RELIEF DECORATED HANDLES OF CERAMIC PATERAE
FROM SIRMIUM, SINGIDUNUM AND VIMINACIUM

Abstract: Four handles of ceramic paterae decorated in relief (nos. 1–4) and one fragmented object for which it has been assumed on the basis of its shape, way of manufacture and iconographic design to be also the patera handle (no. 5), have been found in Sirmium. The decoration on handles 1 and 2 was executed under the influence of the ornamental design of silver paterae from Gaul, while the motif of the goddesses’ busts on handles 3 and 4 is the local adaptation of existing ornamental motifs. The busts of female deities also embellish two handles from Singidunum (nos. 6 and 7) and one handle from Viminacium (no. 8). The multitude of such decorated handles of the ceramic paterae from the sites in Pannonia and the neighboring regions could be related to the expansion of the cult of Silvanus.

Key words: Roman pottery, patera, cult scenes, Pannonia, Moesia Superior, Noricum.

The vessels of cylindrical shape with long horizontal handle, known as paterae or as casserole, if the receptacle was deeper, had been produced of silver, bronze, glass or baked clay throughout the entire Roman period. It is assumed that they have originally been used for ladling wine and finds of the 1st – 2nd century silver paterae indicate that they were made in pairs of which one specimen was slightly smaller, so that it could fit into the other, larger receptacle. These trullae, as they are called in the written sources, changed their purpose in the course of time, so they were not made in pairs any more and they were more and more often used for the cult purposes.1 Of course, more modest, mostly ceramic forms, maintained their role as table or kitchen ware. In addition to rather large number of fragments of these vessels also few handles with or without rim fragments have been found in Sirmium, Singidunum and Viminacium. These handles are decorated in relief, imitating the ornamental scheme of the metal, first of all, silver paterae. These paterae had cylindrical receptacle, ring-like molded rim and flat strap handle, terminating in a circular extension. They had been mold-made of well-refined clay fired to a reddish color. It has been concluded, on the basis of the molds and impressions found in Gaul, that first the prototype was made that

1 Baratte 1993, 151-153.

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was used as matrix, which was in the process of manufacture mostly undecorated, or just vaguely decorated. After drying and baking the decorated side of the matrix has been impressed in the well refined clay, creating thus the contours of a handle. On its base were stamped usual figural or floral ornaments, like on the terra sigillata vessels. The details on figural representations were finished off using special styluses (stilus) and the edge on some specimens was decorated with serrated wheel. The partly dried mold was cut out, additionally dried and fired and then filled with clay. After the completion of this process, the handle was taken out of the mold and additionally decorated.2

Out of seven relief decorated paterae handles from Sirmium, Singidunum and Viminacium, six were coated with olive-brown glaze (nos, 1, 3, 4, 6-8) and one with whitish engobe (no. 2). The relief decoration on the handles of these vessels made possible the analyses concerning their provenance, the workshops for their manufacture and possible purpose. We will pay our attention also to the fragmented handle (?) from Sirmium (no. 5), for which, because of its poor state of preservation and lack of direct analogies, we could assume that it belonged to the vessel of the patera shape only on the basis of its shape and relief decoration.

\[\text{Sirmium}\]

1. \textit{Patera handle, fig. 1}  
\textit{A/1564, Sirmium, Sava quay, purchased}  
\textit{Complete length 13 cm, handle length 10.3 cm, handle width 3.2-5.8 cm}  
Handle with top arched edge missing and rim section of the patera made of refined reddish fired clay and coated with olive glaze. The handle edge has a border of a row of the bead-shaped spherical bosses. The relief representations on the handle are divided into three zones. On the top is the head of Maenad within a frame of arrow-shaped volutes. In the central zone is depicted Minerva or Roma in profile to the left: on the head is crested helmet and she is dressed in a long robe and short cloak fluttering behind her. She holds in her right hand a spear placed diagonally across the body and the shield in her left hand. In the bottom zone are two embracing figures, probably in an erotic scene that could be associated with the cult of Priapus.

Unpublished.

2. Patera handle, fig. 2
A/2003, Sirmium, Sava quay, from discarded earth
Length 7 cm, width 2.8-4.5 cm
Handle of a patera made of reddish fired clay with traces of whitish engobe. The arch-ending edge of the handle has a double border: series of bead-shaped spherical bosses and the arched foliage. The head of Maenad is depicted within these two borders on the expanded top section of the handle. Below the head is the schematized figure of a naked child from the Bacchic repertoire, Amor (putto) with a staff in his right hand (?). To the left of the figure is a basket, which is, perhaps, hanging from the staff. Amor is standing on some indistinguishable object.
Unpublished.

