

# TAVELING MOTIF: VIMINACIUM ARTISTIC OFFICINA AS A PARADIGM OF LATE ANTIQUE PAINTING FASHION\*

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## Introduction

Various influences from the East and West were encountered at Viminacium, owing to its specific geographical position (Fig. 1.).<sup>1</sup> Communication as well as goods exchange took place at Danube River or by overland route (*Via Militaris* and *Via Egnatia*). In these directions and under the similar circumstances culture exchanges occurred and very same routes were used for transferring artists and works of art with the specific motifs, which influence can be noticed in the Viminacium sepulchral art.

Tombs with fresco painted decoration from Viminacium belonged to the period between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> century, and more than 30 of them were excavated between 1983 and 2009,<sup>2</sup> within the necropolises, inside or close to the memorial buildings. According to this fact it can be said that great artistic *officina* worked at Viminacium whose significance can be noticed in successful pictorial solutions. Because of many characteristic motifs, which connect this paintings with analogous representations within the Empire, in this paper we will speak mostly about the paintings from the tombs G-5517, G-2624, G-3130, G-5464, G-160, G-5313, G-3869 and G-52.

As everlasting dwellings, most of the ancient tombs were decorated with paintings and reserved for the higher social classes.<sup>3</sup> Motifs and themes usual in Viminacium painting also can be seen in many other tombs throughout the Roman Empire. Interweaving of pagan and Christian motifs together with the content is striking in this painting and the most common are anthropomorphic figures, Christ monogram, vegetative motifs, birds, kalathos, kantharos, *cornu copiae*, transenna and imitation of marble.

Unfortunately there are very rare examples of completely preserved paintings on the tombs' wall structures and some of them are within the Viminacium tombs G-2624 and G-5517. In

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<sup>1</sup> Archaeological site Viminacium, once was one of the most important military camps on Danube and the capital of the Roman province *Moesia Superior*. More at: <http://viminacium.org.rs/>

<sup>2</sup> Korać 2007, p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Рогич/Анђелковић 2012, p. 85.

most of the cases frescoes are damaged and fragmented owing to physical, physically-chemical, chemical and biological processes.<sup>4</sup>

## **Anthropomorphic figures: portraits of the deceased persons, servants and Cupids**

### *Portraits of the deceased persons*

In the funerary art portraits of the deceased persons are usually painted as individuals or as family groups. In most of the examples known from the paintings from the Balkans provinces images of deceased married couples were represented on the western wall within the tombs' composition. The custom of painting a woman together with her husband has its origin in the banquet scene, which is a typically Roman practice, unlike the Greek prohibition of the presence of respectable women at a banquet.<sup>5</sup>

On the western wall of the Viminacium "Pagan tomb" G-2624, a young female person is depicted down her waist (Fig. 2.).<sup>6</sup> Her oval face is portrayed *en face*, looking to the right. Fine net is placed over her dark hair. Such a coiffure entered into the fashion during the 3<sup>rd</sup> century.<sup>7</sup> Richly decorated dress, as well as jewellery testifies her higher social rank. In her right hand glass balsamarium is painted, as a typically female symbol, usually seen in the iconography of a lady's bath i.e. a woman's toilette. According to the anthropological research of the tomb and iconographic particularities, it is assumed that the painted woman is actually the deceased's portrait.<sup>8</sup> Behind her head, a blue, square field is painted, and it could be interpreted as some kind of nimbus. Various shapes of nimbi, depending on the status of the depicted person, most certainly reinforce the person's dignity.<sup>9</sup> Thus square nimbus, as less perfect than a circular one, should symbolise the terrestrial character of the person of secular rank.<sup>10</sup> Square nimbi were painted on the funerary portraits in Egypt and Syria, which could indicate the Oriental origin of the deceased lady.<sup>11</sup> The portrait of deceased lady from the tomb G-2624 is among rare individual portraits in the sepulchral art,<sup>12</sup> thus married couples or family portraits can be found in most of the tombs, such as the examples from Silistra,<sup>13</sup> Beška,<sup>14</sup> Plovdiv,<sup>15</sup> Osenovo<sup>16</sup> and Thessaloniki.<sup>17</sup> Among these examples the specific one is painted on catafalque in the tomb at Corinth, dated in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D.<sup>18</sup>

### *Servants in the scene of funerary procession (offering scene)*

In the late 3<sup>rd</sup> and during the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD the procession of servants transferred from the reliefs of tombstones and sarcophagi to tomb paintings, especially popular in the province

<sup>4</sup> Dragutinović-Komatina 2004, p. 11–56. Рогич/Мрђић 2006, p. 119–126.

<sup>5</sup> Dunbabin 2003b, p. 23.

<sup>6</sup> The tomb is dated into the first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. Korać 2007, p. 166–182.

<sup>7</sup> Korać 2007, p. 101, 105; Raičković/Milovanović 2010, p. 83.

<sup>8</sup> Anthropological analysis of the hip bones confirmed the funeral of a young female individual. Mikić 2008, p. 37–45.

<sup>9</sup> Анђелковић/Рогич/Николић 2013, 389.

<sup>10</sup> In the funerary painting from the territory of present day Serbia, circular nimbi can be seen on the depiction of the three Parcae in the tomb from Beška. Marijanski-Manojlović 1987, p. 18.

