In the course of archaeological investigations at locality 85 in Sirmium, that could be assumed with considerable certainty to be the segment of imperial residential complex,¹ the foot of gilt bronze fibula (C-169/2005), 31 x 22 mm in size (Fig. 1), was discovered in the fall of 2005. The fibula fragment has been found in sector C, room 12, in the layer of building rubble originating from the same site and accumulated after the completion of archaeological excavations conducted in the previous year. On both lateral edges of the fibula foot there are three cast volutes shaped as letter C. The ornament in the central foot zone is enclosed within a rectangular field, covering almost its entire surface. The decoration executed by engraving and highlighted by niello consists of intersecting circles, which create the motifs of quatrefoils and rhombs filled with short engraved and niello-filled lines. Above the ornamental panel is semicircular impression of the base of the fibula’s missing bow. The end of foot bent at right angle is terminating in an arch and the base of the trough-shaped pin holder is missing. On the bent surface, i.e. the rear wall of the pin holder, there is a cross executed by engraving and niello. Its upper arm is bent to resemble the Greek letter rho, so the monogram cross, crux monogrammatica or Christogram, the combined representation of cross and two initial letters of the word Christos was thus created. In other words, the cross itself represents letter chi, while its bent upper arm makes letter rho. Letters alpha and omega are engraved above the side arm of the cross as direct allusion to Christ as the beginning and the end’, in accordance with His words in the Book of Revelation (1:8; 21:6; 22:13).

The distinct ornament on the foot makes possible relatively precise reconstruction of fibula, despite the fact that its other parts are not preserved (Fig. 2). Namely, the ornamental scheme on this foot has direct analogies on somewhat longer fibulae feet from the grave of Roman officer, most probably of German descent, discovered in Bonn² and fibula from the unknown site, now in the Metropolitan Museum in New York.³ In contrast to the Sirmium foot with three C-shaped volutes on each lateral edge, the other two mentioned specimens have four C-shaped volutes on

¹ Systematic archaeological investigations of this site have started in 2003 and are still in progress. They were preceded by test trenching in 2002, cf. Jepunih, Ponunih 2004, 283-288. Archaeological investigations are organized by the Institute of Archaeology in Belgrade in cooperation with the Museum of Srem in Sremska Mitrovica and the Office for Protection of Cultural Monuments in Sremska Mitrovica. The co-directors of investigations are Dr. Ivana Popović and Dr. Miroslav Jeremić.


³ Deppert-Lippitz 2000, 53–54, Fig. 15; Dandridge 2000, 82–84, Fig. 15–17.
the lateral edges. The ornament in central panel is identical on all three feet, but the ornamental panel on the Sirmium fibula is slightly shorter, hence the ornament is less elaborate. On the bent segment of the foot, i.e. on the rear wall of the pin holder of the Bonn fibula, there is the Christogram and letters alpha and omega, like on the Sirmium specimen, while there are no such symbols on the foot of the fibula from the Metropolitan Museum.

The fibulae from Bonn and the Metropolitan Museum, as well as the one whose foot was discovered within the imperial palace complex in Sirmium, belong to one not so numerous group of the crossbow fibulae having been produced during the second half of the 4th century and of distinct type, considering the mode of manufacture and system of decoration. In contrast to the simple bronze fibulae assembled from the cast elements, these gilt specimens were made in the same way as the gold fibulae, which were certainly used as models, although not a single piece of these gold prototypes is preserved today. In other words, there is no single gold fibula which could be reliably dated in the third and the beginning of the fourth quarter of the 4th century. It could be the consequence of unhappy circumstances in the course of archaeological excavations, but it also could be the result of situation at that time, when there was not a pressing need to produce gold fibulae, because the persons for whom such honors were intended could have been satisfied with gilt bronze specimens of identical shape and impressive appearance as were the gold fibulae.4

These gilt bronze specimens were produced from the pieces of sheet metal joined by forging. Although their entire length does not exceed 7–10 cm, the top surfaces of bow and foot are wider than on the earlier fibulae and therefore they had a voluminous appearance. The foot is of semicircular or triangular cross-section with top lateral edges having series of C volutes cast on the metal sheet of which the foot was made. The onion bulbs’, made of two metal hemispheres joined horizontally by forging, are massive and hollow. Broad wavy band, appliqué, on the transversal bar was also contributing to the massive appearance of these fibulae. Nevertheless, besides these structural elements, their impressive appearance is enhanced also by distinct decoration on the broad top surfaces of bow and foot organized in ornamental bands, which are like tapestry spreading over the fibula body. The motifs of geometric character within

