

Globular Flute

Archaeological site Mramor near Cashka

*Kept in the Womb of the Earth
for six thousand years
the echo of the past
rumbles again*

The archaeological site Mramor near the village Cashka, is located fifteen kilometers north from Veles. According to few archaeological excavations and material finds on this site a Neolithic settlement is confirmed. The life of the settlement is determined, according to the two horizons, in the Middle and late Neolithic period; or more precisely according to archaeological finds and objects this site belongs to the Anzabegovo-Vrsnik cultural group or more accurately, from the second to the fourth phase.

The settlement was raised on a flat terrace framed by Topolka and Mala Reka Rivers. The main conditions for peaceful and durable life of the settlement were not only the fertile soil, abundance of water, pastures and wooded areas, but also the mild climate. During that long standing existence of the settlement, rich material (ceramics, bone tools, stone tools e.t.c.) and spiritual culture (figurines, sacred and ritual vessels e.t.c.) was created and produced. Only small areas of the settlement are excavated but according to the collected results, data and finds it is possible to penetrate in the nucleus of all parts of the Neolithic life. For a moment, these discoveries allow us to perceive the essence of the Neolithic man, not only his everyday life but also to protrude into the deepest and primordial segments of the spiritual life.¹

¹ Т.Јовчевска, Куќата од Хоризонт I во неолитската населба Мрамор кај Чашка, Macedoniae Acta Archaeologica 13, Skopje 1993, 31-41; Eadem, Мрамор-Чашка неолитска населба, Arheološki Pregled 29 (1988), Ljubljana 1990, 56-58.

The subject of our interest is a small clay artifact discovered during the archaeological excavations in that area of the site, which was cultivated by mechanical tools. The object is made of refined reddish clay and on some places darker color as a result of fire is noticed. The find is completely preserved and it has irregular round or globular form with diameter of 4,7 centimeters and hollow interior. Surface of the find is without decorative elements. This find has three holes with different diameters (0,4-0,6 centimeters) placed as apexes of a triangle. The apex positioned at the top of the imaginative triangle is wider than the other two and in that part the find is partially leveled. The other holes are identical. (fig. 1, 2). Application of the find had been unknown but doubts that the find is a musical instrument have been confirmed. Namely, completed expertise has shown that this archaeological find is a globular flute.²

As we already presented, the archaeological site belongs, chronologically and culturally, to the Anzabegovo-Vrsnik Culture or more precisely to the so-called IInd-IVth phase of this Culture.³ We shall make comparative analysis of this group with other cultural groups from the Balkan Peninsula, which overlapped with it in order to make accurate and precise chronological determination.

Anzabegovo-Vrsnik II-IV phase in many similarities and aspects is analogous to Starcevo Culture in its IIa-IIIrd phase. The radiocarbon C₁₄ analysis has shown that Starcevo IIa-III phase is from 5000 BC (5050 year BC +/- 100 years) to 4500 BC (4950 year BC +/- 65 years). Anzabegovo-Vrsnik IVth phase follows Vinca Culture in its early phase of Vinca-Tordos I or Vinca A which existed after 4000 BC (4270 BC +/- 50 years).

²The ocarina was discovered and named in the Western world by Guispe Luigi Donati in 1853. It is globular flute with additional opening for a mouth. The word derives from the Italian word "oca"- goose, and ocarina means small goose. Ceramic ocarina is 12 000 years old. The oldest examples-small instruments which had form of birds or other animals are made of terracotta were known in India 6000 years ago.(Taken from: <http://www.sifflets-en-terre-cuite.org/html/Def/ocarina.html>; <http://www.congbirdocarina.com/history2.html>)

³M. Gimbutas, Neolithic Macedonia I, Los Angeles 1976.

