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A STONE PIPE OF PAN OF THE Vth CENTURY B.C.
FROM DRASXANAKERT

by

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Archaeological finds of musical instruments in Armenia and their representations serve, as a rule as illustrations of the antiquity of musical culture in the country and of the availability of one or another type of instrument. In this respect the discovery of a pipe of Pan in the *dastakert* of "Drasxanakert" marks a new stage in archaeological research on Armenian musical culture. The *dastakert* of Drasxanakert was discovered in 1989 near the village of Benjamin, 10 kilometers south of Giumri at the beginning of archaeological excavations carried out by the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of the Academy of Sciences of the Armenian Republic in collaboration with the Regional Museum of Širak. During the excavations there were found, palaces, cult, residential and commercial buildings as well as a rich and diverse material related to various periods in the life of a settlement dating from the Vth century B.C. to the IVth century A.D. In 1992 during the excavations of buildings of the palace-cult complex founded in the Vth century B.C., a small trapezoidal stone slab of dense limestone was found at a cultural level of the same period¹.

Despite damages to this slab in antiquity, its dimensions can be restored. The height of the plate is 80 mm., the width, about 75 mm. in its upper damaged part and 58 mm. at the bottom. The thickness of the slab is of 13 mm. at the top and 5 mm. at the bottom. Its broad planes are covered with an ornamentation in low relief consisting of adjacent triangles laid out in three superposed rows. Two horizontal strips filled with the representation of zig-zag lines divide the rows of triangles. The upper, thicker, edge of the slab has been worked into a narrow flat plane. In the middle of it, laid along the depth of the body of the slab, four

¹ TER MARTIROSIAN, 1993, pp.50-72; ID., 1995, pp.15,27.

openings, some 6-7 mm in diameter, forming small tube-like pipes closed at the bottom have been drilled. The two central pipes have a length of 61 and 57.4 mm. The length of the two outer damaged pipes, 54 mm and 46.4 mm. has been restored in accordance with the relation of their depth to the upper plane. Upon breathing into them, the two central pipes clearly sound the notes MI and FA. From this, the slab can be identified as a musical wind instrument of labial type, such as a pipe of Pan. The pipe has only orifices for blowing in, and the tubes serve as resonating chambers. The diameter of the orifices for blowing in is of 6.5-7 mm. From the difference in length of the two central pipes, it can be said that in creating the instrument, the ancient masters lengthened the pipe by 1/15 of its length in order to obtain a well-tempered semitone. On the basis of this calculated method for the creation of such an instrument, we were able to determine the sound of the damaged pipes. This was confirmed through the playing of a complete instrument made from stone of the same type. It appeared, moreover, that the lengthening of the pipes to obtain different notes was not uniform, but ranging from 1/15 for the lower notes to 1/17.5 and 1/21.5 for the upper ones. The copy of the pipe produces the chromatic tetrachord: FA#, MI, FA, LA of the second octave. (ill.1).



Ill. 1.

The use of the pipe of Pan as a musical instrument is very ancient, going back to the Palaeolithic period according to certain indications. A Pan pipe found in Poland in a male burial dated in the IIIrd millennium B.C. consists of nine reeds which produce the sounds: DO, RE, MI, SOL, LA, DO, RE, MI, SOL of a two-octave pentatonic scale. An ocarina, similar in type to the instrument from Drasxanakert with orifices only for blowing in, was found in Austria and dated from the end of the IIIrd millennium. It produces the notes: LA, SI, SI, DO. Flutes of Pan dating from the Vth century BC. have from 4 to 7 reeds. The block-flute found at Malhelm-Tarn in England and dating from the II-I centuries B.C. gives the notes: DO, DO#, FA². The silver reeds of pipes are known to have been found at Ur and Larsa, among them reeds from pipes of Pan of different epochs³.

