

## The Caryatid from Osor (Apsorus): A Provincial Reinterpretation of a Classical Motif *Kariatida z Osorja (Apsorus): provincialna reinterpretacija klasičnega motiva*

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### Abstract

The study examines the marble female statue from Osor (Apsorus; now in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Venezia, inv. no. 162-A), traditionally referred to as Medea, Caryatid, or Muse-Caryatid. The figure is dressed in a *chiton* and *diplex*, it was carved with an unfinished back, suggesting placement against a wall. Stylistic and iconographic analysis of its posture and drapery associate it more closely with the Tralles/Cherchell type of caryatides than with the Erechtheion prototypes, thereby underscoring its primarily decorative rather than structural purpose. The statue's archaizing hairstyle and drapery, together with other sculptural finds from Apsorus, suggest an Early Imperial date of production, most likely within the Augustan or Julio-Claudian period. The absence of a clear archaeological context precludes certainty about its original function, but its decorative role – possibly within a public building or elite residence – appears most plausible. The statue exemplifies the transmission and adaptation of classical models in provincial Roman art, reflecting Apsorus's cultural engagement with modern metropolitan artistic trends.

**Keywords:** Apsorus, Caryatid, Grimani collection, Dalmatia, Augustan era

### Izvlček

Prispevek obravnava marmorni ženski kip iz Osorja (Apsorus; danes Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Venezia, inv. št. 162-A), ki je bil tradicionalno poimenovan Medeja, Kariatida ali Muza-Kariatida. Figura je oblečena v hiton in *diplex*, njen hrbet je neobdelan, kar nakazuje, da je bila prvotno postavljena ob steno. Slogovna in ikonografska analiza tako v drži kot v draperiji kip povezujeta s kariatidami tipa Tralles/Cherchell ter ne s prototipi iz Erehtejona, kar poudarja njegovo dekorativno in ne nosilno funkcijo. Tako arhaizirajoča pričeska kot oblačilo in preostale kiparske najdbe nakazujejo njegov nastanek v zgodnjem cesarstvu, verjetno v avgustejski ali širše julijsko-klavdijski dobi. Zaradi pomanjkanja jasnega arheološkega konteksta prvotni namen kipa ni z gotovostjo določljiv, vendar se zdi njegova dekorativna vloga – morda kot okras neke javne stavbe ali razkošne zasebne vile – najverjetnejša. Kip obenem ponazarja prenos in prilagoditev klasičnih vzorov v provincialni rimski umetnosti ter odraža kulturno vpetost Apsora v sočasne umetnostne tokove metropole.

**Ključne besede:** Apsorus, kariatida, zbirka Grimani, Dalmacija, avgustejska doba

### Introduction

The deteriorated marble female statue (Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Venezia, inv. no. 162-A; fig. 1),<sup>1</sup> commonly referred to as Medea (Faber 1982, 74), Muse

(Dütschke 1882, 46, no. 115; Favaretto 2002, 91), Caryatid (Anti 1930, 29, no. 5; Polacco and Traversari 1988, 19, no. 3; De Paoli 2006–2007, 428) or Muse-Caryatid (De Paoli 2006–2007, 446), was excavated in Osor (it. Ossero)<sup>2</sup> and

1 Dütschke (1882, 46, no. 115); Anti (1930, 29, no. 5); Polacco and Traversari (1988, 19, no. 3, with the list of the earlier literature); De Paoli (2006–2007, 428); Harl and Harl (2025, 19809).

2 The earlier literature suggests that the object was excavated prior to 1587 (e.g. Valentinelli 1863, 12, no. 51; Dütschke 1882, 46, no. 115; Anti 1930, 29, no. 5; Polacco and Traversari 1988, 19, no. 3, who wrongly indicate that it was donated to Giovanni Grimani); however, since Antonio Grimani died in 1523, the find must have occurred significantly earlier.



