

Ivana M. POPOVIĆ

Belgrade

Nadežda M. GAVRILOVIĆ VITAS

Institute of Archaeology, Belgrade

## MARBLE STATUE OF HERCULES FROM THE TERRITORY OF *BASSIANAE*

**Abstract:** In the year of 2017, the National Museum of Serbia bought a marble statue of Hercules, found near Ruma, in Srem, at the tripoint of the villages of Buđanovci, Dobrinčinci and Sibač. In the Roman period, this area belonged to the wider city territory of an important centre – *Bassianae*. The statue is preserved up to the knees, while the lower parts of the statue's legs are missing. It can be presumed, on the basis of the preserved attributes, that the statue represents the eleventh Labour of the hero-god Hercules, since he is shown with apples from the Garden of the Hesperides. This particular Labour hasn't been frequently depicted in Roman sculptural repertoire and the statue from *Bassianae* represents a unique complete figural composition in the territory of the Roman provinces in today's Serbia so-far.

**Key words:** Roman period, sculpture, Hercules, apples from the Garden of the Hesperides, *Bassianae*

In the year of 2017, the National Museum of Serbia bought a marble statue of Hercules, found near the smaller town of Ruma, at the tripoint of the villages Buđanovci, Dobrinčinci and Sibač, in Srem. In the Roman period, this area belonged to the wider city territory of an important centre – *Bassianae* (fig. 1). The sculpture has been bought from Slobodan Tomašević (it was in the possession of his father, a retired gymnasium professor from Ruma). The figure is preserved up to the knees, with lower parts of the legs missing. The height of the preserved statue is 31–33 cm, while the width is 18 cm. The previous owners made certain interventions in the area of the lower part of the legs, hence, the statue was forwarded to the Department for Conservation and Restoration

of the National Museum of Serbia, where all the required treatments were made on the statue. The statue's inventory number in the Roman Collection of the National Museum of Serbia is 4322/III. Judging by the attributes of the statue, it can be concluded that it represents Hercules with apples from the Garden of the Hesperides, therefore, the eleventh Labour of the hero-god.



Fig. 1 The finding place of the statue of Hercules, tripoint of the villages of Dobrinca, Buđanovača and Sibač and the border of city territories of Sirmium and Bassianae (map: B. Popović)

Сл. 1 Место налаза скулптуре Херкула, тремеђа атара села Добринца, Буђановаца и Сибача и граница градских територија Сирмијума и Басијана (карта: Б. Поповић)

This particular Labour of Hercules was rarely depicted in Roman figural decorations, it appeared more often in the Greek art. Hercules is represented holding the apples from the Garden of the Hesperides and this iconographic scene had been visually conceived on the basis of the Greek mythological narrative, which combined different versions of the myth, which were later reinterpreted in the Roman literature and adapted to the Roman mythology.<sup>1</sup> Antique writers bring us two main

1 It is presumed that the 11<sup>th</sup> Labour of Hercules had been mentioned, at earliest, in the *Herakleia* of Pisander from Rhodes in the late 7<sup>th</sup> – early 6<sup>th</sup> century BC (in Hesiod's *Theogony*, the Garden of the Hesperides and the snake Ladon are mentioned, but not in connection with Herakles). In the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, Athenian mythographer Pherecydes described in detail how Atlas helped Herakles to get the apples from the Garden of the Hesperides (Salapata 2021: 150–151; Jourdain-Annequin 1989: 21; Boardman et al. 1990: 100).

versions of this particular Labour of Herakles, which were apparently equally represented not only in the literature, but in art as well. The first version of the Labour states that after Herakles' ten Labours, king Eurystheus demanded of the hero to bring him the golden apples from the Garden of the Hesperides, which were given by the Earth goddess Gea to Hera/Juno for her wedding to Zeus/Jupiter. The golden apples grew on the tree in the garden guarded by the Hesperides, nymphs of evening and golden light of sunsets (Daughters of the Evening, Nymphs of the West), who were daughters of Atlas, a Titan condemned to hold up the heavens for eternity. The Garden of the Hesperides was in the far west, located near the mountain Atlas in North Africa. Hera didn't want Herakles to take the apples, so she placed the great serpent Ladon in the garden to guard the fruit. Still, Herakles managed to obtain the apples, after killing the guardian snake, and he gave them to the goddess Athena/Minerva, who brought them back to the Garden of the Hesperides (Harrison 1964: 76–82; Ruck and Staples 1994).<sup>2</sup> The other version of the myth is different since it mentions that Atlas aided Herakles, after being recommended to the hero by Prometheus, as the one who can assist Herakles in obtaining the apples from the Hesperides. Herakles agrees to hold up the heavens while Atlas goes to get the apples, but when he returns to Herakles he refuses to support the heavens again. Herakles succeeds to trick him by asking him to hold up the heavens just for a moment until he gets a pad so it would be easier for him to hold up the sky. Atlas took the heavens from Herakles, who then took the apples and went his way (Salapata 2021: 153).

