

## PROSOPOMORPHIC VESSELS FROM MOESIA SUPERIOR<sup>1</sup>

UDC:  
DOI:  
Short communication

Received: February 19, 2009  
Accepted: May 04, 2009

**Abstract:** The prosopomorphic vessels from Moesia Superior had the form of beakers varying in outline but similar in size. They were wheel-thrown, mould-made or manufactured by using a combination of wheel-throwing and mould-made appliqué. Given that face vessels are considerably scarcer than other kinds of pottery, more than fifty finds from Moesia Superior make an enviable collection. In this and other provinces face vessels have been recovered from military camps, civilian settlements and necropolises, which suggests that they served more than one purpose. It is generally accepted that the faces-masks gave a protective role to the vessels, be it to protect the deceased or the family, their house and possessions. More than forty of all known finds from Moesia Superior come from Viminacium, a half of that number from necropolises. Although tangible evidence is lacking, there must have been several local workshops producing face vessels. The number and technological characteristics of the discovered vessels suggest that one of the workshops is likely to have been at Viminacium, an important pottery-making centre in the second and third centuries.

**Key words:** The prosopomorphic vessels, Viminacium, Moesia Superior, 2<sup>nd</sup> /3<sup>rd</sup> century AD.

The main characteristic of prosopomorphic vessels is that they display a human face or basic facial features: the eyes, eyebrows, nose and mouth, quite often also a beard, hair and ears.<sup>2</sup> Faces begin to occur on vessels as early as prehistory, more precisely the Late Neolithic,<sup>3</sup> and continue until the end of the Roman period. Roman face vessels occur over a long span of time – from the first to the beginning of the fifth century – in almost all provinces of the Empire, and have been recovered from military camps, civilian settlements and cemeteries as well as from graves, where they often

functioned as burial urns.<sup>4</sup> These curious vessels show various shapes, manufacturing techniques and sizes, but are considerably less frequent than most Roman forms.

- 1 For objective reasons the vessels discovered in present-day FYR Macedonia have not been included in here.
- 2 The term “face” is used here to denote both naturalistically rendered and mask-like human faces.
- 3 Jovanović 1975, 26.
- 4 Fülep 1958, Abb. 6.6,1, Taf. IV. 4a–b (1st–2nd c.); Heukemes 1964, Taf. 43/1; Ludovici V, 254/U18; Petru 1972, T. LXXX; Genova 1969, 55, obr. 1a and 1b; Lj. Plesničar-Gec 1971, 123, grave 744, T. CCVI/2; Brukner 1981, T. 47 and 48; Plesničar-Gec 2006, 237, T. 52/3; Mittag 2002, 192, Abb. 4.

\* The article results from the project: *Urbanization and Transformation of the City Centers of Civil, Military and Residential Character in the Region of the Roman Provinces Moesia, Pannonia, Dalmatia* (no 147001), and *Applying of the geophysical methods, GIS, GPR, GPS and new technologies in investigation of the Roman city and military camp of Viminacium* (no 147010), funded by the Ministry of Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia.

An extensive study on the “vessels with a face” by G. Braithwaite discusses the examples found in Italy and other western provinces of the Empire from pre-Roman times to the fourth century, grouped according to the place and date of origin.<sup>5</sup> Braithwaite has drawn up a typology of such vessels and conducted a detailed analysis of the faces in the attempt to establish whom they represented and what the purpose of the vessels was. Due to difficulties in accessing the material from the former Yugoslavia,<sup>6</sup> the resulting picture of their frequency and distribution does not fully match reality. Namely, Braithwaite has analyzed and typologically attributed the vessels from Viminacium, Azanja, Guberevac, Taliata and Margum but, with the exception of Guberevac which is represented by two vessels, the other sites have each been represented by a single example.<sup>7</sup> The aim of our paper is to make some

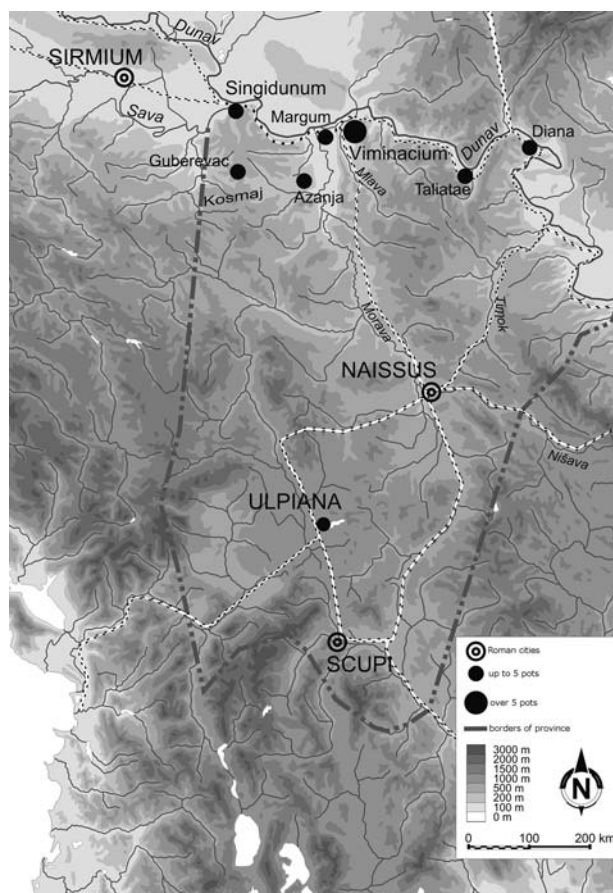
additions to that picture, mostly by presenting heretofore unpublished finds, as well as to propose some corrections.

The sites in Moesia Superior have yielded some fifty complete or fragmentarily preserved prosopomorphic vessels.<sup>8</sup> Most come from the explored section of Viminacium (about forty), followed by Ulpiana, Diana and Guberevac, while Singidunum, Margum, Taliata and Azanja have each yielded one example (fig. 1).<sup>9</sup> Rather than classifying the vessels by shape or type, which is common practice in pottery studies, we have chosen to classify them by mode of manufacture, which has produced three groups: wheel-thrown, manufactured by using a combination of wheel-throwing and mould-made appliques, and mould-made.

**Wheel-thrown vessels** (Cat. 1–30) are more than thirty, thus constituting the largest group. Facial features are plastic or, much more infrequently, executed with incising or puncturing tools. The face vessels found in Moesia Superior have the form of beakers of varying shapes but similar sizes. The body is oval, ovoid or globular, the rim more or less outward-turned, seldom grooved or band-profiled, and the base has the form of a foot, ring or flat. Most have no handles, four are single-handled and one is two-handled. The basic shapes shown by this group of prosopomorphic vessels are commonly found in the pottery assemblages of both Viminacium and Singidunum, as well as on other Moesian sites. The exceptions are the vessels under catalogue numbers 15 and 16, for which no direct analogies have been found, and 7 and 8, whose original shape cannot be reconstructed from the surviving body fragments, but they obviously do not belong to the commonly found shapes. Also distinguished from

Fig. 1. Findspots of prosopomorphic vessels in Moesia Superior

Сл. 1. Месџа налаза ѓросојоморфних ѓосуда на ѓросџору Горње Мезије



5 Braithwaite 2007.

6 Braithwaite 2007, vii.

7 Braithwaite 2007, 215, DAN Type 8, Fig. H3.5 (Viminacium); 217, DAN Type 12, Pl. H10, Fig. H4.5 (Azanja); 217, DAN Type 13, Fig. H5.3 (Taliata); 214, DAN Type 6, Fig. H3.3; 222, DAN Type 30, Pl. H18, Fig. H11 (Guberevac); 225, DAN, Fig. H11.5 (Margum).

8 Anthropomorphic and zoomorphic vessels or those decorated with applied mould-made medallions have not been included here.

9 The finds from Viminacium, Singidunum and Ulpiana have been processed by the authors of this paper, while the data on the frequency of such vessels on other sites are based on the published reports and on personal communications of excavation directors or museum curators. According to Jelena Kondić, director of the Diana–Zanes Project, that site has yielded a few prosopomorphic vessels, of which we have been able to process one. We are thankful to J. Kondić for allowing us access to the vessel, supplying background information and permitting publication. We also thank Deana Ratković, curator of the Classical Collection of the National Museum, Belgrade, for allowing access to and publication of the vessel from Azanja.

the rest by its globular shape and decoration technique is a beaker from Diana (Cat. 18) whose height is equal to its width. Judging by the complete vessels, they were between 9cm and 12cm in height, rarely higher (Cat. 11) or lower (Cat. 17). Most vessels are made from well- to finely-sifted clay. In only five cases (four from Viminacium and one from Diana) the fabric contains an amount of fine-grained sand, and in one, fossil mollusc shells (Ulpiana). Most are fired to a shade of red and have surfaces coated with a red slip or varnish, rarely untreated or roughly smoothed, while seven are fired to grey, and show grey-slipped or untreated surfaces.

