

Sanja PILIPOVIĆ
Institute for Balkan Studies SASA
Belgrade

DIVINE RAPE AS FUNERAL MOTIF:
EXAMPLE OF STELA FROM VIMINACIUM

Abstract: The theme of rape in the decorative program of the stela of *M. Valerius Speratus* from Viminacium and his wife *Lucia Aphrodisia* is expressed in the composition of the Rape of Kore and the Rape of Europa. This paper attempts to understand the said myths and their pictorial representations as funeral symbols of the after-death journey of the soul. Possible geopolitical meaning of the myth of the Rape of Europa has also been taken into consideration. The stela from Viminacium have also been viewed in relation to the monuments with the similar representations in the neighboring Danubian provinces.

As is commonly recognized, the pagan antique had no declared dogma. Death, separation from the world of the living, and the subsequent journey of the soul were symbolically represented by different motifs. A special and important group of myths found in the funeral symbolism involved myths of rape of mortal being by gods. Its complex structure represented an important theme, combining ideas of love and death.

One of the earliest connections between the rape myth and funeral symbolism can be found in the work of Artemidorus of Daldis.¹ This Greek

¹ Artemidorus Daldianus, *Oneirocritica*; Until this guidebook came out, nothing had been written, as far as we know, on the problem of funeral iconography and its semantics. This is the oldest guidebook dealing with iconography that emphasizes the relations between an idea and a picture. Great interest for 'Artemidorus' manual was shown by F. Cumont and A. Darby Nock in their work of the mid-XX century. For more information on Artemidorus work, see: M. T. Olzsewski 1998.

author of the Antonine period in his *Key to Dreams* made a distinction between two fundamental ways of expressing death in art: as a dramatic scene, or as a love encounter. The separation from the world of the living can be, for the author, symbolized by a union with a god or goddess, or a radical life change.² Myths of rape combine both themes. They represent a change from one life form to the other, as well as the change of life to death. The union between a mortal (his soul), and the one symbolizing eternity (deity), represented not only an allusion to earthly marital love, but the idea of eternal soul as well.³

The myths of rape, such as the Rape of Leucippides, Ganymede, Kore and Europa are frequently used symbols in Roman sepulchral art, especially in II and III centuries A. D. Even though they are present in the art of the Roman province of Upper Moesia, they have not been closely studied either in iconographic or iconological context, therefore being an additional incentive for further research. The rich iconography of Viminacium stela (fig. 1 and fig. 2.), made for *M. Valerius Speratus* and his wife *Lucia Aphrodisia*,⁴ in this context represents the motive for examining the importance of the myth of rape as a funeral motif in this region.

M. Mirković gave the basic interpretation of the relief on this monument, along with its photograph (*IMS II 110*).⁵ The inscription indicates that the stela was built for *M. Valerius Speratus*, the consular beneficiary of the legion VII Claudia, later on the decurion of the municipium Viminacium, and prefect of the cohort I Aquetanorum, and for his wife *Lucia Aphrodisia*. The monument was found in Kostolac about 1890. The conservation was done in the Pančevo Museum, where the monument is exhibited. The obverse side of the stela is divided into three fields. Above the inscription, the scene of the Rape of Kore is presented in the bas-relief. Hades, naked, is carrying off Kore and driving a *biga*. To the right is Athena, with a helmet on her

² The sacred union with a divine being is represented in the myths of Zeus and Leda, Amor and Psyche, Dionysus and Ariadne, Endymion and Selene, and others. Radical change in life is represented by myths of divine rape, although there are others related to the turning points in life. One such is the moment of discovery of Achilles in Skyros, M. T. Olzsewski 2001, 155–162.

³ M. T. Olzsewski 2001, 157.

⁴ On the stela, see J. Brunšmid 1895, 8, pl. I (*AE*, 1901, no 206); *CIL* III 12659 (*ILS* 7173); Domaszewski 1967, 34; *RE* IV, 1901, col 242; A. Hekler, 1912, 184, fig. 123; H. Devijver 1977, 831, no 38; M Mirković 1986, 130–131, no 110; Toynbee 1977, 360i; S. Ferjančić 2002, 289, no 367.

⁵ M. Mirković 1986, 130–131, no 110.

head and a shield in her left hand. To the left is Hermes, with *petasos* and *caduceus*; behind him are two hitched horses. Below Hermes' feet there is a flower basket and a rising serpent. The border separating this scene from the inscription presents a hunting scene. The part below the inscription presents the Rape of Europa. Europa, on the bull's back, is flanked by images of the Dioscuri with the horses. This relief is not preserved in its entirety. Only Europa's head and an upper part of the left one of the Dioscuri are preserved. The stela was dated differently, from the period of Hadrian's reign to the period of Septimus Severus' reign, due to the municipium name on the inscription.⁶ Based on the stylistic elements of presented reliefs, more recent research points to the stela originating from Antonine period.⁷

Divine Rape as Symbol of Soul Apotheosis

The relationship between love and death in the context of apotheosis of the soul is expressed in the iconography of the stela from Viminacium through the representation of the Rape of Kore and the Rape of Europa. These compositions symbolized the possibilities for the dead, identified with the abducted girl, as a form of an expression of their hope of rebirth.⁸

The depiction of the Rape of Kore or Persephone on the Viminacium stela symbolizes the motif of the violence of death taking its victims. The myth of Kore, who returns to light after having been taken to Hades' underground world, was appropriately transformed into an allegory of human destiny. After stepping down into the darkness of the grave, people deserve the rebirth of a brilliantly luminous life.⁹ The Stoics interpreted Persephone's stay in the underground world, and her reappearance in the upper world, as the image of a seed thrown into the depths of the earth.¹⁰ Under the sunlight, this embryo

⁶ This municipium was created by Hadrian. *Terminus ante quem* is 239 A. D., when Viminacium was granted the rank of *colonia*. On dating the monument, see M. Mirković 1986, 131, no 110; S. Ferjančić 2002, 289, no 367.

⁷ O.W. de Croizant 1995, 169.

⁸ Besides the Rape of Kore and the Rape of Europa, the myths of the Rape of Ganymede or the Rape of Leucippides had similar significance in funerary art, M.T. Olzsewski 2001; The fate of soul after death, in the context of the return from the underworld, is, apart from in the Rape of Kore, also dealt with in myths on Heracles and Alcestis, Orpheus and Eurydice, and Laodamia and Protesilai, F. Cumont 1942, 30.

⁹ F. Cumont 1942, 95.

