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## The Sculptures from Styberra

UDK: 904:730(497.775),,652”

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The ruins of the city of Styberra are located 16 km to the west of Prilep, on the interfluvium of the Blato and Crna Reka (Erigon) rivers. It is situated on the hill of Bedem, 0.2 km south of the village of Čepigovo and 1 km north-west of the village of Trojkrsti (Fig.1). The hill of Bedem is the westernmost section of the Topolčanska Pregrada, which divides Pelagonia into two parts, the Bitola plain and the Prilep plain.

The numerous remains of marble monuments from Antiquity discovered here through excavation or by accident are very well known amongst scholars and the general public. Marble statues of a religious and secular character constitute a significant proportion of such finds. These sculptures adorned the public buildings in the city of Styberra and the private residences of rich Styberians,

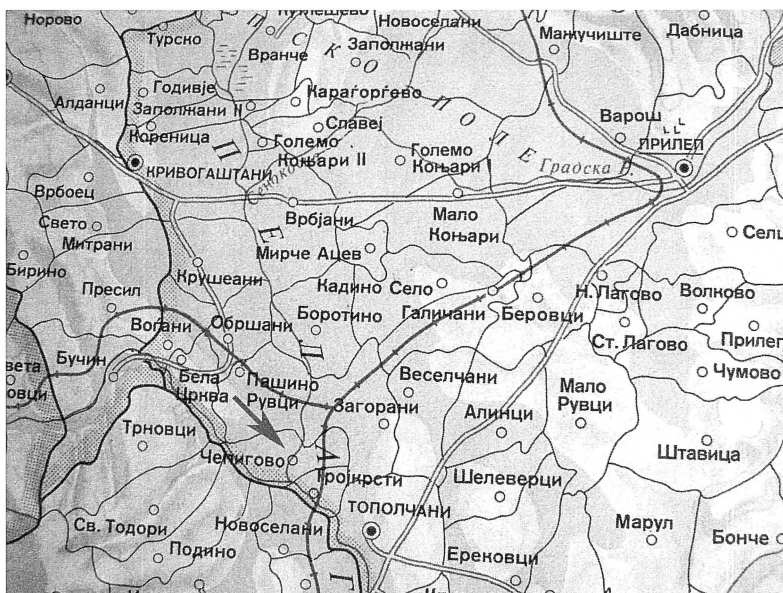


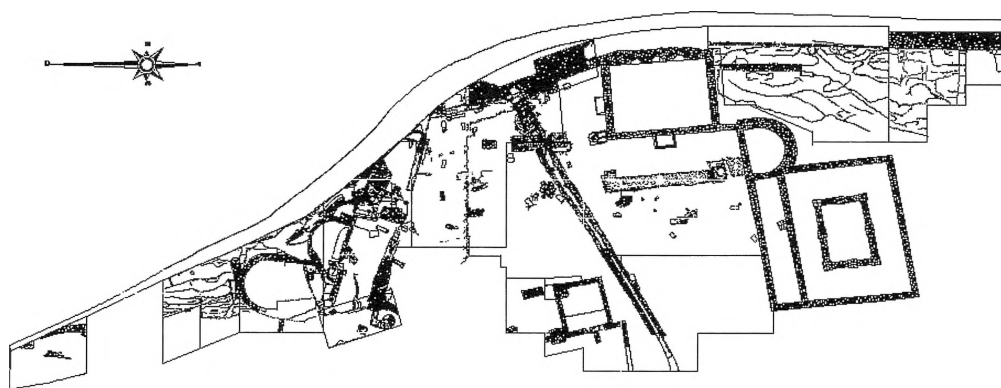
Fig 1.

attesting to the importance of the location and the role of this settlement in Antiquity. The earliest written description of the city was penned by the Greek historian Polybius (200–120 BC), while more detailed information about Styberra was provided by Livy and Strabo.<sup>1</sup> The historian Livy (59 BC–17 AD) described how the Roman army went from Heraclea Lyncestis to Styberra to obtain wheat during the campaign of Consul Sulpicius against King Phillip V of Macedon in 200 BC. Livy further provided an account of the battles of the Macedonians against the Romans and the Illyrians. He tells

<sup>1</sup> Папазоглу, 1957: 212-221; Вучковик-Тодоровик, 1963: 60.



Fig 2.



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Fig 3.



Fig 4.



Fig 5.



Fig 6.