The marble sculpture from the vicinity of Ruma shows a mature man with short curly hair and thin moustache, merging with short curly beard. Pupils can be noticed in the almond-shaped eyes, though not fully modelled. In his right hand, Hercules holds a club, with only the upper part preserved, while in his left hand, bent in the elbow, he holds four apples. The figure is represented nude, standing, with lion skin over the neck and shoulder, which ends freely falling down over the statue's left forearm and left flank, covering the part of a rock on which Hercules is leaning with his left thigh. On his back, from the middle of the back toward the right shoulder, a lower half of a quiver is visible, while the other upper half is missing. Lower parts of the statue are missing, as well as the right arm from the shoulder to the hand holding a club (fig. 2a–d).

Judging by the modelling of the statue's face, hair and beard, the sculpture could be dated into the period of Hadrian's reign (117–138), who visited this part of the province *Pannonia Inferior* in the year of 124, giving to *Bassianae* the status of *municipium* (Душанић 1965: 90). This presumption is additionally supported with the representations of Hercules with a club in one hand and apples of the Hesperides in the other hand, from golden *aurei* from the period of the emperor Hadrian (Daniels 2021: 480). Hadrian continued the propaganda of representing the Roman emperors as Hercules (started by Trajan) and apparently took part in Eleusinian Mysteries following "Hercules and Philip II example" (Birley 2013: 175), but Hadrian's Hercu-

2 Diodorus Siculus writes that Herakles killed Ladon and picked the apples. However, in *Argonautika* of Apollonius of Rhodes, this act of murdering Ladon is given a negative connotation and in the poem, one of the Hesperides refers to Herakles as "the most shameless man [...] most murderous in his violence", etc. (Diodorus Siculus 4.26.4; Stafford 2012: 46–48).

les wasn't a warrior and fighter as Trajan's was, but rather a traveller as the emperor himself, whose imperial goal was to unite all the nations in the Empire and treat them as equal partners.<sup>3</sup> Iconographic analogies of Hercules' statue from Ruma in the context of torso modelling and the posture can be found in the marble statue from baths in Argos, dated into the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, and a marble statue from Thasos (Boardman, Palagia and Woodford 1988: 764, no. 704, 707). The treatment of the head, hair and face is very similar to a marble statue from the Glyptotek in Copenhagen, a small marble statuette from the Art Museum in Boston,<sup>4</sup> but also a bronze statue of Hercules from Prusa in *Bithynia* (Boardman, Palagia and Woodford 1988: 764, no. 725).



- 
- 3 Same as Hercules, Hadrian was from the same province of Hispania and probably from the same settlement – *Gades*. Two of Hercules' Labours most frequently represented in the temple of Hercules Gaditanus from *Gades* were related to the peaceful travels of the hero-god, which Hadrian also enjoyed during his life, Hekster 2005: 207–208.
- 4 A small marble statue modelled by Lyssippos Herakles was discovered in *Asia Minor* and it is possible that it was made in the school of sculpture in *Aphrodisias*, Vermeule 1975: 326, no. 17, pl. 53, fig. 5.



Fig. 2 a–d Marble sculpture of Hercules from Bassianae  
(Documentation of the National Museum of Serbia)

Сл. 2 a-d Мермерна скулптура Херакла/Херкула са територије Басијана  
(документација Народног музеја Србије)

The earliest representations of the 11<sup>th</sup> Labour of Herakles are known from the middle of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, a century earlier than Pherecydes' description of the endeavour. The existence of two different versions of the myth in literature was followed by different representations of the Labour in art as well – through representations of Herakles who holds up the heavens while Atlas brings him the apples and through representations of Herakles attacking Ladon coiled around the tree.<sup>5</sup> The first representations of Herakles resting in the Garden of the Hesperides with apples

5 The 11<sup>th</sup> Labour of Herakles was depicted on the cedar-wood Chest of Cypselus, ornamented with golden and ivory images, dated into the late 7<sup>th</sup> or the early 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. Hercules is represented in the act of threatening Atlas with his sword to force him to give him the apples, de Grino and Olmos 1986: 4–5, no. 5. There is also a wooden group made for the Epidamnian treasury at *Olympia*, dated into the period from 550 to 530 BC, which is considered to be the earliest representation of Hercules with Ladon entwined around the tree, De Grino and Olmos 1986: 5, no. 6.

in his hand are known from one of the four marble reliefs known as the “Three-Figure Reliefs”, dated into 420 BC.<sup>6</sup> This scene gained significant popularity in the late 5<sup>th</sup> and the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC on Attic and South Italian vases, on which Herakles’ repose in a garden of delights, after successfully obtaining the golden apples, is particularly emphasised (Boardman, Palagia and Woodford 1988: nos. 2700–2705). This new iconography foreshadows or already displays Herakles’ deification and immortality, representing the pleasures of a happy afterlife and hero-god enjoying this new bliss. The literature of the late 5<sup>th</sup> century BC similarly represents Herakles – as a moral hero, who earned to live his immortal life in the place of gods and deserved the happy afterlife as a reward for his virtuous deed.<sup>7</sup>

The scene from a red-figural *stamnos* from 470 BC represents a confirmation of the relation between the apples of the Hesperides and Herakles’ immortality – Herakles is represented arriving in Olympus, escorted by Athena, and giving the apple to Zeus.<sup>8</sup> The apples symbolised not only fertility, life strength, love, beauty, but they were also considered as the fruit of the immortals.<sup>9</sup> Already in the late 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, Herakles became the embodiment of *aretē*, in that is he became a person who aspired to live a life full of virtues and who went through suffering and numerous obstacles to reach honour and glory, which culminated with his gaining of immortal life (Bosman 2021: 337). Thus Herakles grows into an example of virtue and becomes an ideal model for ordinary mortals who saw, through Herakles’ life, their own aspirations and wishes for a happy afterlife.

