also been discovered in the mid-lands of the province, in mining and metallurgical centres (Kosmaj, *Ulpiana* and *Romuliana*) and rural settlements (Grocka), these fibulae were used by both men and women.<sup>30</sup> The long usage of this type of brooch indicates that they were ordinary, functional items, widely used by the population of the Lower Danube and, thus, probably used by the military population too.

<sup>28</sup> Genčeva 2004, 45; Cociş 2004, 82–83; Petković 2010,

<sup>29</sup> Petković 2010, 68–69, Table 2.

<sup>30</sup> Petković 2010, 69, Cat. nos. 221, 231, 243–247, 253–254, Map 3.

Two variants of *Noricum-Pannonian* strongly profiled brooches are characteristic of the Danubian Limes in *Moesia Superior*. These are strongly profiled brooches with a spring on the head with a transverse bar, astragaloid raised work on the bow and a triangular foot with a knob-shaped ending (Almgren group IV, types 68–70; Jobst type 4 b–c; Petković group IV, type 13 B) (Pl. 2, 1), and strongly profiled brooches with a spring on the head without the bar, with a longitudinal rib and astragaloid or semicircular raised work on the bow and a triangular foot with a knob-shaped end (Almgren group IV, types 83–84; Jobst Typ 5 c–d; Cociş type 8 b 1–3; Petković group IV, type 13 D). (Pl. 2, 2)

Most of the type Petković 13 B fibulae from Upper Moesia have been found on the Danubian Limes (69, 12%):<sup>31</sup> in the vicinity of *Singidunum*, in Ritopek - *Castra Tricornia*, in Grocka, in the necropolises in *Viminacium*, in Sapaja - *Translederata* fort, on Čezava - *Castrum Novae*, in the fort at Hajdučka Vodenica, in Tekija - *Transdierna*, Karataš - *Diana* and in the fort at the site of Kurvingrad. They belong to the horizon from the second half of the 1<sup>st</sup> - first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, that is, from the reign of Emperor Claudius until the Age of the Antonines. Nevertheless, most of the type 13 B fibulae belong to the horizon of the earthen forts from Domitian's period and to the horizon of Trajan's renewal of the Limes, when the first stone fortifications were erected, which would narrow their dating on the Danube frontier of *Moesia Superior* to the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> - beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries (i.e. from year 84 to 106). This dating is also supported by the finds of type 13 B fibulae from the necropolises in *Viminacium*.<sup>32</sup>

Type 13 D fibulae are concentrated along the Danube Limes of *Moesia Superior*. They have been found in *Singidunum* in the layers from the 2<sup>nd</sup> - beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, in the forts of Ritopek - *Castra Tricornia*, Sapaja - *Translederata* and Čezava - *Castrum Novae*, in the horizon from the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, at Karataš - *Diana* in the layers of the 2<sup>nd</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries and in the *Pontes* fort- Trajan's bridge in the layer from the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> - first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. They have also been discovered in the necropolises of *Viminacium*, in tombs and layers from the 2<sup>nd</sup> -3<sup>rd</sup> centuries.<sup>33</sup> Coinciding with the hinge fibulae belonging to Petković types 9 and 11, type 13 D fibulae are typical

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31 Bojović 1983, 31 et seq; Petković 2010, 82-84.

32 Petković 2010, Cat. nos.358-366.

33 Petković 2010, 84-85.

finds of the Severan phase of the Limes renewal. Nevertheless, this still cannot directly link them to the Roman frontier army.

Considering the similarities in form between Petković types 11 and 13 D, these brooches were most likely produced at the same time and in the same craft centres on the Limes, like *Singidunum*, *Viminacium* and *Diana*. However, there remains a dilemma whether Petković type 11 fibulae, which are a derivative of the *Aucissa* fibulae, had influence on the creation of type 13 D, or both types emerged as a synthesis of the forms of the hinge and strongly profiled brooches of the 1<sup>st</sup> - 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries. The second option seems to be more likely. The development of hinge and strongly profiled fibulae of the 1<sup>st</sup> - 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries could have led to the development of similar forms, with the same aesthetic criteria, which differed only in the type of mechanism for fastening the pin - the first ones had a hinge mechanism, the others a mechanism with a spiral spring. Considering the abovementioned information, it could be concluded that Petković types 9 and 11 of hinge fibulae and types of strongly profiled fibulae 13 B and 13 D are not military brooches in a real sense, although they are frequently found in the forts along the Danube Limes.<sup>34</sup>

The type of arched fibulae with a spring mechanism on the head, known as the “Black Sea strongly profiled fibulae” (Almgren group IV, type 82; Petković group IV, type 14) can be studied only conditionally within strongly profiled fibulae, since it includes the variants and specimens without a strongly profiled bow, but its classification in this group is customary, according to the accepted typologies.<sup>35</sup>

Oscar Almgren limited the origin and production of this type of fibulae to the area of the Danube basin and southern Russia.<sup>36</sup> With further analysis, the original provenance of Petković type 14 was narrowed down to the Lower Danube and Pontus.<sup>37</sup> The opinion that this type emerged around the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> - beginning

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34 It should be noted that the exploration of Roman sites, mainly fortifications, on the Danube Limes is more extensive than the exploration of fortifications and settlements in the interior of Upper Moesia, which is the result of protective excavations during the construction of the hydroelectric power plants Đerdap I (1965-1970) and Đerdap II (1979-1993). This should be kept in mind when analyzing the distribution of certain types of fibulae on the Limes, especially when these fibulae are objects of hyper-production.

35 Almgren 1923, 44, Group IV, Typ 82, Pl. IV, 82; Kovrig 1937, 119, VIII Group, Pl. III, 22 - 24; Амброз 1966, 40 - 43, Group 11, Series I - II, Pl. 7, 10, Pl. 8.

36 Almgren 1923, 44, Pl. IV, 82, 87.

37 Амброз 1966, 40 - 41; Jovanović 1978, 52; Košević 1980, 24, type 12; Bojović 1983, 40 - 41, type 11.

of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century on the Danube Limes of *Moesia Superior* (which was also the location of the first workshops for its production), based on the large number of registered specimens, is predominant in the latest publications on Roman fibulae.<sup>38</sup> According to Aleksandar Jovanović and Dragoslav Bojović, the supposed workshops operated in *Singidunum*, *Viminacium*, *Lederata*, *Drobeta* and *Pontes*.<sup>39</sup> Nevertheless, archaeological excavations at these sites have not yielded any proof of this thesis so far, such as the finds of semi-products, moulds or workshops. Spreading along the Danube during the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, mostly through the Roman army, Petković type 14 fibulae reached *Pannonia*, *Dacia*, *Moesia Inferior* and the cities on the coast of the Black Sea.<sup>40</sup> They appear only very sporadically on the Rhine Limes.<sup>41</sup> From the Danube Limes and Pontus, they were exported to *Barbaricum*, where they became popular among the Sarmatians and Carpi.<sup>42</sup> They were produced in the barbarian territory and in *Dacia*, where they are called the “Carpian” type of fibulae (Pl. 2, 3), as a modified form with a short bow and a long spiral head.<sup>43</sup> Although there are certain opinions that these fibulae emerged in Dacian territory, in the Seret Valley, as early as around the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century, and that they should be dated to the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century in *Dacia*, type 14 C<sub>2</sub> fibulae appear until the middle/second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century at Sarmatian and Carpi sites.<sup>44</sup> Most likely, some of the variants of T-shaped fibulae with a spiral head developed from this variant.<sup>45</sup>

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38 Cociş 2004, 42 – 44, Type 6; Genčeva 2004, 36 – 37.

39 Jovanović 1978, 52 – The author placed the centers for production in the fortifications on Limes: *Lederata*, *Drobeta* and *Pontes*; D. Bojović has supposed that the workshops functioned in the towns risen around the legionary camps of legions IV Flavia and legio VII Claudia, *Singidunum* and *Viminacium*.

40 Kovrig 1937, 119, Pl. III, 22 – 24; von Patek 1942, 112, Pl. VI, 11; Košćević 1980, 24, Pl. XIX, 138 – 140; Cociş 2004, 44, Pl. II, 19 – 24, Pl. III, 25 – 39; Genčeva 2004, 36, Pl. VIII, 1 – 6; Ambroz 1966, 40, Variant I – 1, Pl. 8, 1 – 5.

41 Böhme 1972, 13, Pl. 2, 46.

42 Bichir 1973, 102, Pl. CXII, 2; Vaday 1989, 77, Fig. 12, 8.

43 Cociş 2004, 44 – 45, Type 7, Pl. III, 40 – 41, Pl. IV, 42 – 59, Pl. V, 60 – 61. These brooches belong to the sub-variants Petković 14/A 2 i 14/C 2.

44 Cociş 2004, 45; Vaday 1989, 79, Fig. 12, 18 – 19, Pl. 135, 9, Pl. 140, 2; Bichir 1973, 46, Pl. XXXVII, 5, Pl. XLII, 5, Pl. XLVII, 2 a – b, 5 a – b.

45 Bojović 1983, 74 – 75.

In Upper Moesia, type 14 fibulae predominantly come from the Danube Limes (94, 5%). They were made of copper alloys (bronze, brass), or, in rare cases, silver.<sup>46</sup> Variant 14 A (Pl. 2, 4) is most frequent in the legionary camps, *Viminacium* and *Singidunum*, in the forts and villas in the vicinity of the last one (Ritopek – *Castra Tricornia*, Grocka and Brestovik), and in the mining area of Kosmaj (*Metalla Tricornensis*). In the necropolises in *Viminacium*, this variant was dated to the period from the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> to the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, according to coins and ceramic finds.<sup>47</sup>

Certainly, the earliest finds of Petković type 14 are the silver fibulae from the Bare hoard of silver objects, which were most likely produced during the 1<sup>st</sup> century, and deposited in the hoard of silver jewellery and coins by the end of that same century, i.e. in the period of Domitian's Dacian Wars. The prominent autochthonous Dacian-Moesian component in the types of silver jewellery from the hoard leads to the conclusion that the Petković 14 a<sub>1</sub> variant of fibulae was created in the local tradition, which is also suggested by the fact that they are made of silver.<sup>48</sup>

There are no lines of argumentation to establish the link between the “Black Sea type” of strongly profiled fibulae and the Roman army on the Limes in Moesia Superior. On one hand, recent research locates the area of their origin in the Danube basin of Upper Moesia, whilst on the other hand, a large number of finds from the necropolises in *Viminacium* was discovered in the graves of women and girls, frequently in pairs. Also, a pair of silver fibulae of this type from the Bare hoard indicates that they were originally a part of women's clothing. It is possible that the hyper production of type 14 during the 2<sup>nd</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries is linked to its usage by the Roman army, but that still does not classify them as military fibulae. However, if we observe the distribution of this type to the Lower Danube, Black Sea and *Barbaricum*, it is undeniable that the army played a major role in their spread across the borders of their original provenance. The historical event which can be linked to the spread of type 14 to the Southeast is Septimius Severus' conquest of Syria, Armenia and Partia, in 197.

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46 Petković 2010, 97, Cat.nos. 492, 512-513. – One brooch of type Petković 14 from *Viminacium* and a pair of fibulae of the same type from the Bare hoard of silver items were made of silver.

47 Petković 2010, 99. - Finds from the cremation graves in the “Pećine” necropolis at *Viminacium* (G1 – 1004 and G1 – 2178), as well as inhumation graves from the same cemetery (G – 864 and G – 5317), are important for the late dating of the Petković type 14 into the 3<sup>rd</sup> century.

48 Поповић 1994, 26 – 28; Popović, Borić-Brešković 1996, 46 – 50.

Elbow fibulae with a spiral head (Böhme Types 19-21; Petković Group V, Type 18 A-G) appear in several variants on the Limes of *Moesia Superior* and are dated to the period from the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> to the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century.<sup>49</sup> The variants which can be hypothetically linked to the border army are the elbow fibulae with a rectangular or semicircular spring buttress above the head (Petković Type 18 A-B) (Pl. 2, 5-6).

The opinions about the origin of the elbow fibulae with a spiral head and semi-circular buttress differ, but they all agree that these fibulae appeared around the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> - beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century in the area of the border provinces of the Empire in central Europe. Beside the assumption that these fibulae were created in the area of *Noricum* and *Pannonia*,<sup>50</sup> there is a thesis about the German-Raetian origin of elbow fibulae.<sup>51</sup> The frequency of Petković type 18 along the Rhine and Danube Limes led Astrid Böhme - Schönberger to believe that they were military fibulae.<sup>52</sup> In the western regions of the Empire, apart from the Limes, type 18 fibulae are rare: this type is unknown in Gaul, only several specimens have been discovered in Britain, they seldom appear in the territory of the free Germanic tribes and they are also rare in Switzerland. On the other hand, type 18 fibulae are frequent finds in the border provinces of *Pannonia*, *Dacia*, *Moesia Superior* and *Inferior*; this is also the case among the Sarmatians in *Barbaricum*, on the left bank of the Danube, and they are fairly frequent in Thrace and in the cities in the Pontus region (*Hersones* and *Olbia*).<sup>53</sup>

The finds of elbow fibulae with a rectangular buttress above a spiral head (Petković Type 18 A) from Upper Moesia do not offer enough arguments to attribute this variant to the army. This type of fibulae has been discovered in the mining regions, the forts on the Limes and in the mid-lands, as well as in civilian settlements. Two indicative finds are those of a bronze fibula of this variant, discovered in a pair with a specimen of Petković type 18 B in the rich grave G - 1396, in the necropolis of "Više grobalja", *Viminacium*, and a silver one from tomb G 1 - 313 in Kolovrat, near Prijepolje in Western Serbia, which were undoubtedly worn by women.<sup>54</sup>

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49 Petković 2010, 130/135.

50 Kovrig 1937, 120 - 121; von Patek 1942, 130 - 137, 298.

51 Böhme 1972, 19; Böhme - Schönberger 1998, 362 - 363.

52 Böhme 1972, 52 - 53; Böhme - Schönberger 1998, 363, Abb. 9.

53 Petković 2010, 131.

54 Petković 2010, 132-133.

In contrast with the previous variant, the finds of fibulae belonging to Petković type 18 B from *Moesia Superior* are concentrated around the legionary camps in *Singidunum* and *Viminacium*. A spring with an external chord, a chord-holder and an elongated, rectangular catch plate<sup>55</sup> is the distinctive feature of this variant in *Moesia Superior*. This supports the thesis that they were produced on the Limes of *Moesia Superior*. Fibulae of this type have also been discovered in large numbers in *Dacia*.<sup>56</sup> In the context of the finds from the forts on the Danube and Rhine frontier, the specimens of type 18 B can be regarded as military fibulae.

Elbow fibulae with a hinge mechanism on the head (Petković Group V, Type 19) are very similar to the previous type; this type retains the non-functional semicircular buttress above the cylindrical capsule for the hinge axle on the head. (Pl. 2, 7) The variants differ in the treatment of the cast bow, which can be smooth (type 19 A), with a longitudinal rib (type 19 B) or fluted (type 19 C). (Pl. 3, 1-3)<sup>57</sup>

One fibula from *Viminacium* might testify to the military character of the type 19 A; it has two pins and, accordingly, a rectangular foot with two catch plates.<sup>58</sup> It must have been used to fasten a heavy woollen cloak, so it could have been a piece of military equipment. (Pl. 3, 4)

Elbow hinge fibulae with a fluted bow, polygonal in cross-section (Kovrig X Group, Typ 97; Petković Group V, Type 19 C), are the most numerous variant of type 19 in *Moesia Superior* and on the Danube Limes of this province. Another feature of these fibulae is an elongated, rectangular catch plate, which usually has jagged sides or incised ornament. (Pl. 3, 5) This variant of brooches was produced locally in *Moesia Superior*, and almost two thirds of these fibulae discovered in the territory of today's Serbia come from the Danube Limes, also including the legionary camps and cities of *Singidunum* and *Viminacium* (63, 24%). It can be assumed that the workshops for their production existed in these cities. They are also very frequent on Kosmaj, which links them, on one hand, to the frontier army, and on the other hand, to the mining-metallurgical regions of *Argentaria Pannonica* in the lower Drina basin and *Metalla Tricornensis* on Kosmaj mountain. According to the finds from archaeological units, they can be dated to the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and

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55 Petković 2010, 133.

56 Cociş 2004, 98 – 99, Type 19 b 1, Pl. LXXVII, 1179 – 1190, Pl. LXXIX, 1191 – 1199.

57 Petković 2010, 143-145.

58 Petković 2010, 144, kat. 777, Pl. XXV, 4.

to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. Fibulae belonging to type 19 C from two graves from the necropolis of “Više grobalja” in *Viminacium* outline the chronological span of the production of this variant on the Limes in Upper Moesia: in the cremation burial G<sub>1</sub> – 258 such a fibula is dated to the last third of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century according to Lucilla’s coins, a silver belt set and an oil lamp in the shape of Silenus’s head, while the specimen from the inhumation burial G – 374 is dated to the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century.<sup>59</sup>

There is no reliable proof that type 19 fibulae were linked to the Roman army, since, according to the grave finds, they were worn by both men and women. The silver specimens were parts of sets of female silver jewellery, worn in pairs and linked by woven silver chains with pendants in the shape of an ivy leaf.<sup>60</sup> A large number of these fibulae, especially of variant 19 C, in the forts along the Limes testify to the hyper production of a favourite, popular type in *Moesia Superior*.

Among the plate fibulae made in the cast openwork technique, several variants can be linked to the Roman army. (Böhme Type 46; Ettlenger Type 49; Jobst Type 31 A-B, D; Riha Type 3.18; Petković Group VI, Type 22 A-D). Their original provenance extends along the border provinces on the Rhine and Danube, where they developed the Celtic tradition of manufacture of decorative items in the technique of cast openwork.<sup>61</sup> This is also confirmed by the distribution of the finds of Petković type 22, concentrated in the forts along the Rhine, Danube and Dacian Limes.<sup>62</sup> In scientific literature, this type is dated from the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, while on the Limes of Upper Moesia it lasted until the middle of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>63</sup>

Discoid plate fibulae (Petković tip 22 A) are decorated in the cast openwork technique so that they have a wheel shape, with the pin attached by a hinge mechanism. They can appear in the form of a realistic cartwheel, with six spokes, or with six to eight semicircular or peltate perforations, a jagged rim and an em-

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59 Petković 2010, 144, 146-147, Table 5.

60 Petković 2010, 147-148.

61 Böhme 1972, 44; Jobst 1975, 116 – 117.

62 von Patek 1942, 127 - 128, Pl. XVIII, 7; Böhme 1972, 43 – 44, Type 46, Pl. 29, 1136 – 1149, Pl. 30, 1150; Ettlenger 1973, 129, Type 49, Pl. 15, 2 – 5; Jobst 1975, 116 – 120, Type 31, Pl. 47, T. 48, 338 – 344; Riha 1979, 88, Pl. 13, 310 – 311; Bojović 1983, 64 – 65, Type 25, Pl. XXIX, 276 – 288; Cociş 2004, 125 – 129, Types 25 – 26, Pl. CIX – CX; Genčeva 2004, 70, 74 – 75, Types 28 and 31 b, Pl. XXVI, 1 – 8, Pl. XXVII, 12 – 14.

63 Böhme 1972, 44; Jobst 1975, 117 i dalje; Bojović 1983, 65 – 66; Petković 2010, 180-182, Table 6.

bossed “eyelet” in the centre, so that they represent the celestial wheel – the sun disc. (Pl. 3, 6-7). Wheel-shaped fibulae have been found on the Danube Limes in the legionary camps of *Singidunum* and *Viminacium*, and in the *Diana* fort. According to the finds from archaeological units, in *Moesia Superior* they can be dated to the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century and the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, with a possibility that they might have lasted until the first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>64</sup>

One of the variants of plate fibulae decorated with openwork, which can be linked to the Roman army, is decorated in such a way that it assumes the shape of two, three or more military trumpets (Petković type 22 D), musical wind instruments shaped in a coil between the mouthpiece and the wide, trumpet-like bell. (Pl. 3, 8-10) Only four such specimens have been found on the Limes, at three sites: Ritopek - *Castra Tricornia*, *Viminacium* (2 specimens) and Muoara Vagei. According to the archaeological context, they can be dated from the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup>/beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>65</sup>

Some of the variants of plate fibulae decorated with openwork can be linked to the Roman army, primarily those of variant 22 A, wheel-shaped, with pronounced solar symbolism,<sup>66</sup> and variant 22 D – in the shape of linked military trumpets. Such fibulae could have been the denotation of certain military branches, ranks or units. Also, they could have been awarded in the army as decoration for the meritorious achievements in war or during service. This is also suggested by the fact that some wheel-shaped fibulae with an “eyelet” in the centre were silver plated, while the fibulae with three military horns were also made of silver, besides copper alloys. The fibulae in the shape of military horns, i.e. trumpets, were the denotation of the *cornicines*, which had a significant role in the Roman legions. The silver fibula from Tricornium, the eponymous settlement of the tribe of Tricornians (*Triconium*) and a fort (*Castra Tricornia*) on the Danube Limes of *Moesia Superior* should also be regarded within the same context. (Fig. 2) This fibula is composed of three military horns with clearly distinguishable mouthpieces and wide flaring openings,

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<sup>64</sup> Petković 2010, 180.

<sup>65</sup> Petković 2010, 180-181.

<sup>66</sup> A wheel with four or six spokes is a symbol of the supreme deity of the Celtic pantheon, the Celestial Thunderbolt, the God of the Sun and Fire, Taranis, or Jupiter in interpretatio romana – Eliade 1991, vol. II, 117.



Figure 2: Type Petković 22  
D, Ritopek – *Tricornium*.

not three horns of plenty (*cornucopia*), as Aleksandar Jovanović suggests.<sup>67</sup> On the other hand, fibulae from *Carnuntum* and the museum in Galați, as well as the specimen from the fort in Bologna, Romania, really are representations of the horn of plenty.<sup>68</sup> One fibula of the same type was discovered in a cremation burial in the necropolis of “Pećine” in Viminacium.<sup>69</sup> The closest analogy to the fibula from Ritopek, however, with a representation of one horn, is the bronze specimen from Porolissum.<sup>70</sup> Also, elements of military belt sets can be decorated with openwork so that they assume the shape of several military trumpets.<sup>71</sup>

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67 Jovanović 2007, 61 *et seq.*

68 Jovanović 2007, 62, Notes. 5 i 6; Cociș 2004, 206, Pl. CIII, 1465. – the author unjustifiably defines this brooch as a type of fibulae in the form of trumpet.

69 Petković 2010, 220, Pl. XXXIX, 7.

70 Cociș 2004, 120, Type 23 b, Pl. CIII, 1464.

71 Redžić 2014, 37, Pl. IV, 12 a-f.

The types of fibulae which can undoubtedly be linked to the Roman army are the swastika-shaped plate fibulae. On the Danube Limes of Moesia Superior two variants of this type appear: plate fibulae, whose bow is cast in the swastika shape, and can be decorated with engraving, with a free hinge mechanism on the lower side and a transverse catch plate with a hook at the end (Petković type 23 A) (Pl. 4, 1) and plate fibulae with a bow in the form of a swastika with the endings in the shape of horses' heads, and the "eyelet" motif or concentric circles with a dot in the centre in the middle of the bow and on the proteomes, where they represent horses' eyes (Petković type 23 D) (Fig. 3). In the second variant, the pin can be attached to the bow with a spring mechanism or an open hinge. Also, the fibulae of the second variant are sometimes silver plated.<sup>72</sup>

The classic swastika-shaped fibulae belong to the production of Roman border provinces along the Rhine and Danube, where the specimens with a spring mechanism with an internal chord are typical of the western provinces, and those with an external chord or hinge mechanism are typical of *Noricum*, *Pannonia*, *Dacia*, *Moesia Superior* and *Inferior*.<sup>73</sup> Such fibulae also sporadically appear in Britain.<sup>74</sup> Swastika-shaped plate fibulae are dated from the second third of the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century.<sup>75</sup> In *Moesia Superior* they have been discovered in *Singidunum*, at the site of Knez Mihailova str. no. 44, in the horizon from the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> - first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, and in Viminacium's necropolis of "Pećine", in a sacrificial pit from the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> - first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century.

Swastika-shaped fibulae with horses' proteomes (Petković type 23 D) were created based on the Roman tradition under the "barbarian" influence of Sarmatian tribes.<sup>76</sup> The centre of their production was located in the province of *Pannonia Secunda*,<sup>77</sup> according to the multitude of discovered specimens, most likely in Novi Banovci (*Burgenae*). This type of fibulae spread across the northern border of the

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72 Petković 2010, 187-189.

73 Böhme 1972, 45; Jobst 1975, 123; Cociş 2004, 135 – 136, Type 33 a, Pl. CXXV, 1626 – 1628; Genčeva 2004, 75, Type 32 a, Pl. XXVIII, 1 – 2.

74 Böhme 1972, 45, Find – list 45.

75 Böhme 1972, 46. – The end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> – the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century; Jobst 1975, 123. – the last quarter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> - the first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century; Cociş 2004, 136 – the second third of the 2<sup>nd</sup> – the first third of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century.

76 Vinski 1968, 133; Petković 1999, 225 – 226.

77 Buora 1992, 106.



Figure 3: Type Petković 23  
D, Boljetin – Smorna.

province of *Dacia*, where they are frequently discovered within forts, during the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, and later, in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, also in *Pannonia Secunda*, *Moesia Prima* and *Dacia Ripensis*, while they appear individually in *Pannonia Prima*, northern Italy and Bulgaria.<sup>78</sup>

Swastika-shaped fibulae with horses' proteomes on the endings can be linked to the recruitment of the "barbarians", mostly Sarmatians, namely, the Alans, to the auxiliary cavalry troops of the Roman army by the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. Together with the antler unilateral combs with a triangular handle ornamented with horses' proteomes, they were the denotations of the members of *equites pseudocomitatenses* in Illyricum in the period from year 380 to 408.<sup>79</sup>

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78 Buora 1992, 105 – 107, Fig. 1; Petković 1999, 217, Map 2; Gudea 2002, 101 – 104; Cociş 2004, 135 – 136, Type 33 b, Pl. XCV, 1631 – 1638; Genčeva 2004, 75, Type 32 b, Pl. XXVIII, 3.

79 Petković 1999, 226 – 228.

All specimens of the second variant from the Danube Limes of Moesia Superior were discovered within reliably dated archaeological units: two fibulae from *Singidunum* were found in the horizon from the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> - first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, fibulae from the necropolis of “Više grobalja” in *Viminacium* can be dated from the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the end of the 4<sup>th</sup>/beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, the specimen from “Pećine” to the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> - beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, while the fibula from the fort in Boljetin (*Smorna*) is dated to the 4<sup>th</sup> century. In general, swastika-shaped fibulae with horses’ proteomes on the Limes of *Moesia Superior* are dated from the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the middle of the 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>80</sup>

Both variants of swastika-shaped fibulae appear on the Upper Moesian Limes, primarily in the legionary camps of *Singidunum* and *Viminacium*, which indicates the existence of cavalry cohorts and/or auxiliary cavalry troops within the IV Flavia Felix and VII Claudia legions from the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, the time of Septimius Severus, until the first decade of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, ending with the reign of Arcadius. This is, at the same time, the period of intense presence of the Roman army in the forts along the Danube Limes and the major communications in *Moesia Superior*, which corresponds to the frequency of swastika fibulae.<sup>81</sup>

Taking into account the above mentioned data and the symbolism of the swastika motif, a military attribution of these fibulae seems to be reasonably argued. The fibula with horses’ proteomes from child burial G – 2059, from *Viminacium*’s necropolis of “Više grobalja”,<sup>82</sup> does not contradict this thesis, since it used to belong to the buried boy who inherited this insignia from his father, most likely a veteran in the Roman army, which is known from the case of bulbous crossbow fibulae from a later period.

It should be noted that silver plating, which appears on some specimens of type Petković 23 D, is also identified on the plate fibulae in the form of several military trumpets, belonging to type Petković 22 D. The material from which the fibula was made: copper alloy (bronze), silver or gold,<sup>83</sup> might have been used to

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80 Petković 2010, 189.

81 Petković 2010, Map 16.

82 Petković 2010, Cat. 1011, Pl. XXXIV, 3.

83 Petković 2010, Cat.No. 976, Pl. XXXII, 2, Cat.No. 978. - A fibula in the form of three war horns, Petković Type 22 D 2, from *Castra Tricornia* was made of silver and another brooch of the same variant from an unknown site, now in the National Museum in Belgrade, of gold.

denote the rank as a military insignia, or even a decoration.

The fibulae with a cast, annular bow, whose ends are bent so the fibula assumes the shape of the Greek letter  $\Omega$ , with thickenings at the ends, which can be knob-shaped or in the form of snake proteome, cone or pinecone, with the pin fixed to the bow (Petković, Group VIII, Type 28), were used to fasten the cloak on the right shoulder and can be linked to the army. They are characteristic of the Rhine and Danube Limes, Alpine provinces, Britain and Hispania, incidentally, the region considered to be the original provenance of this type.<sup>84</sup> In the Rhine basin, they were used since the Late La Tène (La Tène III) until the end of the Imperial period, and the variant with the ends shaped as pinecones is typical of the Limes in Germania and Raetia in the 2<sup>nd</sup> – first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century.<sup>85</sup>

On the Limes of Moesia Superior, this type of fibulae has been discovered in Ritopek – *Castra Tricornia*, in Viminacium, and the *Diana* and *Pontes* forts. According to the context of finds, these fibulae are dated to the 3<sup>rd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> centuries, with the possibility of a wider chronological span, from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the middle of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. A find from the grave G – 5227 in the necropolis of “Pećine” in *Viminacium* is especially significant for dating; here, a fibula of this type was discovered together with Hostilian’s coins minted in 251 together with grave goods dated in the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. (Pl. 4, 2)<sup>86</sup>

A similar type of fibula, only with spirally twisted ends, made of copper alloys and iron and of considerably smaller dimensions (Petković Group VIII, Type 29), has also been found on the Limes of *Moesia Superior*: in *Singidunum*, in *Viminacium*, and in the forts of Čezava – *Castrum Novae* and *Diana*. (Pl. 4, 3) According to the reliably dated archaeological units, it could be claimed that this type was in use on the Limes of Upper Moesia from the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the end of the 4<sup>th</sup>/beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>87</sup>

The ring-shaped fibulae with spiral ends, made of copper alloys or iron, present in the border provinces of the Empire and dated to the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup>

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84 Ettlinger 1973, 131 – 132; Rieckhoff 1973, 74; Riha 1979, 205. - These brooches were discovered in a large number in Spain, particularly in the military fort of Numantia. Also, similar brooches were ascertained among the Iberian finds from the Middle and Late La Tène (LT II – III).

85 Böhme 1972, 46, Type 50 b, Pl. 31, 1216 – 1219; Rieckhoff 1973, 74, Omegafibeln Types 1 – 2, Pl. 10, 161 – 166; Jobst 1975, 124, Typ 35, T. 49, 356 – 357.

86 Petković 2010, 223, Cat.No. 1106, Pl.XL, 3.

87 Petković 2010, 224-225, Table 7.

century, were worn by men, most likely Roman soldiers, on the right shoulder.<sup>88</sup>

In *Dacia*, fibulae of this type were used from the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, and have been registered in forts (*Porolissum*, *Feldioara*) and cities (*Apulum*, *Potaissa*).<sup>89</sup> In *Moesia Inferior*, such fibulae have been found in the forts in *Archar* (*Ratiaria*) and *Tutrakan* (*Transmarisca*).<sup>90</sup>

Another type of ring fibulae can be linked to the frontier army of *Moesia Superior* -with a cast, closed annular bow, ending in a cast foot in the form of a frame shaped like the Latin letter U or V (Petković type 30 A), in a rectangular shape, with a rectangular plate at the end (Petković type 30 B) and in a rectangular form or U- or V- shaped, with raised volutes or bird proteomes (Petković type 30 C). At the transition of the bow to foot, there are symmetrical protuberances which serve as pin-rests. The fibulae of this type can be made of silver or of copper alloys (bronze, brass). Interestingly, the specimens made of copper alloys often have a massive iron pin. Also, the larger diameter of these fibulae (4-7 cm) indicates that they were used to fasten thick and long woollen garments (*sagum*), possibly even fur cloaks. The hypotheses that these fibulae are girdle fasteners or the belt buckles of military equipment are, for the time being, not backed by sufficient material evidence and they remain at the level of speculation.<sup>91</sup>

A type of closed annular fibula with a cast foot in the form of a frame appears from the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century on the Rhine Limes, in *Raetia* and *Noricum*, but they are characteristic of *Pannonia*.<sup>92</sup> The fibulae from this region are dated to the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> - the first half of the 4th century by Ilona Sellye, according to the analysis of grave finds.<sup>93</sup> However, the statement of the same author that these fibulae do not exist in *Dacia* and are very rare in *Moesia Superior* is not accurate.<sup>94</sup>

In *Dacia*, such fibulae have been discovered in the layers formed after the Mar-

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88 Keller 1971, 55 - 56; Böhme 1972, 46, Type 51 b - c, Pl. 31, 1226 - 1231; Jobst 1975, 125, Type 36 A, Pl. 49, 358 - 359, Pl. 50, Pl. 51, 367; Riha 1979, 209, Type 8. 2. 4, Pl. 69, 1834, 1836; Feugere 1985, 421, Type 30 g 1 - 2.

89 Cociş 2004, 130 - 131, Types 28 a 4, 28 b 2, Pl. CXII, 1579 - 1580, 1582, 1586.

90 Genčeva 2004, 77, Type 35, Pl. XXVIII, 6.

91 Petković 2010, 226-227.

92 Böhme 1972, 46, Note 369, Type 51 d, T. 31, 1232 - 1233; Jobst 1975, 125 - 126, Note 548, Type 36 B, Pl. 51, 368 - 372, Pl. 52, 373 - 374; Sellye 1990, 18 - 26.

93 Sellye 1990, 26 - 27.

94 Sellye 1990, 18 - 19.

comannic Wars, and were used until the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century.<sup>95</sup> A large bronze fibula from the Feldioara fort, with the foot decorated with a realistically represented pair of horse's proteomes<sup>96</sup> is an exceptionally interesting find. Similarly to swastika fibulae with horses' proteomes, this one could also have been the denotation of cavalry troops, *equites*.

On the Limes of *Moesia Superior*, seven fibulae of this type have been discovered: one in *Singidunum* (Petković type 30 B) (Pl. 4, 4), five in *Viminacium* (one belonging to type Petković 30A, three belonging to 30 B and one to 30 C type) (Pl. 4, 5-8) and one fragmented specimen at *Pontes*. According to the archaeological context, on the Limes of *Moesia Superior* they are dated to the 3<sup>rd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> centuries. A fibula of 30 B type was found in the necropolis of "Više grobalja" in *Viminacium*, in the layer from the first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century and at the site of the "Thermae" in *Viminacium*, a specimen of the same variant was found in the layer dated to the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> - beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> century by the coins of Probus, Aurelian and Maximian. At *Pontes*, a fibula belonging to type 30 was found in the layer from the first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>97</sup>

The foot of the silver specimen from *Viminacium* can be interpreted as a symmetrical pair of dolphins, touching tails, whose proteomes are located at the beginning of the bow. If the assumption that this fibula from *Viminacium* contains a representation of dolphins is true, it could have been the official denotation of the members of Moesian navy on the Danube, *classis Flavia Moesiaca*.<sup>98</sup>

The foot of a fibula from the "Pirivoj" necropolis in *Viminacium* consists of a pair of birds of prey (eagles?) or gryphons, which could also denote a certain military unit (Pl. 4, 8).<sup>99</sup>

Several types of military fibulae can be identified within the group of the arched fibulae (Petković Group IX), which emerged in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century and is characterised by a high semicircular arched bow and a horizontal foot, most often shorter than the bow and rectangular, trapezoidal or rhomboid in shape, with a flat, rectangular catch plate, or one cylindrically, bent in relation to the foot.

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95 Cociş 2004, 129 – 130, Type 27 b, Pl. CXI, 1568 – 1572.

96 Cociş 2004, Pl. CXI, 1572.

97 Petković 2010, 227.

98 Petković 2010, Cat.No. 1135, Pl. XLII, 6; Петровић 1991, 207 *et seq.*

99 Petković 2010, Cat.No. 1137, Pl. XLIII, 2.

The types of fibulae which were institutionalised in the Roman army or the administrative system of the late Empire are primarily the arched crossbow bulbous fibulae (Petković Type 34), most likely the hinge T – fibulae (Petković Type 32), which are their predecessors, then arched fibulae with one knob above the spring (Petković Type 31 D), as well as arched fibulae with a spring and support buttress in the form of a trident (Petković type 31E) and fibulae with the bow in the form of a “fork”, i.e. Neptune’s trident (Petković Type 33), the last two being related to the Danubian fleet (*classis Flavia Pannonica*, *classis Flavia Moesiaca*).

Nevertheless, only in the case of arched crossbow bulbous fibulae are there sufficient archaeological and visual art confirmations that they were an official element of military uniform,<sup>100</sup> while military attribution of other types remains at the level of a hypothesis.

The type known as T- shaped fibulae (Petković Type 31) consists of arched fibulae with a spiral head, whose form resembles the letter T, also known in the scientific literature as the crossbow fibulae (Armbrustfibeln). This type of fibulae of simple form, with a spiral head and highly arched cast bow, developed from the early Roman fibulae of the middle and late La Tène scheme. Seemingly homogenous, the type of T-shaped fibulae actually includes a variety of shapes and ornaments of the bow foot and catch plate.

T-shaped fibulae with one knob (Petković Type 31 D) are mainly made of copper alloys, rarely silver, and have larger dimensions (6-8.5 cm). The fibulae of this variant have a head formed by a transversally hammered beginning of the bow, with perforation for the spring axis and a spring with eight to eighteen coils, which can have an internal or external chord. The ends of the axis can have knobs, while the knob at the beginning of the bow above the spring is most often found in a variety of forms of a pinecone, sphere or a double sphere, or a semicircular shape, in the form of an axe blade. The cast, highly arched bow has a trapezoidal or, in rare cases, triangular cross section; it is sometimes decorated by faceting or an incised X- letter motif, while the foot is rectangular, with a hollow-channel catch, most often decorated by faceting. (Pl.5, 1-4).<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Petković 2011, 121-125.

<sup>101</sup> Petković 2010, 232.

D. Bojović named such fibulae “arched fibulae with a single bulb”, which is accepted in the local scientific literature,<sup>102</sup> while foreign authors of works on fibulae use Oscar Almgren’s term “arched fibulae with a knob”, that is, *Bügelknopffibeln*.<sup>103</sup> The accepted opinion is that this type represents a Germanic form of fibulae created during the 4<sup>th</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> centuries under the influence of the Early Imperial “legionary” brooches (Petković group I, Type 1A – B), Roman T-shaped hinge fibulae (Petković Group IX, Type 32) and the Late Roman arched crossbow bulbous fibulae (Petković group IX, type 34).<sup>104</sup> On the other hand, it is evident that T-shaped fibulae diverged into a series of separate types, typical of Germanic tribes,<sup>105</sup> during the Migration Period, in the 5<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> centuries.

It is evident that the barbarians, primarily the eastern Germanic tribes, recruited into the Roman army of the border provinces, wore Petković type 31D fibulae, which is supported by a large number of finds from the forts on the Roman Limes on the Rhine and Danube.

On the Upper Moesian Limes, this type has been found in *Singidunum* and *Viminacium*, and the forts in Ritopek – *Castra Tricornia*, on Čezava – *Castrum Novae*, in Tekija – *Transdierna*, on Karataš – *Diana*, Trajan’s bridge – *Pontes*, in Rtkovo and in Velesnica. Taking into consideration the number of specimens discovered in the fort of *Diana*, they could have been produced there, locally. The analysis of the archaeological context of the finds of Petković type 31D fibulae from the Limes of *Moesia Superior* determined the chronological span of their dating, from the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the middle of the 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>106</sup>

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102 Bojović 1983, 76.

103 Almgren 1923, 75, 185 – 186, Pl. VIII.

104 Bojović 1983, 74 – 77, Types 33 and 34; Voß 1998, 271 – 276.

105 Schulze - Dörrlamm 1986, 689 – 697.

106 The majority of this type of fibulae from Upper Moesia has been discovered in the horizon from the last quarter of 4<sup>th</sup> – the first half of 5<sup>th</sup> century, in the fortification of Romuliana at Gamzigrad, i.e. 10 specimens. This testifies to the presence of a military unit in the Late Roman Romuliana, an imperial domain of that time. Archaeological research revealed several craftsmen’s workshops as well as economical objects, like granaries and storehouses in this horizon of Romuliana, which indicates the existence of a strategic centre for the supply of the Roman army on the Limes. At the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, the population of Romuliana was composed of barbarians and local inhabitants from surrounding villages, who, besides agriculture and artisan production, also had certain military obligations. It is reasonable to suppose that fibulae of Petković type 31 D were locally produced. – Petković 2010, 234.

The grave finds from the necropolises of *Viminacium* are of special significance in defining the chronology of Petković type 31D: in the necropolis of “Više grobalja”, in the grave G – 424, a fibula of this variant was found on the left shoulder of the decedent, while in the area around the pelvis there were severely damaged coins from the second third of the 4<sup>th</sup> century; specimens of this variant were also registered in the necropolis of “Pećine” – in the grave G – 4816, with several inhumated individuals, dated according to the coins and other grave goods to the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, and in the grave G – 431, dated to the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century.<sup>107</sup>

The finds of arched fibulae with one knob from *Moesia Superior* could be linked to the standing frontier army on the Danube Limes (*limitanei*), so their chronological span would be defined by two historical events: the renewal of the Limes in the period of the first Roman Tetrarchy and the destruction of the Danube frontier by the Huns, from year 441 to 443. In any case, this type was worn by men, on the right or left shoulder, where they fastened a military cloak (*paludamentum, sagum*).<sup>108</sup>

Arched fibulae with a spring mechanism and a flat transverse buttress with three lugs, so that their shape resembles Neptune’s trident (Petković Type 31E), have a triangular cross-section of the bow, three protuberances or triangle-shaped thickenings where the bow merges into a rectangular or trapezoidal foot, and a rectangular catch plate, which is shorter than the foot. The wide spring, which has not been preserved on any of the discovered specimens, was placed under the flat transverse with three lugs, which on some specimens ended in knob shapes, the “bulbs”. These fibulae have larger dimensions (6.5 – 7.5 cm) and are made of copper alloys (Pl. 6, 1-3)

This variant is typical of the Danube Limes of *Pannonia Secunda*, *Moesia Prima* and *Dacia Ripensis*, and dated from the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the middle of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. On the Limes of *Moesia Superior*, they have been discovered in the forts of Sapaja – *Translederata*, *Diana*, *Pontes* and Prahovo – *Aquae*.<sup>109</sup> A. Jovanović maintains that these fibulae are typical of the period of Tetrarchy, the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, and that they could have been the denotation of members of the Danubian navy.<sup>110</sup> On the other hand, J. Kovačević dates the fibula

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107 Petković 2010, 233.

108 The grave finds from *Viminacium*, mentioned above, testify to this.

109 Petković 2010, 234-235.

110 Jovanović 1995, 158 – 165, Figs. 1 – 2, Map 1.



Figure 4: Type Petković 32, National Museum in Belgrade.

from Sapaja to the 5<sup>th</sup> century, the Migration Period.<sup>111</sup> However, the dating of Petković Type 31D brooches spans exactly across the chronological period given by both authors, from the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup>/beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> century until the middle of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. Also, the hypothesis that such fibulae were the denotation of the navy on the middle Danube seems to be plausible. Most likely, they were produced locally, possibly in *Diana*, where two specimens have been discovered.<sup>112</sup>

Arched hinge T- fibulae (Petković Type 32) are typical of the provincial production of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century in the frontier regions throughout the Empire (Fig. 4).<sup>113</sup> It is considered that these are military fibulae, which appeared on the Rhine and Danube Limes during the reign of Septimius Severus, around the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. They were produced until the period of the first Tetrarchy, i.e. Diocletian's time, when, during the final decades of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, they were replaced by

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111 Ковачевић 1966, 37, Fig. 76.

112 Petković 2010, 235.

113 Kovrig 1937, 125, XII Group, Pl. XVII, 171 – 173, 175 – 176, XIII Group, Pl. XVIII, 182, 184 – 186; Böhme 1972, 26 – 28, Type 28, Pl. 16, 698 – 706, Pls. 17 – 20, Find-lists 25 – 28; Jobst 1975, 87 – 91, Type 25, Pl. 28, 209 – 214, Pl. 29, Pl. 30, 222 – 224; Riha 1979, 166 – 168, Type 6. 4, Pl. 49, 1430 – 1432, Pl. 50, Pl. 51, 1445 – 1446; Cociş 2004, 148 – 154, Type 39, Pl. CXLVI, 2003 – 2007, Pl. CXLVII – CLXVI; Genčeva 2004, Type 23 a – b, Pl. XIX, 2 – 9.

arched crossbow bulbous fibulae.<sup>114</sup> It is also considered that the arched crossbow bulbous fibulae developed directly from the arched T-shaped hinge fibulae.<sup>115</sup>

On the Limes of *Moesia Superior*, they have been discovered in *Singidunum*, *Viminacium*, Ritopek – *Castra Tricornia*, Čezava – *Castrum Novae*, Ravna – *Camps*, Tekija – *Transdierna*, *Diana*, *Pontes* and Rtkovo. A high concentration of this type of fibulae is registered in the necropolises in *Viminacium* and the forts of *Castra Tricornia* and *Diana*, which are most likely the locations of their production.<sup>116</sup>

An equally significant number of silver fibulae of Petković Type 32 are the feature of these kinds of finds from *Moesia Superior* and *Pannonia Inferior*. Almost one fifth of these fibulae are made of silver.<sup>117</sup>

It could be assumed that T-shaped hinge fibulae were worn by the soldiers on the Danube Limes in Upper Moesia, which is testified to by a large number of their finds in the forts, but also by women, which is indicated by the finds from *Viminacium*. Besides, a high concentration of these fibulae in the necropolises of the province's capital points to their civilian character. Thus, the possibility of their official use in the Roman army still remains questionable.

Three arched “fork-shaped” fibulae with a hinge mechanism (Petković Type 33C) come from *Viminacium* (Pl. 6, 4). One was discovered in a cremation burial G 1 – 329 in the necropolis of “Više grobalja”, together with fragments of a silver mirror and an iron object (handle of a chest?), dated to the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> - first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, while two others were discovered at the site of “Pećine”, where one of them comes from the waste pit of a ceramic workshop, in operation during the 3<sup>rd</sup> century.

The analogous specimens for these fibulae come from *Pannonia* and *Dacia*.<sup>118</sup> The specimens from *Viminacium* correspond to the accepted chronological framework of this variant, the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> - first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century.<sup>119</sup>

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114 von Patek 1942, 145; Jobst 1975, 87 – 88.

115 Kovrig 1937, 125 – 126; Keller 1971, 27; Pröttel 1988, 352, Abb. 1, 1 – 2.

116 Petković 2010, 246-247.

117 Cociş 2004, 226 – 227, Cat.Nos. 2136 – 2138, 2154, 2167. – There is a relatively small number of silver hinge T – brooches deriving from *Dacia*: 3 from Potaissa, one from Porolissum and one from the hoard of silver items in Aţel.

118 Kovrig 1939, 77, Pl. XVII, 180; Cociş 2004, 137, Type 34a2a, Pl. CXVI, 1640 – 1651.

119 Cociş 2004, 137.

In *Dacia*, Petković type 33C fibulae have been discovered only within the forts, which points to their military attribution.<sup>120</sup> Under the assumption that they represent a stylised Neptune's trident (*tridentum*), they could be the navy denotation, *classis*. In that case, the specimens from *Viminacium* would have been worn by the members of *classis Flavia Moesiaca*.<sup>121</sup>

Arched crossbow bulbous fibulae (Petković type 34), also named bulbous knob-shaped (Zwiebelknopffibeln) or crossbow-shaped fibulae (crossbow fibulae), after the characteristic form of their head,<sup>122</sup> have a hinge mechanism on the head, comprised of a long bar, transversely positioned in relation to the bow at a right angle, and three knobs - one at the beginning of the bow and two at the ends of the bar. The bow has the form of a high arch, triangular or trapezoidal in cross-section, while the foot is rectangular or trapezoidal. The hollow-channel type catch can have different forms of pin holder.<sup>123</sup>

The bow, and especially the foot of this type, is often richly decorated by faceting, incision, stamping or goldsmithing techniques, such as *niello* or insertion of silver or gold foil ribbons along the bow and/or foot, decorated by toreutic vegetal motifs or engraving and *niello*. Also, the fibulae of this type can be decorated by granulation, filigree or pseudo-filigree. Very rarely, the decorative pierced openwork technique on gold or silver sheets, *opus interrasile*,<sup>124</sup> appears on the crossbow fibulae.

Arched crossbow fibulae were produced in three different ways: by casting in a mould, shaping fibula parts by hammering metal sheets and soldering them together, and by the combined method of casting the bow with the upper part of the foot and adding other parts made of hammered metal sheets. This type of fibula was predominantly made of copper alloys, but gold and silver specimens also appear fairly frequently. Also, fibulae made of copper alloys are often gilded or silver-plated.<sup>125</sup>

The very materials crossbow fibulae are made of, their relative uniformity, as well as their respective frequency in the forts on the Limes indicate their official use

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120 Cociş 2004, 212 - 213, Type 34a2a. – in the fortifications of Porolissum, Potaissa, Işua, Buciumi, Razboieni, Comalau, Vraţiţa and Apahida.

121 Petrović 1991, 207 *et seq.*

122 Bojović 1983, 82, type 37; Јовановић 1975, 235 *et seq.*

123 Petković 2010, 259.

124 Petković 2010, 259-260.

125 Petković 2010, 260-261.

in the Late Roman army and administration. This is also confirmed by the portraits of Roman Emperors, military commanders and dignitaries, with a cape fastened by a crossbow fibula, with foot facing up, on the right shoulder: the representation of Emperor Galerius on the triumphal arch in Thessaloniki,<sup>126</sup> marble statue of the Tetrarch in the National Museum in Belgrade,<sup>127</sup> the representation of a dignitary (*togati*) on the pedestal of the Obelisk of Theodosius in Istanbul,<sup>128</sup> the representation of Stilicho in the consular diptych from Monza<sup>129</sup> and of Constantius III in the consular diptych from Halberstadt, the representations of the escorts of Emperor Justinian I and Empress Theodora in the mosaic in the apse of the Basilica of San Vitale in Ravenna,<sup>130</sup> and the representations of commanders in the Roman army or state administration officers in tomb frescoes and tombstones of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>131</sup>

It has been ascertained that the Emperor gave this type of fibulae personally to military commanders and administration dignitaries on the occasion of public holidays (*dies imperii*) and the anniversary of his reign (*vota*).<sup>132</sup> It is assumed that they were produced in the Imperial workshops, which travelled across the Empire together with the Emperor.<sup>133</sup>

Crossbow fibulae can be divided into seven variants according to their form, decoration and the technology of their production, which correspond to rather precisely dated historical periods of the Late Roman Empire, as confirmed by the archaeological context of certain finds and their statistical, typological and stratigraphic-chronological analysis.<sup>134</sup>

The oldest variant of bulbous crossbow fibulae (Keller Type, Pröttel Type, Petković type 34A) are the arched fibulae with plastic, pinecone-shaped bulbs on the head, a cylindrical bar of round or polygonal cross section, a bow which is trian-

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126 Theune-Grosskopf 1995, 86, Fig.58; Janes 1998, 388, Note. 9.

127 Томовић 1997, 420 – 421, Figs. 1 – 2, Figs. 5 – 6.

128 Pröttel 1988, 371, Fig. 9, 1.

129 Volbach 1958, 57.

130 Volbach 1958, 166.

131 Zabehlicky 1980, 1101 – 1103, ; Theune – Grosskopf 1995, 83 – 87; Figs. 55 and 59; Ivčević 2001, 165, Fig. 1; Јовановић 2007, 112 – 113, Fig. 15, 6; Pop – Lazić 2009, 166 – 168, Fig. 7.

132 Theune-Grosskopf 1995, 84 – 89; Janes 1998, 388 – 390; Diaconescu 1999, 205 – 217, Pl. 1, 1 – 2, Pl. 2, 1, Pl. 4, 3.

133 Васић 2001, 195 – 197.

134 Petković 2010, 263-275.

gular or trapezoidal in cross section and a rectangular foot, or a foot which tapers towards the end, decorated with facets or incisions. Among the brooches of this variant, there are also some luxurious specimens, made of precious metals, gold and silver, such as the gold fibula from Romuliana, found in the tomb of Galerius' dignitary.<sup>135</sup> According to the specimens found within reliably dated archaeological units, it can be assumed that Petković type 34A fibulae were used from the period of the First Tetrarchy until the end of the joint rule of Constantine I and Licinius, i.e. in the period from 293 to 324 AD.<sup>136</sup>

On the Limes of *Moesia Superior*, this type is most frequent in *Viminacium*, specifically, in the necropolis of "Pećine" (8 specimens), (Pl. 6, 5-6) two fibulae of this type have been discovered in *Singidunum*, one in Ritopek – *Castra Tricornia*, while three specimens have been discovered in Čezava-*Castrum Novae*. Nevertheless, compared to the other variants of bulbous crossbow fibulae, Petković type 34A is relatively rare on the Upper Moesian Limes (comprising 10% of the total number of crossbow fibula finds). This could be explained by the fact that Roman military officers were not awarded this variant very often, that is, it was meant to be a decoration or insignia for the commanders in the army or high-ranking officers. This is illustrated by the find of a gold fibula from the tomb of a dignitary of Galerius' palace *Felix Romuliana*, most likely *Aurelianus domesticus*, whose tombstone was also discovered in Gamzigrad.<sup>137</sup> This hypothesis is also supported by the specimens made of gold, silver and copper alloy, which most likely, depending on the metal they were made of, denoted the rank of their owners.<sup>138</sup>

The crossbow fibulae of the next variant (Keller Type 2, Pröttel Type 2, Petković Type 34B) have on head bulbs in the form of fluted pinecones, a cylindrical bar of round or polygonal cross-section, symmetrically profiled with volutes or bird proteomes. The bow is triangular or trapezoidal in cross-section and, in some cases, it has a triangular, leaf-shaped thickening on the transition into the foot. The foot is rectangular, or tapers towards the end, and it can be decorated with

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135 Petković 2009, 253-261, Figs. 8-9; Petković 2011, 126-127, Pl. I, 2, Cat.9, Fig.8

136 Petković 2010, 261, Table 10; Petković 2011, 120-123, Table 2.

137 Mirković 1997, 431-433, Figs. 3, 7; Petković 2009, 261-262, Fig. 27.

138 Petković 2010, 278, Cat. Nos. 1368 and 1369, Fig. 84. – In the National Museum in Belgrade, there are one silver and another golden fibula of Petković type 34 A 2, both decorated in *niello* technique.

facets - sub variant 1, by incisions and circular impressions, “eyelets” - sub variant 2 or impressed peltae - sub variant 3. They were made by casting, sometimes with added parts made of hammered metal sheet, such as the bulbs on the head, the leaf-shaped raised work on the joint of the bow and foot, or the pin catch plate in the foot. The fibulae of this variant, as well as of the previous one, can also be luxurious, gilded and decorated in the *niello* technique, especially the last sub variant, in which the foot is decorated with two or three pairs of peltae.<sup>139</sup> (Figs. 5-6)

These luxurious fibulae have been registered in the cities of *Moesia Prima*, *Sigidunum*, *Viminacium* and *Horreum Margi*, the first two of which were also legionary camps on the Danube Limes. Besides these locations, they have also been found in the forts on the Limes of *Moesia Prima* and *Dacia Ripensis*: Ritopek – *Castra Tricornia*, Sapaja – *Translederata*, Kladovo – Donje Butorke, Rtkovo – Glamija, Mihajlovac – “Blato” – *Clevora*. According to the grave finds, the brooches of Petković type 34B can be dated to the time of the rule of Constantine I and his dynasty, from 311 to 361/363 AD.<sup>140</sup>

The variant of bulbous crossbow fibulae Petković type 34B was also intended for the high-ranking military and administration officers of the Empire. The specimens made of precious metals and the inscriptions on this type of fibulae, both testify to this kind of usage. Namely, some of the specimens of Petković type 34 B contain inscriptions in which Caesar, Augustus or *vota* are mentioned; they are associated with imperial propaganda during the reign of Licinius and Constantine I, at the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>141</sup> The fibulae with inscriptions were awarded on the occasions of imperial anniversaries or important events, such as victory in the battle against barbarians or political enemies.

One fibula of variant Petković 34 B 3 made of copper alloy and gilded, was found in the Viminacium necropolis of “Pećine” in the grave G – 786 with a fragmented buckle from a military belt made of copper alloy.<sup>142</sup> (Pl. 7; Fig. 5) The buckle belongs to the type with rectangular metal fittings and a round frame, with a prong which extends over the frame and has raised work in the form of a snake’s head at the end,

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<sup>139</sup> Petković 2010, 263-264, Cat.Nos. 1409–1410, 1412–1415, Pl. LVII, 1–2, Pl. LVIII, 1–2.

<sup>140</sup> Petković 2010, 264.

<sup>141</sup> Ivanovski 1987, 81 *et seq*; Мирковић 1989, 39 *et seq*; Васић 2002, 93 *et seq*.

<sup>142</sup> Спасић-Ђурић 2008, 411-413, Fig. 5; Petković 2010, Cat.No. 1414.



Figure 5: Type Petković 34 B 3, "Pećine" – *Viminacium*.



Figure 6: Type Petković 34 B 3, "Kod Bresta" – *Viminacium*.

dated to the last quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> - first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>143</sup> This find indicates the military character of Petković type 34 B fibulae. The gilded fibula most likely belonged to the commander of an auxiliary regiment recruited among the “barbarians” from the left bank of the Danube, considering the find of the buckle, typical of the finds of the Chernyakhov – Sintana de Mureş culture. This commander of an *auxillia* could have been awarded the fibula for the military success of his regiment.

Fibulae of Petković type 34 B are very frequent on the Danube Limes in *Moesia Prima* and *Dacia Ripensis* (comprising 16% of all crossbow fibulae) and, in all likelihood, they reflect the renewal of the Limes during the time of Constantine I and the Constantinian dynasty.<sup>144</sup>

The “imperial fibulae” represent an outstandingly luxurious variant of bulbous crossbow fibulae, and they appear in a small number (Keller Type 5, Pröttel Type 5, Petković Type 34C). They were produced using the combined technique of casting the corpus (part of the head, bow and part of the foot) and the application of the other parts made of hammered metal sheets. The head features three massive bulbs (knobs) and a profiled, short bar. The wide, short bow with a trapezoidal cross-section is decorated with a longitudinal ribbon with an engraved “fir twig” motif - sub variant 1, geometric and vegetal motifs – sub variant 2, or the previously listed motifs combined with portrait medallions in the *niello* technique and a rectangular foot decorated in the same way as the bow, with stamped peltae or rims profiled with a series of peltae - sub variant 3. (Pl. 8, 1, Pl. 9, 1, Fig. 7)

On the Danube, only the variants 1 and 2 of this type of brooches have been registered, at the sites of *Singidunum*, *Viminacium*, Ravna – *Campsia* and Prahovo – *Aquae*.<sup>145</sup> The largest number of Petković type 34C fibulae comes from the burials at the necropolises of *Viminacium* (4 specimens). Among them, the most interesting is the bronze, gilded fibula from *Aquae*, kept in the National Museum in Belgrade, with an encircled Christogram at the end of the foot, rendered in the silver damascene technique.<sup>146</sup> (Pl. 7, 5, Fig. 8) The circumstances of this find are, unfortunately, unknown; yet, it could be assumed that it comes from a tomb from the Late Roman necropolis of *Aquae*, where burials of officers of the Roman army

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143 Petković et al. 2005, 89-90, buckle type III A, Fig. 18 d.

144 Petrović, Vasić 1996, 21-22.

145 Petković 2010, 264.

146 Petković 2010, Cat.No. 1423, Fig. 87.



Figure 7: Type Petković 34 C 2 b, “Pećine” – *Viminacium*.



Figure 8: Type Petković 34 C 1 b, Prahovo – *Aquae*.

have been registered.<sup>147</sup>

In the *Viminacium* – “Pećine” necropolis, fibulae of variant Petković 34 C 2b, made of copper alloy and gilded, have been discovered in two graves.<sup>148</sup> In both of

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<sup>147</sup> Jovanović Đ. 1996.

<sup>148</sup> Спасић-Ђурић 2008, 413-419, Figs. 6-7; Petković 2010, 265, Cat.Nos. 1431-1432. - These fibulae were discovered in the “Pećine” necropolis at *Viminacium*, in graves G – 5382 and G – 5594.

them, parts of military belt sets, which can generally be dated to the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, have also been discovered.<sup>149</sup> (Pls. 8-9)

According to the analysis of the archaeological context of Petković type 34 C fibulae from the Danube Limes, they can be dated from the second third to the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, i.e. in the historical context from the last years of the rule of Constantine I until the end of the reign of Theodosius I, 330-395 AD.

On the Limes of *Moesia Prima* and *Dacia Ripensis*, the most frequent variant of fibulae is Petković 34 D (Keller Type 3, Pröttel Type 3 / 4), with prominent plastic bulb endings on the head, a triangular profiled bar on both sides of the bow, which is triangular or trapezoidal in cross-section, with incised decoration lengthwise. The foot is long, rectangular or trapezoidal, decorated with facets - sub variant 1, stamped “eyelet” motifs - sub variant 2, stamped peltae - sub variant 3, or triangular, rectangular or oval indentations along the sides - sub variant 4. Ornamentation in the form of stamped “eyelet” motifs can be symmetrically distributed along the rims of the foot or grouped into pairs at the beginning and at the end of the foot, but it is impossible to determine any sort of regularity by its analysis.<sup>150</sup> These fibulae were made of cast copper alloys, exceptionally rarely, only on two specimens from Viminacium’s “Pećine” necropolis, there is gilt and on one of them even a *niello* decoration.<sup>151</sup> (Fig. 9) It has already been mentioned that variant Petković 34 D represents the most frequent fibulae on the Limes; specifically, they comprise almost a half of these finds, 44%. From the analysis of the specimens with a reliable archaeological context, primarily from the necropolises of Viminacium, they can be dated to the period from the reign of Valentinian I and Valens until the downfall of the Roman army after the defeat in the Battle of Adrianople, i.e. the beginning of the reign of Theodosius I, 364 – 380 AD.<sup>152</sup>

A somewhat younger variant of bulbous crossbow fibulae, Petković type 34 E (Keller Type 4, Pröttel Type 3/4) is also rather frequent on the Danube Limes of *Moesia Prima* and *Dacia Ripensis* (comprising one fifth, i.e. 20.5% of all crossbow fibulae). The brooches of this variant are similar to the specimens of variant Pet-

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149 Petković et al. 2005, 89, 93, buckle type II, Figs. 18 b-c, belt-end type I, Fig. 19 a.

150 Petković 2011, 123, Pl. II, Table 2.

151 Petković 2010, kat. 1447, 1573, T. XLV, 2, sl. 95. – These fibulae were discovered in the “Pećine” necropolis at Viminacium, in graves G – 1178 and G – 3791.

152 Petković 2010, 267-268.



Figure 9: Type Petković 34 D 3, "Pećine" – *Viminacium*.

ković 34 D,<sup>153</sup> but they have a bigger and shorter bow, while their foot is wider and longer. They have large, plastic bulb-shaped ends on the head, and a profiled triangular bar. The wide bow, trapezoidal in cross section, has a longitudinally incised decoration, while the long rectangular foot is also decorated in the same way with the addition of stamped "eyelet" motifs - sub variant 1, stamped peltae - sub variant 2, triangular, rectangular or oval indentations along the sides - sub variant 3, or a silver sheet ribbon, extending along the bow and the foot, with an incised vine motif, occasionally filled with *niello*, and a series of "eyelet" motifs or stamped circles along the rims - sub variant 4. The ornament in the form of longitudinal ribbons on the bow and foot, filled with a variety of incised and stamped motifs - transverse or oblique lines, triangles, circles, chevrons or curved lines, braid, vine or their combination is characteristic of this variant. This gives a decorative aspect and, in a way, a "baroque" abundance of ornament to the entire fibula.<sup>154</sup> (Figs. 10-12)

The fibulae of this variant have been registered in *Singidunum*, *Castra Tricornia*, *Viminacium*, on Čezava – *Castrum Novae*, Karataš – *Diana*, and in Kladovo.<sup>155</sup>

One find from *Viminacium* stands out among the fibulae of variant Petković 34 E 2. This bronze, gilded fibula has a wide bow, trapezoidal in cross-section and decorated in the *niello* technique with a longitudinal ribbon with a "fir twig" motif, while in the middle there are two rhombuses with a dot in the centres and volutes

153 Keller 1971, Type 4, a, c, Figs. 11, 9, 11; Pröttel 1988, 357 – 364, Type 3 / 4, Figs. 4a - b.

154 Petković 2010, 268-269. –In the decoration of this type of crossbow fibulae the phenomenon of horror vacui could be observed.

