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FUNERAL MONUMENTS BETWEEN THE MIDDLE COURSE OF RIVER AXIOS AND STRIMON



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Abstract: Funeral monuments that are to be found on the territory between the middle course of river Axios and Strimon, from the first half of the 1st century till the 4th century can be divided into three basic types: plates, stelae and medallions. Since they appear in various parts of the territory in question, they bear local characteristics, and, though grouped according to the regions they belong to, still, they possess certain specific visual, typological and thematic characteristics. Stelae are dominant type of monuments, followed by medallions and stelae.

Funeral plates found in the region of Skopje, in other words on the territory of the Ancient city Scupi, from the end of the 1st century. A.D. (stelae no. 1 and 2) and were found in the village named Zlokukani. They were not self standing monuments, but had decorative function and were decoration of some larger funeral complexes, or, temples.

The motifs of vine on plate with stelae no 1. is modeled by using the technique of drilling with drill, thus achieving better plasticity. It belonged to a commander of a camp of the 14th Legion Geminaius, while plate no. 2 belonged to a legionary of the 7th Legion of Claudius, who, after being retired, has taken part in the civil government of Scupi. These plates, according to the choice and the voluminous way the motives have been modeled, the excellent art applied to the Latin inscription, and, the appearance in general, are certainly funeral works of art from the end of the first century A.D.

Funeral stelae, unlike plates, are self standing monuments. In the Skopje-Kumanovo region at around second half of the 1st century a group of stelae has been created that has large dimensions and their face is divided into two parts: tympanum and field for the inscription. Most of the stelae have been secondary used as spolia in the late Roman graves,

and during the process of adopting to the new monument in most cases the tympanum have been damaged, or the inscription field. The preserved copies show that stelae under the inscription field were cut off that is sharpened and thus pound into the ground during their erection. The foundation that is an integral part of the stelae from Moesia Inferior, here appears very sporadically and only on stelae that have three-parteted division of the frontal surface.

According to the shape of the tympanum there are:

- a. Stelae with triangular tympanum;
- b. Stelae with five angular tympanum;
- c. Stelae with rounded tympanum.

a. Stelae with triangular tympanum are typical for the artists from the workshop that was engaged in Scupi, from the second half of the 1st and the end of the 2nd century. The central acroteria of these stelae if it has been preserved is usually without decoration. Side acroteria sometimes may be decorated with plastic half palmettes. The field of the tympanum is very often decorated with rosette, but also with pine-tree cone, for instance stelae no 3. The frames of this group of stelae are not decorated, where a vase with rosettes is represented, and stelae no 3, decorated with a vase, vine and grapes. Stelae no 4 dated in the late 2nd century at the most, shows human figure modeled as bust in low relief, and rather stylized. These stelae show artistic influence from the artists working for the workshop of Oeskus in Moesia Inferior, from the first half of the 1st century.

b. Stelae with five angular tympanum are typical for the artists that work in the workshop of Scupi at the end of 1st century till the 1/3 of the 3rd century. On the top of the tympanum there is always pine tree cone, and the side acroteria are sometimes decorated with half palmettes. The field of the tympanum is usually decorated with rosette, patera and calatus, and from the 2nd century onwards, a composition

with the Thracian horseman appears. Funeral feast dated in the late 2nd century at the most, and on the contemporary stelae we see the deceased represented as being involved in a scene of everyday life, in full size. On stelae dated in the end of the 1st century till the 1/3 of the 3rd century, we see the motif of human bust as part of the funeral sculpture repertoire. The frames of the stelae are not decorated, except stelae that show vine leaves.

c. Stelae with rounded tympanum are related to the artists of another workshop from Scupi, different from the two mentioned before, dated from the end of 1st century till the 1/3 of the 3rd century. On the top of the tympanum there is pine tree core, and the side acroteria are usually decorated with half palmettes. Within the tympanum field there are rosette, sun disc and sacrificial altar.