<sup>11</sup> Korać 2007, 117.

<sup>12</sup> Similarly rendered portrait can be seen in the medallion on the eastern wall from the tomb in Or ha-Ner, in Israel. Michaeli 2014. Tafel CXXXIII, Abb. 10.

<sup>13</sup> Danov/Ivanov 1980, p. 105–121;

<sup>14</sup> Marijanski-Manojlović 1987, p. 17–32;

<sup>15</sup> Pillinger/Popova/Zimmerman 1999, p. 42–46

<sup>16</sup> Pillinger/Popova/Zimmermann 1999, p. 14.

<sup>17</sup> Eustorgius tomb, Dunbabin 2003a, p. 454.

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.pasthorizonspr.com/index.php/archives/09/2012/painted-roman-tomb-found-in-corinth>

of Illyricum.<sup>19</sup> Servants as gift bearers are represented in two Viminacium tombs G-2624 (Fig. 3.a.)<sup>20</sup> and G-160 (Fig. 3.b, c.).<sup>21</sup>

On the eastern wall in the tomb G-2624 male standing figure is depicted, holding tray with breads in his hands.<sup>22</sup> On the northern wall in the tomb G-160 a male servant holds glass with the vine in his hand, while the maidservant on the southern wall, holds tray with breads.<sup>23</sup> Both of them are facing the western wall, probably the place where the portraits of the deceased persons once stood.<sup>24</sup> In the tomb from Beška four servants can be seen, and each figure brings a different gift: basket with fruits, grapes, garments, glass cup and jug, and tray with the breads.<sup>25</sup>

In the tomb discovered in the street Graf Ignatiev from Plovdiv (Bulgaria) servants bring plates with the fish, bread, fruits and a jug.<sup>26</sup> On the wall painting from Osenovo (Bulgaria), two maidservants can be seen, the first one with the object similar to a jug in her hands and architectural background (probably the property of the owner), while the other one carries the tray above her head.<sup>27</sup> Eight persons are depicted on the walls within the tomb from Silistra. Maidservants bring toiletry objects, such as jug with the water, towel, mirror, vessel with fragrances, while the servants bring trousers, shoes, rope and belt.<sup>28</sup> On the walls of the tomb from Sidon, the group of servants is depicted serving fish and birds' meat on plates, together with (their) inscribed names.<sup>29</sup>

Funerary feast is represented in the tomb from Constanta, containing five reclining men, who are eating at the table, while two standing servants are offering drink to them.<sup>30</sup>

Although in most of the cases servants are shown within the tombs painting, a late antique scene with servants is painted in villa – „Odeon-Teerace House” in Ephesus. On the northern wall two male figures are painted serving a guest, one of them holding a glass cup, while the other one is depicted with a tray with figs in one hand, and bird' meat in the other.<sup>31</sup>

These scenes are typical for the Balkans region, but some of them can be found in Middle East. The earliest one (from Sidon) belongs to the period between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> century, while other mentioned tombs are dated in 4<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century.

### Cupids

A pair of Cupids is represented on the eastern wall of the tomb G-160, therefore so called “Tomb with Cupids” (Fig. 4), from the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>32</sup> A kalathos is painted between the cupids. This is the sole representations of cupids in the Roman sepulchral painting on the territory of present day Serbia. Here, they are most probably painted as mythological figures with the role of the guides to the afterlife.<sup>33</sup> Cupids can be seen on the eastern wall

<sup>19</sup> Dunbabin 2003a, p. 443–468; Valeva 2001, p. 167–196.

<sup>20</sup> Korać 2007, 166–182.

<sup>21</sup> Anđelković Grašar/Nikolić/Rogić 2013, p. 73–100.

<sup>22</sup> Korać 2007, p. 96.

<sup>23</sup> These breads are known as *panis corona*, and they represent food for the body and soul. Korać 2007, p. 95, 96; Anđelković Grašar/Nikolić/Rogić 2013, p. 83–84.

<sup>24</sup> Anđelković Grašar/Nikolić/Rogić 2013, p. 82–83.

<sup>25</sup> Marijanski–Manojlović 1987, p. 18–19.

<sup>26</sup> Pillinger/Popova/Zimmerman 1999, p. 42–43,

<sup>27</sup> Pillinger/Popova/Zimmerman 1999, p. 13–14.

<sup>28</sup> Atanasov 2007, 449–450; Pillinger/Popova/Zimmerman 1999, p. 23–42.

<sup>29</sup> Barbet/Lewis/Gatier 1997, p. 141–160.

<sup>30</sup> Miron 2008, p. 288, Fig. 2.2.

<sup>31</sup> Zimmerman/Landstätter 2010, p. 168–169.

<sup>32</sup> Anđelković Grašar/Nikolić/Rogić 2013, 73–100.

<sup>33</sup> Known from the cult of *Venus Funerariae*, more in: Јовановић 2000, p. 11–19; Anđelković Grašar/Nikolić/Rogić 2013, p. 91.

of the crypt in Kerch from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century,<sup>34</sup> in the niche of the tombs from Roman Alexandria (Stagni)<sup>35</sup> as well as in Ostia from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century.<sup>36</sup> In the tomb No. 89 from Thessaloniki, cupids are carrying the Christ monogram in wreath, and a kalathos filled with fruits is painted below.<sup>37</sup> In the Roman tomb from Anemurium (Anatolia),<sup>38</sup> besides the cupids, kalathos, four petal flowers and garland are painted as the same combination of motifs which are known from the tomb G-160.

