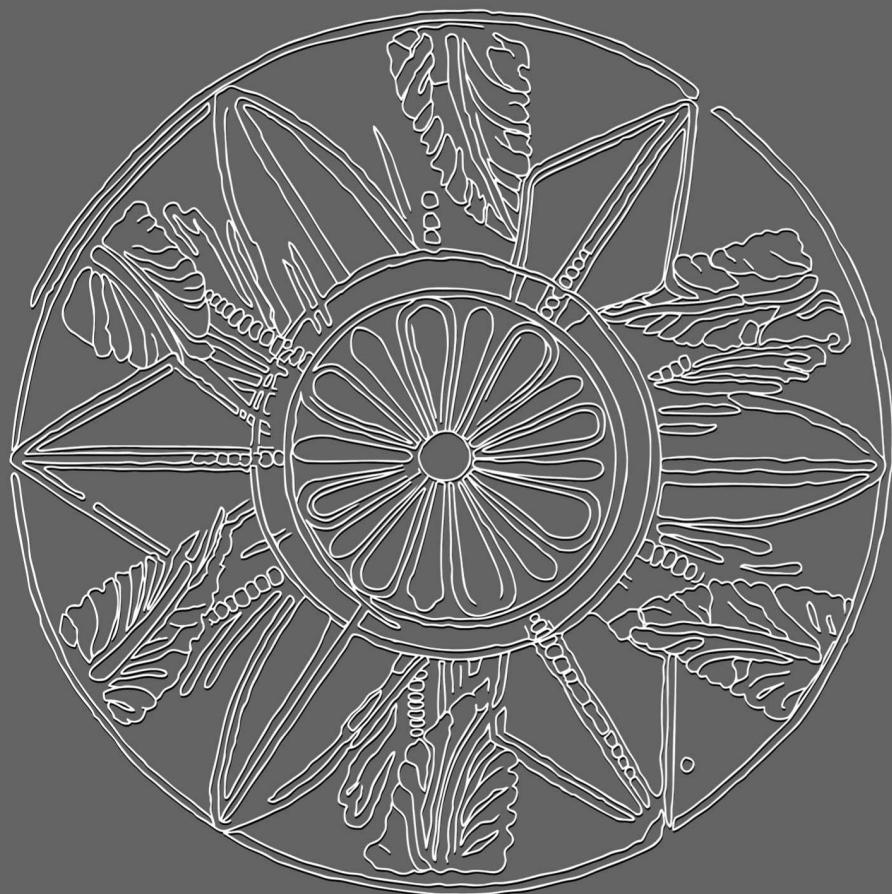


# IARPotHP

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR RESEARCH  
ON POTTERY OF THE HELLENISTIC PERIOD E. V.



Exploring the Neighborhood  
The Role of Ceramics in Understanding Place in the  
Hellenistic World

*Edited by Ivanka Kamenjarin and Marina Ugarković*

Wien 2020

# IARPotHP

International Association for Research on  
Pottery of the Hellenistic Period e. V.

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Volume 3

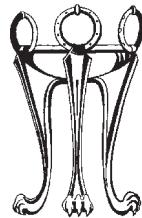
## EXPLORING THE NEIGHBORHOOD

**The Role of Ceramics in Understanding Place in the Hellenistic World**

Proceedings of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Conference of IARPotHP  
Kaštela, June 2017, 1<sup>st</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup>