Fig 7.

us that King Perseus of Macedon organized his military headquarters in Styberra in 168 AD and this was the starting point for his conquest of the lands of the neighboring Penestians. After he had conquered Uskana (present-day Kičevo), he returned to Styberra with the captured Penestians and had them sold as slaves. The geographer Strabo (65 BC-25AD) wrote a description of three cities located in Deuriopus in the valley of the River Erigon, one of which was the city of Styberra. From the records of early itineraries it is known that the city was a stop on the road connecting Stobi and Heraclea. Styberra is omitted as a station on the Tabula Peutingeriana, but an anonymous geographer from Ravenna noted it as Istubera in the following order: Euriston, Ceramiae, Istubera and Heraclea. Research undertaken in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century by historians such as W.M. Leake, E. Kuhn, L. Heuzey, J.G. Hann, M. Dimitza, G. Kacarov and B. Saria recorded numerous remnants of ancient monuments



Fig 8.



Fig 9.

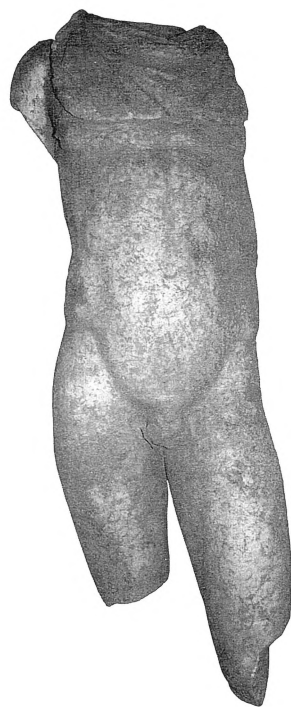


Fig 10.

near the village of Čepigovo. Parts of the city's fortification wall, a temple dedicated to the goddess Tyche and parts of the Gymnasium complex of this ancient city on the left bank of Crna Reka River were discovered during archaeological excavations on the Bedem hill. (Figs. 2 and 3).<sup>2</sup>

The first trial excavations, conducted by N. Vulić in 1924, confirmed that a large ancient settlement once existed on the site.<sup>3</sup> More detailed and reliable information about the city's existence was gained in 1953 with the discovery of numerous marble sculptures and epigraphic monuments during the excavations of D. Vučković-Todorović.<sup>4</sup>

2 Вучковић-Тодоровић, 1963: 59-101; Микулчић, 1996: 15-35.

3 Вулић, 1931: 186-191.

4 Вучковић-Тодоровић, 1963: 59-101.



Fig 11.

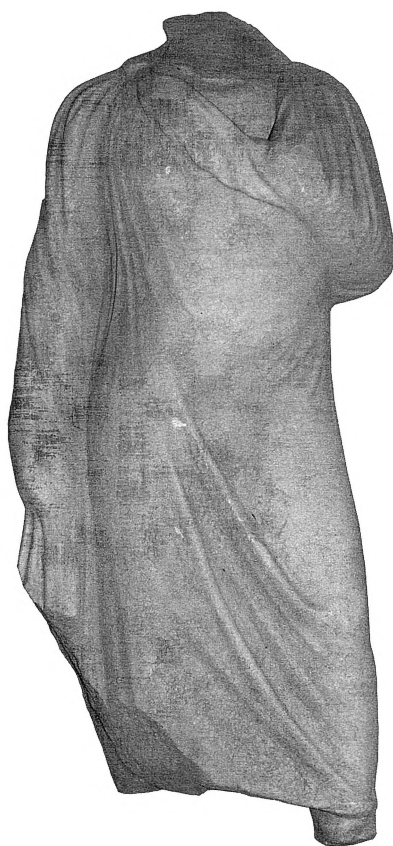


Fig 12.

Since 1983, the State Museum of Prilep has conducted some twenty minor archaeological excavations on previously opened sites, as well as carrying out conservational interventions on the remains of the previously excavated buildings.<sup>5</sup> Such interventions have been executed on the walls of the Temple of Tyche and the excavated parts of the Gymnasium. Small-scale archaeological research has also been carried out on some partially excavated buildings and this research has tended to increase in scope and intensity in recent years. Several marble sculptures and fragments of sculpture, as well as fragments of marble epigraphic monuments and architectural marble elements have been yielded in the excavations so far performed within a relatively small area of the site.<sup>6</sup> In this article we will elaborate further on the marble statues and religious sculptures that have been found in the course of excavations conducted in the period between 2001 and 2010.

During this period of research, two religious and six portrait sculptures were found, as well as several fragments from the upper and lower extremities of sculptures of various sizes, and two damaged plinths with the feet of the statues they once supported. Beside these remains sculptures have been found several fragments of architectural marble elements, several fragmented marble epigraphic monuments and two plinths with inscriptions. One of the plinths has deep feet indentations created by

5 Кепеска –Кепески, 1986: 84-85; Кепеска –Кепески, 1990: 161-170; Кепеска –Кепески, 2008: 230-241.