Figure 1: Caryatid from Apsorus (Museo archeologico nazionale di Venezia, Musei archeologici nazionali di Venezia e della Laguna, inv. no. 162-A, su concessione del Ministero della Cultura; photo: Singer, Neg. D-DAI-Rom 68.4933)

subsequently donated by its inhabitants to Antonio Grimani (1434–1523), who later became the Doge of Venice (1521–1523; Favaretto 1993,

24; De Paoli 2006–2007, 446, n. 79). In 1494, Grimani was appointed Capitano Generale da Mar, but in 1499, he suffered a severe defeat in the naval battle of Zonchio, leading to his exile on the island of Cres (it. Cherso).<sup>3</sup> Upon his return to Venice in 1509, the statue became part of his extensive collection of antiquities and was placed in Palazzo Grimani, positioned in a niche at the right corner of the courtyard, near the entrance (De Paoli 2006–2007, 428; De Paoli 2021, 48, n. 16).

The son and heir of Antonio Grimani, Cardinal Domenico Grimani (1461–1523), survived his father by only a few months. Upon his death, the collection was bequeathed to the family. Eventually, his nephew, Giovanni Grimani (1506–1593), who was appointed Patriarch of Aquileia in 1545 and was himself an avid collector of classical art, inherited the entire collection of his late brothers, Marco, Marino, and Vetore. He also reacquired portions of the Greek and Roman artefacts that had been previously sold. In 1587, Giovanni Grimani donated his extensive collection of ancient sculptures to the *Serenissima* (Dütschke 1882, 46, no. 115; Anti 1930, 29, no. 5; De Paoli 2006–2007, 446, n. 79; Ferrara and Bergamo Rossi 2021, 20), where it is now housed as part of the Grimani Collection.<sup>4</sup>

The statue was discovered headless, and during the Renaissance, a head from another statue (Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Venezia, inv. no. 162-B) was added. In the early 20th century, this head was replaced with a plaster cast taken from its museum counterpart, the Muse Melpomene (inv. no. 161; Anti 1930, 29, no. 5; Polacco and Traversari 1988, 19, no. 3).

### The Caryatid from Apsorus

The female statue from Apsorus stands 2.28 meters high (including the added head; Polacco and Traversari 1988, 19, no. 3) and is dressed in a *chiton* and *diplex*. The lower portions of her arms are missing; however, the positioning of

3 According to Marcella De Paoli, he remained in Osor on the island of Cres until his return to Venice (De Paoli 2021, 48, n. 16), whereas Irene Favaretto (1993, 15; 2002, 84) argues that he left it after two years and sought refuge in Rome.

4 On collection: Favaretto (2002, 84–93), De Paoli (2006–2007).



Figure 2: Caryatid from Tralles, *Istanbul Archaeological Museum*, inv. no. 1189 (D-DAI-IST-671)

the upper arms indicates that the right arm was raised while the left was lowered. Its back is unfinished, suggesting that it was originally positioned against a wall. However, the figure lacks defining attributes, making a precise identification difficult – especially considering that, in the provinces, the iconography of deities and other mythological figures was not always directly copied from the prototypes. Instead, posture, movement, or attributes were often subject to minor or significant modifications and deviations (cf. lately Witschel 1995, 251, n. 22; Dorca Moreno et al. 2021, 5–9). Of particular interest is the arrangement of the locks in her braids, which fall over her breasts. This archaic hairstyle closely resembles the rigid, stylized hair of the *korai* in archaic Greek art and was also employed for the renowned caryatides on the porch

5 On *korai* in Erechtheion *inter alios*: Lauter (1976, 12–40), Schmidt (1982, 79–84), Jenkins (2006, 125–8). On dating see esp. Lauter (1976, 16–7), Vickers (2014, 123–31). On their hairstyle: Schwab and Rose (2015, 1–4).

6 A number of studies have addressed the caryatides from the Forum of Augustus and their role within the broader architectural and ideological programme: cf. e.g. Zanker (1968, 11–3), Hölscher (2007, 119–20), La Rocca (2011, 993–1010), Lo Monaco (2021, 34–6).



