A NEW INSCRIPTION FROM STOBI

In 1958 during the digging of a canal for irrigation in the Rosoman plain, workers found a monument with a relief of nymphs in the meadow\(^1\) of Alexander Dimitrov at "Topolovec". The place is about six kilometers from Stobi\(^2\).

This monument (reg. num. 541— ph. 1) is made of white marble and its dimensions are: height 0.88 m. width 0.41 m. and thickness 0.20m. It is divided into two parts: the upper part serves as a field for the relief, the lower for the inscription.

On the upper part of the monument a relief of three nymphs\(^3\) water-carriers (\(\Upsilon\delta\pi\epsilon\phi\theta\rho\omega\lambda\)) is represented. They are represented standing upright one near the other en face. All of them have jugs on the heads and they are holding them with one hand. In the other hand they have other jugs. They are dressed in long robes having vertical folds and reaching

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\(^1\) Near the place where the monument was found, stand the remains of some ancient building and fragments of Roman pottery.

\(^2\) West from Stobi and near the village of Rosoman.

\(^3\) N. Vulić has published a votive monument with a relief of the three nymphs originating from Bitola Spomenik LXXI, 1931, br. 37).
to their feet. Over the robes they are wearing short ἵτωνες also with vertical folds. The ἵτωνες are tightened in the middle with belts. The faces of the nymphs are damaged.

In the lower part of the monument there is an inscription cut out on a rough and frameless surface. It is in the upper part of the field and it reads:

ΔΙΑΔΟΥΜΕΝΟC ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΟC ΤΗΝ ΣΤΟΒΙΝ ΠΟΛΕΩC ΚΑΙ ΟΙ ΣΥΝ∆ΟΥΛΟΙ ΤΑC ΝΥΜΦΑC ΕΠΟΙΗCAN

The height of the letters varies from 2 to 2,5 cm. The inscription is given in scriptio continua and there are no ligatures.

The monument, as it can be seen, is very important because the name of Stobi is mentioned and it gives data about a significant person of the town. It was erected in the honour of the nymphs by Διαδούμενος and his collaborators. It says in the inscription that Διαδούμενος is an οικονόμος τῆς Στοβινίων πόλεως. The word σύνδουλοι speaks about the slaves, who were working on a farm belonging to Stobi, i. e. to the mayor of the town. In this case the noun σύνδουλοι speaks about the social connection of a group of people with their mayor. Διαδούμενος, probably as a liberated slave, occupied a significant post in Stobi, which he had obtained as a result of his capacities. We meet one οικονόμος in an inscription from Thessalonica4) and also in another one found on the territory of our republic, in the village of Živojno, near Bitola5). In our inscription we ought to interpret the οικονόμος as an official supervising the estates belonging to Stobi. It is equivalent to the Latin word vilicus or dispensator6). The name of the dedicantis is given only with cognomen. The name Διαδούμενος appears for the first time in inscriptions in our republic. This name is met on several epigraphical monuments from Dalmatia, Noricum and Thracia7).

In our inscription the word βωμόν (άράν) is lacking; it should stand between σύνδουλοι and τὰς νύμφας (Διαδούμενος.....καί σύνδουλοι <βωμόν εἰς> τὰς νύμφας ἐποίησαν).

The cult of the nymphs, originating from Greece, was very much widespread in Mesia, Thracia and Macedonia, where a lot of monuments have been discovered. Even temples were raised in the nymphs' honour in Thracia8). Plutarch in the biography of Alexander the Great mentions a nymphaeum in the surroundings of Negusa9).

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4) Δ. Κανατσούλη, 'Η Μακεδονική προσωπογραφία, Θεσσαλονίκη 1955, άρ. 524. „Ζώσιμος οικονόμος τῆς πέλας... ἐγείρει βωμόν μετ' ἀπόφασιν τῆς βουλῆς καί τοῦ δήμου... Θεσσαλονικέων πόλεως“.
5) Ν. Vulić, Spomenik LXXV, br. 20.
6) R. Cagnat, Cours d' épigraphie latine, Paris, p. 136—137.
7) C IL ns. 4797, 4798, 7408, 9777, etc.
8) Н. Мушмов Монетарницата на Сердика, София, 1926, стр. 18.
9) Πλούταρχος 'Η βιογραφία τού Μεγάλου 'Αλεξάνδρου, 7.
reliefs of nymphs have been found on Macedonian territory\(^{10}\). Other epigraphic monuments which are found tell us about the cult of the nymphs\(^{11}\). We meet the presentation of the nymphs as a common relief on the money of Serdica during the time of Caracalla and Gallienus\(^{12}\), as well as on a monument discovered at Stobi, on which they are represented together with Pan dancing\(^{10}\).

Concerning the date of this monument we think that it could be from the second or the third century of our era. The simplified construction of the monument, the stylistic analysis of the relief, as well as the type of the letters O, C, E\(^{14}\) confirm this date.

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