6 Вучковиќ-Тодоровиќ, 1963: 59-101; Соколовска, 1987.



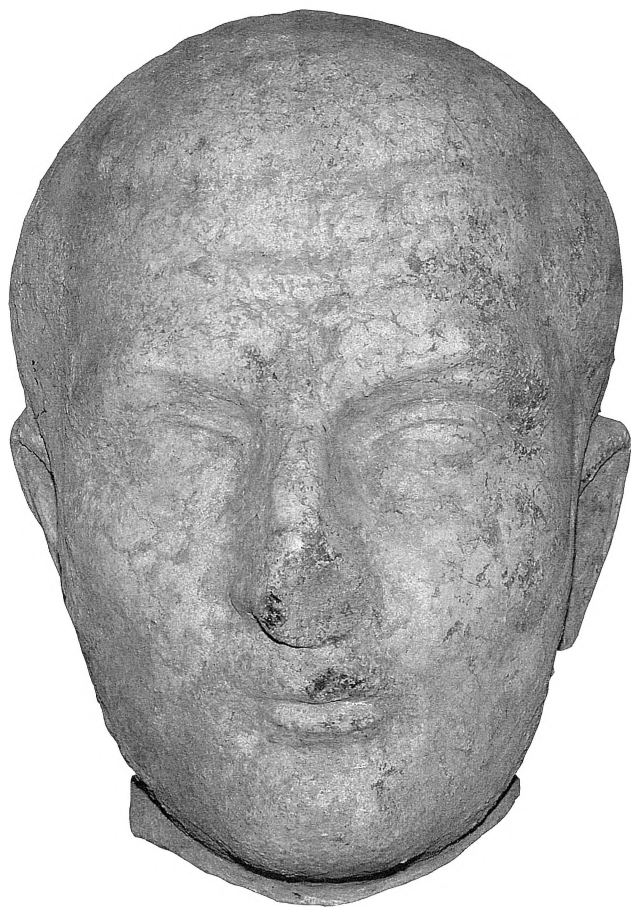


Fig 13.

the sculpture that it supported (Fig.4). The plinths with inscriptions and one of the female portrait statues were found in a religious building of which two rooms have been excavated.<sup>7</sup> These newly found marble statue heads and sculptures add to the existing body of cult and portrait sculptures from Styberra.<sup>8</sup> The religious sculptures were dedicated to the gods Nike and Hermes. The portrait sculptures include a sculpture of Septimius Maestrius Licon, an honourable citizen of Styberra, a sculpture of an Emperor, two torsos of *epheboi* and two torsos of young women.

The white marble sculpture of the goddess Nike is of small dimensions. It was found in two fragments, with a total preserved height of 0.40 m (Fig 5). The head of the statue, a fragment of the left

arm and the whole right arm, as well as a fragment of the right wing, are all missing. The goddess is represented at the moment of landing, draped in a thin *himation* that clings tightly to the body at the front and falls in rich folds from her upper back, beginning under the wings and ending at the feet. The right side of the statue is the most seriously damaged. The goddess lightly touches the ground, which is represented as a round base, or torus, now badly damaged. The marble is quite porous and crumbles when touched. The finding of this statue is significant for it is one of the few statues of a winged Nike whose body is almost entirely intact together with its wings.<sup>9</sup> The statue from Styberra, fashioned by a local craftsman at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. AD, can be connected with numerous copies of the type of statue that represents the goddess at the moment of landing. Another representation of this goddess can be found carved on a large marble slab which formed part of the architectural decoration found in the space in front of the *temenos* in the Gymnasium sector. On the front face of this slab, Nike is sculpted in bas relief at the moment of landing. These two marble monuments

7 Кепеска –Кепески, 2011.

8 Вулић, 1931: 186, 188-191, No. 502-508; Вулић, 1941-48: 184, 186-189, No. 388-392; Вучкович-Тодорович, 1963: 82-87; Соколовска, 1987: 33, 34; Кепески, 2006: 207-216; Кепеска –Кепески, 2007: 87-91; Кепеска –Кепески, 2008: 258-260.

9 Кепеска –Кепески, 2010: 258-260.

confirm that the goddess Nike was venerated and respected in Styberra. As the goddess of victory, Nike brought triumph in war and competitions after the gods had decided on the victor. Such competitions were held in gymnasiums and thus her presence in the Gymnasium of Styberra is understandable.<sup>10</sup> The famous representation of the winged Nike by the Greek sculptor Paeonius of Mende served as a model for numerous copies. Representations of the goddess as she descends from the clouds and touches the earth—represented as a round base or torus—were produced frequently during the Hellenistic and Roman periods.