155 Petković 2010, 271.

Figure 10: Type Petković 34 E 2, “Pećine” – *Viminacium*.



between them, representing a pair of eyes with apotropaic symbolism (Egyptian Wadjet eye, i.e. the Eye of Horus). The long rectangular foot is decorated lengthwise in the *niello* technique, with a ribbon containing an engraved representation of a chimerical creature, a demon with a snake-like body and a head with lop ears or loop earrings and a pair of horns (or two long rays on the scalp and two shorter ones on each side). This creature is wearing a torc with a solar, ray-shaped symbol around its neck, and is surrounded by lush vegetation. The foot is faceted and decorated with three pairs of peltae and volutes at its end. (Fig. 13) The fibula was discovered in the necropolis of “Pećine”, in the grave G – 3123, together with a ceramic jug and a glass goblet from the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> - first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. (Pl. 10)

The imaginary creature represented on the fibula could be Silvanus, schematically rendered after the model of the iconography of this deity in the province of *Dalmatia*.<sup>156</sup> A fragment of a ceramic icon with a similarly represented forest deity is kept in the Museum of Mining and Metallurgy in Bor.<sup>157</sup>

Nevertheless, taking into account the representation of the Eye of Horus, i.e. Wadjet eye, it can be assumed that the figural motif represents a Gnostic demon Chnoubis (Χνουβις), represented as a chimerical animal with the lion's or human head with a nimbus/diadem of light rays and serpent body.<sup>158</sup> Created within

<sup>156</sup> Zotović R. 1994, 178 – 179, Fig. 1.

<sup>157</sup> I express my gratitude to the custodian of the Museum of Mining and Metallurgy in Bor, Marija Jovičić, for this information.

<sup>158</sup> Bonner 1951, 325 –326, 340, Pl. 96, 20, Pl. 97, 21-23, 28, Pl. 99, 65-67, Pl. 100, 68; Desen, Nagy



Figure 12: Type Petković 34 E 2, "Pećine" – *Viminacium*.

the elaborate Gnostic ideology, this solar demon, associated with Abraxas, had a strong apotropaic power against poison and heart and stomach diseases.<sup>159</sup>

In synergy with Wadjet eye, Chnoubis provided good health, protection from black magic and poison, and power. This could be a desirable magical protective combination for a local dignitary of the army or administration in *Viminacium*.

The third possibility is that this fibula is a falsification of the "imperial fibulae" type with portraits of rulers or saints, in which the craftsman copied the representations seen on Petković type 34 C 3 fibulae, which he did not understand. On the other hand, the exceptional workmanship of the fibula, its gilt and the elaborate *niello* drawing make this presumption barely tenable.

There remains a likelihood that the specimen from *Viminacium* was a parody of the official imperial cult, or the response of the Gnostic "opposition" to the imperial propaganda. In that case, the fibula would have been commissioned and worn by a very influential and daring individual, ready to oppose the official imperial ideology of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, inclined to Christianity. In that sense, this fibula might perhaps be associated with the reign of Julian the Apostate, i.e. the brief period of pagan restoration.

According to the aforesaid, it could be claimed that the hermetical or Gnostic concept of the ornament of the *Viminacium* fibula is, in a way, a synthesis of all mystical "learnings" of the Roman Empire of that day- Egyptian, Judaic, Oriental,

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2012, 293 –294, Figs. 1 –3.

159 Bakowska- Czerner 2015, 30 –31, Fig. 4; 303 –307.

Figure 11: Type Petković 34 E 2, Kladovo.



Dionysian and Neo-Pythagorean.<sup>160</sup> In any case, in the time of religious-ideological turbulence of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, Gnostic symbols are to be expected in iconography, besides the Dionysian and Christian ones.

The find from the grave G-3122 from the “Pećine” necropolis in *Viminacium*, discovered together with a buckle of a military belt with oval plating and a frame with the prong exceeding the length of the frame, typical of the last quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> and first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, testifies to the military character of type Petković 34 E fibulae. (Pl. 11)<sup>161</sup>

The latest variant of bulbous crossbow fibulae is Petković type 34 F (Keller Type 6, Pröttel Type 6), which appeared around the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. According to the technology of production, the copper alloy cast body of the fibula with applied remaining parts made of metal sheets, bulbs, the foot and the catch plate; it can be assumed that it developed out of Petković type 34 C. It differs from the earlier type of “imperial fibulae” by its large, fluted bulbs and a very long foot, with sides profiled with peltae. (Fig. 14) This variant of fibulae has been found only on three sites along the Limes of *Moesia Prima*, in *Sigidunum*, *Viminacium*, and in the fort of Ravna - *Campsia*, and only as few as 4 specimens.<sup>162</sup>

The dating of Petković type 34 F can, according to the scarce finds with an established archaeological context on the Danubian Limes, be placed within the span from the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> to the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, the historical framework corresponding to the period from the beginning of Arcadius’ reign until the end of the reign of Theodosius II, 395–450 AD.<sup>163</sup>

This type of fibulae is typical of the Eastern Roman Empire (*Pars Orientalis*), that is, all provinces under the rule of East Roman emperors. In the context of the military reforms from this period, Petković type 34F fibulae were most likely worn by the commanders of cavalry troops, *pseudocomitatenses*.

The gilded fibula from the grave G – 1033 in *Viminacium* – the “Pećine” necropolis has the bow and foot decorated with a “fir branch” motif and round me-

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160 Eliade 1991, II, 233 – 236, 291 – 294.

161 Petković et al. 2005, 88-89, buckle type I, Fig. 18 a.

162 Petković 2010, 272-274.

163 Petković 2010, 274; Pröttel 1988, 370, Fig. 8, 2; Buora 1997, 254 –257. – The dating of Pröttel Type 6 /Petković type 34 F from the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> to the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century is based on pictorial representation of these fibulae on a mosaic in San Vitale in Ravenna and a fresco in San Genaro in Neapolis, but for the late dating (in the first half of 6<sup>th</sup> century) there is no archaeological data.



Figure 13: Type Petković 34 E 2, "Pećine" – *Viminacium*.



Figure 14: Type Petković 34 E, "Pećine" – *Viminacium*.

dallions with a Christogram rendered in the *niello* technique, while on the trapezoidal end of the foot, i.e. the catch plate, there is a round medallion with a male portrait in  $\frac{3}{4}$  profile to the left.<sup>164</sup> This luxurious fibula was found on the decedent's right shoulder, while in the pelvic area parts of a silver military belt set were found, a buckle with a rectangular plate and a B-shaped frame and rectangular fitting with rims decorated with a row of hammered astragals. Fragments of a conical glass goblet were discovered next to the decedent's head. All of the grave finds can be dated to the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>165</sup> (Pl. 12, Fig. 14)

<sup>164</sup> Спасић-Ђурић 2008, 406-409, Fig. 3; Petković 2010, 272, Cat. 1676, T. LXXI, 1, Fig. 107.

<sup>165</sup> See the Note No.149.

The second specimen of Petković type 34 F from Viminacium also comes from a military grave, G – 851, from the “Pećine” necropolis, in which parts of a belt set were also discovered - a buckle with a B-shaped frame, dated to the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> and first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, as in the previous burial.

Finally, we should mention the bulbous crossbow fibulae which cannot be classified to any of the listed variants of Petković type 34. These are the early hybrid forms, based on the type of arched T-shaped fibulae with a hinge.<sup>166</sup> Two specimens have been registered on the Limes, one from the fort of *Diana*, now in the archaeological collection of the Museum of Krajina in Negotin, (Fig. 15) and one from an unknown site on the Danube, now kept in the National Museum in Belgrade (Fig. 16). Interestingly, both fibulae are made of gold.

Figure 15: Type Petković 34 G, Karataš – *Diana*.



The first one, found at the site of *Diana*, is made of gold sheet, has a stripe-like bow and polyhedral knobs at the ends of the bar. Instead of a central knob, there is a gold sheet palmetto. The foot widens in the form of a trapezoid, has incised decoration and a hollow-channel type catch plate. Unfortunately, the archaeological context of the find is unknown.

The second one, from an unknown site in the Danube Basin, by all its features belongs to the early variant Petković 34A 2, the only difference being in a flat, pelta-shaped thickening in place of the central knob, decorated with filigree wire. The ends of the bar, octagonal in cross-section, are also decorated with filigree wire. The foot is decorated with faceting.

Both specimens represent creative, experimental forms of crossbow fibulae, which appear at the beginning of their production.<sup>167</sup>

One fibula from the “Pećine” necropolis in Viminacium can also be classified as variant Petković 34 G, according to the specific shape of its foot. This specimen strongly resembles type Petković 34 B fibulae – it has a head with the bulbs shaped as poppy pods, a profiled bar and its bow is trapezoidal in cross-section, decorated with stamped triangles and punching. The foot of this fibula is rectangular, composed of five convex segments. (Pl. 6, 7)<sup>168</sup>

<sup>166</sup> Popović 2004, 225 et.sequ.

<sup>167</sup> To the same heterogeneous variant (Petković tip 34 G) also belongs a silver fibula from the grave of a cremated individual from the necropolis Ropinski potok - *Timacum Minus*, which has a bow decorated with the *opus interrasile* technique. – Petković *et al.* 2005, 81-82, Pl. XIII, 4; Petković 2010, 272-273, Figs. 108-109.

<sup>168</sup> Petković 2010, 275, Cat.No. 1680, Pl. LXXI, 3.



Figure 16: Type Petković 34 G, The Danube Basin, National Museum in Belgrade.

Besides their general characteristics, the military fibulae from the Danube Limes of Upper Moesia (later the Limes of the provinces *Moesia Prima* and *Dacia Ripensis*) also have traits related to this region specifically. Primarily, the military character of this border province is reflected in the number and variety of types of military fibulae. Most of these types were produced locally, while some also originate from the Danube Limes of *Moesia Superior*.

In the time of the Roman conquest during the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, on the area which was to become the province of *Moesia Superior*, besides the imported Roman types, such as *Aucissa*, *Nertomaris* and “eye” fibulae (*Augenfibel*), there also appear the fibulae of the Late La Tène scheme, as well as the local variant of *Aucissa* fibulae with two pins.<sup>169</sup> Somewhat later, around the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> and the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, the imported variants of strongly profiled fibulae, produced in Pannonia (Petković Group IV, Type 13, var. B and D),<sup>170</sup> become very frequent on the Limes, while the local type of the so-called “Black Sea” strongly profiled fibulae (Petković Group IV, Type 14) emerged on the Limes of *Moesia Superior* and spread across the Lower Danube and the coast of the Black Sea.<sup>171</sup>

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169 Marović 1961, 106-120; Petković 2010,41-43.

170 Petković 2010, 77-85.

171 Petković 2010, 92- 100.

Hinge fibulae with a raised ridge on the bow, produced on the Danube Limes of Upper Moesia, in the Iron Gate region, from the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> until the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, and also appearing in *Dacia* and *Moesia Inferior* (Petković Group III, Type 11) belong to the local types of the Early Imperial period, too.<sup>172</sup>

During the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries, local production of fibulae is predominant in *Moesia Superior* – local variants of Roman types of elbow, plate and arched fibulae appear. An interesting type of brooches is those in the form of a swastika with horse proteomes (Petković Group VI, Type 24), associated with the auxiliary cavalry troops of the Roman army (*equites pseudocomitatenses*) and produced on the Danube Limes during the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>173</sup> Also, certain variants of bulbous crossbow fibulae were produced in some of Constantine's imperial workshops (*Naissus*, *Sirmium*) during the first third of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>174</sup>

The immigration of the Romanised population of *Dacia* after the abandonment of this province by the Roman army and administration in 272, and the invasions and settlement of barbarians from the left bank of the Danube after the Battle of Adrianople in 378 are the two key historical events which can be traced in the finds of the Late Roman fibulae, since the types with the reversed foot (Petković Group IX, Types 35–36) and *Viminacium* – *Novae* type fibulae (Petković Group IX, Type 37) appear on the Limes at that time.<sup>175</sup> They testify to the recruitment of the Roman frontier army (*limitanei*) and auxiliary troops (*auxilia*) among the newly settled foederati and free barbarians from the left bank of the Danube well into the middle of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, that is, the collapse of the Limes in the invasion of Attila's Huns from 441 to 443 AD.

Interestingly, during the reconstruction of the Limes by the Early Byzantine emperors Anastasius, Justin I and, finally, Justinian I, new types of fibulae with a reversed foot emerged, typical of the Lower Danube basin.<sup>176</sup> The head of these brooches is very peculiar, with three knobs, “bulbs”, one at the beginning of the

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172 Grbić 1996, 88–91.

173 Petković, 1999, 226; Petković 2010, 188–189.

174 Јовановић 1976; Поповић 1997; Васић 2001.

175 Petković 2010, 307–326, Figs. 112–118, Pl.LXXII–LXXVII.

176 Јанковић 1981, 172–174, Fig. 69, Д-Е, Fig. 70, Pl.XV, 14–21, Pl. XVI, 3–6, 9–11; Јанковић 1983, 135–136, 140, Cat.No.193–196; Uenze 1992, 148–149, Figs. 5,1–3, 5–9; 595 (List 1).

bow, above the spring, and two at the ends of the axis, resembling the head of the Late Roman bulbous crossbow fibulae. In a way, these fibulae represent the symbiosis of the types with the reversed foot, worn by barbarian warriors, and the Roman official military crossbow fibulae. Their concentration in the reconstructed and newly built fortifications on the Danube might indicate the use of these fibulae in the Early Byzantine frontier troops, *limitanei*. The Christian symbols and inscriptions on the bow and foot of these fibulae could point to the imperial ideological propaganda among the army recruited from the barbarian tribes on the left bank of the Danube, Germanic peoples and Slavs.<sup>177</sup>

Finally, from the analysis of the types of Roman fibulae on the Limes, it can be concluded that their local production, intended for the army, began as early as in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. Also, the production of military fibulae on the Danube frontier of the provinces of *Moesia Prima*, *Dacia Ripensis* and *Moesia Secunda* continued until the end of the Period of Antiquity, that is, until the first quarter/middle of the 7<sup>th</sup> century. What is certain is that half a millennium of production of military fibulae in the lower Danube basin left behind a rich archaeological heritage on the area of present-day Serbia.

*Translated by Jelena Mitić*

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177 Haralambiaeva 1998, 360-360, Fig. 1, Fig. 5.

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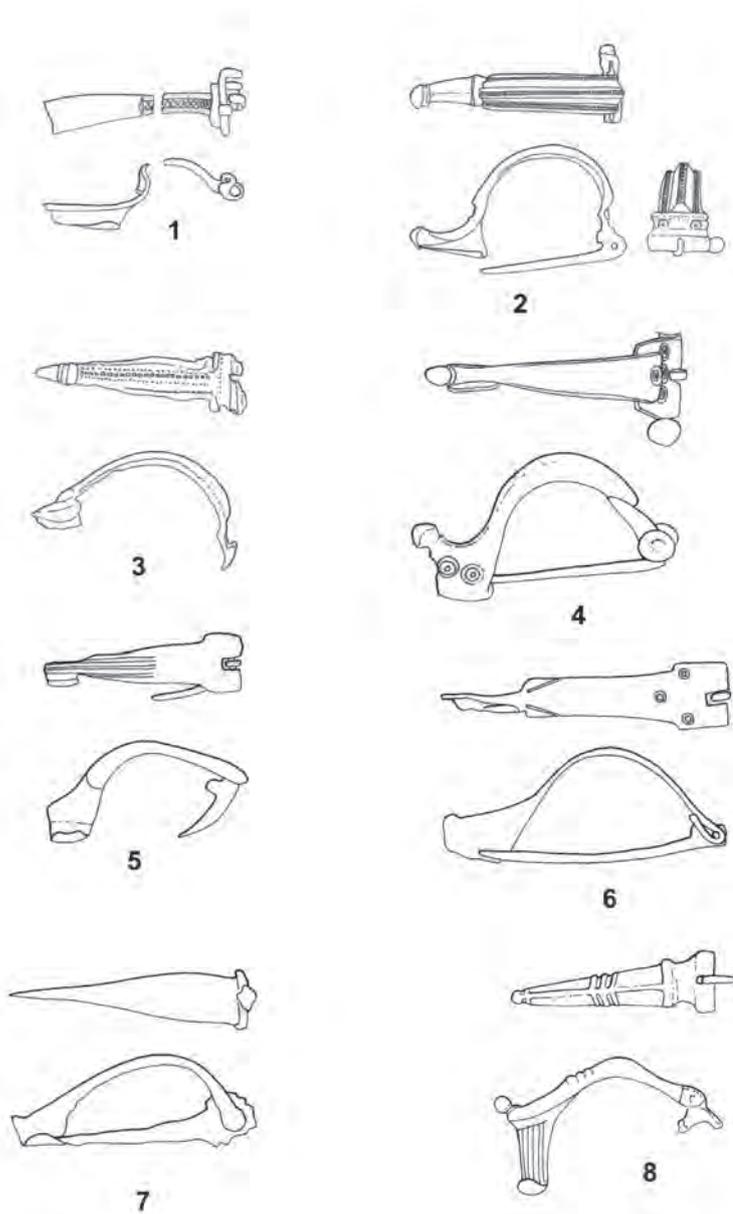
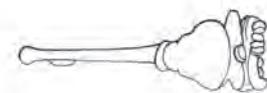
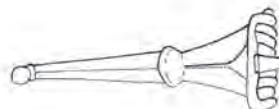


Plate 1: 1 - Type Petković 6 C, Hajdučka Vodenica; 2 - Type Petković 8 A, *Castra Tricornia*; 3 - Type Petković 8 B, *Diana*; 4 - Type Petković 8 C, "Više grobalja" - *Viminacium*; 5 - Type Petković 9 A, *Pincum*; 6 - Type Petković 9 B, *Diana*; 7 - Type Petković 9 C, *Viminacium*; 8 - Type Petković 11 B, *Diana*.

Plate 2: 1 – Type Petković  
13 B, *Castra Tricornia*;  
2 – Type Petković 13 D,  
*Diana*; 3 – Type Petković  
14 D, *Viminacium*; 4 –  
Type Petković 14 A 1,  
*Singidunum*; 5 – Type  
Petković 18 A, *Viminacium*;  
6 – Type Petković 18 B,  
*Singidunum*; 7 – Type  
Petković 19 A, *Singidunum*.



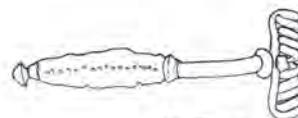
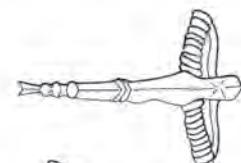
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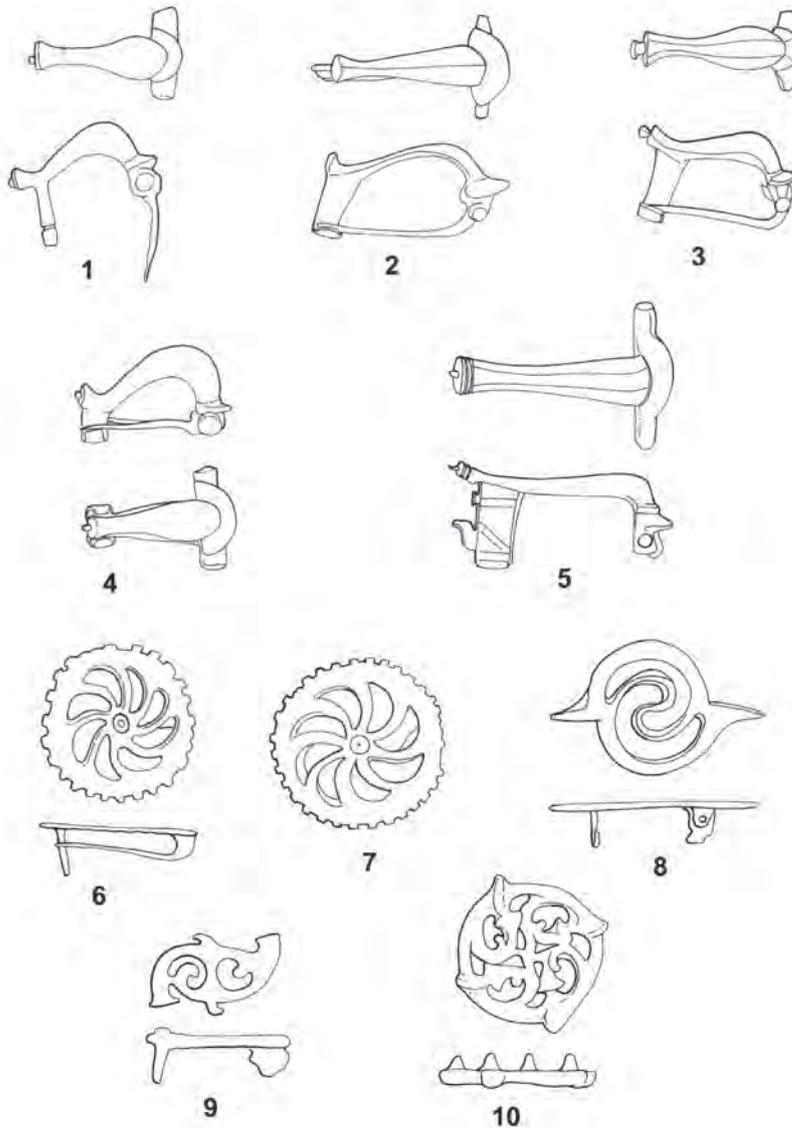


Plate 3: 1 - Type Petković 19 A, *Viminacium*; 2 - Type Petković 19 B, *Viminacium*; 3 - Type Petković 19 C, *Singidunum*; 4 - Type Petković 19 A, *Viminacium*; 5 - Type Petković 19 C, *Viminacium*; 6 - Type Petković 22 A, *Viminacium*; 7 - Type Petković 22 A, *Diana*; 8 - Type Petković 22 D 1, *Castra Tricornia*; 9 - Type Petković 22 D 1, *Viminacium*; 10 - Petković 22 D 3, Mihajlovac - Mora Vagei.

Plate 4: 1 – Type Petković 23A, *Viminacium*; 2 – Type Petković 28, *Viminacium*; 3 – Type Petković 29, *Viminacium*; 4 – Type Petković 30 B, *Singidunum*; 5 – Type Petković 30 A, *Viminacium*; 6 – Type Petković 30 B, *Viminacium*; 7 – Type Petković 30 B, *Viminacium*; 8 – Type Petković 30 C, *Viminacium*.

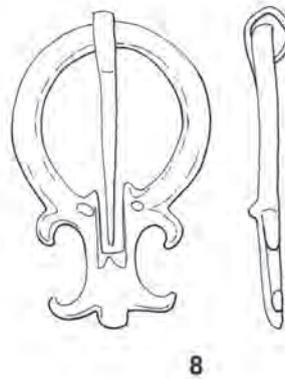
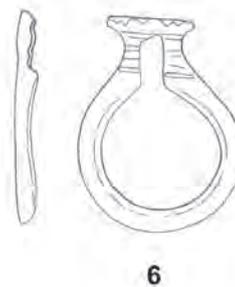
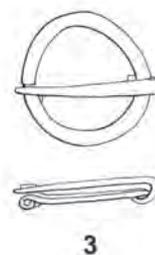
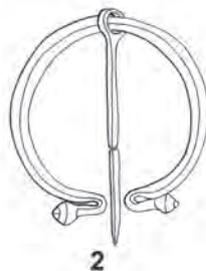
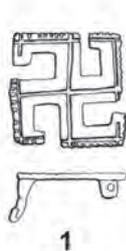


Plate 5: 1 – Type Petković 31 D, *Viminacium*; 2 – Type Petković 31 D, *Viminacium*; 3 – Type Petković 31 D, *Castrum Novae*, 4 – Type petković 31 D, *Pontes*.

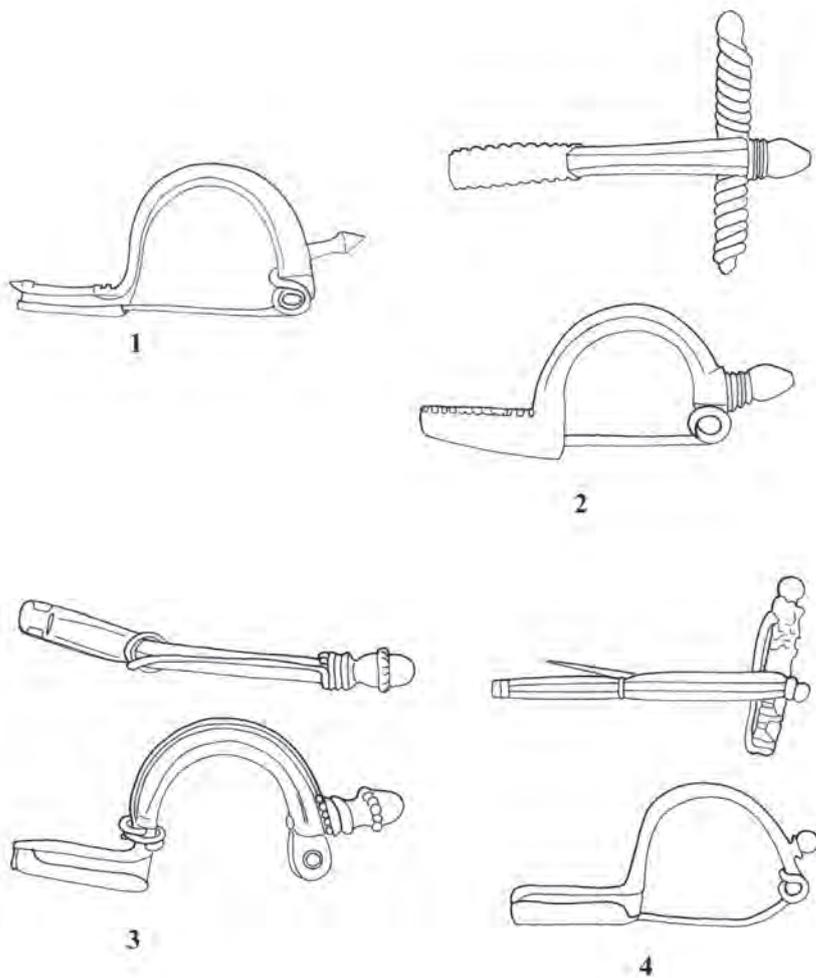
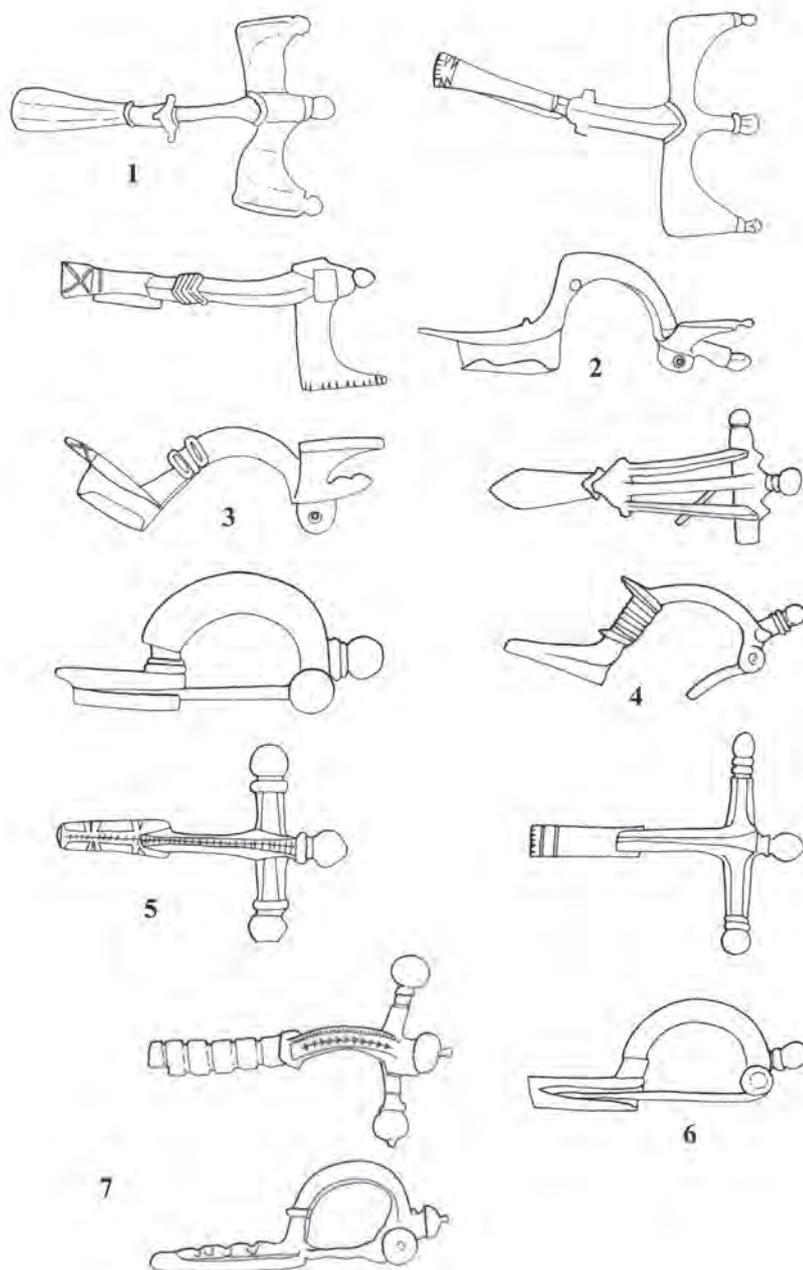


Plate 6: 1 – Type Petković  
33 E, *Translederata*;  
2 - Type Petković 33 E,  
*Diana*; 3 - Type Petković  
33 E, *Diana*; 4 – Type  
Petković 33 C, *Viminacium*;  
5 – Type Petković 34 A  
1, *Viminacium*; 6 – Type  
Petković 34 A, *Viminacium*;  
7 – Type Petković 34 G,  
*Viminacium*.



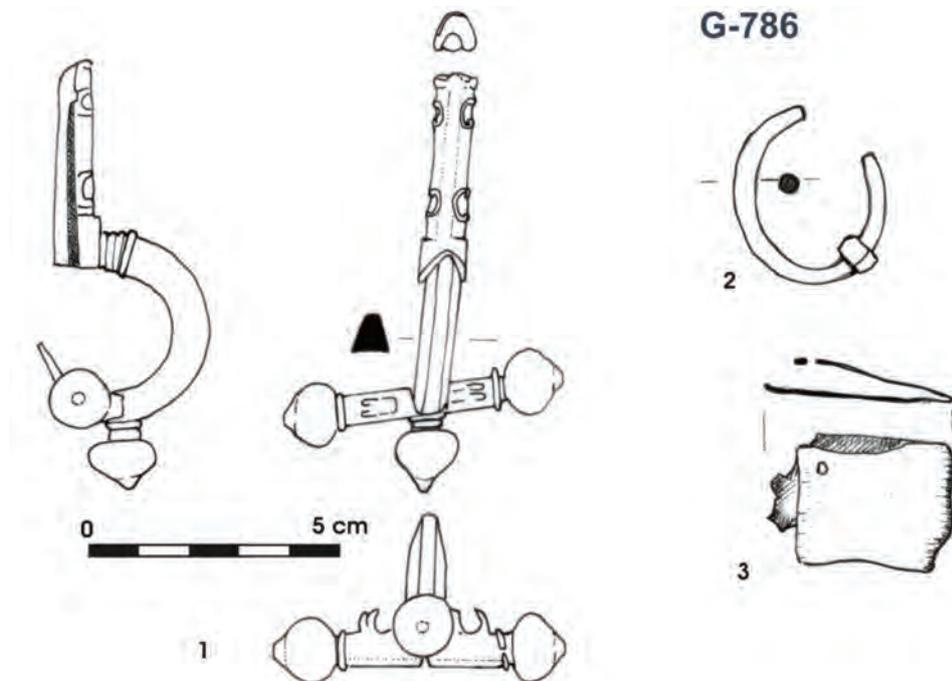
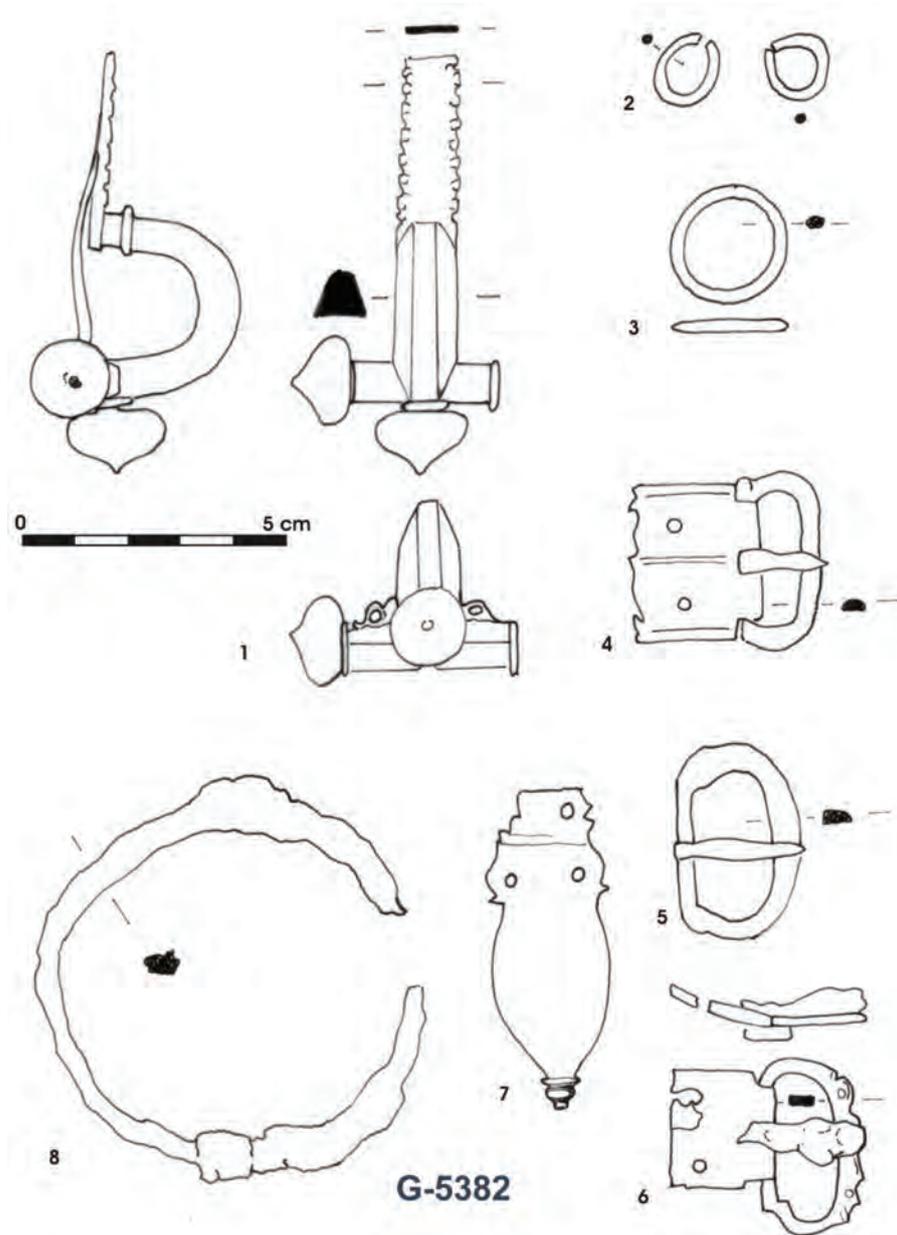


Plate 8: G – 5382,  
“Pećine” – *Viminacium*.



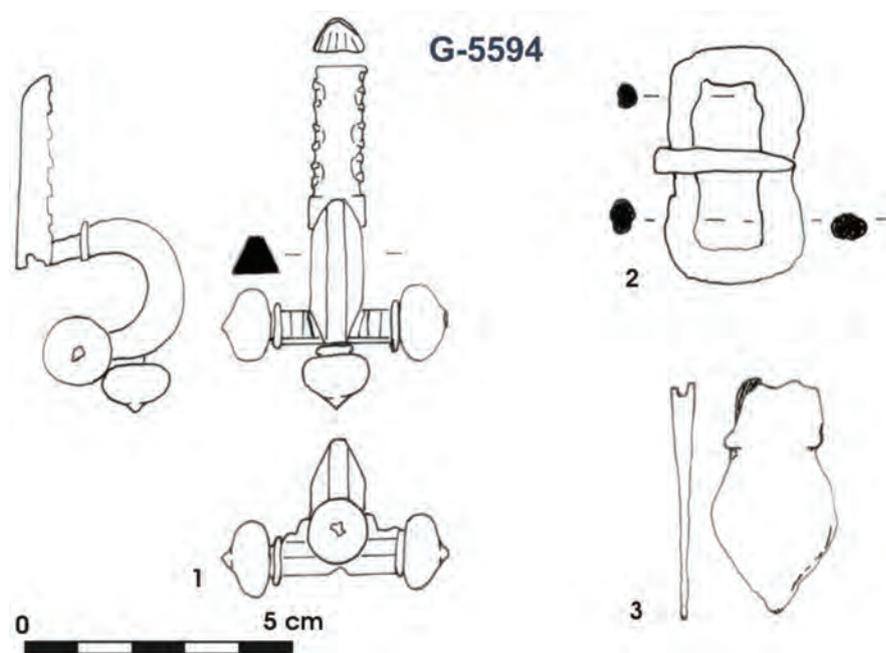
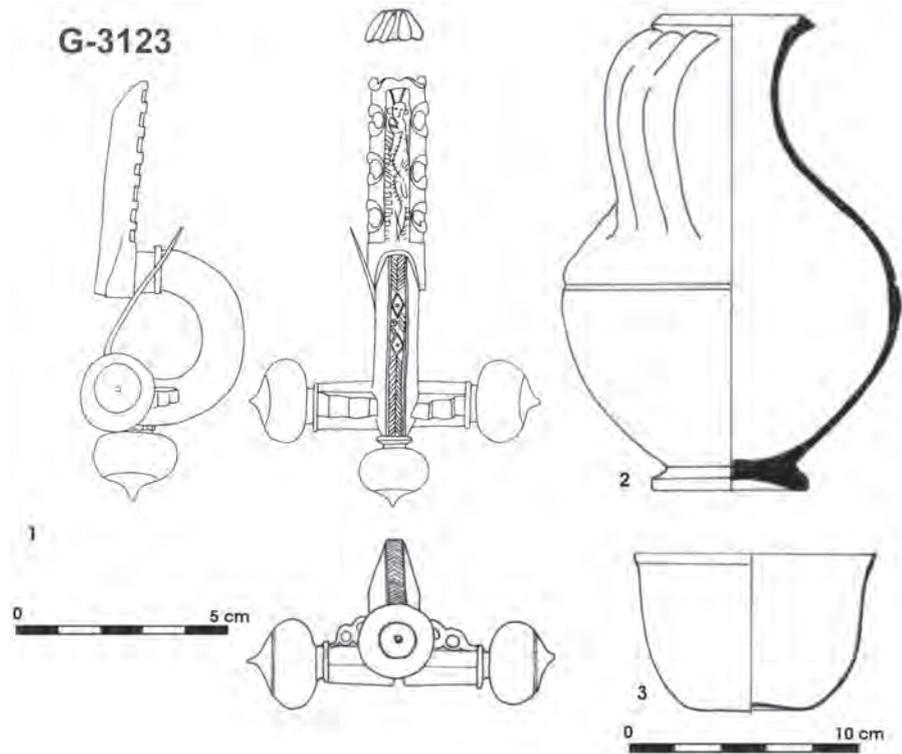


Plate 10: G – 3123,  
“Pećine” – *Viminacium*.



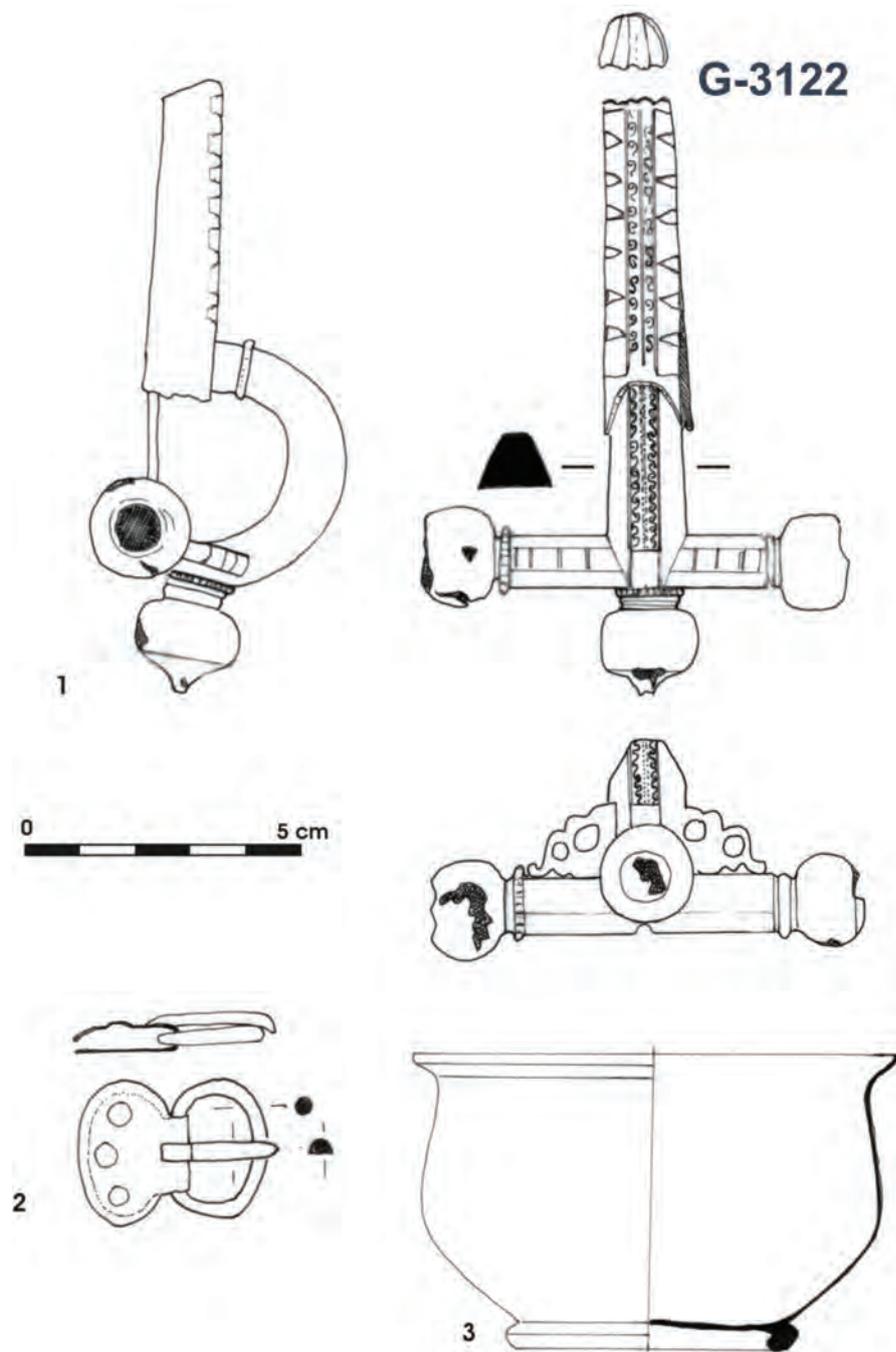
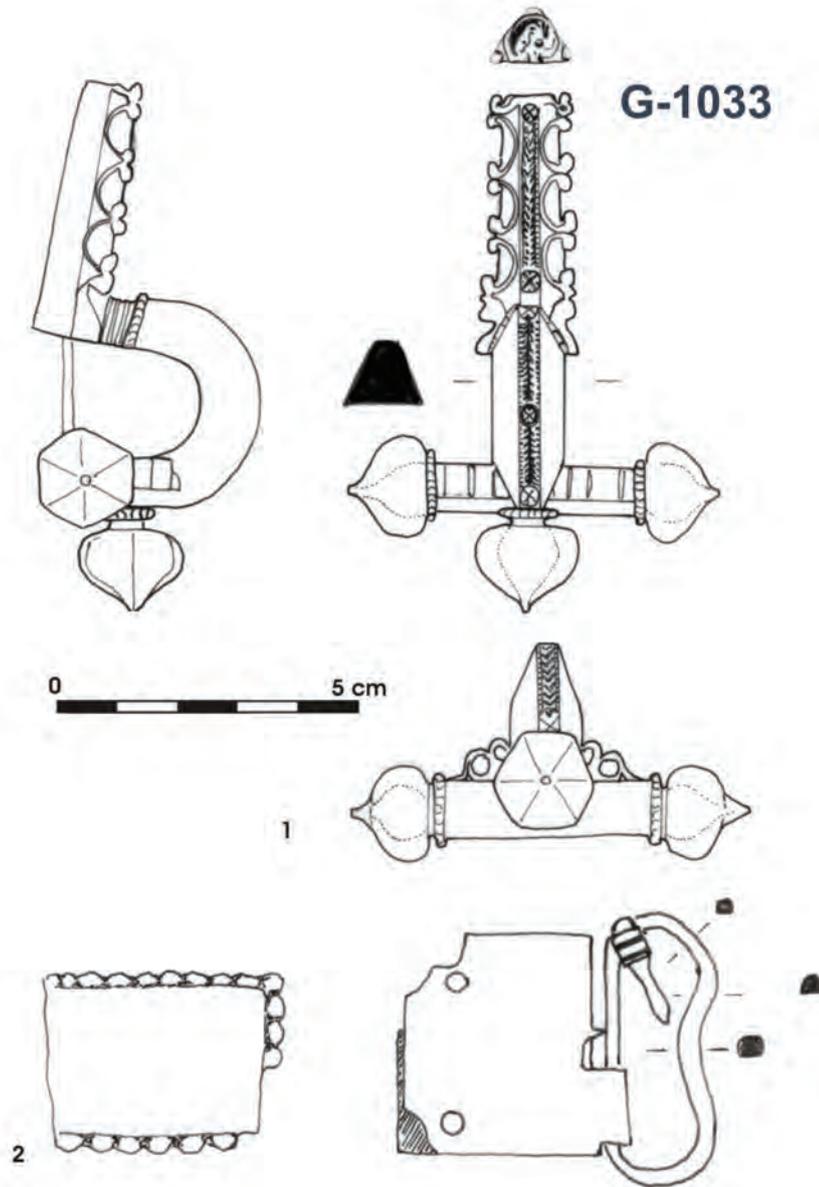


Plate 12: G - 1033,  
"Pećine" - *Viminacium*.



## **CRAFTSMANSHIP ON THE MIDDLE DANUBE LIMES\***

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The Roman army required large quantities of different objects for daily-use and it was an important consumer and producer of diverse craft goods, such as everyday tools, clothing items, vessels for storage, cooking and consumption, luxury personal items, and many more.*

*The Limes regions in Pannonia Inferior and Moesia Superior had an important role in the economic and political life of these provinces, because of the permanent presence of the Roman army and state administration, and also thanks to the convenient geographical position and numerous natural resources. Along with the establishment of the Roman government in the Pannonia Inferior and Moesia Superior, diverse goods from different parts of the Empire began to arrive, and craft production by Roman standards was established in the borderland areas as well. At the same time, autochthonous, traditional techniques of production were not neglected. In this paper, we will offer a brief overview of the archaeological and epigraphic evidence for craft production of objects made from clay, stone and bone raw materials, related to the Limes on the present-day territory of Serbia (Roman provinces of Pannonia and Moesia Superior).*

**KEYWORDS: CRAFT PRODUCTION, WORKSHOPS, CRAFTSPERSON, CERAMIC TECHNOLOGY, STONE OBJECTS, BONE TECHNOLOGY, ROMAN PERIOD, LATE ANTIQUITY**

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\* This paper results from the projects: Romanisation, urbanisation and transformation of urban centres of civil, military and residential character in Roman provinces in the territory of Serbia, no. 177007 and Archaeology of Serbia: cultural identity, integrational factors, technological processes and the role of the central Balkans in the development of the European prehistory, no. OI 177020, funded by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia.

## INTRODUCTION

The Limes regions in *Pannonia Inferior* and *Moesia Superior* had an important role in the economic and political life of these provinces, because of the permanent presence of the Roman army and state administration, and also thanks to the convenient geographical position and numerous natural resources.<sup>2</sup> Main economic activities of the provinces formed along the Danube on the territory of the present-day Republic of Serbia (*Pannonia Inferior*, *Moesia Superior*) were agriculture, craftsmanship, woodworking, exploitation of stone quarries and metal mines, and most prominently trade on the navigable Danube, along with its tributaries, which enabled transport (inflow and outflow of different products) into numerous parts of the Roman Empire.

The process of building the Limes on the Middle Danube began in the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC, with Roman domination being established in *Pannonia* and with the integration of autochthonous tribes of *Breuci*, *Amantini*, *Scordisci*, *Cornacatae*, and others, into the new system of economic, political and religious life.<sup>3</sup> Along with the establishment of the Roman rule on the territory of *Moesia*, from the time of the Julio-Claudian dynasty, the processes of adaptation of autochthonous Celtic, Daco-Mysian and Illyrian tribes began. At the same time, populations from different parts of the Empire settled in the area. Works on the infrastructure and the construction of the security points for the defence of the Empire in the vulnerable areas, such as the Iron Gates region, were particularly extensive and demanding. Numerous army troupes from *Moesia* and other provinces were enlisted here under the patronage of Roman emperors, especially Claudius, Tiberius, Domitian and Trajan. There are numerous literary and pictorial testimonies on these events (tables of Tiberius and Claudius about the road construction in the Iron Gates, Table of Trajan, Column of Trajan, etc.).

With the establishment of the Roman government in *Pannonia Inferior* and *Moesia Superior*, diverse goods from different parts of the Empire started to arrive to the area of the Danubian valley. Also, craft production by Roman standards began in the borderland areas, either by bringing experienced craftsmen among

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<sup>2</sup> Korać et al. 2014, 87.

<sup>3</sup> Dautova Ruševljan, Vujović 2006, 4, map I.

the locals, or when local craftsmen tried to copy high-quality Roman products. At the same time, autochthonous, traditional techniques of production were not neglected, judging by ceramic and other products.

The province of *Moesia Superior* was known first and foremost for mining activities, but also agricultural production and diverse crafts, given the diversity and richness of the raw materials available. Within large urban centres there were *collegia*, organisations of different craftsmen who took care of guild development, employees' status, and also took care of their members and their families in the case of death or poverty.<sup>4</sup> On the territory of the legionary cities of *Singidunum* and *Viminacium*, a smaller number of *collegia* is confirmed by epigraphic record.<sup>5</sup> In the vicinity of *Singidunum*, in the mining area of the mountain Kosmaj, during the 2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> century, organisations of artisans or artists (*collegium fabrum*)<sup>6</sup> existed and also an organisation of workers who collected and recycled old materials (*collegium centonarium*).<sup>7</sup> According to preserved monuments, these were richer members of the Romanised population. A fragment of a votive sculpture is known from *Viminacium*, probably dedicated to the goddess Annona, on which a *collegium* from the territory of the city is mentioned,<sup>8</sup> most probably linked with sailors (*nautae, navicularii*), who took care of supplies for army.

The limited epigraphic corpus gives us information about the existence of some crafts, i.e., about the activities of artisans and craftsmen along the Danube limes. A certain *Aurelius Crescentio, lapidarius*, is known to us, from *Singidunum*, who practised stone working in the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and early 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>9</sup> In the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, in Guberevac, a cloth merchant, *lentiarius Theodulus* was

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4 Joshel 1992.

5 A total of four *collegia*, three from the territory of *Singidunum* and one from *Viminacium* – which is the consequence of insufficient research of the sites in *Moesia*. In comparison, numerous organisations (economic and religious) were registered at certain sites in *Asia Minor*: 78 in *Ephesos*, 52 in *Saittai*, 79 in *Smyrna*, 24 in *Miletos*, etc. Cf. Arnaoutoglou 2002, 29-30.

6 Dušanić 1976, 123-124, no. 95; S. R. Joshel assumes that the general term *fabrum* refers mainly to masons and carpenters (Joshel 1992, 177).

7 Dušanić 1976, 136-137, no. 121; Joshel 1992, 177 - patchwork maker, ragman.

8 This monument was found in the village of Kličevac, to the east from *Viminacium*, in 1960. Mirković 1986, 85, no. 49.

9 Mirković 1976, 50, no. 11.

active.<sup>10</sup> In Smederevo – *Vinceia* or in *Viminacium*, a freed slave *C. Refidius Euty-chus* produced silver objects (*faber argentarius*) in the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century,<sup>11</sup> while a certain *P. Aelius Valerianus* made clothes (*vestiarius*) for the local market during the 2<sup>nd</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> century.<sup>12</sup> The presence of masons active on the territory of *Viminacium* is confirmed by an incised inscription on a large brick, mentioning a group of *artifices*, who did their work in the glory of God.<sup>13</sup> Those were probably builders who worked on the construction of the *domus ecclesiae* in *Viminacium* in 4<sup>th</sup>–mid 5<sup>th</sup> century, at an unknown location.<sup>14</sup>

In this paper, we will analyse aspects of the local production of ceramic, stone and bone objects, for which there are testimonies along the Limes in *Pannonia Inferior* and *Moesia Superior*.

## PRODUCTION OF CERAMIC OBJECTS

Production of diverse clay objects – vessels, lamps, toys, cult objects, weights and other utensils – was very important in the Roman times in the areas of the Danubian valley and lower parts of the valley of the river Sava. Roman ceramic production represented one of the most important economic activities, which was in expansion and reached high technological level.<sup>15</sup>

During the first phase of the government establishment, the Romans did not force the Romanisation of the local inhabitants, especially in peregrine communities. Perhaps the best example for this would be the case of Stari Slankamen – *Acumincum*, which was administrative *civitas peregrina* for a long time, all the way to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, as shown by an inscription by *Titus Flavius Proculus*, who was *princeps praefectus Scordischorum*.<sup>16</sup> In the archaeological sense, the finds of ceramic vessels from the 1<sup>st</sup> century from *Acumincum* show that the Romanisation

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10 Dušanić 1974, 93-105; *Idem* 1976, 152-153, no. 156.

11 Mirković 1986, 121-122, no. 93.

12 Mirković 1986, 74, no. 29.

13 Mirković 1986, 177, no. 216.

14 More about this inscription *cf.* Jeremić, Ilić, this volume; Gargano 2016, 18.

15 Brukner 1987, 27.

16 Brukner 1987, 29, note 11.

process in the first decades of the Roman rule did not take prevail, because both autochthonous and imported pottery can be found, without transitional Roman forms – such as the ones from Romanised communities like *Sirmium*.<sup>17</sup> As a leading city, *Sirmium* had reached a high level of Romanisation already in the mid-1<sup>st</sup> century, mainly thanks to the regulation of the water flow and organisation of navigation on the Sava river. This enabled safe and cheap transport of ceramic products from distant markets.<sup>18</sup> Commerce and transport were, therefore, tightly linked with the development of the ceramic production. The distribution of the ceramic vessels provides data not only on the directions of the commercial flows, but also on food habits that were adopted or inherited from previous periods.<sup>19</sup>

The finds of numerous ovens provide information on the craft production of ceramic vessels in *Sirmium*. They were registered on three locations near the stream of Čikaš, in the area of city necropoles. To the earliest horizon comprehends kilns where vessels were made in late LaTène traditions and those were mainly storage vessels (*pithoi, dolia*). Since the Flavian period, there is evidence of the production of the forms in the LaTène tradition (S-profiled bowls, bowls with inverted rim) and early Empire forms (bowls with thin walls decorated with barbotine technique, Romanised early Empire bowls) (Fig. 1).<sup>20</sup> Within this horizon, 19 kilns were discovered, dug into virgin soil, with circular base, diameter of 1,0-2,0 m, with latticed bracket and clay calotte (Fig. 2-3).

Single or multiple ceramic kilns have been discovered along the Danube Limes, suggesting local production, on the territories of *Singidunum*, *Margum* and *Viminacium*. Workshops that produced luxurious examples of table pottery of *terra sigillata* type were identified with certainty in *Margum* and *Viminacium* by the presence of moulds. These workshops also produced vessels for everyday use, as well as diverse popular forms of lamps. Kilns from *Singidunum* were producing everyday ceramic vessels of the standard Roman typological repertoire.

The production of ceramic and brick items at *Singidunum* played an important role in the economy of the city and the region. The finds of a larger number of kilns indicate the presence of several workshops, perhaps even a large municipal

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17 Brukner 1987, 29-30.

18 Brukner 1987, 33, Pl. 1.

19 Brukner 1987, 28.

20 Brukner 1987, 33, Pl. 10, T. XI, 1, 2, 4; Pl. 2; Premk 1991, 364, fig. 2.

Fig. 1. *Sirmium*, pottery vessels from the kiln (after Brukner 1987, T. 10).

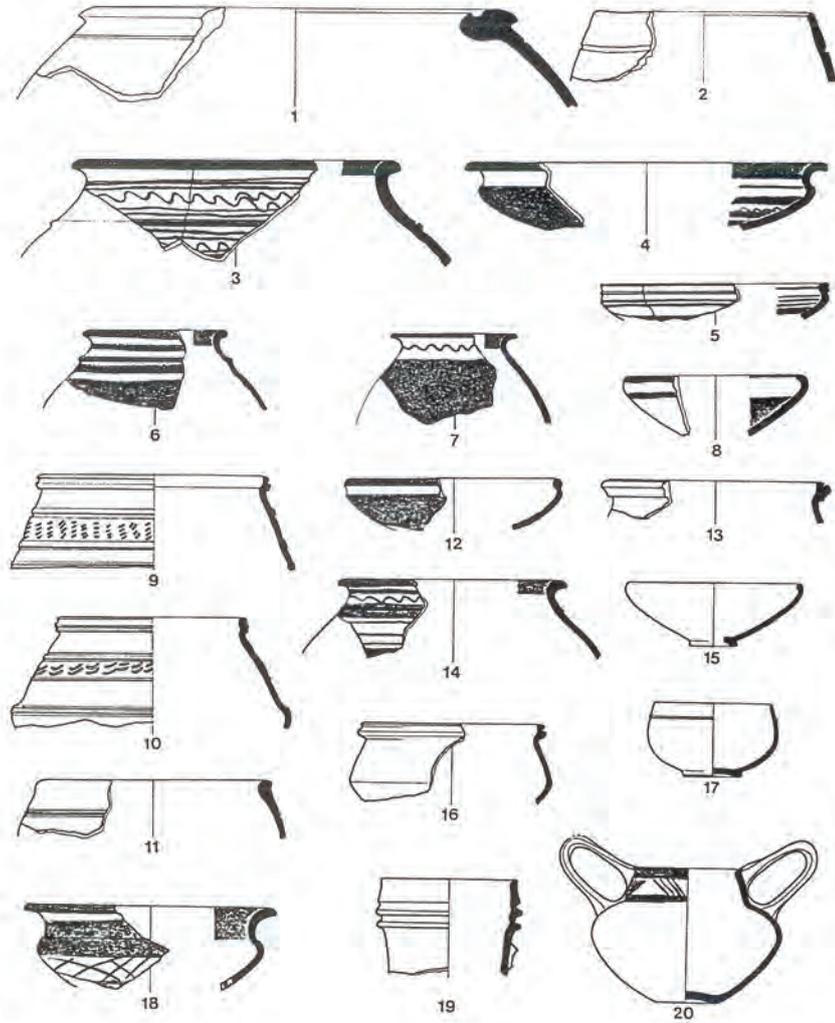


Fig. 2. *Sirmium*, ceramic kilns, photo (after Brukner 1987, T. XI).



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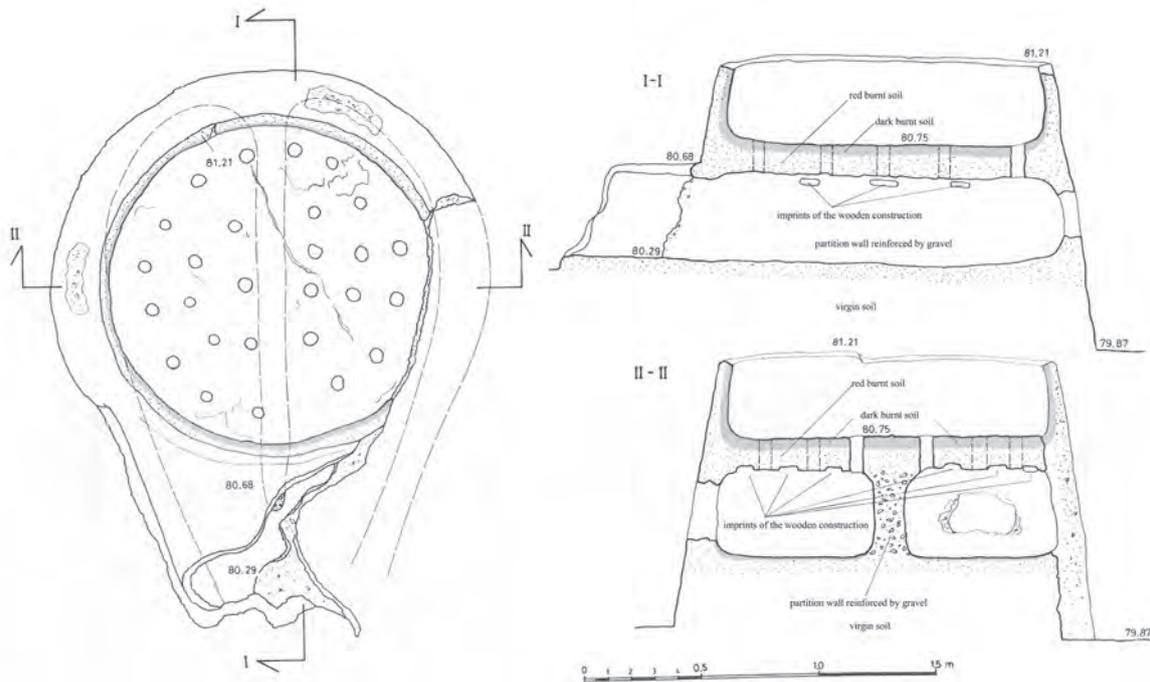


Fig. 3. *Sirmium*, circular ceramic kiln (after Brukner 1987, Pl. II).

workshop centre. In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in an unknown location in Belgrade, one *tegula* was discovered with the stamp of a *Singidunum* ceramic workshop, thus providing an unambiguous evidence for the existence of such an organisation on the city territory: *Figlina Singi/dunensium*, which belonged to the civil, not legionary production in the city.<sup>21</sup> Archaeological researches on several locations confirmed workshops that could have fulfilled the needs of the local market (Fig. 4).<sup>22</sup> In the surroundings of the National Theatre in Belgrade six ceramic kilns and one pit with discarded pots were registered in 1987.<sup>23</sup> These kilns had different constructions and chronology.

Kiln no. 1 was semi-dug-in, with a circular cross-section, and diameter of ca 1,40 m; it had a clay heating channel on the eastern side, 0.70 m wide. It is possible that it had a latticed floor surface. It belongs to the type of circular kilns with pilas-

21 *CIL* III, no. 6328.

22 Cvjetičanin 2000, 245, note 2.

23 Cvjetičanin 2000, 245-250. It wasn't possible to determine the type nor the function for two ovens.

ters, typical for the 1<sup>st</sup>–2<sup>nd</sup> century (Fig. 5). These kilns were in use until the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century and, on the basis of types represented, it is associated with supplying the army.<sup>24</sup> Kiln no. 2 had a rectangular base, made from clay. It was only partially examined and it most likely belongs to the type of kilns with side supporters or central longitudinal pilaster (Fig. 6).<sup>25</sup> These kilns are typical for the 1<sup>st</sup>–2<sup>nd</sup> century, and the typological repertoire of vessels found in them indicates supplying for the army or urban communities of military origin.<sup>26</sup> They had large capacities and were convenient for production of large quantities for military needs or for large vessels, such as *mortaria*, *dolia*, *amphorae* or pitchers.<sup>27</sup> The find of this kiln from *Singidunum* is dated into the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. Kiln no. 3 had the diameter of 1.20 m, but its shape is unknown. Kiln no. 4 was semi-dug-in, its inner diameter was 1.46 m, and it had an elevated latticed floor and a clay channel of semi-circular cross-section (Fig. 7). The kiln no. 4 was discovered in the upper level, and probably belonged to a later horizon. Bronze coins of Trebonianus Gallus, minted in *Viminacium* in 251/252, discovered within the construction, confirm this chronology.<sup>28</sup> The construction of this kiln is of the circular base type and massive or freely standing supporter, typical for the 3<sup>rd</sup> century forms in *Moesia Superior*.<sup>29</sup>

The finds of ceramic kilns from *Singidunum* show that the beginning of these activities falls most likely into mid-2<sup>nd</sup>–mid-3<sup>rd</sup> century, with at least two chronologically distinct groups of workshops (Fig. 8).<sup>30</sup> One of the workshops was located in the immediate vicinity of the early legionary camp, in the area of the necropolis, where well graves were noted. The concentration of well-paid military troupes was certainly very attractive for the potters and they placed their workshops in the vicinity of their customers. With the relocation of the camp and the change of the urban landscape of the city, workshops found themselves in the zone where

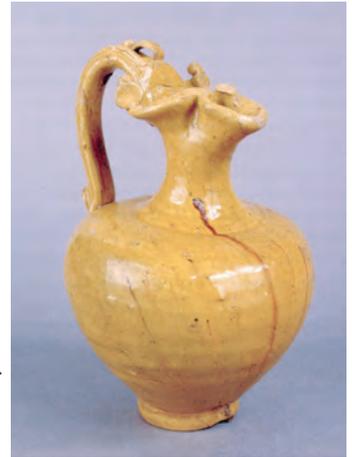


Fig. 4. Early Roman glazed pottery, local Moesian workshop (after Cvjetičanin 2006, photo 4).

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24 Cvjetičanin 2000, 247.

25 Cvjetičanin 2000, 247-248. Ovens of this form are mainly interpreted as brick-making ovens; however, ovens for bricks are usually made from more solid materials, stone and brick, and they are generally larger.

