

THE TREASURY OF SCULPTURES FROM TOMIS. THE CULT INVENTORY OF A TEMPLE

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Abstract: In the present paper we will reopen the analysis of a group of statues and reliefs discovered in 1962 in Constanța, in a pit dug while building a housing complex. The group has been called in the scientific literature 'treasury of sculpture'. The treasury contains 24 pieces, of which 8 statues and statuettes, one *aedicula*, 14 reliefs and 1 altar of small dimensions with phantom traces of letters. The divinities represented are: Hecate on 6 monuments, Selene-1, Nemesis-1, Glycon-1, Tomitan Tyche -1, Isis-1, Charites-1, Dionysus-2, Asclepius-1, Cybele-1, Dioscuri-1 Hermes-1. Mithras-1, Thracian Rider.

Cuvinte cheie: 'Tezaurul de sculpturi', Constanța, relief, statuie.

Rezumat: Articolul de față redeschide analiza unui grup de statui descoperite în anul 1962 la Constanța, într-un șant cu prilejul construirii unui complex de locuințe. Grupul a fost numit în literatura de specialitate 'Tezaurul de sculpturi'. Tezaurul conține 24 de piese din care 8 statui și statuete, o *aedicula* 14 reliefuli și un altar de mici dimensiuni. Divinitățile reprezentate sunt: Hecate on 6 monuments, Selene-1, Nemesis-1, Glycon- 1, Tomitan Tyche -1, Isis-1, Charites-1, Dionysus-2, Asclepius-1, Cybele-1, Dioscuri-1 Hermes- 1. Mithras-1, Thracian Rider.

In the present paper we will reopen the analysis of a group of statues and reliefs discovered in 1962 in Constanța, in a pit dug while building a housing complex. The group has been called in the scientific literature 'treasury of sculpture'. As it was a random discovery, there were no stratigraphic observations. Yet, the arrival of archaeologists, shortly after the discovery was made, allowed the observation that the statues were carefully placed, with some of the statues used as support for others, with the clear intention of protection¹. A late antique wall from the 6th century cut the pit in which the statues were deposited². The treasury was buried outside the early Roman wall of the city and within the Byzantine one.³ In a plan of the area, made by P. Polonic⁴ (fig. 1), we can see that the remnants of a Roman building, discovered randomly while building the railway, were located close to the place of discovery of the statues. All we can tell from the testimony of M. C. Sutzou is that on that spot there was a « large scale building, with columns and Corinthian capitals »⁵. P. Polonic also gives a small elevation of the ruins he sees on the spot.

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*Translated by Silviu Anghel.

**Abbreviations in text: Canarache *et alii* – V. Canarache, A. Aricescu, V. Barbu, A. Rădulescu, *Tezaurul de sculpturi de la Tomis*, Constanța, 1963.

¹ V. Canarache, A. Aricescu, V. Barbu, A. Rădulescu, *Le dépôt des monuments sculpturaux récemment découvert à Constantza*, Acta Antiqua Philippopolitana. Studia Archaeologica, Sofia, 1963, p. 133 ff.

² *Ibidem*, p. 133; D. M. Pippidi, *Sfârșitul păgânismului în Scythia Mică*, in: *Studii de istorie a religiilor antice* 2, Bucharest, 1998, p. 367.

³ A. Rădulescu, *Pontica* 28-29, 1995-1996, p. 91, fig. 5.

⁴ The Library of Roumanian Academy, Mss. P. Polonic, VIII 62-64.

⁵ M. C. Soutzo, RA 41, 1881, p. 28.

6 monuments, Selene-1, Nemesis-1, Glycon-1, Tomitan Tyche-1, Isis-1, Charites-1, Dionysus-2, Asclepius-1, Cybele-1, Dioscuri-1 Hermes-1. Mithras-1, Thracian Rider-4⁶.

D. M. Pippidi sees in the burial of these statues an episode of a «religious war», in other words the desperate attempt of a pagan believer or a group of believers to put to safety some of the sacred figures threatened with destruction by the devastating fury of their Christian enemies or of the imperial authorities⁷. Gabriella Bordenache, while publishing some pieces,⁸ observed that this deposit is extremely varied, in terms of both the quality of the pieces and of the nature of the divinities involved.

In this study we attempt to explain precisely this phenomenon. If burial would have attempted to save from destruction the cult statues of temples from the city, it is very improbable that with them the modest *ex votoes* found in the temples would have been protected as well. It seems rather that we are dealing with the inventory of a single temple. The question then arises if the divinities which form this group can coexist in a single cultual ensemble and which would be the main divinity of this temple.

The dominant number of pieces (6) within the treasury represents **Hecate**⁹. There are three *hekataia*, two of large dimensions (0.53-0.71 m)¹⁰ of the triple Hecate type, an archaizing imitation of the type created by Alkamenes in the 5th century BC, around 410. The Triple Hecate, back to back resting on a central cylindrical column, on the head a polos or a diadem, archaizing drapery of a long chiton with apotygmata and belt strapped under the breasts. The attributes: a long torch, a jug, a phiala, a whip and the key, symbol of a world closed for those uninitiated¹¹. At the feet of each of the figures is a dog. The date of the pieces could go down from the end of the Hellenistic period (*hekataion* 1) to the 3rd century AD. There also are votive reliefs dedicated to the goddess in her trimorphic shape.

1. Hekataion 1 (MINAC inv. 2006)¹². H. 0.715 m. (fig. 2 a-c) Hecate back to back, resting on a central cylindrical column, individual polos, archaizing drapery of a long chiton with apotygmata and a belt enveloping her under the breasts. Each of the figures wears a high torch. Other attributes: a jug, a phiala. At the feet of each of the figures, a dog. This group is the most important of the three in terms of height and depiction. Hieratism offers an air of solemnity. The archaizing style is consistent, without deviations, proving a certain familiarity with this model. The piece could be dated to the end of the Hellenistic age¹³, but most probably at the beginning of the 1st century AD, and is very close to the *hekataion* from the British School in Athens¹⁴ and to the piece from the Athenian Agora¹⁵, both dated to the same period¹⁶.

