

## "A GIRL PICKING FLOWERS" FROM STABIAE

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*Famous picture depicting a girl picking flowers from Stabiae has been an object of discussion for years. She is probably copy of an original dating c. 330. BC and represents Persephone picking flowers immediately before Pluto abducted her.*

The article deals with the famous picture housed in the National Museum (Museo Nazionale) in Naples under the inv. no. 8834. In literature it has been referred to as Primavera, Hora of the Spring, Flora or simply "A girl picking flowers" (colour picture). Surprisingly, it has been paid much less attention in literature than its fame really deserves. Few rather short texts have been written about it, as if there were nothing to say about it except for its beauty. We would try to get down to the picture and to an important question: Whom does it really show?

The fresco was discovered in the villa in Campo Varano (Castellamare di Stabia). The excavations were led by the Swiss engineer Carlo Weber. His diaries from 1757 do 1761 and a plan of the villa are preserved. The excavations at the place Maceria Irace started on the 1st October 1757. We are interested in the room 26. That room was reached in 1759. On the 25th July 1759 Weber described Flora and Leda, on the 26th July 1759 he found Medea and on the 6th August 1759 Diana or Penelope. On the 8th August he described a picture he called Fortuna, unidentified until today in the National Museum in Naples (for details see Allroggen-Bedel 1977: 43, n. 32).

Four pictures were found in the room 26 (other pictures got lost), two on the green and two on the blue background. One of those on the green background has been identified as Leda with a swan (Allroggen-Bedel 1977: Pl.

102), the other is known as Flora or Primavera.<sup>1</sup> Medea, identified with certainty (Allroggen-Bedel 1977: Pl. 10, 3) and a woman with a bow, at first called Diana (Allroggen-Bedel 1977: Pl. 10, 4) are painted on the blue background. But as Diana is shown in a short chiton and shooting-boots, it is more likely to represent Penelope handing a bow and arrows to Odysseus.

They are small pictures, approximately similar in size. "Flora" is 38 cm high and 32 cm wide.

The creation of these pictures can be dated quite precisely. The painting work in the villa in Campo Varano can be divided into an earlier and a later phase, and a few pictures painted between the two phases. To the earlier phase belong works in the so-called third Pompeian style. "Flora" belongs to the earlier phase (Allroggen-Bedel 1977: 81 id.), the third style or the age of Claudius and Nero. It was placed into that phase due to the look of the wall typical of that time: disorganized space, some pictures are placed like panels in rather big plain red or blue areas. It can be dated with certainty between about 50 and 60 AD (Scheffold 1952: 176).

The rendering of the picture has kept thrilling all those engaged in ancient painting for more than two centuries. Historians did not spare words: "probably the best piece of old painting... Rafael seems difficult as compared with it..."<sup>2</sup>. Anyway did the group of painters show in that villa

<sup>1</sup> Elia 1932: fig. 32. Scheffold 1952: tab. 30. Maiuri 1953: fig. p. 83. Scheffold 1959:329 - calls her "Hora". Allroggen-Bedel 1977: I. 10, 1.

<sup>2</sup> Scheffold 1952: 112 quotes Julius Lange. Elia 1932: 98. Maiuri 1953: 86-9. Allroggen-Bedel 1977: 82 id.

the pinnacle of their skills, "Flora" being their best work.

All unanimously agree that the four pictures from room 26 are copies of Greek originals. But the concurrence stops at that point and differences in the debate how to define the date and style of a Greek original start.

Olga Elia (1932: 98) considered Flora to be a copy of the late Hellenistic original because of its gracefulness and lightness. But according to Karl Schefold (1952: 176) the original should have been created between 350 and 340 BC.

We are inclined to accept Schefold's dating, perhaps with a slight correction towards 330 BC. There is hardly any knowledge about Greek painting of the late Classics and the early Hellenistic period, we mainly know Roman copies and wonder to what extent they may be copies or just inspiration (Robertson 1959: 179). Yet, general appearance of the picture can induce comparison with descriptions from the ancient times and with only originals preserved from those - pictures on vases. So we can state that in the late Classics and early Hellenistic age the tradition of showing nature and landscape still prevailed like in the Classics: the story does not take place in the natural environment, there is no horizon, no sky, vegetation or objects in the space (Villard 1973: 142). If any support for figures or their location is needed, just an outline of a tree or a boulder may be shown. The ground is usually smooth and plain, like a unique ground we found on Greek vases. Just that is found in this picture - a uniform green ground that suggests a meadow and a flower picked by a girl. The ground under her feet is indicated by several little dots and lines. The way of representing ground by ranges of dots is characteristic just of pictures on vases in the second half of the 4th century BC, especially in c. 330 (Trendall 1989: 137, 142, 145, esp. 179). The environment does not usually influence figures or vice versa, they do not cast shadows, nor are they lit up in line with the illumination of their environment - all these are the features of painting from about 340 to 330 BC (Villard 1972: 333).

The female figure itself is rendered vividly, shadows suggest volume. Shadows appeared on bodies on the turn from the 5th to the 4th century BC. The famous painter of shadows was Zeuxis from Heraclea (Robertson 1959: 153). In the second half of the 4th century BC shadows are important means to render bodies. Rich drapery with densely seamed outline and indented contours of clothes appeared already on the late-classical reliefs at the end of the 5th and at the beginning of the 4th century BC (cf. for instance the frieze from Apollo's Temple in Bassae,<sup>3</sup> being most conspicuous after the middle of the 4th century BC, especially on South Italic vases.

This girl's pose is very daring: she is shown with her

back to us, head turned to the sight so that we discern only the oval of her cheek, one leg being bent and thrown out toward us (fig. 1). It is very difficult to parallel. There are few figures at all shown from behind on the vases from the 4th century BC. One of these scenes is a famous pelike from London showing Peleus and Thetis that is attributed to the Marsyas Painter.<sup>4</sup> This pelike belongs to the so-called Kerch style of the Attic red-figured pottery and the Marsyas painter is the best painter in that style. He acquired proficiency in rendering fullness of figures, magnificently showing volume by means of shortening limbs. The nude of a running nymph shown from behind demonstrates all the mastery of the painter and his outstanding position in vase painting (fig. 2). Her posture is identical to Flora's like a picture in the mirror - the same gesture, the same freedom of body, the same hairstyle. As distinguished from Flora the nymph runs in panics to hide, her gestures are more pronounced. "Flora" is calmer, she has a stroll, her basket is thrown over her left hand. By the Marsyas Painter we find another feature in common with Flora: the effort to leave an impression of depth and space in spite of the background, the effort to achieve three-dimensional quality (Arias 1962: 383-4. Dörig 1967: 454).