26 Cvjetičanin 2000, 248.

27 Cvjetičanin 2000, 248, note 14.

28 Cvjetičanin 2000, 249-250.

29 Cvjetičanin 2000, 250.

30 Cvjetičanin 2000, 253.

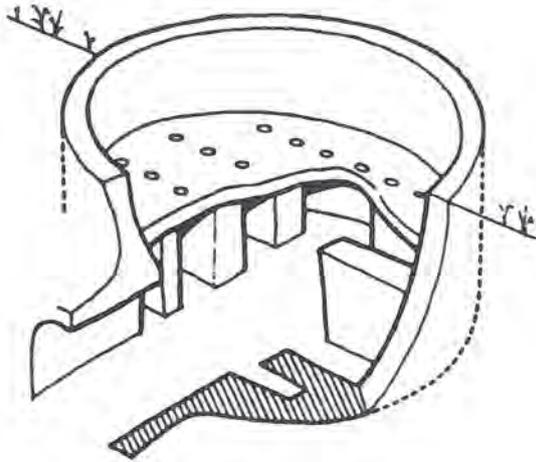


Fig. 5. *Singidunum*, pottery workshop, circular ceramic kiln (after Cvjetičanin 2000, fig. 5a).

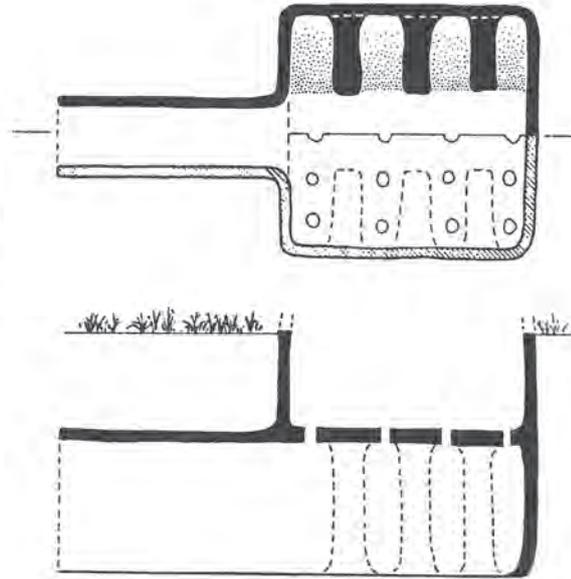


Fig. 6. *Singidunum*, pottery workshop, rectangular ceramic kiln (after Cvjetičanin 2000, fig. 5b).

settlement and necropolis overlapped.<sup>31</sup> It is assumed that at the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century these workshops changed their activities towards the production of vessels for local inhabitants and for funerary purposes.<sup>32</sup>

During the early researches of *Margum*, after the Second World War, the remains of one rectangular oven were discovered, with a latticed floor and a sub-structure with hypocaust pilasters. This oven was interpreted as pottery kiln on the basis of its construction and it was dated into the 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century (Fig. 9).<sup>33</sup> The existence of workshops on the city territory is suggested by the finds of several moulds with reliefs for pottery production in *terra sigillata* technique.<sup>34</sup> The activities of this centre are tightly linked, in technological and commercial aspect, with the near-by metropolis of *Viminacium*.<sup>35</sup> Researchers assumed that the primary centre of production was, in fact, in *Viminacium*, where moulds were discovered on several locations, and that the *officina* in *Margum* was established

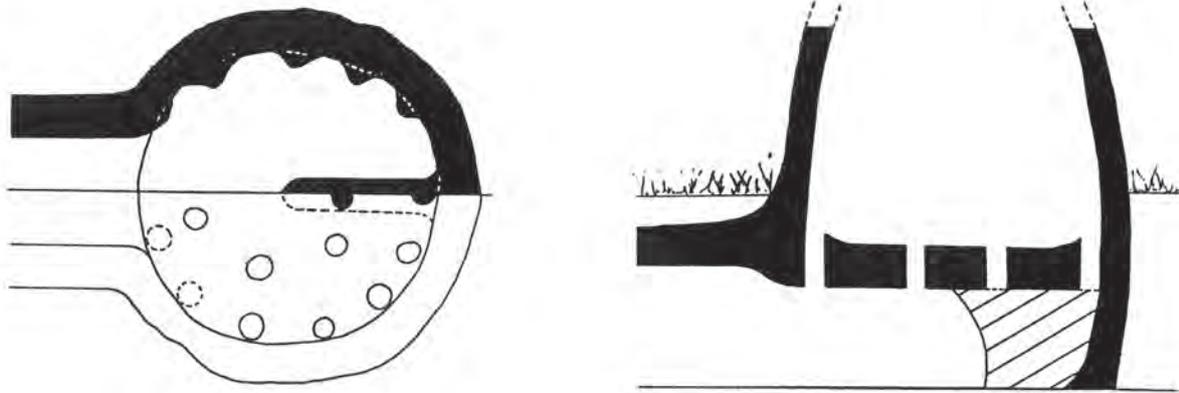
31 Cvjetičanin 2000, 253.

32 *Eadem*, *loc. cit.*

33 Marić 1951, 121-122; Cvjetičanin 2000, 248.

34 Bjelajac 1990, 143, with literature.

35 Bjelajac 1990, 143-144.



by transferring technology, artisans and moulds, and it used the experience and knowledge of the near-by metropolis.<sup>36</sup> The vessels made in this workshop circle were not of the highest quality, as those made by italic or south-Gallic artisans that those workshops looked up to, but were rather modest in aspect of technological knowledge and production. The clay was softer; the coating layer was not permanent and it would peel off. The most common shape of vessels made in this technique were calotte-shaped bowls in the form Drag. 37 (Fig. 10).<sup>37</sup> Beside *terra sigillata*, glazed vessels were also produced, as a sort of luxurious ceramics, with same ornamental motives (Fig. 11). Analyses of ornamental motives showed there were over 290 different symbols, pointing to the skill and inventiveness of Moesian artisans.<sup>38</sup> Main motives were different egg-shaped, floral and animal motives, while human figures occur rarely. We may encounter scenes of gladiator fights, and also figures of Sylens, masks and Amores playing.<sup>39</sup>

From the territory of *Viminacium*, a unique ceramic mould originates with a figural scene depicting gladiators.<sup>40</sup> A ceramic tile – mould, dimensions 7.6 x 11 x 1.4 cm, was found on the site of Selište in the vicinity of a legionary encampment.

Fig. 7. *Singidunum*, pottery workshop, ceramic kiln No. 4 (after Cvjetičanin 2000, fig. 7).

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36 Bjelajac 1990, 144.

37 Bjelajac 1990, T. 87.

38 Bjelajac 1990, T. 65-77.

39 Bjelajac 1990, 145, T. 67.

40 Vujović 2011, 261, T. V, 1-2.

Fig. 8. *Singidunum*, pottery workshop, vessels (2<sup>nd</sup> c.)  
(after Cvjetičanin 2000, fig. 9).

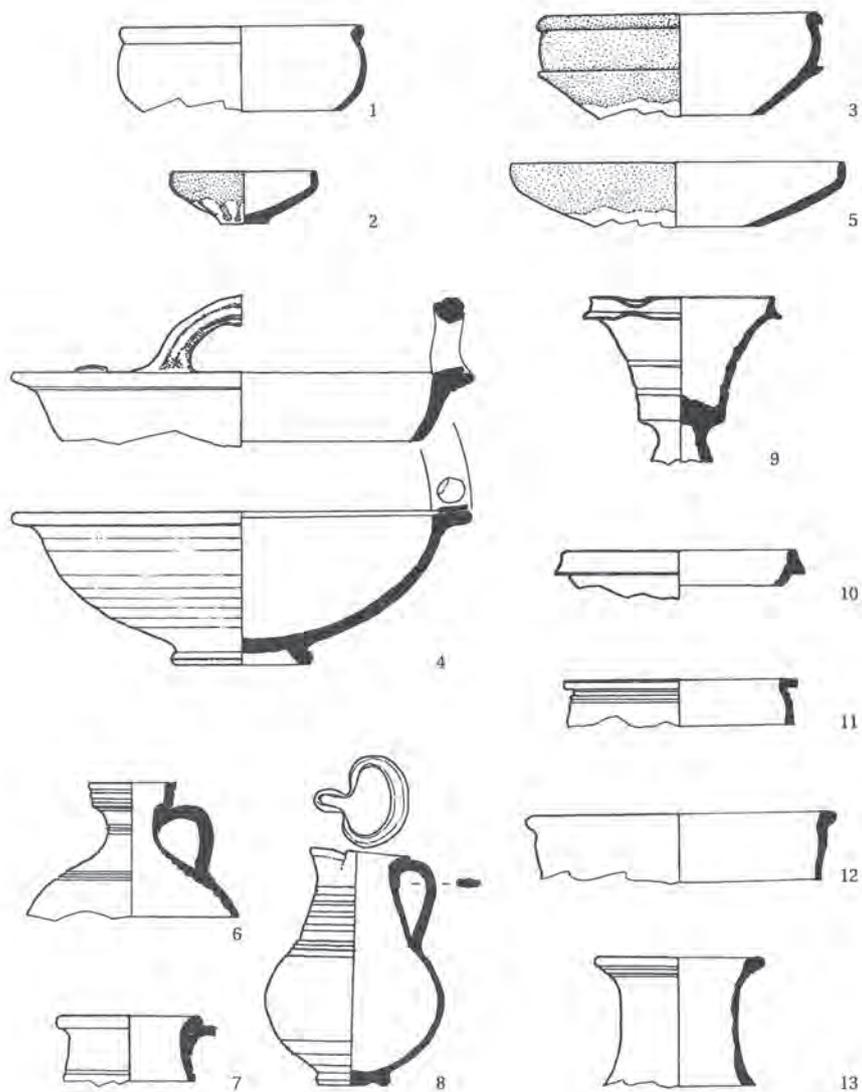
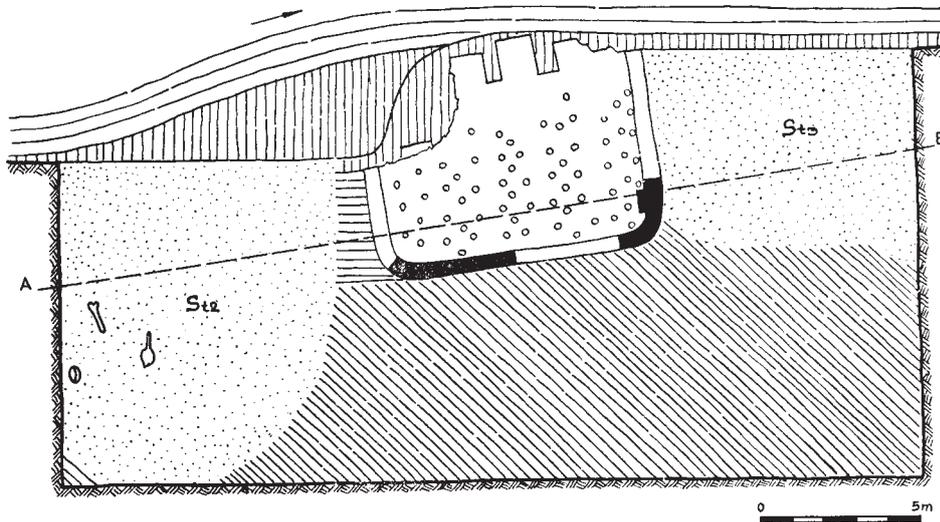
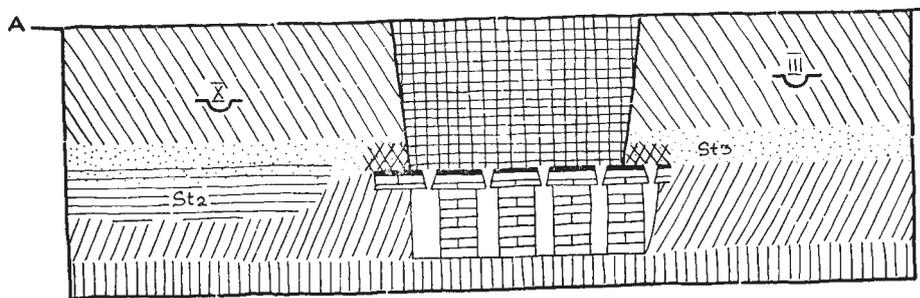


Fig. 9. *Margum*, ceramic kiln (after Marić 1951, fig. 24).



Ground-base of the trench at the level of the floor of the ceramic kiln



The profile of the trench with the ceramic kiln

Fig. 10. Workshop  
*Viminacium-Margum*,  
vessels (after Bjelajac 1990,  
T. 85).

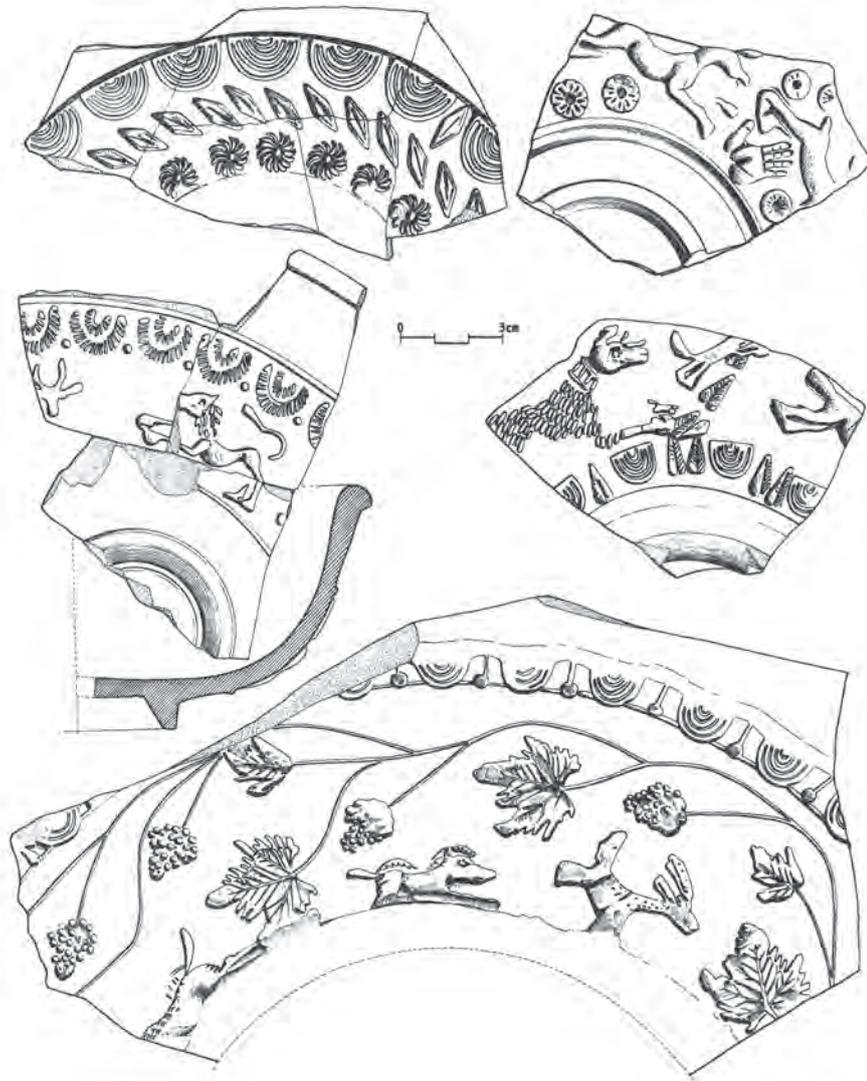
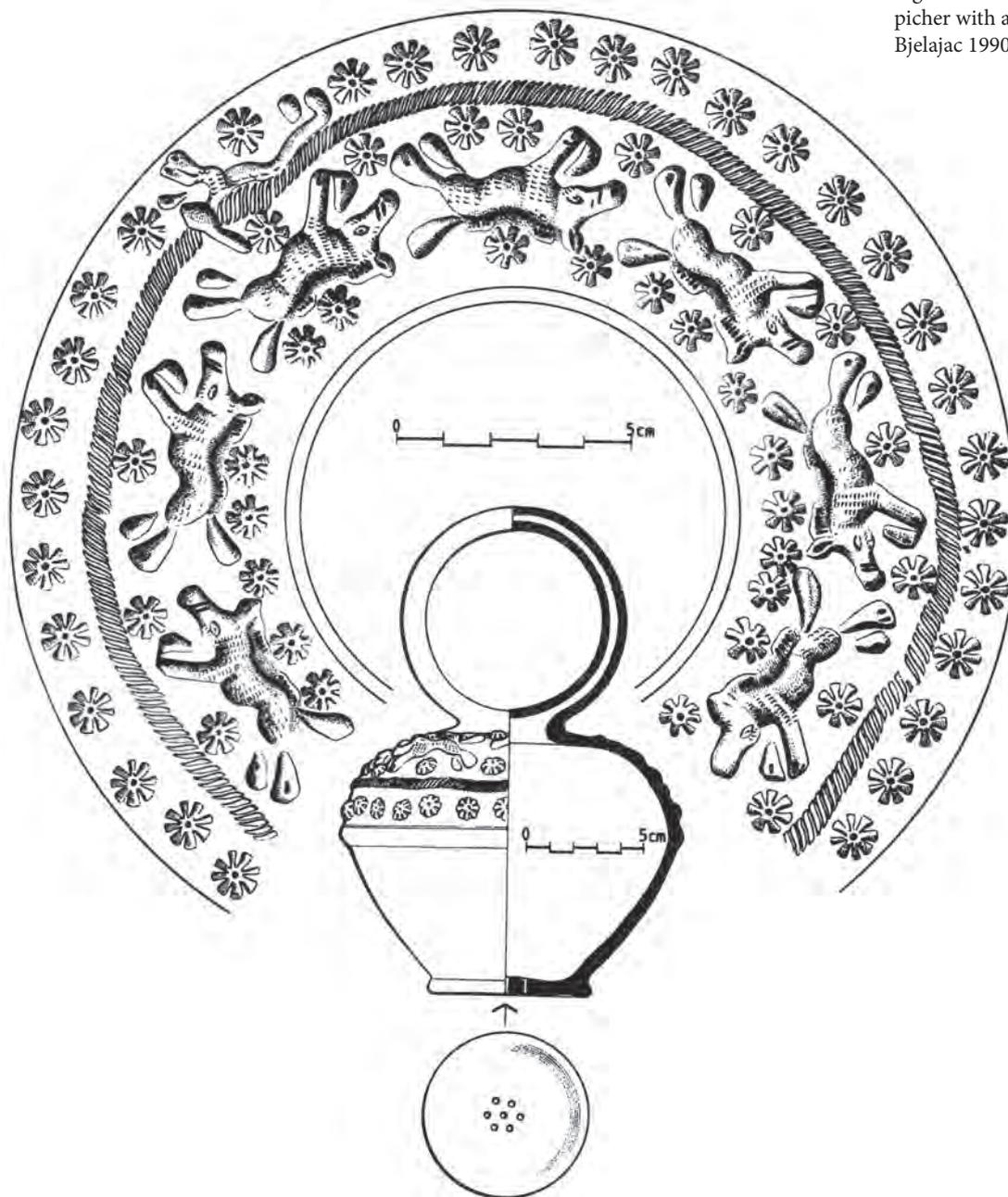


Fig. 11. *Viminacium*, glazed picher with a handle (after Bjelajac 1990, T. 87/38).



It depicts two gladiators, *thrax* on the left, armed with a short sword and *manica*, and a *murmillo* on the opposite side from him, armed with a short sword, shield and helmet (Fig. 12). Beside these figures there are several letters, probably initials of their names, incised into the mould: *MA* (short from *Maximus?*) and *VRSA / VRSA* (*Ursicinus, Ursinus, Ursilianus, Ursio* and similar).<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, we cannot rule out the possibility that these abbreviations represent the *editor* of gladiator fights or the owner of the *officina* in which this object was made.<sup>42</sup> Objects with gladiator scenes on moulds and vessels indicate the existence of relations with the *Viminacium* amphitheatre and the users of these objects during the 2<sup>nd</sup> and in the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, when the gladiator games were frequently organised within this complex. It is possible that this mould represented *crustullum* – mould for cakes, which were served with honey wine during different celebrations. We may assume that public distributions of food were quite frequent in *Viminacium*, as well as public feasts in occasion of jubilees, emperors' birthdays, important military and construction projects, and also when different games were organised (*munera, ludi*).<sup>43</sup>

Within the *officinae* of *Viminacium*, lamps were also mass produced, used for lighting private, public and funerary areas. Researches uncovered 196 moulds for lamp production so far, dated according to coins from Vespasian until Aurelian. Out of all these moulds, 129 of them belong to the type with one beak, 52 had two or more, while the remaining moulds could not have been determined. Ten moulds bear the names of the artisans whose products were copied or directly imported: *CARIA, C ARM[...], CASSI, CCLOSVC, CERIA, CERALIS, CRESCES, ELPIS, FORTIS* and *PRIMIGENI*.<sup>44</sup>

Being a large city, *Viminacium* had a well-organised production of ceramic items.<sup>45</sup> We have no data on how the space for workshops was assigned, who the owners were and what their status was. The most important prerequisite for workshop development is the availability of raw materials, above all clay, but also the vicinity of water and dry land communications for the transport of goods. On the

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41 Vujović 2011, 259.

42 Vujović 2011, 260.

43 Vujović 2011, 261.

44 Korać 2018, 593.

45 Marrese, Tucci, Raičković Savić 2015, 9-43.

Fig. 12. *Viminacium*,  
ceramic crustullum (after  
Vujović 2011, T. V, 2a, b).



territory of the city, workshops for production of bricks and ceramic vessels were registered, and one of them is located at the site of Pećine, on the area of the southern necropolises of the city. During the rescue excavations in 1982–1985, on an area of approximately 1000 m<sup>2</sup>, a total number of 10 ceramic and three brick kilns were discovered, in the immediate vicinity of one object with a porch, for making and drying of products.<sup>46</sup> Ceramic kilns were made from bricks with the stamp *legio VII Cl(audia)* – whose permanent camp was at *Viminacium*, and then they were covered by a thick layer of clay mixed with chaff.<sup>47</sup> These kilns were used on several occasions, and often just one type of vessels was baked in them, for example lids, as in case of the kiln which collapsed while vessels were still being baked in it.<sup>48</sup> The repertoire of vessels discovered within kilns and appurtenant refuse pits demonstrate well developed workshop activity which supplied the market mainly with eating and cooking vessels.<sup>49</sup> Also, two moulds for production of the vessels of type Drag. 37 in *terra sigillata* technique were discovered, however, they had different ornaments than those from the artisanal centre of *Viminacium-Margum*.<sup>50</sup> The beginning of the craft production within this centre can be dated into the time of Antoninus Pius (138-161), and its peak was during the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the first decades of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>51</sup>

### **CERAMIC PRODUCTION IN LATE ANTIQUITY**

With the administrative, military and economic reforms during the period of the Tetrarchy, the Late Antique society underwent deep changes that were manifested in all aspects of life, private, public and sacral. The ceramic production in the 4<sup>th</sup> and the 5<sup>th</sup> century, judging from the finds along the Danube Limes, was modest in aspects of forms, production techniques and ornament usage. Although there were some population declines, due to frequent wars, in the period of the

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46 Raičković 2007, 11.

47 Raičković 2007, 48.

48 Raičković 2007, 48.

49 Raičković 2007, *passim*.

50 Raičković 2007, 49.

51 Raičković 2007, 50.

Late Antiquity, there were also numerous arrivals of groups or even entire tribes, from other parts of the Empire or from *barbaricum*. Newly-arrived inhabitants brought with them specific habits in construction of living space, economy and modes of life. Ceramic production in this period did not yield a lesser amount of products, but the quality was certainly much lower in comparison with earlier periods. Ceramic vessels were functional, practical and cheap (Fig. 13). The production was standardized, with traits of middle- and lower-quality workshops, which recognised the needs of their immediate consumers.<sup>52</sup> One of the most frequent groups of the Late Antiquity pottery in the Limes area in the middle Danube valley was glazed ceramics (Fig. 14 a, b). Their wide distribution, limited number of types for this area, as well as traces of glazing practice, point to their local origin. These workshops made standard types of grey and red kitchen ceramics, with were glazed afterwards.<sup>53</sup>

The production of vessels in the Late Antiquity is confirmed by kilns discovered in the section of Limes at the Iron Gates, within auxiliary forts of *Diana* and *Pontes*. Three kilns were discovered at *Diana*: one in the vicinity of the western wall from the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 15), another one within the inner tower of the south-western corner of the fort, with *tubulae* bearing traces of spilled glaze, from the 4<sup>th</sup> century, and the third one was noted in the central part of the camp, dated into the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>54</sup> At *Pontes*, two Late Antiquity kilns of the same type were discovered; and the one labelled G17/1 was published with more details (Fig. 16).<sup>55</sup> The kiln, with the diameter of 1.50 m, had a semispherical calotte and latticed floor supported by a pillar, placed on an extensively burnt floor.<sup>56</sup> It is dated into the *limitanei*-phase II, in the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>57</sup>

Semi-dug in ceramic kilns with circular or elliptical bases were also registered at the sites of Boljetin – *Smorna*, Ravna – *Campsia* and Grabovica-Brzi Prun.<sup>58</sup> A

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52 Cvjetičanin 2013, 209.

53 Cvjetičanin 2006, 160.

54 Cvjetičanin 2006, 160.

55 Garašanin, Vasić 1987, 90-91, fig. 3, 6, pl. X, XI.

56 Garašanin, Vasić 1987, 91.

57 Garašanin, Vasić 1987, 97.

58 Zotović 1984, 220, T. III, 2; Kondić 1966, 98; Kondić 1967, 67; Paprenica 1986, 363 (uncertain

Fig. 13. Late Antique glazed bowls from the Danubian limes zone (after Cvjetićanin 2006, photo 2)

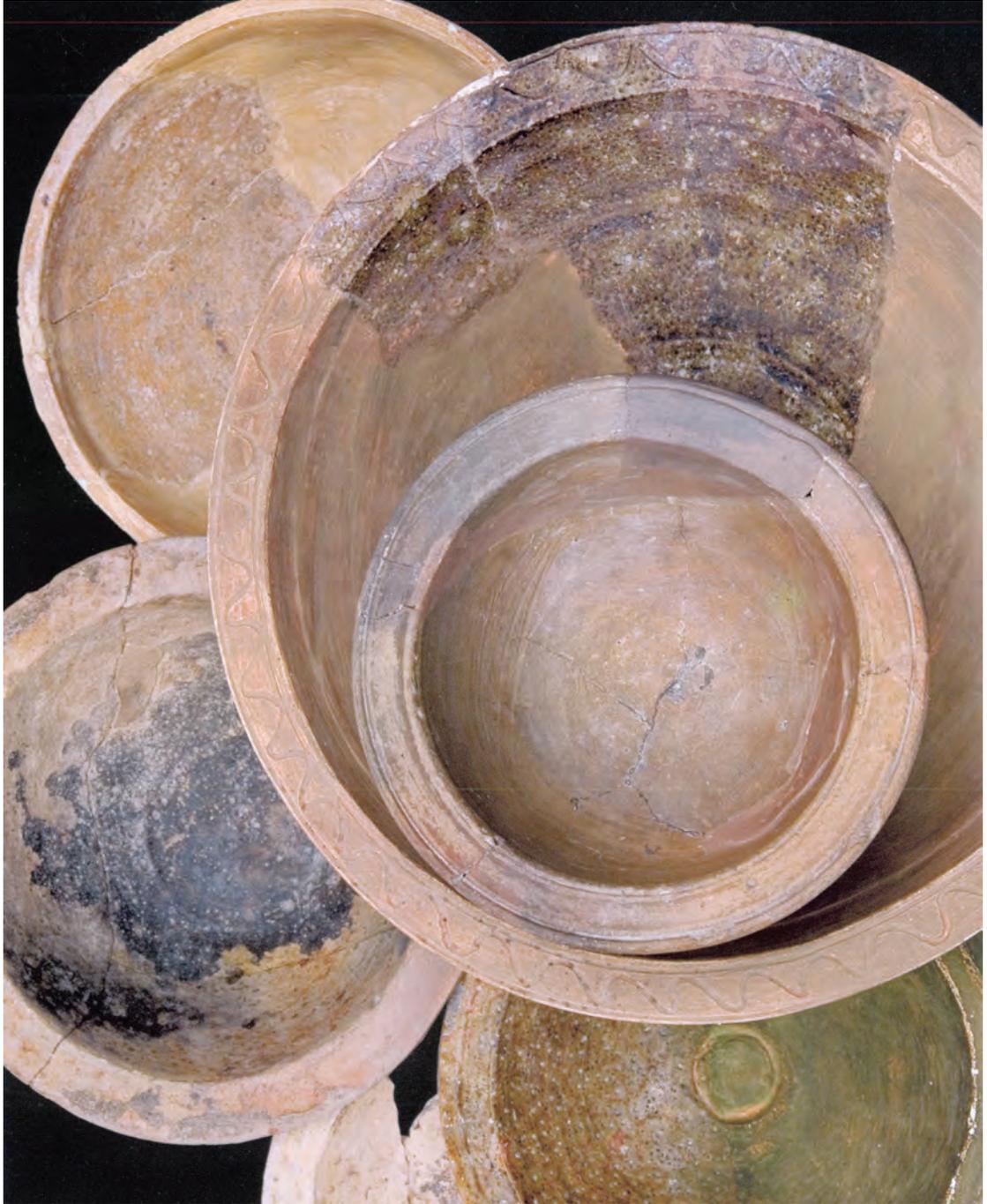




Fig. 14 a-b. Glazed flagons from Ravna-Camps, late 4th century (after Cvjetičanin 2006, photo 6-7)

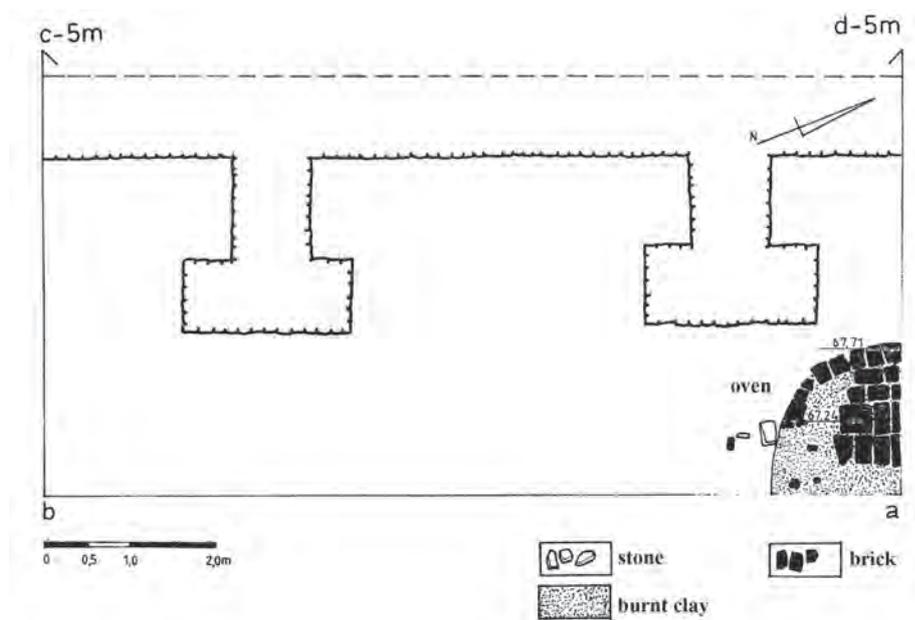


Fig. 15. Diana, ceramic kiln (after Rankov 1987, fig. 16).

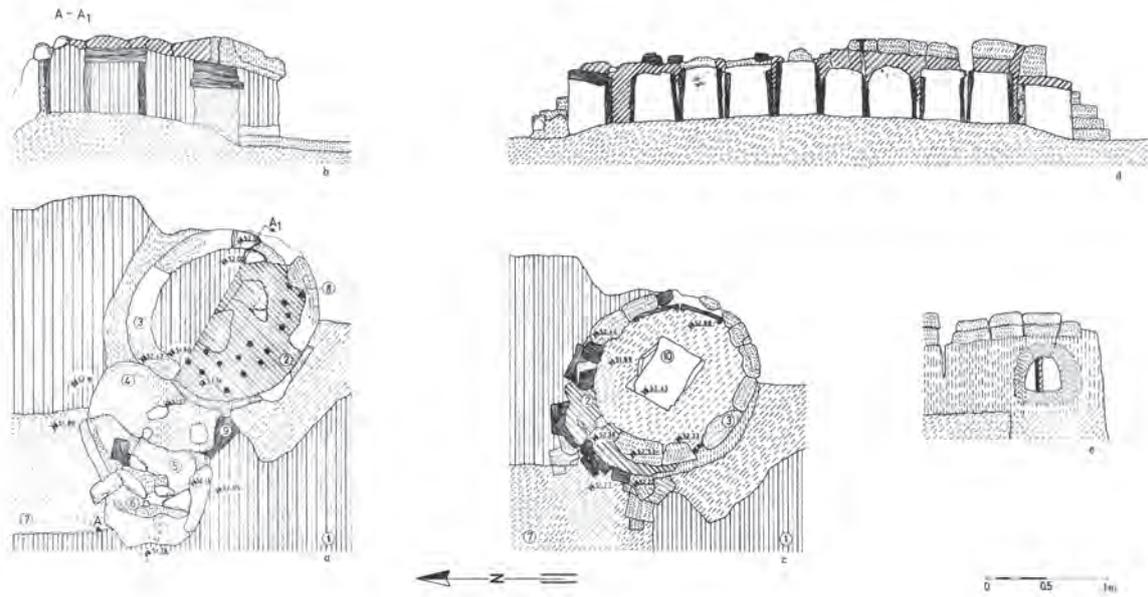


Fig. 16. *Pontes*, ceramic kiln in Sq. G/17 (after Garašanin, Vasić 1987, Pl. X).

Fig. 17. *Smorna*, Eastern tower, kiln (after Zotović 1984, Pl. III, 1).





Fig. 18. *Smorna*, Eastern tower, vessels from ceramic kiln (after Zotović 1984, Pl. III, 2).

ceramic kiln from Boljetin, a small auxiliary camp at Lepena river, was constructed within the eastern tower of the fort (Fig 17), at the time when it was no longer used for defence purposes, perhaps during the time of Constantine I. The kiln was used several times (Fig. 18). At Ravna – *Campsas*, in the central part of the auxiliary fort, remains of a large early Byzantine building were uncovered, with one kiln at each end.<sup>59</sup> These kilns had circular ground bases, they were made of clay, and they were reinforced with a stone rim on the outer side. Calottes and brick floors

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chronology).

<sup>59</sup> Kondić 1966, 98.

remained preserved. Also in this area, remains of an object with several large clay kilns were registered,<sup>60</sup> of unknown dimensions and associated finds, for which T. Cvjetićanin noted that they were most likely used for pottery.<sup>61</sup> At Grabovica, at the site of Brzi Prun, remains of what was most likely a Late Antiquity settlement were partially examined. Within one of the trenches, a circular kiln was discovered, with the diameter of 1,75 m, with a dug-in pre-space and the floor covered by bricks, dim. 38 x 13 x 5 cm, arranged in a mosaic manner, with a partially preserved clay wall and a fragmented calotte-shaped cover. Rare ceramic finds from this object and the entire layer on the site belong to the Late Antiquity production, mostly from the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>62</sup>

The most frequent group of ceramic on the Late Antiquity sites along the Limes were kitchen and storage vessels, produced in small individual workshops.<sup>63</sup> A specific group of vessels is grey polished pottery, which occurs in the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> and first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. Its producers and consumers were *foederati*, barbarian tribes which inhabited the borders of the Empire.<sup>64</sup>

The changes which occurred in the ceramic production in the first six centuries AD are the result of changes in technological knowledge and skills, but also in the purchasing power of the consumers, their aesthetic worldviews, as well as food habits.<sup>65</sup> By studying 313 types of vessels from the borderland areas of the Iron Gates, ranging from the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> until the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century, it was noted that vessels produced by reduction process were predominant (Fig. 19). The reduction firing process was less demanding and it also required less time and less fuel.<sup>66</sup> Vessels were baked too quickly, sometimes even in the conditions of insufficient oxidation, and they vessels were frequently placed too close one to another, which also reduced the firing qualities.<sup>67</sup> Decorative techniques demanded skills of a craftsperson, but not artistic inspiration. The process of turning changed

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60 Kondić 1967, 67.

61 Cvjetićanin 2006, 160.

62 Cvjetićanin 2016, 130-131.

63 Cvjetićanin 2013, 209.

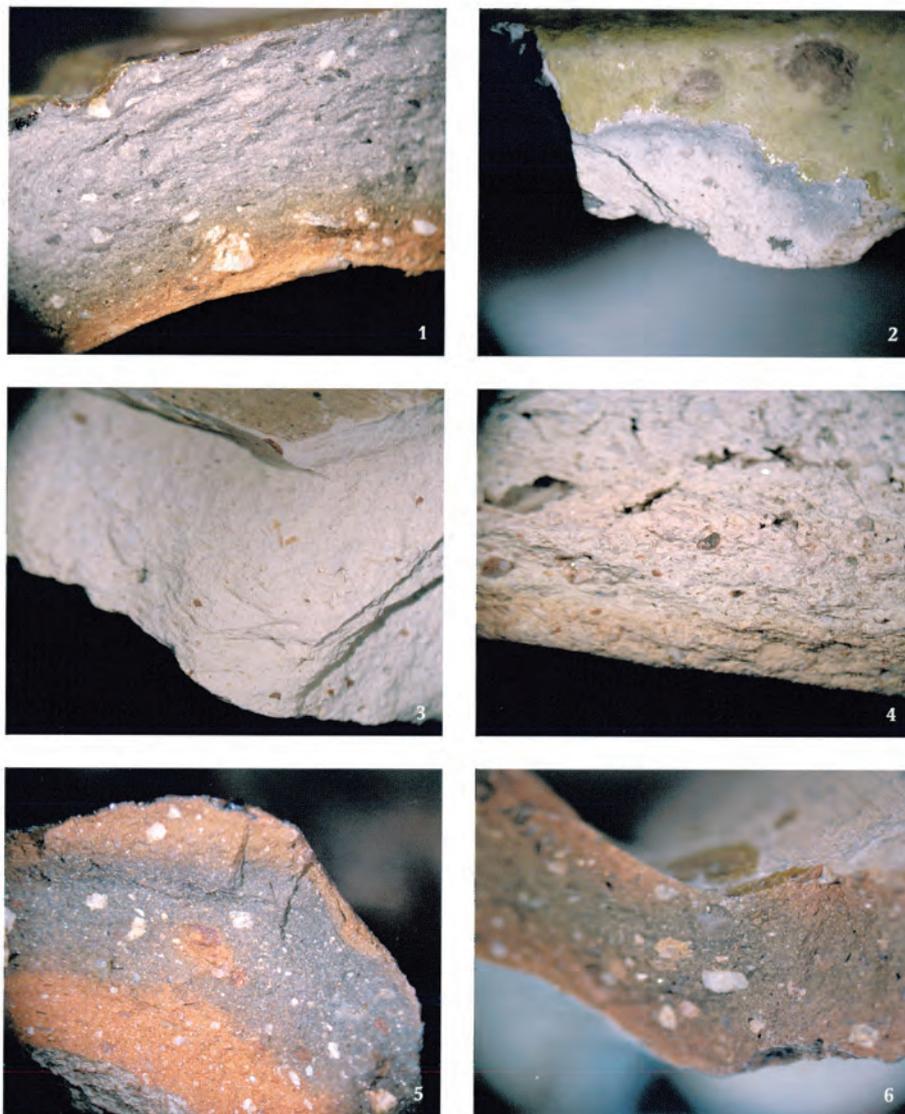
64 Cvjetićanin 2013, 210, fig. 117.

65 Cvjetićanin 2013, 213.

66 Cvjetićanin 2016, 149-153.

67 Cvjetićanin 2016, 153, note 16.

Fig. 19. Ceramics from  
*Diana* and *Pontes*,  
macroscopic view (after  
Cvjetičanin 2006, photo 15)



very little throughout the Roman period, therefore, it is possible that common tools were used for the ceramic production, same as in other workshops. Some of the finds from settlements and forts, such as knives, needles, *spatulae*, could have been used for pottery making.<sup>68</sup> The ornamentation was made by using a limited number of techniques, such as stamping, incising, polishing, and standard tools were used for this, such as bone polishers, awls, clay stamps, etc.<sup>69</sup>

## PRODUCTION OF STONE OBJECTS

One of the particularly interesting and important segments of stone technology in the Roman times are abrasive stone tools. They were used for manufacturing diverse objects, from metal, wood or bone materials. Also, diverse iron tools, used in agriculture and for wood and leather working, demanded constant repairs and sharpening, for which stone abrasive tools were used.<sup>70</sup>

Abrasive stone tools were not frequent on the sites in the Iron Gates area. A small number of items was registered within the fort of Saldum in layers belonging to the late 4<sup>th</sup> century (364–380) and to the 6<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>71</sup> They are most likely linked with metallurgical activities, confirmed by the finds of metal casting moulds and a deposit of metal objects (workshop storage?).<sup>72</sup> Some evidence for a wider use of whetstones come from the youngest layers of the 4<sup>th</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> century fort of Karataš – *Diana*, where examples of rectangular shape were discovered.<sup>73</sup> Similar objects were also noted within the Early Byzantine forts in Ljubičevac and Rtkovo-Glamija.<sup>74</sup>

The largest group find of whetstones discovered so far comes from the hinterland of the Limes, from the site of Gamzigrad – *Romuliana*. During the researches of the southern tower at the western gate of the younger fort (fig. 20) a total number

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68 Špehar 2010, 75-77, T. VIII; Cvjetičanin 2016, 154.

69 Cvjetičanin 2016, 154.

70 Jeremić 2009, 163-178.

71 Jeremić 2009, 168-169, cat. 502-504.

72 Jeremić 2009, 174, cat. 534; 190.

73 Špehar 2010, 124, cat. 659–662, 664–667).

74 Špehar 2010, 124, cat. 659, 663.

of 33 complete and fragmented specimens were discovered. Tower no. 19 served as a workshop after it lost its defensive role and that of a watchtower (fig. 2). Since the middle/second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> and until mid-6<sup>th</sup> century, blacksmith and casting kilns were located here, which could have fulfilled the needs of the local market with products made from metal, or they served for repairing metal tools, weapons, etc.<sup>75</sup>

Whetstones from *Romuliana* represent the link between prehistoric and contemporary whetstones, in the manufacture and in the mode of use. They have typical Late Antiquity shapes, which can be encountered on sites in the present-day Serbia.<sup>76</sup> The majority of examples from *Romuliana* has a more or less regular rectangular shape, with surfaces slightly concave from use (Fig. 21). Examples of elongated, irregular shape also occur, with square cross-section, with narrow ends, of high quality manufacture, as well as double whetstones with two equally used working surfaces.

All the whetstones from the tower represent final objects; semi-finished objects were not registered. Traces of manufacture, visible on their surfaces, enabled the reconstruction of the production process. Smaller segments of stones were obtained by sawing, then they were shaped by fine chipping technique, and the final stage was polishing. Traces of use are visible on all parts of the used tool. Mainly, this was a polished and concave working surface, obtained by use of whetstone for its basic purpose – sharpening of metal blades. One side of a whetstone, the upper one, was mainly used. Damaged whetstones often served as supporters during cutting, sawing, and also as anvils. Basal segments of broken and damaged whetstones sometimes served as hammer.

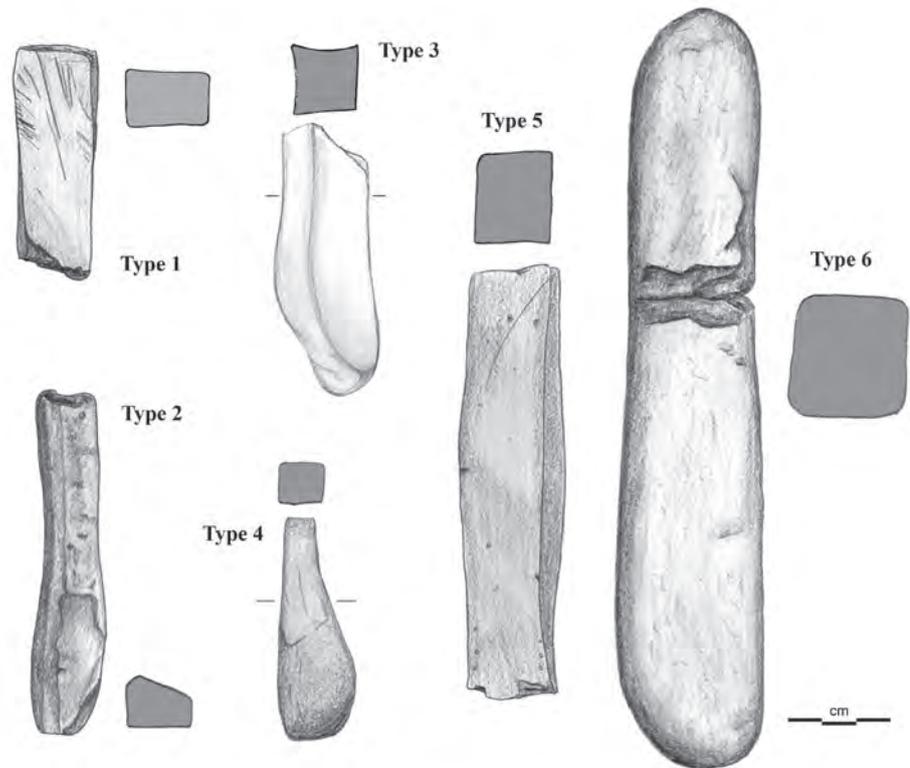
For the production of whetstones at *Romuliana*, fine-grained metamorphosed sandstones were mainly used compact, resilient rocks of weaker abrasive force, therefore convenient for fine polishing and final shaping of objects from solid materials, mainly metal. Somewhat rarer are fine-grained quartz sandstones with silicate, rarely carbonate adhesive and fine-grained igneous rocks – granite and andesite – were only rarely used.

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75 Petković 2004, 129–140; Petković, Živić 2006, 135–140; Petković 2010, 168–176.

76 Antonović 2008, 342. Finds from units from the 4<sup>th</sup> century and layers from the 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> century at the site of Ras – Podgrađe (Popović 1999, 114, fig. 71/1-5; 322-323, cat. 184–188), as well as finds from large regional centres of the 6<sup>th</sup> century, such as Caričin Grad (Špehar 2010, 124, note 126-127) or the site at Mountain Jelica (Milinković 2017, 172–174, cat. 298–305).

Fig. 20. Types of whetstones from *Romuliana*.



Judging by the distribution within tower no. 19 at *Romuliana*, we may note that this was waste – tools that were used secondarily for a while, after damage and breakage, as anvils, hammers and supporters for cutting and sawing. They show that during the Late Antiquity and Early Byzantine period (4<sup>th</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> century) the production of the stone whetstones was standardised. This is visible from regularity in the choice of lithic raw material and in their regular shapes. Late Antiquity lithic tools were never carefully studied, probably because they were not considered attractive and also because they are not particularly abundant. More detailed analyses may offer interesting data regarding quarries in the Roman times, specialised workshops and one, not so common, craft in the Roman times, i.e. production of lithic tools.

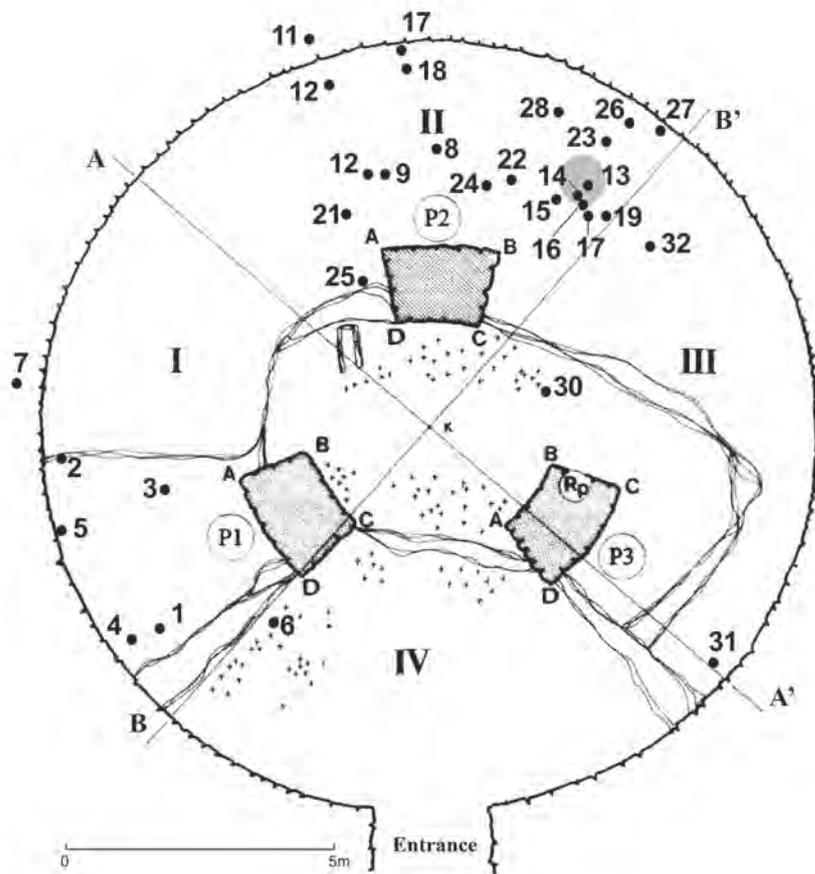


Fig. 21. Distribution of whetstones in the tower no. 19 at Romuliana (plan of tower no. 19, courtesy by Sofija Petković)

## PRODUCTION OF BONE OBJECTS

Objects made from osseous raw materials (bone, antler, mollusc shells, teeth) were very frequent in all aspects of everyday and religious life in Roman times. They were used for producing a variety of objects – for small tools (awls, needles, chisels), for cosmetic purposes and personal decoration (cosmetic and apothecary spoons, hair pins, combs, beads and other parts of composite jewellery), for small utilitarian objects (spindle whorls, needle cases, writing implements – *stili*), for weapons and military equipment (in particular for parts of reflexive bow, but arrowheads were also produced, handles for knives, etc.), for gaming pieces, musical instruments; also, parts of composite objects were made from these raw

materials – decorations on wooden boxes, on furniture, etc.<sup>77</sup> Bone working is often connected with wood-working; the more or less same tools were used for manufacturing these items and artisans were often the same or they shared the working space. Therefore, the presence of an osseous workshop also suggests the presence of a woodworking workshop.<sup>78</sup>

Identification of a workshops for manufacturing osseous materials, however, is not always easy. Unlike ceramic workshops, for example, the traces they leave are less conspicuous and less straightforward. Bone working does not need a special tool kit or a special, separate place for the production. Furthermore, Roman written sources do not even mention this handicraft; the only written evidence for it refers to ivory sculptors (*eborarii*) who were working in the same building and collegium with carpenters (*citrarii*).<sup>79</sup> Another problem of identifying workshops is connected with archaeological recovering practices in the early and mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, when faunal remains were not collected at all or only selectively, and faunal analyses were not common practice. Because of this, manufacture debris remained unnoticed and thus it was not possible to identify the working areas. Also, it is possible that at least some of the bone workshops were mobile, i.e., that artisans stayed at some place for a certain time and then moved on.

Although there is less data on bone working than for some other crafts, we can still note that the need for bone artefacts was rather important. Some researchers even assume that almost every settlement had at least one workshop producing bone artefacts.<sup>80</sup> So far, bone workshops in South-Eastern Europe were identified in cities, such as *Mursa*<sup>81</sup> or *Apulum*.<sup>82</sup> Furthermore, there were several workshops related to the army; for example, in the province of Dacia, at least three workshops were discovered within auxiliary camps – at *Tibiscum*, *Buciumi*, *Porolissum*, and one within the military fort of *Micia*.<sup>83</sup>

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77 Bíró et al. 2012; Deschler-Erb 1998; Hrnčiarik 2016; Kokabi et al. eds. 1996; Kovač 2017; MacGregor 1985; Petković 1995; Vass 2010.

78 Petković 1995, 13

79 Deschler-Erb 1998, 93; Vass 2010,

80 Vass 2010, 59.

81 Kovač 2017

82 Vass 2010

83 Vass 2010

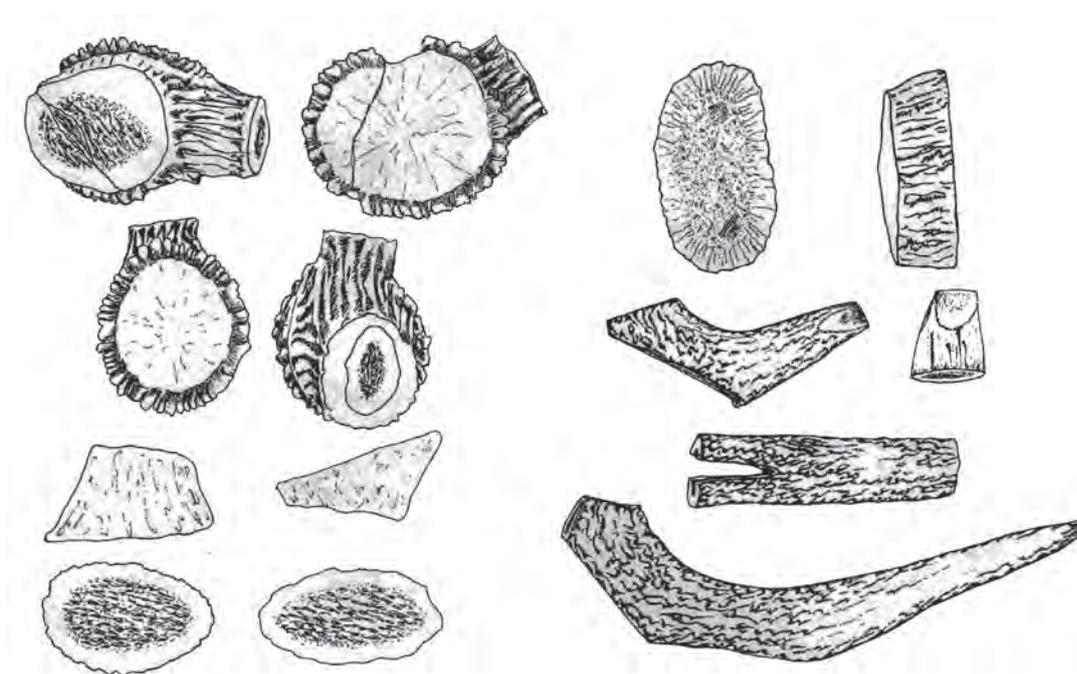


Fig. 22. Manufacture debris from red deer antler, *Singidunum, castrum* (after Petković 1995).

In the Limes area in the middle Danubian valley, we have evidence of bone working in *Singidunum* and in the Iron Gates region, for the time being. These finds are usually linked with Late Antiquity; for earlier phases of the Roman rule, we may assume that workshops existed on the territory of *Moesia Superior*, but we do not have enough data.

At *Singidunum*, a small amount of manufacturing waste was discovered at Veliki Kalemegdan during the excavations in 1980–1984, in the area of the eastern wall of the *castrum* and structures in its interior (Fig. 22). These structures were made from light materials, and had open and semi-dug-in hearths and refuse pits, and are dated into the last quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> – first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. The entire horizon was burnt, probably during the Hun raids in 441. In this workshop, only antler from red deer was worked upon, and only manufacture debris was discovered – there were no finished or semi-finished items.<sup>84</sup> Perhaps this was only a temporary, mobile workshop, from which only waste remained.

In the Iron gates region, a relatively small amount of manufacturing debris from red deer antler was noted on several sites, such as *Diana* and *Pontes*. Very large

<sup>84</sup> Petković 1995, 18.

quantities of semi-finished bone pins were also discovered at these two sites, especially at *Diana*, suggesting intensive production of this, very frequent bone item. Antler waste was also discovered at the site of *Mora Vagei*. It was assumed that on this site from the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> and the 5<sup>th</sup> century a workshop also existed, which produced calotte-shaped spindle whorls and double combs. This workshop was most likely located within the basement of the tower, where the storage area was.<sup>85</sup>

At the site of *Ravna – Timacum Minus*, more substantial remains of a workshop were discovered in 1998.<sup>86</sup> It was located near the fort wall in the vicinity of the southern gate. One object with several rooms was researched here, made from lighter materials – foundations were made of stone and pebbles, walls from wattle and daub and the roof construction was from *tegulae* and *imbrices*. In room no. 2, within the layers dated into the 4<sup>th</sup> – first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century several bone artefacts, semi-finished products, manufacturing waste, as well as cervid antler and bovid horn core with traces of working were discovered. It was assumed by the researcher that wood was worked upon in the same room and that the entire complex represented a workshop area, where several craft activities took place<sup>87</sup>.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

The Limes regions in *Pannonia Inferior* and *Moesia Superior* had an important role in the economic and political life of these provinces, because of the permanent presence of the Roman army and state administration, and also thanks to the convenient geographical position and numerous natural resources. Agriculture and abundant sources of diverse raw materials, such as wood, stone, clay, ores, were important not only for local economy, but also for wider regions. Epigraphic and archaeological evidence available at this moment show that ceramic, brick production, as well as production of lithic, bone and probably wood items were well developed. Several workshops are known on the Limes alone (especially at legionary cities of *Singidunum* and *Viminacium* and on the Limes area in the Iron

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85 Cermanović-Kuzmanović and Stanković 1986, 454-455, Petković 1995, 18.

86 Petković 2001

87 Petković 2001, 70-71.

Gates), which supplied both the army and the borderland areas, and probably also more remote regions. However, an integrative, comprehensive study of arts and crafts in this region is still needed. In particular future researches should focus on the links and relations between different crafts (such as the links between lithic and metal production, bone and wood working, etc.).

*Translated by Jelena Vitezović*

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## ROMAN RELIGION AND CULTS ON THE DANUBE LIMES IN SERBIA\*

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### ABSTRACT

*Among different spheres of daily life led by Roman soldiers in the forts along the Danube Limes, one of the important ones was the sphere of spiritual culture, beliefs and religion. Although with the process of Romanisation, the official pantheon of Roman deities was introduced to the indigenous population, with the building and development of the defence frontier system on the Danube and Roman legions and auxiliary units who were stationed there, came soldiers of different origin and provenience, who brought with them their own religious beliefs and deities. Epigraphic and archaeological monuments found in the Danube Limes localities testify to the degree of acceptance or resistance of the autochthonous inhabitants towards different Roman, Hellenised and Oriental cults and show some very interesting examples of syncretism of the mentioned cults with unknown, indigenous gods and goddesses.*

**KEY WORDS: DANUBE LIMES, SERBIA, ROMAN CULTS, ARMY, FORTIFICATIONS, IMPERIAL CULT**

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It is presumed that the first permanent camps of Moesian legions on the Danube Limes in the territory of the province of Moesia were in larger centres like *Singidunum*, *Margum*, *Viminacium*, *Ratiaria*, and *Oescus*, while from the period of the division of the province of Moesia into Moesia Superior and Moesia Inferior, two permanently stationed legions, *legio III Flavia* and *legio VII Claudia*, were present in Moesia Superior on the Danube limes until the end of Antiquity. However, the majority of forts on the Danube Limes in today's Serbia belonged to the type of medium auxiliary forts, with auxiliary units, who formed the backbone of the provincial army. They occupied much smaller forts than legions did - medium auxiliary forts comprised a surface area which varied from 1 to 2.5 hectares and could accommodate around 500 soldiers.<sup>2</sup> Those auxiliary units, as legions, were comprised of soldiers of different origins who came from various parts of the Roman Empire, and brought with them their own customs and religious beliefs. As part of the Roman Imperial Army, they accepted Roman religion, the official Roman pantheon and ritual practices, but nevertheless, many of them stayed faithful to their local, indigenous gods and goddesses and, since the Roman state never applied any pressure in the sphere of religious beliefs, epigraphic and archaeological material confirms numerous deities of different origin.<sup>3</sup> Also, near every fort, a civilian settlement catering for the soldiers' needs was formed, consisting of indigenous Romanised inhabitants, but also traders, artisans, veterans, slaves and freedmen, who came from different parts of the Roman empire, bringing with them their own customs and religions.<sup>4</sup> Through roads within the Iron Gorge, Roman soldiers were in permanent contact with the traders, administration, veterans, slaves and freedmen for the communication, supply and transport<sup>5</sup>, which streamed between the

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2 Like in localities *Čezava*, *Taliata*, *Diana*, *Pontes*, *Drobeta* etc. Ibid, 18. Small fortifications of the type *burgus-quadriburgia*, existed in localities Mihajlovac and Ljubičevac, while watchtowers were confirmed in localities Lepenski Vir and Zidinac, Ibid, 57.

3 The same can be applied for the persons who constituted the military administration, since they were also of different origin.

4 For more about the topic of the spread of different religions throughout the Roman world, see Price 2012, 1-19.

5 It is well known that Moesia was an important mining area for the Roman empire, rich with ores like gold, silver, copper, iron and lead, but also with very fertile land for agriculture and mountainous areas with woods. Local workshops for ceramic wares, glass vessels, tools and weapons are confirmed in centres like *Sirmium*, *Singidunum* and *Viminacium*, from where the products were transported to fortifications and settlements along Danube Limes.

fortifications and settlements along the Limes, but also between the fortifications along the Limes and almost all parts of the Roman empire, creating a vibrant social network which had an important role in the exchange of religious and spiritual beliefs, and religious theologies as well. Of course, the local context of indigenous cults and religion was an important factor too, determining the degree of acceptance or resistance towards the newly introduced cults and religions.<sup>6</sup>

Epigraphic monuments, the remains of different types of sanctuaries and different kinds of archaeological material with a clear cultic function, were found in localities of the Danube Limes in Serbia (Fig. 1), testifying to the importance and about the need for religious practices and rituals in the lives of the soldiers and civilians who lived there, but also bringing important knowledge about various theologies, their diffusion, different deities and many ways of their worshipping and participating in their cults, in the aforementioned area.

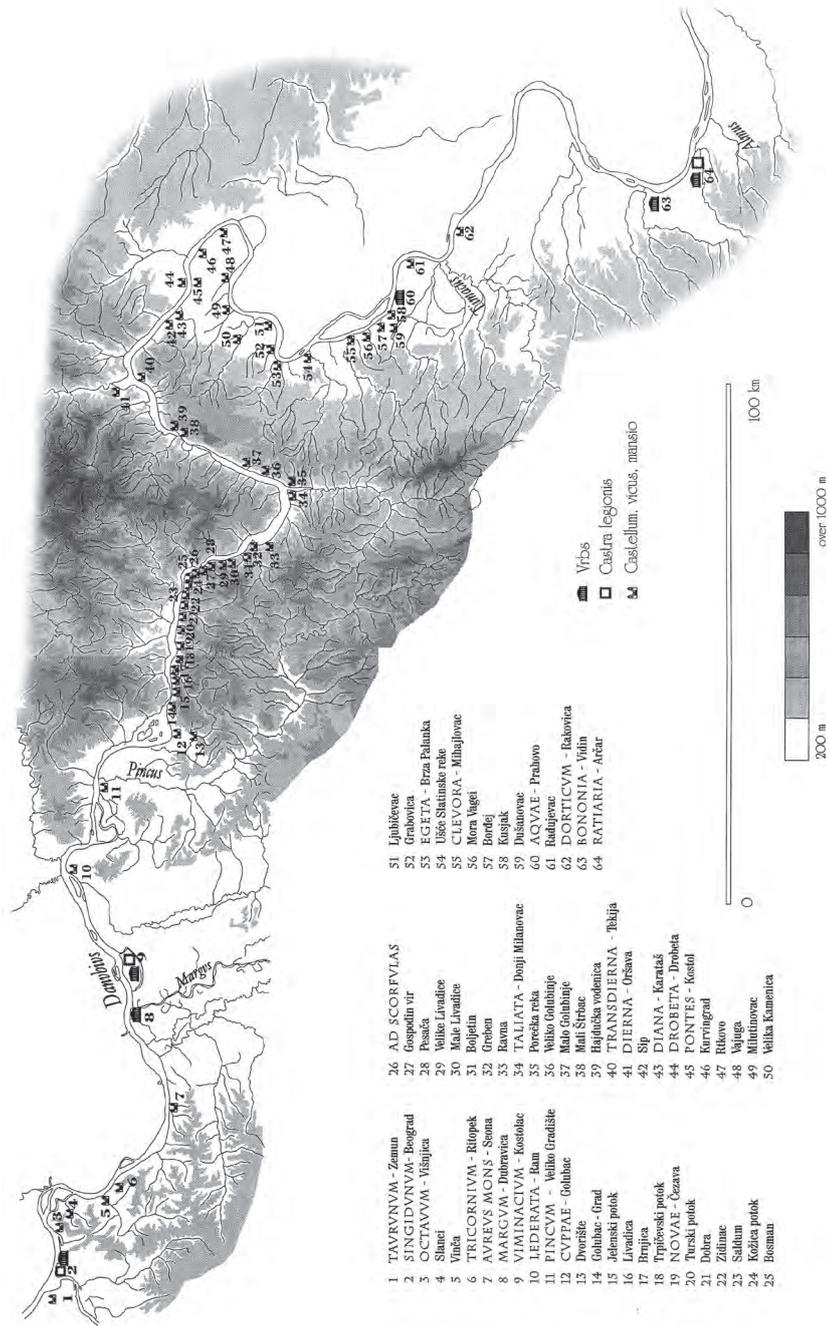
As he was the supreme god in the Roman pantheon, Jupiter was also the most popular deity on the Danube Limes. The god of victory, he was associated with the greatest power and triumph and, as the power of Roman Empire grew, so his importance did as well. Epigraphic dedications to *Jupiter Optimus Maximus* (Jupiter the Best and the Greatest) are the most numerous, mostly made on votive altars, for the health of the emperor or the well-being of the dedicant's family.<sup>7</sup> From the territory of Singidunum, a total number of 36 votive dedications to *Jupiter Optimus Maximus* have been confirmed, which is not at all surprising considering that Singidunum was one of the most important centres in *Moesia Superior*, where *legio IV Flavia* was stationed from the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century until Late Antiquity.

