

SEAL BOXES FROM THE *VIMINACIUM* SITE

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Abstract. – Bronze seal boxes that had the function of holding the wax seal on the *Viminacium* site – Upper Moesia (Stari Kostolac, Serbia), mainly from the area of the necropolis (ten were found in the graves and ten at the cemetery between the graves). Six are from buildings that had a storage function, five are from public facilities – an amphitheatre, and only one find is from the military fort of the legion VII *Claudia*, which was stationed in *Viminacium* in the second half of the 1st century. Thirty-two seal boxes have been processed: nine whole, six with fragmented upper and lower parts, seven bases and ten covers. Seal boxes consist of two parts: the cover and the base. The cover is decorated with figural images, concentric rings and especially with applied ornaments. Some of the motifs are filled with enamel. The base always has three to five circular perforations at the bottom, the side walls are a height of 4 to 5 mm with two opposed notches or slots which are thought to have facilitated the tying of the seal box to a package or a document. The lock mechanism is operated using the hinges principle. Some specimens have a circular extension on the cover with a thorn on the bottom. This fits the hollow in the base, through which passes a thorn for the additional fixing of the cover. Based on shape and decoration, seal boxes were classified into five types: I – elliptical or oval shaped with a figural representation on the cover derived in relief; II/1 – leaf or heart-shaped with a special, riveted ornament; II/2 – leaf or heart-shaped with enamel on the cover; III/1 – circular showing a form in relief; III/2 – circular with cast concentric rings, with no enamel; III/3 – circular with concentric rings with enamel on the cover; IV – diamond shaped with enamel on the cover and V – square with enamel on the cover. The seal boxes dominate chronologically from the first half of the 2nd and throughout the 3rd century.

Key words. – seal boxes, bronze, cover, base, elliptical, oval, leaf-shaped, heart-shaped, circular, enamel, *Viminacium*.

Seal boxes are treated differently in literature. Due to the lack of interest of scientists for these types of objects, and because of the scarcity of findings, very little has been written about them. Among the first to do so was S. Holmes who has processed around 410 seal boxes collected from all over Great Britain.¹ The situation has changed in recent years, due to the increased appearance of seal boxes. This publi-

cation, which deals with the use, chronology, distribution and cultural history, as well as the archaeometric analysis of seal boxes, processes 138 samples from the site of *Augusta Raurica* (Switzerland, near Basel, close

¹ The doctoral dissertation, *Roman Seal Boxes: a classification of the British material*, London 1995.

* The article results from the project: *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, digitalisation and 3D visualisation* (no 47018), funded by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia.

to the villages August and Kaiseraugust).² So far, this represents the largest number of seal boxes found on one site. It is significant that the findings are mostly derived from the well-documented units (residential buildings, public edifices, temples) upon which a chronological and typological classification is made.³ Another site with a remarkable number of findings (76 finds) is *Siscia – Pannonia Superior* (Sisak, Croatia).⁴ From the territory of today's Serbia, which was mostly the part of the Roman province of *Moesia Superior*, only five seal boxes were published (three from unknown sites, one from the territory of Kosmaj, and one from *Singidunum – castrum*, Belgrade).⁵ Unpublished specimens of bronze seal boxes from the *Viminacium* site, which are the subject of this paper, prove that this is not the real situation and that it is reasonable to expect their presence on the other sites in the territory of today's Serbia.⁶ Prior to the discussion regarding this type of case, we should emphasise that the term seal box is used in the paper because we believe that this is the most appropriate name and, in addition, in recent years it was adopted by foreign authors too. It should be noted that the term capsule is also used in some literature.⁷

A seal box consists of two parts: the base and the cover. The main characteristic of the lower part, or base, are the circular perforations at the bottom. Their number varies from three to five. On finds from *Viminacium*, this number ranges from three to four. Some specimens have engraved circles around the perforations, i.e. prints created by punching. The height of the side walls is about 4–6 mm and on both sides of the box the tin is cut into a trapezoidal shape. The lid is attached to the base with a hinge mechanism in order to open and close the box. The hinge mechanism can be attached in different ways (a loop on the lid fits into the two loops on the base or two loops on the base fit into a loop on a cap or coil along the whole side of the box, a method which only refers to the square boxes). Through the loops passes a thin bronze or iron pin. Certain types have a circular extension on the cover (like the nozzle of a lamp) with a thorn on the back side which corresponds to a hole in the base for re-fixing the box. The cover is embossed and sometimes filled with enamel. The perforations at the bottom and the sides had a practical function. The parcel was wrapped with twine or wire whose ends were passed through the side holes, tied at the bottom of the box, covered with melted wax and imprinted with the seal ring and then covered to protect the sensitive imprint. When imprinting seals,

excess wax was able to get out through the holes in the bottom of the base and stick to the shipment.⁸ In addition to these functions, the holes at the bottom may have been necessary for the circulation of air needed to maintain the wax or embossed seal, so that it did not get too dry or melt in the summer. The seal from the ring was not always possible to impress in a box, because the dimensions and shape did not match. In these cases, it could probably be expected that in the box there was just wax without an impressed seal.⁹ So, the box held wax with the sender's seal, or just wax, and thus guaranteed the security of the document.

Seal boxes are mostly associated with writing, i.e. with wooden tables covered with wax, which are comprised of two or more related panels – *tabulae ceratae*. However, their direct relationship has not been clearly confirmed yet. The National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden has a diptych from Egypt and a seal box that was probably found together with it. However, today, it is questionable whether the two objects were, in fact, discovered together. In addition, there are two cases in which the seal boxes are associated with the coin bags (Trier and Kalkries).¹⁰ For now, it is clear that the

² Furger, Wartmann, Riha 2009.

³ Derks 2010, 722. The author provides a brief review and comment on the monograph A. R. Furger, M. Wartmann, E. Riha, *Die Römischen Siegelkapseln aus Augusta Raurica*, August 2009.

⁴ Koščević 1988, 131–138, the doctoral dissertation in a manuscript; Koščević, Marjanić 1995, Pl. 34, 324–344. Seven copies are known from the same province *Poetovia* (Ptuj, Slovenia), two from *Emona* (Ljubljana, Slovenia) and one from *Aquae Iasae* (Varaždinske Toplice, Croatia).

⁵ Krunic 1997, 258–259, cat. 440–444. Besides these, we are not aware of any other published cases of this type from Serbia, which does not mean that there are no others stored in museum depots.

⁶ The only published seal box from *Viminacium* is no. 8, leaf-shaped with applied phallus in the context of phallic symbolism, see in: Spasić-Đurić 2008, 121–174.

⁷ Tabolli 2012, 497.

⁸ Koščević 1983, 67, T. 3.

⁹ Andrews 2008. The author casts doubt on the purpose of seal boxes and their classification in the writing material, and the treatment that they are evidence of literacy. The publication of the work of this author is expected: *Are Roman Seal Boxes Evidence for Letter Writing by Auxiliaries, Veterans (or anyone else)?* The work refers to 871 seal boxes from the Great Britain. For now, only a short abstract of the above work is available, presented at the XXII International Limes Congress 2012. http://limes2012.naim.bg/files/Limes_Congress_2012_Abstacts_last.pdf.

¹⁰ Derks 2010, 725.

miniature seal boxes guaranteed the originality of the document or some other item. In literature, they are mostly associated with writing sets, but there are also those who do not support this theory.¹¹ Remains of beeswax that have been identified in the samples from *Augusta Raurica*, confirmed that some boxes were indeed filled with wax.¹²

Initially, it was thought by scientists that seal boxes were exclusively related to military post, or used for sealing letters that soldiers and veterans sent to their loved ones. However, research has shown otherwise. Although they are numerous seal boxes in military stations and legionary camps, they are also found in civilian settlements, especially in larger cities, burials and temples. Mostly, they have been rarely present in the graves at the sites in which they have been discovered so far. Their presence in the grave is in connection with the letter that would have been placed with the deceased for the journey into the afterlife. If the writing set is found in the grave together with a seal box, then the findings are associated with the occupation of the deceased, as was the case with an object in Winchester (Great Britain).¹³ The function of the seal boxes from temples is linked to the sealing of petitions to the gods.

As for the origin, the current explorations confirmed that the earliest findings are from the southern and eastern parts of the Empire. Therefore, it can be concluded that the seal boxes are of Mediterranean origin. These early types were made from bone. The same forms were, in time, made out of bronze which completely replaced the bone. Therefore, the use of seal boxes began in the Mediterranean and eventually spread to Central Europe.¹⁴ The oldest bone samples dated about 100 BC and are probably the prototypes from which examples in bronze developed. During the Imperial period, the distribution of seal boxes had been expanded to the northern and north-western provinces of the Empire. Square thin-walled boxes became widespread in the first half of the 1st century, between northern Italy and Lower Germania. The boxes of circular and leaf-shape, dating from Augustan to Neronian times, were dominated by the motifs of a military character, and a unique example from Ostia showed a *beneficiarius* with a spear. For this reason it was considered that the use of the seal boxes was limited to the provision of military shipments. In the beginning, they were found in military field fortifications along borders; however, an increasing number of finds from the civilian areas of the settlements, tem-

ples and tombs disprove the theory of their uniquely military character. During the Flavian period, the use of seal boxes was widespread, especially in Gaul and Britain. Further into the 2nd century, it spread over Noricum, Pannonia, Moesia and Dacia. The most popular decorative element on the cover was the phallus followed by the zoomorphic and figural representations dated earliest to the 1st century. Seal boxes with figural relief decorations mostly show ornamentation with “state and military” iconography such as Victory, the warrior, the horse or the eagle. Geometric segments filled with enamel dominate the leaf or heart-shaped and circular shaped box covers, although we also find them in specimens of square and diamond shaped box covers. A variety of enamelled decorations dominate the 2nd and 3rd centuries. In addition to simple geometric motifs, complex leaf-shaped forms or even drawings of birds filled with enamel were encountered.¹⁵

Seal boxes from *Viminacium* were found in the graves of cremated (six finds) and inhumed (four finds) persons; along *Viminacium*'s necropolis in the area between the graves (ten finds), in storage facilities (six finds; objects 16/VI and 31), at the amphitheater (five finds) and in the military camp – *castrum* of the legion *VII Claudia* (one find). There were 32 boxes discovered, of which nine are complete, while others are fragmentarily preserved (covers parts, only base or lids). The classification was based on the shape and decoration.

