ГЛАСНИК 42

српског археолошког друштва 2026



Током 2021. и 2022. године Народни музеј Србије спровео је прва археолошка истраживања тврђаве Купиник у Срему, једне од најочуванијих средњовековних фортификација у Војводини, која се због, специфичне структуре и положаја сврстава у тзв. водене градове. Први пут се помиње у повељама угарског краља Жигмунда Луксембуршког, крајем 14. века, као „краљевски" град. Током 15. века додељиван је у посед српских деспота и великаша, да би постао и резиденција последњих деспота из лозе Бранковића, потомака деспота Ђурђа Бранковића. Откривене целине и покретни материјал указују на живот у граду у време столовања Бранковића, али не и током 14. столећа. Археолошки су потврђени историјски подаци о разарању тврђаве 1521. године у походу Османлија на Београд, праћеним великим пожаром у коме су урушене спратне конструкције куле са каљевим пећима. Унутар бедема утврђено је више нивоа коришћења и нивелација, као и то да – иако је Купиник изгубио значај војнопограничне тврђаве у одбрани јужних граница Угарске – живот овде није сасвим замро.

(Пећњаци из рушевинског слоја разарања тврђаве 1521. године; фото: Вељко Илић, Народни музеј Србије)

Емина Зечевић
Народни музеј Србије

In 2021 and 2022, the National Museum of Serbia conducted the first archaeological research at the fortress of Kupinik in Srem, one of the best-preserved Medieval fortifications in Vojvodina, classified as a so-called water town due to its specific structure and position. It was first mentioned in charters of the Hungarian king Sigismund of Luxembourg in the end of the 14th century as a "royal" town. During the 15th century, it was granted to Serbian despots and nobles, and became the residence of the last despots from the Branković family, descendants of despot Đurađ Branković. Discovered units and mobile material are indicative of the period of life in the city during the reign of the Branković family, but not during the 14th century. Archaeological evidence confirmed historical data about the destruction of the fortress in 1521 during the Ottoman campaign against Belgrade, followed by a great fire in which tower floor constructions collapsed, with ceramic stoves. Within the ramparts, several usage levels and levelling activities were registered, showing that – even though Kupinik lost its significance as a military-border fortress in the defence of Hungary's southern borders – life here did not completely die out.

(Stove tiles from the fortress from the debris layer destroyed in 1521; photo: Veljko Ilić, National Museum of Serbia)

Emina Zečević
National Museum of Serbia

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САДРЖАЈ
CONTENTS

РАСПРАВЕ
STUDIES

Б. Трипковић, Д. Булић, К. Пенезић, Ј. Вуковић, А. Трипковић, Р. Шошић-Клинџић: Шанац у Обровчинама код Дубља (Богатић), локалитет типа обровац – истраживање и резултати 7

B. Tripković, D. Bulić, K. Penezić, J. Vuković, A. Tripković, R. Šošić-Klindžić: Šanac at Obrovčine in Dublje, an Obrovac-type of site – excavation and results ... 30

Ј. Коледин, А. Путица: Метал у метал, прича без краја: симболичке праксе, трансформације и третман металних предмета у оставама касног бронзаног доба 33

J. Koledin, A. Putica: Metal into metal, an endless story: symbolic practices, transformations, and treatment of metal objects in Late Bronze Age hoards 50

P. Milojević, D. Milošević Jović: The Early Iron Age horizon at the site of Kafilerija, near Ćuprija 59

П. Милојевић, Даница Милошевић Јовић: Хоризонт раног гвозденог доба са локалитета Кафилерија код Ћуприје 76

С. Ј. Крстић: Алтернативни приступ интерпретацијама импортованих посуда из кнежевских гробова: примена антрополошких модела коменсалног гостопримства 81

S. J. Krstić: An alternative approach to interpretations of imported vessels from princely graves: application of anthropological models of commensal politics 100

M. Dimitrijević, J. Whitehouse: Roman aqueducts north of the palace complex at Glac near ancient *Sirmium*. Results of archaeological surveys 101

М. Димитријевић, Ц. Вајтхаус: Римски водоводи северно од комплекса палате на Глацу код античког Сирмијума. Резултати археолошких рекогносцирања 138