Facial features are shown on the front side of the vessels, and are usually applied, but can also be incised or punctured, often ineptly, sometimes utterly schematically. The nose, mouth, beard and ears (glued to the face, rarely pinched out) are invariably plastic. The eyes are usually plastic, round or coffee bean-shaped, rarely almond-shaped, but they can also take the form of thin incised circles. The pupils are punctured or incised, protruding or in the form of shallow depressions. In some cases, the eyelashes, eyebrows and beard are rendered by incisions or by fingernail- or tool-made impressions. The face is mask-like and in some cases occupies a half or a third of the front side of the vessel just below the rim. Five vessels have their backsides decorated or incised. Cat. 4 from a grave in the eastern necropolis of Viminacium bears a thinly incised two-line inscription below the rim: *AVRIMI(?)/IVLVALEC*. S. Ferjančić has proposed the following reading: *AVR(elius) IMI(?)/IVL(ius) VALES*. The letter S has the form of the Greek sigma, but a cognomen beginning with *Imi* has not been found.<sup>10</sup> This is the only known prosopomorphic vessel from Moesia Superior with an inscription, and inscribed vessels are generally scarce: a larger-sized two-faced and two-handled vessel bearing a partially surviving inscription, *(RAT?)ARIOR*, has been discovered in the Rhineland (Frankfurt–Zeilsheim).<sup>11</sup> Cat. 13, recovered from the settlement horizon at Viminacium, shows a plastic phallus on the backside. Viminacium, mostly its southern necropolis, has yielded a few more vessels with phalluses, but given that only their smaller body fragments have survived, it may only be assumed that the sherds belonged to prosopomorphic vessels. Phalluses are not a rare occurrence on such vessels, and they have been recorded both in Moesia Inferior<sup>12</sup> and in the Rhineland.<sup>13</sup> Often two or more phalluses are depicted but, unlike our examples, usually forming part of the face and playing an apotropaic role.<sup>14</sup>

The backside of Cat. 11, the high-footed beaker from Azanja, shows zigzag lines executed with a blunt tool and two shorter vertical lines between them, while Cat. 18 from Diana-Zanes shows two ear-to-ear wavy lines between parallel horizontal lines. The Azanja vessel is quite similar to Cat. 12 from Viminacium, of which a rim, body and handle fragment has survived. The similarity relates to the shape, size and mode of manufacture as well as to the manner in which the face is rendered, especially the pellets evoking facial hair executed in the barbotine technique. Given that close analogies have been found neither in Moesia Superior nor in other provinces, it may only be assumed that this vessel had two handles, a tall foot and a decorated backside. Cat. 4 and 11 have pierced ears and the latter has a pierced nose as well. Judging by the size of the perforations, they were adorned with metal hoops. Cat. 16, an unusually shaped vessel, had pinched-out pierced pointed ears and is the only with just the nose root applied to the vessel. Judging by the size of the surviving perforation, ceramic earrings may have been pulled through them, but they may have also served for suspending the vessel. Prosopomorphic vessels with the ears, and not as frequently the nose, pierced for metal or ceramic earrings are most common in Italy, but they also occur in the Rhineland and Pannonia.<sup>15</sup>

On the Moesian sites this kind of vessels first appears in the late first and early second centuries and continues until the middle (end?) of the third century.

**Vessels manufactured by using a combination of wheel-throwing and mould-made appliqué** (Cat. 31–33) are only three. The technique consists in applying a mould-made face on a wheel-thrown vessel. All three vessels come from Viminacium and are made from well-sifted clay, two of them being fired to red, one to grey. Given that vessels identical to one another have not been registered, two vessels discovered in the southern necropolis (Cat. 31 and 32) stand apart. Although only fragments of their bodies have survived, it is obvious that the same mould was used. They differ in the colour of firing and coating, and in finishing

10 We are thankful to S. Ferjančić for the proposed reading.

11 Braithwaite 2007, 109, Pl. D30. 122, Fig. D15A; it was recovered from a cremation burial and dated to the mid 2nd century.

12 Митова-Джонова 1972, обр. 3а, 4.

13 Gose 1950, T. 51/522 and 52/528; Bakker 1975, 280, 1a; Mittag 2000, 189, Abb. 1.

14 On representations of the phallus recorded in the archaeological material (examples from Viminacium) and their symbolism, see Spasić 2008, 121–174.

15 Braithwaite 2007, Figs. C3.2,3,5,6; C6.2–4; C11.1; C7.2; D13.2; H2.5.

details of the face and hair. Technologically, they are similar to the products of the local *terra sigillata* workshop Viminacium–Margum (“softer” fabric, fired to orange-red, rarely grey).<sup>16</sup> The third vessel (Cat. 33) comes from the settlement horizon, also dated to a period between the mid second and mid third centuries. The relief surface being damaged, only recognizable are the hair, nose and prominent cheeks. Subjective observation of the fabric and colour of firing, and the surface treatment, which are commonly encountered in the second- and third-century ceramic assemblage at Viminacium, suggests that all three vessels were produced in this pottery-making centre.

G. Braithwaite lists a few groups of vessels made by using the combined technique: those of the flagon type with the face attached to a narrow neck (cup-necked face flagon or Rhineland face flagon), those she terms mask vases or beakers, characteristic of central Gaul, and those larger-sized, the so-called “planetary vases”, with narrow necks and bases, and swollen globular bodies onto which several busts are applied — hence yet another term for them “bust vases” — occurring in the quite limited area of north-eastern Gaul.<sup>17</sup> The shapes or sizes of our vessels cannot be presumed from the surviving body fragments, but they might have been similar to Braithwaite’s mask vase or beaker type.

**Vessels made in two-part moulds**, usually termed “head pots” because of their shape, can only conditionally be considered prosopomorphic. Same as the previous group, this one also consists of three finds, two of them from the southern necropolis of Viminacium (Cat. 34 and 35), and one from Singidunum (Cat. 36), retrieved from the top infill layer of the ditch in Knez Mihailova Street. They have the form of beakers, are made from well-sifted clay fired to shades of red, and show surfaces either painted in red and smoothed or coated with a dark brown varnish. The Singidunum vessel is the only of the three whose backside has survived, probably showing hair. Its fabric is “harder”, the walls are thinner and the coating more stable. All three show portrait traits, probably depicting characters associated with the cults for which they were intended. For example, those decorated with the motif of grapes and vines (Cat. 34 and 36) are likely to have been dedicated to the Dionysiac cult. The interior surfaces of the vessels bear the negative imprints of the mould, which suggests their non-utilitarian purpose or contradicts their everyday use. Cat. 34 is similar to the beakers found in the Black Sea area and presumably manufactured in a local centre (Olbia?) in the first

century.<sup>18</sup> All three come from the layers dated to a period between the mid second and mid third centuries.

Face vessels originated in the eastern Mediterranean, where they occur as early as the Bronze Age, and whence they spread during the Roman period to the western Mediterranean, North Africa and European provinces. The examples from Viminacium show some similarity to the abovementioned vessels from other regions, but our search for analogies for the Singidunum one has been in vain.

Among the prosopomorphic examples from Moesia Superior presented in here and previously published there obviously are no larger-sized ones (more than 20cm in height) such as found in great numbers in the western provinces of the Empire. The latter show shapes that look more like cooking and storage vessels (pots and *pithoi*) and can have up to three spouts and wavy rims. Apart from being used for storing, they were often used as cremation urns. All Moesian examples have the form of beakers or smaller pots 9–12cm high, similarly to those discovered in Pannonia Inferior, Dacia and Moesia Inferior. Most shapes are common in the pottery production of the Roman period, and beakers with identical or very similar outlines but with no faces occur not only in the ceramic assemblages of Viminacium and Singidunum, but also on other sites in Moesia Superior and in the neighbouring provinces.

So far two identical examples have been found neither in Moesia Superior nor in more remote regions, which suggests that such vessels were intended for a particular occasion rather than mass produced, and that their appearance depended on their purpose, but also on the inspiration and skill of their makers (fig. 2). The fact that they are found on necropolises and in graves as well as on military and civilian sites, suggests their multi-purpose use, which, however, remains insufficiently elucidated.<sup>19</sup> It is generally accepted that a mask-like face gave the vessel a protective role, whether it be protecting the family and their house and possessions, the dead or the content of the vessel.

The number of vessels discovered on necropolises (usually 50% of the total number) substantiates their use in funerary rites, either during the meal, the funeral or the memorial banquet. The view appears

<sup>16</sup> Bjelajac 1990, 144.

<sup>17</sup> Braithwaite 2007, 307–309, 313; 429–437; 458–459.

<sup>18</sup> Braithwaite 2007, 440, Pl. S2.

<sup>19</sup> Their association with the Dionysiac cult seems justified as well as the view that they show sileni and maenads, more or less skilfully depicted.





Fig. 2. Prosopomorphic vessels from Moesia Superior (photo A. Radoman)

Сл. 2. Просојоморфне јосуге из Горње Мезије (фото: А. Радоман)

plausible that the vessels were used during the funeral and then laid, empty or with a content, in graves to protect the deceased in the afterlife.

