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STATUARY PRODUCTION IN STYBERRA

The excavated areas of Styberra, particularly the Gymnasium and the Temple of Tyche, have yielded a rich array of stone material, both statuary and inscriptions dated from the middle of the 1st until the middle of the 3rd century CE. Most of this material was uncovered during the archaeological excavations conducted in 1953, but there have also been some important recent finds. A range of honorific statuary, mostly of epheboi, Himatiophoroi, and Herculaneum women, both large and small, as well as herms and stelae, slabs with inscriptions and twelve ephobic lists with records of ephobarchs, gymnasiarchs and polytarchs were discovered in these buildings. All of this material argues in favour of the existence of a city workshop, with further proof coming from the analysis of the stylistic features of the statues and bearing in mind that the surrounding area of Styberra in the Pelagonian plane of Upper Macedonia is known for its quarries of high quality marble.¹

Key words: Macedonia, Styberra, Gymnasium, Temple of Tyche, honorific and mythological statues, statuary production, Sivec marble queries.

Introduction

Styberra, situated in the region of Derriopos in the Pelagonian Plain was a Macedonian polis of considerable importance during the Roman period and it is one of the towns on the river Erigon, as described by Strabo (VII, 327), who besides Styberra also mentions Brianion and Alkomene.² It was first mentioned by Polybius (XXVIII, 8) and Livy (XXXI, 39; XLIII, 19–20) when referring to the times of the Macedonian wars. The city was most likely abandoned after the barbaric invasions by the Goths and Heruli of the Pelagonian Plain in 267/8–268/9 CE considering the lack of material postdating the mid-3rd century. Papazoglou also offers the theory of an earthquake causing the abandonment of Styberra.³ Although we do not have firm evidence of what actually happened, we do have a clear idea, solely by the context of the discoveries,

1 This study is a result of the work carried out within the multiannual project *Corpus of Roman stone monuments from the Republic of North Macedonia* of the Research Centre for Cultural Heritage “Cvetan Grozdanov” at the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts. This project was also supported by the Austrian Academy of Sciences and the Institute for Cultural History of the Antiquity (Institut für Kulturgeschichte der Antike). The monuments from Styberra considered in this study comprise a great part of the collection from the territory of the Republic of North Macedonia. The work in the project is currently more concentrated on the sculpture in the round, therefore the other stone material from Styberra is omitted from this study.

2 See also *Geogr. Rav.*, IV, 9, 10–13.

3 Papazoglou 1957: 221.

that during the reign of Gallienus life in the city came to a violent end and never recovered again.

The city has a rather rich modern historiography,⁴ but it was not until the archaeological excavations conducted in 1953 led by D. Vučković-Todorović,⁵ when most of the material was found including the honorary inscription made for Posidipos Thessalou from the council and people of the city, that the site was definitively proven to be Styberra.⁶ The excavated areas of the polis, particularly the Gymnasium complex and the Temple of Tyche, have yielded a rich array of inscriptions confirming the activities at the Institution of the young athletes and their competitions. Although very little has been unearthed,⁷ we know a great deal about Styberra, above all through epigraphy dating from 41–48 to 224/225, from which we have learned about city life and the lives of its citizens.⁸ According to the number of recorded *epheboi*, Papazoglou estimated the population in the city to have numbered approximately 20000 free citizens by the end of the 2nd century CE.⁹ The number of identified people has risen further over the years as a result of new epigraphical studies. Wealthy citizens donated sculptures and through epigraphy we know about quite a few of them, about their families, and about the gods they worshipped.¹⁰

A great part of the urban life in Styberra must have revolved around the Gymnasium and the Institution of *epheboi*.¹¹ This complex of buildings - a palaestra constituted of a peristyle and a vestibule, a semi-circular exedra, and a heroon¹² - with its fluctuating character served many purposes within the life of the city. It was an assembly space with different spheres of interaction, a meeting point for the community where values were promoted and the youth was educated, where processions and spectacles were held. The

4 To name some of the most important researchers who were interested in the ubication and the historic importance of this ancient city: Leake 1841: 318-322; Hahn 1867: 225; Heuzey & Daumet 1876: 317; Demitsas 1896: 278–281; Vulić 1931, 186–191; Papazoglou 1957, 216–221.

5 Vučković-Todorović 1963.

6 Ποσιδιππον Θεσσαλοῦ / ἡ Στυβερραίων βουλή / καὶ ὁ δῆμος τὸν πολεῖτην / ἀρετῆς ἔνεκα. (Vučković-Todorović 1963: 79, IV; IG 335¹).

7 Vučković-Todorović 1963; Several excavation campaigns were carried out over the last few decades concentrated mostly on the already excavated buildings led by Ljiljana and Kostadin Kepeski (see Kepeska & Kepeski 1990, 2007, 2008, 2010, 2012) from the Prilep Museum and continued by their successors Duško Temelkovski and Olivera Jandreska. There have been recent, local publications by Mikulčić 1999: 55–72; Lilčić 2009: 140–147.

