

SOFIJA PETKOVIĆ

ROMAN NECROPOLIS WITH CREMATION IN DAVIDOVAC NEAR VRANJE

Contribution to study of Mala Kopašnica - Sase type of graves

Abstract:

In 2011, at the site Davidovac - Gradište, archaeological rescue excavations were performed by a team from the Institute of Archaeology in Belgrade, conducted by Sofija Petković. The excavations were performed in the expropriation zone, along the route of the new highway E 75 - Coridor 10, to the south-west from the Davidovac village, at the site Gradište, on both sides of the road from Vranje to Bujanovac. In this zone a trace of Roman road Naissus - Scupi, Via publica, was discovered, as well as a Roman settlement formed along the communication, which lasted from the 4th to the mid-5th century, probably mansium. Necropolises of this settlement were also discovered - the cremation necropolis from the 2nd -3rd centuries (39 graves) and an inhumation necropolis from the second half of the 4th and the first half of the 5th century (67 graves). The graves of Mala Kopašnica - Sase type were discovered at the cremation necropolis, as well as shallow graves with or without an urn. In this necropolis five types of burials were confirmed, differentiated by the form of the grave and by funeral ritual.

Key words:

Davidovac-Gradište, Roman period, Via publica, Naissus - Scupi, necropolis, cremation, Mala Kopašnica - Sase type of burial, funeral ritual.

The systematic archaeological rescue research at the archaeological site Davidovac (southwest) - Gradište was conducted by the Institute of Archaeology in Belgrade, based on data obtained by the archaeological survey of the site executed by the competent institutions: the National Museum in Vranje, the Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments in Niš and the Institute of Archaeology in Belgrade^[1]. Considering the fact that archaeological excavations have not been executed at this site until now, this research has had great significance for the protection of cultural heritage in the Republic of Serbia.

[1] The investor of the project was the company Koridori Srbije d.o.o. Belgrade. Sofija Petković PhD Research Fellow of the Institute of Archaeology in Belgrade was the Head of Research, and the professional team included: Goran Mitrović, curator at the National Museum in Vranje, Mirjana Glumac, curator at the National Museum in Belgrade, Jelena Živanović MA, curator at the Belgrade City Museum, Radovan Petrović, curator at the Jagodina Regional Museum, Mladan Cunjak PhD, conservationist at the Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments in Smederevo, Igor Jovanović and Marija Jovičić, curators at the Museum of Mining and Metallurgy in Bor, Slavoljub Gacović PhD, archaeologist from Zaječar, Ivana Grujić MA, archaeologist from Opovo, Nikola Radinović MA, archaeologist from Belgrade, Petar Stevanović, archaeologist from Mladenovac, Nataša Miladinović-Radmilović PhD, anthropologist from the Institute of Archaeology in Belgrade, Sonja Vuković MA, archaeozoologist from Belgrade, Zoran Janković, art historian from Belgrade, Nikola Ivanković, architectural engineer from Niš, Dragica Bizjak, Milica Mitić, Marija Jović, Ljiljana Muždeka, Nemanja Marković, Gligor Daković and Nenad Vasović, archaeology students and Nenad Simonović, student of architecture. Between 30 to 80 manual workers worked at the archaeological excavations.



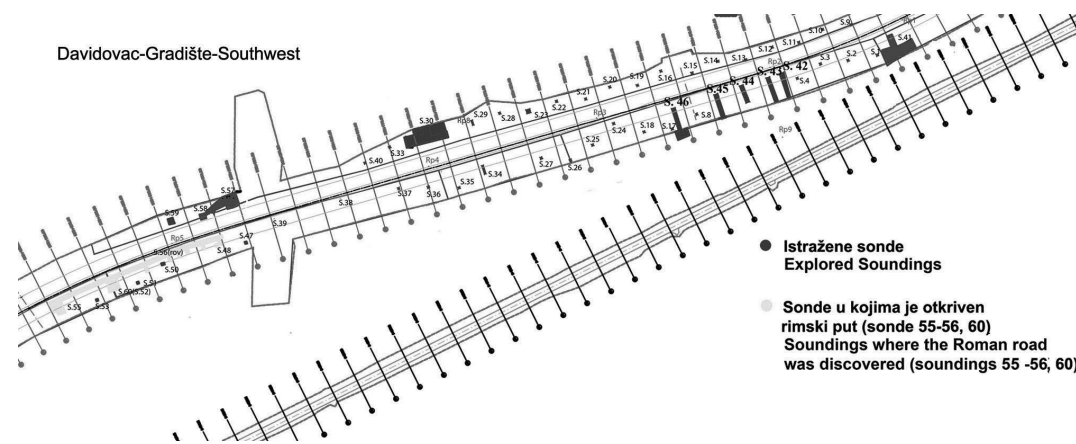
Map 1 - Position of the site Davidovac - Gradište (Southwest) in Vranje-Bujanovac valley.

A part of the archaeological site Davidovac (southwest) - Gradište was endangered by the construction of the highway E75 route along an area 1,025m in length on both sides of the existing highway southwest from the village Davidovac, municipality Vranje, towards the villages of Srpska Kuća and Karadnik, in the municipality Bujanovac, 35 to 50m in width.

During the period from 22 August to 15 December 2011, archaeological rescue excavations were performed in three phases of research. At the northeast part of the site, on the left side of the Vranje - Bujanovac road, remnants of Late Roman settlements from the 4th century to the first half of the 5th century and remnants of the Roman necropolis with cremation from the 2nd to the 3rd century were discovered, as well as the necropolis of inhumed deceased from the 4th to the 5th century, on the right side of the road. At the southwest

half of the site, on the left side of the Vranje - Bujanovac road, a part of the necropolis with cremation from the 2nd to the 3rd centuries was excavated. Further to the south, on the same side of the road, remnants of the settlement from the 4th century were discovered together with a part of the Roman road route Naissus - Scupi (Via publica), 130m in length, which was used from the beginning of the 2nd century until the end of the 5th / beginning of the 6th century, whereas at the furthest southwest part of the site, on the right side of the road, an urban type of Roman settlement was discovered, dating from the 2nd to the 4th century (Petković 2012; Петковић 2012) (Plan 1).

The investigation of the Roman necropolis with cremation was also executed in three phases of archaeological rescue excavations: In the first phase of the archaeological excavations, 40 trial trenches of 2 x 2 m dimensions (trenches 1-40) were open in the zone of expropriation on both sides of the highway from Davidovac to Karadnik, and 21 trenches on the left side of the highway (trenches 1-8, 17-18, 23-26, 33-39) and 19 trenches on the right side (trenches 9-22, 27-32, 40). Trenches were placed 25m apart from one another, in a zig-zag line. A geodetic survey of the trench position using a total station was performed and a general digital plan of the site was made^[2] (Plan 1).



Plan 1 - Plan of the archaeological site Davidovac - Gradište (Southwest).

[2] The geodetic survey was conducted by the Geo Surveillance Department of the company Koridori Srbija, headed by the engineer Dušan Stošić.

Above the cultural layer of the trenches mentioned, on the left side of the highway, and beneath the surface layer of humus, a powerful layer of fluvial deposit was found, made of yellow and yellowish-brown sandy clay of 1.50m thickness to the northeast and up to 1m to the southwest (layer A and layer A1). Although we first assumed it was a layer that had originated by successive seasonal overflow of the Južna Morava River (the South Morava River), with respect to the thickness of the layer and lack of interpolations of cultural layers, we concluded that a catastrophic flood that caused a change in the river course and moved the riverbed of the Južna Morava River towards the northwest, also caused interruption in the dwelling at this site and the closing of the cultural layers with a thick fluvial deposit (Fig. 1).

Beneath the sterile layer of fluvial deposit, two cultural layers from the Roman period were discovered: layer B - brown soil with construction debris (crushed stone, lime mortar, fragments of tegulae and imbrices) and layer C - light brown soil with soot and burned earth.

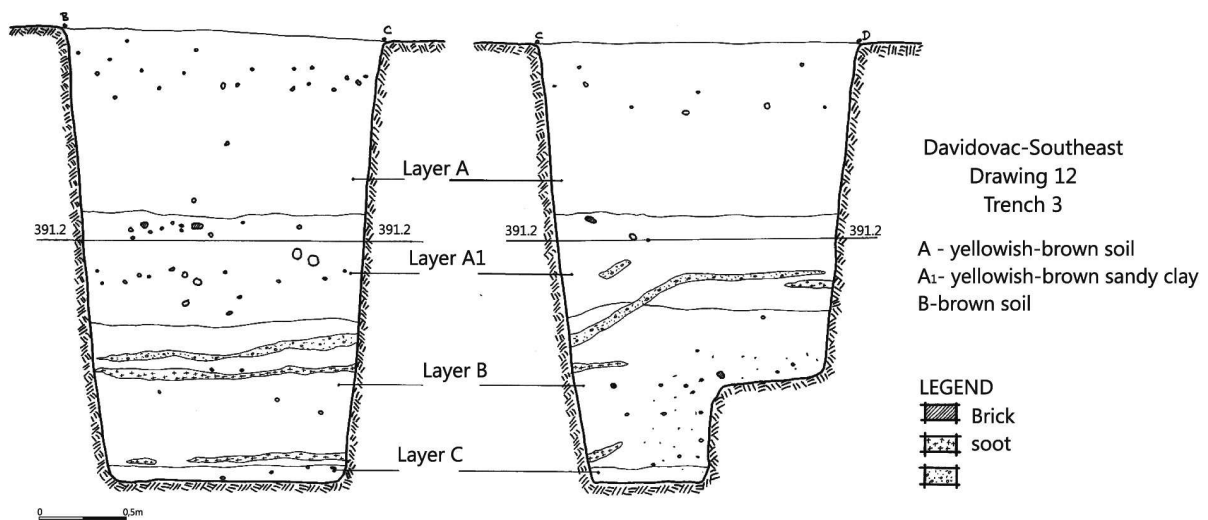


Figure 1 - Stratigraphy of cultural layers - a. SE section of trenches 41 and 41 a
b. SE and SW section of the trench 3.