2. Hekataion 2 (MINAC inv. 2010)¹⁷. H. 0.53 m; (fig. 3 a-c). Trimorphic Hecate with long chiton, peplos with apotygmata, diadem on the head. Two of them hold an animal against their chest¹⁸, one a bird, the other a dog. The attributes are grouped as follows: a bird with a snake, a dog with a bowl from which water is pouring out towards another dog at the feet, a torch with the flame upwards and a snake twisting around the three figures. Roman period, perhaps the 3rd century AD.

⁶ All the pieces are in the collections of the National Museum for History and Archaeology in Constantza.

⁷ Pippidi, *Sfârșitul păgânismului...*, p. 367.

⁸ Gabriella Bordenache, *Contributi per una storia dei culti e dell'arte nella Tomi d'età romana*, StCl 6, 1964, p. 156.

⁹ Canarache *et alii*, p. 59 ff.

¹⁰ The first of the three *hekataia* (*hekataion* 1) is bigger in height than the *hekataion* from the British School in Athens which D. Willers considers the highest one among the preserved *hekataia*. This is the closest analogy to a fragmentary example found in the Agora, cf. D. Willers, *Hellenistische und römische Idealplastik, Antike Kunstwerke aus der Sammlung Ludwig, III Skulpturen*, Veröffentlichungen des Antikenmuseums Basel, 4/3, Mainz, 1990, p. 302, note 4.

¹¹ A. Laumonier, *Les cultes indigènes en Carie*, Paris, 1958, p. 417.

¹² Canarache *et alii*, *op. cit.*, 73, no. 14.

¹³ Bordenache (ed.), *Civiltà Romana in Romania*, Rome, 1970, p. 222, cat. F 120.

¹⁴ LIMC VI, p. 999, no. 131, s.v. Hecate (H. Sarian).

¹⁵ LIMC VI, p. 999, no. 130, s.v. Hecate (H. Sarian).

¹⁶ E. B. Harrison, *Archaic and Archaistic Sculpture*, The Athenian Agora 11, 1965, p. 86-107; p. 98-99, no. 134, pl. 32.

¹⁷ Canarache *et alii*, *op. cit.* p. 69, no. 13.

¹⁸ The variant in which Hecate holds at her chest a pomegranate is also attested, cf. LIMC VI.1 s.v. *Hekate* (H. Sarian).

3. Hekataion 3 (MINAC inv. 2009)¹⁹. H. 0.195m; (fig. 4 a-c). Triple Hecate back to back. The heads are missing. Same type as the preceding example, but a work of lower quality, with more confused shapes. Work of a mediocre workshop.

4. Relief with the Triple Hecate (MINAC inv. 2007)²⁰. H. 0.337 m; w.: 0.216 m; th.: 0.032 m; (fig. 5). Hecate with a polos. Attributes: torches with the flame downwards, cornucopia? or only fruits, tympanon?, dagger and whip. The frontal figure wears a chiton which moulds over the body, with no folds, with the exception of the vertical fold between the legs, inherited from the archaizing model. The chiton leaves the arms naked. Over these, one end of the himation is tied under the breasts, climbs over the left shoulder and falls over the back, covering the lower part of the body. This costume is not very usual.

5. Relief with the Triple Hecate. (MINAC inv. 2008)²¹. H. 0.222 m; w.: 0.155 m; th. 0.02 m; (fig. 6). Hecate with a diadem and polos. The central figure holds torches bearing down. Attributes: snake, bow, key. At the feet of the Hecate there is an altar and a dog. The piece is crudely carved.

In Tomis the only known type is that of the trimorphic Hecate, grouped around a central pillar. Hecate also appears on coins of Tomis²² (fig. 7), during the reign of Severus Alexander (on coins with Iulia Mamaea) trimorphic, but as a particularity not known on any other coin representing the goddess is her position on a column, perhaps emphasizing her character of a goddess of the crossroads, guardian of gates.

As it is clear from the enumeration above, Hecate is found in a dominant proportion in the structure of the thesaurus. She is a divinity with a powerful mystery cult and adds color to associated cults with her chthonian character. In the Eleusinian myths she stands next to Hades and Persephone with which she is often mixed. The association of the goddess with other divinities is well attested in other important cult places such as the sanctuary of Lagina. Laumonier in his rich documentation over this sanctuary observed the concentration of cults: Isis, Cybele, Artemis, Demeter, « divinities with which her image was so close that there was no difficulty for her to absorb their features or borrow their mystery rituals. »²³.

Another relief draws our attention (fig. 8). It was published as a representation of the goddess Artemis²⁴. The goddess, standing, with a long chiton and apoptygma, long torch to the ground in her left hand, on the head a diadem in three corners (mithra) which appears in the *Zauberpapyri* to refer to Hecate²⁵. In fact it is very difficult to clarify which deity is represented on this relief. A goddess dressed in a long chiton lung, with a torch could be Demeter, Persephone, Hecate or Artemis. Evidently in the other, lowered hand she held another attribute, perhaps a phiala or a bundle of grain. Judging by coins from Tomis, she could rather be Demeter or Kore²⁶. In any case, the attributes of this goddess situate her in the same divine circle of chthonian divinities, just like the Eleusinian divinities and just like Hecate.

Another piece of the cult inventory – the relief published as representing **Selene** in a chariot pulled by bulls (fig. 9) – enters perfectly in the logic of this group of cultural representations with which we deal. With both hands she holds the torch, symbol of nocturnal light, a connection with the infernal universe²⁷. The veil curving over her head symbolizes the sky. On her shoulders she has the corn of the moon. She was assimilated with other divinities, such as Hecate²⁸, who can also appear with a crescent²⁹ and with a curving veil (Hecate on the frieze of the temple from Lagina)³⁰). Selene walks in a chariot pulled by bulls, but the bull too is an animal of Hecate³¹. Representations of Selene in the bull chariot are rare rather the references are on coins and in literary texts. We do not attempt to diverge the interpretation from Selene, but neither should we move away from the hypothesis that it could be Hecate in a lunar aspect, or an

¹⁹ Canarache *et alii*, *op. cit.*, p. 65, no. 12.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 59, no. 10

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 63, no. 11.

²² Pick – Regling, no. 3296.

