

From the Roman site of Micăsasa originates a relief vessel, which was found in 1978 by Dr. I. Mitrofan, who then published this piece several times, but without any analysis or comments¹.

Vessel (fig. 13 a-b) is a *pelike* made from two parts obtained within moulds, in a similar way like the lamps or terracotta figurines. The joining edges of the valves are along the vertical shape and can be easily observed. Vessel has an oval body with a short neck, a slightly reverted rim and a high base. It has also two twisted handles, attached to the neck and to the shoulder, with un-pierced hanging ears at the base of each handle. Its decoration consists in two scenes, the first one showing Dionysos from half-profile to the left, naked and with a *nebris* on his left shoulder. He is having a *pedum* with a curved snake-like end in his left hand, while with the right hand is picking up a bunch of grapes. The other scene is showing Pan, half turned to the right, with a *syrix* in his left hand and a *pedum* on his right shoulder. Both scenes are framed by grapevines with big bunches of grapes.

This type of mould-made vessels decorated with relief, was produced by workshops of Cnidus and was found mostly in the eastern part of the Roman Empire² (fig. 1). Usually are generic named *oinophoroi*, because of a vessel found somewhere in Italy and now in the collections of Johns Hopkins University, which has a graphitto written before firing on its base, saying *οἰνοφόρος*³ (fig. 2). In fact this term can be used only for the cylindrical amphorae, since those with an oval body are *pelikes*. Pottery workshops from Cnidus used to produce different forms of mould-made vessels, thus a typology was developed for them⁴.

Most of these vessels have a Dionysian decoration, but sometimes appear also Dioscuri, Aphrodite, Hermes, Eros or Aesculapius and Hygeia. Erotic scenes are another category of subjects⁵. Initially, because of their decoration and also because of some early discoveries from Alexandria, Egypt was considered to be their origin. Later, both Hausmann and Vulina observed that they have an identical fabric with the lamps, *thymiatarioi* and amphorae made at Cnidus⁶. Their first observations were then confirmed by the excavations at Cnidus⁷, as well as by the analyses of the finds from the same site⁸. The specific Cnidian fabric is characterized by a hard fine-grained orange to light grey clay, with some lime and small fragments of golden mica, and with a thin metallic-like, red to brown slip⁹.

The workshops from Cnidus begun to make different types of mould-made vessels from the 1st century AD, but *pelikes* and *oinophoroi* were made from the 2nd

¹ Mitrofan 1991, 176. fig. 10/2-3; 1995, 7, pl. 19/3 and 1996, 19, pl. 20/237

² Bailey 1972-73, 11-12; Hayes 1972, 411; Tortorici 1981, 234

³ Robinson 1909, 34, fig. 3

⁴ Hausmann 1954-55, 134-139; Tortorici 1981, 234-235; Mandel 1988, 100

⁵ Mandel 1988, 104-105

⁶ Hausmann 1954-55, 139; Vulina 1959, 81-83

⁷ Love 1967, 137 and 1974, 86

⁸ Bailey 1972-73, 12; Hayes 1972, 411-412

⁹ Hayes 1972, 411

until the middle of the 3rd century AD¹⁰. During the 3rd century, these vessels were copied by the workshops of Northern Africa, Pergamon and Athens, the last two producing them until early 4th century AD¹¹.

As it was mentioned above, these vessels were made in moulds, from two joined parts, including the handles and the base. All types are copying metal vessels as it is shown by some details like the un-pierced hanging ears of the piece found at Micăsasa. Their general aspect and especially the handles and decorations resemble the toreutic manner¹². A *pelike* found in Tunisia and now in the Louvre Museum, which was probably made in the same area, is far closer to the original metal vessel, preserving better the shape and also more details¹³.

The *pelike* from Micăsasa is decorated with a Satyr on one side and Pan on the opposite one. Another *pelike* found at *Burnum* (fig. 12) in present time Croatia is showing a similar Satyr on one side but the other one is decorated with a Dionysos leaned on a *thyrsos* with the left hand, while the right arm is lifted over his head. Near his left leg is a panther sitting with the front paws on a *kantharos*¹⁴. This image with Dionysos was used to decorate other types of mould-made vessels produced at Cnidus¹⁵.