From the end of 1st century till the end of the 3rd century, on stelae the motif of human bust is represented. Funeral feast is represented from the 1/3 of the 2nd century till the 1/3 of the 3rd century and at the beginning of the 2nd century, the composition with the Thracian soldier appears, on stela no. 5. Stelae with rounded tympanum visibly show the influence of the artists that worked in the workshops of Novae, in Moesia Inferior, at the end of 1st century and the beginning of the 2nd century.

Stelae no. 6 and 7 from Lopate, can be easily singled out as another workshop product, the so called *Sodales Platiae Superae-collegium funeraticium* private or private funeral collegium under the patronage of *Platiae Superae*, that produced stelae on demand, at the mid of the 2nd century.

On stelae from the Skopje-Kumanovo region, the fields of the inscription are divided by vertical column, that may be mounted by a capital and has a base, into two fields, but they both do not always possess inscribed inscription. These stelae are typical for the artists from the workshops of Scupi from the end of 1st century till the end of the 3rd century.

Apart from these workshops, within which, it can be noticed, since the second half of the 1st century, northern Italy artists have been involved, on the territory of Scupi, from the end of 1st century till the end of the 3rd century there are also local stonemasons' workshops, that make stelae of small dimensions, typical for the Macedonian-Hellenic south. On stela of the so called roman type no. 8 there are inscription written in Hellenic language, and a combination of Latin and Hellenic language in the inscription field is to be found on stela no. 9. There is a process of symbiosis of Roman and Hellenic elements, and that goes for all the above mentioned regions. Namely, stelae with symbiosis of Roman and Macedonian-Hellenic architectural or decorative elements are most numerous.

Within the Skopje-Kumanovo region, there are two types of stelae with three-parteted division of the frontal surface:

1. tympanum, inscription field and foundation,
2. tympanum, relief and inscription field on stelae

1. Stela no.10, from the first group have half-rounded or triangular tympanum, decorated with a rosette, or a rosette and wreath. The frames of this group of stelae are not decorated, except no.10, where fragments of vine as decoration can be noticed. On stela no.10, on the foundation there are fragments of a vase, and on no. 11, a fragment of a rounded object vase or a shield is recognizable. They are dated from the end of the 2nd century till the beginning of the 3rd century A.D. and are typical for a workshop that is under the influence of the artists from the contemporary workshop in Ratiaria in Moesia Inferior.

2. The second group of stelae appears in the second half of the 1st and can be found till the beginning of the 2nd century, with the highest density in the 2nd century. The artists from this workshop use pine tree cone as decoration on the top of stelae with triangular tympanum, can be dated in the end of the 2nd century or the 1/3 of the 3rd century. The slanting sides of the tympanum are sometimes decorated with vine leaves, or with dolphins. In the tympanum there are rosette, bucranium, funeral feast, Thracian horseman, and patera, bust, half human figure, toiletry box with a mirror and floral decoration.

The frames of this group of stelae are not decorated, except those of no.12 where vine leaves and grapes are represented. A bust as decorative motif in the field has began to be used the earliest with a stela from Morani, dated in the 70-86 year A.D., while on stela from Vlae it appears within the funeral feast composition, dated in the end of the 1st century, or the beginning of the 2nd century.

The stela no. 13 from Bardovci has frontal surface divided into four fields: tympanum, relief and inscription field, and foundation. Tympanum contains rosette, while the relief inscription field funeral feast. The frames of stelae are decorated with vine, while the foundation shows ascia. The stela is dated in the end of the 1st century, or first quarter of the 2nd century, and is unique example among the stelae in the Skopje-Kumanovo region.

Stelae from Skopje region, are made by local workshops' artists, and show low relief, bad proportion and simplified details.

In the region of eastern Macedonia, there are stelae with division of the frontal surface in two parts, that is typical for the Roman types, and the inscription field contains inscription in Macedonian- Hellenic language, or Latin. They have triangular, or rounded

tympanum, the frames are not decorated, where vine leaves are represented. They are dated from the mid of the 2nd century till the end of the 3rd century.