Д. С. Радисављевић, М. Б. Миловановић: Црква Свете Петке на Грабовачком брду код Трстеника и археолошка топографија њеног окружења 141

D. S. Radisavljević, M. B. Milovanović: The Church of St. Petka on Grabovačko Brdo near Trstenik and the archaeological topography of its surroundings 172

А. Ђукић: Рудник гвожђа у селу Ба код Љига 175
A. Đukić: Iron mine in the village of Ba near Ljig 200

ИСКОПАВАЊА И РЕКОГНОСЦИРАЊА
EXCAVATIONS AND SURVEYS

P. Milojević, M. Muminović Božić, D. Matović: Prehistoric sites on the right side of the Beli Timok valley in the Knjaževac region 203

П. Милојевић, М. Муминовић Божић, Д. Матовић: Праисторијски локалитети на десној долинској страни Белог Тимока у књажевачком крају 229

Д. Милановић, М. Антонијевић, М. Селаковић: Архитектонски остаци и карактер баденског насеља у Кленку код Шапца: Заштитна археолошка истраживања 2021–2022. године 237

D. Milanović, M. Antonijević, M. Selaković: Architectural remains and character of the Baden settlement in Klenak, near Šabac: Protective archaeological research 2021–2022 269

Т. Станковић Пештерац: Резултати систематског ископавања римске виле рустике на локалитету Врањ у Хртковцима 2008. године 271

T. Stanković Pešterac: Results of the systematic excavations of a Roman *villa rustica* at the site of Vranj in Hrtkovci in 2008 307

К. Дмитровић: Резултати археолошких истраживања на локалитету Двориште Музеја у Чачку 2024. године 309

K. Dmitrović: Results of archaeological excavations in the Courtyard of the National Museum Čačak in 2024 333

Е. Зечевић: Тврђава Купиник – резиденција сремских Бранковића у светлу првих археолошких истраживања 337

E. Zečević: The fortress of Kupinik – residence of the Branković family of Srem in the light of the first archaeological research 365

И. Кајтез, Т. Пушица: Средњовековни град Милешевац, прелиминарни резултати археолошких ископавања 2025. године 369

I. Kajtez, T. Pušica: Preliminary results of archaeological excavations of the medieval fortress of Mileševac in 2025 391

М. Васиљевић, М. Зековић: Археолошка истраживања средњовековне цркве – ротонде на локалитету Гувниште код Бача 2023. године 395

M. Vasiljević, M. Zeković: Archaeological research of the medieval church–rotunda at the site of Guvnište, near Bač, in 2023 420

ПРИЛОЗИ ИЗ АРХЕОЛОШКИХ ЗБИРКИ
CONTRIBUTIONS FROM ARCHAEOLOGICAL COLLECTIONS

E. Laflı: A Roman bronze statuette of Aphrodite Anadyomene from western Turkey 425

Е. Лафли: Римска бронзана статуета Афродите Анадиомене из западне Турске 435

М. Игњатовић: Бронзана укосница са главом у облику женског портрета из околине Старе Паланке, на Дунаву – контекстуална анализа 437

M. Ignjatović: Eine Haarnadel aus Bronze mit einem Kopf in Form eines Frauenporträts aus dem Gebiet von Stara Palanka an der Donau – Kontextanalyse 446

В. Вујадиновић, Ђ. Јеремић: : Опеке са жигом Друге делматске кохорте (*Cohors II milliaria Delmatarum*) из Чачка 449

V. Vujadinović, Đ. Jeremić: Bricks with the stamp of the Second Delmatian cohorts (*Cohors II milliaria Delmatarum*) from Čačak 461

ПРИКАЗИ
REVIEWS

К. Дмитровић: Критички осврт на докторску дисертацију „Археолошки локалитети као културно наслеђе и предмет истраживања. Наслеђе римског периода у урбаном ткиву Чачка" Марије Алексић Чеврљаковић 465

IN MEMORIAM

Звонимир Недељковић (1947–2026)
(Неда Мирковић Марић) 475

Жељко Јеж (1953–2026)
(Владимир Пецикоза) 479

ДОДАТАК
APPENDIX

Упутство ауторима 485
Guidelines for the authors 486

Уређивачка политика 487
Editorial policy 488

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A ROMAN BRONZE STATUETTE OF APHRODITE ANADYOMENE FROM WESTERN TURKEY

