PERICA ŠPEHAR

A HOARD OF ROMAN BRONZE ITEMS FROM VIMINACIUM

During the period of Roman domination, the administrative center of the province and the military headquarters of Upper Moesia had been in Viminacium (**fig. 1**), near the confluence of the Mlava and Danube rivers, close to the modern town of Kostolac (Gde. Požarevac, okr. Braničevo/SRB), about 12 km north of Požarevac and 60 km southeast of Beograd. The extremely favourable strategically positioned Viminacium had played its role even during prehistoric times, while in antiquity it has been the meeting point of three communication routes, linking the northern part of the Balkan peninsula with the West, the East and the South (Popović 1968, 29). The arrival of the Romans on Balkan territory was followed by the establishment initially of a military and subsequently of a civilian Roman administration.

Keeping with Roman Empire's policy of conquest, soon after Roman troops emerged on the banks of the Danube, a military camp was erected at the place that will later become Viminacium[1]. This fortification probably gained significance after the legions IV Scythica and V Macedonica were transferred to the banks of the Danube during the reign of Tiberius (14-37). Nevertheless, the earliest epigraphic monuments that originate from the territory of Viminacium testify to the presence of troops from the IV Flavia and VII Claudia legions. It is believed that the VII Claudia legion was transferred in the year 45 or in 56/57, while the IV Flavia legion arrived most probably in the year 86 (Mirković 1986, 35).

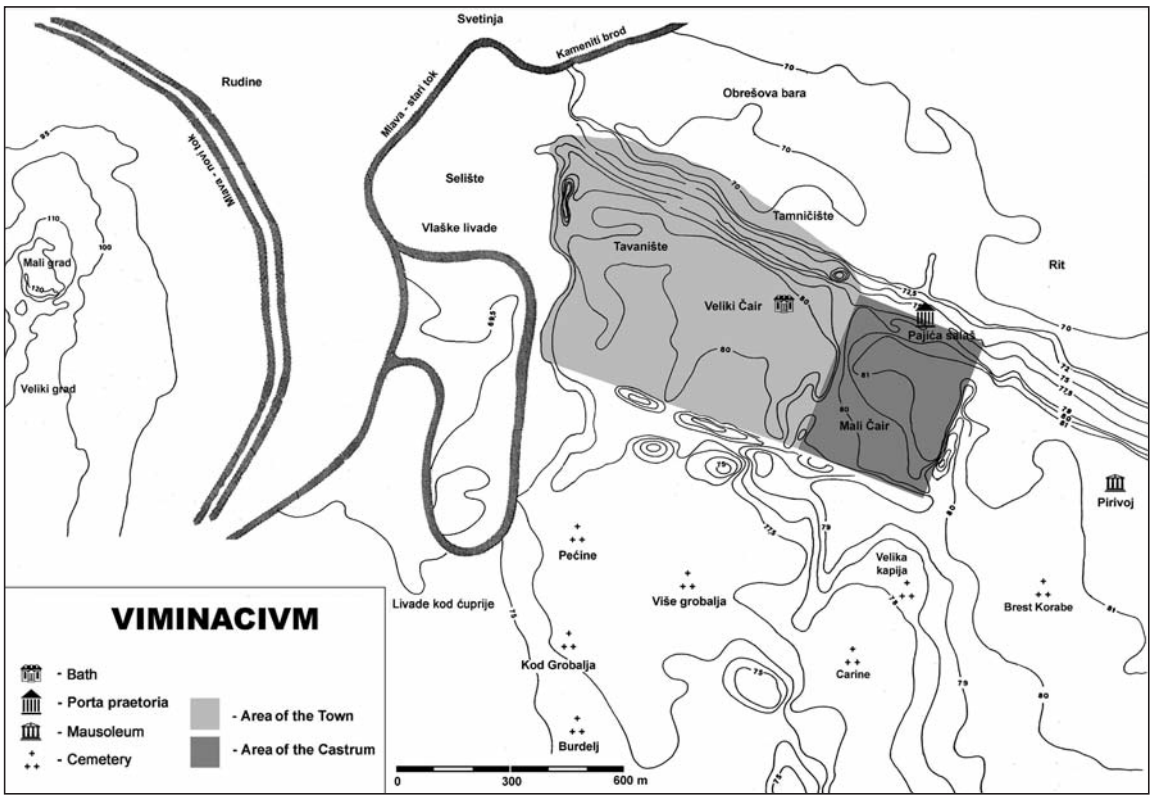

Fig. 1 Position of the military camp and other archaeological sites in Viminacium. – (After Mirković 2005, 22 fig. 5).

According to available data, one may assume that the camp at Viminacium was the seat of both units right until the year 91, when Domitian decreed that it was forbidden for two legions to be stationed in one camp. The IV Flavia legion, thereupon, was transferred to Singidunum, while the VII Claudia legion remained in Viminacium. During the wars with the Dacians, Viminacium's significance grew, so that besides the two legions in this area one may indirectly note traces of a third, the XV Apollinaris, as well as numerous auxiliary units. Otherwise, one encounters inscriptions with the insignia of the IV Flavia legion in the area of Viminacium from the 2nd and 3rd centuries, most probably indicating veterans who chose this area to settle in after they retired from military service (Mirković 1986, 36-38).

Beside the military camp, a civilian settlement of Roman citizens existed in this area (ibid. 46). The economic growth and further development of Viminacium relied on its favourable geographical position which enabled a successful trade, and, in the first place, on the natural and mineral resources of its neighbourhood. Among other things, the necropolises where 13,000 grave units containing over 30,000 individuals were found (Spasić-Đurić 2002, 181) of which only a smaller number have been published (Zotović / Jordović 1990; Golubović 2008) testify to the size of the city.

According to the evidence so far, one may draw the conclusion that Viminacium was most probably granted the status of *municipium* in the year 117 or 118, the first years of Hadrian's rule (117-138). After acquiring this status the city continued to grow, particularly during the reign of Severus. Viminacium made further progress as the year 239 drew to a close, during the reign of Gordianus III (238-244), when it became a colony. In that same year, a mint was opened in Viminacium which issued until 254/255, halting operation twice, in 248/249 and 253/254 (Mirković 1968, 56-73; 1986, 46-51; Borić-Brešković 1976, 8-10).

During the 3rd century and especially in the 4th century, cities that had the status of a *municipium* or *colonia* gradually began to lose their autonomy to central authority which led to the demarcation of the city territory, given that the fortification of settlements along the Danube *limes* was already under way by the time of the Marcommanic wars (Popović 1968, 31).