## Birds

Among many other motifs, birds are painted in both, pagan and early Christian funerary art, within the composition or as individual motif.<sup>39</sup> They are painted on walls, in lunettes or on the tombs' vaults. Within the known compositions, several species of birds are depicted, such as doves, peacocks, partridges, pheasants, quails, ducks or goose, but there are instances when birds are painted unrealistic and thus their species cannot be determined.

In the floral ambient with kalathoi from the tomb G-160, peacocks are easily recognizable, but there are two pairs of birds rendered in schematic and stylized manner (Fig. 5. a, b, c). It can be only assumed that they represent doves or partridges, owing to appearance of their bodies.<sup>40</sup> They are painted over the vessel filled with flowers. Four dove and two partridges are depicted over the similar vessels in the Banquet tomb from Constanta.<sup>41</sup>

Two peacocks over the kantharos with *aqua vitae*, within the scene of *pax aeterna in paradiso* are depicted on the eastern wall of the tomb G-5517 (Fig. 5. d.). In this context peacocks represent souls of the deceased in the ambience of blessing and eternal life.<sup>42</sup> Similar compositions of peacocks can be seen in tombs from Silistra,<sup>43</sup> Iznik,<sup>44</sup> Sofia,<sup>45</sup> as well as many late antique tombs from Thessaloniki and in Roman catacombs.

Peacocks over the kantharos are painted on the lateral walls of the tomb G-2624 (Fig. 5. e.). On the western wall of the tomb G-5464 (Fig. 5. f.) an amphora is painted between two peacocks. Peacock as an individual motif is depicted on the eastern wall of the tomb G-5313, while the peacock in floral ambience is painted on the lateral walls of the tomb G-4734.

On the territory of today Serbia, in the late antique period, birds are painted in the composition of vineyards, on the vaults of tombs No. 3 and 4 from Naissus, as well as in the upper frieze of the tomb from Beška.

## Christ monogram

Christ monogram in laurel wreath is painted in blue nuances on the western wall of the tomb G-5517, so called "Christian tomb" from the first two decades of the 4<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 6.).

<sup>34</sup> Minns 1915, p. 143–147; Rostovtzeff 1919, p. 144–163.

<sup>35</sup> Venit 1999, p. 641–669.

<sup>36</sup> Tomb 26: [http://www.ostia-antica.org/vmuseum/decor\\_3.htm](http://www.ostia-antica.org/vmuseum/decor_3.htm)

<sup>37</sup> Tomb No. 89. Макρή, 2006, p. 145.

<sup>38</sup> Russel 1977, fig 4; Barbet 2014, Tafel LXXIV, Abb. 11.

<sup>39</sup> In Silistra: Димитров, Чичикова 1986, 34; In the tombs from Sofia No. 9 and 10; Devnya; Plovdiv; Serdica – tombs No. 5 and 9; In tombs from Thessaloniki No. 29, 41, 46, 88.

<sup>40</sup> Anđelković Grašar/Nikolić/Rogić 2013, p. 87–89.

<sup>41</sup> Barbet 1994, p. 37.

<sup>42</sup> Anđelković/Rogić/Nikolić 2011, p. 239–240.

<sup>43</sup> Atanasov 2007, p. 451

<sup>44</sup> Barbet/Selçuk Şener 1999, p. 213.

<sup>45</sup> Гробница бр 1. Миятев 1925, p. 5–14.

On the territory of present day Serbia, in the late antique period Christ monogram is depicted in tombs No. 3 and 4 from Naissus.<sup>46</sup> In both cases it is painted within the palm wreath,<sup>47</sup> indicating triumph and eternity, as well as the laurel wreath.<sup>48</sup> Sometime the wreath is made of floral petals; witch is the case with the tomb from Sopianae.<sup>49</sup>

Christ monogram is depicted in tombs from Pecs,<sup>50</sup> Serdica,<sup>51</sup> Sofia,<sup>52</sup> Osenovo, Thessaloniki<sup>53</sup>, Chersonesos, and from Roman villa in Kent (England).<sup>54</sup> When the Christian religion and philosophy became an instrument of power, Constantine's vision before the battle on the Milvian Bridge appeared, in which he saw initials of the Christ name (Chi Rho), within laurel wreath.<sup>55</sup> It was easy to transfer that form of winning the battle to the entire victory of Christianity, and from there to the victory of the resurrection. Hence it is not surprising that from that period on, in the funerary art, the Christ monogram, began to appear in the place where once, in paganism, a portrait of the deceased stood, with all the attributes of triumph and glorification. Thus believer was identified with the greatest symbol of Christianity, which, itself contained all the necessary eschatological symbolism of salvation.<sup>56</sup>

## Railing of paradise

Railing of paradise or transenna is associated with the Christian tombs,<sup>57</sup> it divides space in the front or behind it. These railings of Paradise are depicted as made of crossed leafy branches, wooden bars or as stone sculpture with the motif of scales.