A white marble statue of Hermes (Mercury) has also been found, in which Hermes is represented as a child sitting naked atop a massive, rough stone slab.<sup>11</sup> This has been preserved together with its base and the total height is 0.65 m. The head and most of the neck of the god are missing, as well as the right arm, a part of the left forearm, and the hand in which he is holding his customary symbol, a wand (*karykeion*) that has a damaged upper part (Fig.6). Both of the statue's legs are broken off below the thighs, though a part of the left lower leg has been preserved, on which a pair of wings are visible either side of the foot. A cloak hangs from the statue's left shoulder, falling in long vertical folds on the left arm and all the way down to the base. The damaged upper part of the torque *karykeion* rests upon the god's cloak above the left elbow. On the rear side of the statue, all the anatomical features are accentuated. On the right side of the rough stone slab on which the child Hermes is seated, there are remains of a symbol which we believe to be a simplified representation of a tortoise. It is a common knowledge that, besides being represented with his usual attributes, Hermes was often accompanied with animals such as a dog, a rooster, a lamb, a kid or a tortoise.<sup>12</sup>

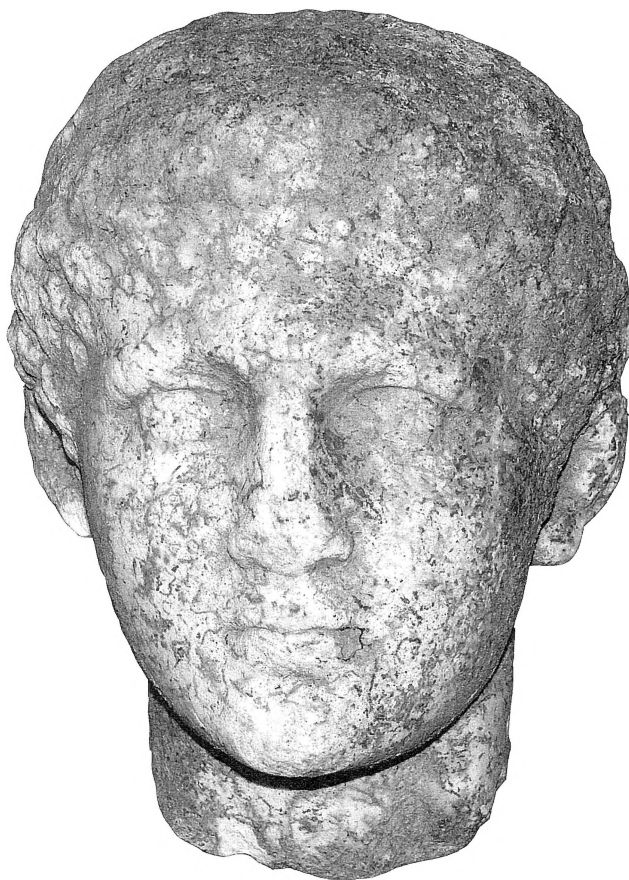


Fig 14.

<sup>10</sup> Срејовић-Цермановић, 1987.: 88, 297 and 288.

<sup>11</sup> Кепеска –Кепески, 2007: 90-91; Кепеска –Кепески, 200, 235 and 242.

<sup>12</sup> Срејовић-Цермановић, 1987: 475.

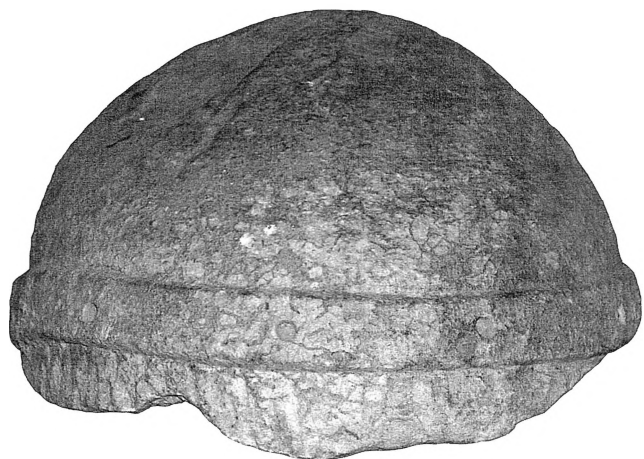


Fig 15.