Little is known about the destiny of the city during the late Empire, particularly during the incursions by the Goths and the Huns. Finds of coins unearthed in the area occupied by the military camp suggest that the Roman fort was in use right until the conquest of the city by the Huns in the year 441 (Priscus, Fragm. 2; Ostrogorski 2007, 10).

After Viminacium was temporarily seized, a new, smaller fortification appears to have been erected, during the reign of Justinian I (527-565), on the left bank of the river Mlava (Procop., De Aedif. IV, 5; Ostrogorski 2007, 66; Mirković 1986, 30). The appearance of smaller camps is linked to the fragmentation of the legions during the late Empire, thus changing the strategy and tactics of warfare. After a series of incursions by the Avars that took place at the end of the 6th and the beginning of the 7th centuries, the Danube *limes* fell, and – needless to say – so did the fort.

On the territory occupied by Viminacium during antiquity, remains of fortifications, buildings, of a water supply network (aqueduct), several necropolises, as well as a significant quantity of small archaeological finds were discovered (Milovanović 2007; Raičković 2007; Redžić 2007), testifying to the life that went on in this area during Roman rule.

A HOARD IN VIMINACIUM

A hoard from the area of the military camp containing a variety of bronze objects also represents part of the Roman cultural heritage. It was found during field work on the land belonging to M. Janković in 1996, but the exact location of this discovery is unknown[2]. It was later purchased by the Narodni Muzej in Požarevac where it is kept today, registered under inv. nos 3087-3095.

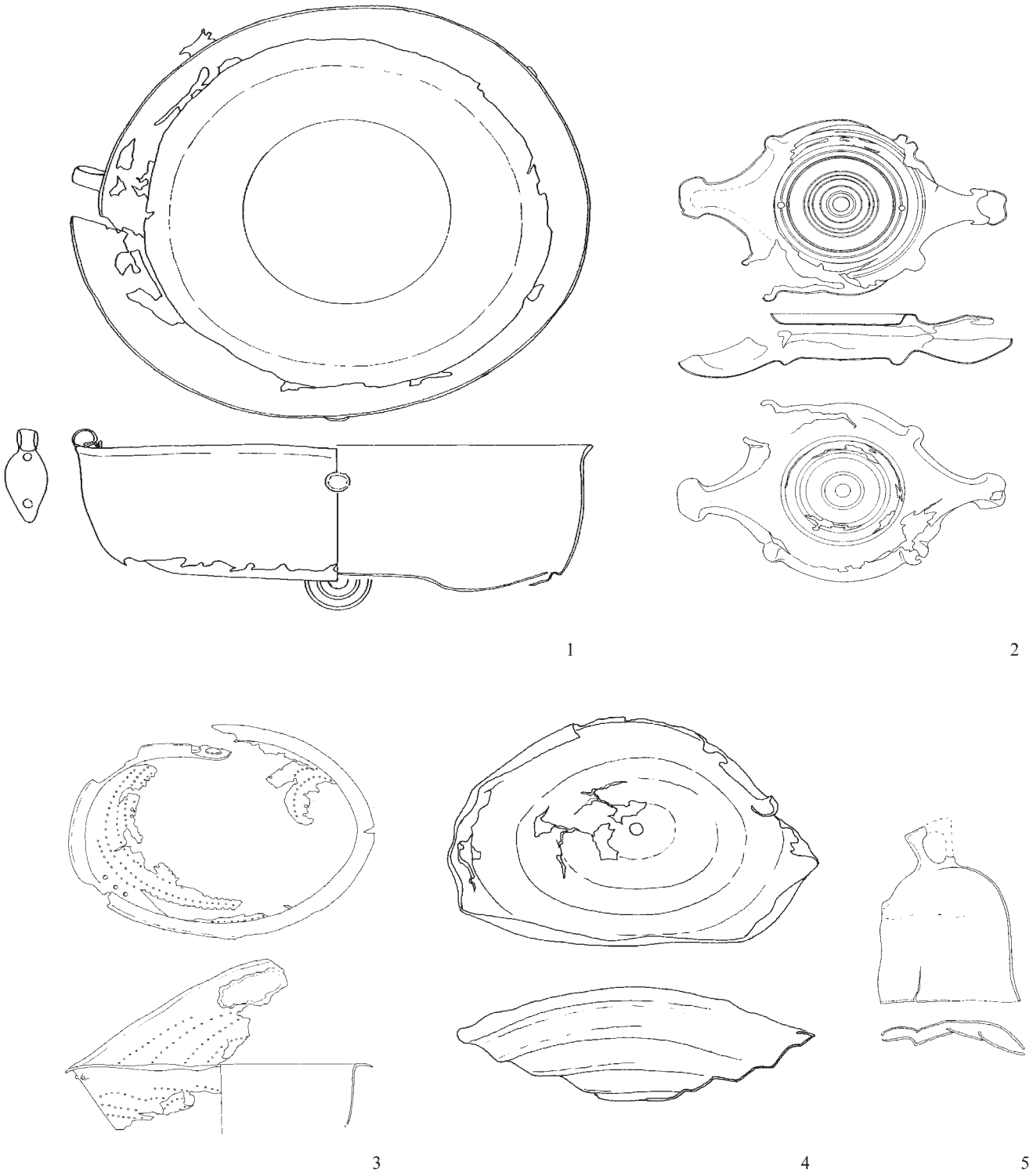

Fig. 2 Viminacium, hoard of bronze items: **1** dish. – **2** Lamp. – **3** Strainer. – **4** Object of unknown purpose. – **5** Bell. – (Drawings A. Kapuran). – Scale 1:3.

On the basis of the generally accepted typological divisions, the bronze items constituting the hoard can be classified into utensils for filtrating wine, one set of which the fragmented find of a ladle, a broken handle, and a specimen of an atypical strainer were preserved. Apart from that, the hoard consists of a dish, a lamp, a cowbell, as well as an item of unknown purpose (figs 2-3).