²³ A. Laumonier, *Les cultes indigènes en Carie*, Paris, 1958, p. 391.

²⁴ Canarache *et alii*, p. 52, no. 8.

²⁵ RE VII, 1912, s.v. Hekate, col. 2773 (J. Heckenbach).

²⁶ Pick – Regling, pl. 14.13-14. Bordenache, *La triade eleusina a Tomis*, StCl 4, 1962, p. 288, fig. 6.

²⁷ LIMC VII.1, p. 706, s.v. Selene (F. Gury).

²⁸ LIMC VII.1, p. 706.

²⁹ Laumonier, *op. cit.*, p. 408, pl. VI. 3, 5

³⁰ Laumonier, *op. cit.*, pl. VI. 1.

³¹ *Ibidem*, p. 409, note 6.

intended corroboration of Selene with the horizon of Hecate. The lunar aspect of Hecate which she also lends to Artemis is associated to nocturnal magic.

We remain in the same horizon with Isis, the lunar and chthonian goddess so closely related to Hecate³². Thus the existence of an oversize bust of a goddess Isis could be explained, unless she is a Roman empress from the first half of the third century, represented with the face of the goddess, with the crescent on the head, the Isiac hair locks and the Isiac knot on the chest³³ (fig. 10 a-b).

The most surprising of the statues of the treasury is that of the snake **Glycon**³⁴ (fig. 11). H. 0.66 m.

The strange configuration of Glycon, this snake with an uncertain dog or sheep head³⁵, long hair, human ears, lion tale, an artificial creation of Alexander of Abonoteichos, a prophet from the middle of the 2nd century from Paphlagonia, is presented as the reincarnation of Asclepius. This Alexander starts an oracular and mystery cult at Abonoteichos which will know an unexpected success³⁶. He constructs a doctrine which has similitude with the orphic and pythagorean one. Orphic elements as the birth of Glycon from an egg, accompanied by hymn to Apollo and Asklepios are found in the epithet awarded to the new god, who is 'ight for the mortals'. Mysteries which recreated his birth were held every four days. They were performed by hierophants, torch bearers and began by chasing away Christians and Epicurians, so that they do not 'research the mysteries'³⁷, the mystic trace of the birth of Apollo in the pains of birth by Leto, his intercourse with Coronis, the conceiving of Asclepius and the birth of the god Glycon. The mystery ended with the representation of the love between Selene and Alexander, the prophet. He is part of the category of the itinerant priests who performed the rituals of mystery cults in the cities they visited³⁸, as had been the fascinating Apollonius of Tyana among whose pupils, albeit indirectly, was Alexander.

Apollonius of Tyana, a neopythagorean who had direct contact with oriental spiritual movements, especially Brachmanic ones, seems to have transmitted to Alexander of Abonoteichos the doctrine of the migration of the soul after death. Both are thaumaturgians, healers, disciples of Asclepius and implicitly of Apollo.

Although Alexander dies in 174 AD, his cult continues to attract believers, and reaches a peak in the reign of Severus Alexander. The sculpture in Tomis is one of the few iconographic documents preserved³⁹. She is identical to the reverse of the coins from Ionopolis⁴⁰, the new name of Abonoteichos, received as a result of the celebrity of the new religion⁴¹. On this coins Tyche with the cornucopia is represented, under which was the representation of the snake Glycon⁴². The association of Glycon with Tyche⁴³, also found on a gold medallion at Tauric Chersonesus, dated to the reign of Alexander Severus and created, according to the editors of the piece, in the same workshop as the contemporary coin⁴⁴. In the reign of Septimius Severus and Severus Alexander, Tomis and Callatis also strike coins with Glycon⁴⁵. Lucian of Samosata, the only literary source for the cult of Glycon, states that the maximum spread of the

³² *Ibidem*, p. 416, refers to Orphic Hymn; Isis, to Plut., *De Is. et Os.* 52-3, to Apul., *Met.* XI, 5.

³³ Bordenache, *Contributi*, p. 175 ff.

³⁴ Canarache *et alii*, p. 55-57, no. 24; Bordenache, *Contributi*, p. 155 ff.; Bordenache, *Ancora su due sculture del deposito di Costanza: Glycon, la Tyche di Tomis*, *StCl* 12, 1970, p. 135 ff.

³⁵ Only on coins from Nicomedia (Bithynia) the head is human.

³⁶ U. Victor, *Lukian von Samosata. Alexandros oder der Lügenprophet*, *Religions in the Graeco-Roman World* 132, Leiden, 1997, p. 1 ff.

³⁷ Lucian, *Alex.* 38.

³⁸ W. Burkert, *Les cultes à mystères dans l'Antiquité*, Paris, 2003, p. 38.

³⁹ Bronze amulets from Athens, cf. U. Viktor, *op.cit.*, p. 2, fig. 3.

⁴⁰ LIMC IV, s.v. Glycon (G. Bordenache-Battaglia), p. 280, no. 6-10.

⁴¹ K. Kraft, *Das System der Kaiserzeitlichen Münzprägung in Kleinasien: Materialien und Entwürfe*, Berlin, 1972, p. 99-100 – believes that Ionopolis is another city, near Miletus.

⁴² Kraft, *op. cit.*, pl. 115, 18.

⁴³ The association of Glycon with other divinities is very rare. A gem from Antiochia shows Glycon with Asclepius, but this is explained by the nature of Glycon himself.

⁴⁴ M. Y. Treister, V. M. Zubar, *A Gold Medallion representing Fortuna and Glycon*, in: *Ancient Civilisation from Scythia to Siberia* I, Leiden, 1994, p. 334.

⁴⁵ Pick - Regling, nr. 3266-3271 (Severus Alexander); Bordenache, *StCl* 12, 1970, p. 136; LIMC IV, s.v. Glycon (G. Bordenache-Battaglia), p. 281, no. 6-18.

cult was the Pontic region from where it spreads to the Danubian regions. The coins with the representation of the snake (fig. 12) cease during the reign of Trebonianus Gallus, but the cult probably dates throughout the entire 3rd century. G. Bordenache dates the piece from Constanța between 150-170 AD on stylistic criteria. If we could judge by the period which offers the most documents in the region of the Black Sea, we would rather date it during the reigns of Septimius Severus – Severus Alexander.

