

## VENUS OR DIANA FROM MEDIANA

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*Abstract.* – During the archaeological investigation of the villa with peristyle in Mediana in 2011, a marble head, which may have been the head of a goddess, was discovered. Her face and the treatment of her hair show that it may represent a replica of a Hellenistic original. As far as is known, analogies of female marble heads from Mediana show that it probably represented either the goddess Artemis/Diana or Aphrodite/Venus. A hypothesis was made that the head might have been modelled at the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century – 430 A.D. In addition, a hypothesis was made that the base found in 2002, on which was preserved a fragmented head and the tail of a dolphin, and the new found head were parts of the same statue.

If this is the case, then the statue can be identified as the type of Capitol Venus, subtype Venus with dolphin.

*Key words.* – Marble head, Mediana, late antique.

Among the various buildings in Mediana, the most important is the so called “villa with peristyle”.<sup>1</sup> The north-western part of the villa, with rooms in the south-western area and the western half of the south portico, were not identified until 2010. During 2010 and 2011 these parts were also researched, so that a complete plan of the villa is now known. The fact that there were two building phases suggests that there had been some reconstruction work carried out. In the second phase, some new parts of the villa were built whilst others were widened. We will briefly mention that west of the big aula/triclinium, a round triclinium, stibadium B, was discovered, identical to the previously discovered stibadium A. A museum building was built above this, on the eastern side of the aula (fig. 1). It is almost certain that stibadium B was built during a rebuilding phase of the existing building, so it can be

assumed that stibadium A belongs to this rebuilding phase. Therefore, previous opinions that stibadium A is from the first building horizon of Mediana, built before the first phase of the villa, is not correct.<sup>2</sup> Stibadium B has two annexes, one to the east and one to the west, and it was decorated with a floor mosaic and a marble panel on the foundation of the walls. On the villa’s vault and possibly on the walls as well, there was a mosaic made of *tesserae*, some with gold leaf, which were found half burnt on the floor, under which was found a hypocaust. In the past it has been suggested that the

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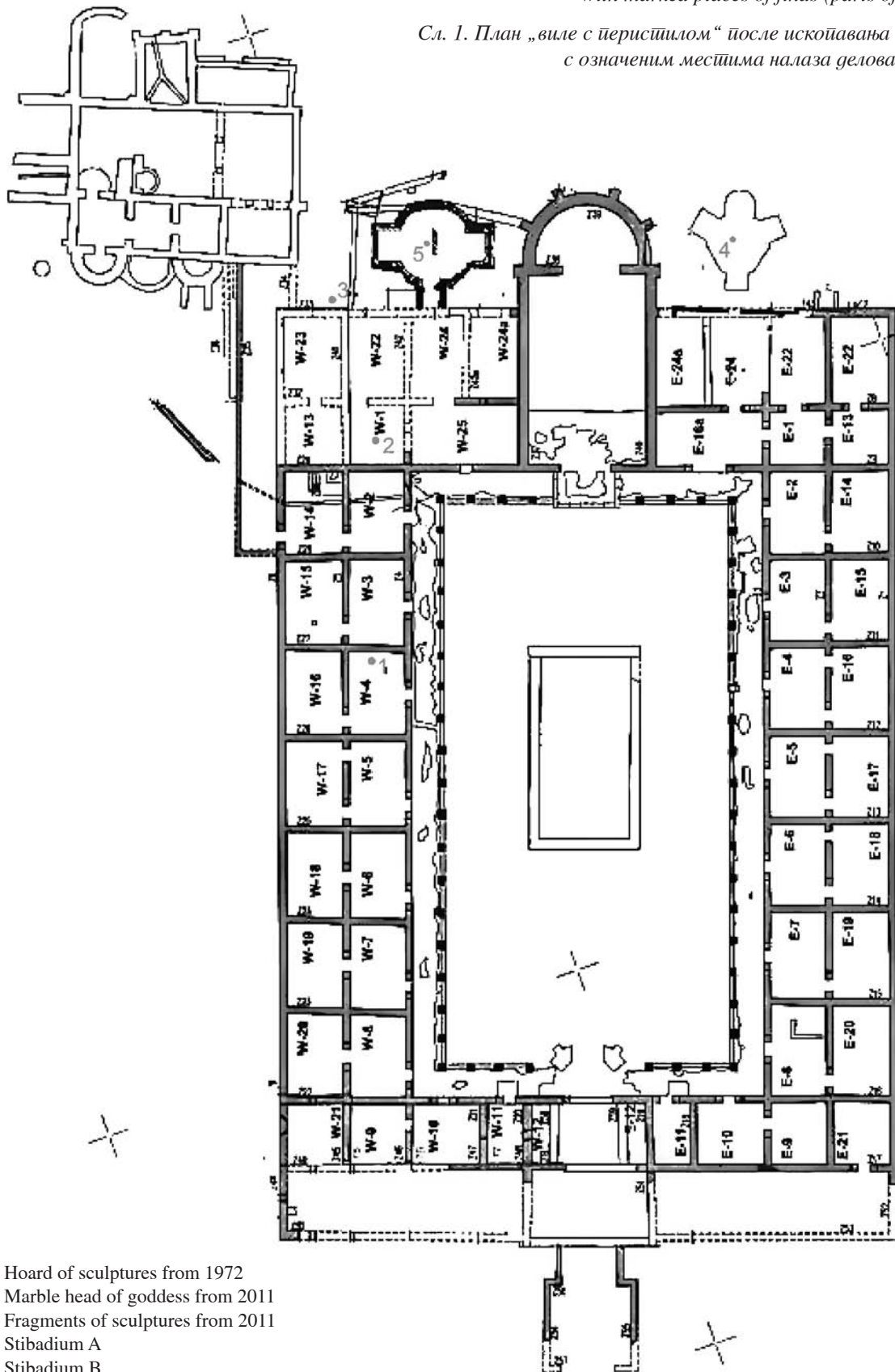
<sup>1</sup> The newest topographic plan, with added geomagnetic prospection, Milošević, Peters, Wendling 2011, 275–284, especially Fig. 2 and with cited literature.

