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MONUMENTA



АКАДЕМИК ВЕРА БИТРАКОВА ГРОЗДАНОВА



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MEDIUM AND MOTIF: GOAT IN THE BESTIARY OF THE IRON AGE *CAPUT ADRIAE*

Abstract

Amalthea's broken horn became the iconographic origin of the horn of plenty (cornucopia), a symbol of eternal, divine living in various Mediterranean cultures. Moreover, the goat, as Amalthea (nourishing goddess), became the symbol of a prime mover in every physical and mystical conception – from ancient through historical to modern art. Ambivalent to the goat, the he-goat became a lunar and finally tragic animal associated with Dionysos and his festivals. It symbolized the power of vital force and fertile fire, which capriciously and swiftly changes into unpredictable gifts of the god. This is also the true aspect of his main art form – for tragedy.

Accordingly, the motif of a goat and/or of a he-goat is present in artistic expressions of "classical" south Balkan territory, while in its central and western part it appears only sporadically. This study will focus on the iconographic and semiotic interpretation of goat motifs on several luxury vessel-types, from dinos-craters to situlae and different types of jugs and their metonymies such as figural ornaments or decorated plates. In different temporal and spatial contexts, they were associated with lavish table services in which wine and other intoxicating (alcoholic) elixirs were mixed and served during various profane and ritual banquets, ceremonies and festivities. Special attention will be devoted to a bronze decorative plate from Osor on the island of Cres in Kvarner. Due to its typological and stylistic features, it is dated to the 4th century BC – in the period when Macedonian workshops massively produced luxurious items and distributed them to the North. This mostly applies to bronze vessels that, in every sense, were a reflection of the communications and propaganda of the elite of that time.

Key words: Northern Adriatic, Iron Age, Hellenism, material culture, goat motif, toreutics, aesthetics, iconography, semiotics

Апстракт

Скршениот рог на Амалтеја станал иконографски извор на рогош на изобилството (cornucopia), симбол на вечниот, божествен живот во разни медитерански култури. Освен шoa, козаџа, како Амалтеја (божица што храни), станала симбол на основната движечка сила во секоја физичка и мистична замисла – од античката преку историјата до модерната уметност. Амбивалентен во однос на козаџа, јарецот станал лунарно и, конечно, трагично живоотно, поврзано со Дионис и со неговите прослави. Тој ја симболизирал моќта на живоотната сила и на плодниот оган што каприциозно, многу брзо се менува во непредвидливи дарови од богов. Тоа е еден аспект, соодветен за неговата главна, уметничка форма, имено, трагедијата.

Соодветно, мотивот на козата и/или на јарецот е присутен во уметничките прикази на класичната јужнобалканска материјорија, додека во централните и во задни делови на Балканот, тој ретко се јавува. Судијата е фокусирана на иконографското и на семиотичкото толкување на мотивите на козата на неколку луксузни садови, од динос-крајер до ситиули и разни типови вази и нивни метоними како што се фигуралните орнаменти или украсени чинии. Во различен временски и просторен контекст, тие се поврзани со бојати жозби на кои виното и другите алкохолни пијалаци се мешале и се служеле во текот на разни профани и ритуални прослави, церемонии и свечености. Особено внимание ќе ѝ биде посветено на бронзената декоративна чинија од Осор, на островот Црес, во Кварнерскиот Залив. Поради типолошките и стилските одлики, таа е датирана во IV век пр. н. е. – периодот кога македонските работилници масовно произведувале луксузни предмети и ги дистрибуирале на Север. Ова, главно, се однесува на бронзените садови, кои, во секоја смисла, ги одразувале комуникацијата и пројаваната на тогашната елита.

Клучни зборови: Северен Јадран, железно време, хеленизам, материјална култура, мотив на коза, материјалика, естетика, иконографија, семиотика

Universality of motif

Constitutive for man's articulation of reality in any contemplation are the signs that appear always and everywhere. The discussion of signs/symbols and their meaning is inseparable from the integral circumstances of individual communities of people who not only marked themselves decoratively through symbols but also expressed the transmission of experiences of both personal and collective experiences of society. Moreover, every work, especially an artistic one, consists of signs that need to be read and interpreted.¹ Thus, from the abundant literary tradition, we can identify the symbolism of the goat in a dimension that does not reduce it exclusively to a mere zoomorphic motif or a domestic animal of economic value, but regards it as an archetypal and essentially mythical representation of a special meaning and symbolic message. In the art of the Mediterranean cultural spheres, from the Eastern Mediterranean to Greek and Etruscan classical art, it is precisely here selected motif of a goat or a he-goat, interpreted iconographically and semantically within various artistic concepts.

In the multitude of significant and artistically valuable examples, on this occasion, upon which we celebrate the great jubilee of our esteemed professor Vera Bitrakova Grozdanova, it is worth mentioning the most representative examples of three goats long known from ancient Macedonia, from the necropolis of Trebeništa and Gevgelija (Fig. 1). These are miniature bronze sculptures that were decorative elements on the shoulders of large luxury vessels, the so-called

¹ Eco 1979; cf. Vaupotič 2016.

dinos-craters, a hybrid form very popular in Macedonia.² The goats are depicted in a recumbent position, with pronouncedly pointed horns, outstretched horizontal ears and an oval-elongated goatee, decorated with incisions. Considering their artistic features, iconographic tradition and technology of production, they are arguably connected with the Laconian toreutic production of the first quarter of the 6th century BC. By marking the archaic imports of prestigious values into northern parts of the Hellenic cultural space of that time,³ they also emphasized the excellence of the local elites.

In the vast geography of the central and western Balkans, the eastern Adriatic and all the way to the northern Adriatic and its hinterland (*Caput Adriae*), the only identified, is the much younger miniature bronze plastic of a goat from Piran. Only 9.7 cm high (Fig. 2), it is a figure presented in a standing position, with precise anatomy of the body and head turned to the left, with curved horns. The exact dating, as well as the source of production, is still debated, as the context of its discovery remains uncertain. The sculpture differs significantly from the previously described Laconian examples, and is of a noticeably younger date: from the end of the 5th and 4th centuries BC. Most probably representing an *ex voto* object, it was interpreted in the context of *Magna Graecia* artistic creation and it was understood along the lines of the mediation of cultural contacts along the Adriatic basin. Such attribution is not completely reliable – consequently claims that it may represent a Roman copy of an older bronze sculpture realized in Greek and/or Etruscan traditions were not rejected.⁴

Focusing on the available repertoire of objects of artistic value, we can say that Iron Age art of the eastern part of *Caput Adriae* artistically neglected the goat motif. With certainty, only a few objects can be singled out that unequivocally represent this animal in various media, but always with distinctly symbolic potential. In addition to, conditionally speaking, the sculpture of a goat from Piran, which therefore represents an import in every instance, the artistic expression of goats is mostly known also from bronze vessels. However, this time it is about the famous Situla art of the Early Iron Age of the northern Italian, the eastern Alpine and the northern Adriatic area, from the very beginning until the twilight of this most important artistic concept dating from the 7th to the 3rd century BC.⁵

Related to this, this article will present a situla from the Histrian cultural region with the depiction of a figural motif in the late style of the 4th century BC. Furthermore, a smaller decorative plate with confronted goat heads from the Kvarner cultural area will be analysed in greater detail. Its formal characteristics

² Stibbe 2000, 68.