The picture emerging from the finds from Moesia Superior is not essentially different from that encountered in other provinces. Of thirty-nine vessels, nineteen have been discovered on necropolises (on sacrificial sites and in graves). Of these nineteen, seventeen come from the southern and two from the northern necropolis of Viminacium.<sup>20</sup> Of ten vessels recovered from graves, seven come from cremation burials (three from a single grave). Given that inhumation burials are nearly thrice as many as cremation burials, prosopomorphic vessels were obviously much more often used in cremation rites. The reason behind that phenomenon remains obscure and is yet another unknown surrounding this class of vessels. It should also be noted that none of the vessels recovered from graves functioned as a burial urn. Such urns were usually larger-sized, although the one found on the site of *Ulpia Traiana* and dated to the third quarter of the third century shows that this was not a rule: the urn containing the bones of a cremated child is 18cm in height.<sup>21</sup>

Wheel-thrown vessels with applied facial features might have been used in everyday life too, as drinking vessels. This is supported by the vessels discovered on town sites round Vesuvius. They have been

found among tavern utensils and were used for serving hot drinks.<sup>22</sup> This, however, does not rule out their ceremonial use, regardless of whether such rites took place in public or private places. Mould-made vessels showing portrait traits might have been intended as votive offerings or used in religious rites,<sup>23</sup> and the imprints of the moulds on their interior surfaces indicate that they were not used as drinking vessels.

The vessels from Moesia Superior come from horizons and deposits dated to the late first or early second through the third century, with the highest frequency between the mid second and early third centuries.<sup>24</sup> The oldest are the beaker from Diana (Cat. 18), the smaller fragment of a vessel from Viminacium (Cat. 26) and two vessels from Ulpiana (Cat. 28 and 29), all from deposits dated to the late first and early or

20 It should be reemphasized that this picture results from the fact that Viminacium has not been evenly explored. The necropolises are best investigated, while only smaller portions of the camp and the settlement have been excavated. Besides, the difference in the number of vessels between the two necropolises results from more than 10,000 graves being explored on the southern necropolis in contrast to about 700 on the northern one.

21 Mittag 2002, 193, Abb. 4.

22 Mittag 2002, 192–194.

23 Vikić 1971, 92.

24 The vessels have been dated by stratigraphic data and by other small finds from the layer or the grave.

first half of the second century. Judging by their technological characteristics (type of fabric and coating), the earliest pieces found their way to Moesia Superior as imports. Between the mid second and mid third centuries, as it appears from subjective observation of the Viminacium examples, there predominate beakers of local, Viminacium's, craftsmanship. But even among them there are vessels produced in other centres, although at this point it cannot be specified in which. From the technological characteristics of two Ulpiana pieces, Cat. 28 and 30, it may be assumed that they come from the same centre, which also goes for Cat. 20 and 26 from Viminacium. Although only smaller fragments have survived, the eyes are recognizably almond-shaped, the fabric is hard and the colour of firing is grey. These are the only pieces with almond-shaped eyes found in Moesia Superior. Cat. 30 from Ulpiana differs from other Moesian finds in technology and style, and is the only whose fabric contains fossil mollusc shells. Its closest analogy appears to be a vessel from the site At-Vršac, assigned to the early Roman local production.<sup>25</sup> It has been observed that the ceramic assemblage from Ulpiana includes many variously shaped vessels that are similar or identical in fabric (fossil mollusc shells). It should also be noted that a larger area with fossil remains of mollusc shells visible in the topsoil has been registered on a hill in the immediate vicinity of Ulpiana.

Just as most sites that have yielded face vessels are near rivers, so the Upper Moesian sites, with the exception of Azanja and Ulpiana, are near the Danube. The earliest prosopomorphic vessels apparently were brought by Roman soldiers and itinerant traders from northern Italy in the late first and early second centuries. Already in the mid second century they began to be produced in local pottery-making centres and, as far as is known, their production (and use?) in Moesia Superior ceased towards the end of the third century, though in some provinces it continued until the end of the fourth century.

Larger pottery-making centres where face vessels could have been produced and further distributed have not been attested, but *terra sigillata* centres have often been suggested, especially with reference to mould-made pieces. There is no tangible evidence, but there apparently have been local potteries producing face vessels. For the neighbouring provinces several centres active in the second and early third centuries have been proposed. In Pannonia Inferior, a centre at Mursa has been presumed based on the quality of the clay, careful craftsmanship and originality

of certain forms.<sup>26</sup> A Dacian example is the ceramic workshop of Micasasa where, in addition to pottery kilns, a sizeable dump of both luxury and common pottery, including two prosopomorphic vessels, has been found.<sup>27</sup> Olbia has been suggested as a possible centre on the northern Black Sea coast.<sup>28</sup> It is our view that at Viminacium – an important pottery-making centre where a complex of pottery workshops and brick-yards has been discovered,<sup>29</sup> and where *terra sigillata*<sup>30</sup> and ceramic lamps production<sup>31</sup> has been attested – face vessels were manufactured as well. In addition to the technological characteristics of most vessels, this view is corroborated by the fact that this site has yielded more than 80% of all prosopomorphic vessels discovered in Moesia Superior. Any concrete conclusion concerning issues such as the production, distribution, frequency or date of the finds from Moesia Superior requires detailed examination of the ceramic assemblages from all excavated sites. Prosopomorphic vessels have not been found among the examined ceramics from *Naissus* (excavations within the fortress of Niš), nor are there any at *Mediana* (Niš). According to personal sources, none have been found in the examined ceramic assemblages from the sites of *Horreum Margi* (Ćuprija), *Castra Novae* (Čezava), *Smorna* (Boljetin), *Transdierna* (Tekija) and *Saldum*,<sup>32</sup> but even though such vessels were not produced in great numbers it is not very likely that none are to be expected on other Roman sites.

## CATALOGUE

A total of 35 pieces have been catalogued.<sup>33</sup> They have been dated by the context of find, by the associated small finds, mostly coins and pottery, as well as by stratigraphic data, while the colour of firing, for the accessible pieces, has been established according to the Munsell colour charts.<sup>34</sup>

25 Jovanović 1975, 26–27, T. IV.

26 Brukner 1981, 36.

27 Mitrofan 1991, fig. 12.

28 Braithwaite 2007, 440.

29 Raičković 2007.

30 Bjelajac 1990, 143–147.

31 Korać 1995.

32 We would like to thank Dr Miloje Vasić, Dr Radmila Zotović, Dr Sofija Petković and Gordana Jeremić M. A. for the information.

33 Apart from the already published finds from Veliki Gradac, Guberevac and Margum (Veličković-Todorović 1969, 135, T. LII; Kondić and Zotović 1978, 238, kat. 182; Braithwaite 2007, 214, Fig. H3.3; 215, H3.5; 217, Pl. H10, Fig. H4.5, H5.3; 222, Pl. H18, Fig. H11; 225, Fig. H11.5), the catalogue does not include vessels too fragmentarily preserved to permit any analysis.

34 Munsell 1975.

1. Almost complete beaker, well-sifted clay fired to red, surface red-slipped. Below vertical rim, plastic eyes with eyebrows, nose and mouth; one ear on either side; eyebrows punctured.  
Findspot: Viminacium, Pećine, 1987, G-5133, C: 12352 (Plate I/1).  
Date: Mid-2nd – mid-3rd century.  
\*\*\*Dated by the stratigraphic data, as it was the only find in a burial pit.
2. Almost complete one-handled beaker made from clay with fine-grained sand, fired to buff red (5YR 7/6), surface untreated. Below prominent shoulder, plastic eyes, nose, both ears and sharply pinched-out beard; eyebrows, moustaches and beard rendered by oblique incisions. "Folded" depression on the body round the handle.  
Findspot: Viminacium, Više Grobalja 1984, Sondage 52, sunken pit, C: 2355 (Plate I/2).  
Date: Mid-2nd – mid-3rd century.  
Published by Zotović and Jordović 1990, 13, fig. 5; Braithwaite 2007, Fig. H3, DAN type 8, no. 5.  
\*\*\*Discovered in a sunken pit below the sacrificial site level and above the layer of burials, and dated to the mid 2nd – beginning of 3rd century.
3. Almost complete beaker, well-sifted clay fired to red (5YR 7/6), red-slipped surface. Plastic eyebrows, nose, beard and ears; eyes and pupils rendered by thinly incised circular lines; eyebrows and beard accentuated by wider incisions.  
Findspot: Viminacium, Pećine, 1989, S. 426, sacrificial site 1, A: 1524a (Plate I/3).  
Date: Mid-2nd – mid-3rd century.
4. Almost complete beaker (rim missing), well-sifted clay fired to red (7.5YR7/6), red-slipped surface. Plastic eyes with eyebrows, nose, mouth, beard and ears; eyebrows accentuated by thin incisions, ears pinched out, asymmetrically set and pierced. On the opposite side, just below the rim, two-line inscription incised after firing: AVRIMI(?)/IVLVALEC.  
Findspot: Viminacium, Pirivoj, 2006, S. 22, G1-60, C: 977 (Plate I.4).  
Date: 2nd century.  
\*\*\*Discovered in a cremation grave in association with a two-beaked lamp and dateable by the context of find.
5. Rim, body, base and handle fragments of a goblet, well-sifted clay fired to red (5YR 6/6), brown-red-slipped surface. Preserved plastic left eye, ear and nose.  
Findspot: Viminacium, Više Grobalja, 1985, S. 149, G1-1348, C: 9177 (Plate II/5).  
Date: Turn of the 2nd and 3rd centuries.
6. Rim and body fragments of a pot, well-sifted clay fired to red (2.5YR 5/8), surface untreated. Plastic eyes with eyebrows, nose, mouth, beard and ears; eyebrows and beard accentuated by using a pointed tool.  
Findspot: Viminacium, Pećine 1983, S. 334, G1-719, C: 7864 (Plate II/6).  
\*\*\*Discovered in a cremation grave in association with another two vessels of the kind (Cat. 7 and 8). Dated by the associated grave goods and stratigraphic context.
7. Body fragment of a vessel, well-sifted clay fired to red (2.5YR 6/8), red-varnished surface. Plastic right eye with eyebrow, nose, mouth and beard; eyebrow and beard accentuated by punctures.  
Findspot: Viminacium, Pećine, 1983, S. 334, G1-719, C: 7864a (Plate II/7).  
Date: Turn of the 2nd and 3rd centuries.
8. Body fragment of a vessel made from clay containing fine-grained sand, fired to red (2.5YR 6/8), surface untreated. Preserved plastic left eye with eyebrow, ear and nose; eyebrow and beard accentuated by incisions.  
Findspot: Viminacium, Pećine, 1983, S. 334, G1-719, C: 7864b (Plate II/8).  
Date: Turn of the 2nd and 3rd centuries.
9. Rim and body fragment of a vessel, well-sifted clay fired to red (5YR 6/1), grey-slipped surface. Preserved left eye and nose; nostrils punctured.  
Findspot: Viminacium, Pećine, 1987, sacrificial site, A: 901 (Plate II/9).  
Date: Turn of the 2nd and 3rd centuries.
10. Rim and body fragment of a goblet, well-sifted clay fired to red (5YR 7/6), red-slipped surface. Below the rim, eyes with eyebrows and nose; eyelashes and eyebrows accentuated by oblique incisions; pupils punctured.  
Findspot: Viminacium, Više Grobalja, 1984, S. 57/58, C: 3859 (Plate II/10).  
Date: Second half of the 2nd – beginning of the 3rd century.
11. Whole two-handled high-footed beaker, well-sifted clay fired to red (2.5YR 6/8),<sup>35</sup> red-slipped surface. Plastic eye rims and pupils, nose, mouth and ears; face spotted with irregularly-shaped pellets, probably in imitation of facial hair; nose and both ears pierced.