Five types have been identified, out of which types II and III have two or three variations. The most numerous are leaf or heart-shaped boxes with decorations filled in enamel (Type II / 2), and circular with concentric rings on the lid, with and without enamel (Type III/2–3). Table 1 presents the typological classification, dates and basic information about the place of discovery of the seal boxes from *Viminacium*.

¹¹ Božić, Feugère 2004, 22; Andrews 2008. See ref. 9.

¹² Furger, Wartmann and Riha 2009, Summary. Jorge D. Spangenberg, of the Institute of Mineralogy and Geochemistry, University of Lausanne, first analysed the content of the sediment of the three seal boxes and, in one, identified beeswax. After that, the archeometrical team from the National Museum of Affolter in Albis performed analysis on several samples using FTIR spectroscopy, the wax was found in multiple samples.

¹³ Furger, Wartmann and Riha, 2009, Summary.

¹⁴ Derks 2010, 723–724.

¹⁵ Furger, Wartmann and Riha, 2009, Summary.










TYPE	VAR.	SHAPE	NO	SITE	INVENTORY	DATE
I			1	Building 16/VI Nad Klepečkom	C-448	1/2 II c.
			2	G1-579 Pećine	C-6601	2/2 II - 1/2 III c.
			3	Building 16/VI Nad Klepečkom	C-449	1/2 II c.
			4	Building 16/VI Nad Klepečkom	C-512	1/2 II c.
			5	Building 16/VI Nad Klepečkom	C-559	1/2 II c.
			6	Building 16/VI Nad Klepečkom	C-558	1/2 II c.
			7	Amphitheater	C-2869	II - III c.
	1		8	G1-1140 Pećine	C-13318	II - III c.
II	2		9	G-1017 Pećine	C-3721	2/2 II - 1/2 III c.
			10	Cemetery space, Pirivoj	C-1038	2/2 II - III c.
			11	Cemetery space, Više Burdelja	C-347	2/2 III - IV c.
			12	G1-669 Pećine	C-7391	2/2 II c.
			13	Cemetery space, Pećine	C-4934	II - 1/2 III c.
			14	<i>Castrum</i> , Velika kapija	C-64	/
			15	Cemetery space, Pećine	C-9355	/
			16	Amphitheater	C-2280	II - III c.
			17	Building 31 Nad Klepečkom	C-1082	1/2 II c.
			18	Amphitheater	C-2384	II - III c.
			19	Cemetery space, Više grobalja	C-11553	II - 1/2 III c.
III	1		20	G-4047 Pećine	C-11201	2/2 III - 1/2 IV c.
	2		21	G1-213 Pećine	C-2611	end II - 1/2 III c.
			22	Cemetery space, kod Bresta	C-498	/
			23	G-2804 Pećine	C-7900	2/2 II - 1/2 III c.
			24	Cemetery space, Pećine	C-4485	/
	3		25	Cemetery space, Pećine	C-10369	/
			26	Cemetery space, Pećine	C-11796	/
	NN		27	Cemetery space, Više grobalja	C-11567	middle III c.
			28	Amphitheater	C-2325	II - III c.
			29	G-2696 Pećine	C-7427	II - III c.
30			Amphitheater	C-2969	II - III c.	
IV			31	G1-91 Pećine	C-1298	middle II c.
V			32	G1-110 Pećine	C-1581	II - 1/2 III c.

Table 1. Typological classification of *Viminacium* seal boxes

Табела 1. Типолошка класификација кућица за чување печата из Виминацијума

Type I

Seal boxes of Type I are characterised by an elliptical or oval shape and relief decoration on the lid. They belong to the luxury findings, on which performances are detailed in relief, as either anthropomorphic (a figure of a woman besides the altar; a figure of a man or a bust of a man in profile), or zoomorphic (eagle) representations. Seven boxes belong to this type, two of which are whole, whilst the remainder are fragmented.

On specimen No. 1 (Plate I and III, Fig. 1, 27, C–448, from the site of “Nad Klepečkom” dim. 2.4 x 1.65 x 0.6 cm) there is, on the lid, a representation of a standing female figure in face-to-right profile, holding in her right hand an object which she is offering to the flaming altar. In the hand of her raised left arm, which is bent at the elbow, she is holding a sceptre. The woman is wearing a long dress with a cut at the side revealing her left leg. The female figure can be compared to an image of a goddess. The closest analogies are related to reverse images from Roman coins, which show the goddess besides the altar.¹⁶ On the base are three circular perforations and trapezoidal notches on both sides. The hinge mechanism is formed whereby one loop, made of embossed tin, rises from one edge of the base, folds over the thorn and ends on the outside of the base while, from the underside of the lid, two identical loops fold over the thorn and end up on the outside of the lid. Appendix 1 shows the appearance of Type I seal boxes with the specified type of hinge mechanism.

The lid of the box No. 2 (Plate I, Fig. 4, C–6601, from the site of “Pećine” dim. 2.2 x 1.5 x 0.4 cm) shows a head of a man face-to-left, with, maybe, a helmet on his head. It could be a god or a soldier but, due to the poor preservation of the lid, the image is unclear. In a fragment of a lower part of the box were found some remains of a dark mixture (maybe wax?). The seal box is part of the grave inventory (G1–579) of a cremated deceased that can be dated to the period from the second half of the 2nd to the first half of the 3rd century.¹⁷

On fragments of box cover No. 3 (Plate I and III, Fig. 3, 28, C–449, from the site of “Nad Klepečkom”, dim. of base 2.1 x 1.4 x 0.5 cm) there is a looming male figure with the head shown in right profile, left hand raised up, possibly holding something in his hand, while the legs are out of step, so that the left leg is slightly bent at knee. The man could be a god or a soldier, but due to the poor preservation of the fragments, we are not able to identify it. At the bottom of the box are three circular perforations. There is a preserved loop of embossed bronze tin on the base through which the

bronze pin passes. The loops from the cover are missing. The image of an eagle on the lid of box No. 4 (Plate I and III, Fig. 2, 29, C–512, from the site of “Nad Klepečkom” dim. 2.4 x 1.6 x 0.6 cm) classifies it in the category with zoomorphic images that were often present during the Imperial period. The eagle is shown with wings outspread, head curved to the right and a wreath in its beak. The eagle is standing on a lightning bolt or a branch. On the base of the box there are three perforations, along with trapezoidal notches on the sides. The hinge mechanism is identical to the samples No. 1 and No. 3 from the same site. A separately cast eagle, nailed to the lid of circle seal boxes, is a favourite motif among zoomorphic representations.¹⁸ Of the numerous specimens from the sites of Western Europe, some have been precisely dated.¹⁹ However, it should be noted that the eagle on the box of ellipsoid (or oval) shape from *Viminacium*, for now, represents a unique finding. There is some discrepancy in the processing of the eagle on the find from *Viminacium* in which every detail and every feather is accurately pointed out, while the finds of circular seal boxes from Western Europe were summarily treated and often presented with a wreath around the edge of the box. The covers of this type were decorated using the niello technique. An eagle is associated with the standard symbol of the Roman legions – *aquila*. On the other hand, the eagle on the box from *Viminacium* would appear to refer to Jupiter, especially because the eagle is, most likely, standing on a bolt of lightning, one of Jupiter symbols. Analogous representations of eagles have been seen on the reverse of Roman coins.²⁰

¹⁶ RIC II, 354, no. 116; 371, no. 268.

¹⁷ The content of the box has not been analysed. Out of the findings from the grave, it is significant to indicate a smaller pot or a cup with an oval rim C–6602, which is very common in the tomb types of Mala Kopašnica Sase in all excavated cemeteries. It occurs in large numbers in skeletal graves, see: Raičković Savić 2012, 102, 212, T. VI/22.

¹⁸ Feugere, Abauzit 1995, 44, Fig. 2/1–14, 21; Feugere, Abauzit 2000, 21, Fig. 1–4. The authors of the first article dealt with 21 copies of circular seal boxes with a riveted cast eagle on the cover and, in another article, four more copies were added.

¹⁹ Boucher, Feugère 2009, Fig. 1–3/6–8. Following sites: Marpingen (Germany, cemetery from the second half of the 1st century); Cirencester and Londres (Great Britain, between 50–75. AD. and the first half of the 2nd century); Mirebeau (around 70–90. AD.), Saint-Brandan (Côtes-d’Armor, the second quarter of the 1st century), Roujan, Montblanc, vallée du Calavon; two specimens from Vindoniss (Swiss, from 17 to 101 AD.).