The sculptures of Hercules holding the apples of the Hesperides can be divided in two groups. The first group includes statues which represent Hercules holding the apples in his right hand, placed behind his back. Numerous Roman statues belong to this iconographic type and represent copies of Lysippos’ sculpture from the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC,<sup>10</sup> the most famous of them being Farnese Hercules, modelled at the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century (Haskel and Penny 1981: 229–232, Cat. 46).<sup>11</sup> The sec-

6 The marble “Three figure reliefs” are copies of the original from 420 BC, which belonged either to a choragic monument or they were placed on the Altar of the Twelve Gods. Herakles is sitting on lion skin on a rock, holding a club in one hand. Two Hesperides are bringing the apples to him – one is represented standing in front of him, while the other is shown behind him, Boardman et al. 1990: 103, no. 2707. However, S. Bohm argues that the reliefs aren’t copies of classical originals, but Neo-Attic creations of the Late Hellenistic or Roman period, Salapata 2021: 158.

7 One of the most famous allegorical interpretation of the Labours of Herakles is Prodicus’ tale of “Herakles at the Crossroads”, known through Xenophon’s work *Memorabilia*, Bosman 2021: 335–337. Prodicus rationalises Herakles, representing him as a free hero-god (and not a tragic figure, like he is represented by Euripides in his tragedy “Herakles”). Stoics thought that Herakles was a moral hero, while Cicero emphasised that Herakles deserved his immortality for his services to the people and the state, Malherbe 2014: 652–653.

8 Here, the apple presumably represents proof that Hercules succeeded to complete his Labour, thus earning his immortality, Boardman et al. 1990: no 2875.

9 Salapata 2021: 150–151. In Herodorus’ allegories, three apples represented three virtues: abstinence from anger, avarice and hedonism, Stafford 2012: 9; Bosman 2021: 340–341.

10 The famous Lysippos’ bronze statue, life-sized or larger, represented Herakles resting, leant on his club, with the apples of the Hesperides in the hand behind his back. The statue was sculpted in the late 4<sup>th</sup> century BC and was publicly displayed in the agora-complex at Sikyon, Lysippos home town, beside the sanctuary of Apollo Lyceus, as mentioned by Pausanias, *Pausanias*, 2.9.8; Vermeule 1975: 323. The appearance of Lysippos’ statue on a Corinthian coin from 300 BC led some scholars to think that Herakles’ statue could have been displayed in Corinth and not Sikyon, Stafford 2012: 129.

11 Farnese Hercules is a famous marble statue of Glykon from Athens, sculpted in the early 3<sup>rd</sup> century, representing a copy of Lysippos’ bronze statue of the hero-god. Glykon’s statue was a colossal work of art, 3,17 m high, discovered in the Baths of Caracalla in Rome in 1546, for which it was most probably made (the

ond group of Hercules' statues with apples from the Garden of the Hesperides encompasses statues which represent the hero-god holding the apples in his left hand, extended forward.

Not many Roman statues belong to the second iconographic type of statues representing Hercules with the fruits of the Hesperides, like two colossal bronze gilded sculptures from Rome, one from *Forum Boarium*<sup>12</sup> and the other from the Theatre of *Pompeii*.<sup>13</sup> The Hercules' statue from *Forum Boarium* was sculpted in the Hellenistic style of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC, while the statue discovered near the Theatre of *Pompeii* is linked to the Roman art of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century (Haskel and Penny 1981: cat. 45). Many marble statues of this type are in museums, like the statue of Hercules from the Patras Museum (Palagia 1990: 59, fig. 9), and private collections in Europe and the USA, as bronze statuettes like the figurine from Byblos and figurine from Frankfurt, both dated into the 1<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>14</sup> The Capitoline Bust of Commodus represented as Hercules should be mentioned, which shows the emperor with a lion-skin over his head, a club in his right hand and the apples of the Hesperides in his left hand (Hekster 2005: 210, fig. 3), as well as the two medallions of Marcus Aurelius and Antoninus Pius, on which a nude, bearded Hercules is shown, leant on a club with his right hand and holding three apples in his left hand (Vermeule 1957: 297). Ichnographically, the statue found near Ruma belongs to this type of Hercules' statues, where the hero-god is holding the apples of the Hesperides in his left hand. The fragmented marble statue of Hercules with the apples of the Hesperides, discovered in room w-4 of Constantine the Great's *villa* at *Mediana* should be mentioned,<sup>15</sup> as well as a geographically close analogy of Hercules with the apples from the votive relief from Bukovo, in today's North Macedonia, on which Hercules is represented with Zeus and Dionysus.<sup>16</sup> It is also important to mention that in the territory of