¹⁰ F. Cumont 1942, 95–97; Kore, Persephone and Hecate were the triune Goddess, as Maiden, Nymph, and Crone, at the time when only women cultivated the land. Kore represented sprouting seeds, Persephone ripe wheat, and Hecate mown wheat. Demetra was the goddess's general name, R. Graves 1972, 24. 1.

brings to life a plant above the ground. In time, the vegetation offers both the fruit of death and the apotheosis, resurrection from death. Kore is therefore a divine essence confined in an earthly body, having been freed from such subordination and returning to the brilliant heights of the sky.

Certain Hellenic epigrams can be seen as inspiration for the creation of myth of Kore in Roman funerary art. An epitaph from VI century B.C. told of a girl ready to marry Hades after having died unmarried.¹¹ One other epigram from III century B.C. glorified an Erina as the new Kore.¹² From the pre-Hellenic times, Persephone and Hecate represented the hope of rebirth. Hades was the Hellenic representation of inevitable death, while Persephone was the goddess of renewal.¹³ An anecdote from Nero's life speaks of Persephone as a symbol of death. When Nero sent for haruspices in the year of his death, his favorite Sporus then showed him the ring with the intaglio of the Rape of Persephone, which was undoubtedly a sign possessed of double meaning.¹⁴

The scene of the Rape of Europa, just like the one of Kore, from a certain point of view represented both the journey and, for the deceased, the hope of salvation after the trials of life. Europa's journey to Crete may also have been an analogy of such trials and perils.¹⁵ The inscription on a cartouche originating in Ostia suggests that the representation of Europa also had a prophylactic character related to the desire that tragic destiny be turned into an allegory of eternal bliss.¹⁶ In Rome, the myth of Europa was not considered to be related to a love affair, but a theme of salvation, granted that this flight ended safely in an act of hierogamy, the sacred union, *hieros gamos*.

Similar funeral symbolism of both rape compositions on the Vimina-cium stela is accentuated by the image of a veil above the heads of abducted girls. This iconographic detail can be seen above Europa's head, and, in a not

¹¹ "I shall always be called Kore, for the God gave me this name instead of marriage." Athens, National Museum, 4889.

¹² *Anthol. Pal. VII, 13*; R. Turkan 1999, 12; on comparison of the deceased with Alcestis, see: *Anthol. Pal. VII, 691*.

¹³ The scene of Kore's resurrection from Hades to the earth was often painted on numerous Greek vases and probably originates from Pelasgian custom of digging out a wheat doll in the early spring, buried after the harvest in order to sprout. R. Graves 1972, 27. 11.

¹⁴ *Suet. Ner. 46, 4*.

¹⁵ O. W. de Croizant 1995, 254.

¹⁶ This inscription is in the Museum of Vatican, Lateran Collection, no. 531, O. W. de Croizant 1995, 248 fig. 25.

so explicit form, as a baldachin in the Rape of Kore.¹⁷ Compositionally, the veil is associated with the presentation of the Rape of Europa, but it is also found in other funerary compositions, especially in the monuments of the Antonine period. The significance of the depicted veil as a symbol of the dome of heaven is similar in all these representations.¹⁸ R. Turcan suggested that the veil could both symbolize a shroud, signifying death on earth, and relate to the act of *hieros gamos* and the veil for the bride to cover her head.¹⁹

Both scenes of divine rape on Viminacium stela metaphorically represent death. The love union of an immortal deity and a mortal woman is the act of deification for both raped girls.²⁰ The souls of both mortal girls are resurrected by love, as in the myth of Eros and Psyche. The representations of this couple in funerary art were also a pictorial expression for *Anabasis*.²¹ Kore, or Persephone, resurrects in Hades' biga, Europa is carried on Zeus the Bull's back²², while Ganymede is elevated by a deity in the form of an eagle. The analogy with abduction as an erotic death symbol can be seen in the pictorial representations of winged Eros, flying in the air and carrying a young man or a young woman in his arms.²³

¹⁷ A veil in the form of baldachin is often shown above Europa's head, but it is not such a typical iconographic detail above Kore's head. This is particularly obvious in the composition of the Rape of Kore on a sarcophagus in the Capitoline Museum in Rome, R. Turkan 1999, fig 46, as well as on the representations of the Rape of Kore on Roman coins from Hyrcanis, Lydia, J. Babelon 1943, 131.

¹⁸ The shape of veil in the form of baldachin or a kind of dome is found also above the heads of Nereid, Ariadne, Selena or other compositions on the sepulchral monuments of the time. It is also present above the figure of Heaven on one terracotta from Vienna, F. Cumont 1942, 171, fig. 34; On symbolism of Europe's veil, J. Babelon 1943, 125–140.

¹⁹ R. Turcan talks about the veil using an example of the veil of Semele, which, just like the one of Ariadne, points to the act of marriage, R. Turcan 1965, 477, 520, fut. 1, 615, fut. 5; The arrangement of the *himation* over the girl's head is an iconographic element with nuptial connotation as well, C. Sourvinou-Inwood 1987, 147.

²⁰ O.W. de Croizant 1995, 249.

²¹ R. Turkan 1999, 152; On myth, see: Apul. *Metamorphoses* 4.28–6.24.

²² Classic texts speak differently about whether the bull is Zeus' messenger, Apd., *Bibl* 2.5.7; Aeschylus., *Karians* or *Europa* 1–3, Diod. Sic. 4.60.2–3, or whether the divinity was transformed into a bull, Shol. to Homer, *Iliad* 12.292 (Hesiod, fr. 140 MW); Apd., *Bibl*. 3.1.1; K. F. Arafat 1990, 135–136.

²³ A. Savić Rebac 1984, 87. On many pictorial monuments, especially intaglios, where Eros as a winged youth carries a young man or woman, see Vazer. R E, Sp. 498.

From the time of Plato to the time of Dionysus Pseudo-Areopagite, Eros' role can be understood as the role of a mediator. He is no longer the initiator, the orphic creator of the worlds, but, together with Plato, becomes a mediator between the soul and the absolute.²⁴ Acknowledging his mediating role, Plotin placed Eros within the transcendent deity itself, and, following the arrival of Christianity, this idea further changed and developed into the idea of Christian love, *agape* or *caritas*.²⁵

The power of Europa's figure,²⁶ just like Kore's, is in the twofold transformation of both images. Both girls, though victims, dominate over their own abductors. Europa masters the bull, being the deity in its bestial identity, the ancient symbol of male strength, fertility and agriculture. Strength is overpowered by beauty, fertility subdued by agriculture.²⁷ Kore manages to reign over Hades' empire, but also to return to the world of the living, where she spends one part of the year. She embodies a dual link, as daughter and wife, creating a balance between these two principles. As the daughter of her mother, she signifies life. As the wife of her husband, she signifies death.²⁸

The mentioned multi-layered nature of myths of Europa and Kore, as well as their primarily eschatological character, were to become favorite themes of numerous Roman sepulchral monuments of II and III centuries A. D. In Rome, the theme of the Rape of Europa was considered to be the theme of salvation, frequently found in representations of the flight. The myth of the rape of Kore, given its more complex iconographic composition, was not represented in such a uniform mode.