<sup>2</sup> Vasić 2004, 104. Id., 2007. 99.

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Fig. 1. Plan of villa with peristyle after the excavations 2010–2011, with marked places of finds (parts of sculptures)

Сл. 1. План „виле с перистилом“ после ископавања 2010–2011, с означеним местима налаза делова скулптура



villa was decorated with mosaics and frescos in the second building phase, which was confirmed by the most recent excavations.<sup>3</sup> Another hypothesis is that during the second building phase of the villa, statues of mythological, not cult, characters were brought and placed in the villa. Fragments of these statues were found in a hoard of sculptures discovered in western room 4, as well as in other excavated areas in and around the villa.<sup>4</sup> Thus, the villa with peristyle was transformed from a simple, almost barrack-like building into a monumental and luxurious residence, with a predominantly ceremonial character. It had a monumental gate to the south, a special vestibule in front of the divided porticos through which one could enter the villa and in the peristyle at the entrance, an arcade was built. The rooms of the northern section were decorated with frescos and mosaics of a festal, ceremonial character.

During June of the 2011 campaign,<sup>5</sup> in the control profile between sondages 46 and 47 (western room 1), a marble head, which probably belonged to a statue of a goddess, was found (fig. 1/1).<sup>6</sup> The head was found on the transition between layer B and layer C. In the same cota and in the surrounding area the head of an iron spear and part of a column with its base were found (fig. 2). Obviously it was a living horizon following a fire at the villa, where unneeded architectonic parts and parts of sculptures were disposed of. Dating from



Fig. 2. The appearance of the head and the base of column

Сл. 2. Ойштини изглед налаза главе и базе стуба

the same period is a group of sculptures found in 1972, in western room 4 (fig.1/2). It seems that after the destruction of Mediana (presumably in 378 AD) the newly settled people who inhabited Mediana in the fourth quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD, were coming upon parts of architectural plastic and sculptures. Some were used as building materials (bases and parts of columns) which were discovered in the foundations of buildings of this horizon in the villa's peristyle, for example, in the foundations of a church with a christogram, where fragments of an honorary inscription were found.<sup>7</sup> One group of sculpture fragments was found south of the villa, in the foundations of the gate and the guardhouse (fig.1/4), two heads were found outside the villa's area and a group of fragments was found, in 2011, in the area between stibadium B and the northern face of the villa (facing the *termae*).<sup>8</sup> A further group of fragments

<sup>3</sup> It was definitively confirmed that all mosaics in Mediana's villa with peristyle, those in the stibadium and those in the aula and peristyle, were from one chronological horizon, although they were made by different artisans or different workshops. They can be dated between 337 and 350 AD.

<sup>4</sup> We presume, as it was stated in Vasić 2004, 103 etc., that at one time the aula was transformed into the sanctuary into which the cult statues of Asclepius and Hygieia and bronze railings were brought. It should be emphasised that all, so far discovered statues were from different periods, from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 4<sup>th</sup> century and from different workshops.

<sup>5</sup> The excavations were made as part of a project of the Ministry of Culture and Media of the Republic of Serbia: *Constantine villa on Mediana – project of presentation 2010–2013*. The chief of the team formed by the Ministry is Dr Gordana Milošević, the chief of archaeological excavations is Dr Miloje Vasić and the chief of field excavations is Dr Nadežda Gavrilović. In addition, the Archaeological Institute of Belgrade, the National Museum of Niš and the Regional Institution for the protection of monuments of culture of Niš, are taking part in the project.

<sup>6</sup> Field diary: 06. 06. 2011. The head was lying on 199. 12; inv. n. C–4. The dimensions of the head are 25 x 14 cm, and the material from which it was modelled is a white marble of fine texture.

<sup>7</sup> Vasić 2004a, 294.

<sup>8</sup> 1) The marble head of Menada with fragmented ivy wreath; the height of the head is 15 cm; it was found in 1996 in the passage (room 16) between two barracks of the eastern section, inv. n. C–823/96. Drča 2004, 164, cat. 86. S. Drča identified this head with Isis presuming that the wreath was of lotus (?). As far as we know, Isis had different attributes on her head. 2) The marble head of Venus or Diana (?), with a large knot of hair on her vertex (top knot) and soft curls. Behind her left ear there is a fragment of an object. The head is 8 cm long; it was found in 2001 in sondage 10 on the inner side of the western perimeter wall of the villa, inv. n. C–67/2001, Drča 2004, 165, cat. 87. S. Drča wrongly identified this head as Isis-Fortuna. For further information regarding this head see B. Plemić in the next issue of *Starinar*.