²⁰ RIC II, 361, no. 191; 403, no. 516; RPC II, nos. 1936, 1938, 1945.

On the fragment of box cover No. 5 (Plate III, Fig. 30, C–559, from the site of “Nad Klepečkom”) there is a part of a human hand and a leg near a palm tree. The hinge mechanism is identical to the previous examples. The closest analogy for this representation would be the reverse of Vespasian’s coins, glorifying the victory and conquest of Judea.²¹

Two fragments of the bottom of the box, with a circular perforation, belong to specimen No. 6 (C–558, from the site of “Nad Klepečkom”). They were found near the same site.

The fragmented bottom of box No. 7 (Plate I and III, Fig. 5, 31, C–2869, from the “Amphitheatre” site, preserved dim. 1.9 cm) with three perforations, without loops matches the listed samples in form.

The seal boxes of Type I are approximately the same size. The same principle of closing was applied to all of the well-preserved specimens, and it could be assumed that they all came from the same workshop. In addition, five samples from the site of “Nad Klepečkom” were found in the same layer, in the immediate vicinity of building 16, room VI.

These reliefs from the seal box lids can be defined as being state-military in nature. The chronologically sensitive material, excavated from building 16, room VI, helps us with their dating. These finds belong to the building which was probably built in the first half of the 2nd and in use until the middle of the 3rd century. Its purpose is not clearly defined, but it could be assumed that it was some kind of storage facility or a workshop.²²

The very same covers with relief representations, usually of divinities, are shown on the cover of the seal boxes from *Siscia* (Sisak – Croatia). On the four examples examined, three of which still retain two loops of embossed metal, as on the finds from *Viminacium*, are shown: Jupiter or Serapis, Minerva or Roma, Fortune and a quadriga with a coachman.²³ The finds from *Viminacium* indicate that they are probably from the same workshop, which we can locate in *Siscia* or *Viminacium*, dated to the end of the first half of the 1st and the first part of the 2nd century.

Type II

The seal boxes of Type II are leaf or heart-shaped with a circular expansion of the narrow end, similar to the nozzle of a lamp. Both variants, besides the form, are linked by the use of enamel as a common decorative element. However, differently derived ornamentation and technique resulted in the appearance of the

two variants. To the first variant, belongs a specimen with a later applied small phallus on the cover. In the second version, are classified seal boxes, on whose lids are heart-shaped compartments filled with polychrome or monochrome enamel. The imitation of precious stones and further emphasised luxury was achieved by the use of enamel. Twelve seal boxes belong to this type.

Variant 1 – Seal box No 8 belongs the first variant (Plate I, Fig. 6, C–13318, from the site of “Pećine”).²⁴ It is a whole box of heart or leaf-shape, with a subsequently applied rivet on its lid, and a specially moulded phallus. Usually the covers of this type are enamelled. On a copy from *Viminacium*, the enamel was not preserved. At the narrow part of the cover there is a circular expansion which corresponds to the cylinder extension on the base. Appendix 2 shows the appearance of Type II box with a circular extension. The seal box is the only inventory in the levelled grave with cremation, G1–1140. Two identical covers are kept in the National Museum in Belgrade. They are from unknown sites and are roughly dated to 2nd and 3rd century.²⁵ Two variants of seal boxes with applied phallus could be traced. The earlier one is characterised by a leaf-shaped box of smaller size, usually up to 2.5 cm with a lid that is rarely enamelled and with no circular extension (or nozzle). To the slightly younger version belong the boxes of the same form with enamel both on the cover and on the circular extension.²⁶ To the second option would belong a copy from *Viminacium*, therefore, it is to be expected

²¹ RIC II, nos. 163–164, 167.

²² Mrđić, Jovičić 2012, 51–54. The building is part of the civil suburb or commercial distribution centre, about 2.4 km from the military fort of the VII *Claudiae*. A total of 21 objects have been investigated. They stretch north and south of the Roman road. They are of civil and storage character with porticos. In building 16, room VI, preserved in the fundamental areas, in addition to coins that were mainly from the 2nd and 3rd century, were found about 83 fragments of bronze mirror with circular perforations around the edges, about 10 kg of iron slag and several fragments of pottery vessels, mostly amphorae. The finds suggest that it was a workshop centre, however, ovens were not found, so it is possible that it was only a warehouse.

²³ Košćević 1988, 56, 205, cat. No. 641–644, T. XXXV, 601–604. Košćević 1995, 21, Pl. 46/487–490. The author describes them as bronze pendants with a specific loop that has no analogy. The dimensions, loops and embossed views indicate that these are bronze seal box lids and, since the bases were not saved, there was some confusion by the author.

²⁴ Spasić-Đurić 2008, 148–150, fig. 12/8.

²⁵ Krunic, 1997, 259, cat. 443–444.

²⁶ Andrews 2008, Fig 7, 8: UKDFD 6508; Fig 9: UKDFD 2118.

that the cover was filled with enamel. Seal boxes with an applied phallus on the cover were a favourite of the second half of the 2nd and through the 3rd century. These were found on the sites in France and Great Britain.²⁷

VARIANT 2 – the best preserved seal box, No. 9, belongs the second variant (Plate I, Fig. 8, C–3721, from the site of “Pećine”, length 3 cm) its lid has a heart shaped segment that is filled with greenish enamel, with three circles filled with yellow enamel, while the edges are the filled with red enamel. An analogous find is known from *Siscia*.²⁸ On seal box No. 10 (C–1038, from the site of “Pirivoj”) the lid is filled with blue, yellow and white enamel. Specimens of lids No. 11 and No. 12 (Plate I, Fig. 10, C–347, from the site of “Više Burdelja”, 3 cm long and Plate I, Fig. 9, C–7391, from the site of “Pećine”, 2.8 cm long) also have a heart-shaped segment, with a circle added in the second specimen. Specimen No. 11 was found in the building in which graves from the middle of the 3rd and the 4th century were found.²⁹ Almost identical specimens are known from Romania, France, Great Britain and Italy.³⁰ The cover of seal box No. 13 (Plate I, Fig. 11, C–4934, from the site of “Pećine”, 3.8 cm long) is decorated with a heart-shaped motif with inwardly bent volute ends. Two identical copies are known from *Pannonia Superior*, *Dacia* and *Italia*, dating to the end of the 2nd and the first half of the 3rd century.³¹ In samples No. 14 and No. 15 (Plate I, Fig. 12, C–64, from the site of “Velika Kapija” 3.4 cm long, and C–9355, at “Pećine”, 2.5 cm long) enamel is preserved only in traces. Seal box lids decorated with enamel that fills the geometric segments on the cover are known from Kosmaj, Belgrade (*Singidunum-castrum*), and from an unknown site, held in the National Museum in Belgrade.³²

A fragment of cover No. 16 with loops (Plate I and III, Fig. 7, 32, C–2280, from the site of “Amphitheatre” dim. 2.9 x 1.7) is leaf-shaped with a circle in relief, in the centre of which is a smaller circle. By decoration they correspond to samples decorated with enamel, so would belong to Type II. Analogous specimens are known from *Siscia* (Croatia) and *Porolissum* (Romania), dated to the 2nd and 3rd centuries.³³ Some samples of this type, from France and Spain, belong to the middle of the 4th and the early 5th century.³⁴

The bottom of seal boxes No. 17 (Plate I and III, Fig. 15, 33, C–1082, from the site of “Nad Klepečkom”, dim. 2.8 x 1.6 x 0.4 cm), No. 18 (Plate I and III, Fig. 13, 34, C–2384, from the site of “Amphitheatre” dim. 3.1 x 1.5 x 0.4 cm) and No. 19 (Plate I, Fig. 14, C–11553, from the site of “Više Grobalja” 2.8 cm

long) are without a lid and are difficult to determine their specific variant. As such, the bottom of the box No. 17 is heart-shaped, while No. 18 and No. 19 are of a leaf-shaped form ending in narrow ends with a cylindrical extension, or nozzle. These types of boxes are defined in literature as lamp-shaped boxes. Through this tubular opening the pin passed from the box lid for a more secure closure. At the bottom of boxes No. 17 and No. 19 are three perforations with a circle engraved around them. These circles probably occurred during the puncturing of the tin. In box No. 18 the third perforation is closed by metal corrosion. At the base one or two loops (the bottom of box No. 19) are preserved. In exhibit No. 18 a thin pin, made of copper wire that passes through the loop, was preserved. The bottom of box No. 17 was found on the wall 5 of building 31, which was defined as a storage building, chronologically corresponding to the period from the first half of the 2nd century to the middle of the 3rd century. Sample No. 19 from the necropolis “Više Grobalja” was found among the graves with cremated and inhumated deceased, from the time of Hadrian (134–138) and Alexander Severus (222–228).

Two samples of Type II seal boxes belong to the graves, one of which is No. 9 from the grave with inhumation. The skeleton belongs to a younger woman, buried in a wooden chest (G–1017). On the basis of the finds it is dated to the second half of the 2nd and the beginning of the 3rd century.³⁵ Seal box No. 12 was

²⁷ Boucher, Feugère 2009, Fig. 5/1–7. The following sites: Franche-Comté (Tonnerre, La Chappe), Mercey-le-Grand, Le Rougeot and Grenoble (France); Norfolk (Great Britain).