Eschatological character of the iconographic program of the stela from Viminacium is emphasized in the representation of the Dioscuri as symbols of the two revolving halves of the sky, as well as perpetual alteration of day and night, death and rebirth. Their brotherly unity is the symbol of eternal harmony, as well as of eternal life, reserved for the deceased as a reward for

²⁴ On the role of Eros as a mediator between death and eternity, as well as on resurrection of a person to the comprehension of ideas, see Plato, *Symposium*.

²⁵ On relationship between Plato's and Plotin's Eros and Christian love, *agápe*, *caritas* of Paul, the apostle, see: A. Savić Rebac 1936.

²⁶ Myth of Europe had its pre-figuration in the tale of a bull sent to Poseidon, which queen Pasiphae fell in love with. Later mytographers have substituted Poseidon with Zeus. Both mythological pictures show that the bull was god. Taumorphous manifestation of gods as husbands is found in the *Minoan* Crete, K. Keréyi 1975, 71.

²⁷ L. Barkan 1986, 8–9.

²⁸ C. G. Jung, C. Kerényi 1973, 108.

merit.²⁹ They also represent protectors of sailors, provide help in storms, and secure successful navigation.³⁰ Their character makes them protectors of the dead. This is the context where their role of escorts, securing Europa's flight across the sea, should be understood, therefore emphasizing the expressed belief in life after death. They are not typical iconographic companions of Europa's flight, but their presence here is understandable, bearing in mind the desire to lay emphasis on those ideas.³¹

Divine Rape as Symbol of Wife's Grave

The ancient Greeks believed that the transition period in the life of a woman, from puberty to maturity, was a form of metaphorical death and apotheosis.³² This transition period in the life of a woman, symbolically manifested in Europa or in Kore, was also present in Roman funerary art.

Europa's adventure illustrates the "rite of passage." Seduction and abduction were painful moments, signifying separation from the place of birth, from father or ancestor, and therefore sorrow and fear. Her journey expresses a sense of dissolution. It can be compared with the journey after death, whose parallel might be the sea voyage to the Island of the Blessed.³³ Arriving in Crete, Europa, via her sacred union with Zeus, is elevated to the level of deity.³⁴

Kore or Persephone is, like Europa, entirely an allegory of a woman's destiny. The boundaries of Hades' Underworld are allegorically a boundary between girlhood and "other" life. The seducer, the God of the Underworld, is an allegory of earthly bridegroom and husband, and the rape of bride is an

²⁹ F. Cumont 1966, 68–69, 80, 91; J. Medini 1985/86, 116.

³⁰ F. Cumont 1942, 64–66

³¹ The Dioscuri as protectors of marriage, and other aspects of their being associated with the theme of the Rape of Europe, will be addressed later, in context of interpretations of these myths as symbols of wives' graves.

³² Beginning from VI century B.C., inscriptions on funeral monuments represented this idea of identifying the deceased with Kore. On the relationship of this transitional moment in a woman's life, and the statues of Europa and Kore as synonyms for the binary "wedding or funeral", J. Barringer 1991, 663–664.

³³ R. Turcan 1999, 44; Figure of Europa has the same symbolic value, and psychopomp role, that the Nereids have when accompanying the deceased to the Blessed Isles across the Oceanus, being proof of eternity, J. Barringer 1991, 657–667.

³⁴ O. W. de Croizant 1995, 253.

allegory of death.³⁵ The lost girlhood and the crossed boundary of Hades' Underworld are allegorically equivalent. Persephone's essence is the death, as well as the domination in death.³⁶ According to C. Sourvinou-Inwood, Persephone's rape was a nuptial paradigm, and because Hades was the God of the Dead, this rape also signifies death of the girl, to give way to the wife and mother.³⁷

Both young women were embodiments of deliverance that may be experienced by mothers after their death, hoping for happier afterlife following the trials of life.³⁸ Scene of the Rape of Europa, as well as representations of sea nymphs, are repeatedly present on the tombstones of married women, while Persephone, in this sense, possesses no such value.³⁹

Europa, "the protector of married women", in addition to being present on the stela of *M. Valerius Speratus* from Viminacium and his wife *Lucia Aphrodisia*, is also shown on the tombstone from Šempetru, near Celeia in the province of Noricum (fig. 3). *Quintius Ennius Liberalis* had this tombstone built for himself, his wife *Ennia Oppidiana* and the children.⁴⁰ The fragment of inscriptions from Ostia with the Rape of Europa, already mentioned, was dedicated to the daughter of an anonymous member of the *Quirina* tribe.⁴¹ Listed monuments date from the Antonine period and were dedicated to married women, except for the example from Ostia, which was dedicated to the daughter. The examples of the Rape of Europa from Micia (fig. 4) and a bas-relief from Novae (fig. 5) do not offer information for establishing whether they belonged to the group of tombstones dedicated to women.

Yet another contribution to the understanding of representation of Europa as the symbol of a wife's grave, would be the Dioscuri, companions of her flight, also shown on the Viminacium stela. Not only are they the symbols of two hemispheres and eternal harmony, but they also signify brotherly and marital love. Love between the spouses is strong, like love between the brothers, securing the eternity of the universe.⁴² The Dioscuri, as

³⁵ Romans preferred to use, not without humor, the theme of funerary wedding, or the ambivalence of the torch of marriage and death, R. Turkan 1999, 253.

³⁶ C. G. Jung, C. Kerényi 1973, 109.

³⁷ C. Sourvinou-Inwood 1987, 139.

³⁸ O. W. de Croizant 1995, 253–4.

³⁹ R. Turkan 1999, 151.

⁴⁰ J. Klemenc 1956, 390–391; J. Klemenc 1961, 20, 25.

⁴¹ Father here assimilates his daughter to Europa, the daughter of Agenor. This fragment dates from Trojan or Antonine period, O. W. de Croizant 1995, 254.