The freedom of figures and gestures on vases in the Kerch style is ascribed to the influence of monumental painting. Just the great freedom of expression, daring scenes and composition as well as the total artificial achievement of the Marsyas Painter indicate that he himself painted monumental compositions in addition to vases. (Boardman 1989: 192)

On Apulian pottery some figures are shown from behind. Two such figures are found by the Painter of the Underworld. On the big lecythus from Richmond (Trendall 1989: fig. 208) with the abduction of Leucippus' daughters, Polydeuces is in battle with Aphareus' sons shown from behind - in full motion, with emphasised muscles. On the crater from Melbourne (Trendall 1989: fig. 211) in the scene of punishing Dirce, the leftmost figure is shown from behind, with raised hands, a step forward, dressed in a long transparent chiton, with long hair. The figure is rather stiff and formal, inferior to the nymph from the pelike by the Marsyas Painter.

A female figure shown in a three-quarter profile, almost from behind, is shown in the scene of the Underworld on the amphora from Geneva.<sup>5</sup> On the picture we see Hades sitting on a throne, Persephone leaning against the back of the throne and both looking at Orpheus who plays to them and is left to Hades. Hecate is standing right to Persephone (fig. 3) with two torches and looking towards Orpheus. She is shown, as already mentioned, in the three-quarter profile, almost from behind, with transparent clothes fluttering

<sup>3</sup> For comparison may be used the relief frieze with the scene of Heracles fighting with Amazons from Tarentum, that was on a family vault. It is dated in the middle of the 4th century BC. The representation of draperies outlines what we have just said. Langlotz 1965: 137.

<sup>4</sup> Today in London, but originating from Kamiros (Rhodos). Arias 1962: pl. XLVII. Dörig 1967: pl. XLIII. Boardman 1989: fig. 390-391.

<sup>5</sup> Moret 1993: 326-7, fig. 9d, Cat. 40. Moret attributes this amphora to the Painter of White Caps (*saccoi*), while Trendall attributes it to the Baltimore painter.





fig. 1

fig. 2

fig. 3

around her and hip-boots on her legs. The weight of the body is put on one leg, the other leg is bent. In the stretched left hand she holds a torch downwards, and in the bent right hand a torch upwards. The ground under her feet is represented with ranges of small dots. Several flowers grow around her suggesting a meadow in the Underworld. She is drawn with skill and fine workmanship, and her posture and clothes fluttering around her are very similar to the way of rendering on the picture from Stabiae. These vases are dated c. 330 BC.

Here we can compare the figure from Calenian relief Canoleius-plate from Corneto (fig. 4): the female figure interpreted as Aphrodite is iconographically identical to the girl from Stabiae (see above). Calenian relief vases appear in the first half of the 3rd century BC and last until the 2nd century BC.<sup>6</sup> The Canoleius-plate shows the characteristics of that relief pottery - its scenes take the example by the Greek late-classical art and the Alexandrian works. On this plate the late-classical models are obvious. Therefore that scene may help us indirectly to date the original of the fresco from Stabiae in the second half of the 4th century BC.

All the so far mentioned stylistic features suggest that the original for "Flora" might have been created about 330 BC, perhaps between 340 and 330 BC.

Why shouldn't it be a late-Hellenistic picture? The revival of Classicism happens at the end of Hellenism. Pictures painted by old painters were sold in Alexandria and Pergamum at incredibly high prices and contemporary painters imitate them (Robertson 1959: 192). Polychromatic

Centuripe vases from Sicily can be taken for comparison, their first specimen dating from the 3rd century BC and the last about the 2nd century BC. They are original pieces of the late-Hellenistic painting. The sample is a lid of a vase kept in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York

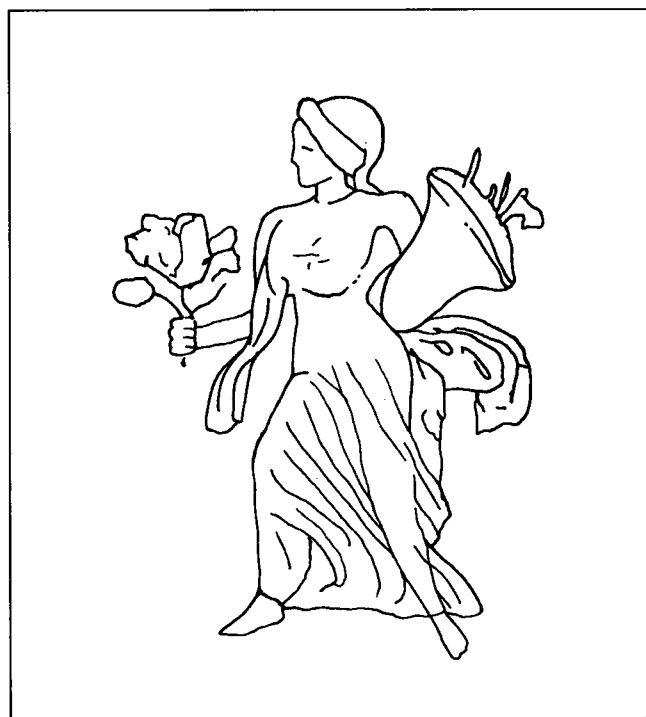


fig. 4

<sup>6</sup> Pagenstecher 1909: 74-6, Abb. 34, Cat. 114c. Robert 1919-III, Abb. p. 454. LIMC IV-2, 1988, fig. 107a, s. v. Hades. U. Hemberg, *Lexikon der alten Welt*, Zürich-München 1990, III, 2575, s. v. Reliefkeramik

today.<sup>7</sup> On the lid we see a woman making a sacrifice on the altar: her clothes are the same as Flora's, even her hairstyle is the same, her pose is similar, although the woman on the vase is rendered in the three-quarter profile and not from behind. This woman is painted in a stiff, closed style and lacking Flora's liveliness and richness of the drapery. She imitates classical models, the way of painting in Polygnotus' tradition<sup>8</sup> - closed volumes, static poses, without distinct motion into depth. In spite of that similarity Flora should belong to the earlier period of rich and gorgeous art, full of motion and fluttering, from the end of Classics and the beginning of Hellenism about 330 BC.

Whom does this picture really show? This girl picks flowers in the green meadow and puts them into a basket hanging over her arm. She is turned with her back to us as if she were floating in an unreal world deprived of reality and any connection with us. The fact that we cannot really see her although we are on the verge of seeing her, makes her going away from us even more. She is not for us here, not yet. Karl Schefold has already said that she is neither Primavera nor Flora or Hora, nor it is a play of light-heartedness. Between the two famous persons from the Greek mythology who gather flowers in the meadow, Persephone and Europa, he has chosen Europa: because Leda with a swan, painted on the green ground, was found with her in the room 26. As both Leda and Europa were Zeus' mistresses, it occurred logical to him that this be Europe picking flowers immediately before being abducted by Zeus in the form of a bull (Schefold 1952: 113). M. Robertson (1988: 91) accepts Schefold's theory as more probable than the other one. He says that although most of the scholars would identify the girl from Stabiae as Persephone, he agrees with Schefold that she might be Europa because the pictures in that room show heroines, not goddesses. That is why he included this picture *sub voce* Europa. But we do not know what was the program of pictures in room 26, and if there were any. Some of them are lost, Weber's diary mentions Fortuna (today lost, see Allroggen-Bedel 1977: 43, n. 32), and Fortuna is not a heroine. It is very dangerous to take as argument the pictorial program when some of the pictures are lost. In this case only certain way to look at this picture is to take her alone without consideration for the supposed program of other pictures in room 26. In our opinion it does not show Europa but another figure from mythology.