²⁸ Košćević 1988, T. LXXXII, 1311.

²⁹ Data taken from the field journal, at the site “Više Burdelja”, in 1977, 92.

³⁰ Benea, Crînguș, Regep-Vlascici, Ștefănescu 2006, Pl. XXI, 1–4 (sites: Tibiscum, Apulum, Porolissum – Romania); Boucher, Feugère 2009, Fig. 2/18 (sites: Eyzies-de-Tayac, Dordogne – France); (sites: London, Weston Colville, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Wacton, Norfolk, Helsington, Cumbria – Great Britain) and (Aquileia – Italy).

³¹ Košćević 1988, 135–136, T. LXXXI, 1303–1304; D. Benea, M. Crînguș, S. Regep-Vlascici, A. Ștefănescu 2006, Pl. XXI, 5–6; Tabolli 2012, 501–502, Tav. 96, No. 1543.

³² Krunic 1997, 258–259, cat. 440–442.

³³ Košćević 1988, 135, T. LXXXI, 1298–1300; D. Benea, M. Crînguș, S. Regep-Vlascici, A. Ștefănescu 2006, Pl. XXI, 16.

³⁴ Boucher, Feugère 2009, Fig. 1–2/16.

³⁵ Raičković Savić 2012, 86, 208, T. II/29. From the grave comes a smaller bowl with “S” profile, typical of the levelled graves Mala Kopašnica–Sase.

found in the levelled tomb of the cremated deceased (G1–669) which is dated to the second half of the 2nd century.³⁶ Seal boxes No. 10 and No. 15, from the *Viminacium* necropolis, are, with coins and other chronologically sensitive material, from the same layer, dated to the 2nd and first half of the 3rd century.³⁷

Type III

Circular-shaped seal boxes of Type III, based on decoration and technique of production, were classified into three variants. Eleven boxes belong to this type.

Variant 1 – the fragmented lid of seal box No. 20 (Plate II, Fig. 16, C–11201, from the site of “Pećine” preserved length of 2.4 cm, R–2, 2 cm) is the only representative of the first variant. In fact, in the middle of the lid, decorated with two concentric rings, is a figural representation cast from a mould. Unfortunately, the find is not preserved, and we are unable to define the motif. We can assume that this is a zoomorphic representation, which was a favourite on circular seal boxes. The representation, maybe, mostly resembles a frog. The frog is, after the eagle, the most common motif on circular seal boxes. Animals on seal boxes are generally associated with the Roman army, because every legion had an animal as a protector and a symbol. The frog did not have such a function and is associated with some kind of internal joke among soldiers.³⁸ Fibulae of zoomorphic forms are often in the form of the same animals that were applied to the lid of the boxes (eagle, turtle, rabbit, lion, rooster, etc...). Box cover No. 20 is a part of the grave inventory of the inhumated deceased (G–4047). Although the skeleton bones were dislocated and fragmented, we concluded that the individual is a female, based on pairs of gold earrings with chains “S” type (C–11200). The grave has been dated to the broad chronological framework of the middle of the 3rd to the first half of the 4th century.³⁹ Seal boxes with zoomorphic figures belong to the earlier chronological range, namely, they are present from the second half of the 1st, to the end of the 2nd century.⁴⁰ If the cover really shows a frog, we believe that, in the grave of the female deceased, it had a secondary function. Since the frog is a symbol of fertility and a protector of women, it may be the reason why the lid of a damaged seal box was used as a kind of amulet.

Variant 2 – on samples of other versions, the box lid is decorated with concentric circles in relief, while at the bottom of the base were three to four circular perforations. The only whole box is No. 21 (Plate II, Fig. 17, C–2611, from the site of “Pećine”, 2.1 cm long),

while in other specimens, No. 22 (Plate II, Fig. 18, C–498 from the site of “Kod Bresta”, 2.5 cm long) and No. 23 (Plate II, Fig. 19, C–7900, from the site of “Pećine”, 2 cm long) only the caps were preserved. Box cover No. 24 (Plate II, 20, C–4485, from the site of “Pećine”, R–2, 2 cm) is without a loop and has, in the middle, a circular perforation centrally perforated, around which are carved two concentric rings. It can be expected that this perforation was closed with a rivet with a decorative head that fell out. Since the other samples of lids are badly preserved, we assume that they all had this perforation in the middle, because it is a characteristic of most of the specimens of this type from other localities.⁴¹ These perforations are often closed by metal corrosion. Applying archeometric analysis to some specimens from *Augusta Raurica*, it was confirmed that the holes were filled with a mixture of corroded metal and beeswax.⁴² Cover No. 23 is from the grave of a deceased child (G–2804). It’s a simple burial pit for the free burial of the dead and, on the basis of pottery from the grave, it is dated to the end of the 2nd and the middle of the 3rd century.⁴³ Seal box No. 21 is from the grave of a person who was cremated and whose remains were stored in an urn (G1–213). Based on pottery finds, it is dated to the end of the 2nd

³⁶ Raičković Savić 2012, 127, 219, T. XIII/15. The dating was made on the basis of a ceramic cup, C–7388, found in the grave. Cups of this type are numerous in inhumations and in all types of graves of the cremated deceased, even in *Viminacium* cemeteries, where three levelled graves are found. They are dated to the second half of the 2nd century. They are numerous in *Singidunum* too.

³⁷ Hadrian’s coin from 134–138; Faustina Older’s coin from 141. and Alexander Severus coin from 222–228.

³⁸ We thank prof. Dr M. Vujović for the suggestions given to us for the representation on the specified box. Also, we cannot rule out the possibility that the box, maybe, had a leaf-shaped form. For the boxes with frog appliqué, see: Feugère, Abauzit 1995, 42–57, Fig. 13; Boucher Feugère 2009, 10, Fig. 4

³⁹ The dating was based on the type of grave. It is a grave with a construction. The cover and the upper part were destroyed by robbery. The Ark was built of fragmented bricks connected with lime plaster, and the walls were plastered with a mortar thickness of 1 cm. The floor is made with two rows of bricks. In the north-western part is the head. Next to these items in the grave, a bronze coin was found, C–11202, which is in poor condition and unreadable.

⁴⁰ Feugère, Abauzit 1995, 42–57.

⁴¹ Boucher, Feugère 2009, Fig. 1–2/10.

⁴² Furger, Wartmann, Riha 2009, Summary.

⁴³ Raičković Savić 2012, 127, 219, T. XIII/13. Contributions from G–2804, C–7895 weevil, C–7892, C–7893 cups and C–7894 fragmented bowl. Both cups are of the same type, typical of the tombs of the cremation condominium type of Mala Kopašnica–Sase.

and the first part of the 3rd century.⁴⁴ Analogous finds from *Siscia* are dated to the 1st century and are considered to be forerunners of the circular boxes decorated with enamel.⁴⁵

Variant 3 – Circular enamel covers No. 25 (C–10369, the site “Pećine”, length 2.2 cm) and No. 26 (Plate II, Fig. 21, C–11796, the site “Pećine”, length 2.9 cm) were selected in the third variant. It should be noted that in both specimens the enamel fell apart. Analogous specimens are known from Romania, and are dated to the 2nd and 3rd centuries.⁴⁶ With the cover of No. 26, the circular extension was preserved, as well as a leaf-shaped box Type II/2. This additional box closing system is typical of the circular specimens decorated with enamel, known from *Siscia* and belonging to the 2nd and, partly, to the 3rd century.⁴⁷ Finds from *Viminacium* are from the area of the necropolis with the graves of cremated and inhumated deceased.⁴⁸

The bottoms of the circular seal boxes No. 27 (Plate II, Fig. 22, C–11567, from the site of “Više Grobalja”, 2.4 cm long), No. 28 (Plate II and III, Fig. 23, 35, C–2325, from the site of “Amphitheatre”, dim. 2.7 x 1.9 x 0.5 cm) and No. 29 (Plate II, Fig. 24, C–7427, from the site of “Pećine”, 2.3 cm long) could not be determined as a particular variant, because their covers were not preserved. The bottom of box No. 27 has four perforations and two loops. It was found in the layer of the necropolis with the coins of Gordian III, Geta and Trebonian the Gaul.⁴⁹ The bottom of box No. 28 was found at the Amphitheater, in the layer dated by the coins to the 2nd and 3rd centuries.⁵⁰ The bottom of box No. 29 has three perforations, with no preserved loops and was a part of the grave inventory of the inhumated, free buried, deceased child (G–2696). On the basis of the grave finds, it was dated to the 2nd and 3rd centuries.⁵¹ Circular seal box No. 30 (Plate III, Fig. 36, C–2969, from the site of “Amphitheatre” dim. 2.2 x 1.6 x 1.1 cm) although whole, due to the thick layer of corrosion, is hard to determine as a particular variant. It is only noted that an iron pin passes between the loops.