⁴² F. Cumont 1942, 86.

was already mentioned, were not typically associated with the image of the Rape of Europa in iconography, but they nevertheless add to the complexity, emphasizing faith in love and eternal life of the departed spouses. Rape of Persephone on the Viminacium stela might have a similar funerary meaning. Hades is naked and his power emphasized, not a mythological but an ideal representation of bride and bridegroom.⁴³

Also relevant in the decoration of tombstones for prematurely deceased girls, and wives dying before their husbands, are the representations of Alcestis' return.⁴⁴ In the province of Upper Moesia, one such representation was found on the stela built into the Smederevo fortress.⁴⁵ Its symbolism is closely associated with the representation of rape on the Viminacium stela, thereby underlining its presence in the Upper Moesia province as a funerary symbol of an early deceased maiden, or a wife dying before her husband.

Europa as Geopolitical Symbol

The myth of Europa, in addition to the already mentioned symbolism, also included a geopolitical idea. Europa's sea voyage from Phoenicia ended in Crete. However, the voyage continues with Cadmus' wandering all the way to Thrace, and to mainland Greece, and ends with the creation of Thebes and the birth of the European continent.⁴⁶

One of the earliest indications of the link between Europe as a continent⁴⁷ and a Phoenician princess is found in *Historiae* of Herodotus.⁴⁸ In

⁴³ There are two types of rape scenes; rape scenes with Hades and Persephone, and rape scenes with a naked protagonist. The second type is not mythological, but an ideal representation of bride and bridegroom modeled after the images of Hades and Persephone, whose marriage was preceded by rape, C. Ssourvinou-Inwood 1973, 12–21.

⁴⁴ N. Vulić, 1903, 67; Iphigenia, Glauke and Antigona indicate that a girl died before her wedding, R. Seaford 1987, 106–130, fut. 106–107.

⁴⁵ On the monument showing the return of Alcestis, N. Vulić 1903, 67, pl. 10; V. Kondić 1965, 231, no 35; Monuments and buildings of Viminacium were rather damaged during the Middle Ages, when the ruins of Viminacium were used as the sources of building material for many objects, including the Smederevo fortress, M. Tomović 1991, 32, fut. 22; V. Kodić 1965, 268;

⁴⁶ O. W. de Croizant 1995, 255.

⁴⁷ The first mention of Europe as the name of a continent is found in Pind., N. 4, R. Chevallier 1998b, 46.

⁴⁸ As for Europe, no man has any knowledge where it got its name, nor is it clear who gave the name, unless we say that the land took its name from Tyrian

the epic narration dedicated to Europa by Alexandrian poet *Moscho* from Syracuse, there is one of the earliest references to the rape of Europa and the name of the continent. This connection between the continent and the Phoenician princess was expressed through the girl's dream in the night preceding the rape.⁴⁹

This relation can be understood as a form of “European propaganda” on the part of Alexandrian writers, who advocated the demarcation of Greek from Barbarian community.⁵⁰ Beginning with earliest times (times of Trojan War), mythological or historical rape of women (e.g. Io, Europa, Medea, Helen) resulted in continual struggle between Asia and Europe.⁵¹

Latin poets of the Augustinian era reunite myth and geography. Ovid connects the name of a Sidonian princess with “the Third World,”⁵² and Horatio speaks of Europa as “one part of the world.”⁵³ Latin poets of I century B.C. provide completely new examples of “European propaganda”, where the power of Jupiter joins the one of August, and the form of Europa the one of Rome.⁵⁴

In this context, this understanding of the representation of the Rape of Europa on the stela from Viminacium is only one of numerous possibilities. Thus, perceiving a myth associated with the region of discovery of sepulchral monuments with this topic, can serve as an important foundation for further understanding of the content of iconographic program on Viminacium stela.

Europa. It would seem before then nameless, like the rest. But it is plain that this woman was of Asiatic birth, and never came to this land which the Greeks now call Europe, but only from Phoenicia to Crete and from Crete to Lycia. Thus much I have said of these matters, and let it suffice; we will use the names established by custom, Herodotus *Historiae* 4. 45. 4–5.

⁴⁹ Two continents that had the shape of a woman fought for Europa. The first woman represented the pre-figuration of Asia, and the other one, positioned opposite her, had no name. A girl pre-figures abduction and attribution of the name Europa to an anonymous land, L. Barkan 1986, 12.; R. Chevallier 1998a, 24.

⁵⁰ O. W. de Croizant 1998, 24.

⁵¹ R. Chevallier 1998b, 52

⁵² Ovid, *Fast*, V, 617–618: *Parsque tuum terrae tertia nomen habet*

⁵³ Hor., *Odes*, III, 75–76: [...]*tua sectus orbis/ nomina ducet*

⁵⁴ The inherited antagonism between continents is reduced by the Pax Romana. Africa and Asia became pro-consular provinces of the Empire, symbolized by highly individualized female allegories, while Europe did not enjoy a special administrative status, and was integrated into the Roman West, O. W. de Croizant 1998, 25–26.

The Danube Route

The depiction of the Rape of Europa was, in addition to being present on the stela from Viminacium in Upper Moesia, also found in the following sepulchral monuments in the Danube provinces: Celeia⁵⁵ in Noricum Micia⁵⁶ in Dacia, and Novae⁵⁷ in Lower Moesia. All compositions show Europa on the bull and have similar iconography, the only difference being the presence of dolphin in the personified sea in the one from *Celeia*.

The quality of a central panel of the *Eneii* monument in Celeia⁵⁸ (fig. 3) in Noricum, dating from the 141 A. D., surpasses the quality of local reliefs and is considered to be the work of a craftsman from a neighboring Roman cultural center of Aquileia.⁵⁹ Latin names indicate that this was the burial place of true Romans, even though *Ennia Oppidiana*, the wife of *Quintius Ennius Liberalis* is dressed in Celtic garments, implying her Celtic origin.⁶⁰

Sculptural fragment from Micia (fig. 4), representing the Rape of Europa, dates from the same era. Dacia is the only Danubian province in which the mythological narration was almost completely nonexistent in the themes of funerary range. Micia was located in the valley of Mures, an area with the highest concentration of mythological themes. This region was among the most open ones for the direct influx of themes from Pannonia region, where themes and characters of classic myths were highly popular. The style and the theme of the Rape of Europa were quite distant from the mediocre characteristics of sculpture from Micia. The model should therefore be looked for in Noricum or the previously mentioned, geographically closer, monuments.⁶¹

⁵⁵ J. Klemenc 1956, 390–391; J. Klemenc 1961, 20, 25.

⁵⁶ L. Bianchi 1985, 176, 180, fig.123.