Figure 3: Caryatid, Le Musée public national de Cherchell, inv. no. S 89 (photo: Amel Boudier)

of the Erechtheion in Athens, that were erected around 415 BC.<sup>5</sup> In addition to serving as structural supports in place of simpler columns, their role evolved to become primarily aesthetic and non-structural (Polacco and Traversari 1988, 20). Centuries later, this hairstyle was adopted by the caryatides in Rome, used as decorative elements in the Forum Augusti, which exerted a significant influence on provincial art.<sup>6</sup>

However, quite early was noted that rather than directly following the type that derives from the figures of the Erechtheion-porch, the statue from Apsorus more closely resembles the caryatides of the Tralles/Cherchell type, whose prototype was likely conceived around the mid-3rd century BC or slightly later (Özgan 1995, 131–2).<sup>7</sup> This resemblance is particularly evident in its posture – one arm lowered and the other raised (the positioning of the arms is in preserved examples either the same or mirrored) – as well as in the arrangement of the braids, and the garment, as all are wearing chiton and diplex. In addition to the best-preserved replicas from Tralles (fig. 2) and Caesarea in Mauretania (fig. 3), this type is also attested by two heads in Athens (National Archaeological Museum, inv. nos. 1682 and 1683; Schmidt 1982, 92–5; Özgan 1995, 125, n. 785), both of which feature holes at the top, as well as by now-lost head originally from Tralles that was previously housed in the Evangelical School in Izmir (Mendel 1914, 259; Schmidt 1982, 93–4; Özgan 1995, 125, n. 786). The heads from Athens date to the Hadrianic era, while the one from Tralles is attributed to the late 2nd century BC or early 1st century BC (Özgan 1995, 126).

The best-preserved example of this type is the Caryatid from Tralles (Istanbul Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 1189; Collignon 1903, 13–29; Mendel 1914, 257–60, no. 541; Schmidt 1982, 92–3; Özgan 1995, 125–33, no. 70). According to unverifiable tradition, it originates from the theatre of Tralles (Mendel 1914, 259; Fittschen 1979, 236; Schmidt 1982, 94). Initially dated to the Augustan era, it was later reassigned to the Claudian era due to stylistic differences compared to the replica from Caesarea.<sup>8</sup> The caryatid holds the brim of her *chiton* with her lowered right arm, while a *modius* rests atop her head. By analogy with relief depictions of caryatides at the corners of Attic sarcophagi (Fittschen 1979, 236, n. 22; Polacco and Traversari 1988, 21) and considering

her posture, she may have originally decoratively ‘supported’ the epistyle with her raised hand, as no holes are present in the *modius*. Her back is completely, though *a prima vista* more crudely than the front side, carved, suggesting that the figure was not affixed to an architectural structure but was instead a freestanding sculpture placed in front of a wall (Schmidt 1982, 92).

The statue from Apsorus appears to bear a closer affinity to the caryatid from Caesarea (Cherchell, Le Musée public national de Cherchell, inv. no. S 89; Collignon 1903, 15–6; Mendel 1914, 259; Fittschen 1979, 236–38; Schmidt 1982, 92–3; Özgan 1995, 126–7; Kreilinger and Atif Hamza 2019, 47–8; Harl and Harl 2020, 24448) than to one from Tralles. The Caesarea figure is dated to the reign of the client kings, approximately the 20s BC (Özgan 1995, 126–7) or between circa 25 BC and 40 AD (Kreilinger and Atif Hamza 2019, 48). Although the statue is fragmentary – missing both the arms and the head – certain formal characteristics allow for a comparative analysis. The treatment of the drapery, particularly the arrangement of folds and the pronounced brim of the garment, is consistent with the Tralles example. *Per analogiam*, the brim was likely held by the figure’s lowered arm. The back of the Caesarea figure is roughly carved, suggesting that it may have served a similar architectural function as the caryatid from Tralles (Schmidt 1982, 92–3; Kreilinger and Atif Hamza 2019, 47–8). Additional contextual evidence for the statue’s placement is provided by the discovery of fragmentarily preserved Gorgoneion at the same site (Cherchell, Le Musée public national de Cherchell, inv. no. S 195). Given their size and the elaboration of the reverse side, these pieces were likely decorative elements belonging to the architectural ornamentation of a large building. It is therefore highly plausible that both the caryatid and the Gorgoneion formed components of a coherent