---

4 Depper-Lippitz 2000, 53.
these bands were executed by engraving and the coloristic effect was achieved using black niello and white silver plating on yellow gilt background. In addition to the intersecting circles creating the motifs of quatrefoils and rhombs on the fibulae from Bonn, Sirmium and the Metropolitan Museum, on other specimens are encountered also the motifs of squares, octagons, rhomboids, herringbone or the S motif. Within these ornamental panels, which substituted narrow decorative bands, on earlier specimens there were sometimes incorporated small medallions with engraved portraits or busts of young men with their faces turned three-quarters to the side and clad in the draped tunics. According to the pieces discovered so far, the number of these portrait medallions, imagines clipeatae, varies from one to ten. Within these ornamental bands sometimes also occurs the panel with Christogram, which could be executed also on the rear wall of the pin holder.

Although the fibulae of this type have been encountered within the wide area from Britain to the Black Sea, the largest concentration of these finds is recorded in the middle and lower Danube basin and the regions gravitating toward that area (Fig. 3), where by all appearances the workshops producing such fibulae also existed. In the graves from the large Late Roman necropolis Ságvár (Triciana), near the Lake Balaton in Hungary, as much as nine such specimens have been recorded and particularly interesting are fibula from grave 249, found with a coin of Constantius Gallus from 351/354 AD, and specimen from grave 253, discovered with a coin of Valentinianus I, minted between AD 367 and AD 375. Considering the fibulae from this necropolis the portrait medallions within ornamental panels occur on two specimens and Christogram on one specimen. It is interesting that fibulae of this type have been found also in the female graves at this necropolis. Besides the fibula from grave 249 at the mentioned necropolis, among the earliest money-dated specimens of this type is attributed the fibula from grave A at the necropolis on the site Mucsfa-Szárszpuszta, decorated with two portrait medallions on the foot and found together with coins of Constantine I, Constans and Constantius II. The gilt fibula with three portrait medallions within an ornamental band was recorded in a grave from the last third of the 4th century at large Pannonian necropolis Csákóvár (Floriana), while the specimen from grave 25 at the necropolis Somodvar is dated by the coin of Valens from AD 364/378. Other fibulae of this type from Pannonia are not precisely dated by the monetary finds. Two specimens from Osijek (Mursa), one with portrait medallion and two Christograms on the bow, and the other with four portrait medallions, are chance finds. Fibula with four portrait medallions from Štrbinci near Đakovo (Certesia ?) was found during the archaeological excavations and on the basis of the analysis of the portraits it was dated into the period between 323 and 337, while for fibulae from

---

6 Keller 1971, 217–218 (Liste 10).
7 Burger 1966, 143–144, Pl. XC, 1–5; XCI, 1, 3; XCIII, 2.
8 Burger 1966, 6 Pl. XCI, 1, 3 (graves 97 and 114).
9 Burger 1966, Fig. 95, 20/3 (grave 20).
10 Burger 1966, Fig. 95, 20/3 (grave 20).
12 Keller 1971, 41.
13 Vinski 1974, 8, T. II, 1; III, 1.
Zmajevac (with one portrait) and Vinkovci (with two portraits) no certain chronological period was defined. There is also no information concerning the finding circumstances of the specimen from Velika near Slavonska Požega with ornamental band without any other ornaments. Particularly interesting is the specimen from Drnovo (Neviodunum) with six portraits and Christogram on the bent section of the foot.

The concentration of gilt fibulae of this type has been recorded, except in Pannonia, also in the middle and lower Danube basin. The specimen from Prahovo (Aquae) has Christogram at the beginning of an ornamental band (Fig. 4), while there are two portrait medallions between the rhombs on the ornamental band on the fibula from the unknown site in Serbia (Fig. 5). In the course of archaeological excavations carried out along the south rampart of Gamzigrad (Romuliana) in 2006 one fibula was discovered under the head of the deceased in a male burial. This fibula has the bust of a young man in a medallion within ornamental band on the foot, while two portrait medallions are on the fibula bow, while Christogram or cross-in-circle is depicted between them. On the fibula discovered at the Fortress in Niš (Naissus) Christogram is depicted on a rear wall of pin holder, while on the specimen from Jagodin Mala necropolis in this town three portrait medallions are incorporated within the ornamental band on the bow.

