

AKTI VIII. MEĐUNARODNOG KOLOKVIJA O PROBLEMIMA RIMSKOG PROVINCIJALNOG UMJETNIČKOG STVARALAŠTVA

AKTEN DES VIII. INTERNATIONALEN KOLLOQUIUMS ÜBER PROBLEME DES PROVINZIALRÖMISCHEN KUNSTSCHAFFENS

THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE 8TH INTERNATIONAL COLLOQUIUM ON PROBLEMS OF ROMAN PROVINCIAL ART

LES ACTES DU VIII^{ÈME} COLLOQUE INTERNATIONAL SUR LES PROBLÈMES DE L'ART PROVINCIAL ROMAIN

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RELIGIJA I MIT KAO POTICAJ RIMSKOJ PROVINCIJALNOJ PLASTICI

RELIGION UND MYTHOS ALS ANREGUNG FÜR DIE PROVINZIALRÖMISCHE PLASTIK

RELIGION AND MYTH AS AN IMPETUS FOR THE ROMAN PROVINCIAL SCULPTURE

LA RELIGION ET LE MYTHE COMME INSPIRATION POUR LA SCULPTURE ROMAINE PROVINCIALE

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THE ANCIENT CULTURAL UNITY BETWEEN THE CENTRAL ADRIATIC LITTORAL AND THE DELMATIAN HINTERLAND

BY MARIN ZANINOVIĆ

There is a strong geographic difference between the Adriatic Littoral and its hinterland (Strab., VII, 5, 17). The coast and especially the islands, were always more open to the various influences of the newcomers, who mostly arrived via sea routes. The ethnic and cultural unity of the Illyrians on the coast, along with those on the mainland and in the interior, is convincingly represented by the cult of Silvanus, especially present in the area of the mighty tribe of the Delmatae. We find their reliefs on such “classic” territory as the island of Hvar, ancient Pharos, well known in the antiquity with its wine production. In some aspects, the cults of Dionysus and Liber also belong to the ancient Illyrian beliefs.

On its long coast, with a thousand islands and cliffs, the territory of Croatia was always exposed to newcomers who arrived with different intentions. Some were welcomed as merchants and seafarers, while others were undesired conquerors who threatened proper living and existence. These facts make the complete historical past of our land and its littoral in all periods. The Adriatic Sea is only a large bay of the Mediterranean Sea, and through it passed the shortest sea route to the Alpine passes and to Central Europe. The very ancient so called “Amber route” is one of the well known manifestations of the importance of this sea route. The archaeological finds from the Palaeolithic onwards give evidence about the relations of our coast with the distant regions of the Mediterranean, both from the east the west. A similar situation, in a continental manner, can be seen in northern Croatia, especially between the Sava and Drava rivers. Numerous invasions and migrations passed through here heading south and west, to Greece and Italy. For this reason Croatia was many times destroyed and plundered. The archaeological finds show that many invasions occurred, and in the prehistoric

periods this is proved by the burnt layers on the Neolithic as on the later sites.

The duality of today’s Croatian land was known to the ancient authors who wrote about our region. One of these is the geographer and historian Strabo from Amasia on the Pontus (63 BC – 19 AD). He himself noted that he travelled in the lands of the Mediterranean from Armenia to Sardinia and from Pontus (Black sea) to Ethiopia. He stayed for a long time in Rome and Egypt. While his “Geography” is completely preserved, his historical work, in which he continued Polybius’ history, is regrettably lost except for some fragments. Thank to Strabo we have some precious information about our area, especially about the tribe of the Delmatae, their settlements and their customs. He is the first who expressly stated the duality of their territory. He writes about the Liburnian coast, and then continues (Stra., VII, 5, 5), “The Dalmatian Littoral with their harbour Salon, then lists some of their more important settlements of which some are the cities (poleis) as Salona, Promona, Ninia and Sinotion, Old and New which were burnt by Augustus, then there is Andetrium a fortified place and Delmion the big town from which is the name of this people. There is the mountain Adrion which divides the Dalmatian land (Dematiken) in the middle on its littoral part and this one on the other side”.