---

statue is now in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale in Naples). The statue represents a nude, mature, bearded Hercules resting, leant on a club, over which is the skin of the Nemean lion is draped, holding the apples of the Hesperides behind his back, Pollitt 1986: 50–51. The statue was named "Farnese" after the cardinal Alessandro Farnese, the owner of a collection of many important classical sculptures, which were moved (along with the statue of Farnese Hercules) to Naples in 1787. Numerous Hellenistic and Roman copies of the Farnese Hercules are known, discovered in different cities like Athens, Sparta, Corinth, Rome etc., Vermeule 1975: 325–332; Bieber 1955: 36–37.

- 12 The colossal bronze gilded statue of Hercules with the apples of the Hesperides (2,41 m high), found in *Forum Boarium*, represents the hero-god as a standing nude youth of strong musculature, holding a club in his right hand and the apples of the Hesperides in his left hand, extended forward. The statue is dated into the late 1<sup>st</sup> – the early 2<sup>nd</sup> century, Palagia 1990: 54–56, fig. 2-3.
- 13 The bronze gilded statue of Hercules discovered near the Theatre of *Pompeii* had been carefully buried in a pit, with letters FCS (*Fulgur Conditum Summanium*), because it was hit by lightning. The statue, known as Hercules Mastai, also represents the god as a standing nude young man, leaning on his club with his right hand and holding the apples in his left hand, with skin of the Nemean lion placed over his left forearm, Palagia 1990: 54–55.
- 14 The bronze statuette of Hercules from Byblos (now in the British Museum) shows a young nude Hercules, who was probably leaning on a club (the attribute is missing) with his right hand, while he holds the fruit of the Hesperides in his left hand. The small bronze statuette from Frankfurt represents the hero-god in the same way, Palagia 1990: 57–58, fig. 8.
- 15 The fragmented marble statue (height 14,5 cm) of Hercules was discovered during the archaeological excavations in 1972, in room w-4 of the western porch of the peristyle, against the northern wall of the room, together with other fragmented marble and porphyry statues of different deities. The fragment of the statue represents the right hand of the hero-god, with lion skin over it, while three apples of the Hesperides can be observed in his hand. This statuary composition of high quality can be dated into the middle of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, Gavrilović 2014: 99, kar. 36 (with earlier literature), ph. 28; Васић и др. 2016: 90, no 10, fig.10.
- 16 The votive relief with the images of Hercules, Zeus and Dionysus from Bukovo (now in the National Museum of Serbia, inv. no. 2986/III, dim. 26,5 × 26,5 × 3 cm) shows all three deities standing, one beside the other:

*Bassianae*, in *Taurunum* (today's Zemun in Belgrade), inside the sanctuary from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century dedicated to Liber and Libera, together with the votive icons of Liber, Libera, Aesculapius and Hygieia with Telesphorus, a marble icon of Hercules with lion skin over him and apples of the Hesperides in his left hand, was discovered (Brunšmid 1895: 170, sl. 126; Brunšmid 1905: 53–54, sl. 105; Гарашанин 1954: 90, сл. 68; Dautova-Ruševljan 1983: 29, 87–88; Milin 2004: 265, fig. 10) (fig. 3). This find attests that Hellenistic iconography had quite a strong influence in the territory of *Bassianae*, combined with the local style of monument modelling and oriental religious traditions. Sculptural works from *Bassianae* imply that local artisans had their own view of the depicting the 11<sup>th</sup> Labour of Hercules, since the sculpture found near Ruma represents the hero-god holding four apples, while on the votive icon from *Taurunum*, he is holding only one apple. This discrepancy should be understood as an interpretation of local artisans, which differ from the usual representation of Hercules with three apples of the Hesperides, based on the traditions of the Hellenistic sculpture and also in relation to the symbolism of the number three, which designates harmony, wisdom and understanding, and also the wish of three goddesses Hera, Athena and Aphrodite, to possess the golden apples from the Garden of the Hesperides (Grimal 1996: 213). Also, the detail of the quiver on Hercules' back shouldn't be surprising, since representations of Hercules with a quiver and holding or shooting from a bow are familiar in Greek and Roman art and aren't rare (Gavrilović Vitas and Anđelković Grašar 2020: 115). The first representations of Herakles with a quiver date before 570 BC, on Attic vases, initially without an indication of the bow.<sup>17</sup> The hero-god is usually shown with a quiver on his back in scenes depicting his capture of the Kerynitian deer (4<sup>th</sup> Labour of Herakles) (Boardman et al. 1990: 48), his killing of the Stymphalian Birds (5<sup>th</sup> Labour) (Boardman et al. 1990: 55), his killing of Geryon (10<sup>th</sup> Labour) (Boardman et al. 1990: 73–76) and in scenes of his rescuing Hesione, following his return from his expedition against the Amazons (Oakley 1997: 623–629).