The sculpture of the child Hermes is finely carved, its distended chest and abdomen, reflecting the contemporary trend of rendering human figures with rounded and soft forms and over-accentuated individual body parts. Judging by the stylistic features in this representation of Hermes, the sculpture was made in the second half or the very end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.

Of the portrait sculptures, the statue of Septimius Maestrius Lycon particularly stands out. Septimius Maestrius Lycon was a *Macedoniarch*,<sup>13</sup> a *panhellen* and an eminent citizen of Styberra (Fig.7).<sup>14</sup> The sculpture was made of a single marble slab, together with an octagonal plinth. The height of the preserved statue is 1.78 m. The head and part of the right arm are missing. The citizen is represented wearing a chiton and a himation. The himation covers the entire body, with deep folds slanting from left to right and several vertical folds below the gently bended left knee. The right arm hangs by the body and over the himation. One end of the himation is thrown over the left arm and falls freely to touch the base of the statue in the form of a *fasca volumina*. The left hand of the statue holds a scroll and there is a large ring on the elegant, elongated ring finger, highlighting the importance of the person represented. The precise craftsmanship and well-proportioned figure, portrayed with serene poise, reflect the character and the significant role played by Septimius Maestrius Lycon in the life in Styberra. From the inscriptions on the marble slab, it is known that Septimius was a *Macedoniarch* and *panhellen* and that the statue was erected during the rule of Emperor Commodus in the late second century AD.<sup>15</sup> In style and quality the statue, is similar to other statues of the

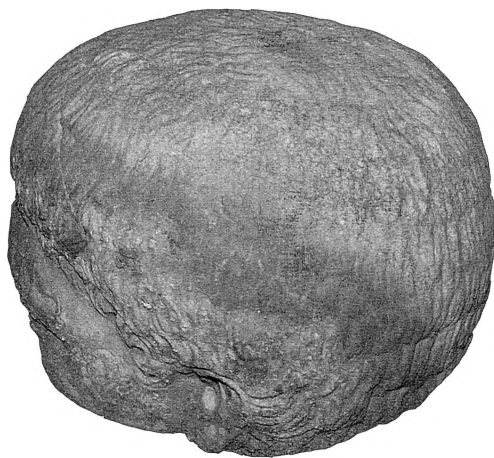


Fig 16.

13 Papazoglu F. 1988: 300. The city produced four *Macedoniarchs*: Septimius Maestrius Lycon at the end of the second century AD and three at the beginning of the third century AD: Septimius Silvanus Claudianus, Septimius Silvanus Nicolaus and Septimius Silvanus Celerus.

14 Кеписка –Кеписки, 2008: 235, 236 and 242.

15 Кеписка –Кеписки, 2007: 87, 88.





Fig 17.

Paliatus type found in Styberra, most of which have been dated to the second half of the second century AD.<sup>16</sup>

The second male portrait statue is of an Emperor. The statue is of a man in armour and is of life-size at a preserved height of 1.33m. The head and arms are missing, as are the legs from below the knees (Fig.8). The statue was expertly made of white marble. The man has a cloak thrown over the left shoulder. The shoulders themselves are protected by wide leather strips and the short sleeves of a tunic are visible below these strips. The skirt is formed of long leather strips ending in a fringe. Above the tunic and skirt, finely shaped metal armour accentuates the chest.

The neckline is rectangular and

below it on the breast there is a relief representation of *Gorgoneion*. The lower hem of the armour ends with two rows of semi-circular leather 'tongues', of which the first row on the upper side is decorated with the heads of eagles and human heads carved in high relief. The statue represents one of the Roman Emperors of the second half of the second century AD, most probably one of the last rulers of the Antonine dynasty or one of the first rulers of the Severus dynasty. This is evident in the manner and style with which the details of the armour and clothes are sculpted, which were typical for the early Roman period.<sup>17</sup>

The two marble torsos of *epheboi* belong to a different type of sculpture. One was found in front of the Temple of Tyche while the other was found in a drainage channel in the Gymnasium sector.

The ephebe torso found in front of the Temple of Tyche is made of white marble and represents a nude male (Fig.9). It has a preserved height of 0.95m and is missing the entire right leg and most of the left leg, the entire right arm and part of the left arm. Of the head only the some curls of hair and the front part of the face is preserved. It has a total height of 0.24 m. It represent a young man, finely built with mildly pronounced chest and abdomen muscles. He wears a short *chlamys* (cloak) thrown over his left shoulder. The drapery hangs in rich folds from the left shoulder to the chest before falling more freely, probably to the height of the left flank. The body's proportions,

<sup>16</sup> Вучковиќ-Тодоровиќ, 1963: 85-86, Т. 26-28; Соколовска, 1987: 140-148, Т. 33-38.

