

**RADOVI BIOARHEOLOŠKE SEKCIJE
SRPSKOG ARHEOLOŠKOG DRUŠTVA**

BIOARHEOLOGIJA NA BALKANU

Bilans i perspektive

Urednici

Nataša Miladinović-Radmilović

Selena Vitezović

**Beograd - Sremska Mitrovica
2013**

RADOVI BIOARHEOLOŠKE SEKCIJE SRPSKOG ARHEOLOŠKOG DRUŠTVA

BIOARHEOLOGIJA NA BALKANU. BILANS I PERSPEKTIVE



BLAGO SIRMIJUMA

PAPERS OF THE BIOARCHAEOLOGICAL SECTION
OF THE SERBIAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

BIOARCHAEOLOGY IN THE BALKANS

BALANCE AND PERSPECTIVES

Editors:

Nataša Miladinović-Radmilović
Selena Vitezović

Belgrade • Sremska Mitrovica
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Izdavač / Published by

SRPSKO ARHEOLOŠKO DRUŠTVO, Beograd, Čika Ljubina 18-20
BLAGO SIRMIJUMA, Sremska Mitrovica, Ilariona Ruvarca bb

Za izdavača / For the publisher

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Miro Radmilović

Grafička oprema / Graphic layout

Nebojša Čosić

Štampa / Printed by

Razvojno-istraživački centar grafičkog inženjerstva Tehnološko-metalurškog fakulteta Univerziteta u Beogradu

Tiraž / Printed in

200

ISBN 978-86-84457-12-9

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BIOARHEOLOŠKA ISTRAŽIVANJA NA BALKANU

Savremena arheologija ne može se zamisliti bez različitih interdisciplinarnih, specijalističkih studija. Kako se arheologija menjala, tako su se i izdvajale nove poddiscipline, usmerene ka specifičnim problemima, pa se danas govori o geoarheologiji, paleoetnobotanici, zooarheologiji (ili arheozoologiji), (bio)fizičkoj antropologiji. Njihov obim, ciljevi i rezultati, međutim, u velikoj meri zavise od različitih faktora, često ne-arheoloških – nedostatak finansijskih sredstava ih ograničava ili usmerava na odabrana pitanja, ali se dešava i da se ovakva istraživanja, kao reprezentativna i privlačna, stave u prvi plan zarad obezbedivanja nastavka finansiranja, a da se zanemari celovito posmatranje nekog arheološkog problema. Isto tako, preovlađujuća teorijska paradigma u nekom periodu, kao i ciljevi istraživanja nekog određenog lokaliteta u velikoj meri mogu uticati na to da se određene specijalističke studije favorizuju ili ostave po strani.

Termin bioarheologija prvi je uveo u literaturu Grejem Klark (Grahame Clark) 1972. godine, da označi proučavanje životinjskih kostiju iz arheoloških slojeva. U Sjedinjenim Američkim Državama, termin bioarheologija se upotrebljava prevashodno za proučavanje ljudskih skeleta. U većini evropskih zemalja, međutim, danas se pod ovim terminom podrazumeva analiza svih bioloških ostataka sa arheoloških nalazišta. Bioarheologija je osnov za mnoge poddiscipline u arheologiji, kao što su proučavanje drevne DNK, paleodemografija, paleopatologija, ali i povezuje se sa socijalnom arheologijom (proučavanje telestnosti u arheologiji – *embodiment in archaeology*).

Sama priroda bioarheoloških ostataka, odnosno činjenica da su oni istovremeno *biološki* i

arheološki, tačnije da pripadaju sferama *prirodnog* i *kulturnog*, jeste ono što im, s jedne strane, daje izuzetno velike interpretativne mogućnosti, ali ih s druge strane i otežava, jer su za puno iskorišćavanje potencijala koji pružaju potrebni stručnjaci koji u svom radu mogu obuhvatiti oba načina posmatranja, to jest, koji neće zanemariti jedan aspekt na uštrb drugog. Upravo iz tih razloga, neophodno je neprekidno preispitivanje i unapređivanje i metodologije i teorijskih okvira.

Stepen istraženosti pojedinih od ovih oblasti dosta varira, u zavisnosti od tematske oblasti, geografskog regiona i hronološkog perioda. Zajedničko, međutim, i antropologiji, i paleoetnobotanici, i zooarheologiji u arheologiji Balkana, jeste nedovoljna sistematičnost u dosadašnjim radovima, tačnije, istraživanja su često bila uslovljena određenim (povoljnim) prilikama, i retko predstavljaju rezultat planiranog, ciljanog projekta. Situacija se u poslednje vreme menja nabolje, najviše zahvaljujući prepoznavanju potrebe za ovakvim studijama kada su u pitanju veliki naučni projekti, ali i zahvaljujući individualnim naporima koje su pojedini istraživači uložili. Umesto dosadašnje prakse predstavljanja rezultata ovih istraživanja u vidu malog dodatka na kraju veće publikacije, sve je veći broj radova u kojima su bioarheološka proučavanja glavna tema.

Bolje povezivanje različitih stručnjaka i stavljanje rezultata njihovog rada u širi arheološki kontekst, jesu, međutim, neophodni za bolje interpretacije arheoloških problema.