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Dedicated to Marija Ljuština on her 51st birthday

Abstract: *An exceptionally well-preserved bronze statuette of Aphrodite (Venus) Anadyomene – one of the iconic depictions of the goddess, made famous by a much-admired painting by Apelles – is kept in the Archaeological Museum of Manisa in western Turkey. Unfortunately, its exact provenance is unknown. The motif of the goddess wringing out her hair is widespread, particularly among bronze statuettes of the Roman period. The statuette from Manisa is a solid bronze casting of the nude Aphrodite Anadyomene. She stands in the contrapposto pose, with her weight resting on her left leg and her right leg slightly bent. The goddess wrings out her long hair, parted in the middle, with both hands. Her face features large eyes, strong brows, and a mouth shaped into a slight smile. The statuette is a provincial work, possibly from western Anatolia, and dates to the period between the late 1st and early 2nd century AD.*

Keywords: *bronze statuettes, Aphrodite Anadyomene, Venus, Manisa, western Turkey, Roman period, Roman bronzes, Roman sculpture*

1. Introduction

The Aphrodite (Venus) Anadyomene statue type depicts the goddess rising from the sea at her birth. It is one of the iconic representations of the goddess, made famous by a much-admired painting by Apelles of Kos from the 4th century BC.[1] Her pose derives from the version of a famous Hellenistic statue, which, in turn, may have been inspired by the image – painted by Apelles – of an Aphrodite Anadyomene rising from the sea and wringing out her hair.[2] This statue was origi-

[1] For the tradition of this statue type – preserved in numerous examples dating from the 3rd century BC to the end of the 3rd century AD – see Berger-Doer and Kossatz-Deissmann 1984, nos. 424–428, 430, and 446–447. For an overview of the Aphrodite Anadyomene type, see De Matteis 2004, Delivorrias 1984, and Brinkerhoff 1978, 56–69; for the iconography of Aphrodite types in general, cf. Cyrino 2010 and Havelock 1995.

[2] See Lullies 1954, 78; Bieber 1977, figs 225–226; and generally, Gąssowska 1971.

nally set up in the Asclepieion of Kos and later transferred to Rome, to the temple in the Forum of Caesar. Various versions of the sculpture are known, as the Aphrodite Anadyomene was depicted standing, crouching or seated, as well as nude or partially draped.[3] Among Roman bronze statuettes, the motif of female nudity is chosen predominantly for Aphrodite, whereas nude depictions of other female deities are rare.[4] The nudity of Aphrodite Anadyomene in bronze statuettes has already been studied extensively.

A large number of Aphrodite Anadyomene bronze statuettes are known from Roman *Asia Minor* (Map 1).[5] Another example of Aphrodite Anadyomene is kept in the Archaeological Museum of Manisa in western Turkey; it is immediately recognisable as an exceptionally well-preserved specimen of this type and ranks among the most spectacular representations (figs. 1–3).

[3] For examples of sculptures of this specific type: cf., e.g., Walker 2009, Feuser 2008, Flemberg 1997–1998, and Borhy 2000–2001. For half-dressed Anadyomene type, cf. Berger-Doer and Kossatz-Deissmann 1984, 76–77, nos. 667–687. Numerous marble statues and statuettes depicting Aphrodite Anadyomene have been found throughout *Asia Minor*; for instance, during the excavations in the area of the Byzantine palace at Elaiussa Sebaste in 2010, a marble fragment of an Aphrodite Anadyomene statue was unearthed that had been reused in the infill of an Early Byzantine wall, cf. Equini Schneider 2012, 203, fig. 4. This high-quality, under-life-size statue is a Roman copy – likely dating to the first decades of the 2nd century AD – based on a Hellenistic original from the 2nd century BC. In terms of iconography, the Aphrodite of Cyrene represents the closest parallel; this work, which formally belongs to the National Roman Museum in Rome (currently kept in the Museum of Libya in Tripoli), is dated to the reign of Trajan, cf. Giuliano (ed.) 1979, 170–176, no. 115. Like the copy from Cyrene, the fragment found at Elaiussa featured a support in the form of a dolphin.