Fig. 3 and 4. The head of goddess: front and half profile

Сл. 3 и 4. Глава богиње, сјерега и из полупрофила

was also found in 2011 in the same area between stibadium B and northern face of the villa (fig. 1/3).<sup>9</sup>

The sculpture of the female deity from Mediana, from white marble, represents the head of a young girl/woman, slightly tilted to the left (fig. 3 and 4). The head of the goddess is softly, gently and almost idealistically modelled. Her cheek bones are not emphasised and her narrow, oval face has no other signs of sensuality, which additionally creates the impression of innocence and chastity in the female sculpture from Mediana. The head has some damage in the area of the nose, mouth and chin. In spite of this damage, it can be presumed that the nose of the goddess was long and straight, and the mouth small and full with maybe, judging by the angles of the mouth, a certain suggestion of a mild smile. Careful modelling of the goddess' chin gives the impression of youthful gentleness to her face, and under the rich waves of her hair, small, very carefully modelled ears are visible. The eyebrows are slightly pronounced, her big almond shaped eyes with clearly modelled upper and lower eyelids are somewhat elongated, without emphasised eyeballs. The goddess is looking into the distance. There is an arced crease on her throat, the so

called *Venus necklace*, which emphasises the fullness of her body. On her eyebrows and certain parts of her coiffure, traces of yellow paint can be observed, while on the bands on her hair and on her face (eyelids, cheeks) there is red paint. Certain elements like the wider root of her nose, the high triangular forehead (due to the goddess' hair), the shape of the eyes, the small, full mouth and the slightly idealistic expression on her face, show that the goddess' head was modelled in a classicistic style, by a Greek sculpture from the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC.

This type of goddess' coiffure is known from antique sculptures, and is characteristic because the hair curls on the vertex are so coiled, that they form a, so called, top knot (*crobylus*, κρόβυλος),<sup>10</sup> and the second part of the hair forelock is tied into a bun on the back of the head from which two tresses fall down towards the arms. The female head from Mediana, however, differs

<sup>9</sup> Sondage 72. It is interesting that in this group a piece of porphyry forearm and hand with a globe in it was found. These fragments are parts of a porphyry statue of Asclepius found in 1972.

<sup>10</sup> For *crobylos* see Bonfante 2003, 141.



*Fig. 5 and 6. Left and right profile of the head*

*Сл. 5 и 6. Леви и десни профил главе*

from this type of coiffure. The hair is divided in the middle and there are forelocks on the upper edge of her forehead which are falling on the left and right side of the forehead and ears. The space between the forelocks is holed with a drill and the hair is carved with a chisel. On the part of the vertex closer to the forehead, there is a taenia (?) on her head, wrapped twice around the head. It can be perceived from the left profile that the front end of the taenia goes over the forelocks and ends in a top knot and that these forelocks go over the back of the taenia (fig. 5). From the right profile, the forelocks, which are collected in a top knot, go over both parts of the taenia (fig. 6). The edges of the taenia and the aforementioned forelocks are represented only with shallow engraved lines, without volume, as if modelled in wood. The forelocks to the fore are more voluminous, modelled with a drill. It is clear that they curve into the locks of the top knot. On it, at the front, there are forelocks modelled with drill and chisel. On the side, the middle part of the forelocks is emphasised using a drill. The top knot does not cover the whole width of the top of the head. The part between the top knot and the bun, and the bun itself are not separately sculpted (fig. 7, 8

and 9). This can be explained by the fact that the statue was intended to be viewed only from the front, but it is also possible that the head was not finished. On the left profile it can be seen that the tresses of the bun are falling towards the left arm. Viewed from the front, the coiffure of the goddess appears as a compact mass, so it resembles a crown or truncated pyramid.

Further in the text we will attempt to determine more precisely to which deity the head from Mediana belongs, on the basis of its stylistic and chronological characteristics. As we don't have parts of the torso at our disposal, the head of the deity must be analysed primarily on the basis of the coiffure. The type of coiffure with a top knot is mostly seen on the goddesses Aphrodite/Venus, Artemis/Diana, Iris (Irida) and Menadae, as well as on the gods Apollo and Zeus and on satyrs and nymphs. Since it is certain that we are dealing with a female and not a male deity, we focused on the possibility of recognising the sculpture from Mediana as the goddess Artemis/Diana or Aphrodite/Venus.

We will begin the analysis with the sculptures of Artemis/Diana which don't have a top knot on their heads. The taenia in the hair and the softness of the

face of the Mediana female's head bear a close resemblance to the marble statue of Artemis from Arizio (the face of Artemis is somewhat rounder).<sup>11</sup> But, although the forelocks on the forehead imply modelling similar to the Mediana head, the only difference can be seen in the hair which falls on the neck. Also, the question of how the head from Arizio was identified as Artemis remains open. A similar representation of Artemis can be seen in Villa Borghese<sup>12</sup> and in the sculpture of the so called "Diana" from the villa Borghese<sup>13</sup>, which has a similar coiffure to the female head from Arizio. We will mention the female sculpture from the Museum Palazzo dei Conservatori in Rome<sup>14</sup> which treats the forehead coiffure in a very similar fashion to that of the Mediana's head, whereby the hair falls backwards in tresses onto the goddess' shoulders. The difference between the aforementioned representations and the head from Mediana is in the treatment of the eyelids, which in the aforementioned representations are more emphasised (except Diana from Villa Borghese). Similar forelocks of hair along with the clear separation of the forelocks can be observed on the head of Atalanta on the Meleagar sarcophagus from Eleusina.<sup>15</sup>