<sup>17</sup> Кепеска –Кепески, 2007: 207-212.



Fig 18.

with mildly pronounced muscles, highlight the high quality craftsmanship of this sculpture of a young *ephebos* from the city of Styberra. The preserved frontal part of the head shows masterful finesse, especially the curls of hair that rest on the forehead in graceful strands. The face has a straight forehead and pronounced eyebrows above almond-shaped eyes, while the nose, mouth and chin are damaged. The stylistic features and manner of craftsmanship identify it as a work created in the second century AD, the period of the Antonine dynasty.<sup>18</sup>

The *ephebos* torso found in the drainage channel in the Gymnasium sector was

also made of white marble and has a preserved height of 1.04 m (Fig.10). It represents a nude young boy with a finely shaped body. He wears a short chlamys over his chest. Clasped to his right shoulder by a round brooch, the cloak covers the upper part and the back of the bust. The figure is represented standing. The head, arms and lower sections of the legs are missing. This portrait sculpture of an ephebe with mildly pronounced muscles and fine proportions was made at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> or the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD.<sup>19</sup> We assume that this young boy belonged to one of the renowned families of the city who could afford to erect a statute of one of its members in the space of the Gymnasium.

Two more marble portraits have been found in the Gymnasium sector, both representing young women of the Herculaneum type. One of these was discovered by chance when a field in the Gymnasium sector was being ploughed.<sup>20</sup> It was made from a single slab of white marble of life-size proportions, would have measured some 1.65 m with the head that is now missing or 1.76 if placed on the missing plinth. (Fig.11). The plinth was either hexagonal or octagonal.

The sculpture is of a young woman dressed in a long chiton and a himation that drapes the whole length of her figure to below the knees. Her right arm is positioned under her clothes at the level of her bust, thus holding the himation. The himation itself is thrown over the left shoulder, falling and enveloping the left arm. The folds of the himation follow the movement of the figure and accentuate the body's contours. Beneath it the vertical rich folds of the chiton are visible, giving the impression of a

<sup>18</sup> Кепески, 2006: 207-212.

<sup>19</sup> Кепески, 2008: 207-212; Кепеска –Кепески, 2008: 243; Кепеска –Кепески, 2010: 260, 262.

<sup>20</sup> Кепески, 2008: 237-239, 244.

thin fabric and thus highlighting the contrast between these two pieces of clothing. This detailed and harmonious statue fits in with well known models of representing young women in the style of the Small Herculaneum Woman, though there are some variations in the overall artistic rendering. The style and technique employed are typical of the age of the Antonine dynasty, the 2<sup>nd</sup> c.AD.

The other female statue was found in a religious building close to the abovementioned statue of the Herculaneum type.<sup>21</sup> This standing statue is of a young girl and was made from a single slab of white marble which, if we include the missing head, has a height of 0.69 m. The head and lower section of the legs are missing. (Fig.12) She is draped in a short chiton beneath a himation which wraps the whole body, including both arms. The curves of her body are hinted at beneath her clothing. Her left arm is used to hold the upper part of the cloak, which is clasped on her



Fig 19.

right shoulder with a round brooch; her right arm hangs prostrated alongside the body gently holding the himation which falls with rich folds. In terms of its stylistic features, the statue is part of a repertoire of representations of young Herculaneum women,<sup>22</sup> though the final rendering depends on the period and the location of production. This type of female marble statue is very common for the Roman period; thus the copying of the original matrix of the representation of the young Herculaneum women was preserved with slight modifications and alterations from the original.<sup>23</sup> The sculptures of the Herculaneum type already found in the Gymnasium sector confirm that this type of sculpture was one of the favourite representations of female characters with which to adorn the public buildings of the city. On the basis of the overall artistic rendering of the figure, this sculpture of a young girl from Styberra appears to be the work of a provincial craftsman at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.

A number of marble heads from male and female portrait sculptures have been found in the drainage channel in the Gymnasium sector. A large fragment of a male head was found amongst the building debris from a layer of a destroyed religious building.<sup>24</sup> The drainage channel revealed one fragment of a male's head, two whole male heads as well as three female heads with major damage, all made of white marble.

One of the male heads belonged to a statue of an adult man, the other to a statue of a young boy. The head of the adult male statue is well preserved: the only missing part is the tip of the nose which has a small protuberance. (Fig.13) The statue represents the face of a man with deep creases on his forehead, pronounced eyebrows

21 Кепеска –Кепески, 2010: 260 and 262.

22 Соколовска, 1987: 61-71.