3. Handle and section of the rim of patera, fig. 3
A/2011, Sirmium, Stari šor (Moše Pijade) street, 94, sewerage system, depth 2 – 2.5 m; purchased in 1981.
Complete length 9.5, handle length 8 cm;
handle width 3.5-5.5 cm
Handle with upper arched edge missing and rim section of the patera made of refined reddish fired clay, coated with olive glaze. Along the handle edge is a border consisting of horizontally incised lines, executed by serrated wheel and the series of moldings shaped as rosettes or beads. On the elliptically expanded upper section of the handle is the female bust in relief. The woman is dressed in a tunic and on top of it is a cloak the edges of which create a slit shaped as Latin letter V. The neck is long and slender and the features are summary modeled and worn out. The hair parted in the middle enframes the forehead. On the top of the head are two protuberances or knots, which perhaps represent the tips of the moon crescent. Below the bust ending in a triangle with rounded apex, there are two vertical grooves, which branch off at the top.
Unpublished.

4. Patera handle, fig. 4
124/1962, inv. 254, Sirmium, south rampart area
Length 4.8 cm, width 5.1 cm
Fragmented handle of a patera made of reddish fired clay and coated with olive glaze. Along the handle edge is a border consisting of horizontally incised lines, executed by serrated wheel and the series of moldings shaped as rosettes or beads. On the top
elliptically expanded and arched handle section is depicted a bust of a female dressed in the robe with dense vertical pleats. In the lower section the bust ends in the form of an isosceles triangle. The face features are vague and worn out and the hair enframes the forehead. On the top of the head are two protuberances, most probably the tips of the moon crescent.

Unpublished.

Fragmented handle (?) made of reddish fired clay, coated with yellowish engobe. The preserved decoration consists of the head and part of the bust of a female, flanked with vertical column-like borders. On the head of a woman is a crown consisting of two...
towers to the left and right and the recession (gateway?) in the center, suggesting that it was the mural crown (corona muralis). The hair on the forehead, top and back of the head is depicted by vertical incisions. The features of the face are schematized and the eyes are emphasized. The woman is dressed in a tunic on top of which is the breast armor fastened with molded rivets (?). The right edge of the handle (?) is devised as the raised hand touching the head. The left edge is cylindrical and resembling a column. The top is shaped as the stylized bird’s (?) head. On the front side the column-like edge is vertically divided in two zones. The right one is marked by the slanting lines, while on the left is a staff (?), stylized human figure and below the figure is the series of short horizontal lines. On the back the handle body and its left edge are executed in such a way to give the impression that woman holds a staff with four phalerae in the left arm, which is bent at elbow. On the phalerae are fluttering tassels or ribbons. Lower phalerae are decorated with radiated ornament, while the square standard could be recognized on the upper phalera. The representation on the backside indicates that person holds vexillum or signum in the left hand, while the front side of the handle edge could represent a scepter.

**Singidunum**

6. Handle and rim section of patera, fig. 6
A/671a, Singidunum, Studentski trg (1996 excavations), house 2, from the ghost walls

Complete length 10.2 cm, handle length 8.2 cm, handle width 3.2-5.2 cm

Handle and rim section of a patera made of refined reddish-brown fired clay. The handle is coated with olive-brown-ochre glaze. Along the handle edge is a border consisting of horizontally incised lines, executed by serrated wheel and the series of bosses shaped as rosettes or beads. On the edges of some bosses are visible the flutings, which make them look like shells. On the upper elliptically expanded section of the handle is the relief representation of a female bust. The woman is dressed in the pleated tunic the edges of which create a slit shaped as the Latin letter V. The neck is long and slender and the face features are modeled in a summery way. The wavy hair, which is parted in the middle enframes the face and covers the ears. On the top of the head are two protuberances or knots, which possibly represent the tips of the moon crescent. Below the bust ending in the form of a triangle with rounded apex are two vertical grooves, which are branching out at the top.


7. Patera handle, fig. 7
Singidunum, Cincar Janka Street (within the castrum, next to the water supplying canal, excavations in 2008)

Length 7.5 cm, width 3.5-4.8 cm

The patera handle is made of refined reddish fired clay and coated with olive-brown glaze. Along partially damaged edge of a handle is a border of horizontally incised lines and a series of spherical bosses shaped as rosettes or beads. In the upper elliptically expanded section of the handle is the relief bust of a woman dressed in tunic, on top of which was a cloak with arched edges meeting at the chest. Two segments of the cloak are of different length and densely pleated. The face is dominated by asymmetrically placed large eyes with clearly denoted irises. The hair parted in the middle surrounds the forehead. On the top of the
head are two protuberances or knots, which probably represent the tips of moon crescent.
Unpublished.³

Viminacium

8. Handle and rim section of patera, fig. 8
Viminacium, amphitheatre, 2nd century layer (sq. C/9, excavations in 2008)
Complete length 11.8 cm, handle length 10 cm, handle width 4.15-5.8 cm
Two fragments of broken handle with the rim section of the patera are made of refined grey fired clay. The handle is coated with olive green glaze. Along the handle edge is a border of horizontally incised lines executed by serrated wheel and the series of spherical bosses shaped as rosettes or beads. In the upper elliptically expanded section of the handle is the relief representation of a woman dressed in the pleated tunic. The neck is long and slender and the face features are summary executed and worn out. The wavy hair, parted in the middle surrounds the forehead. On top of the head are two protrusions or knots, possibly connected, so they could be the tips of the moon crescent. Below the bust ending in a triangle with rounded apex there are two vertical grooves branching out at the top.
Unpublished.⁴