In further analysis we will turn to those sculptures of Artemis/Diana on which there is a top knot as well. The characteristic forelock which is around the face and the forelocks which, from the top left and right of the head, form the top knot, can be seen on a bronze statue of Artemis from Pireus, which has a very small top knot.<sup>16</sup> Somewhat more similar examples in the context of face modelling and the presence of a top knot on the deity's head can be found in a marble sculpture of Diana from the Vatican<sup>17</sup> and the marble head of Diana from Villa Borghese in Rome.<sup>18</sup> A closer analogy concerning the treatment of the hair and coiffure is a Roman copy of Diana from the Vatican.<sup>19</sup> Diana's oval face is surrounded by carefully combed waved hair, which is partly tied with locks in a top knot and partly gathered in a bun on the back of the head; a flat triangular forehead, elongated almond shaped eyes, narrow nose and full mouth are emphasised on the face of the goddess. Still, her hair is much more softly modelled than the head from Mediana. We should also mention some other statues of Diana which are further analogies of Mediana's head: Diana with dog, a statue from Kos<sup>20</sup> and, similar to this one, Diana with dog from the Vatican museum.<sup>21</sup> The coiffure of the statue from Kos is closer to Mediana's head because her locks go from the forehead to the top of the head and make a top knot, while the coiffure of the Vatican's

statue is without locks and the top knot is more emphasised. Maybe the closest coiffure to the one from Mediana's head is the coiffure from the sculpture of the so called "Artemis Rospigliosi".<sup>22</sup> The modelling of the top knot is particularly similar, with the exception that

<sup>11</sup> It is presumed that the sculpture was made in the second half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD and modelled on the Attic cult statue of Artemis from 440–430 BC, *LIMC* II. 1 Artemis, 789, n. 5.

<sup>12</sup> On the fresco from Villa Borghese, similarities with the goddess from Mediana are obvious in the slight tilting to the left of the head of Artemis, the treatment of the coiffure which is tied with ribbons on the top of the head, the oval face with regular features and the idealised expression on the face. The type of representation of Artemis from Villa Borghese belongs to the so called "Dresden Artemis" type, which was modelled on a Greek original from the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC.

<sup>13</sup> A marble statue of Diana from Villa Borghese in Rome represents a Roman copy of a Greek original from the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. Diana's hair is collected in a bun and her facial features are somewhat sharper, *LIMC* II. 1 Artemis, 799, n. 9f, 802, n. 17.

<sup>14</sup> It is presumed that the torso represented Artemis modelled by Kefisodot in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. A Roman copy, Palazzo dei Conservatori, room Tauriani – Vettiani, inv. no. MC 1123; see [www.museicapitolini.org/percorsi/percorsi\\_per\\_sale/museo\\_del\\_palazzo\\_dei\\_conservatori/sale\\_degli\\_horti\\_tauriani\\_vettiani](http://www.museicapitolini.org/percorsi/percorsi_per_sale/museo_del_palazzo_dei_conservatori/sale_degli_horti_tauriani_vettiani).

<sup>15</sup> Stirling 2008, 144 sq, fig. 32 (detail) with quoted earlier literature. Guntram Koch dates the sarcophagus from Eleusina to the first quarter of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC, G. Koch, *Die mythologischen Sarkophage: Meleager (Die antiken Sarkophagreliefs* 12. 6), Berlin 1975, pp. 76, 142–143; non vidimus, cited from Stirling 2008, 145, not. 170.

<sup>16</sup> [commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category: Archaeological\\_Museum\\_of\\_Piraeus\\_\(Athens\)\\_-Second\\_bronze\\_Artemis](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Archaeological_Museum_of_Piraeus_(Athens)_-Second_bronze_Artemis). Pireus archaeological museum. Dated to the middle of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, and it is thought that it belongs to Praxiteles' school.

<sup>17</sup> On Diana from the Vatican, rich waved hair is divided in the middle, tied in a top knot on the top of her head and a bun on the back of her head, with locks that fall on both sides of her neck. A long triangular forehead, shallow modelled almond shaped eyes, long nose and small mouth are considerably reminiscent of the facial features on the head from Mediana. It is presumed that the sculpture was made in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, *LIMC* II.1. Artemis, 809, n. 36d.

<sup>18</sup> The marble head of Diana from Villa Borghese differs from Mediana's head only by a somewhat wider face. It is presumed that the date of its modelling was the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD and that it was part of a relief of a sarcophagus. The marble head of Diana is now at Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek in Copenhagen, *LIMC* II.1. Artemis, 816, n. 112.

<sup>19</sup> It was modelled on the Greek original, Artemis Soteira from a relief from Delos, *LIMC* II.1. Artemis, 802, n. 19a.

<sup>20</sup> [commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Kos\\_museum\\_Artemis](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Kos_museum_Artemis).

<sup>21</sup> Inv. no. 227 – see [commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category: Statues\\_of\\_Artemis](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Statues_of_Artemis).

