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A BRONZE STATUETTE OF A MUSICIAN FROM BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

The bronze statuette of a musician playing a wind instrument, probably a military musician, was found at Donja Blatnica near Mostar. It is very likely, given the relative proximity of military facilities, and the known presence of Roman military units, that this statuette belonged to a member of one such formation. The presence of music in the Roman army is evidenced by many surviving monuments, reliefs and, to a lesser extent, written sources.

Key words: music, instruments, Roman period, bronze statuette, Roman army.

Introduction

The origins of music can be traced back to prehistoric times, evolving from various calls and signs originally designed for mutual understanding. With the passage of time, distinctive forms and styles of music-making emerged among different ethnic communities. Various music-related activities have been identified among ancient Chinese, Egyptian and Semitic peoples (Nef 1937: 13–17). Music as an art may be defined as the use of sounds to evoke various emotional states, reflecting a certain moment of human reality (Abert 1899; Lippman 1964; Anderson 1966; Ferri 2008: 89).

The Greeks and Music

One of the earliest wind instruments of which archaeological evidence has survived is the solo instrument known as the ocarina, which was played by blowing into the mouthpiece. The principle is very similar to that of the flute, a later invention. It was probably used for practical purposes, to summon others from afar, or for magical purposes (Ferri 2008: 90). Our knowledge of music in ancient Greece derives mainly from painted images, architecture, sculpture and written sources. Among the earliest finds, dating from the time of the pre-classical civilizations that evolved on the Cyclades islands off mainland Greece, are statuettes of harpists and flautists (Tomas 2016: 54). In ancient Greece, music was associated with literature, poetry (Huizinga 1970: 212) and, consequently, the theatre (Bošković & Stulli 1961: 34–35). The ancient Greeks taught music using a simple lyre; instruments that were more difficult to play were taught by a virtuoso (Musić 1942: 52). References to the social and cultural role of music in ancient Greece, and later in ancient Rome, are found in written sources. Music was greatly valued in ancient Greece, and was believed to

be a gift of the gods. A Greek myth relates that the gods took pity on the human race, and ordained the feasts of thanksgiving as a respite from their troubles, bestowing upon them Apollo, the Muses, and Dionysus to provide them with music, dance and games (Huizinga 1970: 212–213). In ancient Greece, there was a direct connection between music and the Muses, who presided over music and poetry (Višić 2010). Music was an essential component of many public events. The ancient Greeks developed a tonal system based on acoustics, and elaborated a system of musical notation using the Greek alphabet. They also developed a sophisticated aesthetics of music. Three tonal systems were developed: the diatonic, the chromatic and the enharmonic. Terms such as *harmony* and *symphony* also survive from ancient times (Rocconi 2015: 86).

Greek music was almost always subordinate to poetry, and thus the emphasis was on the emotional import of the poem being recited. The development of the musical arts led to the invention of different musical instruments, among them the *lyre*, the *kithara* and the *aulos*. Religious festivals also stimulated the development of the musical arts. At the Pythian games in Delphi in 586 BCE, victory went to an *aulos* player named Sakadas, who performed a composition commemorating Apollo's victory over the dragon. In 417 BCE Timotheus of Miletus composed his *Nautilos*, describing a tempest at sea. Later, certain instruments were used solely for specific cults: the wind instrument known as the *aulos* accompanied plays dedicated to Dionysus (Rocconi 2015: 83–84), the lyre those in honour of Apollo.¹ Music was used to evoke the combat between Apollo and the serpent or dragon Python, following a standard sequence: the introductory mood is followed by Apollo challenging the dragon and the combat, in which Apollo is victorious, ending with his victory song. Dozens of Greek compositions or fragments of composition have survived. The most significant musical composition is a Delphic hymn to Apollo, which regrettably has not survived in its entirety (Nef 1937: 17–23). Music was also an integral feature of theatre performances; we know of part of a tragedy performed to musical accompaniment by musicians known as *melopoioi* (*Grčke tragedije* 2010: 302).