Southern, lateral wall of the tomb G-5313 (Fig. 7. a.)<sup>58</sup> from the first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, is decorated with the system of diagonal branches, while in the interspaces four petal flowers are represented. Such a decoration presents *hortus conclusus* (indoor garden). A net made of branches which create square forms is painted in the tomb from Constanta.<sup>59</sup>

On the southern wall of the tomb G- 3869 (Fig. 7. b.) railing of Paradise is depicted with the horizontal stripes made of ten square fields with crossed diagonal lines. In its upper part ornament consisted of semi circular lines is rendered, and it is depicted in pair on the surface of each square field.

Railings of Paradise can be seen on the walls of old Christian tomb from Naissus,<sup>60</sup> Pecs,<sup>61</sup> Osenovo<sup>62</sup> and in the tombs from Thessaloniki No. 89, 90 and 92.<sup>63</sup> In the tomb No. 61 from

<sup>46</sup> Rakocija 2009, p. 87–105.

<sup>47</sup> Palm is a symbol of the city of Naissus: Јовановић, 2003, 43–45, 49; Rogić/Anđelković Grašar/Nikolić 2012, p. 346.

<sup>48</sup> Rogić/Anđelković Grašar/Nikolić 2012, p. 341–354.

<sup>49</sup> Magyar 2007, p. 47.

<sup>50</sup> Magyar 2009, fig 3.

<sup>51</sup> Tomb 4.

<sup>52</sup> Tombs No. 1 and 9.

<sup>53</sup> Tombs No. 89, 46, 53 and 57.

<sup>54</sup> [http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight\\_objects/pe\\_prb/p/wall\\_painting\\_from\\_roman\\_villa.aspx](http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/pe_prb/p/wall_painting_from_roman_villa.aspx)

<sup>55</sup> Lactantius, 19, 27, 1–2; Eusebius 1961, 28–29; Eusebius 1989, 33.

<sup>56</sup> Rogić/Anđelković Grašar/Nikolić 2012, p. 345.

<sup>57</sup> Đurić 1985, p. 194, 195.

<sup>58</sup> Northern lateral side is damaged and according to its remains it can be said that it was decorated in the same manner, as the southern one.

<sup>59</sup> Barbet/Monier 2001, p. 337, pl. XLI.4.

<sup>60</sup> Grobnica br. 3. poznata pod nazivom grobnica sv. Petra i Pavla.

<sup>61</sup> Fülep/Bachman/Pintér 1988, fig. 12 i 13.

<sup>62</sup> Pillinger/Popova/Zimmerman 1999, p. 13–16.

<sup>63</sup> Μακρή 2006, p. 160, 161, 140.

Thessaloniki from the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, in lower zones railings made of crossed bars and with the scales motif alternate.<sup>64</sup>

Similar railings were used for fencing some spaces of profane public buildings during the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> century, and during the 4<sup>th</sup> and in the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century these railings were used for fencing the ceremonial lodge during the imperial ceremonies.<sup>65</sup>

## Imitation of marble

One of the usual motifs in the late antique sepulchral painting, which dates back to Hellenistic times, is marble imitation, mostly painted in the lower zones of the tomb structure. It can be depicted as sole motif, which is the case with the tomb G-3130 (Fig. 8.). Also, imitation of marble is painted in the tomb No. 4 from Naissus<sup>66</sup> and Beška.<sup>67</sup>

Some of the researchers assume that marble imitation in the funerary art evokes terrestrial dwelling, while the upper zones are associated with the afterlife.<sup>68</sup> However, marble panelling or imitation of marble represent luxury of palaces in the Hellenistic period, as well as in the First Pompeian style. In the ancient times every luxury building contained marble panelling in the zone of plinth.

## Vegetative motifs

For their decorative and clear symbolical role, vegetative motifs were often painted in sepulchral art. They are associated with Elysium in the pagan or Paradise in the Christian art.<sup>69</sup>

Three of life is depicted in the early Christian tomb from Naissus, as well as in the "Christian tomb" G-5517 from Viminacium. It is a symbol of life and death, three of the knowledge of good and evil. Three connects tree levels of cosmos: underworld (root), surface (bole) and heaven (branches), and it can be associated with the crucifixion.<sup>70</sup>

Garlands are made of lined leafs, flowers and their petals, branches, fruits, sometimes adorned with ribbons and braids. They signify honour, afterlife and often are painted above the deceased portraits,<sup>71</sup> which is the case with the tomb G-2624. In the tomb G-160 Cupids are carrying garlands and in the tomb G- 52<sup>72</sup> red garlands are depicted as a sole motif. Garlands were very popular during the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B. C., when domineer so called *girlandomania*.<sup>73</sup>

Four petal flowers<sup>74</sup> was favourite motif in pagan art and it continued to be a popular one within the decoration of the Christian tombs, due to its cruciform shape. In most of the examples petals are painted with one colour, mostly red and blue.

Such flowers with heart-shaped petals are painted in Viminacium tombs G-5313 (Fig. 9. a.), G-2624 (Fig. 9. b, c.), G-160 (Fig. 9. d.). The same flower shape is painted on the vault of the tomb from Brestovik. Similar, but stylized flowers adorn vaults in Sofia tombs No. 6 и 7.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>64</sup> Макρή 2006, p. 186.

<sup>65</sup> Роровић 2012, p. 66.

<sup>66</sup> Ракоција 2009, p. 94–99.

<sup>67</sup> Marijanski – Manojlović 1987, p. 23.