The same Dionysos appear also on the cylindrical amphorae, but always together with a Silen, while on the opposite side are Pan and a Maenad with a *tympanon*. Two identical vessels, one discovered at *Arrabona*¹⁶ (fig. 7) and the second one with an unknown finding place and now in Metropolitan Museum New York¹⁷ (fig. 6) are showing Pan on the right side and the Maenad on the left, while on the vessel found at *Aegyssus*¹⁸ (fig. 8) they switch their position. It is very possible to be in fact the normal, original composition, since Pan looks to be half turned to the Maenad when is on the left side of the scene. This figure of Pan is identical with that one from the vessel found at Micăsasa. Maenad with *tympanon* and Pan is present also on a fragment found at Alexandria¹⁹ (fig. 4), while Pan alone appears on a fragment from Aquileia²⁰ and on another one from Athens Agora²¹ (fig. 3).

The other image from the vessel, the Satyr, is also present on cylindrical amphorae, this time always with a half-nude, dancing Maenad. Two vessels showing this scene are having on the opposite side the Maenad with *tympanon*, but this time with a Silen. One vessel was found at Greci in Dobrogea²² (fig. 11), while the other one was found probably around Rome, and is now in the British Museum²³ (fig. 10).

The same Maenad with a Satyr appears also on a fragment found at Cnidus and now in the British Museum²⁴ (fig. 9), as well as on another fragment now in Istanbul

¹⁰ Hayes 1972, 412; Bailey 1972-73, 12; Mandel 1988, 126-132

¹¹ Hayes 1972, 412

¹² Hausmann 1954-55, 125-126

¹³ Ghali-Kahil 1960, 79, fig. 7

¹⁴ Suić 1959/95-106, fig. 1-5; Brusić 1999, 39, fig. 71/460

¹⁵ Tortorici 1981, 234-235, pl. 120 and 164

¹⁶ Lovaz, 10, fig. 6/1

¹⁷ Hausmann 1956, 107, fig. 61

¹⁸ Tafrali 1930, 27-30

¹⁹ Breccia 1930, 48, fig. 38/6

²⁰ Heimberg 1976, 285

²¹ Robinson 1953, 110

²² Scorpan 1966, 31-35, fig. 6a-b

²³ Bailey 1979, 257, fig. 1-2

²⁴ Bailey 1979, 259, pl. 3/C2

Museum²⁵. From the same excavations at Cnidus came two other fragments, one showing the Maenad with *tympanon*, while the second one is showing Pan²⁶ (fig. 5). A fragment with the Satyr was discovered in the Liber Pater sanctuary at *Apulum*. The only one published mould was used for producing cylindrical amphorae and is showing the Maenad with *tympanon* and a Silen²⁷.

All these vessels are showing a quite reduced range of decorative elements, for both the cylindrical amphorae and *pelike*. First type of vessels are offering a larger space on their body, so they are always showing a combination of two figures, while *pelike* have only one figure on each side. This observation leads to the discussion upon the production process. It was argued that moulds have been made using a decorated archetype²⁸, but Bailey correctly presumed that they were made using an archetype decorated only with grapevines and then each valve was decorated using individual stamps for the central figures²⁹. In fact the best proof is the presence of identical figures alone or combined, sometimes in switched position, on both types of vessels. Some other details lead to the same conclusion, for example Satyr, who on cylindrical vessels is holding the Maenad when dancing, on *pelike* where is alone, is having a quite clumsy right hand picking up a bunch of grapes. Also the switched position of Pan on the vessels from *Arrabona* and New York is somehow a mistake since Pan should be on the left side, turned to the Maenad, in order to have a coherent composition, like on the vessel from *Aegyssus*.

All these vessels, through their shape and decoration are strongly connected with the Dionysian cult, being used for drinking wine. Cnidus was famous in fact not only for the sanctuary of Aphrodite *Euploia*, but also for its wine³⁰. Many vessels of this kind might have been made for the pilgrims coming to the sanctuary, or for the "tourists" coming to see Praxiteles' statue of Aphrodite, as was mentioned by Pliny (*Nat. Hist.* 36. 20). Their prototype must have been similar vessels made from metal.