⁵⁷ O. W. de Croizant 1995, 165

⁵⁸ The obverse showed Europe on a bull, and the personified sea showed a dolphin. On the reverse side was Judgment of Paris, while the narrow sides contained representation of a satyr wanting to take away a cape from a nymph, and the Rape of Ganymede, J. Klemenc 1956, 390–391.

⁵⁹ J. Klemenc 1961, 25.

⁶⁰ From the inscription we know that *Quintius Ennius Liberalis* had the tombstone built for himself, his wife *Ennia Oppidiana*, daughter *Kalendini* and son *Vitulus*. Celtic cultural influences are present here in the clothing of the painted *Ennia Oppidiana*. In this area, they were the consequence of the transformation of Celtic *oppidium* into the municipium, governed by a Roman procurator from the 45 A. D., J. Klemenc 1961, 20.

⁶¹ L. Bianchi 1985, 105.

The representation of the Rape of Europa in Novea (fig. 5), in Lower Moesia, dates from the time when this military settlement, founded about the end of I century A. D., became the settlement of an advanced garrison, either in II century, or early III century.

In the province of Dalmatia, the Rape of Europa was shown on a rather damaged sculptural fragment, found in the Marići village, near Kotor (fig. 6).⁶² A rather damaged relief makes it difficult to say whether it was a part of a tombstone.

In Upper Moesia, the representation of the Rape of Europa on Viminacium stela had its analogies in the following monuments. It was found to be a funerary theme on a lead sarcophagus (fig. 7).⁶³ Its fragment was found in the Seliste site, also part of the territory of Viminacium. This representation of Rape of Europa is shown with the Three Graces scene. The middle part of this tripartite composition is lost, but it is believed that it showed Jupiter. One sculptural rock fragment showing Rape of Europa is kept in the National Museum in Nis (fig. 8).⁶⁴ Stylistically, it is rather simple, and probably the work of a local craftsman. It is dated to the end of III century or the beginning of IV century. Because of its damaged condition, it is hard to determine whether it was part of some complex, or whether it was presented in a funeral context. The representations of the Rape of Europa on the two examples of *terra sigillata* from Viminacium also tell of importance of the myth in this province.⁶⁵

The representation of the Rape of Persephone is not so frequent in the region. Even though it does not exactly show the moment of rape, a small sculptural group that shows Pluto and Persephone (fig. 9), found near Kostolac in 1899, is worth mentioning.⁶⁶ This work is not well preserved. It shows a couple sitting on a dual throne. The heads of both bodies are missing, but N. Vulić assumed that the two are Pluto and Persephone. This work was made in the province, and dates from late II and early III centuries. This sculptural group is rather similar to the relief from Constance showing busts of Hades-Pluto, Persephone and Demeter.⁶⁷

⁶² I. Pušić 1998, 15, fig. 1.

⁶³ S. Golubović 2001, 144.

⁶⁴ M. Tomović 1993, 94, fig. 47.4.

⁶⁵ These examples *terra sigillate* are the work of the workshop from Rheinabern, city near the upper course of Danube. Import of these plates was the regular import for this city, and it reached its maximum in the last quarter of II century and the beginning of III century, and then sharply fell, Lj. Bjelajac 1990, 38, T. 25 fig. 253 i fig. 254.

⁶⁶ N. Vulić 1903, 65, fig. 8.

⁶⁷ This relief had its cultural implication, and it is typologically close to Greek archetype, G. Bordenache 1964, 171, fig.10.

The importance of the theme of divine rape of Kore and Europa in the Balkan Peninsula is further emphasized by the coins discovered in Adrianople,⁶⁸ Byzantium⁶⁹ and Odessa.⁷⁰

The aforementioned examples clearly indicate that the representations of divine rape on the Viminacium stela can only be understood within framework of mutual cultural influences of the geographically close provinces. In the first half of II century, Viminacium and the center of Noricum, and Pannonia along the Drava Basin, both exhibited a tendency towards classicism, which can be interpreted as a continuation of already established tendencies in Aquileia. In the opposite direction from Viminacium, Micia was located on the crossroads of Byzantium, Adrianople and Nicopolis, in the direction of Istrum and along the Danube routes leading to Aquincum, Viminacium, Carnuntum, Iuvanum, and Poetovio.⁷¹ These border towns, located on the key commercial routes of the Roman Empire, at the same time played a mediator role in the exchange of art works between the provinces of Egypt, Asia Minor and central Europe. The veterans of the Danube limes, as settlers, were also important in exchanging cultural influences. However, the defense of the Danube limes, in addition to veterans, also attracted other population segments, such as traders, who favored scenes of classical mythology, belonging to well known art centers, on their tombstones.

A relative concentration of remains of the sculpture with the Rape of Europa theme in the Danube provinces can be explained by the said cultural influences in these regions. However, it is also necessary to pay attention to the history of these provinces, located in the direction towards the Black Sea, the territory of Greek colonization, and to the sensibility of Hellenic culture itself.

⁶⁸ The coins showing the Rape of Europa were an expression of local religious representations, linked to the ancient cult of Zeus, and, also, his gallant adventures. The money from Adrianople dates from the time of Caracalla, И. Юркова 1987, 74–74.

⁶⁹ The representation of Rape of Europa can be also found on the silver coins of Caracalla (no. 3327), as well as on the silver coins of Geta, (no. 3350). Also on the bronze coins of Severus Alexander (no. 3392 and no. 3393), N. Mušmov 1912.

⁷⁰ Persephone is shown only in the composition with Demetre on the coins in *Odessos*, of late II and early III centuries. From the time of Septimius Severus (no.1595), Elagabalus (no.1624), Severus Alexander (no.1628), Gordian III (no.1658), N. Mušmov 1912.

⁷¹ *Iuvavum* in Noricum, and *Poetovio* in Pannonia are the cities where mosaics showing Rape of Europa were found, unique in the Danubian provinces. O. W. de Croizant 1995, 163–169.

Making analogies between the boundaries of Roman Empire, where all of the aforementioned monuments showing Europa were found, and such representation understood as a symbol of the European continent, can, admittedly, also be viewed as a rather loose interpretation. Nevertheless, they still deserve to be mentioned.