Ideja za pripremu ovog zbornika radova proistekla je iz prvog simpozijuma koji je organizovala Sekcija za bioarheologiju Srpskog arheolo-

škog društva na XXXV godišnjem skupu Društva, održanom u Valjevu. Sekcija je nastala iz potrebe da se rezultati rada bioarheoloških istraživanja predstave široj arheološkoj javnosti, kao i da se pokrene diskusija o metodološkim i drugim problemima sa kojima se različiti stručnjaci susreću u radu. Pored toga, cilj je bio ne samo da se predstave interdisciplinarni radovi, već da se zaista pokrenu *multidisciplinarna* istraživanja.

Publikovanje rezultata ovakvih studija ponekad je otežano upravo zbog njihove specifične prirode, kada se traže radovi koji pokrivaju širu čitalačku publiku, ili pružaju odgovore na pitanja šireg značaja. To je bio dodatni razlog za pokretanje ovakve publikacije. U ovom zborniku, nadamo se, prvom u nizu, uglavnom su radovi koji analiziraju dosadašnja istraživanja i pokazuju sadašnje stanje, kao i oni koji se bave metodološkim problemima. Predstavljeno je, međutim, i nekoliko studija slučaja, a posebni odeljak predstavljuju radovi na temu životinja i materijalne kulture. Naslov „Bilans i perspektive“ ukratko sumira osnovne teme dotaknute u ovom zborniku.

Prvi rad u zborniku jeste tekst P. Radovića, koji se bavi osetljivim, ali veoma značajnim pitanjem, koje vapi za što hitnijim rešenjem – problemom zakonske regulative čuvanja antropoloških ostataka i njihovim adekvatnim tretmanom i smeštajem u nadležnim ustanovama.

Istorijat istraživanja, odnosno bilans dosadašnjih i perspektive za buduća istraživanja, teme

su radova Ivane Stojanović i Jelene Bulatović (zooarheologija), i Dragane Filipović i Đurđe Obrađović (arheobotanika).

Metodologija obrade osteološkog materijala tema je radova N. Miladinović-Radmilović (standardizacija antropološke dokumentacije za arheologe i antropologe), K. Đukić (primena imidžing metoda) i S. Vitezović (obrada artefakata od koštanih sirovina), u kojima se i predlažu metodološki okviri ubličeni na osnovu iskustva autorki.

Naredni blok predstavljaju studije slučaja, pretežno koncentrisani na antropološke ostatke (P. Radović, N. Dimović), a posebno se izdvaja studija J. Jovanović i J. Bulatović u kojoj su dati uporedni rezultati analiza antropoloških i zooloških ostataka sa nekropole u Remezijani.

Konačno, zbornik zaključuju radovi koji se bave životinjama i materijalnom kulturom: S. Petković i I. Sidéra su predstavile odabrane koštane predmete iz rimskog, odnosno praistorijskog perioda, dok je tema rada G. Jeremić predstava životinja na rimskim mozaicima.

I, na kraju, ali ne najmanje važno, hteli bismo da se zahvalimo svim kolegama koji su podržali naš rad, naročito kolegama iz Arheološkog instituta, kao i članovima Srpskog arheološkog društva koji su nas podržali i koji su pratili naša izlaganja na skupu u Valjevu.

NATAŠA MILADINOVIC-RADMILOVIĆ,
SELENA VITEZOVIĆ

LUDI GALLINARI ON THE MOSAIC FLOOR FROM OESCUS (NW BULGARIA)

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Abstract: During archaeological research in 1948 in the central part of the Roman *Oescus* (modern day Gigen) at the confluence of the Iskar and Danube rivers, in the province of *Moesia Inferior* (Late Roman province *Dacia Ripensis*), a structure was discovered with a room decorated with a mosaic floor with figural scenes. Mosaics' panels depicted scenes from the Menander's piece "The Achaeans", cockfight, world of fishes and animals – symbols of seasons. Special attention is dedicated to a partially preserved depiction of a cockfight (*ludi gallinarii*), which was one of the favorite sports and gambling events in Roman times. These scenes appear on various monuments, mosaics, tombstones, in wall painting, toreutics. We will attempt to determine the origin of the patron, and possibly the workshop that produced this mosaic of exceptional value, based on the analysis of the monuments, and overview of displays on the mosaic from *Oescus*.

Key words: *Oescus*, mosaic floor, cockfight, *ludi gallinarii*, 3rd-4th century AD.

Акстракт: Приликом археолошких истраживања 1948. године у средишњем делу античког града Ескуса (*Oescus, Colonia Ulpia Oescensium*), у провинцији *Moesia Inferior* (касноантичка *Dacia Ripensis*), откривен је велики део једне грађевине украсене мозаичким подовима. Мозаички панели приказују сlike из Меандровог комада „Ахајци“, борбу петлова, свет риба и животиње које симболишу годишњих доба. Посебна је пажња посвећена делимично очуваној представи борбе петлова (*ludi gallinarii*), која је била једна од омиљених спортских и коцкарских догађаја у римском периоду. Ове сцене јављају на различитим споменицима, мозаицима, надробним плочама, на зидним сликама, у тореутици. Покушаћемо да одредимо порекло патрона, и могућу радионицу која је створила овај изузетно вредни мозаик, на основу анализе споменика и на основу прегледа мозаика из Ескуса.

Кључне речи: *Oescus*, подни мозаик, борба петлова, *ludi gallinarii*, III-IV век.