The Delmatae originally lived in the mountainous areas and in the karsst valleys in the hinterland of the sea coast, between the rivers Krka (Titius) and Cetina (Hippus). In the middle of this area rises the magnificent mountain of Dinara (Adrion), 1931 m high, as a bulwark dividing the north from south of their land. But this, and other mountains along the coast, such as Kozjak, Mosor and Biokovo, did not prevent communication between the interior and the sea coast and

the world of the Mediterranean. In their interior we find the coins of the Greek cities and other items such as Greco-Illyrian helms, found mainly on the territory of the Delmatae. Knowing their warlike qualities, this is not surprising. The main lines of penetration of the Greek, as well as other influences, passed through the pass of Klis, north of Salona, and by other passes, arriving in their valleys beyond the Dinara. Another important route went from the valley toward the present day town of Čapljina and along the rivulet of Trebižat, then the valleys of Ljubuški and Imotski, as the natural way to their central valley of Duvno (Delminium).¹

Another Greek from Asia Minor, and valued writer of "The Roman History", Cassius Dio Cocceianus (cca. 150-235 AD), who like Strabo was from the northern province of Bithynia (from the town of Nicaea, about 350 km to the west from Amasia), wrote his work nearly two centuries after Strabo. Unfortunately, it is in most part lost and only partly preserved in the later Byzantine copies (Zonaras and others). Dio was the governor of the Roman province of Dalmatia from 223 – c. 226, and Pannonia Superior from 226 – c. 228. He knew his provinces well and when he described Octavianus campaign in Illyricum in 35-33 BC, he accentuated the difference between Dalmatia and Pannonia. The Pannonians are living in the background of Dalmatia along the coast of Ister (Danube), from Noricum to the European Moesia, and compared with other people they lived very poorly. Neither the land nor the climate was favourable to them, so they did not produce oil or wine, except in small quantities and of bad quality. Because lived in the cold for the greater part of the year, they ate millet and barley, with which they also prepared drinks². As a true man of the Mediterranean, wine and oil were a measure of good cooking for Dio. This is a confirmation of the ancient opinion that the Mediterranean lands end where there are no olive trees. We have to remind ourselves that Strabo stated that the Adriatic islands are very favourable for the cultivation of olive

trees and vineyards (Strab., VII, 5, 10). He also underlines that all the territory beyond the Adriatic coast is mountainous and cold, and with a lot of a snow, thus making it unfavourable for the cultivation of grapevines and wine. Of course, we shall not conclude that the Illyrians did not know about grapevines and wine. What is known about them from ancient authors is that they consumed the wine in great quantities; at least in the upper layers of their society, as is stated by Polybius (II, 4, 6, XXIX, 5, 7, cf. Liv., XIV, 30)³. The wine amphoras from Pharos and Issa, found at the site of Ošanići (the center of the Illyrian tribe of Daorsi), confirms this fact, as commerce regarding the import of wine from Chios and Thassos, on the estuary of the Naron river, is noted by Strabo (according to Theopompus) (VII, 5, 9).

The Greek presence on our coast is very old, beginning with the Myceneans whose pottery was found on the island of Brač (Škrip) and on the Monkodonja hillfort near Rovinj in Istria. The sources also register a possible sporadic presence of the Rhodians, the Phocaeans, the Corinthians, the Corcyreans and the Athenians. There were possibly others whose names were not noted in the books of a history. The permanent presence of the Greeks on our coast was a consequence of the imperial might and will of Dionysius, the Elder from Syracuse (404-367 BC) and the most powerful ruler in his time on the Mediterranean⁴. To secure his political and strategic supremacy on the Adriatic, he helped colonists from Sicily and southern Italy to settle on the island of Vis (Issa) in the beginning of the fourth century BC. This was followed by the founding of Pharos (Stari Grad) on the island of Hvar in 385/4, where the Parians from the Aegean Sea settled. With these foundations, Dionysius set in motion the historical processes with a lasting influence on the destiny of native populations and their political and social development. These processes, at different periods, lead to initial conflicts in which the native settlements were destroyed and their land taken; forcing them with military might