8 Most of the epigraphic material was studied by Papazoglou 1988, but also Kalpakovska 2004 and Babamova 2005: 83–98, cat. nos. 9–22.

9 Papazoglou 1957: 220.

10 According to the inscriptions the family of the Septimioi Silvanoï was the most prominent one, holding important official functions in the city, but there are also many mentions of the Flavii and the Vetii. For more details see Kalpakovska 2004: 51–65.

11 Papazoglou 1988; Kalpakovska 2004.

12 The only plans and reconstructions of the excavated buildings were made by Mikulčić 1999: figs. 31–32, 35–37.

production and distribution of the oil used for the ephebic games had a noted impact on the city's economy and trade. Certain *Markos Ouettios Philon*, prominent inhabitant of Styberra, was one of the benefactors (*euergetes*) (*i. e.* donors of oil) to the Gymnasium and the most mentioned person in the inscriptions.¹³ We are unable to say much more about the local economy. From what we do know, Styberra was a rather wealthy city found in Hellenistic times that flourished during the Antonine and Severan dynasties when the city's economic fortunes were at their peak. Studies have been undertaken of the local marble which comes from the Sivec quarry located only about 20 km away, close to the city of Prilep. It is a fine-grained dolomite of exceptional whiteness, and has been confirmed to have been used in Stobi and in the nearby settlements in the Pelagonian Plain such as Heracliea Lyncestis and Styberra.¹⁴ In this study, above all, we are interested in the great number of statues from Styberra connected to the Gymnasium complex and to the Temple of Tyche and which further support the theory that there was a statuary workshop in the city, judging by their style and method of execution as well. It must be noted that for this study a selection of statues was made without any intention, or possibility, of presenting the statuary corpus of Styberra in its entirety.

The Gymnasium

The wealthy citizens of Styberra were the main patrons of the education of the young ephebes, and of the games, sponsoring the competitors whom they supported and cheered on during events. Among the inscriptions we find mention of a gymnasiarch, an ephebarch, a treasurer, and an agonothetes, which allows us to better grasp the structural organisation underlying this Institution.¹⁵ They were the most honoured individuals, with sculptures commemorating their benefactor deeds, and the ones that ordered and erected the majority of the sculptures.¹⁶ As to the sculptural program of the building, unsurprisingly, there are mostly finds of epheboi, Himatiophoroi, and Herculeaneum women, both large and small, as well as herms and imperial portraits, also mythological statuary although not as abundant.

Honorific Statuary

The aforementioned range of honorific statuary was mainly placed in the hall of the Gymnasium, along the walls, where most of them were found having crashed to the ground, beside their postaments. To the right and left of the entrance of the Heroon there were postaments for statues of eminent

13 Papazoglou 1988: 242; Kalpakovska 2004: 59–60.

14 Barić 1969; Prochaska 2013; Niewöhner, Audley–Miller & Prochaska 2013.

15 Kalpakovska 2004: 56–59.

16 Mortensen 2018: 116–117.

citizens or administrators of the Gymnasium, some found *in situ*, with the statues beside them, either broken or decapitated.

Mostly we encounter statues of Himatiophoroi (Fig. 1),¹⁷ large¹⁸ and small¹⁹ Herculaneum women (Figs. 2, 3), and of course, statuari of epheboi (Fig. 4).²⁰ Some of them have even been rescued from anonymity; we know the names behind some of the figures and the exact dates when they were erected. During the later excavation campaigns a statue was unearthed together with an inscription by means of which we learn of Septimius Maestrius Lycon (Fig. 5), a makedoniarch and panhellenus whose statue was erected during the reign of emperor Comodus.²¹ Another, very interesting find from the Heroon is the herm of Posidipos (Fig. 6),²² portrayed as a hermaphrodite and erected by the epheboi Licinios Aristobulos, Licinios Basos and Titus Flavius Antonios. Thanks to the inscription it can be precisely dated to 372 Macedonian era which is the year 224/5.²³ There have been some new discoveries including portrait heads of Severan imperial women (Figs. 7, 8)²⁴ and a second century cuirassed statue (Fig. 9),²⁵ depicting either an Emperor or a high ranking imperial official. Another cuirassed statue was found in Prilep (Fig. 10)²⁶ that could be attributed to the same workshop according to the almost identical decorative motifs on the cuirass, such as the gorgoneions and the sashes tied in a wide Heracles knot, as well as the long lappets of the kilts. Analysis of the Prilep statue's marble has confirmed the use of Sivec marble.²⁷

17 Vučković-Todorović 1963: 85, no. 1, T. XXVI, 44; Sokolovska 1987: 146, no. 78, T. 37/1-2; Bitrakova Grozdanova & Nikoloska 2022: cat. nos. 70-77, Pl. LIX-LXIII.