We should begin with obvious things: the main points of reference for identification are that it is a girl, that she walks in the meadow, that she picks flowers and holds a basket. That is all we have.

Greek mythology knows several girls being connected

with a GREEN MEADOW full of flowers. These are Persephone, Europa, Eurydice, Io, Sirens and Medusa.

MEDUSA is a known monster, but once upon the time she was a beautiful girl punished with terrible ugliness, her lovely hair being turned into snakes: either because she competed with goddesses in beauty (Apollod. 2. 4. 3; Lucan. 9. 636; Schol. Pind. Nem. 10. 4) or because she offended Athena by making love to Poseidon (Ovid. Met. 4. 791). Hesiod (Th. 276 id) says that Medusa and Poseidon were making love on the meadow full of flowers in spring.<sup>9</sup>

SIRENS live and sing on their island called *Anthemoessa* (Flower island - Hes. fr. 88; Odys. 12. 39 id. 166 id. 184 id. Apoll. Rhod. 4. 891 id). Sirens' Island is a meadow full of flowers, Odyssey calls it *λειμῶν ἀνθεμῶεις* (12. 159). Sirens' Island is considered as the entrance to the Underworld as well.<sup>10</sup>

IO also fits into this picture. Aeschylus tells in Prometheus (561-886) that Io in her night visions learns that she will have an affair with Zeus in the future, she is said to go to the meadow of Lerna (651-4). But she refuses to do it, is chased home, transformed into a cow and run after by a hornet (663-82) (Schmiel 1981: 267).

EURYDICE, Orpheus' wife, is also connected with this complex. The story was mostly made famous by Vergil (Georg. 4. 453) and Ovid (Met. 10. 6). Death befell her on the green meadow - she was either running away from Aristaeus and trod upon a snake as Vergil says or she was simply walking and picking flowers when she was bitten by a snake, as Ovid says.<sup>11</sup> Another source (Liber monstr.) tells that she was walking in the meadow by the water and the monster Hydra dragged her off under the water.<sup>12</sup> E. Maas (1895: 289-90, n. 88) describes the illustrations from the codex with Vergil's texts (Vat. lat. 3225). We see Eurydice in the Underworld surrounded by flowers, having a fluttering dress on. Orpheus is also here in Phrygian clothes with a lyre. We see Ixion and Cerberus, too. The scenes with Eurydice are rare. Here we see her connected with flowers from the Underworld in accordance with literary sources.

EUROPA is another girl from the meadow (Iliad. 14. 321. Schol. Iliad. 12. 292. 2. 494. Apollod. 3. 1. 1. Conon, 32. 37. Palaeph. 16). Moschus' Europa is one of the most beautiful scenes described in literature. He describes Europa and her servant-maids going to the green meadow to pick flowers. He paid special attention to the description of a finely decorated basket into which she was putting the picked flowers (Mosch. Europa, 37-62). It is interesting that just Io's sufferings were shown on Europa's basket. While she was picking flowers and playing with her servant-maids, Zeus came in the figure of a bull and abducted her.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Robertson 1959: fig. p. 173, 174-detail. Wintermeyer 1975: Abb. 5

<sup>8</sup> This aearchaisation is also obvious, for instance on a big frieze in the villa of Mysteries in Pompei.

<sup>9</sup> Niese, RE VII. 1912, 1636; Kerényi 1988: 49. Vernant 1987: 54

<sup>10</sup> Zwicker, RE V. Halbb 1927: 288-308, s. v. Sirenen; Harrison, Prolegomena 199 id. Stella 1956: 592, 775 id. d'Agostino 1982: 47

<sup>11</sup> see Hyg. Fab. 164; Apollod. 1. 3. 2. Diod. 4. 25. Schol. Stat. Theb. 8. 59, Mosch. Id. 3. 124 (Eurydikeia)

<sup>12</sup> Roscher I, 1, 1421-2, s. v. Eurydike. Gruppe in Roscher III, 1, 1160, s. v. Orpheus. Kerényi, 1988b: 221-2. Guthrie 1956: 41-2

<sup>13</sup> Maggiulli 1989: 191. Schmiel 1981: 267. Helbig in Roscher I, 1, 1412, s. v. Europa, Robertson 1988: 76f

The story by Moschus is parallel to Io's adventures described by Aeschylus, but Europa as distinguished from Io goes to the meadow reconciling herself to destiny (Mosch. Europa, 28-36). The meadow is in fact a fatal place. Here we should add another notice: Pausanias (9.39.4-5) says that in Lebadeia Demeter had a nick name Europa.<sup>14</sup>

An amphora from the National Museum in Naples (Smith 1976: fig. 16) shows a scene shortly before the abduction of Europa (T. 1): in the middle is a bull around whom Erotes fly and girls play, pick flowers and make wreaths around him, but a basket (kalathos) cannot be seen. Europa is iconographically represented in three ways: riding a bull, playing beside a bull (like on this vase) or absorbed in thought sitting under a planetree on Crete.<sup>15</sup> There is no situation in the iconography in which Europa can be recognized inherently even if she has a basket.

The abduction or leading off or disappearance or death of a girl while picking flowers in the meadow in the early spring repeats constantly as an invariable pattern in the Greek mythology. That happened to Oreithyia abducted by Boreas (Choiril. Sam. fr. 7 in Kinkel, Ep. Gr. Fragm. 1.269, E. Simon, *Limc VII-2*, no. 25c) then to Creusa abducted by Apollon (Eurip. Ion, 887 id) and to Helene taken away by Hermes (Eurip. Helen. 243 id) (Piccaluga 1966: 233).

Therefore, it is interesting that in the late antiquity the writer Martianus Capella when describing the wedding of Philology and Mercury, in the second book of his work tells about the fear of a girl marrying Mercury: she saw him just once while picking flowers (MART. CAPELL. De nuptiis Philol. et Merc. 2.42.16 f). This chapter obviously refers to flowers at the moment of the abduction of Persephone or her marriage to Pluto (Shanzer 1986: 58). The image that flowers should be present when a girl passes the border between the worlds and enters the sphere of gods, had been preserved, as we see, until the late antiquity and the last pagan writers.

But the famous of all them is KORE-PERSEPHONE. Persephone was walking in the meadow and gathering flowers, when Hades, the master of the Underworld, ran out with his black horses from a chasm in the earth (*chasmages*), abducted her and took her to his dark realm. Numerous sources, from Homeric hymn to Demeter to Claudius Claudianus, tell about this story. Hom. Hym. Dem. says that that happened in the valley of Nysa that abounds in flowers, on the meadow (6 id, 425 id.) by the sea (14, 34, 38). Nysa in Asia Minor is usually connected with the deities of the Underworld and entering the Underworld.<sup>16</sup> It is a very dangerous region where the young goddess let herself allure, what was fatal.