35 The colour of firing for Cat. 11 and 18 has been determined after conservation and therefore cannot be taken as reliable.



- Findspot: Azanja, Dobri Do, 1966, No 4018/III<sup>36</sup> (Plate III/11).  
Date: Second half of the 2nd century – beginning of the 3rd?  
Published by Braithwaite 2007, 217, DAN Type 12, Plate H10, Fig. H4.5.
12. Rim, body and handle fragment of a pot, well-sifted clay fired to red (2.5YR 6/8), red-slipped surface. Preserved plastic right eye rims and pupil, left eye partially, nose, mouth partially, and right ear; face spotted with irregularly-shaped pellets, probably in imitation of facial hair.  
Findspot: Viminacium, Više Grobalja, 1974, K: 58 (Plate III/12).  
Date: 2nd – mid-3rd century.
13. Rim and body fragments of a vessel, well-sifted clay with a quartz content, fired to grey (5YR 5/1), surface untreated. On one side, plastic eyes with eyebrows, nose and left ear. On the opposite side, on upper body, a phallus set horizontally.  
Findspot: Viminacium, Rit, 2004, settlement layer, A: 418 (Plate III/13).  
Date: 2nd century.  
\*\*\*The vessel is larger than is common for this kind of pottery and interesting because of the phallus depicted on the backside. It was discovered in the 2nd-century settlement horizon in association with smaller sherds of two vessels of unidentifiable shapes bearing unrecognizable appliqué.
14. Rim and body fragments of a beaker, well-sifted clay fired to grey (2.5YR 6/0), surface unevenly slip-coated. Preserved plastic eyes with eyebrows, mouth and left ear; eyebrows accentuated by vertical incisions, pupils by deep-incised lines; facial features executed awkwardly, set asymmetrically and shaped differently.  
Findspot: Viminacium, Zanatski Centar, 1985, A: 2383 (Plate IV/14).  
Date: Second half of the 2nd – beginning of the 3rd century.  
\*\*\*Discovered within the complex of potteries, but the exact findspot remained unrecorded. Dated by the associated ceramic finds.
15. Rim, body, base and handle fragments of a beaker, fired to red. Plastic eyes, nose, mouth and ears.  
Findspot: Viminacium, Više Grobalja, 1985, S. 152, G-1688, C: 9584 (Plate IV/15).  
Date: 2nd century.  
\*\*\*Discovered in a grave in association with 2nd-century coins.
16. Rim and body fragment of a goblet, finely-sifted clay fired to light red (2.5YR 6/8). Plastic right eye and ear, and nose; ear pierced.  
Findspot: Viminacium, Pećine, 1983, S. 345 (Plate IV/16).  
Date: Second half of the 2nd – beginning of the 3rd century.
17. Body and base fragment of a goblet, well-sifted clay fired to red (2.5YR 6/8), surface untreated.  
Findspot: Viminacium, Više Grobalja, 1984, S. 66, G1-559, C: 4601 (Plate IV/17).  
Date: Second half of the 2nd century.  
\*\*\*Dated by the associated grave offerings, ceramic vessels and a lamp.
18. Whole globular vessel made from clay containing a small amount of sand, fired to red (2.5YR 4/8).<sup>37</sup> Plastic round eyes, nose, mouth, beard and ears; sharply-outlined right eye rim, and rounded left one; eyebrows, eyelashes and beard accentuated by oblique incisions.  
Findspot: Diana-Zanes, 1992, S. 70, southeast intramural area, demolition layer, C-31 (Plate IV/18).  
Date: 2nd century.  
\*\*\*Discovered in the demolition layer of the earlier fortress dated to the turn of the 2nd and 3rd centuries. Fragments of *terra sigillata* vessels of south-Italic provenance have also been found.
19. Body fragment of a vessel, well-sifted clay fired to red (2.5YR 5/8), red-varnished surface. Preserved plastic left eye and nose; nostrils rendered by shallow depressions.  
Findspot: Viminacium, Velika Kapija, 1979, S. XXI, C: 31 (Plate IV/19).  
Date: 2nd century – mid-3rd century?
20. Body fragment of a vessel, finely-sifted clay fired to grey (7.5YR 6/0), black-slipped surface. Partially preserved plastic eyes and nose.  
Findspot: Viminacium, Velika Kapija 1979, S. IX, C: 180 (Plate V/20).  
Date: 2nd century – mid-3rd century?
21. Body fragment of a vessel, well-sifted clay fired to red (5YR 7/8), red-slipped surface. Preserved plastic nose, and eye rendered by circular incision.  
Findspot: Viminacium, Više Grobalja, 1978, S. IX, Bloc 1, C: 911 (Plate V/21).  
Date: First half of the 3rd century.  
\*\*\*Dated by the coin and ceramic finds from the layer.

36 The vessel was purchased for the National Museum in 1966 and entered into the inventory records under no. 4018/III. It was discovered 7km south of Azanja on the site known as "Mezul" between Dobri Do and Vlaški Do in association with a glass *balsamarium* and two coin hoards (2nd and 3rd centuries) deposited in the vessels. We would like to thank Dr Miloje Vasić for his detailed description of the context of find.