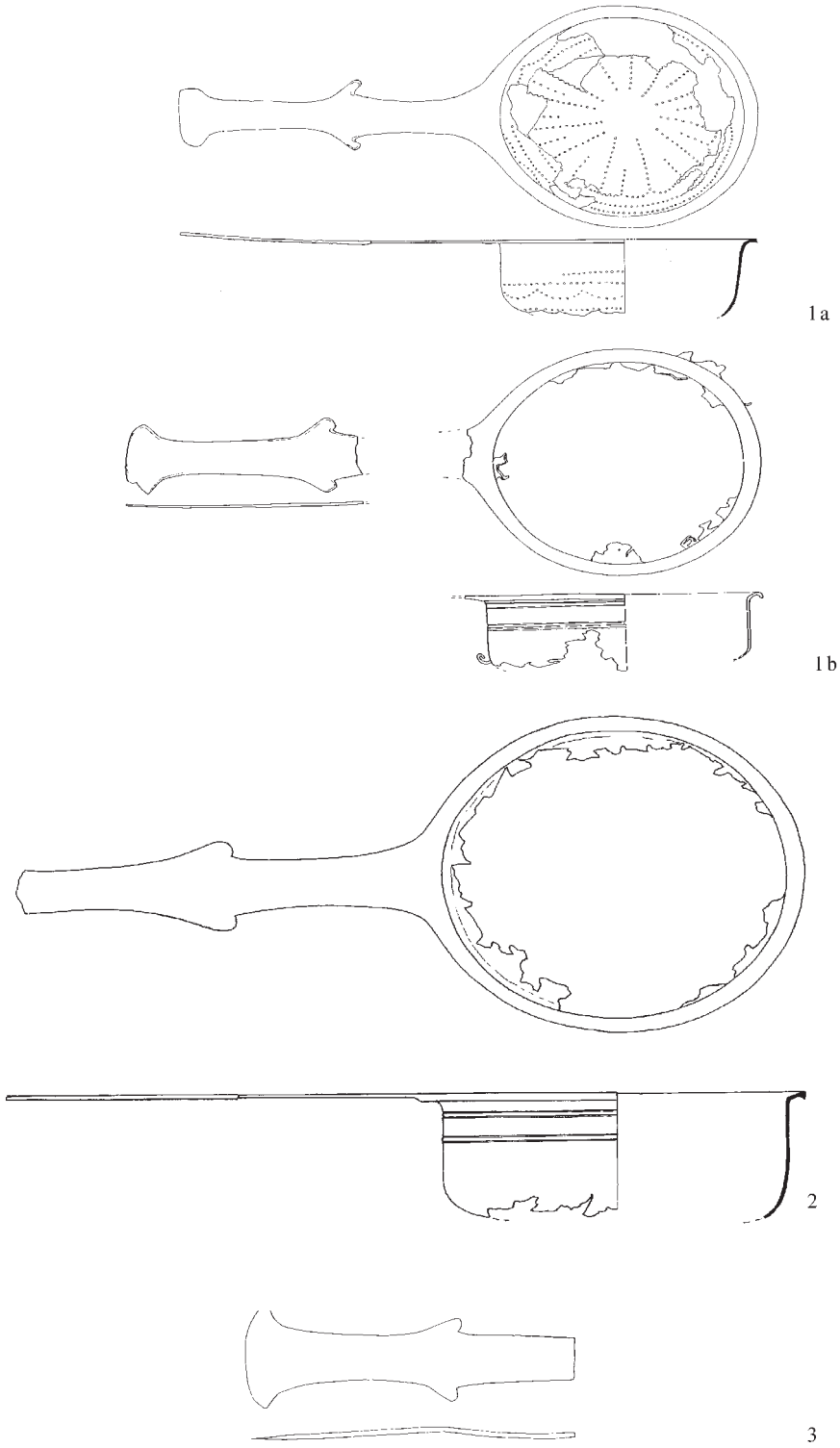

Fig. 3 Viminacium, hoard of bronze items: wine strainers. – (Drawings A. Kapuran). – Scale 1:3.

Strainers and wine presses

Wine strainers make up the most numerous group of finds in the hoard, and in professional literature they are sometimes referred to under the mistaken term of *infundibulum* (funnel), whereas the proper denomination is *collum* or *cribrum* (Vujović 2003, 65). This type of find was used for straining wine to purify and later dilute it. The said items often appeared as grave goods representing a kind of status symbol of the deceased as well as a sign of his wealth (Eggers 1951, 48).

A wine strainer actually consisted of two vessels, a strainer and a ladle (press), and comprised a set. These vessels had the same shape, with the recipient of the ladle having a slightly larger diameter in order to install the strainer inside of it (Karasová 1998, 39). If a master craftsman's stamp existed, it was located on the upper side of the strainer, and on the lower side of the handle of the ladle (Petrovszky 1993, 98).

The wine strainer appeared very early in the repertoire of Roman bronze production, as long ago as the early Roman imperial period, as a legacy of the La Tène tradition. Considering that this object was of a utilitarian nature, ornaments very rarely appeared on it, but occasionally – with the exception of the said stamps bearing the names of the manufacturers – the sole »ornamentation« consisted of small circular perforations on the strainer which could be distributed in the shape of floral or geometrical motives.

According to the generally accepted typology of this kind of find, drawn up by H. J. Eggers on the basis of Roman bronze vessels discovered in the region of »Free Germania«, one can classify five basic groups of wine strainers. Namely, according to their division, the types with long narrow handles (type Eggers 162-163) belong to the older types of strainers, like the type with the handle decorated with volutes in the middle (type E.159), while later types that evolved from type E.159 featured a handle worked in the shape of an »oar« which, instead of a volute, had small, semicircular or pointed additions (type E.160-161; Eggers 1951, 48).

The strainer typology was not, however, established only on the basis of the appearance of the handle but also according to the shape of the receptacle and by the metric ratio of the length of the handle and the diameter of the receptacle. So, besides the handle of the type E.159 vessel decorated in the middle with extrusions in the shape of a volute, the receptacle had a semispherical shape, while the relation between the length of the handle and the diameter of the vessel was 2:1. Changes came about concerning the appearance of the strainer, first of all the handle which in the next phase had small extrusions that resembled volutes, while the shape of the receptacle, like the ratio of the handle and the diameter, stayed unchanged (type E.160). A further development ensued in which the bottom of the receptacle acquired a flattened appearance, while the handle was slightly shorter (E.161). It is interesting that the said extrusions sometimes look like distorted, incomplete volutes, whereas they were once fashioned in the shape of diagonally placed pointed additions. Nevertheless, based on what we have learned so far, it has not been possible to establish a more precise chronology for the bronze vessels on the basis of the way in which the said extrusions were produced, given that they occurred at the same time in different geographical regions. Moreover, even in one set of vessels, two types of extrusions sometimes appear (Eggers 1951, 48 pl. 13; 159-162 map 45-47; Petrovszky 1993, 98; Karasová 1998, 39-46).