In the lower Danube basin, in the territory of present-day Bulgaria, as much as nine fibulae with portraits of young men either on the ornamental band or on the bent section of the foot have been discovered. Number of images varies between one and six. Six medallions were encountered on the fibula from

---

16 Migotti 2008, 85–86.
17 Vinski 1974, 8–9, T. III, 3.
18 Vinski 1974, 8, T. III, 2.
19 Popović 2001, cat. 89.
21 For the information and possibility to consult photodocumentation of this find I am thankful to Dr. Sofija Petković from the Institute of Archaeology in Belgrade and Maja Živić MA from the National Museum in Zaječar, who are going to publish in detail this fibula in their works in this volume of Starinar.
22 Jovanović 1978, 45, cat. 53, fig. 128.
23 Jovanović 1978, 45, cat. 52, fig. 127.
the site Černa Gora and five images were depicted on the specimens from the northern necropolis at Stara Zagora (Augusta Traiana) and at the site Comakovci. Four images were depicted on the fibula from the necropolis Stražata in Pleven and the specimen with three medallions was also found at the same site. Three images were represented also on one fibula from the site Kozlodui-Regianum and one from an unknown site. Two medallions were encountered on the specimen from the necropolis at Varna (Odessos) and one portrait was on the fibula from the site Kolarci.24

This group of fibulae belongs, according to the existing classifications, to the Keller/Pröttel type 5 and it is dated in the period from around AD 370 to around AD 400. This chronological framework has been derived on the basis of 23 grave finds of fibulae with the portrait medallions,25 i.e. on the basis of type 5 fibulae, being found together with distinct elements of belt garnitures within certain grave association,26 although specimens from the Pannonian necropoles Mucsfa-Szárászpuzsza and Ságvár occur already with the coins of Constantius II and Constans (337–340; 337–350), i.e. of Constantius Gallus from AD 351/354 AD. There is, therefore, the opinion that this type of fibulae was introduced as early as around AD 350,27 while some isolated specimens have been found in the graves dating from the beginning of the 5th century.28 The money-dated finds from the necropoles Andernach and Krefeld-Gellep in Lower Germania fit into the suggested chronological framework as they included the coins of Valens minted in the period AD 364/378 and AD 373/378.29

In our analysis of fragmented gilt fibula from Sirmium, we studied it within suggested type, paying special attention to specimens which included in their decorative scheme Christogram and/or the medallions with portraits of young men. We think that both these decorative elements are motifs which independently or combined occur on the bows and feet of these fibulae.

Fig. 5 – Fibula with portrait medallions, Serbia, unknown site

Сл. 5 – Фибула са христо̀гра̀мом, Србија, непознато налазиште

24 Иванов 1972, 9–29, Fig. 1–13; Думанов 2006, 113–117, Fig. 1–4, 6; Guggisberg 2003, F 27–35.
25 Gaggisberg 2003, 159.
29 Keller 1941, 41.
fibulae, so the specimens decorated with just one group of these motifs could not be distinguished. The statistic data reveal that on 49 recorded fibulae with portrait medallions, Christogram appears on nine of them (London ?, Marteville, Basel, Drnovo-Nevidudunum, Osijek-Mursa, London-British Museum, Munich-private collections, 3 pieces), while autonomous appearance of Christ monogram on fibulae without medallions with male images has been recorded on smaller number of specimens, like those from graves discovered in Bonn, at the necropoles Ságvár and Stražata in Pleven or the chance finds from Prahovo and the Fortess in Niš (Naissus)31 (Fig. 3). The conclusion concerning relationship between the fibulae with Christogram and portrait medallions is corroborated also by the fact that the opinion that latter ones are ‘imperial fibulae’, i.e. that portraits in medallions depict Constantine and members of his dynasty, are abandoned in literature,32 because relatively numerous dated specimens from grave associations suggest somewhat later chronological framework. The opinion that these are the portraits of bishops33 or saints34 is also unsustainable, concerning the absence of any inscriptions or depiction of nimbi around the heads of portrayed persons. Therefore, the occurrence of these ornamental elements should be considered from a different angle and certainly not isolated from the ornamental band spreading like tapestry over the foot and bow of these fibulae. After all, as the bow of the Sirmium specimen is missing, we could not determine whether the ornament on the bow included also the portrait medallions, although analogously decorated specimens from Bonn and the Metropolitan Museum do not have them.