Within this region there are two types of stelae with three-parteted division of the frontal surface:

1. tympanum, inscription field and foundation, stela from village Filipovci, dated in the II-III century.

2. tympanum, relief field and horizontal groove, Mechkuevci-Sveti Nikole, dated in the I-II century.

Four-parteted division of the frontal surface is to be found on: stela from Malino - Sveti Nikole, and it contains tympanum, relief field, second relief field that is actually in between field, and inscription field with inscription in Hellenic language. Here also there is a symbiosis of Roman and Macedonian-Hellenic architectonic and decorative elements. That is, actually, the situation within the whole region of eastern Macedonia. This stela is dated in the first half of the 1st century.

Rounded small dimensions are typical for stelae from the southern Macedonia and the region of Struma, which is specific for the Hellenic type of stelae that have rectangular, pentagonal or half rounded shape. They have tympanum and pin, or tympanum, relief field, and pin, as well as inscription in Hellenic language. The tympanum is decorated with busts, half body figures, whole body figures and funeral feast. These stelae are dated from the beginning of the 2nd century until the beginning of the 4th century and are characterized with Roman and Macedonian-Hellenic elements.

It is believed that monumental stelae named northern Italian have been diffused through Aquileia in two directions: along the Danube coast to Moesia and, through province Dalmatia Dyrachion and along Via Egnatia reach Macedonia. The transmission of this kind of funeral art has been made by the soldiers, or better to say by the craftsmen lapidarii, who migrate together with the soldiers. They continue producing this kind of stelae in the new country.

This northern Italian type of stelae has not been accepted well by the local macedonians citizens, who continue to make and use small dimensions stelae, analogue to the south Hellenic ones, and quite different from those made in Moesia Superior, where the northern Italian type is the most popular one. The oldest stela of northern Italian type is from Malino-Sveti Nikole, dated in the first half of the 1st century. Here also Roman elements are used regarding the form, and Macedonian-Hellenic ones are visible in the full height human figure and the Hellenic inscription.

In southern Macedonia and within the region of Struma, funeral medallions have been found, dated from the end of the 1st century until the beginning

of the 4th C. They look like disc with central recess to which busts are adjoined, modeled in one, two or three rows. The frame of the medallion may be decorated with oval ornaments, while the lower part was attached with a pin to a foundation that contained inscription.

These medallions appear only in southeastern Macedonia in the vicinity of Gevgelia, Dojran and around the middle course of river Struma.

Among the decorative elements that appear on the territory between the middle course of river Axios and Strimon, most frequent are vine, pine cone, rosette and half -palmettes, and among the iconographic themes most popular is the funeral feast, while among the plastically represented human motifs-it is the motif of the bust.

In the Skopje-Kumanovo region frequent motifs are vine with wine leaves, grapes, ivy leaves as well as acanthus leaves, in the period of the second half of the 1st century till the second half of the 3rd century, with the highest density in the 2nd century.

In the region of eastern and southeastern Macedonia, this decorative motif is very rarely found. As decoration the motif of vine appears first in Rome and through the stelae from northern Italy it is transferred to Moesia Inferior, wherefrom was brought to Moesia Superior. There it was well accepted, unlike in Macedonia, where its presence is rather rare and limited to a certain area.

The motif of two pair of hands that may be seen on single stelae from Marvinci, dated in the first quarter of the 3rd century has been transferred from the Macedonian-Hellenic south-east.

Rosette is very frequent on stelae from the Skopje-Kumanovo region, from the second half of the 1st century till the second half of the 3rd century, with the highest density in the 2nd century. Rosette is very frequent on stelae from the eastern and southeastern Macedonia region from ½ of the 1st century until the end of the 3rd century. The appearance of the motif of rosette on the funeral sculpture is to be related to Macedonia, wherefrom was transferred to Rome. From Rome this iconography disperse to all the parts of the Empire and returns back to Macedonia, where it receives local characteristics.