37 See note 34 above.



22. Body fragment of a vessel, well-sifted clay fired to grey (2.5Y 7/0), grey-varnished surface. Preserved plastic right eye, partially left eye, eyebrows and nose; eyebrows accentuated by thin vertical incisions crossed with a long horizontal line.  
Findspot: Viminacium, Amphitheatre, 2008, Sq. G/8 (SE corner), layer of yellow-brown earth<sup>38</sup> (Plate V/22).  
Date: 2nd century.
23. Rim and body fragment of a vessel fired to light brown (10YR 7/3), dark brown-slipped surface. Plastic left eye and eyebrow, nose and beard; eyebrow arched, accentuated by deep vertical incisions.  
Findspot: Viminacium, Amphitheatre, 2008, Sq. F/3 (SE corner), layer of yellow-brown earth (Plate V/23).  
Date: 2nd century.
24. Rim and body fragment of a vessel, finely-sifted clay fired to dark brown-red (2.5YR 6/6–5/8), surface untreated. Plastic left eyebrow and nose with damaged tip.  
Findspot: Viminacium, Amphitheatre, 2008, Sq. F/3 (SE corner), layer of yellow-brown earth (Plate V/24).  
Date: 2nd century.  
\*\*\*All three vessels (Cat. 22–24) found in the amphitheatre area were recovered from 2nd-century deposits.
25. Rim and body fragments of a vessel, well-sifted clay fired to red (5YR 7/6), red-slipped surface. Below the rim, eyebrows and nose; eyebrows accentuated by vertical incisions; nostrils punctured.  
Findspot: Viminacium, Više Grobalja, 1984, S. 51, 52, 62, 63 and 72, sacrificial site, A: 1485 (Plate V/25).  
Date: Second half of the 2nd – beginning of the 3rd century.
26. Body fragment of a vessel, finely-sifted clay fired to grey (7.5YR 6/0), grey-varnished surface. Preserved part of plastic eye and nose; eyebrow marked by incisions; pupil plastic.  
Findspot: Viminacium, Više Grobalja, 1985, S. 177, G1-1696, C: 11715 (Plate V/26).  
Date: Turn of the 1st and 2nd centuries.  
\*\*\*Discovered in a cremation grave and dated by the associated coins and other small finds, such as a bone pin with the head in the form of a female bust.
27. Rim, body and base fragment of a vessel, sifted clay fired to red (5YR 6–7/6). Plastic mouth, beard and ears; oblique lines on pinched-out beard.  
Findspot: Viminacium, Kod Koraba, 2005, S. 72, G1-102, C: 329 (Plate V/27).  
Date: 2nd century.
28. Body fragment of a vessel, finely-sifted clay fired to red, red-slipped surface. Plastic left eye, nose with nostrils, mouth and beard; eyebrow rendered by irregularly patterned thin incisions.  
Findspot: Ulpiana, North Gate, 1982, Sq. CD/7, excavation layer XII-XVI, A: 1574 (Plate V/28).  
Date: First half of the 2nd century.
29. Body fragment of a vessel, finely-sifted clay fired to red, red-slipped surface. Left eye, with punctures above and plastic arch bearing short deep incisions beneath, nose and mouth plastic; eyebrow rendered by deep oblique incisions.  
Findspot: Ulpiana, North Gate, 1982, Sq. F/7 (relat. depth 1.30–1.65m), A: 1810 (Plate V/29).  
Date: First half of the 2nd century.
30. Rim and body fragment of a vessel made from clay containing fossil mollusc shells, fired to grey, surface untreated. Plastic eyes with accentuated pupils, and nose; eyebrows rendered by deep incisions.  
Findspot: Ulpiana, North Gate, 1981, Tower 2, A: 284 (Plate V/30).  
Date: 2nd century.
31. Body fragment of a vessel, finely-sifted clay fired to red (5YR 6/8), surface red-slipped and smoothed. Wide face shows eyes with eyebrows, nose and mouth; forehead surmounted by two pine cones (grape clusters?).  
Findspot: Viminacium, Pećine, 1983, S. 334, sacrificial site level, C: 9364 (Plate VI/31).  
Date: Mid-2nd – mid-3rd century.  
\*\*\*Discovered on the sacrificial site level and dated by stratigraphic data and other ceramic finds.
32. Body fragment of a vessel, finely-sifted clay fired to grey (5YR 5/1), surface grey-slipped and smoothed. Preserved eyes with eyebrows and part of nose; in the hair above forehead, two pine cones (grape clusters?).  
Findspot: Viminacium, Pećine, 1981, S. 264, pit, C: 3627 (Plate VI/32).
- 38 The processing of the pottery recovered from the amphitheatre area being underway, the vessels have not yet been numerically designated.

- Date: Second half of the 2nd – beginning of the 3rd century.  
 \*\*\*Comes from the same mould as Cat. 31, but is fired to grey and grey-painted. Dated by the associated ceramic finds.
33. Body fragment of a vessel, well-sifted clay fired to red (2.5YR 5/8), surface untreated. Preserved eyes, nose, prominent cheeks; lower face damaged.  
 Findspot: Viminacium, Rit, 2004, S. 6, A: 163a (Plate VI/33).  
 Date: Second half of the 2nd – beginning of the 3rd century.  
 \*\*\*Discovered in the settlement horizon and dated by the stratigraphic context and other small finds.
34. Rim, body, base and handle fragment of a goblet, finely-sifted clay fired to red (2.5YR 6/6), red-slipped surface. Preserved eyes with eyebrows, nose, mouth and prominent beard; hair adorned with vines and grapes.  
 Findspot: Viminacium, Pećine, 1983, S. 340, sacrificial site, C: 9763 (Plate VI/34).  
 Date: Second half of the 2nd – beginning of the 3rd century.
- \*\*\*Originally probably two-handled. Dated by the stratigraphic context and other ceramic finds.
35. Rim and body fragment of a vessel, finely-sifted clay fired to red (10YR 7/1), surface red-slipped and smoothed. Preserved eyes with eyebrows, nose, mouth and wavy hair.  
 Findspot: Viminacium, Više Grobalja, 1984, S. 72, sacrificial site, C: 3267 (Plate VI/35).  
 Date: Mid-2nd – mid-3rd century.
36. Rim, body and handle fragment of a vessel, well-sifted clay fired to red (10R 5/8), dark brown-varnished surface. On one side, facial features and portion of hair above forehead. Backside barely decipherable, possibly showing grape vines.  
 Findspot: Singidunum (Belgrade), 30 Knez Mihailova St, 1992, S. I-II, ditch infill, A: 1172 (Plate VI/36).  
 Date: End of the 2nd – early decades of the 3rd century.  
 Published by Ivanišević and Nikolić-Djordjević 1997, fig. 32.  
 \*\*\*Discovered in the upper infill layers of the ditch in Knez Mihailova St. and dated by the context of find.

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**Резиме**

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## ПРОСОПОМОРФНЕ ПОСУДЕ СА ПРОСТОРА ГОРЊЕ МЕЗИЈЕ

**Кључне речи:** Просопоморфне посуде, *Viminacium*, Горња Мезија, II-III век нове ере.

Основна карактеристика просопоморфних посуда је приказан лик, односно црте лица – очи са обрвама, нос и уста, а не ретко, брада, коса и уши. Током антике, просопоморфне посуде се јављају у дугом распону, од I до почетка V века, у скоро свим провинцијама Римског царства, а налажене су, како у логорима, насељима и на некрополама, тако и у самим гробовима. Ова неуобичајена група посуда јавља се у различитим облицима, технологијама израде и величинама, али је, у односу на већину римских форми, заступљена знатно мањим бројем налаза. Обимну студију о „посуодама са лицем“ објавила је G. Braithwaite обрадивши примерке из Италије и западних провинција Римског Царства од пре римског периода до IV века. Због отежаних околности приликом прикупљања грађе са наших простора, слика о распрострањености и заступљености ових посуда на просторима Горње Мезије не одражава праву ситуацију. Циљ овог рада је да приказану слику допуни, углавном до сада непубликованим налазима, али и примерцима код којих је била потребна извесна корекција.

На локалитетима Горње Мезије нађено је око 50 просопоморфних посуда. Највише примерака потиче са истраженог простора Виминацијума (око 40), а затим Улпијане, Дијане и Губеревца, док је по један налаз евидентиран у Сингидунуму, Маргуму, Талијати и Азањи (сл. 1). У зависности од начина израде, односно тога да ли је коришћено витло, калуп и витло или само калуп, издојене су три основне групе.

**Посуде рађене на витлу** (кат. 1–30) представљене су највећим бројем, са преко 30 налаза. Рађене су у форми пехара различитих облика, али сличних димензија, а црте лица су најчешће аплициране. Са изузетком неколико налаза, основни облици уобичајени су у керамичкој производњи II и III века и јављају се како на Виминацијуму и у Сингидунуму, тако и на другим античким локалитетима. Најбројнији су пехари рађени од добро пречишћене глине печене у црвеним тоновима, бојене или фирнисоване, ређе необрађене површине. Црте лица су често невешто изведене, а у неким случајевима потпуно шематизоване. Потребно је поменути неколико примерака који на делу посуде супротном од лика имају занимљив додатак – на једном је непосредно испод обода урезан натпис у два реда (кат. 4), на другом је пластично изведен фалус (кат. 13), а на двема посудама су тупом алатком изведени украси (кат. 11 и 18). Просопоморфне посуде рађене на витлу јављају се крајем I, односно почетком II века и континуирано трају до средине III века.

**Посуде рађене комбинацијом витла и калупа** (кат. 31-33), заступљене су са свега три примерка, сачуваних у мањим деловима, те није било могуће одредити њихове облике нити димензије. Рађене су од добро пречишћене глине, две су црвене, а једна сиве боје печења. Имајући у виду да до сада нису регистровани идентични примерци, издвајају се две посуде (кат. 31 и 32), за које је евидентно да су израђене у истом калупу, а разликују се по боји печења и бојења, као и детаљима дораде лика и косе. Према технолошким карактеристикама сличне су налазима произведеним у домаћој радионици за израду тера сигилате Виминацијум – Маргум (глина „мекше“ фактуре, оранжцрвене, ретко сиве боје печења). Субјективним посматрањем технолошких карактеристика – структуром и бојом печења глине, као и обрадом површине, међу керамичким материјалом II и III века нађеним на Виминацијуму уобичајеном – можемо претпоставити да су све три посуде израђене у овом центру.

