
The Roman temple – heroon of Gramadje, Barovo – Demir Kapija *Rimski tempelj – heroon iz Gramadja, Barovo – Demir Kapija*

Viktor Lilchikj Adamsen

Ss. Cyril and Methodius University, Faculty of Philosophy, North Macedonia
viktorlilcik@gmail.com

Antonio Jakimovski

Ss. Cyril and Methodius University, Faculty of Philosophy, North Macedonia
antonio@fzf.ukim.edu.mk

Marjan Jovanov

Ss. Cyril and Methodius University, Faculty of Philosophy, North Macedonia
marjan@fzf.ukim.edu.mk

Abstract

The article presents the results of the archaeological research of a temple – heroon from the Roman period in Barovo (Demir Kapija, Northern Macedonia). Based on the research carried out, and the architectural elements found, we have managed to create an ideal reconstruction of the temple with the roof, or rather, to get an impression of how the temple probably looked before its destruction. Within the framework of the Erasmus+ AD HOC project (Accessible and Digitised Cultural Heritage for Persons with Disabilities), a three-dimensional digital reconstruction, a visual restoration and a 3D model of the temple were created. This model will be used in a variety of educational activities for audiences with all types of disabilities.

Key words: temple – heroon, Roman period, 3D digital reconstruction

Izveček

Članek predstavlja rezultate arheološke raziskave templja – heroona iz rimskega obdobja v Barovu (Demir Kapija, Severna Makedonija). Na podlagi opravljenih raziskav in najdenih arhitekturnih elementov nam je uspelo ustvariti idealno rekonstrukcijo templja s streho, oziroma pridobiti vpogled, kako je tempelj verjetno izgledal pred uničenjem. V okviru projekta Erasmus+ AD HOC (Dostopna in digitalizirana kulturna dediščina za osebe s posebnimi potrebami) je bila izdelana tridimenzionalna digitalna rekonstrukcija, vizualna restavracija in 3D model templja. Ta model se bo uporabljal v različnih izobraževalnih dejavnostih za občinstvo z vsemi vrstami posebnih potreb.

Ključne besede: tempelj-heroon, rimsko obdobje, 3D digitalna rekonstrukcija

Introduction

The village of Barovo is located in the valley of the gold-bearing river Boshava, which rises from the mountain Kozhuv. It is located 17 km from the town of Negotino and 12 km southwest of Demir Kapija. Along the river valley there are several ancient settlements near the villages of Gorna Boshava, Kula, Konopishte, Gradishte, Koprishnica and others.

Two archaeological sites were discovered in the immediate vicinity of Barovo – Ridot, an ancient village from the early Roman period of the 1st – 2nd century, and Gramadje, a temple-heroon with a necropolis (Лилчиќ 2001, 319). The second one is located 1 km south of the village.

The first information about discoveries of stone remains of a temple was mentioned by Vojislav Radovanović (Радовановић 1924, 318) and later by Nikola Vulić (Вулић 1933, 101–103; ibid 1941–48, 54). Years later, Viktor Lilchikj