23 Кепеска –Кепески, 2008: 237, 238, 239 and 244.

24 Кепеска –Кепески, 2010: 262 and 264.

above almond-shaped eyes and full lips accentuating the calm and grave facial expression of the person whom this statue honours. The hair is rendered schematically, with deep thinning lines on the forehead and a large ponytail gathered behind finely sculptured ears. The finesse of the features and the calm facial expression reflect the internal serenity of the person represented in the moment of creation. The head has larger dimensions, with a preserved height of 0.30 m, and belonged to a statue larger than natural size. The statue clearly represents a person who had an important role in the city and its surroundings and perhaps was directly involved in the governing and organization of a wide range of activities in the Gymnasium. The statue is the work of a local craftsmen, created between the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century and the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD.

The head and neck of a statue of a young boy sculpted in natural size have been preserved with a height of 0.20 m (Fig.14). The soft features of the boy's face, accentuated by large eyes and a straight nose (partly chipped on the tip) and full lips, produce a serene and contented facial expression. The short hair, rendered with tiny locks, is tied with a thin strap at the forehead. We are of the opinion that this head was part of a sculpture representing a young boy—an *ephebos*—and that he must have merited such a statue in a public building by reason of his belonging to one of the renowned families of Styberra or perhaps as a pupil or a victor in some competition. The statue was created between the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century and the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD.

Beside these marble heads, two larger fragments of male portrait heads have been found. One fragment was found in the drainage channel and represents part of the crown of a head of a man wearing a shallow cap, the back part broken off (Fig.15). The cap ends in a relatively broad strap with small circular perforations at equal intervals. Under the strap, some tiny straight strands of hair are visible. The fragment has a preserved height of 0.10 m and a diameter of 0.19 m.

The other fragment is of larger dimensions (0.25 x 0.14 m) with a preserved height of 0.12 m and represents part of an adult male's head (Fig.16). A part of the vertex with short strands of hair and parts of the left eye and ear are preserved. This fragment is larger than natural size and was found amongst the debris of a ruined, as yet unexplored religious building found north of the *temenos*. The head belonged to a marble sculpture which was larger than natural size and was erected to honour a person whose activities were somehow connected with the functioning of the building.

The fragments of marble male portrait heads from Styberra, as well as the majority of the marble sculptures found, were produced in the period between the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD.

Two fragmented and one entire marble head of a female have been found. The intact head represents a young girl and has a height of 0.27 m, thus making it natural size (Fig.17). The well preserved face has soft features, large eyes, a straight nose (partly chipped) and full lips that give a soft and serene facial expression. The wavy hair is tied in a knot high at the head and the locks of hair falling over the forehead are held by a sort of diadem. The treatment of this section of the sculptor's work reflects a trend contemporary with the production of this sculpture. By comparison with the stylistic features on female portrait sculptures and their renderings on Roman coins, this head most closely resembles female representations in the age of the Severus

dynasty. The hairstyle of this female marble head also bears closest resemblance to the hairstyle of Septimius Severus's consort, Julia Domna, and her sister Julia Maesa. On this basis, it seems the sculpture was made between the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century and the first decades of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD.<sup>25</sup>

The other two marble heads have suffered major damage, though the stylistic features are well preserved. The upper part of the head and most of the face is preserved from one of these, with a preserved height of 0.22 m, while the lower section of the face and neck are missing (Fig.18). The forehead is high, with large and accentuated almond-shaped eyes and a straight nose that is partially damaged. The visible hair is divided in two sections over the forehead, and large, slightly wavy locks fall over the ears. The rest of the head is covered with a himation whose folds once fell over the body.

The other female head is partially damaged and preserved with a section of the neck, with a total height of 0.31 m (Fig. 19). The right cheek, the nose and parts of the forehead and the hair are missing. The left side of the face is preserved, with an almond-shaped eye, full lips, an accentuated chin and a part of an elegant neck. The pronounced features of the face are complimented by large curls of thick hair in the form of S-spirals visible over the forehead, while the rest of the head is covered with a himation which covered the body of the statue.

On the basis of the stylistic features and manner of fashioning the faces of these representations of young women, the marble heads can be identified as sculptures created in the period between the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century and the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD.

Besides the abovementioned finds of 6 portrait and 2 religious sculptures, as well as the finds of 5 marble heads and fragments of two marble heads, many small and large fragments were found during the excavations—parts of forearms, palms, fingers, feet attached to plinths, segments of clothing and a great deal of shapeless marble debris. (Fig.20). All of these fragments belonged to sculptures that adorned the interior and exterior of the Gymnasium and the buildings in its vicinity.