Another piece which we will mention here, in a natural connection with Glycon is the statue of **Asclepius** (fig. 13). Glycon, as we have seen, is another aspect of the healing god, and their iconographic association is already attested on a gem from Antiochia⁴⁶.

What brings us again to this important sculpture for the ensemble of the treasury is its Orphic and mystery component, which can be easily extended to the main divinity of the treasury who can be Hecate whose mystery component appears, in this context, even more pronounced. Hecate is one of the important divinities in orphic mysteries⁴⁷, and in Lagina she has her own mysteries, as in Aegina⁴⁸, a cult place which in the Roman period has a large renown, as well as in Samothrace⁴⁹. She also appears in the mystic system of the neoplatonists⁵⁰.

We were showing above that the association Glycon - Tyche appears on coins from Ionopolis. The statue of **Tyche from Tomis**⁵¹ (fig. 14 a-c), the most impressive piece together with the snake from this deposit, represents a syncretic image in which part of the attributes of the goddess are passed on to the small bearded character at her feet: the mural crown, the ship bow and the tree stump. The goddess wears a mantle which covers her head and entire back and shoulders, has a diadema on her head, the cornucopia in her left hand and a scepter (?), hand curved from the elbow towards her front. The male character at her feet comes out of an acanthus calyx, is resting on a ship bow and holds in his other hand a tree stump, a syncretic image of the duality of land and sea, which makes us consider above all the allegoric figure of the city of Tomis, and not an image of Pontus, as thought G. Bordenache. In the same way we explain the mural crown which he wears on his head. Tyche with the Pontus is represented on the coins from Tomis⁵², the latter wearing crab pincers on the head, as an allusion to his marine nature. So the statue offers a different image and with another iconographic interpretation. Divinity of good fortune, Tyche or Fortuna as the Romans called her is a divinity of extreme complexity. She “creates life” which explains all her ulterior or local specialization: as an oracular divinity as in Praeneste and Antium, she revealed to people their future and brought them good luck⁵³. The association between Tyche and Glycon on the documents mentioned above, coins from Ionopolis and the medallion at Chersonesus, point towards an oracular aspect of the goddess, as was the one in Praeneste, and as it seems to be the one in Tomis. If it were this way, the presence of the statue in the deposit would enter in the logic of the mystery cult which seems to be visible in the pieces found there.

These lead to the monuments in the treasury which represent **Dionysus** (Inv. no. 2014). There are two reliefs. The first (fig. 15) displays an inscription which makes known the attribute of the god Dionysus, Kathegemon⁵⁴. Young Dionysus, imberb in a short chiton and a chlamys, holds the thyrsus in the left hand and the kantharos in the right. The crown of leaves of vine and ivy on the head. On his feet, short boots. At his right, at his feet, nude Priapus with fruits in his hands on a round base toward which a panther is advancing. In the superior corner a satyr with ram feet, with a beard and corns, picking grapes from a vine in front of him. At the left of the god, in the superior corner, a knight without weapons,

⁴⁶ LIMC IV, s.v. Glycon (G. Bordenache-Battaglia), p. 281, no. 19.

⁴⁷ Appears in Orphic Hymns as Eubulos = Hades, RE. Suppl. III, 1918, col. 2773 (B. Prehn).

⁴⁸ M. Nilsson, *Geschichte der Griechische Religion* 2 II, Munich, 1961, p. 353; Paus. II, 30, 2.

⁴⁹ C. Nock, JHS XLVI, 1926, p. 50 ff.; Nilsson, *op. cit.*, p. 354.

⁵⁰ RE VII, 1912, s.v. Hecate (J. Heckenbach), col. 2772.

⁵¹ Canarache *et alii*, *op. cit.*, p. 16, no. 1; Bordenache, *Contributi*, p. 167.

⁵² Pick – Regling, pl. VII. 22. On the coins from Tomis appear four iconographic schemes of Tyche: cf. Pick – Regling, I/2, pl. VII. 15.

⁵³ J. Champcaux, *Fortuna. Le culte de la fortune dans le monde romain, II : Les transformations de Fortuna sous la République*, Rome, 1987, p. 293.

⁵⁴ H. 0.475 m; w.: 0.375 m; th. 0.075 m; Canarache *et alii*, p. 32, no. 4, fig. 13-16. C. Scorpan, *Reprezentări bacchice*, Constanța, 1966, p. 21, no. 1, fig. 1; Z. Covacef, *Arta sculpturală în Dobrogea romană. Secolele I-III*, Cluj-Napoca, 2002, p. 128.

walking, with an altar and tree in front of him. In the lower corner, Pan⁵⁵ with the fruit basket (liknon?) on the head and a rod. The liknon, the fruit basket is a symbol of Bacchic mysteries as is the phallophoros, the basket which also contained the phallus. The liknon was worn on the head. The epigram of the Alexandrian poet Phalaikos during the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus, describes Euanthe dedicating to Bacchus a liknon together with the entire apparatus of a menade: tympan, tyrs cymbales and liknon worn on the head. The liknon was used in the cult of Dionysus as was the round osier basket, both attested iconographically⁵⁶. The liknon can be worn by the Priapus. On the lower margin there is an inscription:

Διονύσω Ἀγαθῇ τύχῃ καθηγεμονεῖ
Ἀκυλείνος Ἀρτεμιδώρου κατ' εὐ-
χὴν εὐτυχῶς ἐπ' ἀγατῶ.

The iconographic type which we have here derives from Hellenistic Pergamene types⁵⁷. Dionysus Kathegemon has a mystery cult widely spread by the Attalids from Pergamum⁵⁸. Started in the Hellenistic age, it continues during the Roman period. The relatively wide diffusion of the cult of Dionysus Kathegemon in the Western Pontic poleis is interesting through the mystery character it had. The brotherhoods are made of mystes. The term is used only for the mysteries of Dionysus, but it is often about the cult. The term is widely used in the imperial period⁵⁹.