The finding place of the marble statue of Hercules at the tripoint of the villages of Dobrinči, Buđanovci and Sibač, is in the wider city territory of an important Roman centre *Bassianae*, located near today's village of Donji Petrovci, the site of Gradina, about 15 km east from Ruma. The settlement was probably developed in the area of a private property, *villa* of the local veteran *Bass(i)us*, and the status of *municipium* was given to it probably in the year of 124, when the emperor Hadrian visited these parts of the province. *Bassianae* acquired the status of *colonia* during the reign of Caracalla, who visited *Pannonia Inferior* in 214. Since two colonies, namely, *Sirmium* and *Bassianae*, are very close one to the other in this part of Srem, the question of the boundaries of their city territories can be posed. We believe that the border between the two colonies started at an important strategic point, across

---

Hercules is represented as a nude, mature man, holding the apples in his left hand, Zeus is in the middle, shown holding a sceptre and a *patera* with an eagle beside his legs, while Dionysus is pouring the liquid from the *patera* onto the panther beside him. A. Jovanović thinks that all three gods are represented as protectors of winegrowing, but that it is possible that they were also protectors of mines and miners here, Јовановић 2005: 520; Gavrilović 2014: 94, cat. 19 (with previous literature), ph. 14.

17 In the beginning, in both literature and art, Herakles was primarily a bowman, whose use of bow contributed to the victory in Trojan war, Boardman et al. 1990: 184.





Fig. 3 Votive icon with the representation of Hercules from the sanctuary in Taurunum (Documentation of the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb)

Сл. 3 Икона с представом Херкула из светилишта у Таурунуму (документација Археолошког музеја у Загребу)

the castel Beljin, on the bend of the river Sava, through Kupinovo (between *Sirmium* and *Bassianae*) and then between Hopovo and Krušedol, which is an eight km long part of the border, epigraphically attested on inscriptions from Hopovo, in which a citizen of Sirmium is mentioned, as well as an inscription from Krušedol where a magistrate of *municipium Bassianae* is mentioned too (Душанић 1965: 85–91; 106–107; Dušanić 1967: 67–81; Mirković 1971: 81, No. 78; Milin 2004: 253–268). It is important to mention a presumed road between the *castrum* Beljin, on the confluence of the creek Vukodraž into the Sava, and Petrovaradin (*Cusum*), which is the road *Bassianae–Cusum*, which almost completely coincides with the modern road of Irig–Petrovaradin, which passes through Fruška Gora (*Alma Mons*). During the Roman period, this road probably represented the border between city territories of *Sirmium* and *Bassianae* (Popović 1996: 140–141, fig. 12), which means that the area around the tripoint of the villages of Buđanovci, Dobrinци and Sibač belonged to the

city territory of *Bassianae* (fig. 1). On an aerial photograph made before the Second World War, it can be seen that *Bassianae*, together with the walls encompassing the reinforced towers, had streets placed at a right angle, and among other buildings, a basilica and forum can be identified (Грбић 1937: 1–7). There was a workshop for the textile fabrics, mostly from wool (*gynaecium Bassianense*) mentioned in the historical sources from the 5<sup>th</sup> century, *Notitia dignitatum occidentis*, where it is also stated that the Late Antique *Bassianae* was developed around the military *castrum* located around 4 km to the west, at the site of Solnok, identified as *Caput Bassianensae*, also mentioned in *Notitia* (Not. dign. occ. XI. 46).

As can be perceived from the marble statue of Hercules with the apples of the Hesperides from vicinity of Ruma and from the marble icon from *Taurunum*, this iconographic motif was present in the works of art made in the territory of *Bassianae*. However, the questions of locating the ateliers where different artistic monuments were produced and the centres with which these ateliers had contacts, remain open. Indirect data about the artisan ateliers in *Bassianae*, primarily stonemasons, exist in the form of a marble sculpture of Perseus holding Medusa's head from Donji Petrovci, head of the goddess Diana from Putinci and fragmented statue of Venus from Surduk (*Ritium*). Although rigidly modelled, the head of Diana (Popović 2012: 57, fig. 1) represents a solid work of a local artisan who succeeded to show the idealised facial traits of a decided goddess of a hunt. The figure of Perseus (Popović 2012: 57, fig. 2) also represents local work of high quality, although certain body parts lack proportions and the back side of the statue is crudely modelled. The fragmented statue of Venus Pudica from Surduk (Popović 2012: 57, fig. 3) represents a good copy of the Hellenistic original, with nicely modelled flowing plaits of the cloak around the figure's hips. All marble sculptures from the territory of *Bassianae* are closely linked to the themes from the Graeco-Roman mythology and in their artistic expression they represent more or less skilfully modelled copies of Hellenistic works of art. They are dated into the period of the Antonine dynasty, which is logical, considering the fact that *Bassianae* gained the status of *municipium* during the reign of Hadrian. The sculpture of Hercules with the apples of the Hesperides, discovered near Ruma, should be observed in the light of the mentioned artistic tendencies and historical circumstances which shaped the epoch in which the statue was made.