³ Stibbe 2000, 68-72; Stibbe 2003, 70-71, fig. 46; Mutafchieva 2018, 90, fig. 6-7.

⁴ Moser 2014, with earlier literature.

⁵ E.g. Turk 2005; Kern, Guichard, Cordie, David 2009; Perego 2013; Zaghetto 2018.

identify it as belonging to the decoration of luxurious vessels that were mainly made and used during the early Hellenistic period in the area of ancient Macedonia and Greece at the end of the 4th and the beginning of the 3rd century BC.

Therefore, although it is actually a set of formally and stylistically different concepts of the prehistoric art of the Early Iron Age on the one hand and classical art on the other, they are connected by the manifestation of the motif (goat) and the medium (vessel). Under the classical archaeological method of comparison, stylistic analysis and contextual evidence will be employed to discuss the possible interpretation of objects and motifs as a system of signs in semiotic and aesthetic aspect, especially the significant effect of one sign system on another, in a certain syntax of communication. For it was man's spirit and creative effort that depended on this system as the bearer of meaning, the transmission of coded symbols that thus became man's mediated behaviour.⁶

The connection between medium and motifs

The iconic *leitmotif* of Situla art, represented in all phases of style development for more than 300 years, is a depiction of various animal species whose spectrum extends from real and realistic, to surreal, stylized, and even grotesque figures. Reflecting the importance of their role in the society of that time,⁷ they are mediated in certain scenes. Most often in monotonous-repetitive friezes, but also in complex compositions as passive and as active protagonists, with a skill that represents an artistic substitute for narration⁸ and which, in its own peculiar way, succeeded in introducing the category of time into the otherwise entirely static constitution of the situlae "picture".

From the Histrian cultural heritage in the "situla archive" of motifs, situla no. 68 shows a procession of horned animals directed to the left (Fig. 3).⁹ The situla was found in Nesactium, in a so-called tomb from 1981, and interpreted as a part of the artistic expression of the late style of Situla art, associated with phase VI of the Histrian cultural group and dated to the first half of the 4th century BC.¹⁰ The composition of this piece of art is horizontal and uniform with the categorized scene of uniform animal figures that differ only in the horns shown and certain technically realized details. The procession is led by five goats, and closed out by two deer with shorter horns and smaller antlers. Visually, it is a much more modest and less skilful toreutic work than those from the period of the classical

⁶ Moris 1975.

⁷ E.g. Frie 2020.

⁸ Zaghetto 2007; 2018; Perego 2013; Eibner 2018.

⁹ Mihovilić 1996, 19, 49, fig. 20, Pl. IV: 68, att. 5; Mihovilić 2013, fig. 191.

¹⁰ Mihovilić 2001, 106; Mihovilić 2013, 266.

Situla art of the 2nd phase. Still, it is still connected with the Hallstatt tradition of the Dolenjska cultural area,¹¹ in terms of transmissions (aesthetic and ideological) of values that were equally understood and accepted by Histri. Although it is the best-preserved situla from that site, we do not encounter narration, a material and/or metaphysical ideologically synthesized system of thinking, nor the dialectic of perception and reception of the world of that time. We are confronted with the evocation of an exclusively monotonous scene of seemingly passive actors, which purely pragmatically, in both expression and content, only refers to the tradition of toreutic creation of the classical situla phase, echoing the connection between the choice of medium and motifs.

The exceptional group of toreutic works, which in its own way also reflects the same phenomenological connection between media and motifs, is joined by an interesting decorative plate from Kvarner (Fig. 4). Discovered during the excavation of the Osor necropolis on the island of Cres in the middle of the 19th century,¹² it soon experienced its re-promotion, but as a Roman decorative “fibula with two masks” (Fig. 4.1).¹³ Unfortunately, it has also gone completely unnoticed in all scientific discourse of artistic and/or archaeological interpretation for more than 135 years.

Formally, the bronze plate is an oval-shaped medallion, made by casting in a one-piece mould, embossed on the outside, flat on the back (Fig. 4.2). The profile shows two opposed goat heads connected by a frontal part. Their muzzles touch and reunite with the beard hair. Out of the frame come two lowered, slightly twisted and ribbed horns and strands of curly hair in the lower part, which, with wavy vertical lines, lend an active and dynamic character to the work’s composition. The shape of the muzzles is identical, so that under the horn and next to the vertically aligned strands of hair on the head, one horizontally lowered and oblong ear, with deep relief, protrudes on each side. Beneath the accentuated eyebrows are almond-shaped eyes with pronounced eyeballs, and the snout with nostrils with an accentuated “S” profile passes into the chin, thus forming a visual and technically uniform entity of a circular composition of plastic style. However, in the central part, significant damage is visible between torn apart horns by which, this decorative plate was attached to a certain extension. Most likely, it should be interpreted as a decorative lower part of the vessel handle.

In the topographic area of the eastern part of *Caput Adriae*, the manifestation of the motifs of confronted goats is thus far completely unknown, which means that the Osor plate remains a unique object on a regional scale. However,

¹¹ Mihovilić 2013, 266.

¹² Lošinjski muzej – Arheološka zbirka Osor, inv. no. 1875, length 6.9 cm, width 6.2 cm, thickness 0.4 cm.

¹³ Klodič 1885, 111, fig. 18.

such an iconographic motif is known from southern, central Dalmatia, although it is represented on a glass seal from grave 4 of the Vičja luka necropolis, on the island of Brač. Like the glass seal depicting Hercules, and the bronze ring depicting the rooster, it has been treated as an import and understood in different ways so far (Fig. 5.1).¹⁴ It is a subject that formally and stylistically marks the highest artistic achievement closely related to the late Classical/early Hellenistic Macedonian cultural environment, dating to the second half of the 4th century BC. Such seals inherently possessed many values, so in addition to the primary purpose of stamping, they also marked the guarantees of presence, direct connections and served as means of recognition. The decorative or apotropaic power of glass seals is also evident in their jewellery application, especially as pendants, special gifts (*doron*) and dedicated votives – as recognizable gifts of the Macedonian aristocracy and diplomacy.¹⁵

Even though the same semiotic motif as the sign/symbol was used, the goats on the seal from Vičja luka are portrayed in their entirety, raised on their hind legs above the vessel (crater). Thus they are placed in a scene that can be iconologically interpreted in association with the worship of the god Dionysus (cf. Fig. 11) and in the context of Macedonian art production, on several different levels; as a special symbol of their art, jewellery and emblems of coins from the 4th century onwards (Fig. 5.2).¹⁶

On the contrary, the Osor plate is reduced in form, almost heraldically, in summarizing the presentation of the required theme, whose source and most related, though not identical, comparisons can be found in the same Macedonian cultural, artistic and mythical world of the final 4th and early 3rd century BC.