The concept of relief decoration on the described paterae handles reveals that there are two different ornamental schemes, although some ornamental motifs, like the beaded molding on the edge, appear on every specimen. However, on the handles no. 1 and no. 2 in the top zone is the head of Maenad with other figures below it, while in the top zone of the handles nos. 3, 4, 6-8 is the bust of a goddess, possibly Luna, and the lower section is undecorated. However, the paterae handles presented here do not have analogies among the ceramic⁵ and bronze⁶ paterae handles decorated

³ I wish to thank Nela Mićović from the Office for Protection of the Cultural Monuments of the City of Belgrade for making it possible for me to publish the find and also Dr. Stefan Pop-Lazić from the Institute of Archaeology in Belgrade, who informed me about it.
⁴ I wish to thank Snežana Nikolić from the Institute of Archeology in Belgrade for making it possible for me to publish the finds.
⁵ Vertet 1972, 5-40.
in relief that have been found at many tens of sites in Gaul. This corroborates already suggested opinion that handles of the ceramic paterae did not result from impressing the bronze specimens into damp clay but the ornament of the metal specimens was just a model for production of molds, so the identically decorated handles of bronze and ceramic paterae have not been encountered so far.7 Nevertheless, the ornamental designs present on the handles of ceramic paterae are to be found on the paterae handles from Aquincum,8 but also from other Pannonian towns,9 although certain motifs are encountered also on some silver specimens from Gaul.10 We think that the handles with the head of Maenad in the top section are according to their ornamental design closest to the handles of silver paterae after which they have been modeled, while those with the bust of female deity could be the local, Pannonian – Upper Moesian interpretation of that design.

Namely, because the ceramic and bronze paterae as cheaper merchandize were made after more luxurious silver specimens, the finds of silver paterae provide the most data about the evolution of ornamental motifs on the handles of these receptacles. As the long handle made a problem in designing the ornament, because the available space was shaped as vertical strap it was solved, on the 1st century paterae, in such a way that on the top was modeled the Bacchic head type, Maenad or Silenus, and below were arranged the floral ornaments. This ornamental scheme evolved in such a way that in the 2nd – 3rd centuries the handle was mostly divided in many zones and their decoration repeated in a simplified manner the extended Bacchic type elements. On the top of the handle were depicted the busts or figures of the deities and in the lower zones were the Bacchic motifs and elements of the idyllic landscape. These details, detached from the more complex landscape compositions originating from the idyllic representations on the Alexandrian toreutics, were represented as isolated decoration and out of their logical context.11 This evolution is best illustrated on the paterae handles from the hoards deposited in Gaul around AD 270, or from the isolated finds from this territory, and on the vessels imported to the other regions of the Empire. The shape and decoration of silver paterae were very quickly taken over by the ceramic workshops in south12 and central Gaul,13 where the production of the shapes inspired by the silver vessels had started.

The paterae handles no. 1 and no. 2 from Sirmium are also the proof of the evolution of that ornamental scheme as the composition on them was executed in horizontal zones, maintaining at the top, in the upper zone, the representation of the Maenad’s head. This motif has also been encountered on the silver patera found at D. Bechovitza near Vraca in Bulgaria, that was made in the 2nd - 3rd centuries in some local workshop, but under the influences of the iconographic concepts on the Gaulish toreutics.14 Female figure in the military gear, Minerva or Roma, is represented in the second zone of the handle no. 1. This is not common representation on the handles of silver paterae, although similar figure of the goddess with spear and shield was encountered in the second zone of gilt silver patera found in Capeheaton in England15 (fig. 9). On the other hand, despite the fact that representations on one rather worn out ceramic patera handle from Aquincum have been identified as the head of goddess Isis Pharia and figure resembling the statue of Nike from Samothrace,16 we are of the opinion that, on the basis of disposition of motifs and position of the body of central figure, the ornament on that handle is analogous to the specimen no. 1 from Sirmium, i.e. that below the head of Maenad was depicted the goddess in a military gear. We would like to mention that on few bronze paterae handles from many sites in Gaul the attributes of the goddess Minerva/Athena were depicted together with the attributes of Mercury or Apollo, while on the specimen from Camp d’Avor is represented a female deity with helmet and spear, most probably Minerva.17 On the other hand, the goddess dressed as Amazon could be explained also as the representation of Roma, i.e. the guardian of the city, in this case of Sirmium, but depicted as the city goddess of Rome. The city goddesses, Tychai, or the personifications of cities, provinces and rivers are frequent motifs in Roman art, taken from the repertoire of the Hellenistic artistic achievements. In the course of time these representations experienced iconographic and symbolic transformations. Only the iconography of Roma as goddess sitting on the throne like Amazon, with helmet and holding spear and shield, is clearly modeled thanks, first of all, to the many representations on coins,18 while image and attributes of other