All these aspirations contributed that the iconographical scene of Hercules with the apples from the Garden of the Hesperides would continue to be popular in the Late Antique period as well, appearing on imperial coins in the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and during the first decade of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>18</sup> Early Christians viewed Hercules as a warrior against evil and saviour, which is attested by the fresco-painting in room N in the Christian catacombs of *Via Latina* in Rome, where the hero-god is represented leant on his club beside the apple tree in the Garden of the Hesperides (Stafford 2012: 203). Certain scholars suggest that the statue of Lysippos Hercules was adorning Constantine the Great's Hippodrome in Constantinople (Stirling 2014: 102), and in the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, while describing the statues with which Constantine the Great decorated the Baths of Zeuxippos, Christodoros of Koptos mentioned

---

18 On aureus of the emperor Carinus from 283–285 and bronze *foliis* of Maximinus Daza from Antioch in 310 and 311, Vermeule 1975: 329–330, no. 1–2.

the statue of Hercules (Stirling 2014: 104). The statues of Farnese Hercules were discovered in Late Antique *villae* in San Giusto,<sup>19</sup> in the *frigidarium* of the Summer Baths at *Thuburbo Maius* (Stirling 2016: 273, fig. 3) and in *villa* Chiragan (Stirling 2016: 60), which has a parallel in the Late Antique *villa* with peristyle from Constantine the Great's period at *Mediana*, in the context of the choice of the hero-god as one of the favourite gods of the Roman elite in the Late Antiquity. On the basilica built during the reign of Severi dynasty in *Leptis Magna* (reconstructed as a church in Justinian's period), the pilasters were ornamented with scenes from Hercules' Labours, and among them was also the representation of Hercules with the apples of the Hesperides (Kristensen and Stirling 2016: 23). Even until the 7<sup>th</sup> century, in the gymnasium and baths destroyed by the earthquake in the middle of the 4<sup>th</sup> century in *Salamis*, on Crete, a statue of Hercules with the apples of the Hesperides was on display, which was thrown into a water tank together with other mythological statues after the final destruction of the building in the 7<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>20</sup> The notion that the mythological message of Hercules' statues with the apples of the Hesperides in the context of a promise of a blissful and eternal afterlife, represented a threat for Christianity and Christians in the Late Antiquity, can be well observed on the example of the statuette of Hercules with apples from *Tralles* in *Asia Minor*, on which three crosses have been marked on the figurine's body (two crosses on the pectorals and one on the lower abdomen).<sup>21</sup> The cross markings or "Christening" of pagan images in the Late Antique period can be interpreted in two ways – by putting crosses on pagan statues, Christians wished to either damage them and destroy the "powers" they thought these statues had<sup>22</sup> or they wanted to baptise them and make them "useful" (reused) in the Christian world through this rite of purification.<sup>23</sup>

Yet, the statue of Hercules with the apples from the Garden of the Hesperides, discovered near Ruma, survived untouched by the Christian beliefs and testifies about the period when the most significant epoch of Antique art was evoked, representing the god as a mature man who successfully went through not only eleven Labours, but also survived them and showed his human, vulnerable side, thus being brought closer to ordinary people and their hope to attain, as he did, a happy and immortal afterlife.

*Translated by the authors*

---

19 The *villa* was renovated in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, Stirling 2005: 270.

20 The genitals of all nude male statues were damaged, which is ascribed to the Christians who were offended by the nudity of the statues, Stirling 2016: 106–107.

21 The statuette of Hercules from *Tralles* in *Asia Minor* was a copy of Lysippos weary Herakles and was bought in 1904 for the Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology at Berkeley (inv. no. 8-3429), Kristensen 2012: 32–33.

22 The Christians believed that by mutilating the faces and genitals of nude pagan images, they would actually destroy the powers and demonic spirits of deities that their images possessed. The marking of a cross, God's sign, negated all the power and strength of the pagan images, Kristensen 2012: 36; Kristensen 2013: 127.

23 The Christians had an ambivalent attitude towards pagan images in the context that the cross marking could signify a destructive act, with the goal of negating the whole symbolism of the image, but on the other side it could mean the "purification" and baptism of the image with the goal of reusing it in the Christian world. In that context, it is significant to mention the episode from the Life of Porphyry, in which the bishop succeeded in closing the important local sanctuary of Marnas in the 5<sup>th</sup> century and started to build a church in its place. Three boys fell into one of the wells, but Porphyry said that through prayer, they were found unharmed and with mysterious crosses on their bodies, which were understood as the sign of God, who saved the children. Thus, the crosses on pagan images can be interpreted, in some cases, as the signs of God's good will and testimonies that a particular pagan image was changed into a Christian image, Kristensen 2012: 37–41.

## SOURCES / ИЗВОРИ

### *Not. dign.* [occ.] [or.]

*Notitia dignitatum: pars Occidentis; pars Orientis; accedunt Notitia urbis Constantinopolitanae et Laterculi provinciarum*, O. Seeck, ed., Berlin: Bero-  
lini apud Weidmannos, 1876.

### Diodorus Siculus

Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, Vol. II: Books 2.35–4.58, C. H. Oldfa-  
ther, trans., Loeb Classical Library 303, Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univer-  
sity Press, 1935.