Type IV

Seal box No. 31 is of diamond shape and is separated as a special example of Type IV (Plate II, Fig. 25, C–1298, from the site of “Pećine”, 3.1 cm long). The box cover was made using the technique of embossing over a matrix mould. Nine rhombic fields are filled with blue, red and yellow enamel. The bottom of the box has three properly spaced circular perforations. A diamond-shaped box with a network of up to 25 rhom-

bic cells filled with blue enamel is known from London, and dated to the period between 120 and 165 AD.⁵² A similar specimen, known from *Siscia*, belongs to the 2nd and 3rd centuries.⁵³ Seal boxes of diamond shape, as far as we know, were always decorated with enamel, and on the cover was a circular extension with a nozzle for fixing to the boxes. This supplement is typical of circular and leaf or heart-shaped specimens. Seal box No. 31 belongs to the grave with cremation (G1–91).⁵⁴ On the basis of the coin of Antoninus Pius, the tomb is dated to the middle of the 2nd century.

Type V

The square seal box No. 32 (Plate II, Fig. 26, C–1581, from the site of “Pećine”, dim. 2 x 2.1 cm)

⁴⁴ Raičković Savić 2012, 93, 114, 118, 141, 212, T. VI/22; 215, and 216, T. IX/10, T. X/20). The pottery inventory from the grave includes C–2606 pot in the function of the urn, C–2607 and C–2609 plates and a jug C–2608. This material was two to three times more frequently present in the *Viminacium*'s levelled graves with cremation than the simple pits with the burned sides. So, it is a common grave inventory of the Mala Kopašnica–Sase levelled graves. The plates correspond to the type III/9, according to Singidunum pottery typology, see in: S. Nikolić-Đorđević, *Antička keramika Singidunuma, Singidunum II*, Belgrade, 2000, 99.

⁴⁵ Koščević 1988, 132–133, T. LXXX, 1277–1280.

⁴⁶ Benea, Crînguș, Regep-Vlascici, Ștefănescu 2006, Pl. XXI, 19–21.

⁴⁷ Koščević 1988, 133–134, T. LXXX, 1282, 1285–1287.

⁴⁸ Data taken from field documentation.

⁴⁹ The coin, C–11569 belongs to the period of Geta as Caesar; the coin, C–11564 belongs to the period of Gordian III from 238–244; the coin, C–11563 belongs to the period of Gordian III from 240–241 and the coin C–11565 belongs to the period of Trebonian the Gal from 251–252.

⁵⁰ The coins from the 2nd century are as follows: C–2660, Hadrian; C–1799, Faustina the Elder and C–1841, Faustina the Younger. The coins from the 3rd century are: C–1349, Alexander Severus; C–2065, Caracalla; C–1355, Gordian III and C–2776, Gallienus.

⁵¹ Raičković Savić 2012, 136, 138, 221, T. XV/2–4, 7; T. XVI/22. Pottery items from the grave G–2696 (C–7423 and C–7425 jugs, C–7426 a pot) belong to the second half of the 2nd and the first half of the 3rd century. Jugs are a typical inventory in the levelled graves of the type at Mala Kopašnica–Sase, while the pot was found more frequently in the graves of inhumated deceased.

⁵² Holmes 1995, 393, Fig. 2.

⁵³ Koščević 1988, 136, T. LXXXII, 1319.

⁵⁴ In the damaged leveled grave, next to the box were found the following inventory: bronze rivet embellished by enamel on one side, while on the other was an eccentrically placed nozzle (the finding has the same number as the seal box); lamp with a damaged seal on the bottom C–1293; bronze coin of Antoninus Pius C–1294; iron rivet for a belt C–1295; iron arrow C–1296 and four bone tokens C–1296.

was set aside as a special type. It is whole, with only minor damage. The box cover is decorated with red, blue and ochre enamel. The decorations have, in the middle, a circular cell and around it are radially spreading fields filled with enamel. The ornamentation is made by embossing on a matrix. At the corners of the bottom are four smaller circular perforations. The hinge mechanism runs along the whole side of the box. The find is from the grave with cremation (G1–110). The grave is levelled, and largely destroyed by subsequent burials.⁵⁵ A plate bronze fibula, as a chronologically sensitive material, dates the tomb to the 2nd and the first half of the 3rd century.⁵⁶ Seal boxes with ornaments in relief on the lid are the oldest specimens and are dated to the first century, while boxes of the same shape with enamel ornamentation, as in the examples of *Viminacium*, belong to an earlier stage, to the 2nd and 3rd century. Analogous items from *Siscia* were dated in the same way.⁵⁷

CONCLUSION

Reviewing the seal boxes from *Viminacium*, it could be concluded that, by the shape and decoration, they correspond to the appropriate analogous samples from Western Europe. The exceptions are Type I seal boxes. Seal boxes of elliptical or oval shape with relief images on the cover (goddess at the altar, male bust in profile, standing figure of a man – a deity or a soldier and an eagle), rarely occur at other sites. The only known specimens are from London, dated between 50 and 120 AD⁵⁸. Closer analogies to the Type I seal boxes are the covers with figural representations of deities, from Sisak, which coincide chronologically with examples from *Viminacium*⁵⁹. The seal boxes of Type I from *Viminacium* (the site “Nad Klepečkom”) are from the building 16 which is defined as a storage facility or workshop, dating from the middle of the 2nd century.

It is inevitable that we should mention the similarities between some lids of seal boxes from *Viminacium* and the plate fibulae from the same site. The box lids Type III/2 with concentric circles, correspond to *Viminacium*'s plate fibulae variant 1, that are dated to the 2nd and the first half of the 3rd century⁶⁰. Fibulae of this type in Upper Moesia are imported from Noricum and Raetia, Alpine provinces and the Rhineland. The first samples are linked with the Roman army, which dates them to the end of the 1st and at the beginning of the 2nd century and were spread by trade and military movements during the 2nd and 3rd centuries⁶¹. The samples

with the enamel type III/3 are similar to *Viminacium*'s plate fibulae variant 3, which belong to the first half of the 3rd century⁶². The aforementioned type of fibulae from *Viminacium* could be linked to the Sarmatian population on the left bank of the Danube⁶³. Diamond and square-shaped boxes with enamel of Type IV and V correspond to *Viminacium*'s plate fibulae variant 5, which belong to the period of the first half of the 2nd to the middle of the 3rd century⁶⁴. Fibulae of a rhomboid arc shape with circular extensions on the vertices are present throughout the Empire from Gaul to Ponta, ranging from the end of the 1st to the middle of the 3rd century, while specimens from Upper Moesia date to the 2nd century⁶⁵. Fibulae of a square arc shape are linked to the Gaul and Roman provinces with Celtic populations. In Serbia they are rarely present and dated to coincide with the rhomboid arc fibulae⁶⁶. The above similarities between these objects indicate production in the same workshop and in an identical time span of the first half of the 2nd to the middle, or possibly the end, of the 3rd century. It is particularly important to mention the three bottoms of seal boxes of leaf-shaped forms made of lead from *Siscia* and the two from the Museum of Lyon. It can be assumed that they represent the samples for making identical boxes of bronze⁶⁷.

Workshops for the production of seal boxes should be looked for in the areas where similar forms of fibulae

⁵⁵ The most significant finding in the grave is a wooden chest with bronze revetment, lock, decorative wedges? and handle C–1579. The approximate dimensions of the chest would be about 24 x 16 cm. In the vicinity were found two bronze mirrors, one complete with circular perforations around the edge, while the other is fragmented, C–1580 and C–1584, then seal box C–1581, circular plate fibula C–1582 and silver coin (Octavian Augustus, 28–26. BC.) which was perforated in the function of the pendant C–1583.

⁵⁶ Redžić 2007, 46, cat. 235. T. XXI, 235.

⁵⁷ Košćević 1988, 131–132, T. LXXX, 1274.

⁵⁸ Holmes 1995, 394, cat. 2–5.

⁵⁹ Košćević 1988, 56, 205, cat. 641–644, T. XXXV, 601–604; Košćević 1995, 21, Pl. 46/487–490.

⁶⁰ Redžić 2007, 46, cat. 234–236. T. XXI, 234–236; Petković 2010, 166. Type 21/B1.

⁶¹ Petković 2010, 166. Type 21/B1.

⁶² Redžić 2007, 47, cat. 238–239. T. XXI, 238; T. XXII, 239.

⁶³ Petković 2010, 168–169. Type 21/C.

⁶⁴ Redžić 2007, 47–48, cat. 246–248. T. XXII, 246–248.

⁶⁵ Petković 2010, 191–192. Type 24/A2.

⁶⁶ Petković 2010, 192. Type 24/ B.

⁶⁷ Košćević 1988, 136, T. LXXXII, 1316, 1317 and cat. 1416; Furger, Wartmann, Riha 2009, Fig. 69.

where produced. In particular, this applies to enamel seal boxes, which are likely to have been produced in the same workshops that made other objects decorated with enamel (fibulae, belt's notch? etc.)⁶⁸. In addition to imported *Viminacium*'s findings connected to the military movements and other trade links, we can assume some local seal box production too.

Seal boxes from *Viminacium* were cast, while some lids had carved ornaments, embossed on a matrix and enamelled. The surfaces were carefully polished. Circular perforations at the bottom were drilled later, after casting.