Middle Neolithic phase of Anzabegovo-Vrsnik IVth culture existed for a long period and with its end it penetrated into the beginning of the late Neolithic period.⁴

Anzabegovo-Vrsnik shows synchronism with the Karanovo Culture or its IInd-IVth phase which is chronologically determined between 5700-5300 BC⁵, and with the Sesklo Culture dated between 5300 and 4400 BC.⁶

Therefore, the Neolithic settlement at the site Mramor near Chaska is dated in wider chronological frames from 5000 BC to 4000 BC. The fact that globular flute was found outside archaeological context makes difficulties in precise chronology of the find. Yet, chronology of the settlement is considered as chronology of the artifact. Traces of fire visible on some part of the globular flute imply that it belongs to the older archaeological horizon of cultural development. Namely, archaeological excavations have confirmed that this settlement suffered by fire. The absence of decorative elements is another plausible element to the suggested chronology because in the later phases of the Neolithic period vessels for specific or cult purposes are, by definition, decorated.

The following text deals with the attempt of appropriate analysis of the globular flute compared with similar finds from the archaeological sites. We divided these archaeological sites in two groups. In the first group are archaeological sites that have chronological and cultural similarities, and another

⁴N. Tasić, *Hronologija starčevačke kulture* (ungedruckte Dissertation, Beograd 1977); M. Garašanin, *Centralno-balkanska zona, Praistorija Jugoslavenskih zemalja II* Sarajevo 1979, 84-106, 141-143, 634, Idem, *Der späte balkanisch-analolische Komplex ein Rückblick nach vier Jahrzehnten*, *Starinar* n.s. XLVII, Beograd 1997, 30; Idem, *Kulturströmungen im Neolithikum des Südlichen Balkanraumes*, *Prähistorische Zeitschrift* 73/1, 1998, 25ff.

⁵S. Hiller-V. Nikolov, *Karanovo, Die Ausgrabungen im Sudsektor 1984-1992 I-II*, Sofia 1997; Y. Bojadziev, *Chronology of Prehistoric Cultures in Bulgaria*, 149 ff. bzs 16ff und zusammenfassend; D.H.Todorova, I.Vaišov, *Novokamenata epoha v Bugaria*, Sofia 1993, 64-93.

⁶The Neolithic sequences in Tessaly, Middle Neolithic (or "Sesklo culture)(ca.5300-4400 b.c. at Sesklo itself), http://projectsx.dartmouth.edu/history/bronze_age.

group consists of archaeological sites where the same type of the find had been discovered.

We started our tracking on the wider area of the Balkan Peninsula by investigating cultures that are connected with the archaeological site Mramor by chronology.

The vast region that belongs to the Vinca culture, that is the territory of the Balkans, comprises archaeological artifacts so-called rattles⁷ (fig. 3-6). These are small objects made of clay in various forms (anthropomorphic, zoomorphic or in the form of vessels). The interior of the rattles is empty and small balls of clay or stones are placed in it.

Similar rattles have been found in Moldova and these objects belong to the Cucuteni culture⁸ (fig. 7).

Few musical instruments were found on the territory of nowadays Greece. We are going to mention the "flute" discovered at the Neolithic settlement Dispilio in Castoria⁹, which is dated around 5500 BC, and the "flute" at the Museum in Volos that is found on the acropolis of the archaeological site Sesklo¹⁰ (fig. 8), dated in the Middle Neolithic period.

In this context, we are going to mention the "flute" discovered in Divje babe I in the Idrija valley in western Slovenia (fig. 9). The flute is dated in the wider chronological frame of the European Paleolithic (45 000 years old), but its function and

⁷ Š. Jovanović, Neolitsko naselje Kremenjak kod Otpornja, Katalog, Vršac 1982, 14; F. Milleker, Vorgeschichte des Banates II, 1983, Taf.IX, Starinar III, Beograd 1938; B. Stalio, Neolit na tlu Srbije, Beograd 1977, Katalog, 90, 106, 109; M. Bogdanović, Stare kulture na tlu centralne Srbije, Kragujevac 1981, Katalog, 25, 112; N. Tasić, Neolitska plastika, Beograd 1973, Katalog, 112, Tab.XXX; B. Jovanović, Trnovača, Barandana-seqe vinhanske grupe, Arheološki pregled 6, Ljubljana 1964, 13-15; Neolit južnog Banata, Katalog, Pančevo 1978, 19; S. Jocić, Antropomorfna zvečka iz Barande, Glasnik, Pančevo 1988, 1, 25.