Similarity of Viminacium Stela to Tomb of the Nasonii Paintings

The presence of the Rape of Persephone and Rape of Europa on Viminacium stela points to iconographic program, whose complexity certainly transcends the boundaries of Upper Moesia. Representation of the Rape of Europa has its analogies in the aforementioned monuments, while the Rape of Persephone is not frequently presented in the region. The pictorial union of these two compositions does not suggest a typical unity of programs on sepulchral monuments of the Roman Empire. O. W. de Croizant emphasized the similarity of this stela program with the program of the paintings in the Roman tomb, epigraphically identified as *Sepulchrum Nasoniorum*.⁷² The tomb was discovered in 1674 near Flaminia Street in Rome, but its funerary paintings are known only by a watercolor by Pietro Santi Bartoli⁷³ and a drawing by P. Bellori from the late XVII century.⁷⁴

The representation of the Rape of Persephone had its counterpart on the opposite wall, in the Rape of Europa (fig. 10). The similarity between the programs of this tombstone and the Viminacium stela is further emphasized by a hunting scene, present on both monuments.⁷⁵ Messages of the hope of eternal cycle dominate therefore the iconographic programs of both sepulchral monuments.

Compositionally, the representation of the Rape of Kore, or Persephone in the Tomb of the *Nasonii* is closer to the Viminacium stela. The

⁷² Based on epitaph, it is known that *Q(uintius) Nasonius Ambrosius*, founders of the tomb, lived in the Trojan or Antonine period, O. W. de Croizant, 1995, 169.

⁷³ The original watercolors by Pietro Santi Bartoli were, according to Roman antique painting, made in 1674. These were copies of the painting of the tomb discovered at the time, in Via Flaminia in Rome. Today, they are in Glasgow University Library Special Collections, GB 247, P. S. Bartoli 1706.

⁷⁴ G. P. Bellori 1680

⁷⁵ The decorative program of this tombstone vault, among others, was not only made up of a representation of tiger hunting, but also of the moral exegesis of values over evil forces, and a representation of Heracles led by Hermes, who takes Kerberos out of the underworld, as well as a scene of the sacrifice to the gods of Manes, O. W. de Croizant 1995, 247

representation from Viminacium is more complex, because it shows the goddess Athena on the right.⁷⁶ However, Rape of Europa in the Tomb of the *Nasonii*⁷⁷ is much more complex than the Viminacium one, and it contains a group of women on the left side of the composition. Their presence can be understood in the sense of trying to lay emphasis on the separation of the world of the living from the world of the dead.

Both compositions of the Tomb of the *Nasonii* paintings are part of a complex eschatological program. Their similarity to the representations on the Viminacium stela is not expressed so much in their iconographic program, as in the fact that these two compositions of divine rape make up a cohesive funerary program of one sepulchral monument.⁷⁸

Analogies in the program of Viminacium stela and the Tomb of the *Nasonii* paintings, given a large distance between the two monuments, present a challenge in understanding possible contacts between the two areas. Italian influences, through cultural exchanges between the Danube provinces, are further highlighted by this example. Viminacium workshops were apparently very well located and therefore in a position to use the trends of these cultural flows.⁷⁹

* * *

Representations of divine rape on the stela of *M. Valerius Speratus* and his wife indicate a highly complex program, whose symbolism and style surely transcend the boundaries of the province in which it was made.

Viminacium representation of Europa is among typical representations of her flight on the bull's back. Along with the previously mentioned compositions from the Danube provinces, it constitutes part of a series of rather repetitive, i.e. with no large iconographic differences, representations in funerary art. For that reason, it was considered more important to focus

⁷⁶ Statue of Athens can be found in complex representations of the composition of the Rape of Persephone, as well as in the representation of divine rape in the funeral art of Massyaf, M. T. Olzsewski 2001, pl. XXVII fig. 6; Athens is also shown on complex composition on the sarcophagus from Roma, H. Sichterman, G. Koch 1975, fig. 59, 60, 61.

⁷⁷ G. P. Bellori 1680, pl. XVII, p. 48

⁷⁸ Two *pinakes*, found in the sanctuary of Persephone at Locri Epizephyrii, dedicated to Persephone, depict Rape of Europa. These *pinakes* support the connection between Europa and Persephone, marriage and death, J. Barringer 1991, 665, fut. 38.

⁷⁹ O. W. de Croizant 1995, 169

on researching the presence of this theme in different geographic areas, as well as on its symbolism.⁸⁰ Nonetheless, the uniqueness of the Viminacium composition lies in the presence of the Dioscuri. Pictured as companions of Europa's flight, they accentuate complexity of its symbolism.

Funeral context of Viminacium stela program is also emphasized by the composition of the Rape of Persephone in the same iconographic program. As far as we know, this scene is a unique representation, and not only in Upper Moesia province.⁸¹ It has a clear eschatological and funerary context, even though its iconography is not as uniformly presented as is the representation of Europa's flight. The Viminacium stela has a more complex composition, also implying the unique character of this work. Because of the clarity of the idea it contains, as well as since there are no similar iconographic monuments in this region, this study also attempts at understanding the represented ideas, rather than at interpreting their iconographies.

The presentations of two divine rapes on Viminacium stela make up a rather complex ideational program of this monument. The rapes can be understood not only as symbols of belief in life after death, but also as more concrete funerary symbols. They represent a transitional moment in the life of a woman. Metaphorically, they became symbols of death and visual representations of a wife's grave. This may also present a way of understanding the compositions of divine rape on the stela of *M. Valerius Speratus* and his wife, *Lucia Aphrodisia*. Nevertheless, potential geopolitical relevance of the myth of the Rape of Europa should not be neglected, if considered in view of the relationship between the figure of Phoenician princess and the European continent. Emphasizing the idea of community, as opposed to the barbarian world, would indeed be rather a loose interpretation of funerary representations of the stela of *M. Valerius Speratus*, the beneficiary of the legion of VII Claudia and decurion of Viminacium municipium, but this idea nevertheless deserves mentioning.

The representation of the Rape of Kore and the Rape of Europa were not typical funerary themes, either on sepulchral monuments in Upper

⁸⁰ Eschatological character of this representation can also be underlined by its presence in candle decorations, besides sarcophagus and tombstones, of Rape of Europa of the same iconographic type in the British Museum, no. 826, H. B. Walters 1914, 124. However, numerous representations on mosaics cannot be understood in this context.

⁸¹ The said representations from Viminacium and Constance belong to completely different type of representation. They show Persephone and Pluto on a throne in Viminacium, as well as half-figure portraits depicting Demeter at Constance.

Moesia, or in neighboring Roman provinces. Their presence on the Viminacium stela can be understood as a consequence of the previously mentioned cultural influences of the other parts of the Empire. Geographical position of Viminacium, located at the crossroads of the main routes passing through it at the time, and linking it with different parts of the Empire, additionally facilitated the exchange of art works among the provinces. One should not underestimate the importance of colonization by Greek population, bringing along influences of Hellenic heritage, where both these myths and their earliest pictorial representation originated from.