### Pausanias

*Description of Greece*, I–II, W. H. S. Jones, trans., London: W. Heinemann;  
New York: G. P. Putman's Sons, 1918.

## ABBREVIATIONS / СКРАЋЕНИЦЕ

*LIMC* *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*, I–VIII, Zürich–Münich,  
Artemis 1981–1997; VIII, Artemis, Zürich–Düsseldorf, 1997.

## REFERENCES / ЛИТЕРАТУРА

### Bieber, M. 1955

*The Sculpture of the Hellenistic Age*, New York: Columbia University Press.

### Birley, A. R. 2013

*Hadrian: The Restless Emperor*, New York: Routledge.

### Boardman, J., Palagia, O. and Woodford, S. 1988

Herakles, in: *LIMC* IV, 1, 2 Eros-Heracles, Zürich, 728–838.

### Boardman, J. et al. 1990

Herakles, in: *LIMC* V-1, Herakles – Kenchrias, Zürich, 1–192.

### Bosman, P. 2021

The Philosophical Tradition, in: *The Oxford Handbook of Heracles*, D.  
Ogden, ed., Oxford: University Press, 332–344.

### Brunšmid, J. 1895

Arheološke bilješke iz Dalmacije i Panonije, *Vjesnik Arheološkog muzeja u  
Zagrebu* 1.1: 148–183.

**Brunšmid, J. 1905**

Kameni spomenici Hrvatskoga narodnog muzeja u Zagrebu, *Vjesnik Arheološkog muzeja u Zagrebu* 8.1: 37–106.

**Daniels, M. 2021**

Heracles and Melqart, in: *The Oxford Handbook of Heracles*, D. Ogden, ed., Oxford: University Press, 464–488.

**Dautova-Ruševljan, V. 1983**

*Rimska kamena plastika u jugoslovenskom delu provincije Donje Panonije* (Zusammenfassung: Römische Steindenkmäler aus dem jugoslawischen Gebiet der Provinz Pannonia Inferior), Novi Sad: Vojvođanski muzej, Savez arheoloških društava Jugoslavije.

**De Grino, B. and Olmos, R. 1986**

Atlas, in: *LIMC II* 1, 2, Zürich, 2–16.

**Душанић, С. 1965**

Три епиграфска прилога (Summary: S. Dušanić, Three epigraphical notes), *Жива Анџика = Antiquité Vivante* 15.1: 85–108.

**Dušanić, S. 1967**

Bassianae and its Territory, *Archaeologia Jugoslavica* 8: 67–81.

**Гарашанин, Д. 1954**

Археолошки споменици у Београду и околини, *Годишњак Музеја прага Београда* 1: 45–98.

**Gavrilović, N. 2014**

*Kult Herkula i Merkura u Gornjoj Meziji I-IV vek n. e.*, Arheološki Institut, Posebna izdanja 56, Beograd: Arheološki institut.

**Gavrilović Vitas, N., Anđelković Grašar, J. 2020**

A message from beyond the grave: Hercules rescuing Hesione on a Stojnik funerary monument, *Сџаринар* 70: 111–125.

**Грбић, М. 1937**

Архитектура у Басијани код Доњих Петроваца у Срему, *Гласник Историјској групујува у Новом Сагу* 10: 1–7.

**Grimal, P. 1996**

*The Dictionary of Classical Mythology*, Wiley: Blackwell.

**Harrison, E. B. 1964**

Hesperides and Heroes: A Note on the Three-Figure Reliefs, *Hesperia* 33.1: 76–82.

**Haskell, F. and Penny, N. 1981**

*Taste and the Antique: The Lure of Classical Sculpture, 1500–1900*, New Haven: Yale University Press.

**Hekster, O. J. 2005**

*Propagating power: Hercules as an example for second-century emperors*, Blackwell/Classical Press of Wales.

**Jourdain-Annequin, C. 1989**

*Héraclès aux portes du soir. Mythe et histoire*, Annales littéraires de l'Université de Besançon n 402, Paris: Diffusion Les Belles Lettres.

**Kristensen, T. M. 2012**

Miraculous Bodies: Christian Viewers and the Transformation of „Pagan“ Sculpture in Late Antiquity, in: *Patrons and Viewers in Late Antiquity*, S. Birk, B. Poulsen, eds., Aarhus: University Press, 31–66.

**Kristensen, T. M. 2013**

*Making and Breaking the Gods. Christian Responses to Pagan Sculpture in Late Antiquity*, Aarhus: University Press.

**Kristensen, T. M. and Stirling, L. 2016**

The Lives and Afterlives of Greek and Roman Sculpture: From Use to Refuse, in: *The Afterlife of Greek and Roman Sculpture. Late Antique Responses and Practices*, T. M. Kristensen, L. Stirling, eds., Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1–27.

**Malherbe, A. J. 2014**

*Light from the Gentiles: Hellenistic Philosophy and Early Christianity*, C. R. Holladay, J. T. Fitzgerald, G. E. Sterling, J. W. Thompson, eds., Leiden, Boston: Brill.