⁸ T.S. Passek, KSIIMK 56, 1954, 94, 95; M. Gimbutas, The Goddesses and Gods of Old Europe 6500-3500 BC, Los Angeles 1982, 204, fig.154.

⁹ <http://www.mlahanas.de/Greeks/LX/DispilioTablet.html>

¹⁰ D.R.Theocharis, Neolithik Greece, Athens 1973, fig. 241.

purpose are under doubts by the experts.¹¹

Possibilities for discovering musical instruments that belong to the prehistoric times are extremely limited. This situation rests on the fact that most of these musical instruments were made of organic materials that are easily disintegrated. Yet, their development and evolution could be observed through prehistoric figurines that represent players,¹² and through written sources¹³ (fig. 10, 11). In the later periods, which follow the Neolithic period, other forms of musical instruments appeared. These instruments followed the way of creation and function of the culture to which they belonged. The pipes discovered on the archaeological site Wiclow (Ireland) are dated in the Bronze Age. The experts have implied that these pipes may have been part of a multi-flute instrument or pipe organ (fig. 12). The oldest wind instrument from Ireland, discovered in an archaeological context, has been dated in VI-V BC. Ireland does not lack musical instruments of prehistoric date. Most notable are the truly spectacular cast bronze horns of the later Bronze Age and Iron Age. The only other wooden instruments, made of yew wood, are a set of four curved pipes from Killyfadda (Co. Tyrone 400 BC), the Began Horn from Co. Mayo dating to 700 AD and a short conical wooden horn from the River Erne in Co. Fermanagh dated to 700 AD. In Scotland are discovered few examples of horns. The oldest preserved horn, dated in VII BC, is from the southwestern part of Scotland. The horn had been found near mediaeval archaeological site at Innermessan near

¹¹ I. Turk, *Mousterian Bone Flute*, Znanstvenoraziskovalni Center Sazu, Ljubljana 1997; B. Bower, *Doubts aired over neanderthal bone "flute"* (and reply by musicologist Bobk Fink), *Science News* (April num.4), 1998, 215; Nowell and Chase, *Slovenske novine* 23-11-1996, 328; Bob Fink (<http://www.webster.sk.ca/greenwich/flcompl.html>); Idem, *A Bone to Pick*, *Antiquity Journal*.

¹² A. Cermanović-Kuzmanović, D. Srejšević, *Leksikon religija i mitova drevne Evrope*, Beograd 1992, 376; S. Kochav, *Izrael*, Zagreb 2000, 54, sl.54; *Muzeji sveta*, Arheološki Muzej-Atina, Vuk Karadžić, 1979, 20-21.

¹³ R. Duev, *tu-qa-no?- τ ὁ μπανον, *ŽA* 52, Skopje 2002, 137-141; Idem, *Avlosi (auro?-αύλοι) во микенскиот свет?*, *ŽA* 53, Skopje 2003, 15-22.

Stranraer, in modern Dumfries and Galloway.¹⁴

In the following text, I shall mention instruments that have many analogies with the instrument that is subject of our interest. In this context, I will refer to flutes recovered from the Jiahu archaeological site in Henan Province, China. These flutes are made from bird's bones and they have five to seven holes. The archaeological site was occupied between 7,000 and 5,700 BC.¹⁵

The Chinese Xun¹⁶ or globular flute (fig. 14) had been known since the Neolithic period.¹⁷ Recently discovered small simple globular flute in the neolithic site of Tieshan, close to the town of Lushun, is regarded as the ancestor of the Xun. According to the periods, the Xun finger holes number changed but the overall shape stayed unchanged. The xun has an ovoid shape with a flattened base and a mouth piece located at the apex.

The Xuns excavated at the sites preceding the Shang period (pre 1766 BC) measured from 5 to 8 cm and had three finger holes. During the Shang dynasty (1766-1122 BC), this number increased to five. At that period, the flutes were often decorated with heads of mythical animals. It is also in this time that we can find the first written sources about Xuns.

The Xun can be connected with the Korean Hun and the Huan in Vietnam, but the Japanese Tsuchibue appeared towards 250 BC. It has six finger holes (four and two) but as a difference of the xun, the mouthpiece is opened in the largest end of the instrument.