The Roman city of *Oescus*, formed at the beginning of the 1st century AD, and promoted to the rank of colony after 106 (*Colonia Ulpia Oescensium*), was located in the area of the modern day village of Gigen in Pleven District in the northwestern Bulgaria, about 3 Roman miles south of the confluence the Danube and Iskar rivers

(Danoff 1937: coll. 2033-2036). It is one of the most important Roman cities in the province of Lower Moesia (*Moesia Inferior*), and Late Roman coastal Dacia (*Dacia Ripensis*) (Velkov 1977: 89). Structures discovered in *Oescus* indicate that this was a large and wealthy Roman colony, which flourished between 2nd-4th centuries. The

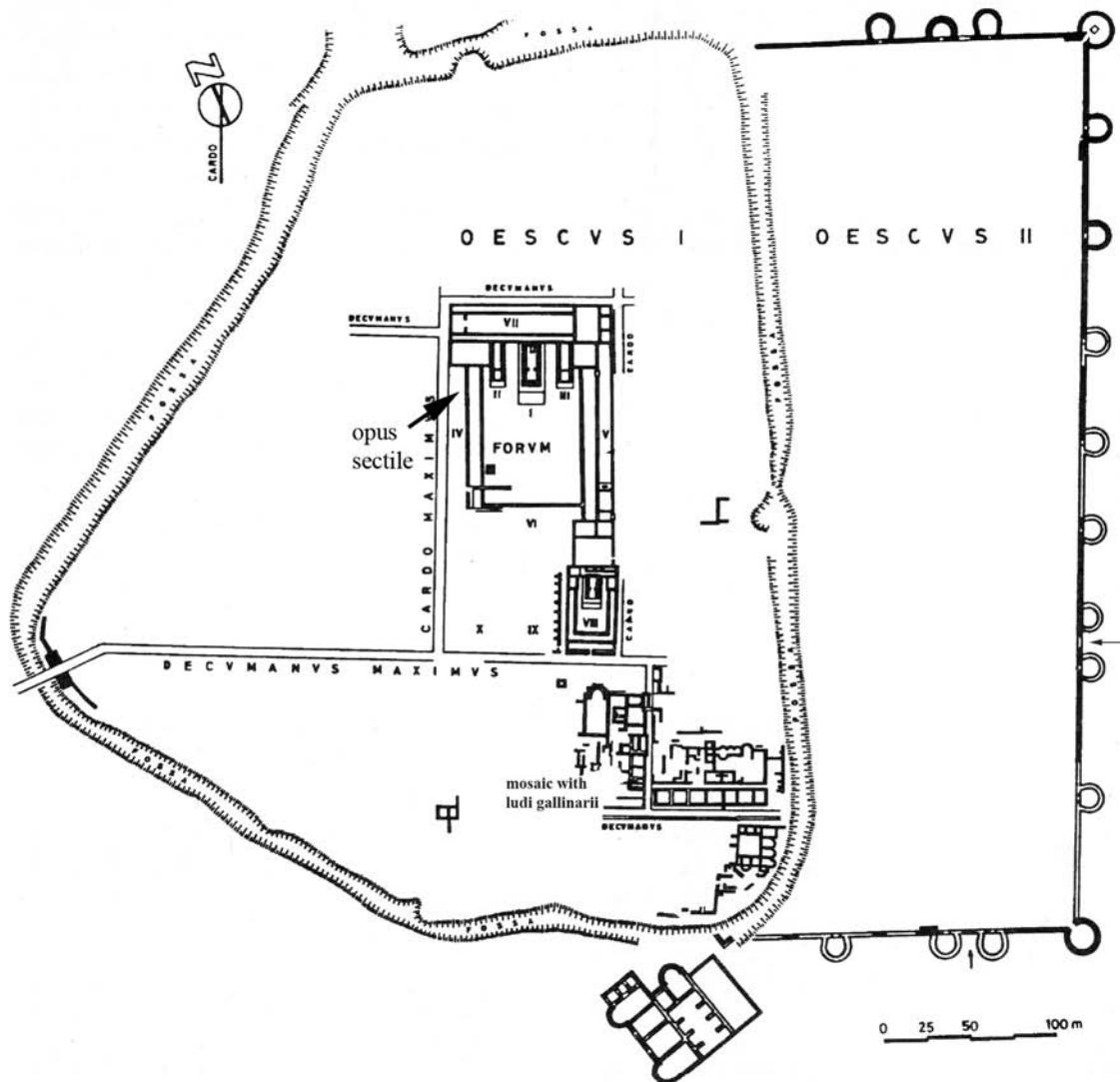


Figure 1. Oescus, site map (according to: Ivanov 1996: Abb. 1)
Слика 1. Ескус, мапа локалитета site map (према: Ivanov 1996: Abb. 1)

city was organized according to the West Roman imperial model and official language was Latin, however, eastern Mediterranean influences were dominant in ornamentation of buildings (Kabakčieva 1999: 49).