Edited by Ivanka Kamenjarin and Marina Ugarković

Offprint



PHOIBOS VERLAG, WIEN 2020

# The Face from the Other Side

Boris Kavur – Martina Blečić Kavur – Branko Kirigin

*Dedicated to Petar Popović*

## Abstract

A fragmented terracotta depiction of a human head from Pharos, a Greek *apoikia* established in the 4<sup>th</sup> century B. C. in Stari Grad on the island of Hvar in Croatia, exhibits a peculiar facial morphology – the bushy moustache allows us to interpret the image as a representation of an archetypal barbarian of the old world, i. e. as a Celt. This artefact, discovered in an archaeological context from the 4<sup>th</sup> century B. C., is an example *par excellence* of how people and ideas moved – in this case, from the other side of civilization, from the northern part of the Apennine Peninsula. This barbarian stands with his physical materiality as a metaphor for the horror or destruction imposed upon the *civilized world* when people like him moved across the territory of northern Italy in large numbers. Feared and admired for their bravery and loyalty, they were soon incorporated into political plans and agendas of the rulers of the region as Celtic mercenaries became a major component of the military potential of the Hellenic states and warlords. Adopted by Hellenistic mythology, the Celts were presented with an origin that placed them inside the indefinite position between civilization's builders and destroyers.

## The discovery

A crucial area of archaeological thought has always been the relationship between people and things – and things were central to the endeavour. Traditionally, interpretations focused on questions of chronology, function and to a lesser degree styles in which objects were produced. Consequently, in the long run, this chronologically oriented positivist archaeology did not contribute substantially to broader forms of social analyses and historical interpretations of the past. In addition, unfortunately, it did not, especially prehistoric archaeology, develop a clear conceptual framework on how to observe an object of art. This way observing, along with the focus on style, although embedded into different regional and chronological traditions, provided a way to modestly enter the worlds and minds of past populations by formulating hypotheses about their aesthetical perceptions of the world surrounding them. By looking through their eyes, we are not only able to understand what they saw but can also understand how they saw it.

These items of artistic production, these “buried treasures”, directly address our archaeological imagination and provoke the greatest shifts in our understanding of the past. By performing systematic research on them, archaeologists have for decades focused on identifying items of surplus value interpreted as trade goods or “exotica”. This was done to show how long-distance trade and entanglement of cultures linked the worlds of prehistoric Europe and Mediterranean cultures. Historical goals behind this approach were archaeological supplementations of events described in historical sources, while the archaeological motives were demonstrations of these processes focusing on the involved actors and their agendas. The research focus, evolving from material culture studies, shifted from identification of items to recognition of major actors and interpretation of their economic and social roles.

It often happens that the most unexpected discoveries appear in the most unexpected places – one such discovery was a fragment of terracotta discovered in 2013 during the excavations conducted by the Museum of Stari Grad on the territory of Remete Garden inside the perimeter of ancient Pharos. This Greek *apoikia* was established in the early 4<sup>th</sup> century B. C. at modern Stari Grad on the Adriatic island of Hvar in Croatia. It was one of the last Greek settle-



Fig. 1: The geographical position of Stari Grad on the island of Hvar in Dalmatia (Croatia) (graphic by Martina Blečić Kavur).

ments established in the central and western Mediterranean<sup>1</sup>, and is perhaps the most important archaeological site/historical source for illustrating relations between the autochthonous populations and the process of Greek colonization in central Dalmatia.

Unfortunately, our understanding of the settlement's plan is very limited since, according to estimates, only 1.5 % of the 10 hectare *asti* of the city was excavated – mostly during rescue excavations<sup>2</sup>. This sensational discovery was made in the lowest level of a small trench located between the city walls, which were probably constructed at the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> century B. C., and a public cistern of the Greek city. The erection of fortifications (3<sup>rd</sup> century B. C.) seems to have destroyed the older pottery workshops. The lowest cultural layer (SJ 470), a thin dark brown, was deposited upon an uneven bedrock. Although uncovered over a relatively small area, it featured 74 fragments of coarse hand thrown pottery (mostly pots) and 12 fragments of imported Greek amphorae, cooking pots and fine dishes. The latest date to the 4<sup>th</sup> century B. C. and chronologically link the period of deposition to events from the period when the city was founded. Currently, the excavators are interpreting the finds as a result of activities before the Greeks' arrival – this was probably some kind of levelling and groundwork for the beginning of Greek building activities on the location of an abandoned autochthonous settlement.<sup>3</sup>

### The face

Among other ceramic finds, a fragment of a terracotta face of only 6.5 cm in height was discovered. After observing the backside and the breakage pattern, we interpreted the terracotta fragment as a human head that was once a part of a larger sculpture. It features a distinct facial morphology: it depicts a male face with its main characteristics preserved, and the face is broken

<sup>1</sup> KIRIGIN 2006; CABANES 2008.

mete Garden and house is discussed in KIRIGIN – BARBA-

<sup>2</sup> KIRIGIN 2018, 397.