The crossbow fibulae including also the gilt specimens decorated with ornamental bands, Christograms and portrait medallions are functional jewelry used to fasten the cloak, chlamys, at the shoulder and worn in the late antiquity by the higher ranking officers and civil servants. They were used, as largitio and donativa, to commemorate imperial jubilees and victories and, as civilian population in the 4th century got many military characteristics, they became ornamenta dignitatis for the larger segment of population. In contrast to the earlier specimens decorated with narrow ornamental bands on the foot and bow and sometimes with inscriptions, the group of fibulae we are talking about has diverse ornamental motifs coloristically enhanced using niello and silver plating on the gilt background. Christograms and portrait medallions that are elements of the ornamental scheme of the fibulae of this group appear only sporadically on the related fibulae of type 6, dated in the period around AD 400 and in the first half of the 5th century.35 But, C volutes on type 6 fibulae are not incorporated in the narrow foot, but they are its dominant element executed in the openwork technique. These ornamental motifs on rare known specimens of the type 6 fibulae are isolated from other ornamental elements and somewhat differently executed than on the earlier specimens of type 5. Thus, on the fibula of that slightly later group found in grave 42 at Ságvár necropolis, Christogram is placed on top of the pin cassette,36 while on the fibula from grave 1033 in Pečine necropolis in Viminacium the very reduced Christograms are placed in nine medallions on the ornamental band and the young man’s portrait is on the bent section of the end of the foot.37 The portrait of young man on the bent section of foot of the fibula from village Kolari in Bulgaria,38 that was executed in a panel without medallion could be stylistically associated with portraits of melancholic figures in the painting and sculpture of the 4th–5th centuries. This is the latest so far known fibula with a portrait of young man. Nevertheless, the Christogram motif reappears on exceptionally luxurious gold crossbow fibulae made in the opus interrasile technique and dating from around AD 450 to AD 538.39 But, ornamental elements on these fibulae incorporating Christogram, differ from the ornamental elements on the gilt bronze

---

30 Guggisberg 2003, 157, Tab. 2; 307–322 (46 registered specimens); Popović 2001, cat. 88 (Serbia, unknown site, National Museum in Belgrade); Dumanov 2006, 113, Fig. 1 (Černa Gora).
31 A l’aube de la France 1981, nr. 234 a; Burger 1966, Fig. 95, 20/3; Tabakova-Cenova 1981, 103, Fig. 6, 3; Popović 2001, cat. 89; Jovanović 1978, 45, cat. 53, Fig. 128.
32 Laur-Belart 1959, 57; Ivanov 1972, 22, 26; Jovanović 1978, 57; Tabakova-Cenova 1981, 136. A detailed survey of the existing opinions about the meaning and the symbolics of the portrait medallions on fibulae was given by Migotti 2008, 16–23.
33 Cabrol, Leclercq 1923, 1490.
35 Keller 1971, 52–53.
36 Burger 1966, 143, Pl. XCI, 2.
38 Ivanov 1972, 18, Fig. 14, 15.
39 Deppert-Lippitz 2000, 57–61, Fig. 18–24 (fibula from the unknown site, today in the museum in Stockholm, specimens from the sites Apahida in Rumania, Tournai in Belgium, Reggio Emilia in Italy, Palatine Hill in Rome, from Asia Minor, today in Burton Y. Berry Collection, Bloomington and from the unknown site, today in the Louvre Museum in Paris).

fibulae from the second half of the 4th century, so it makes possible following an evolution of the symbolic meaning of this decorative scheme. Decoration of the gilt bronze fibulae of type 5 reflects accurately the aesthetic ideas and concepts in the art of the second half of the 4th century. The elaborate floral and geometric motifs highlighted by niello and medallions with schematized portraits of young men appear not only on fibulae of this type, but also on belt buckles and appliqués, on silver vessels and other objects, often in scenes of animal hunting and other nature illustrating scenes. This iconographic scheme is customary also in mosaics, frescoes, on luxurious glass vessels and ivory.40 The floral motifs, first of all that of vine, clearly indicate the Dionysian character of these motifs, which are associated with comfortable lifestyle. The schematized busts of young men are also a segment of that classicistic ornamental program and their origin is probably in the representations of lesser deities and personification of natural phenomena and allegories in the Roman art. This decorative program used in all fields of the applied arts was accepted also by the Christians, so many pagan motifs remained in use along with the Christian symbols. Therefore, it is not surprising that Christograms appear on fibulae together with busts of young men and floral and geometric motifs enhanced by niello, so to say the symbols reminding of comfortable lifestyle, richness of nature and force of its phenomena. Namely, among military and civil elite, the owners of these fibulae, there were in the end of the 4th century without doubt many Christians and most of them (according to some opinions as much as 80%) were of barbarian descent, as grave finds concentrated along the Danube limes indicate.41 The appearance of Christian symbols on objects of pagan iconographic contents has been recorded also on the luxurious silver vessels, like, for instance, on the ‘Hunting Plate’ from the Seuso treasure, where the Christ monogram is incorporated in the inscription of the central medallion.42

