

FREE-STANDING MEDALLIONS WITH PORTRAITS IN UPPER MOESIA*

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Résumé. – Le présent article présente les monuments funéraires en forme de médaillon de la Haute Moésie. Leur forme et leur iconographie sont analysées ainsi que l'origine des donateurs et l'identité des artistes qui les ont créés. L'exemple de ces médaillons souligne les liens existants entre la Haute Moésie, la Norique et Pannonia. Il illustre également les relations avec, d'un côté, les centres artistiques du nord de l'Italie et de l'autre, la province de Dacie.

Abstract. – The subject of this research paper presents Upper Moesian funerary monuments in the form of medallions. Their form and iconography have been analysed as well as the origin of the donors and the artists who made them. The examples of these medallions highlight the connections between Upper Moesia, Noricum and Pannonia. It also demonstrates that there was a link with the artistic centres of northern Italy on the one hand and with the province of Dacia on the other.

Keywords. – free-standing medallions, portraits, Upper Moesia, Noricum, Pannonia, Dacia, Danube.

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The funerary monuments of Upper Moesia in the form of free-standing medallions with portraits of the deceased were not the object of special attention in early scientific research studies. In the first half of the 20th century N. Vulić published four medallions with photographs¹. Then, M. Veličković dedicated a shorter study to medallions from Prahovo² and in his unpublished doctoral dissertation V. Kondić, in keeping with knowledge at that time, pointed out three medallions³. Somewhat later P. Petrović published data concerning a medallion from Ravna⁴.



Map with the sites of the monuments.

In this research paper it will be first present a catalogue of Upper Moesian free-standing medallions with portraits, followed by an analysis quoting their closest similarities. In addition to these medallions one more example is known from the province of Upper Moesia showing a scene of horses in a hunt, from the Museum of Krajina in Negotin in the north-east sub-Danube part of the province. However, since it shows a different funerary theme, we will only briefly mention another medallion showing a scene of horses⁵.

1. N. VULIĆ, « Antički spomenici naše zemlje », *Spomenik* 47, 1909, p. 175, c ; N. VULIĆ, « Antički spomenici naše zemlje », *Spomenik* 71, 1931, p. 9 no. 9 and 243 no. 648 ; N. VULIĆ, « Antički spomenici naše zemlje », *Spomenik* 98, 1941-1948, p. 126, no. 277.

2. M. VELIČKOVIĆ, « Jedan specifičan tip nadgrobnog medaljona u donjem Podunavlju », *ZNM* 3, 1962, p. 94-100.

3. V. KONDIĆ, *Sepulkralni spomenici sa teritorije rimske provincije Gornje Mezije*, Doctoral dissertation has been approved by the department of Archaeology, Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade, 1965 (unpublished), p. 255-256.

4. P. PETROVIĆ, « Medaljon iz Ravne kod Knjaževca », *Glasnik* 8, 1992, p. 2, with a photograph on the title page.

5. A. JOVANOVIĆ, *Ogledi iz antičkog kulta i ikonografije*, Beograd 2007, p. 111, T. 15/5.

1. – Free-standing funerary medallion of white limestone with a small apex in the upper part. The other side of the medallion is hollow so that it has a simple outward surrounding. It is only known from earlier documentation (fig. 1) :

Location of find : Unknown.

Kept today : Mid-20th in the collection of the National Museum in Belgrade, today lost.

Dimensions : Diameter 42cm, height of apex 9 cm, thickness 18cm.

Description : In the niche there are three busts : a man with his wife to the left and their child in the middle. The woman has tied her curly hair back and is wearing a tunic with a decorative ribbon around the neck and a cloak around her shoulders. She is wearing triangular earrings and a pearl necklace. The man has short curly hair and is wearing a tunic with cloak (*sagum*), his left hand lies on his breast and holds a scroll around which he curls three fingers while his index finger is stretched out. The child's left hand is also placed on its chest.

Date : 2nd or 3rd century.

Literature : N. VULIĆ, « Antički spomenici naše zemlje », *Spomenik* 47, 1909, p. 175, c with photograph.



Figure 1 : Free-standing medallion of unknown origin, lost today (N. VULIĆ, « Antički spomenici naše zemlje », *Spomenik* 47, 1909, p. 175, c).

2. – Free-standing medallion of white marble in the shape of a seashell, with a pedestal at the bottom (fig. 2) :

Location of find : Kosmaj.

Kept today : National Museum in Belgrade, Roman collection, inv. no. 2989/3.

Dimensions : Height 68cm, width 65 cm, thickness 12cm.

Description : Inside this medallion which is in the shape of a furrowed shell there are three busts ; a man, with his wife to the left and their child in front of him. The man has a very expressive face with prominent eyes, short hair



Figure 2 : Free-standing medallion of white marble in the shape of a seashell from Kosmaj, National Museum in Belgrade (photo from the National Museum in Belgrade).

brushed back, and a beard. He is dressed in a tunic with a cloak (*sagum*) thrown over his shoulder, fastened to his left shoulder with a *fibula*, as is the child in front of him. The woman has gently wavy hair with a centre parting. Her hairstyle is in keeping with the fashion of from the Severan period. She is either Julia Domna, the wife of Septimius Severus, or Julia Mamea, Severus Alexander's mother. She has a pearl necklace around her neck and earrings made of a single pearl. She is dressed in a tunic whose folds cannot now be seen clearly. Her right-hand side is hidden by the man's shoulder.