In the hoard of bronze vessels unearthed in the area of Viminacium, the type E.161 set (**fig. 3, 1**), the partly damaged find of a press (**fig. 3, 2**) of the same type, as well as a fragmented handle (**fig. 3, 3**) that may belong to type E.160 or E.161 were classified as wine strainers.

The wine straining set consists of a strainer (length 27 cm, diameter of the receptacle 11 cm, height 3.8 cm) and a cylindrically shaped press (preserved length 21.6 cm, diameter of the recipient 11.3 cm, preserved height 3.6 cm) that has a flat rim and a conical, smooth base which is broken, and a horizontal handle with arch-shaped edges and two slanting spouts on the sides in the middle of the handle which is fragmented in the case of the press (**fig. 4**). The receptacle of the strainer has small, circular perforations arranged in lines, two of which are straight, one wavy, on its belly. At the junction of the belly and the base, there is another straight line and then two more at the base of the strainer. The central part of the base is decorated with radiantly distributed lines in two lengths that occur alternately, thus creating a floral motive. In contrast to the strainer, the recipient of the ladle is decorated with six parallel, incised horizontal lines. The said ornament consists of two parallel lines and one more clearly defined line beneath which three thinner lines are grouped[3]. Apart from that, the strainers also include a damaged ladle with an identical shape

Fig. 4 Viminacium, hoard of bronze items: pair of wine strainers. – (Photos N. Borić).

(length 32.6 cm, diameter of the receptacle 15.5 cm, preserved height 6.2 cm), the recipient of which is decorated with four parallel, incised horizontal lines, arranged in two groups of two lines[4], as well as a fragmented handle with arch-shaped edges (preserved length 13.4 cm, width 5.1 cm) and two slanting spouts on the sides, midway on the handle.

As already stated, types E.160-161 represent a specific part of the process of the typological development of the strainer, considering that type E.160 acquired a new shape of the handle, whereas in the case of type E.161, changes also came about concerning the shape of the receptacle.

On the basis of hitherto research, one can link the beginnings of the manufacturing of type E.160 to the final decades of the production of the previous type E.159, i.e. to the middle of the 1st century. The finds from Novaesium dated to the years 38-70 (Petrovszky 1993, 99) – Sládkovičovo (okr. Trnava/SK) grave no. 68 and Kostolná pri Dunaj (okr. Bratislava/SK) graves nos 5, 51 and 53 (Kunow 1983, 141f. K 180. K 192; Karasová 1998, 41)[5], attributed to the Claudian-Neronic and the early Flavian period – argue for this kind of dating in Central Europe, similar to the finds from the graves containing cremated bodies in Třebušice (okr. Most/CZ) (Kunow 1983, 147 K 263; Petrovszky 1993, 100). In Scandinavia, however, this type is most characteristic of the period of 70-150/160, although it can be followed until the year 200 (Lund Hansen 1987, 47).

The transition in the production of wine strainers to the new type (E 161), the receptacle of which has a smooth base, in Central Europe, occurs around 140-160 (Petrovszky 1993, 101), or from 140-200 (Kunow

1983, 217). J. Kunow opted for this chronology on the basis of a hoard from the territory of Hungary (kom. Komárom-Esztergom) dated by the find of a military diploma from the year 148 (Radnóti 1938, 54. 77). A similar chronological determination is offered by S. Berke who links this type to the middle of the 2nd century, although it is possible to trace it throughout the entire 3rd century (Berke 1990, 26f.), while J. Wielowiejski attributes the beginning of the manufacturing of the new type, based on finds from Osiek (woj. Świętokrzyskie/PL), and Pruszcy Gdanski (woj. pomorskie/PL), to 180-230 and its cessation to the first quarter of the 4th century, i.e. by 310 (Wielowiejski 1985, 217 pls 18; 19, 1). In Scandinavia, one encounters this type from 150/160 to 310/320, although the finds belonging to type E.161 are mainly ascribed to the 3rd century (Lund Hansen 1987, 66f.).

The origin of the type E.160-161 wine strainers, according to the finds from Pompeii and Herculaneum which are stamped with a typical Gallic name, can be linked to Gaul (Sakař 1970, 62; Kunow 1983, 64; Petrovszky 1993, 98); nevertheless, U. Lund Hansen indicates Campagna as the region where this type of vessel came from, whereas its production later moved to Gaul and Lower Germania (Lund Hansen 1987, 60). On the grounds of the individual stamps of master craftsmen, one may conclude that certain vessels do not only originate from northern Italic workshops but also from the Roman provincial artisan centres located in Gaul and probably in the Rhine region (Kunow 1983, 64; Wielowiejski 1985, 218; Petrovszky 1993, 223; Karasová 1998, 42). A. Radnóti admits that they may also have been manufactured in the region of Pannonia (Radnóti 1938, 81).

Analogies to the wine strainers discovered in the area of Viminacium are numerous, so that for the sake of clarity we shall individually mention only those that originated from Serbia (**fig. 5**), while other analogous finds will be presented collectively, according to the specific geographical regions.

There are two localities from the territory once known as Pannonia Inferior where wine strainers have been found. The first one is the necropolis of Sviloševo (okr. South Bačka/SRB) where in grave no. 42 two finds of fragmented handles belonging to types E.160-161 have been unearthed, bearing the stamps CCONS and A/BBIC (Brukner 1995, 150 cat. no. 159; pl. 14, 159; Dautova-Ruševljan 2003, 20f. 112f. pl. 19, 2-3). The second site is Gomolava (okr. Srem/SRB) with four fragmented handles which in terms of the shape may have belonged to type E.160 or E.161. In all cases the receptacle of the vessel was damaged. Given that the said specimens were discovered in an area which (with the words of the researcher) served for metal processing, the question of the existence of a production centre in this area arises, seeing the fact that the handles have been discovered at the spot where there had been a kiln (Dautova-Ruševljan / Brukner 1995, 61f. pls 5, 28; 6, 29-31).

As for Moesia Superior, all the sites where wine strainers were discovered were located on the *limes*, along the right bank of the Danube. Thus, we have the set of a strainer and a press from the fort at Ravna (okr. Bor/SRB) dating to the 3rd century (Arheološko Blago Đerdapa 1978, 76 cat. no. 202; fig. 202), while inside the fort at Pontes (okr. Bor/SRB) six fragments of recipients of strainers were discovered, but it is not known whether they belonged to the same or to different vessels (Černač 2000, 127 cat. nos 60-62; Vujović 2003, 71 cat. nos 60-62; pl. 10, 3-4). A strainer similar to the specimen discovered in Viminacium as well as two handles and a fragment of the perforated base of a strainer were discovered at Diana (okr. Bor/SRB) where they were attributed to the 2nd and 3rd centuries (Grbić 1994, 18 cat. nos 25-29; pls 1, 3; 3, 2; Vujović 2003, 71. 75-76; cat. nos 63-67; pl. 12, 1-4).