The second **Dionysiac relief** (inv. 2015)⁶⁰ (fig. 16), without an inscription, is a rectangular piece in which young imberb Dionysus is represented, with the crown of vine leaves and of ivy on the head, in a short chiton and a chlamys on a shoulder falling over the back. He wears the nebris around the body, holds the tyrsus in his left hand and the kantharos in his right with the mouth downwards letting the wine flow towards the panther at his feet. In his feet he has short boots. At his left a snake is twisted around a *cista mystica*. *Cista mystica* was in the Roman period the common sign for mysteries⁶¹. The *cista mystica* is, as the liknon a symbol of the attribute of Dionysus as a god of fertility. The *cista* can be seen on Bacchic scenes on Roman monuments and of initiation in Bacchic mysteries. The snake is connected with the ancient cult of Dionysus, taken from here by the Orphics and Neoplatonists⁶². There are many documents about the mystery cult of Dionysus in Tomis which, associated offer a relatively good image. Another dedication⁶³ offers precious documents about the Dionysiac cult in Tomis. This calls Dionysus by two epithets *pyribromos*, 'rustling' fire, attribute which appears in Orphic hymns⁶⁴ and *taurokeros*, an epithet present in the Bacchae of Euripides⁶⁵, as well as in the Orphic hymns⁶⁶. The members of the association are called *bakchoi*. In the inscription the celebration of the god is mentioned "in the ancient rite" which seems to refer to the old Dionysiac cult hymn from Elis where Dionysus appears as a *ταυροκηρωφ*⁶⁷, allusion to his character as god of fertility. The celebration of the old cult image of Dionysus as a bull is made through the mention of the god as "horn bearer". The first epiphany of Dionysus corresponds with the sacrifice of a bull in the cult ceremony. In both cases therefore we deal with a mystery cult of Dionysus. The image of the cult of Dionysus in Tomis is completed by a dedication to the emperor Gordian III and Sabina Tranquillina in 241⁶⁸ by a thiasos. The relief represents Dionysus

⁵⁵ L. Robert, *BullEp* 1966, p. 397, no. 267, calls him rather Silvanus.

⁵⁶ M. P. Nilsson, *Dionysiac Mysteries of the Hellenistic and Roman Age*, Lund, 1957, p. 21 ff.; Cl. Berard, *Anodoi. Essai sur l'imagerie des passages chthoniens*, Rome, 1974, p. 107.

⁵⁷ Bordernache, *Sculpture grecque e romane del Museo Nazionale di Antichità di Bucarest*, Bucharest, 1969, p. 64, no. 116.

⁵⁸ Inscriptions about Dionysus Kathegemon were gathered by G. Quandt, *De Baccho ab Alexandri aetate in Asia Minori culto*, diss. Halle, 1913, p. 123 ff.

⁵⁹ H. Jeanmaire, *Dionysos, Histoire du culte de Bacchus*, Paris, 1951, p. 441.

⁶⁰ H. 0,320 m; w. 0,210 m; th. 0,087 m. Canarache *et alii*, p. 29, no. 3, fig. 12; Scorpan, *op. cit.*, p. 39, no. 10, fig. 10.

⁶¹ Burkert, *Les cultes*, p. 10, note 31.

⁶² Nilsson, *Dionysiac Mysteries ...*, p. 43.

⁶³ ISM II, cat. 120 (5).

⁶⁴ *Hymn. Orph.* 19,2; 57,2.

⁶⁵ Eur., *Bacch.* 100.

⁶⁶ *Hymn. Orph.* 52.2.

⁶⁷ RE V, s.v. Dionysos (O. Kern), col. 1032. 1041.

⁶⁸ ISM II, cat. 107 (73).

among the Corybantes, satyrs, Priapus with a *cista mystica* and a panther. At the Orphics, the child Dionysus is guarded by the Corybantes. The Corybantes are under the power of Cybele. At the sound of the *tuna*, they loose conscience and start a delirious dance under the power of Phrygian music. This is purification through madness, through music. They dance for the new child born to Zeus, Dionysus. Thus we have the connection Dionysus-Corybantes-Cybele.

We remain in this mystery context with the relief dedicated to **Cybele** (fig. 17), a relief with a traditional iconography which does not offer much information.

The three Graces⁶⁹ (fig. 18) are represented nude, two from the front, the third, in the middle, from the back, with the head turned in profile and the arms around the other two. The two graces on the sides are standing with their right leg slightly bent and with their weight on their left foot. Fuchs calls this type a rococo motif, a creation characteristic for the end of the second century of the Hellenistic period⁷⁰. Each of them is crowned by a Nike. Charites were associated with all divinities of fertility, but especially with Aphrodite and Nemesis. Pausanias shrouds in mystery the celebration which took place in Athens for which Pamphus created first of all a song for the Charites, whose names he does not even mention⁷¹, as it was known, we must understand, only by the initiated.

Another divinity present in this group is **Mithras**, whose cult in Moesia Inferior is well attested, if it were only for the famous discovery in the "La Adam" cave from the Gura Dobrogei⁷². A votive relief which has the god in the center, fulfilling a ritual sacrifice of the bull, flanked on one side and the other by a Cautes and a Cautopates, with the Sun and the Moon above the scene and the abbreviated illustration of Mithras' birth from the rock (fig. 19). It is interesting that there are few cases when Mithras visits other sanctuaries. J. Toynbee searched this case and only found three cases: the temple of Isis from Cyrene, the Dolichenum on the Aventine in Rome and South of Rome, in a temple of Zeus Bronton⁷³. From the list this group from Tomis is missing.

Associated with Hecate is the goddess **Nemesis** represented in a beautiful aedicula in which the two statues of the goddess are represented in their double hypostasis⁷⁴ (fig. 20). Of Micro Asiatic origin, probably having originated in Smyrna, this double figure is spread from Asia Minor in Syria, Cappadocia, as well as Greece⁷⁵. The double Nemesis of an archaizing style, identical with the two twin statues found at Tomis⁷⁶, show a common prototype which must have been the cult statue of the city, influenced by the iconographic type in circulation in Smyrna⁷⁷. The association of the goddess with Hecate is known through several monuments, among which we quote the gem known through a drawing from The German Archaeological Institute in Rome⁷⁸. The association of Nemesis and Tyche is old in Greek religion and art and evolves towards an assimilation starting from the 4th century BC, as an inscription from Epidauros suggests⁷⁹. The goddess is sitting next to Dionysus⁸⁰, but also to the Dioscuri.