**Milin, M. 2004**

Bassianae, in: *Die autonomen Städte in Noricum und Pannonien: Pannonia II*, M. Šašel-Kos, P. Scherrer, eds., *Situla* 42, National Museum of Slovenia, Ljubljana, 253–268.

**Mirković, M. 1971**

Sirmium - its History from the I Century A.D. to 582 A.D., *Sirmium* I, ed. V. Popović, Belgrade: Institute of Archaeology, 5–94.

**Oakley, J. H. 1997**

Hesione, *LIMC* VII. 1, 2, Zürich, 623-629.

**Palagia, O. 1990**

Two Statues of Hercules in the Forum Boarium in Rome, *Oxford Journal of Archaeology*, Vol. 9, iss. 1: 51–70.

**Pollitt, J. J. 1986**

*Art in the Hellenistic Age*, Cambridge: University Press.

**Popović, I. 1996**

Notes topographiques sur la region limitrophe entre la Pannonie Seconde et la Mésie Première, in: *Roman Limes on the Middle and Lower Danube*, P. Petrović, ed., Cahiers des Portes de Fer, Monographies 2, Belgrade: Archaeological Institute, 137–142.

**Popović, I. 2012**

*Sirmium – Marble Sculptures = Sirmium – Mermerne skulpture*, Blago Sirmijuma 5, Beograd: Institute of Archaeology; Sremska Mitrovica: Treasures of Sirmium.

**Rawson, B. 1970**

Pompey and Hercules, *Antichthon: Journal of the Australian Society for Classical Studies* 4: 30–37.

**Ruck, C. and Staples, D. 1994**

*The World of Classical Myth*, Durham, North Carolina: Carolina Academic Press.

**Salapata, G. 2021**

Labor XI: The Apples of the Hesperides, in: *The Oxford Handbook of Heracles*, D. Ogden, ed., Oxford: University Press, 149–164.

**Stafford, E. 2012**

*Herakles*, Taylor & Francis Group, London and New York: Routledge.

**Stirling, L. 2005**

*The Learned Collector. Mythological Statuettes and Classical Taste in Late Antique Gaul*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan.

**Stirling, L. 2014**

Collections, Canons and Context: The Afterlife of Greek Masterpieces in Late Antiquity, in: *Using Images in Late Antiquity*, S. Birk, T. M. Kristensen, B. Poulsen, eds., Oxford: Oxbow books, 96–114.

**Stirling, L. 2016**

Shifting Use of a Genre: A Comparison of Statuary Décor in Homes and Baths of the Late Roman West, in: *The Afterlife of Greek and Roman Sculpture. Late Antique Responses and Practices*, T. M. Kristensen, L. Stirling, eds., Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 265–289.

**Vermeule, C. C. 1957**

Herakles Crowning Himself: New Greek Statuary Types and Their Place in Hellenistic and Roman Art, *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, vol. 77, part 2: 283–299.

Vermeule, C. C. 1975

The Weary Herakles of Lysippos, *American Journal of Archaeology*, vol. 79,  
no. 4: 323–332.



Ивана М. ПОПОВИЋ  
Београд

Надежда М. ГАВРИЛОВИЋ ВИТАС  
Археолошки институт, Београд

## МЕРМЕРНА СТАТУА ХЕРКУЛА СА ТЕРИТОРИЈЕ БАСИЈАНА (*BASSIANAE*)

### РЕЗИМЕ

Народни музеј Србије откупио је 2017. године мермерну статуу Херкула, нађену у Срему, недалеко од Руме, на тремеђи атара села Буђановаца, Добринца и Сибача (сл. 1). У римском периоду је ова област припадала широј градској територији важног урбаног центра Басијана (*Bassianae*). Фигура је у целости очувана до колена, док доњи делови ногу недостају. На основу сачуваних атрибута закључује се да је реч о представи Херакла/Херкула који у руци држи јабуке из врта Хесперида, дакле о приказу једанаестог подвига овог хероја (сл. 2). Тај његов подвиг је релативно ретко приказиван у скулптури, у којој могу да се разликују два типа иконографије ове сцене: први, који приказује Херкула како у десној руци, забаченој иза леђа, држи јабуке из врта Хесперида, и други, са Херкулом који држи јабуке у шаци леве руке испред себе. У други тип скулптура, коме припада статуа Херакла/Херкула пронађена близу Руме, убраја се и фрагментована скулптура из собе w-4 виле Константина Великог на Медијани, али треба поменути и налаз мермерне иконе Херкула са јабуком из врта Хесперида из храма посвећеног Либеру и Либери у Земуну, који се налазио на територији Басијана (сл. 3). Басијане су добиле муниципални статус за време Хадријана, највероватније 124. године, када је цар боравио у овим крајевима. Да је у Басијанама постојала клесарска радионица, или више њих, посредно потврђују налази мермерних скулптура Персеја који носи Медузину главу, из Доњих Петроваца, глава богиње Дијане из Путинаца или фрагментована статуа Венере из Сурдука. Све те статуе представљају копије хеленистичких оригинала и настале су у периоду владавине династије Антонина, као и статуа Херакла/Херкула са јабукама из врта Хесперида из околине Руме.