Date : Mid to late 3rd century.

Literature : N. VULIĆ, « Antički spomenici naše zemlje », *Spomenik* 71, 1931, p. 9 no. 9 ; V. KONDIĆ, *Sepulkralni spomenici sa teritorije rimske provincije Gornje Mezije*, Doctoral dissertation has been approved by the department of Archaeology, Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade, 1965 (unpublished), p. 255.



3. – Free-standing marble medallion placed on a short pedestal with two reclining lions on each side. The medallion is surrounded with a laurel wreath and has a pinecone on top (fig. 3) :

Location of find : Prahovo (*Aquae*).

Kept today : National Museum in Belgrade, Roman collection, inv. no. 2943/3.

Dimensions : Height 113cm, width 87cm.

Description : In the centre there is a single figure, most probably a woman, whose hair is divided into carved locks and combed back from her face. She has an unusual cloak thrown over her shoulder and decorated vertically, from the centre of which two relief decorations extend on both sides.

Date : End of 3rd century.

Literature : M. VELIČKOVIĆ, *op. cit.*, p. 94-100 ; V. KONDIĆ, *op. cit.*, p. 255.

Figure 3 : Free-standing medallion on a pedestal flanked by two lions from Prahovo. National Museum in Belgrade (photo from the National Museum in Belgrade).

4. – Free-standing medallion of limestone in the shape of a seashell with a pedestal at the bottom (fig. 4) :

Location of find : Found in 1963 at the former School of Agriculture (now School of Economics), at Vučački stream, Smederevo.

Kept today : National Museum Smederevo, Roman collection, inv. no. A-256.

Dimensions : Height 70 cm, width 76 cm.

Description : The medallion in the shape of a furrowed seashell is placed on a pedestal. In the inner part six figures are shown. The relief is poorly preserved so that the portraits cannot be clearly discerned. In the upper part there are three figures : in the middle there is a man, with one woman on each side. The man is dressed in a tunic with a cloak (*sagum*) thrown over his right shoulder, fastened with a *fibula* on his left shoulder. As far as we can make out the women are dressed in *stolae*. The figure of the woman on the man's right is shielded by his body. On the woman's dress, on the man's left-hand side, two unusual cloths hang crosswise over her breasts. Under these portraits, in the foreground, there are three children. The figure of the child in the middle is very badly preserved. However, one can see that the other two children wear *toga* and have cloaks thrown over, fastened on the left-hand side. The women's hairstyles resemble types from the Severan period.

Date : Mid to late 3rd century.

Literature : L. PAVLOVIĆ, *Muzej i spomenici kulture Smedereva*, Smederevo 1972, p. 61.



Figure 4 : Free-standing medallion of limestone in the shape of a seashell from Smederevo, National Museum Smederevo.

5. – Free-standing medallion of limestone. It is hollowed on the foreside so that it has an outer frame. There is a pedestal at the base. The foreside is badly damaged and the upper part of the headstone is missing. It was probably unearthed in a building site (fig. 5) :

Location of find : Smederevo.

Kept today : National Museum Smederevo, Roman collection, inv. no. A-257.

Dimensions : Height 70 cm, width 79 cm, thickness 12 cm, height of the base 10 cm.

Description : In the niche there are seven busts, three in the first row, four in the second. The relief is badly preserved. The head of the person in the middle of the first row is missing.



Figure 5 : Free-standing medallion of limestone from Smederevo, National Museum Smederevo.

On their right there is a man, and on their left a woman. The woman's hair is in thick curls which hang down over her ears. In the lower region there are four youths. The outer left and right portraits probably show children. In the centre there are two somewhat older figures, and on one the remains of a beard can be seen. Their clothes are roughly pleated and they are wearing cloaks, fastened to their left shoulder with a *fibula*. The three dimensions of the figures and the depth of the niche itself cannot be easily made out.

Date : 3rd century.

Literature : N. VULIĆ, « Antički spomenici naše zemlje », *Spomenik* 71, 1931, p. 243 no. 648 ; V. KONDIĆ, *op. cit.*, p. 255 ; L. PAVLOVIĆ, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

6. – Marble free-standing medallion, hollowed on the front side, giving it an outer frame. At the bottom, there is a wide pedestal which continues onto a second, narrower pedestal. The monument is damaged, broken into five uneven pieces. (fig. 6) :



Location of find : Roman camp at Ravna (*Timacum Minus*). Subsequently used in a Late-Antique granary.

Kept today : Homeland Museum Knjaževac, Roman collection, inv. no. 513.

Dimensions : Height 85 cm, width 99 cm.

Description : In the niche there are seven figures, three in the upper region and four in the lower. The relief is damaged so that the figures cannot be easily distinguished. The first figure on the right in the upper row shows a male, with evident remains of a beard and moustache. He is dressed in a tunic with a

Figure 6 : Marble free-standing medallion from Ravna, Homeland Museum Knjaževac (photo Homeland Museum Knjaževac)

cloak (*sagum*) thrown over his right side and fastened on his left shoulder with a *fibula*. The figure in the middle is damaged, but is probably a young man, also in a tunic and cloak. The bust of a female on the far left is very damaged. She is wearing a pearl necklace and earrings. Her hairstyle is similar to a type from the Sever era. In the lower region there are four figures. In the centre two women are depicted with the same type of Sever period hairstyle. Both of them have bent right arms in which they hold an object, probably an apple. On their right- and left-hand sides a man wearing a tunic and cloak is standing. The face of the man to the left reveals the remains of a beard and moustache.