⁶⁹ Canarache *et alii*, p. 79, no. 15, fig. 40-41. LIMC III.1, s.v. Gratiae (H. Sichtermann), no. 52. The iconography for these Graces is found only on the Roman monuments in Italy, in painting, sarcophagi, gems and coins. It appears more rare on votive monuments as this one. Outside of Rome there are analogies only in Side and Perge, cf. I. Jale, *Roman Sculpture in Side*, Ankara, 1975.

⁷⁰ W. Fuchs, *Die Skulptur der Griechen* 4, Munich, 1993, p. 378.

⁷¹ Paus. IX. 35

⁷² Pippidi, *op. cit.*, p. 368 ff.; M. Vermaseren, *Corpus inscriptionum et monumentorum religionis Mithriacae* II, The Hague, 1960, p. 364-366.

⁷³ J. M. C. Toynbee, *The Roman Art Treasures from the Temple of Mithras*, London, 1986, p. 59-60.

⁷⁴ Dim. aedicula: H 1,05 m; w. 0,50 m; th. 0,285 m. Dim. statues: H 0,63 m. Canarache *et alii*, *op. cit.* p. 83, no. 16; LIMC VI, p. 747, no. 146.

⁷⁵ R. Fleischer, *Eine neue Darstellung der doppelten Nemesis von Smyrna*, in: *Hommage Vermaseren*, Leiden 1978, p. 392-396

⁷⁶ Bordenache, *Sculture greche e romane*, Bucharest, 1969, no. 91.

⁷⁷ Bordenache, *Contributi*, p. 167; LIMC VI, p. 761.

⁷⁸ LIMC VI.1, p. 752, no. 203 s.v. Nemesis (P. Karanastassi).

⁷⁹ Ch. M. Edwards, *Tyche at Corinth*, *Hesperia* 59, 1990, p. 531; on a carnel from Berlin, Staatliche Museen FG 7336 (LIMC VI, p. 753, no. 207).

⁸⁰ LIMC III.1, p. 474, no. 607.

The Dioscuri are presented in an important statuary group (fig. 21 a-b) in terms of size, from which one is preserved (inv. 2012)81 together with his horse. The group is standing on a base with an inscription:

[Δ]ιοσκόρους κτίστ[ας τῆς πόλεως τῇ φυ-]
 -λῇ Βορέων ἀνέ[θηκεν.....]
 ..ος Ἀσκληπιοδ[ίωρου.....]

The cult of the Dioscuri is known in Pontic cities from the 3rd century BC. It is a civic cult as attested by preserved documents: decrees of the council, exvotoes dedicated by the strategos and the soldiers who participated in the war against the apolloniates, their presence on the coins of Histria and Tomis. This iconographic type had a great spread in Tomis. It appears on a gate arch from Tomis which was part of a construction of large dimensions.

One would also need to add, to have the complete inventory of the discoveries, the four reliefs of the **“Thracian Rider”**82 (fig. 22-25). The votive reliefs in the sanctuary must not surprise us as frequently in sanctuaries of divinities from the classic pantheon were placed ex votos to local heroes83 with the standardized iconography of the rider. The analysis of N. Hampartumian attests the association of the rider on the same relief with other divinities: Dionysus, Cybele, Hermes, Ares, Dioscuri84. We will easily notice that these divinities appear in the group we are dealing with now.

*

What we have tried to show so far is that the divinities represented in the treasury of statues and reliefs discovered at Tomis are in a tight interconnection and might have constituted an ensemble of mystery cults. There is a logic in the grouping of these pieces, according to which they form a coherent ensemble. We believe that the hypothesis of a temple inventory is thus defensible. The way such a temple looked like is visible from several sources.

The inventories of temples show that they were used for several associated divinities (pantheon) or the receiving of offerings to other divinities than those to whom the temple is dedicated (visiting gods). The problem is if a complementarity of such divinities was necessary. A study was made on the inventory of the *mithraeum* from Walbrook85 where the main divinity is known. At Walbrook there were, besides Mithras the following divinities: Minerva, Sarapis, Mercur, Bacchus, Genius loci, Dioscuri, river divinity, Danubian Riders. What we can see in this sanctuary is that divinities can be associated with Mithras by some of their functions. There is a part reserved for civic or official cult. Each of these divinities appears in other temples of Mithras.

Another example is the temple of Isis from the sanctuary of Apollo in Cyrene. In a *bothros* belonging to this temple many dedications and numerous sculptures were found. They represented Hecate, Zeus, Charites, Cybele and Mithras86.

Pausanias (III 24,2) states that in a grotto next to Pharsalus Pan, Hermes, Heracles, Apollo, Asclepius and the Nymphs were venerated87.

These *panthea* date from the Greek period as is attested by a mystic sanctuary from Phyla, near Athens (today Chalandri). The mysteries are those of the Great Goddess (Gc). Besides there were altars for Apollo Dionysodotos, Artemis Selaphoros the torch bearer, Dionysus Anthios, god of the flowers, Nymphs. A temple unites altars for Demeter Anesidora, Zeus Ktesios, Athena Tithrone, Kore Protogene88.

81 H. 0,52 m. Canarache *et alii*, p. 90 ff., fig.46-47. L. Robert, J. Robert, BullÉp, 1966, p. 398, no. 267; ISM II, p. 149, no. 122.

82 N. Hampartumian, *Corpus Cultus Equitis Thracii*, IV, Moesia Inferior (Romanian Section) and Dacia. Leiden, 1979, no. 18, 19, 22, 23.

83 M. Alexandrescu Vianu. *Remarque sur l'heroisation thrace*. DHA 6, 1980, p. 107. The case of Thasos, where on the central entablature of the *proskion* of the theater appear together on metopes Dionysus and Heron. cf. B. Holzmann, *La sculpture de Thasos*, Et.Th. XV, Athens - Paris, 1994, p. 108, no. 40-41.