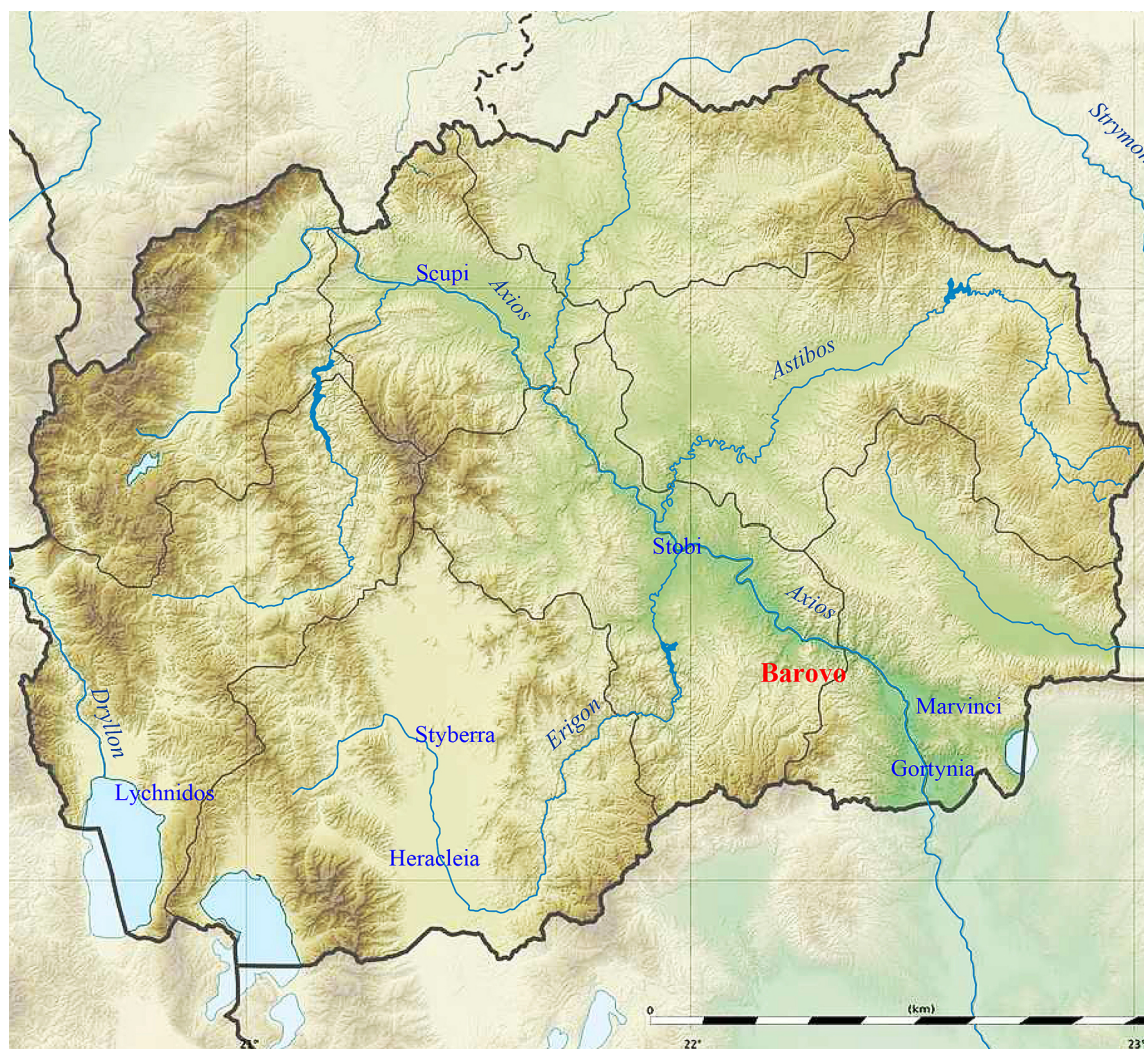


Figure 1: Geographical location of the archaeological site of Gramadje – Barovo.

conducted a survey of the site (Лилчиќ 1986; *ibid* 1987, 135–148; Lilčić 1988). He assumed the location of the heroon, illustrated the present stone architectural remains of the temple, and proposed a reconstruction of the roof area of the building. Documented were approximately twenty stone architectural elements - profiled and decorated stone slabs with portraits, animal figures, lion heads on the vertical zones of the gesims/gaion, architraves, cornices, parts of marble statues and others (Лилчиќ 1987, 135–148; *ibid* 2001, 319–338).

However, he was unable to locate the architecture itself. Its remains were scattered over a large area around Gramadje hill and were particularly badly preserved. Decades ago, they had been pulled out of the field with metal ropes by workers of the local agricultural cooperative to clear the ground for deep ploughing. According to information from local residents, the largest blocks were even blown up with explosives.

Archaeological excavations in 2012 and 2016

The ancient site considered one of the most important cultural heritage sites in the Tikvesh



Figure 2: Uncovering the base of the temple-heroon with architectural elements and marble sculptures (archaeological campaign 2012; photo A. Jakimovski).



Figure 3: Surface findings of architectural elements and stone sculptures (archaeological campaign 2012; photo V. Lilchikj Adamsen).

region due to its architectural remains was archaeologically explored and excavated in 2012 to determine the exact location of the architecture and discover additional architectural elements that would allow for reconstruction. Several test trenches were excavated on the larger area, where the architectural elements were scattered. On the western plateau of the hill called Gramadje, three control trenches of 10 m in length did not produce any results.

Two trenches were excavated on the hill where the location of the architecture was assumed. In both of them were discovered foundations of architecture that was interpreted as being secular. The foundations and crepidoma of the heroon as well as several stone architectural elements were discovered in 2012 at a third location.

Most of the architectural elements were located towards the west from the foundations – several of them were discovered not far from the place of their fall. For the reconstruction were of special importance fragments of the ceiling cassette with a representation of the claws of an eagle or a griffin, a part of a cornice with a denticula and a sima with reliefs of lion heads that served as spouts for rainwater from the roof. Further, was discovered massive frontal acroteria with acanthus leaf decoration superimposed with a towering central palmette, a decoration unknown until now in Northern Macedonia.

Research continued in 2016 and the goal was to complete the excavations of the interior of the temple. The discovered architectural elements and the foundation enabled the reconstruction of the temple with its roof.