Other sources place the abduction in Cyzicus (Plut. Luc. 10. Porphy. De abst. 1.25. Propert. 3.22.1-5) or in

a town Crenis (Philippos) in Macedonia, a place in the plain too rich in flowers (App. Bell. civ. 4.105. Plin. N. H. 21.17. Athen. 15.31b. Tertull. De corona, p. 110 A).

Another possible place of abduction is mysterious Kolonos in Attica (Soph. Oed. Col. 1590, Schol. Soph. Oed. Col. 1590. Schol. Hes. Th. 914). That was usually a place of worship of dark, chthonic deities and entrance to the Underworld where Oedypus descended to his grave (Soph. Oed. Col. 1590). The terrible event was also placed near Hermione in Argolis (Paus. 2.35) in the place called Leimon (= meadow).

Eleusis also had its meadow and flowers that lured Kore and where she was abducted (Plat. Thaeet. 143B. Plut. Thes. 11. Paus. 1.38.5). That tradition was closely connected with the cult complex of Eleusis and its eschatological religion. The spring in Eleusis by which Kore was abducted and where sad Demeter was sitting in search for her daughter was called Parthenion (= virgin spring, Hom. Hym. Dem. 344), but also ANTHENION (= flower spring, Athen. 78c) (Kerényi 1967: 36). From the ancient sources we know that the night holiday in Eleusis ended on a meadow outside Telesterion (Schol. Aristoph. Ranae, 344. Aristoph. Ranae, 34-53, 372-376. Eurip. Ion, 1074-76). Writer Stobaeus compared the experiences of the soul after death with the initiated in Eleusis that wander in the darkness filled with fear, until in sudden light they catch sight of a meadow where they hear voices and see dancers (Burkert 1983: 292. Eliade 1991: 252). These passages show that the meadow was undoubtedly connected with death, and in Eleusis with the condition of the initiated who get information about life after death. A nice choral song in Aristophanes' "Frogs" (v. 440-459) celebrates the holy dance of a goddess among flowers and blossoming meadows, where the purest light shines only for the initiated into mysteries. It was noticed long ago that that may refer only to Eleusinian Mysteries (Pascal 1912-II: 26-27) and what happened there - in that context Kore is closely connected with the meadow and both with mysteries. In addition, Clement of Alexandria (Protr. 2.12 and 14) mentions among many events in Eleusis one called (τὰ Φερεφαιττης ανυολογια) (Persephone's bunch) when the flowers chosen by Persephone were probably celebrated in sacral context (Piccaluga 1966: 133).

SICILY was often mentioned as a place of abduction (Stat. Theb. 8.62. Plut. Timol. 8. Diod. 5. 69. Arnob. 5.24. Schol. Hes. Th. 914. Schol. Aristoph. Vespae. 1438) (Zimmermann 1882: 17 id.). Henna on Sicily was famous for flowers (Lucan. 6.74. et Schol. ad loc. Plut. Qu. nat. 23.2. Diod. 5.3. Ps. Arist. Mir. ausc. 1.1. Claud. R. P. 2.101 id.). That meadow blossoms all over the year, says Diodor quoting Timaeus, and here Zephyrus followed Persephone when she went to gather flowers, as described by Claudianus. The Sicilian myth is generally closer to Latin writers (Cic. In Verr. 2.4.107. Ovid. Met. 5.392 id. Fasti,

<sup>14</sup> Helbig in Roscher I, 1, 1412. Harrison, Prolegomena 579

<sup>15</sup> Helbig in Roscher I, 1, 1417, with the picture of a coin from GORTINA (?) showing Europa under a plane-tree, Robertson 1988: I, 19 (II-2, p. 34)

<sup>16</sup> Zimmermann 1882: 17 id. Kerényi 1967: 34 id.

4425 id. Firm. Mat. De errore relig. 7.1. Claud. R. P. 2.7 id.) than the Eleusinian (Maggiulli 1989: 189). We should mention the holiday Anthesforia in honour of Persephone when bunches of flowers were carried. It was widely spread on Sicily (Strab. 6.1.5) in connection with the abduction of Persephone.<sup>17</sup>

In addition to Henna, candidates for the site of abduction were Etna (Hyg. Fab. 16. Lyd. De mens. 4.85. Stat. Achill. 2.150. Val. Flacc. 5.345. Serv. Georg. 1.38. Collum. 10.268 id. - here was described the meadow where Persephone picked flowers) and Hippon (Strab. 6.1.5. - here she was picking flowers).

Orphics taught that the mysterious meadow was on a secret island near Okeanus (Orph. Arg. 1192 id. Orph. Hymn. 18 (17) 13 (Zimmermann 1882: 19. Güntert 1919: 166).

Picking flowers in a meadow is a very dangerous act - it leads directly into death or it is connected with death in a way. Claudianus does not say unintentionally (R. P. 2.265): "*male dilecti flores*". Because the flowers are not chosen by chance. Persephone's bunch (*anthologia*) consists of precisely determined sorts of flowers: saffron, iris, hyacinth, rose, violet, lily, daffodil. All the girls mentioned so far end either abducted to another sphere (of gods) like Io and Europa (they are lost for ever with regard to their past life) or disappear directly in death like Eurydice or Persephone. Persephone is a young girl who from the meadow goes into death. At the same time she is death herself, the queen of the dead. Sirens who sing in that meadow lure incautious passengers into death, in fact they are death themselves as said in their song. Medusa is a personification of death - her face killed everybody who would look at her. The one who refused to look at her did her in - Perseus, Sirens were conquered by the who refused to listen to them - Odysseus. All stories have the same feature in common - the MEADOW is directly related to the world of death. All the female figures are related to each other and to death. A woman in a meadow points directly to the voyage without return. The fatal meadow is usually found in the descriptions of the world of the dead, either as Persephone's region or as (ΗΛΥΣΙΟΝ ΠΕΔΙΟΝ) from Odyssey (4.561 id.).

One of the well-known descriptions of the fatal meadow is by Plato (Rep. 10.614b-621d), where is told the story of Er, whose soul wandered twelve days while his family believed him to be dead. So his soul came to a wonderful valley where numerous souls gathered. Er calls it δαμονιον τοπον, a place between heaven and earth, where the threshold of the worlds is crossed (cf. PLAT. Phaedo 107 d; Gorg. 524 a). Plato mentions later that the souls descending from heaven and those rising from the Underworld meet in that valley and tell each other their experiences (Pascal 1912: 127 id. Highbarger 1940: 60-62). Plato obviously did not invent that meadow, but used something already existing in tradition to explain his ideas. Really, a meadow as a place of death or a place of encounter with death has long since been running through Greek

tradition. We find a Meadow of asphodelus where chosen souls go to by Homer already (ODYSS. 11.572-75, 601-27; 24.1-22). Vergil conveyed Homer's and Plato's ideas in the sixth book of Aeneid (Highbarger 1940: 100-101).