Namely, this rather rare decorative motif can for now be followed exclusively on the lower parts of handles of metal vessels with which, like attachments, they were nailed to the body of the vessels, i.e. in a direct connection between the medium and the motif. The most significant find of two such plates is on a bronze jug with two handles, the so-called *lagynos* or “mushroom jug” from the famous tomb B of the Derveni necropolis, dated to the turn of the century (310–290 BC) (Figs. 6.1, 7.1).¹⁷ The jug was found together with other prestigious symposium dishes made of silver and bronze around the most luxurious volute, so-called

¹⁴ Blečić Kavur, Kavur 2016, 248-249; Blečić Kavur, Kavur 2017, 99-100, fig. 2 – with earlier literature.

¹⁵ Blečić Kavur, Kavur 2016, 249; Blečić Kavur, Kavur 2017; cf. Ignatiadou 2013, 204-205.

¹⁶ The elevated goats above the vessel (crater) were interpreted as a reduced metaphor of the Dionysian troupe but also as a chthonic connection with Dionysus himself.; Touloumtzidou 2011, 525-526; Ignatiadou 2013, 204-205; 214, 49; Blečić Kavur, Kavur 2017, 100; Tzanavari 2016, 570-572.

¹⁷ Themeles, Touratsoglou 1997, 75, 176, B34, eik. 48; B34, Πίv. 85; Kottaridi 2004, 68, 80, cat. 8; Barr-Sharrar 2008, 24, fig. 21; Touloumtzidou 2011, 528-529, Πίv. 63 γ-ζ; Tzanavari 2016, 566-567, Πίv. 6; cf. Katsifas, Touloumtzidou, Zachariadis 2019, 9, B34, fig. 2.

Derveni crater that served as an urn. The purpose of this exceptional jug has not been fully clarified, but its origin, following other finds in the tomb, is dated to the end of the 4th century BC. It was assumed to have an Attic or even Corinthian origin in terms of the shape of the vessel itself, as we can find parallels as well as role models in this ceramic repertoire of the 5th century BC. Nevertheless, such vessels were in use until the 3rd century BC in Macedonia, which is confirmed by ceramic vessels, for example, from Ilida or the necropolis of Lete.¹⁸ A similar, though not identical, find of a bronze jug was also recorded in the Macedonian capital Pella.¹⁹

In a formal sense, the plates on the jug from Derveni do not have a closed medallion shape, as the Osor plate does, but they are elaborated exceptionally plastically with accentuated hair that is wavy, falling in long straight strands from the side and under the heads of goats, thus emphasizing the dynamics of the motif (Fig. 7.1). The horns are short and horizontally ribbed, and rise vertically towards the handles, above horizontally fashioned ears. The upper part of the plate is additionally decorated with acanthus leaves, which merge with the body of the vessel. The heads have an “S” shaped profile of the muzzle, accentuated eyebrows, almond-shaped eyes and vertically raised hair above the forehead, which are all features of the goats on the Osor plate. Between the heads, there is a lowered triangular protrusion, which could end in a pointed or decorative shape in the form of acanthus leaves. The same is visible on other, most similar examples: a damaged plate from Rigio Didimotichou (Fig. 6.2) and the plate of the oinochoe handle from Naupaktos (Figs. 6.2, 7.3), also dated to the last quarter of the 4th century BC.²⁰

A relatively recent finding of the plate of the oinochoe, excavated in a female tomb of the Lete necropolis and dated to around 270/260 BC, was also compared with described decorative lower parts of the handles (Figs. 6.3, 7.4).²¹ It is an example that, although of identical motif and formal artistry, does not exhibit a plastic style of decoration and the liveliness of the presentation of details as the other listed examples in a more expressive relief. With the creation of the upper part of the plate, the way the horns, ears and acanthus leaves are placed, this one from Lete seems to represent a much flatter, i.e. simplified copy of the plate from Naupaktos. The latter, also of a younger date, could be attributed to the first third of the 3rd century BC.²²

¹⁸ Touloumtzidou 2011, 527-528, Πίv. 63 η; Tzanavari 2016, 575-577, Πίv. 13.

¹⁹ Themeles, Touratsoglou 1997, 75; Barr-Sharrar 2008, 24.

²⁰ Another similarly decorated plate from Corfu is also mentioned; Touloumtzidou 2011, 524, 529, Πίv. 63α-β; Tzanavari 2016, 568-570, ex. 1; Πίv. 7-8.

²¹ Tzanavari 2016, Πίv. 7-8.

²² Tzanavari 2016, 569-570.

However, all these jug decorations have already been associated and analysed in detail in recent Greek literature, most notably by A. Touloumtzidou and K. Tzanavari. Research has focused mostly in the direction of interpreting their creation and possible production ateliers, all the way to the symbolic and semantic evaluation of this rare iconographic concept in the undoubtedly Macedonian toreutics of the already Hellenistic artistic style.²³ The same thinking, in much earlier studies and applied to other examples of vessels from the Italian area, was promoted also by Cl. Rolley. Considerable attention of the profession was then focused on the hydria explored in Milan's Palazzolo di Paderno, a tomb that, according to other finds, dates to the last decade of the 1st century BC (Fig. 8).²⁴ It is an unique find in the area of northern Italy, and the context of the tomb is both remarkable and deceptive. Namely, it is well known that the hydria was obtained through victory in the Roman athletic competitions and that it held the cremated remains of an athlete, just as cremated remains were deposited in the Derveni crater and the silver hydria from Vergina, which actually served as an urn.²⁵ For this reason, and for a long time, the production of the hydria was considered Roman, created under Hellenistic-influenced prototypes, and used until the Augustan period.

However, different arguments were presented, especially addressing the manner, style and individual solutions of the design of the vessel itself, advocating that it is much older, absolutely a symbolic object in the grave.²⁶ After all the offered interpretations regarding the workshop and the time in which the hydria was created, M. Bolla finally ascribed its origins to the artistic centres of ancient Macedonia at the end of the 4th century BC as the most probable toreutic origin.²⁷ The application under the handle of the hydria with two confronted goats' heads best confirms this. It was realized in a rather "baroque" rendering of other well-known examples from Greece and Macedonia, especially the hair and the upper part that connects to the handle, so the ribbed smaller horns are barely recognizable amid the lush floral motif. The plate is also not a closed-form of a medallion like the Osor plate, but an open lower part in the centre of which, between the heads of the animals, is placed a larger palmette. However, the characteristics of the figures of the confronted goats are much less expressive or almost minimalist mostly in the depiction of eyes, nose and muzzle, while eyebrows - so specific in emphasizing the character traits of goats from other compared plates - are

²³ Touloumtzidou 2011, 528; Tzanavari 2016, 574-575.