Pine tree cone is one of the very frequent motifs that appear on the speller decoration of the stelae in Skopje-Kumanovo region from the end of the 1st century till the second half of the 3rd century.

In the region of eastern and southeastern Macedonia, this decorative motif is very rare. It has been transferred to Moesia from northern Italy through Ravenna along Danube coast. Here it was well accepted, unlike in Macedonia, where its presence var-

ies from region to region. Half palmettes are very frequent motif on stelae from the Skopje-Kumanovo region, from the first half of the 1st century until the first half of the 3rd century, unlike the stelae from the region of eastern and southeastern Macedonia, where their presence is rare. This decorative motif was transferred from northern Italy, along the Danube coast to Moesia.

Unlike these motifs, on the other hand we can see numerous garlands, bucranions, dolphins, ascias, Medusa heads and Atis, that are typical for the stelae in northern Italy and the province Dalmatia. On the territory of Macedonia and Moesia Superior they are rather rare and appear sporadically. It tells us that when something new had appeared in Rome, it was not automatically accepted in all the provinces of the Empire. We shall stress the fact that these decorative elements on stelae in Dalmatia appear at the end of the 2nd century, with rare exceptions, unlike in Macedonia, where they began to be used on stelae in the mid of the 1st century. That means that the influence of the second path of influence through Dalmatia is not to be considered in any case.

The mirror and the comb are very frequent motifs on stelae from the Skopje-Kumanovo region, and very rare in the other regions. Toilet box and spindle are used very rarely in all of the regions. They appear on the stelae from Macedonia and Elada, and latter have been accepted in all the part of the Roman Empire.

Vases are very frequent motifs on stelae from first half of the 1st century until the end of the 3rd century. Starting from the votive monuments they continued to be used on the stelae in Macedonia, and later on were accepted as decorative motif on the Roman funerary sculpture.

Figurative images are to be found dispersed all over the region.

Thracian horseman as iconographical theme appears rarely on stelae that are treated in this work, all in all on three of them, from the beginning till the end of the 2nd century, while the funeral feast, bust and half figure are very frequently represented.

The funeral feast composition appears in the second half of the 1st century till the 2nd half of the 3rd century, all over the regions. In the course of the 4th century B.C., this motif has been transferred to the Macedonian stelae, and hence to Moesia, Trace, Dacia and to Rome. As simplified (simple) variant, it spreads from Rome outwards, all over the provinces of the Roman Empire.

Human figure is represented as bust, half figure and full height human figure, starting from the first half of the 1st century till the beginning of the 4th

century. Bust appears on 36 monuments, from 70-86A.D. till the beginning of the 4th century, half figure on ten stelae, from the end of the 1st century till the first quarter of the 3rd century, and the full height human figure on six stelae, from the first half of the 1st century till the beginning of the 4th century.

Actually, when the human figure represented as bust appears, or as half figure, we can speak about funeral monument. Here the sculptor has tried to represent the individual characteristics of the deceased. Bust may be modeled in several ways on the monuments: with inscribed lines-the clothes are stylized, low relief and high relief. It means that apart from the flat linear style, typical for the provincial art in Roman times, there is high relief that stresses the tendency of artists to extract more from the background. It is especially true for the 2nd and 3rd century, when the figures are represented in very high relief, recalling of free standing sculptures, for instance stelae.

Generally, the representation of the busts on the medallions is realistic, that is to say the modeling style is in accordance with the common tendencies in the portrait art. For this reason they could be made in all the provinces of the Roman Empire, and dedicated to the deceased within the whole Imperial period. During the modeling of the decorative elements and the voluminous human figures, craftsmen used, besides chisel, used technique of drilling with drill and stelae. They have also used technique of graduation, technique of point, technique of different levels on stelae. The main characteristic of the artists that work in these workshops is stylization that appears from first half of the 1st century until the end of the 4th century.

Apart from stylization, from the 2nd century till the 4th century, schematization and geometrisation is noticeable, especially in the course of the 3rd century. At the end of the 1st century and especially around the mid of the 2nd century we encounter the tendency of realistic treatment, that, even though being rare at the time, will be present until the beginning of the 4th century.