**Посуде рађене у дводелним калупима** (кат. 34-36), због свог облика људске главе, тзв. „haed-pots“, само се условно могу назвати просопоморфним. Као и претходна група, заступљене су са три налаза, од којих два (кат. 33 и кат. 34) потичу са јужне некрополе Виминацијума, док је трећи, нађен у Сингидунуму (кат. 36), представљао садржај завршне фазе засипања рова у Кнез Михаиловој улици. Посуде имају форму пехара и направљене су од добро пречишћене глине, печене у црвеним тоновима, црвено бојене и глачане, или фирнисоване површине. Лице и коса су прецизно изведени мада је само од посуде из Сингидунума сачувана и друга страна, на којој је вероватно приказана коса. Порекло посуде са обликом људске главе је источномедитеранско, где се јављају још у бронзано доба, а током римског периода прошириле су се и на области западног Медитерана, северне Африке и европских провинција.

На основу овде приказаних, као и раније публикованих просопоморфних посуда нађених у Горњој Мезији, може се видети да су све посуде имале форме пехара или мањих лонаца, висине 9-12 цм, а слична ситуација је у Доњој Панонији, Дакији и Доњој Мезији. Већина облика уобичајена је у керамичкој производњи римског периода.

Како се може видети на анализираним налазима са нашег простора, а и из других провинција, не могу се наћи идентични примерци. Та чињеница указује да није постојала серијска производња овакве врсте посуда, већ да су оне прављене за одређене прилике, а њихов изглед је, поред намене, зависио од инспирације и вештине самих мајстора. Налази ових посуда на некрополама, у самим гробовима, у



логорима и цивилним насељима, упућују на њихову вишеструку намену, мада она још увек није довољно разјашњена. Опште је прихваћено да су ликови-маске посуде давали заштитну улогу, било да се ради о заштити покојника или породице која их користи, њихове куће и имања.

Број посуда нађених на просторима некропола (најчешће је то око 50% од укупног броја), потврђује њихово коришћење у погребним ритуалима. Слика налаза из Горње Мезије не разликују се у већој мери од оне у другим провинцијама. И овде је око 50% нађено на просторима некропола (на жртвеним површинама и у самим гробовима), а од десет посуда из гробова, осам је из гробова са кремацијом. Имајући у виду да је број скелетних сахрана на Виминацијуму, скоро три пута већи од оних са кремацијом, очигледно је да су просопоморфне посуде знатно чешће коришћене приликом обреда и сахрана спаљених покојника. Узрок оваквој појави за сада нам није познат и свакако представља још једну од недоумица коју тек треба разјаснити. Посуде рађене на витлу, са аплицираним детаљима црта лица, могле су бити коришћене и у свакодневном животу (за конзумирање течности), али то не искључује њихову примену приликом религиозних обреда, било да су се они одвијали у јавним грађевинама или приватним домовима.

Како у већини провинција где су посуде са ликом налажене, углавном на локалитетима смештеним дуж река, и у Горњој Мезији потичу са налазишта лоцираних поред Дунава. Изузетке представљају примерци из Азање и Улпијане (карта).

Најстарији примерци просопоморфних посуда нађених у Горњој Мезији представљају увоз из северне Италије, доспео крајем I и почетком II века, а највише их потиче из културних хоризоната и гробова датованих од друге половине II до средине III века (једна посуда нађена је у

касноантичком хоризонту). Судаћи према технолошким карактеристикама, у овом периоду су израђиване у некој од виминацијумских радионица.

Иако не постаје конкретни докази, морало је постојати више локалних радионица у којима су, поред остале грнчарије, прављене и посуде са ликом. У суседним провинцијама, претпостављени центри били су у Мурси (Доња Панонија), један од примера је и Микасаса (Micasasa), у Дакији, а као могући центар, смештен на северној обали Црног мора, наводи се и Олбиа. Ови центри били су активни током II и почетком III века.

Мишљења смо да су у Виминацијуму, као значајном керамичком центру – у коме је откривен комплекс за израду керамичких посуда и опека, потврђена производња рељефно украшених посуда рађених у техници тера сигилате, као и керамичких светиљки – прављене и посуде са ликом. Такво мишљење, поред поменутих технолошких карактеристика посуда, поткрепљује и чињеница да са овог локалитета потиче преко 80 % просопоморфних посуда нађених у Горњој Мезији.

За доношење конкретнијих закључака који се односе на производњу и друга питања везана за просопоморфне посуде из Горње Мезије, неопходна је детаљна обрада керамичког материјала са свих истражених налазишта на нашем простору. Познато нам је да их нема међу до сада обрађеном керамиком из Naisusa (ископавања у оквиру Нишке тврђаве), као ни на Медијани (Ниш), а на основу информација добијених после детаљне обраде керамике није их било ни на налазиштима *Horem Margi* (Туприја), *Castra Novae* (Чезава), *Smorna* (Бољетин), *Transdierna* (Текија) и Салдум. Међутим, без обзира на то што ова врста посуда није израђивана у великом броју, мало је вероватно да их на другим античким локалитетима није било.

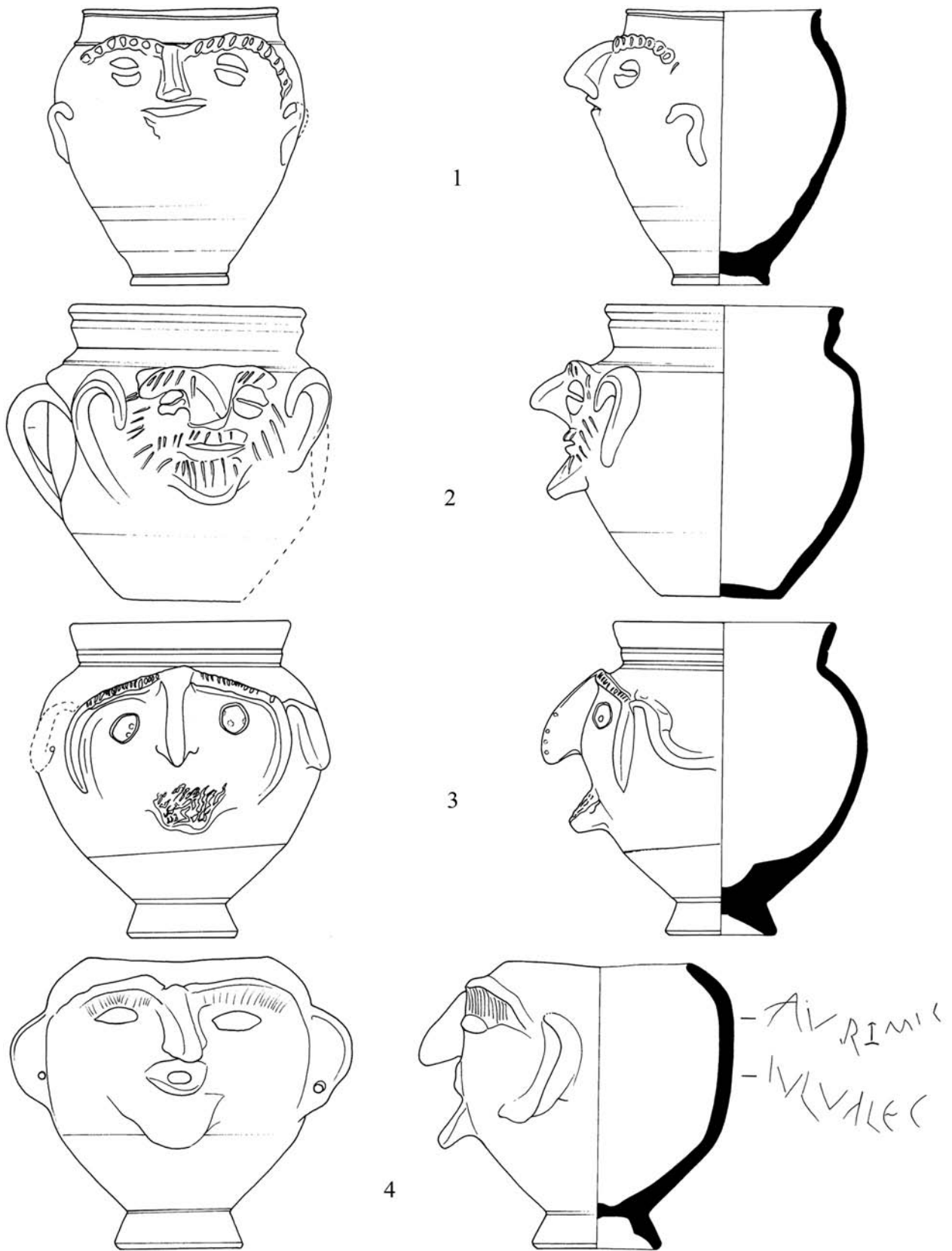
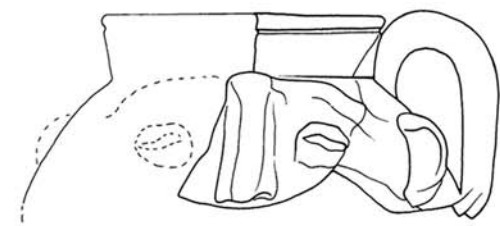
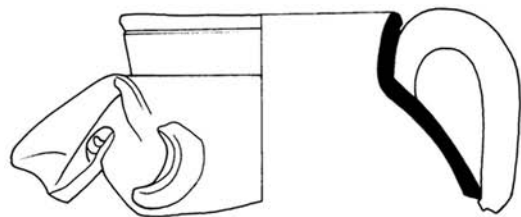