18 Vulić 1941-48: 390, 391; Kruse 1975: 285 f. B32, B33, Taf. 22; Sokolovska 1978a: Figs. 6, 7; Sokolovska 1987: 158-159, nos. 108, 119, T. 45/1-2; Alexandridis 2004: 242, nos. 126, 129; Trimble 2011: cat. nos. 31, 32; Bitrakova Grozdanova & Nikoloska 2022: cat. nos. 47, 48, Pl. XLV, XLVI.

19 Kepeska & Kepeski 2008: 237, 239, 244, Fig. 14; Kepeska & Kepeski 2010: 260, Fig. 7; Kepeska & Kepeski 2012: 371, 376, 377, Figs. 11, 12; Bitrakova Grozdanova & Nikoloska 2022: cat. nos. 45, 46, Pl. XLIII, XLIV.

20 Kepeski 2006: 207-211; Kepeska & Kepeski 2008: 236, 237, 243, 244; Kepeska & Kepeski 2012: 375, 376, fig. 9; Kepeska & Kepeski 2010: 262, fig. 8; Kepeska & Kepeski 2012: 376, fig. 10.

21 Kepeska & Kepeski 2007: 87-88; Kepeska & Kepeski 2011: 374, fig. 7; Bitrakova Grozdanova & Nikoloska 2022: cat. no. 71, Pl. LX.

22 Vučković-Todorović 1963: 68, 69, T. VI, 11; Sokolovska 1987: 154, n. 100, T. 42/3; Bitrakova Grozdanova & Nikoloska 2022: cat. no. 102, Pl. LXXVIII.

23 Ὑῖα Ποσιδίππιο / Ποσιδίππον συνέφηβοι / κλεινὸν ἐφήβαρχον / ἄνθεσαν τῇ πατρίδι / *vacat* / ⁵ Λικίνιος Ἀριστόβουλος / Λικίνιος Βάσσος / Τ(ίτος) Φλαύιος Ἀντώνιος / *vacat* / ἔτους β ο τ' (Kalpakovska 2004: 38, 39; Babamova 2005: 96, no. 21).

24 See Kepeska & Kepeski 2012; Bitrakova Grozdanova & Nikoloska 2022: cat. nos. 25-27, Pl. XXVI, XXVII.

25 Kepeska, Kepeski 2007: 87-95; Kepeska, Kepeski 2008: 236, 243; Kepeska, Kepeski 2012: 375; Bitrakova Grozdanova & Nikoloska 2022: cat. no. 104, Pl. LXXXI.

26 Stemmer 1978: 65 f. no. V18; Sokolovska 1987: nos. 54, 57, T. 29/1, 4; Bitrakova Grozdanova & Nikoloska 2022: cat. no. 105, Pl. LXXXII.

27 Niewöhner, Audley-Miller & Prochaska 2013: cat. no. 10.

Fig. 1. Himatiophoros
(photo credit: I.
Blažev)



Fig. 2. Large
Herculaneum woman
(photo credit: I.
Blažev)



Fig. 3. Small
Herculaneum woman
(photo credit: I.
Blažev)



Fig. 4. Ephebe (photo
credit: I. Blažev)





Fig. 5. Statue of Septimius Maestrius Lycon (photo credit: Lj. and K. Kepeski)



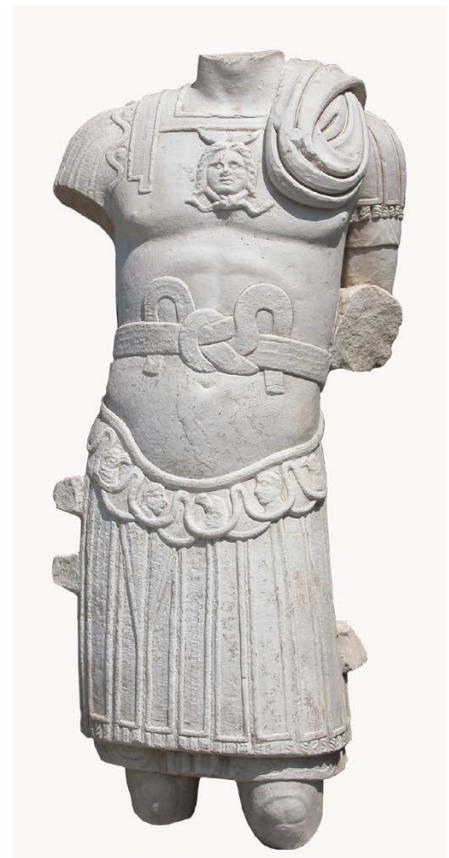
Fig. 6. Herm of Posidipos (photo courtesy of the Archaeological Museum of North Macedonia)



Fig. 7, 8. Women portrait heads (photo credit: I. Blažev)

Fig. 9. Cuirassed statue (photo credit: I. Blažev)

Fig. 10. Cuirassed statue, Prilep (photo credit: I. Blažev)



Mythological Statuary

Although the temple of Tyche is the only religious structure known so far in Styberra, the Gymnasium complex offered us the most knowledge of the city's religious life, since the Heroon also housed mythological statuary. On the basis of the inscriptions and the statuary we know that the Heroon housed sculptures of Asclepius, Hermes, and Heracles, divine protectors of health, youth and competitions. Among the inscriptions, we mostly come across vows to Asclepius, the saviour, and to Heracles. A votive inscription to Poseidon, Erygon and the nymphs tells us of the cult of the water gods and a local case of a deification of a river.²⁸

Only the statue of Asclepius (Fig. 11)²⁹ was discovered beside an altar with an inscription dedicated to the god, erected by Flavia Lika in the year 208.³⁰ During the later campaigns in Styberra a statue of Hermes was found (Fig.