The foot of gilt fibula from the imperial palace in Sirmium is adorned besides the Christogram on the rear wall of pin holder also with wide ornamental band with motif of intersecting circles creating quatrefoils and rhombs. The ornamental bands with intersecting circles, ellipses and squares highlighted by niello and sometimes combined with the medallions with busts of young men appear frequently also on luxurious silver vessels in the middle-second half of the 4th century.43 However, the motif of quatrefoils and rhombs resulting from intersection of circles or octagons is most frequently encountered in mosaics, even in the mosaics from the imperial palace and villa urbana in Sirmium.44

So, an ornamental scheme on the foot of gilt fibula from Sirmium clearly indicates that decorative systems in the Late Roman art swiftly passed from one group of objects to the other, so we could speak about the art industry (Kunstindustrie), which united many aspects of craftsmanship and artistry. Within such setting, common for the objects of art originating from pagan and Christian milieu, the Christogram appears on the rear wall of pin holder of the fibula from Sirmium, as it also appears on different parts of already mentioned fibulae of that type with or without portrait medallions,45 on the silver vessels46 and jewelry, particularly finger rings,47 from the same period. This symbol is certainly an indicator of Christian conviction of the fibula owner, although other ornamental motifs do not suggest it openly. Still, on the pin holder of Sirmium fibula is depicted a rising cross, i.e. the cross erected at Golgotha, that is an unambiguous allusion to Christ, but also to his triumph over death. The apocalyptic letters, alpha and omega, suspended from lateral arms of the cross, symbolize Christ as the beginning and the end, in accordance with His words in the Book of Revelation, where Christ says in various variants on three occasions (1:8; 21:6; 22:13): I am the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last’. But the complete symbolism of this motif was going to appear just few decades later on gold fibulae made in the opus interrasile technique, where the monogram cross does not appear within ornamental motifs known from many pagan monuments, but within the setting imposing strong Christian message. Perhaps the best example of evolution of the motif on the crossbow fibulae feet that developed for approximately one century, from the end of 4th to the end of 5th – beginning of the 6th century, could be seen on luxurious gold specimen...
from the Metropolitan Museum. Contrary to the standard late antique ornamental scheme on the foot of Sirmium fibula, on this specimen we encounter together with monogram cross and apocalyptic letters alpha and omega also the motif of spirally winding foliages, clearly indicating Garden of Eden, while the cross itself is crowned with a wreath as symbol of victory. Thus, this is the message about triumphant cross, the synonym of the Golgotha cross, i.e. of the tree of life, which brings eternal life in contrast to the tree of good and evil in the Garden of Eden, that brought the mortality to mankind. Nevertheless, this emphasized Christian symbolism is not conspicuous on the Sirmium specimen, as an ornamental setting of the Christ monogram is common for many objects of art produced in the second half of the 4th century in the Christian, as well as in the pagan milieu. Only in the ensuing decades the standard late antique decoration was to be transformed into genuine Christian one. The luxurious gilt bronze fibula could have been awarded as emperor’s gift, in the final decades of the 4th century, to someone of the court officials, perhaps during the meeting between emperors and brothers Valentinian and Valens, taking place in Sirmium, or on the occasion of crowning of Theodosius I during the stay of emperor Gratian in this town. As most of these fibulae are grave finds, the question arises concerning the reasons of its appearance within the remains of the imperial palace in Sirmium. It is important to mention, regarding this problem, that residential complex lost its original function already by the end of the 4th century. It is confirmed by humble dwellings of stone and brick fragments encountered in the open areas of the imperial palace and hippodrome. At the beginning of the 5th century the necropoles were no more situated outside town ramparts and the remains of the dead were transferred to the enclosed town area as indicated by small brick-built graves found in the interior of the Sirmium town basilica (the church of St. Demetrius). At locality 85 in Sirmium have been recorded the remains of the cathedral church of medieval Dmitrovica, dating from the 14th–16th centuries, built on top of the remains of late antique residential structure. The church was surrounded by the necropolis with many levels of burials. The remains of Early Christian cult structure have been recorded only fragmentary. The assumption that shortly before the attack of Huns and Goths in the beginning of the 5th century the remains of the dead and their grave goods, including the gilt fibula with Christogram, were transferred from the necropolis extra muros to the small cemetery around or inside the church, that is a phenomenon already recorded in the Sirmium town basilica, remains for the time being just a hypothesis.