<sup>68</sup> Миятевъ 1925, p. 64–65, 109–111.

<sup>69</sup> Рогих/Анђелковић 2012, p. 85–103.

<sup>70</sup> Chevalier/Gherbrant 1983, p. 172.

<sup>71</sup> Korać 2007, p. 77.

<sup>72</sup> Site „Kod Koraba” is a part of eastern Viminacium necropolis.

<sup>73</sup> Baldassarre et al., 2002, p. 55.

<sup>74</sup> More about the four petal flower in: Рогих/Анђелковић 2012, p. 88–89.

<sup>75</sup> Миятевъ 1925, p. 50, 58.

In the tomb No. 37 from Thessaloniki, a flower with heart-shaped petals is painted within the red circle, flanked by two doves, and the peacock below. Here the cruciform shape of the flower represents an example of the symbolical cross within the wreath, thus determined this tomb as the Christian one.<sup>76</sup>

Motif of a grape vine is painted as an individual motif or as frieze in the upper zones of Viminacium tombs, such as G-5517, G-5464, G-160. As one of the frequent motifs in the sepulchral art and because of its valuable symbolism grape vine is painted in, both pagan and Christian tombs from present day Serbia and its neighbouring countries.<sup>77</sup> In Roman – pagan art its symbolism is associated with the Dionisos cult, while in the Christian art it signifies Christ and Eucharist.<sup>78</sup>

## Kalathos and kantharos

Kalathos and kantharos originate from the Hellenistic art. Kalathos represents a storage basket,<sup>79</sup> and in art it is depicted filled with flowers or fruits. It symbolises fertility, i.e. *cornu copiae*. Some goddesses are represented with kalathos,<sup>80</sup> and these examples can be seen in the decoration of Roman sarcophagi.<sup>81</sup>

Kalathoi are depicted in the tomb G-160 (Fig. 5. a, b; Fig. 10. a.), here they are painted with ochre colour and diagonal brown lines, suggesting interlaced birch. Similarly rendered kalathoi can be found in the “Banquet tomb” from Constanta,<sup>82</sup> from the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, as well as in the “Eustorgius tomb” and tomb No. 95, from Thessaloniki.<sup>83</sup> Kalathoi are depicted on walls of the mausoleum in Cuma from the first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century,<sup>84</sup> walls of the tombs No. 14686 and 43427, from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century and tomb of “Seven sleepers” from Ephesus, from the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>85</sup> In the tomb from Sardis (4<sup>th</sup>–5<sup>th</sup> century)<sup>86</sup> kalathoi, peacock, floral motifs and a large vessel filled with flowers are depicted in the very similar manner as in the tomb G-160.

Kantharos is a drinking vessel, which is associated to the Dionysus cult in the Antiquity, symbolizing immortality and rebirth. This symbol is adopted by Christianity, where it suggests resurrection and Eucharist. Whether it is empty or filled with vine, grapes, water or wine, kantharos symbolize a drink of immortality.<sup>87</sup>

In many examples kantharos is flanked with peacocks or other birds. Kantharos filled with the water flanked with two peacocks is represented on the eastern wall in the tomb G-5517 (Fig. 10. b.). Pair of birds over the vessel filled with flowers is painted in the central fields of the southern and northern wall of the tomb G-160 (Fig. 5. c.). A peacock with the kantharos filled with wine is depicted on each lateral wall in the tomb G-2624 (Fig. 10. c.).

<sup>76</sup> Μακρή 2006, p. 161–162.

<sup>77</sup> Naissus tombs No. 3 and 4, Beška and Čalma, as well as Pecs and Sofia (tombs 4, 6 and 7).

<sup>78</sup> Rogić/Anđelković Grašar/Nikolić 2012, p. 349.

<sup>79</sup> Moses and Oedipus were found in baskets, thus they symbolize mother's body and fertility. Chevalier/Gherbrant 1983, p. 398.

<sup>80</sup> Such as Cybele, Demeter, Persephone, etc.

<sup>81</sup> In the southern Italy kalathos is associated with the cult of death and it was the attribute of Persephone, queen of the underworld; on the fresco of the Thirds Pompeian style from (*Stabiae*), Flora holds kalathos filled with white flowers in her left hand. Hoti 1995, p. 115, 124.

<sup>82</sup> Barbet 1994, Fig. 10, 40.

<sup>83</sup> Μακρή 2006, p. 139, 170.

<sup>84</sup> Brun/Munzi 2010, p. 502, 504–506, 508.

<sup>85</sup> Zimmerman/Landstätter 2010, p. 146, 148, 155–156.

<sup>86</sup> Rautman 2011, p. 1–26.

<sup>87</sup> Đurić 1985, 222; Миятев 1925, p. 86–105.

Similar representations can be seen in tombs from Silistra,<sup>88</sup> Thessaloniki (No. 29, 52, 94, 95),<sup>89</sup> as well as in many Roman catacombs.

## Conclusion

The iconography of Viminacium tombs corresponds to the solutions of many late antique tombs from the territory of the Roman Empire and the essence of this art is in richness of symbols and allegories. Christian art inherit many pagan motifs, which meaning was not changed, but gained Christian sense.<sup>90</sup> Thus majority of late antique themes were incorporated and reshaped in the Middle Age art.