7 For a detailed discussion of its dating and the current state of research, see Özgan (1995, 128–32).

8 On the question of dating, see Özgan (1995, 126–8).



Figure 4: Melpomene (Museo archeologico nazionale di Venezia, Musei archeologici nazionali di Venezia e della Laguna, inv. no. 161, su concessione del Ministero della Cultura; photo: Singer, Neg. D-DAI-Rom 68.4934)

decorative program, possibly conceived in emulation of the sculptural scheme of the Forum of Augustus<sup>9</sup> – a model extensively replicated throughout the Roman provinces.<sup>10</sup>

Quite early was scholarly attention drawn to a group of related statues that exhibit notable affinities with the Apsorus figure (Benndorf 1866, 230; Dütschke 1880, 324; Bulle 1894, 153), namely the examples in Mantua (Palazzo Ducale, inv. no. 6674; Labus 1837, 258–9; Dütschke 1880, 323–5, no. 720; Collignon 1903, 22–4), the Hermitage (inv. no. ГР-3097; fig. 5),<sup>11</sup> and Melpomene in Venice (Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Venezia, inv. no. 161; fig. 4),<sup>12</sup> the last of which was even erroneously believed to originate from Apsorus (Harl and Harl 2025, 19809). All of them share the material (marble), posture (standing frontal, one arm raised, another one lowered), the approximate measurements, the garments (*chiton* and *diplex*), archaic hairstyle, the folding of the drapery and unfinished back.<sup>13</sup>

Due to the resemblances Maxime Collignon classified these figures as a sub-group within the Tralles/Cherchell type,<sup>14</sup> proposing that Roman copyists had reinterpreted the original caryatides as representations of the Muses – an interpretation he applied to all of these examples.<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, they diverge from the Tralles/Cherchell types in two significant respects: the style of the drapery, which reflects influences from the Greek Classical tradition, and the function of the lowered arm, which does not

9 Cf. reconstruction in Kreilinger and Atif Hamza (2019, 47–8).

10 Cf. Boschung (2003, 6–7, n. 27, with the cited examples), La Rocca (2011).

11 Collignon (1903, 24–5, n. 3), Waldhauer (1936, 26–8, no. 260), Schmidt (1982, 95). Its provenance remains uncertain; it was presumably brought from Athens to Venice, where it was sold in 1851 (cf. Waldhauer 1936, 26, n. 2).

12 On statue, see: Dütschke (1882, 47–8, no. 120), Anti (1930, 29, no. 6), Lancha (1994, 995, no. 193), Polacco and Traversari (1988, 18, no. 2, with the list of the literature), De Paoli (2004, 71, no. II. 24) Harl and Harl (2025, 19809). In earlier scholarship, it was classified as a Greek – most likely Attic – work (cf. Dütschke (1882, 47, no. 120), Anti (1930, 29, no. 6)), but it is now generally considered to be of a Roman production, possibly from the Hadrianic period, executed in the Archaic style (De Paoli 2004, 71, no. II. 24).

13 Despite the similarities it was highly stressed that there is no proof that they were originally displayed together, neither that they originate from the same finding (Polacco and Traversari 1988, 20–1).

14 On the dependence on Tralles/Cherchell type see the list of the literature in Polacco and Traversari (1988, 20). On the type: Schmidt (1982, 92–5).

15 Collignon (1903, 22, 26), Waldhauer (1936, 27). They were also grouped together by other scholars: Mendel (1914, 259), Waldhauer (1936, 27), Schmidt (1982, 95). Evamaria Schmidt (1982, 95) held them for the Antonine copies.