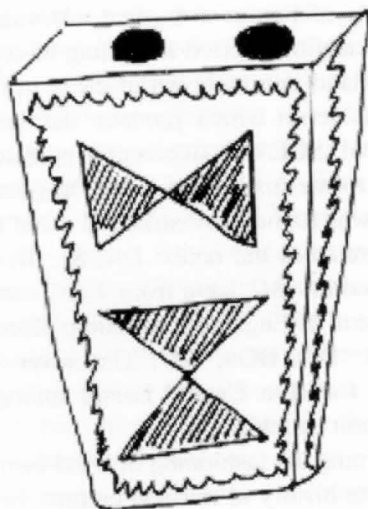
Information concerning the fashioning of wind instruments from stone is extremely rare in the history of musical culture. In the rich collection of musical instruments of the worldwide collection preserved in the Musée de l'Homme in Paris, there is but one example of a multi-reed flute made from nephrite. It was found in Bolivia among the materials of ancient Indian culture. This flute has been preserved in fragmentary state; it has the approximately triangular shape, the seven reeds and the dimensions characteristic of the multi-reed cane flutes of contemporary Latin America. It should be remembered in this connection that nephrite was considered more valuable than gold in Pre-Columbian America. We also know of the making in 1803, at the order of Napoleon, of a crystal flute which was presented to the musician Drouais. Despite their difference in cultural setting and period, these two examples serve to underscore the extreme value and rarity of musical wind instruments made of stone.

The stone pipe of Pan from Drasxanakert cannot, however, be taken as a unique, accidental occurrence in the culture of ancient Armenia. This is demonstrated by the finding of another stone flute discovered among the archaeological materials of the Hellenistic period in Armenia. This pipe was discovered in the 1976 excavations of Garni in tomb #121 dating from the II-I centuries B.C. This find was considered to be that of a unique ritual object, either an amulet or an object intended for sooth-saying (ill.2)⁴. It has, unfortunately, not been possible to discover this object in the collection of the museum, however, the detailed descrip-

² MALINOVA, 1988, p.100.

³ PARROT, 1969, p.307.

⁴ XAÇATRIAN, 1976, p.17, fig.33. Ill. 2 here follows Xaçatryan's sketch.



III. 2.

tion, measurements and illustration of this find in its publication allow us to identify it securely as a twin reed pipe. This pipe is 60 mm. high, 50 mm. wide in its upper part and 30mm. in the lower. The body of the pipe is also decorated with triangular ornaments. However, these triangles are joined at their angles forming a butterfly-like design. Furthermore, two of these butterflies are placed one above the other, with the upper in a horizontal and the lower one in a vertical position. They are placed in a frame formed by a zig-zag line, and similar zigzag lines run along the side faces of the pipe. The smaller side of this pipe allows us to presume that it emitted sounds of a higher tonality.

The persistence of the triangular decoration is not accidental. Our four-reed pipe of Pan was found in the palace-sanctuary. This building is rectangular in plan divided into two parts by a blind wall. The first central room on the eastern side is the more interesting one. Its eastern portion has a well paved floor of tightly adjusted perfectly hewn slabs of black tuf. The floor slopes toward a carefully laid gutter with a stone bottom and a stone border made up of small slabs set on edge. Two slabs of the flooring have depressions of small diameter for the setting up of wooden pillars. A raised platform approximately one meter wide runs along the wall of the eastern paved section. Judging from the type of construction of the floor, we can presume securely that this was a shed for large horned cattle. The manger was located on the eastern side and the gutter for flushing out the shed, on the western one. Most interesting

for our subject is a room with torus-shaped bases, which adjoins the sanctuary on the northern side and probably served as a treasury. Special attention should be paid to a base of tuf set on a low square plinth. A large, tall rounded torus rises above the plinth. Its surface is decorated with a relief cut in the stone representing the large petals of a stylized plant. The edge of the petals is formed by a plaited relief and their central part underscored by a vertical groove. The flat torus with slightly protruding edges is set above the petals. In shape, this base is a stylization of bases of Persepolis type, while the design of the petals is characteristic of Achaemenid bases of the Vth century B.C., starting with the buildings of king Artaxerxes. The broken corner of the base and the deep setting of the plinth in the beaten-clay floor testify to the re-use of the base at the time of the re-building of the sanctuary in the IVth century B.C. It is precisely here that the pipe of Pan was found beneath the beaten-clay floor of the IVth century, so that it can securely be dated in the Vth century.