RIĆ 2019.

<sup>3</sup> The complex treatment of the lowest layers at Re-



Fig. 2: The archaeological site of Remete Garden in Stari Grad (photo by Rafael Janić).

off above the left eyebrow. The eyelids are accentuated, slightly framing bulging eyes. A damaged narrow nose widens towards the nostrils and marks the central position of the face. The lips are narrow, tightly jammed, and their outside corners are pulled down, and above the upper lip is a modelled moustache stretching slightly across the mouth. Below the lower lip is preserved a part of a short goat-shaped beard rendered in the same manner as the moustache – the textured effect is created with a series of long vertical V-profiled incisions. On the left of the damaged part of the beard, on the right cheek, it is clear that the sculpture was formed from a ceramic core to which modelled details were subsequently applied. The forehead is broken off above the right eyebrow and a crack descends obliquely below the left one. As can be seen on the preserved part above the right eye, the eyebrows are accentuated and form two arches which fuse into the nose. Despite how prominent the eyebrows are, due to a shallow horizontal depression in their centre, they are more visible on the right eye. By observing the inside of the head, we can see that the left side of the face is partially broken off. We can further conclude that the central part was probably hollow, while the right and lower side were originally applied to the rest of the figure.

Based on the facial morphology, especially the thick moustache, which a type that does not occur in the Late Classical Greek sculptural tradition but is known from contemporary authors not only as a major fashion, but also as a cultural trait designating barbarians from Central Europe, we can interpret this fragmentary terracotta as a Celt. We have to acknowledge that this daring statement brings forward several subsequent problems arising from the interpretation. First, Hellenistic terracotta figurine production did fabricate images of Celtic warriors of that time. Standardized in form and iconography, they had accentuated attributes of their identity and trade – in the basic form they were depicted mostly naked, wrapped in a long hooded cloak, belted with a long sword and carrying a large shield<sup>4</sup>. These were not realistic images of Celtic mercenaries present across the Mediterranean, but canonical images of foreigners equipped with easily identifiable attributes indicating their origins, trade and status within Hellenistic society. Such figures were produced in accordance with Hellenistic technological standards – they were mass-produced in moulds. Due to their technology of production, they were small, thin and hol-

<sup>4</sup> BIENKOWSKI 1908; COELLO 2008.