A considerable number of musical instruments played by these ancient peoples are known to us. In the case of the ancient Greeks, the *lyre* and the *kithara* were stringed instruments yielding a single pitch. The lyre was played mainly at home, as the instrument of amateurs, and was used in teaching music to children. The *kithara*, a more difficult instrument to master, featured in both solo performances and concerts. Harps, and the single-stringed monochord, were also stringed instruments. The most popular wind instruments were the *aulos*, a flute with finger holes, the *diaulos* with two separate reed pipes, the chromatic *aulos*, the flute or monochromatic syrinx, and the Pan pipes or polychromatic syrinx. Wind instruments were usually made of bone, wood or a combination of both with bronze (Žižek 2008: 81–84, 86). Also known in those ancient times were percussion instruments such as cymbals (Parović-Pešikan 1981: 157), castanets, and the tympanon, as well as the first keyboard instru-

1 For Apollo, see Graves 2008: 72–78.

ment, the *hydraulis*.² These instruments also generated different forms of music. Accounts survive of performances of compositions for the *kithara*, of interludes, of pieces for the *aulos*, of the genre known as the Pythian nomos, and of various types of choral music. The principal choral forms were the *threnos*, the *paeon* and the *dithyramb* (Uzelac 2005: 19–22). The Hellenistic period was also known for its lively musical performances, an essential feature of religious celebrations, games, festivals, sporting events and the like (Cary 1972: 317). Tradition has it that the goddess Cybele invented the cymbals, flute and snare drum, to accompany games and dances (Osvalt 1980: 182). Also associated with music in a religious context are local representations of the syrinx-player Silvanus, portrayed in a variety of forms and with different followers.³

The Etruscans and Music

Etruscan music was directly influenced by that of the Greek (Pallottino 2008: 326–327). There are numerous archaeological finds, surviving frescoes depicting entire orchestras, musical instruments, and games, which reveal the importance of music in the lives of the Etruscans. These include the frescoes in the Tomb of the Shields in Tarquinia (Gavela 2007: 37), the Tomb of the Dancers (Gavela 2007: 39), the cultic games in the Tomb of the Augurs (Gavela 2007: 50), and the Tomb of the Triclinium (Gavela 2007: 70–71). Certain Etruscan scenes reveal that some of their instruments were identical to those of the Greeks; they also used stringed instruments such as the lyre (Gavela 2007: 54), or wind instruments (Gavela 2007: 71). Some surviving sources also refer to instruments that might be regarded as Etruscan national instruments, in particular the double *frula* and the straight trumpet known as the *salpinx*. Surviving written sources or images also reveal that the Etruscans used instruments such as the *barbiton*, the curved horn or *cornu* and the *crotala*, a percussion instrument (Pallottino 2008: 327).

Music in the Roman world

The Romans adopted music from the Greeks but drew a distinction between poetry and music. In contrast to ancient Greece, where music was a form of artistic expression, in Roman society it was increasingly performed by slaves (Manuwald 2011: 80–90), accompanying the gratification of the senses and lewd private performances, as recorded in the biography of the emperor Nero (Nef 1937: 17–23). As music became a factor in moral deviance, the Romans professed to abhor music and dance. Paradoxically, though, music played an important part in both religious and everyday life. During the imperial period, the emperor Domitian built an odeon, or concert hall,⁴ where music competitions were held (Rober 2009: 200).

2 Percussion instruments have also been found in mosaics. Žižek 2008: 85, fig. 8.

3 Busuladžić 2017: catalogue no. 104, plate 44, 104, catalogue nos. 106–109, plate 45, 106–109, catalogue nos. 110 and 111, T. 46, 110 and 111.

4 Odeons were smallish, roofed buildings (see Nestorović 1952: 382).

Among the ancient Romans, music was associated with certain aspects of society, primarily religious customs and theatre performances (Owen 1996: 5), ritual performances as part of public events, gladiatorial combats (Rocconi 2015: 90), and the use of musical instruments during military ceremonies and other military matters. This last is illustrated by a bronze statuette of a military trumpeter, found in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Busuladžić 2017: catalogue no. 100, plate 42, 100).