Figure 5: Caryatid, St. Petersburg, *The State Hermitage Museum*, inv. no. ГР-3097 (©The State Hermitage Museum)

appear to have held the brim of the garment but more likely supported an attribute.<sup>16</sup> The stat-

ues do not feature holes in the head (Schmidt 1982, 95), and unlike the Tralles and Chersell figures their backs are left uncarved and without elaboration – strongly indicating that they were intended to be placed against a wall rather than viewed in the round, and that they did not play the supportive, but rather decorative role (Schmidt 1982, 95, n. 548).

The best-preserved example of this group is the Antonine (Lancha 1994, 995, no. 193) statue housed in the Hermitage Museum, which retains both arms. Although both attributes, the scroll in the raised and the codex in the lowered hand are modern additions (Waldhauer 1936, 26; Schmidt 1982, 95), the preservation of the limbs allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the original pose. The hairstyle suggests that the figure did not originally wear a *modius*. Furthermore, a single hole in the calotte of the skull likely served for attachment to an architectural element – possibly the epistyle – indicating that the statue was positioned in front of a building and fulfilled a purely decorative function (Waldhauer 1936, 26; Schmidt 1982, 95). This arrangement may well parallel the architectural placement hypothesized for the caryatides from Tralles and Caesarea.

In the absence of attributes, the precise identification of the statue from Osor remains uncertain. Its archaizing hairstyle clearly evokes the visual language of the caryatides, yet the interpretation as a Muse-Caryatid remains also possible in light of a comparable example of the Muse of Tragedy in Venice. Nevertheless, it must be noted that the addition of attributes could potentially support an alternative identification, as the combination of *chiton* and *diplex* is far from being a standard costume for depictions of the Muses, neither the hairstyle, resembling the hairstyle of caryatides,<sup>17</sup> and that only one statue from that sub-group (Museo Arche-

16 Oskar Waldhauer concluded that the lowered arm in each figure once held an attribute associated with a specific Muse, and that the statues were originally positioned in front of a building, thereby relinquishing their original architectural, supportive function (Waldhauer 1936, 27).

17 In *Lexicon iconographicum mythologiae classicae*, only the above discussed figure of Melpomene in Venice is wearing this particular garment and has such a hairstyle (Faedo 1994, 993–1011; Lancha 1994, 1013–25).

ologico Nazionale di Venezia, inv. no. 161) with certainty has the attribute, associated with the Muses. This ambiguity leaves open the possibility that the figure may have originally represented another mythological character, identified by the unpreserved attribute, and reinterpreted within the caryatid tradition.

### Hypothetical Setting

The archaeological context and precise findspot of the Apsorus statue are unknown, making it impossible to determine its original function with certainty. Based on the discovery of marble portrait heads believed to represent members of the Julio-Claudian dynasty, along with a dedication to Jupiter and an inscription referencing a priest of Minerva, scholars have envisaged the existence of a Capitolium (Faber 1982, 74; Matijašić 1989–1990, 261). Within this framework, Aleksandra Faber proposed that the so-called ‘Medea’ might actually represent Juno, and that the statue could have originally stood in the Capitolium (Faber 1982, 74). However, this interpretation is difficult to reconcile with the unfinished treatment of the statue’s back, which suggests it was intended to be viewed only from the front.

Regrettably, the architectural remains from Apsorus are extremely limited and provide no proper information regarding the statue’s original placement. Given that iconographic schemes comparable to caryatides were often employed for statues displayed in public buildings without a structural function – such as *thermae* or *theatres* – or served as decorative elements in elite domestic settings (Witschel 1995, 250; Zanker 2015, 110), it is most plausible that the caryatid from Apsorus likewise belonged to such a context.

The variation in the position of the arms among the statues of the caryatides Tralles/Cherchell type – some with the right arm raised

(Mantua, Osor, Hermitage), others lowered (Tralles, Cherchell, Venice) – suggests, in my view, that these figures were designed to be installed in complementary pairs or even groups in architectural juxtapositions.<sup>18</sup> This interpretation is further supported by reconstruction of the original placement of the Caesarea figure.<sup>19</sup> In this light, the female figure from Apsorus may have stood to the left of a large architectural structure, perhaps symbolically ‘supporting’ the epistyle with her elevated right arm.