Date : Mid to late 3rd century.

Literature : P. PETROVIĆ, « Medaljon iz Ravne kod Knjaževca », *Glasnik* 8, 1992, p. 2 with a photograph on the title page.

7. – Free-standing marble medallion (fig. 7) :

Location of find : Peć.

Kept today : The Museum of Macedonia, Skopje (?).

Dimensions : Height 43 cm, width 26 cm, thickness 9 cm.

Description : Fragment of a funerary medallion, only its left side remains today. The left-hand part of a man's portrait can be perceived, his left ear and the outline of the lower part of his face. It is evident that he wore a tunic and cloak, fastened to his right shoulder with a *fibula*. Unfortunately the fragment is poorly preserved.

Date : 2nd or 3rd century.

Literature : N. VULIĆ, « Antički spomenici naše zemlje », *Spomenik* 98, 1941-1948, p. 126, no. 277 ; E. DOBRUNA-SALIHU, *Plastika dekorative dhe figurative e gurit ne Dardani gjate kohes romake I-II*, Prishtine 2005, p. 783-784, cat.no 265, fig. 226.



Figure 7 : Fragment of a free-standing medallion from Peć (E. DOBRUNA-SALIHU, *Plastika dekorative dhe figurative e gurit ne Dardani gjate kohes romake I-II*, Prishtine 2005, fig. 226)

Medallions were not isolated forms of monuments in Roman funereal art but were most probably fixed on altars or funeral columns. This can be concluded thanks to the evidence of existing hollows on their reverse sides or plinths, which are in fact pedestals, at the base, as well as by comparing them to northern Italian medallions and those of Noricum, integrated into the funerary whole⁶. Authors agree that the origin of medallions stem from *imago clipeata*,

6. L. TOPOSU MARINESCU, *Funerary Monuments in Dacia Superior and Dacia Porolissensis*, Oxford 1982, p. 32.

first pointed out by A. Schober *inter alia*⁷. R. Winkes adds that *imago clipeata* was connected with the cultural heritage on the one hand, and with the idea of *pompa triumphalis* on the other⁸. As early as the 1st century the presentation of the deceased in a circular setting indicated their heroics, which understandably connects *imago clipeata* as a funereal symbol with the form of a shell or triumphal wreath⁹. H. P. L'Orange considers that the idea of *clipeus* being a picture of the Cosmos (*clipeus caelestis*), as well as its comparison with the Universe, appears in literature from a very early date. Accordingly the deceased presented in the *clipeus* is raised to the stars, since *clipeus* symbolizes his apotheosis¹⁰.

A. Schober was one of the first to show that funerary medallions originated in Italy¹¹. As a matter of fact, portraits presented in a circular setting were very common on stelae or sarcophagi in Italy¹². In centres such as Altino (*Altinum*) on the northern Adriatic or Brescia in the foothills of the Alps it has been shown that the greatest number of stelae are those with *imago clipeata*¹³. These circular forms were placed on the front upper parts of the stelae, beneath the front, or on a wreath, and so on. The only question is on what sort of funerary monuments are independent, preserved medallions from northern Italy situated today. Are they on tombs, urns, stelae, columns, or are they perhaps just standing alone¹⁴ ?

The funerary medallions belonged to Italo-Roman art, but origin of their form leads to the Greek world. Portraits in the form of *imago clipeata* depicted on the round shields are known from the late Hellenistic Art¹⁵. The form of the medallion most likely developed in the Roman world under Greek influence. Later on, that form spread partially from the north of Italy and in the free form, from Noricum across the Danube to the Black Sea and back to Northern Greece.

7. A. SCHOBER, *Die Römischen Grabsteine von Noricum und Pannonien*, Wien 1923, p. 209 ff.

8. R. WINKES, *Clipeata imago. Studien zu einer Römischen Bildnisform*, Bonn 1969, p. 81-83. The idea of a medallion as a gravestone memorial stems from *imago clipeata*, which is then again closely connected with wax figures, V. KONDIĆ, *op. cit.*, p. 256.

9. L. TOPOSU MARINESCU, *op. cit.*, p. 64 ; D. SCARPELLINI, *Stele romane con imagines clipeatae in Italia*, Roma 1987, p. 89 ff.

10. H. P. L'ORANGE, *Studies on the Iconography of Cosmic Kingship in the Ancient World*, Oslo 1953, p. 90 ff. ; M. R. VASIĆ, *Nadgrobni spomenici (stele i cipusi) u rimskoj provinciji Dalmaciji od I-IV v. n. e.*, Doctoral dissertation has been approved by the department of Archaeology, Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade, 1972 (unpublished), p. 372.

11. Although D. P. DIMITROV, (*I medaglioni sepolcrali isolati nella valle del medio Struma e nella Macedonia settentrionale*, Rome 1947, p. 12) didn't consider that gravestone medallions were often found in Italy, later research indicates the opposite, A. SCHOBER, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

12. D. SCARPELLINI, *op. cit.*

13. *Ibid.*, p. 31 ff ; L. Toposu Marinescu points out their popularity in Altino (L. TOPOSU MARINESCU, *op. cit.*, p. 32).