Ten seal boxes from *Viminacium* are a part of the grave inventory (six from the graves of the cremated deceased and in four graves of inhumated deceased). The same number of specimens originates from the necropolis, in layers between the graves. These data differ from previous knowledge about the place of discovery of seal boxes. On the sites of Western Europe, they are rarely found in the graves. In *Siscia*, 76 of the samples do not belong to the grave inventory, as is the case with the 138 finds from *Augusta Raurica*. Seal boxes from the graves of the inhumated deceased in the *Viminacium*'s necropolis (four finds: Nos. 9, 20, 23 and 29), belong to children. They are, surely, not scribes and, therefore, the presence of seal boxes in the graves could be related to the belief in an afterlife where, according to some authors, the seal box had the purpose of verifying a letter⁶⁹. In the graves of the cremated deceased, as in the type at Mala Kopašnica–Sase, six seal boxes were found (Nos. 2, 8, 12, 21, 31 and 32). Four graves are levelled, in the shape of a simple rectangular burial pit, while one had the remains of cremated deceased stored in a hearth ceramic pot, which was used as an urn. An anthropological analysis of osteological material was not carried out, so the gender and the age of the deceased were not determined. We can only claim, with any certainty, that the square seal box with enamel belonged to a female. The seal box was probably placed in a wooden coffin covered with bronze formwork with fragments of two bronze mirrors. Seal boxes from the graves (with inhumation and cremation) are enamelled (four finds: Nos. 9, 12, 31 and 32), are decorated in relief (three finds: Nos. 2 – a bust of a man, No. 20 – a frog? and No. 8 – an applied phallus) or have concentric rings without enamel (two finds: Nos. 21 and 23). If we add the finds from the necropolis area (between the graves), then we have seven more enamelled copies (Nos. 10, 11, 13, 15, 19, 25 and 26). The graves where the seal boxes have been found

mostly had poor inventory. The most common are ceramic pots from the local *Viminacium*'s workshops, of cheap production. They belong to the second half of the 2nd and the first half of the 3rd century, and are common grave inventory of the inhumated and cremated deceased. Analogies are found not only around the Upper Moesia, but in neighbouring provinces too. These data lead us to think that these luxury examples of seal boxes have a secondary use, and that, perhaps, they were some kind of treasure, often the only treasure (because of the lavish appearance of the lid with polychrome enamel) used as grave goods. In particular, one must refer to the seal box No. 8 with a subsequently applied phallus on the cover, which was the only find in the levelled grave with cremation, though damaged. In this case, not only that the cover was probably enamelled (the enamel is not preserved), but also the very symbolism of the phallus can explain the presence of the seal box in the tomb. Phallic findings in tombs from *Viminacium*'s necropolis were found in 13 graves, six of which were children's. Phalluses of various forms were worn by the children around the neck to guard against curses, to prevent misfortune and to bring good luck⁷⁰. Phalluses, like other objects of apotropaic character, were carried through life around the neck (as a necklace with phallic pendants), on the hand (as miniature rings with phallic motifs on bracelets) and were attached to a crib or a bed, in order that they could be placed, as personal belongings, in the grave to protect the deceased after death⁷¹. We believe that the seal box with phallus on the lid, found in the grave with cremation where the age of the deceased had not been determined, had no original purpose, but that it was used for secondary purposes, primarily as an amulet. Maybe that's the case with lid No. 20, if the frog is present, as has already been discussed. Seal boxes from the graves and cemeteries of *Viminacium*, are small in number (20 samples) and, compared to the total number of tombs excavated so far (about 13,000), appear in only 0.15% of the graves. This is a remarkable piece of information which should be paid special attention, considering it is currently the only site where seal boxes dominate the funerary practices.

⁶⁸ Benea, Crînguș, Regep-Vlascici, Ștefănescu 2006, 169–180.

⁶⁹ Furger, Wartmann and Riha 2009, Summary.

⁷⁰ Спасић-Ђурић 2008, 157.

⁷¹ Спасић-Ђурић 2008, 161.

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Резиме:

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КУТИЈИЦЕ ЗА ЧУВАЊЕ ПЕЧАТА НА ЛОКАЛИТЕТУ ВИМИНАЦИЈУМ

Кључне речи. – Кутијице за чување печата, бронза, поклопац, база, елипсоидно-овалне, листолико-срцолике, кружне, емаил, *Viminacium*.

Бронзане кутијице за чување печата (32 примерка) из Виминацијума – Горња Мезија (Стари Костолац, Србија) углавном су са простора некропола (десет примерака из гробова и десет између гробова), док су шест из објекта који је вероватно имао функцију складишта, четири из објекта јавног карактера – амфитеатра, а само је један примерак из војног логора легије *VII Claudia*. Кутијице за чување печата састоје се из два дела: поклопца и базе. Поклопац је декорисан фигуралним приказом, концентричним кружницама, посебно аплицираним орнаментом, а често су различити мотиви испуњени емајлом. База увек има кружне перфорације на дну, од три до четири, бочне зидове висине од 4 до 6 mm, са трапезастим урезом кроз који пролази жица или канап за везивање кутије за пошљику или документ. Механизам за затварање је функционисао по принципу шарке. Поједини примерци имају кружно проширење на поклопцу са трном на наличју коме одговара идентични део на бази за додатно фиксирање поклопца. Класификација је извршена на основу облика и декорације на поклопцу кутије. Издвојено је пет типова са варијантама. Углавном одговарају аналогним примерцима из Западне Европе, а најближе по аналогијама су им кутијице из Сиска. Кутијице типа I са рељефним фигуралним представама на поклопцу изузетно су ретке, познати су неки примерци из Лондона и Сиска. На њима су углавном приказивана божанства и војници. Уникатна је кутијица елипсастиг облика са представом орла с венчићем у кљуну. Може се довести у везу са Јупитером, или са стандардним симболом римске легије – *aquila*. Евидентна је подударност у форми, декорацији и хронологији, кутијица за

чување печата тип III, IV и V и плочастих фибула са емајлом или без њега. Може се очекивати да су у питању исти радионички центри који су производили делове војне опреме, фибуле и печатне кутије. Треба их лоцирати у провинцијама Западне Европе (Галија, Норик, Реција). Са војском и путујућим трговцима ова врста предмета доспева на просторе Виминацијума. Десет кутијица из Виминацијума део су гробног инвентара (шест из гробова кремираних покојника и четири из гробова инхумираних покојника). Исти број је са простора некропола, између гробова. На локалитетима са до сада познатим налазима кутијица за чување печата, то је права реткост. У гробовима доминирају емајлиране кутијице, па смо мишљења да су ови луксузни примерци имали секундарну примену и да су можда, као нека врста драгоцености, коришћени као гробни прилози. Можда такву функцију треба очекивати, након што је кутија изгубила свој примарни значај, или када је била делимично оштећена. Кутијица за чување печата са фалусом на поклопцу у кремираном гробу етажног типа можда је коришћена у секундарне сврхе, пре свега као амајлија. Фрагментовани поклопац кутијице са нејасним рељефним украсом (жаба?) такође би могао бити нека врста амајлије. Бројнија заступљеност кутијица у гробовима и на простору виминацијумских некропола, у односу на налазе из других делова насеља, представља изузетан податак, коме се треба посебно посветити, будући да је то за сада једини локалитет на коме кутијице за чување печата доминирају у фунерарној пракси (у гробовима различитих форми и на простору некропола). Хронолошки припадају 2. и 3. веку, док су најмлађи примерци из прве половине 4. века.