In Odyssey a nymph (or goddess) Calypso lives on the island Ogygia, that is described as a place full of lovely meadows (λειμωνες) with violets (ODYSS. 572). That island is far in the West (SCHOL. ODYSSE. 5.100) in Oceanus, what actually means in the world of the dead (Güntert 1919: 165-66). These meadows of Ogygia are really comparable to the meadows of asphodelus in the Underworld (ODYSS. 11.539). Plants described on Ogygia are certainly the plants of death that mark the world of the dead (Pascal 1912-II. 65-9. Güntert 1919: 170-72). The descriptions of these valleys by Homer are not a part of enjoyment in the landscape and the atmosphere of beauty - they suggest the world of the dead and some other sphere of existence.

The flowers are not casually chosen - these are precisely determined sorts of early spring flowers. All the girls mentioned are connected with these sorts of flowers: saffron, iris, hyacinth, rose, violet, lily and daffodil, let's add Persephone's asphodelus. They announce spring that in this mythological complex does not remind of love and waking but of fear and death. A flower does usually denote transition between two levels of existence (Bérard 1974: 29) that come dangerously close to each other in spring when flowers crop up. All the girls were abducted in early spring. Therefore, the representation of flowers in the context of the Underworld does not surprise.

The famous pinax (relief made of terracotta) from Lokroi from c. 470 BC (Langlotz 1965: pl. 72) shows Hades and Persephone on a throne. She holds ears of corn and a cock in her hand, and he holds flowers and a patera. The flowers are in Hades' hand - the hand of death, the hand of unreturnability. Pinax from the Athenian acropolis painted by Mikion (Bérard 1974: 156, pl. 15, fig. 52) is very interesting for our theme. It represents the return (anodos) of Persephone. She comes out among the petals. Flowers are on her breasts and on the ground round the figures.

No wonder that the Apulian vases in the 4th century BC, especially in c. 330 BC (when the picture from Stabiae was made), show flowers in the scenes from the Underworld. Meadow-flowers are seen among the figures from the Underworld. They grow from the ground making the image of a meadow. One polychromic vessel dated in the 3rd century BC (fig. 8) is sculptured as a lovely Persephone's head. There is a wreath of flowers round her luxuriant hair. Looking at the vessel we can't fail to think of Pindar's description (Ol. 2.115 id.) of the Island of the Celestials full of golden flowers that flame and grow on the trees and in the water. The celestials decorate themselves with wreaths made of those flowers, Persephone's flowers. The flowers adorn her head as well.

Dodds (1973: 146) tried to explain the anxiety of spring as the time of the greatest crisis in the year when

<sup>17</sup> Piccaluga 1966: 233. On the flowers and the abduction of Persephone see also Herter 1941.



fig. 8

old provisions run low and the crop is still uncertain or as Alcman said, when everything grows but there is not enough to eat (Alcman, f 76 Bergk). Perhaps the roots of the image of spring that is more connected to death than to life, more inclined to fear than to happiness should be looked for in that explanation.

The scene of a beautiful girl that readily and airily walks in the meadow and picks flowers is not an idyllic scene of happiness in the spring, it is not the scene of taking pleasure in a walk with the feelings of love, as it may seem at first sight. Knowing the context of picking early spring flowers in the Greek mythology, we become aware that the apparently unconcerned play suggests the world we do not want to think about, leaving to another sphere of existence. The magnificent girl picking flowers in the meadow represents something terrible to come - departure to the Underworld. Among the girls we have mentioned, three fit this picture: Eurydice, Europa and Persephone.

In order to choose one of them we should take into consideration that this girl has a basket hung over her arm in which she has put flowers. It is not a simple basket, it is a KALATHUS.

It is a special sort of basket, in the form of a bell turned upside down, the bell of a lily or a chalice: it is cylindrical and widened towards the opening. It is related to women and needle-work - yarn, balls of wool and similar necessities are held in it. Therefore, it was a part of wedding gifts. But kalathus is also mentioned as a basket for flowers what is a very important function (Ovid. *Met.* 5.393. 14.267. *Fasti*, 4.435. 5.218. *Proper* 2.15.20. 3.13.30. *Claud. R. P.* 2.139. *Mosch.* 2.34.37). Out of the three chosen girls (Eurydice, Europa, Persephone) two are mentioned with a basket - Persephone always and Europa occasionally. Moschus gives in his idyll a detailed description of the Europa's magnificent basket (37-62). Persephone's basket has been described by many writers (*Claud. R. P.* 2.122 id. 139 *Ovid. Met.* 5.394., and especially *Ovid. Fasti*, 4.435. *Clem. Alex. Protr.* 2.17.1) (Zimmermann 1882: 11-12. Bérard 1974: 66).

A hydria by Baltimore painter corroborates that story (Trendall 1989: fig. 253) which represents the abduction of Persephone. On a detail we can clearly see kalathus that fell under Hades' cart and one of the flowers from the meadow. Nearby are excited Artemis, Athena and a figure that should be Aphrodite - this is an illustration of a South Italian, Sicilian myth, the one brilliantly retold seven centuries later by Claudius Claudianus in his work *De Raptu Proserpinae*.

In the ritual context kalathus is specially connected with the Eleusinian cult of Demeter and Persephone. According to the source material it was carried in processions: Callimachus (*Hym. Cer.* 1.12) says that in Eleusis four horses were dragging a huge kalathus full of ears of corn, and exactly that is shown on Trajanus' coins (fig. 5). Such processions are described by Clement of Alexandria (2.21.2)



fig. 5



and Arnobius (5.26) in Alexandria and by Scholia of Callimachus (ad loc.). The procession in which kalathus was carried was an important part of the cult of Demeter and Persephone (Sfameni Gasparro 1986: 334). The hymn to Demeter by the poet Callimachus is evidence of the sacredness of the basket where he says that the unhallowed (profane) were called to bow their heads when kalathus passed. The poet lets us know that the full meaning of the basket as well as the insight into what was in it are available only to those initiated into the mysteries of Demeter and Persephone.

This basket is mentioned in the pass-word (*synthema*) as well uttered by the initiated in Eleusinia. That pass-word preserved for us Clement of Alexandria (*Protr.* 21,2, and taken over from him by Arnob. 5.26). *Synthema* is mysterious: "I fasted, drank *kykeon*, took out of the basket (*kiste*), worked and put back into the basket (*kalathus*) and from there into another basket (*kiste*)".<sup>18</sup> The mention of the basket - kalathus in the wholly saying of Eleusinian mysteries is a definite evidence that it is not just a usual necessity in the iconography, but it implies a number of symbolic and religious connotations.