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6 Along with the process of Romanisation, the deities of the Roman pantheon were introduced to the territories of the Central Balkan provinces and the middle Danube region. Through the Roman period, until the final victory of Christianity, religions and cults of different provenance were present in the mentioned territories, having more or less success in the autochthonous population, which was mirrored the popularity or absence of certain cults or assimilation of certain cults with the cults of indigenous deities.

7 Epigraphic dedications to the most powerful and the greatest of all Roman deities, underline his supremacy, will and power, which were highly respected among Roman soldiers and the civilian population. Epigraphic dedications to *Jupiter Optimus Maximus* made for the health of the emperor include, for example, monuments from Singidunum published in *IMS I*, 3; *IMS I*, 4; *IMS I*, 101; Kostolac (*Viminacium*) *IMS II*, 22; *IMS II*, 25; Votive monuments dedicated to *Jupiter Optimus Maximus* for the health of the dedicant are known from Singidunum, *IMS I*, 11 and Ritopek *IMS I*, 79.

Fig. 1 Map of the localities on the Danube Limes in Serbia (Roman Limes on the Middle and Lower Danube, Belgrade 1996)



uity.<sup>8</sup> The strategic position of Singidunum contributed to the fact that it became a very important crossroad with a fort and settlement and soon developed into a *municipium* (in the period of the reign of Emperor Hadrian) and later, during the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, it became a colony. Marble fragmented sculptures representing the god Jupiter are not numerous and, for most of those kept in the National museum in Belgrade, the place of finding is, unfortunately, unknown.<sup>9</sup> They present either a standing figure of the god with an eagle or Jupiter seated on a throne.

As the capital of the Roman province of *Moesia Superior*, *Viminacium* was not only a very important military centre, but also a strategically and economically significant city, located in a favourable geographic position, being a crossroad for road and river transportation.<sup>10</sup> The cult of the god Jupiter has been confirmed in *Viminacium* with seven votive monuments and a fragmented marble sculpture of Jupiter with an eagle.<sup>11</sup> Since *Viminacium* was a centre settled with inhabitants of different origins through the period of the Roman rule, the majority of pagan cults known during antiquity existed there and different deities were venerated by citizens of diverse social and economic status. Beside the cult of *Jupiter Maximus Optimus*, dedications and cult sculptures connected to the gods *Jupiter Dolichenus*, *Jupiter Turmasgades* and *Jupiter Paternus* have been discovered in *Viminacium*.<sup>12</sup>

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8 Votive monuments dedicated to *Jupiter Optimus Maximus*, from the territory of Singidunum are published in: *IMS I* (n. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 79, 80, 86, 87, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, ), *AE 1727*, *AE 1997*, n. 1301, *IL Iug* 1986, n. 502, Petković 2002, 219-224.

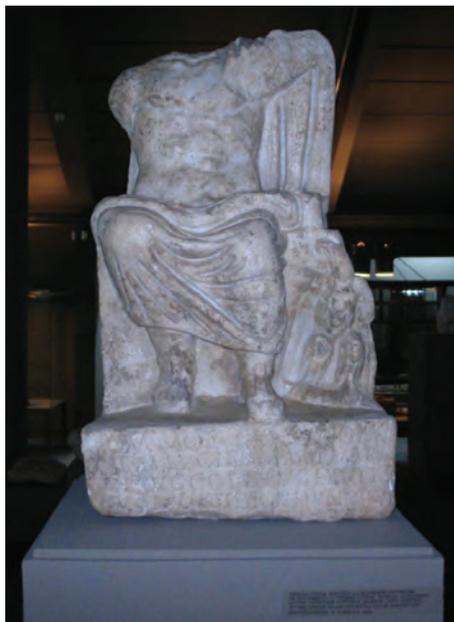
9 Fragmented marble sculptures identified as representations of the god Jupiter mostly present a bearded head of a mature man, a standing god with an eagle beside him or a god seated on a throne. There are also three dubious fragmented sculptures which represent either the god Jupiter or the god Asclepius. Fragmented marble sculptures of Jupiter kept in the National Museum in Belgrade, whose place of find is unknown, are: fragmented sculpture of a half-naked Jupiter (inv. n. 2954/III), dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> century, Bošković Robert 2006, n. S.1; head of a bearded mature man (inv. n. 2953/III), dated to 3- 4<sup>th</sup> century, *Ibid*, S. 3.

10 From the second half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century until the end of Antiquity, *Legio VII Claudia* was stationed in *Viminacium*, as was the river fleet *Classis Flavia Histrica*, Korać et al. 2014, 65-66.

11 For votive monuments from *Viminacium* dedicated to Jupiter see *IMS II*, n. 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24 and 25. Besides a fragmented sculpture of Jupiter with an eagle, of which only the figure of the eagle is preserved, two marble torsos of Jupiter/Asclepius of the iconographic type were also found in *Viminacium*, Tomović 1992, n. 187, fig. 38.7, Bošković Robert 2006, 134, S.12, Pl. 46/2.

12 For the cult of Jupiter Dolichenus in *Viminacium* and generally in central Balkan Roman provinces, see Gavrilović 2010, 173 etc. For the cult of Jupiter Turmasgades, *Ibid*, 178-181. For votive dedication to Jupiter Paternus, *IMS II*, 102.

Fig. 2 Marble sculpture of Jupiter, Kostol (Pontes), (<http://virtuelnimuzejdunava.rs/pocetna/rimski-bog-jupiter.i-97.125.html>)



At Kostol (*Pontes*) a unique dedication to *Jupiter Optimus Maximus Montanus*, inscribed on the front side of the base of a statue of a god seated on a throne with an eagle with spread wings beside his left leg, was discovered (Fig. 2).<sup>13</sup> This iconographic type of Jupiter sculpture belongs to the type of presentations copied from the famous cult statue of Capitoline Jupiter<sup>14</sup> and is analogous to the marble statue from Tekija (*Transdierna*). Since the epithet *Montanus* is not confirmed anywhere else in the territory of the Central Balkan Roman provinces, it could be presumed that its meaning implied a god who inhabited higher spheres

(mountains?).<sup>15</sup> An iconographically similar marble statue of Jupiter seated on a throne was discovered in the Limes locality of Tekija (*Transdierna*), and by virtue of its stylistic similarities to the statue from Kostol, it can be presumed that it was modelled in the same workshop (perhaps in a centre like Ratiaria or *Viminacium*?).<sup>16</sup> Above the north-western tower of the Ram fort (tower 5) from the middle ages, a votive monument (used as *spolia*) dedicated to *Jupiter Optimus Maximus* by *vexillatio legionis VII Claudiae* was found, dating to the period of Trajan's wars in

13 A fragmented statue of white marble was found in 1979 during the archaeological excavations in the locality of Kostol (*Pontes*), in a pit situated in the passage of a *porta principalis sinistra*. The statue of the god is naked, with emphasised body musculature and a himation over his left shoulder. The ex-voto was dedicated to *Jupiter Montanus* by *Marcus Lucius Romanus Marini* (-us, -ninus, -anus?), Augustal of Colonia Drobeta. The monument was discovered in the area of the presumed agricultural estate and it is dated to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, Гарашанин, Васић, Марјановић-Вујовић 1984, 48-50.

14 The cult statue of Jupiter Capitoline was made after the fire of the Capitoline shrine in 69 AD, for the temple of Jupiter in Capitoline Hill, Stamper 2005, 14.

15 Гарашанин, Васић, Марјановић-Вујовић 1984, 49.

16 The fragmented marble statue of the god Jupiter on a throne from Tekija, represents only the lower part of the god's naked body with a himation on it and a figure of an eagle with semi-spread wings. On the sides of the throne, analogous to the throne of a statue of Zeus at Olympia, a series of animal figures (sheep, bulls) in shallow relief are presented. The statue is dated to the first decades of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, Tomović 1992, 107, n. 138, fig. 45.1-4.

*Dacia*.<sup>17</sup> An *ex-voto* offer in the shape of a votive plaque, found in a hoard also in the locality of Tekija, with an image of a Zeus/Jupiter bust presented in *aedicula*, flanked with the attributes of a thunderbolt and sceptre, is dated to the second half of the 1st century.<sup>18</sup> A fragmented marble sculpture of Jupiter was also found in the locality of Karataš (*Diana*), representing a local work of art, dated to the second half (the end?) of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century.<sup>19</sup> As for the bronze statuettes of Jupiter, they were almost exclusively found in different localities in the Limes area which is, in the context of the god's symbolism for soldiers and considering the ease with which it could be transported (due to the small size and weight of the statuettes, which was, of course, the case with all cult objects of smaller size and lighter weight)<sup>20</sup> and probable existence of small *lararia* or *sacella* in forts and settlements beside forts on the Danube Limes, not surprising.<sup>21</sup> The majority of the statuettes represent the god as a nude, bearded, mature man in a standing position, with a thunderbolt in one hand and a sceptre in the other hand and, judging by their stylistic characteristics, they were products of local workshops, dated into the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> century.<sup>22</sup> Among them, a completely nude bronze statuette of Jupiter from the locality of

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17 Симић, Симић 1984, 33, fig. 3; IMS II, 293; Mirković 2015, 71-72.

18 Six silver votive plaques with images of different deities (Jupiter, Sabazius, Magna Mater, Fortuna-Tyche, Luna, Mercury), were found in a bronze vessel in the locality of Tekija (*Transdierna*), belonging probably to a soldier of a Roman cohort or legion. For more about the plaque with the image of the god Zeus/Jupiter see Mano-Zisi 1957, 39-40, fig. XXV. A small number of votive plaques with the image of *Zeus Zbelsourdos* are also known from the locality of Pautalia (?), Вулић 1941-48, 306, n. 72.

19 The fragmented marble statue of Jupiter found in the locality of Karataš (*Diana*) represents a muscular nude torso of the god, with a himation falling down over his left shoulder and covering the lower part of his body. Iconographically, it is very close to the statues of Zeus and Asclepius from the second part of the 5<sup>th</sup> century B. C. However, stylistically, the statue from Karataš, judging by its simplicity and unskilful modelling, represents the work of a local artisan, dated to the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, Срејовић, Кузмановић-Цермановић 1987, 90, n. 36, fig. 36; Tomović 1992, 105, n. 134, fig. 36.3.

20 Price 2012, 8.

21 Bronze statuettes of a nude standing Jupiter, with a thunderbolt and sceptre as attributes in his hands were found in the localities of: Kostol (*Pontes*), Veličković 1972, n. 5; an unknown locality in the Limes area, *Ibid*, n. 3; Ram (*Lederata*), Bošković Robert 2006, 117, n. 4; two statuettes found in the locality of Tekija (*Transdierna*), Cermanović-Kuzmanović 1971, f. 1-4 and f. 5-8; two statuettes from Arčar (*Ratiaria*), Najdenova 1994, 301. A bronze statuette of Jupiter with a patera (instead of a thunderbolt) and a sceptre, was found in the locality of Kostol (*Pontes*), dated to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, Veličković 1972, n. 4.

22 The iconography of bronze statuettes of Jupiter, mostly found in the Limes region imply copying of the classic and Hellenistic sculptures, namely in the shape of *Zeus Brontaios*, modelled on a Greek prototype of Leochares (370-360. B. C.)



Fig. 3 Bronze statuette of Jupiter, Tekija (Transdierna), (<http://virtuelnimuzejdunava.rs/pocetna/bronzana-skulptura-boga-jupitera.i-106.125.html>)

Tekija (Transdierna) could be connected to the *cohort V Gallica* (and be of Gallic provenance) and, in that context, have a military sacral meaning (Fig. 3).<sup>23</sup> Besides the concentration of epigraphic and archaeological monuments dedicated to Jupiter in the Limes area, the other centres where the god (venerated alone or with other deities like Iuno, Liber and Libera, Draco and Dracena, Minerva, Hercules, Nemesis, Ceres, Asclepius, Telesphoros and Hygieia, Nemesis, Lares and anonymous deities)<sup>24</sup> was very popular were mostly important economic and mining centres, like for example *Ratiaria*. Very closely tied to the mightiest Roman god Jupiter, was the cult of the emperor, the imperial cult, which was very dominant in the army. Emperor worship was not only usual in all the units of the Roman army, it was even obligatory for ensuring victory over the enemies of the Roman State.

As the most important female Roman divinity, representing women and female principles of life, the goddess Juno was also associated with childbirth, marriage, the protection of women in peril, but also as a saviour of the Roman State. Concerning the region of the Danube Limes in Lower Pannonia and Moesia Superior, the goddess' cult is epigraphically confirmed in votive monuments found in the locality of *Viminacium*.<sup>25</sup> She is mentioned on votive monuments as *Iuno Regina* in the context of a political deity, the goddess of heaven who protects and brings wellbeing to the Roman emperor, but also as the one who ensures the preservation of the Roman State in a political and military context. Enjoying popularity not only among women, but also soldiers, it was not unexpected that a marble statue of the goddess was found in the locality of Tekija (*Transdierna*) in the Limes region. The marble statue of Juno from Tekija represents a female figure standing on a plinth, dressed in a *chiton* with a *himation* over it, with, probably, a sceptre in her right hand (now missing) and an inscription carved on the front of the plinth.<sup>26</sup> N. Vulić thinks that the location of the statue's find was a Roman

23 Цермановић-Кузмановић 1974, 159-161.

24 With Juno *IMS* II, 25; with Liber, Libera and Terra Mater, *IMS* I, n. 16; with Hercules, Minerva and Nemesis, *Il Iug*, 1439; with Ceres, *CIL* 3, 8085; with Draco and Dracena, *IMS* VI, n. 10; with Asclepius, Telesphorus and Hygieia, *Il Iug*, 1438; with Nemesis, Вулић 1941-48, n. 223; with Lares, *IMS* II, 24; with anonymous deities, *IMS* IV, n. 62, n. 101, *Il Iug*, 1414, *AE* 1972, n. 514 and n. 515.

25 *IMS* II, n. 25.

26 The inscription carved on the front of the plinth is dedicated to *Iunoni Reginae* by the Decurion Ulpus Antonius Quintus, who was from the municipium of Drobeta. The statue of Juno was modelled in the Classicist style, copying draped female statues from the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century B. C., but

fortress in Tekija and dates the statue to the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> or the first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century.<sup>27</sup> The fragmented marble statue of Juno from Radujevac, dated to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, represents a female dressed in a long *chiton* with a *himation*, similar to the statues of a veiled *matronae*.<sup>28</sup>

The goddess Minerva represented the third deity in the Capitoline triad, the goddess who mostly presided over handicrafts, inventions, arts and sciences. A powerful protectress, Minerva was also an averter of all the spirits of evil, danger and disease. For Romans, she was, however, also a goddess of war, a guarantee of victory, whose feast days included gladiatorial games while, on the other hand, as the protectress of women, she usually watched over women's weaving and spinning.<sup>29</sup> Votive monuments dedicated to Minerva were found in the localities of *Singidunum*<sup>30</sup> and *Viminacium*.<sup>31</sup> In both monuments found in the Limes area, the goddess is venerated along with Jupiter and Juno and, thus, the dedications are made to the Capitoline triad. Besides the mentioned monuments, votive monuments on which the Capitoline triad is honoured have also been found in southern parts of the Roman province of Moesia Superior and were dedicated by soldiers, *beneficarii consularis* and traders, who expressed their gratitude and loyalty to the Roman State with their dedications. Judging by the small bronze finds of Minerva, the deity enjoyed some popularity in the Danube Limes, since two statues have been found in the territory of *Singidunum*, and three statuettes were discovered in the region of the Limes (Fig. 4).<sup>32</sup> Analogous to numerous statuettes of Minerva in other Roman provinces, these

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with a lack of skill in presenting the fullness of the figure, which stylistically implies the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> or the first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century as the period of its modelling, Tomović 1992, 97, n. 108, fig. 28.4.

27 Вулић 1941-48, 259; Tomović 1992, 97.

28 Срејовић, Цермановић-Кузмановић 1987, 86, n. 34, fig. 33; Tomović 1992, 93, n. 92, fig. 29.4.

29 In time, the goddess Minerva became associated with war and the Roman army, which is confirmed not only by Pompey's dedication of a temple to Minerva for his success in the east, but also by Domitian choosing a goddess for his special protectress and his companion. This close association could be seen not only in coinage and sculpture, but also in the goddess' temples built on the *Campus Martius* and in Domitian's *Forum Transitorium*, as in the great equestrian statue of Domitian which stood in The Forum, with an image of Minerva in his left hand, Hekster 2015, 252-256.

30 *IMS* I, n. 15.

31 *IMS* II, n. 25.

32 One bronze statuette of Minerva was found in the Lower town in Kalemegdan, in Singidunum, while three statuettes from the Limes area are unfortunately of unknown provenance, Античка бронза Сингидунума 1997, n. 1; An appliqué in the shape of Minerva's bust found in Obrenovac, dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> century, should also be mentioned, Античка бронза Сингидунума 1997, 69, n. 47.



Fig. 4 Bronze statuette of Minerva, unknown locality, Limes area (Veličković 1972, n. 14)

finds represent the goddess standing, wearing a *chiton* with a *himation* and a helmet on her head, and with an *aegis* with Medusa's head and a *patera* in one hand while leaning on a spear in the other hand. While all the statuettes of Minerva represent solid provincial works modelled on the Greek prototype of *Athena Lemnia*, one statuette discovered in the Limes area distinguishes by excellent skilfulness in the details (the goddess' hair, the *egida* with Medusa's image on the goddess' chest) and may represent an import dated to the 1<sup>st</sup> - 2<sup>nd</sup> century.<sup>33</sup>

Epigraphic and archaeological monuments dedicated to Hercules have been found in abundance in the Danube Limes area in Serbia, confirming the god's popularity as a powerful god of success and victory among soldiers, but also within the autochthonous population. Votive monuments dedicated to Hercules alone<sup>34</sup> or with other deities (like Jupiter or Jupiter, Minerva and Neptune)<sup>35</sup> are mostly known from the Danube Limes region and represent dedications from soldiers. Votive monuments dedicated to Hercules discovered in locations in the Danube Limes area are three votive altars from Viminacium dedicated to *Hercules Conservator*, *Hercules Sanctus* and *Hercules Victor* and a votive monument from Arčar (*Ratiaria*) dedicated to *Hercules*, almost all dedicated by soldiers.<sup>36</sup> The popularity of the Hercules cult in the Limes region can also be perceived in the name of the locality *Ad Herculem* (Čortanovci).

A similar situation repeats regarding the concentration of marble statues of Hercules - the majority of whole and fragmented sculptures and sculptural compositions was found in the Limes region, in the localities of *Ratiaria*, *Singidunum*, *Viminacium*, *Margum*, *Prahovo* and *Karataš*.<sup>37</sup> Most of them represent solid provincial works of art, copies of the famous sculptures *Torso Belvedere* and *Farnese Hercules* by Lysippos. The particularly exquisite sculptures of Hercules with Telephos from

33 Veličković 1972, 20, n. 12.

34 In votive monuments from Moesia Superior, Hercules is usually mentioned with the epithets *augustus*, *conservator*, *sanctus*, *invictus* and *victor*. While the epithet *augustus* implies the official character of the cult (the first monuments dedicated to *Hercules Augustus* are dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century), epithets *invictus* and *victor* are the earliest known epithets given to Hercules and they imply that under them, the deity was venerated as the god of strength, invincibility and victory, for more Gavrilović 2014, 17-23.

35 *IMS* I, n. 103; Gavrilović 2014, n. 15.

36 Gavrilović 2014, 17-22.

37 *Ibid*, 29-34.

*Singidunum* (Fig. 5) and *Viminacium*, dated to around 320, are more analogous to the original statue of Lysippos than the copies from Rome and Naples.<sup>38</sup> Bronze statuettes of Hercules were discovered in the territory of the Central Balkan Roman provinces, but only a statuette from the locality of *Ratiaria* is important for the connection with the Limes area and represents an iconographic type of god, unlike the marble sculptures which are associated with only two iconographic types of Hercules statues, as we have already seen.<sup>39</sup> Since almost all dedicants of Hercules votive monuments are soldiers and since the majority of marble statues and bronze statuettes of the god was found in localities in the Danube limes in Serbia, it is quite clear that the official cult of Hercules found his most numerous worshipers among the soldiers who were situated in forts and auxiliary camps in the Limes area, particularly in larger centres like *Singidunum* and *Viminacium*. Since Hercules was (among other functions) the god of invincibility and strength, military men mostly dedicated votive monuments to him, in hope of heroism, endurance and glory. As has already been mentioned, the cult of Hercules with the epithets *augustus*, *conservator*, *invictus* and *victor*, belonged to the official cults of the Roman State and, depending on the political situation and the ideology of the emperor in question, was more or less popular. Therefore, it is not surprising that most of the votive monuments, marble sculptures and bronze statuettes (parts of the sanctuaries and *lararia*) found in the Limes area, are dated to the period of the reign of emperors such as Commodus, Septimius Severus and Alexander Severus. Remains of Hercules' sanctuary were also discovered in the locality Ravna (*Campsia*).<sup>40</sup>

The Roman deity Mars, the god of war, at first an agricultural deity and protector of the crops, evolved later into a protector of the Roman nation and its army.



Fig. 5 Marble sculpture of Hercules with Telephos, *Singidunum* (National Museum Belgrade)

38 The marble statue of Hercules from Ratiaria represents a very high quality copy of the Greek prototype represented by the Roman copy of *Torso Belvedere*. However, the sculptures from *Singidunum*, *Viminacium* and *Margum* represent copies of a famous sculpture from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century of Glykon, *Farnese Hercules*, which shows a naked and bearded, mature god caught in a rare moment of repose, leant on his club over which the pelt of a Nemean Lion is thrown, while holding the apples of Hesperides behind his back, Bieber 1955, 36-37; Pollitt 1986, 50-51. For the sculpture of Hercules with Telephos from Viminacium see Gavrilović 2014, 31, cat. 24, fig. 24.

39 Three bronze statuettes of Hercules were found in Ratiaria, belonging to the iconographic type of *Herakles Albertini* (a standing, naked, bearded, mature god with a club and the pelt of a lion, and a diadem on his head) and *Herakles Lenbach* (a standing, naked, bearded, mature god with the pelt of a lion, and a *rython* in his hand), for further reading with literature see Ibid, 37-38, cat. 47, fig. 47.

40 Ibid, 54, 58.



Fig. 6 Bronze statuette of Mars, *Viminacium* (Veličković 1972, n. 10)

As a dignified ancestor of Romans, he symbolised not only the raw strength and courage in war, but also invincibility and victory over the enemies of the Roman Empire. He enjoyed particular popularity among the soldiers of the Roman army and was invoked before any impending danger, because of his warrior nature, to give help and bring success in battles. In the territory of today's Serbia, the cult of Mars has been confirmed with six votive monuments, on which the god is mentioned either alone or with the epithets *Sacrum* (votive monument from *Viminacium*), *Campester* and *Equitum*.<sup>41</sup> Of the so far known six bronze statuettes of Mars, three were found in the localities of the Limes area (localities of *Viminacium* and an unknown site in the Limes region), presenting a well known iconographic type of *Mars Ultor* (Fig. 6).<sup>42</sup> Knowing the high degree of Mars' popularity within the Roman army, his primarily military function on the Danube Limes in Serbia, where numerous legions were stationed, is completely expected.

An eternal traveller and protector of roads and voyagers, seamen, traders and their transactions, but also a patron of the arts, the youth and dead souls, Mercury and his popularity among soldiers situated in the Limes region are confirmed with one votive inscription and two marble statues from *Viminacium* and numerous bronze statuettes from different localities.<sup>43</sup> Since the votive inscription dedicated to Mercury, Liber and Libera doesn't give any information about the dedicant's social or professional status, the reason for the dedication or the function in which deities were respected, we will turn to more than a dozen bronze statuettes

41 The cult of Mars has been epigraphically confirmed in the territory of today's Serbia with five votive monuments from the locality of *Timacum Minus*, near Knjaževac (which represents the oldest fortification in the area of Timok, dated from the middle of the 1<sup>st</sup> century, garrisoned by *Cohors I Thracum Syriaca*, which was replaced from the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century by *Cohors II Aurelia Dardanorum*, which was, in the last decades of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, replaced by *pseudocomitatenses Timacenses auxilarii*). One votive monument dedicated to *Mars Sacrum* comes from locality of Kalište, *Viminacium*, where traces of a *castellum* have been confirmed, for more see Gavrilović 2010a, 266-278.

42 The iconographic type of *Mars Ultor* presents the god as a mature, bearded man in full armour with a helmet on his head, holding a spear and a shield. Emperor Augustus was the promoter of the cult of *Mars Ultor*, Mars the Avenger and his temple was dedicated in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B. C., in the Forum of Augustus.

43 *IMS* II, n. 28; Gavrilović 2014, 63-81, cat. 97-166. Similar votive inscriptions dedicated to the deities Mercury, Liber and Libera are known from *Apulum*, *Carnuntum* and *Rome*. Two marble sculptures of Mercury, from *Viminacium*, presenting a head of a young man and a torso of young deity belong to the Classicistic style of the 4<sup>th</sup> century B. C. (the head of a deity) and copies of Praxiteles' sculptures (the torso of a deity). Among numerous bronze statuettes of Mercury, there are also nine figurines of the iconographic type of Hermes-Thoth.

found in localities like *Ratiaria*, *Singidunum*, Tekija, Karataš and Male Livadice,<sup>44</sup> in search of the answer of Mercury's popularity among soldiers in the Limes. The majority of the statuettes belong to the iconographic type of *Hermes Kerdos* and represent solid provincial work dated to the period of the 2<sup>nd</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> century. However, two statuettes from the localities of Tekija (*Transdierna*) and Karataš (*Diana*) represent exquisite imported works of art, where the god is shown naked, with a winged *petasos* on his head and winged sandals on his feet, holding a tortoise in his hand (statuette from Tekija, Fig. 7), or a marsupium and caduceus (missing) in the case of a statuette from Karataš.<sup>45</sup> As the god of commerce and travel, patron of traders and guardian of merchants, artisans and travellers, Mercury was certainly a very popular deity among soldiers, veterans, free men and slaves who travelled or inhabited the settlements beside the forts and auxiliary camps on the Limes. Judging by the number of bronze figurines found in the localities in the Danube region, it can be presumed that many houses in settlements and forts had a small statuette of Mercury in their *lararia*.

The cult of the goddess Diana, protectress of nature, forests, hunting, mines, but also women and childbirth, deity of wild and remote spaces and invincible huntress concerned with the chase, enjoyed enviable popularity in the Limes area, partly because of her association with Mars and partly because of her responsibility for the outer frontiers and the protection of lives and the welfare of soldiers who were stationed on the frontiers. The toponym *Diana*, which refers to the fort in Karataš (*Statio Cataractarum*), was maybe given because of Diana's sanctuary that existed there (Fig. 8).<sup>46</sup> Votive monuments dedicated to Diana alone (with the epithets *Augusta*, *Sacra*, *Regina*) or with other deities (Apollo or Silvanus), were



Fig. 7 Bronze statuette of Mercury, *Diana* (Karataš) (<http://virtuelnimuzejdunava.rs/pocetna/rimski-bog-merkur.i-87.125.html>)

44 Летица 1984, 183-184, fig. 1.

45 Among other animals, the tortoise is commonly seen animal in Mercury's iconography and the statuette from Tekija (*Transdierna*) can be dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. The statuette from Karataš (*Diana*) represents a high quality imported statuette of Mercury with the image similar to the images of the emperors of the Julio-Claudian dynasty, mostly to the image of the emperor Caligula. The statuette is dated to the 1<sup>st</sup> century, Gavrilović 2014, 72-73, cat. 122.

46 The locality of Diana was located between Dierna (*Zerna*) and Kostol (*Pontes*) and is mentioned as the locality Zanes among the forts which were reconstructed by Justinian. Since the name of the Roman goddess Diana is encompassed in the name of the locality and since, in the early Roman strata of the fort in the locality, a marble votive relief with the representation of the goddess Diana hunting and a small marble head of the goddess were found, it can be presumed that there was a sanctuary dedicated to the goddess in the very locality of *Diana* / Karataš, Ранков-Кондић 2009, 371.



Fig. 8 Goddess Diana, locality *Diana* (Karataš) (<http://virtuelnimuzejdunava.rs/pocetna/glava-rimske-boginje-diane.i-89.125.html>)

found in several localities in the territory of *Moesia Superior*, like Arčar (*Ratiaria*) and *Viminacium*.<sup>47</sup> As for the fragmented marble sculptures of Diana presenting the deity in the hunt, they were found in *Viminacium* and iconographically belong to the type of Praxiteles' *Artemis Brauronia* and Leochares' *Artemis Agrotera* with a deer.<sup>48</sup> Fragmented marble votive reliefs with a representation of Diana hunting were also found in *Viminacium*.<sup>49</sup>

The cults of *Liber* and *Libera*, that is of the god *Dionysus* (*Bachus*) and his thiasos, celebrated the deities as patrons of agriculture, fertility, wine, vine growing, joviality, good spirits and feast, but also as protectors of mines and miners, iatric and chthonian deities. The cults of *Liber* and *Libera* have been confirmed with votive monuments, sculptures and statuettes found in *Singidunum*, *Viminacium* and *Kostol* (*Pontes*). The votive monuments are dedicated to either *Liber* alone (with the epithets *Pater*, *Sacrum*, *Augustus*, *Sanctus*)<sup>50</sup>, with *Libera* or with some other deity/deities, like *Jupiter* and *Mercury*, or the goddesses *Juno* and *Terra Mater*. Iconographically, *Dionysus* (*Bachus*, *Liber*) was most frequently represented in relief, sculpture and small statues as a young naked standing man, with a *nebris* over his shoulder and attributes such as a *thyrsus*, *cantharus*, grapes, *pedum* or a *cultellus*. Fragmented marble sculptures from *Singidunum* and *Viminacium* depict exactly that iconographical type of the god's statues.<sup>51</sup> A marble votive relief with an inscription, from the locality of *Kostol* (*Pontes*), represents one of the most interesting finds dedicated to *Liber* and *Libera*, presenting two deities with a *putto* and *Maenad* in the main scene, while in the lower register there is a scene depicting "The death of *Pentheus*" (Fig. 9).<sup>52</sup> The relief from *Kostol* (*Pontes*) is

47 CdO 2016-2017; *IMS* II, 63, n. 5, n. 297.

48 Both fragmented statuettes were dressed in a short, belted chiton and while the first statuette where the goddess is represented pulling an arrow from a quiver is dated to the last decades of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, the second statuette is dated to the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> or the first decades of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, Tomović 1992, 92-93, fig. 30.6, 18.3.

49 Томовић 1990, 104-105, 130; *IMS* II, n. 35.

50 *IMS* I, n. 16, 17; *IMS* II, n. 27, 28; *AE* 1938, 93.

51 Tomović 1992, 109, n. 150, fig. 38.1; 110, n. 151, fig. 47.3; 111, n. 157, fig. 41.3.

52 The votive relief with the inscription dedicated to the divine pair of *Liber* and *Libera* by *Aurelius Siro* presents, in the main scene, the gods in a standing position, with a small *putto* with an object and playing the *kettledrum* beside *Liber* and a *Maenad* holding an unidentified object beside the goddess *Libera*. The god *Liber* is nude, with a *nebris* over his right shoulder and a *thyrsus* in his left hand, and feeding a panther from a *cantharus* in his right hand. The goddess *Libera* is holding a *thyr-*

dated to the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> – the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century and it is presumed that its owner was a very educated and learned person who was well acquainted with the cult of Dionysus.

Although primarily the goddess of love, pleasure, beauty, fertility and prosperity, Venus, with the epithet *Victrix*, was believed to ensure victory over enemies. No votive monuments dedicated to Venus are known from the Danube Limes area, but there are marble fragmented sculptures and statuettes of the goddess found in localities of *Singidunum*, *Viminacium* and Karataš (*Diana*).<sup>53</sup> The goddess was mostly presented as an iconographical type of *Venus pudica*, as a naked standing female figure covering her *pudenda* with one hand, as is the case with a bronze statuette found in the locality of Rtkovo-Glamija I (Fig. 10).<sup>54</sup> However, there are more iconographical differences between the lead statuettes of Venus known from the localities between *Sirmium* and *Viminacium*.<sup>55</sup> They represent the products of local workshops, which probably existed in *Sirmium* and *Viminacium* and were producing this type of statuette for local shrines (*aediculae*), dating from the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century.

Although not as popular as the previously mentioned deities, the cult of the goddess Nemesis should be mentioned, since votive monuments and marble sculptures of the goddess have been found in the Limes area and the interior of *Moesia Superior*, in the localities of *Singidunum* and *Viminacium*.<sup>56</sup> The goddess was honoured as the protectress of soldiers and, generally, as the goddess of military success and victory. The epithets that are attributed to the goddess (*Augusta*, *Sancta*,

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*sus* in her right hand while. In a lower register from the main scene, two Maenads can be seen with Agave, who is holding a dagger in her right raised hand, and the decapitated head of a naked man in her raised left hand. To the right of Agave, Cadmus is holding an altar or rock in his right hand and a bag in his left hand. There is also a nude Satyr playing a wind instrument, Васић, Јовановић 1987, 127-134, fig. 1.

53 Tomović 1992, 87-89, n. 65-81.

54 Gabričević 1986, 74, fig. 1.

55 S. Pop Lazić distinguishes five types of lead statuettes of Venus: the first type is represented by the figural composition of Venus with Amor on a pedestal, the second type depicts a schematised type of *Venus Pudica*, the third type presents the type *Venus Pudica* but more harmoniously, the fourth type shows a nude Venus with a mantle wrapped around her left leg, while the fifth type presents a three-dimensional Venus with her right hand outstretched, while in her left hand she is holding a plate, Pop Lazić 2012, 151-164.

56 Gavrilović 2011, 191-203.



Fig. 9 Votive icon of Liber and Libera, Kostol (*Pontes*) (Васић, Јовановић 1987)

Fig. 10 Bronze statuette of *Venus Pudica*, Rtkovo-Glamija I (Gabričević 1986)





Fig. 11 Votive monument  
dedicated to  
Nemesis, *Viminacium*  
(Gavrilović 2011)

*Regina*) imply a connection between the goddess and the official cult, beginning with the emperor Claudius and following the imperial coin propaganda, and it can be concluded that it served to promote this connection.<sup>57</sup> One marble monument particularly emphasises the role of Nemesis as the goddess who is the destroyer of the enemies of the Roman State and who brings victory and peace to the Romans, a fragmented marble sculpture of Nemesis trampling on a prostrate figure with an inscription dedicated to Nemesis on its base, from *Viminacium* (Fig. 11).<sup>58</sup> From the thus far known epigraphic and archaeological material, it can be presumed that the goddess had sanctuaries at *Singidunum* and *Viminacium* and that her cult was also connected to the amphitheatre in *Viminacium* and gladiatorial games.<sup>59</sup>

The cults of the iatric deities, Asclepius and Hygieia, judging by thus far known epigraphic and archaeological monuments, were not so popular in the Danube Limes area, since epigraphically, their cults have only been confirmed in the locality of Arčar (*Ratiaria*), near the Danube.<sup>60</sup>

The cult of the Thracian Horseman or Thracian Hero, known in the territories of the Roman provinces of Thrace, *Moesia Superior* and *Moesia Inferior*, related to an indigenous Thracian god, of complex theology, who enjoyed considerable popularity among Roman soldiers and veterans. Epigraphic monuments dedicated to *Deo Heroni*, *Deo Taton* and *Deo Mundryto*, are known from the localities of *Singidunum* and *Viminacium*.<sup>61</sup> In the context of the Thracian horseman cult, a particularly interesting example is represented by the votive monument found in the locality of Karataš (*Diana*), dedicated to *Deo Toto*. Although V. Kondić presumed that, by the name *Deo Toto*, the Egyptian god Toth was considered, after new epigraphic analyses, it is more probable that the monument was dedicated to *Deus Totovitio* who is analogous to the inscription discovered at *Svilengrad*, dedi-

<sup>57</sup> Hornum 1993, 13-19.

<sup>58</sup> A fragmented marble monument of Nemesis trampling on a prostrate figure, from *Viminacium*, presents the goddess with her left foot on the back of a female figure. The dedicant of the monument is Aelius Pompeianus, who was maybe of oriental origin and the monument is dated into the period of the reign of the dynasty of Severi, Vasić 1979, 31-35; Gavrilović 2011, 194-199.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid*, 201.

<sup>60</sup> *AE* 1902, 42. For more about the cults and porphyry and marble sculptures of Asclepius and Hygieia, see Vasić et al. 2016, 83-87; Gavrilović 2010b; Bošković-Robert 2006, 457-468.

<sup>61</sup> *IMS* I, 2; *IMS* II, n. 16, 21, 309; Cermanović-Kuzmanović 1962, 38, n. 52.

dated to the Thracian Hero referred to as *Heroni Totoivhiano*,<sup>62</sup> actually erected in honour of the Thracian Hero. The dedicant of the monument was a Roman soldier, probably of Thracian origin, who served in legio IV Flavia, on the Danube frontier.

A votive altar dedicated to *Genius Daciarum* was found near the supposed settlement in the locality of Tekija (*Transdierna*), which was contemporary with the fort in Tekija from the 1<sup>st</sup> - 2<sup>nd</sup> century.<sup>63</sup>

Among different deities of Asia Minor and Syrian origin whose cults have been confirmed in the territories of the Central Balkan Roman provinces,<sup>64</sup> the cult of the god Jupiter Dolichenus, along with the Persian cult of the god Mithras, were the most popular in the Danube Limes area. This fact is not surprising, considering the symbolism they had for soldiers as invincible, victorious and saviour gods, although the theologies (and, logically, ritual practices) of those two cults differed.<sup>65</sup> The cult of Jupiter Dolichenus is confirmed with numerous epigraphic monuments, marble sculptures, two bronze triangular votive plates, one tabula ansata, one bronze statuette and one terracotta.<sup>66</sup> The epigraphic monuments of

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62 The votive monument dedicated to *Heroni Totoivhiano*, from Svilengrad, is now situated in the City Museum of Veliko Trnovo (inv. no. 1859). It is suggested that the epithet *Totovitio* is a toponymic modifier, which means “a hero from Totoithia”, Grbić 2013, 14-16.

63 The votive altar found in the locality of Tekija (*Transdierna*) was dedicated to *Genius Sanctus Paternus Daciarum* by a centurion named Antonius Maximus, who belonged to one of the cohorts (*cohort V Gallorum* and *cohort IX Gemina Voluntariorum*) that were situated at the fort in Tekija during the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> century, Цермановић-Кузмановић 1984, 341-342.

64 The epigraphic and archaeological monuments confirm the presence of the cults of Magna Mater and her consorts Attis, Sabazius, Jupiter Dolichenus, Jupiter Turmasgades, Jupiter Melanus, Jupiter Cidiessus, Zeus Okkonenos, Zeus Ezzaios, Zeus Synenos, Mên, Artemis of Ephesus, Sol Invictus and Dea Syria, Gavrilović 2010.

65 Here, primarily referring to the fact that the religion of Jupiter Dolichenus probably didn't belong to mystery religions, as Mithraism did and that, as such, Mithraism required initiation rites and excluded women, unlike the cult of Jupiter Dolichenus. However, both gods comprised a strong military component - Jupiter Dolichenus was presented dressed in Roman military dress, while Mithras, as a warrior against evil and a carrier of the light, represented an ideal for soldiers in the Roman army in pursuit of success and victory over the enemies of the Roman State.

66 More than dozen epigraphic monuments dedicated to Jupiter Dolichenus alone or with some other deity/deities, have been confirmed in the following localities in the Limes area: Arčar (*Ratiaria*), Košava (Vidin), Jasen, Veliko Gradište (*Pincum*), Čezava (*Castrum Novae*), Kličevac (*Viminacium*), Karataš (*Diana*) and Brza Palanka (Egeta) Gavrilović 2010, 293-302. Marble statues of Jupiter Dolichenus sometimes presented with his parda Junona Dolichena were found in the localities of Vidin (*Bononia*), *Viminacium*, Čezava (*Castrum Novae*) and Brza Palanka (*Egeta*). One gilded bronze votive triangular plate was found in the locality of Brza Palanka (*Egeta*), one bronze votive

the god, found in localities in the Limes area, are mostly dedicated *pro salute* of the Roman emperor/emperors, by inhabitants of indigenous, Greek or Oriental origin and are connected to the period of the reign of the emperors from the dynasty of Severi (dating from 193. to 235.), when the cult of the god flourished and reached the peak of its popularity. In almost half of the monuments, dedicants are military persons - a governor of *Moesia Superior*, soldiers, the cohort or the priests of the cult (who were also in the army), which further supports the presumption regarding the popularity of Jupiter Dolichenus as one of the most prominent gods among *dii militares*.<sup>67</sup> Of particular interest is a votive monument found in the locality of Glamija (village Rtkovo), dedicated by a priest of Jupiter Dolichenus and Dea Syria.<sup>68</sup> The only confirmed sanctuary that is, in our opinion, a *sacrarium* of the god Jupiter Dolichenus was discovered in the locality of Brza Palanka (*Egeta*, Fig. 12, 13), although it can be presumed that other sanctuaries of the god existed in the localities of Karataš (*Diana*), Arčar (*Ratiaria*), *Viminacium* and perhaps Čezava and Glamija, near Kostol (*Pontes*).<sup>69</sup> The appearance and rapid diffusion of the cult of Jupiter Dolichenus in the areas near to the Danube Limes are certainly connected with the soldiers, merchants, administrative officials and slaves of eastern

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triangular plate (unfortunately lost) was discovered in Vidin (Bononia). A fragmented terracotta presenting the deity was found in the necropolis "Više grobalja", in *Viminacium*, Ibid, 302-310.

67 A votive monument from Karataš (Diana) dedicated by L. Marius Perpetuus, future governor of the province Moesia Superior, Ibid, 298, n. 93; votive monuments from Arčar (*Ratiaria*), Veliko Gradište (Pincum) and Čezava, dedicated by soldiers, Ibid, 295, 297, n. 87, 91 and 92; tabula ansata with the dedication of *Cohors I Cretum*, from Brza Palanka (*Egeta*), Ibid, 298-299, n. 94; votive monuments dedicated by the priests of the Dolichenian cult, from the localities of Arčar (*Ratiaria*), Jasen (Vidin), Kličevac (*Viminacium*) and Glamija (village Rtkovo), Ibid, 294-295, 296, 302, n. 86, 89, 100; Габричевић 1987, 144-146.

68 Габричевић 1987, 144-146. The votive monument was found during archaeological excavations in the locality of Glamija I (village Rtkovo), in the south-western corner of a Late Antique fort's wall, as *spolia*. The dedicant is Julius Apollinaris, a priest of Jupiter Dolichenus and Dea Syria, and the formula *in memoriam* could imply his foreign origin. The fact that Julius Apollinaris was a priest in both the cult of Jupiter Dolichenus and Dea Syria, is not surprising, knowing from historical sources that the two deities had a mutual sanctuary in Hierapolis, where their statues stood. It can be also presumed that Julius Apollinaris was probably in some way connected to some of the military units or held some military position in some locality in the Danube Limes area, since it was not uncommon for soldiers to function as a priest in the army as well.

69 A detailed analysis and the argument for the existence of several *dolichena* that probably existed in other localities in the Danube Limes area, are given in an article by the author N. Gavrilović Vitas "Dolicheneum and Dolichenus' cult objects from the locality Brza Palanka - Egeta. Contribution to the study of the cult of Iuppiter Dolichenus", which is currently in print.

origin who were present in the aforementioned territory and who venerated the deity because of his military and invincible character, who brought needed victory, glory and further power to the Roman State. However, systematic plundering and destruction of Jupiter Dolichenus' temples along the Rhine and the Danube Limes during the reign of Maximus Thrax (235.-238.), rapidly contributed to the disappearance of the cult of this very popular military deity.<sup>70</sup>

In connection with the previously mentioned, a second important oriental cult was the cult of the Persian god Mithras, even more popular in the Danube Limes localities than any other oriental deity. An Iranian god of light, a solar deity whose cult was the last to penetrate western parts of the Roman Empire from the Hellenized East, Mithras gained many followers in the short time of his existence, from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 4<sup>th</sup> century. As a creator and warrior against Evil, Mithra was an excellent *exemplum* to follow for soldiers and military officials, offering the hope of salvation and rebirth in his theology. The votive monuments dedicated to Mithras have been found in Danube Limes area localities such as Arčar (*Ratiaria*), Smederevo (originally from *Viminacium*), *Singidunum*, *Viminacium* and Prahovo (*Aquae*),<sup>71</sup> while votive relief icons have been found in numerous localities not only in the Limes region, but also in the interior of the Central Balkan Roman provinces territory. In most of the votive monuments, Mithras is mentioned by the epithet *Invictus*, as the deity under whose protection the dedicant and his family put themselves. Numerous votive icons with a main scene of *tauroctony* in the middle register were discovered in Danube Limes localities, among which the most interesting are a votive icon found in the *sacrarium* in the locality of Brza Palanka (*Egeta*), discovered along with other epigraphic and archaeological finds connected to the cult of Jupiter Dolichenus (allowing the hypothesis that a *mithraeum* existed in the vicinity of the *dolicheneum* presumed to be situated in the locality of *Egeta*),<sup>72</sup> and a marble votive relief icon depicting the act of *tauroctony*,

70 The most probable cause for the destruction of Jupiter Dolichenus' temples by Maximinus Thrax was the richness of the sanctuaries - cult objects made of silver and bronze (gilded too), coin hoards and gold objects and jewels decorated with precious stones (for example the *dolichena* by Saalburg and Pfünz), for more see Tóth 1973, 112-114.

71 *AE* 1966, 344; *IMS* II, n. 29, 30, 31, 32, 34, 308; *IlJug* 7; *IlJug* 483; *IMS* I, 104. We should mention a votive altar found in the locality of Karataš (*Diana*) with two letters D and M, which could be read as *Deo Mitrae*, Mirković 2015, 93, n. 40.

72 The currently known localities where sanctuaries of the gods Jupiter Dolichenus and Mithras



Fig. 12 Jupiter Dolichenus and Juno Dolichena, Brza Palanka (*Egeta*) (Museum of Krajina, Negotin: N. Borić, S. Kostić)

Fig. 13 Triangle votive plate of Jupiter Dolichenus, Brza Palanka (*Egeta*) (photo: Historical Museum of Serbia)



with different scenes from the theology of the cult in the upper register, found in the locality of Tekija (*Transdierna*, Fig. 14), which represents one of the finest works of local origin, dated to the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> or the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century.<sup>73</sup> However, unlike the cult of the god *Sol Invictus*, another important solar deity whose cult was adopted in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century and particularly emphasised from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, and who was a part of the official imperial ideology and propaganda of different emperors,<sup>74</sup> the cult of Mithras, was never included into the official cults of the Roman State. As with the majority of oriental cults, the cult of the god Mithras lasted until the 4<sup>th</sup> century when, as a powerful opponent to the rising Christianity it was, with all the other pagan cults, destroyed and forgotten.

The possibility of the existence of magic practices in some of the localities in the Danube Limes should also be mentioned. A discovery of an icosahedron of quartz crystal in the western semicircular tower of the southern gate of the locality of Čezava (*Castrum Novae*), probably dated to 3<sup>rd</sup> century, leads to the hypothesis that it was maybe used as a status symbol related to a certain cult or magic ritual.<sup>75</sup> Analysing the teachings of leading philosophical schools of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> century neopythagorean and neoplatonical school, M. Vasić thinks that the icosahedron from the locality of Čezava was used as a mystical-magical object, probably by

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have been confirmed, relatively close one to the other, are: Doliche and Dura-Europos in Syria, Rome (Aventine), Porolissum in Dacia, Carnuntum and Brigetio in Pannonia Superior, Stockstadt and Saalburg in Germania Superior and probably Virinum in Noricum (two *mithraea* are mentioned on the inscriptions from votive monuments), Schwarzer 2012, 172

73 This type of relief is well known not only in the Roman province of Moesia Superior, but also in Moesia Inferior and the Dacia territory. As A. Ceranović-Kuzmanović points out, since the upper part of Mithras' votive icon was used as *spolia* in the walls of the fort from the 3<sup>rd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> century, the icon itself can be dated to the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> or the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, Цермановић-Кузмановић 1972, 147-151; Campbell 1968, 1-2.

74 Here we are referring to the introduction of the Syrian god *Sol Invictus*, who was introduced to Rome in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century and worshipped (starting from the emperor Hadrian to Commodus, Septimius and Alexander Severus, but mostly Elagabalus), not the older indigenous Roman god of the sun, whose cult existed for many centuries, Halsberghe 1972, 46-47; Hoey 1939, 456-481.

75 M. Vasić does not exclude the possibility that the icosahedron found in the locality of Čezava could be dated to an earlier time, perhaps the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, since it was found in a layer dated to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, but it could have been used earlier, Vasić 1994, 167. Analogies to the icosahedron from *Castrum Novae* are known from Germany, Britain, France, Italy and Turkey, but only the icosahedron from Italy (found near the locality of Arezzo, an icosahedron found in a female grave, dated to the 1<sup>st</sup> century) and the icosahedron from Turkey (now in the Istanbul Art Museum) are completely similar to our find, since they are not inscribed with Latin letters and Roman numerals on their sides, for more see Kostov 2014, 25-26.



Fig. 14 Marble votive icon of the god Mithras, Tekija (*Transdierna*) (<http://virtuelnimuzejdunava.rs/pocetna/reljef-bogamitre.i-107.125.html>)

some higher officer of the cohorts stationed in *Castrum Novae*, educated to understand all the possibilities contained in the icosahedron's symbolism.<sup>76</sup>

After a summarised review of the most important cults epigraphically and archaeologically confirmed in the localities in the Danube frontier during the period of Roman reign, we should turn to the question of the ritual practices that were part of the soldiers' lives in the forts along the Danube border. Due to the lack of literary sources concerning the religious ceremonies of the Roman army, we are bound to mainly turn to epigraphical evidence and archaeological sources. However, a religious calendar preserved on a papyrus found in *Dura Europos* about the cult ceremonies held by the Roman army throughout the course of the year, known as *Feriale Duranum*, offers us some insight into the festivals and ceremonies practised by the Roman soldiers.

It is generally accepted that *Feriale Duranum* represented a copy of a document which was in the possession of every military unit in the Roman State, but

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<sup>76</sup> Vasić 1994, 175-176.

it is more important that, judging by its content, the cults of Capitoline Triad, the gods Mars, Victoria and other deities who belonged to the circle of the so-called *dii militares*, were honoured with more ceremonies than the other gods and goddesses of the Roman pantheon. However, with the evidence in the shape of numerous votive and archaeological monuments dedicated to, for example, oriental gods like Jupiter Dolichenus and Mithras, it is clear that their cults were very popular among soldiers, although they did not belong to the official pantheon of the Roman State but, nevertheless, soldiers had the freedom to worship them openly. Whatever deity was in question or whether the honouring of certain emperor was in question, the official ceremonies were performed either on the parade ground or in the headquarters of the unit, the *principia*.<sup>77</sup>

The calendar of *Feriale Duranum* introduces us to ritual practices, rites and sacrifices (for example, of an ox in honour of Jupiter, a cow in honour of the goddesses Juno, Minerva and Victory or a bull in honour of Mars), performed in the cult acts for the particular festival or anniversary of a certain emperor or empress. Roman soldiers were united in different cult practices, by a calendar with festivals and ceremonies, in which prescribed sacrifices were part of ritual rites, thus forming social unity and a consciousness of the importance of participating and being a part of religious practices and cult acts performed in honour of their favourite god, goddess or Roman emperor/empress. Different religious practices and ceremonies were certainly a part of daily life in the Roman forts on the Danube frontier too, about which religious beliefs and rites together with numerous epigraphic and archaeological finds discovered in the Limes area represent a strong and lasting testimony.

*Translated by Nadežda Gavrilović Vitas*

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<sup>77</sup> Dziurdzik 2016, 381.

## ABBREVIATIONS

*AE L'Année Epigraphique*, Paris

*CdO Chronique d'Orient 2016-2019*

*CIL Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, Berlin

*Il Jug* A. and J. Sasel „*Inscriptiones Latinae quae in Iugoslavia inter annos MCMXL et*

*MCMLX et inter annos MCMLX et MCMLXX et inter annos MCMII et MCMXL repertae et editae sunt*, Ljubljana 1963, 1978 and 1986

*IMS Inscriptions de la Mésie Supérieure*, Belgrade

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## EVIDENCE OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY ON THE DANUBE LIMES, FROM SINGIDUNUM TO AQUAE\*

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### ABSTRACT

*This paper studies historical sources combined with archaeological data on traces of early Christianity in the middle section of the Roman Danubian Limes. Thanks to the results of archaeological researches and accidental findings, a picture was obtained, although still insufficiently clear, on the development of Christianity in this area in the period from the 4<sup>th</sup> up until the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century. Historical sources note the existence of an organized Christian community at the Limes in the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. The oldest archaeological traces come from the mid-4<sup>th</sup> century and they are mostly linked to the findings of painted tombs or stone and lead sarcophagi with distinct Christian symbolism. In large urban centres, Singidunum and Viminacium, parts of buildings which can be possibly defined as churches were discovered, from the 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> century. Most of the ecclesiastic buildings discovered along the Limes belong to the period of the 6<sup>th</sup> century. They were built within military encampments and they bear witness of the high degree of Christianization not only of military crews but also the civilian population which lived in those fortifications and their immediate vicinity.*

**KEY WORDS: EARLY CHRISTIANITY, ECCLESIASTICAL OVERVIEW, FOURTH-SIXTH CENTURIES, LIMES, CHURCHES, TOMBS, WALL PAINTING, SARCOPHAGI.**

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\* This paper results from the projects: *Romanisation, urbanisation and transformation of urban centres of civil, military and residential character in Roman provinces in the territory of Serbia* (no. 177007) and *IRS – Viminacium, Roman city and military legion camp – research of material and non-material of inhabitants by using the modern technologies of remote detection, geophysics, GIS, digitalization and 3D visualization* (no. 47018), funded by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia.

The Late Antiquity period was filled with turbulent political and social events and turmoil which brought deep political, economic and social changes to the Roman Empire, leading to the gradual transformation of the late antique society. The possibility of free confession of faith, proclaimed by the Edict of Toleration by Emperor Galerius, in 311 AD (The Edict of Serdica), as well as freedom of confession of the Christian faith by Emperor Constantine I in 313 AD (The Edict of Milan), brought prosperity and development to Christianity, both in the organisation of the community itself, and also in the areas of construction and artistic development. Urban centres, smaller settlements and fortifications got their first basilicas. Necropolises with churches serving the cult of the dead were formed outside the city ramparts (*extra muros*).

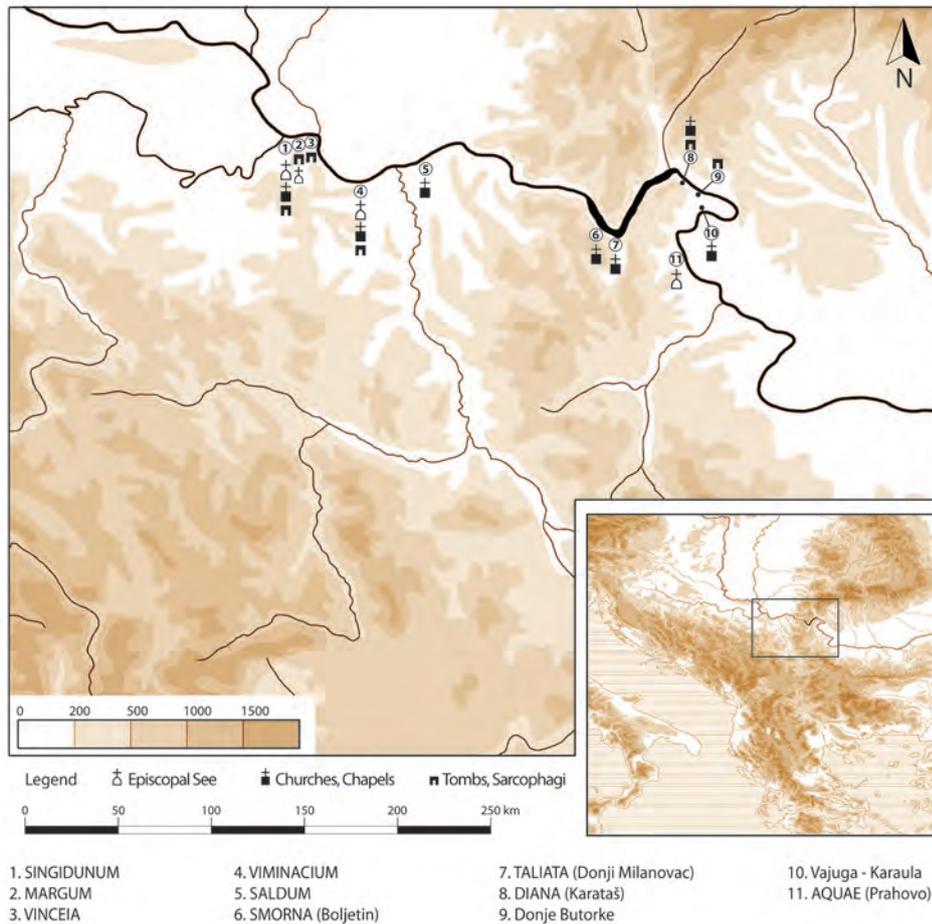
Systematic research of the sites along the Middle Danube Limes, such as Beograd–*Singidunum*, Dubravica–*Margum*, Kostolac–*Viminacium*, Čezava–*Novae*, Donji Milanovac–*Taliata*, Karataš–*Diana* and Prahovo–*Aquae*, which represent important church, urban and military centres, enables an insight into the processes of Christianisation through findings of the remains of church architecture, sepulchral monuments, as well as the different objects used in the Christian cult or personal piety (Map 1). The first scientific papers and research of the early Christian monuments along the Limes originate from the 1870s. The Austrian researcher Felix Kanitz, during his stay in Kostolac, described the late antique tombs in detail, some of which had frescoes.<sup>2</sup> In the 1880s, in the newly edited archaeological journal “*Starinar*,” Mihailo Valtrović was among the first to publish the studies of the individual early Christian finds, and the results of the research of the early Christian grave units in the area of *Viminacium*.<sup>3</sup> Further investigations were continued by Miloje Vasić, who published, at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the important grave units and still valid typology of burial forms from this metropolis.<sup>4</sup> The greatest impetus in discovering the monuments from the early Christian epoch was at the time of extensive archaeological works in the course of the construction of HPP Đerdap I during the 1960s and 1970s. By the research of

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2 Kanitz 1904, 180–181.

3 Valtrović 1886, 70–71; *Idem* 1891a, 109–130, *Idem* 1891b, 130–142. M. Valtrović recorded the existence of a rich fresco-painted tomb in *Viminacium*, which was destroyed by the locals. Valtrović 1884, 6, 14, 124.

4 M. M. Vasić gave the first known typology of late antique graves and tombs in *Viminacium*. Vasić 1907, 96–98.



Map 1. Early Christian sites on the Middle Danubian Limes

the forts' interiors and their immediate surroundings, the remains of foundations of several basilicas, chapels and tombs were also examined, and archaeological material from the early Christian period was also found, though it was scarce.<sup>5</sup> Afterwards, a series of individual papers, studies, and catalogues of findings were published that complete our knowledge of religious life and artisan production inspired by the Christianity of the Late Antiquity period.

<sup>5</sup> The papers were published in the journals *Arheološki pregled* 1964–1970, and *Starinar* 33–34 (1982–1983), 1984.

## THE HISTORICAL AND ECCLESIASTICAL OVERVIEW OF THE MIDDLE DANUBE LIMES

The northern border of the Roman Empire on the Danube was already established in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. Since the time of Trajan, from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, until the epoch of Aurelian in the 270s, the area of the middle Danube basin represented only the border between the provinces in the inland.<sup>6</sup> After leaving Dacia, the right Danube bank again became the mainstay of defence from barbarian attacks. Due to the political and strategic importance of the Danube Limes, the territorial division of the area that was included in the Diocese of Dacia, i.e., the Prefecture of Illyricum (*Praefectura praetorio per Illyricum*), was frequently changed. On the north of the former Upper Moesia (*Moesia Superior*), along the Danube, the province of *Moesia Prima* was formed, encompassing the middle part of today's Serbia, with its easternmost point in *Taliata*, today's Donji Milenovac. The province of *Dacia Ripensis* spread from the Poreč river confluence toward the east.<sup>7</sup> Although separated by the administrative boundary, these two provinces were connected by the fortification system.

The area of the Middle Danube, according to historical sources and archaeological material, came into contact with the new religion relatively late compared to the southern part of the Balkans, in which Christianity was present since the time of the Apostles.<sup>8</sup> The process of Christianisation was much slower in the mountainous hinterland and deeper in the inlands of the provinces, due to the greater isolation of the inhabitants, who were away from the main communication routes. The first information about the presence of the Christians in the Danube area originates from the time of Marcus Aurelius (161–180) and his war against the Quadi tribe. The war was fought by a legion that was brought from the East (*XII Fulminata*) in which there was a significant number of Christians, as Tertullian

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<sup>6</sup> Mirković 1981, 90–91.

<sup>7</sup> Veters 1950, 6.

<sup>8</sup> The New Testament scriptures contain the Epistles of the Apostle Paul directed to the Christian communities in the cities at the south of the Balkan peninsula: one for Philippians in Macedonia, two for the Christians in Thessaloniki, two in Corinth in Achaia and one to Apostle Titus on the Crete island. Lebreton, Zeiller 1946, 176–188. Dela ap. 16, 9–12; 17, 1–14; 19, 21–22; 20, 1–2.

and Eusebius of Caesarea wrote.<sup>9</sup> However, the first reliable traces of Christians in the Middle Danube area come from the time of Diocletian (284–305), who systematically persecuted members of the Roman army stationed along the Danube who confronted pagan customs that were close to the Emperor.<sup>10</sup> The majority of the Christian martyrs mentioned in the sources or in tradition are connected to larger urban agglomerations in these provinces.

One of the largest cities in the province of Upper Moesia was *Singidunum*, a fortification in the frontier region, with the seat of the *IV Flavia* legion.<sup>11</sup> Due to its remarkable strategic importance, on the confluence of the river Sava into the Danube, the city was often in the possession of the various tribes and tribal alliances that were located in these areas.<sup>12</sup> The oldest information about the presence of Christians in *Singidunum* is related to the tribulation in the time of Diocletian's persecutions. One of the first Christian martyrs, Donatus, has been reported in the sources as *diaconicus sanctae ecclesiae Singidoniensis*.<sup>13</sup> The fact that *Singidunum*, as an important military base in the borderland of *Moesia Prima*, had a deacon who died for the faith as early as the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, indicates the existence of an organised Christian community before the release of the Edict of Milan, in 313. The death of a group of Christians in *Sirmium* who were from *Singidunum* and among which there was the priest Montanus and his wife Maxima is also known from sources.<sup>14</sup> Several years later, two more martyrs appear, whose death is also connected with *Singidunum*: the martyrs Ermil (*Hermylus*) and Stratonik (*Stratonicus*), who were executed after 313 AD.<sup>15</sup> According to the later, insufficiently reliable Metaphrast's *Menologium*, their bodies were thrown into the Danube and were believed to have been buried 18 miles downstream of *Singidunum*, possibly in the area of today's village of Brestovik, where the fortified settlement *Aureus*

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9 Zeiller 1967, 42–46, with cited literature.

10 Zeiller 1967, 53–108.

11 Mirković 1968, 37–49; Eadem 1976, 23–32.

12 Barišić 1955b, 2, note 5b.

13 Zeiller 1967, 75–76, 78.

14 Zeiller 1967, 78. Montanus and Maxima appear in the martyrologies under different dates, March 26 and May 11. Cf. Zeiller 1967, 105.

15 Zeiller 1967, 105–107; Popović 1991, 73–80.

*Mons*<sup>16</sup> was located. It is possible, however, that the bodies of the martyrs emerged eight miles from *Singidunim* in *Castrum Octavum*, in today's Višnjica.<sup>17</sup>

The first known bishop of *Singidunum*, Ursacius (*Ursatius a Singiduno, Ursacius*), was mentioned in the sources for the first time, as a participant of the Council of Tyre in 335 AD, where he appears as an opponent of bishop Athanasius of Alexandria, one of the leading representatives of the Nicene doctrine.<sup>18</sup> On the Council of Serdica in 343, Ursacius was the leading one on the list of heretics (*nomina haereticorum*).<sup>19</sup> During his long service, until approximately 370, the Episcopacy of *Singidunum* had an important role in the church policy of the Empire and in the spread of Arianism, which was present in the whole Danubian area and Illyricum, as well as in Italy, Gaul and in the East. During the time of Ursacius, one local Synod of Arian representatives was held in *Singidunum*,<sup>20</sup> and the bishop himself together with bishop Valens of *Mursa* had a great impact on Emperor Constantius II in terms of religion.<sup>21</sup> The Episcopal See in *Singidunum* after him was also another apostle of Arianism, bishop Secundianus. As an Arian he would be convicted by the council of the western bishops in Aquileia, in 381 AD.<sup>22</sup> Written evidence of subsequent bishops of *Singidunum* has not been found to date. The Episcopacy certainly existed in the 6<sup>th</sup> century, and *Justinian's Novel CXXXI* testifies to this.<sup>23</sup> In the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century, in relation to the Avar attacks and the siege of the city by the Khagan Bayan, historical sources mention a bishop of *Singidunum* who, together with the military commander Sethos, strived to defend not only *Singidunum*, but *Sirmium* as well, in 579 AD.<sup>24</sup>

The city of *Margum* on the right bank of the Velika Morava (*Margus*), in the vicinity of its confluence with the Danube, had an important role in economic and religious life in the Limes area. The existence of a bishop in the town is men-

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16 Mirković 1976, 27; Eadem, 1979, 21.