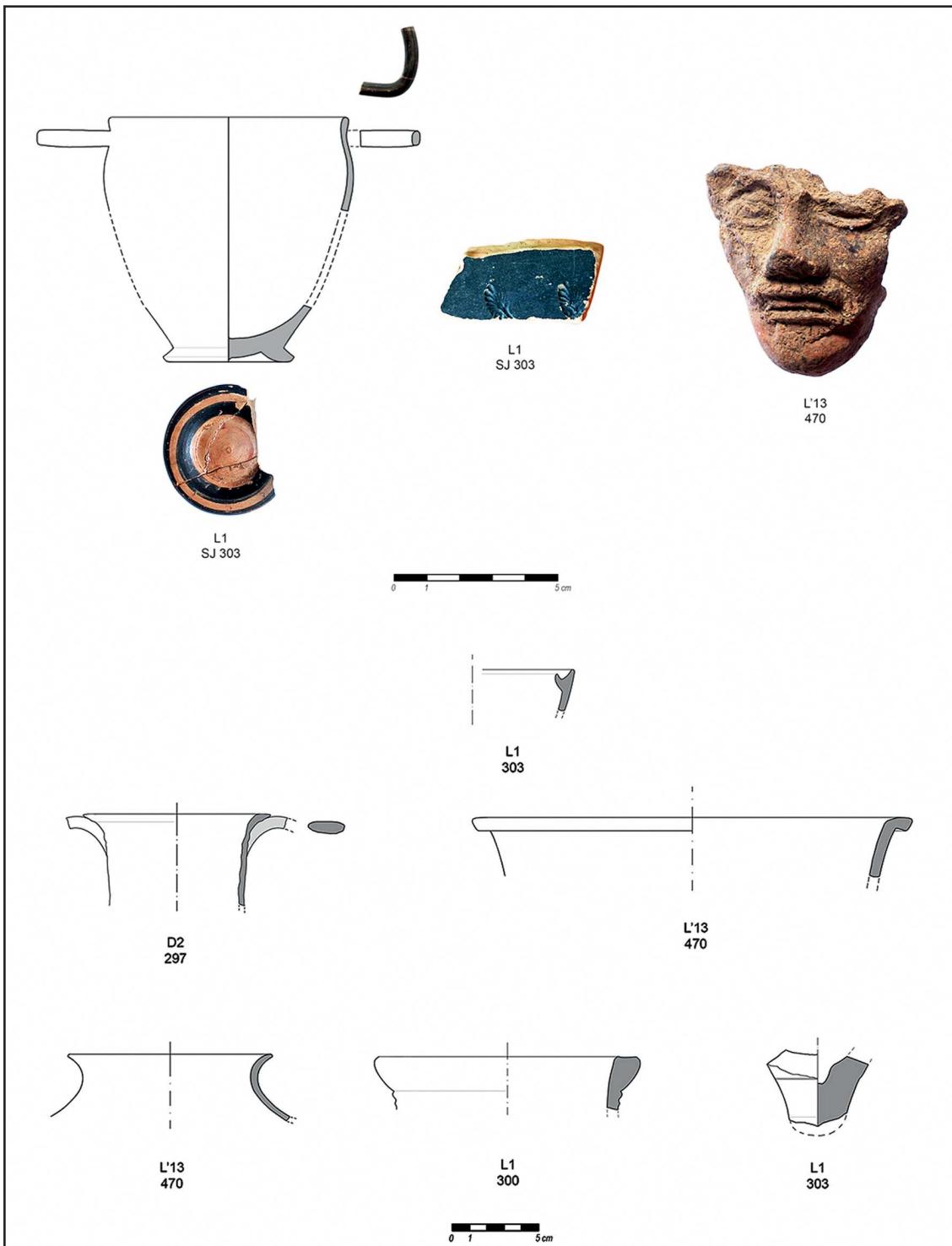


Fig. 3: The lowest layers with imported pottery and a fragment of a male terracotta (drawings by Porin Kukoc, photos by Andrea Devlahović, graphic by Martina Blečić Kavur).

low. To facilitate that kind of production, they were made from fine-grained purified clay. The most interesting fact of the Pharos terracotta is the clay from which it was modelled – it is coarse and includes large amounts of temper. This makes it dramatically different from other contemporary Mediterranean ceramic sculptures. Because of that, many large sand grains are protruding through the partially visible polished surface, thus creating an irregular surface and texture of the

statue. This becomes even more visible on the back side where a larger limestone piece is protruding from the surface.

Larger terracotta depictions of the Celts appeared approximately a century later after the initial production of small figurines. Hellenistic realism had also influenced Roman production of larger terracotta groups in forms of friezes or pediment decorations of temples, based on Etruscan tradition<sup>5</sup>. Complex compositions of historical or mythological narratives presented the Celts with characteristic visual features, such as their disorderly hairstyle and moustaches. Perhaps the most renowned is the terracotta frieze from Civitalba (Sassoferato). Although dated not earlier than the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C., numerous figures form the motive of Galatomachia celebrating the Roman conquest of Celtic northern Italy and depict the Celts as known from historical sources and popular imagery of Late Hellenistic artistic traditions<sup>6</sup>.