It might have been very possible for the owner of the *pelike* from Micăsasa to be a member of a local *thiasos*, since the Dionysian *collegia* are known in Roman Dacia³¹. Besides this vessel, other two fragments were discovered in Dacia, both at *Apulum*. The first one is decorated with an Eros³², while the second one, which was discovered in the Liber Pater sanctuary is showing the inferior part of the scene depicting a Satyr.

The Dionysian images were very popular during the 2nd and 3rd century AD when these vessels were made. These scenes are close to those from the decoration of the Neo-Attic sarcophagi of the 2nd and 3rd century AD³³, but were used for many other objects, including those made from clay, like *ampulla* and *oscilla*³⁴. It is very possible for them to be used also for the initiation in the mysteries of Dionysos, a ceremony always ended with a banquet³⁵. In this case a drinking vessel bearing the images of the *thiasos* might have been a significant souvenir. We have to observe that, with the

²⁵ Hausmann 1954-55, 134

²⁶ Bailey 1979, 259, pl. 3/C3 and C5

²⁷ Froehner 1886, 78, pl. 93/7, 9

²⁸ Heimberg 1976, 251

²⁹ Bailey 1972-73, 12

³⁰ Love 1967, 135; Mandel 1988, 105

³¹ Schäfer, Diaconescu 1997, 196

³² Mandel 1988, 238

³³ Matz 1968, 20-23

³⁴ Mandel 1988, 71; Diaconescu 2000, 249 and 270

³⁵ Turcan 1996, 311-312

exception of Cnidus, all these vessels are scattered across the Empire in a small number, so most probably they were not a matter of bulk trade, but more like a personal brought, as a souvenir. Even their narrow mouth and the often presence of hanging ears, as well as the shapes with two handles indicates their use as personal drinking flagons. In this case, their owners were probably members of Dionysian mystery cult, maybe some of them even initiated in Cnidus or other centers of Asia Minor, where the cult was very strong and popular. They brought these vessels back home and kept them as important souvenirs of their beliefs. Many of these vessels were found in graves, joining their owners in the after-life, maybe as a sign of their belief in the re-born Dionysos.

Catalogue

Pelike

1. Micăsasa (Cluj Napoca Museum); inv. no. V 43834 (fig. 13 a – b).

Reddish-brown fabric with red slip; H = 15 cm.

Satyr shown in semi-profile, with a *nebris* on his left shoulder and a *pedum* with a snake-like end on his left hand, while his right hand is picking a bunch of grapes; Pan with a *syrinx* in his left hand and a *pedum* on his right shoulder; both scenes are framed by grapevines.

Literature: Mitrofan 1991, 176, fig. 10/2-3; Mitrofan 1995, 7, pl. 19/3; Mitrofan 1996, 19, pl. 20/237.

2. Burnum (Zadar Museum); inv. no. N 807 (fig. 12).

Reddish- brown fabric; H = 17, 3 cm.

Dionysus half-nude, leaned upon a *thyrsos* with his left hand and the right hand lifted over his head, near his left leg is a panther sitting over a *kantharos*; Satyr shown in semi-profile, with a *pedum* with a snake-like end on his left shoulder while his right hand is picking a bunch of grapes; both scenes are framed by grapevines.

Literature: Suić 1959, 95, fig. 1-5; Mandel 1988, 237; Brusić 1999, 126, 71/460 and 115/460.

3. Apulum – Liber Pater sanctuary.

Light red fabric with red slip; H = 8,5 cm (fragment).

Legs of a Satyr half turned to the left; scene is framed by grapevines.

Literature: unpublished.

Oinophoroi

4. Greci (Constanța Museum); inv. no. 3587 (fig. 11).

Yellowish-red fabric with traces of red slip; H = 22 cm.

A Maenad dancing with a Satyr who is having a *nebris* on his left shoulder and a *pedum* in his left hand; another Maenad with a *tympanon* in her right hand, dancing with a Silen wearing a short tunica and trousers, and holding a *thyrsos* in his left hand; both scenes are framed by grapevines.

Literature: Scorpan 1966, 31-35, fig. 6 a, b; Rădulescu, Pontica 7/1974, 317, fig. 1 a, b; Heimberg 1976, 285; Mandel 1988, 232.