17 Mirković 1976, 27, note 13.

18 Zeiller 1967, 149–150; 216; Lippold 1961, 1055.

19 Mirković 1976, 27.

20 Bratož 2011, 228, note 112.

21 Barceló 2004, 149.

22 Zeiller 1967, 150.

23 Zeiller 1967, 151.

24 Menandri excerpta, p. 471.34–473.4; Barišić 1955a, 92–93; Mirković 1976, 27.

tioned by the historian Priscus. The Hun's conquest of *Margum*, *Viminacium* and some other cities in the Danubian area, according to his description, was directly connected with the bishop of this city and his unseemly deeds.<sup>25</sup> The bishop of *Margum*, whose name is unknown, according to Priscus' testimony, went to the Hun territory and robbed the king's treasury. Being afraid of retaliation, he surrendered to the enemy and promised the capitulation of the city in return.<sup>26</sup>

Among the most important cities of the *Moesia Prima* province was *Viminacium*, the capitol and Episcopal See.<sup>27</sup> The political significance of the city itself, as well as the presence of a large number of soldiers from various parts of the Empire, influenced the spread of different Eastern religious doctrines, together with the official religion of the Empire, among which Mithraism was dominant.<sup>28</sup> Written data about the existence of an organised Christian community in the city originates from the 4<sup>th</sup> century. The city was an important meeting place at the end of July – beginning of August in 337 AD between Athanasius of Alexandria, on his return from exile in Trier, and Emperor Constantius II, who led military operations against the Sarmatians at that time.<sup>29</sup>

The bishops of *Viminacium* of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> century are known from historical sources. The bishop Amantius, signee of the acts of the Synod of Serdica in 343, who was probably represented by one of his priests, presbyterus Maximus,<sup>30</sup> was, together with the majority of the bishops from Illyricum, against the main Arian representatives in the Balkans, the bishops Valens of *Mursa* and Ursacius of *Singidunum*. Bishop Cyriacus, mentioned in 356 in *Atanasius Epistola contra Arianos*, was possibly on the Episcopal seat of the Moesian capitol, *Viminacium*, even though in the source this is not precisely stated.<sup>31</sup> An unnamed bishop of *Viminacium* from the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century was mentioned in one letter to Pope Celestine I (424).<sup>32</sup> From the period after the Hun invasion in the middle of

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25 Prisc. Frg. 6, 1, p. 276.32–277.5; Barišić 1955a, 9; Mirković 1986, 209.

26 Zeiller 1967, 151; Mirković 1986, 209.

27 Popović 1967, 29–53; Mirković 1968, 56–73; *Eadem* 1986, 24–27.

28 Zotović 1973, 31–33; Zeiller 1967, 17–26.

29 Burgess 2008, 38, 42.

30 Zeiller 1967, 148.

31 Zeiller 1967, 148–149

32 Zeiller 1967, 598.

the 5<sup>th</sup> century, there is no data about church organisation in *Viminacium* until the 6<sup>th</sup> century when, in Justinian's Novel XI from 535, we find that the city fell under the jurisdiction of the Archbishopric of *Justiniana Prima*. At this time, as Procopius informs us, the renewed Episcopate was elevated to the status of Metropolitanate.<sup>33</sup>

Among the important cities which were also Episcopal centres in the province of Coastal Dacia was the city of *Aquae* near today's Prahovo. Historical sources report that the bishop of this city, Vitalis, was one of the participants of the Synod of Serdica, in 343.<sup>34</sup> Only in the 6<sup>th</sup> century did the activity of the bishop of *Aquae* become known. Justinian I singled out the Episcopate *Aquae* as a distinct church unit, independent of the episcopate of *Meridium* to which it was subordinated until then, including in its episcopate the city of *Aquae*, and its surrounding fortifications (*castella*), churches (*ecclesiae*) and agricultural lands (*territoria*).<sup>35</sup> This measure derived from the intent of suppression of the Bonosus heresy, still present in certain regions in the 6<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>36</sup> In Justinian's Novel XI, dated 535 AD, the bishop worked on the suppression of the Photinus heresy, which, at the end of 6<sup>th</sup> century, was confessed to by Bonosus, the bishop of *Naissus*. Justinian strived to finally suppress this heresy in the Balkan area and in this endeavour he assigned a special role to the bishop of *Aquae*.

Since the beginning of the Roman conquests, in the regions of *Moesia Prima* and the *Dacia Ripensis* provinces, large cities and settlements were formed and lots of fortresses were built along the Danube Limes, with numerous troops stationed in them. Even though the majority of settlements and fortifications were destroyed during the Hun invasion in the middle of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, a considerable number were restored by Justinian's fortification activity in the Balkans, which Procopius described in detail in his famous work *De aedificiis*.<sup>37</sup> During decades-long archaeological research on the Danube Limes, traces of the churches, sepulchral monuments and objects which were parts of church furniture, and also objects of a profane nature with some Christian attribute have been found. These

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33 Popović 1967, 37, note 69.

34 Hilarius, *Coll. Antiar. Par.* A, 4, 1, 27, 6; CSEL 65, 66, 20; Athanasius, *Apologia* 48, 2 (124, Nr. 11); Zeiller 1967, 154; Bratož 2011, 244.

35 Mirković 1995, 207.

36 Iustinianus, *Nov. XI*, 5, 29–33; Zeiller 1967, 350.

37 *De aedif.* IV, 4 p. 122.15–129.4; translation according to: Barišić 1955a, 58–70.

material remains indicate that Christianity among civilians, as well as among the soldiers of the Roman Empire, was considerably present in the period from the 4<sup>th</sup> until the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 7<sup>th</sup> century.

## CHURCHES AND CHAPELS ON THE LIMES

The archaeological remains of church architecture from the period of Early Christianity on the Middle Danube Limes are very modest, which is a consequence of insufficient knowledge regarding the settlement horizons in larger and smaller cities or fortified military settlements. This is especially significant for the territories of two provincial metropolises – *Singidunum* and *Viminacium*, in which relatively modest traces of the presence of Christian communities during Late Antiquity have been found.

There is almost no data about churches in *Singidunum*. In the places where remains of church architecture would have been expected there are thick layers of modern, Ottoman and medieval cities. During research of the interior of the legionary fort *Singidunum* in the area of Kalemegdan, foundations of a structure that could be potentially identified as an early Christianity basilica have been found (Fig. 1, a).<sup>38</sup>

In *Viminacium*, the established areas of civil settlement and legionary fort have been researched to a lesser extent in the places where considerable remains of church architecture of the 4<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century could be expected (Fig. 2). In the new research of the area around the amphitheatre which occupied the north-east corner of the fortified city, in the near vicinity of the eastern facade of this complex, the foundation remains of a structure were found (Fig. 3–4). In the absence of reliably confirmed remains of Christian sacral buildings, some researchers of the *Viminacium* necropolises have presumed that luxury family mausoleums were used as places where Christian cults for the deceased were performed.<sup>39</sup> It is possible that they were used for the smaller family of collegium members' gatherings during commemorations or for memorial services for the members buried in these tombs, but not for wider use. The building of churches

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38 The authors express special thanks to Dr Stefan Pop-Lazić for this information.

39 Zotović 1986, 60–63; *Eadem* 1994, 60–63.

Fig. 1. *Singidunum* (Belgrade) in the Late Antiquity: 1. legionary camp; 2. civil settlement; 3. necropolises; a. possibly location of the Early Christian church; b. the Jonah sarcophagus



Fig. 2. *Viminacium* (Kostolac), site map: 1. Early Christian church? near the amphitheatre; 2. Early Christian church? at Burdelj; 3. Early Christian painted tomb

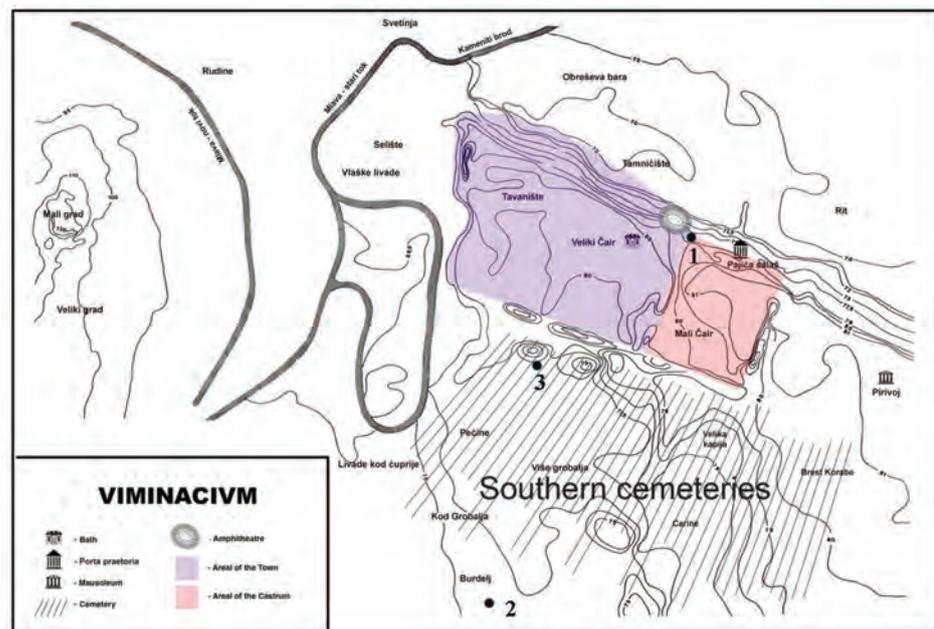




Fig. 3. *Viminacium* (Kostolac), Early Christian church?, aerial view (M. Korać in: *Fasti Romanae* 2017)

on a city's necropolises was a common Christian practice during the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries, seen on numerous sites, among which the basilicas that have been researched in the area of eastern Late Antiquity – the Early Christian necropolis of *Naissus* in today's city quarter of Jagodin Mala stand out.<sup>40</sup> The structure that has been explored at the Više Burdelja site could have had the role of a burial basilica in the area of the *Viminacium* southern necropolises (Fig. 2, 2).<sup>41</sup> It is a three–

40 Jeremić 2013, 129–130; Jeremić 2014, 18–22.

41 Jeremić 1977a, 55–57; Milošević 2006, 105–106.

Fig. 4. *Viminacium* (Kostolac), Early Christian church?, view from the amphitheatre (M. Korać in: *Fasti Romanae* 2017)



naved structure, 24.6 x 17.2 m, oriented northeast–southwest, with an entrance on the west side. The interior of the building is dissected with two rows of four 1 x 0.7 m pillars. The corners are reinforced with pilasters, as well as the interior of the eastern wall, with two pilasters set in the direction of the central pillars. The walls of the building and pillars were built mostly of reused bricks, stone blocks and gravestone fragments. The coins below the roof covering define the time of intensive use of the building to the period from Constans (337–350) to Gratian (367–383).<sup>42</sup> Research has shown that the structure was built over the remains of a necropolis from the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, and that burial practice inside the building continued during the 4<sup>th</sup> century, when the tombs were built, and that some of them were fresco-painted.<sup>43</sup> The eastern part of the building remains unexplored, so there is no data regarding its final shape, nor any data on archaeological findings from its interior. The question of whether the building served as a cemetery basilica or if it was a large family tomb that could have been used as a cemetery chapel, remains open.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Milošević 2006, 106.

<sup>43</sup> Jeremić 1977b, 59.

<sup>44</sup> Milošević 2006, 106.



Fig. 5. *Viminacium*, Early Christian inscriptions

One epigraphic monument might testify to the construction of the city basilica on an unknown location in *Viminacium* (Fig. 5, a). It is the finding of the inscription on one large brick that reads: *Cristus (!) deus dei / filius custodiat / artifices (!) om/nes qui hoc<sup>s</sup> [o]pus fecerunt / in domino*.<sup>45</sup> *Artifices* were workers who sought blessing for their work for the Lord (*in domino*). Unfortunately the brick was found at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century without recorded conditions of the find, therefore we cannot estimate the location on which the structure had been built and from where this brick originated. *Christus deus dei filius* is the formula that is characteristic for Orthodox Christianity,<sup>46</sup> which was actually practiced in *Viminacium*, judging by the priests that sat on the Episcopal throne of this city during the 4<sup>th</sup> century.

The Christianisation of the Danube Limes was definitely very intense, however the archaeological findings do not show much evidence of it. Downstream along the Danube, the evidence of church architecture has been registered on several sites, thanks to protective archaeological excavations during the construction of HPP Đerdap I, and chronologically they would correspond to Justinian's military, administrative and ecclesiastic consolidation of the border. These are foundation remains of four church buildings *intra muros* in three fortifications, in Čezava–

45 Mirković 1986, no. 216.

46 Gargano 2106, 18.

*Novae*, Donji Milanovac–*Taliata*, Boljetin–*Smorna* and Vajuga<sup>47</sup> (Map 1). Also, some towers of Late Antique and Early Byzantine fortifications in Saldum, Donje Butorke and Karataš–*Diana*, with their shape, resemble chapels more than observation points, so they will be mentioned here.

On the site of *Castrum Novae* in Čezava, the fortification for the accommodation of cohorts with a few structures in the interior, and a part of the dock have been examined (Fig. 6). A civil settlement and the associated necropolises remained unexplored. The remains of early Christian church buildings belong to the latest (7.) construction phase of the fortification dated to the 6<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 7). These are the foundation remains of two basilicas constructed one above the other, the earlier of which was completely investigated (Fig 8 a, b).<sup>48</sup> The older church (basilica 1) was partly discovered below the foundation remains of the later building in the northwest corner of the fortification. It was built from stone, brick and mortar. In the published reports there is no data on its appearance or dimensions, except that by its dimensions it slightly deviates from the later church. The apse of the older church is larger than the apse of the later one, and on the outside it was reinforced with at least three or four counterforts.<sup>49</sup> The northern wall of the building was dislocated to the north about 2 m in relation to the northern wall of the younger church. Based on the shape of the structure, researchers have determined it to the time of Justinian I, until 543/544 AD.<sup>50</sup>

Above the older church, a new, somewhat smaller church was built. It was built above the remains of an older basilica and does not occupy the dominant position within the defended space. It is located at a distance of about 7 m from the western rampart and about 65 m west of the fort's main northwest–southeast communication. The basilica's orientation slightly deviates from the rampart route, which is approximately positioned with its corners towards the cardinal points, and the Basilica itself is positioned on an east–west axis with a deviation of 20° of its east end towards the north. The building is preserved in the foundation zone and, to a lesser degree, in the aboveground part. It was made of crushed stone, mortar and

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47 There is no data about shape, size and construction elements of the church in Vajuga. Cf. Popović Lj. 1984, 109.

48 Vasić 1984, 102, fig. 9; *Idem* 1995, 49.

49 Vasić 1984, 102, T. VI, 1, 3.

50 Vasić 1984, 102.



Fig. 6. *Novae* (Čezava), aerial view (documentation of the Institute of Archaeology, Belgrade – the IAB)

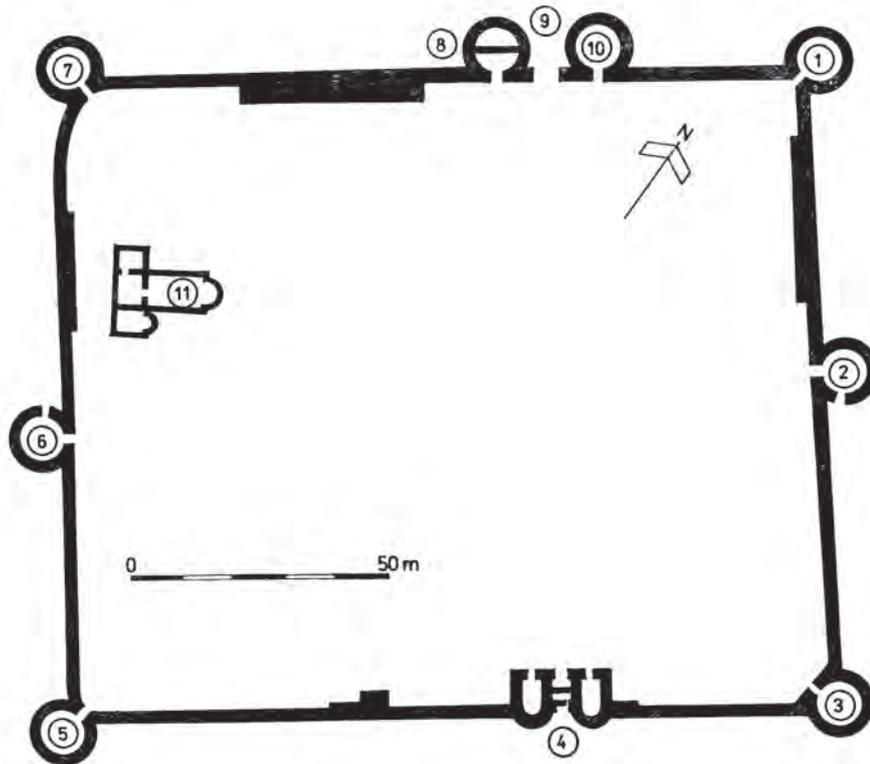
brick. It consists of a naos, a semicircular apse, a narthex and two annexes from the north and south sides of the narthex.<sup>51</sup> The southern annex ends in the east with a semicircular apse. A marble mortar was found in it, which probably served a cult purpose.<sup>52</sup> The total exterior length of the building is 22 m, and the area in the west with the annexes – 17.5 m. The basilica's nave has internal dimensions of

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51 Vasić 1984, T. VI, 1.

52 Vasić 1995, 49.

Fig. 7. *Novae* (Čezava) in the 6th century AD (after: Vasić 1984, 103, fig. 9)



about 10.5 x 6.25 m, with an apse depth of about 2 m. In the interior of the apse there was a built-up semicircular bench. The building had a partially preserved mortar floor. Researchers determined the construction of the church to the time of Justinian I, after 543/544, based on the shape of the floor plan, while coins of the emperor Maurice, from 593/594, indicate the date of its destruction.<sup>53</sup>

A church with a similar plan and period of construction, also *intra muros* of the fortification for accommodation of the cohort, leaning on a western rampart, was found in Donji Milanovac–*Taliata* (Fig. 9).<sup>54</sup> Its west end rests against a tower, whose lower level is adapted to a baptistery (Fig. 10).<sup>55</sup> The building is oriented approximately east–west, with a deviation that is conditioned by the direction of the western ramparts (Fig. 11). It consists of a naos, with internal dimensions of 9.5 x

<sup>53</sup> Vasić 1984, 102.

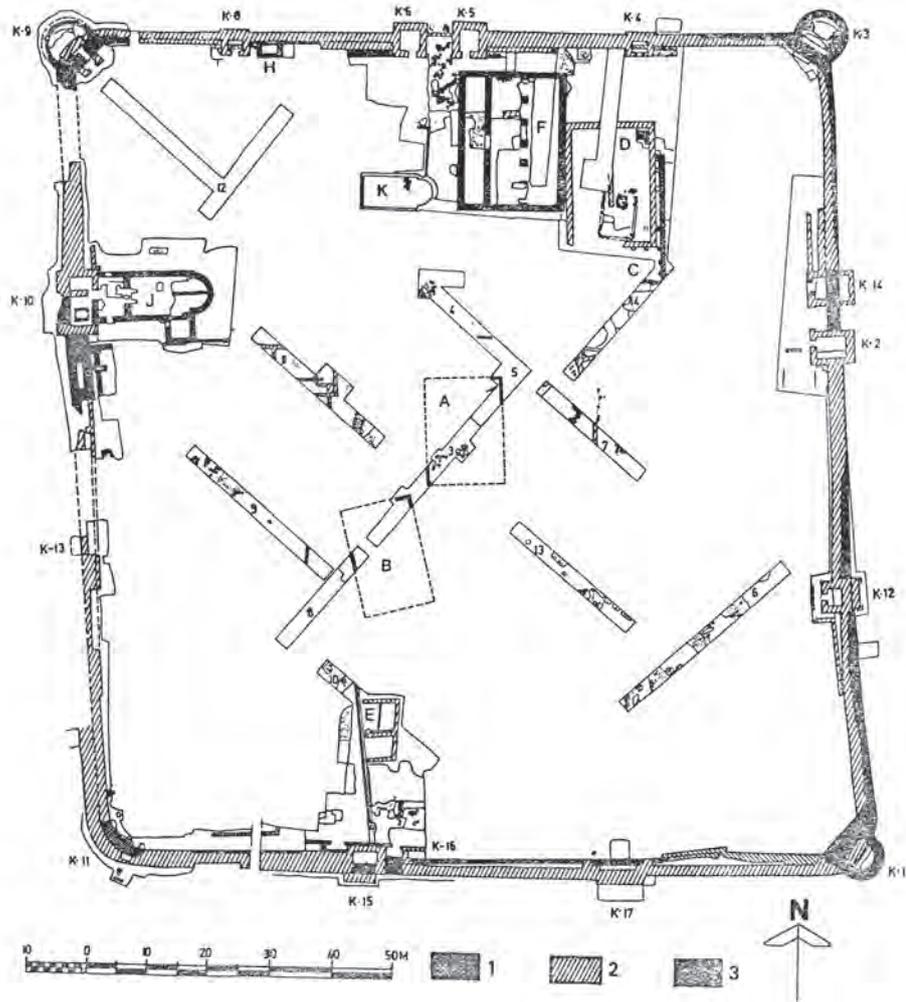
<sup>54</sup> Popović 1984, fig. 4, 5, 6.

<sup>55</sup> Popović 1984, 273; Ilić 2006, 226–227.



Fig. 8. *Novae* (Čezava): a. basilica No. 2, view from the NW; b. detail of the basilica No. 1 (documentation of the IAB)

Fig. 9. *Taliata* (Donji Milanovac), site plan (after: Popović 1984, 266, fig. 1)



5.9 m, with an apse on the east, 3.4 m deep. In the west there is a rectangular narthex, 5.8 x 4.3 m. The baptistry in the tower, measuring 8.2 x 3.5 m, is attached to the narthex (Fig. 12).<sup>56</sup> On the south side, at the eastern end, a 3.3 x 3 m annex was subsequently built, with an entrance from the western side, with a width of 0.75 m. The entrances to the church are 1.2 m wide, on the southern and northern part of the narthex, where there were entrances to the naos and baptistry, through passages 1.65 and 1.25 m wide.

<sup>56</sup> Popović 1984, T. VII, 3.

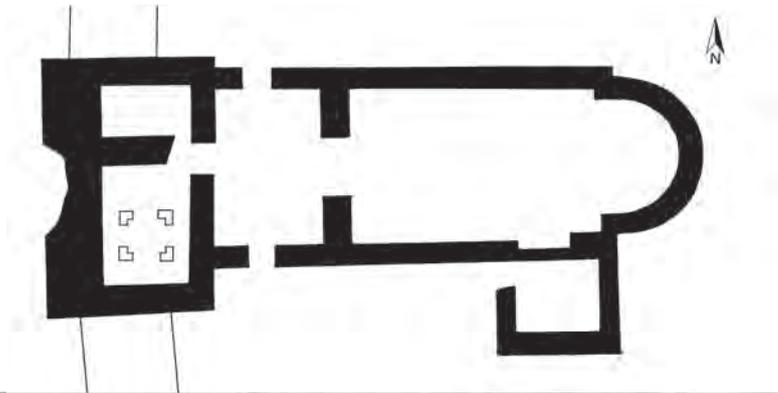


Fig. 10. *Taliata* (Donji Milanovac), Early Christian basilica, ground plan (after: Ilić 2006, fig. 2)



Fig. 11. *Taliata* (Donji Milanovac), Early Christian basilica, NW view (after: Popović 1984, T. VII, 3)

Fig. 12. *Taliata* (Donji Milanovac), the baptistery in the tower (after: Popović 1984, T. VIII, 3)



The church in *Taliata* was built using the *opus mixtum* technique, with brick walls. Researchers discovered two phases of reconstruction, based on differences in the floors and the finishing of the church walls. The older church floor, 30 cm below the younger one, had a mortar base on which Roman bricks of various formats were placed, as well as hexagonal ceramic tiles. For the younger naos floor, large format bricks were used, while standard Early Byzantine bricks were used in other parts of the building.<sup>57</sup> Extensive use of the space has been documented by the

secondary repair of the floor with stone pieces, or fragmented bricks. The baptistery was positioned on the ground floor in the southern part of the tower.<sup>58</sup> It had brick paving with a substructure. The piscina has an oval shape and was built from brick and mortar and plastered, with stairs on the east and west side. There were pillars on its corners, and they were most probably bearers of a wooden canopy construction. Two layers of piscine mortar coating have been registered during research.

According to the archaeological findings, it has been concluded that the basilica was built during the time of Justinian's renovation of the *Taliata* fort.<sup>59</sup> Over time, the fort degraded and low quality reconstructions were performed on some of the buildings inside the fortification, as evidenced in the church, or destroyed, like the large *horreum* whose space was used as a workshop for metal processing.<sup>60</sup> This fortified settlement in *Taliata*, which was more rural than a real military base, was destroyed during Avaric attacks in 595/6 AD.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Popović 1984, 276, fig. 6.

<sup>58</sup> On the upper floors the tower might still have defensive and observatory function. Cf. Popović 1984, 280.

<sup>59</sup> Popović 1984, 280.

<sup>60</sup> Popović 1984, 280.

<sup>61</sup> Popović 1984, 280. In the Middle Ages, on the area of basilica, the medieval necropolis structured in rows was formed in 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> century, with a smaller single-nave church in the vicinity of the northern gate of the early Byzantine fortification.



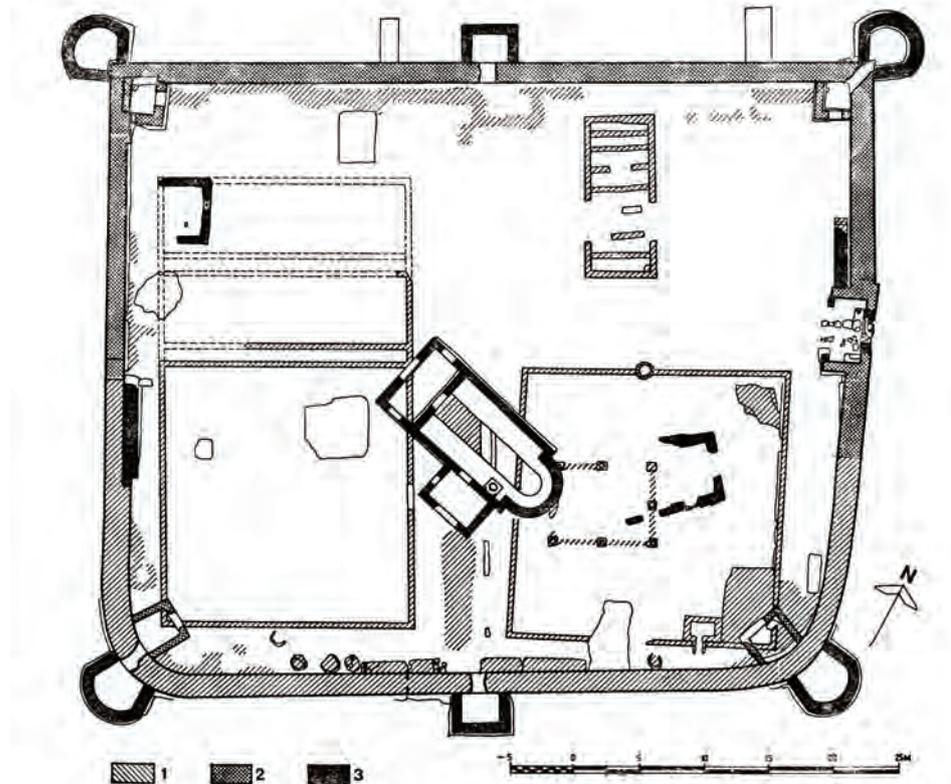
Fig. 13. *Smorna* (Boljetin), aerial view (documentation of the IAB)

Archaeological research in Boljetin, which was identified as the Roman *Smyrna* or *Smorna*, examined the Roman and Early Byzantine fortification, together with a nearby early Roman necropolis (Fig. 13).<sup>62</sup> Within the Early Byzantine renovation of the fortification in the 6<sup>th</sup> century (3<sup>rd</sup> construction period), a parish church was built with inner dimensions of 15 x 5.5 m (Fig. 14, 15). It has an east-west orientation with a 13° deflection in its eastern part toward the south and with its orientation considerably deviating from the fortification's orientation. It is a structure with a naos and a semicircular apse, with a 2 m diameter at its east end

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62 Zotović 1984, 211–229.

Fig. 14. *Smorna* (Boljetin),  
site plan (after: Zotović  
1984, fig. 2)



and a rectangular nartex on the west (Fig. 16). On the inner side of the apse there is a masonry bench, 0.90 m wide made of cut stone panels, for priests' seats. In the naos, next to the southern wall, 0.60 m from the eastern end of the wall, there was a cross-shaped baptistery with dimensions of 1.2 x 1 m, built from bricks joined with mortar, and plastered with two layers of mortar (Fig. 17 a, b).<sup>63</sup> The first mortar layer was hydrostatic, and the second one was white lime. The floor in the basilica consisted of a sand substruction, a pebble layer and a layer of white lime mortar on which bricks were laid. The nartex on the west side was subsequently built, as was the southern annex. It has doors on the southern and northern wall, each 1.2 m wide and on the west side, 2 m wide. The nartex and naos were connected by doors that were 1.4 m wide. In a later phase, the southern and western doors were walled up. The main entrance to the church was then on the north

<sup>63</sup> Ilić 2006, 226.



side, which is the closest to the main communication of the fort, with an east–west direction. The church in Boljetin was built from cut rubble, crushed stone and brick, which was preserved only in one row or as imprints in the mortar.<sup>64</sup> In a later phase, levelling was performed with a low quality lime.<sup>65</sup> Partitions of the passages were most probably made at this time. The structure was in a renewed and levelled condition and used for cult purposes during the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> century, when a rural necropolis was formed around it.<sup>66</sup>

Fig. 15. *Smorna* (Boljetin), Early Christian basilica, view from the East (documentation of the IAB)

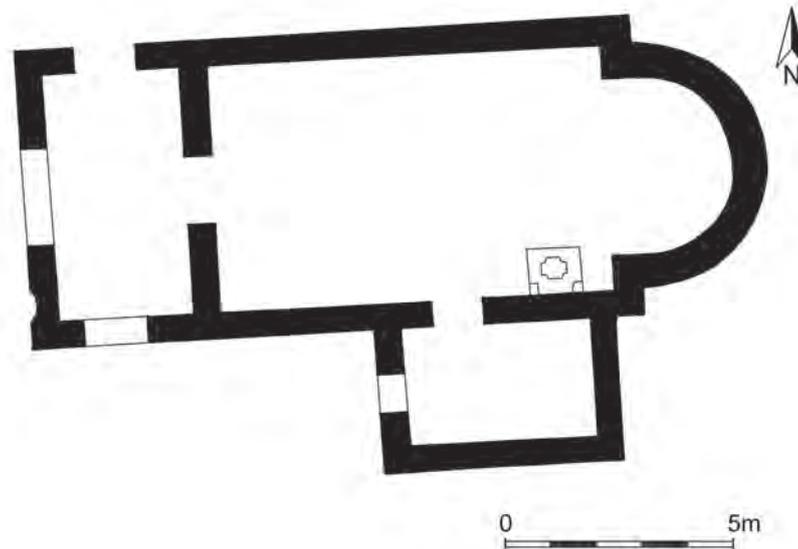
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64 Zotović 1984, 223.

65 It is possible that the upper, aboveground parts were made of wood, and they collapsed over time. In the second phase, traces of wooden constructions were not recorded. Cf. Zotović 1984, 224.

66 Radičević 2008, 203.

Fig. 16. *Smorna* (Boljentin),  
Early Christian basilica,  
ground plan (after: Ilić  
2006, fig. 1)



Within the Limes fortifications, examples of tower construction have been recorded which, by their shape, orientation and emphasised apse, remind one of Early Christian chapels, and therefore they are mentioned in this paper. They are dated from the 4<sup>th</sup> to the mid/latter part of the 6<sup>th</sup> century. In Saldum, the Early Byzantine *castellum*, which was used for the accommodation of auxiliary troops, together with its earlier phases and remains of the previous architecture has been explored (Fig. 18).<sup>67</sup> Remains of the settlements outside the fortification and necropolis were not covered by protective archaeological research, conducted from 1966–1970. In the interior of the Early Byzantine fortification, architecture made of lightweight materials was registered. The rampart with four towers was built during Justinian's renovation of the Limes.<sup>68</sup> Three towers have circular plans, while the fourth was built in the form of a chapel, with a rectangular plan and inner dimensions of 5.75 x 4.20 m, with its longer sides parallel to the Danube (Fig. 19).<sup>69</sup> It ends in the east with a semicircular apse 2.20 m deep (Fig. 20). At the western end, the entrance is 1.30 m wide, with a rectangular anteport (1.30 x 2.25 m). The interior of the room is floored with mortar, with a substructure

<sup>67</sup> Petrović 1984, 128–134; Jeremić 2009.

<sup>68</sup> Jeremić 2009, 47.

<sup>69</sup> Jeremić 2009, 40–42.



Fig. 17. *Smorna* (Boljentin), Early Christian basilica:  
a. naos with the baptistery;  
b. detail of the baptistery  
(documentation of the IAB)



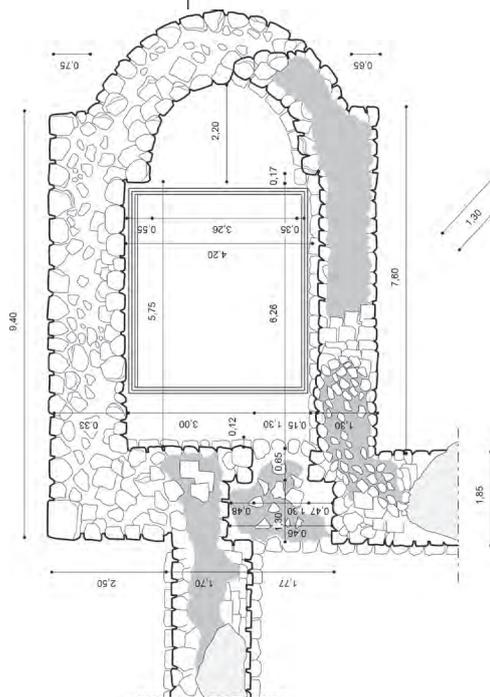
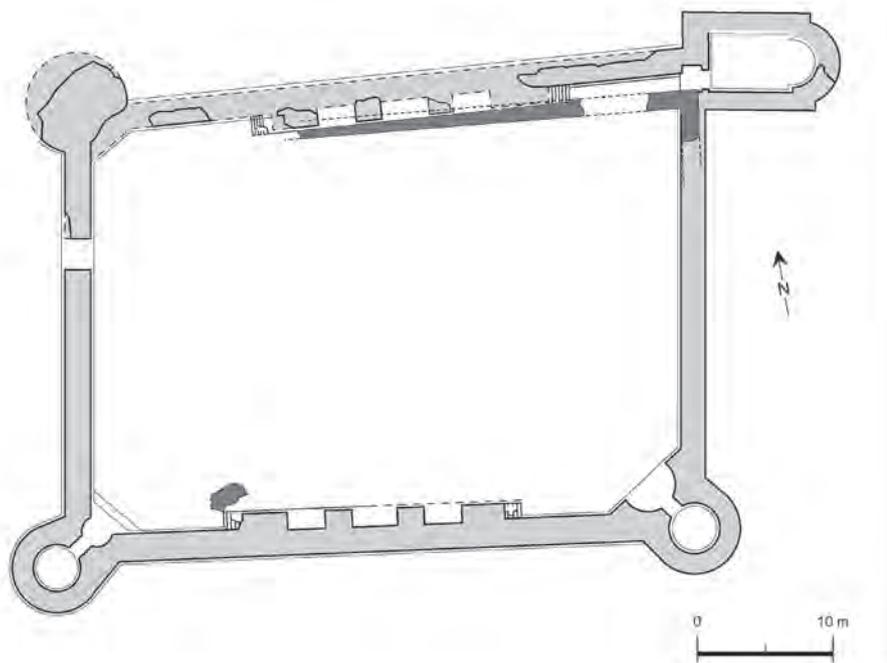
made of pebbles. Due to exposure to the Danube currents, the tower in the form of a chapel was quite damaged at the time of excavation, and the archaeological layers, especially the latest horizon, were destroyed by erosion, so the data on findings was missing. Consequently, a more precise attribution of this space into cult or other purposes is lacking.

A tower of a similar shape was recorded at the fortification in Donje Butorke, near Kladovo. At the time of Justinian I, a fortification with circular towers on the corners was built (Fig. 21). In the middle of the south-eastern rampart, at the location of the walkway extension, a structure was built – a tower of a rectangular plan with an apse with its shoulders on the eastern end (Fig. 22). The orientation of the tower deviates slightly from the orientation of the ramparts and is turned more towards the east. The tower is 5.5 x 3.2 m in size, with a trapezoidal anteport in-

Fig. 18. Saldum, ground plan of the castellum (after: Jeremić 2009, fig. 19)

Fig. 19. Saldum, NE tower, ground plan (after: Jeremić 2009, fig. 28, a)

Fig. 20. Saldum, NE tower, photo (after: Jeremić 2009, fig. 27, b)



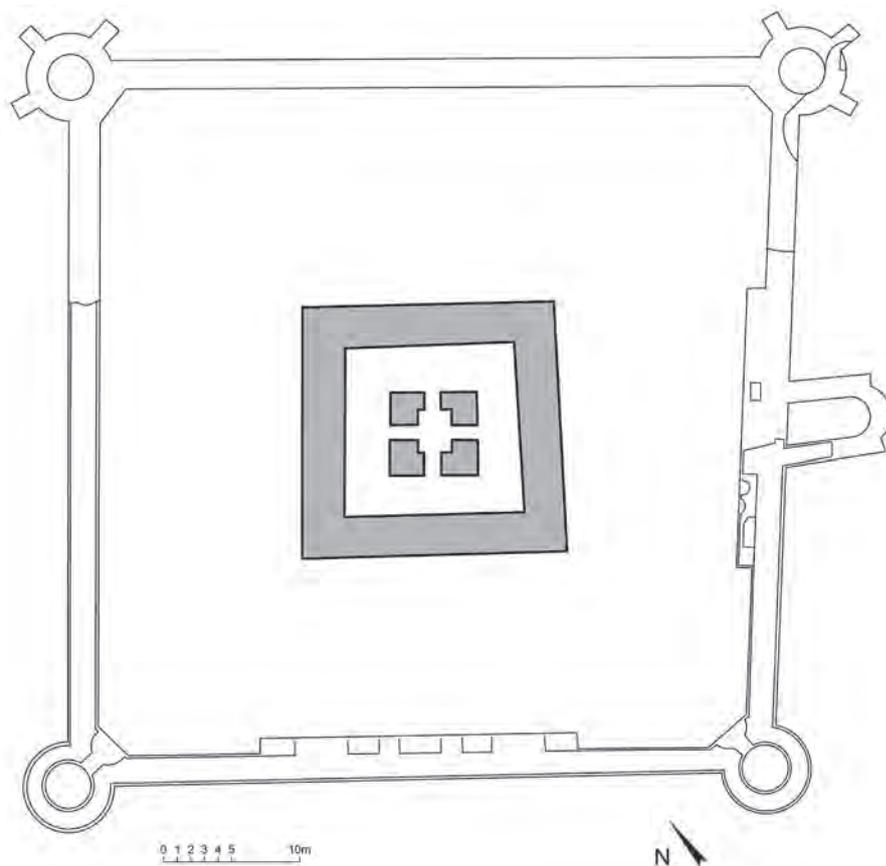


Fig. 21. Donje Butorke, ground plan of the fortification (after: Jeremić 2007, fig. 3, 4)

Fig. 22. Donje Butorke, Eastern tower with an apse (after: Cermanović-Kuzmanović 1979, T. III, 3)



corporated into the lower floor of the walkway.<sup>70</sup> The entrance to the tower and the tower itself were arched. It is possible that there was also a floor, which could have had an observation function, as in the case of the tower in *Taliata*. In its final form, the tower in Donje Butorke is in the shape of a chapel, most likely realised in the second phase of construction, in the middle or in the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>71</sup>

The remains of a fort for the accommodation of cohorts in Karataš, with its associated settlement and necropolis, have been identified as the Roman settlement of *Diana* (Fig. 23).<sup>72</sup> The site is about 300 m downstream of HPP Đerdap I and is situated on the bank of the Danube. Research has determined the main stages of the construction of the fortification that was first made of earth, and afterwards of stone fortification, to periods from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century. Apart from the ramparts and buildings in the interior, parts of the necropolis were examined, and a tomb (crypt) was accidentally discovered on the bank of the Danube (*cf. infra*). The fort plan from the 4<sup>th</sup> century has also attracted the attention of researchers (Fig. 24). A rampart from the 4<sup>th</sup> century was built on the line of a *vallum* from the oldest phase. On the centre of the western rampart, a projected tower with an antefort was placed, flanked by two side niches. The peculiarity of these niches is their shape, they are semicircular from the outside, as are the towers of the eastern and southern rampart, while in the interior both have apses with shoulders, thus making the shape of the chapel, which in a military tactical sense had less of a clear view than circular towers, which allowed visibility from all sides (Fig. 25).<sup>73</sup>

## BURIAL OF CHRISTIANS ON THE LIMES

In the necropolises along the Limes not many burials with distinctive Christian features have been recorded, mostly due to areas being inaccessible for exploration and due to the small volume of conducted archaeological works. Although Christians were the dominant political and economic group in the Late Antiquity

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<sup>70</sup> Cermanović–Kuzmanović 1979, 129; Kondić 1984, 146.

<sup>71</sup> Jeremić 2009, 47.

<sup>72</sup> Kondić 1987, 43–44.

<sup>73</sup> Rankov 1980, 53–60; Rankov 1984, 7–10; Rankov 1987, 5–7; Kondić 1996, 81–83.

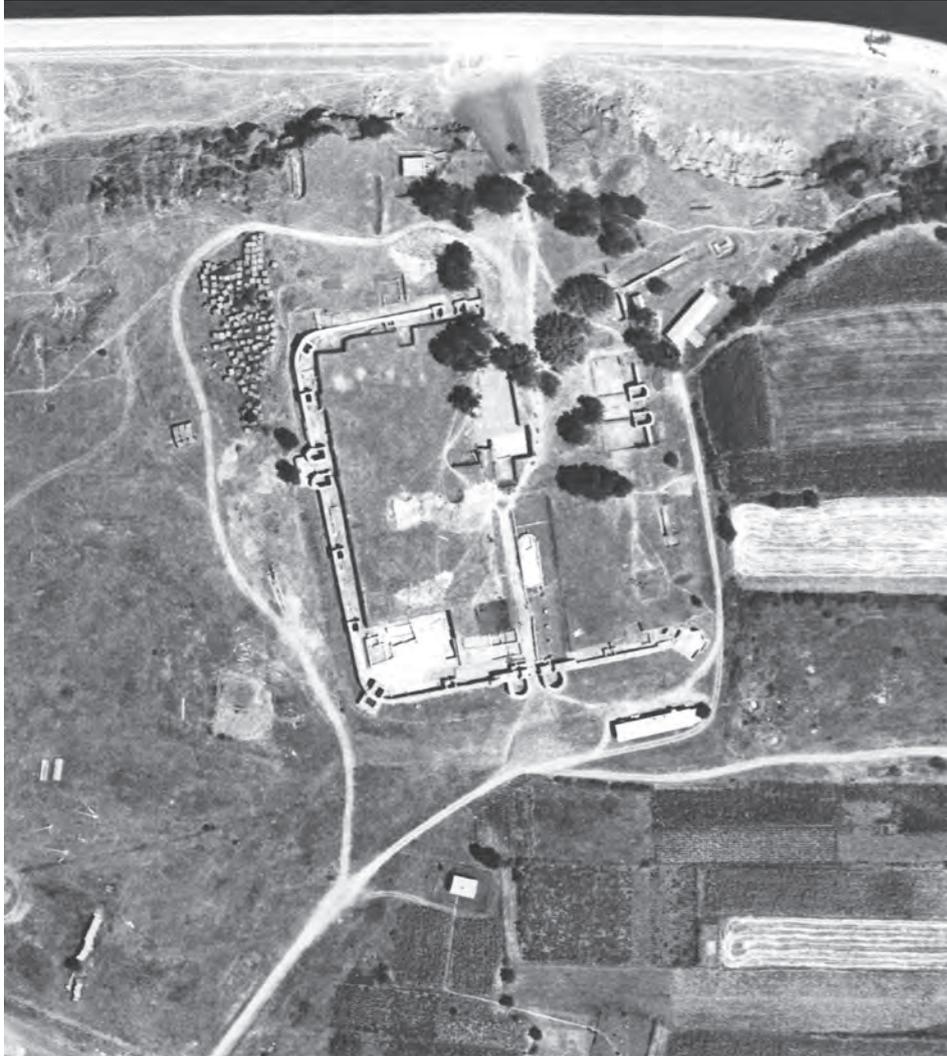
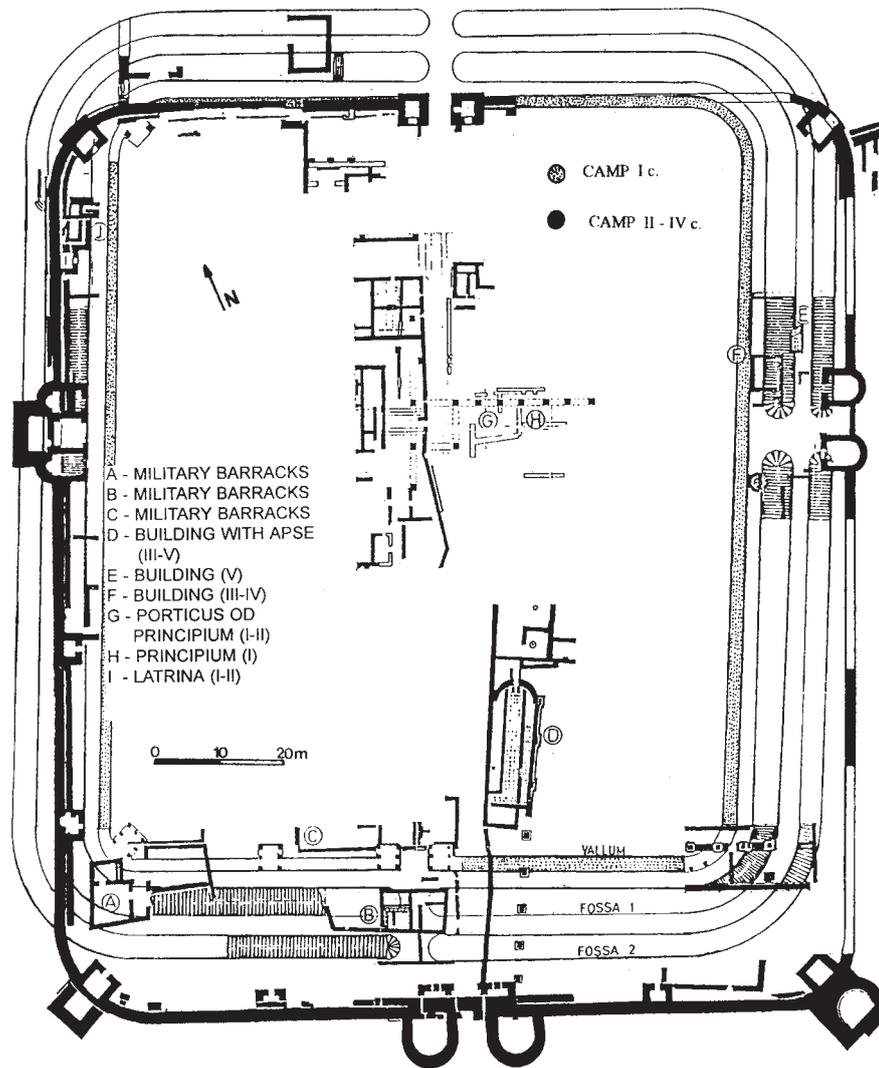


Fig. 23. *Diana* (Karataš), aerial view (documentation of the IAB)

period, Christian elements in a funeral cult can mostly be seen through artistically painted tombs, relief decoration of stone or lead sarcophagi and, most rarely, through architectural units devoted to the martyr cult.<sup>74</sup> Early Christians were

<sup>74</sup> On the other hand, we have little data on Christian burials because of the inequality of the research. In *Singidunum*, at the site of the Late Antique necropolises, modern city quarters are spread, so data was obtained mostly during protective works in a smaller, limited range. *Margum* is insufficiently explored, it is situated on free areas that are partly devastated by the river's current, while the most extensive research efforts are performed in *Viminacium* in areas endangered by the con-

Fig. 24. *Diana* (Karataš), site plan (after: Kondić 1996, 82, fig. 1)



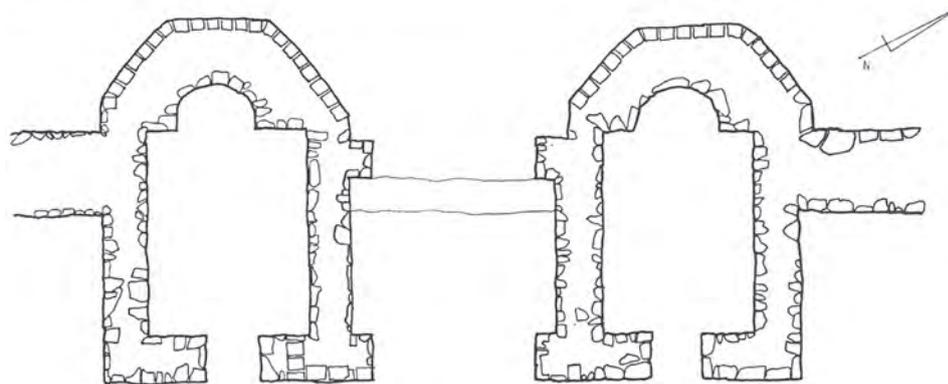
buried together in necropolises with late pagans, without a clear separation of grave areas, and this is confirmed at the *Viminacium* necropolises.<sup>75</sup> Researchers

struction of PP Kostolac. However, here it is difficult to distinguish the early Christian burials due to the small number of personal piety objects or undoubtedly Christian symbols in the tombs or grave architecture. The necropolises were formed on the wider territory of *Singidunum* in Višnjica and Brestovik, and downstream in Tekija, *Diana* and Vajuga.

<sup>75</sup> Zotović 1986, 53; *Eadem* 2000, 15.



Fig. 25. *Diana* (Karataš), Western gate: a. groundplan (after: Rankov 1987, fig. 1, 2, 6, 8)



have explained this by the lack of clear boundaries between pagan and Christian views of the afterlife during the 4<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>76</sup> although it could also be due to the continuance of traditional rituals and methods of burial, which were deeply rooted in the population, and were difficult and gradual to change.<sup>77</sup> Tertullian had

76 Zotović 2000, 15–16.

77 Jeremić 2014, 52–53.

Fig. 25. *Diana* (Karataš),  
Western gate: b. northern  
tower; c. southern tower  
(after: Rankov 1987, fig. 1,  
2, 6, 8)

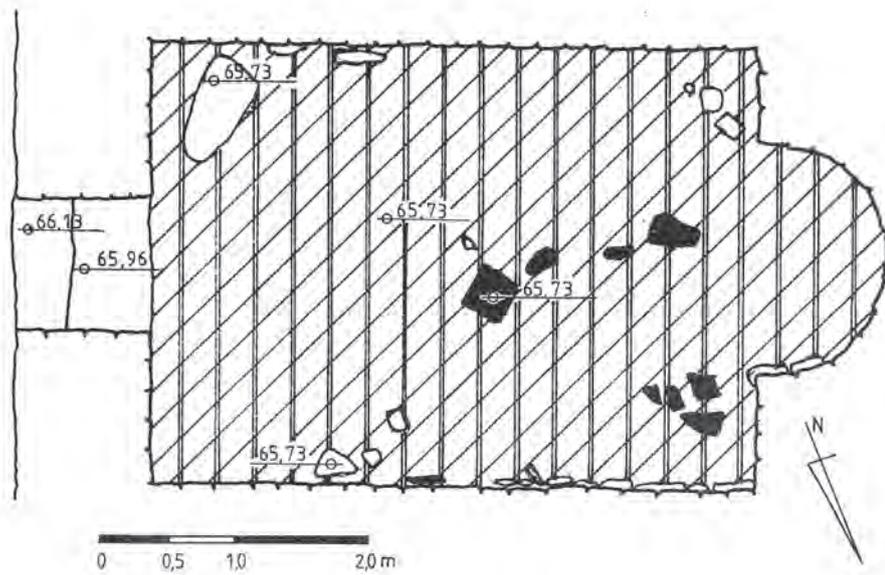




Fig. 26. *Singidunum* (Belgrade), the Jonah sarcophagus (documentation of the IAB)

already noticed that *Christians* are made, *not born*, and that new Christians grew up as Romans, who maintained the cultural, social and political views they grew up with.<sup>78</sup> It is also difficult to identify burials as Christian in the cases of grave findings which were without grave goods and inventory. This can be interpreted both as the burial of poor class members, but also as a respect for the strict Christian practice of rejecting luxury.

In *Singidunum*, Christian burials have been confirmed in research of the south-east urban necropolis (Fig. 1, b). Reliable confirmations of burials of the Christian population were available there, such as the remains of the deceased being laid down in a stone sarcophagus with the biblical scene of the Jonah tribulation, and lead sarcophagi decorated with Christian symbols. All quoted findings are generally defined to the 4<sup>th</sup> century. In 1885, in the centre of Belgrade on the corner of Kapetan Mišina and Jovanova Street, during earth works, a sarcophagus measuring 2.18 x 0.98 x 0.74 m, made of limestone with a lid in the form of a four pitched roof was discovered (Fig. 26).<sup>79</sup> The sarcophagus was decorated with Noric–Pannonian scrolls, and was reused for new burials, most probably in the mid or the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, when new customers required the addition of the presentation of popular Christian scenes on it.<sup>80</sup> On the front side of the sarcophagus, a relief figure

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78 Drake 2016, 2.

79 Valtrović 1886, 70; Idem 1891, 142.

80 Pilipović, Milanović 2016, 220.

scene was presented, quite unskilfully executed (Fig. 27). The narration takes place through a series of various episodes, with scenes from the Old Testament, about the suffering and repentance of the prophet Jonah, with the action taking place from the right-hand side of the observer to the left. The story begins with the display of a ship with full sails, with a mast in the form of a cross and the naked figure of Jonah, who leaps into a restless sea full of sea monsters. The exit from temptation is represented by his appearance from the jaws of a sea monster, with his arms spread to the Good Shepherd, the Saviour of the soul. Behind the rescued Jonah is a tree with fruits and birds in the branches, symbols of life in paradise. Presentations with Jonah were popular in the Constantinian and *post-Constantinian time*, and the cult of martyrs and faith in salvation played an important role in the religious life of *Singidunum*.<sup>81</sup> This is also supported by a reduced relief depiction of a fish and gourd on the bottom of the lead vessel, which can be brought into a connection with this biblical personality.<sup>82</sup> Jonah symbolises a person who is full of doubt and wandering, but who, through temptation and redemption, finds the path to salvation. Like a sheep, he returns to the flock of the Good Shepherd, the one who cares for Christian souls.<sup>83</sup>

Burials in the lead sarcophagi are considered luxurious among the *Singidunum* Christian population. Out of seven registered sarcophagi,<sup>84</sup> from the area of the southeast necropolis of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> century, only with one specimen is it possible to assume that it was a Christian burial, of a child in a sarcophagus with a length of 1.07 m (Fig. 28).<sup>85</sup> The lid of the sarcophagus was decorated with three crossed lines, among which are crosses in relief whose arms end in arrowheads. The sarcophagus was dated to the first decades of the 4<sup>th</sup> century<sup>86</sup> and it has closer analogies in two sarcophagi from *Viminacium*, discovered at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>87</sup> during rescue excavations of the southern necropolis.<sup>88</sup>

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81 Pilipović, Milanović 2016, 222–224.

82 About this topic M. Vujović prepares the paper.

83 About the Good Shepherd in the paper of O. Ilić and G. Jeremić, in this Collection.

84 Pop–Lazić 2002, 83; Crnobrnja 2003, 314, sl. 1.

85 Crnobrnja 2003, 314; Milovanović 2017, 270, cat. 377a.

86 Crnobrnja 2003, 315.

87 Vulić 1909, 133. It is possible that it is the same specimen that Milovanović published as an accidental find. Cf. Milovanović 2017, 270, cat. 377.

88 Golubović 2002, 631, fig. 8, 9.



Fig. 27. *Singidunum* (Belgrade), the Jonah sarcophagus, detail (documentation of the IAB)

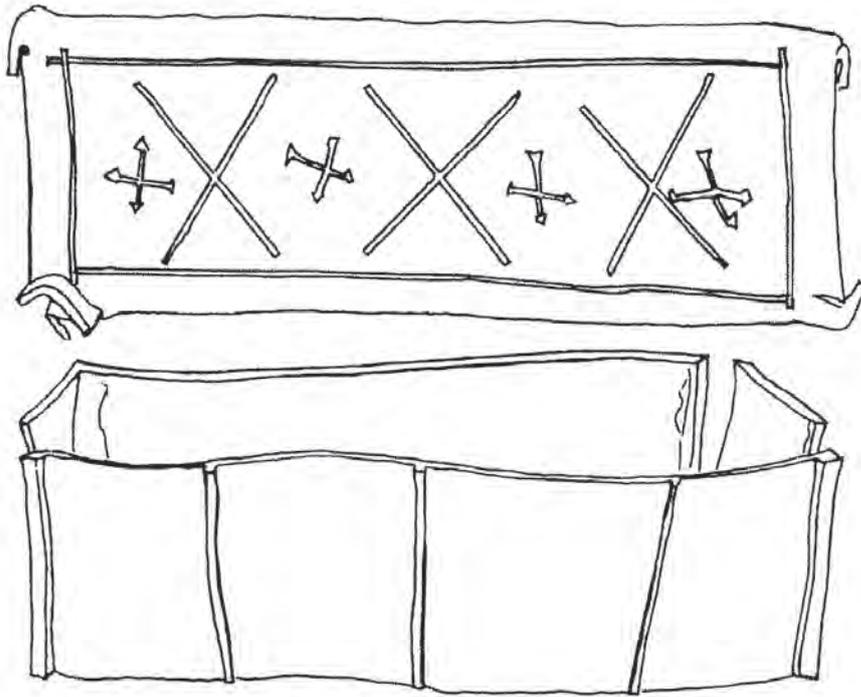


Fig. 28. *Singidunum* (Belgrade), Early Christian lead sarcophagus (after: Crnobrnja 2003, fig. 2)

Very little is known about the *Margum* population and their funeral customs at the Early Christian time. The epigraphic evidence does not provide information about the Christian epoch,<sup>89</sup> while the methods of burial are known on the basis of a small amount of protective research. In the course of excavation in the area of the south-eastern city necropolis formed along the road to *Viminacium*, a small

<sup>89</sup> Mirković 1986, 213–217.

number of graves from the Late Antiquity period were found. A semicircular vaulted tomb, which was well built, without a dromos, and with fresco decoration, is distinguished among the others (Fig. 29).<sup>90</sup> All sides of the tomb had fields divided, by a red-coloured cross, into four parts. The lower zones were additionally divided into panels of imitation marble.<sup>91</sup> The tomb was most probably painted during the 4<sup>th</sup> century, not necessarily at the beginning of the century. Among the analogues there are well dated fresco-painted buildings with an imitation marble overlay from a villa with peristyle in *Mediana*, from the middle of the 4<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>92</sup> and a presentation on a plinth in the semi-circled vaulted tomb in *Naissus*, from the ninth decade of the 4<sup>th</sup> century (a tomb with Christ's monogram).<sup>93</sup>

The research of the *Viminacium* necropolises that has taken place since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and intensively since the 1970s, has yielded data regarding about 14,000 individual or collective burials from the Antiquity and Late Antiquity periods. The necropolises of the late antique *Viminacium* developed south from the legionary fort and fortified city at the sites of Pećine and Više Burdelja (Fig. 2). Originating from this area are the largest number of Christian monuments, mausoleums, painted tombs, lead sarcophagi, epigraphic monuments and movable finds that come with Christian symbols.

Christian tombstone inscriptions from *Viminacium* are very rare (Fig. 5, b–d). Two marble tombstones, which today are missing, were found at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Their conditions of finding are unknown. They are 2 and 4 cm thick, and they were most probably used as a tomb cover in some mausoleum or cemetery basilica.<sup>94</sup> For a funerary inscription in one grave from the necropolis in Pećine, a square brick with dimensions of 41 x 41 x 5 cm was used.<sup>95</sup>

On these three inscriptions the names of two deceased females and one male were mentioned. *Marina, honesta femina* lived 30 years with her husband *Publi-*

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90 Jovanović, Cunjak 1994, 118–119, fig. 13.

91 Researchers dated the tomb to the end of 3rd and the beginning of 4th century, based on the assumption that the presentation of a cross is not clearly presented and therefore originated during the period of persecution of Christianity in the time of the Tetrarchy. Cf. Jovanović, Cunjak 1994, 119.

92 Archaeological research showed that the decoration of the villa with peristyle (frescoes, mosaics, sculptures) was performed simultaneously, in about the mid 4th century. Cf. Jeremić 2006, 140.

93 Jeremić 2014, 46–49.

94 Mirković 1986, no. 217, no. 219, with older literature.

95 Mirković 1986, no. 218

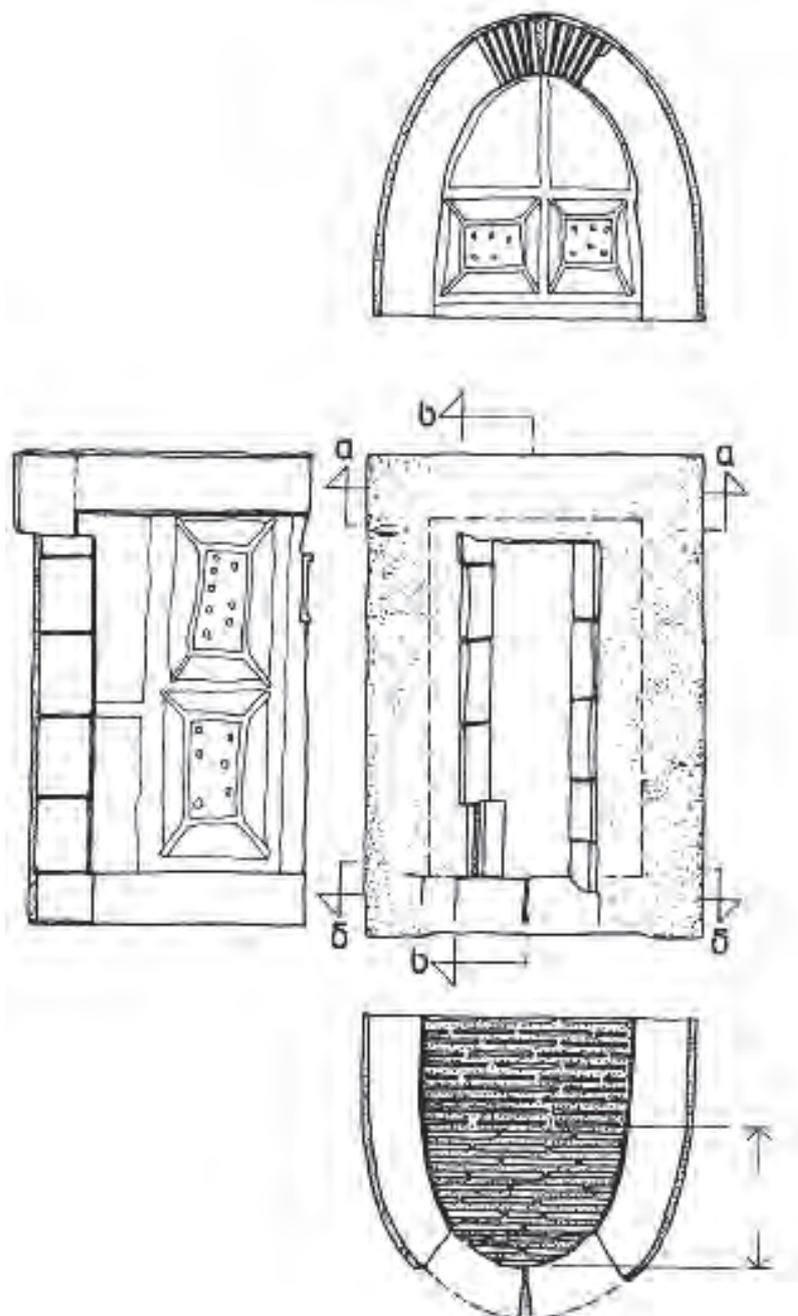


Fig. 29. *Margum*  
(Dubravica), painted tomb  
(after: Jovanović, Cunjak  
1994, fig. 13)

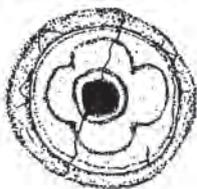
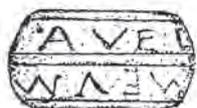


Fig. 30. *Viminacium* (Stari Kostolac), clay spindle whorle with an inscription, a. photo; b. drawing (documentation of the IAB)

us *Licinius Constanciolus* (*P. Licinius Cosanciolus*),<sup>96</sup> the other deceased woman, whose name has not been completely deciphered – SIIHA, was a widow (*bidua*), who lived for 45 years or, according to another interpretation, outlived her husband by 14 years (the inscription in this part is insufficiently clear). The third inscription refers to the funeral of a *Valerius*, to whom the foster parents (*nutritores*), who loved this boy very much, built a monument.<sup>97</sup>

To the Christian circle of funereal practice objects belongs a find that was laid next to a deceased woman buried in a tomb at the Pećine necropolis. The object is in the shape of a biconical spindle whorl made of baked clay with a central vertical perforation, decorated with four petals (Fig. 30, a–b). The inscription, in Latin in two rows facing each other, reads: *Ave domina / Lumen meum*, and this is common among inscriptions of the Christian world.<sup>98</sup>

A small number of grave units reliably defined as burials of Christian believers have been found in *Viminacium*. These are finds of one masonry tomb with a fresco painting, three lead sarcophagi and three children's graves, oriented in a north–south direction, with findings of a Christian content.<sup>99</sup> In a tomb with a west–east orientation, built from bricks and mortar, with a trapezoidal shape and, at the moment of discovery, a destroyed cover, and with a fresco painted interior, three men aged about 40 were buried, together with a woman of about 20.<sup>100</sup> Based on the coin finds, the tomb is dated to the third or fourth decade of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>101</sup> This is, for the time being, the only one of the 28 discovered fresco–painted graves and tombs that can be classified as Christian, because of the representation of a Christogram on the western wall (Fig. 31) and complex figural scenes on other walls, which could have deeper allegorical and religious meanings.<sup>102</sup> On the eastern wall, the source of life is symbolically presented in the form of a kantharos (*aqua vitae*), surrounded with trees of life (*arbores vitae*)

96 Mirković 1986, no. 217.

97 Mirković 1986, no. 219.

98 Mirković 1986, no. 224; Documentation of the Institute of Archaeology, Belgrade, Project *Viminacium*, field inv. no. 2637, grave no. G–732/1981.