From that perspective, the sculpture from Stari Grad differs from both groups of images – it is larger than the small contemporary Greek terracotta, and it is too static, even archaic, in comparison to younger Roman friezes. Since its static facial expression exhibits several archaicizing elements known from Etruscan art, we can propose another possibility for its interpretation. Taking into consideration its size, stylistic elements of the depiction and the coarse clay from which it was produced, we can assume that the face is a fragment of an architectural decoration, an antefix depicting a Celtic barbarian. Such an interpretation could be considered less likely since, until now, only a few floral decorated antefixes from public buildings in Pharos were discovered<sup>7</sup>, and such motive is unknown from the rest of the Greek *oikoumene*, but ...

### The Story

Economic and cultural contacts linking “prehistoric” communities from central and southeastern Europe and “cultures” of the central and eastern Mediterranean can be traced back to the Early Iron Age<sup>8</sup>. They were not only illustrated by luxurious artefacts from workshops of the western Mediterranean discovered in contexts in central Europe, but also by the presence of artefacts demonstrating the opposite movement of goods, people and consequently cultural influences. For example, in Greek and Sicilian sanctuaries as well as sanctuaries on the borders of these cultural zones, elements of mostly female attire, but sometimes also of weaponry have been discovered<sup>9</sup>. These contacts persisted for centuries and are today not only readable in the archaeological record and scarce historical sources, but they also entered the realm of mythology when Greek authors tried to incorporate Celtic societies into their mythological organization of the world<sup>10</sup>.

In the middle of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, the composition of votive depositions changed – in contrast to mostly female attire and jewellery in the previous periods, weapons significant for the “Celtic” production made their appearance in sanctuaries across the Italic Peninsula, the Balkans and the Aegean<sup>11</sup>. These were specific artefacts considered as status symbols and loaded with symbolism. This is interpreted as a result of the turmoil in 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C. when the Celts from northern Italy entered the Mediterranean as mercenaries, thus becoming the “Adriatic Celts”. These Celts were active in the south of the Apennine Peninsula and were dispatched across the Adriatic and actively involved in cultural, economic and political processes in the Greek world<sup>12</sup>. When introduced into the Mediterranean world, the Celts became a menace and an object of fascination for ancient civilizations. Accounts of them focused on their physical characteristics as well as gear and military aptitude. They were elevated to the level of symbols – symbols of military audacity and ferocity. In the popular culture of the interlinked Hellenic world,

5 HOLLIDAY 1994.

6 RANKIN 1987.

7 Cf. JELIČIĆ RADONIĆ – RAUTER PLANČIĆ 1995, 75.  
103. 107.

8 BRIDGMAN 2005.

9 VERGER 2003; VERGER 2011.

10 BOULOGNE 2005.

11 KAVUR – BLEČIĆ KAVUR 2014; KAVUR – BLEČIĆ KAVUR 2018.

12 KAVUR 2017.



Fig. 4: The Pharos head – male terracotta head (photo by Andrea Devlahović).

these symbols were consequently designating mercenaries that were appearing in bigger and bigger numbers in the Mediterranean<sup>13</sup>.

Furthermore, it seems that the majority of isolated Celtic artefacts were discovered in sanctuaries of the Greek world in a consistent chronological horizon encompassing the end of the Early and the beginning of the Middle La Tène period. Traditionally, this was considered as something linked to the events of 279 and 278 B.C., but recently authors started to liberate their interpretations from historical determinism and began interpreting this momentum, based on the understanding of contexts of discoveries, in different political and economic circumstances<sup>14</sup>. It became fashionable to use important artefacts of surplus economic and aesthetical value, which were produced in Mediterranean economic centres and diffused through centuries-old trade and migration routes back to Central Europe, to demonstrate the existence of diplomatic communication as well as economic links between social elites from the Mediterranean (especially Greece and ancient Macedonia) and central, eastern and southeast Europe<sup>15</sup>. On the other hand, the presence of these artefacts was interpreted as a reflection of direct migrations of individuals coming from and returning to “prehistoric” Europe – a complex processes linked to the mechanisms of recruiting and using mercenaries from the Celtic world. The physical presence of these mercenaries and their identities were incorporated into the broader ideological and religious framework of the Hellenistic world and its marginal territories. A process that was followed by the inclusion of their reductive and standardized image into iconographic programs of Mediterranean civilizations.