14. D. SCARPELLINI, *op. cit.*, p. 40 ff.

15. According to Pliny (*Naturalis Historia* XXXV, 3, 12) during the Trojan war, such portraits were represented on the shields in the battlefield. For more details about origin of the medallion in Roman world, see E. WALDE, « Bemerkungen zu den Freistehenden Grabmedaillons in Noricum » in *Akti VIII. Međunarodnog kolokvija o problemima rimskog provincijalnog umjetničkog stvaralaštva*, Zagreb 2005, p. 132.

This exchange of influences result in number of free-standing medallions in the provinces of Noricum, Pannonia, Dacia, northern Macedonia and in Upper Moesia, while they cannot be found in Italy in their free-standing forms¹⁶.

Medallions were very popular in Noricum, and mainly date back to the 2nd century. The greatest number have been found in Virunum¹⁷ and Flavia Solva¹⁸. Then, five were located in Juvavum¹⁹, the same number in Ovilava²⁰, two in Lauriacum²¹, and one in Teurnia²². These medallions, oval-shaped with a portrait of the deceased in the centre, have a plinth to place them on the ground or to fasten them to the altar. They are distinguished by their large dimensions (diameter : 80-100 cm) in contrast to the Pannonian variety which are smaller (diameter : 50-70 cm)²³. Medallions from Noricum do not have developed pedestal forms. In that regard, one can distinguish one medallion from Ovilava whose pedestal is formed of two reclining lions²⁴.

Medallions found in Upper Pannonia usually date from the 3rd century, but they were not as popular in this region as in Noricum. In Carnuntum two medallions are marked²⁵, while in the district between Ad Flexum and Arrabona there is another one²⁶. In Lower Pannonia medallions date back from the 2nd or 3rd century. Two medallions have been recorded near Lake Balaton²⁷, and also in Sopiana²⁸, six from Aquincum, and one from Intercisa²⁹. From the south-eastern part of Lower Pannonia, two medallions from Sirmium have been preserved, but only one of those bears the portrait of the deceased, while the other only has a hunting scene³⁰. Then, at Prhovo near Šimanovac a medallion was found with preserved portraits of a man and woman³¹.

Studying funerary monuments from the province of Dalmatia, M. R. Vasić encountered the existence of five medallions dating from the end of the 4th century : from Brodarevo,

16. E. WALDE, « Bemerkungen zu den Freistehenden Grabmedaillons in Noricum » in *Akti VIII. Međunarodnog kolokvija o problemima rimskog provincijalnog umjetničkog stvaralaštva*, Zagreb 2005, p. 139.

17. CSIR, Österreich II/2, no. 106-121.

18. A. SCHÖBER, *op. cit.*, cat. no. 335-349.

19. CSIR, Österreich III/1, no. 66-70.

20. CSIR, Österreich III/3, no. 68-71 & 73.

21. CSIR, Österreich III/2, no. 96-97.

22. CSIR, Österreich II/6, no. 12.

23. V. DAUTOVA-RUŠEVLJAN, *Rimska kamena plastika u jugoslovenskom delu provincije Donje Meziđe*, Novi Sad 1989, p. 64.

24. CSIR, Österreich III/3, no. 71.

25. CSIR, Österreich I/3, no. 294 & 295.

26. CSIR, Ungarn II, no. 40.

27. CSIR, Ungarn VIII, no. 130 & 131.

28. CSIR, Ungarn VII, no. 81 & 82.

29. A. SCHÖBER, *op. cit.*, Aquincum : cat. no 350-353, Intercisa : cat. no. 354.

30. The medallion shaped like a shell with preserved plinth in the lower part has the portrait of three deceased people, while on the other medallion two horses are shown, following a dog hunting for rabbits, V. DAUTOVA-RUŠEVLJAN, *op. cit.*, cat. no. 19, T. 7/3 cat. no. 18, T. 7/1.

31. *Ibid.*, T. 7/2.

Tubići, Pritoka, Tegar and Šipovo³², M. R. Vasić justifiably pointed out the possibility that this type of monument originated from influences coming from Pannonia or, on the other hand, from Dacia, via Upper Moesia.

A study by Toposu Marinescu of funerary monuments from Upper Dacia and Dacia Porolissensis even notices forty-three medallions³³. They were most usually surrounded by a wreath, with a pinecone on the top, while the lower part was fixed to a pedestal. Three medallions, from Micia, Alba Julia, and Brucla are placed on a pedestal comprising two reclining lions³⁴. A number of portraits on Dacia medallions are displayed with a background in the shape of a seashell. Sometimes only the top of a shell is accented, bent towards the centre of the medallion, while sometimes the interior of the shell is visualized with chiseled grooves³⁵. These medallions are very large in dimension, and in that respect the Dacia medallions are closer to those from Noricum than to those from Pannonia.

Research to date shows that medallions were not popular in Lower Moesia or Thracia. Only two examples from Lower Moesia have been noticed, in Oecus. The first dates from the 1st century, and on that medallion in the shape of a shell one portrait is displayed³⁶. The second medallion, situated today in a museum in Sofia³⁷, is decorated with a massive wreath, showing the bust of a woman.