[4] Scholars disagree on the significance of the nudity of Aphrodite Anadyomene. It is now generally acknowledged that Graeco-Roman iconography features various forms of nudity serving different functions; while the nudity of Aphrodite Anadyomene highlights her body, it simultaneously draws attention to her sexuality and procreative power. For discussions of nudity in Graeco-Roman sculpture, see the three seminal studies by Clark (1956), Bonfante (1989), and Himmelmann (1990), all of which address the meaning and function of such nudity. Furthermore, the function of statuettes depicting a nude or semi-clad Aphrodite Anadyomene in a funerary context may be linked to highlighting the loss of potential offspring – both for the deceased's family and for the community.

[5] Depictions of Aphrodite Anadyomene enjoyed great popularity in *Asia Minor* across almost all artistic genres during both the Hellenistic and the Roman period. According to a study by Max Bernhart, Aphrodite Anadyomene was a popular motif on coins minted predominantly in western Anatolia; cf. Bernhart 1936, 34–36, nos. 204–222, pls. 5–6. Terracotta statuettes of Aphrodite Anadyomene in particular – dating mostly from the period between the 3rd century BC and the 3rd century AD – have been discovered at numerous sites in *Asia Minor* and are kept in various Turkish museums; the same applies to numerous examples of marble statuettes of the same type. Aphrodite Anadyomene is strongly represented in the coroplastic production of Tarsus; cf., for example, an example in the British Museum, acc. no. 1918,0612.2, www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/G_1918-0612-2 (accessed: 1 January 2026). For another similar piece – possibly also of Tarsian manufacture – cf. an Aphrodite terracotta figurine from the Archaeological Museum of Kahramanmaraş; cf. Laflı and Buora 2024, 121–122, cat. nos. 83, 133, figs. 83a–e. In *Ephesus*, the Terrace Houses attest to a preference for depictions of the Aphrodite Anadyomene type, followed by the type of Aphrodite tying her sandal; cf. Schintlmeister 2013, 133.



Map 1. Main sites in Anatolia mentioned in the text (drawn by: F. H. Kaya, 2026)

Карта 1. Главна налазишта у Анадолији поменута у тексту (цртеж: Ф. Х. Каја, 2026)

2. The figurine from Manisa

Copper alloy.

No information regarding finding spot or context.

Chemical composition. ICP-MS/AAA data from sample – leaded bronze: Cu, 78.45; Sn, 6.99; Pb, 14.38; Zn, 0.022; Fe, 0.01; Ni, 0.03; Ag, 0.05; Sb, 0.07; As, less than 0.10; Bi, less than 0.025; Co, less than 0.005; Au, less than 0.01; Cd, less than 0.001.

Dimensions. H. 18.1 cm, 22.8 cm (with base), base H. 4.7 cm, W. 8.2 cm, D. 5.3 cm, altar (or pedestal) H. 6.3 cm, W. 3.8 cm, D. 3.7 cm.

State of preservation. The patina is brown and exhibits slightly raised, mottled areas featuring red and green corrosion products. Light brown soil deposits and corrosion layers form a crust.

The statuette is structurally intact, and the surface is very well preserved.

Technical observations. It was cast solid and with fine details using the lost-wax process; the modelling was likely executed on the wax model prior to

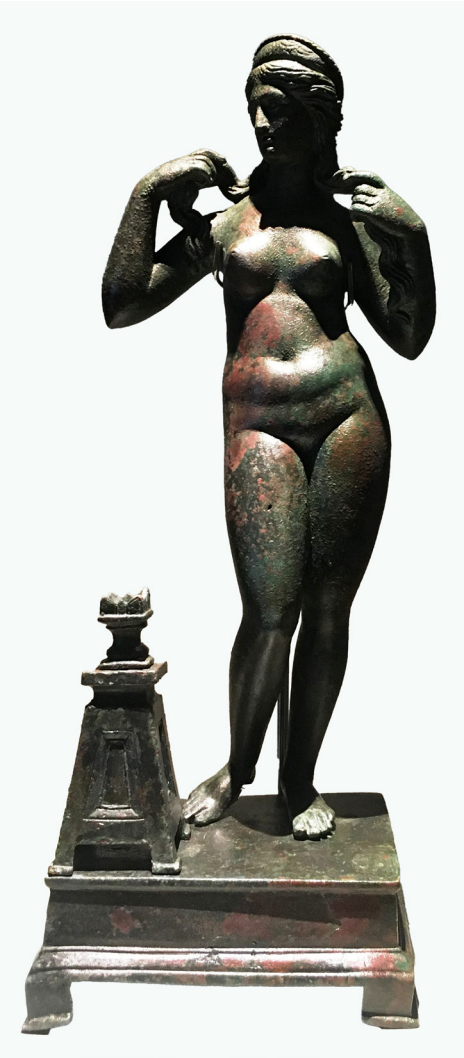

Fig. 1. Roman bronze statuette of Aphrodite Anadyomene, Archaeological Museum of Manisa (photo: E. Laflı, 2026)