Traditionally, these processes are contemplated within a broader scope of historical events – the employment of Celtic mercenaries was mentioned for the first time in the years 369–368 B.C., when Dionysius the Elder from Sicily dispatched them to assist Sparta fighting the Thebans. However, the discovery from Stari Grad could document that the use of Celtic mercenaries started earlier in the period, when Dionysus I of Syracuse assisted the colonists from

<sup>13</sup> PÉRÉ – NOGUÈS 2006; PÉRÉ – NOGUÈS 2007.

KAVUR 2018.

<sup>14</sup> BLEČIĆ KAVUR – KAVUR 2010; KAVUR – BLEČIĆ

<sup>15</sup> BLEČIĆ KAVUR – KAVUR 2018.

Cycladic Paros in establishing a colony in the Adriatic, especially since these were most probably deposed oligarchs from the ranks of Spartan exiles<sup>16</sup>.

Such a strategic decision of Dionysius should be considered within a broader Sicilian political context – after securing the authority on the eastern part of Sicily, he oriented his imperial ambitions to the Adriatic. It was a part of a larger project in which he planned to build up a maritime empire in the Adriatic. This was a period when Syracuse was positioned in the centrum of Greek culture and politics – Plato resided in Sicily and Dionysius created a plan to rewrite the Greek tradition. By creating a mythological past and origins in the misty periods when gods and heroes roamed the earth, which included the prehistoric people surrounding the Mediterranean into the Greek oikoumene on a symbolical level.

Although there is a problem with directly recognizing the role of Syracusan Greeks in the founding of Stari Grad, we can see their direct active role in the turmoil following the establishment of the colony. A year later, in 384 B. C., the settlement was under attack by the autochthonous populations, and it managed to survive due to the assistance of the Syracusan fleet. To shed light on the problem, we have to observe the process in a broader sense, especially the events two decades later. In the years 369–368 B.C., Dionysius sent Celtic mercenaries to help Sparta in its battles against the Thebans<sup>17</sup>, and the short description of the action in Xenophon's *Hellenica* is the first incontestable description of the Celts in ancient sources<sup>18</sup>. However, he probably established contacts with them at least some 20 years before, since it was recently assumed that it was Dionysius who coordinated them in the military action that finally led to the sack of Rome<sup>19</sup>. Since the Celts in the next decades became active as mercenaries of Syracuse in their campaigns against Kroton and Locri<sup>20</sup> and were crucial during the campaign against Corsica, when Sardinia and Pyrgi were also taken<sup>21</sup>, we can be pretty sure that they were involved in the Adriatic campaigns and in the rescue operations of 384 B. C. on the island of Hvar.

### Conclusion

The presented example of material culture, a fragmentary terracotta head discovered in an archaeological context dated to the 4<sup>th</sup> century B. C. in Stari Grad on Hvar in Dalmatia, is an excellent illustration of the movements of people and ideas that became incorporated into iconographic programs of ancient imperial and colonial ambitions. The Celts from northern Italy who served Sicilian Syracuse came from the “other side” of civilization<sup>22</sup>. Finds from Stari Grad are, on the level of interpretation, the point of intersection between the written history of the Mediterranean and the silent world of prehistoric communities, communities used and abused in this game of thrones. Coming from the northern part of the Apennine peninsula and included in the iconography of Greek culture, this barbarian stands with his physical materiality as a metaphor for the horror and destruction imposed upon the civilized world when his kind traversed the territory of northern Italy in large numbers. Feared and admired for their bravery and loyalty, these Celts were soon incorporated into political plans and agendas of the rulers of the region – mercenaries became a major component of the military power of Greek states and warlords. Adopted by Hellenistic mythology, the Celts were presented with an origin that placed them inside the indefinite position between civilization's builders and destroyers<sup>23</sup>.

The terracotta head presented here, interpreted as an image of a Celt, and its stratigraphic position as well as the interpretation of the context within the building history of Pharos, provides numerous new insights into the initial phases of Greek colonization of Adriatic islands. Newly established colonies were erected in a territory where economic and cultural contacts had

<sup>16</sup> CASTIGLIONI 2008.