<sup>22</sup> Roman copy from the 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, of a Hellenistic original: *LIMC* II, Artemis, p. 646, no. 274, pl. 468, s. v. Artemis (L. Kahilil) = *LIMC* II, p. 808, no. 35, s. v. Artemis/Diana (E. Simon and G. Bauchhenss). Musée Louvre, inv. no. MA 559.

on the sculpture from the Louvre it is much wider and it is positioned on the top of the head. With that in mind, we will mention Artemis from the house of Panayia in Corints. Lea Stirling, who published this find, is of the opinion that this type was modelled on Artemis Rospigliosi.<sup>23</sup> The statue of Artemis from the house in Panayia along with other statues found there, were dated by L. Stirling from the late 3<sup>rd</sup> to the early 4<sup>th</sup> century AD.<sup>24</sup> However, besides formal similarities between Artemis from Korinthos and the head from Mediana (the top knot, the “Venus necklace” on the throat), there are important differences, especially since on the head from Korinthos the eyebrows are carved as a straight line and the taenia around her head was additionally modelled from some other material, which can be clearly seen by the print on the head. It is important to mention that the head from Panayia was coloured in a similar way to Mediana’s head.<sup>25</sup>

In terms of territorially stylistic similarities to the head of the goddess from Mediana, we should mention a marble sculpture of Diana Lucifera from Equum.<sup>26</sup> It represents a standing figure of the goddess almost life-sized, whose coiffure (waved hair divided in the middle and tied in a top knot on the top of the head and a bun on the back of the head), and certain facial features resemble those of the Mediana’s head. The date of Diana Lucifera’s modelling is, depending on which author is consulted, either the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century or the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD.<sup>27</sup>

Whilst analysing possible analogies with Artemis/Diana, it must be stated that we were not able to perceive any such sculptures that had similarities to Mediana’s head, which would enable us to identify it with any certainty as Artemis/Diana. Chronologically, one group of the sculptures belongs to the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC and one group are Roman copies of these statues and actually present a way of sculpting from the Hellenistic period, belonging primarily to a period from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, except Atalante from Meleager’s sarcophagus and Artemis from Panayia (Korinthos). Considering the characteristics of the coiffure and the modelling of the face, Mediana’s head appears to derive from the Hellenistic, early Roman period and it has certain similarities with sculptures dated to this period. However, they are all significantly less stylised and have much more richly modelled details than those of Mediana’s head, and on this basis it could not belong to aforementioned period.

The second part of the analysis concerns representations of Aphrodite/Venus. When comparing Mediana’s

head with known representations of Aphrodite/Venus, many similarities can be perceived in the facial features and expression, the way of combing the hair into a top knot and the tying of the hair with ribbons. There are many more surviving statues of Aphrodite/Venus than there are of Artemis/Diana, which is not surprising when we consider how the descendants of the Romans, especially of Julius Caesar and Julio-Claudian, had high regard for Venus. The head from Mediana would mostly appear to belong to the Capitoline Venus type of sculpture. However, this type is also derived from a much more famous sculpture of Aphrodite of Cnidus, which was modelled around 364–361 BC by Praxiteles<sup>28</sup> and painted by Praxiteles’ pupil Nikias.<sup>29</sup> Her naked figure, especially the type of head, influenced much later Hellenistic sculptures and, therefore, later Roman copies. There are two main types of replica of the Aphrodite from Cnidus:

1) The Belvedere type,<sup>30</sup> which is considered to be closer to Praxiteles’ original, especially in the representations of Cnidus coins<sup>31</sup>

2) The Colonna type<sup>32</sup>

The head of Venus from Cnidus has an ellipsoid face, a triangular forehead (because of the arrangement of the hair forelocks), almond shaped eyes, a strong nose, a small mouth and a prominent chin. The hair is divided in the middle; waved locks are combed towards the back of the head where they are grouped into a bun. Two ribbons are tied around the head, which makes the statue more beautiful. The sensuality of her face is

<sup>23</sup> Stirling 2008, 118.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 135, 140, 144.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 115.

<sup>26</sup> Milićević Bradač 2009, 67–68.

<sup>27</sup> Milićević Bradač 2009, 68. As the author states, M. Abramčić dated the sculpture of Diana Lucifera to the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, while N. Cambi dates her to the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD and it is considered to be an import from the workshops of Aphrodisias.

<sup>28</sup> By Pliny, *NH* 34, 50: “In the 104<sup>th</sup> Olympiad (=364–1) Praxiteles was at the peak of his art.” (Loeb collection). Ajootian 1998, 99. Corso 2007, 9.

<sup>29</sup> Ajootian 1998, 99 (Pliny, *NH* 35, 133).

<sup>30</sup> Corso 2007, 14, nt. 8, no. 260, fig. 2 (Rome, the Vatican Museum storehouse inv. no. 4260).

<sup>31</sup> Corso 2007, 9, fig. 1 (nt. 8, no. 322), bronze coins made in the name of Caracala and Plautilla: London, The British Museum, Department of Coins.

<sup>32</sup> Corso 2007, 14, nt. 8, no. 259, fig. 3. Rome, the Vatican Museum, Gabinetto delle Maschere, inv. no. 812.