A metrical inscription from Bithynia from the 1st century BC or 1st century AD came to us in fragments. It deals with the procession of the basket (*kalathus*). Among others it prescribes clothes to be worn in the procession (Körte 1899: 413-415m, no. 13). Rings and golden adornments are forbidden to be worn (Sfameni Gasparro 1986: 334n. 195). Inscriptions from Andania and Lykosoura that prescribed clothes, jewelry and footwear may be compared to that inscription.<sup>19</sup> We know that golden adornments were forbidden as well as whitening and red colour for the face (Andania). Everybody should be barefoot and have white clothes. Moreover, the temple must not be visited in purple, mottled or black clothes. The clothes should be clean (Körte 1899: 415). On an inscription from Chios (Bithynia) footwear is not forbidden, but it is forbidden in Andania, Lykosoura, and the same mentions Callimachus in his hymn to Demeter (v. 124). These inscriptions can hardly help us solve our iconographical problems with the basket. We see that all these instructions and prohibitions refer to the situation when coming in touch with the basket in the procession that undoubtedly confirms its sacredness. It would be interesting to compare these regulations with the real representation of the girl from Stabiae. We see that the girl is barefoot, that she has light clothes, not completely white but white prevails. The blue colour we can understand as shadow on the whiteness, but yellow is present. Judging from the inscriptions, yellow colour was not prohibited in the procession. But the girl obviously has a golden bracelet on her arm, so we cannot relate her directly to these inscriptions unless the goddess is allowed what believers are prohibited. The flower beside the girl is thin, discreet

and white. Among the picked flowers, that project from her basket, white prevail, although there are some yellow, too. Callimachus' hymn to Demeter might help us here that says (v. 120) that there were four white roses in the basket while it was carried in the procession. Of course, we cannot be entirely sure about these correspondences and take them as something completely proved. We would just like to show how challenging it may be to connect the inscriptions and a poem by Callimachus with the picture from Stabiae. Kalathus is mentioned in Demeter's mysteries on Paros (Apollod. FGrH 244F 98).<sup>20</sup>

Thanks to Pausanias' report we know that Damofon from Messenia made statues of Demeter and Kore Sotiera for town Magalopolis (PAUS. 8.31.1 and 2). Two smaller figures with baskets full of flowers on their heads are in front of goddesses, and the believers from the neighbourhood told that Athena and Artemis had picked flowers with Persephone (Förster 1874: 101).

The basket is often represented on the South Italian vases in the 4th century BC in connection with funeral themes and the Underworld. Baskets are often connected with a grave as these vases show. A huge kalathus filled with fruits or flowers shown within aediculae on a grave may be sometimes found. In South Italy kalathus has a special meaning connected with the cult of the dead (Schauenburg 1972: 285-89, Fig. 53). Persephone is the incontestable queen of the dead and no wonder that her kalathus itself had an important role in funerals and the cult on the grave. It was represented in a specially interesting way on the lid of a lekane - a huge kalathus surrounded by ears of corn.<sup>21</sup> Kalathos in the girl's hand is not just a girl's requisite - filled with flowers it reminds of cult and death.

To sum up, the girl with a basket could be both Europa and Persephone. But Europa is always identifiable by a bull near her, otherwise it is unrecognizable (except the coins from Crete where she sits pondering under a plane-tree). If Schefold took Leda as guidance to identify Europa, we should mention that Leda is identified just by the swan, otherwise we would not recognize her. So Europa should also be with a bull. Therefore we believe that the girl from Stabiae, so-called Flora actually represents Persephone at the moment of abduction - a peaceful moment before a horrible deed, when the girl disappears in the Underworld through *Chasma ges*.

It will be hard to find the iconographic parallel to the girl from Stabiae. This fresco is in every way an extraordinary scene: both by its artistic achievement and its iconographic approach. The representations of Persephone show her at the very moment of abduction (on coins, gems, reliefs, mirrors, mosaics): girls pick flowers and are shown bewildered at the moment when Hades arrives on a chariot.

<sup>18</sup> Kerényi 1968: 65. Burkert 1987: 94. Burkert 1983: 269, 273. Greek text: ἐνηστεύσα, ἐπιὼν τὸν κύκεωνα, ἐλάβον ἐκ κίστης, ἐργασάμενος ἀπεθεμὴν εἰς καλάθον καὶ ἐκ καλάθου εἰς κίστην

<sup>19</sup> Körte 1899: 414, see also Dittenberger, *Sylloge* (1), 388, 29 for the inscription from Andania

<sup>20</sup> Nilsson 1955: 659. Zimmermann 1882: 12. Burkert 1983: 269-70

<sup>21</sup> Trendall, *The Red Figure Vases of Lucania, Campania and Sicily, I-II*, Oxford, 1967, pl. 215.5



fig. 6

He just lays violent hands on Persephone or has already thrown her on the chariot and the basket is lying overturned under the chariot or somewhere beside it (fig. 6). Other scenes show Demeter's search for her daughter, Persephone's return (*anodos*) or Persephone and Hades as motionless rulers of the Underworld. There is no iconographic precedent for the peaceful moment, stroll of girls (or a girl) who gather flowers on the meadow before the terrible event. On the most sarcophagi from the Roman imperial time girls kneel beside a basket while picking flowers and are shown in the vehement motion of astonishment and not quiet and relaxed. A selection of sarcophagi with a scene of Persephone's abduction was made by C. Robert (1919-III). Characteristic are sarcophagi for ex. 378a, pl. CXXII from Aachen, 389a, pl. CXXIV from Tarragona, 392a, p. CXXV from Rome, Museo Capitolino, 406, pl. CXXVIII from Salerno (fig. 7) etc. (sarcophagi are on pl. CXIX-CXXXI in Robert 1919-III).<sup>22</sup> A picture from a tomb

in Kerch shows Kore caught unawares while picking flowers - she stands between the two baskets with her hands put up and a veil thrown over them (Förster 1874: I. 1, 229 id. no. 7. Overbeck 1873-78: 658).

Yet, a picture stands out (pl. 2): it is Calenian omphalos-plate called Canoleius-plate, decorated with a scene of Persephone's abduction (Pagenstecher 1909: 74-76, Abb. 34, Cat. 114c. Robert 1919-III: p. Abb. 454). The plate originates from Corneto (Museo Etrusco) and has the inscription L. CANOLEIOS. L. F. FECIT. CALENOS. In the circle round omphalos we see diverse deities in several scenes: helmeted Pluto is on a two-wheeled cart, bridles and sceptre holding with his right hand and with his left hand Persephone who extends her arms toward a figure behind the chariot. There is a dog under the horses of Pluto's two-wheeled cart. Athena, entirely armed stands and looks after Pluto, and Persephone extends her arms



fig. 7

<sup>22</sup> A special problem arose from the persistence of the same type of the scene on sarcophagi and coins as well. Therefore, an extremely influential model is supposed to have existed, whose fame or value inspired numerous copies. We know of two such outstanding examples from the ancient times. One is Praxiteles' group of the abduction of Persephone made of bronze (PLIN. NH. 34.69: 36.23. QUINTIL. Inst. 12.10.9, see Förster 1874: 102 id.). The other is the famous fresco made by painter Nikomachos, a somewhat younger contemporary of Praxiteles, for Minerva's cella in the Jupiter's temple on the Capitoline hill in Rome. It was destroyed during the Vitellius' rising (PLIN. NH. 35.108. VITRUV. praef. 3.2). The fresco is described as a moment at which Hades catches Persephone while Eros is flying over the cart, the overturned basket with flowers is under the cart, and one or two companions could be seen behind it (Overbeck 1873-78: 432 id. 595. Förster 1874: 106-108. Robert 1919-III: 455. RE XXXIII, 1936, 464-467, s. v. Nikomachos). The picture was very famous and it must have been much copied in its times thus becoming an influential pattern of representing the abduction of Persephone. Similar scene is depicted on the wall of the royal grave of Philippos of Macedon in Vergina, a rare original of Greek painting from the 4th century BC. M. Andronikos (1978: fig. 5 and 4) attributes this fresco to Nikomachos himself.

