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VOTIVE RELIEF FROM BAROVO (SCUPI) CONTRIBUTION TO STUDY OF THE LIBER AND LIBERA CULT IN UPPER MOESIA

Abstract. – This paper will represent a votive relief built in the south wall of the refectory of St. Nikola's church in Barovo, to the south of Skopje. Iconographic analysis will show that it is the representation of Liber and Libera, or Dionysus and Ariadne. In addition, the significance of this relief will be considered in comparison with other monuments of this cult in the territory of the province of Upper Moesia.

Key words. – votive relief, Liber, Libera, Dionysus, Ariadne, village of Barovo, Scupi, Upper Moesia, Macedonia.

The relief built in the southern wall of the newly constructed refectory of St. Nikola's church in the village of Barovo, to the south-west of Skopje, was published in the first half of 20th century, but so far has not been studied in more detail. For that reason, as well as for the fact that it is the work of exceptional iconographic and stylistic characteristics, the Barovo relief will be studied here in greater depth. Firstly, in the form of a catalogue, general information will be given, and then more will be said about its iconography and stylistic values. After that, the attempt will be made at understanding the importance of this monument in the context of veneration of the Liber and Libera cult in the territory of the province of Upper Moesia.

General information on the monument:

Dimensions: Height 50 cm; width 34 cm; breadth cannot be seen since it is inbuilt.

Site: The slab was built into St. Nikola's church in the village of Barovo, about ten kilometres south-west from Skopje.¹

Present location: The relief is today built in the south lateral wall of the newly constructed refectory of the same church.

Dating: 2nd century.

Description: The relief marble slab is rectangular in shape. It is set on the crepidome and has a semi-round upper part. It shows two standing figures under a grapevine. The young man, on the left side, has goat skin draped over his left

shoulder, and characteristic high boots. He embraces the girl to his right with his left arm. In his right hand, arm lowered, the young man is holding an upturned goblet from which liquid is flowing towards a four-legged animal, a dog or a panther, next to his feet. The girl, half-naked, is holding the falling drapery with her right hand, and in her left hand she is holding a bunch of grapes. The figures of this couple are skilfully created after Hellenistic-style models. Unfortunately, their faces cannot be seen well, since the relief is not completely preserved. This relief is especially important because of the subtle modelling of the figure bodies and emphasizing their third dimension, as opposed to the only slight emphasis on the floral decorative ornament, the grapevine, above their heads. The details were crafted with great attention. This can be said especially of the upturned goblet, from which only barely outlined liquid flows.

Bibliography: Вулић, 1931, 208–209, no. 549; Dragojević-Josifovska, 1982, 56; Видоеска, 2001, 120–121.

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In scientific bibliography to date the Barovo relief has not been studied in detail, and the couple represented has been interpreted differently. When publishing ancient monuments from the territory of our country,

¹ In this area there are two localities, one in the village of Barovo, and the other 2 km north of the village, on the slope of mountain Vodno, *TIR* 1976, 22.



Fig. 1. Liber and Libera/Dionysus and Ariadne.

Votive relief built in the south wall of a newly constructed refectory of St Nikola's church in Barovo

Сл. 1. Либер и Либера/Дионис и Аријадна.

Војивни рељеф изидан у јужни зид новосаграђене трпезарије цркве св. Николе у Барову

Vulić, as early as the first half of 20th century, described this relief and presented it by a drawing, indicating that it was a presentation of Amor and Psyche.² In this important work of Vulić's, a certain difference can be noticed between the description and the drawing of the relief, the discrepancy being that the description stated that next to the feet of the male figure there was a four-legged animal, while the animal is not present in the drawing. It is of importance to point out that Vulić fails to mention that grapevine was presented above this couple both in the description and in the drawing of this relief.

Studying the inscriptions in the territory of Scupi, Dragojević-Josifovska published an inscription dedi-

cated to Liber Pater (*Deus Liber Pater*), and mentioned this anepigraphic monument from Barovo, stating that it was Liber and Libera.³

The existence of this relief was mentioned also by Vidoeska in her paper on medieval art in the church of St. Nikola's in Barovo. Making no attempt at attributing this relief, Vidoeska says that it was originally built in the southern wall of the fence of the church, and that later it was placed in the southern wall of the newly built refectory of the same church, where it is located today.⁴

² Вулић, 1931, no. 549.

³ Dragojević-Josifovska, 1982, 56.

⁴ Видоеска, 2001, 120–121.

After these earlier, different interpretations of the Barovo relief have been mentioned, it is now necessary to look into its iconographic values and determine, as far as possible, the subject matter presented. Before starting the iconographic analysis of this monument, it is of great importance to point out that this is a votive monument, as is stated by Josifovska,⁵ while Vulić made no attempt at more precise attribution, indicating only that it was a relief marble slab.⁶ By careful examination of the Barovo relief it can be seen that it is a votive monument with rectangular base, on the crepidome, with a semi-round upper part. Such votive monuments were not unusual and they are often seen in the border areas of the provinces of Upper Moesia and Macedonia.⁷

Since it is a votive monument, the most logical assumption was that the Barovo relief shows a symplegma of Liber and Libera and Dionysus and Ariadne, containing also the elements of iconography of Amor and Psyche. Accordingly, we will discuss first the iconographic elements indicating that they were Liber and Libera, or Dionysus and Ariadne, and then the elements belonging to the iconography of Amor and Psyche will be mentioned as well.

Liber, Liber Pater is an old Italic deity of vegetation, fertility and virility, which was later assimilated with Bacchus, Dionysus from the Greek world, personifying the renewal of life, vegetation, fertility of the earth.⁸ He was also believed to be a protector of viticulture. Essentially, Liber was actually an expression of the fertility cult within a broader context, the fertility of the Nature in general, green, subterranean and mineral.⁹ Similarly to other ancient Italic deities, Liber has no myth of his own and the iconography is based on artistic representations of Greek Dionysus.¹⁰ Accordingly, the name of this deity in scientific studies was different: Bacchus, Liber, Liber Pater, Liber-Dionysus, Dionysus.

The iconography related to the god Dionysus is exceptionally rich, and one of the subject matters is his loves.¹¹ This thematic unit, *inter alia*, incorporates also the love between Dionysus and Ariadne. It was presented by the following compositions: Epiphany of Dionysus on Naxos, Hierogamy of Dionysus and Ariadne, Triumph of Dionysus and Ariadne in a chariot, or their portrait representations, whether together or alone.

In view of thus formulated thematic units, it can be seen that the Barovo relief is very close to representations of hierogamy of Dionysus and Ariadne. The hierogamy of these deities was presented by two different types of compositions, depending on whether the figures were standing or reclining. Since the Barovo



Fig. 2. Drawing of the votive slab from Barovo (Vulić, 1931, no. 549)

Сл. 2. Цртеж војивне плоче из Барова (Вулић, 1931, бр. 549)

relief figures are standing, more attention here will be paid to that particular iconographic type. Characteristically, Liber and Libera are presented as holding thyrsos or cantharus in their hands, with a panther next to them. They might be joined by Silenus, Pan or the

⁵ Dragojević-Josifovska, 1982, 56.

⁶ Вулић, 1931, no. 549.