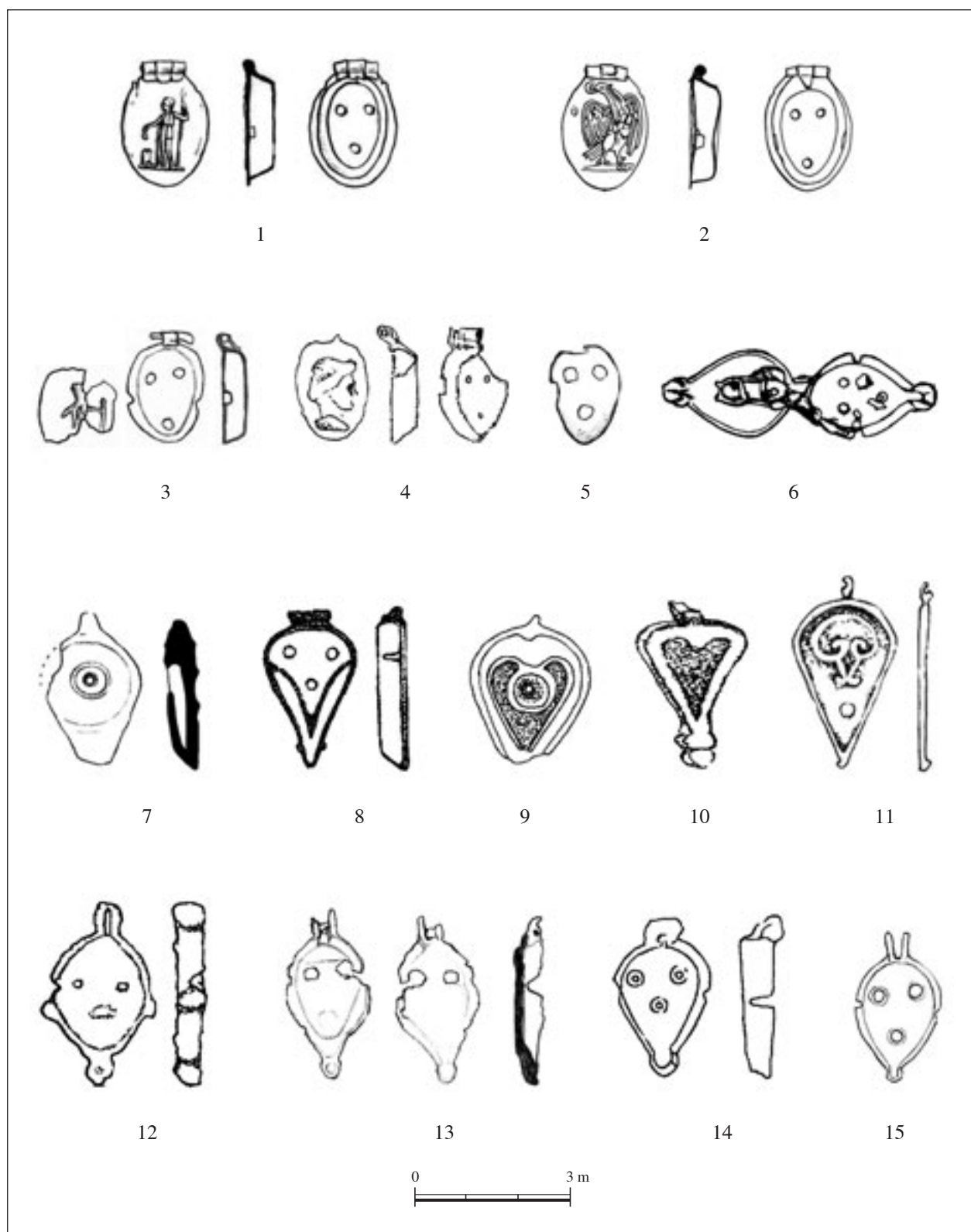


Plate I – Seal boxes type I–II from Viminacium – sites: Nad Klepečkom, Fig. 1, 2, 3, 15; Pećine, Fig. 4, 8, 9; Amphitheater, Fig. 5, 7, 13; Velika kapija, Fig. 12 and Više grobalja, Fig. 14

Табла I – Кућице за чување печата типа I–II из Виминацијума – локалитети: Над Клепечком, сл. 1, 2, 3, 15; Пећине, сл. 4, 8, 9; Амфитеатар, сл. 5, 7, 13; Велика капија, сл. 12 и Више гробља, сл. 14

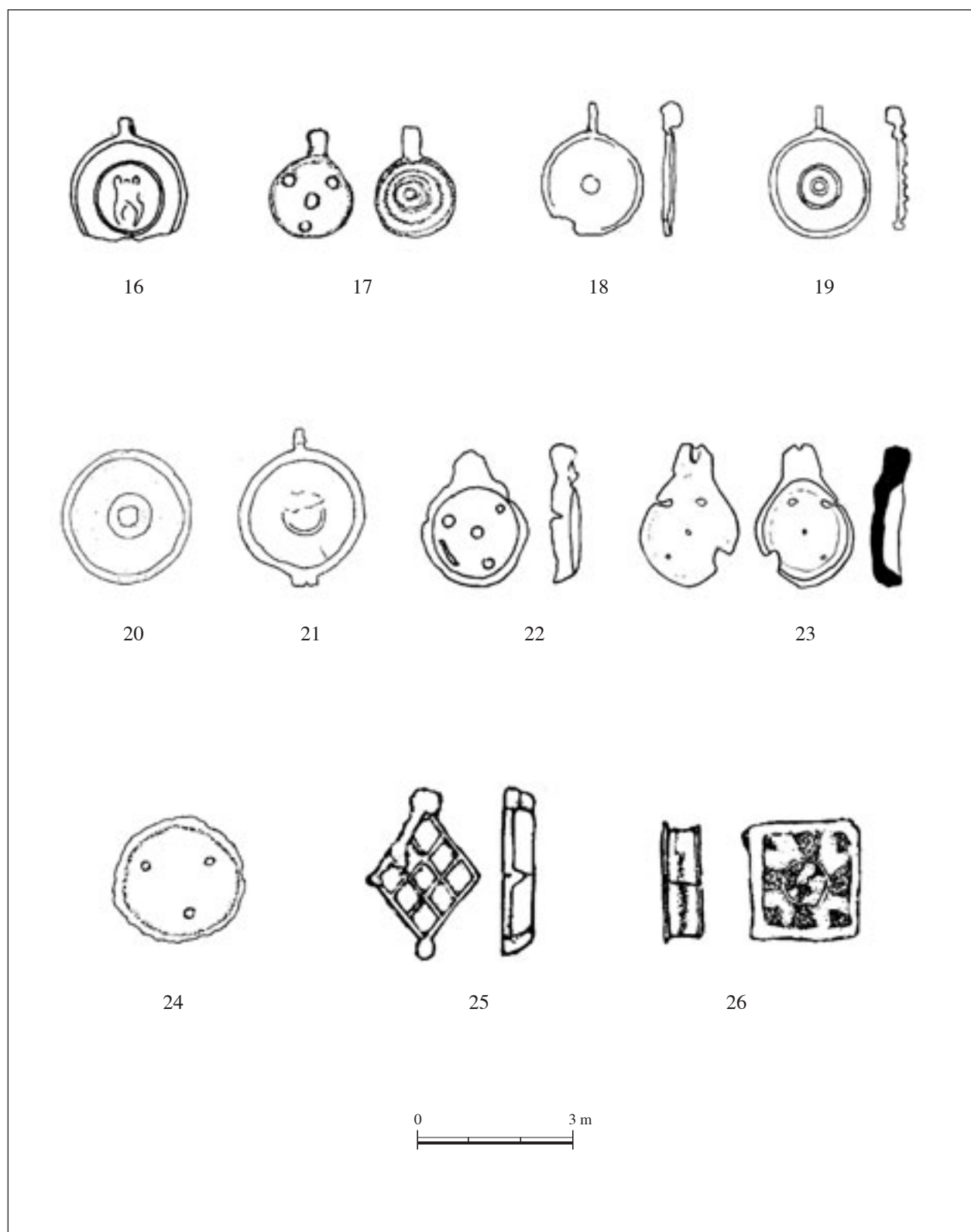
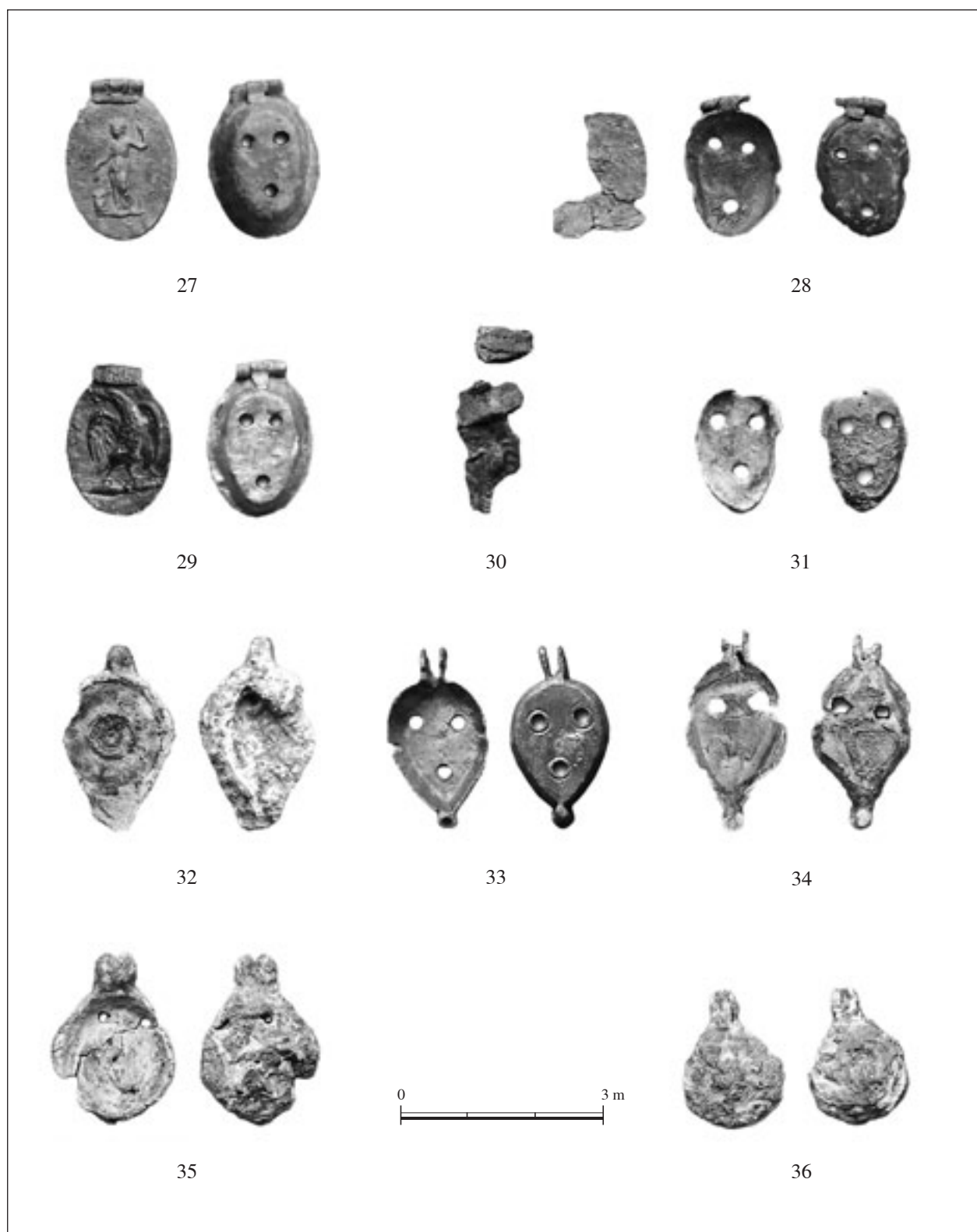