Analogous finds also include a specimen from an unknown locality kept in the depot of the National Museum in Belgrade which, according to its shape, resembles type E.161, as well as a fragment from the receptacle a strainer (Ratković 2005, 35; 130 cat. no. 65).

It is interesting to note that certain finds, like the strainer from Seone-Vršina (okr. Podunavski/SRB)[6] and an identical specimen from an unknown location, have a spherical extrusion in the middle of the handle

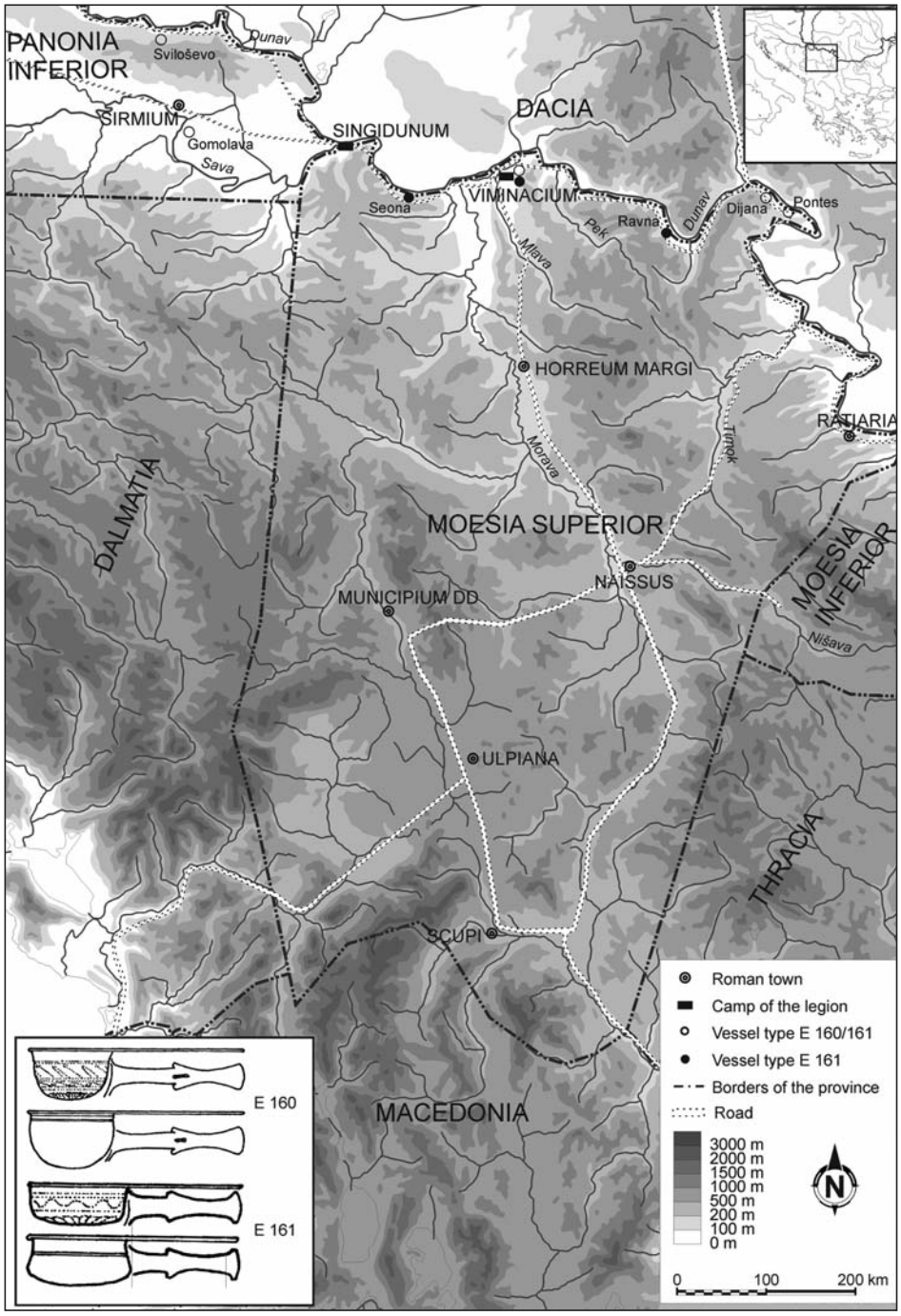

Fig. 5 Distribution of type E.160-161 vessels in the territory of Serbia.

instead of the usual reinforcement (**fig. 6**; Ratković 2005, 35f. 129. 131; cat. nos 64. 66). Given that the find from Seone has a recipient that is characteristic of type E.161, some authors classify it as such, mentioning as its analogy a find from England (Great Wackering; Eggers 1968, fig. 58, 34), although by the shape of its handle it represents a typical example with slanting extrusions.

Besides the specimens discovered in Serbia, we encounter similar finds in Croatia (Hoffiller 1903, 113f. fig. 61) or Slovenia (Breščak 1982, 26. 56; pls 13, 125; 26, 125), while we know of numerous analogous finds from the *barbaricum* north of the Roman border. A first inventory of these specimens was given by J. H. Eggers in 1951 (1951, 175 annex 69; map 46), while later research conducted primarily in Poland, in

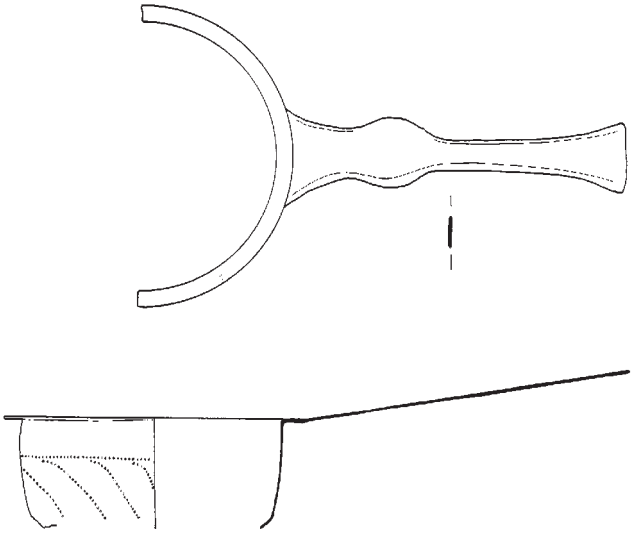

Fig. 6 Strainer from Seone-Vršina. – (After Ratković 2005, 129). – Scale 1:3.