Layer B, with an average thickness of about 0.70m, was formed at the level that made some kind of cobble, perhaps a substruction of the Roman road discovered at the southwest end of the site, containing findings that date to the second half of the 3rd and the first half of the 4th century (with bronze coins, fragments of ceramics and glass vessels).

Layer C, with an average thickness of about 0.50m, contains a smaller quantity of archaeological findings, fragments of Roman and prehistoric ceramic vessels and animal bones. The Roman graves with cremated individuals of the Mala Kopašnica - Sase type I^[3] were dug into this layer, rectangular grave pits with rounded corners with an average dimension of 1.10 x 0.70m, about 0.50m deep, whose sides and bottom are burned. Five graves were discovered in trial trenches: in trench 5 (grave 3 and grave 5), 6 (grave 1) and 7 (grave 2), on the left side of the highway and trench 14 (grave 4) on the right side of the highway. All the graves had the same orientation, with the longer sides in a NE-SW direction. Remains of cremated individuals together with remnants of pyre (soot, charred wood) were laid into the pit without a recipient. Ceramic vessels were discovered in these graves - biconical, two-handled cups, spherical and conical bowls and one oinochoe wine jug, where food and drinks were laid for the deceased, to which charred nuts found in a bowl in grave 3 clearly testify. Jewellery and personal items of the deceased were laid into the graves as grave goods (e.g. a necklace of glass beads in grave 5, bronze fibulae, a bronze oil-lamp and strigillus in grave 2). These graves were preliminarily dated to the 2nd and the first half of the 3rd century on the basis of the relative stratigraphy of cultural layers, grave pit types and analysis of the grave goods.

It should be mentioned that the grave pits of graves 1 and 2 were partly outside the trenches' edges, so in this phase of excavation their exact dimensions were not determined.

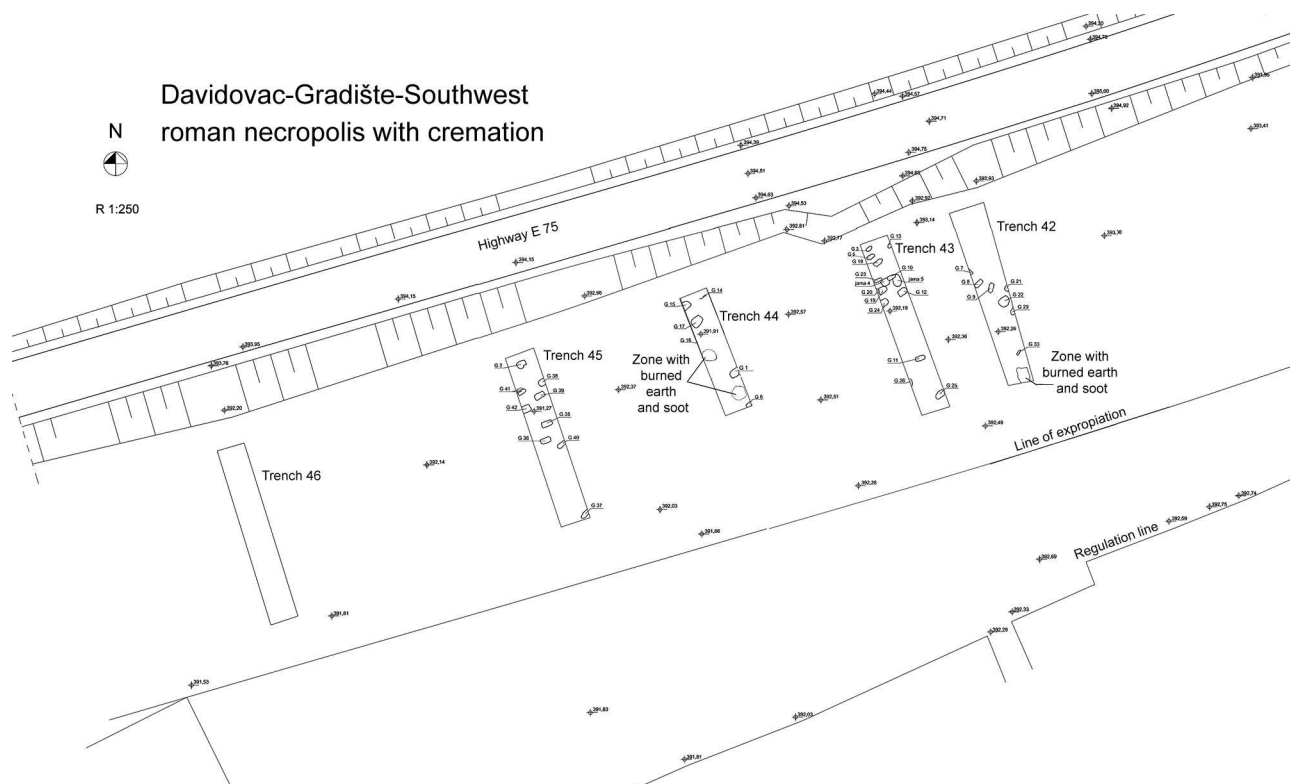
With the aim to estimate the chronology and type of the discovered Roman necropolis with cremation, as well as to determine the direction of its expansion, six trenches were opened in the second phase of excavations (trenches 41-46) in the NW-SE direction, with the dimensions 25 x 5 m, across a total distance of 210m (trench 42 at 100m from trench 41, trench 43 at 10m from trench 42, trench 44 at 20m from trench 43, trench 45 at 20m from trench 44 and trench 46 at 35 m from trench 45)^[4] (Plan 1). In trenches 41-46 the layer of fluvial deposit (layer A), at an average thickness of 1.20-1.50m, was firstly removed using mechanization, and then the Roman cultural layer (layer B) was removed up to the level where graves were buried.

In trenches 42-45, in layer B, a great number of Roman findings from the 3rd century to the 4th century were found, but there were no traces of buildings or other architectural structures^[5]. Here the graves were dug from the level b - bottom of layer B, into the layer of yellowish-brown sandy soil (layer C). Besides the already discovered graves of the Mala Kopašnica - Sase type I, large graves with a trapezoid section of a pit (trough-shaped) were also discovered, having a rectangular ground plan with rounded corners, whereas the base is smaller than the superficial surface of the burial place. The sides and bottom of these graves were coated with a thick layer of clay (5-10 cm) that was burned by lighting fire in the pit. The following grave goods were found in those graves: ceramic and glass vessels where food and drinks were offered to the deceased (ceramic bowls, pots and two-handled cups, glass cups and small bowls), as well as personal items (jewellery, parts of clothing, tools and arms). In this phase of research, 21 graves were discovered (graves 6-26) (Plan 2).

[3] Garašanin 1968, 6; Зотовић 1968, 19, 24-25, type IV; Јовановић 1984, 101-103; Golubović 1998, 248, Viminacium type IIIa.

[4] Trench 44 is shortened by 10m at the southeast due to a discovered pipe of the modern water supply system.

[5] In trenches 41 and 46 a different situation was discovered, i.e. buildings of the Late Roman settlement from the 4th century to the 5th century were discovered.



Plan 2 - Plan of the necropolis with cremation at Davidovac - Gradište (Southwest).

Sacrificial areas (*kulina*) were found in trenches 42 and 44 and between graves, displayed with burned earth, ashes and soot containing a great quantity of animal bones^[6].

In the third phase of research, the excavation in trench 41 was extended towards the southwest (dimension of 10 x 12m) with the aim to completely investigate a discovered Late Roman building (Structure 2). The excavations in trenches 42-46 were also resumed in order to investigate the Late Roman settlement from the 4th century to the 5th century and the necropolis with cremation of the Mala Kopašnica - Sase type from the 2nd century to the 3rd century (Plan 2).

In trench 41 and its extension part 41a, a Late Roman building (Structure 2) was found with several rooms, 11m wide and 12m long in the discovered part up to the SE section of the trench. A great quantity of various archaeological findings was excavated in this structure and around it (ceramics, a ceramic oil-lamp, glass, bronze, iron and lead objects, coins), which are undoubtedly dated from the end of the 3rd/the beginning of the 4th century to the middle of the 5th century.

There are two rooms in the structure, which was built of crushed stone bound by yellow clay. The floor (level b) was paved with tegulae, and remnants of the ruined roof construction were found on the floor. Structure 2 was demolished in a devastating fire, manifested here in the layer of fire and destruction (layer B) where the objects from the second half of the 4th century to the middle of the 5th century were discovered (ceramics, glass, fibulae, coins). However, the level c - floor made of poor lime mortar in a light yellow colour, which was found on a layer of sand with fine gravel (previous

[6] These areas were found in the southwest part of trench 42 and trench 44 between graves 1 and 6 and in the middle part of the trench, southwest off the graves 14-17 (Plan 1).



Figure 2 - Structure 2 with excavations, from the west.