⁷ Such is the votive relief of Dionysus/Liber, Zeus and Hera from Rudnik north of Veles (no. 104), of Bacchus and his suite from Stobi (no. 107) and two reliefs with Dionysus from the vicinity of Prilep (no. 95 and no. 110). In addition, the following votive reliefs have the same form: with Artemis (no. 42, 45, 49), Zeus and Hera from Sandanski (no. 174), the relief with Artemis from Štavica near Prilep (no. 71), and the relief with Heracles from Peštani near Prilep (no. 128) see: Düll, 1977.

⁸ Gasparri, 1986, 540–541.

⁹ Dušanić, 1999, 130, note 7.

¹⁰ Срејовић, Цермановић-Кузмановић, 1998, 234; *LIMC* III/1 s.v. Bacchus, 540–566; *LIMC* III/2, s.v. Bacchus, no. 1–268.

¹¹ Gasparri, 1986, 540–566.

Maenads.¹² While studying votive monuments of the province of Lower Pannonia, Dautova-Ruševljan also notices that Liber was often represented as Dionysus, and Libera as Ariadne.¹³ Similarly, S. and M. Popescu state that Libera may be identified with Ariadne if she is presented half-naked.¹⁴

Further support to the understanding of the Barovo relief as a hierogamy presentation is provided, *inter alia*, by the following, very similar examples. On a Vatican altar from the time of the Flavians, Dionysus and Ariadne are standing beneath an arch, a wreath of grapevine.¹⁵ The celebration of their marriage is emphasized by Roman *dextrarum iunctio*. Both figures, Dionysus with a cape on his shoulders and Ariadne in a chiton, are holding thyrsos. Between them is a panther. The other illustration from the Empire period shows Dionysus and Ariadne also as standing figures underneath an arch of grapevine.¹⁶ Dionysus, with a beard and in a chiton, holds cantharus and embraces Ariadne's shoulders.

The iconographic elements present in both mentioned examples can be seen in the Barovo relief as well. First of all, the two standing frontal figures are placed beneath a grapevine branch at the moment of their embrace. Liber/Dionysus is presented in a usual manner, as a young man in a mildly emphasized contraposto, with a nebris over his shoulder, and in characteristic high footwear.¹⁷ In his left hand he is holding cantharus, from which a liquid is flowing towards the panther. Liber's head is crowned by a blossomy cluster of ivy (*corymbus*), but the hair strands are not over-emphasized. His counterpart, Libera, is also shown frontally, but does not have a corymbus, and her hair is made up in a bun.¹⁸ The Barovo relief departs from the most common type of this presentation only by the fact that these deities are presented holding a thyrsos, one of the most popular attributes, in their hands. Furthermore, Ariadne was often presented in a chiton or a palla, while in the Barovo relief she is half-naked and holding the drapery which is falling from around her waist. As was already mentioned, S. and M. Popescu believe that it is this iconographic type of half-naked Libera that emphasizes her identification with Ariadne.¹⁹ As for the panther, it was Liber's usual companion, especially in compositions of the wedding ceremony of Dionysus and Ariadne,²⁰ while the upturned goblet in the hand of Liber/Dionysus is frequent in the scenes of their triumph.²¹

In addition to the mentioned iconographic elements, in the Barovo relief it is possible to see the ones bringing it closer to the presentations of Amor and Psyche: the fact that the standing figures of a man and a woman are shown at the moment of embrace, then the posture, and

a graceful pose of the female figure.²² Furthermore, the animal in the Barovo relief is very much like a dog, a symbol of ambivalent meaning, a frequent companion of Amor in funerary art.²³

At the end of these iconographic considerations it can be concluded that the relief in the votive monument, today part of the southern wall of the newly built refectory of St. Nikola's church in Barovo, shows Liber and Libera, or Dionysus and Ariadne with the elements of iconography of Amor and Psyche. The merging of these subject themes, Dionysus and Ariadne and Amor and Psyche, was not unusual in Roman funerary art. Turcan pays special attention to these issues in his study on Dionysian imagery on Roman sarcophagi.²⁴ He indicates different themes where the substitution of those mythological couples (Dionysus–Ariadne and Amor–Psyche) takes place. It is of special significance within the thematic unit of the wedding *convivium*.

¹² When studying the Liber cult in Dacia, S. and M. Popescu point out different iconographic types of presenting this deity, and for the understanding of the Barovo relief, hierogamy of Liber and Libera type is the most important one. In addition to this iconographic type, Liber was also presented with a nebris on his back and a panther besides his feet, embracing a satyr with his left arm while lifting a snake over his head with his right arm. Both Liber and the satyr are holding a pedom, and they could be joined by other satyrs or the Maenads. Liber could also be accompanied by members of Dionysian Thiasos or animals. And finally, Liber and Libera were presented both as portraits and single figures, Popescu, Popescu, 1995, 228 and on.

¹³ Dautova-Ruševljan, 1983, 89.

¹⁴ Popescu, Popescu, 1995, 234, note 90.

¹⁵ LIMC III/1, s.v. Bacchus, no. 193.

¹⁶ LIMC III/1, s.v. Bacchus, no. 194.

¹⁷ For similar examples see: LIMC III/1, s.v. Bacchus, no. 1–268.

¹⁸ This manner of presenting Libera was also popular in Dacia, Popescu, Popescu, 1995, 229.

¹⁹ See note 13.

²⁰ Cumont, 1942, 412.

²¹ The closest examples are on a sarcophagus from Pisa, as well as on one from Florence, Turcan, 1999, no. 132. and no. 134.

²² LIMC VII/1 s.v. Psyche no. 126–134. A male figure resembles the relief on a sarcophagus from Arles where, *inter alia*, two Amors are presented. On this sarcophagus from Arles, Amors have wreaths on their heads and cloak over their shoulders, Turcan, 1999, 144, fig. 163.

²³ Apart from the fact that the dog was a very significant chthonic symbol, Cumont emphasizes its different symbolism. Since in sepulchral art Eros signified a »hero« of blessed souls, an animal that teased him and admired his games belonged to the world of the living, and thus emphasized the idea that a heroized deceased would find in the other world everything he had loved in this one. A dog as Amor's companion was represented, *inter alia*, on a sarcophagus from the Lateran Museum (Cumont, 1942, 400, 404), and on a terracotta with Amor and Psyche from the National Museum in Belgrade, Veličković, 1957, 42, no. 49, T. XVIII.

²⁴ Turcan, 1966.

Turcan quotes monuments where the partakers of the act on Naxos are, in fact, Eros and Psyche.²⁵ So, among others, in the scene of a Dionysian banquet on the sarcophagus of St. Agnes from Rome, there are Amor and Psyche instead of Dionysus and Ariadne.²⁶ On the other sarcophagus with a theme of Bacchus' celebrations, Amor is, in fact, Dionysus in a chariot, while Psyche had the role of a Maenad with a tambourine.²⁷ The next subject matter involving the substitution of these mythological couples is *Vindemia* – the widest spread festival of the Greek-Roman veneration of the god Dionysus.²⁸ In different representations of Dionysian celebrations one can often see Amor with a goblet. On a Roman sarcophagus Amors are represented as grape pickers,²⁹ while Psyche, on a sarcophagus with a relief of the Good Shepherd from Vatican, is represented as offering Amor a basket filled with grapes, alluding to *auspicatio vindemiae*.³⁰

As far as is known today, apart from the monument from Barovo, three more anepigraphic confirmations of this cult have been found in the province of Upper Moesia. They are: a fragmentarily preserved stone votive icon of Liber and Libera from Viminacium,³¹ a marble icon of Liber and Libera with an inscription in the vicinity of Pontes³², and a relief of Zeus, Hercules, and Dionysus from the village of Bukovo near Negotin in Krajina.³³ In addition to these reliefs, perhaps one more sculptural terracotta fragment should be mentioned here, with Dionysus' head framed by grapevine leaves. This fragment is from Ravna and can be found today in a museum in Niš.³⁴