Within Viminacium funerary painting, various scenes with an allusion to eternity were painted. Portraits of the deceased, servants – gift bearers, Christ monogram, cupids, birds, as well as railings of Paradise, imitation of marble, kantharoi, kalathoi, floral motifs and grape vine, can be recognized in such a context. Each of these motifs poses strong symbolism and in the rich scenery all together they complete the ambience of blessing, which the deceased expected after the death.

Scenes of Elysium and Paradise gardens in the late antique art are represented with floral gardens with grape vine, birds, kalathoi and kantharoi. These gardens are inspired with the royal gardens of the Orient (Egypt, Assyria, Babylon), known from Alexander the Great conquest campaigns,<sup>91</sup> as well as the Greek funeral gardens (*kepotaphia*).<sup>92</sup> They are depicted as fenced spaces, and within these spaces, birds represent souls of the deceased in the blessed Paradise. Peacock is the favourite motif in late antique tombs, and its symbolism of immortality and apotheosis is the same for both, pagan and Christian art.<sup>93</sup>

Grape vine was dedicated to Dionysus – Bacchus, while in the Christianity it is associated with the resurrection.<sup>94</sup>

In most of the examples Cupids, as escorts to the deceased, are depicted in the pagan tombs,<sup>95</sup> but they can be seen caring the Christ monogram in the tomb from Thessaloniki.<sup>96</sup>

Depictions of servants are typical in the funerary art from the 4<sup>th</sup> century onward. They are inspired with royal iconography, where these figures served to their masters, emphasizing the hierarchy. Servants are depicted within the offering scene (*Cenae funebris*) or in the scene of toilette (*mutatio vestis*). In the funerary art these scenes most probably were painted in order to convey the wish of the deceased for the same treat in the eternal life as it was during their terrestrial one.<sup>97</sup>

One of the motifs in the funerary art definitely associated to the Christianity is Christ monogram. This new symbol signifies fate in Christ which does not have to be hidden, but free and universal. Christ monogram appeared in Constantine time, on the south, east and west of Europe.<sup>98</sup> In the funerary art it can be an individual, central motif, flanked with birds, sometimes hold by cupids or surrounded with the vegetative motifs, garland or flanked by saints.

<sup>88</sup> Pillinger/Popova/Zimmerman 1999, Tafel 54, Abb. 25.

<sup>89</sup> Μακρή 2006, p. 162, 147, 156, 170.

<sup>90</sup> Срејовић МСМХСIII, p. 277–278.

<sup>91</sup> Миятевь 1925, p. 43.

<sup>92</sup> Thompson 1963, p. 36. Рогич/Анђелковић 2012, p. 100.

<sup>93</sup> Anđelković/Rogić/Nikolić 2011, p. 238.

<sup>94</sup> Rogić/Anđelković Grašar/Nikolić 2012, p. 349–350.

<sup>95</sup> Đurić 1985, p. 175.

<sup>96</sup> Grobnica br. 89. Μακρή, 2006, p. 145.

<sup>97</sup> Đurić 1985, p. 163.

<sup>98</sup> Pillinger 2012, p. 25–27.



Viminacium's painting *officina* was active during the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> century and inspired by the painting of vast Roman Empire, following leading artistic canons. Analogous paintings can be found on the territory of present day Hungary (Pecs-*Sopianae*), Romania (Constanta-*Tomis*), Bulgaria (Silistra, Sofia, Serdica, Plovdiv, Ossenovo, Devnya), Greece (Thessaloniki, Corinth), Turkey (*Sardis, Ephesus, Anemurium, Nicaea*), Ukraine (Kerch), Russia (Crimea-*Chersonesus*), Lebanon (*Sidon*), Egypt (Alexandria-*Stagni*), England (Kent), Italy (*Pompeii, Isola Sacra, Cuma*), and on the territory of today Serbia in the tombs from *Naissus*, Beška, Brestovik and Čalma (Fig. 11.).

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# TAVELING MOTIF: VIMINACIUM ARTISTIC OFFICINA AS A PARADIGM OF LATE ANTIQUE PAINTING FASHION (Abstract)

Viminacium, the capital of the Roman province *Moesia Superior* was an important trade and manufacturing centre, which society was various and had divers' needs. One of these needs was requisite to decorate their everlasting dwelling after the death. In the period of late 3<sup>rd</sup> and end of 4<sup>th</sup> century great artistic workshop worked at Viminacium producing frescoes for higher social class. Many scenes and motifs allow us to trace their origin and multifold meaning within the tomb context.