<sup>20</sup> SZABÓ 1991, 333; BOUZEK 2002, 55.

<sup>17</sup> TREISTER 1996, 245; SORDI 2002, 496; OCCHI-PINTI 2006, 79.

<sup>21</sup> SORDI 2002, 494.

<sup>18</sup> FREEMAN 1996, 20.

<sup>22</sup> BRIDGMAN 2005; GRUEN 2011.

<sup>19</sup> ZUFFA 1978, 139; BRIDGMAN 2003, 49.

<sup>23</sup> LAMPINEN 2008; GUZMÁN ARMARIO 2011.

already been taking place. Most importantly, the colonists were not only collaborating in these processes with the regional populations, but were in specific situations also supported with strategic relief coming not only from their cities of origin but also from superpowers trying to further their global geopolitical interests. Consequently, mercenaries coming from *the other side* were not only audacious soldiers supporting the imperialistic interests of Sicilian Greeks, but also tamed barbarians who became a symbol of Greek cultural superiority, showing that it was indeed possible to tame and include such people into political and military strategies<sup>24</sup>.

Observing the artefact in its context, we can assume that it was a specific derivation of material culture that should be linked to the Greek Sicilian, and not Pharian, heritage. With its presence, it introduces two conceptual novelties and largely influences the historical interpretation of the discussed events. First of all, we can assume a stronger connection between the Celts from northern Italy and the policy of Syracuse in the decade before the establishment of Pharos. Contrary to what was previously assumed, we can claim that the Celts were introduced into Greek visual culture long before the sack of Delphi in 297 B. C.<sup>25</sup>. Since it deviates in form, size and technology from later Hellenistic depictions of Celtic mercenaries but includes all the characteristics needed for a positive identification, we can propose that the find from Stari Grad presents the earliest depiction of a Celt discovered up to this time. And if the interpretation stating that this is a part of architectural decoration is correct, it is the only hint of the existence of a monumental and representative building in Pharos in the earliest phases of its establishment.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> COPPOLA 1988.

<sup>25</sup> PÉREZ RUBIO 2016, 150.

<sup>26</sup> This study was made as a part of the national pro-

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Editors in chief: Ivanka Kamenjarin and Marina Ugarković

Language editing: Sarah James (English), Marko Domljanović (English), Raffaella Da Vela (Italian), Lea Ivanovski (French), Ines Sučić (German)

Layout: Roman Jacobek, Phoibos Verlag

Cover photo: Dominik Žanić; photo p. 4: Mario Klaić; photo p. 6: Ivan Šuta

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Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über <http://dnb.ddb.de> abrufbar.

#### **Bibliographic information published by Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek**

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data is available in the Internet at <http://dnb.ddb.de>.

[www.phoibos.at](http://www.phoibos.at); [office@phoibos.at](mailto:office@phoibos.at)

Printed in the EU: Prime Rate Kft., Megyeri út 53, H-1044 Budapest

ISBN 978-3-85161-237-0 (printed edition)

ISBN 978-3-85161-238-7 (E-book, PDF)

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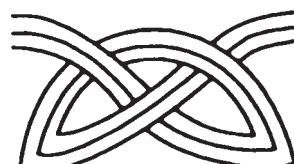
The Museum of the Town of Kaštela



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Institute of Archaeology, Zagreb

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INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY

Croatian Science Foundation (RED project)



University of Colorado Boulder,  
Kayden Research Grant



University of Colorado **Boulder**  
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**CERAMICA-Stiftung Basel**

The Museum of the Town of Kaštela, Institute of Archaeology, Zagreb and The Croatian Science Foundation's Roman Economy in Dalmatia: production, distribution, and demand in light of pottery workshops (RED, IP-11-2013-3973) supported both the conference and its proceedings. The printing of this publication was made possible by generous grants received from the University of Colorado Boulder (Kayden Research Grant) and CERAMICA-Stiftung Basel, as well by private donations.

### Private donors:

Guy Ackermann  
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