²⁴ Bolla 1993, 76-78, Pl. XLV-XLVII; Bolla 1994, 71, cat. 80, Pl. LXXII-LXXIII; Bolla 1995, 10, figs. 2a,b-4— with earlier literature; cf. Tzanavari 2016, 570.

²⁵ Andronicos 1987, 213-214, fig. 183; Bolla 1993, 76.

²⁶ Rolley 1987, 352; Rolley 1991, 6; Bolla 1993, 76.

²⁷ Bolla 1995.

completely absent. Finding such an object in the much younger grave of an “athlete” further emphasizes its value both as an exotic and as an older and precious object in the grave.

The second bronze vessel is the so-called oinochoe from Boston supposedly originating from Rome (Fig. 9). Its handle also ends in a decorative relief plate depicting the same motif – the confronted goat heads. For a long time, a southern Italian (Tarentine) origin was supposed, mostly based on comparisons with the motifs of confronted ram heads, since examples from Greece, except the jug from Derveni, were not yet known. It was dated broadly, i.e. interpreted in terms of the decorative art of the Hellenistic period.²⁸ Currently, just like the most related oinochoe from a private collection (Gorny-Mosch),²⁹ based on the typology of the vessel, the closest parallel being the silver oinochoe from Vergina,³⁰ we also consider it as a work of Macedonian ateliers, whose extraordinary and luxurious toreutic performance was “signed” with the heraldic emblem of the two confronted heads of goats.

Although the Osor decorative plate does not have a direct “sister” example, the features of expressive relief and contrast, vividness and indentation of the surface, composition and dynamics, and anatomical precision in depicting the animals (Fig. 4.2) are very indicative for the aesthetic aspect of Macedonian toreutic production in the early Hellenistic style. Therefore, it seems pragmatic and affirmative, although the circumstances of its discovery remain completely unknown, to consider the production of the plate from Osor in this artistic and cultural concept. It certainly had a distant echo in the eastern part of *Caput Adriae*, especially with the presence of luxury bronze vessels, which, in every sense, were a reflection of the communications and propaganda of the elite of that time.³¹

Aesthetic and pragmatic value of motives

Each piece of art is a cultural and historical phenomenon whose values depend on its original context, but also on how it is experienced. Since our sensitivities, reactions and views on the importance of values and aesthetic experiences in the hierarchy of these recognized values are constantly changing, it is accepted that in ancient times aesthetic worth was, and had to be, an integral part

²⁸ Pfrommer 1983, 240-241, fig. 2; Pfrommer 1987, 15-269; cf. Touloumtzidou 2011, 524-525.

²⁹ Touloumtzidou 2011, 505, Πίv. 58α; cf. Tzanavari 2016, 569-570.

³⁰ Andronicos 1987, 152-153, fig. 115; Kottaridi 2004, 74, cat. 1; Touloumtzidou 2011, 506, Πίv. 58β-γ; Kottaridi 2013, 248.

³¹ Blečić Kavur 2012; Blečić Kavur 2015; Blečić Kavur 2021.

of the artistic excellence of individual objects.³² Vessels that were decorated in any way with scenes, symbols, motifs or signs were undoubtedly at the core of their creation and practical application had a distinct aesthetic value of recognized works of art of that time – just like today. In the diachronically different artistic and craft productions of arts presented here, the permeation of medium (vessels) and motifs (goats) was not accidental and/or randomly selected. Their pragmatic value resided precisely in the magical synthesis of their meanings as a message and/or metaphor, narration or the style of those objects that are more difficult to define outside their communication environments.

In the iconological interpretation, telling why this particular motif was selected and why it is presented in such a way(s), the vessel itself contributes exceptionally to the interpretation of both the meaning and its value. All the vessels listed here, from dinos-crater to situla and different types of jugs and their metonymies such as figural ornaments or plates, in different temporal and spatial proportions, are actually associated with lavish table services in which wine and other intoxicating (alcoholic) elixirs were mixed and served during various profane and ritual, holy banquets, ceremonies and festivities. The banquet and symposium emphasized the “internationally accepted” ritual of alcohol consumption, whose role in promoting commercialism, in the exchange of hospitality and the dynamics of power in the last millennium BC was well known (Fig. 10).³³ As a kind of medium, all these forms of vessels used to promote a) ritual consumption of sophisticated drinks during elite activities such as processions and libations, b) wearing iconographic decoration as images and their metaphors that could be and were understood within the system of communication values and representation of the elites, and c) their embodiment as a sign/symbol and/or attribute in the art of their regional cultural-historical circumstances. Essentially, all the vessels were also luxury exotic products, either as directly imported objects (miniature sculpture of goats from Trebenišče, Gevgelija or Piran, plate from Osor) or as local reproductions of foreign models (Situla art). They should therefore be understood in terms of prestigious status symbols that showed a complex and coherent relationship between culture of drinking as a social dimension, adopted foreign objects/protocols and (toreutic/situla) art itself as an “iconic language”, as on the Venetian Situla art example argued by E. Perego.³⁴

The selected luxury dishes were iconographically marked by a common motif of goats in various symbolic (ideological) compositions. In addition, it had

³² Dziemidok 1988.

³³ Cf. Kottaridi 2004; Zaccaria Ruggiu 2004; Iaia 2006; Boroffka, Boroffka 2012/2013; Blečić Kavur 2012; Blečić Kavur 2021; Perego 2013; Blečić Kavur, Kavur 2020.