Figure 3 - The graves of cremated deceased with urns
- a. Grave 30; b. Grave 31.

blanket) with compressed yellow clay underneath it, was discovered in the same area under the brick-paved floor and the layer of yellow and brown clayey sand (layer C), which contained findings generally dated to the 4th century (ceramics, glass, fibulae, coins, ceramic oil-lamps). This level was damaged with numerous pits (pits 1-25) among which are a pit - silo (pit 8), holes for wooden pillars, roof construction or gallery beam and graves with cremated individuals (graves 27 and 28, pit 15 = grave 30, pit 16 = grave 31, pit 24 = grave 32, pit 25 = grave 34) (Fig. 2). The excavated graves belong to different types: graves 27 and 28 have already been described as the Mala Kopašnica - Sase type I, graves 30 and 31 belong to the type of round pits with ceramic urn, and graves 32 and 34 belong to the simple type of a small pit with an oval ground plan, without urn (Fig. 3, 4). In these burial places, besides ceramic urns, grave goods were also found, such as bronze coins, a bronze decorative pin, fragments of glass vessels, an iron buckle and small bone dice. A grave pit of grave 28 damaged grave 27, which indicates the existence of two phases of burials at the necropolis with cremation in Davidovac (Fig. 5). Also, burial places in the part of the necropolis with cremation that were discovered under the mortar floor of structure 2, gave to *terminus ante quem* at the end of the 3rd/beginning of the 4th century, when the Late Roman building originated, according to the archaeological findings and stratigraphy of the cultural layers.

During the third phase of excavations in trenches 42-45 another 10 graves of cremated individuals were discovered (29, 33, 35-42), buried into the layer C, yellowish-brown clayey sand. Graves with a large trough-shaped pit are extremely interesting, since the pit may have a horizontal or vertical division, which we shall discuss later. In the investigated graves, the following grave goods were found: ceramic and glass vessels where food and drinks had been left as offerings, personal items of the deceased - jewellery, parts of clothing, tools and arms and grave goods, in the strict sense of the term, which have a cult role - oil-lamps and coins.

Unfortunately, the archaeological rescue excavations were completed in Davidovac with this third phase of research. They were not resumed due to construction of the highway E75 dynamics on the section from Vranje to Bujanovac^[7] (Plan 1).

The topography of the Roman necropolis with cremation in Davidovac may be approximately determined. It spreads on the left side of the Roman road *Naissus - Scupi* which followed the left, i.e. the west bank of the Južna Morava River in Vranje-Bujanovac valley. Towards the northwest and north, the necropolis spread up to the foot of the Gradište hill, where the Late Roman necropolis was situated^[8], and to the southwest up to the Roman settlement from the 2nd-3rd centuries, that spread along the Roman road^[9] (Plan 1). It is more difficult to determine borders of the necropolis with cremation towards the northeast and east, where remnants of the building from the 4th century to the 5th century were discovered^[10], since the Late Roman settlement was formed above the necropolis, to which the graves beneath the floor of the building (Structure 2), excavated in the trench 41 testify. On the other hand, this situation was not confirmed in the southeast, since there were no traces of the necropolis detected beneath the remnants of the building from the 4th century found in trench 46. However, about 35m to the northeast, in trench 45 as many as nine graves were discovered. This may show that the spread of the west border of the necropolis with cremation was in the area between trenches 45 and 46 (Plan 2). The south border of the necropolis was determined naturally by the riverbed of the Južna Morava; the



Figure 4 - The grave of cremated deceased in oval grave-pit, grave 32.

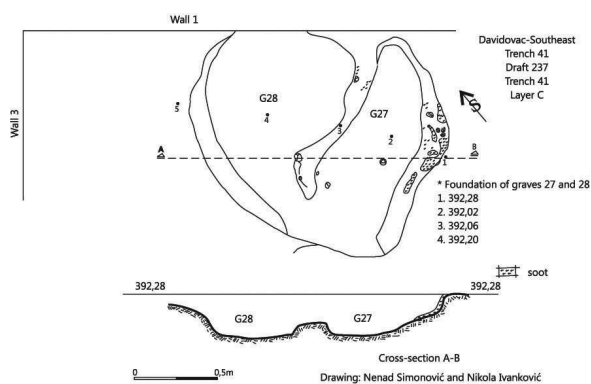


Figure 5 - The layout and section of the graves 27 and 28.

[7] Appeals of the Head of Research and the Institute of Archaeology in Belgrade were sent to the investor, competent institutions for protection of cultural monuments (the Republic Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments in Belgrade, the Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments in Niš) and the Ministry of Culture to allow complete research of the necropolis with cremation in the zone of expropriation, i.e. on the route of the highway at the site Davidovac - Gradište, but the appeals remained without any response. The necropolis was destroyed by earthmoving works conducted by mechanization by the construction company Aktor at the beginning of June 2012.

[8] A part of the Late Roman necropolis, situated in the zone of expropriation at the site Davidovac - Gradište, was completely researched by archaeological rescue excavations (trenches 30 with extensions) (Грујић 2011; Petković 2012, 87, fig. 2).

[9] The Roman road was researched in trenches 48-56 and 60 (Петковић 2012a, Petković 2012, 90, fig. 6), and the buildings of the Roman settlement, also containing *thermae*, was researched in trenches 57-59 (Petković 2012, 89-90, fig. 5).

[10] Apart from Structure 2, researched in trench 41, Goran Mitrović, the curator at the National Museum in Vranje also discovered three structures from the same period, to the northeast of this building, during archaeological surveillance of work executed by the construction company Nuba invest (optical fibre cables placement). The dating of the discovered structures from the 4th century to the 5th century has been determined on the basis of numerous archaeological findings, such as ceramics, coins and the like. The results of these rescue works shall be published before long, and at this occasion I wish to thank my colleague Goran Mitrović for sharing information with me.

southwest part of the village Davidovac, today. Novo Naselje, provided the tombstones and other archaeological findings, which provides evidence of the necropolis spreading to the south^[11].

On the basis of these excavations, it was possible to determine the spatial organization of the necropolis with cremations in Davidovac. The graves were oriented NE-SW with their longer sides, at a distance of 1 to 5 m of one another, buried according to the chess-square system. This is supported by the tombstone markings and the arranged, subdivided area for burials, which had already been determined as characteristic of the Mala Kopašnica - Sase type necropolis (Зотовић 1968, 25). In only one case did we note an intersection of grave pits^[12], which might not have been accidental, and which we shall discuss later.

There is no information on the existence of the grave pit coverings, made of brick, stone or wood, because the upper zones of graves were ruined by fluvial erosion. On the other hand, the fluvial deposit also saved the necropolis in Davidovac from human activity in the later periods. It should be mentioned that in the researched part of the necropolis there are no recorded cases of grave robbery in the ancient period.

The necropolis with cremation in Davidovac in Vranje is multilayered, which reflects in the stratigraphic^[13], chronological and ethnical sense. The two latter aspects may be tracked through the burial ritual and types of grave construction, bearing in mind the fact that archaeological findings from graves of this necropolis were not completely analyzed^[14], primarily due to their numerousness and the fact that conservation of the metal objects has not been performed yet^[15].

The typology of the graves with cremation from Davidovac is based on the burial ritual and the shape of grave pits. First, the graves all belong to the category of *ustrinum* (*ustrinum*, *n. pl. ustrina*), i.e. the burned remains of the deceased and parts of the funeral pyre were selectively brought in smaller quantities from the fired surface and laid into the prepared grave^[16].

The researched graves in the necropolis in Davidovac may be classified into four types on the basis of the grave pit shape and according to the manner of burying the remains of the cremated individuals (Fig. 6).

1. A grave pit of rectangular layout with rounded corners, in some cases oval, with burned sides and bottom and the placement of the remains of the deceased person directly into the pit;
2. a trough-shaped grave pit of larger dimensions, with burned sides and bottom, and the placement of the deceased directly into the pit;
3. a trough-shaped grave pit of larger dimensions, with burned sides with vertical (a) or horizontal (b) pit divisions for the remains of the deceased and an area for grave goods, and
4. a grave pit of smaller dimensions and a round or oval layout, with the remains of the deceased deposited in an urn (a) or laid directly into the pit (b).

[11] Petrović 1979, n° 121 - The tombstone of Ulpia Andia made of bluish marble is incorrectly recorded as a finding from Ristovac. It was discovered in 1890 on the territory of the village Kraljeva Kuća, now Srpska Kuća, encompassing today's Novo Naselje in Davidovac. Ilija Ječić, a customs officer from Ristovac, sent a copy of this tombstone inscription to Nikola Vulić, and the tombstone was placed in front of the customs office building in 1900 at the border between the Principality of Serbia and Turkey on the old road for Bujanovac (today in the southwest part of Davidovac in Novo Naselje), but later it disappeared. At about 400m to the northeast from the old customs office building, during preparations for laying foundations of the new house in his yard in 1997, the villager Petko Nedeljković discovered a tombstone of white marble at the depth of about 2 m, which he broke and built into the concrete foundation. The curators G. Mitrović and A. Bulatović saved only one fragment of this monument, which was brought to the National Museum in Vranje in 1998 (int. no. 3355). The grave stele description of Helena Quinta and Lucius Turelius, quaestor of the colony of Scupi, was not published.

[12] See note 7.

[13] The case of layering graves 27 and 28, which belongs to the same type of Mala Kopašnica - Sase type I.

[14] The anthropological material was completely processed and analyzed by Nataša Miladinović-Radmilović, and the ceramics was processed by Nikola Radinović. Snežana Ratković also took part in processing these findings along with students of archaeology Dragica Bizjak, Marija Jović and Milica Mitić.