99 Zotović 1994, 60–66.

100 Necropolis of Pećine, grave G–5517. Zotović 1994, 64.

101 Spasić–Đurić 2015, 115.

102 Korać 1995, 172–173; Idem 2007, 33–43;



Fig. 31. *Viminacium*, Early Christian tomb, western wall (after: Korać 2007)

and two antithetically positioned peacocks that together symbolise the eternal life in paradise (*pax aeterna in paradisum*), but also participation in the Eucharist.<sup>103</sup> On the north side there is a scene (*venatio*) in which a rider on a horse in gallop is moving to the right, closely followed by a lion with open jaws jumping toward him. The rider is here presented as a victim who, despite the weapons in his hand, does not enter into battle with the beast. However, on the south wall of the tomb, the venator faces danger face to face, accompanied by a hunting dog, confronting a leopard directed towards him. In the world of good fighting evil, he decides to oppose the forces of evil, for which he will receive eternal bliss as a reward.

Christians from the wealthier city classes of *Viminacium* buried their dead during the 4<sup>th</sup> century in lead sarcophagi.<sup>104</sup> Research has recorded five sarcophagi

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<sup>103</sup> Korać 2007, 44–47; Spasić–Đurić 2015, 116.

<sup>104</sup> During explorations of the necropolises in the last 30 years, over 20 lead sarcophagi have been

that have Christian symbols on the lids or sides, as well as two ossuaries, which could be treated as Christian receptacles. The sarcophagi were laid out in luxurious family tombs, individual masonry structures or directly placed in the ground. It is assumed that they were made in one of the local workshops, under the influence of Syrian masters or their motifs, possibly as the orders of Oriental customers.<sup>105</sup> Lead ore in the Late Antiquity period was very accessible in this market, thanks to the vicinity and activity of the mines in *Moesia Prima* and the surrounding areas (*res metallica*), among which the centres of exploitation on the mountains of Deli Jovan, Avala and Kosmaj near *Singidunum*, and also on Rudnik are particularly significant. Most often, in lead sarcophagi, children or younger women were buried in luxury clothing, often decorated with gold embroidery, which would oppose the recommendations of the fathers of the church for nurturing Christian modesty.

Burial in a lead sarcophagus was registered at the necropolis of Antique *Vinceia*, today's Smederevo, at the site of Ćirilovac. On this site F. Kanitz registered the remains of a Roman fort and settlement.<sup>106</sup> In earthworks in the vicinity of the site, part of the necropolis was found in which a lead sarcophagus with a figural scene and inscription was registered (Fig. 32).<sup>107</sup> The relief presentation on the lid, made by casting, contains a depiction of the Christogram made of a series of triangles in whose centre was a deltoid with an equal-armed cross. In the upper part, on each corner, is a human head with an unskillfully and oversized wreath depicted, as well as another one in the lower part of the cross at the point of the intersection of the arms. Depictions of three characters have been interpreted as Dionysius masks, here presented in symbiosis with the Christian belief in resurrection after death.<sup>108</sup> The engraved inscription reveals the name of a deceased woman: *Aur+eli(ae) Salleliae f(iliae) c(arissimae)*.<sup>109</sup>

One of the most significant grave units discovered in the Middle Danube area is the finding of a crypt in *Karataš-Diana* (Fig. 33). The building is located north

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found, out of which almost third was decorated with different motifs. Cf. Golubović 2001, 139; Milovanović 2017, 269–278.

105 Golubović 2002, 629–630.

106 Kanitz 1904, 153–154.

107 Cunjak, Marković–Nikolić 1997, 37.

108 Cunjak, Marković–Nikolić 1997, 39.

109 Cunjak, Marković–Nikolić 1997, 41.

of the gate of the *porta principalis sinistra* fort, on the axis of the main road of the camp, on the Danube slope towards the port, taking a position that is visible both from the fort and the Danube banks. It is a crypt with an aboveground structure, with a rectangular plan and dimensions of 8.2 x 6.7 m (Fig. 34), and with a dromos on the eastern side.<sup>110</sup> The underground part of the structure is divided into two rooms with five vaulted arcosolia, in which the funerals were carried out (Fig. 35). The structure was built from stone and mortar, with bedding courses made of bricks that were also used for vaulted constructions and pillars (Fig. 36), while the floor was paved with bricks. In debris of the western room, a marble *transenna* relief was found with a crossed bands motif made in relief (Fig. 37, a, b). A close parallel for it is found in the Christian architecture of the 4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> century, in marble *transennae* from *Naissus* and *Sirmium*, on the base of the Obelisk of Theodosius in Constantinople, as well as on a painted railing of paradise on a tomb in *Naissus*.<sup>111</sup> According to the method of construction, the crypt has similarities with mausoleums explored in the area of the eastern necropolis in *Naissus*, in Jagodin Mala, as well as with a crypt within the

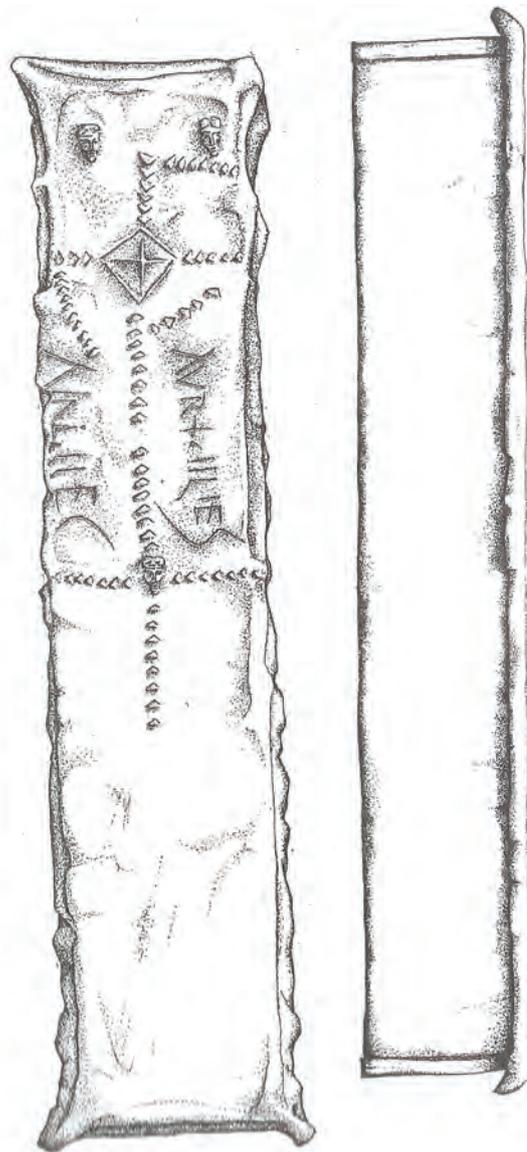
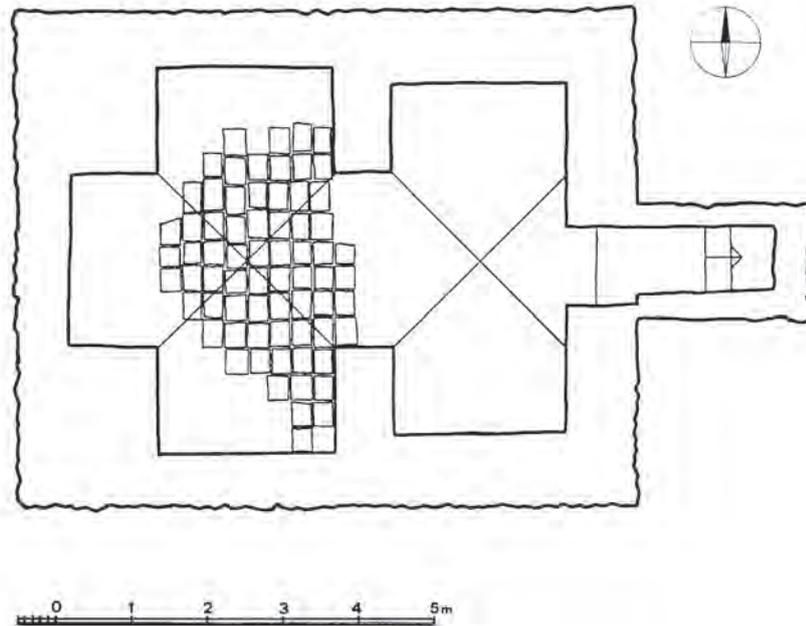


Fig. 32. *Vinceia* (Smederevo), lead sarcophagus (after: Cunjak, Marković-Nikolić 1997, T. I)

110 Milošević 2013, 238.

111 Nikolajević 1978, 684–686.

Fig. 34. *Diana* (Karataš), the crypt, ground plan (after: Nikolajević 1978, fig. 7)



complex with a cemetery basilica at the same site.<sup>112</sup> In the building, dislocated remains of several deceased were found, one of which had a cross-shaped fibula, indicating a military funeral, possibly of a person based in this fortification. The crypt was dated to the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>113</sup>

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The deep changes that affected the Middle Danube areas, which included numerous administrative, military, social and economic reforms, contributed to the creation of a specific social climate in which the Late Antiquity society was developing. The beginning of the Late Antiquity was marked by numerous stratifications, which were particularly noticeable in terms of the confession of different religions. Christianity, as an up and coming religion with a very diverse organisa-

112 Jeremić 2014, 19–22, 34–35.

113 Milošević 2013, 239. The author, on the basis of analogies in the form and method of construction with the crypt from Naissus, considers that it is a martyrium, even though there is neither, in hagiography, the name of the martyr who died or was buried in Diana, nor any epigraphic evidence. Cf. Milošević 2013, loc. cit.

tion that functioned well in the coastal towns, gradually established itself in the Danube area, with resistance particularly shown by the military emperors of the Tetrarchy period. Great brutality in the suppression of the freedom of Christian followers was shown by the emperors Diocletian and Galerius, especially in the cities along the Danube, where the largest number of members of the army and the priesthood perished for the faith of Christ.

In the first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, Episcopates were organised in the larger cities of the Danube area (*Singidunum*, *Margum*, *Viminacium* and *Aquae*), however, the remains of basilicas in which bishops had their seats and ministered, have not been reliably localised to date. It is only from the later periods that we know of the existence of the foundation remains of smaller parish churches that rose during Justinian's restoration of the Limes in less urbanised environments. These buildings probably served liturgical purposes not only for the fortifications' troops, but also for civilian communities in those places.

In a survey of necropolises and individual graves and tombs, only a small number can be identified as indisputably Christian deceased resting places. Those were burials in stone (with presentations of Jonah) and lead sarcopha-



Fig. 33. *Diana* (Karataš), the crypt, view from the east (documentation of the IAB)



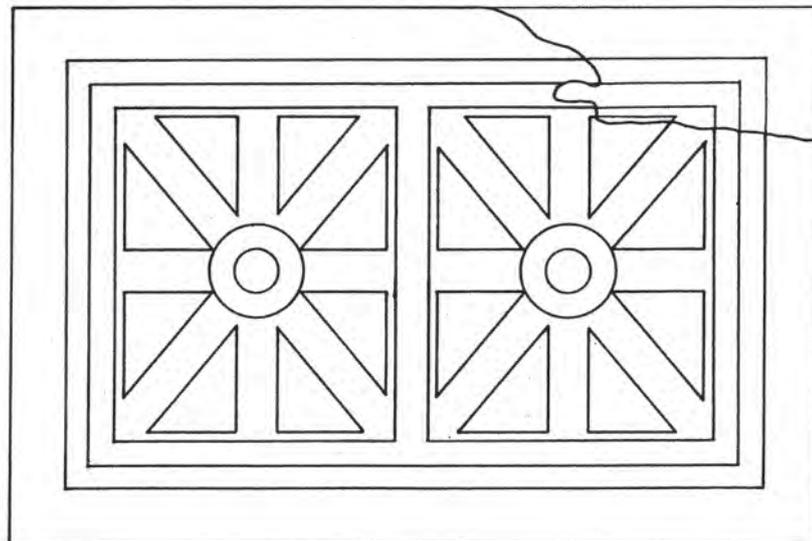
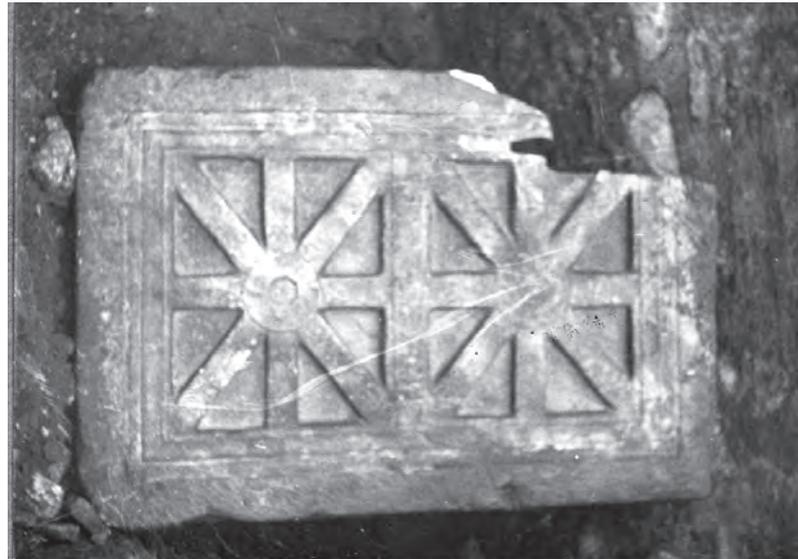
Fig. 35. *Diana* (Karataš), the crypt, detail of an arcossolium (documentation of the IAB)



Fig. 36. *Diana* (Karataš), the crypt, detail of a pillar (documentation of the IAB)

gi (with crosses and Christian inscriptions), graves with Christian inscriptions, or masonry graves and tombs with depictions of Christian content and symbolism. Although meagre and heterogeneous, the finds from this section of the Limes speak of the methods of the spread and acceptance of Christianity, which played an important role in the functioning and preservation of society in areas exposed to constant attacks on the edges of the Roman world.

Fig. 37. *Diana* (Karataš),  
the crypt, a  
marble transenna:  
a. photo,  
b. drawing  
(documentation  
of the IAB)



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## EARLY CHRISTIAN FINDS ON THE MIDDLE DANUBE LIMES\*

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### ABSTRACT

*The paper deals with the Early Christian objects in the Middle Danube Limes from Singidunum to Aquae. According to their function, shape or decorative content, it is possible to divide them into items that used in liturgical practice (silver chalices, bowls, spoons used during the Eucharist, flagon, procession crosses, lamps) and various objects, which shape, inscription or ornamental elements indicate Christian character, but which were intended for secular purposes (jewelry, steelyard, crest application with Chi-Rho monogram, fibulae etc.).*

*In addition to the local products, a certain number of objects consist of imported material produced in some major production centers, most often in the East, from where they were distributed to the other parts of the Roman Empire. A significant number of imported items indicate Egyptian origin, with their separate production centers, and from where they had been brought as an import to the Balkan region by trade routes. Some of the products were manufactured in western centers of manufacture. All registered Early Christian items, in their own way shed light on a turbulent period in this region from the 4th to the beginning of the 7th century.*

**KEYWORDS: EARLY CHRISTIAN OBJECTS, LOCAL AND IMPORTED PRODUCTS, MIDDLE DANUBE LIMES, 4TH TO THE BEGINNING OF 7TH CENTURY.**

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Religious objects had a special significance in the period of early Christianity, showing not only a commitment to religious institutions, but also the economic development of the ecclesiastic community to which they belonged. Discovered church hoards contain, along with the objects that were used in liturgical rituals, numerous gifts including votive objects of great value obtained from donors, or as an income from properties that were bequeathed to the church. The contributions of believers, members of the church community, together with income from church properties was one of the main sources of the church's wealth and it was used for, among other things, the construction and decoration of sacral structures. On a large number of silver vessels (chalices, bowls, glasses, spoons, etc.) that were intended for liturgical rituals, most often found engraved is the Christogram. As opposed to late antique silverware of the early 4<sup>th</sup> century, at the end of 4<sup>th</sup> and during the 5<sup>th</sup> century, and particularly during the early Byzantine period, Christian symbolism was an integral part of decorative content, whether in the ornamentation or the content of the inscriptions that were relatively common in this period.

When it comes to the area of the Danube Limes in the territory of today's Serbia, we can distinguish a rich collection of different early Christian objects of liturgical practice or various objects whose shape and decoration indicate their Christian character, but which were intended for secular purposes. All of them confirmed that the presence of Christians was deeply ingrained into the Roman army (Map 1).

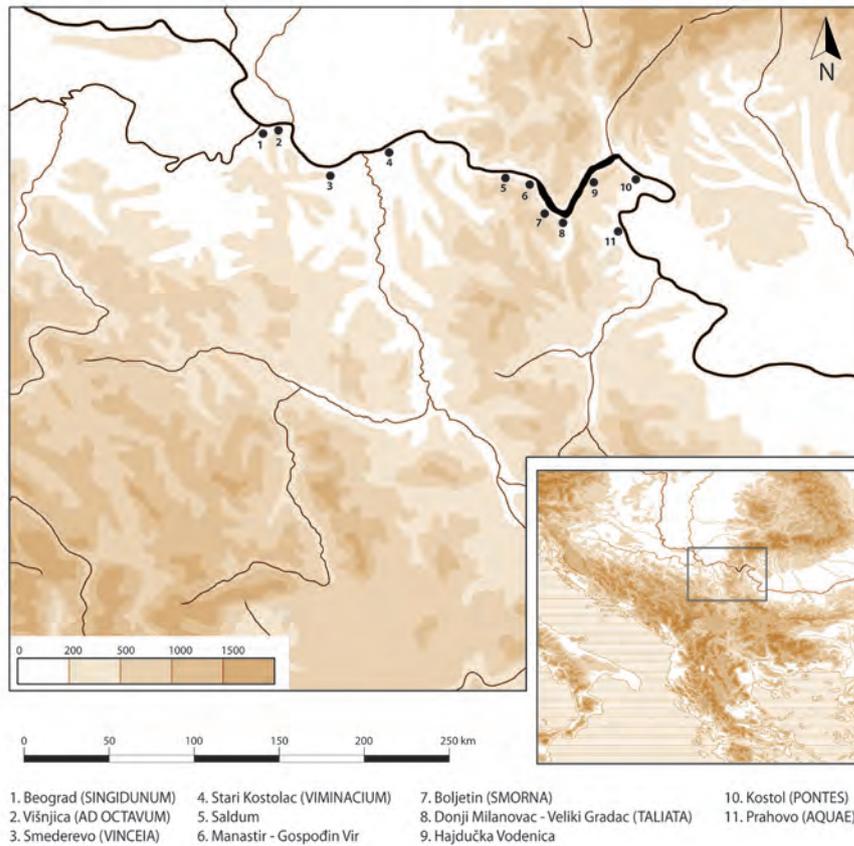
From *Viminacium*, the capital of *Moesia Prima* and the Episcopal See in the 4<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>2</sup> we can distinguish a rich collection of silverware. Five silver chalices on a high conical foot with a cover (two of them preserved) were made by casting technique with engraving (Fig. 1).<sup>3</sup> There are numerous chalices with a similar shape that are attributed to the Early Byzantine period on the basis of control stamps or the style of craftsmanship. The profile of the silver chalice's foot found at the Riha site, near Aleppo in Syria, now in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection in Washington,<sup>4</sup> is similar to the foot of the *Viminacium* chalices. Based on the five identified stamps in the inner side of the foot, the chalice is attributed to one of

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2 About the significance of the Episcopacy in *Viminacium* see the paper "Evidence of Early Christianity on the Danube Limes, from Singidunum to Aquae" in this Collection.

3 Popović 1994, kat. 277–281.

4 Ross 1962, cat. 9, Pl. X.



the Constantinople workshops during the reign of Justinian I.<sup>5</sup> In the north of Syria and the eastern part of Asia Minor, abundant hoards of silverware, gifts of some wealthier members of the church community, have been found. To date, approximately fifty silver vessels as individual findings that belonged to the church of St. Sergius in Kaper Koraon, in the vicinity of Hama, have been found.<sup>6</sup> It is believed that the silver chalice with a strainer, now preserved in the Museum of St.

<sup>5</sup> Cruikshank Dodd 1961, cat. 8.

<sup>6</sup> The hoard of church items made of silver found in the region of Hama, in Northern Syria contains chalices, strainers, ladles and spoons. Somewhat more rarely appear silver foils that served for covering church furniture, fans and lamps. The official stamps on them enable a very precise dating to the Early Byzantine period. Cf. Mundell Mango 1986, 68–73, fig. 1, 2.

Fig. 1. *Viminacium*.  
Collection of silver  
chalices (photo N. Borić)



Anne in Jerusalem, was also from Hama.<sup>7</sup> The official stamps on the chalices indicate that they were manufactured in Constantinople, and that they most probably came into the possession of the wealthier members of the local Syrian community through trading, who then donated them to the church. Many of these objects can be precisely chronologically defined to the middle of the 6<sup>th</sup> century due to the control stamps or the inscriptions with the names of the donors.<sup>8</sup>

In comparison with the objects originating from the East, our specimens look very modest, both in their production technique and their decorative themes. On the basis of analogies we can conclude that *Viminacium* vessels in the form of a chalice, by their style, show particular features, which could be said to be a combination of existing forms of eastern origin with a local tradition, which leads to the conclusion that the vessels might have been manufactured in the local workshops of *Viminacium*.

The small silver vessel in the shape of a hemispherical bowl with a wide, flat rim with a string of beads welded around it comes from *Viminacium* (Fig. 2).<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> *Cradle of Christianity* 2000, 88.

<sup>8</sup> Kent 1961, 35–45.

<sup>9</sup> Kondić 1994, kat. 276.



Fig. 2. *Viminacium*. Silver bowl with Christ monogram (photo N. Borić)

Subsequently engraved Christ monogram on two places on the lower side of the rim, point to the Christian attribution of this bowl, at least in a certain later phase of its use. This type of bowl is known as *Schüssel mit Kugelrandverzierung* and has been discovered in known hoards of that period from Britain to the countries of the Eastern Mediterranean. An identical specimen originates from Kerch in Crimea (*Panticapaeum*), dated to the late 4<sup>th</sup> or the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>10</sup> Another bowl of the same type represents part of a silverware hoard in the vicinity of Latakiya in Syria which is kept today in the Cleveland Museum of Art, in Ohio.<sup>11</sup> A finding similar to the previously mentioned ones originates from Palmira, now housed in the State Museum in Berlin.<sup>12</sup> The control stamp on this vessel enables a precise dating to the last quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>13</sup> Based on these analogies we could also date the bowl production to the same period of time.

The rich collection of *Viminacium* dishware contains a few more types of silver bowls whose Christian attribution is absolutely certain. Among them are two shallow bowls with a horizontally profiled narrow rim that stands out (Figs. 3

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10 *Spätantike und frühbyzantinische Silbergefäße* 1978, Abb. 42.

11 Mundell Mango 1998, fig. 12.

12 Cruikshank Dodd 1961, cat. 81a.

13 Cruikshank Dodd 1961, cat. 81b.

Figs. 3. a-b *Viminacium*.

Silver bowls with two stamps with a Latin cross (documentation of the National Museum in Belgrade)



a–b).<sup>14</sup> On the outer side of the base, on two opposite ends, a rectangular stamp with a Latin cross is imprinted, with the letters B and Z around it, for which J. Kondić gave an interesting interpretation that the bowl is a votive offering brought for the soul of the deceased.<sup>15</sup>

It could be concluded that the silver vessels from *Viminacium* are characterised by the simplicity of the shape and the reduced ornamentation, most often consisting of several concentric circles. Vessels are mostly made of lower quality silver, and are similar in their form and dimensions.

The function of spoons has not been fully defined in scientific literature. Some authors regard them as objects of the Christian cult, while others classify them as profane objects, as a part of luxurious tableware.<sup>16</sup> Spoons with a Christian attribution are typically decorated with the Christ monogram on the inner side of the bowl or, on a transition piece that connects the handle to the spoon bowl, some appropriate text or a symbolic meaning is depicted (fish, lamb).

Three almost identical specimens of silver spoons treasured in the National Museum in Belgrade make up part of the previously mentioned collection from *Viminacium* (Fig. 4). On their rounded transition to the handle an inscription in the form of a monogram is engraved. According to M. Tatić-Đurić this inscription can be read as *Enneus*, providing the closest parallel to the inscription with the name that is on one Christian sarcophagus from the Lateran Museum, with a depiction of Adam and Eve – *Ennius Asterius*.<sup>17</sup> According to its form, this ligature with a monogram is similar to those that were registered on stamps from Anastasius I to Maurice, i.e. in the period from 491 to 602.<sup>18</sup>

Taking into account the similarity of our dishes and spoons to those originating from the famous hoard of the church objects in Canoscio, in Italy,<sup>19</sup> in

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14 The collection of Christian objects from *Viminacium* that consists of two bowls and four spoons represents an accidental find that came into the National Museum in Belgrade as purchased (two bowls and three spoons); the fourth spoon of the same type is part of the collection of the National Museum in Požarevac. The authors would like to express special thanks to the director of the National Museum Bojana Borić-Brešković on the provided photos of the objects.

15 Kondić 1994, 66.

16 Korać 1995, 189–190.

17 Tatić-Đurić 1967, 244; Diehl 1961, 4027.

18 Cruiskshank Dodd 1961, 104, pl. 250.

19 Milojević 1970, 122, Abb. 9/1, 11.

Fig. 4. *Viminacium*. Silver spoons (photo N. Borić)



which church dishes with Christian characters have also been found together with spoons with emphasised Christian symbols (Christogram, fish, lamb), the conclusion could be drawn that the finding from *Viminacium* also contains a selection of church items intended for the Eucharist.

We can classify the spoons from *Viminacium* into the Desana type, according to the hoard found at the Desana site in Italy.<sup>20</sup> The characteristic of this type of spoons is that in the transition piece that connects the spoon bowl to the handle there is a small disc, while the handle is elongated and pointed at the top. On the disc, various Christian symbols or inscriptions were engraved, as is the case with our specimens.

The spoons, as objects of a religious character intended for the Eucharistic, have numerous closer or further analogies on the whole area of Europe and the Mediterranean. They are generally chronologically determined into the period from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> This famous Ostrogoth hoard contains, among other finds, 18 silver spoons, of which 12 belong to the Desana type. It is dated to the period of approximately 500 AD until the first half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century. Cf. Simoni 1988, 79–86.

<sup>21</sup> Milojević 1970, 111–133.

When considering the person whose name could be presented on spoon inscriptions from *Viminacium*, we cannot agree with the interpretation of some authors, according to which the inscription is the personal name of the craftsman,<sup>22</sup> since the spoons were usually marked by the name of the owner or donor, in the same way as tableware or arms were decorated with Christian symbols in the Middle Ages.<sup>23</sup>

At the *Pontes* site – Trajan's bridge, near Kostol, on the Iron Gate part of the Danube limes, a hoard of medieval iron tools was found in the layer between a house from the second half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century and a house from the 11<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>24</sup> The most typical item from this hoard was undoubtedly a flagon with a biblical inscription, today housed in the National Museum in Belgrade. The flagon is made of cast bronze, and decorated using engraving and punching techniques. The handle is connected to the rim by open panther jaws and to the belly of the vessel by a thin shield, above which is a sculpted head of a ram. Behind the head of the panther, which connects the handle and the flagon opening, there is a representation of a bird, made in relief (Figs. 5 a–c). The surface of the vessel is decorated with friezes of incised and punched ornaments. On the neck of the vessel the inscription ΦΟΝΗ ΚΥΡΕΙΟΥ ΕΠΕΙΤΟΝΥΔΑΤΟΝ (*The voice of the Lord is upon the waters*) is incised, which is a part of the third verse of the 29<sup>th</sup> Psalm of King David.

There are many opinions about the time of making of this undoubtedly liturgical vessel. When the flagon was published for the first time, the researcher of medieval layers in *Pontes* dated the flagon to the period between the 6<sup>th</sup> and the 8<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>25</sup> However, in a later article dedicated to the analysis of the *Pontes* hoard, and especially of the flagon, the same author, guided by the context of the inscription engraved on its neck, defined the flagon as a church liturgical vessel, produced in the 8<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>26</sup> Somewhat later, the vessel was defined as a Byzantine product,<sup>27</sup> or as an order from the Christian East for the needs of

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22 Kondić 1994, 66.

23 Milojević 1970, 122.

24 The campaign was conducted in 1983. G. Marjanović-Vujović was head of the excavations of the medieval layers on the Kostol–*Pontes* site.

25 Marjanović–Vujović 1983, 117, kat. 98.

26 Marjanović–Vujović 1987, 136, 138.

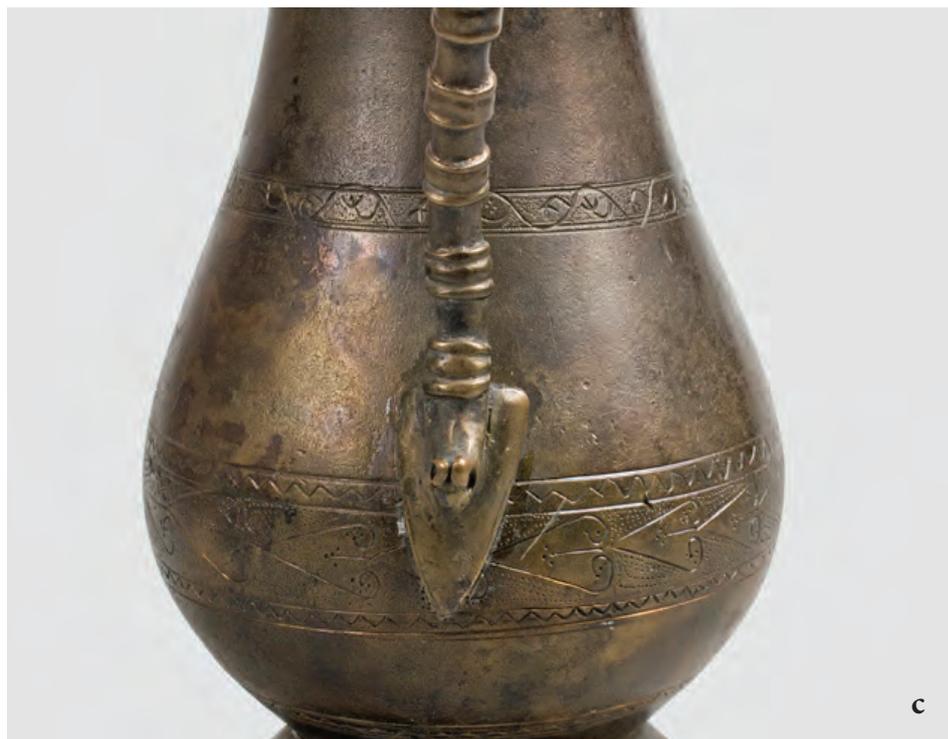
27 Bugarski, Ivanišević 2013, 143–144.

Fig. 5. a Kostol–Pontes.  
Bronze flagon, view and  
details (after: Popović 2015,  
112, fig. 1 a-c)





**b**



**c**

Figs. 5. b-c Kostol–Pontes.  
Bronze flagon, view and  
details (after: Popović 2015,  
112, fig. 1 a-c)

the Slavonic population, and dated into the 11<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>28</sup> The last in the series of arguments regarding the chronological determination of this vessel was recently published. According to the interpretation of the author, who was guided by an analogue finding from Vrap in northern Albania, the vessel was dated to the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 7<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>29</sup>

The art of casting bronze objects was inherited from ancient times and continued in the Late Antique and Early Byzantine period and in the, by then to a great extent Christianised, Roman Empire. As with the antique examples, Christian lamps were ship-shaped (*navicella*), with one or two openings for a wick and a small handle (*acrostolium*) on it. In the 4<sup>th</sup> century, the handle on bronze lamps was often decorated by a Christ monogram.

One extraordinary finding is the ten flame ship-shaped bronze lamp originating from the surroundings of Smederevo–*Vinceia*, from the Mezul site (Fig. 6). Part of the bow is extended by the representation of a fantastic animal, sculpturally made, holding a man in its jaws, reminding us of the story of Jonah, who symbolically represents “Christ’s Passion and Resurrection. In the same way that Jonah spent three days and nights in the whale’s belly, Christ spent three days and three nights in the depths of the earth” (Matt 12:40). This was the favourite theme of Early Christian mosaics and sarcophagi of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, and it is found on the previously mentioned sarcophagus from Belgrade. Marine fauna on the ship’s sides symbolises the sea, where dolphins occupy a central position, as one of the important Early Christian symbols. The cover (deck), foremast and, most probably, human figures positioned on the deck are missing today. The votive inscription is placed on the bow and stern and, according to V. Popović can be interpreted and read in two ways:

*DEI – IN DOMU – TERMOGENES – VOTUM FECIT*, which indicates more of a pagan character of the lamp, or

*IN DOMU – DEI – TERMOGENES – VOTUM FECIT*, revealing a more Jewish or Christian meaning.<sup>30</sup>

There are not many analogies for this type of lamp. The lamp probably originates from the time of the Empire and points to a connection with Rome, since in Rome,

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28 Zečević 2013, 232–233.

29 Popović 2015, 121–130.

30 Popović 1970, 324.



Fig. 6. Smederevo–*Vinceia*, Mezul site. Bronze lamp in the form of ship (photo N. Borić)

in the ruins of the Valerian palace, a similar lamp was found that today is housed in the Archaeological Museum in Florence.<sup>31</sup> The text on this lamp is written on a plate at the top of the foremast. This specimen was hung by wire quoits and, unlike our example, there are only two openings for flames on each side.

When it comes to the dating of this unique lamp in our area, the opinions of the authors do not coincide.<sup>32</sup> V. Popović, on the basis of the dual formulation of the inscription, and according to its paleographic characteristics, considers that this specimen should be dated to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century.<sup>33</sup> We can say with certainty that the lamp has a votive character, as clearly indicated by the inscription, in which the donor is marked with his proper name. It is difficult to explain this unique finding and determine to whom it belonged, whether to some Christian community, or individual, but most probably to a member of the Christian faith, thus representing a specimen of the early presence of Christianity in the area of *Moesia Prima*. According to the mentioned lamp from the museum in Florence, we can also determine our specimen in the time period of the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> or at the beginning of 4<sup>th</sup> century.

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31 Brenk 2003, fig. 187.

32 According to L. Pavlović, the lamp might have been produced in the time of Hadrian (117–138), the emperor who was a fan of the Greeks, Greek culture and cults. Cf. Pavlović 1967, 128.

33 Popović 1970, 329.

Fig. 7. *Singidunum*. Bronze lamp with a cross-like handle (documentation of the Belgrade City Museum)



A bronze lamp from *Singidunum* represents a well preserved example of a lamp with an elongated beak, a cover in the form of shell and a cross-like handle (Fig. 7).<sup>34</sup> The stand on which such lamps were usually placed was not preserved.<sup>35</sup> This type of lamp has numerous analogies in the whole Mediterranean area. From the immediate vicinity, a similar type of lamp originates from Stobi and is dated to the 5<sup>th</sup> century<sup>36</sup> and from the Luciu site in Romania.<sup>37</sup> This type of lamp is part of the collections of numerous museums and private collections throughout the world. From the private collection of Christian Schmidt in Munich comes the sample that is the same as the finding from Belgrade.<sup>38</sup>

It originates from the area of the Eastern Mediterranean and is dated to the 6<sup>th</sup> century. Similar findings are housed in the Louvre, in Paris, in Egyptian collection.<sup>39</sup> Even though they come from the most diverse areas of the Late Antique Empire,

34 There is no precise data about the finding place of the lamp, except that it was found in the area of Belgrade. It is housed in the Collection of the Migration period and Middle Ages of the Belgrade City Museum. The authors would like to express special thanks to the director of the Belgrade City Museum to Tatjana Korićanac and to the curator Nika Strugar on the provided documentation for the objects.

35 Janković 1997, 334, kat. 578.

36 *Od arheološkoto bogatstvo* 1980, kat. 555.

37 Teodor 2001, 119, fig. 5/2.

38 *Rom und Byzanz*, 87–88, cat. 80.

39 Bénazeth 1992, 122–123, E11924, E14283.

there is no doubt that the quality and uniformity of the craftsmanship of these lamps indicate the existence of separate production centres where they were produced and, afterwards, distributed from. As for most of the other shapes made of bronze, we may also say for these lamps that they are most likely products of Coptic workshops that were centres of production of bronze objects during the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>40</sup>

The Cross as a dominant Christian symbol does not appear before the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, except on rare monuments.<sup>41</sup> Starting from the 5<sup>th</sup> century, under the influence of the councils of Ephesus (431) and Chalcedon (451),<sup>42</sup> the cross becomes part of the dogma and official religion, retaining this attribute until today. The motif of the cross is noticeable on numerous monuments of various purposes: carved or painted on the stone relief of public and private buildings, as a decorative motif on mosaics, painted on the walls of early Christian tombs, on objects made of wood and ivory, on objects of a religious character dedicated to liturgical activities or on objects that make up part of church equipment, on oil lamps, or stamped on objects that were in profane use. It is especially widespread on jewelry, primarily on Byzantine products of precious metal in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> century.

In Christianity the cross took different forms during its development.<sup>43</sup> The most typical are variants of the cross with equal arms, or a cross with a longer vertical arm. Starting from the Middle Ages it would be known as a Greek or Latin cross and this terminology has been preserved until today. According to the form of the crosses, it is possible to conclude the method of their use, or their function. The crosses of larger formats used during the practicing of certain liturgical services, where they were carried in the church itself and around it, can be designated as processional, according to this function.

Two pendants of a processional cross made of lead come from *Viminacium* (Fig. 8–9). Both crosses were hung on the lower edge of the horizontal arm, as indicated by the holes on the upper vertical arm. According to G. Marjanović-Vujović, such and similar crosses were donated to a church by believers as a pledge of their prayers with which they addressed it, or as a sign of gratitude.<sup>44</sup>

Fig. 8. *Viminacium*. Lead pendant of a processional cross (redrawn after: Marjanović-Vujović 1977)

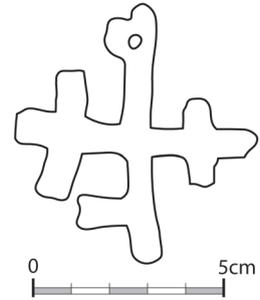
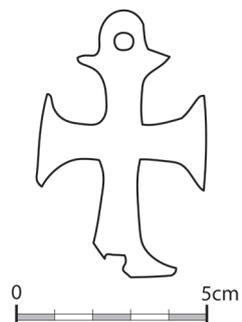


Fig. 9. *Viminacium*. Lead pendant of a processional cross (redrawn after: Marjanović-Vujović 1977)



40 Nesbitt 1988, no. 26–31; Badawy 1978; Gabra 1996.

41 *D'un monde à l'autre* 2001, 230; Dalton 1901, cat. 292, Pl. VI/a.

42 Kartašov 1995, 295–417.

43 On different forms of the cross as a Christian symbol, cf. Mirković 1965, 172–173.

44 Marjanović-Vujović 1977, 11.

A bronze stamp from the collection of the Belgrade City Museum probably comes from the territory of *Singidunum* (Fig. 10).<sup>45</sup> The stamp is in the form of an equal arm cross with a cast inscription in negative in Greek “*ΑΝΤΩΝΙΑΣ ΚΑΣΤΑΣ*” that can be interpreted as “return to Antonius”, as M. Janković stated.<sup>46</sup> Bread has had a symbolic meaning since ancient times, and the rite of its marking existed before the appearance of Christianity.<sup>47</sup> The stamps that were used for the marking of Christian bread during the Eucharistic had a clear Christian attribute, which is shown on a specimen from the Belgrade City Museum.

Weighing equipment like steelyards and counterweights are relatively rare findings on archaeological sites. A part of a steelyard, a beam with a measuring scale and a punched inscription and a smaller counterweight are housed in the Belgrade City Museum (Figs. 11 a–c).<sup>48</sup> The other part of this group finding, with a counterweight shaped like the bust of a Byzantine Empress<sup>49</sup> and a chain system with hooks for hanging loads, is housed in the National Museum in Belgrade (Fig. 12). Recently, in his discussion about this steelyard, M. Vujović, to a large extent, shed light on the set of circumstances which, more than eighty years ago, led to the separation of the parts of the Belgrade steelyard.<sup>50</sup>

On both sides of the shorter part of the beam of the steelyard, there is a punched inscription in Greek (Fig. 13). The text of both inscriptions begins and ends with a cross:

*ΠΑΠΑΚΕΣΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΟΥ*

On the other side, part of the text, also between two crosses, may be read as:<sup>51</sup>

*ΚΥΡΣΦΙΑ(ΙΚΟ)C*

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45 There is no precise data about the finding place of the lamp, except that it was found in the area of Belgrade. It is housed in the Collection of the Migration period and Middle Ages of the Belgrade City Museum.

46 Janković 1997, 307, kat. 543.

47 *Cradle of Christianity*, 97.

48 The steelyard is a part of the Collection of the Migration period and Middle Ages of the Belgrade City Museum.

49 Tatić–Đurić 1962, T.I, II a, III v–g. The counterweight shaped like the bust of a Byzantine Empress is a part of the Collection of the National Museum in Belgrade.

50 Vujović 2014, 161–183.

51 Vujović 2014, 166–168.



Fig. 10. *Singidunum*. Bronze stamp in the form of cross (documentation of the Belgrade City Museum)

According to the interpretation of M. Vujović, the steelyard beam from the Belgrade City Museum can be more precisely aligned with the Constantinople type.<sup>52</sup> In the area of the Danube Limes, parts of a steelyard that was most probably intended for the measuring of medicines or precious metals, gold, or silver are originated from the fortification in Saldum.<sup>53</sup> Steelyards similar to the one from Belgrade have been found in Gamzigrad,<sup>54</sup> Caričin Grad,<sup>55</sup> in the Early Byzantine fortifications in Ras<sup>56</sup> and in Gradina on Jelica Mountain near Čačak.<sup>57</sup> The steelyard from Debrešte in Macedonia belongs to this type, also with a punched inscription between two Latin crosses.<sup>58</sup> Such inscriptions are quite common on bronze steelyards of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries. We find them also in the Dumbarton

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52 Vujović 2014, 169, with cited literature.

53 Jeremić 2009, 189–190, fig. 89, cat. 626–628.

54 Lalović 1983, 165, kat. 348.

55 Bavant *et al.* 1990, 245, Pl. XLIV/299–301.

56 Popović 1999, 116, kat. 160, sl. 67.

57 Milinković 2010, sl. 39–41, T. XIV/5, 60–61.

58 *Antička bronza* 1969, kat. 338.

Figs. 11. a-c *Singidunum*.  
Details on the shorter lever  
arm of the Early Byzantine  
steelyard (documentation of  
the Belgrade City Museum)





Fig. 12. *Singidunum*. Counterweight in a form of Byzantine Empress (documentation of the National Museum in Belgrade)

1. ΠΑΤΑΚΕΣΟΙ ΚΟΝΟΜ ⲄⲚ

2. Ⲛ ΚΥΡΣΦΙΑ:Ι.ΟCⲚ



Fig. 13. *Singidunum*. Inscription on the shorter lever arm of the Early Byzantine steelyard (After: Vujović 2014, 182, T. III).

Oaks collections, and they mostly originate from the East. A completely preserved steelyard form in the Dumbarton Oaks collection was found in Constantinople and dated to the 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>59</sup> Another steelyard from the same collection has been dated to the 5<sup>th</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> century and is marked with the name *Edesius* in the genitive singular case (+HΔECIOY+).<sup>60</sup> Yet another steelyard, also made in Constantinople, comes from the private Munich collection of Christian Schmidt.<sup>61</sup> As is the case with our finds, next to the cross there is a punched inscription in Greek: *MAXIOY*. It is most likely the name of the owner and it is written in the genitive singular case, which can be translated that it belongs to *Maxius*. This is quite a rare name that, in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, mostly belonged to the higher officials of the Empire or to priests. The steelyards of the Constantinople type are generally dated in the period from the 5<sup>th</sup>–7<sup>th</sup> century and, according to the highest concentration of findings and inscriptions in Greek, the place of their production is the Eastern Mediterranean.

The role of the early Christian church and its officials in the economic life of the Early Byzantine state was crucial, especially in the hinterlands, away from the main administrative centres and from fiscal control. In certain critical circumstances, the Church appears not only as a spiritual stronghold, but also as the main exponent of the state in economic organisation and, furthermore, as a direct participant in the financing of the military and of military logistics. The steelyard with a counterweight shaped like a Byzantine Empress (Ariadne) from Belgrade could, therefore, represent evidence of these measures of the Byzantine state, which were undertaken in the context of the recovery or renewal of fiscal organisation and military supply in the hinterlands of the Danube area, from the time of Anastasius I (491–518), and quite certainly during the rule of Justin I (518–527), and later during the time of Justinian's great renovation of the Limes.

Beside the counterweight shaped like the bust of a Byzantine Empress, which was made using the hollow casting technique, with its cavity partly filled with lead, another part of the steelyard from Belgrade is a fully cast spherical counterweight, which is the weight verified by the exagia kept in the city church (Fig. 11 a). Apart from the exagia the official etalon for the weight of gold coins, there were exagia that

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59 Ross 1962, 61, cat. 71, T. XLIV, XL.

60 Ross 1962, 63, T. XLII/73.

61 *Byzanz das Licht*, Kat. III, 25.

were used as a control measure for the weight of the counterweights used in trade.<sup>62</sup> By keeping them in churches their accuracy was guaranteed.<sup>63</sup> The main purpose of the exagia was related to gold coins (*exagia solidi*) and the control of their weight, but they were also used in goldsmithing. Therefore, scales and exagia are also found in the graves of travelling goldsmiths in Kunszentmárton, Jutas (Hungary).<sup>64</sup> The characteristic Christian symbols were sometimes present on these exagia, as is the case with a specimen from Prahovo–*Aquae*, with an acronym around the cross on the obverse *E (clesiae) Mun(di) +*. On its reverse is a cross with a monogram with the following letters *A, N, I V, S*. Below the monogram is the Greek letter  $\Gamma$ , which can be interpreted as the number 3 and could be a tremissis or one nomisma.<sup>65</sup>

A gold glass vessel base with a portrait of a married couple with a child, made in the *fondi d'oro* technique, originates from the territory of Prahovo–*Aquae*.<sup>66</sup> The preserved part of the rounded base contains, on gold foil in the middle, an engraved representation of a man, woman and a child (Fig. 14).<sup>67</sup> The portraits are shown *en face*, with the Latin inscription *VIVAS IN DEO* above them. A thin silver foil band frames the depicted figures.

This type of decoration was common in the period of the early Empire. However, the flourishing of this technique that consists of casting in a mould and the insertion of foil shaped in the form of medallions is connected to the period of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>68</sup> In most cases these are fragments of flat or rounded plates or spherical chalices. In the beginning, these gold leaves were decorated with scenes from ancient mythology, so that with the development of Christianity, particularly in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, scenes with Christian content prevailed. Together

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62 Kostić 1993, 69.

63 The steelyard from the early Byzantine fortification of Ras–Podgrađe was found on the floor of the 6<sup>th</sup> century basilica. Cf. Popović 1999, 116, kat. 160, sl. 67.

64 Kovačević 1977, 167–168, sl.103, 104.

65 The counterweight is preserved only in drawing. According to Đ. Janković, its weight could have been 4.56 g, cf. Janković 1981, 166.

66 The gold glass base came to the National Museum in Belgrade through a purchase in 1977 (inv. no. 1511/IV). According to uncertain data given by the owner, the cross-shaped fibula (inv. no. 1519/IV), which will be discussed later, was found together with this base. The authors would like to express special thanks to the director of the National Museum Bojana Borić-Brešković on the provided photograph of the object.

67 Rankov 1983, 85–89; Ružić 1994, kat.1194, T. XLIV/1.

68 Cermanović–Kuzmanović 1976, 175–190.

Fig. 14. Prahovo–*Aquae*.  
Glass base made in the  
*fondi d'oro* technique  
(documentation of the  
National Museum in  
Belgrade)



with the acclamation in Latin *VIVAS IN DEO*, during the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> century many specimens made in Italy have the expression *PIE ZESES* or only *ZESES*, first in Greek, and later in Latin. Along with the inscription, we find the Christogram, which may be followed by the so called apocalyptic letters  $\alpha$  and  $\omega$ .<sup>69</sup>

Representations of married couples, as in the case of the specimen from Prahovo, were common in the decoration of gold bases of glassware, and the acclamation *VIVAS IN DEO* is also common as an integral part of the whole. The majority of specimens with family presentations originate from Italy, while they are rare in provincial production, except in Pannonia.<sup>70</sup> A similar scene on our specimen to that from Prahovo indicates the distinctiveness of this motif in the Danubian provinces in general.

<sup>69</sup> Migotti 2003, 15.

<sup>70</sup> In the province of Pannonia, there are as many as four out of five found specimens with presentations of married couples in provincial production: two originate from Štrbinci near Đakovo in Croatia, and two are from Hungary. Cf. Migotti 2003, 15.

Despite the eastern origin of this technique, gilded glasses are characteristic to the western part of the Empire. Most specimens come from Roman catacombs, while a significantly smaller number has been found in other provinces of the Empire.<sup>71</sup> It is a common opinion that the largest and perhaps the only production place for such objects was Rome.<sup>72</sup> On the other hand, it is assumed that in Trier, the second large provincial centre for glass making, smaller medallions and gold glass bases were produced.<sup>73</sup> However there are also opposing opinions, according to which glass bases made in the *fondi d'oro* technique have eastern, Egyptian or Syrian origin.<sup>74</sup> Nevertheless, most authors who have been engaged with this issue attribute the oriental elements of style, as well as the inscriptions in Greek on some specimens, to the eastern origin of the craftsmen that were employed in western workshops, rather than to the origin of the products themselves.<sup>75</sup> The opinion of some authors regarding the local production of the specimen from Prahovo–*Aquae*, is completely alone and seems insufficiently grounded.<sup>76</sup>

As was already mentioned, such depictions of married couples were very common in the decorating of gold glass bases. The acclamation *VIVAS IN DEO* also commonly appears as a part of this whole. Based on numerous analogies,<sup>77</sup> as well as the stylistic features of the characters, this object can be also dated to the 4<sup>th</sup> century. Finally the question remains about the purpose and use of such gilded glass base made in the *fondi d'oro* technique. Archaeological context is certainly necessary in order to identify the purpose and use of these objects. For the time being it can be concluded that most of them were parts of grave related goods. In addition, there is the fact that only the bases of the vessels have been found and never complete vessels or their shards, so the shape of the vessels is still little known. All these facts directed B. Migotti to the conclusion that glass vessels with gilded bases were

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71 Until now, about 500 pieces of gold glass bases made in the *fondi d'oro* technique with engraved depictions have been found in the territory of the entire Empire. Except for Rome and Italy, gilded glass bases, though small in number, were evidenced in: Austria, Germany, France, Spain, Hungary, Bulgaria, Serbia, Croatia, and Slovenia. Cf. Migotti 2003, 14.

72 Migotti 2003, 16.

73 Cambi 1976, 141.

74 Cermanović–Kuzmanović 1976, 180.

75 Migotti 2003, 14.

76 Rankov 1983, 88.

77 Migotti 2003, sl. 3, 5, 6, 10, 12, 15, 16.

ritually broken to be placed in the grave, or to serve as grave markers.<sup>78</sup> Assumptions about their plausible original function can only be made based on the shape of the vessels, as well as according to the engraved depictions on the gold foil.

From the surroundings of Smederevo–*Vinceia* originates a bronze statue of the Good Shepherd with a lamb on his shoulders.<sup>79</sup> The Shepherd is presented as youthful, with an almost boyish face and curly hair, while the details of his clothes and the lamb's fleece are roughly presented (Fig. 15). The coarse and unskilfully made statuette indicates provincial work. The lower parts of the shepherds legs are missing.

The image of the Good Shepherd (*Pastor Bonus*) is often used in the artistic creation of the Late Antiquity, both as a young man or an old man with beard. This is a topic from a pagan world that loved to show pastoral scenes with philanthropic meanings. The Old Testament is full of presentations with the Good Shepherd, where metaphors with his image describe the role of the priest to the believers: David (Psalm 22), Isaiah (40, 11). In the New Testament, Jesus is a Good Shepherd to his people (John 10, 1–18), returning the lost sheep to its flock (Matthew 18, 12–14; Luke, 15, 4–7). The model of the Good Shepherd has a simple meaning that emphasises the relationship between saviours and those that need to be saved and, perhaps, this explains his frequent representation in the iconography of Late Antiquity when, from a persecuted and illegal religion (*illicitae*), Christianity became the universal world religion.

A gold necklace with two medallions and a cross, together with a gold ring represent part of a grave find from the Bela Stena necropolis in the village of Višnjica–*Ad Octavum*.<sup>80</sup> The double medallions are made using the filigree technique and there is granulation with a decorative motif in the form of oppositely placed reduced palmettes (Fig. 16). The pendant on the necklace is in the shape of the Latin cross. For this necklace we may say that apart from its aesthetic value it also has a deeper symbolic significance. M. Tatić–Đurić designated this necklace as στρεπτὸν, i.e. jewellery that is worn directly around the neck, which is indicated by the small dimension of the necklace.<sup>81</sup>

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78 Migotti 2003, 16.

79 Valtrović 1891, 109, sl. 1–2; *Antička bronza* 1969, kat. 300.

80 Tatić–Đurić 1964, 185–192.

81 Tatić–Đurić 1964, 193.



Fig. 15. Smederevo–*Vinceia*.  
The Good Shepherd (photo  
N. Borić)

The mass usage of Christian symbols in the artistic creation of the Late Antiquity commenced only in the first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, after the issuing of the Edict of Milan, in 313 AD. The cross as a dominant Christian form is present on many monuments starting from Late Antiquity. According to some authors, its use in goldsmiths is present approximately from the 5<sup>th</sup> century when it started to be used not only for cult purposes, but also as an element of jewellery and other products of artistic craft.<sup>82</sup>

Very close analogies, not only with the medallions, but also with the cross, are provided by a find from Mersin, in the vicinity of Tarsus, which A. Grabar dates to the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> and start of the 6<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>83</sup> In support of dating the necklace to this period are the historical circumstances. The necropolis of Višnjica belonged to the fortification which is assumed to have been *Octavum/Octabon*, one of many that Justinian I renovated or built in the period of his great building activity in the Balkans during the 6<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>84</sup> Most probably, the necropolis next to the fortress of the Justinian era also belonged to that period.

Cross shaped forms of pendants in the Danube Limes area are not very common. A bronze pendant in the shape of an irregular cross decorated with ornaments in the form of concentric circles at the ends of the arms and in the middle of the cross originates from Ram-*Lederata* (Fig. 17).<sup>85</sup> A pendant from *Viminacium* from the Više Grobalja site also has a cross-shaped form (Fig. 18).<sup>86</sup> The cross is plate-shaped with horizontal arms, made of thicker bronze sheet. On the front there is a circular setting, probably for enamel or glass. The cross was part of a necklace with 112 multicoloured beads. This cross-shaped pendant originates from a child's grave and is dated to the 6<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>87</sup>

The common feature of all cross-shaped forms of pendants is the fact that they were made of bronze, as were most similar ones from closer environments, such as

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82 Vinski 1968, 104–105.

83 Grabar 1951, 27–49.

84 *De aedif.* IV, 4 p. 122.15–129.4; translation according to: Barišić 1955, 67.

85 Vinski 1968, 110–111, T. VII/30.

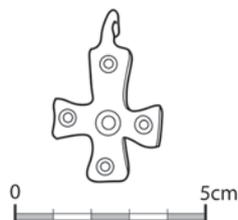
86 The pendant is a part of the grave inventory (grave no. 134, Više Grobalja site). It makes up a part of the Antique collection of the National Museum in Požarevac. The authors would like to express special thanks to Dragana Spasić, the curator of the National Museum in Požarevac on provided photograph of the object. Cf. Zotović 1994, 183–190; *Eadem* 1994a, kat. 15.

87 Zotović 1994a, 66–67.



Fig. 16. Višnjica-*Ad Octavum*. Gold necklace with two medallions and a cross (photo N. Borić)

Fig. 17. Ram–*Lederata*.  
Pendant in a form of cross  
(redrawn after:  
Vinski 1968, T. VII/30)



specimens from Gamzigrad,<sup>88</sup> or Gradište/Balajnac near Niš,<sup>89</sup> except for a pair of gold pendants that come from the Hisar fortification (Suva Reka) in Kosovo.<sup>90</sup> They are usually of smaller dimensions, simple and do not display particularly skilful craftsmanship. Decoration most often consists of small concentric circles, which is the ornamental characteristic for Late Antiquity and the Early Byzantine period.

Two silver rings originated from *Viminacium*, from the Pećine site, have a Christian attribute in the form of a Christ monogram, engraved in the plate like head, which date them to the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 19).<sup>91</sup>

A pottery lamp from Antique *Singidunum* contains clear Christian elements in its decorative content.<sup>92</sup> The lamp has an oval shape with an elongated beak (Fig. 20). Two figures, male and female, both in an orant position, are presented on the disc. Besides this depiction, crosses on the disc, beak and a third one on the leg of the lamp indicate the Christian character of the lamp. All three crosses are made of relief dots. According to the clay composition, the lesser quality of baking and the relatively unskilfully made composition of this depiction, M. Birtašević is of the opinion that it is a product of a local workshop, dating quite broadly to the period from the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>93</sup> It should be said that figures presented in an orant pose represent characteristic iconography since the time of painting in catacombs, and disappeared during further development, becoming even rarer in the 6<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>94</sup>

The other finds originating from the Danube Limes are mostly represented by lamps of an oval form with a cross in combination with floral and geometric ornament as a dominant motif. One such specimen comes from the fortification in Saldum.<sup>95</sup> The lamp has an oval form with a representation of a cross on a disc, while the wider shoulders are decorated with geometric motifs (Fig. 21). The handle is in

88 Janković 1983, kat. 183–185.

89 Jeremić 1995, fig. 27.

90 Shukrić 1989, 77–85, fig. 7, T.II/3.

91 The rings were the grave inventory (child grave no. 213, Pećine site), but today only one is preserved and makes up a part of the Antique collection of the National Museum in Požarevac. Cf. Zotović 1994a, 65, sl. 5.

92 The lamp was found in 1937 in the foundation of the building of the Patriarchate in Belgrade and is housed in the Collection of the Migration period and Middle Ages of the Belgrade City Museum.

93 Birtašević 1955, 46.

94 Gerke 1973, 29.

95 Jeremić 2009, 138, cat. 403.



Fig. 18. *Viminacium*, Više Grobalja site. Pendant in a form of cross (documentation of the National Museum in Požarevac)

Fig. 19. *Viminacium*, Pećine site. Silver ring (documentation of the National Museum in Požarevac)

the form of a stylised palmette, which is an influence of the Late Antiquity tradition. This shape of a handle is often found in Early Byzantine layers and also on a fragmented lamp from Caričin Grad,<sup>96</sup> and from Bumblești–Jiu in Romania.<sup>97</sup> The lamp from Saldum was found on the floor level of a fortification from the Justinian epoch.

The lamp from Prahovo–*Aquae* also has an oval form with a cross-shaped handle.<sup>98</sup> The shoulder is decorated with lines, while a stylised star shaped floral ornament is on the disc (Fig. 22). According to the opinion of researchers, the lamp is a local product, made under the influence of Syrian–Palestinian workshops and is dated to the 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>99</sup>

Pottery vessels for profane use, with some Christian attributes, are represented in several finds in the area of the Danube Limes. The majority of findings are vessels for the storage and transport of food. These kinds of items usually had a long life, so it was common to put marks of ownership on them that could, at the same time, be features of belonging to the Christian faith. Such features could also appear on master's stamps, or those of the workshops which produced such dishes. There are also specimens containing certain Christian acclamations.

Amphorae and pithoi represent two basic types of vessels that served for the storage and transport of foodstuffs. Amphorae were most commonly used for the stor-

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96 Bjelajac 1990, 190, pl. XXII/4, XXVI/2.

97 Teodor 2001, fig. 6/8.

98 The authors would like to express special thanks to Gordan Janjić, the curator of the Krajina Museum in Negotin for provided the photograph.

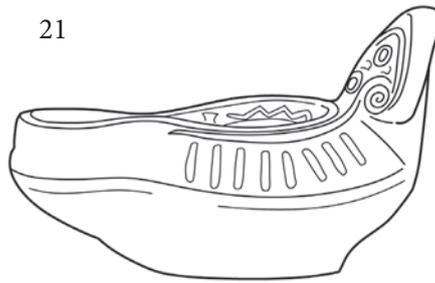
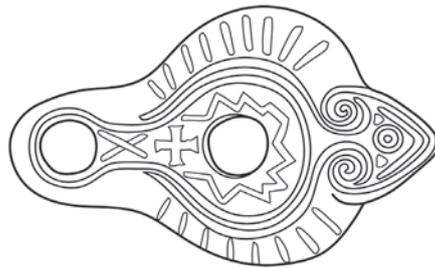
99 Janković 1981, 163, T. IX/2.

Fig. 20. *Singidunum*. Pottery lamp with two figures and crosses (documentation of the Belgrade City Museum)



Fig. 21. *Saldum*. Pottery lamp with a cross and a handle in a form of palmette (redrawn after: Jeremić 2009, 138, cat. 403)

Fig. 22. *Prahovo-Aquae*. Pottery lamp with a handle in a form of cross (documentation of the Krajina Museum in Negotin)



age and transport of liquids, while pithoi were mostly used for the storage of grains, and other types of solid food. Their larger presence on certain sites speaks precisely about the economy of the region and, thus, about the primary production activities.

The finds of amphorae that, in their decorative element, contain some Christian symbols are recorded mostly in the Danubian area. Among them there are several findings of amphorae of the so called spindle-shape that have a representation of a cross painted in red: Saldum (Fig. 23, 1), Boljetin-*Smorna* (Figs. 23, 2, 3) and Donji Milanovac-*Taliata* (Fig. 23, 4). They are widely represented on the Danube Limes and they most commonly contained wine. The earliest versions of this type occur in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, mostly in the area of the western Mediterranean, and then recorded in other parts of the Mediterranean in the 5<sup>th</sup> and particularly in the 6<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>100</sup> The bottom of the jug from the fortification in Saldum, with its engraved Christogram, is another confirmation of early Christianisation in the Danube Limes<sup>101</sup>.

The larger vessel with handles from *Singidunum* is decorated with deeply stamped ornaments in the form of an alternating pattern of grapes and fish (Fig. 24). According to the conditions of the find it is dated to the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>102</sup> It cannot be claimed with any certainty that this is a vessel with a Christian attribute, since the presentation of the fish does not necessarily indicate that the owner of this vessel belonged to a Christian community.