With regard to understanding the iconographies of the mentioned reliefs and their comparison to the Barovo relief, the least is offered by the fragment from Viminacium, since only Liber with hair done up in long locks and a thyrsos can be seen on it,³⁵ and then the marble icon from the vicinity of Pontes with a highly complex iconography, divided into two registers. In the icon from the Pontes vicinity, in the upper register there are Liber and Libera, represented in a usual manner. Liber, naked, with a nebris, corymbus, thyrsos, cantharus and panther at his feet. Next to him is Libera, embracing him. She is represented with a corymbus on her head and in a long peplos. On the left side of Liber there is a little *putto* playing the tympanum, and on the left side of Libera there is a female figure in a peplos. Above them there is sketchy grapevine with clusters of grapes. The lower frieze shows the death of Pentheus.³⁶

The relief from Bukovo near Negotin in Eastern Serbia is much closer to the Barovo relief. The similarity can primarily be seen in the fact that the figures are



Fig. 3. Liber and Libera. Marble icon from the vicinity of Pontes (Васић, Јовановић, 1987, 134, fig. 1)

Сл. 3. Либер и Либерa. Мермерна икона из околине Понџеса (Васић, Јовановић, 1987, 134, сл. 1)

²⁵ Turcan, 1966, 502, note 8.

²⁶ Turcan, 1999, 151, no. 178.

²⁷ Turcan, 1999, 151, no. 177.

²⁸ Turcan, 1966, 561.

²⁹ Reinach, 1912, 294, no. 1.

³⁰ Turcan, 1999, 145, no. 164.

³¹ Томовић, 1989–90, 106, no. 19.

³² Томовић, 1989–90, 106, note 44. Cf. Васић, Јовановић, 1987, 127–129, fig. 1.

³³ Вулић, 1931, no. 630.

³⁴ In addition, a sculptural fragment of Dionysus from Ravna, also in the Museum in Niš today, should be mentioned, Петровић–Јовановић, 1997, 60, no. 4 and 65, no. 9.

³⁵ On the basis of this very small fragment, a head with thick hair and tresses falling to the shoulders, a hand and forearm and a part of thyrsos in the shape of a sceptre, Томовић supposes that it is a votive icon of Liber and Libera, Томовић, 1989–90, 106, no. 19; A presentation of Liber with a pedum and cantharus and the dog next to his left foot, on a fragmented ceramic handle, comes from Viminacium, Зоговић, Јордовић, 1990, 30–31.

³⁶ In the scene of Pentheus' death, the central figure is a woman in a peplos with a sword in her hand and a severed head of a naked man without limbs, while on the right there is a figure holding a sack, the arm resting on the altar. On the left, this central group is framed by two Maenads, and on the right there is a putto or a satyr playing a wind instrument, Васић, Јовановић, 1987, 127–129, fig. 1.



*Fig. 4. Zeus, Dionysus and Hera (Jupiter, Liber and Libera–Terra Mater?).
Votive relief from Rudnik, north of Veles (Düll, 1977, fig. 32)*

*Сл. 4. Зевс, Дионис и Хера (Јупитер, Либер и Либера–Терра Матер?).
Војивни релјеф из Рудника, северно од Велеса (Düll, 1977, сл. 32)*

set up on the crepidome and modelled very plastically, with the third dimension emphasized. Here, as well, Liber has upturned cantharus in his left hand, and the panther at feet. In addition to this relief from Bukovo, the Barovo relief also has its close analogies in northern Macedonian anepigraphic monuments of this cult. The importance of these northern Macedonian reliefs lies in the fact that they originate from a geographically very close area, and have similar iconography and style as well.³⁷ The greatest number of the reliefs is set up on a crepidome and has a highly emphasized third dimension.³⁸ Of all the reliefs, the following two should be particularly pointed out: the relief with Dionysus/Liber, Zeus and Hera from Rudnik, north of Veles,³⁹ and the relief with Dionysus/Liber and Hera from the area of Vataš, south of Kavadarci.⁴⁰

In the relief from Rudnik, Dionysus, naked and long-haired, holds an upturned wine vessel in his left hand and a bunch of grapes in his right. Under the bunch there is a small panther, more like a dog. On his left side there is Zeus, with a sceptre and his sacred animal – an eagle. Finally, at the far left there is a female figure, interpreted as Hera by Düll and Josifovska, pouring a libation over the sacrificial altar.⁴¹ A hypothesis of

Jovanović should certainly be mentioned here, and that is that Libera or *Terra Mater* is represented here instead of Hera.⁴² Jovanović also states the possibility that a female figure in the relief from the Vataš area can be understood in the same way, as Libera, unlike Düll, who interprets this relief as a presentation of Liber and Hera.⁴³ Here, as well as on the relief from Rudnik, Liber has a goat-skin draped over his body. There is a panther by his side, and on the other side there is a grapevine tree with leaves.⁴⁴ The female figure is dressed in a long peplos, with a short chiton draped over it.

³⁷ The best overview of these monuments is in a comprehensive study by Düll about cults in the northern part of Macedonia, Düll, 1977, 77–85, cat. no. 89–112.

³⁸ Düll, 1977, 77–85, cat. no. 93, 104, 107, 111 and others.

³⁹ Josifovska, 1961, 57; Düll, 1977, 325, cat. no. 104.

⁴⁰ Düll, 1977, 330, cat. no. 111.

⁴¹ Düll, 1977, 325, cat. no. 104; Cf. Josifovska, 1961, 57.

⁴² I thank Professor Jovanović for providing me with his paper »Археолошке белешке уз сакралне споменике из Македоније«, which is to be published in the collection of the National Museum of Belgrade on the occasion of the anniversary of this institution.

⁴³ This hypothesis as well was mentioned in the same paper by Jovanović, which is currently in press; Cf. Düll, 1977, 325, cat. no. 111.



Fig. 5. Dionysus and Hera (Liber and Libera?).
Votive relief from Vataš, south of Kavadarci
(Düll, 1977, fig. 33)

Сл. 5. Дионис и Хера (Либер и Либерка?).
Воштивни рељеф из Ваџаша, јужно од Кавадараца
(Düll, 1977, сл. 33)

In her left hand she is holding a thyrsos or sceptre, and in her right hand a patera, and she is pouring from it over a bunch of grapes. In comparison with the mentioned examples, the Barovo relief, with its composition structure, foreground emphasized, and subtly rendered details, still stands out by its quality in a way.