7 Vertet 1972, 35.
13 Vertet 1972, nr. 7, 36.
14 Jouglev 1971, 79-80, fig. 19-21.
16 Bugán 2002, 95-96, Abb. 1, 1; 2, 1.
18 Spätantike 1983, Kat. 86, 89, 92.
The iconographic representation of the city goddesses, who were depicted without individual characteristics, was established not until the Late Roman period. Tyche of Sirmium on the stamps on gold ingots, found in Feldiora in Romania, is depicted as woman in long chiton with mural crown on the head and palm branch in her hand, while the attributes of the goddess whose marble head is crowned with corona muralis and who was found in the course of archaeological investigations of the imperial palace in Sirmium in 2005 are not known.

But, as the patera with handle on which was depicted the goddess in the costume of Amazon had been made around two centuries before these monuments, it is possible that it was the city goddess portrayed as Roma. The scene in the third handle zone is unclear, although two embraced figures probably in an erotic scene could be recognized. This composition could be related to the cult of Priapus, because the scenes showing offering the sacrifices to Priapus or Priapus’ herms had been depicted on the silverware separately from the more complex scenes of idyllic landscapes. The handle with this complex iconographic scheme was coated with high quality olive glaze and has been discovered by chance on the Sava quay, where the Sirmium earliest habitation structures made of wood have been encountered. Judging by the parallels on silver vessels, it was made in the middle or second half of the 2nd century, when, besides the imported glazed ware from the central Gaulish workshops, also appear the local products of that kind, many of which were made under strong central Gaulish influences. We are of the opinion that the patera of which the handle is preserved was one such product manufactured probably in Sirmium.

The patera handle no. 2 confirms certain conclusions we reached in the analysis of the handle no. 1, but providing even more concrete evidence for the transfer of the ornamental motifs from the silverware to the pottery vessels. On the handle we are discussing is represented below the head of Maenad the naked child from the Bacchic repertoire, holding the staff (pedum) on which is most probably suspended a basket. Although this handle is not glazed, but coated with the whitish engobe, the analogous ornamental

19 LIMC VII, 779, nr. 1-2.
20 Popović 2008, 159-162.
21 Trésors d’orfèvrerie 1989, cat. 160 (silver patera, Reignier); Antiūno ceparpa / Antique Silver, 1994, cat. 195 (silver patera, Nova Bozhandra).
24 Cvjetičanin 2001, 75-78.
design was encountered on one glazed handle from Aquincum and possibly on a specimen from Karataš (Diana). The female head on top of these handles has been identified as the head of Medusa, according to the explanation suggested for the representations on some handles of the Gaulish bronze paterae. It is, however, important to mention that identical iconographic concept, i.e. putto below the head of Maenad, was also encountered on the pair of silver paterae discovered in Aigueblanche in Savoy (fig. 10). On these silver vessels there are three Bacchic masks below Amor and that could be the representation on the mentioned pottery handles, as this zone on them is not clear enough. In any case, the handles of ceramic paterae clearly indicate that on them had been reproduced the ornamental scheme used on the silver paterae and lower quality of relief and certain indistinctness in representation result from the difference in material used for modeling the scenes. On the other hand, head of Maenad, putto and the foliage clearly suggest the Bacchic character of the entire image. The ceramic paterae of which these handles were parts although imitating by their decoration the silver vessels from the Gaulish workshops are local Pannonian products, while the specimen from Diana on the Djerdap (Iron Gates) limes could be private possession. As even 14 glazed paterae handles with relief decoration have been discovered in Aquincum and on one was identified the stamp of master Valerius Maximus, it is assumed that the center for production of these vessels existed in this city during the second half of the 2nd century. However, as the handle no. 2 from Sirmium as well as the preceding specimen has been discovered on the location of the early settlement at the river quay and that they were not glazed, we could not reject the possibility that vessels of this type were produced in Sirmium, in the workshop closely related in its activity to the artisan center in nearby Aquincum. The workshop producing glazed and unglazed paterae handles decorated in relief existed also in Viminacium, as numerous fragments, but also one well-preserved flat rectangular handle with representation of Satyr carrying pedum have been recorded in the sacrificial layer, above the graves at the necropolis ‘Više grobalja’. The ornamental design used on the paterae handles nos. 3, 4, 6–8 differs from the decoration on the previously analyzed handles. Although not identical in details, these handles repeat the identical iconographic contents on the arch-shaped expanded upper section: within a border of beaded molding there is a bust of female deity, while the lower section of the handle is undecorated. Even six handles with ornament conceived in a similar manner were encountered in Aquincum, and one or more specimens have been also recorded in other large urban centers in Pannonia including Poetovio, Carnuntum, Brigetio (two handles), Solva and Mursa (eight handles). One handle of the same type was discovered also at the site Podkraj near Hrastnik, which was in the ager of Celeia, i.e. just on the border between Noricum and Pannonia. There is the assumption that these handles had been produced in the workshop in Mursa, whence they were distributed to the Pannonian cities. The attribute on the goddess’s head is indistinctive on most of the handles, so it seems that it was rather the hair tied on top of the head in some type of a knot (noedus, krobylos), than the crescent as the symbol of Luna. If it is not an attribute on the top of goddess’s head, but it is just a hair style, the only parallel for this atypical coiffure consisting of two ‘horns’ achieved by spiral winding of the hair locks on top of the head could be found on the silver head of the goddess from the hoard of silver vessels, statuettes and gold jewelry from Vaise near Lion (fig. 11). This small head, 7.5 cm high, dates from the end of 2nd or the beginning of the 3rd century, but it was not possible to identify