Attitudes towards music changed when the new religion of Christianity began to gain ground. Wind instruments were banned, and vocal religious music became the only officially recognized kind (Ferri 2008: 93).

There is ample evidence of the role of music in everyday life, both among the Greeks and, later, in Roman society, in the form of scenes of musicians, musical instruments, dancers and games on painted pottery vases, lamps and other objects.⁵

Evidence of music-making in Bosnia and Herzegovina in Roman times

Orpheus and Calliope

A number of archaeological finds from Bosnia and Herzegovina attest to music-making in Roman times. A particularly fine example is the image of Orpheus in a mosaic from Panik (Busuladžić 2017: 118–124).

Orpheus (Macchioro 1930: 3–28), son of the Muse Calliope and the river god Oeagrus (Graves 2008: 103), was one of the greatest poets (Owen 1996: 3), honouring the gods in his songs (Osvalt 1980: 255). His love for his dead wife Eurydice (Morford & Lenardon 2003: 358) was so great that he descended into the underworld.⁶ There, accompanying his unique voice on the golden lyre given to him by Apollo (Morford & Lenardon 2003: 360–361), which he was taught to play by the Muses (Graves 2008: 103), he charmed the many gods who heard him. Later, back on earth, he sang and played the lyre so exquisitely that the beasts and the birds would gather round to listen to him (Darmon 1995: 61–62). Tradition has it that after his death, his lyre was carried to heaven and placed among the stars (Budžak 2004: 195–199). His death was met with lamentations, and his return to life was celebrated with a banquet, a pagan version of the Resurrection (Carus 1903: 484). From these, a range of Orphic mysteries evolved (Macchioro 1930: 53–74), marked by ecstasy (Macchioro 1930: 29–53) and the emergence of Orphic communities (Macchioro 1930: 122–145), which must also have had an impact on music.

This myth is recorded in Bosnia and Herzegovina, at the Roman villa in Panik near Bileća, where a mosaic was uncovered portraying Orpheus in an

⁵ Busuladžić 2017: 106–136. Maenads were depicted dancing, holding tympanons. Parović-Pešikan 1981: 156; Osvalt 1980: 207; Parović-Pešikan 1981: 163 and 164; Pallottino 2008: 328; Rober 2009: 201.

⁶ *ALGRM* III, 1897–1902, 1159–1164.

ecstasy of song (Busuladžić 2017: catalogue no. 101, pl. 43, 101), surrounded by animals, entranced by his music (Busuladžić 2008: 105–107). This scene appears on many monuments throughout the Roman Empire (Žižek 2008: 82; Ferri 2008: 93).

Calliope, mother of Orpheus, also figures in the arts (Osvald 1980: 228). The daughter of Zeus and Mnemosine, she is traditionally regarded as one of the most refined of the Muses, presiding over the arts and in particular over epic poetry (Srejšović & Cermanović 2004: 190). Her name derives from the Greek words for beauty and voice: Calliope, the beautiful voiced. The role of the Muses was to entertain the gods on Mount Olympus with their singing; they were an essential part of joyous occasions such as weddings and games, but also of sorrow and of funerals. They both inspired and personified knowledge and the arts, especially literature, dance and music. Erato, whose emblem was the *kithara*, was the Muse of love poetry; Euterpe, whose emblems were the *aulos* and the *syrinx*, was the Muse of music, song and lyrical poetry; and Melpomene was the Muse of tragedy (Srejšović & Cermanović 2004: 275–276). Among other muses were Clio, Melete, Polyhymnia, Arche and Thalia (Višić 2010: 27). The Muses were synonymous with the melodious sounds of nature, birdsong, the rippling of water, and the sound of wind, prompting the artistic expression of thoughts and feelings in poetry, literature and music. The authors and composers of these works saw this as inspiration from a god, who instilled the creative force: the very role that was the preserve of the Muses (Višić 2010: 26), who inspired artistic and spiritual creativity and the manifestation of beauty. They were seen as reflective or imaginative beings, and thus had no temple, no sacrifices were made to them, nor were they treated as beings with a connection to the divine (Višić 2010: 28).