The findings of fragments of Late Antique helmets with a Christian attribution, clearly speaks about the Christianisation that was present among the Roman troops on the Danube Limes. These are remains of application decorated with Christogram that were applied on Late Antique composite helmets (Ridge helmets, Intercisa type IV).<sup>103</sup> In *Viminacium*, at the Čair site, in the area of the fortified city (*colonia*) and legionary fort (*castrum*), a part of a decorative application with a Christogram in relief was accidentally found in 1991 (Fig. 25). The helmet itself, to whom this application would belong, was not registered, as was the case with another find from the Limes, from Manastir, in the Iron Gates area. On this site remains of a small watchtower (*burgus speculatorius*) made of stone and mortar have been confirmed, as well as the remains of small wooden architec-

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100 Bjelajac 1990, 87.

101 Jeremić 2009, 117, cat. 337.

102 Nikolić-Đorđević 2000, 184.

103 Vujović 2012, 33–38.

Fig. 23/1. Saldum.  
Amphora with a cross  
painted in red  
(redrawn after: Jeremić  
2009, 110, cat. 319)

Figs. 23/2, 3. Boljetin-  
Smorna. Amphorae  
with crosses painted  
in red (redrawn after:  
Bjelajac 1996, T. XXXI, 167,  
168)

Fig. 23/4. DonjiMilanovac-  
Taliata. Amphora with cross  
painted in red (redrawn  
after: Bjelajac 1996, T.  
XXXI, 174)

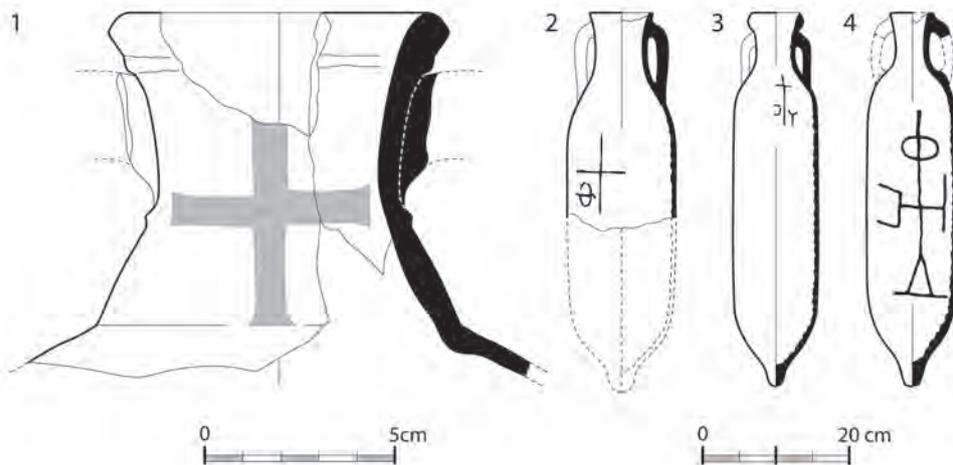
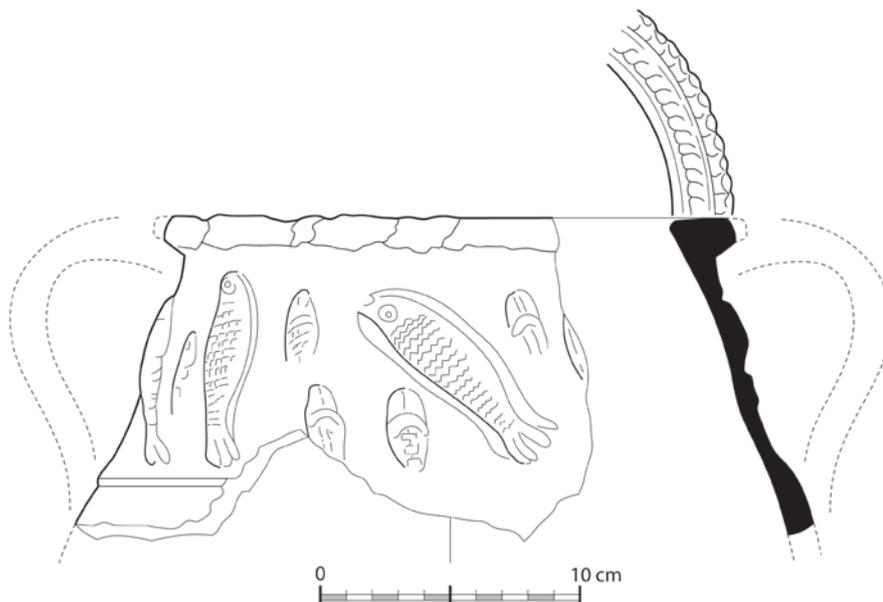


Fig. 24. Singidunum. Larger  
vessel decorated with  
stamped ornaments of  
grapes and fish  
(redrawn after: Nikolić-  
Đorđević 2000, 183, kat. 2)



tural structures,<sup>104</sup> with an associated Late Antique necropolis, partly devastated by medieval burials. A *burgus* with an associated settlement is dated to the time of *praepositus Hermogenes* (whose brick with a stamp has been found in the tower floor and whose time of service at the Limes is dated from the ninth decade of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century to the time of Constantine I) and to the time of the Constantine ep-  
104 Minić 1984, 153.

och, (based on the finding of coins minted in 319 AD) and later.<sup>105</sup> From research of the Late Antique necropolis it has been determined that, most probably, the persons who made up the troop of the *burgus* were buried there and, judging by chronologically sensitive findings of fibulae and buckles that indicate some military funerals, their burials took place in the late 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>106</sup>

In one grave, in the location of the left shoulder of the deceased, a fragment of an object made of copper, plated with gold, with a relief depiction of a Christogram was found. The object is determined to be a pendant and dated to the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>107</sup> It is part of a crest application that came to this grave in some unusual way (Fig. 26). It is possible that it represented a part of the filling of the grave pit, which means that it didn't belong to the deceased,<sup>108</sup> or, in the event that it was the personal equipment of the deceased, the object was obtained and secondarily used due to its decorative or maybe for its prophylactic functions. Examples of the decoration of Late Antiquity helmets with this symbol are registered at sites from Britain to the Danubian border countries, and a good parallel is the fragment of a helmet's decoration from Kaiseraugst–*Castrum Rauracense* that came from the fort interior.<sup>109</sup> Researchers have assumed that findings from *Viminacium* and Manastir could be dated to the late 4<sup>th</sup> century, possibly to the time of Valens and the Valentian renewal of the Danube Limes (364–378/380), or later, to the time of Theodosius I (379–395) and immediately after his death, up to the Hun invasion in 441/443.<sup>110</sup> The soldiers who would wear this type of Late Antique helmet were most probably representatives of the infantry. Findings of fragments of decorative crests with Christograms in the area of the legionary fort of *Viminacium* and the small watchtower in the inhospitable section of the Limes in Manastir in the Iron Gates, indicate that in various military points at the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, Christianised representatives of the Roman army stayed and actively participated in the defence of the territory and in daily activities.

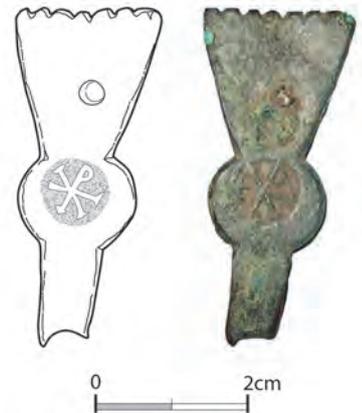


Fig. 25. *Viminacium*, Čair site. Application with Christ monogram (redrawn after: Vujović 2012, 31-32, fig. 21, 2)

105 Vujović 2012, 35.

106 A cross-shaped fibula and a bronze buckle are dated to the period of 364–380 and later, up to the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. Cf. Vujović 2012, 33.

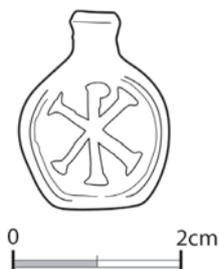
107 Minić 1984, 154, fig. 1.

108 Vujović 2012, 35.

109 Faccani 2012, 109, note 31.

110 Vujović 2012, 36.

Fig. 26. Manastir.  
Application with Christ  
monogram (redrawn after:  
Minić 1984, 154, sl. 1)



In the area of the Danube Limes, a small number of fibulae which, by their shape or decorative content, can be defined as Early Christian have been recorded to date. The bronze cross-shaped fibula with gilt from Prahovo–*Aquae* is most probably part of a grave inventory together with the previously discussed gold glass base made in the *fondi d'oro* technique.<sup>111</sup> The fibula belongs to luxurious and well crafted specimens, with à jour decoration (Fig. 27). In her monograph about fibulae, S. Petković states that such fibulae were a mark of the military or an official honour given by the Emperor on the occasion of state holidays or anniversaries.<sup>112</sup> The rectangular foot is, in the central part, decorated with rich ornamentation in the form of a fish bone, performed by engraving, notching and the niello technique. The same ornament is found on a high positioned bow at the end of which is the *Chi-Rho* monogram, given in a circular medallion with a square frame, emphasised by niello. The needle is missing. On this fibula there is one of the oldest depictions of Christ's monogram on an object with an official character.<sup>113</sup>

Cross-shaped fibulae have been found in all parts of the Empire, and judging by the numerous finds, they were well represented along the Danube Limes, particularly in Pannonia.<sup>114</sup> There are numerous presentations of these fibulae in a series of miniature art monuments made of ivory, glass and metal and also in painted presentations on frescoes, mosaics and gold foils. This specimen of a cross-shaped fibula, as well as a very similar one that comes from the tower of Niš–*Naissus*,<sup>115</sup> indicates its official character by its high quality craftsmanship. Their production should be connected to public workshops in larger urban centres. The presence of the Christ monogram indicates that the fibulae could not have been made before 313 AD, i.e., before the issuing of the Edict of Milan.

One more fibula originates from the Danube Limes area with an obvious

111 The fibula makes up a part of the Late Antique collection from the National Museum in Belgrade. In the older literature, Dušanovac is stated as the finding place of this fibula, Cf. Jevremović 1988, 165–169. With a later detailed review of National Museum documentation it was established that the fibula came into the National Museum in Belgrade through a purchase, together with the previously mentioned glass base (inv. no. 1519/IV); Cf. Popović 2001, kat. 89, fig. 15.

112 Petković 2010, 261.

113 Jovanović 1978, 58.

114 Since the findings are without any clearly defined Christian attribution, we are of the opinion that it is sufficient only to mention some of the sites for a clearer insight into the distribution of these types of fibulae: Sisak, Osijek, Sremska Mitrovica, Novi Banovci, Dalj, Drnovo, Ljubljana, Ptuj.

115 Jovanović 1975, 235–245; Jovanović 1978, 65, kat. 53, sl. 128.



Fig. 27. Prahovo–*Aquae*.  
The bronze cross-shaped  
fibula (photo N. Borić)

Christian attribution. It is a bronze fibula with a backward bent foot, from the fortification in Hajdučka Vodenica in the horizon of the 6<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>116</sup> The top of the foot ends with a cross like motif made in relief. A similar specimen to this fibula comes from Pernik in Bulgaria with a bow ending in the shape of a cross.<sup>117</sup> There are closer analogies in other Balkan provinces of the Empire, such as a bronze fibula from the fortification at the Sokolica site, in the village Ostra, in the vicinity of Čačak, with pseudo-corded ornaments, which is dated to the 6<sup>th</sup> century according to the finding of a bronze follis of Anastasius I, minted in Constantinople between 512 and 517 AD.<sup>118</sup>

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116 Jovanović 1984, 325, T. III/9.

117 Lyubenova 1981, 170, obr. 112/2, 3, 10.

118 Milinković 1986, 52.

## CONCLUSION

The archaeological findings originating from the Danube Limes area that stretches from *Singidunum* to *Aquae* which, by their function, form or decorative content, can be defined as Early Christian, in their own way shed light on a turbulent historical period in this area from the 4<sup>th</sup> to the beginning of the 7<sup>th</sup> century. It was a time of political turmoil, conflicts between the Roman and Byzantine armies, and invading barbarians on the northern borders of the empire. The growing uncertainty, which was primarily the result of frequent barbaric invasions, as well as the conditions caused by the economic crisis that was distressing the empire during the whole of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, brought general uncertainty and provided favourable conditions for the spread of messianic ideas among the pagan population, especially those ideas coming from the East.

Our present knowledge of the spiritual life of the inhabitants of cities and fortifications in the Middle Danube Limes in the Late Antiquity period shows that, besides the dominance of the official religion of Rome, the importance of Christianity was increasing, as evidenced by the preserved material remains and written sources as well. The number and variety of objects of a religious character devoted to liturgical practice, as well as objects of a profane nature with clear Christian features that are represented both in larger urban structures and in fortifications on the Danube Limes, indicate the existence of a well organised Christian church and an already developed form of Christian life in these areas in the period from the 4<sup>th</sup> to the beginning of the 7<sup>th</sup> century.

When considering the character of the finds themselves, their modest workmanship is noticeable, and they were most often produced in local workshops (*Viminacium*, *Naissus*). In addition to these local products, a certain number of finds consist of imported material produced in one of the major production centres, most often in the East, from where it was distributed to the other parts of the empire. A significant number of imported finds indicate Egyptian origin, with their separate production centres, and from where they had been brought as an import to the Balkan region by trade routes.

The mass settlement of Slavic tribes that started at the beginning of the 7<sup>th</sup> century led to deep ethnic and social changes that had already begun, and which now contributed to the definitive destruction of the overall urban structure, and thus

of the church organisation. The interruption of the continuity of life was testified in all thus far registered fortifications on the Danube, as the first line of defence from the tribes emerging from the north and northeast. In the conquered areas, a new form of life, bearing all the features of typical rural culture, completely strange to Late Antiquity urban and the already, to a great extent, Christianised civilization, was formed and marked the centuries to come.

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## SIXTH-CENTURY FOEDERATI FROM THE UPPER MOESIAN LIMES: WEAPONS IN A SOCIAL CONTEXT\*

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### ABSTRACT

*In this article we present some of the most characteristic possessions (and status symbols) of sixth-century Germanic foederati in the Upper Moesian limes – their weapons. According to archaeological dating and historical records, the finds from the Jakovo, Batajnica, Singidunum, Margum and Viminacium cemeteries may be first ascribed to the Heruli, settled in the area from c. 512. The article studies weapon combinations in graves and recapitulates Herulic military practices. Our evidence reveals a clearly differentiated and internally stratified community with a privileged position, derived from its role in the defence of the border and engagement in numerous military campaigns of the Empire.*

**KEY WORDS.** – SIXTH CENTURY, LIMES, FOEDERATI, HERULI, WEAPONS, CEMETERIES, GRAVES, MERCENARIES.

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## INTRODUCTION

With its frontier cities and fortifications on the Danube, Northern Illyricum underwent drastic changes with the Gothic incursions of the end of the fourth and the fifth centuries.<sup>1</sup> Despite the efforts of Emperor Theodosius II in the defence of the Balkan provinces, particularly evident between 410 and 425, the settlement of the Goths as *foederati* was followed by movements, attacks, and further settlement of other peoples, which all culminated in the early four-forties with Hunnic operations led by Attila. Both the old legionary camps and the smaller fortifications along the Danube were to lose their importance.<sup>2</sup> Between the fifth and the seventh centuries, Germanic peoples were settled on both banks of the Danube, either as Roman enemies or as their mercenaries. There were three phases of their presence in the region within this span. Hunnic domination period was followed by that of Gepidic predominance, with 454 as a turning point, and the year 567–568, when the Avars established their rule in the Carpathian Basin, represents another critical moment in the history of Germanic presence in the region (Fig. 1).

Even if their overall number is not very high, and the sites producing them are not sufficiently explored and published,<sup>3</sup> the finds of foreign ('barbarian') material culture – the bulk of which came from cemeteries<sup>4</sup> – are illustrative of the changes that were taking place in the Central Balkans and particularly along the *limes*.<sup>5</sup> On this occasion, we will present some of the most characteristic possessions (and status symbols) of Germanic *foederati* – their weapons – from both graves and the habitation layers in which they were found.

As in 447 the Empire and the Huns agreed to move their border away from the Danube to the vicinity of the city of Naissus,<sup>6</sup> and given that it was only at the time of Anastasius's reign (491–518) that the Romans launched the reconquest of the Danube *limes*, our analysis will be mostly restricted to sixth-century finds.

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1 Wolfram 1990a; Зечевић 2002.

2 Бугарски, Иванишевић 2012, 490–493; Ivanišević, Kazanski 2014, 131–136.

3 cf. note 5 and following syntheses: Dimitrijević et al. 1962; Mrkobrad 1980; Милинковић 1998; Milinković 2005; Ivanišević, Kazanski 2014; Bugarski, Ivanišević forthcoming.

4 Ivanišević, Bugarski forthcoming.

5 e.g. Popović et al. 2017; Ivanišević, Kazanski 2002; Димитријевић 1960; Bugarski, Ivanišević 2013; Поповић 1988; Ivanišević et al. 2006; Špehar 2012.

6 Priscus, frg. 7, 286,31–287,7.



## EVIDENCE

From west to east, our survey starts in the Syrmia region, where the traces of Gepidic presence are indisputable, particularly in Sirmium itself;<sup>7</sup> one could perhaps assign to them also the finds – including a spatha – from damaged graves at Rakovac.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, the area of the city of Bassianae in the southeastern corner of the Syrmia region remained within the Empire. From this part of Syrmia – Jakovo, Batajnica and Belegiš – came some well-known weapon graves.

Out of 87 recorded graves at the large Kormadin cemetery in Jakovo (only 26 of them, excavated after World War II, were properly documented, and many

Fig. 1. Northern Illyricum during the Migration Period: Cities, large cemeteries (1) and small cemeteries or single burials (2).

<sup>7</sup> Popović et al. 2017.

<sup>8</sup> Dimitrijević et al. 1962, 89–90, figs 2, 3; Ivanišević, Kazanski 2014, 145, fig. 18/1; Bugarski, Ivanišević forthcoming.

more destroyed), some eight were warriors'. From the 1904 excavations came a male grave with a sword; two poorly preserved seaxes (66 cm and 75 cm long), an 83 cm long spatha with a silver U-shaped chape<sup>9</sup> and a 39 cm long lenticular (laurel-leaf-shaped) spear-head have also been collected. We know of two weapon graves from the excavations that followed: grave 3 produced an 85 cm long spatha, and grave 4 a 42 cm long lenticular spear-head,<sup>10</sup> and the 1956–1958 professionally conducted excavations yielded two more such burials (Fig. 2.1–14). In grave 2, together with a heavily corroded spatha there were 12 arrow-heads of different types (rhomboid, laurel-shaped and three-winged, ending in either sockets or tangs), clustered together along the right femur and apparently kept in a quiver, and a bronze two-part buckle, bone purse clasp, and comb. The sword was found by the left leg of the deceased. From grave 8, a 37 cm long reed-like spear-head was recovered, together with a knife and a simple iron buckle.<sup>11</sup> The cemetery has been dated from the middle of the fifth (D2/D3/MD1 = 430–460 or D3/MD2 = 450–470/480) until at least the first (MD4 = 510–540/550) or the second half and even the end of the sixth century (MA2 = 520/530–560/570; MA3 = 560/570–600/610).<sup>12</sup> The best datable find from grave 2/1956 is the buckle; the analogous object comes from grave 11 at the Lombard cemetery Hegykő–Mező Utca which was dated between 510 and 568.<sup>13</sup> This Mediterranean buckle, type Legoux–Périn–Vallet 161, belongs to the late MA2 and, particularly, MA3 phases of the Merovingian chronology of the sixth century (520/530–560/570–600/610).<sup>14</sup>

Apart from three graves with modest inventories, a well-known warrior's grave has been unearthed at the Bekića Salaš site near Batajnica. The grave produced a Baldenheim- type helmet, corroded and fragmented spatha, lenticular spear-head, umbo, simple snaffle bits, and Germanic stamped pot.<sup>15</sup> The iron and bronze helmet with ear-pieces and mail neck guard bears gilding and punctured geometric and zoomorphic design – predatory birds, fish, and sheep (rather than fantastic ani-

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9 cf. notes 34–36.

10 Димитријевић 1960, 6–7, T. IX/2.

11 Димитријевић 1960, 10–11, 13, 18–20, T. III/1–13, 16–20, 24, 26, T. VII/6.

12 Ivanišević, Kazanski 2014, 145–146.

13 Bóna, Horváth 2009, 35, 204, Taf. 5/11, 126/1.

14 Legoux et al. 2004, n° 161; Ivanišević, Kazanski 2014, 146, fig. 16/8.

15 Vinski 1957, 3–27, T. I–IX; Dimitrijević et al. 1962, 73–75.

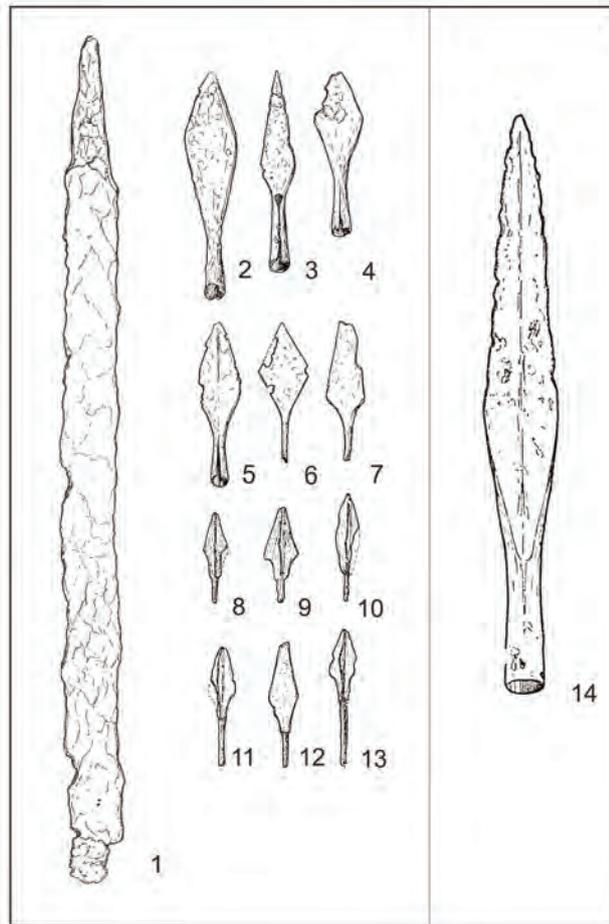


Fig. 2. Jakovo – Kormadin:  
1–13. Grave 2; 14. Grave 8  
(Scale 1:5).

mals?) (Fig. 3).<sup>16</sup> The umbo is of the type with decorative rivets (14.7.2 at Viminacium), which was in use until the end of the sixth century;<sup>17</sup> the grave from Batajnica has been attributed to a Gepid commander and dated to the middle of the sixth century, up to the year 567.<sup>18</sup> Two lenticular spear-heads and two ceramic vessels have been recovered from two graves (?) at the Orthodox churchyard in Belegiš.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Vinski 1954; Vogt 2006, 193–195.

<sup>17</sup> Ivanišević et al. 2006, 42, Fig. 24/2–4.

<sup>18</sup> Vinski 1954, 182; 1957, 26–27; Ivanišević, Kazanski 2014, 145.

<sup>19</sup> Mrkobrad 1980, 52, n. 332; Simoni 1977–1978, 218–219; Bugarski, Ivanišević forthcoming.

Following three small Migration-Period necropolises, the damaged cemetery of 105 graves, Singidunum III, was formed above the edge of the former urban core and at the fringes of the Roman necropolis. Dating from the end of the fourth to the end of the sixth or the beginning of the seventh century, it was probably the main city cemetery in the course of the Migration Period. Only three graves contained weapons, one of them from the D2/D3 phase, Smolin horizon (430/440–470/480). Grave 56, of an adult male and again simply dug into the ground and damaged, produced a double-edged spatha datable to the fifth and the early sixth centuries (Fig. 4.1).<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, from brick-built grave 6, in which a male (?) aged about 20 was buried, three arrow-heads were recovered (Fig. 4.2–4). Two of them were three-winged, and the third was damaged, apparently laurel-shaped and ending in socket instead of tang. Judging by the other finds, particularly the bronze buckle and applique, this grave was dated to the first three quarters of the sixth century.<sup>21</sup>

The bulk of Migration-Period graves belong to the D2/D3 and D3/E periods. The buried were members of a heterogeneous barbarian group, mostly of Germanic descent, which settled in Singidunum in the middle and the second half of the fifth century and around the year 500. According to the written sources, by the end of the fifth and the beginning of the sixth century the city with its surroundings was settled by Ostrogoths, Gepids and Heruli. The grave finds, typical of Germanic peoples successively settling along the Danube limes and also those belonging to the Roman tradition, point to this kind of mixture, whether the buried were mercenaries or ruling-class people.<sup>22</sup> One of the latest burials at the site, coming from the time when the city was reclaimed by the Empire, grave 6, may be attributed to the Roman *foederati*.

Situated at the confluence of the Danube and the Velika Morava, Margum regained its importance during the crisis of the Late Roman Empire, when a system of at least two fortifications on both banks of the Danube – Margum and contra Margum – was established, controlling a natural crossing point over the river.<sup>23</sup> Some intramural graves have been unearthed in the city, from a layer containing Late Roman and Migration-Period finds, including a cicada brooch. These graves

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20 Ivanišević, Kazanski 2002, 123–124, 133, 139, pl. V/56-1, VIII/103-1.

21 Ivanišević, Kazanski 2002, 123, 124, pl. II/6.

22 Ivanišević, Kazanski 2002, 124–127; Ivanišević, Bugarski forthcoming.

23 Бугарски, Иванишевич 2012, 486; Bugarski, Ivanišević 2013, 473–474.



Fig. 3. Batajnica – Bekića Salaš: Baldenheim-type helmet.

produced finds such as a bronze earring with polyeder-like ending and simple cast bronze armrings,<sup>24</sup> generally attributable to the end of the fourth and the beginning of the fifth century. In another location, almost 70 graves were recorded at the city cemetery. Apart from some prehistoric cremation burials and second- and third-century Roman graves, five brick-built graves were dated to the end of the fourth and the beginning of the fifth century, and the same date has been suggested for some of the neighbouring graves.<sup>25</sup>

Four simply-dug graves have been attributed to the *foederati* who settled there before 568;<sup>26</sup> the fact that they had been buried among the locals was taken as a supporting argument. The series of brick-built graves with no inventories may also

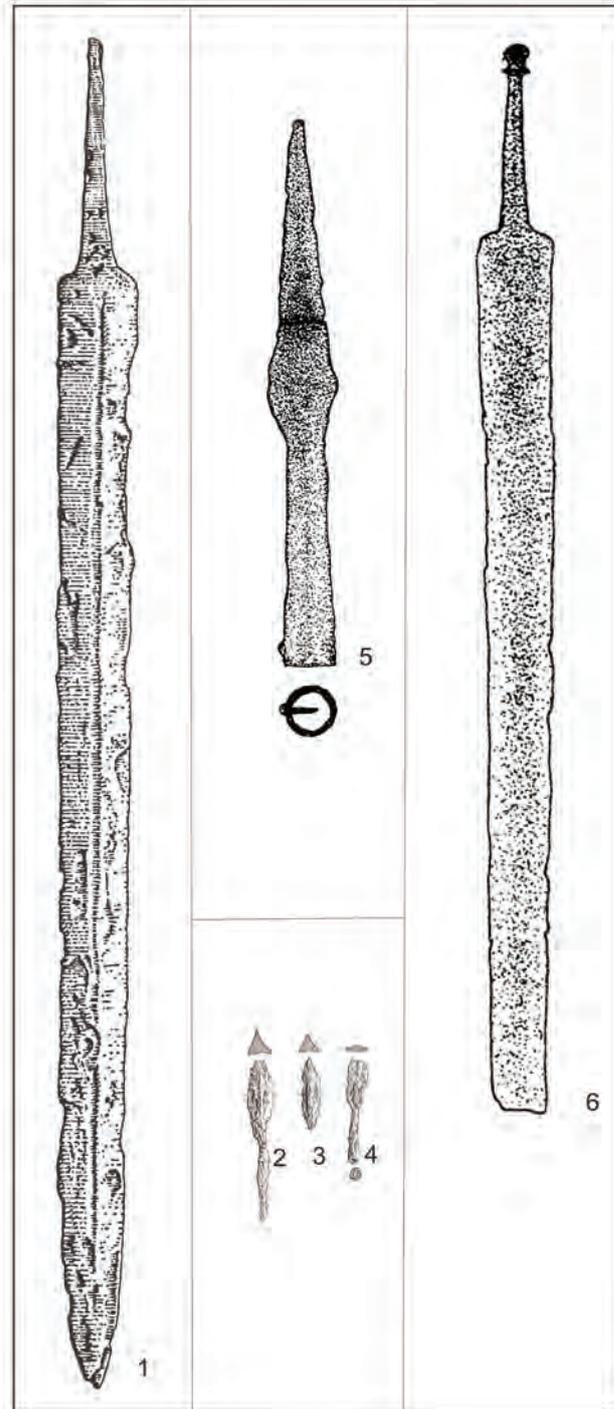
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24 Мано-Зиси et al. 1950, 144–153, 155–156, 159–163, сл. 5, 16, 29.11–12; Dimitrijević et al. 1962, 119, sl. 1, 2.

25 Јовановић, Цуњак 1994, 119–120.

26 Цуњак 1992; Bugarski, Ivanišević 2013.

Fig. 4. Singidunum III: 1.  
Grave 56; 2-4. Grave 6;  
Margum: 5. Grave 15; 6.  
Grave 17 (Scale 1:5).



have belonged to the sixth century,<sup>27</sup> as well as a few more, oriented as the four Germanic ones. These burials contained characteristic Germanic finds: pottery (a stamped pot and a burnished bottle), an iron spear-head and a sword (Fig. 4.5–6). The double-edged spatha with a grip ending in a pommel cast in bronze, preserved to a length of 71 cm, was unusually pointed to the head of the individual buried in grave 17, and from grave 15 came a socketed iron spear-head and a wheel-made pot decorated with rhombic stamps. Many parallels for the spatha and the spear-head finds have been offered recently by the present authors, coming from both Gepid and Lombard milieus.<sup>28</sup> To this group of burials also belongs grave 7 with a modest inventory, consisting of a knife, an arrowhead of an undetermined type, and a simple buckle – a common combination of finds in Gepid cemeteries.<sup>29</sup> Across the Danube, contra Margum, five Germanic graves have been unearthed at the Park site in Kovin, grave 2 labelled ‘warrior’s’. It was not described in detail;<sup>30</sup> yet in a published archival photograph one can see a lenticular spear-head.<sup>31</sup>

A total of 170 Migration-Period graves have been recorded at three cemeteries in the immediate vicinity of Viminacium, once the prosperous capital of Upper Moesia: 43 graves at Viminacium I (Burdelj), 106 at Viminacium II (Više grobalja) (Fig. 5), and 22 at Viminacium III (Lanci). No weapons are so far known from Viminacium I; as for the early weapon graves (phase A), grave 1607 from Viminacium II contained an umbo of the Liebenau type, datable to the end of the fourth and the first two thirds of the fifth century, a triangular spear-head and two knives (D1–D2/D3; most likely D1 or D2). A roughly 40-year-old male was buried in this simple grave. This individual could have been a member of the *foederati* garrison, or perhaps one of those who conquered the city alongside Attila. The B phase graves (D2/D3–E) did not produce weapon finds.<sup>32</sup>

On the other hand, graves from the C phase are particularly important for our analysis. This phase lasted throughout the sixth and the first decades of the seventh century, and its earliest sub-phase is C1. In simple grave 152, of a male older

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27 Јовановић, Цуњак 1994, 120–122.

28 Bugarski, Ivanišević 2013, 469–470, fig. 3.

29 Јовановић, Цуњак 1994, 120, сл. 7.

30 Pribaković 1963; cf. Milinković 2005, 208; Bugarski, Ivanišević 2013, 474.

31 Пековић 2007, 46, сл. 15

32 Ivanišević et al. 2006, 119–121, 212, pl. 38/1607.

than 45 at death, six arrowheads were found accompanying the burial – three of them three-winged – as well as a Germanic vessel, tweezers, and some other finds (Fig. 6.6–11). Grave 152 was dated to the E period (470/480–510).<sup>33</sup>

From the C2 sub-phase, i.e. the middle third of the sixth century, came nine graves with weapon finds (113, 115, 121, 129, 141, 142, 1876, 2093, and 2142). While most of the graves contained single pieces of weaponry, the first three feature weapon combinations. A simple inhumation, grave 1876 of a male aged around 40, produced only a sword set (Fig. 6.5, 10.2). This was, however, a rather luxurious set, including an 85 cm long double-edged spatha, two silver sheath fittings, and amber pommel.<sup>34</sup> The U-shaped chape is typical of the A-C sword groups by Wilfried Menghin<sup>35</sup> and resembles both Gepidic and more distant finds, including those from Gaul and Britain,<sup>36</sup> while the analogous finds to the silver band decorated in a trellis motif can be found in Western and Northern Europe, but very seldom in the Middle Danube region (the Rakovac find).<sup>37</sup> The amber pommels ('magic sword pendants') have also been found in earlier contexts.<sup>38</sup>

A male individual, older than 21 years at death, was buried in grave 142. This coffin burial contained a 29 cm long lenticular spear-head, characteristic Germanic vessel and a knife (Fig. 6.13). A very similar spear-head came from grave 2142 (Fig. 6.14). This simple male inhumation also produced an oval bronze buckle, a bone comb and purse clasp (rather than strike-a-light).<sup>39</sup>

Only a shield handle and boss were found in simple male grave 2093, by the head of the deceased (Fig. 6.12). The umbo with silver rivets belongs to Hübner's type IV, while the handle is of a common shape, resembling that from grave 141 (Fig. 6.15), of a male individual older than 45 years buried in a wooden coffin, which also contained a bone comb and a characteristic silver belt set of the Pleidelsheim Y 20 type.<sup>40</sup> A male of the same age was buried in simple grave 129

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33 Ivanišević et al. 2006, 121, 198, pl. 31/152.

34 Ivanišević et al. 2006, 216, pl. 39/1876, fig. 44/2.

35 Menghin 1983, 125.

36 cf. Ivanišević et al. 2006, 37.

37 Ivanišević et al. 2006, 38; cf. note 8.

38 cf. Biborski, Kaczanowski 2013.

39 Ivanišević et al. 2006, 122, 188, 233, pl. 27/142, 44/2142.

40 Ivanišević et al. 2006, 42–43, 122, 188, 223, pl. 25/141, 42/2093, fig. 24/3.

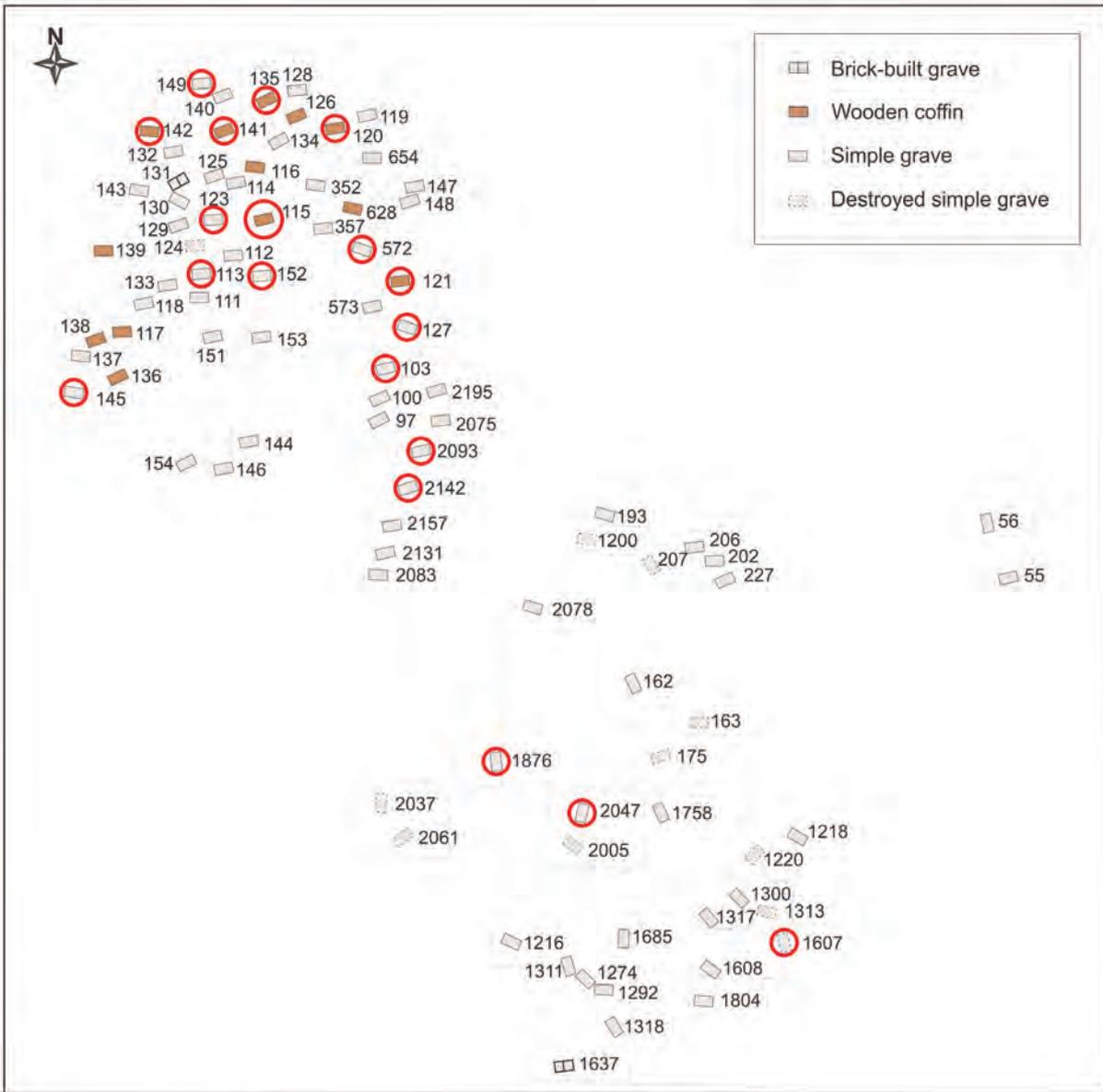


Fig. 5. Viminacium II:  
Cemetery plan, red circles:  
weapon graves.

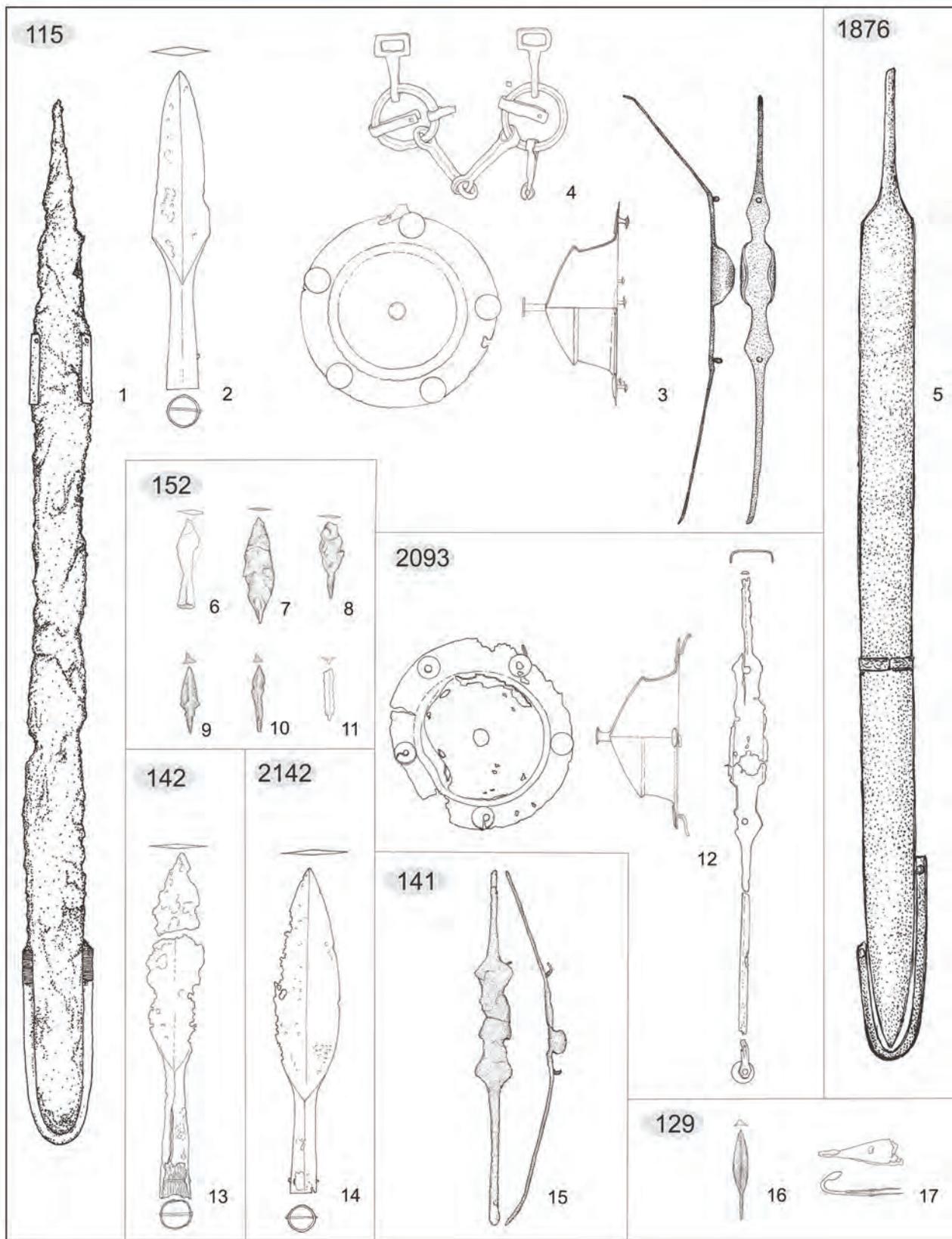


Fig. 6. Viminacium II: 1. 1-4. Grave 115; 5. Grave 1876; 6-11. Grave 152; 12. Grave 2093; 13. Grave 142; 14. Grave 2142; 15. Grave 141; 16-17. Grave 129 (Scale 1:5).

with a quiver hook, three-winged arrow-head, tweezers, etc (Fig. 6.16–17). Present in nomadic milieus, quiver hooks are seldom found in Germanic contexts.<sup>41</sup>

In grave 115 a mature male was buried, perhaps in a wooden coffin. His 90 cm long *spatha* had another silver U-shaped chape, and both the shield handle and *umbo* were preserved, belonging to the Hübner III type (Figs. 6.1–4, 10.1).<sup>42</sup> In terms of typology, particularly interesting is the spear-head. In the original publication it was attributed to the type 14.3.2, comprising different lozenge-shaped, lenticular and triangular blades. It is wide but basically reed-shaped rather than lenticular, and 27 cm long.<sup>43</sup> A cast silver buckle also came from this grave, as well as a typical Germanic vessel, and snaffle bits – the only find of this kind at the Viminacium necropolises. The snaffle bits were found by the feet of the deceased.<sup>44</sup> Interestingly, the finds from both this grave and Batajnica belong to the simplest type, without cheek-pieces, which by that time had become rare in the Early Byzantine Balkans.<sup>45</sup>

In addition to a 77 cm long *spatha*, lenticular spear-head (34 cm in length) and *umbo*, grave 121, in which a male aged about 45 had been buried in a coffin, also contained silver and bronze buckles, knife and comb (Fig. 7.2–4). The *umbo* does not have typological parallels in Hübner's classification.<sup>46</sup> The weapon combination recorded in grave 113 is different (Fig. 7.8–12). Two reed-like spearheads, 31 and 33 cm in length, were found by the feet of the male buried in this simple grave. This individual, older than 45 years at death, had also been buried with three arrow-heads – two of them barbed and one laurel-shaped – a sickle (?), knife, strike-a-light, bone comb, two bronze buckles, and tweezers.<sup>47</sup>

The C3 sub-phase graves date from the last third of the sixth and the first half of the seventh century. Only two weapon graves have been ascribed to this period: graves 120 and 572. Another coffin burial of a male older than 40, grave 120 contained a 32 cm long lenticular spear-head, shield handle and boss (Hübner III), bone comb and knife (Fig. 7.13–14); in simple grave 572, of a male aged about

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41 Ivanišević et al. 2006, 41, 122, 177, pl. 13, pl. 19/129; cf. Horváth 1991.

42 Ivanišević et al. 2006, 42, 166, pl. 13, fig. 24/2, 44/1, 46/1; cf. Hübner 1989.

43 Ivanišević et al. 2006, 39, 166, pl. 13, fig. 22/7–11, 45/8.

44 Ivanišević et al. 2006, 43, 166, pl. 13, 14/115.

45 Bavant 2012, 145, fig. 2, 3b.

46 Ivanišević et al. 2006, 42, 174, pl. 18.

47 Ivanišević et al. 2006, 39, 164, pl. 12/113.

45 years, a 21 cm long javelin was found together with several other objects (Fig. 7.6). These small projectiles are often found on Gepid and Lombard sites and in the Early Byzantine Balkans as well.<sup>48</sup>

A series of weapon graves from the C phase could not be dated more narrowly (123, 127, 135, 145, 149, and 2047). A male aged between 35 and 45 years was buried in simple grave 123 with his 89 cm long spatha, two buckles, ceramic bowl and knife (Fig. 7.1). This grave has been damaged, and simple grave 127 as well, featuring a 32 cm long lenticular spear-head, biconical vessel and scissors (Fig. 7.5). In damaged grave 135, a roughly 30-year-old male was laid in a coffin with some modest finds and a 28 cm long lenticular spear-head (Fig. 7.7). Simple grave 145, of a male aged around 45 with artificially deformed skull,<sup>49</sup> contained an 83 cm long spatha and, among other finds (again modest), a total of 12 arrow-heads grouped together below the feet (Fig. 8.1–13). Furthermore, damaged simple grave 149, in which a male aged between 40 and 45 years was buried, produced another lenticular spear-head (30 cm in length) and a silver umbo rivet (Fig. 8.23), and in simple grave 2047 nine arrow-heads were found by the right shoulder of the deceased (Fig. 8.14–22). Eight of them were deltoid in shape, and only a single arrow-head was three-winged; those from grave 145 are chiefly laurel-shaped, with three (?) deltoid and two barbed finds.<sup>50</sup>

To the last sub-phase of Germanic presence in the city (C3) one can also ascribe grave 23 from the Viminacium III cemetery, in which a 37 cm long reed-like spear-head has been found together with parts of a typical Germanic belt set of Western European origin, datable to the last decades of the sixth century and the first decades of the seventh (Fig. 8.24).<sup>51</sup> Given its location, it is likely that this cemetery was used by the *foederati* garrison stationed at Svetinja, an Early Byzantine fortification in the immediate vicinity of Viminacium and perhaps the site of sixth-century Viminakion;<sup>52</sup> with the help of numismatic evidence, Germanic presence there has

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48 Ivanišević et al. 2006, 40–41, 122, 170, 203, pl. 16, 33/572.

49 Mikić 1994, 193.

50 Ivanišević et al. 2006, 121–122, 174, 176, 182, 190, 196, 218, pl. 19/123, 20/127, 22/135, 28, 30/149, 40/2047.

51 Ivanišević et al. 2006, 49, 229, pl. 45/23, fig. 41/5.

52 Ivanišević et al. 2006, 133; Ivanišević 2016, 91–92; Ivanišević, Bugarski forthcoming.

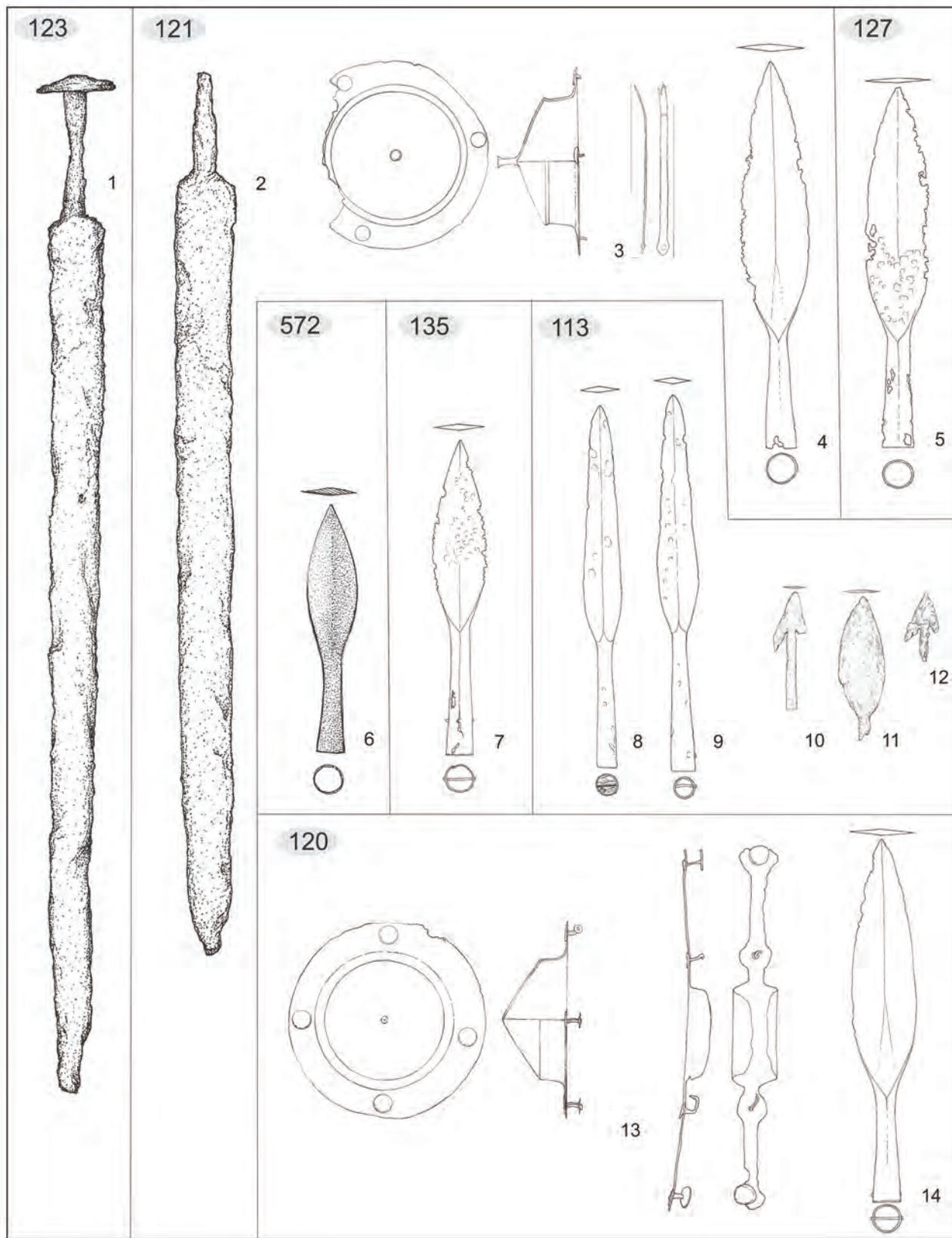


Fig. 7. Viminacium II: 1. Grave 123; 2-4. Grave 121; 5. Grave 127; 6. Grave 572; 7. Grave 135; 8-12. Grave 113; 13-14. Grave 120 (Scale 1:5).

also been dated approximately to the last third of the sixth century.<sup>53</sup>

A total of nine rectangular timber-frame buildings have been documented next to the rampart built in *opus mixtum*, containing enormous quantities of amphorae and Germanic pottery among other finds.<sup>54</sup> Judging by the stratigraphy and coin finds, it appears that some of these buildings pre-date, and some post-date the Avar destruction of 584, and some other objects, such as a Yassi Ada-type buckle, fit nicely into this chronological framework. A bone horse harness buckle is another interesting find.<sup>55</sup> Characteristic parts of nomadic horse riding equipment, such buckles have been found in Avar cemeteries, but also in Caričin Grad, the metropolis of that time; a similar find also came from Pontes.<sup>56</sup> As for weaponry, a shield handle of the same type as those from the Viminacium II necropolis was found, together with four arrow-heads – three of them three-winged and one barbed (Fig. 8.25).<sup>57</sup> Especially important are the finds of at least two lamellar armours (Fig. 9). The bulk of iron lamellae came from the floor of a smithy; they were found together with the folles of Emperor Maurice minted in Constantinople in 587/8 and 590/1.<sup>58</sup>

From the Balkan hinterlands, but apparently connected to the limes, we know of two Germanic burials from Kamenovo by Petrovac upon the Mlava River. Those graves, of a warrior and a female, were found among some non-Germanic (Roman?) graves (Fig. 8.26-28). The warrior's grave contained a lenticular spear-head, scramasax (29 and 25 cm long, respectively), a laurel-shaped arrow-head, fragmented scissors, a knife, and a stamped pottery vessel. The Kamenovo graves were dated to the last third,<sup>59</sup> or more likely to the middle, of the sixth century.<sup>60</sup>

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53 Поповић 1988, 26–31.

54 Милошевић 1988.

55 Поповић 1988, 25, сл. 19/4, 20/1.

56 Ivanišević 2012, 60, fig. 2/10; Špehar 2010, 58, cat. no. 66.

57 Поповић 1988, 30–31, сл. 24.

58 Bugarski 2006.

59 Simoni 1977–1978, 209–214, T. I, II, III/1; Милинковић 1998, 250–253; Špehar 2012, 51, fig. 28.

60 Kiss 1984, 136; Bugarski – Ivanišević 2013, 473.

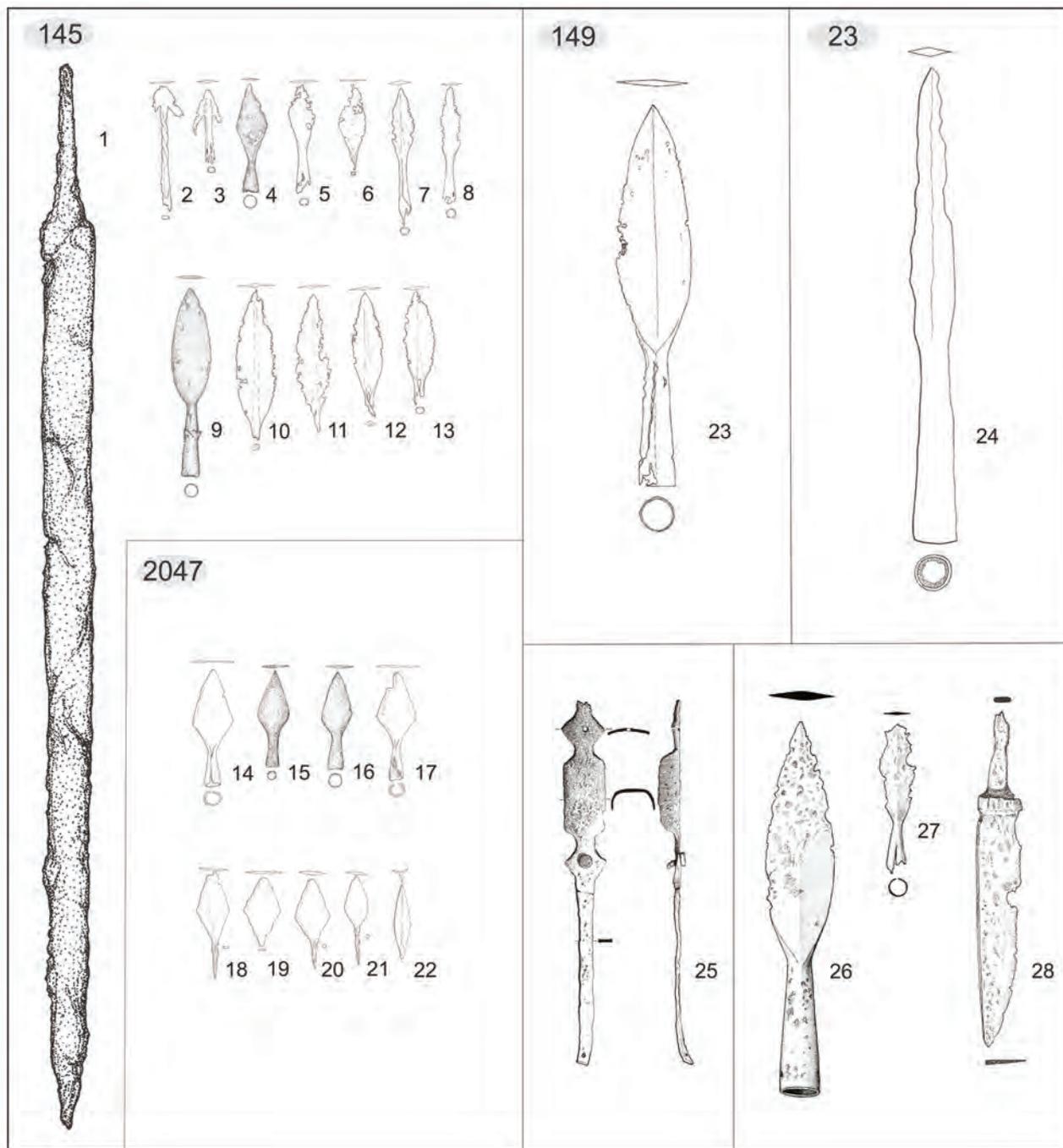


Fig. 8. Viminacium II: 1–13. Grave 145; 14–22. Grave 2047; 23. Grave 149; Viminacium III: 24. Grave 23; Viminacium – Svetinja: 25; Kamenovo: 26–28 (Scale 1:5).

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Recently, an ethnic interpretation was attempted of the sixth-century Germanic finds from these parts, suggesting that most of the finds from Banat and Bačka (including those post-dating 567/8)<sup>61</sup> may be seen as Gepidic, as well as those from the western part of Syrmia. Yet, as it is apparent from the scarce written sources that during most of the period of our concern the Gepids were enemies of the Empire,<sup>62</sup> it has been doubted if they were engaged in defending the Danube limes.<sup>63</sup>

On the other hand, the sources recorded that the Heruli had been settled within the Empire, along the limes. This ethnic group was for decades engaged in military operations in Illyricum and Thrace, and also in the Persian, Vandal, and Italian campaigns. According to a well-informed contemporary, Marcellinus Comes, in the year 512 the Heruli crossed into the territory of the Empire with the approval of Emperor Anastasius: *Gens Herulorum in terras atque civitates Romanorum iussu Anastasii Caesaris introducta*.<sup>64</sup> This piece of information does not specify which parts were settled, but the possibility that it was a wider area should not be excluded, as the towns/communities are mentioned in the plural form (*civitates*). It is commonly believed that they settled in the area of Bassianae in Syrmia,<sup>65</sup> which is derived from the supposition that the eastern part of Pannonia Secunda with the city of Bassianae was reclaimed by the Empire already in 510, upon the terms of the treaty between the Goths and Byzantium. This delineation was mentioned in Justinian's Novel 11 of 14 April 535,<sup>66</sup> and an important note left by Menander Protector, that the '...Emperor was planning to settle the tribe [Avars] on the land which the Heruls had earlier inhabited, which is called Second Pannonia'<sup>67</sup> testifies to the same effect.

Procopius left a somewhat different picture of the settlement of the Heruli, who 'crossed the Ister River and decided to live as neighbours to the Romans in that region; this was during the reign of the Emperor Anastasius, who received

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61 Bugarski, Ivanišević 2016.

62 Sarantis 2016, 266–278, 312–323.

63 Ivanišević et al. 2006, 133–136.

64 Marcellinus Comes, Chronicle, ad. 512,11.

65 Stein 1949, 145–146, 156; Dušanić 1967, 74–75; Mirković 1971, 50–51; Sarantis 2010, 369.

66 Novellae 11.

67 Menander Protector, History, fr. 5.4. 2–6. Transl. R. C. Blockey.

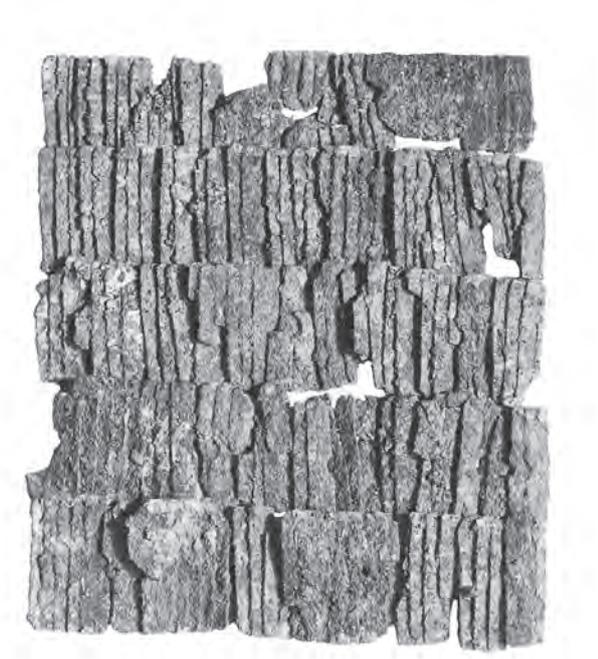


Fig. 9. Viminacium – Svetinja: Lamellar armour – preserved rows of lamellae (no scale).

them with great friendliness and allowed them to settle where they were.’ In other words, they are said to have crossed into the Empire on their own will. Soon after arrival they started a rebellion; the uprising was crushed by the Roman army, and the lives of those who survived were spared.<sup>68</sup>

Historical sources from the reign of Emperor Justin I do not mention the Heruli. However, the news from the first year of Justinian’s rule, that they were given fertile lands and other possessions, while Justinian persuaded them to adopt Christian faith,<sup>69</sup> speaks for their importance to the Empire. As for the cities and areas of their settlement, Procopius mentions Singidunum in two instances. Particularly important to us is the second piece of news, which reads as follows: ‘Other towns of Dacia also, about the city of Singidunum, had been taken over by the Eruli as a gift from the emperor, and here they are settled at the present time, overrunning and plundering Illyricum and the Thracian towns very generally.’<sup>70</sup> It

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68 Procopius, Wars, VI.xiv.28–32.

69 Procopius, Wars, VI.xiv.33–34.

70 Procopius, Wars, VII.xxxiii.13. Transl. H. B. Dewing.

is stated here, as well as in Marcellinus Comes,<sup>71</sup> that the Heruli settled other cities of the Diocese of Dacia too. Taking into account their spread along the Danube limes, one would first think of the key strongholds there – Margum and Viminacium<sup>72</sup> – where parts of the above-discussed large cemeteries have been recorded, datable precisely to this period.<sup>73</sup>

Certain groups of the Heruli were engaged in the Roman army, serving among other *foederati*. They were regularly paid from Constantinople for their services, even if they plundered the Romans.<sup>74</sup> Their status is usually perceived as that of the Gepids and Lombards – the allies of the army, or *xymmachoi*.<sup>75</sup> In the capacity of *foederati*, they were most certainly obliged to protect the frontier and to take part in the defence of the Empire from the other barbarians' raids, as evidenced by their role in breaking a Slavic raid from across the Danube which took place after 545.<sup>76</sup> Significant contingents of the Heruli took their share in the conquests of Africa (1,000 of them and Huns altogether) and, especially, of Italy – 2,000 men were recorded there in 538, and 3,000 mounted warriors in 552.<sup>77</sup>

It is important to address the issue of their numbers in the northern part of Illyricum, from where, according to Procopius, they were recruited.<sup>78</sup> Alexander Sarantis estimated that some 1,500 to 2,000 Heruli lived there; however, bearing in mind the strength of their overseas contingents, he left the possibility open that the Herulic settlement was in fact more significant.<sup>79</sup> Their numbers may have been larger if we take into account the information on another division of theirs in 549, when 1,500 Heruli under the leadership of Philemuth took the Roman side, and 3,000 joined the Gepids in their war against the Lombards. Many Herulic rebels were killed by the Roman army.<sup>80</sup> Nevertheless, as mentioned before, already in 551/2 a large num-

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71 cf. note 64.

72 Ivanišević 2016, 89–99, fig. 1.

73 Ivanišević, Kazanski 2014, 131–160, fig. 1; Ivanišević, Bugarski forthcoming.

74 Procopius, Wars, VII.xxxiii.13–14.

75 Sarantis 2010, 381.

76 Procopius, Wars, VII.xiii.21–26.

77 Jones 1964, 667–668; Sarantis 2010, 384–385.

78 Procopius, Wars, VII.xiii.21–26.

79 Sarantis 2010, 377–378; cf. Иванишевич, Казанский 2010, 148.

80 Procopius, Wars, VII.xxxiv.42–47.

ber of Herulic warriors took part in the Italian campaign.<sup>81</sup> Soon after that, the Heruli vanished from the historical stage, apparently scattered in small groups – either within the limits of the Empire or melting into other ‘barbarian’ communities, notably Gepidic. The news left by Menander Protector, that Justinian suggested to the Avars to settle ‘on the land which the Heruls had earlier inhabited’, is taken as confirmation that the latter left the lands they had occupied for almost four decades.<sup>82</sup>

The Migration-Period cemeteries along the limes, from Jakovo via Singidunum and Margum to Viminacium, testify to the importance of ‘barbarian’ settlement there, Herulic in particular.<sup>83</sup> The finds from the southeastern corner of Sirmia may be assigned to them, although the Jakovo necropolis was labelled as Gepidic already in the title of an article by Danica Dimitrijević and is still commonly attributed to them.<sup>84</sup> The same could be true for the Batajnica grave<sup>85</sup> and the sixth-century Germanic finds from the Serbian Danube region – many of them surveyed here – and perhaps for those from the bridgeheads in southern Banat as well. We could not interpret with any certainty other finds from the Central Balkans. Although the hinterlands of present-day Serbia were not part of Gepid lands, Germanic finds from that area were assigned to them and interpreted in light of their movements after the 567 defeat.<sup>86</sup> However, given the historical circumstances and the scarcity of precisely dated finds, we maintain reservations about such an attribution.<sup>87</sup>

In light of these estimations, in grave 6 at Singidunum III a member of the Herulic garrison may have been buried, and those four individuals from the Margum cemetery have been interpreted in the same way, as against the original publications where they had been seen as Gepids.<sup>88</sup> In addition to the historical background, another argument for such an attribution is that the four graves were

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81 Procopius, Wars, VII.xxv.13.