the Czech Republik and in Slovakia (Sakař 1970, 27. 61; figs 16, 21; 20; 22, 6-7. 14; Kraskovská 1978, 4f. 8-11. 15. 18f. 28f.; pls 10, 4-6; 16, 1-4; 18, 1-2; figs 9, 5; 10, 3-4; 12, 2; Wielowiejski 1985, 218 pls 18; 19, 1-2; 20; 21, 1; Karasová 1998, 51-59. 68. 71. 73-75. 77. 80. 82. 84) as well as the important discoveries in Germany (Künzl 1993, 195-197; cat. no. D76-106; pls 136-169) add to our knowledge. Valuable data is also offered by the finds from Scandinavia (Lund Hansen 1987, 465-466), Gotland (Lindeberg 1973, 35-36), England (Eggers 1968; Kennett 1969, 137 fig. 15), Pannonia (Radnóti 1938, 70-81 pls 5, 22-6, 26; pls XXIV-XXV), as well as by specimens unearthed in Eastern Europe (Kropotkin 1970, 98 fig. 67, 11). Finds bearing the stamps of master craftsmen (Petrovszky 1993, 217) which also originate from the region of »Free Germania« provide us with a particular insight clarifying the problem of the place of origin and the development of a specific type of vessel.

Besides the aforesaid typologically clearly defined discoveries of wine strainers, another interesting specimen of Roman bronze production was discovered in the hoard (**fig. 2, 3**): namely a fragmented vessel for straining (diameter 14 cm, preserved height 4.5 cm) with a broad rim. It is interesting that the strainer has not been cast with a handle – the handle has been added on later, as the remains of three circular rivets show. It seems that the handle once broke and that three small circular perforations may have served to attach a new handle, made at an angle of 90° in relation to the said rivets. On the belly of the strainer, five parallel horizontal lines are visible, created by small circular perforations[7].

According to its shape and purpose, this type of find does not have direct analogies. Judging by the poor workmanship of the perforations that enable the straining as well as by the existence of two handles, one should not exclude that the vessel may have been secondarily used as a strainer and, prior to that, probably served as a dish. According to the generally accepted typological division of Roman bronze vessels, this vessel could – in terms of its shape – belong to the dishes of type E.67-68 or E.93 (Eggers 1951, 166. 168; annex 25-26. 36; map 25), but we cannot be certain about this.

Bronze dish

Another find from the hoard was a bronze vessel (**fig. 2, 1; fig. 7**) in the shape of a dish, with a mildly extruded flat rim of a triangular cross section and a concavely worked base which was later repaired and decorated with five concentric circles on the lower side (diameter 23.6 cm, height 8.4 cm). Directly beneath

Fig. 7 Viminacium, hoard of bronze items: dish. – (Photo N. Borić).

the rim are a leaf-shaped reinforcement, worked like a loop on its upper side, as well as the remains of two rivets, placed at the same level as the said reinforcement[8].

As the position of the rivets shows that there were reinforcements at the aforesaid spots, it is possible to assume that the vessel has been suspended from three chains. On the other hand, on the basis of appropriate parallels, we know that such vessels usually had two handles opposite each other and that they were used for serving drinks (Tomašević-Buck 1984, 162; Kunow 1983, 71)[9] or food (Petrovszky 1993, 130). Given the fact that the said rivets merely suggest the possibility that reinforcements existed but do not assure this, it remains to some extent unclear how the vessel had been carried or hung and, hence, what had been its function. If it had hung from chains, it was probably used for preparing food; if not, it was used for serving.

Taking into account that the vessel had been repaired, which is attested by the later soldered base with traces of lead along the edges which differ in structure and colour from the rest of the vessel, the possibility also arises that the vessel initially had four reinforcements and two handles and that it had been reworked later, thereby changing its function. This conclusion is drawn from the detail that the structure of the rivets does not only differ from the structure of the vessel, but also from each other. Nevertheless, one should mention that there are no traces on the vessel that would testify to the existence of leaf-like reinforcements, so that it still remains unclear whether the vessel had been repaired at some later date or whether the function of the vessel had been changed in the process of its production.

Direct analogies for this type of find are so far unknown. We know of similar vessels from »Free Germania«, though: namely, according to Eggers' classification, vessels of a similar shape and an identically worked rim would belong to the types E.78-87 which differ from each other concerning the shape of the reinforcements and the handles. If one were to observe the manner in which the said reinforcements were produced, the specimen from the hoard discovered in Viminacium would belong to vessels that have two omega handles (Eggers 1951, pl. 8, 78; Petrovszky 1993, 129).

Eggers gave the first chronological determination of this type of find, dating them to the 3rd century (Eggers 1951, 167), whereas on the basis of well-known specimens of vessels with stamps with a receptacle shape belonging to type E.79 and a handle shape of type E.78, R. Petrovszky suggested to attribute them to the