towards her. Athena cannot do anything because Zeus' lightning (*keranos*) stands between her and Pluto's chariot.<sup>23</sup> The cart with Demeter is behind Athena: she holds two lighted torches. There is a pig under the horses of her two-wheeled cart. Obviously, the scene shows Demeter wandering in search for her daughter.<sup>24</sup> A naked helmeted young man with a mantle round his arms, a spear and a sword may be recognized as Ares.<sup>25</sup> There is a two-wheeled cart with a female figure in a short garb behind Ares. She holds two torches in her hands. Some regarded it as Enyo, Ares' companion (Pagenstecher 1909: 76), but it is very likely to be Hecate, who often attends Persephone's abduction. A female figure in a long dress stands behind her (fig. 4). She has a veil round her and the swept up hair. With her right leg she stepped forward and the left is stretched backward. A basket full of flowers is hung over her left hand and in the right hand she holds an already picked flower. She obviously participates in gathering flowers (*Anthologia*). Pagenstecher (1909: 76) agrees this might be Aphrodite. The conclusion was reached exclusively by means of elimination: we know from source-materials that Athena, Artemis and Aphrodite accompanied Persephone while picking flowers. As Athena was shown in another place (behind Pluto's carriage, and this picture does not fit the iconography of Artemis, just Aphrodite remains. Aphrodite is often mentioned as Persephone's companion while Persephone was picking flowers before the abduction (*HYG Fab.* 146. *CLAUD. De RP.* 1.220 id.). But we know that on Apollo's throne from Amyklai Athena, Artemis and Aphrodite were present at the moment of Persephone's abduction. Pausanias (3.19.4) says that Pluto was shown with Aphrodite, Athena and Artemis, then *kathodos* or *harpage* (abduction), Demeter with *Morai* and *Horae* Persephone's, *anodos* (return) (Förster 1874: 100. Robert 1919-III: 455 n. 1.). Behind her is a two-wheeled cart with a winged female being, perhaps Nike. Over her cart is something like a big flower or a branch of a palm-tree. She is followed by Hermes with *petasus*, *chlamys* and winged shoes and a stick in his hands (in this case the stick looks like a branch). Hermes stands in front of Pluto's cart.

Here, we are interested in the female figure interpreted as Aphrodite (fig. 4). She is the nearest iconographic parallel to a girl from Stabiae: both have their hair matted into a hairdo on their necks, both have a long braid and a fluttering veil around them, both have *kalathus* hung over the left arm. Both pick a flower with the right hand: while the girl from Stabiae is just gathering a flower from the stalk (fig. 1), the figure on the Canoleius-plate holds the

already picked flower. Both are shown with the right leg stepping forward, while the left remained behind. These are two identical figures, with just one but terrible difference: the girl from Stabiae is shown from behind, while this one is represented in much more usual way - en face.

Nevertheless, it seems that we should accept that Aphrodite is shown in this way on the Canoleius-plate. It is hard to believe that on this plate with a logical sequence of diverse figures any figure repeats - Persephone is already shown on Pluto's cart and she is not likely to be repeated. One is certain: the female figure on this plate, probably Aphrodite, participates in the abduction of Persephone and in *anthology* (picking flowers) that preceded the abduction. It is suggested by *kalathus* and a flower in her hands. It is important that a woman was rendered in this way be it Aphrodite or not, who participates in Persephone's *anthology* and abduction and not in another scene. On the reliefs of terracotte (pinakes) from Locroi for instance, *kalathus* always belongs to Persephone, and perhaps in one case only to Aphrodite, but even then Aphrodite is in the setting of Persephone's story (Förster 1874: 108-110. Sourvinou-Inwood 1973: 13). Aphrodite with a basket also belongs to the story of Persephone. Hence we conclude that this Canoleius-plate is promoting our interpretation of the girl from Stabiae as Persephone.

Difference is in the entire approach: the Canoleius-plate shows many figures going like a frieze round it. As Persephone is unmistakably shown on the chariot with Pluto, *anthology* is suggested by another female figure, her companion in having a walk, probably Aphrodite, that is attributed all the characteristics of Persephone's *anthology* - a basket and a flower. But when a painter chooses the form of the panel with just one figure and the theme of *anthology*, then he will certainly show the main figure of *anthology*, whose important attribute *anthology* is.<sup>26</sup> One of the secondary figures that works as an extra in the story is hardly likely to be chosen. When we have to decide whether Europa or Persephone, then in my opinion the Canoleius-plate is a strong argument on behalf of the interpretation that Persephone is shown immediately before the abduction on the fresco from Stabiae.

We have another reason to regard the girl in the meadow as Kore. The girl is turned with her back to us. It is a very unusual scene. We have found a few examples of such scene on vases. It is more frequent in fresco painting - but all figures we see turned with their back have some reason: they either turn dancing like the girl on a big frieze

<sup>23</sup> Cf. identical situation on the hydria by the Baltimore painter showing the abduction of Persephone (Trendall 1989: fig. 253). Zeus' lightning - a sign sent by Zeus to Athena as a warning not to interfere - was painted between Athena and Pluto's four-horse carriage.

<sup>24</sup> It is logical that a pig appears under Demeter's cart as well as a dog is usually shown under Pluto's carriage. They are their specific animals. As to Demeter, we wonder whether this be an allusion to the story of Demeter, who could not find the traces of her lost daughter because they were covered by the traces of Eubuleus' pigs. Cf. CLEM. ALEX. *Protr.* 2.17.1 (Campbell 1969: 184).

<sup>25</sup> It may be logical if we compare Claudian's statement that Apollo and Ares wooed Persephone, but Demeter did not want to give her to either of them. Cf. *CLAUD. De R. P.* 134 id.

<sup>26</sup> neither Athena nor Artemis nor Aphrodite are known themselves for *anthology* or for a basket - they come in touch with them only as Persephone's companions, immediately before her abduction.

of the villa of Mysteries or they sit round the table so that some figures are inevitably with their back to us; but this frieze dates from the later times. It was an exception in c. 330 BC.