³⁴ Perego 2013; cf. Eibner 2018; Nebelsick 2018.

to play the role of a medium, because the essence of art as an aesthetic object was not so much in its aesthetic autonomy as in its communicative function. That is why a certain “metalanguage” was installed, which enabled them to recognize communication codes as clear and unambiguous signs of the exchange of meanings within a work of art.³⁵ Thus, for example, Amalthea’s broken horn became the iconographic origin of the horn of plenty (*cornucopia*), a symbol of eternal, divine living in various Mediterranean cultures. Moreover, the goat, as Amalthea (nourishing goddess), became the symbol of a prime mover in any physical and mystical conception – from the ancients through the historical to the modern art.³⁶ Nevertheless, ambivalent to the goat, the he-goat became a lunar and finally tragic animal associated with Dionysus and his festivity (Fig. 11). It symbolized the power of vital force and fertile fire, which capriciously and very quickly turned into unpredictable gifts of god. This is also the true aspect of his main art form – for tragedy.³⁷

In this context, the he-goat motif as a sign/symbol that reflected the recognizable symbolic (ideological) concepts of the mythical and real world of that time is easier to interpret and recognize within Laconian and Hellenistic art. His direct connection with a “young God” is definite and clear, either as his identification or as his attribute (Fig. 11). Because, in addition to the bull, the goat, as a symbol of vital force and fertility of a predominantly lunar character, was his favourite offered sacrifice during various ritual festivals.³⁸ After all, Dionysus himself was, among other things, the God of numerous plants, mostly ivy and grapes, and of course wine.³⁹ Associated with this, during manic rites and ecstatic drunkenness of religious ecstasy, he presented himself as a God of liberation and relaxation of instincts, to purify souls in the process of personality decay and rebirth, all under the dynamics of circulation of all nature.⁴⁰ However, perhaps its symbol, precisely during the drunkenness of various ceremonies, banquets and festivals, played the role of a reminder of how every pleasure, intemperance and exaggeration can turn from power and domination into a real nightmare, into a fatal tragedy.

Situla art, on the other hand, had a strong visual impact and can, at the level of analysis of the “image” and the archaeological object as the bearer of that “image”, be credibly interpreted. We can therefore understand it banally, as an “image” that has no transmitted meanings, messages, metaphors, but is only

³⁵ Bučan 2016, 53.

³⁶ Tresidder 2004, 91; Werness 2006, 197.

³⁷ E.g. Chevalier, Gheerbrant 2006, 258-259; Seaford 2006, 88-91.

³⁸ Hoffmann 1997, 97; Seaford 2006, 24.

³⁹ Seaford 2006, 15-18.

⁴⁰ Burkert 2011, 249-257; Bottini 1991; cf. Seaford 2006, 21-25; Isler-Kerény 2009; Tzanavari 2016, 573-574; Filser 2017, 183-185, fig. 58a.

there to stimulate reaction and certain emotions, i.e. to feel, encourage, wonder and connect with each other, that is, especially in the late style, it had a purely decorative effect with precisely defined symmetries and rhythmizations.⁴¹ However, with the cognitive approach to understanding the art of the past as well as the multivocality of each work regarding each human mind, we thus remain deprived both in a more complete reading and in a more complete understanding of this conscious “art”. Alternating repetitions of different and constant motifs are decorative and standardized elements of situlae design as interpreted by L. Koch.⁴² Yet all of these, we might say, “typified” motifs in the figural of that art established a dynamic like time and language, i.e. a precious narrative that was much more complex than a flat or purely descriptive-decorative image, especially in the classical phase of the Situla style.⁴³ It was precisely Situla art as a “image” that managed to improve the mere description, as some authors interpreted it,⁴⁴ with the disposition, i.e. the skill of arranging within the frame, a skill that ultimately represents the artistic substitute for narration.⁴⁵ Such a set of semiotic-semantic signs, presented for a certain reason and with a certain logic, required a more “enlightened” reader and interpreter from the archaic society of that time.⁴⁶ It was not, nor could it be the *Biblia pauperum* of the wider community of Iron Age individuals, so the circumstances of finding such monuments, if we have them, are immensely important because they indicate that the context of their deposition, particularly in graves, must have been special and different, but not at the same time the richest. With the contexts available to us, it must become clear that even then the prestige of materiality was inferior to the prestige of symbols, which just like the “international symposium”, was the “international metalanguage” of communicative and cognitive values of their time. With the same interpretation, we can recognise Hellenistic symposium vessels which, despite the lack of more eloquent narration, repetitive scenes and different acts, have only a precisely chosen motif as a sign/symbol of defined pragmatic value.

From the iconographic aspect, it can be said that the principle of dualism is evoked on almost all vessels of the Situla art, including those from the late phase with a single frieze of composition and combination of figures visible on the non-action situla. On the one hand, the procession of animals suggests a consistent and balanced passage to the underworld by the maturing of death,⁴⁷ which might

⁴¹ Koch 2003, 363-364.

⁴² Koch 2003, 352, 362.

⁴³ Zaghetto 2018; Nebelsick 2018.

⁴⁴ E.g. Boardman 1971; Brendel 1995, 182; Huth 2005.

⁴⁵ Bučan 2016, 62.

⁴⁶ Osborne 1998.

⁴⁷ Teržan 1997, 659-660; Turk 2005, 36; cf. Frie 2020.

perhaps be interpreted as a “tragedy” of Situla art. However, this impression is not definitive and fatal, but ambivalent, because different floral motifs will give both hope and faith in eternal circulation, i.e. in the cycle of renewal, rebirth and thus return.⁴⁸ That is why, the last and/or individual friezes of (horned) animals, despite the impression, are not a tragic but a positive final act that combines the work of art and the dialectic of the “narrative” with the mission of restoring optimism in the most difficult moments. In this respect, dying and rebirth of nature presuppose the rebirth of the deity of spring, in fact, his return from the underworld, which is a necessary image of consciousness for the beginning of the year. The effect of circular movement, predetermined by the shape of the vessel, i.e. the medium, and the concept of the decorative frieze, which symbolizes endless circulation and eternal renewal, and crucially, that the use of this symbol does not destroy, but purifies, certainly contributes to this “rhetoric”. All this is in complete harmony with the iconographic representation of the Dionysian concept and/or the idea of immortality because the image of the world at that time was based on the exact cyclical repetition of time.⁴⁹

The analysis of motifs clearly shows how the meaning of signs is established over time and stabilizes in a certain area, but also their transmission from one cultural environment to another, where it reflects the same or somewhat adjusted values of their original meaning.⁵⁰ In no context chosen here, the motif of a goat not only signified a zoomorphic representation of a deity but also represented a cosmological value as a mediator of the cosmic forces embodied in that figure. In this way, he kept both people and gods (universe) in a mythical state of consciousness, so his symbolism in consciousness may represent divine power, and the show itself was by no means transcendent to the world but immanent to nature and to the abundance, it offers and enables. The symbol of the antithetical goats from the Osor decorative plate, with distinctive symbolical potential, does not merely mediate meaning. With respect to its semiotic aspect, it should be interpreted just like the Iron Age Situla art, in the fluidity action of one sign system on another in the syntax of various forms of production, circulation, acceptance and communication of the cultures of the old world.

⁴⁸ Teržan 1997; Teržan 2007, 85.

⁴⁹ Gould 1996, 10-12, 48.

⁵⁰ E.g. Boroffka, Boroffka 2012/2013; Nebelsick 2018.