52 Archaeological investigations at this site are still in progress and the results have not been published so far.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Приликом археолошких истраживања локалитета 85 Сирмијума, за који се са веома дозом извесности претпоставља да представља део царског резиденцијалног комплекса, откривена је, у јесен 2005. године, стопа бронзане позлаћене фибуле (С-169/2005), димензија 31 х 22 mm (сл. 1). Фрагмент фибуле нађен је у сектору С, у просторији 12, у слоју шута који је нанет по завршетку археолошких радова претходне године, и који почиње са истог локалитета. На бочним рубовима стопе фибуле налазе се по три изливена валуте у облику слова С. Декор у средишњем делу стопе сменет је у правоугаоно поље које обухвата скоро целу њену површину. Орнамент, изведен урезивањем и наглашеним нислом, састоји се од кругова који се секу, формирајући мотив четворолиста и ромбоа, чије су површине попуњене кратким урезаним и нислом испуњеним линијама. Изнад орнаменталног поља налази се пољукуржани отисак основе лука фибуле, који недостаја. Крај стопе, повијен под правим углом, луци је завршен, а основа олучастог држача игле недостаје. На повијеној површини, задњем дну држача игле урезиван је крст чији је горњи крак повијен у грчко слово rо, тако да се формира монограмски крст, или христограм, комбинована слика крста и прва два слова речи Χριστός. Наиме, сам крат представља слово χi, док његов повијен горњи крак формира слово ρо. Изнад бочног крака крста угробирана су слова αlфa и οмегα, што је директна алудија на Христа као почетак и крај, у складу са његовим речима из Κњиге Oпштравења (1:8; 21:6; 22:13).

Специфичан орнамент на стопи омогућава да се релативно прецизно реконструише изглед фибуле, иако њени други делови нису сачувани (сл. 2). Наиме, орнаментална схема на овој стопи своје директне аналогије налази на нешто дужим стопама фибуле из гроба једног римског официра, највероватније германског порекла, откривеног у Бону, и фибуле са непознатог локалитета, данас у Метрополитен музеју у Нюјорку. За разлику од сирмијумске стопе, на чијим се бочним витцама налазе по три С волуте, стопе оба наведена примерка украшене су са по четири С волуте на бочним витцама, док је декор у централном пољу исти на све три стопе, с тим што је орнаментално поље на стопи фибуле из Сирмијума нешто краће, па је, самим тим, декор мање развијен. На повијеном делу стопе, односно на задњем зиду држаца игре фибуле из Бона налазе се, као и на сирмијумском примерку, христограм и слова αlфa и οмегα, док је тај део стопе фибуле из Метрополитен музеја без ових симбола.

Фибуле из Бона и Метрополитен музеја, као и она чија је стопа откривена на простору царске палате у Сирмијуму, припадају једној не тако бројној групи луковичноставних фибула, произвођених током друге половине IV века, а специфичних по начину израде и систему украшавања (тип V). За разлику од обичних бронзаних фибула које су начинђене од ливених елемената, ови позлаћени примерци су израдивани на истински као златне фибуле, које су им, свакако, послужиле као модели, мада ниједан од тих златних прототипова данас није сачуван. У широком орнаменталном пољу на њиховој стопи, која је заменила уске орнаменталне траке на ранијим примерцима, понекад су интегрисани мали медаљони са угравирајућим позацањем и бистама младића, глава окретнутих три четвртине у страну и обућених у драпирани тунике. Према досадашњим налазима, број ових портретних медаљона, imagines clipeateae, креће се од један до десет. Унутар ових орнаменталних трака некад се јавља и поље са христограмом, који може бити изведен и на задњем зиду држаца игре.