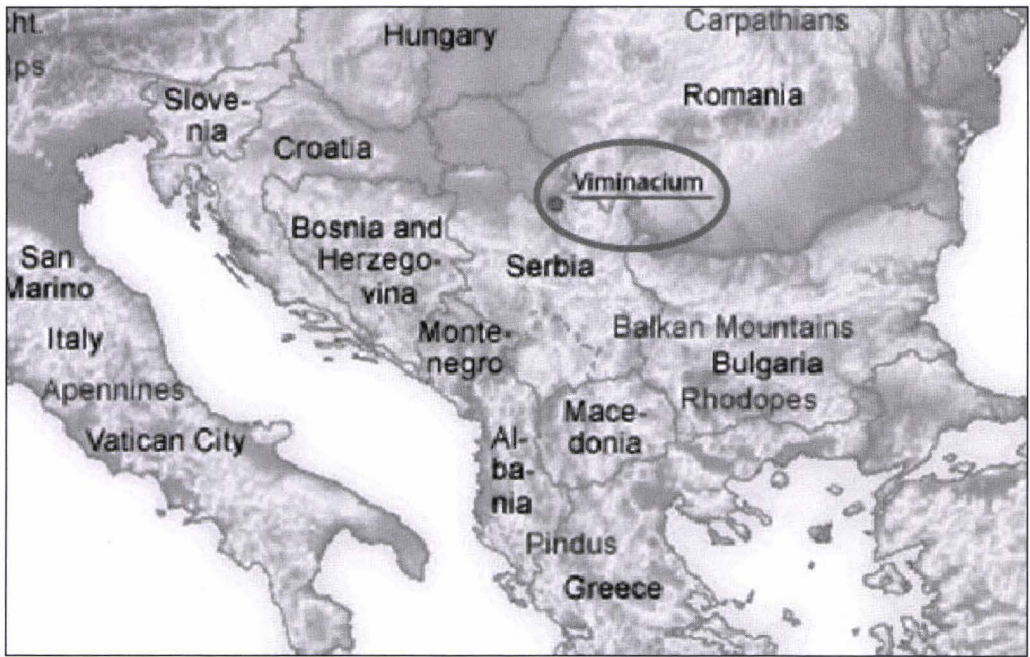


Fig. 1. Map with the position of Viminacium, [https://en.wiki2.org/wiki/North\\_European\\_Plain#/media/File:Europe\\_topography\\_map\\_en.png](https://en.wiki2.org/wiki/North_European_Plain#/media/File:Europe_topography_map_en.png). With the marked places, D. Rogić



Fig. 2. Portrait of the deceased lady from the “Pagan tomb”, G-2624, Photo: M. Korać.



Fig. 3. (a) Servant from the “Pagan tomb”, G-2624, Photo: M. Korać, (b) and (c) Servants from the “Tomb with Cupids”, G-160, Drawing D. Rogić.



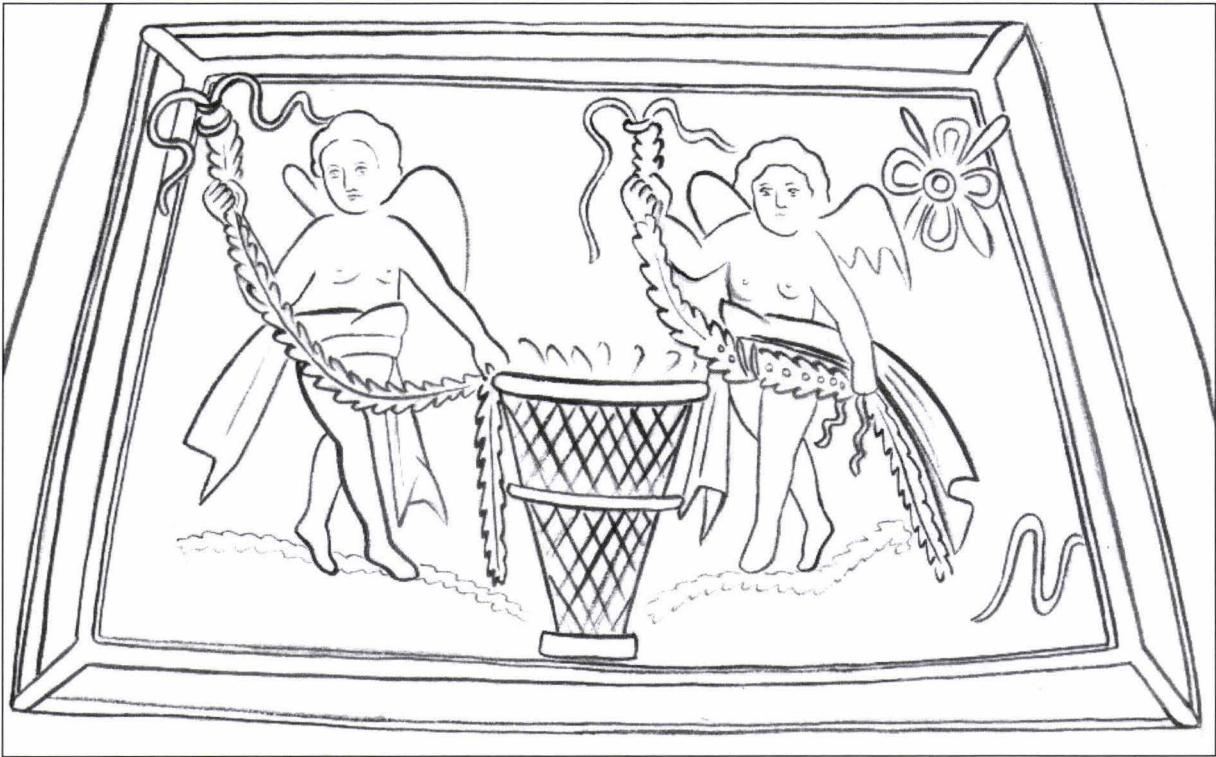


Fig. 4. Cupids from the “Tomb with Cupids”, G-160, Drawing D. Rogić.