28 Kalpakovska 2004: 63–65.

29 Josifovska 1961: 64, 76, T. XI; Vučković-Todorović 1963: 84, T. XXIII, 40 / XXIV, 41; Düll 1977: 372, no. 199, Abb. 50; Sokolovska 1987: 198, no. 182, T. 70/3.

30 Ἀσκληπιῶι / Σωτήρι / Φλαυία / Λύκα / ἡ ἀνέθηκεν / ἔτους ζ ν τ' / Αὐρηλίῳ Πομπειανῶ / καὶ Λολλιάνῳ Αὐρίτῳ / τὸ β' ὑπάτοις (IG X 2, 2, no. 320, T. XLIV; Kalpakovska 2004: 39, no. 12; Babamova 2005: 122, no. 59, T. XVII).



Fig. 11. Statue of Asclepius (photo courtesy of the Archaeological Museum of North Macedonia)



Fig. 12. Statue of Hermes (photo credit: I. Blažev)



Fig. 13. Head of Hermes (photo credit: I. Blažev)



Fig. 14. Statuette of Nike (photo credit: Lj. and K. Kepeski)

Fig. 15. Torso of a young god (photo courtesy of the Archaeological Museum of North Macedonia)

Fig. 16. Statuette of Aphrodite (photo courtesy of the Archaeological Museum of North Macedonia)



12),³¹ in addition to the head of the young god found earlier (Fig. 13).³² A fine marble statuette of Nike (Fig. 14), currently on display at the Prilep Museum,³³ was found west of the Heroon, broken into two pieces.³⁴ Another identification of Nike in Styberra was made on a relief depiction on the front of a massive marble block of the Temenos.³⁵ One more discovered statuette, now also in the Prilep Museum, can be identified as both Apollo and Dionysus (Fig. 15).³⁶ It is merely a torso of the young god of a Lykeios type, resting his hand on top of his head, insomuch as we can determine from the breakages and imagine with respect to the position of the right arm, which, again, can represent both gods. We also include here a statuette of Aphrodite (Fig. 16),³⁷ although we do not know the exact context of her discovery, having been found during previous campaigns for which we lack documentation.

31 Kepeska & Kepeski 2007; Kepeska & Kepeski 2008; Kepeska & Kepeski 2012: 373, 374, fig. 6.

32 Vučković-Todorović 1963: T. XXIX, 48; Sokolovska 1987: 194, no. 176, T. 69/1.

33 I would like to express my gratitude to Olivera Jandreska and Duško Temelkovski for kindly helping me while working on the Styberra material at the Prilep museum.

34 Kepeska & Kepeski 2010: 258, 259, fig. 5; Kepeska & Kepeski 2012: 372, fig. 5.

35 Kepeska & Kepeski 2010: 259, fig. 6.

36 Nikoloska 2020: 408, fig. 11. The statuette was excavated within the context of the Gymnasium during the 2008 campaign led by L. Kepeska from the Prilep Museum. I hereby express my gratitude to Duško Temelkovski from the Prilep Museum for his cooperation. Also lupa. at no. 28646.

37 Vučković-Todorović 1963: 68, T. IV, 6-7; Josifovska 1961: 27, fig. 5; Sokolovska 1987: 174, no. 137, T. 55, figs. 1-3.

The temple of Tyche

The only other unearthened building besides the Gymnasium to have yielded important material is the Temple of Tyche. It is, evidently, an older temple restored in 126/7 by the vow of Anthestia Fusca that lists names of her heirs. Her predecessors Titus Flavius Orestes and his son Filoxenes erected her statue, which has unfortunately never been found.³⁸ The testament of Anthestia Fusca confirms the existence of an earlier sanctuary of Tyche in Styberra, dating to before the restoration that took place according to the vow of Orestes and Filoxenes, most likely built in the middle of the 1st century at the earliest following the flourishing beginnings of the city and in accordance with the epigraphic records of the ephebaic community. Going by what we can reconstruct of the renewed object, it was a prostylos, with a stylobate supporting four, probably Ionian columns since fragments of such columns were found in the 1953 excavations.