A bronze appliqué of a Muse (Busuladžić 2017: catalogue no. 102, plate 43, 102) found in Stolac, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, was probably a decorative part of a larger object. Images of Muses in various materials and made using various techniques were not uncommon in the Roman Empire (Ferri 2008: 92).

The mosaic from Panik near Bileća with the image of Orpheus also portrays his mother Calliope (Busuladžić 2017: catalogue no. 103, pl. 43, 103). As Orpheus' mother, the direct connection between the two is evident (Busuladžić 2008: 105–107). The presence of these two mythical figures strongly suggests that the people living in what is now Bosnia and Herzegovina were aware of their role and importance in Roman art, poetry, song, music and their performance.

Further evidence of this is the fact that many monuments, sculptures (Panyagua 1972: 88, 91, 93–96, 98, 100–103, 107–108, 111–113, 123, 125, 130), painted vases (Bejaoui 1992/93: 141), frescoes, mosaics (Miraj 2013: 103, 118, 120; Stern 1955: 68–71, 73–75; Dimitrov 2014: 31) and other artefacts depicting Orpheus have been found throughout the ancient world.⁷

In many instances, images of Orpheus have been interpreted as a crypto-Christian symbol (Macchioro 1930: 186–205). Orpheus in place of the Good

⁷ ALGRM III, 1897–1902, 1166–1207.

Shepherd can be seen on many monuments of a Christian nature (Lanciani 1893: 23). The motif of Orpheus the musician has also been used in portrayals of the biblical David, as the royal psalmist and unusually talented musician (Hachlili 2013: 414–415).

Apollo

There are many myths about Apollo (Hamilton 1962: 25–26), the god of light, son of Zeus and Leto (Osvalt 1980: 48; Graves 2008: 72). He was born on the island of Delos (LIMC 2/1, 1984: 183–363), where the earth burst into flower and shone with light after his birth (Budžak 2004: 30–35). He killed the fearsome Python (Busuladžić 2016: 143), his mother's enemy, at the Oracle of Delphi, of which he was the patron (Kun 2004: 39–40). Struck by an arrow loosed by Eros (Busuladžić 2016: 143), he fell unhappily in love with the nymph Daphne. He also served under his favourite, King Admetus, as punishment for his sins (Kun 2004: 42–43). A skilled lyre player, his constant companions were the nine Muses (Budžak 2004: 30–35); he is thus also associated in particular with music. He was celebrated in dance, song and music on Delos.⁸ Apollo also sang the first victory song, or paeon, after slaying the Python. The Pythian games were held in his honour, consisting of musical contests at which each contender performed a hymn to Apollo.⁹ Other Greek myths tell of his musical contests with Marsias and Pan (Graves 2008: 73) His musical talents were as famous as those of Orpheus, even drawing animals to him to listen to him playing the lyre (Osvalt 1980: 48–51). He is often portrayed in the nude, with a handsome body of markedly masculine proportions, and curly hair (Musić 1942: 67).

The cult of Apollo was quite widely represented in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Imamović 1977: 211–214), as well as in various forms and at many other places (Srejšević & Cermanović 2004: 38–42).

Epigraphic monuments providing evidence of the cult of Apollo have also been found in Bosnia and Herzegovina, along with a well-preserved bronze artefact from Prijedor (Busuladžić 2017: 211–212). Images of Apollo are quite common at ancient sites: bronze statuettes have been found in Slovenia (Strmčnik 1997: 278, fig. 13), the Roman province of Pannonia (Tadin 1979: 10–12), Kosovo (Ferri 2008, 91; Dobruna–Salihu 2010: 156), France (Lebel 1962: 15–16, no. 4), and Romania (Alicu *et al* 1979: 143, no. 371), and artefacts in stone and other materials at Viminacium and sites in Vojvodina, along with other sites in Serbia (Jovanović 2007: 9–14), Croatia and North Macedonia (Busuladžić 2017: 128).