¹ M. Zaninović, *The Illyrian Tribe of the Delmatae*. Godišnjak Centra za balkanološka ispitivanja (Godišnjak CBI) 4, 1966, 27–92. – Idem, *The Illyrian Tribe of the Delmatae II*. Godišnjak CBI 5, 1967, 5–101. – Idem, *Le relazioni greco-delmate sull'Adriatico*. Jadranska obala u protohistoriji – Kulturni i etnički problemi. Simpozij Dubrovnik 1972 (Zagreb 1976) 301–307. = M. Zaninović, *Od Helena do Hrvata* (Zagreb 1996) 193–200. – Idem, *The Territory of the Neretva Valley as a Foothold of Roman Penetration*. Izdanja Hrvatskog Arh. Društva 5 (Split 1980) 173–180. = Idem, *Od Helena do Hrvata* (Zagreb 1996) 221–229. – I. Marović, *L'elmo greco-illirico*. Jadranska obala u protohistoriji (Zagreb 1976) 287–300. – S. Čače, *Dalmatica Straboniana*. Diadora 16–17, 1994–1995, 101–128.

² Dio, XXI, 49, 36–38. – M. Šašel Kos, *A Historical Outline of the Region Between Aquileia, the Adriatic and Sirmium in Cassius Dio and Herodian* (Ljubljana 1986) 5–49; 130–131.

³ M. Zaninović, *The Illyrians and the Grapevine*. Godišnjak CBI 13, 1976, 261–272 = Idem, *Od Helena do Hrvata* (Zagreb 1996) 385–393.

⁴ G. Novak, *Kolonizatorsko djelovanje Dionizija Starijega na Jadranu*. Vjesnik Hrvatskog Arh. Društva 18–21. Serta Hoffilleriana, 1937–1940, 111–128. – Idem, *I Greci antichi nell'Adriatico*. Rad Jugoslavenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti 322, 1961, 145–222. – L. Braccisi, *Grecità Adriatica* (Bologna 1979). – J. Jeličić et alii, *Pharos – Antički Stari Grad*. Catalogue of the Exposition. Zagreb – Muzejski prostor, December 1995 – January 1996, 160 pp.

to become slaves or subjects without rights. Naturally, we do not have many facts needed to get a complete and clear picture of these complicated relations, but what we can get from the authors and archaeological remains is the presence of permanent tension between the natives and the newly arrived, depending on the situations in different periods.

The relations between the Illyrians on the mainland and those on the islands proceeded in the accepting of the influences of one civilization which had might and methods to impose themselves on these peoples, depending on their position in different geographical areas. The inscriptions, archaeological finds (local and imported), coins and their mints and hoards lend support to these processes. The ascent of the Illyrian Ardiaean state, after the fall of the Dionysian Empire, turned over these processes and made the Adriatic Greeks more or less a second grade factor. A demanding of Roman protection from the Illyrian threats by the Issaeans and Pharians, together with the southern Greek settlements of Corcyra (Korfu), Apollonia and Dyrrhachium, brought the Romans, who were the new masters of the Mediterranean, on the eastern Adriatic coast and on its islands.

For our theme the religious picture and situation in our region, according to the preserved monuments and inscriptions, is important. The Greeks, as always, brought with them their official divinities (Zeus, Dionysus, Hermes, Heracles, Athena, Artemis, Aphrodite, Persephone and others) whose names we find in the inscriptions and their images on the coins. The religious base of the Illyrians was, as far as we can judge by preserved monuments and the surviving elements found in beliefs of the later inhabitants on their land, was that of worship of the forces of nature. These are divinities of nature, the forests and the protectors of livestock. Firstly, this is a divinity similar to the Greek Pan, whom they accepted during the time in his Greek, or later Roman variant of Silvanus, usually designed as the *interpretatio graeca* or *romana* of a said native divinity. In some relief monuments he is associated with Diana, with the nymphs or with some other divinities like Liber (the Italian equivalent of Dionysus).