Nevertheless, considering the well-documented integration of the imperial cult within the province of Dalmatia (cf. Cambi 1998; Buzov 2015) that is in Apsorus evidenced by the discovery of three marble portrait heads and a fragmentary torso of the members of the Julio-Claudian dynasty (Cambi 1982; Cambi 1998, 46–7), it is plausible to suggest that the female statue was originally part of an architectural context inspired by the decorative program of the Forum of Augustus, a model widely emulated throughout the western provinces as a means of expressing loyalty and devotion to the emperor (cf. La Rocca 2011, 1004). However, in the absence of additional evidence, this interpretation must remain hypothetical.

### The Dating

For both statues located in Venice Renato Polacco and Gustavo Traversari suggested that they may have been produced in Hadrianic era.<sup>20</sup> In the absence of archaeological context or distinctive iconographic attributes that might narrow the chronology, the dating of the Apsorus statue can only be hypothesized in relation to other finds from the site and the broader historical development of the settlement (cf. Zaninović 2005, 16–8; Blečić 2007, 200; Jadrić-Kučan 2011, 143–6; Blečić Kavur 2015, 18–21). Notably, the majority of the Roman stone monuments unearthed in Osor date to the 1st century AD (Cambi 1982,

18 For such an arrangement and some examples of it see Zanker (2015, 110–1).

19 See reconstruction in Kreilinger and Atif Hamza (2019, 48).

20 *Sono da ritenere due modesti lavori decorativi di gusto arcaizzante, creati nel II sec. d.C., forse in epoca adrianea, piuttosto che in epoca antoniniana come altri hanno supposto* (Polacco and Traversari 1988, 21).

95–92). Among these, three marble portrait heads depicting members of the Julio-Claudian dynasty are of particular significance,<sup>21</sup> as they attest to the imperial cult<sup>22</sup> and reflect the existence of a thriving sculptural tradition in Osor during the Early Imperial period. On this basis, it is reasonable to propose a similar dating for the statue in question.

Furthermore, such a chronology is supported by broader cultural trends of the Augustan period, during which archaic and archaistic figures were frequently interpreted as symbols of sanctity, antiquity, and long civic continuity of the settlement (Zanker 1988, 243–5; Fullerton 1990, 197–206; Witschel 1995, 250). These associations would have reinforced both the image of Apsorus as a long-established and culturally vibrant settlement, and its alignment with contemporary artistic currents in the Early Imperial Rome. Given Apsorus' evident openness to the artistic and ideological influences of major urban centers,<sup>23</sup> the statue's creation within this early imperial context appears highly plausible.

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- 21 Especially remarkable is a portrait of Augustus of the Alcudia type (Arheološka zbirka Osor, inv. no. AZO 409), a portrait type, conceived in the 30s BC, which remains unaffected by the later Prima Porta variant developed after the Senate conferred the title Augustus upon Octavian in 27 BC (Zanker 1973, 44; Smith 1996, 37; Cambi 2000, 31; Jadrič-Kučan 2011, 144).
- 22 The statuary group may have been erected during one of the extended stays of Drusus Minor and his wife in the province of Dalmatia. He resided there from the winter of AD 17–18, departed to participate in the campaigns against the Germanic tribes in Germania, and returned following the sudden death of Germanicus and his funeral in AD 19. Drusus remained in Dalmatia until assuming his second consulship in May AD 20 (Cambi 2000, 39; Jadrič-Kučan 2011, 144–5; Jadrič-Kučan 2018, 253).
- 23 In addition to the previously mentioned marble heads of members of the familia Caesaris, a relief of Spinario was also found in Osor (Arheološka zbirka Osor, inv. no. AZO 842), which represents the adaptation of the well-known Hellenistic genre figure (see lately Šmid 2024–2025).

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### Summary

The paper explores the so-called Caryatid from Osor (Apsorus), a marble female statue now preserved in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Venezia (inv. no. 162-A) and belonging to the Venetian Grimani Collection. Although discovered headless, it was later fitted with a head from another statue, subsequently replaced in the 20th century by a plaster cast.