Nearly 65 years ago, during archaeological excavations in the central part of the Roman city, a large section of a representative building was discovered. It was located in the eastern part of a settlement *Oescus I*, and in the immediate

vicinity of a large complex of temples and public basilica (Иванов 2005: *passim*), which were located on the northern side, whereas *thermae* and a number of shops (*tabernae*) were on the southern side (Figure 1). Most of the structure was investigated, except for its western part which remains unexplored. Unfortunately, the results have not yet been published, so that there are no precise information about its exact appearance, or construction phases and repairs. At one point,



Figure 2. Oescus, mosaic with figural scenes (according to: Иванов 1954: T. I).
Слика 2. Ескус, мозаик са фигурантим представама (према: Иванов 1954: Т. I).



Figure 3. Oescus, *ludi gallinarii* (according to: Иванов 1954: T. 19)
Слика 3. Ескус, *ludi gallinarii* (према: Иванов 1954: Т. 19)

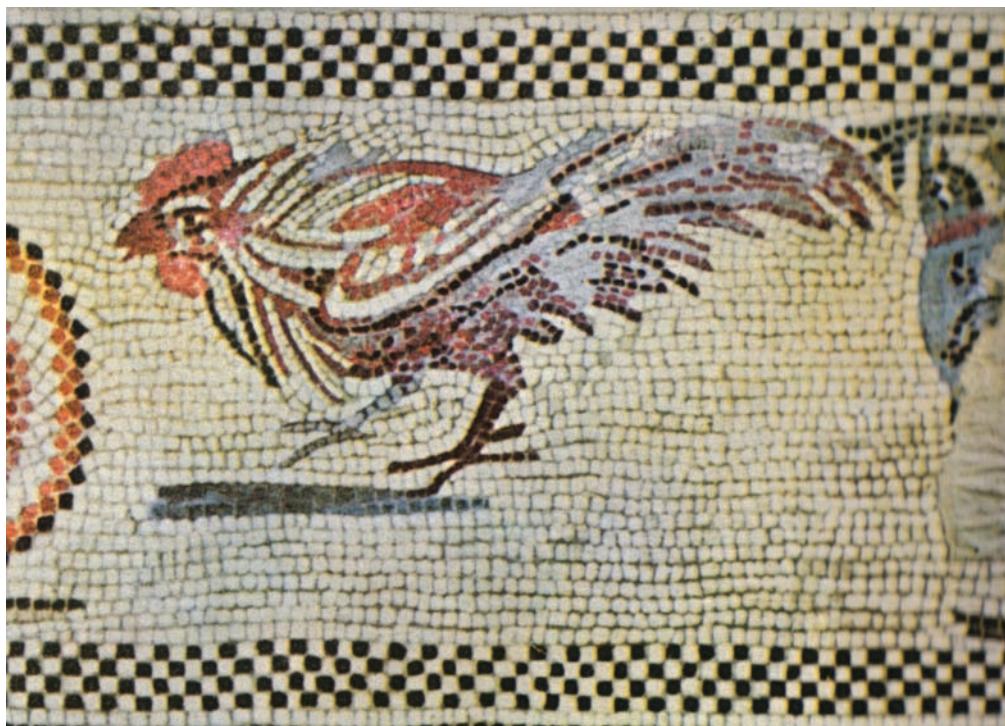


Figure 4. *Oescus, ludi gallinarii*, detail (according to: Иванов 1954: Т. 20)
Слика 4. Ескус, *ludi gallinarii*, детаљ (према: Иванов 1954: Т. 20)



Figure 5. *Oescus, ludi gallinarii*, detail (according to: Иванов 1954: Т. 21)
Слика 5. Ескус, *ludi gallinarii*, детаљ (према: Иванов 1954: Т. 21)

probably in Late Roman period, the structure was expanded in its eastern part, thus blocking a narrow side street. Because it was located in the central part of the village, it can be assumed that it was a public building.

In one of the structure's southern rooms, a mosaic floor was discovered, 80 m² in area, with an emblem 2.95 x 1.63 m in size, containing figural scenes (Иванов 1954: *passim*; Idem 1994: 160-164; Попова-Мороз 1987: 7-8). At the time of discovery, the mosaic was severely damaged (Figure 2). Outer frame of the mosaic was made up of two geometric fields, one consisting of irregular octagons that overlap and touch their longer sides whereas the short sides touch the squares (Répertoire graphique 1973: no. 352), and another field that consisted of a network of slanted squares, filled with cross-shaped flowers (flowers: *Ibid.*: no. 107). The main panel with figures was surrounded by a bordure of waves (*Ibid.*: no. 190), and a field with two arrays of circles that overlap and form a four-leaf (*Ibid.*: no. 437) and a double-braid (*Ibid.*: no. 194). The panel itself was divided into three rectangular areas, with the central octagon with human figures in the middle (Ivanov 1954: 3-5). Four figures were depicted, of which three were standing and one was sitting. It represented a theater scene with two, maybe three, masked actors and with one person (*persona muta*) observing the unfolding of the scene (Јеремић 2010: 83-84; Eadem 2012: 134-135). Above their heads was a Greek inscription indicating that this was an episode from the Meander's piece, "The Achaeans": M] ENANΔPOY·AXAIOI. To the right of the scene there was a panel showing five fish, rich in color, with dark shadows, swimming freely in water.¹

There was a depiction of a cockfight, damaged at both ends (Figure 3) in the rectangle to the left of the central panel with Meander's "Achaeans". The roosters were placed opposite each other, body and head slightly bent towards the opponent, suggesting that it was the moment just before the fight. The rooster to the right was

shown in its entirety (Figure 4), whereas the one to the left missed its tail (Figure 5). Both roosters were shown with feathers in rich shades of red, burgundy, white, gray and yellow, with colorful playfulness and realistic depiction achieved by the use of small glass cubes. Leg in stride in both animals is done in gray-blue cubes and the proping leg - burgundy. There were irregularities in leg anatomy in both roosters except for the left roosters's right leg which was shown correctly with three fingers pointing forwards and one pointing backwards (Goldfinger 2004: 218; Percy 2006: 11).