84 Hampartumian, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

85 Toynbee, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

86 P. Romanelli, *La Cirenaica Romana*, Rome, 1943, p. 223.

87 F. Graf, *Heiligtum und Ritual*, in: *Le Sanctuaire grec*, Entretiens Hardt 35, 1992, p. 159.

88 W. Burkert, *Greek religion*, Harvard, 1985, p. 279.

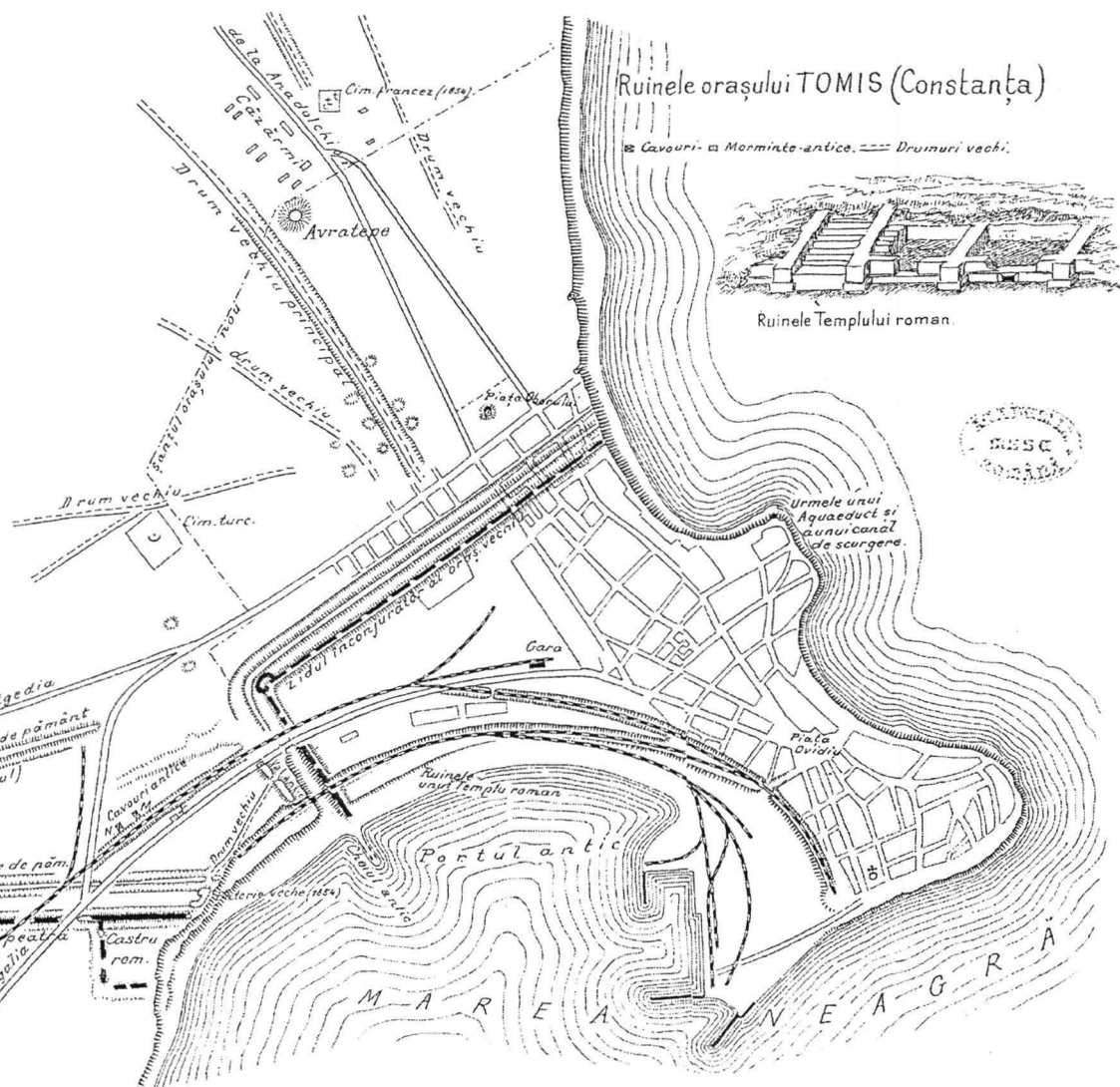
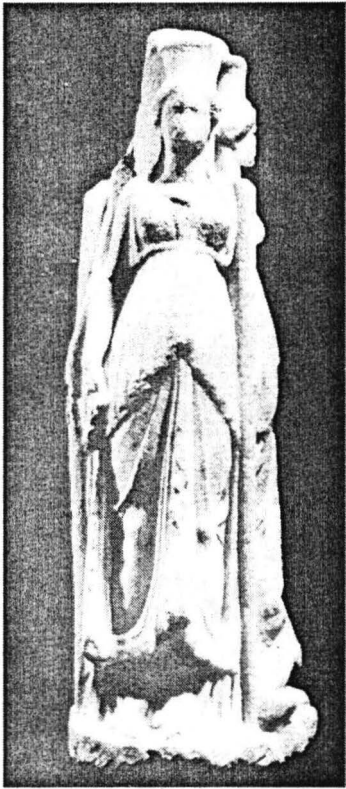


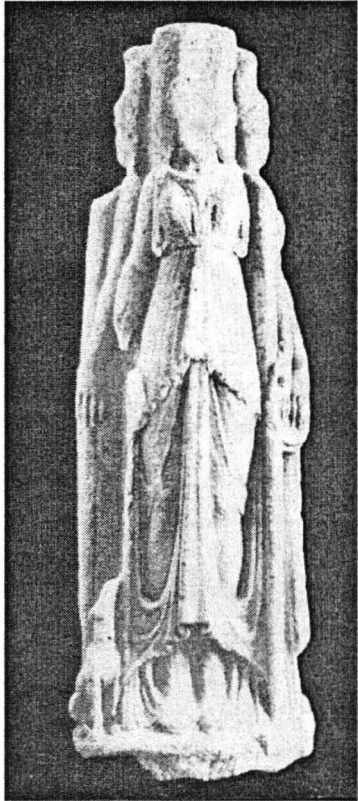
Fig. 1. Plan of the ruins of Tomis at the beginnings of the 20th century - Library of the Romanian Academy of Sciences, Fund P. Polonic Mss VIII, 62-64.