82 cf. note 67.

83 Иванишевич, Казанский 2010; Bugarski, Ivanišević 2013; forthcoming.

84 Димитријевић 1960; cf. Ivanišević, Kazanski 2014, 145; contra: Bugarski, Ivanišević 2013, 476; forthcoming.

85 Милинковић 2010, 66; Bugarski, Ivanišević forthcoming.

86 e.g. Simoni 1977–1978; Милинковић 1998.

87 Kiss 1984; Ivanišević et al. 2006, 133–140; Bugarski, Ivanišević forthcoming.

88 Цуњак 1992 ; Јовановић, Цуњак 1994.

extramural, situated in the old city cemetery, unlike the intramural ones which thus can be dated to the period of Germanic rule over the city and the region, between ca 441 and 510.<sup>89</sup> Moreover, as the grave-finds from Kovin resemble to a great extent the ones from the C phase graves at Viminacium II, one may believe that they belonged to the Heruli of Justinian's era, serving in Constantiola as Roman *foederati*.<sup>90</sup> Viminacium apparently provided the most illustrative settlement and funerary contexts for our analysis. Most weapon burials at Viminacium II date from the second third of the sixth century, and the social status of the members of this band of mercenaries exceeds that of their predecessors.

Serving directly under their leader, the *foederati* were not incorporated into regular units, nor did they have to be trained like regular soldiers.<sup>91</sup> Our scant written sources do not tell much about Herulic warfare practices. Yet, the little information from Justinian's time is in line with that from the previous period in stating that the Heruli fought lightly armed.<sup>92</sup> Procopius wrote that they did not wear armour, helmets or corselets, but only a shield and thick jacket instead; this may have contributed to their mobility and readiness to perform ambushes.<sup>93</sup> The frequency with which they were called upon to serve in the Imperial armies (in different geographical conditions and against different opponents) and the responsibility given to their commanders point to their military strength.<sup>94</sup> On the other hand, that their leaders wore helmets we know from Paul the Deacon, who noted that after the Lombards had won a battle and killed their king, they carried off the banner of Rodolf (Bandum) 'and his helmet which he had been accustomed to wear in war'.<sup>95</sup>

According to our evidence, the *foederati* were buried much like the other Germanic peoples of that time, excluding the Lombards who, while still in the Carpathian Basin, laid plenty of arms in their graves.<sup>96</sup> Equipped with weapons of their own (seaxes, spathae and possibly spear- and arrow-heads) and Byzantine

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89 Bugarski, Ivanišević 2013; Ivanišević, Bugarski forthcoming.

90 Ivanišević, Bugarski 2008, 45, fig. 8; Bugarski, Ivanišević 2013, 474.

91 cf. Bachrach 2008, 173.

92 Jordanes, *Getica*, 261.

93 Procopius, *Wars*, II.xxv.27.

94 cf. Sarantis 2010, 384–385.

95 Paulus Diaconus, *History*, XX 37. Transl. W. D. Foulke.

96 cf. Bóna, Horváth 2009; Kiss 2015, 287.

manufacture, in fortifications along the Danube where they had been engaged they could also have used other types of weapons, such as reflex bows.<sup>97</sup> After the second half of the fifth century, long seaxes became few in contexts other than Gepidic; it is not likely that they were of Byzantine make.<sup>98</sup> Particularly interesting is the 75 cm long find from Jakovo, which in its length resembles Avar-Period single-edged swords – ‘proto-sabres’.<sup>99</sup>

The Baldenheim-type helmets were long believed to have been of Germanic origin; however, the finds from Caričin Grad (Justiniana Prima) and Heraclea Lyncestis testify to their Byzantine provenance and confirm their dating within the sixth century.<sup>100</sup> Similarly, western, Merovingian origin is commonly suggested for umbos with silver rivets, also known from Gepid and Lombard contexts, and for accompanying shield handles. On the other hand, those pieces of weaponry have also been found in the Early Byzantine Balkans,<sup>101</sup> present-day Turkey (Mersin – Elaiussa Sebaste) and Israel (Jerusalem – Mamilla), and had even been depicted on a sixth-century mosaic in Constantinople.<sup>102</sup> By all appearances, lamellar armours from Svetinja are also Roman products. Coming from a troublesome border area, they have most probably not been produced but only serviced there.<sup>103</sup> That those armours were valuable is evident from the fact that they were very seldom laid in prominent warriors’ graves.<sup>104</sup>

Helmets of the Baldenheim type were highly prestigious items. As noted by Herwig Wolfram, one such piece had the value of several villages.<sup>105</sup> Out of almost 50 finds, many helmets came from the graves of Germanic military commanders who, judging by their spatial spread, were of Frank, Alemannic, Gepid, Lombard, and, if our suggestion were to be followed, Herulic descent. This is still a small number, ‘indicating that their role as symbols of rank or status may have been much

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97 cf. Špehar 2010, 128–131; 2012, 46–51.

98 Kiss 2014, 143–144, 156–158; on spathae cf. Menghin 1983.

99 Kiss 2014, 153; cf. Kazanski 1991, 132–133.

100 Bavant 2008.

101 Hübner 1989; cf. Ivanišević et al. 2006, 42–43; Ivanišević 2012, 58–59, fig. 2/2, 3.

102 Quast 2012, 357, Abb. 5, 6.

103 Bugarski 2006, 174–175; cf. Glad 2010, 184.

104 cf. Kory 2004.

105 Wolfram 1990b, 311; cf. Милинковић 2006, 256, н. 32, 33.

more important than their role in war.<sup>106</sup> Those may well have been diplomatic gifts;<sup>107</sup> one could easily speculate that the murdered king's helmet might have been of the same type. Therefore, we must conclude that the commander buried in Batajnica, near Singidunum, was of very high rank. If he was a Herul, his grave would turn out to be one of the most important Herulic burials, in a way matching that of a high-born woman at Gračanica (Ulpiana – Justiniana Secunda).<sup>108</sup>

This grave is exceptional not only for the helmet find. Even if the finding circumstances are not clear, a spatha, shield, lenticular spear-head and snaffle bits have also been recovered. Except for the helmet, almost the same combination of finds was registered in grave 115 at Viminacium II, which contained a reed-like instead of lenticular spear-head, while grave 121 did not produce snaffle bits. In this context, we believe that they symbolised horse-riding and used to depict the buried individuals as mounted warriors. Coffin burials 115 and 121 also featured silver belt buckles; they can be compared with graves 1 and 7 at the Gepidic cemetery of Hódmezővásárhely–Kishomok, the latter also producing snaffle bits,<sup>109</sup> and with graves 17 at Szolnok–Zagyva–Part and 128 from Szóreg–Téglagyár, all of the same affiliation.<sup>110</sup> Far more numerous burials of this kind have been encountered in Lombard possessions in present-day Hungary;<sup>111</sup> out of 32 (?) graves surveyed here, the three singled out are of the highest status, the Batajnica burial in particular.

From damaged simple grave 149 at Viminacium II a shield and a lenticular spear-head have been recovered; perhaps some grave-goods are missing. On the other hand, the same combination of weapons came from another coffin burial, grave 120. Another two graves – 141 at Viminacium II and 23 at Viminacium III, both with coffins – produced silver belt pieces in association with single weapon finds: a shield and a reed-like spear-head, respectively. In addition to this, a single shield came from grave 2093 at Viminacium II, and single reed-like spear-heads from simple graves 15 in Margum and 8/1956 in Jakovo. A single javelin came from simple grave 572, while single lenticular spear-heads were recovered from

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106 Härke 1990, 25–26.

107 Vogt 2006, 177–189.

108 Kovačević 1963–1964; Milinković 2006.

109 Bóna, Nagy 2002, 111–116, Taf. 6, 9.

110 Cseh et al. 2005, 31–32, 48, 164–177, Taf. 16–18, 38, 64.

111 cf. Bóna, Horváth 2009; Keresztes 2015.

graves 142, 2142, 127 and 135 at Viminacium II (both simple and coffin burials), and from Kovin, Belegiš and Jakovo (grave 4).

Another interesting combination of weapons is recorded in graves 2/1956 at Jakovo and 145 at Viminacium II. Both simple graves, they contained a spatha and 12 arrow-heads each. It should be noted that the same number of arrow-heads of different types was registered in grave 59 at the Gepidic cemetery of Szolnok–Szanda, and as many as 14 in grave 191.<sup>112</sup> Nine and six arrow-heads respectively were found in simple graves 2047 and 152 at Viminacium II, and three came from brick-built grave 6 at Singidunum III. Simple graves 7 at the Margum necropolis and 129 at Viminacium II each produced an arrow-head. In simple grave 113 from this cemetery, three arrow-heads were found in association with two reed-shaped spear-heads. For comparison, a pair of such spear-heads was found in grave 43 at another Gepidic cemetery, Kisköre–Pap Tanya,<sup>113</sup> and only a single Lombard grave in present-day Hungary, grave 1 at the Mező Utca site in Hegykő, produced two spear-heads.<sup>114</sup> Finally, from grave 2 from Kamenovo a scramasax, a lenticular spear-head and an arrow-head have been recovered.

A general problem in the study of weapon combinations is the issue of ‘grave disturbing activities’ – namely, looting. Whether swords were indeed more ‘popular’ than spear-heads, or just more easily accessible for looters, Alpár Dobos allowed for the possibility that the initial proportion of weapon burial in the late row-grave cemeteries in Transylvania was in fact considerably higher than when excavated.<sup>115</sup> For comparison, out of 19 weapon graves at Viminacium II, four have been damaged. In one such grave a spatha was found, two produced spear-heads, and in the fourth there were a spear-head and a shield – that is, only a silver umbo rivet.

While we are aware that some of our contexts are (and some could be) incomplete, it is still worthwhile to investigate if they might have reflected Germanic (Herulic) warfare practices, or, in other words, if they represented functional weapon sets. Different opinions have been expressed concerning this issue. At first, Germanic weapon burials were used to reconstruct their standard weapon sets and fighting practice, implying that the weapons have been utilised by

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112 Bóna, Nagy 2002, 210, 228, Taf. 36/59, 52/191.

113 Bóna, Nagy 2002, 194, Taf. 28/43.

114 Keresztes 2015, 471, fig. 2/3, 4.

115 Roth 1977; Dobos 2015, 72, 80–81. On ‘Grabraub’ most recently cf. Aspöck 2018.

the deceased during their lifetime.<sup>116</sup> Later scholarship, spearheaded by Heinrich Härke, was much more sceptical towards this simplified interpretation. One of the reasons is that not all weapons belonging to a deceased were laid into his grave. For example, from written sources such as the *Beowulf*, we learn that some swords were handed down over several generations.<sup>117</sup>

The largest and best studied reference group are fifth-to-seventh century Anglo-Saxon weapon graves.<sup>118</sup> Altogether, 44% of all those burials contained a spear, 26% a shield, and only 12% produced a sword.<sup>119</sup> Our sample is different, presenting 62% of weapon graves with a spear, 22% with a shield, and as many as 28% with a sword (Table 1).<sup>120</sup> As Härke further put it, while the ‘majority of weapon sets, be they single weapons or combinations of several weapons, look practical enough,<sup>121</sup> a ‘considerable proportion (about 25%) of weapon sets do not make any practical sense at all: they are made up of a single throwing spear [...] or even a shield on its own.’<sup>122</sup> In the same spirit, it has recently been stated that, due to the symbolic nature of this burial rite, functional weapon combinations could not be reconstructed from Avar weapon graves.<sup>123</sup>

While reed-shaped spears are usually seen as thrusting weapons, at least some of the lenticular blades (the narrower ones) were thrown. The fact that they have been found in pairs has significantly contributed to such a conclusion.<sup>124</sup> On the other hand, the pair from grave 113 at Viminacium II includes reed-like spearheads longer than 30 cm; only the weapon from grave 572 is a typical javelin. This is the only piece of weaponry in the grave, and the additional two graves featured single shields. The three ‘no-sense’ sets constitute 9% of all.

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116 e.g. Werner 1968; Steuer 1968.

117 Härke 1990, 34, n. 23; Effros 2003, 93.

118 Härke 1992.

119 Härke 1997, 119. Taking into account only the undisturbed weapon burials from 47 cemeteries, statistical ratios change dramatically: 84 (86) % weapon graves with spears, 45% with shields, and 11 (12) % with swords (Härke 1990, tab. 1; 2005, tab. 2).

120 When disturbed graves are excluded, in our sample there are still 54% weapon graves with spears, 21% with shields, and 29 % with swords.

121 Härke 1990, 33, tab. 2, n. 21. The term ‘set’ is used even for single weapon finds in graves.

122 Härke 1997, 119.

123 Csiky 2015, 389–390.

124 cf. Dobos 2015, 65–67.

In general, the deposition of weapons in graves has something to do with 'wealth', but archaeology by itself cannot explain why some men have been buried with weapons, and some others have not. These and other artefacts – archaeological burial data – were put into graves by the mourners, and thus are *intentional* data, while *functional* data provide information about the actual life of the buried and are not affected/distorted by the burying community.<sup>125</sup> They primarily come from physical anthropological analyses, crucially important to burial archaeology, which have revealed that some of the males buried in Anglo-Saxon weapon graves were too young, too old or too sick to be warriors. In contrast to this, many individuals bearing the marks of fighting, including cut marks on the skull, have been buried without any weapons.<sup>126</sup> In the Avar sample as well there are weapons in infant, juvenile and senile graves, which makes 'deposition of weapons in burials [...] much more closely associated with social maturity than with fighting ability.'<sup>127</sup>

Again, our sample shows a different trend. Buried with weapons in either simple graves or coffins, men from Viminacium were all adults, and almost all aged between 30 and 50 years. The individual inhumed in grave 145, equipped with *spatha* and a 'full' set of arrows, had an artificially deformed skull. Published anthropological analyses are not detailed enough to allow us to determine if some of those warriors (?) actually had battle wounds,<sup>128</sup> but in our analysis we can still lean on both intentional and, to an extent, functional data.

A weapon burial rite is, after all, a social phenomenon. In terms of individual burials and from the angle of contextual archaeology, 'the choice of armament deposited in a particular grave depicted how kin wished to remember the deceased, an image tempered by local custom and the amount of wealth that family members were willing or able to devote to the funeral ceremony.'<sup>129</sup> On a group level, and not contradicting the previous point, weapon burials served as an ethnic marker, underscoring the group's biological origin, which is one of the elements in the process of ethnic identity formation, and its differentiation from the local population. In this context, weapons were used as 'symbols of real or potential

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125 Härke 2005, 197.

126 Härke 1997, 120; 2005, tab. 7; cf. Effros 2003, 95.

127 Csiky 2015, 385.

128 Mikić 1994; 2008; Микић 2007.

129 Effros 2003, 95.

**Table 1. Sixth-century foederati from the Upper Moesian Limes: weapon combinations in graves.**

<i>cemetery</i>	<i>grave no.</i>	<i>grave type</i>	<i>date</i>	<i>age</i>	<i>helmet</i>	<i>shield</i>	<i>seax</i>	<i>scramasax</i>	<i>spatha</i>	<i>lenticular spear-head</i>	<i>reed-like spear-head</i>	<i>javelin</i>	<i>arrow-head</i>	<i>quiver</i>	<i>snaffle bits</i>	<i>other valuable finds</i>
Jakovo	several	simple	mid 5 <sup>th</sup> - 6 <sup>th</sup> ct.				2		2/1 set	1						damaged
Jakovo	3	simple	mid 5 <sup>th</sup> - 6 <sup>th</sup> ct.						1							no
Jakovo	4	simple	mid 5 <sup>th</sup> - 6 <sup>th</sup> ct.							1						no
Jakovo	2/1956	simple	?						1				12	1		no
Jakovo	8/1956	simple	mid 5 <sup>th</sup> - 6 <sup>th</sup> ct.								1					no
Batajnica		?	mid 6 <sup>th</sup> ct. 2. third 6 <sup>th</sup> ct.		1	1			1	1					1	?
Belegiš	two?	?	6 <sup>th</sup> ct.							2						damaged
Singidunum III	6	brick-built	500–575	ca 20									3			damaged
Margum	7	simple	6 <sup>th</sup> ct.										1			no
Margum	15	simple	6 <sup>th</sup> ct.								1					no
Margum	17	simple	6 <sup>th</sup> ct.						1							no
Kovin	2	simple	6 <sup>th</sup> ct.							1						?
Viminacium II	152	simple	470–510	>45									6			no
Viminacium II	1876	simple	2. third 6 <sup>th</sup> ct.	ca 40					1 (set)							no
Viminacium II	142	coffin	2. third 6 <sup>th</sup> ct.	>21						1						no
Viminacium II	2142	simple	2. third 6 <sup>th</sup> ct.							1						no

<i>cemetery</i>	<i>grave no.</i>	<i>grave type</i>	<i>date</i>	<i>age</i>	<i>helmet</i>	<i>shield</i>	<i>seax</i>	<i>scramasax</i>	<i>spatha</i>	<i>lenticular spear-head</i>	<i>reed-like spear-head</i>	<i>javelin</i>	<i>arrow-head</i>	<i>quiver</i>	<i>snaffle bits</i>	<i>other valuable finds</i>
Viminacium II	2093	simple	2. third 6 <sup>th</sup> ct.			1										no
Viminacium II	141	coffin	2. third 6 <sup>th</sup> ct.	>45		1										silver
Viminacium II	129	simple	2. third 6 <sup>th</sup> ct.	>45									1	1		no
Viminacium II	115	coffin?	2. third 6 <sup>th</sup> ct.	mat.		1			1 (set)		1				1	silver
Viminacium II	121	coffin	2. third 6 <sup>th</sup> ct.	ca 45		1			1	1						silver
Viminacium II	113	simple	2. third 6 <sup>th</sup> ct.	>45							2		3			no
Viminacium II	120	coffin	3. third 6 <sup>th</sup> – 1. third 7 <sup>th</sup> ct.	>40		1				1						no
Viminacium II	572	simple	3. third 6 <sup>th</sup> – 1. third 7 <sup>th</sup> ct.	ca 45								1				no
Viminacium II	123	simple	6 <sup>th</sup> – 1. third 7 <sup>th</sup> ct.	35–45					1							damaged
Viminacium II	127	simple	6 <sup>th</sup> – 1. third 7 <sup>th</sup> ct.							1						damaged
Viminacium II	135	coffin	6 <sup>th</sup> – 1. third 7 <sup>th</sup> ct.	ca 30						1						damaged
Viminacium II	145	simple	6 <sup>th</sup> – 1. third 7 <sup>th</sup> ct.	ca 45					1				12			no
Viminacium II	149	simple	6 <sup>th</sup> – 1. third 7 <sup>th</sup> ct.	40–45		1				1						damaged
Viminacium II	2047	simple	6 <sup>th</sup> – 1. third 7 <sup>th</sup> ct.										9			no
Viminacium III	23	coffin	6 <sup>th</sup> – 1. third 7 <sup>th</sup> ct.	adult?							1					silver
Kamenovo	2	?	mid 6 <sup>th</sup> ct.					1		1			1			no

Fig. 10. Viminacium II:  
Silver U-shaped chapes – 1.  
Grave 115; 2. Grave 1876  
(no scale).



violence, and their display in a ritual projects an image of martial prowess and/or power – and they have been used as such throughout history.<sup>130</sup> On this we can only agree with Härke, and – to put aside the apparent disproportion in their size<sup>131</sup> – it may well have been the reason that our sample differs from the Anglo-Saxon in age structure and in displaying a higher ratio of offensive weapons.

This is so because the presented sample was not drawn from a sedentary population, either conquering or native, but instead represents the military core around which the populace was formed – Justinian's mercenaries. In this case, therefore, weapon graves did contain 'tools of their [...] trade'.<sup>132</sup> More richly furnished weapon burials from the C2 phase, including graves 115 and 121, cluster in the northern part of the necropolis (Fig. 5). From the same area came (medium) rich women's burials of the same date – graves 133, 138, 2083, and the particularly wealthy female grave 118, which, among other finds, contained a faceted crystal bead, a silver strap-end and brooch, and a large bronze bowl (Fig. 11.1–5).<sup>133</sup> One may suppose that these women were somehow related to prominent males buried with weapons.

Successors of those were perhaps not Heruli – with the arrival of the Avars the Heruli disappeared from the written sources<sup>134</sup> – but still maintained their gainful position until the end of the sixth or the beginning of the seventh century. The finds of lamellar armours from Svetinja speak for the garrison's importance to the Empire, and the vast

130 Härke 1997, 120.

131 cf. notes 119, 120.

132 cf. Härke 1990, 22.

133 Ivanišević et al. 2006, 122–127, 168, 170, pl. 15, figs 3, 48; for the bowl cf. Vida 2016, 86–88, figs 90, 91.

134 Schwarcz 2005, 512.

Fig. 11. Viminacium II: 1–5.  
Grave 118.



share of amphorae found in pottery contexts there<sup>135</sup> indicates that those mercenaries were involved in another lucrative activity – the distribution of goods.<sup>136</sup>

These commodities came from the *annona*. Justinian's *Quaestura Exercitus* was established in 536 to ensure that the troops on the Danube – *limitanei* and *comitatenses* – receive supplies from the Aegean provinces.<sup>137</sup> Several decades later those ended up in the hands of the mercenaries, probably in the form of the *annona foederatica*.<sup>138</sup> It should be noted here that Florin Curta, while writing about Slavic leaders of the second half of the sixth century north of the Danube, mentions archaeological finds of amphorae there, illustrating that 'olive oil, wine or garum were as good for showing off as horses, weapons, and gold.'<sup>139</sup>

135 Поповић 1988, 13–19, сл. 13, 14.

136 Ivanišević 2016, 92.

137 Karagiorgou 2001, 149–154; Curta 2016, 307–334.

138 cf. Bachrach 2008, 172.

139 Curta 2010, 308, n. 20, 21. On amphorae from Early Avar contexts cf. Csiky, Magyar-Hárshegyi 2015.

These observations bring us back to the assessment of the status of the most prominent individuals in our sample. In cultural-anthropological terms, they can be labelled 'big-men'.<sup>140</sup> While 'great-men' would lose their status after the conflict, 'chiefs' usually led larger groups. In the context of Early Mediaeval archaeology, this concept was recently tested by Stefan Eichert, who summarises that 'big-men' were 'leaders that can receive their position because of individual skills and actions. Economical aspects are more important and they act as redistributors of different goods (agriculture, prestige goods). Big-men keep their status in peace times, because they control or manipulate the material-economical wealth of their community'<sup>141</sup>, above all by receiving money from the Empire to pay and maintain the soldiers.<sup>142</sup>

After studying sixth-century Germanic finds from the Upper Moesian limes, including both the settlement and funerary contexts – weapon graves in particular – we may conclude that our evidence reveals a clearly differentiated and internally stratified community with a privileged position, derived from its role in the defence of the border and engagement in numerous military campaigns of the Empire. There is little doubt that we can ascribe these finds, particularly those from the second third of the sixth century, to Herulic mercenaries and their leaders.

*Translated by Ivan Bugarski*

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140 e.g. Sahlins 1963; Lindstrom 1981.

141 Eichert 2017, 18.

142 Bachrach 2008, 173.

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## IMAGE AS A WAY OF SELF-REPRESENTATION, ASSOCIATION AND TYPE CREATION FOR LATE ANTIQUE WOMEN IN THE CENTRAL BALKANS\*

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### ABSTRACT

*The ancient Romans valued portraiture as a means of communication and self-representation. Men and women were commemorated in a variety of media, from carved cameos, to gold glass medallions, to paintings and statuary. The tomb, was the most common location for these portraits. This paper examines the portraits of women from the late antique Balkans. It demonstrates how the portraits of women communicated ideas about the person portrayed through iconographic markers, such as hairstyle, gesture, or clothing. Often these markers of identity were borrowed from empresses or from goddesses, so that one can speak of types that the artists commonly deployed. Along with these empire-wide types and markers of qualities, portraits from the Balkans also demonstrate local specificity.*

**KEYWORDS.** – IMAGE, WOMEN, SELF-REPRESENTATION, ASSOCIATION, TYPE, EMPRESS, MOTHER, WIFE, GODDESS.

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## INTRODUCTION

Images of men used the following markers of identity: status, achievements, origin etc. Images of women relied on iconographic elements often borrowed from goddesses or the empress.<sup>1</sup> Portraiture, therefore, communicated through symbols, emblems and signs and was often joined by inscriptions. This is what Hölscher has termed the “language of images” in Roman art.<sup>2</sup> Whether we are speaking of works of art or schematic, emblematic images, their purpose in most cases was achieved and understood by targeted observers. Without any specific knowledge about the possibilities of what would be, in modern times, called image or visual communication, ancient masters and commissioners of works of art successfully managed to create memorable images which could have transferred messages via iconography and based on an understanding of an image’s place within a cultural context.<sup>3</sup>

The political situation in the late antique Central Balkans brought about various economic and cultural changes. A brief review indicates the many challenges that the region went through. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, eighteen Roman emperors originated from the territory of present day Serbia, a fact that brings the region into focus.<sup>4</sup> The Tetrarchial reorganization of the Empire caused a shift in the importance of Balkan provinces. The Tetrachs favoured some provinces at the expense of others. Until the end of the 4<sup>th</sup>, the Central Balkans belonged to the Western division of the Roman Empire.<sup>5</sup> After Theodosius’s death (395), the region became a part of the Eastern Roman Empire. Since the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup>, attacks of barbarian tribes often destabilized the region until the 7<sup>th</sup>, when Roman domina-

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1 One of the examples can be seen in the assimilation of men and women to Mars and to Venus. (Hölscher 2004, 63, 65; Kleiner 1981, 512-544).

2 Hölscher 2004.

3 Paul Martin Lester said in his study of visual communication and, specifically, visual analysis “Image analysis teaches two important lessons about the creation of memorable pictures: A producer of messages should have an understanding of the diversity of cultures within an intended audience and she should also be aware of the symbols used in images so that they are understood by members of those cultures”. These two lessons were clearly followed by ancient artists, while for us today the perception of images and analysis of them can be interpreted on many levels of analytical perspectives, such as personal, historical, technical, ethnic, cultural and critical. Lester 2013, 128-146.

4 Јовановић 2006; Korać et al. 2016.

5 Teall 1967, 13-36; Ферјанчић 2013, 26-35.

tion in the Central Balkans ceased with the final settlement of Slavic tribes.<sup>6</sup> The political turmoil caused migrations of people and brought about cultural changes including changes in artistic production. Due to the closeness to the Danube Limes and continuous presence of the army in this region, cultic practices and religious beliefs were subjected to various influences. Eastern cults were very popular, so was Arianism.<sup>7</sup> The traces of these religious beliefs can be noticed in craft and art production. Yet, as in the whole Empire, art was usually associated with the imperial or religious cult or funerary practices and decoration of urban centres or imperial commissions. Very well known models were followed and it can be said that, in general, art production was under the same influence of the East and West. Along with influence from the centre, it is also possible to trace the existence of local some production centres, which were mostly located in cities along the Danube Limes or its hinterland. Specific decoration of fresco painted tombs, much better known in the Eastern Mediterranean world is also characteristic for the region of the Central Balkans, giving the notion that several painting workshops worked here during late antiquity.<sup>8</sup>

In such a context it would be possible to consider various interpretations of images of women in all varieties of their appearances. As with all other images, female imagery was shaped by personal, public, political, or religious goals. In late antiquity, there emerged a new portrait type, which fused classicism with spiritualism and expressionism: the “soft” style based in Greece and the Latin West with the “hard” style mostly current in the Oriental provinces.<sup>9</sup> The mixture of Roman classical artistic values and styles with eastern influences, aiming at highlighting emotional states and the inner workings of the spirit characterizes many late antique images of women.<sup>10</sup>

The aim of this paper is to examine feminine imaging and its various meanings, interpretation and significance within the visual culture of late antiquity. The first female images were considered as powerful weapons used to transfer messages by

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6 Зечевић 2002; Максимовић 1980, 17-57.

7 About the Eastern religions in this territory in: Gavrilović in this volume. About Sirmium as “caput Illyrici” and Christianity in: Popović 2013c, 115-117.

8 Rogić, Anđelković Grašar 2015, 201-210.

9 Age of Spirituality 1979, 3, 286.

10 On portraits in Late Antiquity and Middle Ages in: Tomić 2004, 105-120.

creating/adhering to a desired look. This means that late antique women were aware that by the creation of a certain type and by following the example-the role model, they would be able to present the best idea of themselves to the public. Two main goals needed to be achieved: first, to create an image that imitates a portrait of the Roman empress; and, second, to follow the exemplary matron type and such a way of life. The same goals were pursued in images intended for daily life and funerary purposes. Imitation of a model was one of the suitable tools in achieving the ideal image. Secondly, in the later paragraph entitled *Unus pro omnibus, omnes pro uno*, as the translation suggests, will be considered several examples of various female image types remained stable across media. No specific types were invented for different media, rather one type suited all. Thus, in the conclusion, all of the examples and suggested interpretations are considered in order to shed light on how women wanted to be seen women wanted to be seen and what kind of image they aspired to project about themselves in the late antique Central Balkans territory.

## IMITATION OF AN EXEMPLARY MODEL AND CREATION OF AN IDEAL IMAGE

Roman classical art followed the ideals of Greek classical art and all of its principles concerning symmetry, balance or proportion, and dynamism. By contrast, late antique art prefers frontality, often disregards proportion and the rules of how to render three-dimensional objects. In addition, that art displays a great diversity of visual production, encompassing a plurality of styles, subject-matter and visual media.<sup>11</sup> Imperial statues, especially from the period of the Tetrarchy, characterize the late antique style. A number of late antique imperial portraits made of porphyry was found on the territory of present-day Serbia.<sup>12</sup> At the same time, the more traditional way of representing the emperor, in the classical Roman imperial style, recalling the glorious predecessors like Octavian Augustus or Trajan, or deities such as Apollo-Helios, was also present.

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11 On argument about Late Antique Art in: Elsner 2006, 271-309.

12 Поповић 2017; Поповић 2013a, 176; Срејовић 1959, 253-263; Срејовић, Цермановић-Кузмановић 1987a, кат. 13, 14; Sreјović 1987, 98, kat. 221; Sreјović 1994a, 41-47; Sreјović 1994b, 143-152.

The same style of a combination of the traditional and the late antique styles, specific for male portraiture, can be seen on several preserved portraits of the late antique empresses. Official state images of empresses were the most prominent, especially on coins or various miniatures and objects of everyday use, such as oil lamps, glyptics, etc. Unlike monumental art images, smaller objects emphasise specific details that were not important for the specific individual but, rather, for the status or the role which that individual held. Besides imperial regalia, other details provide specificity, such as, coiffure, jewellery, costume, attitude, posture, and gesture.

Although imperial portraits are usually marked with all the necessary imperial insignia, there are a number of portraits that resemble the imperial ones, but lack the insignia. There is a tendency in the scholarship to assume that all portraits that look like the imperial ones are in fact imperial. Coins of the empress Galeria Valeria, daughter of Diocletian (305-311), such as the aureus from the National Museum in Belgrade, represent this late antique empress with all the facial features that correspond to Tetrarchic imagery; her hairstyle is in accordance with the fashion of the time, with a braid which is lifted up and fastened to the back of the head. On her head is depicted a triangular hairpiece, which can be associated with the *stephane* – type of headgear worn by goddesses or empresses with the title of Augusta, since the diadem as specific imperial regalia and as *perpetuum diadema* is associated with the reign of Constantine the Great.<sup>13</sup> The same manner of rendering of a portrait and hairstyle, but in this case without a diadem, can be seen on the portrait depicted on a cameo from the Horreum Margi (Ćuprija), which is identified as well as Galeria Valeria (Fig. 1a, 1b).<sup>14</sup> But that cameo may simply represent a woman who wanted to be seen portrayed in the imperial fashion.

The features of late antique empress portraits are characteristic of other portraits, some of which, because of the similarity, have been thought to represent empresses. Two cameos from Remesiana represent, in Ivana Popović's words, "the prototype of the figure of Constantine's wife Fausta" (307-326).<sup>15</sup> By prototype, Popović understands the mother figure of the future emperor or his wife, both important in dy-

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13 Stout 1994, 93; Поповић 2013, 93-108; However, in the description of the portrait of Galeria Valeria on this coin the term diadem appeared in the catalogue of Roman Imperial Coinage, and later quoted by two authors. Васић 2008, 292, кат. 417; Antički portret u Jugoslaviji 1987, 242; RIC VI, 562 br. 53.

14 Поповић 1989, 36-37, кат. 49; Popović 2010, 210-211, No. 38, Pl. XIII, 38; Cermanović-Kuzmanović 1963, 119-125.

15 Popović 2010, 220.



Fig. 1a - Cameo from Horreum Margi (Ćuprija), identified as empress Galeria Valeria (documentation of the National museum of Belgrade).



Fig. 1b - Aureus of Galeria Valeria from the National Museum of Belgrade (After: *Antički portret u Jugoslaviji* 1987, cat. 239).

nastic politics and propaganda, to which the mass production of cameos with such images was especially suitable.<sup>16</sup> The cameos depict female busts in right profile, with sophisticated facial expressions and coiffure with fine waves which follow the shape of the face and are combed at the back into a bun (Figs. 2a, 2b)<sup>17</sup>. This hairstyle is characteristic for Fausta's depictions on coins, as is the case with the bronze medallion, minted in Sirmium after 316/17.<sup>18</sup> This type of image, first disseminated on coins, is also found on glyptics. This is the method by which imperial propaganda travelled from one medium to another. In contrast to the coins, although there are no many examples with the diadem, the images on cameos do not display any imperial regalia, or the diadem, something that can be taken as a consequence of Fausta's death shortly after Constantine's adoption of the diadem. Fausta's portraits on coins minted in the period between 324 and 326, after she was proclaimed Augusta, are distinctive by her image in profile, according to the fashion of the time and with the bun at the nape of the neck, sometimes with, but usually without a diadem.<sup>19</sup>

Although there was a tradition to represent the imperial family on cameos, as well as notions that these were representations of women with a high social status, on cameos with female busts discovered in a large number along the Danube Limes, figures of empresses in the form of a prototype are most probably represented.<sup>20</sup> These prototypes can testify to the taste and fashion dictated by empresses which were followed by noble women whose images were not too different from this role model. The same style characteristics of an idealised profile image according to the empress' role model can be seen on cameos of the *dubitandae* or [considered doubtful], type in the National museums of Belgrade and Požarevac. Ivana Popović characterised them as questionable and that they were placed in such a type because of their unknown origin and provenience. They are dated to the post antique period but are modelled in accordance with the Roman glyptic manner

16 Popović 2010, 218.

17 Кузмановић-Нововић 2009, 85-86, сл. 20; Поповић 2009, 56-61, сл. 1-5; Поповић 1992, 402-403, кат. 1, 2; Поповић 2010, cat. 39, 40, pl. XIII; Поповић 2001, кат. 71, 80; Srejović 1993, 81, cat. 119.

18 Calza 1972, 248-256, XXXV, 301, 304; Gnechchi 1912, 22, Tav. 8. 10-12.

19 Absence of the diadem on Fausta's portraits on coins some authors interpret as accentuation of Helena's stronger influence and higher rank in the state (RIC VII, 45) while its existence is associated with the practical significance of an adornment, according to other authors. Drijvers 1992, 503.

20 Popović 2010, 217-218, with the reference 21.

and techniques.<sup>21</sup> Since the majority of these cameos were brought to these museums as gifts and the context of their find is impossible to know, it is only possible to judge the images based on an analysis of the characteristic of the portraiture and manner or style of the production. Two ellipsoid cameos from the National Museum of Požarevac, made of white quartz, were brought to the museum by the people who found them. One originates from the site of Dubravica-Orašje and the other from Kostolac-Ćirikovac, both locations in the vicinity of ancient Viminacium, which was one of the production centres on the Danube Limes. Since the archaeological site of Viminacium was for years known as a site where illegal excavations and looting were conducted,<sup>22</sup> one of the curators from the National Museum in Požarevac – Dragan Jacanović, stated to the author of this paper that the people who brought the cameos to the museum had already been known to the Museum's employees for years as those who were digging across the Viminacium archaeological site and that the real provenience of both cameos can certainly be associated with this ancient site.<sup>23</sup> One of these cameos is described as a relief bust of a woman, facing right with wavy hair combed into a bun on the back of her head and with a richly draped collar around her neck (Fig. 3a). After the cameo's cleaning the collar disappeared, the fine wrinkles on the woman's neck appeared (perhaps a reference of Venus' rings?); it turned out that there was no collar, but some kind of a tunic. The second cameo's iconography did not change after cleaning. The woman's head in relief is facing left, with long hair modelled in braid at the back of her head which is raised up to the ribbon which resembles a diadem (Fig. 3b).

*Arti minori* were an ideal medium for representations of an ordinary woman during a politically and economically insecure time in the Empire, suggesting that the private life was influenced by the public. Some examples constitute real works of art, while others were manufactured with all of the craft characteristics and images subordinated with the aim of imitating the imperial model. Copying the imperial model resulted in the creation of a specific type.

21 Поповић 1989, 45, кат. 74, 75, 76, 77, 78; Поповић 1991, 60, кат. 15, 16.

22 Korać et al. 2016, 114-116.

23 I would like to thank Mr Dragan Jacanović, curator in the National Museum of Požarevac, for the consultations regarding this topic and for providing information used in this paper. Also, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the curator of the National Museum of Požarevac, Mrs Teodora Branković, for providing me with material and photographs for this paper.



Fig. 2a – Cameo from Remesiana, identified as empress Fausta (documentation of the National museum of Belgrade).



Fig. 2b – Cameo from Remesiana, identified as empress Fausta (documentation of the National museum of Belgrade).



Fig. 3a – Cameo with the female bust from the National Museum of Požarevac (Documentation of the National Museum of Požarevac).



Fig. 3b - Cameo with the female bust from the National Museum of Požarevac (Documentation of the National Museum of Požarevac).

Besides the ideal self representation of a woman as a dignified Roman matron who followed the fashion of the time and who was very similar to the empress in her appearance, gesture and image quality, female imagery was also oriented toward communicating two ideas central to women's lives – being a wife and mother. Image associations were made, in the first place, between the family portrait and an imperial one while, on the other hand, models of an ideal spouse and maternal type were ever present in the imagery of goddesses and their family roles. Thus, again, portraits fused three ideas: a similarity to the empress, maternity and wedlock, conveyed through deities.

Examples of a family portrait, associated with the portraiture of the imperial family, is represented on the preserved part of the bottom of a glass vessel made in the gold glass technique, from *Aquae*, from the middle of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. In the medallion is depicted a married couple with a child and above them there is an inscription of a Christian aspiration *VIVAS IN DEO*, representing their wish for a good life (Fig. 4).<sup>24</sup> The medallion shows three busts: a man, a woman and a child. All figures are depicted *en face* with a similar treatment. On their elongated, oval faces, big eyes are accentuated by strong eyebrows and their look is directed upwards in the direction of the inscription. The woman is dressed in a long tunic with a palla, richly decorated with a stylised spiral element.<sup>25</sup> The woman's coiffure corresponds to another 4<sup>th</sup> century hairstyle popular in sculpture or fresco painting. The hair is flowing down to the chin, covering the ears and is decorated with an ornament that suggests a veil or a fine net.<sup>26</sup> Around woman's neck is a rich collar with an adornment similar to precious stones. The woman is represented wearing an expensive decorated dress and jewellery and a fashionable hairstyle which can be seen on other depictions in glass vessels or any other artistic medium from

24 Ранков 1983, 85; Кондић 1993, кат.131; Kondić 2005, cat. Nr. 109. Kondić 2007, Kat. Nr. I.11.33. Lutraan 2006, 83; More about the Christian context of this image in: Ilić, Jeremić in this volume.

25 This spiral decorative dress element is known from the funerary portraits, but as well as suggests the notion of popular golden embroidery, testified from several late antique graves. Korać 2007, 106; Anđelković Grašar et al. 2013, 138; Спасић-Ђурић 2003, 59-86.

26 Such hair decoration can be visible on some other examples of gold glass, cf.: <http://www.musee-lapidaire.org/oeuvres-antiques/fr/oeuvre/fond-de-recipient-avec-un-couple-et-un-enfant> or it can be said that is also known from other artistic media, cf.: Anđelković Grašar 2015, 270; Anđelković Grašar, Tapavički-Ilić 2015, 17-19 and online <http://journal.exarc.net/issue-2015-2/int/mural-painting-roman-lady-viminacium-roman-matron-modern-icon>

the period of the 4<sup>th</sup> to the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>27</sup> All of the details on the female figure suggest her high social status and the origin of her role models are in the depiction of Roman noble ladies, as can be seen on the medallion of the cross of Galla Placidia, from Brescia (*Musei Civici*), referring to values of family life and aristocratic charity.<sup>28</sup> There are other images of the imperial family that could be understood as models for the tondo composition, such as the Severan Tondo and Julia Domna, one of the most popular empress role models.<sup>29</sup> The most similar composition can be seen on a tondo from the Vatican Library, where a family portrait is depicted, consisting of parents and a child, dressed in the fashion of the time and with typical hairstyles, and with their gaze directed directly toward the observer.<sup>30</sup> Similarities between the compositions on gold glass discovered in Rome or even in the provinces in the Balkans, suggest that regardless of one's religious affiliation, there is a sense of prosperity and a desire to look like the upper strata, even if one is not quite a member. This points not only to self-presentation, but to the self-construction of the people represented on these objects.<sup>31</sup>

Regarding the female figural statues from the territory of Upper Moesia, unlike portraits, it can be said that they were larger in number than male. From the late antique period, six known statues belong to the iconographical model characteristic of the large and the small Herculaneum, or Pudicitia type, most common in the period between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries (Fig. 5a-d).<sup>32</sup> These statues were created according to the commissions of high status and wealthy Roman ladies. Their popularity throughout the Empire is explained by the association between Roman copies of the Praxiteles cult statues of Demeter and Kore and Roman matrons, who aspired to be represented with dignity and grace, as were the goddesses of whose cult they worshiped.<sup>33</sup>



Fig. 4 – Glass medallion with the depicted family portrait and an inscription VIVAS IN DEO from Aquae (documentation of the National museum of Belgrade).

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27 Cf.: Korać 2007, 106; Andelković Grašar et al. 2013, 138. Lutraan 2006, 32, 35-36.

28 Elsner 2007, 17-18.

29 Baharal 1992, 110-118.

30 Morey 1959, Pl. XVI, No. 97.

31 Kampen 2007, 135.

32 Except the statue from Naissus, which is dated to the end of the 3rd and beginning of the 4th century. Tomović 1992, 63-64, kat. 44-49; Vulić 1931, 104, br. 250. Hereby I would like to express my gratitude to the director of the National Museum of Belgrade, Mrs. Bojana Borić-Brešković, senior curator of the National Museum of Niš, Mrs Vesna Crnoglavac and the museum advisor at the Museum of Krajina-Negotin, Mr Gordan Janjić, for providing me material and photographs for this article.

33 Tomović 1992, 63-64.



Fig. 5a – Female portrait statue “Small Herculean”, Singidunum (documentation of the National museum of Belgrade).

Fig. 5b – Female portrait statue “Pudicitia type”, Aquae, Museum of Krajina, Negotin (documentation of the Museum of Krajina, Negotin)

Fig. 5c – Female portrait statue, Naissus, National Museum of Niš (documentation of the National Museum of Niš)

Fig. 5d – Female portrait sculpture, Aquae, Museum of Krajina, Negotin (documentation of the Museum of Krajina, Negotin)

Comparing sculptural portraits of men and women, female portraits are fewer in number, at least when we speak about late antiquity. In female sculptural portraiture, the same problems with the identification of a represented person occurred as with cameos. To recognise some of these persons as some ordinary woman or an empress, sculptural material could be, but is not necessarily, helpful. The same is true of the quality of rendering, as well as the hairstyle. On these portraits, some features of the Eastern style can be noticed, and some such examples are two portraits from Viminacium and one from Ulpiana.<sup>34</sup> From the 4<sup>th</sup> century onwards, the private portrait almost disappeared from sculpture in the territory of Upper Moesia.<sup>35</sup>

Self-representation is usually associated with the term portraiture. However, it is not easy to identify a portrait when the portrayed woman is made to look like an empress or a goddess; the differences are often minute. Sculptural portraits were probably used for some kind of public use, to be represented in some public space,

<sup>34</sup> Tomović 1992 52, kat. 13, 15, 78.

<sup>35</sup> Tomović 1992, 58.

within the private family house or in the atrium among the portrait gallery of the ancestors. On the other hand, funerary portraits can be seen on stelai, sarcophagi or in tomb paintings. The significance of a portrait in funerary art is associated with the memory of the dead and many types of these memorials addressed an audience. Funerary monuments were often commissioned *ante mortem* by the tomb owner and thus reflect the personal choices regarding the way individuals defined their social image, or *post mortem* by surviving kin to commemorate their loved ones and equally attest to a desire to present the family in a particular light.<sup>36</sup> For women, as for men, it was important to represent who these people were during their lifetimes, and all iconographical solutions were directed toward this idea. Motifs, symbols and portraits were important to highlight the most important moments of their life and material status during the lifetime, as well as appealing to their future in the afterlife. The practice of inserting the portrait head of the deceased person onto an idealised figure on the relief-adorned marble sarcophagi was a practice popular during the Imperial period, in and around Rome. This practice forged the *post-mortem* identity of the person buried in the sarcophagus.<sup>37</sup> On funerary monuments the portrait in classical artistic terms is rare, and a woman is represented as a stylised figure without individual portrait features, but with other remarks that can help in personalizing her image. Most common are women's frontal depictions, together with the husband or within the image of a family. In such compositions, the spouses are represented in a similar manner and style, very schematically rendered. Family portraits on Roman tombstones are characterised by the standardisation of composition with distinctive gestures which emphasise the physical contact between the family or spouses. There are eight examples of funerary portraiture representing physical contact from the province of Upper Moesia, one of which is from the late Roman site of *Timacium Minus*.<sup>38</sup>

In such a treatment on funerary monuments it can be said that female representations are distinctive only owing to the accentuation of the clothes, jewellery and decoration, or material status, and gender specification. The common characteristic of these funerary monuments is visible in the flat surface of the relief, which

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36 Carroll 2013, 562.

37 Birk 2014, 33.

38 More on the topic of the motif of physical contact on Roman tombstones in the province of Upper Moesia in: Marjanović 2018, 77-88.

is distinctive with linear treatments. The schematisation characteristic of this new style can be attributed to the settling of large numbers of Oriental people in the territory of the Central Balkans.<sup>39</sup> During the reign of the Severan dynasty, in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, a population of Eastern origin, mostly from Asia Minor, was present in the army and inhabited major military camps and urban centres of *Moesia Superior*. These ethnic changes, besides their influence on art, led to the appearance of religious syncretism, which was noticeable in funerary rites, epigraphic inscriptions, cult icons or funerary goods.<sup>40</sup>

This kind of schematic, female representation is characteristic for the period of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, while from the 4<sup>th</sup> century onwards, female imagery on funerary monuments almost disappeared.<sup>41</sup> Although characteristic in the decoration of sarcophagi and stelai during the Empire, from the 4<sup>th</sup> century portraits, were found within the tomb. In the region of the Central Balkans and the Eastern Mediterranean we find masonry tombs with painted compositions which were a very popular funerary practice, as an expensive type of funeral was usually associated with a deceased of a high social status.<sup>42</sup> The wish to preserve of memory of the self after death created a fertile ground for the importance of the portrait in funerary art. The creation of the funerary portrait, whose origin dates back to ancient Egypt and is also connected with the role of funerary masks, the *imagines*, encompasses the desire for preserving not only the face, but also the self of ancestors, actually the human desire for “the survival of the self” and the idea of “to never die”.<sup>43</sup>

Among funerary images, those which are represented in fresco decorated tombs are the most indicative, because all of the motifs, symbols and portraits of the deceased were not available to see. To whom were these images designed to communicate and what kind of messages could they have conveyed? Art, with all of its possibilities, is always directed toward an audience, to an observer. That is why art has always transferred messages. But what would be the significance of an

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39 Srejšović 1987, 237.

40 Зоговић 1986, 41-59; Марић 2003, 105-119; Спасић-Ђурић 2002, 167, 184-185; Спасић-Ђурић 2015, 95-97, 100-103.

41 Поповић 2013, 541-556; Поповић 2014, 216-221; Cermanović-Kuzmanović 1965; Srejšović 1987, kat. 228.

42 Спасић-Ђурић 2002, 186; Зоговић 2000, 15-16; Valeva 2001, 167-208.

43 Anđelković et al. 2013, 95; Hanfmann 1973, 260, 266; Della Portella 2000, 62-63.

image rendered in a space where no viewing is possible? What is the role of this image? It could be said that all of the image qualities, content, significance and symbolism were oriented in this case only toward a nonexistent world with nonexistent observers. These paintings were designed to be seen not by “the living public” but by *diis manibus* and the gods of the Underworld.<sup>44</sup> In the world of death, for which all of these people were preparing, their afterlives and roles were predetermined, referring to the previous, the ones while living. Burials were conducted in various grave constructions depending on the deceased’s material status, with fresco decorated tombs among the most expensive methods of burial.<sup>45</sup> Luxuriously decorated tombs testified to the social status of the deceased, while the artistic decoration on the walls within them testified to owners’ ideas about life and death. The grave space was largely painted with motifs of a cultic-symbolical character. These images represented paradise and mythological figures, subordinated to the deceased and their apotheosis, which brought the portrait into the focus of funerary painting. An interesting notion is that all of the funerary equipment, such as the usual iconography and specific symbolism, similar to funerary goods in graves, were already set up (painted) in the tomb, while after the death of the deceased his or her portrait would be painted additionally.<sup>46</sup> Funerary images of women in tomb frescoes of late antiquity in the Central Balkans are divided between representations of mistresses of the tomb or maidservants who participated in the offering scene/funeral procession. Depicted as a mistress of the tomb she could be represented in a pair with her husband, the master of the tomb, as can be seen in tombs from Beška, Silistra, Osenovo, Plovdiv and Thessalonica. In rare cases, the deceased woman can be painted alone, as in the tombs from Čalma and Viminacium (Fig. 6a). The motif of a maidservant in an offering scene is preserved in tombs from Plovdiv, Silistra, Osenovo, Thessalonica, Beška and Viminacium (6b, 6c).<sup>47</sup>

All of these specific examples of female portraits can be seen as common for representations of goddesses, empresses and ladies of high social rank. Besides

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44 Špehar 2017, 20.

45 Спасић-Ђурић 2002, 186; Зотовић 2000, 15-16.

46 Поповић 2011, 238; About the associations between the symbolism of funerary goods from female graves and iconography from painted tombs in: Tapavički-Ilić, Anđelković Grašar 2013, 65-84.

47 More about the individual images of mistresses and maidservants in tomb frescoes of the late antique period in the Central Balkans, about the associations between them, iconography and symbolism in: Anđelković Grašar 2015, 269-275.



Fig. 6a – Portrait of a mistress of the tomb G 2624



Fig. 6b – Portrait of a maidservant from the tomb G 160 from Viminacium (Source: Documentation of the institute of Archaeology, project Viminacium).

remarkable similarities in gestures and postures, the most often are those associated with the fashion, specifically coiffure and clothes and all of the additional adornments, such as jewellery or headdress. All these means were used in order to create a specific manner of self-representation, associations between the aforementioned three female representations and finally a sort of ideal type which was desirable in works of art or craft.

### UNUS PRO OMNIBUS, OMNES PRO UNO

With this widely popular phrase, we can speak of one type of image which could serve as a representation of any woman, be she ordinary, a goddess or an empress. Portraying and representing a woman followed forms and designs already known and established over a long period of time. Facial features and body shapes were more or less similar for any kind of female representation, whether the woman was an empress, a mother or a wife in some private sphere of life or a goddess. Within the image, similarities existed with the gestures, clothing, shoes, hairstyles and other motifs used for decoration. Artists even used the same prospective, pictorial elements and principles, even techniques sometimes in the representation of the completely different roles of these women.

What could be different in imaging an empress, married woman or goddess? Differences can be noticed in the achievement of a certain idea, the success of an imitation, the striking accentuation of attributes or regalia, etc.<sup>48</sup> All of these specific motifs can be considered as signs which would be helpful in understanding the image on a semiotic level, signifying that the images would be much more interesting and memorable if signs that are understood by many were used in the picture.<sup>49</sup> It is very important to point out the iconographical similarities than the differences, since the similarities can be helpful in understanding the concept and the background of feminine imaging.

48 About the attributes and regalia in representation of late antique and Early Byzantine empresses in: Angelova 2015, 185-198.

49 Lester 2013, 51.

Among depictions, which are undetermined is one used as decoration of an oil lamp from Pontes, dated to the 6<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 7a).<sup>50</sup> Similarly rendered oil lamps have been found at the sites of Mokranjske stene (Fig. 7b)<sup>51</sup> and Gamzigrad,<sup>52</sup> also dated to the 6<sup>th</sup> century, with the difference that the heads are more like masks than female portraits. Masks in the shape of a human face are among the habitual decoration on Early Roman oil lamps.<sup>53</sup> Female faces were used as decoration on the handles of three paterae from Caričin Grad (7c).<sup>54</sup> Another expression of a human face, which alludes much more to a mask than a portrait, is used as a decoration of the lower part of a pitcher handle, also from Caričin Grad.<sup>55</sup> Another female face is depicted on a padlock from Ravna, dated to the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, defined as a human mask, although without such physiognomy (7d).<sup>56</sup> These images resemble each other, whether they are interpreted as human masks or as images of women. Among this pictorial poetic, which is half way between the real human face and a mask, there is a mythological example of Medusa's face, which throughout various transformations in art, was also visualised in two ways, either as a beautiful female face or a horrifying mask. Medusa's face, among others, was one of the popular decorations on jewellery, especially cameos, and in such a way directly brought her into connection with the matrons who wore them (7e).<sup>57</sup>

All of these images were created and formed according to a prototype. This is why here we cannot speak of portraiture. The facial features are characterised by a small mouth, a straight nose, large accentuated eyes and a hairstyle divided in the middle, which flows down to the chin. This idealised image, with highlighted eyes which reinforce a spiritual look and with a neglect of naturalism is something characteristic of feminine imagery of the time. Such images are found on



Fig. 6 c – Figure of a maidservant from the tomb G 160 from Viminacium (Source: Documentation of the institute of Archaeology, project Viminacium).

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50 More about this oil lamp in: Petković et al. 2015, 79-89.

51 Sretenović 1984, 221-225, Sl. 216/8.

52 Јанковић 1983, 132, 134, кат. 175.

53 Крунић 2011, 364-365.

54 Although the handle of the third patera is not preserved it can be supposed that it had the same decoration. Bjelajac 1990, 172-173, pl. XVI/18.

55 Bavant, Ivanišević 2003, kat. 14.

56 Петровић, Јовановић 1997, кат. 20, 77.

57 Milovanović, Anđelković Grašar 2017, 167-182.

Fig. 7a – Fragmented oil lamp with the depiction of a female head from Pontes (After: Petković et al. 2015, 81, Fig. 1).

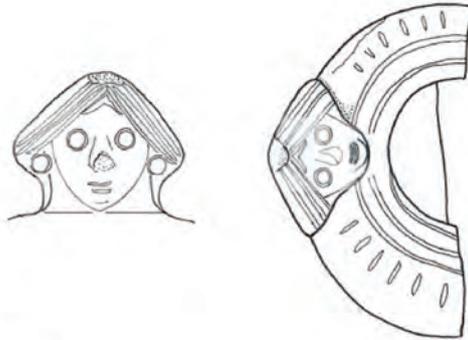


Fig. 7b - Oil lamp from Mokranje Stene (After: Petković et al. 2015, 82, Fig. 4.).

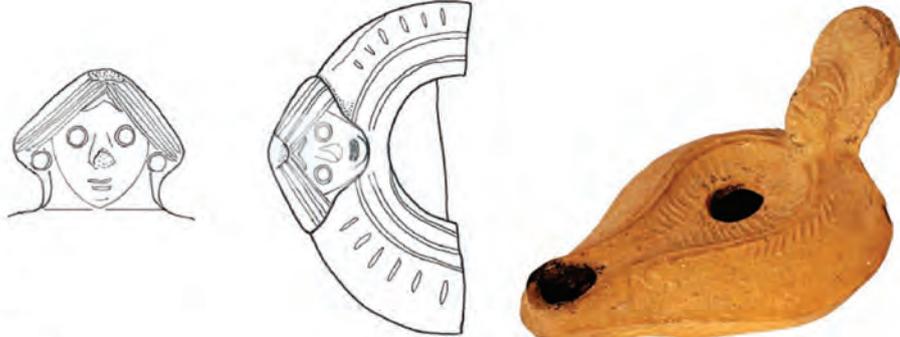


Fig. 7c: Patera with the handle ended in a shape of a female head from Caričin Grad (After: Bjelajac 1990, 172-173, pl. XVI/18).

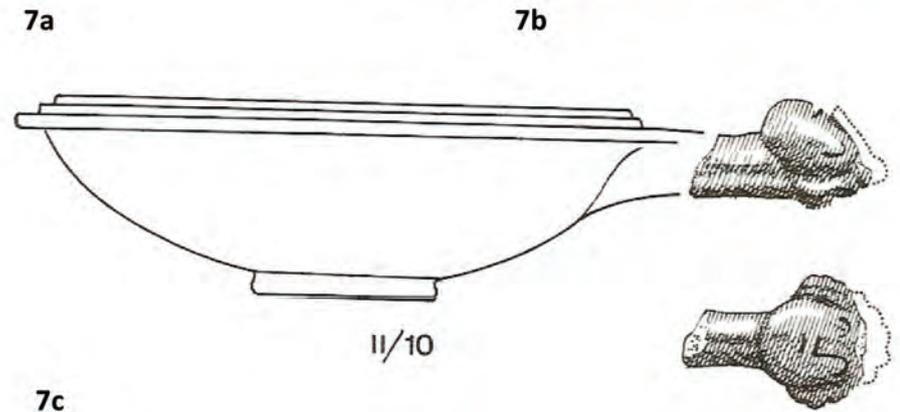


Fig. 7d - Padlock with human face from Ravna (After P. Petrović, S. Jovanović 1997, 77, cat. 20).

Fig. 7e - Medallion with cameo decorated with Medusa's image from Viminacium (Source: Documentation of the Institute of Archaeology, project Viminacium).

Fig. 7f – Cameo with en face female bust, National museum Belgrade (After: Поповић, 1992, кат. 3).



some utilitarian objects and objects of everyday use, which could be associated with their significance. These typological images were convenient for transferring messages, as was the case with the examples of coins, steelyard weights or lamps, which were decorated with the images of empresses.<sup>58</sup> This kind of image signified the figurative presence of the depicted person, especially on those objects which were in everyday use, so if this image referred to the imperial type, ordinary people were encouraged during their daily activities to venerate the imperial cult.<sup>59</sup> Image type was not the same as image, but it had its own significance and such a symbolical representation was often the personification of the imperial virtue.<sup>60</sup> That is also one of the reasons why, in such images, there was no space for details or the individual characteristics of a portrait.

Likewise, depictions on cameos which were considered to be ideal, typified images of empresses could be interpreted in another way, as images of ordinary women that followed the ideal empress type and her figure as a role model. A depiction of the aforementioned idealised, schematised type can be seen on a cameo at the National Museum of Belgrade, dated to the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century (7f).<sup>61</sup> This frontal type of representation is much more frequent for this ideal type of female representation, while the profile depiction on Roman cameos is more specific to the region of the middle and lower Danube, in the period between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>62</sup>

Another female image of the same pictorial register is represented on the rectangular, flat bone plaque of a pyxis from Caričin Grad, found near the basilica beneath the Acropolis. Within the ornament made of carvings in the shape of a fish bone, an almost complete stylised figure of a woman is represented *en face* (Fig. 8).<sup>63</sup> The complete representation is rendered in a very linear and schematic manner, while all human forms are geometrised. On a circular face, the nose and eyes are modelled with small carvings like dots, while the mouth is depicted with a small dash. Above the forehead is an ornament made of short lines, which could

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58 Angelova cat. 10-14, in: *Byzantine Women and Their World* 2003, 52-56; Petković et al. 2015, 81-83.

59 Herrin 2000, 9; St. Clair 1996, 147-162.

60 Herrin 2000, 10.

61 Поповић 1992, 403, кат. 3.

62 Роровић 2010, 203-224.

63 Кондић, Поповић 1977, 188, Т. III, сл. 2.

suggest a braid or even a diadem, while in the middle there is an adornment in the shape of concentric circles, which are repeated on both sides of the neck, and continue to the “coiffure” over curved lines. The dress is long and decorated with rhomboid carvings all along the surface, while at the endings it is edged with vertical stripes. An adornment around the neck is rendered with the same type of cuts as in the hair, and it could represent a necklace or a kind of rich collar, popular and already known from the described female decorations. The hands of the woman are not depicted, probably because of a lack of space, which is limited by a decorative frame. Although the schematic image of this woman fits with the overall expression of a late antique art, the object on which the woman is depicted itself and its context could be helpful for her identification. Knowing that pyxides were an ordinary part of a lady’s toilette, in which cosmetics or jewellery were kept, it would, thus, be appropriate to expect a representation of a woman of high social status, dressed in accordance to the fashion of the time.<sup>64</sup> However, the fact that the pyxis was found in the sacred place of a basilica, among other archaeological material that it contained and a copper cross, makes this identification difficult.<sup>65</sup> The costume is rendered linearly but the wealth of adornment, a suggestion of gold embroidery or precious stones on the collar, dress and clavi, as well as the conspicuous frontality, suggest solemnity, which was characteristic, as already mentioned, for the typological images of empresses.<sup>66</sup> The content of such pyxides is most usually brought into connection with the scenes and motifs that are depicted on them. If these are scenes from the Old and the New Testament than it could be supposed that the content was associated with the liturgy (bread or incense).<sup>67</sup> This depiction of a woman on the bone plaque of a pyxis from Caričin Grad resembles the solemn gesture of an empresses depicted on ivory diptychs, so if we really can speak of the empress type of imagery then the pyxis could have possibly contained some of the relics associated with the imperial cult or an imperial gift to the church.<sup>68</sup>

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64 Walker 2003, cat. 148.

65 Мано-Зиси 1959, 301, сл. 26.

66 The crossed lines that create the net of rhombuses on the dress are visible as the clothes’ decoration on the female depiction within the family portrait on the brick from Caričin Grad. In some cultures, female clothes were often decorated with rhombuses as distinctive female symbols signifying the womb of life, in: Gerbran, Ševalije 2004, rhombus: 788.

67 St. Clair 1979, 132-133. About the content of various pyxides in: Nees 2014, 67-77.

68 A representation of an Early Byzantine empress is depicted on the ivory plaque from Trier, most



Fig. 8 – Bone plaque of a pyxis with the female depiction from Caričin Grad (Source: Documentation of the Institute of Archaeology, project Caričin Grad).



## CONCLUSIONS

Empresses' representations on coins which were imitated and often turned in their typified or prototype images on cameos were present in the consciousness of citizens, and it is suggestive that those interpreted as "Galeria Valeria" and "Fausta" were found in the territory which was important to the Tetrarchic emperors and Constantine himself.<sup>69</sup> These female faces on cameos, without any individual facial characteristics, but with a specific hairstyle, which was accepted by women from a higher social status, were made by templates or cardboards with the image of an empress, which were used in workshops along the Danube limes.<sup>70</sup>

The portraiture of Roman women in the Central Balkans was affected most significantly by the Roman custom of imitation of the empress's image. This was still the most important method of self-representation, with a difference that, with the cessation of sculpture, the majority of production was transferred to the *arti minori*. On the other side were desacralised statues of goddesses which became models for representations of noble woman and prominent ladies during the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> century. Sculptures in draped chiton and himation, in cases where the head or some other attribute is missing, suggest adaptations which could have occurred during late antiquity, i.e. changes from a cult to a portrait statue by adding another head or by the adaptation of some other body part.<sup>71</sup>

Images of women from the 4<sup>th</sup> century onwards can be found on utilitarian objects in everyday life or in funerary practice. In funerary art the relationship between the deceased and the idealised figures could have been understood on many levels: firstly they presented analogies to roles, values and ideals generally accepted by society, and secondly, they related the individual virtues and qualities of the deceased.<sup>72</sup>

What unifies all these images is the tendency toward the fashionable appearance and accentuation of status symbols. In order to achieve the ideal type, women adopted standardised hairstyles, jewellery and types of clothing – gold em-

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probably a part of a reliquary box with relics of the True Cross, in: Spain 1977, 279-304.

69 Popović 2010, 220.

70 Popović 2013b, 189-190.

71 Tomović 1992, 63-64, 67.

72 Birk 2014, 34.

broidery and rich adornment with precious or semi-precious stones, gems, etc. Women were represented as wives and mothers, as part of a family portrait or as individuals, sometimes according to the realistic manner and Roman classical style with predominate profile compositions during the 4<sup>th</sup> century, sometimes with the characteristics of the Eastern, spiritual style and frontal images as almost the only artistic solution from the 5<sup>th</sup> century onwards, within the compositions created of lines and dots, with barely recognisable human/female features.

*Translated by Jelena Anđelković Grašar*

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