Fig. 11. Head of the goddess, silver, Vaise near Lyon, hoard (after Aubin et al. 1999, fig. 85)

Сл. 11. Глава бойне, сребро, Vaise код Лион, остава (према: Aubin et al. 1999, fig. 85)
the deity to which it belonged.\textsuperscript{36} The opinion has been recently expressed that the goddess depicted on the handles from Aquincum and Singidunum is Venus to whom also the rosettes creating the wreath around the image allude.\textsuperscript{37} Nevertheless, this wreath is identified in the existing literature as the symbol of Isis and the depicted goddess as the universal female deity, venerated under various names, but whose characteristics are united in the Egyptian goddess Isis.\textsuperscript{38} However, it is still an open question whether the border on the paterae handles with beads or rosettes has the symbolic meaning of the wreath, or is it just an ornamental element as it also appears on the ceramics handles, which iconographic contents could not be related to the cult of Venus.\textsuperscript{39} Still, the representations of women with hair gathered in two knots on top of the head could be related to some statues of Venus, but also to the representations of some other female deities.\textsuperscript{40} On the other hand, it seems that on some handles (no. 4) is actually represented the crescent on the head of the goddess, that indicates the representation of Selene/Luna who, of course, could unite also the characteristics of other female deities, first of all of Artemis/Diana.

The concentration of the finds of paterae handles with representation of the goddess’s bust at the sites in Pannonia, in the bordering region between Noricum and Pannonia and in the Danube region of Moesia Superior, closely connected with Pannonia (fig. 12), clearly indicates the existence of one or more mutually connected workshops. The uniform iconographic scheme with insignificant differences in the details of representation bears witness to the limited number of molds for production of these paterae, that are judging by the weariness of some cast specimens had been in use for a rather long time. After analyzing the handles discovered so far, we identified three types of representations of the goddess’s busts: woman with long and slender neck, dressed in a cloak with the edges creating the slit shaped as Latin letter V (nos. 3 and 6); woman with large eyes, dressed in pleated cloak with arched edges meeting on the chest (no. 7); figure clad in a dress with vertical pleats (no. 4). It seems that two described handles of the first type, from Sirmium and Singidunum (nos. 3 and 6), were cast in the same mold as one specimen from Aquincum\textsuperscript{41}, and to the same type could also be ascribed the handles from the sites Solva, Mursa\textsuperscript{42} and Hrastnik near Celaia.\textsuperscript{43} The handle of the second type from Singidunum (no. 7)

\textsuperscript{36} Aubin et al. 1999, 109-111.
\textsuperscript{37} Jovanović 2007, 59.
\textsuperscript{38} Bugán 2002, 108.
\textsuperscript{39} Handles 1 and 2 from Sirmium, handle from Karataš – Diana (Cvjetićanin 2001, 33).
\textsuperscript{40} Gassner 1992, 26.
\textsuperscript{41} Bugán 2002, 114, Abb. 1-2, 11; Gassner 1992, 18, Abb. 5 A 3.
\textsuperscript{42} Gassner 1992, 18, Abb. 4 S 1; 20, Abb. 6 M 1.
\textsuperscript{43} Krajšek, Stergar 2008, Sl. 5, T. I, 15.
comes by all appearances from the same mold as the specimen from Brigetio,\textsuperscript{44} while we did not find direct analogy for the Sirmium specimen no. 4 among the so far known finds. According to the existing classification of the Pannonian glazed pottery, the handles with relief decoration featuring bust of the goddess are attributed to the group 2, which is distinguished from other relief decorated pottery shapes. The activity of the workshops where they had been produced could be dated to the second half of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} century.\textsuperscript{45}