Сл. 1. Римска бронзана статуета Афродите Анадиомене, Археолошки музеј Манисе (фото: Е. Лафли, 2026)

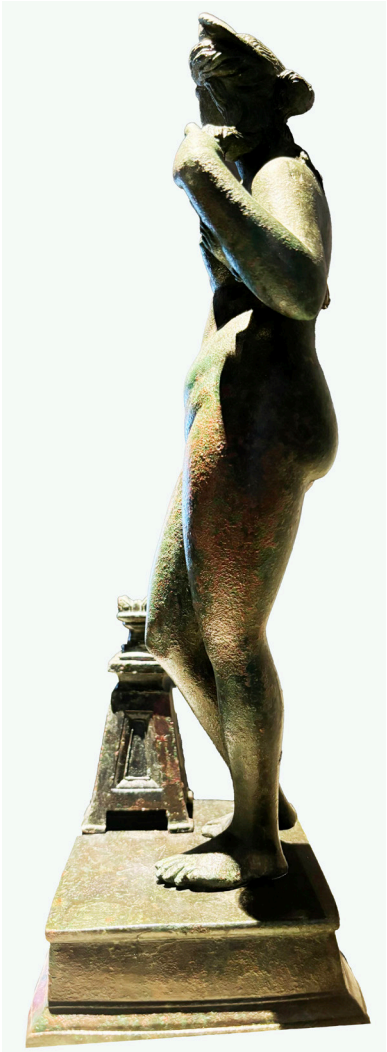

Fig. 2. Roman bronze statuette of Aphrodite Anadyomene, Archaeological Museum of Manisa (photo: E. Laflı, 2026)

Сл. 2. Римска бронзана статуета Афродите Анадиомене, Археолошки музеј Манисе (фото: Е. Лафли, 2026)

casting. This lightweight, hollow statuette was cast in a single piece. The figure is superbly modelled and chased.

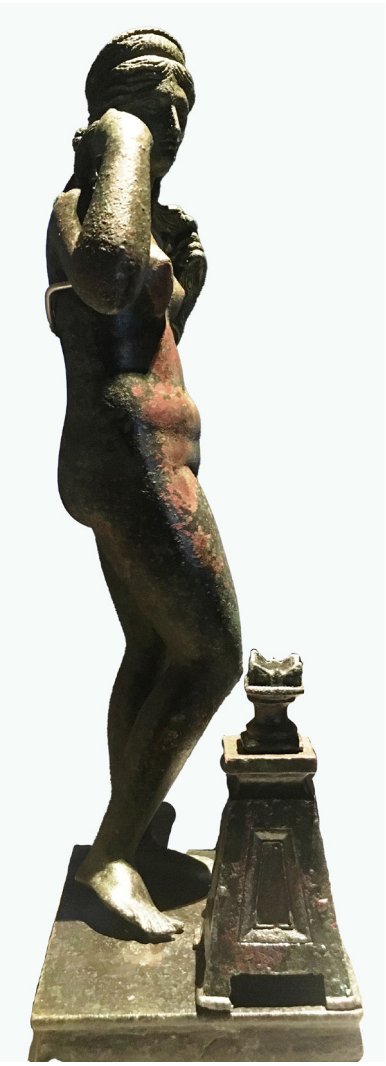

Fig. 3. Roman bronze statuette of Aphrodite Anadyomene, Archaeological Museum of Manisa (photo: E. Laflı, 2026)

Сл. 3. Римска бронзана статуета Афродите Анадиомене, Археолошки музеј Манисе (фото: Е. Лафли, 2026)

Description. As previously noted, the nude, iconic figure of Aphrodite stands on her left leg with her right leg bent; she wears only a diadem – specifically, a crescent-shaped *stephane* – and is depicted as a figure rising from the sea immediately after her birth. Aphrodite wrings out strands of hair with both hands – a gesture frequently seen in Greek and Roman art. She is thus shown in the pose of drying her hair, with raised arms, immediately after emerging from the water. As already mentioned, the motif of Aphrodite wringing out her hair derives from the "Aphrodite Anadyomene" type – meaning "Aphrodite rising from the sea" – which is based on the concept that she was born from the sea as an adult and is consequently attempting to dry herself.