This complex picture of the native Illyrian beliefs was systematically studied and explained prof. Dujice Rendić Miočević, especially the cult of Silvanus and other divinities connected with him. He has systematized their iconography and the variants in the archaeological monuments⁵. He was fascinated by the number of these monuments, especially in the interior of the territory of the tribe of the Delmatae, and rightly concluded that it represents the original native divinity considering the sites where were found their monuments and their anonymous local stone-cutters (a sort of a “naive” artists of these bygone centuries). So it is not surprising that the known unique Illyrian sculptor Maximinus is a local master who undersigned himself on the reliefs of Diana and the girl named Lupa with *Maximinus sculpet*. The first reliefs were found near Imotski in the end of the 19 century, and the monument to Lupa was found in the same region near the village of Sovići, near Gruda in Hercegovina, in 1956. In his later studies, Rendić Miočević included the territory of the province of Pannonia. He proved that the abundance of these monuments in the Illyro-Dalmatian regions is the unique repertory of our archaeological heritage. It is interesting that the Silvanus monuments are also relatively numerous at Salona, the capital of the province of Dalmatia. However, taking into account its geographic position, it was a natural “capital city” for its immediate and strong Delmatian hinterland who persistently kept their traditions⁶.

What I have stated up to now is connected firstly with the “Delmatian” coast and its hinterland. Induced by our Conference about Roman provincial artistry, I would like to underline the spiritual and ethnic unity of our coast and islands during these ancient times, and also in other periods of the past. Namely, our “classical” islands, it seems, were outside of the veneration of the native cults. This appears to be the case as they were marked more with the official divinities of the Greek poleis; in our case Issa and Pharos. Several years ago, I published some newly found reliefs of the Silvanus cult from the island of Hvar, better known by its Greek traditions and archaeological monuments⁷.

⁵ D. Rendić Miočević, *Représentations illyriennes de Sylvanus sur les monuments du culte dans le domaine Dalmate*. Glasnik Zemaljskog muzeja 10, 1955, 5–40 = Idem, *Iliri i antički svijet* (Split 1989) 461–506.

⁶ D. Rendić Miočević, *Neki ikonografski i onomastički aspekti Silvanove kulturne zajednice u Panoniji i Iliriku*, Vjesnik Arheološkoga muzeja u Zagrebu 3. ser. 12–13 [Posvećen Z. Vinskome] 1979–1980, 105–120 = Idem, *Iliri i antički svijet* (Split 1989) 507–522. – Idem, *Dva antička signirana reljefa iz radionice majstora Maksimina*. Arheološki radovi i rasprave JAZU 4–5, 1967, 339–341 = Idem, *Iliri i antički svijet* (Split 1989) 559–570. – For the inscriptions and monuments at Salona: M. Zaninović, *The Illyrian Tribe of the Delmatae*. Godišnjak CBI 4, 1966, 47–54. – Silvanus in the hinterland of Salona: A. Rendić Miočević, *A propos des deux sanctuaires de Silvain dans les environs de Salone*. Arheološki radovi i rasprave 8–9, 1982, 121–140. More finds of Silvanus monuments in the area of the Delmatae has published I. Bojanovski in several papers.



FIG. 1 RELIEF OF SILVANUS FROM SVIRČE, THE ISLAND OF HVAR.

(Fig. 1 and 2). These reliefs show that our “classical” islands, with these native traditions, belong to the same spiritual sphere as their compatriots on the neighbouring mainland. We have to accentuate that the reliefs were found in a village area, the *chora* of the polis of Pharos, more precisely in their time in the *ager* of the Roman Pharia. The relief of Silvanus with the nymphs was found in the surroundings of the village of Dol, about 2 km from Pharos, somewhere in the middle of the 20th century. In this village there are remains of Roman villas, from where this relief most probably came from. It was kept in the Archaeological

collection of the Dominican monastery at Strai Grad (Pharos), from which it was regrettably stolen about ten years ago.

The second damaged Silvanus relief was found in 1962 near the village of Svirče about 2 km to the east of Dol. The fact that these reliefs were found outside the urban area of Pharos or Pharia means that they were dedicated by the native inhabitants of this fertile plain. Parallely along side the Greek element on the island, the original native Illyrian population was continuously present. This we can conclude from rare preserved inscriptions. From the plain of Pharos come well known



FIG. 2 SILVANUS AND THE NYMPHS FROM DOL, THE ISLAND OF HVAR.