However, the problem of occurrence of the bust of female deity on handles of the series of Pannonian and Moesian-Danubian paterae is more complex. If the goddess Luna is depicted on them, it could be explained as the result of an intrusion of eastern mystical cults, first of all the one dedicated to the solar god Mithras and its expansion over the territory inhabited in pre-Roman times by the Celtic tribes as in their religion the astral symbolism played the important role.\textsuperscript{46} When the Sirmium specimens are concerned, it is important, in our opinion, to mention that paterae handles with relief representation of Luna appear just in the territory where the highest concentration of the icons related to the cult of the Danubian horsemen have been recorded in the 2\textsuperscript{nd} - 3\textsuperscript{rd} centuries.\textsuperscript{47} Also these icons were frequent finds in Viminacium.\textsuperscript{48} This cult was, according to some opinions, dedicated to the lunar goddess, emissary on earth of the goddess Luna and female pendant to the solar god Mithras.\textsuperscript{49} In favor of this definition of that mystical cult, but also of the thesis about local origin of the ornamental scheme on the handles with the bust of the goddess on top, speaks also the information that one patera handle from Sirmium (no. 3) has been found only 2 meters to the south from the place where the reliefs with dedication to Mithras have been found\textsuperscript{50} and which bear witness to the restoration

\begin{itemize}
\item 1-5 handles of ceramic paterae;
\item altars dedicated to Silvanus;
\item statuette of Silvanus;
\item altars dedicated to Mithras;
\item altar dedicated to the Mother of Gods;
\item A – imperial palace;
\item B – forum;
\item C – shrine of Jupiter in the beneficiary station
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{44} Gassner 1992, Abb. 4 BR 3.
\textsuperscript{45} Gassner 1992, 26-30, 32.
\textsuperscript{46} Topál 1995, 104.
\textsuperscript{47} Поповић 1988, 105-116.
\textsuperscript{48} Зотовић 2001, 167-179.
\textsuperscript{49} Zotović 1978, 1351-1378; Zotović 1999, 74-75; Зотовић 2001, 176-177.
\textsuperscript{50} Information from the documentation of the Museum of Srem.
of the temple of this deity.51 One fragmented altar dedicated to Silvanus has been accidentally discovered in the immediate vicinity of these finds 53 and this could indicate that the cult place of Silvanus also existed in the close vicinity of the sanctuary of Mithras in Sirmium. It is important to mention in that context that as far as we know not a single receptacle of ceramic patera from which the handles with relief representation of goddess originated has been found, so we think that they had the cult purpose as the votive offerings.

The finds of patera handle with relief representation of the goddess, the altars dedicated to Mithras and Silvanus, as well as one monument indicating reconstruction of the temple of the Mother of Gods,53 are concentrated in Sirmium in the northern periphery of the forum and not far from the crossing of two main city communications, cardo maximus and decumanus maximus (fig. 13). If we assume that the sanctuaries of these deities had been located in that city zone, it is necessary to turn our attention to their interrelations. This, on the other hand, could provide certain information concerning the purpose of ceramic paterae with relief decorated handle and reason for their relatively mass use in the urban centers of Pannonia, the Danube area of Moesia Superior and the border region between Noricum and Pannonia. Namely, one of the epiphanies of the goddess Selene/Luna is Artemis/Diana who appears on the reliefs from western and central Bosnia (Opačići, Založje, Glamočko polje, Jajce) in the cult communion with Silvanus and the nymphs.54 Artemis/Diana is also one of the epiphanies of the Mother of Gods who could be understood as emissary on earth of the goddess Luna, i.e. as the female pendant of the god Mithras. As the epigraphic monuments confirm, not far from the Mithras’ temple in Sirmium was the temple of the Mother of Gods, the goddess whose companion was Attis and, according to his iconography as well as under the influence of the cult picture of Mithras’ dadophori,55 originated in later syncretism the representations of youths with some attributes of Liber/Silvanus, that are frequent on the tombstones from eastern Dalmatia.56 Therefore, the cults of Luna, Diana, Mother of Gods, Mithras and Silvanus as universal female and male deities, who in the Pannonian-Balkan provinces assimilated the autochthonous cult contents of the local deities of similar character, have many mutual connections and that has its reflection in Sirmium in the proximity of the cult places dedicated to these gods. Although there is no direct evidence for the existence of the sanctuary of Luna/Diana, we think that handle with relief representation of the bust of female deity is the votive offering to this goddess, i.e. in a sense to the supreme female deity. It is also important to mention that this handle had been made in the second half of the 2nd century, i.e. in the period when the cult of Silvanus flourished in Pannonia and this cult became here some kind of official religion in the period of the Severi.57 Therefore, the concurrent occurrence of the dedications to his companion Diana/Luna is utterly logical. The cult of Silvanus had many adherents also in the centers of Moesia Superior, Singidunum and Viminacium, as it is confirmed by the dedications to this deity.58