Standing 2.28 meters high and dressed in a chiton and diplex, the statue's unfinished back suggests that it was conceived to stand against a wall rather than as a freestanding figure. Its hairstyle – featuring braids falling symmetrically over the chest – recalls archaic *korai* and, by extension, the caryatides of the Erechtheion, but its stylistic and iconographic features align more closely with the caryatides Tralles/Cherchell type, whose pro-

prototype probably dates around mid-3rd century BC. The composition, with one arm raised and the other lowered, and the garment find parallels especially in the subtype of Tralles/Cherchell type, in examples in Mantua (Palazzo Ducale, inv. no. 6674), the Hermitage (inv. no. GP-3097), and Venice (Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Venezia, inv. no. 161).

Its unfinished back and absence of a *modi-us* or other architectural support argue against a functional role as a bearing figure and instead support its use as decorative sculpture, placed in front of walls or niches, possibly within a public building, theatre, or a luxurious private villa, where such statues symbolized erudition and artistic cultivation. Given the limited archaeological evidence from Osor, the statue's function remains hypothetical.

Chronologically, the Osor statue most plausibly dates to the early Imperial period, around the first century AD, coinciding with a broader revival of archaic forms under Augustan classicism, in which archaic and archaistic motifs were reinterpreted as symbols of religious piety and civic longevity. The adoption of such forms in provincial contexts, like that of Apsorus, underscores its integration into the artistic and ideological orbit of Roman Empire, demonstrating both familiarity with metropolitan models and the local capacities for reinterpretation.

### Povzetek

Prispevek obravnava t. i. kariatido iz Osorja (Apsorus), marmornat ženski kip, ki je danes shranjen v Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Venezia (inv. št. 162-A) in je del beneške zbirke Grimani. Čeprav je bil kip odkrit brez glave, so mu pozneje dodali gla-

vo drugega kipa, ki je bila v 2. stoletju nadomeščena z mavčnim odlitkom.

Figura v višino meri 2,28 metra in je oblečena v *chiton* in *diplex*; neobdelan hrbet nakazuje, da je bil kip zasnovan za postavitev ob steno in ne kot samostojna figura. Njegova pričeska – kite, ki simetrično padajo čez prsi – spominja na pričesko arhaičnih kor in s tem posledično tudi na kariatide z Erehtejona, vendar se slogovne in ikonografske značilnosti bolj ujemajo s tipom kariatid Tralles/Cherchell, čigar prototip verjetno sega v sredino 3. stoletja pr. Kr. Kompozicija, z eno roko dvignjeno in drugo spuščeno, ter oblačilo najdeta posebej dobre vzporednice v podtipu Tralles/Cherchell, v primerkih v Mantovi (Palazzo Ducale, inv. št. 6674), Ermitažu (inv. št. GP-3097) in Benetkah (Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Venezia, inv. št. 161).

Neobdelan hrbtni del in odsotnost modija ali druge arhitekturne opore govorijo proti funkcionalni vlogi nosilne figure in podpirajo razlago, da je kip služil kot dekorativna skulptura, postavljena pred steno ali v nišo, morda v javni stavbi, gledališču ali razkošni zasebni vili, kjer so takšni kipi simbolizirali izobraženost in umetniško kultiviranost. Glede na omejene arheološke podatke iz Osorja ostaja prvotni namen kipa hipotetičen.

Kronološko kip iz Osorja najverjetneje spada v zgodnje cesarsko obdobje, okoli 1. stoletja po Kr., ko se v okviru avgustejske obnove pojavi širši preporod arhaičnih oblik. Arhaični in arhaizirajoči motivi so bili v tem času interpretirani kot simboli verske pobožnosti in dolge urbane tradicije mest. Prevzem takšnih oblik v provincialnih kontekstih, kot je bil Apsor, poudarja njegovo vključenost v umetnostni in ideološki krog Rimskega imperija ter kaže na poznavanje metropolitanskih vzorcev in hkrati lokalne zmožnosti za reinterpretacijo znanih motivov.