For the better understanding of the significance of the Barovo relief, the other examples of Dionysian themes from the province of Upper Moesia should be identified. On a relief mirror from Viminacium, made by the technique of hammering on a matrix of bronze, silver, gold, originating from the end of 2nd or the first half of 3rd century, there is a representation of hierogamy of Dionysus and Ariadne.⁴⁵ This relief belongs to the second iconographic type of hierogamy, since both Dionysus and Ariadne are shown in a half-reclining position on the bed. The other theme, *Sleeping Ariadne*, often termed *Ariadne Abandoned*, is represented on a now reconstructed stone relief found in the *thermae* sector in Romuliana at the end of 2nd or the beginning of 3rd century.⁴⁶

In addition to these examples that do not have direct analogies with the Barovo relief, the Upper Moesian examples of Amor and Psyche could be noted here, since

the Barovo relief is also characterized by elements of the iconography of this mythological couple. Amor and Psyche are represented in the right niche of the front side of a limestone sarcophagus from Viminacium from 2nd or the beginning of 3rd century,⁴⁷ on a fragment of a sarcophagus from the village of Mirkovci, north of Skopje⁴⁸, and on a gold ring, of unidentified place of discovery, from the second half of 2nd century, which is today exhibited in the National Museum in Belgrade.⁴⁹

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In the second part of this study, for the purpose of better understanding the meaning of the Barovo relief, it is necessary also to examine the general characteristics of observing the Liber and Libera cult in the province of Upper Moesia. In addition, it should certainly be noted that those deities were also very popular in the

⁴⁴ Јосифовска, 1961, 57; On a votive slab with Bacchus from Prilep, the deity was also represented next to the grapevine (Вулић, 1941–48, 313, no. 97), while on the other votive slab from Bitolj, Bacchus is with a thyrsos, panther and a branch of grapevine, Вулић, 1931, no. 32.

⁴⁵ Dionysus and Ariadne with wreaths circling their heads lie in an embrace on a bed, while her drapery forms a baldachin above their heads. Next to this central couple of Dionysus and Ariadne, Satyr and Sol are represented, as well as warrior symbols. More extensively on the problems of this religious syncretism in the example of this mirror, see: Каровић, 1995, 223–224, fig. 1–3; Cf. Rankov, 1980, cat. no. 49; Т. I/2; Крунић, 2000; Спасић, 2001, 162–165, no. 1, fig. 2 and fig. 3.

⁴⁶ Ariadne is lying with her eyes shut, with a drapery around her waist. Her right arm is raised, elbow bent, and placed over her head, and her left arm is in front of her body, placed for support. For more details, see: Лаловић, Јовановић, Ружић, 1997, 203; Лаловић, 1997, 437–441; Лаловић, 2001, 239–241.

⁴⁷ In the field to the right of the inscription there are standing figures of Amor and Psyche, embracing. To the left of the inscription there is another couple, probably the portraits of the deceased. For more details on this sarcophagus, see: Mirković, 1986, 158–159, no. 163, with the previous bibliography; Ђорђевић, 1998–90, 137–138, no. 8, fig. 11.

⁴⁸ In the fields under the arcades there is a winged Eros and Psyche. She is holding a cape with her left hand, and stretching the right one towards Eros, Вулић, 1931, 213, no. 567.

⁴⁹ Under the tympanum with a shell there are Amor and Psyche, Поповић, 1992, 24, no. 18; Three terracottas with Amor and Psyche could be mentioned here as well, originally not from the area of the province of Upper Moesia, but indirectly arriving later at Belgrade museums. One of them originates from the place of Neochori near Amphipolis and is kept in the National Museum in Belgrade (Veličković, 1957, 42, no. 49, Т. XVIII; ЛМС VII, s.v. Psyche, no. 121b). The other two terracottas, unknown place of discovery, are part of the collection of the Memorial Centre »Josip Broz Tito«, acquired before the Second World War in Athens, Cvijović, 1991, 50–51, no. 50 and no. 53.

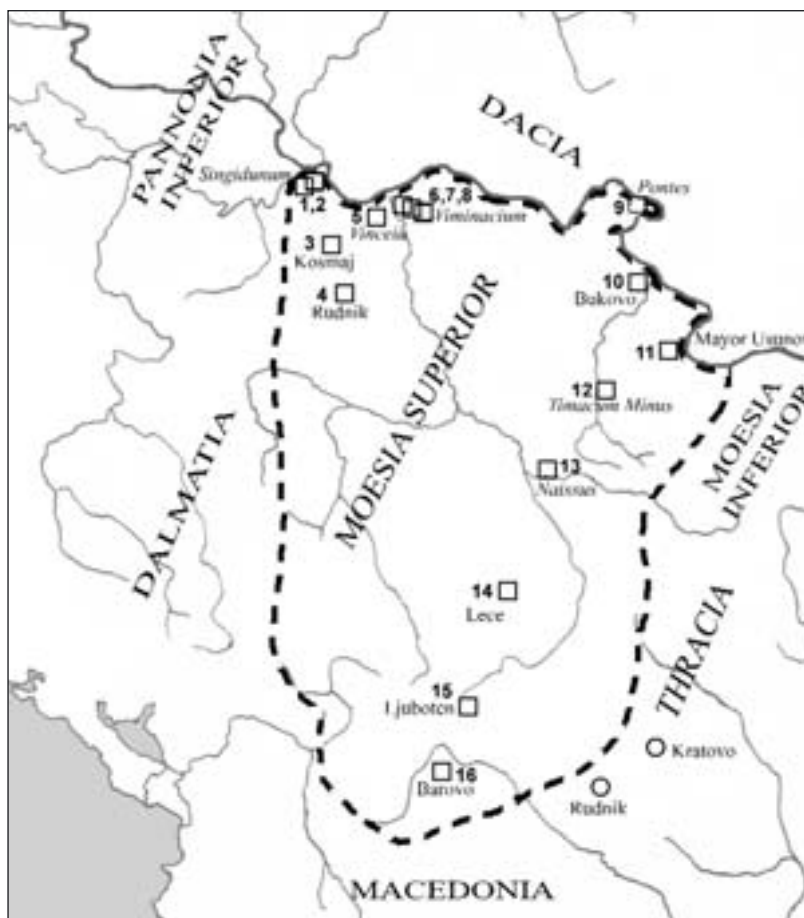


Fig. 7. Map of Upper Moesia with monuments of the Liber's cult marked:

1. Votive altar from Singidunum (IMS I 16); 2. Votive altar from Singidunum (IMS I 17); 3. Votive altar from Kosmaj (ŽA 2002, 219–224, fig. 1); 4. Silver patera with the inscription from Rudnik (IMS I 170); 5. Votive altar from Vincaia (IMS II 27); 6. Votive altar from Viminacium (IMS II 28); 7. Fragment of marble votive icon from Viminacium (Viminacium 4–5, 89–132, no. 19); 8. Fragmented ceramic handle from Viminacium (Зоївовић, Јорговић 1990, 30–31); 9. Marble votive icon with the inscription from the vicinity of Pontes (БС IV, 127 129, fig. 1); 10. Votive relief from Bukovo near Negotin (Споменик 1931, no. 630); 11. Votive altar from Mayor Usunovo near Vidin (AE 1938, 93); 12. Terracotta fragment from Timacum Minus (Пеїровић – Јовановић 1997, 65, no. 9); 13. Votive altar from Naisus (IMS IV 25); 14. Votive altar from Lece near Leskovac (IMS IV 109); 15. Votive altar from Ljuboten, north of Scupi (IMS VI 11); 16. Votive relief from Barovo, south of Scupi.
* (Sculptural fragment from Plešinci near Kratovo, Јосифовска 1961, 57)
* (Votive relief from Rudnik, north of Veles, Düll 1977, fig. 32)

Сл. 7. Карта Горње Мезије са укрћаним споменицима Либеровој култи.