The marble monuments from Styberra were made from white marble of a relatively high quality from the marble mines of Prilep. The style of these sculptures and the frequency of finds suggests they were the work of provincial craftsmen from local workshops who followed earlier examples of such types of sculptures while incorporating styles of the period in which they worked. These sculptures are representative of art produced in the period between the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD and the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD. Most of them were created in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, the time of the Antonine and Severus dynasties when the city itself was renovated. The numerous finds of marble monuments', especially the portrait and religious sculptures found within a relatively small area during the excavations of the public buildings attest to the spiritual and material wealth of this urban settlement. This further confirms the significance of this Hellenized city that emerged to become the heart of the Pelagonian valley and allows us to follow its economic and cultural development across a broader time span. Life in this city came to an end in the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD, suddenly and violently, for reasons still unknown. This coincides with the raiding

25 Машкин, 1968: 465, 471.

\*Photographs taken by D. Dimeski and L. Kepeska.



incursions of the Goths and Heruli who devastated these areas on two separate occasions (257/68 and 268/69 AD). However, the reasons for the disappearance of the town may well be more complex and profound and connected to the economic and political crisis of the Roman Empire.

The significance of Styberra as an ancient cultural and economic centre and the important role its citizens enjoyed amongst the free provincial cities of the Roman Empire is confirmed not only by the abundance of marble sculptures but also by recent finds of epigraphic monuments: two marble bases<sup>26</sup> and fragments of marble plates with inscriptions.

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## Резиме:

### Скулптурите од Стибера

Остатоците од градот Стибера лежат на 16 км западно од Прилеп, над вливот на реката Блато во Црна Река (Erigon), распослани на ридот Бедем кој е на 0,2 км јужнио од селото Чепигово и 1 км северозападно од Тројкрсти.

Од овој антички град со истражувањата на ридот Бедем се откриени делови од градскиот бедем, храм на божицата Тихе и делови од комплексот Гимназион. Со археолошките ископувања од периодот помеѓу 2001 и 2010 година, пронајдени се две култни и шест портретни скулптури, неколку глави од машки и женски претстави, како и повеќе фрагменти од раце и нозе на скулптури со различна големи. Истотака, пронајдени се и две оштетини плинти, на кои се зачувани стапалата на скулптурите кои стоеле на нив. Покрај наодите на скулптури, најдени се и делови од мермерна архитектонска пластика, неколку фрагментирани епиграфски споменици и две бази со натписи.

Култните статуи се претстави на божествата Ника и Хермес, а портретите се прикази на следниве: Септимиј Местриј Ликон-виден граѓанин на Стибера, на еден им- ператор, две машки торза на ефеби и две на млади жени. Остатоците од портретните статуи и наодите на неколкуте машки и женски мермерни глави се со различен степен на оштетувања и се пронајдени фрлени во одводен канал во секторот Гимназион. Само еден поголем фрагмент од мермерна машка глава е најден во градешниот шут на еден рушевински слој во култниот објект. Од мермерните машки глави едната е претстава на возрасен маж, другата на младо момче; истотака, најдени се и фрагменти од мермерни глави со претстава на

возрасни мажи. Од мермерните женски глави, две се фрагментирани и една е целосно сочувана.

Мермерната пластика од Стибера е изработена од бел мермер со релативно добар квалитет, кој бил ваден од прилепските рудници за мермер. Начинот на обликување и бројните наоди се дел од продукцијата на провинциските мајстори од локалните работилници. Овие мермерни дела припаѓаат на продукцијата од I -иот до III -иот век. Најголем дел од истите се изработени во II-иот век во истиот период кога била поголемата обнова на целиот град, во времето на династиите Антонини и Севери.

Бројноста на досега откриените мермерни споменици, особено на портретна и култна пластика, најдени на релативно мал простор при истражувањето на објетите од јавен карактер се потврда за материјалното и духовното богатство на градската населба. Со ова уметничко творештво се потенцира и важноста на богатиот, хеленизиран град настанат во срцето на Пелагониската рамнина, преку чии остатоци се следи во подолг временски период и неговиот економски и културен развој.

Значењето на Стибера како антички културен и економски центар, освен со богатството од мермерна пластика, се потврдува и со новите наоди на епиграфски споменици-две мермерни бази со натписи и неколку фрагменти од мермерни плочи со натписи. Со нив уште еднаш се потврдува местото и улогата на градот Стибера и неговите граѓани во постоењето на слободните градови во римските провинции, како и на значајните чинители од севкупниот живот на Империјата во периодот од I -иот до III -иот век.

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(English translation by Jelena Jarić)