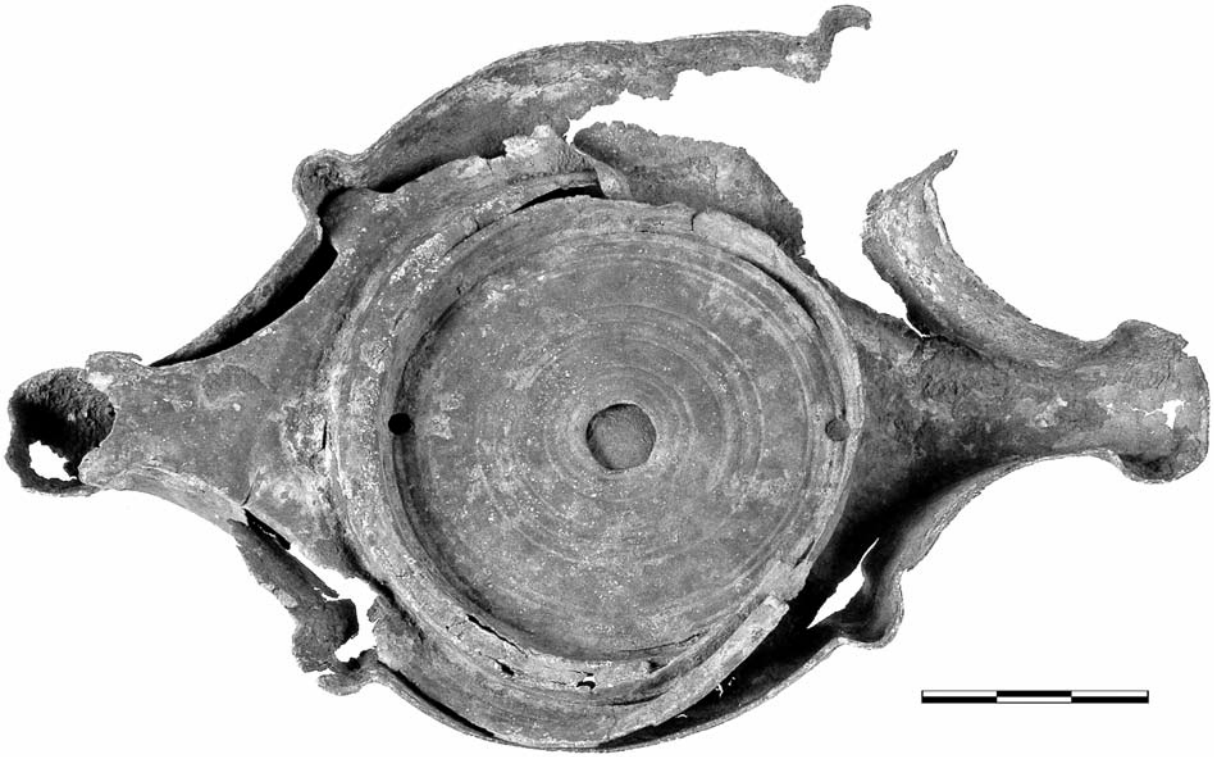

Fig. 8 Viminacium, hoard of bronze items: lamp. – (Photo N. Borić).

period between 160/180 and 230/250 (Petrovszky 1993, 129). Similarly, Wielowiejski dates them to 180-230 (Wielowiejski 1985, 195), linking their origin to Gaul or Germania Inferior (Petrovszky 1993, 130), while finds of these types in Scandinavia are attributed to the years 250/260-310/320 (Lund Hansen 1987, 87).

The first inventory of analogous finds from »Free Germania« was given by J. H. Eggers (1951, 167f.; annex 31; map 28). During later excavations, similar finds were discovered in Germany (Erdrich 2002, 66; pls 89, 1; 90, 1; 92, 1), Poland (Wielowiejski 1985, 195) and Scandinavia (Lund Hansen 1987, 462).

Bronze lamp

Another find discovered in the hoard (**fig. 2, 2; fig. 8**) was a two-part, elongatedly shaped bronze lamp (length 16.4 cm, recipient diameter 10 cm, height 2.8 cm), distinguished by a circular body with four symmetrically placed extrusions, a circular opening for pouring liquid, as well as by two almost identical nozzles, each with a hole for a wick. The receptacle of the lamp is slightly lowered and decorated with concentric circles which were also to be found on the lower side of the lamp. It is interesting that the lamp consists of two separate halves which were later joined by soldering. The lamp itself was not held by hand but served to illuminate rooms, as shown by two small circular perforations on the upper side of the receptacle, placed opposite each other according to the perpendicular axis of the lamp, through which chains were installed so it could be suspended.

A direct analogy for this sort of find is unknown, although models for this type should be sought among the solid cast lamps with volutes, with their production centre in Italy, which were characteristic of the period of the high and late Empire, i.e. in the years 200-400. I refer to lamps with two nozzles placed opposite each other which have circular receptacles and four symmetrically distributed plastic decorations. In one

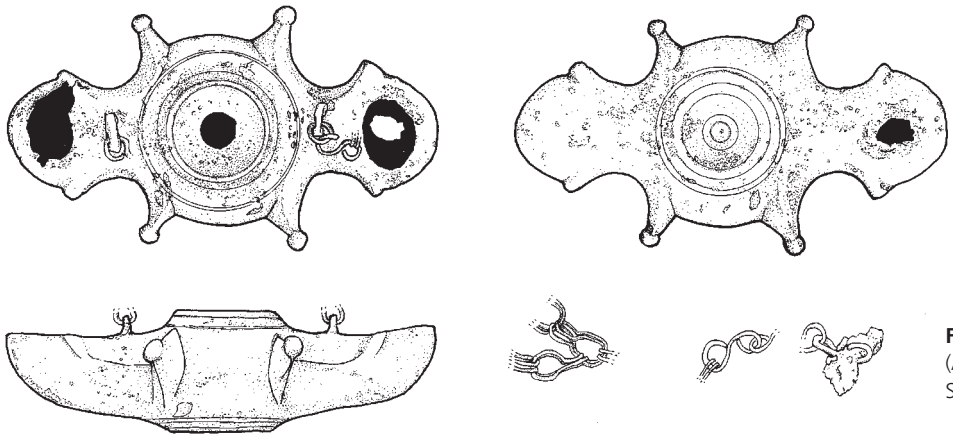

Fig. 9 Lamp, British Museum. – (After Bailey 1996, pl. 74). – Scale 1:3.

case, there are four plastic models of flowers, in another, which in its shape strongly resembles the find from Viminacium, there are four symmetrically extruded additions that end in a sphere (Bailey 1996, 60f. 63; pls 70, Q3768; 74, Q3777).

On the basis of the two said specimens, now in the British Museum in London, one may assume that the one discovered in the hoard from Viminacium to some extent represents an imitation of the said type of lamp. I am primarily speaking of the specimen with extruded reinforcements in the shape of a horn ending in a spherical addition (**fig. 9**; Bailey 1996, 63 pl. 74, Q3777). It is interesting to note the existence of an identically shaped lamp with one nozzle discovered in Germany and dated to the 1st century AD (Berke 1986, 290 pl. 38, 16).

Bell

The find of a slightly deformed conically shaped bell (**fig. 2, 5**; diameter 6.9 cm, height 9.6 cm) with a damaged rectangularly shaped loop at the upper end (the clapper missing in the hoard)[10] represents a material testimony to cattle-breeding being one of the economic activities the inhabitants of Viminacium were engaged in. Because of its size, one can definitely assume that this bell hung around the neck of a large cattle. Similar finds were discovered at several sites in Southeastern Europe, dating to the Roman period (Henning 1987, fig. 48; pl. 54, 27).

