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### NEW ROMAN SCULPTURES IN THE MUSEUM OF SLAVONIA

Fig. 1. This is a damaged marble statue of Kybele which was by chance excavated in 1966 at Osijek on the site of Roman Mursa. The ground where it was found could not yet been explored in order to find at least traces of a Metroon. The statue is broken under its chest. The goddess is seated with both her legs reposing on the back of a lion. The rich folds of her garment, especially of her cloak, are elegantly arranged and naturally in a masterly manner represented. The lion under her feet is leisurely lying with the tasselled tail wound around his left hind leg. Numerous are the damages on the statue. Not only the upper part of it and the lion's head that are missing but also damage is caused on her knees and scratches on many parts of the surface can be seen. — H. 82 cm. Inv. No. 7923.

Onomastic analyses of names which occur in Roman inscriptions of Mursa have shown that quite a number of Orientals lived here so that Mursa can be regarded as a centre of oriental cults. Some previously found reliefs and objects would prove that Egyptian gods such as Isis and Osiris, then Mithras, Sabazios and others were worshipped in Mursa.

Although Kybele's cult had been introduced and accepted in Rome in Hannibal's time, it gathered significance and meaning, owing to political reasons only in Augustus' time. The Magna Mater Idaea could then be identified with Venus, Aineias' Mother and ancestress of the Iulii and so the imperial policy in the East justified. In Hadrian's time Kybele's cult was widely accepted and she finally turned out to be the divine All Souls Saving Mother who brings redemption and immortality and thus reconciles emperor and slave, rich and poor, Romans and barbarians, men and women<sup>3-9</sup>. It was great Phidias who set the ideal of this image in the Metroon in Athens and there too she was represented standing between two lions.<sup>11</sup>

In Pannonia the existence of her cult is proved by inscriptions in Emona, Carnuntum and Aquincum and by plastic art material in Poetovio and Brigetio<sup>13, 14</sup>. In recent times proofs of the existence of her Metroon have been found in Senj (Roman Dalmatia) where not only fragments of her statue with two lions were found, but also an inscription dedicated to the goddess, and in addition the foundation walls of her temple<sup>17</sup>.

Also at Zadar while an excavation on the Roman Forum near the Capitolium had been carried out, irrefutable proofs have been discovered of a Metroon with an underground room for ceremonies.<sup>15</sup>

Examples of statues are given from Stobi,<sup>16</sup> Novae,<sup>21</sup> Schitul,<sup>22</sup> from Thebe<sup>23</sup> and from other places. Although workshops of stone masons in Mursa and in Sirmium are supposed to have existed in the course of the 2nd and 3rd centuries in which sarcophagi and tombstones or perhaps plastic art had been carried out, this statue of Kybele worked on a precious kind of marble shows such high artistic quality that one should easily assume that it was imported from Greece. It is well known that Attic workshops produced numerous copies of Greek master-pieces to cover the needs for art objects in palaces and temples of the whole cultured world at that time. It is therefore considered that this statue had been created in the time of the great advocate of Greek classic art Hadrian, and that it was delivered from some Attic workshop. It was probably worked after the statues of

the 4th century B. C. whose many copies could be seen in Greece and in Athens still in the course of the 2nd and 3rd centuries.

By way of analogies it can be stated that the statue from Osijek also had a belted chiton under its chest, perhaps a »corona muralis« on her head (or even a kalathos), in one hand a patera, in the other a tympanon.

Kybele's cult had been strictly observed in connection with official events in Mursa, as elsewhere in the Roman Empire, and it presumably lasted to the mid of the 3rd century when here too it successively yielded its place to Christianity.

Fig. 2. This is the upper part of a well known type of tomb-stones of which only the left side is preserved. As the picture shows the left lion with the ram's head in its paws is preserved and in the middle a woman's head. From the right lion the right hind leg is visible. This very rough and damaged work, made from a kind of lime-stone, shows poor anatomy as is apparent from the hind legs, large head with gaping muzzle and forepaws with the ram's head. It also shows a trend to stylisation and symbolisation in art, which we often find in art objects of the later Roman Empire. H. 56, w. 63, b. 24 cm. Inv. No. 7316.

This top-piece of a tomb-stone was found in 1961, south of Mursa's supposed walls on the ground where we suspect a road was leading out of town with here and there tombs and sarcophagi on both its sides.