Especially realistic is the deceased female with scarf over the head represented on stelae no 14, from southeastern Macedonia, who wears Also, in the course of the 2nd and also in the 4th century, the tendency towards idealization of the faces of the deceased appears, medallion no 1.

Local craftsmen apart from stylization and schematization, use linearity, geometrisation, without good sense for proportion, and with the tendency of horror vacui, especially in the course of the 3rd century.

Full height human figure is typical for the Macedonian-Hellenic type of stelae, and the same actually goes for the funeral feast and the Thrace horseman,

while a bust and the half height figure are typical Roman type of stelae. Still, even the typical Roman type of stelae with the choice of theme that are typical for the Macedonian-Hellenic south, and also by the way they are interpreted show a new style that is specific for this area.

Among these motives we notice Heracles' knot, various interlaces and vases, typical only for the stelae between middle course of Axios and Strimon, from the first half of the 1st century until the beginning of the 4th century. Not only vine, but any kind of motif is represented in a way that is typical of the workshops that worked at the time on this territory. These motives apart from decorative function had also symbolic meaning, that fit well in the belief in eternal life and rebirth man of the Antique period had. Sculptors have been acquainted very well with the symbolic meaning of the decorative elements, and that is why their choice and representation on funeral monuments can not be just accidently there.

Some stelae belonged to soldiers and legionnaires, for instance to the 7th Claudie's legion, 5th Macedonian, 4th Flavius's 14th Geminaius and 3rd Galikus, who, after serving their time, or by deduction-prior to the retirement period retirement or release, have inhabited this territory. They were accompanied by a lot of various types of craftsmen, who have combined the new artistic skills with the skills and knowledge of the local colleagues. Namely, prior to the arrival of Romans, there were funeral monuments erected and made, showing the influence of the craftsmen from the Hellenic south. And after the arrival of Romans in Macedonia, nothing have changed related to monuments outlook, that were of small dimensions, rectangular, or square, but only the bust as motif has been accepted.

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In Moesia Superior, on Roman type of stelae the following motives have been added: funeral feast, Thracian horseman, and Full height human figure, typical iconography of the craftsmen from the Macedonian-Hellenic south. Thus a symbiosis of the Roman and Macedonian-Hellenic architectural and decorative elements occurred, that combined with the local interpretation, make unique work in funeral art, from the first half of the 1st century until the beginning of the 4th century on the territory of the middle course of Axios and Strimon, whose main carrier was the Ancient Macedonian.

Summary

We may conclude that on the territory between middle course of river Axios and Strimon, the following several types of stelae appear:

1. Roman type of stelae (also named northern Italian) that have large dimensions, tympanum, and separated inscription field that contains Latin language inscription.

2. Macedonian-Hellenic type of stelae that have small height, rectangular, pentagonal or half rounded form of tympanum, pin, and an inscription in Hellenic language.

3. Stelae that show mixture of Roman and Macedonian-Hellenic architectonic and decorative elements

Local workshops' stelae that are characterized with small dimensions, tympanum, inscription field and an inscription usually are in Hellenic language.

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Роберт ПЕТКОВСКИ

НАДГРОБНИ СПОМЕНИЦИ МЕЃУ СРЕДНИОТ ТЕК НА АКСИЈ И СТРИМОН ВО РИМСКИОТ ИМПЕРИЈАЛЕН ПЕРИОД

резиме

Надгробните споменици, кои се јавуваат на територијата меѓу средниот тек на Аксиј и Стримон, од 1/2 на I до почетокот на IV век, се издвојуваат во три основни типови: плочи, стели и медалјони. Бидејќи се јавуваат во различни делови на третираната територија, тие носат свои локални карактеристики, а групирани според регионите во кои се јавуваат, сепак имаат одредени ликовни, типолошки и тематски специфики.