[15] An aggravating fact for creating a chronology of the necropolis with cremations from Davidovac was that before conservation it was not possible to identify the strongly patinated bronze coins found in graves.

[16] I wish to thank Nataša Miladinović-Radmilović for the use of the preliminary results of the anthropological analysis in this paper (N. Miladinović-Radmilović, Davidovac - Southwest (Gradište). Anthropological records - incineration). For a selective collection and the burial of cremated remains of the deceased from *ustrinum* see: Миладиновић-Радмиливић 2009, 15.

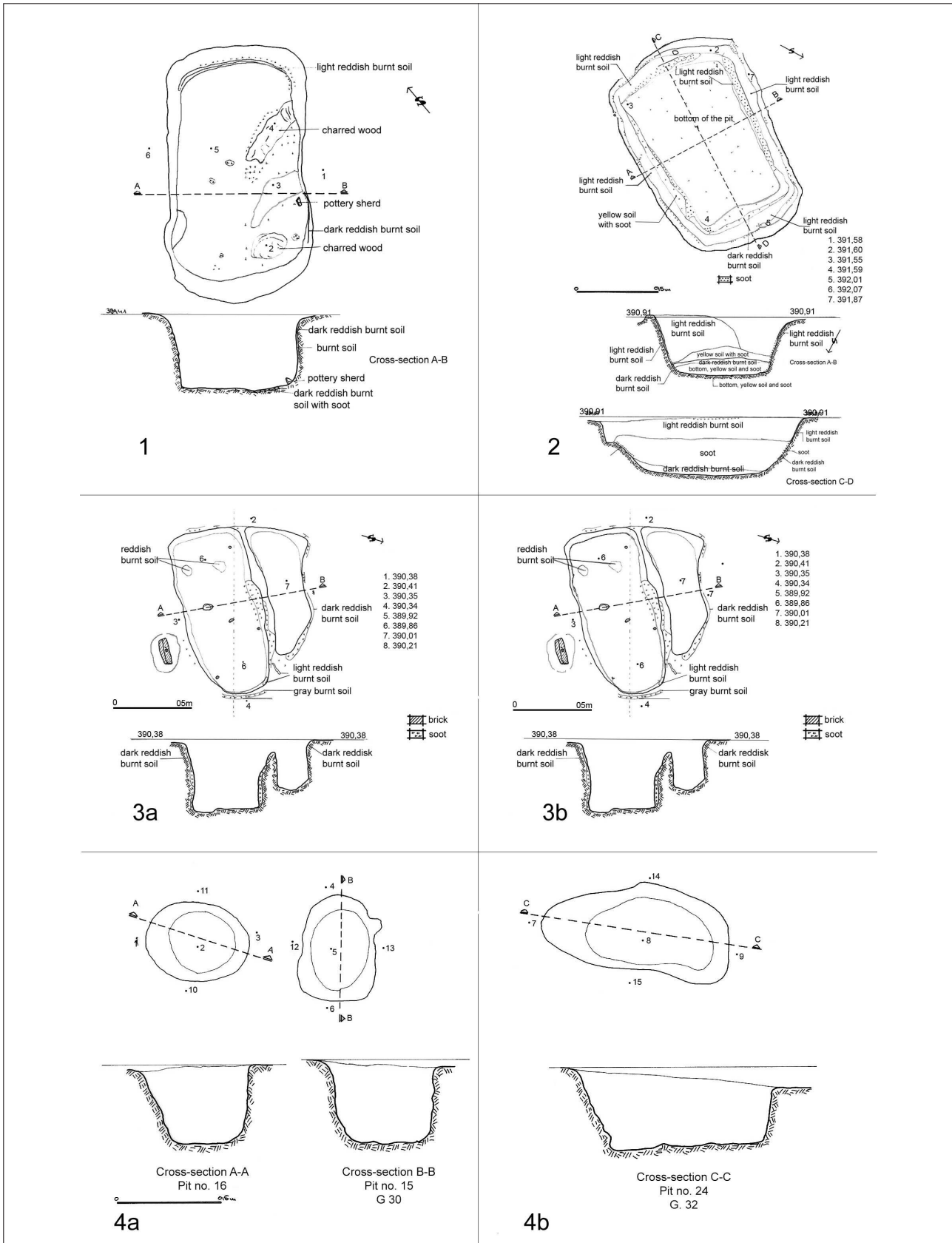


Figure 6 - The types of graves at necropolis with cremation in Davidovac.

As stated before, a total of 42 graves was excavated. However, using anthropological analysis, six double-levelled graves were determined to be in the necropolis in Davidovac, i.e. two individuals were buried in one grave pit (graves 6 a-b, 8 a-b, 17 a-b, 22 a-b, 36 a-b and 40 a-b)^[17]. For now, we can observe that these are the burials of adult individuals with children: in two cases an adult male person and a child were buried together (graves 6 and 36), in another there was a male adolescent person and a child (grave 40), in another there was a woman and a child (grave 17), whereas the sex of two adult persons buried with children could not be determined by anthropological analysis (graves 8 and 22). Bearing in mind these data, it is not certain whether these were graves of parents with children, but next of kin were most likely buried in this manner. On the other hand, we discovered graves without anthropological material (graves 5, 18 and 33), which could be explained in two ways: 1. The existence of the cenotaph of the Mala Kopašnica - Sase type or 2. The depositing of the remains of the deceased in the upper zone of the grave pit, which was destroyed by fluvial erosion^[18].

The greatest number of graves belong to type 1, i.e. to the Mala Kopašnica - Sase type I (61.90%) (Fig. 6. 1). The simple rectangular or oval grave pits have burned sides and at the bottom there is a layer of soot and charred wood, indicating the ritual of coating graves with wood and burning these formwork panels for its lustration ceremony (Зотовић 1968, 25; Јовановић 1984, 104; Зотовић, Јордовић 1990, 10; Korać, Golubović 2009, 523-524). In support of this, there are findings of large iron wedges on the grave sides, with which a wooden construction was pinned (Јовановић 1984, 104; Korać, Golubović 2009, 524). The remains of the deceased were laid into the grave mixed with the remains of the charred wood from the pyre, which were then covered, most frequently with yellow clay. In this way, the grave pit was not filled completely, so there are vessels with food and drinks for the deceased in the upper zone. The assortment of ceramic vessels (pottery) from the graves is limited: there are conical and biconical bowls and plates, usually two to three in one grave, a type of two-handled biconical cup - a goblet, rarely small biconical pots with or without handles, and in one case there is an oinochoe wine jug (grave 5) (Fig. 8). In these graves coins were not found, and only in one grave was a ceramic oil-lamp discovered (grave 35), and very rarely was there jewellery, fibulae, parts of clothing - buckles and applications, weapons and tools. It appears that the main grave goods connected to the burial ritual were ceramic vessels, primarily bowls, plates and two-handled cups. They are found in every grave of type 1, in smaller or larger quantities. Three graves of our type 1 (graves 3, 10, and 19) are particularly significant for the reconstruction of the burial ritual.

In graves 3 and 10 at the bottom of the pit, there are traces of charred, vertically placed pillars, which carried a horizontal wooden area where food and drinks were laid - in grave 3 two bowls, of which one contained charred nuts, and in grave 10 a pot, a small biconical pot and a two-handled biconical cup - a goblet. This construction was lifted above the grave since the remains of the cremated person had already been deposited in the pit. It seems to us that the funeral feast was performed on it, i.e. the relatives and friends of the deceased person ritually had a meal above the grave, symbolically sharing food with the deceased and all ancestors^[19]. At the end of the meal, the wooden construction would be burned together with the vessels and the remains of the food. This can be seen in the intensively charred, but saved remains of plants, such as wood, fruit and seeds, as well as the position

[17] N. Miladinović-Radmilović, Davidovac - Southwest (Gradište). Anthropological records - incineration.

[18] It is less likely that the cremated bones were completely decomposed, which is the case with the remains of some skeletal graves of the Late Roman necropolis at the site Davidovac - Gradište, since they are very resistant to natural environment factors (Милადиновић-Радмиливић 2009, 8-9.)

[19] Archaeobotanical analysis which is performed by Aleksandar Medović MA in the laboratory of the Museum of Vojvodina in Novi Sad is underway, so it is not yet possible to describe the types of food or drinks used in the burial ritual.



Figure 7 - Grave 3 with ceramic bowls, from the north - in upper left corner a detail of charred nuts from one of the bowls.



Figure 8 - Grave 10 with ceramic vessels, from SE.



Figure 9 - Grave 19, from NW.

of vessels that fell down into the pit from a certain height. After burning the food, the pit was covered. Archaeological findings show that personal items of a deceased person and/or posthumous offerings, excluding food, were laid in the grave before and after the funeral feast (Fig. 7, 8).

In grave 19 there were no traces of wooden pillars or a wooden platform (small table) for the funeral feast, but in one half (the southeast half) of the grave pit, wood was put in layers and later burned after the ritual meal, whose objects were laid in the south corner - of the grave (two cups and a bowl). In the second half (northwest half) of the grave, the remains of the cremated person were buried

and then covered with yellow clay (Fig. 9). This grave falls under the type with the division of the grave pits into two parts, which appears in type 3 a-b.