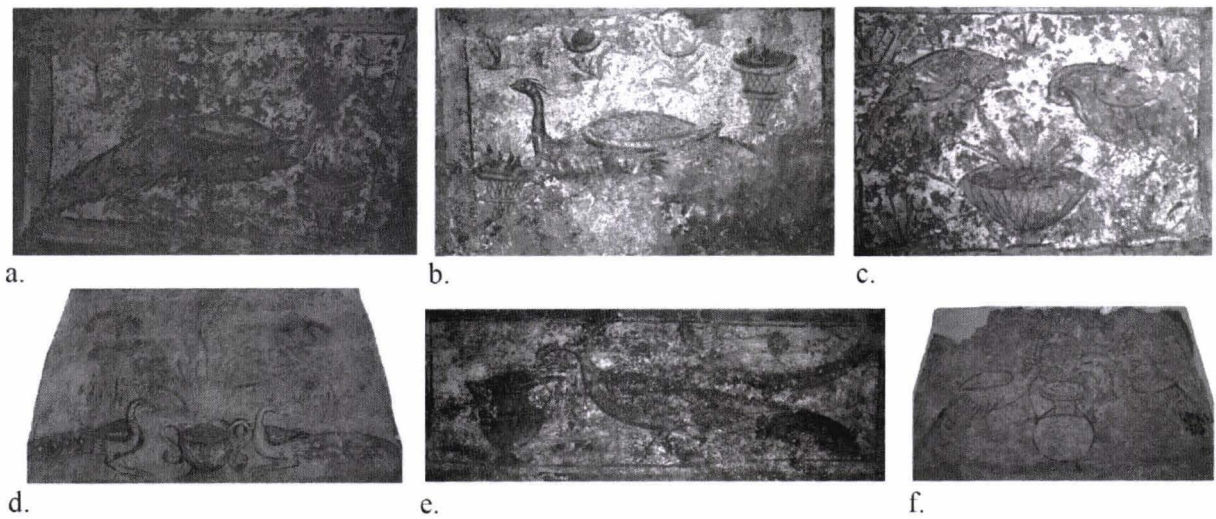


Fig. 5. (a-c) Peacocks and a pair of birds from the tomb G-160, (d) peacocks from the tomb G-5517, (e) a peacock from the tomb G-2624, (f) peacocks from the tomb G-5464, Photos: M. Korać.



Fig. 6. Christ monogram from the “Christian tomb”, G-5517, Photo: M. Korać.



a.



b.

Fig. 7. (a) Railing of paradise from the tomb G-5313, (b) Railing of paradise from the tomb G-3869, Photo: M. Korać

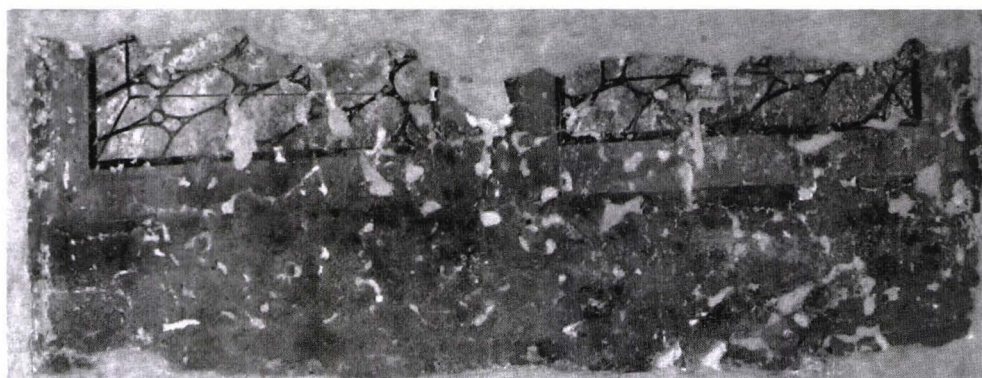


Fig. 8. Imitation of marble from the tomb G-3130, Photo: M. Korać.



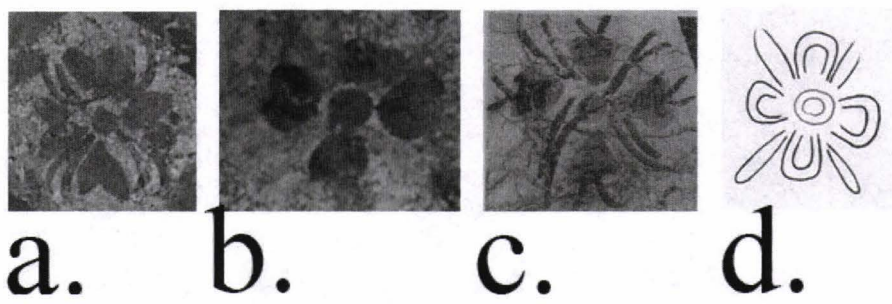


Fig. 9. (a-d) Four petal flowers from the tombs G-5313, G-2624 and G-160, Photo: M. Korać, drawing: D. Rogić.



Fig. 10. (a) Kalathos from the tomb G-160, Drawing: D. Rogić, (b) Kantharos from the tomb G-5517, (c) Kantharos from the tomb G-2624, Photo: M. Korać.



Fig. 11. Marked counties with analogous motifs in the late antique funerary art <http://www.fansshare.com/gallery/photos/13226643/smallest-cities-in-europe-cities/> With the marked places, D. Rogić.