THE BRONZE STATUETTE FROM VAN AT THE LOUVRE MUSEUM

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The bronze statuette discovered in the basin of Lake Van in 1872 currently is exhibited at the Louvre Museum.

It is an exclusive value in the Armenian music history. The bronze figurine is of 6.5 cm. height and introduces a sitting man playing wind instrument. This statuette depicting a musician is one of ancient specimens excavated in the Armenian Highland¹.

The figurine has a “crest-like” hairdo (or a hat) with a small hole in the upper part (0,3 cm.). It is notable that this bronze statuette (dated to the 2nd millennium B.C. among the exhibits of the Louvre Museum) belongs to a number of statuettes discovered in different locations of Armenia which are dated to the 3rd-1st millennia B.C. The human statuettes of almost the same proportions (6,5-8 cm.) and of a similar and different functional types (of clay and metal) have been discovered in different regions of the Armenian Highland. The discovered statuettes have been studied by Kh. Samuelyan, Erv. Lalayan, A.A. Zakharov, S. V. Bessonov, S. Barkhudarian, S. G. Goyan, S.A.Easyan, Zh.Kachatryan and others. Archaeological data testifies to that Armenian musical instruments have been known since the 3rd-2nd millennia.

2 Joueur de flute assis, MNB-938. The Famous Armenian writer Raffi (Hakob Melik-Hakobian) (1835-1888) noted in his book Kaytzer [Sparks] (1883–84) that Armenian peasants in the vicinities of Van and Rusahinili found copper artifacts including statuettes of humans (“copper humans”). All these archaeological finds were stored in the Museum of Varaga Monastery (Գարգաճ, բուրգերձ դիոսկուրոս, հ. 6, "Խաղարք", բուհակ 1986, էջ 64).

3 Generally, big experience of making clay statuettes was at the basis of creating bronze statuettes. The art of creating anthropomorphic clay figurines comes from the Eneolithic epoch in the Armenian Highland. S.Esayan noted: “Human image had a significant place in ancient art of the Armenian Highland. It is introduced by not big but valuable specimens with large and small plastic and perfect images of hunting and agricultural rituals, etc. These multiple and diverse images reached us from the Neolithic Age in the form of small sculpture and images and sceneries made on pottery”. The researcher paid especial attention to “the anthropomorphic statuettes dated to the 7th-3rd millennia B.C. discovered during excavations from the archaeological monuments of the Neolithic and the Early Bronze Ages, as well as due to accidental finds in different places of the Armenian Highland, which were widely spread in settled, early farming cultures” (Հայկական հին երաժշտական գործիքները, Շնորհ ի վերուստ. առասպել, ծես և պատմություն, Երևան, 2008, էջ 241–242: Պետրոսյան Ա., Զանգեզուրի հնագիտական հուշարձանները, “Լրաբեր” հաս. գիտ., Ն 4, 1972, էջ 69-70; Խանզադյան Է., Հայկական հին երաժշտական գործիքները, «Աշխատություններ» Հայաստանի պետական պատմական թանգարանի, հ. 5, Երևան, 2008, էջ 241-242. Խանզադյան Է., Հայկական հին երաժշտական գործիքները, «Աշխատություններ» Հայաստանի պետական պատմական թանգարանի, Երևան, 2008, էջ 241-242.: Խանզադյան Է., Հայկական հին երաժշտական գործիքները, «Աշխատություններ» Հայաստանի պետական պատմական թանգարանի, Երևան, 2008, էջ 241-242.)
It is worth to mention that the Armenian Highland is rich in copper ore and, consequently, in monuments of the Bronze Age\textsuperscript{11}. Moreover, similar bronze statuettes (with some differences) have been discovered in Syria, Asia Minor, “The Aegean world” including Greece, Southern Italy and Etruria\textsuperscript{12}.

\textsuperscript{11} Mar'tirosyan A. A., Armenia in the age of bronze and early iron, Yerevan, 1964. Հայաստանի ուշբրոնզեդարյան քանդակագործությունը (մ.թ.ա. XIV- X դդ.), "Լրաբեր" հն. գիտ., № 12, էջ 45-54:


\textsuperscript{13} Лисициан С. С., Старинные пляски и театральные представления амийского народа, т.1, Ереван, 1958, илл. в табл. LXIV.
Abovementioned researchers have emphasized the cultic significance of these kind of statuettes from different places. Antonio Borio writing about the statuettes excavated in Sardinia (which he named “bronzetti”) noted that some statuettes have hooks (to hang on a string) which is one more proof of their cultic significance. Thus, the upper small hole of the statuette from Van, probably was also made with the same purpose.

The data of archaeological materials and medieval miniatures (illuminated manuscripts) about the Armenian musical instruments have already attained attention of the researchers. Pipes made from bone were discovered during the archaeological excavations in Garni and Dvin.

A pipe from Garni

An opinion has been expressed that the pipes with 5 holes had cultic significance as they were made of the bone of crane (or stork), which in ancient Armenian and some other countries symbolized a herald of spring and sun. It is notable that in ancient times the figure “five” was associated with the famous five planets: Jupiter, Saturn, Mars, Mercury and Venus.
From ancient times sunrise melodies in Armenia were performed, particularly at wedding parties, funerals or other ceremonies. These melodies were played by Armenian wind instruments – սրինգ, զուրնա-դուդուկ (pipe), պրագ (fleute), ճապոր, կռածո փող (trompette), եղջերափող (horn).