Cattle-raising had a long tradition in the Danube river basin, considering that since the very beginning of the Roman rule, it was one of the regions of the Empire from where meat and dairy products came from. The beginnings of cattle-breeding can be linked to the autochthonous population making use of the favourable climatic and geographical conditions. The arriving ethnic groups simply continued cultivating the existing tradition, expanding during the period of late Antiquity (Henning 1987, 102-105). Finally, one needs to mention that cow bells were mainly made of iron, while bronze specimens are much rarer.

Item of unknown purpose

The last find from the hoard is a conically shaped article of unknown purpose (**fig. 2, 4**), with a surface worked in relief and a small circular opening on the upper side (diameter 17.9 cm, height 6.9 cm), probably the foot of a vessel. A similar object, with a preserved, small button-like ending at its top, was discovered at the Kastell Donbach in Germany (Werner 1938, pl. 118, 1).

CONCLUSIONS

The hoard discovered in the area of the military camp mostly consists of wine strainers and ladles, which clearly indicates that their owner drank wine which could have been an import or a local product. In Southern Europe, different kinds of fruit were already being produced in the 1st century, among them grapes. Soon, however, Domitian (81-96) banned its cultivation in the provinces. Nevertheless, the vineyards were renewed almost two centuries later, during the reign of Probus (276-282). The remains of wine presses discovered in Southeastern Europe by and large substantiate this claim, as they do not originate from layers older than the end of the 3rd century. Still, the find of a wine press at Winden dated to the 2nd century implicates a certain dilemma: this chronological attribution would indicate the possible existence of provincial vine growing when the ban was in force (Henning 1987, 105f.).

The finds discovered in the hoard do not provide enough evidence to precisely determine the moment when the hoard had been buried. Nevertheless, two types of finds (wine strainers and bronze dishes) – for which it was possible to give a slightly more precise chronological attribution (based on accurately dated analogies in combination with preserved historical data) – have enabled us to roughly date the said hoard, as well as to envisage the reasons that induced the owner, at a certain point, to hide his valuables.

According to hitherto knowledge, based on well-dated specimens of wine strainers belonging to type E.161, this type of find appeared in Central Europe from the middle of the 2nd century on, throughout the entire 3rd century, whilst according to some authors this sort of vessel even occurred at the beginning of the 4th century, i.e. up to the year 310, and in Scandinavia it was produced even up to the year 320 (Petrovszky 1993, 101; Kunow 1983, 217; Berke 1990, 26-27; Wielowiejski 1985, 217; Lund Hansen 1987, 66f.).

The following find also enables us to make a more specific chronological attribution: the dish belonging to type E.78-79 which appeared at the same time as the said type of strainer, coupled with the fact that it remained in use for a slightly shorter time, until the middle of the 3rd century, in Central Europe, whilst in Scandinavia it appeared from the middle of the 3rd century until the year 320 (Eggers 1951, 167; Petrovszky 1993, 129; Wielowiejski 1985, 195; Lund Hansen 1987, 87).

On the basis of the presented dating of the vessels of type E.78-79 and E.161, and taking into account that the other finds do not offer more data for a chronological attribution, the hoard from Viminacium could be attributed to the period from the middle of the 2nd to the middle of the 3rd century.

Bearing in mind that this dating is not assured, we will have to wait for the results of future research in this area, which – in combination with the well-known historical sources and data – will be able to answer this and many other questions connected with the life that unfolded in the territory of Viminacium.

Notes

1) With the fortress in Singidunum, the camp in Viminacium belongs to the group of the oldest fortifications on the right bank of the Danube.
2) The data on the circumstances of the find were obtained from the curator of the Narodni Muzej in Požarevac, Dragana Spasić-Đurić, to whom I am grateful for the material she lent to me for publication.
3) Inv. nos 3090-3091. 3093.
4) Inv. no. 3092.
5) It is necessary to mention that inside grave no. 53 strainers of type E.159 and E.161 were found together.
6) The present-day village of Seone is situated on the bank of the stream that bears the same name and flows into the Danube, in the immediate vicinity of the one-time auxiliary fort of Mons Aureus, erected on the right bank of the Seone river.
7) Inv. no. 3090a.
8) Inv. no. 3087.
9) It is important to mention that Kunow classifies a similar vessel of type E.77 as part of a service for drinking.
10) Inv. no. 3094.

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Zusammenfassung / Abstract / Résumé

Ein Hort römischer Bronzegegenstände aus Viminacium
In Viminacium, der Hauptstadt der Provinz Obermösiens, wurde neben den Überresten der Befestigung, weiteren Gebäuden, einem System von Wasserleitungen (Aquädukten) und mehreren Gräberfeldern auch eine bedeutende Zahl an Kleinfunden entdeckt. Während Erdarbeiten im Lager wurde ein Hortfund ausgegraben, der eine Vielfalt an Bronzegegenständen enthielt, die aus Gegenständen zum Filtrieren des Weins, einer Schale, einer Öllampe, einer Kuhglocke sowie einem Gegenstand unbekannter Funktion bestanden. Der Hortfund kann der Epoche von der Mitte des 2. Jahrhunderts bis zur Mitte des 3. Jahrhunderts zugewiesen werden.

A hoard of Roman bronze items from Viminacium
In Viminacium, capital of Upper Moesia, the remains of fortifications, buildings, a water supply network (aqueducts), several necropolises, as well as a significant quantity of small archaeological finds were discovered. During field works in the area of the military camp, a hoard was unearthed. It contained a variety of bronze objects which can be classified as utensils for filtrating wine, a dish, a lamp, a cowbell, as well as an item of unknown purpose. This hoard could be attributed to the period from the middle of the 2nd to the middle of the 3rd century.

Un dépôt d'objets en bronze romains de Viminacium
À Viminacium, capitale de la province de Moesia Superior/Mésie, les restes du rempart, de différents bâtiments, un système d'adduction d'eau (aqueducs) et plusieurs nécropoles ont été mis au jour ainsi qu'un nombre considérable de petits objets. Lors de travaux de terrassement dans le camp, un important dépôt d'objets en bronze a été découvert. Il se compose d'ustensiles pour filtrer le vin, d'une coupe, d'une lampe à huile, d'une sonnaille, ainsi que d'un objet indéterminé. Ce dépôt peut être daté du milieu du 2e au milieu du 3e siècle. *L. B.*

Schlüsselwörter / Keywords / Mots clés

Serbien / Balkan / Obermösien / Bronzegefäße / Hort
Serbia / the Balkans / Upper Moesia / bronze vessels / hoard
Serbie / Balkans / Moesia Superior / récipients en bronze / dépôt

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3/08