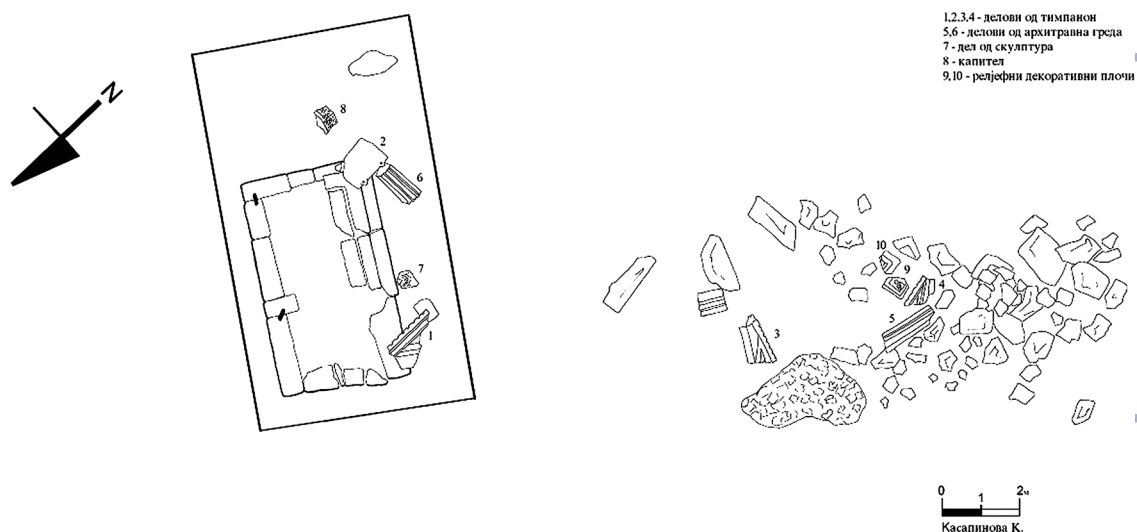


Figure 4: The base of the temple-heroon with architectural elements (archaeological campaign 2012, M. 1: 50; archive of the UKIM).

Architecture and architectural elements

Tympanum of the temple: Four corner elements originating from the front and back of the temple have been preserved. The tympanum is composed of a horizontal wreath without a sima,

which is consisted of five continuous bands and the total height of the entire zone is 0.19 m. The lowest is the toothed zone (denticula) with depressions (imersecciones) that have an oblique profile. Followed by a narrow cymatium over

which a gaison is placed – it has a flat front side and is rounded at the bottom. In the recessed zone of the gaison, at the corners between the pediment and the side façade, we see small ap-



ple-shaped rosettes, of which only one was preserved. Above the gaison there is a kyma with a rounded profile, and another rectangular profiled zone (plinth).



Figure 5: Monumental parts of the tympanum in situ (archaeological campaign 2012; photo V. Lilchikj Adamsen).

All four lower corners of the tympanums are more or less preserved. They are covered by a simplified crown profile at an angle of 26 degrees. The central elements, most probably decorated, were not discovered. Oblique tympanum crowns with the raking sima. They framed the upper, gable side of the tympanum. Small fragments of the very lower parts were preserved. Their profile is similar to that of the horizontal parts of the wreath.



Figure 6: Fragment of an architrave with a frieze from the front (archaeological campaign 2012; photo A. Jakimovski).

Architrave with frieze: Recognised was a single left corner element that was with the usual

epistyle profile divided into five horizontal, banded zones with a total height is 0.26 m. The lower three zones are flat and with alternating graded outcrops and are followed by a cymatium-cornice with a rounded profile and a flat plinth.

The frieze zone is located above the architrave and it consists of three basic surfaces and has a height of 0.18 m. A flat belt below, retracted by 20 mm inwards, followed by a vertical flat belt with an oblique profile towards the outside and a flat belt projecting above in line with the plinth of the architrave. Along the inner sides, at the height of the frieze, the epistyle beam was gradually cut by about 0.12 m. This incision served for the support mounting of the horizontal plates from the ceiling above the front portico of the temple. The same profiling as on the front side continues on the left side of the block. On the upper side towards the ends, the block has two rectangular holes, for metal joints with the extended stone elements.

Cornice: Eight fragments of the cornice above the sidewalls were preserved. Four of them were incorporated into the aforementioned corner cusped blocks. The profile of the cornice consists of the following zones: denticula, narrow cymatium, then projecting, internally hollowed gaison, rounded cymatium, straight sima

and a plinth. In the sima on all four-corner dentils we see sculptured lions' heads. Three heads were preserved, one of which because it was broken off, was transferred to the National Museum of Negotino. The tops of the cornice blocks have rectangular holes for metal joints. The average height of the profiled zone of the wreath is 0.297 m., which is exactly one Roman foot (pes).

Ceiling panels: five parts of these plates were discovered. They allow the reconstruction of the size of the roof. Namely, the porch would be covered with five such plates and their total area measured 3.10 x 1.20 m. or 10.5 x 3 feet. Only parts of five plates gave been preserved.