1. Војивни олтар из Сингидунума (IMS I 16); 2. Војивни олтар из Сингидунума (IMS I 17); 3. Војивни олтар са Космаја (ŽA 2002, 219–224, сл. 1); 4. Сребрна патиера са натписом са Рудника (IMS I 170); 5. Војивни олтар из Винцеје (IMS II 27); 6. Војивни олтар из Виминацијума (IMS II 28); 7. Фраментни мермерне војивне иконе из Виминацијума (Viminacium 4–5, 89–132, бр. 19); 8. Фраментниована керамичка дршка из Виминацијума (Зоївовић, Јорговић 1990, 30–31); 9. Мермерна војивна икона са натписом из околине Понџеса (БС IV, 127 129, сл. 1); 10. Војивни рељеф из Букова код Нејоштина (Споменик 1931, бр. 630); 11. Војивни олтар из Мајор Узунова код Видина (AE 1938, 93); 12. Фраментни од теракоите из Тимасит Минус-а (Пеїровић – Јовановић 1997, 65, бр. 9); 13. Војивни олтар из Науса (IMS IV 25); 14. Војивни олтар из Леца код Лексовца (IMS IV 109); 15. Војивни олтар из Љубошена, северно од Скупа (IMS VI 11); 16. Војивни рељеф из Барова, јужно од Скупа.
* (Скулпторални фрагмент из Плешинаца код Крајтова, Јосифовска 1961, 57)
* (Војивни рељеф из Рудника, северно од Велеса, Düll 1977, сл. 32)

neighbouring Roman provinces, in the Danubian part of Lower Pannonia⁵⁰, in Dacia⁵¹, Dalmatia⁵² and in the northern part of the province of Macedonia.⁵³

The cult of Liber in Upper Moesia has been supported, as far as is known today, by three anepigraphic and eleven epigraphic monuments, in addition to the Barovo relief. Their analysis might indicate the character of the observation of this cult, and thus contribute to a better understanding of the significance of the votive monument from Barovo. The data are scarce, which in itself makes the collected data even more valuable. Firstly, all the Upper Moesian evidence concerning the cult will be mentioned, to the greatest extent possible, and then the attempt will be made, based on such evidence, at the understanding of the fundamental functions of this cult in Upper Moesia, which in itself will expand our knowledge of the Barovo relief.

The anepigraphic Upper Moesian monuments of this cult have already been discussed within the context of analogies of the Barovo relief, but for the purposes of a clearer overview, they will be referred to again. In the northern part of the province this cult was corroborated in Singidunum,⁵⁴ in Kosmaj⁵⁵ and Rudnik,⁵⁶ then in Vinceia,⁵⁷ Viminacium⁵⁸ and in the vicinity of Pontes.⁵⁹ Farther south, it was corroborated in Negotin⁶⁰ and in the place of *Mayor Usunovo* near Vidin,⁶¹ and as for the central part of the province, in Naisus,⁶² Ravna⁶³ and in the place of Pusto Šilovo near Lec, in the vicinity of Leskovac.⁶⁴ Finally, in the southern part of the province, the Liber cult, in addition to the Barovo relief, was confirmed in the place of Ljuboten, to the north of Skopje.⁶⁵ From the above mentioned it is obvious that the significance of the Barovo relief lies primarily with the fact that it confirms that the Liber and Libera cult had a significant role in the southern part of the province as well – in the area of Scupi.⁶⁶

Studying the inscriptions and the reliefs as well, we notice that Liber in Upper Moesia appears on his own, but in different cult unions. He independently appears in three inscriptions (*IMS* II 27; *IMS* IV 109; *IMS* VI 11). In the cult union with Libera, Liber appears, in addition to the Barovo relief, also in one inscription (*IMS* I 17), in a marble icon from Pontes (*ĐS* IV, 134, figure 1), and in the inscription from Mayor Usunovo (*AE* 1938, 93). Liber was perhaps also represented with Libera on a stone votive icon from Viminacium.⁶⁷ The inscription from Kosmaj indicates that Liber was admired in a cult union with Jupiter.⁶⁸ The union of Liber, Libera, Jupiter and *Terra Mater* is mentioned in an inscription from Singidunum (*IMS* I 16).⁶⁹ The relief from Bukovo near Negotin⁷⁰ also presents the cult union

⁵⁰ In Lower Pannonia, Liber and Libera were particularly honoured within the autochthonous population in the Danubian region, in Taurunum and in Sirmium. A great number of fragments of votive slabs with images of Liber and Libera, Hercules, the Maenads and Satyr and others found alongside the foundations of a building indicates the existence of the shrine of Dionysus in Taurunum, Dautova-Ruševar, 1983, 88–89, T. XX/5, XX/8, XX/9, XXI/1, XXI/5; In addition to Taurunum, E. Imamović, indicates that Sirmium was the other centre where significant confirmations of honouring these deities were found, Imamović, 1977, 165.

⁵¹ Numerous papers treated the Liber and Libera cult in the province of Dacia. One of the most important is the paper of S. and M. Popescu, where even 272 monuments are named: reliefs, sculptures, objects made of bone, ceramics, intaglios, and inscriptions related to this cult. The authors mention also the existence of numerous shrines of this cult in, among other towns, in Apulum, Ampelum, Sarmizegetusa, Sucidava, Drobetae, Romula, Napoca, Alburnus Maior and others, Popescu, Popescu, 1995, 227–235.

⁵² Liber and Libera were particularly venerated in the province of Dalmatia, both in its inland and coastal parts. Treating these problems, Imamović names four areas where this cult was particularly present. In the inland part, those were the northwest part of Bosnia, western Herzegovina and eastern Bosnia. In the coastal part of the province, evidence of the existence of this cult was found in numerous places such as Salona, Klis, Benkovci, Narona etc, Imamović, 1977, 160–168.

⁵³ In a comprehensive study by Düll, numerous monuments of this cult from the northern part of the province of Macedonia are mentioned; they are mostly from Kavadarci, Prilep, Heraclea near Bitola, Ilindenac, Paionia and others, Düll, 1977, no. 89–108.

⁵⁴ Mirković, Dušanić, 1976, no. 16 and 17.

⁵⁵ Petković, 2002, 219–224, fig. 1.

⁵⁶ Mirković, Dušanić, 1976, no. 170. A dedication to Liber (*CIL* III 6317), found near Arilje, in the border area between Upper Moesia and Dalmatia, should be mentioned here.

⁵⁷ Mirković, 1986, no. 27.

⁵⁸ Mirković, 1986, no. 28; Томовић, 1989–90, 106, no. 19; Зоговић, Јордовић, 1990, 30–31.

⁵⁹ Васић, Јовановић, 1987, 127–129, fig. 1.

⁶⁰ Вулић, 1931, no. 630.

⁶¹ *AE* 1938, 93.

⁶² Petrović, 1979, no. 25.

⁶³ Петровић–Јовановић, 1997, 65, no. 9.

⁶⁴ Petrović, 1979, no. 109.

⁶⁵ Dragojević-Josifovska, 1982, no. 11.

⁶⁶ For better understanding of this relief from Barovo, the other monuments found in this locality should perhaps be mentioned. In addition to this one, which is the subject matter of this paper, another inscription was also built in the newly constructed refectory of the church of St. Nikola (*IMS* VI 127), and bibliography mentions two inscriptions as well, first of them dedicated to Fortuna, while the dedicants of the other one are representatives of high aristocracy and veterans of the Scupi colony, with a non-imperial gentilicium *Aufidius* (*IMS* VI 4; *IMS* VI 49).

⁶⁷ Томовић, 1989–90, 106, no. 19.

⁶⁸ Petković, 2002, 219–224; Cf. Dušanić, 1990, 539, note 29.