Right behind the rooster there was a partially preserved image of a hen in blue tesserae, with a branch in its beak, which probably confirmed the winner of the fight. It was possible that there had been an image of another hen behind the left rooster whose head with a palm branch remained preserved, possibly indicating that the right rooster was the winner. Roosters were separated by a wreath with a serrated edge and a ribbon at the bottom, representing a laurel wreath, intended for the winner; however, laurel leaves were not shown. A palm branch was placed through the center of the wreath. Roosters and hens (*galli, gallinae, gallinacei*) belong to the most important class of birds in the family *Phasianidae* and the genus *Gallus*. Based on archaeological traces and paleozoology, this kind of poultry was considered to be first domesticated in Indonesia and Thailand 6000 BC, a millennium later in China, and in 4000 BC it appeared in the Harappa culture, where clay statuettes of roosters and hens were registered (Peters 1998: 191-192). Researchers have discovered depictions of poultry in the paintings in the Tutankhamen's tomb in Egypt in 14th century BC. Mass poultry breeding in separate brick henneries had been known in this country since the 4th century BC (Percy 2006: 16). Poultry arrived to ancient Greece via Persia, so they were called Persian birds. It was incorporated into everyday-life, art and mythology. This species reached the Romans through the Greeks in southern Italy and the Etruscans, who used poultry, among other things, for predicting future. Poultry played a role in Romans'

¹ T. Ivanov believes that these are freshwater fish, cf.: Ivanov 1994: p. 160 To the contrary: Jeremić 2010: 82.



Figure 6. Pompeii, *ludi gallinarii* (according to: Иванов 1954: Т. 5)
Слика 6. Помпеја, *ludi gallinarii* (према: Иванов 1954:Т. 5)

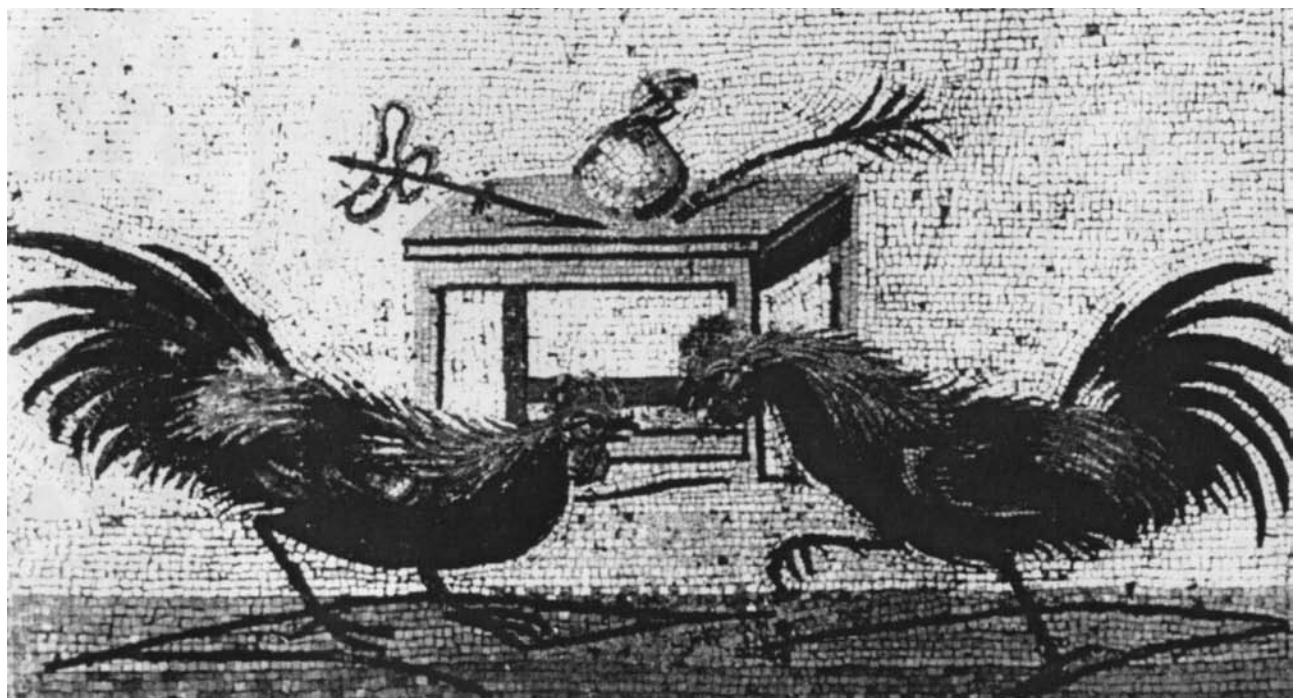


Figure 7. Pompeii, *ludi gallinarii* (according to: Peters 1998: Abb. 67)
Слика 7. Помпеја, *ludi gallinarii* (према: Peters 1998: Abb. 67)