In a similar way, considering close relationship between the cults of Silvanus and Liber and frequent equalizing of these deities, could be explained also the iconographic concepts on handles nos. 1 and 2 from Sirmium, on which are noticed the motifs from the cult of Liber/Bacchus – Maenad, Amor (putto), foliage, scene from the cult of Priapus. Against this backdrop, the female figure in the costume of the Amazon on handle no. 1 could be explained as city goddess of Sirmium, i.e. the supreme local female deity – still another epiphany of the goddess Luna/Diana. We would like to mention that bronze statue of Silvanus is of very good quality of manufacture, modeled in the artistic spirit of the first tetrarchy,59 possibly as exemplum Silvani of the emperor Galerius, found in the vicinity of the Late Roman imperial palace, where also one altar dedicated to this deity has been found.60 If the statuette represents, as we assume, the symbol of Lower Pannonia,61 it is logical that its female coadjutor is the city goddess. Two handles with Bacchic motifs from Sirmium have been found on the Sava quay, so it could be assumed that the cult place dedicated to Liber/Silvanus and his companion Diana/Luna/city goddess existed on this location in the city. When the handles with representation of the bust of the goddess from Singidunum are concerned, one of them (no. 6) has been found within a dwelling structure, thus indicating the existence of the house shrine.

51 Mirković 1999, 94, note. 5.
52 Напониш 2009, с. 2.
54 Rendić-Miočević 1955, 5-40.
56 Bacač 1975, 367.
57 Мекић 1974, 250-252.
58 Mirković 1976, 56, nr. 22 (Singidunum); Мirković 1986, 80, 196-198, nr. 41, 297, 300 (Viminacium).
60 Mirković 1971, nr. 26.
while, although archaeological context of the second specimen (no. 7) is not quite clear, it does not rule out the possibility that it was some cult structure used by the soldiers of the garrison stationed in the vicinity. The patera handle of this type from Viminacium has been discovered during excavations of the Roman amphitheater, which was certainly surrounded by many shrines. We think, therefore, that paterae with relief decorated handles did not have utilitarian, but cult character, that is so far not explicitly confirmed only by the find from Podkraj near Hrastnik in the ager of Celeia, where has been recorded the shrine of the deities Savus and Adsaluta. The goddess depicted on the tops of these handles symbolize by all appearances the female deity of complex character, whose iconographic scheme could represent the local adaptation of the iconographic concepts, applied to the representations of some goddesses of similar character, like the one whose head was found in the Gaulish treasure Vaise.

The attempted explanation of the iconographic concepts on the relief handles of ceramic paterae nos. 1-4, 6-8 could be also used in the analysis of the object no. 5, identified as handle because of its shape and iconographic content but also because of the fact that it is solid cast and not hollow like the terracottas. The female with mural crown on the head, indicating the representation of the city goddess, was depicted on this object. However, it is important to mention that on the handles of silver paterae found in Gaul or made under Gaulish influence have been encountered the female deities with mural crowns identified as Tutela (Reignier) or Epona/Terra Mater (Branetić). Woman with mural crown on the head was depicted also on the top of glazed handle from Mursa, that was part of the patera made either in the Gaulish workshops or in some local center, which was working under strong Gaulish influence. These influences are confirmed by the representation in the lower zone – representation of the goddess with the horn of plenty (cornucopia) in her right hand and probably the caduceus in the left hand and this in our opinion identifies her as Mercury’s mother Maia/Rosmerta known from the decorations on the Gaulish silverware. Nevertheless, the woman with mural crown on the ceramic handle (?) from Sirmium is dressed in a tunic probably with the armor on top of it. On the other hand, the left vertical edge of the handle (?) is designed on the front side as the scepter ending on top as swan’s head (?) while on the backside are depicted military insignia, vexillum and signum. This complex composition could be explained as the portrait of Tyche of Sirmium, as a universal goddess who in the peacetime holds the scepter as the sign of authority, while in the wartime she was the guardian not just of the city, but also of the military units stationed in this Pannonian center at the given time. We know from the analysis of the epigraphic monuments and relevant written sources that Sirmium was not the permanent station of military garrisons but they assembled there only in the moments of crisis, as it was the war against the Quadi and Marcomanni. These tumultuous events on the frontier of the Empire even brought the emperor Marcus Aurelius himself to Sirmium, where was also his palace at that time, according to some sources (Philostr. vita Marci, 168-169; Zonaras, XII, 2; Dio Cass., LXXI). In any case, Sirmium was the starting point in the wars of Roman army against the barbarians in Pannonia during the final decades of the 2nd century. These historical data corroborate our thesis that object no. 5 was a patera handle with the representation of the city Tyche in a dual, peaceful and belligerent role. As it has been discovered in a zone outside the north town rampart (fig. 12), it could have been an offering to some cult place of the military character. The production of the pottery vessels made of well-refined clay either painted or engobe-coated is the characteristic of the 2nd century. This is the time when the handle no. 5 could have also been produced, besides typologically standard and iconographically interesting handles nos. 1-4, 6-8. If this insufficiently preserved object has been correctly identified concerning the aspects of typology and iconography, it would be the confirmation of the thesis that pottery material from Sirmium makes possible better understanding of certain historical events.