*Fig. 7 and 8. The appearance of the top of the head*

*Сл. 7 и 8. Изглед шеме на главе*



*Fig. 9. The appearance of the head with bun*

*Сл. 9. Изглед пошљика главе с њунџом*

lined with a “Venus necklace”. Her eyes and eyebrows are modelled with sharp lines and the eyebrows merge with the nose shaft. Mediana’s head resembles this type of modelling, but is much closer to the Colonna type, especially with the treatment of the forelocks on the forehead. The difference, therefore, is in the top knot which is present on Mediana’s head.

We should also mention the famous Venus de Milo, which certainly belongs to those sculptures based on the style of Aphrodite from Cnidus. Some authors think that it belongs to Praxiteles’ school (Alkamenes) whilst others date it to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC.<sup>33</sup> The bust of Aphrodite, which was sent by ship from Greece to Rome, is very interesting for our analysis. The ship sank at Mahdia.<sup>34</sup> Mohamed Yacoub mentions that the coiffure resembles “slices of melon” (*côte de melon*), which form a knot on the top of the head. In a way, this was a precursor of top knot representation.

A possible replica of Aphrodite from Cnidus was discovered in 2003, in Sagalassos, in a nymphaeum from the period of Hadrian.<sup>35</sup> Here we are certainly dealing

<sup>33</sup> Murray 2004, 275 sq. The arrangement of the hair is similar, as is the modelling of the forelocks and tying of the bun on the back of the head, where the forelocks fall on the neck.

<sup>34</sup> Yacoub 1970, 76/7: Fouilles sous-marines de Mahdia; p. 82: C. 1183, Buste d’ Aphrodite. The author dates the find to the 3<sup>rd</sup>–2<sup>nd</sup> century BC, Quertani 1994, 290 thinks that the head has certain similarities with some Praxiteles’ sculptures, although it is not a Roman copy. The author dates the sculpture to the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC.

<sup>35</sup> Waelkens 2004. The author, judging by the type of hairstyle, writes that the head was modelled on the sculptures from the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. The hair is tied with two parallel ribbons, but, since the head is fragmented, we can’t be certain how the coiffure looked at the back of the head. Waelkens rightly emphasises that it is not a faithful replica, but the sculpture has great similarities with the Kaufmann head from the Louvre, which is itself a replica of Aphrodite from Cnidus.



with some transformation of hair representation, where the head is not just simply a replica, but it is modelled in the sculptor's particular style. For us, it is important and interesting that in the treatment of the forelocks on the top of the head, certain similarities with Mediana's head, can be perceived. The face of Aphrodite from Sagalassos is, however, completely differently conceived, being wider with a larger, flat mouth and narrow lips.

The fact that the sculpture of Aphrodite was transferred from Cnidus to Constantinopolis around 393/4 AD, and was damaged in a fire in 476 AD, which destroyed other original Greek sculptures from the famous collection of Lausus, the chamberlain (*praepositus sacri cubiculi*) of the court of Teodosius II, shows how much the sculpture was respected in late antiquity and in Christianity as a remarkable piece of art.<sup>36</sup> Therefore it is not unusual that a larger number of replicas were found in Italy (Rome, Ostia, Tivoli), France (Martigny, Toulouse), Spain (Tarragona), but also in Greece (Athens, Korinthos) and in cities of Asia Minor.

We already emphasised that the head of the goddess from Mediana could be linked with the type of sculptures of which the most famous examples are Venus Medici and Venus Capitolina or generally, the Venus Pudica type.<sup>37</sup> But, before analysing these two types, we will mention that in the middle, between the Aphrodite from Cnidus and the Venus Medici and Venus Capitolina types, there is a sculpture of Aphrodite which was modelled by Menophantos in the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC,<sup>38</sup> maybe at the same time as Kleomenes' Venus Medici. We mention Menophantos' Aphrodite because it is rare that there are emphasised parts or attributes on the statues that allow us to deduce that they are modelled as copies of other, more famous statues found in the territory of Italy. There is a slight suggestion of a top knot on Menophantos' Aphrodite.

Venus Medici, now in Florence, probably originated in Rome, and has on its plinth an inscription with the signature of the aforementioned sculptor Kleomenes, son of Apolodorus from Athens. The authenticity of the inscription has been widely discussed.<sup>39</sup> It is possible that Kleomenes worked for a Roman clientele in the first half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC, reproducing the original, which was famous in his native country. The support on the left side is in the shape of a dolphin on whose back two Eroti play.<sup>40</sup> The head is sharply turned to the left. The hair is shorter and simply tied on the back of the head and part of the forelocks is pulled from the forehead towards the top of the head, but without a big knot (top knot). There are 33 known replicas.<sup>41</sup> The

famous statue of Venus Capitolina is probably a copy of a late Hellenistic sculpture and was modelled in the Antonine period, but the precise origin of the prototype (if there was one), remains unknown. The marble version has a vase with a drape over it as a support.<sup>42</sup> Other versions of Venus Capitolina have a dolphin, tree or Eros as a support.<sup>43</sup> Christine Havelock mentions that the majority are of larger dimensions and from the western provinces of the Roman Empire and that those smaller than natural size are more common in the eastern provinces.<sup>44</sup> They could be part of house decorations, or parts of domestic lararia; they all differ in some details, especially in the position of the head, and none has such a meticulously modelled top knot as the Roman Venus Capitolina.<sup>45</sup> Most of the Roman copies are dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. The main characteristics on sculptures of the Venus Capitolina type are, as already mentioned, a top knot which is more or less detailed, with full forelocks tied into a knot on the top of the head with the free ends of hair forming equally full locks. On the back of the head, the hair is tied in a second knot, from which the tresses fall down over the shoulders. The top knot is less emphasised on the head from the Louvre<sup>46</sup> than in other sculptures of this type. Certain

<sup>36</sup> For Lausus collection see Guberti Basset 2000. Kedrenos 322c.