Not many statues were found in this building, nevertheless the discoveries are important to this study. There were seven niches in the naos, three on the side walls and one on the eastern wall, while the entrance is on the north side. This is where the famous portrait busts of T. Flavius Orestes (Fig. 17, 17a)³⁹ and his son Philoxenus (Fig. 18, 18a)⁴⁰ were found. Both of these mid-2nd century busts were placed on small rectangular pedestals, found together, with their names inscribed upon them, representing the only inscriptions discovered at the Temple, together with the testament of Anthestia Fousca. These are surely the most representative portraits from Styberra in general. What is also significant is that these busts inform us about the city's connection with Heracleia Lyncestis. We know that T. Flavius Orestes of Styberra twice served as high priest in Heracleia Lyncestis. His son T. Flavios Philoxenos is one of the heirs of Anthestia Fusca who renewed the temple of Tyche. The connection with Titus Flavius Orestes from Heracleia had already been drawn,⁴¹ his statue having been found in Heracleia's theatre in connection to the city Nemesion, along with a pedestal bearing an inscription that confirmed his identity that might have been a product of the Styberra workshop.

Other sculptures of deities and other honourable citizens must have adorned the Tyche temple niches. Later on, in the mid-3rd century, the Im-

38 θεὰν Τύχην τῆ πόλει καὶ τὸν ναὸν καὶ τοὺς ἐν αὐτῷ ἀνδριάντας ἀποκαθέστησαν / καὶ δηνάρια πεντακιεῖλια ἠρίθμησαν τῆ βουλῇ ἐκ διαθήκης Ἀνθεστίας / Φούσκας οἱ κληρονόμοι Τ(ίτος) Φλαούιος Ὀρέστου υἱὸς / Φιλόξενος Μ(ἄρκος) Οὐέττιος Νεῖ- / καρχος, Γ(άιος) Ἰούλιος Καπίτων, Π(οῦβλιος) Ἀνθέστιοι Τρόφιμος καὶ Χρήστος· ἔτους δοσ' (Vučković-Todorović 1963: 83; Papazoglou 1988b; IG 336; Kalpakoska 2004: 25, 2.1.1; Babamova 2005: no. 55).

39 Vučković-Todorović 1963: 83, T. 21, 35, 36; Rüschi 1969: 117, P15; Sokolovska 1987: 113, no. 26, T. 13/1, T. 14/1; Jevtović 1987: no. 116; Bitrakova Grozdanova & Nikoloska 2022: cat. no. 7, VIII-X.

40 Vučković-Todorović 1963: 83, T. 22; Rüschi 1969: 116, P14; Sokolovska 1987: 110, no. 21, T. 10/1, T. 11/ 1; Kalpakoska 2004: 25, 2.1.1; Jevtović 1987: no. 115; Bitrakova Grozdanova & Nikoloska 2022: cat. no. 6, Pl. VI, VII.

41 Tomašević 1965: 20-23.

Fig. 17. Bust of T. Flavius Orestes (photo courtesy of the Archaeological Museum of North Macedonia)

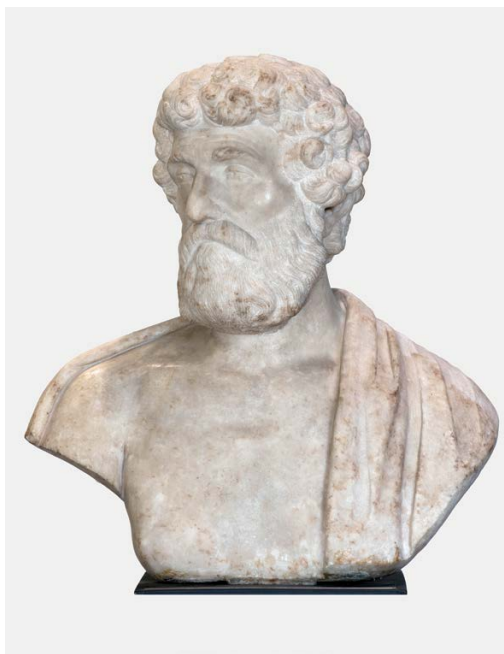
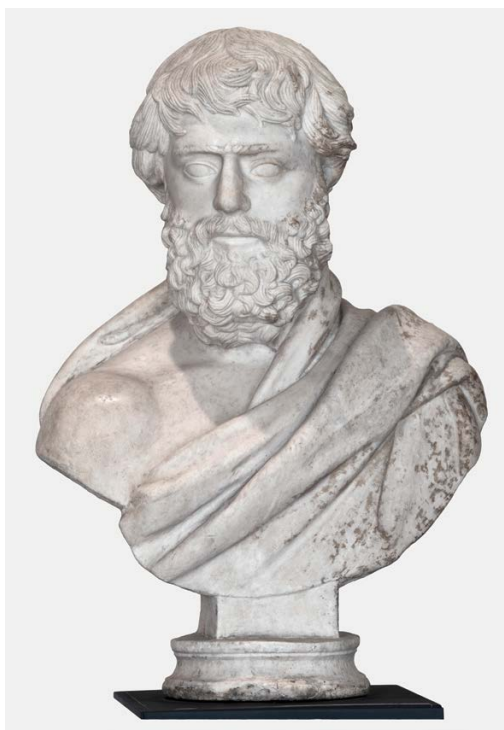