Graves of our type 2 were interpreted in the archaeological literature as Mala Kopašnica - Sase type I, the Mala Kopašnica - Sase type III or as graves where the deceased were cremated - bustum (*bustum, n. - pl. busta*) (Fig. 6. 2). However, during excavations in Davidovac, such graves were differentiated as a transient form between the graves of the Mala Kopašnica - Sase type I and the Mala Kopašnica - Sase type II. I believe that through the symbiosis of our grave form type 1 and type 2, the Mala Kopašnica - Sase type II is created, which is also the prevailing form of burials in the early imperial period of Upper Moesia, Dacia, Pannonia Inferior and the northeast parts of Dalmatia. Graves that are very similar to our type 2 indicate that, but as they have a vertical or horizontal pit division they are more similar to our type 3 a-b. In the case of the necropolis in Davidovac, the idea to divide the grave pit into an upper level and lower level, a grave pit in the narrow sense, was still not formalized, which is defined in the Mala Kopašnica - Sase type II. This is important because in this latter type of grave, cremated remains of the deceased and grave goods were deposited in the grave pit, and parts of the funeral feast were stored in the upper level (Зотовић 1968, 25-27; Јовановић 1984, 104). On the other

hand, in our type 2, the cremated bones of the deceased and the remnants of the pyre were distributed in the lower zone of the pit, as in type 1, whereas grave goods and parts of the funeral feast were stored in the upper grave zone.

In the necropolis of the Mala Kopašnica - Sase type, graves of our type 2 seldom appear in a significant number, so M. Garašanin and A. Jovanović classify them as a indistinctly defined type Mala Kopašnica - Sase III, which they interpret as accompanying a phenomenon, non-characteristic for this type of necropolis (Garašanin 1968, 6-7; Јовановић 1984, 110-112)^[20]. However, they make up a significant percentage of all the researched graves in Davidovac, i.e. more than a fifth (21.43%). It is also interesting that the prevalence of the sites where the graves of the Mala Kopašnica - Sase type III appear, encompasses the epichoric territory of the Dardani (Јовановић 1984, 111, map 20; Papazoglu 2007, 143-161, fig. 3).

As was stated before, graves of type 2 were formed so that their sides and bottom were coated with a layer of purified clay, at a thickness of 5-10 cm, and then a fire was lit in the pit, to which the charred wooden pillars testify. Such prepared graves have the same shape as the red burned, ceramic vessel with quadrangular recipient and rounded corners, narrowing down at the bottom^[21]. It is interesting that type 2 is similar in grave pit shape to the ceramic recipients, used in burial rituals of people in the pre-Roman period and the imperial period in the southeast parts of Upper Moesia (Bulatović 2008, 208-215). Findings from the graves of our type 2 do not differ from the ones found in pit type 1. Ceramic vessels with food and drink intended for the deceased appear as grave goods, most frequently bowls and two-handled biconical cups. In two cases there were bronze coins (graves 23 and 24) and in one grave a ceramic oil-lamp (grave 42). Personal items of the deceased were also deposited in the pits: jewellery, parts of clothing and wooden boxes with personal items (a toiletry set, jewellery and the like).



Figure 10 - Grave 12 with ceramic vessels, from NE.



Figure 11 - Inside of the two-handled pot from the grave 12 during emptying, with partition of clay and two-handled cup in it.

[20] Garašanin defines graves of the Mala Kopašnica - Sase type III rather vaguely as "... shallow, mainly trough-shaped pits filled with remains of bone char, pyre and offerings." Jovanović cites Garašanin and states that graves of this type do not have the sides and bottom of the pit burned. On the other hand, in the typology of M. Garašanin only one of grave pit shapes of the Mala Kopašnica - Sase type III is defined, with some reservation that they appear in more variants, whereas there are no data on how much the grave pit was burned.

[21] I took from M. Garašanin the term "trough-shaped pit" as the most picturesque, in order to differentiate this form of grave from the classical type of the Mala Kopašnica - Sase I (Garašanin 1968, 6).

The burial ritual at the graves of type 2 is similar to the previously described funerals of type 1. The research results of graves 12, 17 and 42 allow for the reconstruction of ritual cult activities.

Grave pit 12 was dug so that it had a rectangular layout and slanted sides that spread to the surface, and then it was coated by a thick layer of clay. At the bottom of the pit there are stuck wooden pillars and wooden logs, burned with the aim to provide a grave lustration and to strengthen its sides, i.e. to form a ceramic recipient in the pit. In such prepared pits the cremated remains of the deceased were laid together with the remnants of the pyre and personal items (a bronze chain and bronze plating)^[22]. A layer of intensive soot and charred wood was formed in the lower zone of the pit (Fig. 10). In the south corner of the grave a ceramic vessel was laid on this layer - a two-handled biconical pot. The interior of the pot was divided by a partition of clay, and in the larger part of the receptacle a two-handled biconical cup was placed, which indicates libation over the grave with two types of liquids^[23] (Fig. 11). In the Roman period, libation was an obligatory part of the burial ritual, but in this case epichoric cult elements could be implied^[24]. A glass bottle with the recipient vertically divided into two parts was found in the grave with cremation in Doclea (G. 323), which also had a horizontal pit division (our type 3b) (Цермановић-Кузмановић, Велимировић-Жижић, Срејовић 1975, 173-174)^[25]. Researchers assumed that it could have been a glassware for the libation of two types of liquids or that it was a semi-finished glassware with an error^[26]. This leads to the conclusion that libation with two types of liquids was performed over the graves with cremated deceased of the type Mala Kopašnica - Sase. The symbolism of this ritual is most probably the renewal of life, i.e. the rebirth of the deceased person, and in that sense the liquids with which the libation was performed could be water, wine, milk, honey, the blood of sacrificed animals or their mixture (Rode 1991, 144, 151).



Figure 12 - Grave 17 - a. A level of secondary burial under the bowl, from SW; b. A level of primary burial at the bottom of grave-pit, with remains of cremated deceased and ceramic vessels, from SW.

[22] A great number of bronze loops, parts of a bronze chain and amorphous parts of bronze plating found at the bottom of the pit in the north corner most probably are the parts of a box for personal items, a toiletry set, jewellery and clothing, taking into account that a female person was buried in the grave.

[23] Anthropological material was not discovered in the vessels - archaeobotanical analysis of the content is underway (See note 19).

[24] Сројић 1997, 319-320 - in the cult pit at the site Panjevački Rit, that belongs to the Triballi tribe period a-b (the 4th century BC) three ceramic cups and a vessel with a double bottom were found in one ceramic urn, which were interpreted by the author as a vessel for libation of three types of liquids within the chthonic cult of fertility and renewal of life.

[25] The coins of Emperor Domitian were found in the grave, dated to the end of the 1st century to the first half of the 2nd century.

[26] The second possibility is less likely, because great skill was needed to make such a vessel. Also, the twofold neck and twofold opening with brim are distinctly differentiated on the vessel.

Grave 17 is formed in the same way as the previously described grave 12, except that at the bottom of the pit there were no traces of vertically placed pillars, but remnants of the layered wooden beams. At such an executed floor, two ceramic bowls, one within another (most probably with posthumous offerings in food) were put along the southeast side of the pit. Then the whole wooden construction was burned in order to purify the grave pit and burn its sides. The cremated remains of the deceased were laid into that type of grave, being diffused upon the whole area of the pit. A large quantity of fragmented ceramic vessels and animal bones were also discovered above the layer of charred wood and soot, most probably remnants of the funeral feast performed over the grave. All of this was covered by a layer of yellow clay, on which a wooden chest was laid in the south corner, of which only charred parts were saved, as well as iron wedges and hinges, and along the southeast side of the grave the cremated bones and a bronze ring were laid, covered with a ceramic bowl^[27]. The pit was then covered with reddish-brown earth mixed with fragments of ceramic vessels (Fig. 12).

In the case of this grave, it may be assumed that it consisted of two diachronous burials, i.e. the remains of cremated bones in the soot layer of the lower pit zone belong to one deceased person, and the remains beneath the bowl and above the layer of yellow clay belong to another deceased person^[28]. At the same time, a layer of yellow clay presents a caesura between funerals, and most probably the first fill of the pit. Fragments of ceramic vessels and animal bones beneath the layer of yellow clay originated from the first funeral feast, and similar rests in the layer of reddish-brown earth originated during the funeral feast of the second funeral. It is evident that the first grave had a grave stele or other aboveground markings, because it was possible to perform the secondary funeral without damaging the grave pit.

A very similar burial ritual was perceived in grave 42, but a large iron wedge and a ceramic oil-lamp (clearly bearing cult significance) were laid on the layer of charred beams and soot with cremated remains of the deceased.

Sacrificial areas were confirmed in the Davidovac necropolis, so-called *kulina* (Јовановић 1984, 104; Зотовић, Јордовић 1990, 14-16, fig. 7-8; Marjanski-Manojlović 1987, 14-15), and they may be connected to grave type 2, because they were discovered beside and above the graves. Apart from areas with intensively burned earth, i.e. remnants of hearth, larger quantities of animal bones and fragments of ceramic vessels were found here (Plan 2; Fig. 13).