5. Rome (?) (British Museum London); inv. no. 1849.6-20.8 (fig. 10).

Red fabric; H = 24.5 cm.

A Maenad dancing with a Satyr who is having a *nebris* on his left shoulder and a *pedom* in his left hand; another Maenad with a *tympanon* in her right hand, dancing with a Silen wearing a short tunica and trousers, and holding a *thyrsos* in his left hand; both scenes are framed by grapevines.

Literature: Walters 1896, 267, no. G186; Ferri 1933-34, 16, figs. 12/3 and 13/4; Hausmann 1954/55, 133, fig. 48; Hayes 1972, 411, fig. 22/a; Heimberg 1976, 285; Bailey 1979, 257, fig. 1-2; Tortorici 1981, 234, pl. 164/3a-b; Mandel 1988, 232; Hayes 1997, 72, fig. 26.

6. Aegyssus (Tulcea Museum); (fig. 8).

Red fabric; H = 23 cm.

Dionysos half naked, with the right arm over his head and the left hand leaned upon a Silen; Pan with a *syrinx* in his left hand and a *pedom* on his right shoulder, half turned to a Maenad with a *tympanon*; both scenes are framed by grapevines.

Literature: Tafrahi 1930, 27; Ferri 1933-34, 16, fig. 13/5-7; Rădulescu 1974, 319; Mandel 1988, 233, pl. 25/K6.

7. Unknown provenience (New York Metropolitan Museum); (fig. 6)

Reddish-brown fabric.

Dionysos half naked, with the right arm over his head and the left hand leaned upon a Silen; a Maenad with a *tympanon* and Pan half turned to the right side, with a *syrinx* in his left hand and a *pedom* on his right shoulder; both scenes are framed by grapevines.

Literature: Hausmann 1956, 107, fig. 61; Heimberg 1976, 285; Bailey 1979, 260.

8. Arrabona (Győr Museum); (fig. 7).

Red fabric.

Dionysos half naked, with the right arm over his head and the left hand leaned upon a Silen; a Maenad with a *tympanon* and Pan half turned to the right side, with a *syrinx* in his left hand and a *pedom* on his right shoulder; both scenes are framed by grapevines.

Literature: Lovaz 1931, 10, fig. 6/1; Heimberg 1976, 285; Bailey 1979, 260.

9. Cnidus (British Museum London); inv. no. 1859. 12 – 26. 510. (fig. 9).

Red fabric; fragment.

Bodies of the dancing Maenad and the Satyr with a *pedom* on his left hand.

Literature: Newton 1863, 441-443; Bailey 1979, 259, pl. 3/C2.

10. Cnidus (British Museum London); inv. no. 1859. 12 – 265.

Red fabric; fragment.

Upper half of a Maenad with a *tympanon* on her right hand.

Literature: Newton 1863, 441-443; Bailey 1979, 259, pl. 3/C3.

11. Cnidus (British Museum London); inv. no. 1905. 7 – 14. 2. (fig. 5).

Red fabric; fragment.

Pan with a *syrinx* in his left hand and a *pedom* on his right shoulder, half turned to a Maenad, with only the garment preserved.

Literature: Newton 1863, 441-443; Bailey 1979, 259, pl. 3/C5.

12. Aquileia (Aquileia Museum)
Red fabric; fragment.
Body of Pan.
Literature: Bonis 1952; Heimberg 1976, 285; Bailey 1979, 260.
13. Athens Agora (Museum of Athens); inv. no. P 19171. (fig. 3).
Red fabric; fragment
Pan with a *syrinx* on his left hand.
Literature: Robinson 1953, 110; Hausmann 1954-55, 134, fig. 47/1; Ghali-Kahil 1960, 79, fig. 6; Heimberg 1976, 285; Bailey 1979, 260.
14. Alexandria (Benachi Collection Athen); inv. no. MP 1590 and 1592.
Red fabric; fragments
Maenad.
Literature: Hausmann 1954-55, 134, fig. 49; Heimberg 1976, 285.
15. Alexandria (Museum of Alexandria); (fig. 4).
Red fabric; fragment.
Maenad and Pan , framed by grapevines.
Literature: Breccia 1930, 48, fig. 38/6.
16. Unknown place in Asia Minor (Istanbul Museum)
Fragment.
Maenad with Satyr.
Literature: Hausmann 1954-55, 134; Heimberg 1976, 285.
17. Unknown place in Asia Minor (J. Gréau Collection)
Fragmentary mould for the scene with a Maenad and a Silen.
Literature: Froehner 1886, 78, pl. 93/7, 9.