Medallions were common in the north-eastern part of the province of Macedonia. They date from the end of the 1st century to the beginning of the 4th. They appear around Murgasevo, Demi Hisar³⁸, three in the Vardar valley³⁹, then one in the prefecture of Kilikis⁴⁰. Seven medallions originate from the Thessalonica area⁴¹, two from Halkidiki, and two from Agios Prodromos and Geroplananos⁴². D. P. Dimitrov points out ten medallions from the Struma

32. M. R. VASIĆ, *op. cit.*, cat. no 700, 706, 702, 705 & 708.

33. L. TOPOSU MARINESCU, *op. cit.*, p. 31-33, cat. no. 1-43, T. 30-33. In Dacia there were numerous medallions on pedestals, plinths in the shape of truncated pyramids, most probably placed on an altar or column, some medallions were hung on the other side, and some were a central element at the top of Danubian stelai made of two symmetrical reclining lions and one central motif which could be different. L. Bianchi considers these medallions to be a unique category from the perspective of their morphological value, L. BIANCHI, *Le stele funerarie della Dacia*, Roma 1985, p. 12.

34. L. TOPOSU MARINESCU, *op. cit.*, cat.no 8, 19 & 25.

35. L. TOPOSU MARINESCU, *op. cit.*, form in the shape of a shell : cat.no 10-11, 14-16, 28, form in the shape of a shell with pronounced furrows : cat.no 2, 5, 25.

36. S. CONRAD, *Die Grabstelen aus Moesia Inferior. Untersuchungen zu Chronologie, Typologie und Ikonografie*, Leipzig 2004., cat.no 459, T. 139/2.

37. D. P. DIMITROV, *op. cit.*, p. 13, fig. 13.

38. D. P. DIMITROV, *op. cit.*, p.11.

39. Two medallions are from Gevgelija and one from beside Almopia, D. P. DIMITROV, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

40. CSIR Griechenland III/1, no. 119

41. CSIR Griechenland III/1, no. 58, 59, 60, 63, 64, 68, 97.

42. CSIR Griechenland III/1, no. 113 & 114

valley⁴³. There is also one from Pentapolis, one from Nomos Piraeus⁴⁴, and three from Seres⁴⁵, one from Drama and one from Thassos⁴⁶. These medallions, frequently framed with simple wreaths, are distinguished by their simple design and decoration and shallow relief forms.

In the analysis of Upper Moesia medallions, attention will be paid to the quality of the materials from which they are made, their dimensions, and then their form, typology, presented iconography, as well as their customers and the workshops in which they were made. Looking at the quality of the material of which they are made, one can see that four of the seven Upper Moesia free-standing medallions were made of marble (cat. no. 2, 3, 6, and 7). Regarding dimensions, Upper Moesian medallions are similar to those from Noricum or Dacia, in contrast with the Panonian type which are somewhat smaller. The Upper Moesia medallions are larger in dimension (68-69 cm) apart from the one which has been lost today (cat. no. 1) and whose diameter was rather smaller (42 cm). The medallion from Peć, unfortunately only preserved in fragments today, must also have been larger in dimension (cat. no. 7). Besides the Upper Moesia medallions being poorly preserved, and one being only known from literature, the medallion from Kosmaj (cat. no. 2) can be distinguished regarding the quality of its craftsmanship as well as medallions from Smederevo (cat. no. 3), and from Prahovo, although the latter can be connected with the medallion which is only known from literature (cat. no. 1).

Regarding type and form, the Upper Moesian free-standing medallions can be divided into three different groups. The first comprises simple medallions with portraits (cat. nos. 1, 5, 6, and 7), the second comprises the two medallions in the form of seashells (cat. nos. 2 and 4), while one medallion has a characteristic pedestal in the form of reclining lions (cat. no. 3).

Although the Upper Moesia medallions in the form of seashells, from Kosmaj (cat. no. 2) and Smederevo (cat. no. 4), are made of different materials – marble and limestone respectively – their similarity of craftsmanship, form and style is noticeable. The medallions with a background in the form of a seashell are characteristic of the province of Dacia, but there the seashell was inscribed into the round form of the medallion⁴⁷. The only Dacia medallion in which the edges of the shell partly extend further than the outline of the medallion is the example from Brucla⁴⁸. Also, on one medallion from Oecus in Lower Moesia, the edges of the shell partly extend further than the frame of the medallion⁴⁹. It is also the case in one such artifact from the south-eastern part of Lower Pannonia⁵⁰. L. Toposu Marinescu considers the origins of this type of background for medallion portraits and confirms Gabelman's idea that this motif originated from Altinum in the 1st century, on stelai and sarcophagi, and then spread

43. D. P. DIMITROV, *op. cit.*, p. 6-9, cat. no 1-10.

44. CSIR Griechenland III/1, no. 131.

45. CSIR Griechenland III/1, no. 123, 133, 134.

46. CSIR Griechenland III/1, no. 126 ; D. P. DIMITROV, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

47. L. TOPOSU MARINESCU, *op. cit.*, cat. no. 2, 5, 10-11, 14-16, 25, 28.

48. *Ibid.*, cat. no. 25.