The globular flute-ocarina is a common find on the archaeological sites from the pre-Columbian America¹⁸ (fig.15).

¹⁴ M. Gowen, Unique prehistoric musical instrument discovered in Co.Wiclow, http://www.mglarc.com/projects/musical_instrument.htm.

¹⁵ BBC News Online, Science Edition, Editor Dr. David Whitehouse, September 23, 1999.

¹⁶ and this instrument is still in use in Asia during Confucian rituals The ideogram for the 'xun' represents 'the feeling full with the sadness of the separation when a good-bye should be said', and this instrument is still in use in Asia for Confucian rituals.

¹⁷ <http://www.sifflets-en-terre-cuite.org/html/Def/ocarina.html>

¹⁸ <http://songbirdocarina.com/history2/html>.

The native American population made this type of instruments in different zoomorphic and anthropomorphic forms. Development of the rituals of the oldest cultures in Central and South America created “dancing instruments” that resulted with the appearance of ocarinas and two-chambered wind vessels/instruments. Aztecs have brought the ocarina in Europe. Namely, Ferdinand Cortes had sent a group of Aztec musicians and dancers at the court of Charles V and this group had performed for the pope Clement VII.

According to the previous facts the globular flute emerged on three different continents. Therefore, the oldest examples of this instrument had independent evolution. Music and dance¹⁹ were part of the life of the Neolithic man (fig. 16). Thus, the beginning of the music and creation of musical instruments should be revealed from the earliest prehistoric times. This statement rests on the fact that most of musical instruments that have been discovered have more developed form that indicate that the process of making musical instruments knew older tradition which is hidden in the layers of soil. The principal question is what were the preconditions and needs for the Neolithic man to produce music and to create musical instruments. Unfortunately, it is difficult to answer this question particularly when someone speaks about the Neolithic period. This situation is supported by the fact that our knowledge about the prehistoric spiritual life is fragmented and incomplete, which is not the case with the material or profane culture.

Sociological and psychological criteria are limited and not sufficient when someone starts to explore the art of the particular period i.e. the Neolithic period. It is difficult to find decisive determinant for the art which had been developed in homogeneous communities in the Neolithic period. In this period,

¹⁹ On the images of ithallic ritual scenes on the walls of the caves are observed men and women figures in ritual dance; В. Герасимова, Т. Стойчев, Итифалически ритуални сцени в пещерната монохромна живопис по нашите земи, Годишник на Национални археологически музей, София 1992, 89-103.

there were neither evident social layers nor differences in the possessing of tools for manufacture. In that society there was no obvious antagonism between the individual and the community, as well as the complex problem of "individual freedom and above individual need". Yet, the Neolithic art (i.e. rattles and globular flute) was connected with social, economic and psychological forces, simultaneously changing them along with the way of life in that period. The musical instruments were not made for leisure. Someone could assume that they were a product of constant struggle between man and its environment. They were used as tools for adjustment and protection in order to congregate essential values of life.²⁰ Forces of nature were incorporated in the Neolithic artifacts and therefore the relation between these forces and the believers were immediate. The religion in the Neolithic period was popular and rituals connected with everyday life expressed it.²¹ Most of the archaeologists and experts who research this issue have accepted these conclusions.²²

Finally, the discovering of the globular flute at the archaeological site Mramor, among other musical instruments from the Neolithic period (i.e. flutes and rattles), is a contribution in demistification of the mystery of music and dance as a part of the spiritual vigor of the Neolithic man in the region of the Balkan Peninsula.

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²⁰ Д. Срејовић, Неолитска пластика централнобалканског подручја, Неолит централног Балкана, Београд 1968, 178-223.

²¹ А. Сермановић-Кузмановић, Д. Срејовић, Лексикон религија и митова дrevне Европе, Београд 1992, 373-378 и наведената библиографија.

²² Д. Гарашанин, Религија и култ неолитског човека на централном Балкану, Неолит централног Балкана, Београд 1968, 241-258; М.Елијад, Историја вјеровања и религијских идеја I, Београд 1991, 31-52.