It is uncertain who ordered or created the visualization of symbols presented here, but it is certain that they came from highly educated social circles, and that the execution of this work of art, whose importance transcends the regional boundaries where it was made, is undoubtedly exceptional. This study should be seen as an attempt to place into perspective the rich iconographic program of this stela by analyzing the symbolism of divine rape as funerary motif.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Arafat K. F. 1990
Classical Zeus: a study in art and literature, Oxford Univ. Pr.
- Babelon J. 1943
Le voile d'Europe, RE, 125-140.
- Barringer J. M. 1991
Europa and the Nereids: wedding or funeral?, AJA 95, 657–667.
- Barkan L. 1986
The gods made flesh: metamorphosis & the pursuit of paganism, Yale Univ. Pr.
- Bartoli P. S. 1706
Le pitture antiche delle grotte di Roma, e del Sepolcro de 'Nasoni diseguate, e intagliate alla similitudine degli antichi originali da Pietro Santi Bartoli suo figliolo, descritte da G. P. Bellori e Michel Angel della Chausse, Rome
- Bellori G. P. 1680
Le pitture antiche del sepolcro de 'Nasonii nella via Flaminia diseguate et intagliate da Pietro Santi Bartoli, descrite de Gio. Pietro Bellori, Rome
- Bianchi L. 1985
Le stele funerarie della Dacia, Roma
- Bjelajac LJ. 1990
Terra sigillata u Gornjoj Meziji, Beograd

- Bordenache G. 1964
Tem e motivi della plastica funeraria d'etr' romana nella Moesia Inferior, Dacia VIII, 161–175.
- Brunšmid J. 1895
Nadgrobn i spomenik M. Valerija Sperata iz Viminacija, Viestnik Hrvatskoga Arheološkoga Društva 1, Zagreb, 1–13.
- Chevallier R. 1998a
Europe, quel symbolisme?, D'Europe à l'Europe. I, Le mythe d'Europe dans l'art et la culture de l'antiquité au XVIIIe siècle: actes du colloque, réunis par Rémy Poignault et Odile Wattel-de Croizant, Tours, 15–20.
- Chevallier R. 1998b
L'Europe dans les textes géographiques grecs et latins, D'Europe à l'Europe. I, Le mythe d'Europe dans l'art et la culture de l'antiquité au XVIIIe siècle : actes du colloque, réunis par Rémy Poignault et Odile Wattel-de Croizant, Tours, 38–54.
- Croizant O.W.de, 1995
Les mosaïques représentant le mythe d'Europe: Ier-VIe siècles: évolution et interprétation des modèles grecs en milieu romain, Paris
- Croizant O. W. de, 1998
D'Europè à l'Europe, évolution de la problematique dans l'antiquite, D'Europe à l'Europe. I, Le mythe d'Europe dans l'art et la culture de l'antiquité au XVIIIe siècle : actes du colloque, réunis par Rémy Poignault et Odile Wattel-de Croizant, Tours, 21-28.
- Cumont F. 1942
Recherches sur la symbolisme funèraire des Romains, Paris
- Devijver H. 1977
Prosopographia militiarum equestrium quae fuerunt ab Augusto ad Gallienum, II, Leuven
- Domaszewski A. von 1967
Die Rangordnung des römischen Heeres, 2. Aufl, Graz-Köln
- Ferjančić S. 2002
Naseljavanje legijskih veterana u balkanskim provincijama: I-III vek naše ere, Beograd
- Golubović S. 2001
Prilog proučavanju olovnih sarkofaga u Gornjoj Meziji, Viminacium XII, 135-147.
- Graves R, 1972
The Greek Myth, Penguin Books Ltd, Harmondsworth, Middlesex
- Irving P. M. C. 1990
Metamorphosis in Greek myths, Oxford Clarendon Pr.
- Юркова И. 1987
Монтосеченето на градовете в долна мизия и тракия II–IIIв Хадрианпол, София
- Hekler A. 1912
Forschungen in Intercisa, Jahreshfte 15, 174–196.
- Jung.C.G., Kerényi C. 1973
Essays on a Science of Mythology, The Myth of the Divine Child and the Mysteries of Eleusis, Princeton Univ. Pr.

- Kastelic J. 1997
Symbolische Darstellungen auf den römischen Grabmonumenten in Šempeter bei Celje, Akten des IV. internationalen Kolloquiums über Probleme des provinzialrömischen Kunstschaffens, Situla 36, Narodni Muzej Slovenije, 9–20.
- Kerényi C. 1975
Zeus and Here, Archetypal Image of Father, Husband, and Wife, Princeton Univ. Pr.
- Klemenc J. 1956,
Grobne skrinje za pepel pokojnikov iz Šempetra v savinjski dolini, Arheološki vestnik VII–4, 384–398.
- Klemenc J. 1961
Rimske iskopenine v Šempetru, Ljubljana
- Kondić V. 1965
Sepulkralni spomenici sa teritorije rimske provincije Gornje Mezije, doktorska disertacija odbranjena na Filozofskom Fakultetu u Beogradu na odeljenju za arheologiju- neobjavljeno.
- Medini J. 1985/86
Aplike u obliku Atisove glave iz rimske provincije Dalmacije, Radovi Filozofskog Fakulteta Zadar, 25(12), 109–124.
- Mirković M. ed. 1986
Inscriptions de la Mésie Supérieure, vol II: Viminacium et Margum, Beograd
- Мушмов Н. 1912
Античные монеты на Балканския полуостровъ и монетить на българскитъ царе, София
- Olszewski M. T. 1998
Les projections oniriques: une clif de l'iconographie de la vita privata d'époque impériale romaine (selon l'Onirocriticon d'Artémidore de Daldis), thèse de doctorat, Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne, not published.
- Olszewski M.T. 2001
Le langage symbolique dans la décoration à scenes mythologiques et son sens dans les tombes peintes de l'Orient romain nouvelle approche, La peinture funéraire antique, IVe siècle av. J.-C.-Ive siècle ap. J.-C., Actes du VIIe colloque de l'Association Internationale pour la peinture murale antique, Saint-Romain-En-Gal-Vienne (6–10 octobre 1998), sous la direction d'Alix Barbet, Paris, 155–162.
- Parnicki-Pudelko S. 1974
Les recherches archéologiques polonaises à Novae (Bulgarie) en 1972, Latomus XXXIII, 2, 314–323.
- Pušić I. 1998
Tragovi arheoloških lokaliteta..., Muzejske sveske Zavičajnog muzeja Herceg Novog 3, Herceg Novi, 1–23.
- Rebac Savić A. 1936
Platonska i hrišćanska ljubav, Letopis Matice Srpske, jan.-feb., 69-82.
- Rebac Savić A. 1984
Predplatonska erotologija, Novi Sad
- Seaford R. 1987
The Tragic Wedding, JHS 107, 106–130.