Fig. 18. Bust of Philoxenus (photo courtesy of the Archaeological Museum of North Macedonia)



perial cult was installed in Styberra, as was customary in every flourishing city in the Roman Empire. City priests of the Imperial cult donated a - poorly executed - portrait of the emperor Trebonius Galus (Fig. 19),⁴² thus inserting the Roman administration into the Institution of the epheboi and the life of the Gymnasium. Interestingly enough, no mythological statues have been found in the context of the Temple, except the statue of a young god leaning against a strut (Fig. 20), found in the drainage.⁴³ It is thought to represent the young Dionysos, however there is an omitted iconographic element in low relief on the back of the strut, seemingly a quiver (Fig. 20a). This in turn leads us to believe that we are dealing with an image of Eros of the wingless type that could have been a part of a statuary group, judging by the size of the strut.

An exceptional marble bust of Faustina Minor in Isis garments was found recently within a building adjacent to the Temple of the goddess Tyche, which is believed to have been a part of the agora of the city of Styberra.⁴⁴ Based on its position when it was discovered, it was probably placed in a niche in the eastern wall which was richly decorated with frescoes. The connection of this Faustina to the portrait of Crispina from Macedonia, now in the Museum of Ljubljana,⁴⁵ should not be dismissed, not only because of the dynastic relations between both depicted persons, but also considering the portrayal style, the hairstyle in particular. It is quite probable that they originate from the same manufacturing centre. A shared placement in the same city in Macedonia can be assumed, considering that the findspot of the portrait in Ljubljana has not been confirmed. Due to the skilful production, it could be assumed that both portraits were not local products, but imports, most probably from Rome,⁴⁶ so not very relevant to our study. On the other hand, since we are dealing with rare imports from Styberra, this evidence can support the assumption that the city did not have a great need for imports and relied mostly on its own sculptural production.

Stylistic observations

Just by the quantity of the statuary finds alone, considering the small area of the city excavated thus far we can confidently assume that Styberra had a developed statuary production. More than enough of the local statuary,

42 Vučković-Todorović 1963: 84, T. 25, 42; Rüschi 1969: 118, P16, Abb. 6, 7; Bergmann 1977: Taf. 48, 1, 2; Sokolovska 1987: 125, no. 43, T. 22/1, Jevtović 1987: no. 194; Bitrakova Grozdanova & Nikoloska 2022: cat. no. 35, Pl. XXXV.

43 Vučković-Todorović 1963: 83, T. XXIII, 39; Sokolovska 1987: 183, no. 155, T. 61/4; Nikoloska 2015: 89, fig. 3.

44 Bitrakova Grozdanova & Nikoloska 2022: cat. no. 8, Pl. XI-XIII; Nikoloska, Jandreska & Temelkoski 2024

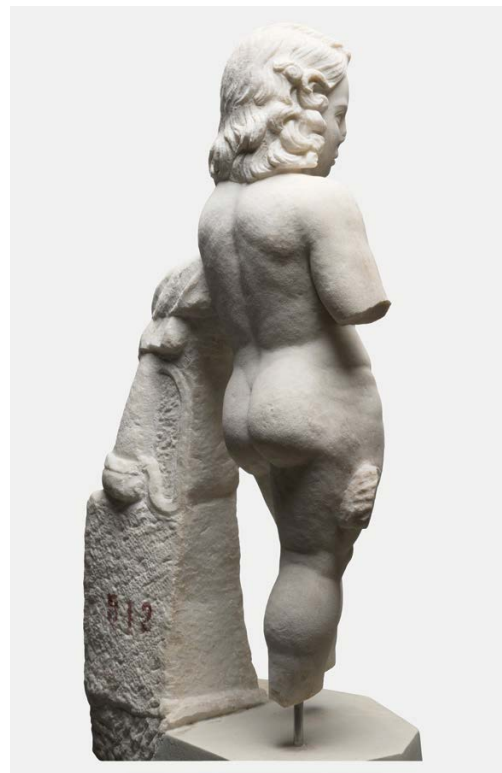
45 Kastelic 1953: 29-35, Abb. 1, 2; Rüschi 1969: 114, P9; Sokolovska 1987: 115, no. 28, T. 16/1; Osvald 2005; Istenič 2015: 95, fig. 104; Bitrakova Grozdanova & Nikoloska 2022: cat. no. 9, Pl. XIV, XV.

46 Fittschen 1996: 48.

Fig. 19. Portrait of Trebonius Galus (photo courtesy of the Archaeological Museum of North Macedonia)



Fig. 20. Statue of Eros (photo courtesy of the Archaeological Museum of North Macedonia)



although not its entirety, has so far been presented in support of the argument towards the existence of a city workshop. Also, analysis of the marble of some of the material from Styberra (two ephebic lists, the pedestal for the bust of Philoxenus, and one of the large Herculaneum Women) has attested to local use of the Sivec dolomite.⁴⁷ However, let us also observe some aspects of the stylistic features of the presented statuary before drawing further conclusions.