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Марѿина Блечик Кавур

МЕДИУМ И МОТИВ: КОЗАТА ВО БЕСТИЈАРОТ ОД ЖЕЛЕЗНОТО ВРЕМЕ *CAPUT ADRIAE*

Резиме

Во разни медитерански култури, скршениот рог на Амалтеја станал иконографски извор на рогот на изобилството (*cornucopia*), симбол на вечниот, божествен живот. Освен тоа, козата како Амалтеја (божица што храни), станала симбол на движечката сила во секоја физичка и мистичка претстава – од античка преку историска, сè до модерната уметност. Амбивалентен кон козата, јарецот станал лунарно и, конечно, трагично животно поврзано со Дионис и со неговите прослави.

Тој ја симболизирал моќта на виталната сила и на плодниот оган што носи непредвидливи, брзи промени во даровите на боговите. Тоа претставува вистински аспект за неговата главна уметничка форма, трагедијата. Студијата се фокусира на иконографското и на семиотичкото толкување на мотивите за козата на неколку луксузни садови, од динос-кратер до ситули и разни типови вази и нивните метонимии како фигурални орнаменти или декорирани чинии. Во различен временски и просторен контекст, тие се поврзувале со богатите трпези на кои виното и другите опојни пијалаци се мешале и се служеле за време на профани и на обредни прослави, церемонии и фестивали. Токму уметноста на медитеранскиот културен круг, од Источниот Медитеран до грчката и етрурската класична уметност, го зема мотивот за козата или за јарецот, и јасно го прикажува иконографски и семантички, а и одлучно го толкува во рамките на одреден уметнички концепт. Фокусирајќи се на достапниот репертоар на предмети со уметничка вредност, може да кажеме дека железнодопската уметност од источниот дел на *Caput Adriae* уметнички го запоставила мотивот за козата. Може да се издвојат само неколку предмети што недвосмислено го прикажуваат ова животно во различни медиуми, но секогаш со особен симболички потенцијал. Освен, условно говорејќи, скулптурата што претставува коза од Пиран, којашто е увезена, уметничкиот израз на козите е најдобро познат преку бронзените садови. Но, овој пат станува збор за познатата уметност на ситули од раното железно време од Северна Италија и од источниот Алпски и северниот Јадрански Регион, од

раните почетоци, сè до залезот на овој многу важен уметнички концепт од седмиот до третиот век пред новата ера.

Во врска со тоа, текстот обработува ситула од истарскиот културен регион, со приказ на фигурален мотив од доцниот стил на четвртиот век пред новата ера. Освен тоа, подетално се анализира една помала декоративна плоча со спротивставени козји глави од Осор, на островот Црес, во кварнерскиот културен регион. Неговите формални карактеристики, исто така, ѝ припаѓаат на декорацијата на луксузни садови што, главно, се правеле и се користеле во текот на ранохеленистичкиот период, во областите на античка Македонија и на античка Грција, кон крајот на четвртиот и почетокот на третиот век пред новата ера – во периодот кога македонските работилници масовно произведувале луксузни предмети и ги дистрибуирале кон *север*. Ова најмногу се однесува на бронзените садови кои, во секоја смисла, биле одраз на комуникацијата и на пропагандата на елитата во тоа време.

Оттаму, иако претставуваат збир на формално и стилски различни концепти на праисториската уметност од раното железно време, од една страна, и класичната уметност, од друга страна, тие се поврзани со манифестацијата на мотивот (коза) и на медиумот (сад). Со класичниот археолошки метод на споредба, стилска анализа и контекстуални докази, се разгледува можното толкување на предмети и мотиви како систем на знаци, од семиотички и естетски аспект, особено значителниот ефект на еден знаковен систем врз друг, при извесна синтакса на комуникацијата. Бидејќи човековиот дух и креативниот напор зависеле од овој систем како носител на значењето, пренесувањето на кодираните симболи така станало човеково посредно однесување.

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Fig. 1. Bronze goats from Macedonia 1) Trebeništa (George Ortiz Collection, after Stibbe 2000), 2) Trebeništa, tomb 1, 3) Gevgelija (after Mutafchieva 2018)



Fig. 2. Bronze goat from Piran, Slovenia (© Museo d'Antichità J. J. Winckelmann, Trieste, <https://museoantichitawinckelmann.it/la-capra-istriana/> 25.8.2020)

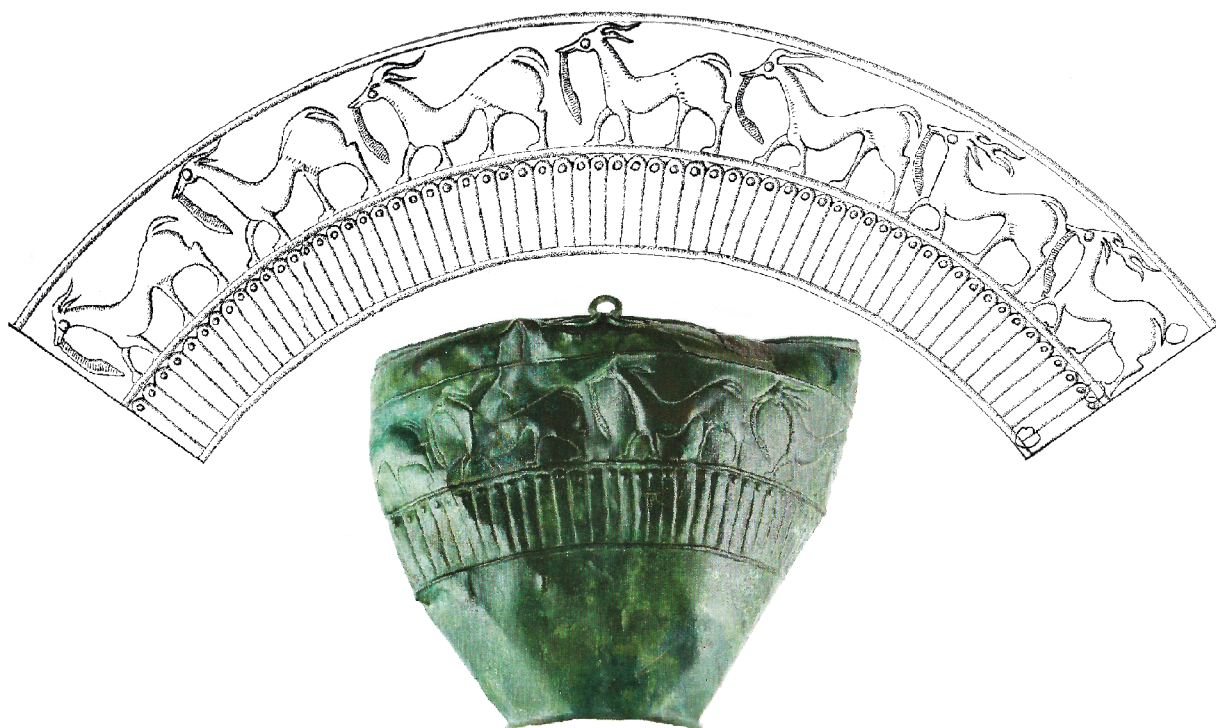


Fig. 3. Bronze situla no. 68 from Nesactium, Croatia (elaborated after Mihovilić 1996; Mihovilić 2013)