Figure 8. Antioch, mosaic of the "House of Eros the trader" (according to: Levi 1947: fig. 43a)
Слика 8. Антиохија, мозаик из "Куће Ероса трговца" (према: Levi 1947: fig. 43a)

everyday diet, as well as in entertainment, religion and cult

Lions shied away from the rooster's crowing, so the travelers across Libya brought them along, to protect them from harm (Aelian, On Animals, III. 31). It was also noted that in Thessaloniki, in the Nibe region (Νίβας), there was a special kind of rooster that could not crow, the animals were completely silent, so a proverb was created in relation to them, referring to impossible things: "You have something or other, like a Nubian rooster has crowing" (Aelian, On Animals, XV. 20).

Roosters in a cult are associated with numerous goddesses and gods: Hermes / Mercury, Lares, Demeter / Persephone, Asclepius, Hercules. After each battle the Spartans offered Ares a rooster as a sacrificial animal (Csapo 1993b: 8, 10; Toynbee 1973: 257). Rooster's crowing would suggest a change of night and day, and it was often associated with the cult of the dead. According to the Thracian version of the Greek myth, a rooster originated from Alectryon (Ἀλεκτρυόν),

Ares' companion on drinking parties and romantic meetings. Alectryon had to keep Ares awake while in throes of passion with Aphrodite, however, he fell asleep and Hephaestus caught the lovers in the act, which is why Ares turned his friend into a rooster, a belligerent animal with a crest that resembles a Corinthian helmet with a plume (Csapo 1993b: 9). Alektryon was depicted in the form of a rooster on the money of the Ares' Thracian city of Selymbria (Gökyldirim 1998: 282).

According to legend, roosters and hens, as Aelian recorded from an older writer Mnaseas (Μνασέας), were devoted to an unnamed temple of Heracles and his wife Hebe. In this temple the animals were separated according to sex into separate enclosures, with flowing water between them. Roosters were dedicated to Hercules, and hens and Hebe. There was no interaction between them, except during mating season, when the roosters flew out of their space among the chickens and returned back over water (Aelian, On Animals, XVII. 46). The rooster was the favorite animal of the goddess Leto, because it was on her side when she gave birth to twins Apollo and

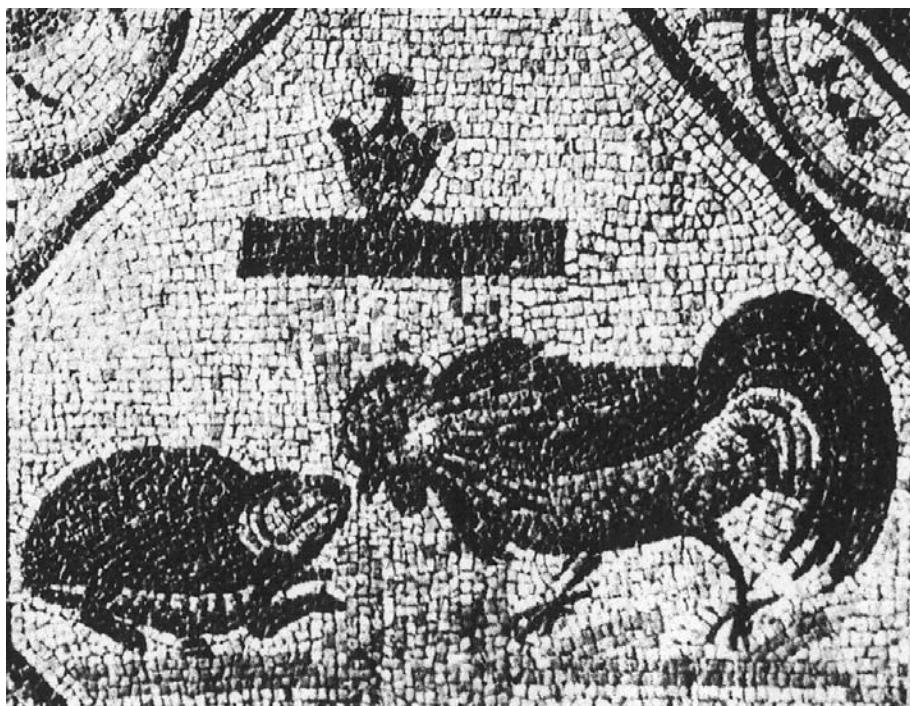


Figure 9. Aquileia, mosaic with a fighter-rooster charging a turtle (according to: Toynbee 1973: fig. 115)
Слика 9. Аквилеја, мозаик са борцем-петлом који јуриша на корњачу (према: Toynbee 1973: fig. 115)

Artemis, and it was thought that these animals help during child delivery (Aelian, *On Animals*, IV. 29).