The archaeological material belonging to an early cultural stratum, uncovered here during the excavations, is interesting. Of great interest is the discovery of the protome of a small bull's head made of clay and covered with a red slip. Such protomes have been found earlier as decoration of bowls of large dimensions belonging to the Late Bronze, Early Iron and Urartian periods⁵. Even though the form of our protome follows that of ancient models, it belongs unquestionably to a later period. Likewise of interest, are the fragments of two large rectangular perfume or incense burners found here. One has a dark brown highly polished surface and thick walls. A protuberance has been placed at the top on the inner surface for greater convenience in the placing of the lid. The shape of these objects is reminiscent of that of incense burners from the Late Bronze Age⁶, but they are distinguished from them by their color and their highly polished sides. The other incense burner is characterized by thinner walls with a red slip. Together with it were found several fragments of large cone shaped objects covered with a red slip, whose inner surface shows neither slip nor polish. One of these has a wavy surface. Another is decorated with an ornament consisting of two sinuous lines composed of seed-like indented dots. Two ancient traditions have been united here, the ornamentation of jars with seed-like indented dots is characteristic for vessels of the Early Iron Age and of the period of its broad distribution; the addition of a red slip on jars, characterizes the

⁵ PJOTROVSKIJ, 1959, pp. 175-179, figs. 38-39; MARTIROSIAN, 1964, p.175, fig. 72, 1-2.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p.172, fig.69.

ceramics of the Urartian kingdom and of the Achaemenid period. The above mentioned cones stood on their broad surface, while their upper part served as a base for the setting of the incense burners decorated with protomes. Supports and incense burners of this type are known to us from their representations on the reliefs of Persepolis⁷. Judging from the type of objects discovered on these premises, we can conclude that they were not intended for a mere shed, but rather for a shed-sanctuary. From the number of openings in the slabs of the paved floor, we can assume that one or two sacred animals were kept here. On either side of the southern entrance to the shed were placed large torus-like bases supporting wooden columns.

To the west of the sanctuary lay a central room paved with slabs in its south-western portion and with boulders in the remaining part. The animals were apparently brought forth into this room on celebratory-cult days. Most probably, these premises served as a sanctuary for the goddess Anahit. Plutarch observes that in the sanctuary of Anahit [Artemis] were kept heifers "with brands upon them in the shape of the torch of the goddess"⁸. On the basis of Plutarch's information concerning the sanctuary of the goddess Anahit in Ekeleac', we should say more precisely that our goddess was worshipped in the form of a heifer. Both the sanctuary in the form of a shed, and the shape of the protomes found there, testify to the fact that the goddess was worshipped there in animal form. The mark of an indented triangle on the forehead of the heifer-protome is likewise characteristic. In his publication of similar material from the excavations of Duin, G. K'oč'aryan correctly linked the triangular indentations on the foreheads of bull-shaped protomes with the symbol of the goddess Anahit, while noting at the same time the great antiquity of the worship of bulls and cows in Armenia⁹.

A triangle pointing downward, which Plutarch compared to a torch, symbolized the female lap in the art of antiquity and was likewise a symbol of fertility. This type of ornamentation is characteristic of a large number of staffs with rattles and bells from Armenian sites of the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age; the finds at Lori-Berd can serve as an example¹⁰. The vertical division of the ornamental field into three rows permits the assumption that they symbolize the three worlds: the upper — celestial, the central — terrestrial and the inferior — chthonian. The hor-

⁷ KOCH, 1996, figs. 44,119-120.

⁸ PLUTARCH, *Lucullus*, xxiv,6.

⁹ K'OČ'ARYAN, 1991.

¹⁰ DEVEDŽIAN, 1881, p.45, fig.14, pls. V,1-4.VI,3-19.XIII,2.

izontal zig-zag lines are usually interpreted as the symbolic representation of solid ground. Thus, both the place of finding and the ornamentation of the stone Pan pipe underscore the ritual aspect of this musical instrument. It is interesting to note that the triangle as a female principle has been preserved in Armenian culture, including its musical culture, up to our time. In an interesting article devoted to problems in the use of the Armenian folk, wind instrument, called the zurna, R. Puč'ikjan notes that the large zurna remains to this day a sacred instrument, and, as associated with the phallus, remains a strictly masculine instrument on which women are forbidden to play. At the same time, it is interesting for our subject to observe that the woven sheath for the zurna, specially prepared by the women, is decorated by them with a triangular ornamentation¹¹. In other words, if the zurna is associated with the phallus, its sheath is associated with the pudenda. The trapezoid shape of the pipe has the same symbolic meaning. Consequently, both the form of the pipe and the nature of the ornamentation of the stone pipes allows us to assert that in antiquity, pipes with twin numbers of reeds were considered to be a female instrument.