Fig. 4. Bronze decorated plate from Osor, Croatia (1 after Klodić 1885; 2 Lošinjski muzej, Arheološka zbirka Osor, photo by author, M 1:1)



Fig. 5. Glass seals from 1) Vičja luka, grave 4 (after Blečić Kavur, Kavur 2017), 2) Olynthos, MG 9 (after Ignatiadou 2013)



1

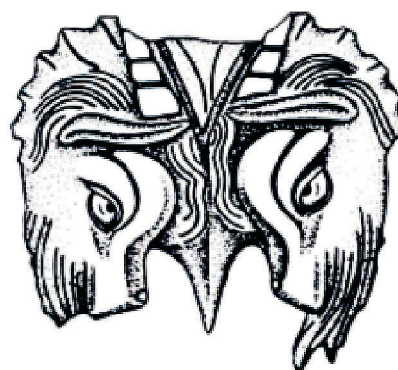
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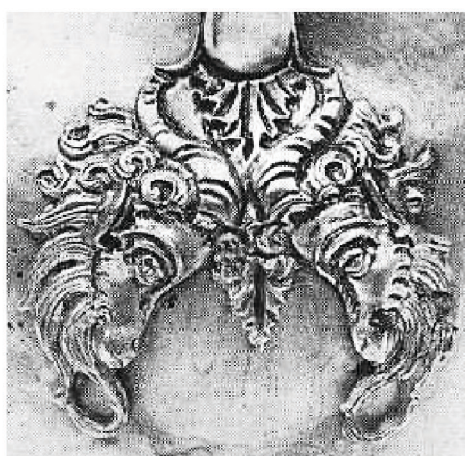
Fig. 6. Bronze oinochoe from Greece 1) Derveni, B34, 2) Naupaktos, 3) Lete (after Tzanavari 2016)



1



2



3



4

Fig. 7. Decorated plates with goats from 1) Derveni, B34 (after Themeles, Touratsoglou 1997), 2) Rigio Didimotichou (after Touloumtzidou 2011), 3) Naupaktos (after Touloumtzidou 2011), 4) Lete (after Tzanavari 2016)



Fig. 8. Bronze hydria from the grave Tomba dell'Atleta in Palazzolo di Paderno, Milan, Italy (after Bolla 1994; photo by author)

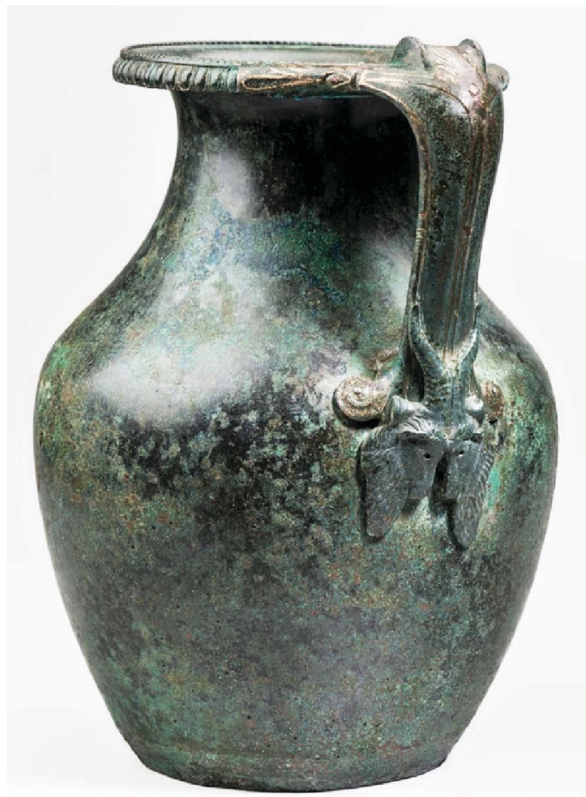


Fig. 9. Bronze oinochoe from Boston (Rome) (© Museum of Fine Arts Boston
<https://collections.mfa.org/objects/153084> 20. 8. 2020)



Fig. 10. Symposion and kylikeion from the tomb Aghios Athanassios, Thessaloniki (after Tsimbidou Avloniti 2005)



Fig. 11. Dionysos between two standing goats by Oltos painter. Red-figure cup (kylix) 520–510 BC (Kopenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptothek, 2700, Beazley no. 200529; after Filser 2017, 58a-b)

ЛИСТА НА УЧЕСНИЦИ / LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Nikos AKAMATIS

International Hellenic University,
14th km Thessaloniki-Moudania
nikakamatis@hotmail.com

Slavica BABAMOVA

Archaeological Museum of the Republic of North Macedonia,
Kej "Dimitar Vlahov" bb, Skopje
slavicababamova@gmail.com

Sanja BITRAK

Archaeological Museum of Republic North Macedonia,
Kej Dimitar Vlahov b.b., Skopje
sanjabitrak@yahoo.com

Silvana BLAŽEVSKA

National Institution Stobi
Archaeological site Stobi, 1420 Gradsko
silvana.blazevska@gmail.com

Martina BLEČIĆ KAVUR

Univerza na Primorskem, Fakulteta za humanistične študije,
SI – 6000, Titov trg 5, Koper
martina.blecic.kavur@upr.si
martinabkavur@gmail.com

Perikles CHRISTODOULOU

House of European History, European Parliament, Brussels
CReA-Patrimoine, Université libre de Bruxelles
periklesc@gmail.com

Bojan DJURIĆ
University of Ljubljana,
Aškerčeva 2, 1000 Ljubljana
bojan.djuric@gmail.com

Stela DROUGOU
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
54124 Thessaloniki
drougou@hist.auth.gr

Dafina GERASIMOVSKA
Faculty of Philosophy,
Ss. Cyril and Methodius University, Skopje
dafina@fzf.ukim.edu.mk

Despina IGNATIADOU
National Archaeological Museum,
1 Tositsa Street, 10682 Athens
dignatiadou@gmail.com

Olivera JANDRESKA
NI Institute and Museum Prilep,
Str. "Mosha Pijade" no. 142, Prilep
oliveravera@gmail.com

Pero JOSIFOVSKI
Archaeological Museum of Republic North Macedonia,
Kej Dimitar Vlahov b.b., Skopje
pjosifovski@yahoo.com

Lenče JOVANOVA
Museum of the City of Skopje,
Bul. Ss Cyril and Methodius bb, Skopje
jovanova.l@gmail.com