<sup>37</sup> Murray 2004, 272 i not. 1.

<sup>38</sup> Havelock 2007, 80, fig. 22. Corso 2007, 103, not. 107. Roma, Museo Nazionale delle Terme, inv. no. 75674. The sculpture was found in the monastery of San Gregorio al Celio, Camaldolese. LIMC II, s. v. Aphrodite, no. 422. On the base there is an inscription: "ΑΠΟ ΤΗΣ/ΕΝ ΤΡΩΑΔΙ/ΑΦΡΟΔΙΤΗΣ ΜΕΝΟΦΑΝΤΟΣ ΕΠΟΙΕΙ" ["According to Aphrodite in Troas (probably Alexandria of the Troas, Menophantos made (this statue)"].

<sup>39</sup> Ridgway 2001, 354. Ridgway 2002, 264. Havelock 2007, 76 sq. with earlier literature. For Venus Medici see LIMC 2, s.v. Aphrodite 53 (c), nos. 419, pl. 40; dating is open.

<sup>40</sup> Havelock 2007, fig. 19. Florence, Uffizi, inv. no. 224.

<sup>41</sup> Ridgway 2001, 355. Havelock 2007, 78, calling upon the research of B. Felletti Maj, Aphrodite Pudica, *Archaeologia Classica* 3, 1951, 33–65.

<sup>42</sup> Roma, Musei Capitolini, inv. no. 409. LIMC II, s. v. Aphrodite, no. 409.

<sup>43</sup> Havelock 2007, 75.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.* She mentions on page 78 that B. Felletti Maj in the quoted paper confirmed 101 replicas of the type Venus Capitolina. Ridgway 2001, 355 sq. citing different replicas.

<sup>46</sup> The Louvre, inv. no. MA 571 (MR 671), dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. Photo in commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Capitolina Venus.

elements concerning the sculpting of the locks and the top of the head can be perceived the same on this head as on Mediana's head, although they are still vague similarities. A less emphasised top knot is present on the statue of Venus Pudica with dolphin, discovered in Odeon, Cartagena.<sup>47</sup> The head of this sculpture is, however, stylistically different from Mediana's head.

We will also mention the group of sculptures of the crouching Aphrodite, which have the same coiffure as Venus Capitolina. Maybe the most famous and best modelled of these is the statue of Aphrodite found in Hadrian's villa in Tivoli.<sup>48</sup> The original sculpture of Aphrodite crouching is dated to the late 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC and, according to Pliny the Elder (*NH* 36. 21; 36. 35), it was made by the sculptor Doidalsas from Bithiny, and was ordered by King Nikomedes around 250 BC. Most authors accept this dating. However, a certain number of authors reject the very existence of Doidalsas, thinking that the text by Pliny is corrupted and therefore misinterpreted.<sup>49</sup> Most of the replicas are life-sized, but there are also smaller statues. As Christine Havelock mentions, variants in different materials were more often copied in the period of the Roman Empire than in later Hellenism.<sup>50</sup>

A very similar representation of the coiffure can be seen in the sculpture of Venus with Eros, which doesn't belong to the group of Venus Medici and Venus Capitolina. It is a marble composition, found in Rome, which represents a Roman copy from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, modelled on a Greek original from the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>51</sup> The goddess has waved hair divided in the middle, a top knot tied with ribbons on the top of her head and a combed bun on the back of her head. Besides the unusually close similarity in treatment of the hair and coiffure, close analogies can be perceived in the narrow, oval face, the high forehead, the nose and the small lips, with the only difference being the somewhat deeper modelled almond shaped eyes on the sculpture from the Louvre.

With this, we conclude the list of possible analogous sculptures of Artemis/Diana and Aphrodite/Venus. The same objections that were made concerning representations of Artemis/Diana can be applied to sculptures of Aphrodite/Venus. It is not our intention, with the simple numbering of sculptures, to determine the identification or the chronology of Mediana's head, but to briefly analyse the appearance of Roman copies of Hellenistic originals, which certainly enjoy significant prestige among art lovers. It has been shown already that older statues, in the Hellenistic period, were copied,

which can be seen with the sculptor Menophantes and maybe also with the replica of Venus Medici if, indeed, it really was modelled by Kleomenes from Athens in the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC. Of course, that is not the case only with these two goddesses, but also with other deities. The analysis clearly showed to which extent certain types could have been treated differently, either because of the passage of time, or because of the skill of the sculptor. That is the case with Mediana's head which displays the main characteristics of sculptures such as Artemis Rospigliosi or Aphrodite/Venus, first seen in Aphrodite from Cnidus and Venus Capitolina. However, the sculpture from Mediana shows a quite unique style which can be seen in the careful treatment of the narrow face, and especially in the modelling of the coiffure. The almost geometric treatment of the forelocks on the forehead and the linear, flat representation of the forelocks, which go from the forehead to the top of the head and the top knot, could not be found in any other sculpture which could have been a copy or a prototype. This kind of stylised treatment most closely resembles the art found on one side of the relief on Galerius' arch in Thessaloniki and partially resembles that found on the relief on the arch in Rome from Constantine's period (especially the scene *oratio Augusti and liberalitas*), on which the clothes were modelled in a particularly flat way.<sup>52</sup> The stylisation of Mediana's head is probably not as a consequence of a less skilful artisan, but of an artistic concept which was widely accepted in late antiquity. Therefore, we can take the two aforementioned arches as paradigms of new ideas of modelling sculptures which were partly derived from country art and wood engraving. This would lead to the conclusion that the head from Mediana could be dated to the second and third decades of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. That date could certainly be prolonged to the middle of that century, but it could date back to the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Odeon was built at the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD. Museum Bardo, Tunisia, inv. no. C.923 – Yacoub 1970, 46. LIMC II. 1, p. 85; vol. II. 2, p. 76, fig. 737