Graves of our type 2 appear at the necropolis of *Viminacium* and *Margum*, as well as the necropolises of *mansio Municipium* in Kalište, of the Roman town *Aureus Mons* near Smederevo and *villa rustica* in Mačvanska Mitrovica near Beška in Srem, where they are generally dated to the first half /middle of the 2nd century (Зотовић, Јордовић 1990, T. LXVI, LXXI, LXXVII, CXXXVI, CXLVIII, CLIX, CLXIX, CLXXII, CLXXXVII, CXCVI, CXCIV, G1-23, 32, 44, 142, 166, 251, 189, 209, 221, 258, 271, 277; Korać, Golubović 2009, 58, 61, 118-119, 124, 127, 129, 163, 172, 220, G1-316, 319, 373, 374, 381, 386, 387, 388, 421, 433, 486; Цуњак 2012, 177, graves 1-C and 2-C; Јовановић, Цуњак 1994, 111-115, fig. 10, grave 27; Цуњак, Марковић-Николић 1997, 20-21, grave 5, fig. 4, T. VI; Ercegović-Pavlović 1980, 6-7, 9, Pl. II, IV, V-VI, VIII, fosse sépulcrale 1-2, 4, 7, 19, 21; Marjanski-Manojlović 1984, 33-35, T. 1. G- I, T. 2. G- V, T. 3. G-IX, T. 5-GXV). Particularly important is the dating of the graves of our type 2 in the first two thirds of the 2nd century at the *Viminacium* necropolis “Više grobalja“, where they make up 4.42% of all explored graves with cremation (23 graves of 541). This chronology is based on the

[27] Remains of two cremated individuals are found in the grave: an adult woman and a child aged 1-7 (N. Miladinović-Radmilović, Davidovac - Southwest (Gradište). Anthropological records - incineration).

[28] It was determined by the anthropological analysis that, in the lower zone of the pit, bones of the cremated adult woman were mixed with the remnants of pyre and soot, whereas in the upper zone and above the yellow clay, there were remains of the cremated child covered by the bowl.



Figure 13 - Remnants of offering surface, “kulina” to the SE from the graves 14-17, from SE.



Figure 14 - Grave 22- a. The south part of the grave with libation tube and remains of the wooden chest, from NE; b. Researched grave, from NE.

stratigraphy of the necropolis, findings of coins of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius in the graves, as well as the dating of other grave goods. It is interesting that at all these necropolis funerals type 2 are dated to the same period as the graves of our type 1, i.e. the Mala Kopašnica type I, and that they are missing in the second half of the 2nd century, when multi-level graves of the type Mala Kopašnica II appear.

Graves of our type 3 a-b are very similar to the previous type, provided that the pits are divided vertically or horizontally, in two unequal parts, which bears cult significance in the burial ritual (Fig. 6. 3a-b). I have already mentioned that graves type 3 are a transient form of the Mala Kopašnica type I graves towards multi-level graves of the Mala Kopašnica type II, whereas they originated by evolution of our types 1 and 2 within the type Mala Kopašnica I. We shall consider what could have influenced the conservative form of our type 1 (the Mala Kopašnica type I) and led to changes, i.e. the disappearance of the graves in the shape of ceramic recipient, grave type 2 and then the graves in the shape of ceramic recipient with an inner division, type 3 a-b, which were essentially the predecessors of the Mala Kopašnica type II^[29]. The assumption is that changes in burial ritual led to changes in the form and dimensions of the grave pit, and then differentiation of space within the grave. Based on research of several graves in the Davidovac necropolis, it is possible to reconstruct the burial ritual performed at the graves type 3 a-b:

Grave 22 is the only example of type 3a among the excavated graves of the necropolis in Davidovac. The grave pit is of an irregular, oval layout ($R_1=1.66\text{m}$, $R_2=1.42\text{m}$), relative shallowly buried (0.33m), with a smaller pit of round layout in the middle ($R=0.70\text{m}$), buried to 0.70m of the basic pit bottom. The sides of the pit and bottom are coated by purified yellow clay and then a fire was lit inside the pit for lustration and formation of the ceramic grave recipient. In the cylindrical pit (a grave in its strict

[29] It is all about the ritual cult meaning of such graves and not the form of rectangular double-level grave pits, which appear in almost the entire area of the European continent in a broad chronological range (Garašanin 1968, 16-23; Гертов 1970, 4; Јовановић 1984, 107-108; Golubović 1998, 251-253; Oța 2007, 76-78.)

sense of the word), remains of the cremated deceased person were buried together with the remains of the funeral feast - fragments of ceramic vessels and animal bones, then covered with yellow clay. A layer of soot with cremated human bones and remains of the funeral feast were also found above this pit and at the bottom of the basic pit^[30]. Apart from that, traces of a libation pipe made of ceramic vessel parts and fragments of tagulae were discovered in the southeast part of the grave pit^[31]. The grave was covered with reddish-brown earth, and the aboveground parts of the libation pipe were not discovered. I shall add that remains of the adult person were buried in the primary pit and subsequently a round pit was buried into the grave, where the remains of the cremated child were deposited, similar to grave 17^[32] (Fig. 6. 3a; Fig. 14).

I believe that grave 17, type 2 and grave 22, type 3a had a similar burial ritual where the remains of an adult woman were buried in the pit while the remains of the cremated child were deposited subsequently and laid underneath the ceramic vessel (grave 17) or in a subsequently buried round pit with burned walls, which also presented a type of ceramic recipient (grave 22). The initial pits were of a similar trough-shaped form with intensively burned sides and bottom, i.e. the form of the rectangular ceramic recipient, which narrows towards the bottom. I highlight the similarity in the grave pits forms of rectangular ceramic vessels, which are found as grave goods in the Roman graves with cremation in southeast Serbia, northeast Macedonia and west Bulgaria^[33]. It appears that graves of our types 2 and 3a-b are older than the necropolis in which these vessels were found^[34]. Therefore, I think that the rectangular ceramic vessels most probably present a kind of urn, perhaps for secondary funerals (of children?), and that they are not sacrificial altars used in the burial cult, i.e. they are grave replicas of our types 2 and 3^[35].

The similarity in the form of the Roman grave 22 from Davidovac and graves from the close site in Krševica, which date to the 4th century BC, is impressive (Микулчић, Јовановић 1968, 357-360, Plan 3; Јовановић 1984, 106). Although the chronological distance between the necropolis from Davidovac and that of Krševica is great, it may be assumed that the epichoric tradition of conservative burial ritual on the territory of the Južna Morava basin had been preserved from the Hellenic period

[30] In this grave, the bones of two individuals were discovered - an adult person of unidentified sex and a child aged 1-7 (N. Miladinović-Radmilović, Davidovac - Southwest (Gradište). Anthropological records - incineration).

[31] It is believed that the ceramic or lead libation pipes, the water supply system pipes used secondarily at the necropolises of Mala Kopašnica - Sase type, are most likely a custom of Greek or Oriental origins (Јовановић 1984, 104-105; Глумац 2011, 237-240). In addition to that, I believe that libation in the burial ritual has a very long tradition in the Central Balkan region, as was stated in the text, so the libation pipes at the necropolises of the Mala Kopašnica type may be deemed as autochthonous elements of the sepulchral cult.

[32] N. Miladinović-Radmilović, Davidovac - Southwest (Gradište). Anthropological records - incineration.

[33] Graves of cremated deceased, where vessels of this type were laid, have a specific construction above the pit, a round ring of larger crushed stone with a tumulus of fine stones and earth. The grave pits correspond to our types 1 and 2 or to shallow pits of round or oval shape (Mala Kopašnica type III) with the grave goods and remains of the cremated deceased (Булатовић, Чершков 2007, 145-151, fig. 3-5, graves 3/V, 1-2/VI, 5-9/VI; Bulatović 2008, 208).

[34] The so-called sacrificial altars are precisely dated to the 3rd century - the first half of the 4th century on the basis of other grave goods (Bulatović 2008, 208), whereas the necropolis of cremation in Davidovac is dated to the period from the 2nd century to the first half of the 3rd century based on the stratigraphy of cultural layers and archaeological findings.

[35] Unfortunately, the contents of these vessels were not analyzed, although the author states that two rectangular vessels "full of ashes and soot" were discovered in Ljanik, and that "... the remains of some burned material were found in the receptacles of rectangular vessels in Ljanik..." (Bulatović 2008, 204, 209). The content of a rectangular ceramic vessel found in 2012 in the grave with a stone construction at the necropolis with cremation Gornje Obrusce - Sebrat near Bujanovac was confirmed as the anthropological remains of a cremated individual and the remnants of a pyre according to the analysis of Nataša Miladinović-Radmilović. I express my gratitude to Goran Mitrović, custodian of Museum in Vranje and Nataša Miladinović-Radmilović, anthropologist from the Institute of Archaeology in Belgrade, who provided me with information and material from the excavation of this necropolis and the results of the anthropological analysis.



Figure 15 - Grave 41, from SE.



Figure 16 - Grave 2- a. A detail of the smaller segment of grave - goods, bronze coin and bronze plate, from SW; b. Researched grave, from NW.

until the end of Antiquity^[36]. Unfortunately, the anthropological remains from these graves were not analyzed, so it is not certain whether double funerals were in question here.

On basis of all this, it can be assumed that graves of type 3b with a trough-shaped pit and horizontally divided space, present double funerals, as well. However, the space division of these graves has a completely different meaning. Formally perceived, the pit was divided into a smaller and larger part with a clay partition.

In grave 41, the pit oriented with its longer side in the NE-SW direction was divided into a larger part with an oval shape at the southeast and a smaller “kidney-shaped form” at the northwest. It should be emphasized that the pit sides are greatly burned, whereas the partition was made after the grave lustration, because there are no traces of burning on the partition. Also, the bottom of the basic pit is on a significantly lower level in comparison to the bottom of a smaller pit annex. In the larger part of the grave pit, intensive soot and remnants of charred beams mixed with the remains of the bones of a cremated individual were discovered, as well as grave goods - a fragmented ceramic bowl and a two-handled cup.