Local, "fighting" roosters were especially appreciated. Stocky built and with peculiar looks and temperament, they were trained for brutal fighting. There are several sources that mention them. Gaius Lucilius mentioned that the winning rooster strutted around, rising at his toe tips when he walked: „*gallinaceus cum victor se gallus honeste / altius <in> digitos pri-moresque erigit unquis*“ (Lucilius, *Carminum reliquiae*, 300-301). Columella distinguishes three types of roosters: *cohortalis*, *rusticus* and *Africanus (Numidicus)*,² and he also mentioned rooster breeders (*avium lanistae*) (Columella, *De re rustica*, VIII. 2). This author stated that the owners could lose their entire property in cockfights (*Ibid.*). Aelian recorded that the rooster that was defeated in battle, would not crow, but

would be depressed and ashamed (Aelian, *On Animals*, IV. 29). However, a winner would be proud, gleeful and would hold his head high. But when he went through the door, he would lower his head to protect his crest regardless of size. Before the start of the fight, roosters were smeared with onions, in order to raise their body temperature, as well as their fighting spirit and hardiness (Csapo 1993a: 116).

The Greeks were considered to be the best fighting-rooster breeders, and their poultry was the most aggressive. The roosters most valued were those from Tanagra (*Tanagricum genus*), Rhodes (*Rhodium*), Delos (*Delicai*), Chalkidiki (*Chal-cidicum*), Medea in Persia (*Medicum*, according to Columella, his contemporaries wrongfully named that kind *Melicum*) (Columella, *De re rustica*, VIII. 2; Varro, *De re rustica*, III. 9, 6). These animals were distinguished by slender body and exquisite beauty.

Cockfights (ἀλεκτρυόνων αγωνες, *ludi gallinarii*) were one of the favorite sports events to ancient Greeks. According to an ancient decree,

² Unlike him, Varro uses the name *villaticae* for the group of tamed birds (Varro, *De re rustica*, III. 9, 1).

in Athens the cockfights were held each year at a theater, at the expense of the public treasury, and all the young Athenians took part. This sport was obviously significant in Athens, as the competitions took place in the month of Poseidon (December-January), and the importance of the event is best illustrated by the fact that the cockfight was chosen as the allegory for this month on the liturgical calendar of Athens, and that the rooster and palm tree were displayed on Athen's tetradrachms, and later in other Greek cities' minting (Levi 1947: 193).

One of the earliest depictions of a cockfight appears in archaic age on the limestone frieze from Xanthos (Levi 1947: 193). Scenes appear in black and red-figure painting of ancient Greece (Barringer 2001: fig. 54-57). Fights were displayed on bronze mirrors, stone reliefs, in fresco painting and mosaics. In the mosaic art, examples can be seen in Pompeii, Carthage, Piazza Armerina, Antioch, Sabratha. In Pompeii cockfights were shown on two mosaics from the "Maze House" from the first half of the 1st century AD. In one instance, the outcome of the fight was shown (Figure 6): the winning rooster was shown with Victoria bringing a laurel, and a servant, bringing a palm branch to his head, whereas on the opposite, there is a defeated, bloody rooster with the personification of Defeat, in the position of mournin (Levi 1947: 194). Roosters were made in light-brown tesserae. On the other mosaic from Pompeii (Figure 7) two fighters were shown with the one to the right, with a raised foot, stepping towards the opponent, presented as the likely winner of the duel. Roosters were presented in dark brown and black tesserae, on a light background. Behind them was a table with a palm branch for the winner, a caduceus and a bag of money.

Heraldically placed roosters in an apparent attempt to fight, were shown on the mosaic in the "House of Eros the trader" of Antioch, from the period 235-312 (Figure 8) (Campbell 1938: 214, fig. 10; Levi 1947: 625). The panel showed five different activities of Eros, with the one where Eros encourages roosters to fight standing out. On the mosaic from the second half of the

fourth century villa near Piazza Armerina, boys who hunt animals and birds were shown, including a scene in which a rooster attacks boy who flees. From the early Christian period a magnificent display of a fighter-rooster charging a turtle remained preserved on the mosaic from Aquileia (Figure 9). In this depiction the authors find symbolic Christian representations of fight between evil and good / vigilance, embodied in the turtle and rooster (Toynbee 1973: 222 et fig. 115). On the sixth century mosaics from Sabratha, two beautiful roosters were shown with a group of hens and chicks (Toynbee 1973: 257).

Evidently, displays of cockfights (*ludi gallinarii*) are relatively rare in mosaic art. This scene on the mosaic from *Oescus*, which is dated to the period between 3rd-4th centuries,³ could be viewed in the context of the other mosaic floor panels in the central part of the building of the ancient city of *Oescus*. The selection of scenes in Menander's "Achaeans" and cockfights, could indicate the origin of the Athenian customer (*patron*) or the craftsman of the mosaic (*vermiculator*) of this unique work of art, or their strong links with Greek culture (Јеремић 2010: 19, 88). Putting the play episode in one panel next to a bloody battle associated with hazard in another, says a lot about the client, about their equal appreciation of the subtle cultural pieces, as well as cruel sports and gambling shows, which could have been performed at the same place - at the theater. Or perhaps the reason for the choice of topics of cockfight is of completely different nature - the contracting authority could have been driven by aesthetic principles, by the beauty of roosters and hens, so when viewing the book of samples, they chose this motif.

This paper is a result of the project Romanization, urbanization and transformation of urban

³ There is no agreement on the dating of of Menander's "Achaeans" mosaic within academic circles. Some authors claim that the mosaic was created by the end of the 2nd - beginning of the 3rd century (Ivanov 1954: 22), or in the first half of the 3rd century (Ivanov 1994: 164; Popova-Moroz 1987: 7-8). That the mosaic was created in the 4th century, see: Toynbee 1955: 205; Јеремић 2010: 88-91; Eadem 2012:137.

centres of civil, military and residential character in Roman provinces on the territory of Serbia (No. 177007) funded by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia.