The association of the pipe of Pan from Drasxanakert with the cult of the goddess Anahita, who appears here in her archaic form, allows us to explain the reason for which it was made of stone. We have accounts in the mythology of the ancient Orient and of the Caucasus of the association of the chief goddess or of a leading semi-mythological female personage with a rock or stone. Thus in a Hurrian myth, the goddess Kumarbi weds a rock and gives birth to Ullikum¹². In the Ossetian epic of the Narts, Satanay arouses such a passion in a shepherd that he pours out semen on a rock from which is born Satanay's son Soslan¹³. A legend linking Satanay directly with a rock may have existed in antiquity. No information concerning the association of goddesses with rocks has survived in Armenian mythology. However, the survival in mythology of the legend about the birth of Attis from a rock, which has analogies in Armenian mythology¹⁴, allows us to say that the archaic goddesses of Armenia were worshipped in the form of mountains. It is significant that the English traveller of the beginning of the XXth century, H.F.B. Lynch, noted the existence of a shrine frequented by women at the top of Mount Sip'an¹⁵.

¹¹ PIČIKYAN, 1996, pp.165-166.

¹² XAČIKYAN, 1988, vol. II, p.608.

¹³ NARTS, 1974, p.199.

¹⁴ ADONTZ, 1946, p.370.

¹⁵ LYNCH, 1965 vol. II, p.339.

An observation of the stone pipe also allows us to present a hypothesis on the composition of wind ensembles associated with the sanctuaries of the goddess Anahit. The pipes discovered in antiquity were for the most part examples of instruments intended for the production of two octaves of sounds. At the same time, the presence in the musical culture of ancient Armenia of two-reed side by side with four-reed pipes, permits a hypothesis on the complex character of the orchestration of ancient Armenian religious music. The two reed pipes were presumably intended to fill in the passing semitones in each tetrachord. Hence, the performance of the notes of a tetrachord by a four reed instrument had to be accompanied by two double-reed instruments. This type of performance has been preserved until our time among a number of peoples still at the initial stage of cultural development. The performance of ritual music among a number of African tribes may serve as an example. Consequently, we can suppose that a half octave was performed by three musicians, an octave by six, and two octaves by an orchestra consisting of twelve persons. There is no doubt that the orchestras performing in the temples of the goddess Anahit were composed of women.

It should be remembered that a female flutist playing on a double aulos is represented on a rhyton from Erebuni dated by us in the IVth century B.C.¹⁶, that is to say almost contemporary with the Pan pipe from Draxanakert¹⁷. It is probable that at this time, the more easily played aulos was spreading under the influence of the Graeco-Persian culture of the eastern regions of Armenia and displacing the pipe of Pan type from daily use. However, the discovery of the chronologically later double reed pipe from Garni allows us to say that stone pipes continued to exist in antiquity as musical cult instruments. It is noteworthy that four-reed Pan pipes also spread into Mesopotamia in the Seleucid period as is evidenced by a terracotta statuette of a woman playing on a block-flute¹⁸. Alongside it, the zurna also kept its importance as a cult instrument. The close connection of the use of musical instruments with ritual practices and the symbolism of fertility cults led to their sharp rejection by the Christian church. As is well known, among all musical instruments, the Christian church accepted only the trumpet, as an instrument connected with the military¹⁹. Nevertheless, the zurna survived until now in the popular culture of Armenia. The labor involved in the making of stone

¹⁶ TER MARTIROSIAN, 1996, pp. 200-201.

¹⁷ ARAKELJAN, 1976, pl. LIX.

¹⁸ PARROT, 1969, p.307, fig.388.

¹⁹ OGANESJAN, 1973/2, pp.61-76.

pipes and the complicated archaic manner of their use, together with the narrow specialization of pipes of Pan type as musical ritual instruments linked with the worship of the goddess Anahit, apparently led to their disappearance with the Christianization of the country.

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