Иако су фибуле овог типа констатоване на широком простору од Британије до Црног мора, највећа концентрација њихових налаза је у средњем и доњем Појулављу и регионима који градиратију том појасу (сл. 3), где су се, по
свој прилици, налазиле и радионице за њихову израду.

Насупрот стандардној касноантичкој декоративној схеми са стопе сирмијумске фибуле, на овом примерку, уз монограмски крст и апо- 
калпитична слова alfia i omega, срећемо мотив спирално увијених лозица, које јасно асоцира- 
ју на Рая, док је сам крст овекан венцем, сим- 
болом победе. Дакле, то је порука о крсту ко- 
ји побегњује, синопиму за крст на Голготи, од- 
носно за дрво живота, које доноси вечни живот, за разлику од дрвета познавања добра и зла из Рајског врта, које је донело смртност 
човечанства. Међутим, та наглашена хри- 
шћанска симболика на сирмијумском пример- 
ку се не уочава, будући да је декоративно окру- 
жење у којем се Христов монограм појављује 
заједничко за бројне уметничке предмете на- 
стале у другој половини IV века како у хри- 
шћанској, тако и у паганској средини. 

Декорација бронзаних позлаћених фибула 
tипа 5 верно одражава естетске идеје и кон- 
cепте у уметности друге половине IV века. Бо- 
gати флорални и геометријски мотиви, нагла- 
шени нислом, и медаљони са схематизованим 
портретима младића, појављују се не само на 
фибулама овог типа, већ и на појасним коцца- 
мам и апликацијама, на сребрном посуђу и друг- 
gим предметима, често у контексту сцена лова 
на дивље животиње и других призора из при- 
роде. Та иконографска схема уобичајена је и 
на мозаикима, фрескама, луксузним стакле- 
ним посудама и слоновачи. Флорални мотиви, 
пре свега представе винове лозе, јасно указују 
на Дионизијски карактер ових мотива, који 
asociрају на угодан живот. Схематизоване би- 
сте младића представљају, такође, део тог клас- 
цистичког декоративног програма, а њихово 
покрло се, вероватно, налази у представама 
нijих бошанстава и персонификација природ- 
них појава и алегорија у римској уметности.

Новцем датоване налази фибула са овом деко- 
rацијом јасно показују да је реч о производима 
из друге половине IV века, тако да раније изне- 
tа хипотеза да су у медаљонима приказани 
чланови Константинове династије, губи свој 
ослонац.

Луксузну бронзану позлаћену фибулу мо- 
грао је да добије током последњих деценија IV 
 века, као царски дар, неко из дворског окру- 
жења, можда током састанка, одржаног у 
Сирмијуму, између царева и браће, Валенти- 
нијана и Валенса, или, пак, поводом крупи- 
sања Теодосија I, током боравка цара Грација- 
на у овом граду. Будући да највећи број фибу- 
ла овог типа представља гробне налазе, по-
ставља се питање о разлазима њене појаве у 
kontekstu остатака царске палате Сирмијума. 

Овакву разматрања овог проблема важно је 
напоменути да је резиденцијални комплекс 
већ на крају IV века изгубио своју приватну 
функцију, што доказује скромне стамбене гра-
ђевине од камена и фрагмената цигала, кон-
статоване на слободним површинама царске 
палате и хиподрома. Почетком V века некро-
поле се више нису налазиле ван градских беде-
ма, а остатци покојника су, како то показују ма-
ли гробови од опека из јутрацијности градске 
базилике (црква светог Димитрија) у Сирмијуму,
пред налетом варвара пренесене у угроже-
ни градски простор. На локалитету 85 Сирми-
јума, изнад остатака касноантичке резиденци-
јалне грађевине, регистровани су остатци кате-
дралне цркве средњевековне Дмитровице из 
XIV–XVI века, око које се простирала некро-
pola са више нивоа сахрана. Остатци ранијег 
ранохришћанског култног објекта регистро-
вали су само фрагментарно. Претпоставка да 
св почетком V века, пред најездом Хуна и Го-
da, остатци покојника и њихови гробни прило-
зи, међу којима је била и позлаћена фибула са 
христограмом, пренети из некрополе extra mu-
ros на мало гробље око или унутар цркве, што 
је појава већ регистрована у градској базилици 
Сирмијума, остаје за сада у домену хипотезе.