The Styberra statuary consists mostly of the common, standard Eastern type of *Himatiophoroi*⁴⁸ and large and small Herculaneum women that were produced in great numbers all across the Empire. The statues of Herculaneum women produced in Styberra mostly followed the model of the Ephesian style.⁴⁹ Comparison with the other Herculaneum women from the wider Macedonian region reveals certain differences, whether with the robust local style of the Grlane statues or the more refined style of statues found elsewhere that could have been imports from more renowned workshops.⁵⁰ The hands of the masters of the Styberra workshop could be observed through closer analysis of the rendering of the drapery of both the honorary statuary and of the mythological statues. The folds that follow the shapes of the figures are indeed finely executed, but do not very naturalistically present the fall of the cloth. There are some other features that can be recognised as marks of the local workshop. Besides such canonical elements as the pose and the drapery of the Herculaneum women, what is typically local and already observed⁵¹ is the high raised neckband of the tunic. To this observation we can add a further stylistic detail, that of the execution of the feet and the sandals that we found among the fragments in Kuršumli An (Fig. 21), with the same triangular ending of the strap towards the toes that are unrealistically sculpted as rectangular shapes and quite apart of each other. Similarities of style can also be observed among some of the found fragments of hands holding bundles of grain (Fig. 22),⁵² that exhibit no finer detailing of the fingers and nails.

There are several other details that help us recognise a provincial artistic hand. When compared, the sculptures of Asclepius and Eros (assuming that this statue is indeed a depiction of Eros), show certain similarities in their execution with the chisel. We notice deep renderings, but without finishing touches and no smoothing of the edges which are left almost schematic. The naked parts of their bodies are smooth but not polished. The faces of the deities are

47 Niewöhner, Audley-Miller & Prochaska 2013: cat. nos. 6–9.

48 Filges 2000: 101–103.

49 Kruse 1975: 58; Atalay 1989: 78.

50 Sokolovska 1987: nos. 105–107, 110–116. For more on the local style of the Grlane statues see Trimble 2011: cat. nos. 37, 38; Bitrakova Grozdanova & Nikoloska 2022: cat. nos. 41–60, Pl. XXXIX–LII.

51 Niewöhner, Audley-Miller & Prochaska 2013: 107.

52 All of these fragments are now in Kuršumli An as a collection of the Archaeological Museum of North Macedonia. I would like to thank Slavica Babamova for graciously allowing me to work on the Styberra material from the collection.

Fig. 21. Fragments of feet (photo credit: I. Blažev)



Fig. 22. Fragments of hands (photo credit: I. Blažev)



not fully worked, and appear as “out of the manual”, canonically produced without artistically recognisable features. There are also some unfinished details, for example the fingernails of Asclepius or the unfinished strut of the Eros sculpture, or maybe it is just a sign of mediocre work lacking the mastery of finishing touches. The surfaces of the naked bodies of the deities are left unpolished, as is the case with the statuette torso of the young god. Both Hermes and Eros have elongated almond-shaped eyes and a serious expression because of their pressed lips and gaze. As for the newly found Nike, the statue depicts a moment of flying in, dressed in a thin himation wrapped tightly at the front, and flowing in thick folds at the rear, beneath the wings, over her back all the way down to her feet. Although there is a certain gracefulness to the figure, a sense of stiffness is present in the depiction of the very act of flying in. Roughly and schematically depicted wings with stylized details confirm that the statue was made by local masters. Also, some local stylistic elements are recognised on some other statues from the vicinity, such as the aforementioned cuirassed statue from Prilep,⁵³ that could have been a product of the Styberra workshop. The simple ornamentation of the cuirass and other details indicate a particular schema for the local production of the cuirassed statues.

Those stylistic features cannot be recognised on the busts of Philoxenes and Orestes. Well executed, with carefully rendered details of the hair and the beard, and highly polished where their naked skin is showing, in contrast to the waves of the drapery, these busts are clearly works of masterful artists. Regarding the artistic performance from a technical point of view, the busts were very well made; the details meticulously rendered; the naked parts of the bodies and faces polished to a high gloss. Both the beards and their hair were shaped with a spiked chisel, while the bodies and the garments were mostly made with a flat one. The backs of the heads are basic, with barely rendered locks. These portraits depict persons with a strong character and of mature age, presented as philosophers in the style typical of Hadrian’s academism. The individual facial features, the noses, eyebrows and flaccid cheeks are successfully rendered, reflecting real portraits. Although some individual features appear in the busts, they are also generalized, so the portraits are rather cold, but represent persons of great repute within their community, confirmed both by the inscriptions and the context of their discovery.