⁶⁹ The cult of the goddess *Terra Mater* was closely connected to the cult of Liber; for more details about that connection and about the significance of the *Terra Mater* cult in the region of the Balkan *metalla*, see Поповић, 1995, 153 and on; Cf. Dušanić, 1977, 60, note 24.

⁷⁰ Вулић, 1931, no. 630.

of Liber and Jupiter together with a female deity, whose identification has already been discussed. The inscription from Naisus notes the following cult union: Liber, Jupiter, Juno and Hilara/Libera (*IMS* IV 25). Finally, Liber is also mentioned in an unusual cult union with Libera and Mercury in Viminacium (*IMS* II 28).

Concerning the epithets themselves, in the province of Upper Moesia, Liber is most frequently mentioned as *Pater* (*IMS* I 16; *IMS* I 17; *IMS* II 27; *IMS* IV 109; *IMS* VI 11; *ĐS* IV, 134 figure 1; *AE* 1938, 93). Then these epithets follow: *Deus* (*IMS* IV 25; *IMS* VI 11; *ĐS* IV, 134 figure 1), *Sacrum* (*IMS* II 27; *IMS* I 170),⁷¹ *Augustus* (*IMS* II 27), *Sanctus* (*IMS* IV 109), and *Laetus* (*IMS* IV 109). On the silver patera from Rudnik, the inscription reads *D(eo) B(accho) s(acrum)*.⁷² In one place, Libera herself has the epithet of *Dea* (*ĐS* IV, 134 figure 1) and *Hilara* (*IMS* IV 25). In addition to the common formulas, one of those monuments was erected *pro salutes* of father and son together with the villagers (*IMS* IV 109), while the other was *ob immunitatem* (*IMS* VI 11).

Although it cannot be said that inscriptions dedicated to this deity were numerous, some of them also provide significant data about the dedicants themselves, that is to say the followers of this cult. Their basic characteristics will be referred to here in order to achieve a better understanding of the relief from Barovo dedicants. Common Roman names are mentioned most often. In an inscription from Singidunum the origin, most probably northern Italic, of a dedicant *T. Aurelius Atticus* (*IMS* I 16) can be seen, while the inscription in the relief from Pontes (*ĐS* IV, 134, figure 1) contains a cognomen *Siro*, which indicates that the origin of this dedicant could be Greek. The dedicant from Kosmaj, *Atrius Cornutianus*, had the same gentilicium as a military tribune of II cohort *Aurelia Dardanorum*, stationed in Ravna.⁷³ The social stratum of the followers of this cult can be inferred to a certain extent from these inscriptions. The proof that the followers of Liber came from a higher social layer is in the inscriptions mentioning the members of the city administration: a decurion (*IMS* I 16) and a prefect of a vicus, since they erected the monument dedicated to the villagers' health (*IMS* IV 109). The inscriptions also mention the members of clergy (*IMS* VI 11), as well as military veterans (*IMS* I 16; *IMS* IV 25). The inscription from Lece also confirms that the cult was collectively significant, since the dedicants there were a father and a son together with the villagers (*vicani*).⁷⁴

The characteristics of the cult in the province of Upper Moesia were not the subject of systematic studies,

but some authors dealt with the topic on different occasions.⁷⁵ The inscriptions mentioning Liber in the Balkan provinces were most frequently present in the period from 2nd to mid- 3rd century.⁷⁶ Researchers agree that Liber in Moesia, Pannonia and Dacia represents an old autochthonous deity of fertility and vegetation honoured under his Latin name, but these questions are still open.⁷⁷ As far as the province of Macedonia is concerned, Bruhl states that this deity was honoured under its Latin

⁷¹ *IMS* II 27: *Liberio Pat(ri) / Aug(usto) sa[c(rum)] / [- - - ; IMS* I 170: *D(eo) B(accho) s(acrum)*.

⁷² Mirković, Dušanić, 1976, no. 170; This interpretation of the *DBS* inscription is highly probable, especially for the fact that in an inscription from Rogatica in eastern Dalmatia (*CIL* III, 8367) there is a formula *Liberio B(accho)*, which is, in fact, a dedication to the Romanized deity *Liber Pater*. For more details about this silver patera from Branečići, see Поповић, 1995, 154–155.

⁷³ Petković, 2002, 221.

⁷⁴ Although it is not in a direct connection with Upper Moesian followers of this cult, a very interesting study of S. and M. Popescu about a social level of the cult followers in the province of Dacia should certainly be mentioned. Out of fifty-six inscriptions dedicated to this deity, women are dedicants of nineteen. Forty-four names are Italic, seventeen are Greek-Oriental, seven of them have Thracian characteristics, and one name is Semite. Of the members of higher classes, there are three decurions of Apulum, a quaestor, a treasurer, a member of the order of *Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa*, two decurions of *Napoca* colony and one decurion (?) of the municipium of *Potaissa*. Among the priests, there is a *Flamen* of the municipium of *Apulum*, two *Sacerdos* and an *Augustal* of the municipium of *Potaissa*, and two *Augustals* of the colony of *Ulpia Traiana*. Fourteen inscriptions mention the names of soldiers and veterans. A quarter of all the inscriptions is to a certain extent related to the army, indicating the importance of the military element in this cult. In addition to this, Liber was admired by all the population strata as well, even among the slaves, Popescu, Popescu, 1995, 228.

⁷⁵ The cult of Liber and Libera and its values were discussed in numerous works, and in that context these general characteristics will not be given too much attention here. For more details on that, see: Bruhl, 1953; Bodor, 1963; Turcan, 1966; LIMC III, s.v. *Bacchus* and other numerous studies. About this cult in the area of Illyricum, see: Душанић, 1980, 13 and on; Dušanić, 1999, 130 and on; Dušanić, 2003, Petković, 2002, 219 and on.

⁷⁶ Томовић, 1989–90, 106; Cf. Bruhl, 1953.

⁷⁷ Discussions about the origin of this deity are still under way. The origin of the myth and its wide presence in Italic countries are still unknown today. S. and M. Popescu believe that the joint presentation of Liber and Libera is a local creation that was widespread in Upper Moesia and Pannonia in the direction of *Aquileia* (Popescu, Popescu, 1995, 230). While studying this cult in Moesia, Dalmatia, Dacia and Pannonia, Domaševski as well noticed, and A. Bruhl half a century later confirmed, that Liber and Libera are the names given to the old autochthonous deities of these countries in the time of Roman conquests, and although they assumed the functions of autochthonous cults, their basic function remained the same everywhere. It was Liber's function of the deity of wine that he took over from Dionysus. Vine growers turned to him for help in order to have a good harvest, and innkeepers put his representations among the house gods, Bruhl, 1953, 210 and on.

name of Liber Pater, while the object of the cult was actually a Thracian deity.⁷⁸