In the course of analyzing the relief decorated paterae handles from Sirmium, we came to the conclusion that some specimens, mostly those featuring the busts of the goddess, but also Amor below the head of Maenad, have close analogies in the finds from Aquincum. This confirms the assumption that army played an important part in the distribution of luxurious, first of all glazed pottery. In other words, as Sirmium was a civilian center of Pannonia and Aquincum the...
military one, it could be assumed that owners of the vessels originating from the Gaulish workshops were the members of higher classes of the society in these cities. The local production of such vessels, judging by the paterae handles from Aquincum, Mursa and Sirmium, started already in the second half of the 2nd century and continued simultaneously with analogously decorated silver paterae, which were the model for production of the ceramic as well as the bronze specimens. The metallic luster of finely glazed pottery left the impression of luxury, while the vessels also by their decoration imitated the appearance of much more expensive silver specimens. The paterae handles with representation of the bust of female deity on the upper expanded section are local adaptations of the existing iconographic scheme, originating perhaps from Gaul, but which in the time of flourish of the Silvanus’ cult developed also in the Pannonian workshops. They could have been located in Mursa, but also in Aquincum or Sirmium, i.e. in all these centers connected by the roads, which were well maintained and repaired\(^{69}\) and used by military units, but also by merchants and tradesmen. The finds of such decorated paterae handles are not known outside the territory of Pannonia and the parts of Moesia Superior and Noricum, gravitating towards Pannonia. The large quantity of these handles found in the urban centers of Pannonia speaks in favor of the thesis that these were also the centers of their production and use and that finds from Singidunum and Viminacium could be explained as the reflection of the close connection between the Danube section of Moesia Superior and Pannonia. This is confirmed by abundant archaeological material, but also by the information that the IV\(^{\text{th}}\) legio Flavia, stationed in Singidunum, stayed for some time in Aquincum during the wars of Marcus Aurelius against the Parthians in the end of the 2nd century, while this legion or some of its units were stationed in Viminacium during the reign of Alexander Severus in the beginning of the second decade of the 3\(^{\text{rd}}\) century.\(^{70}\) Diverse commercial, administrative and, very important, military contacts between Pannonia and the geographically close Danube zone of Moesia Superior resulted in the fact that archaeological finds from the Roman times, including also the relief decorated handles of the ceramic paterae, could be considered in this area as the material of uniform stylistic group. The future physicochemical and metric analyses of all known handles of ceramic paterae with relief representation of the goddess would show whether the paterae as finished products had been distributed from one center, or the molds circulated between the workshops and some of them could also have the matrices of their own manufacture.

69 Mirković 1971, 34.
70 Mirković 1976, 30.
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РЕЉЕФНО ДЕКОРИСАНЕ ДРШКЕ КЕРАМИЧКИХ ПАТЕРА ИЗ СИРМИЈУМА, СИНГИДУНУМА И ВИМИНАЦИЈУМА

Кључне речи: Римска керамика, патера, културе сцене, Панонија, Горња Мезија, Норик.

Посуде цилиндричне форме са дугом хоризонталном дршком, патере или ако је реципијент дубљи, касероле, израђивале су се током целог римског периода од сребра, бронзе, стакла или печене земље. У Сирмијуму су нађене четири рељефно украшене дршке керамичких патера (сл. 1-4) и један предмет за кога се на основу облика, начина израде и иконографског решења претпоставља да је дршка патере (сл. 5). Декорација дршки бр. 1 и 2 израђена је под утицајем орнаменталне схеме сребрних патера из Галије (сл. 9, 10), док мотив попрсја богиње на две дршке (сл. 3 и 4) представља локалну адаптацију постојећих декоративних решења, можда, такође, галског порекла (сл. 11). Дршке са мотивом бисте женског божанства на врху откривене су и у Сингидунуму (сл. 6, 7) и Виминацијуму (сл. 8). Бројност овако орнаментисаних дршки керамичких патера на локалитетима у Панонији и у деловима Горње Мезије и Норика који јој инклинира (сл. 12), може се довести у везу са ширењем Силвановог култа, на шта указују места налаза споменика из Сирмијума, посвећених Силвану, Мајци Богова, као и дршки патера са представом попрсја Луне/Диане (сл. 13). Локална производња ових патера, судећи по дршкама из Аквинкума, Мурсе и Сирмијума, почела је већ у другој половини II века, а одвијала се истовремено са аналого декорисаним сребрним патерама, које су представљали узор за израду како керамичких, тако и бронзаних примерака. Метални сјај глеђосане керамике пружао је утисак луксуза, а посуде су и својим декором опоношале изглед далеко скупљих, сребрних примерака. Дршке патера са приказом бисте богиње на врху представљају локалну адаптацију постојеће иконографске схеме, која се, у доба процвета Силвановог култа, развила у панонским радионицама. Оне су могле бити лоциране у Мурси, али и у Аквинкуму или Сирмијуму, односно у свим овим центрама, понекад са појединим или групним украсима, али и у другим деловима Паноније и Норика, где се налазе многих сребрних примерака. Овакав утицај на овом простору археолошки налази из римског периода, својим декором представљају материјал јединствене стилске групе.