Plate I - Viminacium: 1-4 (drawing D. Rogić), scale 1:2

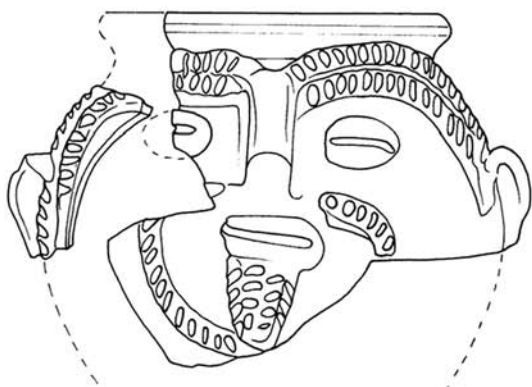
Табла I - Viminacium: 1-4; (цртежи: Д. Ројић) R 1:2



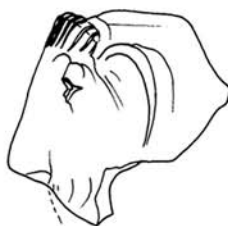
5



6



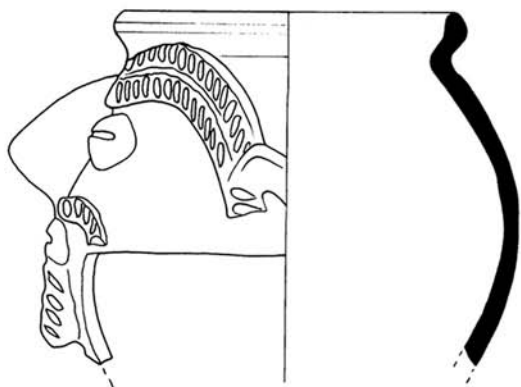
7



8



9



10

Plate II - Viminacium: 5-10 (drawing D. Rogić), scale 1:2

Табла II - Viminacium: 5-10; (цртежи: Д. Ројић) R 1:2

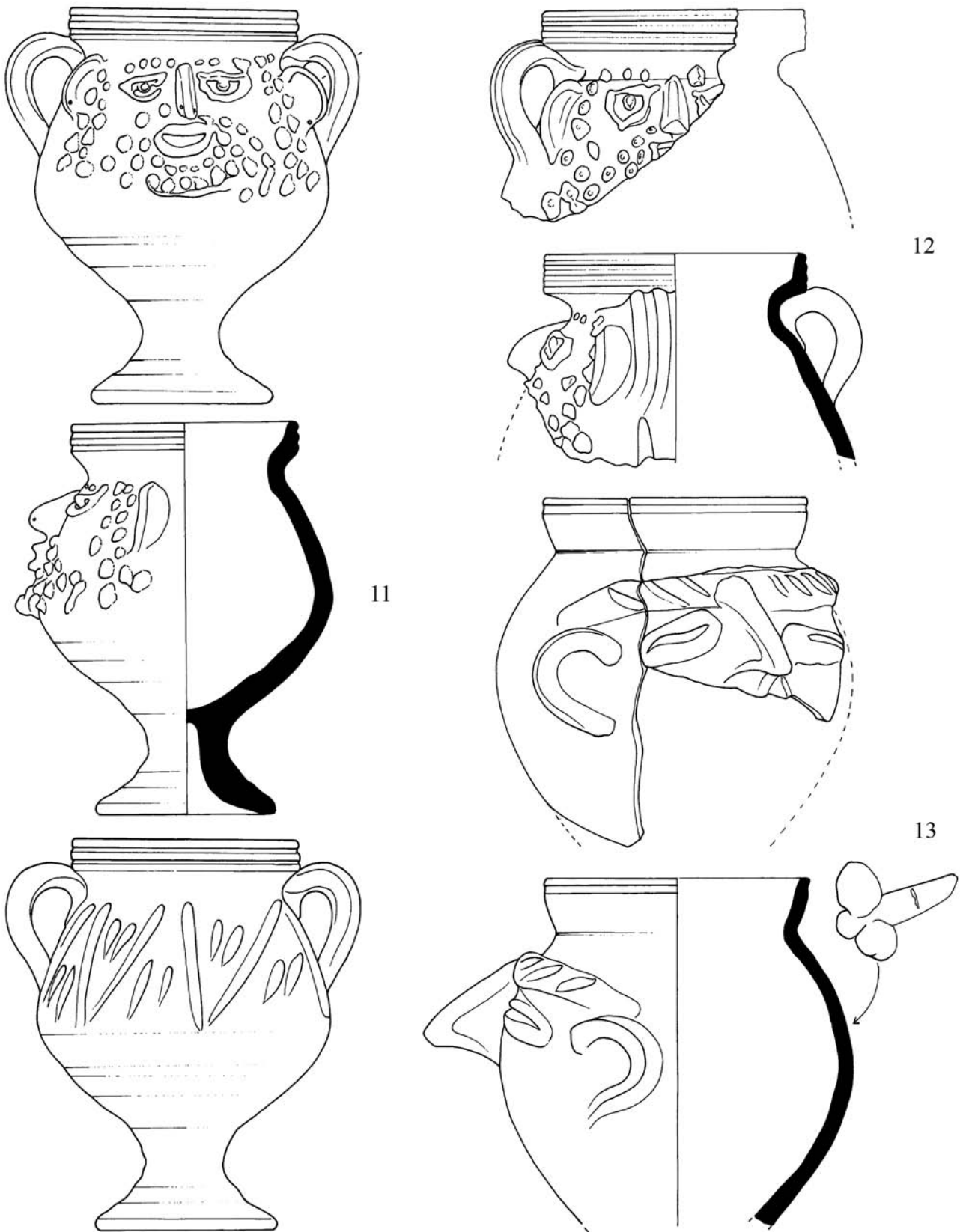


Plate III - Azanja: 11; Viminacium: 12-13 (drawing D. Rogić), scale 1:2

Табла III - Азања: 11; Виминациум: 12-13; (цртежи: Д. Ројић), R 1:2



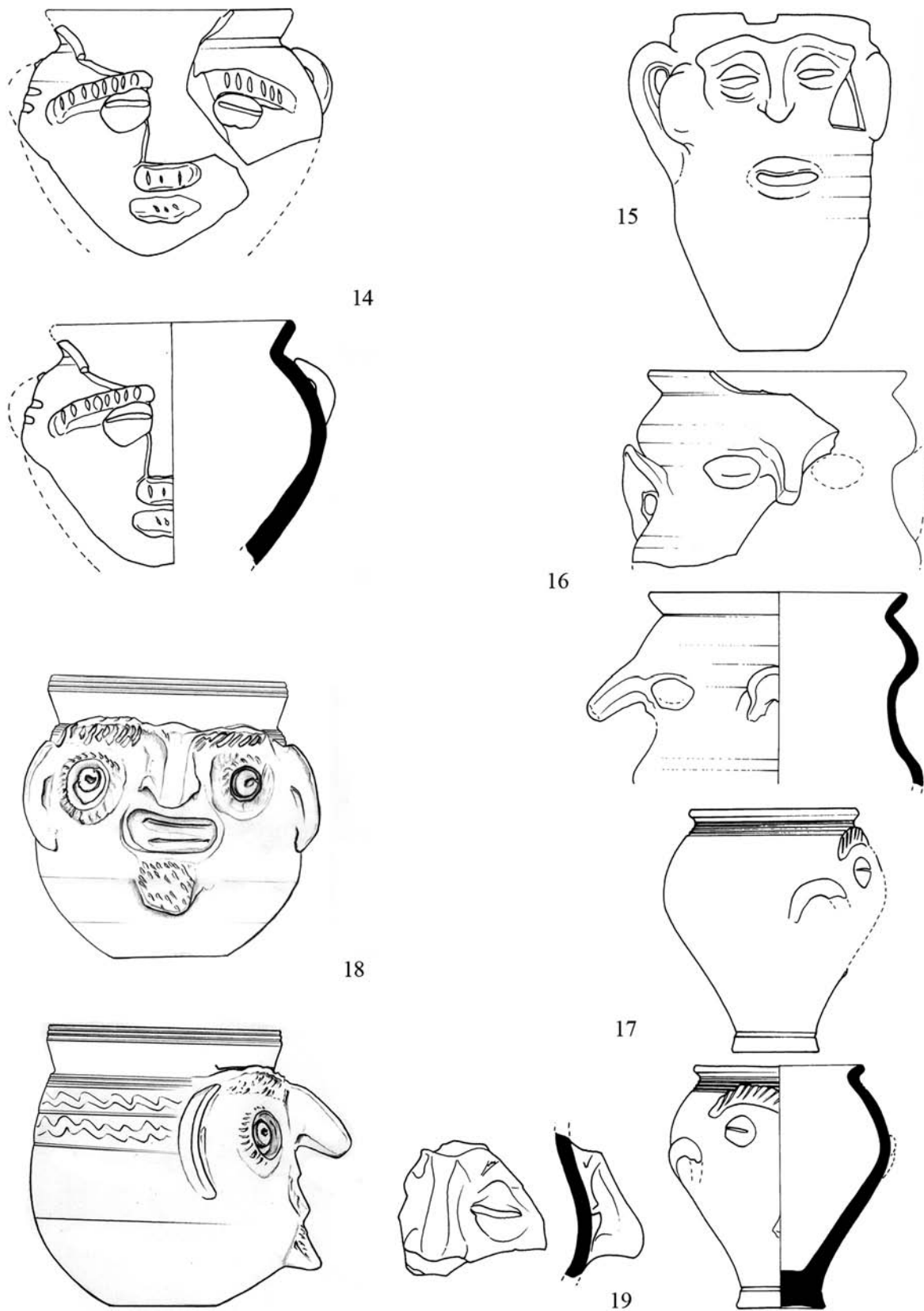