<sup>48</sup> Inv. no. 108597. LIMC II, s. v. Aphrodite, no. 1018.

<sup>49</sup> Ridgway 2001, 230. Ridgway 2002, 116, with cited literature.

<sup>50</sup> Havelock 2007, 85. For different versions see LIMC II, s. v. Aphrodite, nos. 1018–27; 1030–35.

<sup>51</sup> LIMC II.1. Aphrodite, 57, n. 456.

<sup>52</sup> See good quality photographs and commentary in Frova 1961, 341–348, figs. 320–325.



Fig. 10. The base with feet and dolphin's head

Сл. 10. База са стојаљима и главом делфина

century. The equal use of the chisel and the drill implies the homogeneity of the workshop, which is one of the characteristics of art from the period of Tetrarchy and Constantine. Therefore, we would not regard this style as decadent or provincial but, rather, as a style which tried to introduce new elements in an effort to break the habits of the old style. However, we lack more obvious parameters which would suggest in which workshop the head from Mediana was made.

Considering the dimensions of the head from Mediana, it can be presumed that it represented a part of a sculpture of almost life size. Unfortunately, the absence of any iconographic elements such as attributes or figures which, together with the goddess, could have formed a particular composition, makes it difficult to form any further opinions as to whether the statue was standing or sitting. However, it is worth mentioning a hypothesis that the base with feet and a dolphin, found in 2002, could belong to the same hypothetical composition as the head from Mediana (fig. 10).<sup>53</sup> The base

on which the feet are represented has the following dimensions: length = 47 cm, width = 27 cm. The feet are 21 cm long and do not cover the whole width of the base. This size of feet would be consistent with a statue of approximately 1.65 m, which would be anthropometrically consistent with the dimensions of the head. Therefore, the head and feet could belong to a sculpture of approximately natural height (although we could ask the question, what was natural height in late antiquity, considering the average height of people in the aforementioned period). The toes of the feet are meticulously modelled, but the head of the dolphin is highly stylised and suits the stylisation of the head. Maybe, the analysis of the marble of the head and base would show that they are from the same sculpture. For now, we suggest that the head and the base with the feet are parts of the same statue, and that the head be identified as the Venus Capitolina type, subtype Venus with dolphin and would also suggest a slightly wider date of modelling – the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD ± 340. Also, the find of the goddess' head made the composition of the sculptures, which ornamented the villa with peristyle, significantly richer in the context of the residential complex of Constantine the Great and his heirs in Mediana. We will not enter into a discussion as to whether it is possible to find, in residences of Christian emperors, sculptures or mosaics with mythological scenes. It is enough to say that in the majority of known aristocratic and imperial villas all over the Roman Empire, similar ensembles were discovered. Therefore, it is no wonder that in the decoration of Mediana's villa with peristyle, which was presumably done in the period of Constantine (337–350), different sculptures with a mythological content were found, but which lost that connotation and came to be considered either as works of art or in a new Christian ideological context.<sup>54</sup>

*Translated by Nadežda Gavrilović*

<sup>53</sup> Васић 2004a, 294. Marble base with feet and fragmented dolphin – base of the statue of Venus (Venus Pudica), sondages 24 and 24a, middle aged pit, inv. n. C–144a/02.

<sup>54</sup> For details about these questions see Stirling 2008a, *passim*.

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**Резиме:**

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**ВЕНЕРА ИЛИ ДИЈАНА ИЗ МЕДИЈАНЕ**

*Кључне речи.* – Медијана, скулптура, касна антика.

У ископавањима виле с перистилом у Медијани током кампање 2011. године откривена је на горњој површини првобитног рушевинског слоја од таванице и крова (слој С), у западној просторији 1, мермерна глава која би по карактеристикама фризура припадала некој богињи. Анализа је показала да најближе аналогије можемо наћи код представа Артемиде/Дијане и Афродите/Венере. Узори медијанској глави сежу до хеленистичке уметности. По њима су рађене реплике у римској уметности, које су углавном из 1–2. века после Хр. Стилске карактеристике обраде косе на глави из

Медијане упућују више на касну антику и на нове концепције започете током Тетрархије а настављене под константијанском династијом. Због тога је за израду ове главе предложен датум: крај 3 – ±340. година. Изнета је могућност да су новооткривена глава и база откривена 2002. године, на којој се налазе фрагментована стопала и глава делфина, делови исте статуе.

У том случају, ова статуа може да се идентификује као тип Капитолске Венере, подтип Венере с делфином или Венере Пудика.