Since the origin of this cult is not the subject matter of this paper, no further analysis of this problem will be undertaken here. Still a fundamental question, and a question of importance for understanding the Barovo relief that needs to be answered, the question concerning the values of the cult that this votive monument emphasized, is this one: whether it was a monument erected in the honour of Liber as the agrarian deity or the deity from the mining Pantheon, and whether it can be connected to the idea, shared by certain authors, that Liber was a favourite deity of military population?⁷⁹ It is impossible to give a final answer to these questions, but we can mention here the studies and examples indicating that Liber in Illyricum as well as in the province of Upper Moesia was honoured more as one of the deities of heterogeneous mining Pantheon (Terra Mater, Roma, Tellus, Ceres, Diana etc).⁸⁰ Venerating Liber was present in the mining districts throughout the Roman Empire, and in his studies Dušanić emphasizes that Liber in Illyricum was more honoured as a miners' patron than as an agrarian deity.⁸¹ Petković also develops this idea discussing the inscription of Liber and Jupiter from the mining area of Kosmaj.⁸² Petković, in that line, also interprets the appearance of Liber in a cult union with other deities of the mining Pantheon, with Libera and Terra Mater, in the inscription from the foothill of Avala (*IMS I 16*), which could also confirm the existence of a link between Liber and mining life.⁸³ This can be further confirmed by the dedication to this deity on a silver patera from the other mining area, from Rudnik (*IMS I 170*).⁸⁴ Popović believes that there was a workshop for making silver dishes, connected to lead and silver mines, where the dishes and vessels like this patera could be made, for nearby sanctuaries and temples of the local deities of Bacchus-Liber, Terra Mater and other deities.⁸⁵ Viminacium, also, where two inscriptions and one votive icon of Liber originated, was a domicile of the procurator of the silver mine, and an important mining-administrative centre.⁸⁶ The inscription from Lece, a mining area not far from Leskovac, speaks in favour of this idea.⁸⁷

The monuments of this cult from the northern part of the province of Macedonia that are very close to the Barovo relief in style and iconography should be observed in the same way. Within this comprehensive opus it is important to mention a female statue made of volcanic stone from Plešinci near Kratovo.⁸⁸ Josifovska believes it is a Maenad from the orgiastic Dionysian cult, while Jovanović supposes that it is a representation of Libera

here as well.⁸⁹ Since antiquity, Kratovo, place where the sculpture was found, was a significant centre of mining activity (lead, silver, copper and gold mines).⁹⁰ Dušanić even asks a question whether the Kratovo mining region should belong to Dardania or Upper Moesia.⁹¹

On the basis of the mentioned examples it could perhaps be concluded that Liber in the Barovo relief also appears in a similar context of his connection with the mining districts. There is no direct evidence to confirm

⁷⁸ In Macedonia, in the Thracian-Hellenistic civilization enveloped by the Latin glow, Dionysus was venerated until very late antiquity. The colonists of Italian origin, settled since Augustus' time in this region, mixed with the autochthonous population and thus led to the admiration of this old deity with Roman characteristics, Bruhl, 1953, 213.

⁷⁹ Bruhl states that this deity was frequently admired, whether with Libera or independently, among the soldiers in Pannonia and Dalmatia, Bruhl, 1953, 190; As far as Dacia is concerned, S. and M. Popescu, on the basis of 56 inscriptions, offer a precise picture about the followers of this cult, who were also mostly connected with the army, Popescu, Popescu, 1995, 228.

⁸⁰ More precisely, Liber and Libera can be classified in a subgroup, with Silvana, Diana and Ceres, as the deities of nature. In addition to these deities of nature, there are two more subgroups in the mining Pantheon. The first consists of the deities of the underworld (Dis Pater, Terra Mater, Orcia, Aeracura), and the other subgroup consists of those deities-patrons of work in the mining *officinae* (Hercules, Vulcanus, Neptunus), Душанић, 1980, 13, note 28; Dušanić, 2003, 259, note 56, 264, note 107.

⁸¹ Dušanić, 1999, 131.

⁸² Petković, 2002, 219 and on. About Kosmaj mines, Simić, 1951, 190 and on.

⁸³ Cf. Petković, 2002, 221 with the review of previous bibliography; On Avala mining veins see Simić, 1951, 185 and on. An inscription from Avala thus mentions *Dea Orcia* (*IMS I 20*), also closely connected with the chthonic cults in the local mines, above all with the cult *Terra Mater*, and thereby with the cult of Liber, Поповић, 1995, 154.

⁸⁴ On the mining area of mountain Rudnik, see Simić, 1951, 195 and on.

⁸⁵ Поповић, 1995, 156.

⁸⁶ Simić, 1951, 12. Although Simić does not provide the data that Ridanj, near Golubac was a famous mining site in antiquity, but only since the Middle Ages, this site near the Danube might be important to note, Simić, 1951, 248–249.

⁸⁷ *IMS IV 109*; Simić, 1951, 13, 239 and on.

⁸⁸ It is rather damaged, the head is missing, but it can be seen that the body is in contraposto. She is clad in a double chiton, and in the hand of the bent left arm she is holding a bunch of grapes (?). B. Josifovska realizes that on the hand a bird eating grapes is presented, while in the remnants of the relief besides it she recognizes a panther, Јосифовска, 1961, 57. Cf. Вулић, 1931, 85, no. 199.

⁸⁹ This hypothesis of Jovanović is also part of the mentioned paper in print.

⁹⁰ Simić, 1951, 293 and on.

⁹¹ Душанић, 1980, 27 and note 135 with the overview of previous bibliography about this topic.

this notion, but the already mentioned Upper Moesian and northern Macedonian analogies underline the idea in a certain way.

A special contribution to understanding the cult of Liber in this area is an inscription from the area of Arrubium in Lower Moesia.⁹² It can be learnt from the inscription that *equus ale I Dardanorum Antoniniane, M. Antistius Caecina* was a follower of the cult of Liber Pater. This affirmation of the origins through worshipping Liber contributes to the emphasis of a domicile element in the cult of this deity.⁹³

Even with regard to the dating of the relief of Liber and Libera from Barovo, there are no data that might facilitate a more precise determination. The specified stylistic qualities of this relief, three-dimensional modelling and a great attention paid to details, show that the relief was made before the times of changes in the style and tendencies towards simplifying the form and shape, which was particularly noticeable in the third century. In order for the Barovo relief to be more precisely dated, its comparison to other monuments of this cult as well as to the other monuments from this site could be used. For the most part, the monuments of this cult in the province of Upper Moesia date from 2nd and 3rd centuries,⁹⁴ but it is necessary to emphasize that the geographically closest monument is the one from Ljuboten, north of Skopje, dated to the first half of 2nd century.⁹⁵ Furthermore, two more monuments, out of the three found in the village of Barovo, are dated to the same period.⁹⁶ In addition, two both geographically and iconographically closest examples from north Macedonian area are dated to the similar period. The relief from Rudnik near Veles is dated to the second half of 2nd century, while the relief from Vataš is dated to the year 200.⁹⁷ Bearing in mind all these data, as well as the stylistic characteristics of the relief itself, the votive monument from Barovo could still be dated to the time period of 2nd century.

* * *

At the end of these considerations, the conclusions could go into two directions, towards outlining the significance of the votive monument from Barovo itself, and summarising the knowledge about the significance of the Liber and Libera cult in the area of the province where the monument originated. Thus, firstly, it could be said that the votive relief from Barovo with Liber and Libera/Dionysus and Ariadne is outstanding both in iconography and in style, and that it is closely related to north Macedonian reliefs. However, at the next level, the Barovo relief provides highly significant data about

the existence of this cult in the area of Scupi, and therefore broadens the knowledge of veneration of the cult in the territory of the entire province. Although it is not known who ordered the monument, their social status could only be inferred from the fact that it is work of outstanding quality, particularly if bearing in mind the quality and new creations of other Upper Moesian, and even Macedonian, monuments of this cult. A votive monument like this one from the village of Barovo could only be afforded by wealthier citizens. Likewise, it might be of importance to repeat that a geographically closest confirmation of this cult, the one from Ljuboten, north of Skopje, had members of clergy as its dedicants.