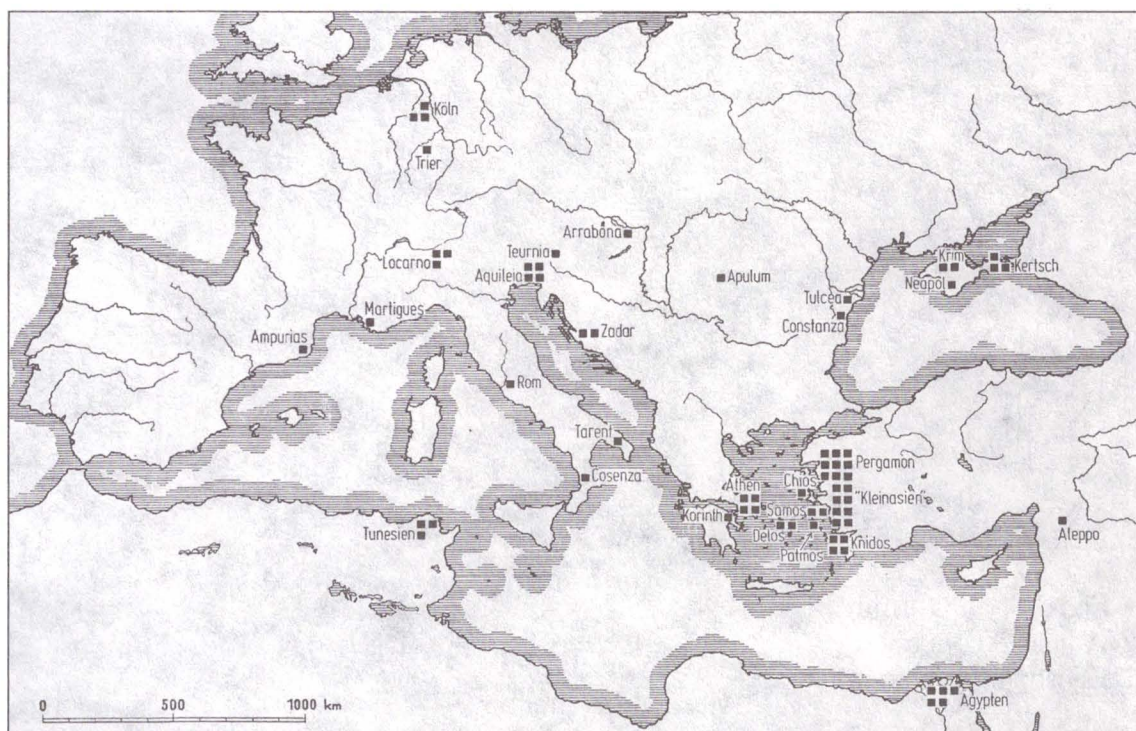


Fig. 1 – Distribution of the Cnidian relief vessels (after Heimberg 1976)



Fig. 2 – Vessel with the graphitto *οἴνοφορος* (after Robinson 1909)



Fig. 3 – Vessel from Athens Agora (after Hausmann 1954-55)



Fig. 4 – Vessel from Alexandria (after Breccia 1930)



Fig. 5 – Vessel from Cnidus (after Bailey 1979)



Fig. 6 – Vessel from New York (after Hausmann 1956)



Fig. 7 – Vessel from Arrabona (after Lovaz 1931)



Fig. 8 – Vessel from Aegyssus (after Mandel 1988)



Fig. 9 – Vessel from Cnidus
(after Bailey 1979)



Fig. 10 – Vessel from British Museum
(after Hayes 1997)



Fig. 11 – Vessel from Greci (after Scorpan 1966)



Fig. 12 Vessel from *Burnum* (after Brusić 1999)



Fig. 13 a b Vessel from *Micăsasa*

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