Vesna KALPAKOVSKA
Independent researcher
ul. Karposh br. 5-3/13
7000 Bitola
kalpakovska@yahoo.com

Ruth KOLARIK
Colorado College,
14 East Cache la Poudre St.
Colorado Springs, CO, 80903
rekolarik@gmail.com

Pasko KUZMAN
NI Institute for protection of monuments of culture and Museum,
Boro Shain 10, 6000 Ohrid
pasbukefal@yahoo.com

Yuri N. KUZMIN
Independent researcher
Tukhachevskogo 88, 141, Samara 443082
yurimac@yandex.ru

Viktor LILCHIKJ ADAMS
Faculty of Philosophy,
Ss. Cyril and Methodius University, Skopje
viktorlilcik@gmail.com

Elica MANEVA
Faculty of Philosophy,
Ss. Cyril and Methodius University, Skopje
elica.maneva@gmail.com

Emilio MARIN
Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres
/ Catholic University of Croatia
Ilica 242, 10000 Zagreb
emilio.marin@unicath.hr

Branka MIGOTTI
The Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts,
The Division of Archaeology,
Ante Kovačića 5, 10000 Zagreb
branka.migotti@gmail.com

Dragi MITREVSKI
Faculty of Philosophy,
Ss. Cyril and Methodius University, Skopje
dragimit@yahoo.com

Aleksandra NIKOLOSKA
Research Centre for Cultural Heritage "Cvetan Grozdanov",
Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts,
Bul. Krste Misirkov, 2, P.O. Box 428, 1000 Skopje
anikoloska@manu.edu.mk

Dimitar NIKOLOVSKI
National Institution Stobi
Archaeological site Stobi, 1420 Gradsko
dimitar.nikolovski@stobi.mk
dimche@gmail.com

Marina ONČEVSKA TODOROVSKA
Museum of the City of Skopje,
Bul. Ss Cyril and Methodius bb, Skopje
marinaot@t.mk

Aleksandra PAPAZOVSKA
Archaeological Museum of the Republic of North Macedonia,
Kej Dimitar Vlahov b.b. 1000 Skopje
papazsan@hotmail.com

Eftimija PAVLOVSKA
National Bank of the Republic of North Macedonia
Blvd Kuzman Josifovski Pitu 1 1000 Skopje
eftimijap@g.mail.com

Goce PAVLOVSKI
National Institution Stobi
Archaeological site Stobi, 1420 Gradsko
goce.pavlovski@stobi.mk

Goran SANEV

Archaeological Museum of the Republic of North Macedonia
Kej Dimitar Vlahov b.b., 1000 Skopje
sanev@hotmail.com

Carolyn S. SNIVELY

Gettysburg College,
Gettysburg PA 17325 USA
csnively@gettysburg.edu

Viktorija SOKOLOVSKA

Archaeological Museum of the Republic of North Macedonia
Kej Dimitar Vlahov b.b., 1000 Skopje
vs023@uowmail.edu.au

Davča SPASOVA

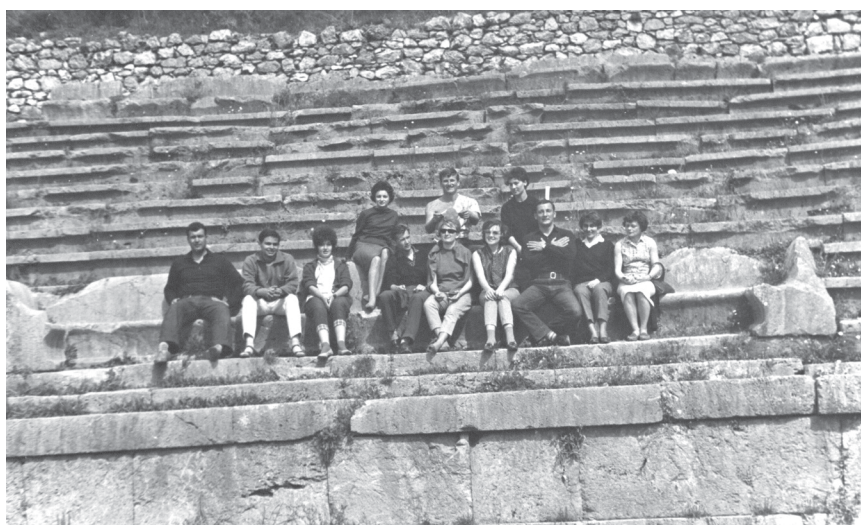
Ministry of Culture of the Republic of North Macedonia
61 Gjuro Gjakovikj Str., 1000 Skopje
spasovad@yahoo.com



Ohrid, October 2019



Salona 1960, students with prof. Rendić Miočević



Athens 1961, student excursion



Ohrid 1961, National Museum



Vienna, Herder Preis 1999



Skopje, St. Clement Prize 2009



Faculty of Philosophy, Skopje 2009



Prespa, 2007 (40 years of research)



Brijuni, Pola Symposium 2008



Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Skopje 2006



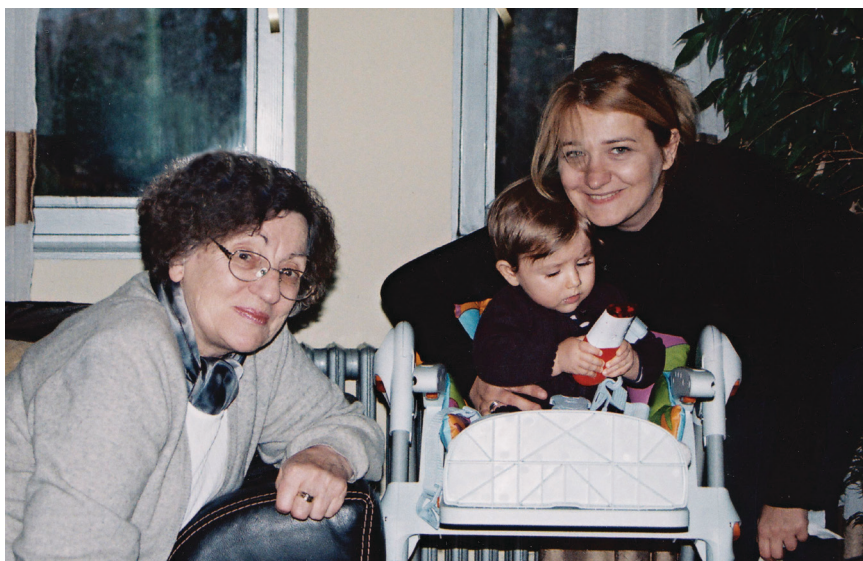
Vergina 2000, student excursion, Faculty of Philosophy Skopje



Symposium, Ohrid 2019



Acad. Bitrakova with her family 2009



Acad. Bitrakova with her family 2009

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