Надгробните плочи ги среќаваме во Скопскиот регион, т.е. на територијата на градот Скупи, од крајот на I век, во Злокуќани. Тие не биле самостојни споменици туку имале декоративна функција и биле украс на некои поголеми гробни комплекси или храмови. Овие плочи, според изборот и начинот на изведување на пластичните мотиви, одлично врежаниот натпис на латински јазик и општиот изглед, се ремек-дела на надгробната уметност од крајот на I век.

Надгробните стели за разлика од плочите, претставуваат самостојни споменици. Во Скопско-Кумановскиот регион околу втората половина на I в. се создава една група на стели, кои се одликуваат со големи димензии и двојно расчленување на лицето на плочата: тимпанон и натписно поле. Повеќето стели секундарно биле употребени како сполии во доцно римски гробници, а при адаптирањето најчесто бил откришен тимпанонот или долниот дел од натписното поле. Според обликот на тимпанонот се издвојуваат: стели со триаголен, петоаголен и со полукружен тимпанон, зашилени и така забивани во земјата при нивното поставување.

Во Југоисточна Македонија и регионот на Средна Струма се присутни и надгробни медалјони, од крајот на I в. до почетокот на IV в. Тие имаат форма на диск со вдлабната основа на која се моделирани бисти во еден, два и три реда. Рамката на медалјонот може да биде украсена со јајцевиден орнамент, а во долниот дел имало клин со кој медалјонот се поставувал на постамент, на кој имало натпис. Овие медалјони се јавуваат само во Југоисточна Македонија и тоа во околината на Гевгелија, Дојран и Средна Струма.

Од декоративните елементи кои се јавуваат на територијата меѓу средниот тек на Аксиј и Стримон, најзастапени се лозата, боровата шишарка, розетата и полупалметите, од иконографските теми - посмртната гозба, а од пластичните човечки претстави - бистата.

Не само лозата, туку секој мотив е претставен на начин, кој е одлика само на ателјеата кои твореле на оваа територија во тој период. Овие мотиви освен декоративната функција имале и етнографско и симболично значење, кое се вклопувало во верувањата на Македонците во антиката, идејата за вечен живот и повторно раѓање. Тие долго време по доаѓањето на Римјаните продолжуваат со третирање на мотиви кои им биле пренесени од минатото, тогаш само ги прилагодуваат според вкусот на нарачателите на стелите. Мајсторите каменоресци одлично го познавале симболичкото значење на декоративните елементи, па затоа нивниот избор и изведба врз надгробните споменици, не може да биде случаен.

Некои од стелите припаѓаат на војници и легионери, кои по отслужувањето на воениот рок или со дедукција (предвремено отпуштање - пензија), се населиле на оваа територија. Со нив дошле разни мајстори и занаетчи, кои новите уметнички вештини ги комбинирале, со вештините и знаењата на луѓето кои тука живееле. Имено и пред доаѓањето на Римјаните, во Македонија се правеле и користеле надгробни споменици, кои настанале под влијание на мајсторите од југот (Хелада).

На тој начин е добиена една симбиоза на римски и македонско-хеленски архитектонски и декоративни елементи, кои во комбинација со локалната интерпретација, прават уникатна целина во надгробната уметност, од 1/2 на I в. до почетокот на IV в., на територијата меѓу средниот тек на Аксиј и Стримон, чии главни носители се Античките Македонци.



Stalae No. 1 Zlokukani



Stalae No. 2 Zlokukani



Stalae No. 3 Lopate



Stalae No. 4 Konjuh



Stalae No. 5 Sredno Konjare



Stalae No. 6 Lopate



Stalae No. 7 Lopate



Stalae No. 8 Dolno Vodno



Stalae No. 9 Sredno Konjare



Stalae No.10 Sopishte



Stalae No.11 Vlae



Stalae No.12 Skupi



Stalae No.13 Bardovci



Stalae No.14 SI Macedonia



Medallion No.1 Gevgelija - Dojran



Medallion No.2 Gevgelija - Dojran