- Sichtermann H., Koch G. 1975
Griechische Mythen auf römischen Sarkophagen, Tübingen
- Sourvinou-Inwood C. 1973
The Young Abductor of the Locrian Pinakes, BICH 20, 12-21.
- Sourvinou-Inwood C. 1987
Series of Erotic Pursuit: Images and Meanings, JHS 107, 131-152.
- Tomović M. 1993
Roman sculpture in Upper Moesia, Beograd
- Toynbee J. M. C. 1982
Death and Burial in the Roman World, London
- Turcan R. 1966
Les sarcophages romains a representation dionysiaques, Paris
- Turcan R. 1999
Messages d'oultre- tombes, l' iconographie des sarcophages romains, Paris
- Vulić N., Ladek F., von Premerstein A. 1903
Antički spomenici u Srbiji, Spomenik XXXIX, 43-88.
- Walters H. B. 1914
Catalogue of the Greek and Roman lamps in the British Museum, London



Fig. 1
Relief depicting
Rape of Europa and
Rape of Persephone.
A marble stela of M.
Valerius Speratus
and his wife found
at Kostolac, Vimi-
nacium. Second or
early third century
A. D. National Mu-
seum Pančevo (after
M. Mirković 1986,
no.110)



Fig. 2

*A marble stela of M. Valerius Speratus and his wife. National Museum
Pančevo (photo: S. Pilipović)*



Fig. 3 Relief depicting Rape of Europa. Marble tombstone of the Enii. Second or third century A. D. Found in the village of Šempetru, Celeia (after J. Kastelic 1997, Pl. 8.1)



Fig. 4 Relief depicting Rape of Europa. Marble. Found at Micia (after L. Bianchi 1985, fig. 123)



Fig. 5 Relief depicting Rape of Europa. Found at Novae (after S. Parnicki-Pudelko 1974, Pl. XXX, fig. 14)



Fig. 6 Relief depicting Rape of Europa. Marble. Found in the Marići village, near Kotor (after I. Pušić 1998, fig. 1)



Fig. 7 Relief depicting Rape of Europa and Three Graces. A lead sarcophagus found at Selište, Viminacium. National Museum Požarevac (photo: S. Pilipović)



Fig. 8 Relief depicting Rape of Europa. Marble. Late third or early fourth century A. D. National Museum Niš (after M. Tomović 1993, fig. 47A)



Fig. 9 Relief depicting Pluto and Persephone on the throne. Marble. Late second or early third century A. D. Found at Kostolac, Viminacium (photo: S. Pilipović)



Fig. 10 Rape of Europa. Tomb of the Nasonii. Second century A. D. Drawing by P. S. Bartoli and G. P. Bellori 1680, pl. XVII, p. 48 (after O. W. de Croizant 1995, fig. 24)

БОЖАНСКА ОТМИЦА КАО ФУНЕРАЛНИ МОТИВ: ПРИМЕР СТЕЛЕ ИЗ ВИМИНАЦИЈУМА

Резиме

Тема божанске отмице у декоративном програму надгробног споменика *M. Valerius Speratus* и његове супруге из Виминацијума присутна је на композицијама Отмице Коре и Отмице Европе. Стела је на основу натписа различито датована, од времена Хадријанове владавине све до времена Септимија Севера.

Веома богат иконографски програм виминацијумске стеле може да се сагледа на различитим плановима. Приказане божанске отмице могу да се разумеју као ликовни симболи за пут душе након смрти. Обе отмице повод су за сједињење бесмртног божанства и смртне жене, хијерогамију, односно за момент апотеозе или обожења смртног бића. На следећем нивоу симболизам ових отмица може да се сагледа у њиховом конкретнијем фунералном контексту. Бројни су класични текстови као и епитафи који указују да се овај прелазни моменат у животу жене, из девојаштва у зрело доба који отмица заправо и приказује, изједначава са прелазним моментом из живота у смрт. Још од VI века ст. е. епитафи идентификују умрлу девојку са отетом Кором или Европом и чине основу за разумевање ових односа који су наглашени и постојањем споменика са представом отмице Европе подигнутих умрлим женама. Овај однос између момента отмице и смрти често је исказан кроз однос самог чина венчања и чина сахране. На ликовном плану посебно је наглашен приказом вела изнад главе отете девојке који указује на покров, односно земаљску смрт, али и на чин *hieros gamos*, односно на вео којим невеста покрива своју главу. На виминацијумској стели он је приказан изнад главе Европе и у не тако експлицитној форми у представи отмице Коре.

Успостављањем везе између континента и феничанске принцезе, митолошка фигура Европе може да буде сагледана и у њеном геополитичком контексту. Изражавање идеје *Грци на супрот Варвара* може се транспоновати и на Римљане и зато представља нови ниво могућег значења ове првобитно фунералне теме. Визуелизована на фунералним споменицима дуж дунавског лимеса, представа отмице Европе не може да потврди, али свакако може да укаже на нови ниво разумевања ове теме.

Композиције отмице Европе и отмице Персефоне нису убичајено представљане заједно на сепулкралним споменицима. Зато је изузетно важно споменути блискост програма виминацијумског споменика са гробницом *Nasonii*, чије је сликарство познато само са акварела *Pietra Santi Bartolija* и цртежа *P. Bellori*-ја са краја XVII века. Овде су предстве *Отмице Европе* и *Отмице Персефоне* представљене на наспрамним странама гробнице. Аналогије у програму виминацијумске стеле и сликарства гробнице *Nasonii*, два просторно веома удаљена споменика постављају питање могућних додирних ових простора. Композиције ових божанских отмица нису толико иконографски блиске колико је важна чињеница да заједно чине део сложеног иконографског програма.

Утицаји који су долазили из Италије, посредством културних веза између римских провинција дунавске области овим примером се само наглашавају. Виминацијумске радионице су изгледа биле веома добро географски смештене да искористе токове ових културних струјања. Са друге стране изузетно је важна и колонизација грчког становништва, које је чувало снажну хеленистичку традицију у којој су и настали митови о божанским отмицама, као и њихове најраније ликовне представе.

Изузетно сложен програм виминацијумског споменика, са представама божанских отмица Персефоне и Европе, не само у погледу стила у којем су ови рељефи изведени, већ и својим комплексним симболизмом свакако превазилази оквире простора на којем је овај споменик настао.