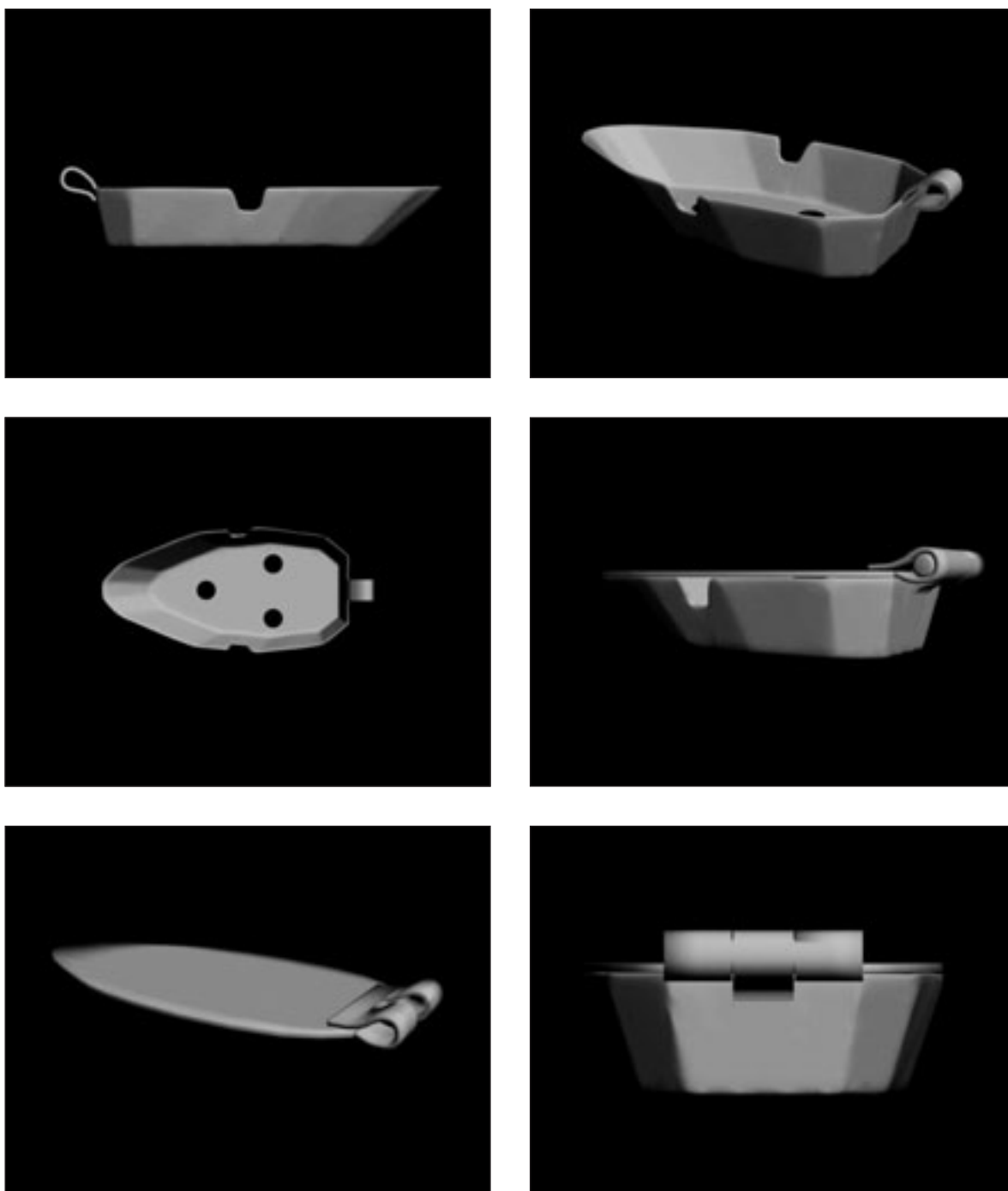
Plate II – Seal boxes type III–V from *Viminacium* – sites: *Pećine*, Fig. 16–17, 19–21, 25–26; *Kod Bresta*, Fig. 18; *Više grobalja*, Fig. 22 and *Amphitheater*, Fig. 23

Табла II – Кућије за чување печата тип III–V из Виминацијума – локалитети: Пећине, сл. 16–17, 19–21, 25–26; Код Бреста сл. 18; Више гробаља, сл. 22 и Амфитеатар, сл. 23



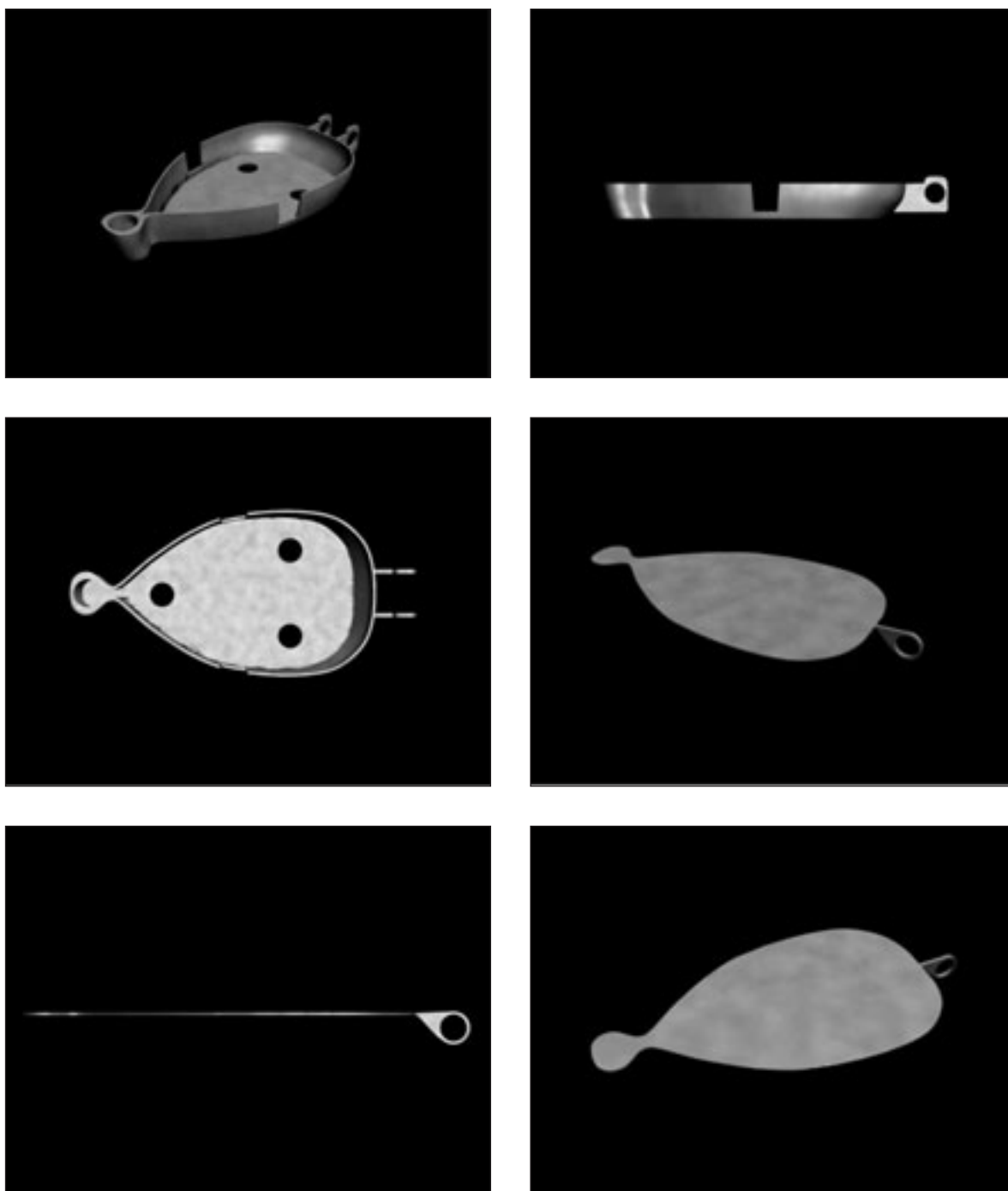
*Plate III – Seal boxes type I–III from Viminacium – sites:
Nad Klepečkom, Fig. 27–30, 33; Amphitheater, Fig. 31–32, 34–36*

*Табла III – Кућије за чување печата типова I–III из Виминацијума – локалитети:
Над Клепечком, сл. 27–30, 33; Амфитеатар, сл. 31–32, 34–36*



*Appendix 1 – Layout base and lid seal boxes type I from Viminacium
with hinge mechanism and loops of embossed tin*

*Прилог 1– Изглед базе и поклоица кућија за чување печата тип I из Виминацијума
са шарнир механизмом и петљама од искуцаног лима*



*Appendix 2 – Layout base and lid seal boxes type II from Viminacium
with hinge mechanism and loops*

*Прилој 2 – Изглед базе и поклојца кућица за чување печата тип II из Виминацијума
са шарнир механизмом и петљама*