Plate IV - Viminacium: 14–17 and 19; Diana: 18 (drawing D. Rogić), scale 1:2

Табла IV - Viminacium: 14–17, 19; Diana: 18; (цртежи: Д. Рођић) R 1:2

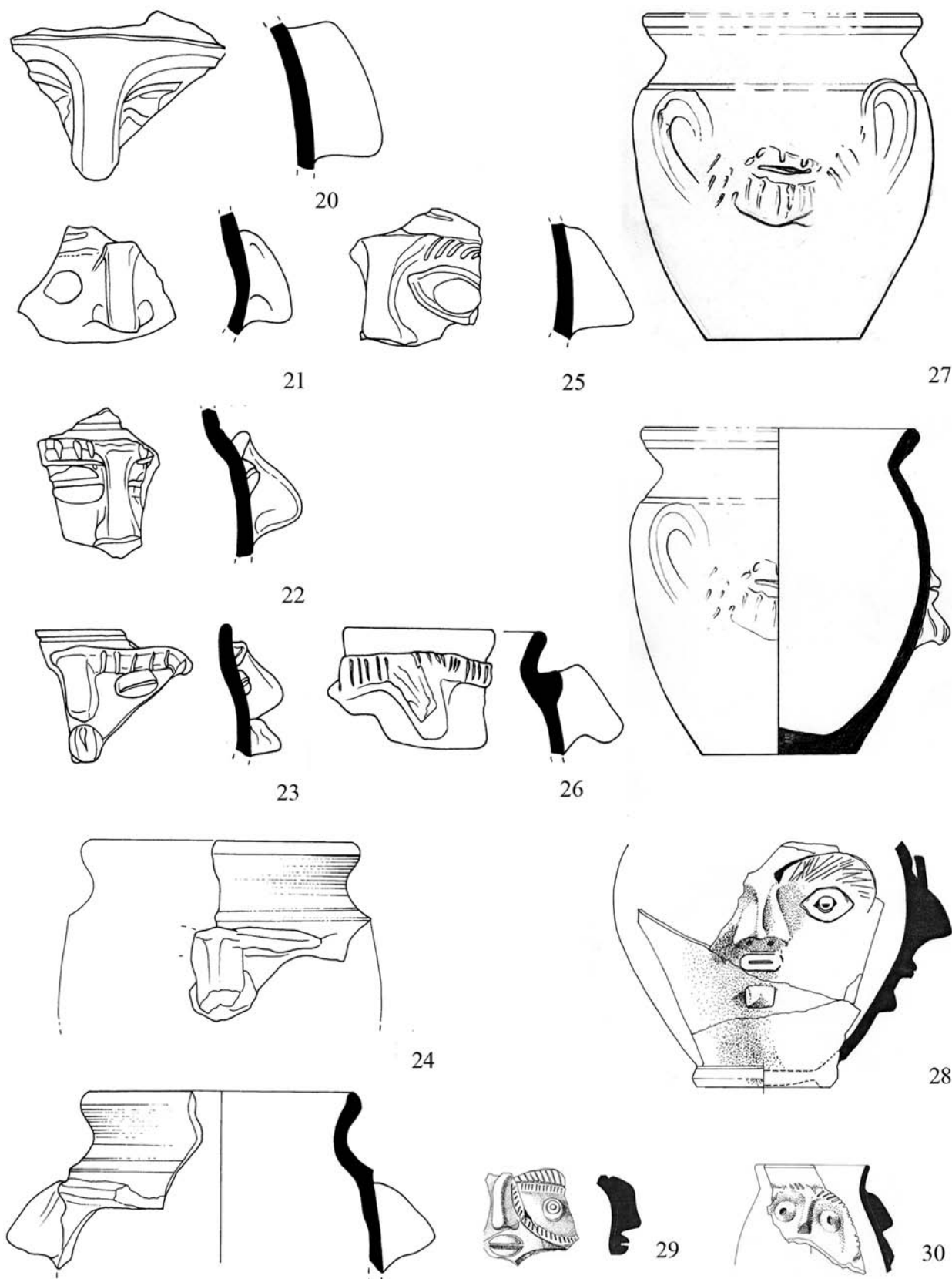
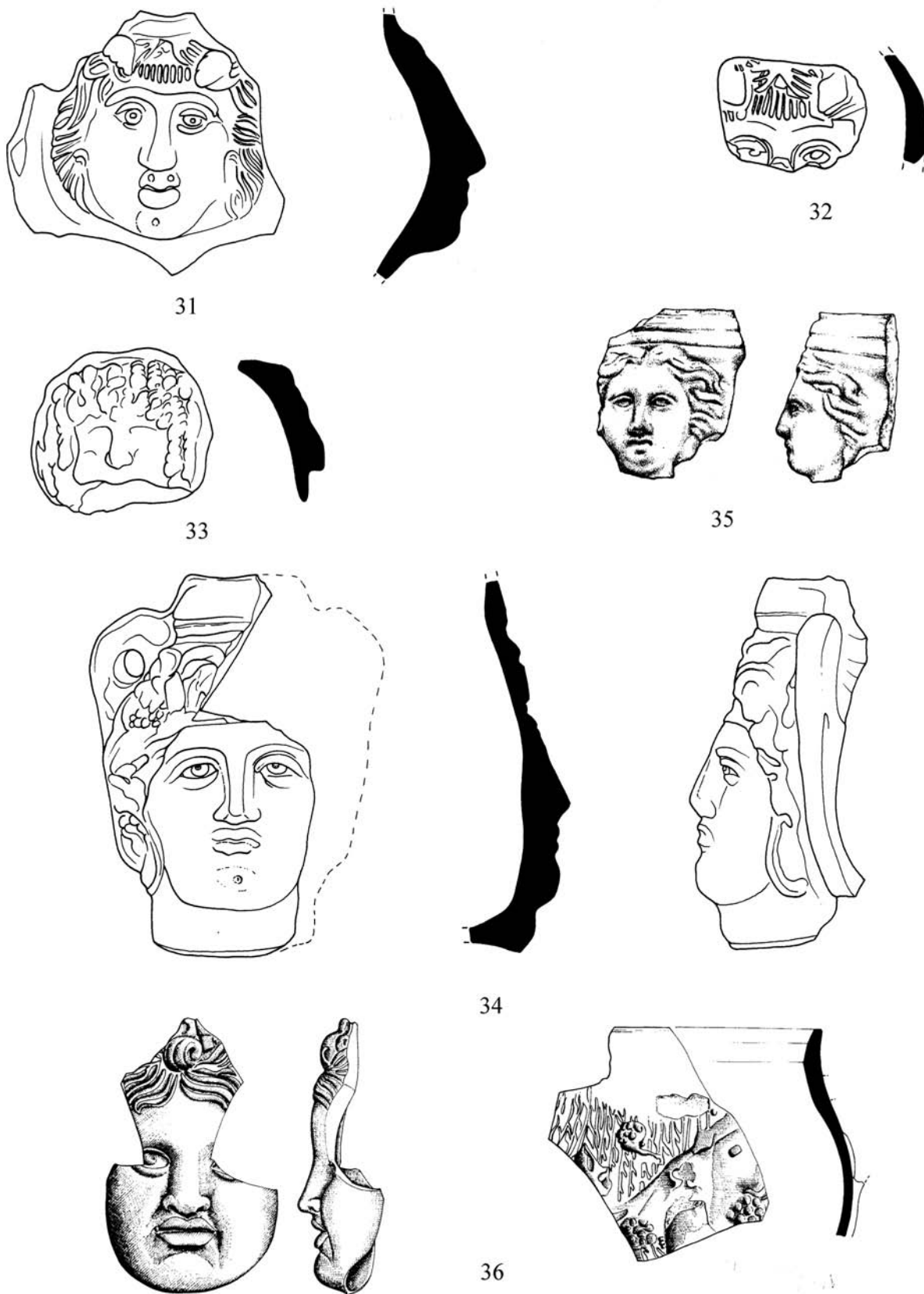


Plate V - Viminacium: 20-27 (drawing D. Rogić); Ulpiana: 28-30 (drawing Lj. Ivezić), scale 1:2

Табла V - Viminacium: 20-27 (црпљежу: Д. Ројић), Ulpiana: 28-30; (црпљеж: Љ. Ивезић) R 1:2



Plat IV - Viminacium: 31–35 (drawing D. Rogić); Singidunum: 36 (drawing M. Ristić), scale 1:2

Табла VI - Viminacium: 31–35 (цртежи: Д. Ројић), Singidunum: 36; (цртеж: М. Ристић) R 1:2