There was a belief in the Ancient East that the sun died at night and revived in the morning. Such a perception found its reflection in the riddles written for children by the Catholicos of Armenia, Nerses IV Shnorhali (Gracious, 1166-1173): “It is born, grows and dies at the same day. Then with a new breath it puts on bright clothes” (The Sun) 18.

Taking into consideration the belief that the sounds of wind instrument gave a breath to the dead 20, it can be supposed that by playing sunrise melodies (sahari) people magically facilitated the “revival” of the Sun.

Judging from the average comparative sizes of the bronze statuette from Van it can be supposed that the full-scale instrument’s length was 47-50 cm. The Armenian zourna, a wind instrument of this size was widely used in the basin of Lake Van until the Armenian Genocide.

Armenian zourna has been preserved and in Eastern Armenia and at the south-eastern coast of the Black Sea among Hamshen Armenians.

A double flute depicted on the silver rhyton (the 4th BC) from Erebuni 21 is a good example of an ancient wind instrument.
According to a Greek myth about a reed instrument, a pair of pipes called “aulos”\textsuperscript{22}:

"Minerva [Athena] is said to have been the first to make pipes from deer bones and to have come to the banquet of the gods to play. Juno [Hera] and Venus [Aphrodite] made fun of her because she was grey-eyed and puffed out her cheeks, so when mocked in her playing and called ugly she came to the forest of Ida to a spring, as she played she viewed herself in the water, and saw that she was rightly mocked. Because of this she threw away the pipes and vowed that whoever picked them up would be punished severely. Marsyas, a shepherd, son of Oeagrus, one of the satyrs, found them, and by practicing assiduously kept making sweeter sounds day by day, so that he challenged Apollo to play the lure in a contest with him."\textsuperscript{23}

There was a belief in Ancient East that the wind instruments as a symbol of vital breath contributed to "resurrection from the dead". The sound of the pipe was considered the symbol of God's voice\textsuperscript{24}. It is not a coincidence that in one of his \textit{taghs} St. Grigor Narekatsi called for to sing the Lord’s Ascension with “the sound of the trumpet”\textsuperscript{25}.

The worship festival of the ancient Armenian God, Ara the Beautiful was celebrated near the Lezk village, on the slopes of a mountain near Lake Van\textsuperscript{26}. Ritual dances were performed under the sounds of \textit{zourna}\textsuperscript{27}.

\textsuperscript{22} Barker A., Greek Musical Writings: Volume 1, The Musician and His Art, Cambridge, 1989, p. 74, n. 79.
\textsuperscript{24} Exodus, 19: 16,19; 20:18,19.
\textsuperscript{25} Գրիգոր Նարեկացի, Տաղ Համբարձման, “Տաղեր” (գրաբար և աշխարհաբար), Երևան 2013, էջ 74-75:
\textsuperscript{26} Աբեղյան Մ., "Իստորիա դերևէարմենական լիթերատուրայի", Երևան,1975, էջ 27. The toponym Lezk is derived from the Armenian word \textit{լիզել} (lick). According to a legend preserved by Movses Khorenatsi, Ara after being killed in a battle for the freedom of the Motherland, was resurrected by gods who licked him (Մովսէս Խորենացի, Պատմութիւն Հայոց, Երևան, 1991, էջ, ԺԵ). In mythology licking dog-spirits were known under the name of \textit{Aralezes}. 
It can be said that the image of the bronze statuette from Van had connection with the worship of the spring blossom and fruitfulness known under the name of Ara the Beautiful. The symbol of fertility - fallos is present there, as well as in the "bronzettis" excavated in other areas.

There is another interesting version of the Van bronze statuette's instrument which belongs to horns. As it is known from ancient written sources and medieval miniature painting, there were used as natural, as well as copper-hammered types in Armenia. Some of their versions had holes and were named “trumpet”. Copper trumpets and horns that were blared during the military ceremonies and festive rites were called “military” polyphonic or “four sounded” trumpets.

It was possible to clarify the presence of sound holes on pipes and trumpets by means of a comparative analysis of miniature painting\(^28\) by the method of study of musical instruments.

\(^27\) Лисицыан С., оп. си., р.161, табл. LXXXI. A sample of zurna from Shatakh, Western Armenia.

A version of a labial trumpet is present in the 15\textsuperscript{th} century miniature of Artshesh (21), which is very like European medieval cornets called "cornet a buqin". Taking into consideration the sizes of Hamshen zourna we decided to recreate a version of the ancient Armenian instrument preferring the traditional apricot wood.

![Image of a labial trumpet](image1.png)

![Image of a labial trumpet](image2.png)

It is mostly spread in the land of "Prunus armenicum"\textsuperscript{30}. Apricot wood is resonant, stable and has a quality of gaining beautiful, natural brown shades.

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., plates XLIII-XLVIII.

\textsuperscript{30} Danielyan E.L., Prunus Armeniaca: Originated in Armenia, 21\textsuperscript{st} CENTURY, № 2, pp. 79-94.
Finally the instrument was made and introduced to the Folk commission of Composers Union of Armenia.

It was awarded excellent by the specialists and was recommended to be exhibited in the “Sardarapat State Museum of Ethnography and History of the National Liberation Struggle of Armenia”. The replica of the trumpet was awarded with the bronze medal of “The Exhibition of National Costumes and instruments” in Moscow.

The instrument of “bronze musician” excavated from the coasts of the Lake Van and exhibited in the Louvre Museum we called “Van-trumpet”.

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ARMENIAN KINGDOMS (III-II millennia B.C.)