Concluding thoughts

The main objective of this paper was to demonstrate a case of merging of the social dynamics and religious practices of Styberra in association with the studied public buildings, all with the purpose of acknowledging the city’s sculptural production and tracking the possible existence of a workshop. A considerable amount of statuary has been and is still being discovered within the excavated areas. Unfortunately, we do not have any archaeological evidence of an actual workshop, or a signature of a city artist, but there are some strong indications

53 Stemmer 1978: 65 f. no. V18.

that Styberra had a developed statuary production underpinned by a supporting economy. Just the mere quantity of excavated statuary, both from the Gymnasium and the Temple of Tyche, not nearly presented in its entirety here, already speaks to the high demand for honorary sculpture and argues for the mass production of a local workshop in order to communicate the city's cultural identity among its inhabitants. From the stelae, inscriptions and numerous ephebic lists we additionally learn of the high demand for inscribed and sculpted stone in order to honour outstanding townsmen and townswomen for their merit, and to worship the city gods through their sculptured effigies. To additionally confirm the fact that the statuary production of the city was quite prolific, besides the abundance of statuary finds from the Gymnasium, there are many other fragments of sculptures and body parts found at the Prilep Museum and the Archaeological Museum of North Macedonia, that are mostly unpublished.

It would be only natural for a city located in the direct vicinity of quality marble quarries to have flourished in the sculpture business. The population of Styberra must have made a living from the exploitation of both stone and metal. Another important facet of the city's economy was mining. Metal is quite useful in the stone business, for its use not only in sculptural metal binding but also in the machinery behind the sculpture industry.⁵⁴ We assume that there would have been several workshops; marble blocks were custom cut at the quarries and transported as semi-fabricates. The basic outlines of the statues would have been initially carved at quarry-based workshops, before being taken to a city workshop, or an atelier, assuming that there were several in Styberra, where they would be finished with fine drilling and polishing. A general style of the local workshop can also be recognized. What is common to most of the statuary is the treatment of the drapery, whereby the folds are soft and finely rendered, yet very linear and not quite naturalistic. Although the clothing follows the shape of the body and even creates a see-through effect, lending elegance to the figures, there are also marked distinctions that suggest the hand of a local artist. The details are not very skilfully rendered, and although the surfaces are smooth, they are never polished. As for the busts of Philoxenes and Orestes, a more skilful artists fashioned these portraits, perhaps even traveling masters employed by the city workshop. We can consider this hypothesis since we do not possess comparable statuary either in terms of technique or style from the city that could confirm continuation of this particular artistic practise.

One more argument in favour of a highly productive local workshop is that only rarely have imports been found in Styberra, except for the Antonine female portraits, in contrast to Heracleia Lyncestis that has yielded some of the most representative statuary, most of it housed in important museum collections across Europe, such as the Poet's bust⁵⁵ and the bust of Aeschines,⁵⁶ now

54 Babić 1972: 24, 33.

55 Leake 1835: 319, no. 3; Hinks 1976: 25, no. 14; Mačkić & Mikulčić 1960: no. 91; Sokolovska 1987: 114, no. 27, T. 15/1; Bitrakova Grozdanova & Nikoloska 2022: cat. no. 4, Pl. V.

56 Leake 1835: 319, n. 3; Michaelis 1882: Pl. 18; Mačkić, Mikulčić 1961: 60, fig. 77; Hinks 1976: 18, no. 8; Sokolovska 1987: 108, no. 19, T. 9, fig. 1; Jevtović 1987: no. 112; Bitrakova Grozdanova & Nikoloska 2022: cat. no. 3, Pl. IV.

in the British Museum. Some statues from Heracleia Lyncestis were made out of Sivec dolomite,⁵⁷ and are similar in style to those from Styberra, which might lead us to suppose a regional demand. Styberra had official connections with Heracleia, perhaps including trade of locally made sculpture as might have been the case with the statue of Titus Flavius Orestes, the high priest of both Styberra and Heracleia. We also considered another example, the cuirassed statue from Prilep which clearly came from the same workshop. These two cases additionally highlight the potential for possible future research into regional export.

Painting a colourful canvas consisting of some glimpses of city life and its citizens by simply interpreting the existing material, and drawing some evident conclusions was not difficult, but not enough if we want to grasp better the knowledge of the local sculptural production. Although already very detailed, the story of Styberra has not been nearly sufficiently revealed. Its archaeological and epigraphic corpus is yet to be fully collected and analysed, let alone the enormous potential of the unearthed site which certainly deserves more attention while seeking further evidence of the city's sculptural production, the local workshop and the regional trade network.

⁵⁷ Niewöhner, Audley-Miller & Prochaska 2013: cat. nos. 2, 12.

ABBREVIATIONS

- AA
Archäologischer Anzeiger
- BCH
Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique
- CSIR
Corpus Signorum Imperii Romani
- JdI
Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archaeologischen Instituts
- MacActaA
Macedoniae Acta Archaeologica
- МАНУ
Македонска академија на науките и уметностите
- ÖAI
Österreichische Archaeologische Institut
- СКА
Српска краљевска академија
- ŽivaAnt
Živa Antika

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