In the smaller part of the pit, there were no findings or traces of burning (Fig. 6. 3b; Fig. 15). Bearing in mind that the cremated bones of only one individual were discovered in the grave^[37], and that in the smaller part there were no findings at all, the symbolism of the grave division is not completely clear, apart from the possibility that it was used during the ritual offering, most probably

[36] During the latest research in 2001-2005 on the plateau of the Kale-Krševica fortification acropolis, six pits of round or oval shape were discovered, which had burned sides and a layer of soot and charred wood at the bottom, filled with animal bones and fragments of Hellenistic and Late La Tène pottery dated from the 2nd century to the 1st century BC, which the researchers described as ritual pits (Popović 2011, 151-155, Figs. 3, 6-14.). These objects greatly resemble the previously discovered graves and graves of our types 2 and 3a from Davidovac in shape and contents, as well as in the position of vessels along the pit sides.

[37] An adult male person was buried in the grave (N. Miladinović-Radmilović, Davidovac - Southwest (Gradište). Anthropological records - incineration).

libation. It may be a similar ritual concept as the symbolism of the two ceramic vessels from grave 12, in which the larger one had a devided recipient (Fig. 11). A similar form of devided recipient could also be seen in two ceramic vessels of rectangular shape from graves with cremation at the site Stara Koliba - Ljanik near Preševo and Sebrat - Selište - Gornje Obrusce near Vujanovac (Булатовић, Чершков 2007, 150, fig. 7, T. II, 4; Bulatović 2008, 204-205, Pl. I, 1, Pl. IV, 28, 30)^[38]. If some ceramic *kernoi* from the Roman necropolis present replicas of graves of our type 2, these would imitate the shape of type 3b. Perhaps the concept of a grave pit - ceramic vessel, highlighted in the graves at Mala Kopašnica - Sase type I and III, i.e. graves of our types 1, 2 and 3 a-b, as well as the ritual division of the ceramic burial receptacle, a ceramic vessel from the grave and *kernos* in Ljanik and Sebrat, indicate the autochthonous tradition of a burial ritual that has elements of epichoric agrarian cults.

The pit of grave 2 is oriented with its longer side in the NE-SW direction and is divided into two parts by a partition with a wavy, "serpent-shaped" form - the east part of which is larger and the smaller one to the west. The sides and bottom of the grave pit are greatly burned, whereas the partition was made of purified yellow clay and it did not burn. The remains of the cremated deceased, mixed with the remnants of the pyre (soot, charred wood), were deposited at the bottom of the larger (eastern) part of the grave pit, and the personal items of the deceased were laid above it: a bronze oil-lamp and bronze strigillus in the northeast corner and a bronze hinged fibula and glass vessel in the southeast part^[39]. In the smaller (western) part of the pit, a bronze coin and part of an application of bronze foil were discovered, beside soot and charred wood^[40]. Above the horizon with grave goods, a layer of soot and several iron wedges were discovered, being remnants of wooden construction (a table) for the funeral feast above the grave, which was burnt after its use, similar to graves of type 1 (Fig. 16).

The cremated remains of an adult male person were deposited in this grave^[41], of obviously better social and economic status, taking into account numerous grave goods, of which some are luxurious objects, such as a bronze oil-lamp, a glass bowl and a bronze strigillus. It is also interesting that standard grave goods of the Roman graves with cremation appear in this grave - an oil-lamp and coins, later an obligatory part of the Mala Kopašnica type II grave inventory (Зотовић 1968, 26; Фидановски, Цвјетићанин 2005, 65-67, 83-99, T. I-V; Korać, Golubović 2009, 527-529; Stamenković 2013, 105-119, 149, fig.99, 109, 114). On the other hand, not a single ceramic vessel was laid in the grave, which is a rarity at the necropolis in Davidovac. It is evident that the deceased had already accepted the Roman way of life and customs, which was not the case with the rest of the population buried in this necropolis. Yet, the shape of the grave pit where the cremated remains were laid, the grave goods and the burial ritual of the funeral feast testify to its autochthonous origin.

One of the pits contains two graves of our type 2, with grave 27 partly buried in grave 28, and both having a similar shape to type 3b^[42]. Unfortunately, these pits were damaged by the levelling of the terrain that preceded construction of the Late Roman building at the end of the 3rd - beginning

[38] The interior of these vessels was divided so that one corner was separated from the rest of the recipient by a semi-round partition.

[39] The fibula belongs to the type Petković 10/A, dated from the 1st century to the 2nd century (Petković 2010, 60-61, fig. 15, T. VIII, 1-2). It is difficult to identify the type of the bronze oil-lamp, greatly damaged with corrosion (the beak of the oil-lamp is lacking), nor the small glass bowl (?) before their conservation and reconstruction, but we can generally date them from the 2nd century to the first half of the 3rd century AD. The strigillus dates from the 1st century to the 4th century.

[40] Unfortunately, the coins could not be identified before conservation due to strong patina.

[41] Anthropological analysis indicates a male person younger than 40 years of age (N. Miladinović-Radmilović, Davidovac - Southwest (Gradište). Anthropological records - incineration).

[42] See note 7.

of the 4th century (structure 2)^[43] (Fig. 5). The anthropological material from these graves was not saved either, nor any other archaeological findings. Nevertheless, bearing in mind the fact that at the necropolis in Davidovac the overlapping of grave pits was never discovered, i.e. the graves once had above-ground markings (tombstones), we think that here we can safely identify chronologically close, successive funerals, most likely of relatives. It may be assumed that both graves had the same above-ground markings, and that the funerals in graves 27-28 were similar to the burial rituals of graves 17 (type 2) and 22 (type 3a).

It can be concluded from these findings that the horizontal division of the pit is characteristic of the graves of adult male persons and do not present double funerals. The function of the smaller part of the grave remains unclear, since it does not contain characteristic findings (grave 2) or findings in general (grave 41). It is possible that the smaller annex of the grave pit serves as a space for funeral sacrifice, primarily libation, but also as a part for communication with the deceased. It could also be a grave - a cenotaph within a "double-funeral", intended for a person who for some reason (death in war, death in some remote place) could not have been buried together with the deceased, as the person should have been^[44].

Analogies for the grave pits of type 3b are found in a necropolis of the ancient Doclea (Цермановић-Кузмановић, et al. 1975, 21, type II/3 B)^[45]. The authors identify five graves of this type, but there are more, even eleven graves^[46]. Unfortunately, anthropological material from these graves was not analyzed, although it appears that individual funerals are in question. In one of these graves (G. 323) already mentioned a glass bottle was found with the twofold container^[47]. In one grave (G. 146), in addition to two glass balsamaria, bronze tweezers and iron wedges, a bronze hinged latenoid fibula with two pins and a bow comprised of four series of astragals was discovered, which dates the grave from the 1st century BC to the first half of the 2nd century AD (Petković 2010, 39-41, T. III, 3, type 2/B).

As far as I know, graves of our type 3 a-b have not been recorded at the necropolis in Mala Kopašnica and Kosmaj (Зотовић 1968, 19, 24-26; Фидановски, Цвјетићанин 2005, 61-67; Пешић 2010, 52-55; Stamenković 2013, 59-61, fig. 44-45)^[48]. However, among the graves with cremation of the Viminacium necropolis - "Više grobalja", grave pits of type 3a were recorded (Зотовић, Јордовић 1990, 79, 83-84, 87-88, 99, T. LXIV, G1-20, T. LXXXIII, G1-54, T. CIV, G1-87, T. CLVIII, G1-187, CLXIV, G1-199; Korać, Golubović 2009, 184, 231, 251, G1-445, G1-496, G1-518). On the basis of discovered coins of Trajan, Hadrian and Antoninus Pius, as well as grave goods, primarily ceramic oil-lamps, vessels and glass, these graves are dated to the 2nd century (Зотовић, Јордовић 1990, 79, 83-84, 87-88, 99; Korać, Golubović 2009, 184, 231, 251). At the same necropolis, two graves of our type 3b were discovered, dated to the same period (Korać, Golubović 2009, 236, 245, G1-504, G1-512).

[43] The foundation of wall 1 of structure 2 destroyed the northeast end of grave pit 27.

[44] Double-funeral graves and cenotaphs were discovered at the necropolis with cremation in Davidovac.

[45] Type II/3 B - of these graves the authors state that they have burned sides due to the layering of white-hot pyre remnants. However, it is known that in the Roman graves of the ustrinum type the remains of the deceased were deposited the following morning, when they were collected from the cooled pyre (Зотовић 1968, 25; Зотовић, Јордовић 1990, 115; Фидановски, Цвјетићанин 2004, 65-67; Korać, Golubović 2009, 524.).

[46] These are graves 146, 170, 173, 184, 186, 195-196, 202, 205, 319 and 323, generally dated by archaeological findings (glass, oil-lamps, ceramics) and coins of Domitian, Hadrian and Antoninus Pius in the 2nd century (Цермановић-Кузмановић, Велимировић-Жижић, Срејовић 1975, 91, 97, 99, 101, 103-105, 140, 143). In comparison to the number of graves of the Mala Kopašnica type, our type 3a-b appears in Davidovac at the approximate percentage of 7.90% and in Doclea of 10.6%.

[47] See notes 25 and 26.

[48] I also wish to thank my colleague Mirjana Glumac, senior curator at the National Museum in Belgrade for sharing information with me about the necropolis Guberevac - Gomilice on Kosmaj, which present the topic of her doctoral dissertation.

In any event, graves of type 3 a-b amount to a negligible number among those researched graves with cremation at the necropolis “Više grobalja” (1.85%), whereas a greater number of graves belong to Mala Kopašnica types I and II (Golubović 1998, 247-249; Korać, Golubović 2009, 531).