Silvanus

Another cult also associated with music is that of Silvanus, whose cult was present throughout the Roman Empire (Osvalt 1980: 307), including the region

8 *RE* 1895, 2–110.

9 *ALGRM* 1884–1886, 422–467.

that is now Bosnia and Herzegovina. Evidence of his cult is provided by monuments found in Serbia, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Gaul, Africa, Syria (Imamović 1977: 55–82), Germania (Goethert 2015: 27–36), Croatia (Milićević Bradač 2008: 359–364) and elsewhere. Silvanus was the god of frontiers and guardian of boundaries (Milićević-Bradač 2008: 362). He was the most popular deity among the poor in Rome, the protector of carpenters, grain merchants, and all those associated with forestry in all its forms. He was also worshipped by gladiators, hunters, slaves and colonists. Significantly, Italic variants of Silvanus depict him as a farmer. Iconographic analysis of monuments suggests that many peoples had a local deity associated with flocks, woods, pastures and vegetation, and that when they came under Roman rule those local deities came to be identified with the Roman god Silvanus. He is portrayed as a god of woods on local monuments (Bekavac 2011: 153–154; Imamović 1977: 56–58). Iconographic features suggest his close similarity to the Greek Pan (Musić 1942: 75), but epigraphic monuments specifically refer to Silvanus (Sanader 2008: 178). He also shares other attributes with Pan (Graves 2008: 94–96), both being associated with music and musical instruments. The local Silvanus is often depicted with the wind instrument known as the *syrinx* or pan pipes, an instrument associated with Cerambus, son of the nymph Eidothea of Mount Othrys, owner of large flocks, who is credited with inventing the *syrinx* and was also known for his singing to the accompaniment of the lyre (Srejović & Cermanović 2004: 200). This reveals that deities broadly associated with flocks and woods are almost invariably depicted with the *syrinx*. In our case, he is iconographically similar to the Greek Pan (Busuladžić 2017a: 17–24) or the Roman Silvanus (Rendić-Miočević 1955: 5–40). In Bosnia and Herzegovina, several monuments of Silvanus are known in various contexts, complete with the *syrinx* (Busuladžić 2017: 225; 227).

The *syrinx* is almost invariably associated with many nymphs, gods, rulers and heroes (Srejović & Cermanović 2004: 44, 157, 317 and 387), while some traditions also ascribe it to other mythical figures, such as King Midas (*Ibid*: 265).

The Sistrum

The image of a *sistrum*, a percussion instrument, can barely be made out among the floral decoration of a relief on a cippus from Stolac, Bosnia and Herzegovina (Busuladžić 2017: 225). This instrument too is associated with religion, featuring in the cult of Isis among the ancient Egyptians, from whom it reached this part of the world. The followers of Isis, soldiers, merchants and sailors, would have used this instrument, which it appears was present here by the 1st century CE (Paškvalin 2012: 276).

A bronze statuette of a musician

Among the archaeological finds in Bosnia and Herzegovina is a bronze figure of a musician from Donja Blatnica near Mostar (Patsch 1904: 281; 1912: 26), probably representing a military musician.

Martial music, intended to raise morale among soldiers and to develop their sense of belonging to a Roman military unit, was not unknown in the Roman army. At first, unlike the Greeks, the Romans held an unfavourable view of music, which was seen as tending to immorality, at least in theory; but it gradually evolved to take its place in a military context, given its ubiquity in everyday life, in religious ceremonies and in private parties. In every case, a range of instruments was used – stringed instruments such as the *lyre* and *kithara*, percussion instruments such as the snare drum, *tympanon*, *sistrum* and cymbals, and a variety of wind instruments such as the *lituus* (Bishop & Coulston 2013: 227), the hydraulic organ (Rocconi 2015: 90), the tuba, the horn, the *cornua*, the *buccina*, the frula and more (Rober 2009: 200–201).