49. S. CONRAD, *op. cit.*, cat. no. 459, T. 139/2.

50. V. DAUTOVA-RUŠEVLJAN, *op. cit.*, cat. no. 19, T. 7/3.

to other provinces such as Dalmatia, Noricum, Pannonia, or Gallia Narbonensis⁵¹. The seashell as a motif also appears on Upper Moesia stelae, on two from *Singidunum* and on one from *Viminacium*. On one of the stelae from Singidunum, the shell is located above the scene of a funerary feast, while on the other it is above the depicted portraits of the deceased⁵², similar to the stela from Viminacium, where the shell is depicted above the bust of a deceased married couple⁵³.

It is difficult to say precisely whether the shell-shaped Upper Moesia medallions originated in one of the workshops in Viminacium or Vincea, or whether they were imported. V. Kondić believes that the shell-shaped medallion from Kosmaj is not of domestic provenance⁵⁴. The quality of this marble memorial may indicate the possibility of its being imported. On the other hand, the importance of Upper Moesia workshops in the creation of funerary monuments, especially Viminacium, was pointed out even in early literature⁵⁵. The Smederevo medallion in the shape of a seashell and the other medallion from Smederevo Museum are distinguished by the same material used (limestone), the similar stylistic characteristics, and the style of workmanship, all of which indicates that they originate from the same workshop, even perhaps from antic Vincea⁵⁶. Again, we should bear in mind that the ruins of Viminacium were used as a quarry for building materials for the Smederevo fortress, where most of the luxurious memorials were found⁵⁷. In any event, these Upper Moesia medallions, as well as the one formerly in the possession of the National Museum Belgrade and which is now lost, came into existence due to influences from northern Italy via the western Balkan provinces of the Empire.

The medallion from Prahovo (cat. no. 3) belongs to the type which was popular in Dacia : it is framed by a wreath, on a pedestal flanked by two reclining lions, and with a pinecone on top. There, in Dacia, three such examples have been confirmed⁵⁸. It seems that medallions on pedestals with reclining lions were not common in western provinces of the

51. L. TOPOȘU MARINESCU, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

52. M. MIRKOVIĆ in M. MIRKOVIĆ, S. DUŠANIĆ, *Inscriptions de la Mésie Supérieure I : Singidunum et le nord-ouest de la province*, Beograd 1976, cat. no. 34 & 53.

53. M. MIRKOVIĆ, « Neue Inschriften aus Viminacium », *Viminacium* 13-14, 2003, p. 104, cat. no. 15.

54. V. KONDIĆ, *op. cit.*, p. 256.

55. *Ibid.*, p. 268 ff ; S. PILIPOVIĆ, *Mit i ljubav. Predstave na nadgrobnim spomenicima rimske provincije Gornje Mezije*, Beograd 2007, p. 102 ff.

56. There are numerous gravestone memorials from the Smederevo area, among which there are three stelae of united architectonic construction, M. MIRKOVIĆ, *Inscriptions de la Mésie Supérieure II : Viminacium et Margum*, Beograd 1986, no. 179 & 190 ; *Stela with a relief of the Return of Alcestis*, Plipović 2007, cat. no. 8, with an overview of earlier literature ; For other funerary memorials from this location see M. MIRKOVIĆ, *Inscriptions de la Mésie Supérieure II...*, nos. 3-4, 9, 17, 21, 26-27, 29-30, 45, 64, 57-58, 60, 63, 75, 82, 93, 95, 97, 103, 108, 115, 122, 124, 151-152, 162, 165, 174, 177-188, 191, 193, 204, 206, 238, 248, 255, 288, and 324.

57. A large number of funerary stelae were destroyed during the Middle Ages when Viminacium served as a quarry for building materials, V. KONDIĆ, *op. cit.*, p. 268.

58. L. TOPOȘU MARINESCU, *op. cit.*, cat. no. 8, 19 & 25.

Empire. From Ovilava in Noricum there is only one such example⁵⁹. Medallions flanked by Genii have been identified in northern Pannonia, in Carnuntum⁶⁰ and in lower Pannonia, in Aquincum⁶¹. Studying the medallion from Prahovo, M. Veličković concluded that it originated from a workshop in antic Aquae, but according to borrowed examples in keeping with the then current understanding of style and approach to craftsmanship⁶². He thought that this was something younger than the Dacia example, which is generally dated back to the IIIrd century, but could possibly be dated to the period after the Aurelian evacuation of Dacia in 270, in that way connecting it with the establishment of the new province of *Dacia Ripensis*, in whose territory the town of *Aquae* was discovered. Considering the stylistic characteristics, Veličković stated that the Prahovo medallion presented the last variant in the development of this kind of memorial⁶³. Comparing it with the Dacia examples he quoted the following differences⁶⁴ the base of the Prahovo medallion was significantly lower than the Dacia example, and is in that respect closer to medallions from Brucla⁶⁵; the pine cone on the Prahovo medallion was conical while that on the Dacia example is bi-conical; the bust of the deceased on the Prahovo medallion had been carried out in high relief whereas the Dacia reliefs were generally shallow. The most significant difference is seen in dress. The deceased on the Dacia medallions were usually shown in Roman attire (*tunica, sagum*), while the clothing on the Prahovo medallion are most probably of domestic, indigenous origin, perhaps from Dacia⁶⁶. Besides, the above valid differences in sources for the origin of the Prahovo medallion should in any event be sought in Dacia, without rejecting the possibility of imports.