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Резиме

LUDI GALLINARII НА ПОДНОМ МОЗАИКУ ИЗ ЕСКУСА (OESCUS) (СЕВЕРОЗАПАДНА БУГАРСКА)

ГОРДАНА ЈЕРЕМИЋ

Приликом археолошких истраживања 1948. године у средишњем делу античког града Ескуса (*Oescus, Colonia Ulpia Oescensium*), у провинцији *Moesia Inferior* (касноантичка *Dacia Ripensis*), откривен је већи део једне грађевине украшене мозаичким подовима. Грађевина је вероватно била јавног карактера, подигнута у близини форума и комплекса храмова. Мозаци су покривали површину од око 80 m². У двоструком оквиру од геометријских тепиха налази се централни правоугаони панел са фигуранлим сценама. Средишњи део овог панела је у облику октогона, у ком су приказане четири људске фигуре – три глумца са позоришним маскама и посматрач сцене, вероватно писац комада (*persona muta*). Сцена је захваљујући натпису изнад актера одређена као епизода из дела мајстора новоатичке комедија Менандра „Ахајци“ -ΜΕΝΑΝΔΡΟΥ·ΑΧΑΙΟΙ. Десно од позоришне сцене налази се правоугаони панел са представом риба које пливају слободно у води, лево је приказ борбе петлова (*ludi gallinarii*), док су у одсечцима представљене животиње које симболишу годишња доба. Представа борбе петлова била је, према овим приказима, фланкирана симболима зиме (дивљи вепар) и недостајеће фигуре – симбола јесени, коју би могао да представља бик.

Ludi gallinarii представљају један од омиљених спортских и коцкарских догађаја старих Грка, који су Римљани преузели и наставили да негују кроз читав период антике. За борбу су коришћени посебно обучавани петлови – „борци“, крупне грађе и наочитог изгледа. Међу њима су на цени били борци који су потицали из Грчке и који су важили за најагресивније. Извори посебно помињу петлове из Танагре (*Tanagricum genus*), са Родоса (*Rhodium*), Делоса

(*Delicai*), Халкидикија (*Chalcidicum*), из Медеје у Персији (*Medicum*).

Борбе петлова приказују се у ликовним уметностима још од архајског доба (кречњачки фриз из Ксантоса), а нарочито су заступљени у вазном грчком сликарству и сепулкралној уметности. Касније, у римском свету представе се јављају у фреско сликарству, тореутици, мозаичкој уметности. На мозаицима су представе борбе петлова веома ретке, поред панела из Ескуса, познати су прикази на два мозаика из Помпеја (I век н.е.) и једног мозаика из Антиохије датованог у другу половину III-IV век. У овај период определен је мозаик са борбом петлова из Ескуса.

За представе борбе петлова карактеристично је хералдичко приказивање ривала, углавном је један у подређеном положају и представља пораженог такмичара. Између, или изнад петлова, налазе се ловоров венац и палмина грана намењене победнику, као и врећа са новцем, коју добија власник победничке животиње.

Представа борбе петлова на мозаику из Ескуса занатски је изведена веома добро. Једно од питања које овај мозаик покреће је да ли се иза ове декоративне сцене крије повезаност наручиоца (*patron*) или мајстора који је извео дело (*vermiculator*) са Атином, где је овај спорт још од класичног грчког доба био веома цењен. Други елемент, који указује на тесне везе са Атином јесте централна представа мозаика – сцена из позоришног комада „Ахајци“ славног писца Менандра, који је на комичан начин одсликао атинску свакодневицу и чија је једна од сцена из овог комада нашла своје место на мозаику на доњем Дунаву – у Ескусу. Начин израде мозаика указује да је мозаичар био бли-

зак са антиохијским радионичким кругом, где су се такође неговале теме из атинског културног круга. У тумачењу сцене борбе петлова из Ескуса можемо да пратимо симбиозу вештог

занатског рада мозаичара из антиохијског круга, којима су атинске теме биле блиске, али и жељу патрона да у згради у којој је боравио у центру Ескуса, украси оваквим мотивима.

CIP - Каталогизација у публикацији
Библиотеке Матице српске, Нови Сад

572 : 902 (497) (082)

BIOARHEOLOGIJA na Balkanu : bilans i perspektive /
urednici Nataša Miladinović-Radmilović, Selena Vitezović. –
Beograd: Srpsko arheološko društvo : Sremska Mitrovica :
Blago Sirmijuma, 2013 (Beograd : Razvojno-istraživački
centar Tehnološko-metalurškog fakulteta). – 214. :
ilustr. ; 29 cm. – (Radovi Bioarheološke sekcije Srpskog
arheološkog društva)

Na spor. nasl. str. : Bioarcheology in the Balkans. – Radovi
na srp. i engl. jeziku. – Tekst lat. i cir. – Tiraž 200. –
Summaries. – Bibliografija.

ISBN 978-86-84457-12-9

1. Ств. насл. на упор. насл. стр. 2.
Миладиновић-Радмиловић, Наташа | уредник |
а) Биоархеологија – Балкан – Зборници
COBISS.SR 2820226247