It is interesting to note that, though dance was mainly performed by women, it was also a feature of the military; dancing featured in Romulus' rape of the Sabine women, and the performance of such dances by soldiers in armour was known as the *bellicrepa saltatio* (Rober 2009: 201).

Written sources, though limited, provide some insight into the evolution of music in a military context. There are no known instances of the use of musical instruments in the army during the Republic, but written sources refer to the horn, tuba and *buccina*, then used primarily as a means of communication by signals or as a call to action. Later, during the Empire, an instrument resembling a curved metal horn is known, and its use is indicated, from paintings, mosaics, and terracotta votive models and sculptures (Bishop & Coulston 2013: 68–69).

We learn from Vegetius that the Roman army used a number of musical instruments, invariably wind instruments, for their primary purpose of signalling. A secondary use was of march music, another feature of the army. Flutes could be used for a similar purpose, to provide a beat for rowers in the fleet. They were also used in the army's religious ceremonies (Bishop & Coulston 2013: 115); archaeological evidence has revealed the use of the *aulos* in such a context (*Ibid.*: 144–145). Written sources are supplemented by archaeological evidence, chiefly in the shape of the metal "lips" joining the parts of an instrument that, if they were made of perishable material, have not survived. The images on Trajan's famous column include a *cornu* curved into a near-circular shape (*Ibid.*: 115), just like that of our bronze statuette. Many other images reveal the use of musical instruments, mainly wind instruments, undoubtedly used by legionaries, cavalrymen and other military personnel (*Ibid.*: 189–190).

Direct evidence that these instruments were also used in a civilian context, during gladiatorial combats, at funerals and other such events, is provided by many surviving monuments, reliefs and other images (*Ibid.*: 116).



Fig. 1. A bronze figure of a musician from Donja Blatnica near Mostar.

By way of conclusion

A fair amount of scholarly works about the military presence in the Neretva valley has been written to date. The army's advance along the river valleys, in this case that of the Neretva, and the increasing Romanisation of the surrounding areas, is widely known. The proximity of Naron, and the evidence of Roman sites such as Višići, Tasovčići, Čapljina (Zaninović 1996: 221–230), and Mogorjelo (Dyggve & Vetters 1966), the latter probably of considerable military importance, lead to the local conclusion that the statuette is of a military musician. The presence of this statuette may safely be regarded in this context.

The long historical continuity of the conquest of Illyria (later the Roman province of Illyricum), and the often very bloody Illyrio-Roman wars (Mesihović & Šaćić 2015: 151–165, 179–207), required a significant military presence. The result of the final stage, known as the *bellum Batonianum*, 6–9 CE (*Ibid*: 207–235) was the defeat of several tribes – the Pannonians, the Delmatae, the Daesiates, the Breuci and the Moesia among them. No fewer than fifteen legions were engaged in this military campaign. Even after the subjugation of the region, the Roman presence consisted of a military and security system of five legions, two stationed in Dalmatia itself – the VII and the IX legions (Zaninović 1996: 213), with a further military presence in the neighbouring province of Pannonia (Mesihović 2016: 119–126).

The direct contact between the wider Mostar region, where the statuette of the musician was found, and the Roman army is attested by the military camp at Gračine near Ljubuški (Tončinić 2011: 173–174), where a variety of documented military units were stationed for long or short spells of duty (Marić 2016: 105–118; Dodig 2008: 143–163). This site, and the troops stationed there, required a considerable turnover of soldiers from various quarters of the Roman empire. It is in this light that the origins may be sought of this bronze statuette, which could have belonged to a soldier who was directly responsible for music as part of life in the army.

ABBREVIATIONS

RE

Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft, Stuttgart.

ALGRM

Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie, Leipzig.

LIMC

Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae, Zürich-München.

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