Based on the stylistic analysis, as well as on comparison with other geographically close monuments of this cult, and also other monuments from this site, the votive relief from Barovo could be dated more broadly into 2nd century. Finally, reflections about this anepigraphic monument of Liber and Libera from the village of Barovo, situated to the south-west of Skopje, should not be considered final, since they are more a contribution towards the understanding of this very complex subject matter, which is indeed deserving of more attention.

Translated by Branislava Jurašin

⁹² Aricescu, 1977, 223, no. 85 (=AE, 1980, 822)

⁹³ Aricescu (1977, 51) dates this inscription in the time of Severus on the basis of the name of the cohort, *Aurelian*, but the earlier dating of this inscription could also be supposed (*Ala I Dardanorum* is mentioned in another inscription from this region CIL III, 7504).

⁹⁴ To the time between year 101 and 300, the following inscriptions were dated: *IMS I 17* and *IMS II 27*. To the period from the year 101 to 200, the inscription *IMS II 28* was dated, and to the period between the year 151 and 250, the inscription *IMS IV 109* was dated (according to *EDH* as well). To the time between the year 200 and the first decades of 3rd century, the relief with inscription on a marble icon from the vicinity of Pontes was dated, Васић, Јовановић, 1987, 127–129, fig. 1.

⁹⁵ *IMS VI 11* (according to *EDH* as well).

⁹⁶ The already mentioned, today lost, stele from Barovo (*IMS VI 49*), as well as the preserved sacrificial altar, today built in the south wall of the newly constructed refectory of St. Nikola's church (*IMS VI 127*), are dated to (according to *EDH* as well) the first half of 2nd century. There are no data for more precise dating of the third monument from Barovo, today lost (*IMS VI 4*).

⁹⁷ Düll, 1977, no. 104 and 111.

ABBREVIATIONS:

<i>AE</i>	<i>L'année épigraphique.</i>
<i>ANRW</i>	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt,</i> Berlin–New York.
<i>AMN</i>	<i>Acta Musei Napocensis,</i> Cluj–Napoca I 1964.
<i>AV</i>	<i>Arheološki vestnik (Šašlov zbornik),</i> Ljubljana.
<i>CIL</i>	<i>Corpus inscriptionum Latinarum.</i>
<i>БС</i>	<i>Бергајске свеске,</i> Београд.
<i>EDH</i>	<i>Épigraphische Datenbank Heidelberg.</i>
<i>IMS</i>	<i>Inscriptiones de la Mésie Supérieure,</i> I, II, III/2, IV, VI, Beograd 1976–1995.
<i>LIMC</i>	<i>Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae,</i> I–VIII, Zürich, Munich, 1981–1997; VIII, Zürich–Düsseldorf, 1997.
<i>Споменик</i>	<i>Споменик Српске академије наука и уметности,</i> Београд.
<i>TIR</i>	<i>Tabula Imperii Romani. Naissus–Dyrrhachion–Scupi–</i> <i>Serdica–Thessalonike,</i> Ljubljana 1976.

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ВОТИВНИ РЕЉЕФ ИЗ БАРОВА (СКУПИ) ПРИЛОГ ПРОУЧАВАЊУ КУЛТА ЛИБЕРА И ЛИБЕРЕ У ГОРЊОЈ МЕЗИЈИ

Рељеф узидан у новосаграђену трпезарију цркве Св. Николе у селу Барову, југозапад од Скопља, публикован је у првој половини XX века, али до сада није опширније проучаван. Н. Вулић је још у првој половини XX века је публиковао овај рељеф, указавши да се ради о Амору и Психи (Вулић, 1931, бр. 549). Ни у опису ни у цртежу овог рељефа Н. Вулић није навео да се изнад овог пара налазила грана винове лозе. Поред тога у опису је било наведено да се поред ногу мушке фигуре налазила четвороножна животиња, док на цртежу она није приказана. Такође, бавећи се натписима на територији Скупа, Б. Драгојевић-Јосифовска је, публикујући један натпис посвећен Деусу Либеру Патеру, указала и на овај анепиграфски споменик из Барова, претпоставивши да се ради о Либеру и Либери (Dragojević-Josifovska, 1982, 56).

Рељеф из Барова је правоугаоног облика, постављен је на крепидому и полукружно је завршен на врху. Сам облик рељефа показује да се ради о вотивном споменику, а анализа његове иконографије да су приказани Либер и Либера, и то као Дионис и Аријадна са иконографским елементима који су преузети из иконографије Амора и Психе.

Иконографија везана за бога Бахуса (*Bacchus, Liber, Liber Pater*) веома је богата. Сагледавајући рељеф из Барова уочава се велика блискост са приказима хијерогамије Бахуса и Аријадне. У прилог томе могу се навести бројни примери, од којих је можда најзначајнији један из Царског периода. На њему је испод свода од винове лозе приказан Бахус, са брадом и у хитону, како држи кантарос у десној руци, а левом грли Аријадну око рамена (*LIMC III/1* бр. 194). Поред овог, веома је важно навести и споменике овог култа како из саме провинције Горње Мезије, тако и из њеног пограничног подручја са провинцијом Македонијом.

За разумевање значаја као и значења рељефа из Барова од посебне су важности други примери овог култа из саме провинције Горње Мезије, из Сингидунума, са подножја Авале, Космаја, Рудника, Виминацијума, Понтеса, Неготина, Наиса и Скупа. Ови драгоцени подаци говоре о просторима простирања култа, о различитим култним заједницама у којима се

Либер појављивао, као и различитим епитетима које је имао. Такође они говоре и у извесној мери о самим дедикантима. Од посебне важности за разумевање рељефа из Барова јесте и сама функција култа, односно питање да ли је Либер био превасходно поштован као аграрно или божанство рудничког пантеона. Један део горњомезијских споменика овог култа, као и северномакедонских рељефа, иначе веома блиских рељефу из Барова, изражава везу са рудничком функцијом култа и због тога намеће сагледавање рељефа из Барова и на овакав начин.

Закључци након ових разматрања би могли да иду у два смера, ка резимирању значаја самог вотивног споменика из Барова, али и сумирању знања о значају култа Либера и Либере на подручју провинције у којој је овај споменик и настао. Тако би се прво могло рећи да је вотивна плоча из Барова са Либером и Либером/Дионисом и Аријадном изузетан споменик и у погледу своје иконографије и у погледу стила. Не зна се ко су били његови наручиоци. О њиховом социјалном статусу може једино да говори чињеница да се ради о делу изузетног квалитета, које су себи могли да приуште једино имућнији грађани. На следећем плану ово дело пружа веома значајне податке о постојању култа на подручју територије Скупа, а самим тим и проширује знања о његовом поштовању на простору целе провинције.

Питање које се овде намеће, а на које је тешко дати коначан одговор, јесте каквог је карактера била ова култна слика из Барова, односно да ли Либер има функцију аграрног или божанства рударског пантеона. На основу аналогија са другим споменицима овог култа из провинције Горње Мезије, као и северномакедонских примера, који наглашавају везу овог божанства и рударских дистрикта, можда би се могло претпоставити да је и на рељефу из Барова Либер исказивао сличну функцију. На основу стилских карактеристика, као и компарацијом са другим споменицима овог култа, рељеф из Барова би се могао датovati у II век, с тим што би се требало нагласити да ово дело нема директних уметничких аналогија.