On the other hand, in part of Upper Moesia in the Danube basin at the sites Orašje - Dubravica (*Margum*) and Babin razboj - Smederevo (*Aureus Mons*) in part of the researched Roman necropolis, dated to the early imperial period, graves of our type 3a were discovered, together with graves of the Mala Kopašnica types I and II^[49]. As was already stated, one grave of our type 2 was excavated on Babin razboj, where remains of the cremated deceased were covered with a ceramic lid^[50]. This type of funeral was discovered in Kalište (*Municipium*), where the grave was dated by coins of Antoninus Pius and Julia Faustina, as well as disc-shaped fibulae decorated with enamel from the middle/second half of the 2nd century (Цуњак 2012, 60-61, 150, 152, Cat. Nos. 1 and 11, 177, 183, grave 1-C). We should mention that graves of type 3a-b were discovered in the latest research of the necropolis of the mining settlements in the Roman center for exploitation of precious metals in Dacia, *Alburnus Maior* (Damian et al. 2008, 24-29, 125, 136-137, 139, 158-159, 163-168, 170, 180-181, Pl. 88, 104, 107, 139, 149, 150, 155-157, 163, 180, M 116, M 130, M 133, M 163, M 171, M 177, M 178 (type 3 a), M 172, M. 179, M 184, M 200 (type 3 b); Moga et al. 2010, 192-194, Fig. 6-7, Fig. 37. 2, G 58-59 (M 1/S XI, M 2/S XI), G. 72, G. 80 (M 4/S XIII, M 12/S 12)^[51].

Unfortunately, data on graves of the Mala Kopašnica - Sase type at the necropolis of *Singidunum* and *Naissus* are scarce, so it can only be determined that they are present in the 2nd century to the 3rd century (Pop-Lazić 2002, 37-39, 42-44, fig. 1, 1-3; Ајдић 1972, 35-36, Gradsko polje - construction site of the the Technical Faculty).

Analysing the origins of double-level graves of Mala Kopašnica type II, A. Jovanović identifies graves of Late Archaic period with the horizontal division of grave pits from Karaorman near Štip, Demir kapija and Beranac near Bitolj (Јовановић 1984, 108). Although they are rather chronologically distant, these analogies indicate the beginnings of forming a specific burial ritual on the territory of the West Balkan, which the academician D. Sreјović discovered at the necropolis in Karagač (Sreјović 1973, 61-64). This funerary practice is observed in Hellenistic and Late La Tène graves from Krševica and Skupi (Микулчић, Јовановић 1968, 357-360; Микулчић 1979, 243-249). Although at this point of research it is not possible to determine the origin of our types 1-3 a-b, it may be stated that they are connected to the tradition of incineration in the Central Balkan region, which appears in the 8th century BC between the Illyrian cultural circle in the west and the Thracian in the east^[52]. Also, they are predecessors of the most widespread type of graves with cremated deceased in the Central Balkan region in the first three centuries of the new era, the type Mala Kopašnica - Sase.

On the territory of pre-Roman Dardanians (Papazoglu 2007, 143-161) i.e. on the territory of the later formed Roman provinces of Upper Moesia and in Late Antiquity Dardania and Dacia Mediterrana

[49] Јовановић, Цуњак 1994, 110, 113-114, grave no. 5, end of the 1st century - beginning of the 2nd century; Цуњак, Марковић-Николић 1997, 11-14, 23, Plan 1, T. I, T. IV-V, T. VIII-IX, 2nd century.

[50] See Јовановић, Цуњак 1994; Цуњак, Марковић-Николић 1997.

[51] In all other respects, cremations of the bustum type and ustrinum type are almost equally present in this necropolis, among which graves of our types 1 and 2 are the most frequent, i.e. Mala Kopašnica type I, and the double-level graves of Mala Kopašnica type II rarely appear. I believe that in some cases the researchers described certain funerals as bustum without enough evidence (See: Ота 2007.)

[52] Срејовић 1979, 79-83 - although the author discusses the region of Dacia and Moesia, encompassing the Velika Morava basin (the Great Morava basin), he later shows that the two nations lived here divided by the course of the Zapadna Morava River (the West Morava) and the Južna Morava River, The Dardani lived to the south and southwest of these rivers, and the Triballi to the north and northeast, whereas the Dacians, Moesi and Getae were present further to the north and northeast (Папазоглу 2007, 328-333.).

(Папазоглу 1988, 162-169, map 1; Petrović 1979, 19-20; Dragojević-Josifovska 1982, 17-18; Petrović 2007, 7-23), the early appearance of graves of the Mala Kopašnica - Sase type was observed (Срејовић 1965, 81; Garašanin 1968, 22-24; Зотовић 1968, 27-28; Јовановић 1984, 109-110). This does not mean that the genesis of the stated ritual should be sought in the Dardanian ethnic group^[53], because in the protohistoric period that precedes the Roman conquests in the Central Balkan region, the cultural unity of the Thracian, Moesi, Triballi and Illyrian tribes had already been achieved (Васић 1991, 78-81; Papazoglu 2007, 395-398). In the early imperial period from the 1st century to the middle of the 3rd century, a strong Late La Tène tradition is observed in poorly Romanized Upper Moesia, which is reflected in the archaeological material with distinct Dacian, Celtic and Illyrian elements, as well as the Hellenic influence.^[54] However, I believe that it is not possible to reasonably attribute certain protohistoric, epichoric traditions of the Roman material culture in the Central Balkan region to a specific ethnic group, in this particular case to the Dardanians. First of all, this is because the cultures of the Iron Age were not reliably connected to certain ethnic groups (Vasić 1991, 73-82). Archaeological scepticism that has recently emerged makes it possible to ethnically describe prehistoric Iron Age cultures, primarily because the written sources about the peoples and tribes in the Central Balkan originated from ancient, Greek and Roman authors of later periods (Вранић 2011, 660-662).

On basis of everything stated, it may be concluded that the earliest forms of Roman graves with cremation of type Mala Kopašnica - Sase originated within the territory of the Dardanians, and that one of the oldest necropolises of this type, with the researched autochthonous elements, is the necropolis in Davidovac near Vranje. Here we have described more specific variants of the graves of type Mala Kopašnica (our types 2 and 3a-b), which present a step forward in the development of double-level graves of type II, the generally accepted form of funeral with cremations in Upper Moesia, Pannonia Inferior, Dacia and the eastern part of Dalmatia in the second half of the 2nd century and the 3rd century.

Finally, we should mention four graves of our type 4, discovered beneath the floor of Structure 2: two graves of our type 4 in the shape of shallow, round pits with urns (graves 30 and 31) and two graves of our type 4 b in shallow oval pits, without recipients (graves 32 and 34) (Fig. 6.4 a-b). Bearing in mind the dating of grave goods from these graves and stratigraphy in Structure 2, it may be assumed that the funerals belonged to the final phase of the necropolis with cremation in Davidovac, which belongs to the middle/second half of the 3rd century. The burial of cremated remains of the deceased in shallow round pit in urn or without it was not characteristic for the region of Upper Moesia, not even Dardania, although these graves always appear in our necropolis, at a scale of 1-2% (Зотовић 1968, 22-24, types II-III; Јовановић 1984, 118-119; Зотовић, Јордовић 1990, 104, 115; Golubović 1998, Korać, Golubović 2009, 524-525; Stamenković 2013, 148-150, fig. 45 c). Although burial of cremated remains of the deceased in urn was typical of a Roman necropolis from the 1st century to the 2nd century throughout the Empire, in Upper Moesia it appeared later and it was most likely under the influence of the funerary practice of Celts (Scordisci ?) and Dacians (Јовановић 1984, 119). At the necropolis in Davidovac, these graves testify to the colonization of the population from

[53] However, in contemporary science there is no generally accepted opinion about the origins and ethnicity of the Dardanians, described as Illyrians, "Illyrized" Mediterranean people (Pelasgians), Dacians and Moesi, Thracians and Phrygians, etc. (Papazoglu 2007, 161-202). Z. Mirdita provides complex ethnogenesis of the Dardanians, who originated by effects of Illyrian and other (Moesi, Thracian, Triballi?) adstrat on the Mediterranean (Pelasgian) substrate (Mirdita 1991, 107-109).

[54] Pre-Roman elements of material culture is particularly distinct on the silver jewellery and fibulae (Поповић 1994; Поповић 1996; Поповић 2002; Petković 2010, 331-340, 345-347; Петковић 2012b.). Unfortunately, analysis of the Roman ceramic vessels from Upper Moesia, originated under the influence of the late La Tène pottery, has not been synthetically processed (See: Фидановски 1990, 18-22, 26-27; Таравићи-Илић 2008; 2010; Bulatović 2008; Радиновић 2011, 113-115.)

the middle of the 3rd century, conditioned by the economical development of the Roman settlement formed along the very important road that connected the two large towns of Upper Moesia, Scupi and Naissus. I assume that by the end of the 3rd century burials at this necropolis had ended and, at approximately the same time, the burial ritual of cremation was abandoned. The necropolis with inhumation, which belonged to the Roman settlement in Davidovac, was much larger and researched at two sites: Davidovac-Gradište and Davidovac-Crkvište (Грујић 2011; Шпехар et al. 2013). This indicates that the Roman settlement at Davidovac did not experience a period of prosperity before the 4th century, of which the archaeological rescue excavations from 2011 partly testify (Petković 2012).

Sofija Petković
Institute of Archaeology, Belgrade

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