If not damaged such crowns of tomb-stones consist, as a rule, of two opposite lying lions that grasp with their paws a ram's head and between them there is mostly a column decorated with a bearded head in relief and a wicker basket (the kalathos) on top of it. In some cases we may find instead of the bearded head, a gorgoneion, a genius leaning on a torch, a sphinx or even a woman's head as is obvious in our example. It should be presumed that the woman's head originally must have leaned against a low column and that it had a wicker basket on top of it. In the Museum collection there is another version of this piece which has between the two lions a column with a basket on top instead, and no head at all. It was found at Dalj near Osijek. In recent times a third example occurred in the neighbourhood of Osijek, at Popovac, a well known Roman site in the district of Baranya beyond the Drava river (fig. 3). This stone is still in private possession. It represents a better preserved piece as it has a more complete inventory of symbols: both lions with clearly visible rams' heads, a column with gorgoneion and a wicker basket and so it gives a good idea of how such decorative parts of tomb-stones looked like. This piece is worked out in details with better skill and more anatomic understanding which is easily noticed when the lions are compared. The tasselled tails wound round the hind legs are naturally represented while in the example from Osijek we can hardly guess whether the tails are wound around the legs at all. Eves, mane, slightly gaping muzzle, paws, claws, rams, gorgoneion, all is well reproduced and gives the impression of a balanced and well compositioned decoration.

More examples are given to show the spread of this decoration in Pannonia, Dalmatia, Moesia and Dacia<sup>30-40</sup>. In literature this type has occasionally been discussed and explained as connected with the cult of Mithras,<sup>45</sup> of Kybele and Attis<sup>46, 47</sup> and of Serapis<sup>48-52</sup>. In the northern part of Pannonia these pairs of lions are seldom seen on tomb-stones. Thus we come to the conclusion that our symbolic decoration on tomb-stones penetrated into the lower Danubian provinces from the East and that the lions with rams symbolise the tauro-or kriobolia (connected with Mithras and Kybele) and of course the all devouring jaws of death, while the wicker basket symbolises the abundance (connected with Serapis or gods of fertility). In any variation this top decoration tells in a simplified manner something of the inevitable and inexorable circle of life and death, i. e. of the return of all human and other beings to the Mother Earth whence again all new life begins.

Our example with the woman's head has so far no analogy but considering the aforesaid main idea, the head could very likely signify Terra Mater who is sometimes identified with Kybele.

It remains a question whether we may look upon such type of stones as witnesses of existing followers of respective oriental cults, or as pure symbolic decorations reminding us only of the circle of life and death, no matter of what special cult the deceased might have belonged to.

For stylistic reasons we are inclined to attribute the example from Osijek to the later imperial period, to the time of the Severi in the third century and to see in it a product of a local workshop. Of course the example from Popovac

could be dated earlier, perhaps to the 2nd century and be regarded as a product of a more skilful master in a workshop, perhaps in Sirmium.

Fig. 4 a, b, c. This bronze statue of Jupiter is perfectly preserved but for the basis. It was found in 1965 south of Mursa although very near its supposed walls. It probably belonged to a home sanctuary.

This statue shows a right anatomic knowledge as the proportions and muscularity of the naked body correctly show. Jupiter is represented standing with the weight on his right leg, holding in one hand the lightning bundle, and in the other perhaps the sceptre which is missing. There is much harmony in the elaborate arrangement of his hair which is bound round the top while rich curls encircle forehead and face and fall down the neck. A full beard lies on the chest. The chlamys elegantly folded is thrown over his left shoulder and down the upper left arm.

This statue was founded and afterwards enchased. The surface is covered by a dark green patina. H. 11,7 cm. Inv. No. 7772.

The Jupiter-Zeus cult was the most wide-spread in the Greco-Roman world. — From Mursa 10 inscriptions exist on altars with the dedication to I. O. M. but no statue of his has yet been found. Nonetheless, there is no doubt that Mursa had at least one temple dedicated to this mightiest of all pagan gods.

In our statue, we may say, he is represented as Fulgurator (lightning bundle) and Lord (sceptre). He is certainly here not represented after famous statues of the great Greek classic sculptors, such as Phidias, nor after the ideals set by unknown masters of the Zeus Otricoli or Zeus Verospi. Mildness in features and dignity in attitude are expressed here to show the character of the Almighty Father of all men, whereas bundle and sceptre to signify his tremendous power over heaven and earth and all existing creatures. — There are many analogies to this statue in European collections.<sup>56</sup>