Although there are no precise data about who actually commissioned the Upper Moesia medallions, it can be concluded that they belonged to prosperous families. This is indicated more by the iconography and style than the quality of material – four of the seven free-standing medallions are made of marble (cat. nos. 2, 3, 6 and 7). Analysis of attire, especially the appearance of jewelry on the deceased portraits, indicates wealthy individuals. The example of the woman depicted on the lost medallion showed an unusual tunic with decorative ribbon around the neck and a cloak over her shoulder (cat. no. 1). On the shell-shaped medallion from Smederevo, two unusual cloths hang crosswise over her breasts (cat. no. 4). On three medallions the women wear a pearl necklace around their necks and triangular or pearl earrings (cat. no. 1, 2 & 6), jewelry worn by prosperous ladies. Two women on the Ravna

59. CSIR, Österreich III/3, no. 71.

60. CSIR, Österreich I/3, no. 295.

61. A. SCHÖBER, *op. cit.*, no. 355.

62. M. VELIČKOVIĆ, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

63. *Ibid.*, p. 99.

64. *Ibid.*, p. 95.

65. L. TOPOȘU MARINESCU, *op. cit.*, cat. no. 25.

66. The Dacia clothing on the medallion from Tropeum Triani is reminiscent of the Prahovo example, M. VELIČKOVIĆ, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

medallion hold an apple in their hands, a common attribute on funerary monuments⁶⁷. The clothing shown also points towards the issue of Romanization of the local population. The men are most frequently dressed in tunics with a cloak (*sagum*) thrown over their right shoulder, fastened to their left shoulder with a *fibula* (cat. no. 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7). One could even say that most of the medallions are actually military memorials, except for the Prahovo medallion (cat. no. 3) on which it is the woman who wears the unusual tunic that probably has a local origin.

One cannot say much about the value of the portraits shown on the Upper Moesia free-standing medallions. The reason lies in the fact that most are very badly preserved (cat. no. 3, 4, 5), or are in fragments (cat. no. 7), or are only known from literature (cat. no. 1). In contrast, the portraits on the Kosmaj and Ravna medallions (cat. no. 2 and 6) are well preserved and depict individualized people, using realistic means. This can especially be noticed in the figure of the man in the first row of the Kosmaj medallion, and then the subject of the Ravna example. Studying five sub-Danube free-standing medallions known at the time, S. Ferri noticed two types of portrait characteristics, the first of realistically depicted portraits, the other of shallow faces with large eyes⁶⁸. The Upper Moesia medallions can be said to accentuate three dimensional forms and expertly-modeled plastic work with characteristic details such as the women's individual hairstyles and their jewelry. The Prahovo medallion provides a special example of the shallow form (cat. no. 3). S. Ferri noticed that children in portraits are usually depicted as miniaturized men but with the same decisiveness and maturity as adults, with the characteristics of their portrayed fathers, imitating the excessive realistic tendency of the Greeks, who for centuries had portrayed children as miniature adults. Unfortunately, in Upper Moesia children's portraits on medallions are not well preserved, so it is difficult to comment further on them, except for the fact that this method of child portrayal was present, as the Ravna medallion exemplifies best (cat. no. 6).

The question of where these medallions were made is a special and very important question : were they produced in Upper Moesia workshops or were they imported ? The Prahovo medallion was very probably an import from Dacia. The Kosmaj medallion was also probably an import, judging by the very high quality of its workmanship. If this is not imported, this memorial could be classified as one of the best quality memorials created in this part of the province. Bearing in mind the similarity of craftsmanship and quality of materials used, the Smederevo medallion (cat. no. 4 & 5) could be presumed to have its origins in the same workshop, perhaps Upper Moesia. The medallion from Peć is only preserved as a fragment, while the medallion of unknown origin is known only from literature, so it is difficult to speak about their possible designer.

Studying the Upper Moesia medallions depicting portraits of the deceased necessarily raises the question of where and how the deceased are portrayed on stelae in this province.

67. Female attributes beside apples were grapes, a basket of fruit, flowers, birds, a rabbit, a spindle, a mirror etc. ; V. DAUTOVA-RUŠEVLJAN, *op. cit.*, p. 53 (comp. L. TOPOSU MARINESCU, *op. cit.*, p. 57).

68. S. FERRI, *Arte romana sul Danubio. Considerazioni sullo sviluppo sulle derivazioni e sui caratteri dell'arte provinciale romana*, Milano 1933, p. 327 ff.

It is important to emphasize that the portraits of the deceased are shown very frequently, not in the form of medallions but in rectangular or semicircular settings, sometimes pentagonal or triangular in form. Most portraits are displayed on stelae in the Ravna and Timok areas, in a semicircular setting⁶⁹. Then, they are also found in the Singidunum region⁷⁰, Scupi⁷¹, in Viminacium⁷², Kosmaj⁷³, and individual examples can be seen in the Morava and Nišava valleys⁷⁴, in Novi Pazar⁷⁵, and Peć⁷⁶. It is interesting that free-standing medallions with portraits of the deceased were known in the province of Upper Moesia, but cannot be said to have been generally accepted in the artistic decoration of stelae in this province.

Finally, this research can be said to show that free-standing medallions were an accepted form of memorial as well in the province of Upper Moesia, especially in its north-eastern part. Most frequently they were in the possession of wealthy, Romanized families. They arose as the result of the widening influence coming from northern Italy, via Noricum or south Pannonia. The exception is the Prahovo medallion which has its origins in influences coming from Dacia, or may even have been imported into the province. For the medallion from Peć it is difficult to say anything definite since only a fragment of it is preserved.