Her head is turned slightly to the right and gazes slightly downward. Her neck is short. Her arms are raised; each hand holds a lock of hair, lifting it away from the shoulder. The hair is parted in the centre, moved back from the face, and arranged into an elegant updo; it is styled partly into a knot at the top and a chignon at the nape of the neck, while some strands hang loose. The long hair is cascading down her neck and back. Her headband resembles a fillet, similar to those seen in many comparable depictions of Aphrodite Anadyomene.[6] Her face – featuring large eyes, strong brows, and pursed lips – bears a slight smile. Her gaze is lowered; the eyes are characterised by deeply set inner corners, narrow apertures and heavy lids, with the upper eyelid sharply defined. Her lips are also full.

[6] In some comparative examples, she wears an *opisthosphendone* – a band of fabric or metal that is wide in the middle and narrow at the ends, serving to gather, secure, and shape the hair at the back of the head.

The goddess stands in a gentle S-curve: her left leg is straight with the hip thrust outward, while her right leg is slightly bent at the knee; her torso leans to the left. She is depicted in *contrapposto*, with her weight resting on her left leg, which serves as the weight-bearing leg. Her torso is softly modelled, featuring small, not yet fully developed breasts and a small, circular depression indicating the navel. Overall, Aphrodite's pose appears static; she possesses robust yet balanced proportions and an elegantly curved body that conveys a sense of feminine, erotic movement.

Her feet are bare.

An original element of this statuette is a pyramidal altar or pedestal – perhaps intended for the *hydria* commonly associated with Aphrodite – positioned at the front left. There is a depression in the centre of the top surface; no other distinctive features of this object have been highlighted.

The base on which the figure is mounted resembles a low, rectangular, box-like stool and is typical of the Roman period.

3. Discussion

Although this bronze statuette of Aphrodite Anadyomene from Manisa rivals masterpieces in its high aesthetic quality, it likely originated from mass production intended to supply bronze statuettes as votive offerings for the goddess's sanctuaries, or as figures for domestic shrines and possibly tombs. Such Aphrodite statuettes may also have been associated with wedding rituals; given their rarity in tombs in *Asia Minor*, they evidently did not serve as grave goods – unlike the numerous terracotta Aphrodite statuettes found in Hellenistic and Roman tombs throughout Turkey.

Workmanship. This is a high-quality product from a local workshop – possibly in western Anatolia (Ephesus or Smyrna) – that distinguishes itself from most other known bronze statuettes of the Roman world through specific features, such as a more naturalistic appearance and more pronounced modelling. The artistic quality, the level of finish, the fine modelling of the Aphrodite figure, and the precise rendering of the altar (or pedestal) and base are of an outstanding standard, offering great aesthetic appeal. The work is characterised by remarkable crispness; particular emphasis was placed on the exact depiction of distinctive anatomical details. The smooth polish of the skin surfaces is also of high quality.

In western *Asia Minor*, neither the hands of the makers nor traces of their tools can be discerned on mass-produced bronze statuettes, as the materials vary widely in quality and the pieces were executed anonymously as well as with highly inconsistent craftsmanship levels. It would therefore be premature to at-