Why did the painter choose such an unusual pose at that time. Other pictures in the same villa in Campo Varano in Stabiae show Psyches picking flowers - entirely natural and usual in profile (Allroggen-Bedel 1977: room 7, p. 52, pl. 23,3-4). He must have had a reason to paint her with her back to us. She is beautiful but we do not see her. She is not for us - she belongs to another world and we are not allowed to see her face before we cross the border of the worlds. We should remember that Medusa stays on the same meadow - Medusa whose face we are not allowed to look at because it denotes certain death (see Vernant 1987: *passim*). The face of the goddess of death should remain *unknown to the living*. To Orpheus it was also forbidden to turn and look at the face of Eurydice, who is one of the girls on the meadow. What did KORE really look like to the mortals is shown by the wonderful statues of Demeter and Persephone from Cyrene - they do not have faces.<sup>27</sup> (Pl. 3) The face of the goddess of the Underworld should remain unknown and invisible to all the mortals, except perhaps to the initiated in Eleusis. We do not know what they saw in the flash of light before the great happiness on the green meadow. To all others the ultimate cognition remains entirely unreachable until they cross the threshold of the worlds themselves.

Therefore, we regard the girl on the picture as Persephone: she walks in the meadow, picks flowers, puts them into kalathus and we see her from behind. God help us that she does not turn to us yet.

The subject under discussion is an extraordinary powerful artistic personality of an unknown painter. With his gift and inspiration he is beyond the scope of the given or usual iconography rendering his own vision of a wonderful moment - the quiet moment when nothing has happened yet and everything is in due order, but all of us are aware that it is an illusion because the "horror" is about to happen - it will happen every moment!!! We are standing in front of the picture whose wonderful tranquility and beauty cause excitement, tension, fear and suspense in us. We would like to jump and warn the girl, who is withdrawing from us - with her back to us, she is going calmly to another world and we can neither stop and catch her nor cry. She is not for us here, but for somebody else who has not come yet but we are aware that he is about to appear. For us, mortals, the best would be to run away because the scene is not for men but only for gods. What has to happen and the real meaning of the whole event is known only to the initiated into the mysteries. It was recognized long ago that representing moments loaded with high dramatic tension though nothing happens was favoured by Roman artists and spectators of that time. Of course, the painting aimed at creating tension in a spectator and his strong emotion and curiosity in what is about to happen was inherited from the Hellenistic art, but the Roman masters gave special power to it.<sup>28</sup>

The unknown painter tells almost everything by telling nothing. He is beyond the scope of usual representation, but retains all the elements of iconography by which the scene can be recognized. Thanks to that his artistic genius is comparable with the greatest artists who took the existing myth and used it as a vessel in which to pour their gift, inspiration and their view of the world.

<sup>27</sup> Ferri, 1929, 3 id. T. I-XIII. Bacchieli 1994: 104

<sup>28</sup> see a work by M. Barringer 1994: 160-61, where some Mythological scenes from Pompeii (Io and Penelope) are discussed as well as this special relation between a picture and a spectator in the Roman painting of the Third and the Fourth Style.

## ABBREVIATIONS

AION Arch St Ant	Annali di Sezione di Archeologia e storia antica, Dipartimento di studi del mondo classico e del Mediterraneo antico, Napoli
BICS	Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies, University of London
JDAI	Jahrbuch des deutschen archäologischen Instituts, Berlin
LIMC	Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae, Zürich & München
MDAI(A)	Mitteilungen des Deutschen archäologischen Instituts, Athenische Abteilung, Mainz am Rhein
MDAI(R)	Mitteilungen des Deutschen archäologischen Instituts, Römische Abteilung, Mainz am Rhein
RA	Revue Archéologique, Paris
REG	Revue des Etudes grecques, Paris

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SAŽETAK

"DJEVOJKA KOJA BERE CVIJEĆE" IZ STABIJA

Slavna slika koja se danas nalazi u Napulju (Museo Nazionale, izv. 8834) i prikazuje djevojku koja bere cvijeće na livadi, tumačena je različito: kao Primavera, Hora proljeća, Flora, najčešće kao Perzefona. C. Schefold (1952: 113) je mislio da je to Europa. Usporedbom s drugim slikama, reljefima i slikama na vazama može se zaključiti da je ova slika kopija grčkog originala načinjenog oko 330. g. pr. Kr.

Kad je o identifikaciji lika riječ, tu nemamo puno elemenata po kojima bismo se mogli ravnati. Ona je djevojka, šeta livadom, bere cvijeće, stavlja ga u košaru koju nosi preko ruke i okrenuta nam je leđima. Mitologija poznaje mnoge ženske likove koji su imali veze sa zelenom livadom punom cvijeća. To su Perzefona, Europa, Euridika, Oritija, Ija, te Sirene i Meduza. Perzefona, Europa, Euridika i Oritija bivaju ili otete ili umiru dok beru cvijeće, a ostali likovi i njihove nesretne sudbine tijesno su povezani s livadom. Košaru u ruci, prema izvorima, imaju Europa i Perzefona. Stoga je Schefold (1952: 113) pretpostavio da je djevojka na slici Europa, a njegovu tezu je prihvatio M. Robertson (1988). Obojica kažu da su u sobi 26 u Stabiju prikazane samo heroine - Medeja i Penelopa na plavoj podlozi, Leda s labudom i Djevojka koja bere cvijeće na zelenoj podlozi. Budući da su i Leda i Europa bile Zeusove ljubavnice, smatraju logičnim da je Djevojka koja bere cvijeće Europa prikazana prije

nego što je oteo Zeus u liku bika. Europa se u ikonografiji prikazuje na tri načina: ili kako jaše na biku, ili kako se igra pored bika ili kako zamišljeno sjedi pod platanom na Kreti. Nema situacije u ikonografiji po kojoj se Europa može prepoznati sama po sebi makar imala i košaru. Košara se u izvorima samo ponekad spominje uz Europu, ali se uz Perzefonu spominje stalno. Košara (Kalathos) je stalni atribut Perzefone na prikazima na vazama i na rimskim sarkofazima. Pisani izvori spominju je kao dio eleuzinskog rituala i Demetrinih procesija širom grčkog svijeta. Djevojka nam je okrenuta leđima. To je vrlo neobičan prikaz, na vazama ima malo paralela, na zidnom slikarstvu nešto više, ali svi likovi na freskama imaju konkretan razlog zašto su okrenuti leđima: ili se vrte u plesu ili sjede oko stola pa su neki nužno okrenuti. Stoga se postavlja pitanje zašto je slikar odabrao ovu neobičnu pozu. Ona je divna, ali mi je ne vidimo. Ona pripada drugome svijetu i nije nam dano da je ugledamo dok ne prijeđemo granicu svjetova. Na ovoj istoj livadi boravi Meduza koju ne smijemo pogledati u lice jer je to sigurna smrt. Lice božice smrti mora ostati nepoznato živima. Kako je uistinu izgledala Perzefona smrtnicima pokazuju nam sjajni kipovi Demetre i Perzefore iz Kirene - oni nemaju lice. Zato mislimo da je djevojka na slici Perzefona: ona šeta livadom, bere cvijeće, stavlja ga u kalathos i vidimo je s leđa.



T.1



T.2