The transfer of the artistic influences probably went in Upper Moesia across the Danube, either through the western provinces of the Empire or, as in the case of the medallion from Prahovo, from Dacia. Free-standing medallions are good examples of the development of a late Hellenistic artistic form which first appeared in a certain form in northern Italy. This form developed more in Noricum and was widely accepted in the area of Pannonia, Dacia, northern Macedonia and later on found its place in the funerary art of the Upper Moesia.

69. P. PETROVIĆ, *Inscriptions de la Mésie Supérieure III/2 : Timacum Minus et la vallée du Timok*, Beograd 1995, nos. 24, 26, 28, 34-35, 44-45, 56-57, 67, 69, 71, 73, 89, 91, 96 (no 42 in a rectangular field in combination with a other scene).

70. M. MIRKOVIĆ in M. MIRKOVIĆ, S. DUŠANIĆ, *Inscriptions de la Mésie Supérieure I...*, nos. 35, 45, 62 (in a rectangular field) and nos. 28, 38, 41 52, 58 (semicircular field). M. MIRKOVIĆ, « Neue Inschriften aus Viminacium », *Viminacium* 13-14, 2003, p. 97-107, cat. no. 15 (rectangular).

71. B. DRAGOJEVIĆ-JOSIFOVSKA, *Inscriptions de la Mésie Supérieure VI : Scupi et la region de Kumanovo*, Beograd 1982, no. 109, 125, 130, 158, 171 (in a semicircular field), nos. 34, 110, 139, 179 (in a pentagonal field) and no. 234 (in a triangular field).

72. M. MIRKOVIĆ, *Inscriptions de la Mésie Supérieure II...*, nos. 132 & 190 (in a rectangular field) and nos. 188 & 311 (now damaged, but the shape of the field can be seen).

73. S. DUŠANIĆ in M. MIRKOVIĆ, S. DUŠANIĆ, *Inscriptions de la Mésie Supérieure I...*, nos. 119, 122, 125.

74. P. PETROVIĆ, *Inscriptions de la Mésie Supérieure IV : Naissus-Remesiana-Horreum-Margi*, Beograd 1979, nos. 81 & 99 (in semicircular field).

75. N. VULIĆ, « Antički spomenici naše zemlje », *Spomenik* 98, 1941-1948, p. 120, no. 264.

76. *Ibid.*, p. 125, no. 274.

ABBREVIATIONS :

CSIR : *Corpus Signorum Imperii Romani. Corpus der Skulpturen der Römischen Welt.*

CSIR, Griechenland III/1 : M. LAGOIANNI-GEORGAKARAKOS, *Die Grabdenkmäler mit Porträts aus Makedonien*, CSIR, Griechenland, band III/1, Akademie von Athen 1998.

CSIR, Österreich I/3 : M. L. KRÜGER, *Die Reliefs des Stadtgebietes von Carnuntum, I. Teil : Die Figürlichen Reliefs*, CSIR, Österreich, band I/3, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Wien 1970.

CSIR, Österreich II/2 : G. PICCOTTINI, *Die Rundmedaillons und Nischenporträts des Stadtgebietes von Virunum*, CSIR, Österreich, band II/2, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Wien 1972.

CSIR, Österreich II/6 : F. GLASER, *Die Skulpturen des Stadtgebietes von Teurnia*, CSIR, Österreich, band II/6, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Wien 1997.

CSIR, Österreich III/1 : N. HEGER, *Die Skulpturen des Stadtgebietes von Iuvavum*, CSIR, Österreich, band III/1, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Wien 1975.

CSIR, Österreich III/2 : L. ECKHART, *Die Skulpturen des Stadtgebietes von Lauriacum*, CSIR, Österreich, band III/2, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Wien 1976.

CSIR, Österreich III/3 : L. ECKHART, *Die Skulpturen des Stadtgebietes von Ovilava*, CSIR, Österreich, band III/3, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Wien 1981.

CSIR, Ungarn II : Z. FARKAS, D. GABLER, *Die Skulpturen des Stadtgebietes von Scarbantia und der Limesstrecke Ad Flexum-Arrabona*, CSIR, Ungarn, band II, Ungarische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Budapest 1994.

CSIR, Ungarn VII A. : SZ. BURGER, *Die Skulpturen des Stadtgebietes von Sopiana und des Gebietes Zwischen der Drau und der Limesstrecke Lussonium-Altinum*, CSIR, Ungarn, band VII, Ungarische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Budapest 1991.

CSIR, Ungarn VIII : C. ERTEL, S. PALÁGYI, F. REDÓ, *Die Skulpturen des Stadtgebietes von Salla und Mogetiana sowie des Balaton (Plattensee) Oberlandes in den Komitaten Zala und Veszprém*, CSIR, Ungarn, band VIII, Ungarische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Budapest 1999. Ljubljana 1963, 1978, 1986.

ZNM : *Zbornik radova Narodnog muzeja u Beogradu*, Beograd.

Spomenik : *Spomenik Srpske akademije nauka i umetnosti*, Beograd.

Viminacium : *Zbornik radova Narodnog muzeja u Požarevcu*, Požarevac.