Figure 7: Part of the cornice above the sidewalls (archaeological campaign 2012; photo A. Jakimovski).



Figure 8: Fragments of ceiling plates with portraits (archaeological campaign 2012; V. Lilchikj Adamsen).



Figure 9: Fragment of the torso of a male marble sculpture (archaeological campaign 2012; photo A. Jakimovski).

On the middle, two are portraits of a man and a woman. The woman is young, dressed in a robe with folds. She has neatly combed hair, parted in the middle and gathered at the back. This hairstyle is common on early Roman tombstones, dated mainly from the 2nd – 3rd century (Вулић 1941-1948, 34, no. 82, 112, no. 143, 375, 177, no. 373, 179, no. 333; Соколовска 1987, 50–51, no. 35–38). The man has a slightly longer and wider neck, but part of the head was broken off. On the third plate, we see a dolphin. Perhaps it is the plate noted by Vulić, writing of “a fish on the left and above it a leaf” (Вулић 1933, 101). On the fourth plate, we see an ara – altar.

In the ceiling cassettes, we see portraits of ordinary people, according to which we could conclude that it is a posthumous object – a mausoleum. It seems that the custom of building mausoleums for the wealthiest families or individuals in Macedonia became popular during the Roman imperial period since more and more such buildings are being discovered.

Columns and capitals: Although columns were mentioned by Radovanović (Радовановић 1924, 318) only a single capitel was discovered in 2012.

Stylobate: During the excavations were discovered 15 stone elements forming the substructure of the temple.

Fragments of marble statues: Discovered were an upper part of a male torso (Bitrakova Grozdanova and Nikoloska 2022, no. 92, 81), and four smaller fragments. Three of them are the lower parts of the body, covered by a folded dress, while the fourth represents a muscle – a triceps. The torso of the sculpture was discovered on the outer side of the southern wall of the architecture.

Conclusion

The discovered architecture was most probably erected by or for a prominent citizen in the 2nd or 3rd century AD. It is the first excavated example of such a building that contains almost all the architectural elements enabling a complete reconstruction. Its importance is accentuated by the representative architecture and the fragmented marble statue of a man discovered most likely belonging to the owner. It was the positioning of statues of individuals and not deities in such a prominent place in the temple that points to a posthumous character of the building or, in our terms, a heroon.



Figure 10: 3D digital reconstruction and restoration of the temple-heroon in Gramadje – Barovo (produced by K. Denkovski).

During the Erasmus+ AD HOC project (Accessible and Digitised Cultural Heritage for persons with disabilities) a complete three-dimensional digital reconstruction, visual restoration and 3D model of the temple was made.

Summary

The temple-heroon in Gramadje (Barovo) was erected on a gentle slope with a wide panoramic view towards the Barovo plateau in the south. It was a rectangular building with a northwest-southwest orientation and 5.40 to 3.50 meters in size.

The form of the architecture - its characteristic functional and decorative details, enable us to reconstruct the purpose as well as the dating of the building. Not only the architecture but mostly the preserved fragments of sculpture and the portraits from the plates in the ceiling suggest a dating of the temple-heroon from Barovo into the second half of the 2nd and early 3rd century.

In the framework of the Erasmus+ AD HOC project (Accessible and Digitised Cultural Heritage for persons with disabilities) a complete three-dimensional digital reconstruction, visual restoration and 3D model of the temple was created. This model will be used in a variety of educational activities for persons with all kinds of disabilities, especially for the children with visual impairments from the state school for blind DUCOR “Dimitar Vlahov” from Skopje.

Povzetek

Tempelj-heroon (mavzolej) v Gramadju (Barovo) je bil zgrajen na položnem pobočju s širokim panoramskim razgledom proti Barovski planoti na jugu. Gre za pravokotno stavbo z orientacijo severozahod-jugozahod velikosti 5,40 x 3,50 metrov.

Oblika arhitekture - njeni značilni funkcionalni in dekorativni detajli nam omogočajo rekonstrukcijo namembnosti in datacije objekta. Ne samo arhitektura, predvsem ohranjeni fragmenti kiparstva in portreti s plošč v stropu nakazujejo na datacijo templja-heroona iz Barova v drugo polovico 2. in začetek 3. stoletja.

V okviru projekta Erasmus+ AD HOC (Dostopna in digitalizirana kulturna dediščina za osebe s posebnimi potrebami) je bila narejena tridimenzionalna digitalna rekonstrukcija, vizualna restavracija in 3D model templja. Ta model se bo uporabljal v različnih izobraževalnih dejavnostih za osebe z vsemi vrstami oviranosti, še posebej za otroke z motnjami vida iz šole za slepe DUCOR “Dimitar Vlahov” iz Skopja.

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