inscriptions of *Mathios* (the son of *Pitheos*), who on a plain stone slab marked a boundary stone (*horos*) of his lot of land. Certainly the most famous is the decree (*psephisma*) from Lumbarda on the island of Korčula (ancient *Corcyra Niger*) in which the Greeks from Issa made a contract with the local Illyrians and their chieftains (*Pullus* and his son *Daza*) who permitted the Greeks to settle in their plain. In the names of the three Dorian tribes *Dymanes*, *Hylleis*, and *Pamphyloi*, listed at the end of the inscription, there are also some Illyrian names. Similarly as with the names on the Issaeon Tragourian inscriptions at the Issaeon subcolony Tragourion (Tro-gir) like *Oltionos Salla*, *Zopyros Oltionos*, *Oltios Enkt* ...; this last one from Issa, about which more can be found in the fine paper of prof. Duje Rendić Miočević⁷. It is possible to observe that there are a small number of these names. But this group of people, already by their social position, left fewer documents on their private and official life of their communities. It is also possible

to object that there is a small number of only two reliefs on the island of Pharos, but neither are the Greek monuments more numerous. As to the Silvanus reliefs, we can associate a rustic relief of *Libera* in the act of libation found on the southern side of the island, on the site of a villa rustica in the village of Zavala, which is well known today by its fine vineyards. This lack of monuments is probably a result of early Christianization of our islands and the region of Salona, when many pagan monuments were destroyed, especially those of Pan or Silvanus, according to whose image was made and a figure of the devil in the Christian iconography. An interesting episode occurred at the parish of Makarska in the 18th century when the villagers found the relief of Silvanus, and thinking that it was the image of the devil, had it destroyed. Maybe from the same reason Silvanus from Svirče was destroyed, with only the head remaining similar to that from Salona, possibly from the same workshop. (Fig. 3) The iconographical

⁷ M. Zaninović, *Three Ancient Reliefs from Hvar*. *Opuscula archaeologica* 6, 1966, 15–24. = Idem, *Od Helena do Hrvata* (Zagreb 1996) 137–147.

⁸ D. Rendić Miočević, *The Illyrians in the Inscriptions of the Greek Colonies in Dalmatia*. *Vjesnik Arh. i Hist. Dalmatinsku* 53, 1952, 25–48. = Idem, *Iliri i antički svijet* (Split 1989) 155–180. For the relations of the Dalmatian Mainland and the Islands: M. Zaninović, *The Illyrian Tribe of the Delmatae*. *Godišnjak CBI* 4, 1966, 46–70.



FIG. 3 SILVANUS FROM SALONA.

representation of Silvanus and nymphs from Dol can be connected with the relief from Gardun (Tilurium) (Fig. 4) and some others.

We must say that the island of Hvar, in its narrower and elongated eastern part, is without significant agricultural areas. Therefore, this part was left to the native inhabitants. We can conclude this on the basis of the archaeological finds where the antiquity is scarcely represented, differently from the central island plain⁹ and the western parts of the island as well. The islands population always renovated with the settlers from the mainland. One important reservoir for these people was the estuary of the Naron river, to which area Hvar is nearing with its eastern end as to the opposite Makarska littoral. The Greeks were interested mainly in its trade possibilities, fertile fields and the ports. From the Black sea to



FIG. 4 RELIEF OF SILVANUS AND THE NYMPHS FROM GARDUN.

Hispania, the classical world of the Greeks remained on the coasts, and in the interior of these territories we find their products from Scythia to Illyricum and Gallia. Italian archaeology, for example, began to explore and discover the native hill-fort settlements in the interior of Calabria by the Romanian prof. Dinu Adamesteanu as recently as in the 60s of the 20th century. Vincenzo Tusa did so in western Sicily in the 70s, as did Adriano La Regina in the central region of Adriatic Italy¹⁰.

As a rule, the Greeks guarded the coast. Due to the already expounded facts, these monuments are especially important for us in permeating the Illyrian beliefs and cults with classical Greek and Roman iconography. That is, they are not only archaeological documents about the existence of the domestic Illyrian cults on the classical territory of our islands, but also social and sociological monuments about the spiritual conditions of the native population; a population which kept their traditions during the prevalent and dominant world of the Graeco-Roman antiquity. This is what I wanted to accentuate given the context of our scientific conference, which is most needed and very useful.