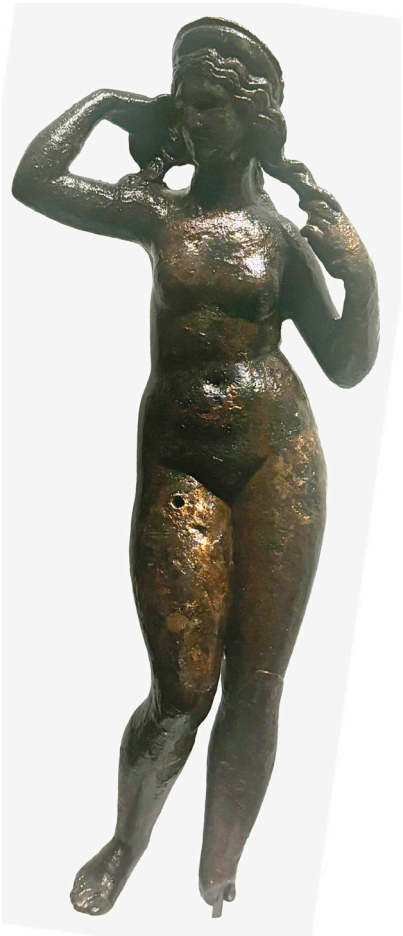

Fig. 4. Similar bronze statuette with identical dimensions from Çiftlikköy, near Yalova, Istanbul Archaeological Museums, acc. no. 5938 (photo: E. Laflı, 2026)

Сл. 4. Слична бронзана статуета идентичних димензија из Чифтликеја код Јалове, Археолошки музеји Истанбула, бр. 5938 (фото: Е. Лафли, 2026)



Fig. 5. Similar bronze statuette with identical dimensions from Çiftlikköy, near Yalova, Istanbul Archaeological Museums, acc. no. 5938 (photo: E. Laflı, 2026)

Сл. 5. Слична бронзана статуета идентичних димензија из Чифтликеја код Јалове, Археолошки музеји Истанбула, бр. 5938 (фото: Е. Лафли, 2026)

tempt to group such statuettes from Turkey based on their craftsmanship. Given the numerous high-quality statuettes in local museums – as well as their similarities in iconography and manufacturing technique – it appears that a production of high-quality bronze statuettes was on-going in western *Asia Minor* between the

late 1st and mid-3rd century AD. Manufacturers and workshops producing such luxury goods were likely based in wealthy Roman cities in western *Asia Minor*, such as Ephesus, Smyrna, and Pergamum. Among these high-quality pieces, there are no surviving examples of a specific type that was reproduced exactly in a second example; this also applies to simpler statuettes that exhibit illusionistic modelling in terms of scale and technique.

Comparanda. Bronze statuettes of the Aphrodite Anadyomene type were widespread in the provinces of the Roman East, including Turkey; numerous examples are known from Turkish museums and various finding spots – such as a similar piece with nearly identical dimensions from Çiftlikköy (Yalova Province),[7] kept in the Istanbul Archaeological Museums (acc. no. 5938; figs. 4–5), and three bronze figures of Aphrodite Anadyomene from Cilicia (cf. Laflı and Feugère 2006, 41, nos. 42–44, and p. 27 with bibliography). However, among the few published examples from Turkey, no piece could be found that constitutes an exact match in terms of the manufacturing technique and iconography.

For the most comparable representations from outside of Turkey, see also Berger-Doer and Kossatz-Deissmann 1984, nos. 424–425, 430–432, 437–438, and 445–450.[8] Despite the difference in hairstyle, the bronze Aphrodite statuette from Manisa is comparable in iconography and style to the Venus from the Dutuit Collection kept in the Petit Palais, Paris, and illustrated by Judith Petit (1980, 84, no. 28).

Dating. Establishing a relative chronology for bronze statuettes from western *Asia Minor* is problematic due to the scarcity of securely dated examples; consequently, a stylistic analysis establishing a decade-by-decade production sequence has not yet been possible. Although Aphrodite was generally depicted as a fully nude figure from the 1st century AD onwards, this cannot be applied as a fixed *terminus ante quem* for *Asia Minor*. Given the short neck, stocky physique, and static posture, our statuette from Manisa is best dated to the period between the late 1st and early 2nd century AD.

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[7] For this site (ancient *Pylai*?) and its finds (predominantly Byzantine), cf. Mamboury 1951, 439–441.

[8] For further comparative examples, cf. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Venus_Anadyomene_in_ancient_statues (accessed: 1 January 2026).

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РИМСКА БРОНЗАНА СТАТУЕТА АФРОДИТЕ АНАДИОМЕНЕ ИЗ ЗАПАДНЕ ТУРСКЕ

Кључне речи: *бронзане статуете, Афродита Анадиомена, Венера, Маниса, западна Турска, римски период, римска бронза, римска скулптура*

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