a

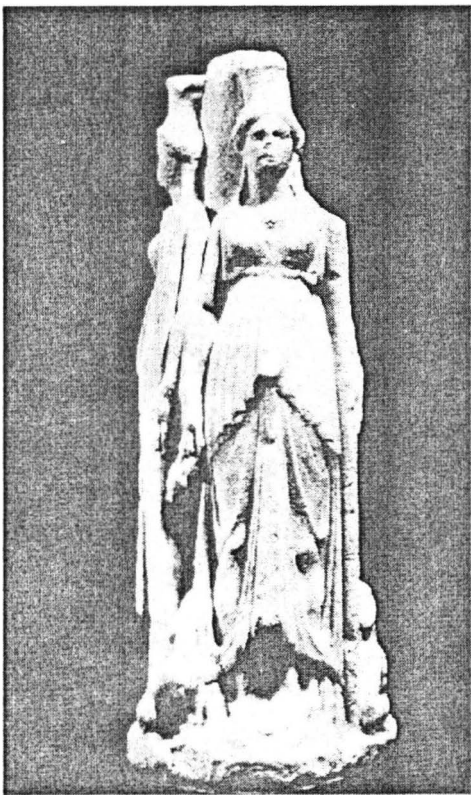


b



c

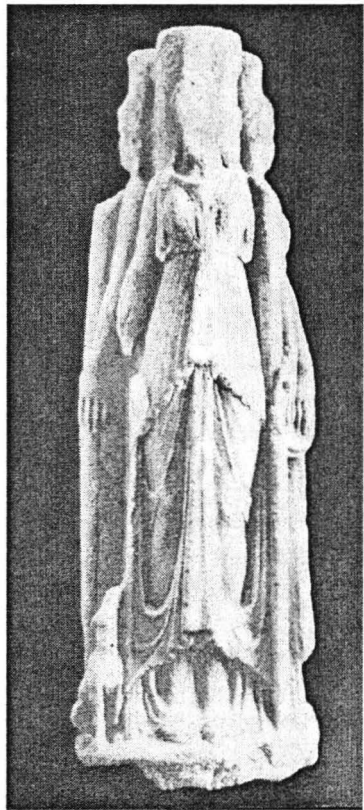
Fig. 2 a-c. Hekataion 1.



a

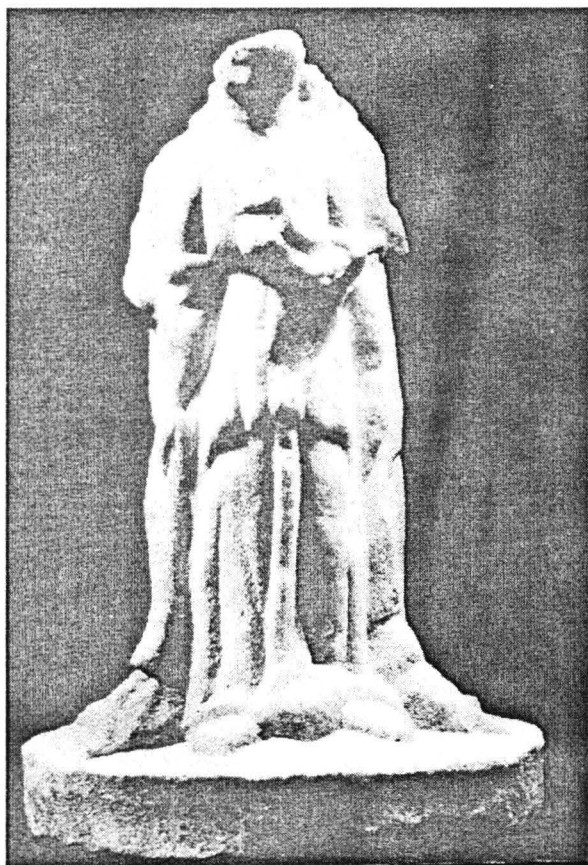


b



c

Fig. 3 a-c. Hekataion 2.



a



b



c

Fig. 4 a-c. Hekataion 3.

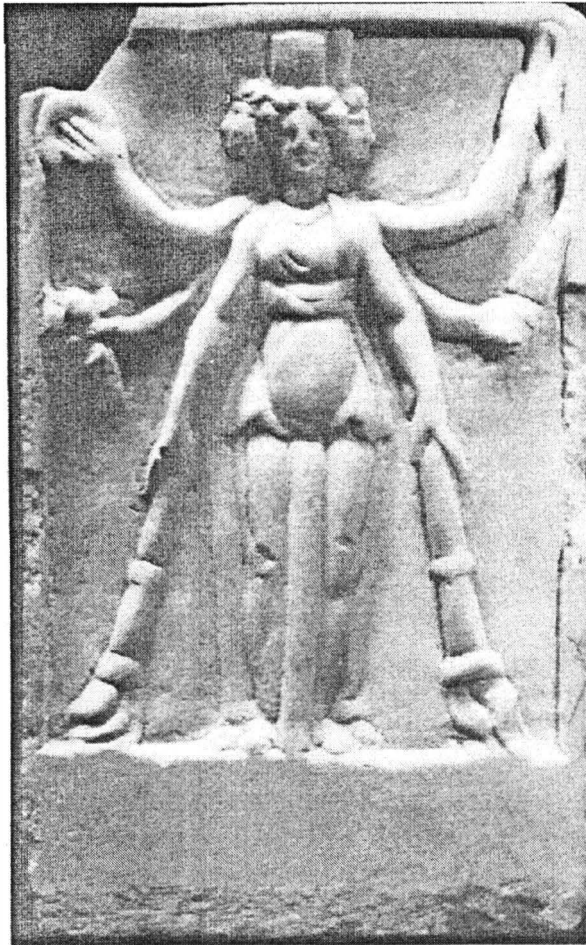


Fig. 5. Relief with the triple Hecate (inv. 2007).



Fig. 6. Relief with the triple Hecate (inv. 2008).



Fig. 7. Coin of Tomis – Pick/Regling I.1, nr. 3296.



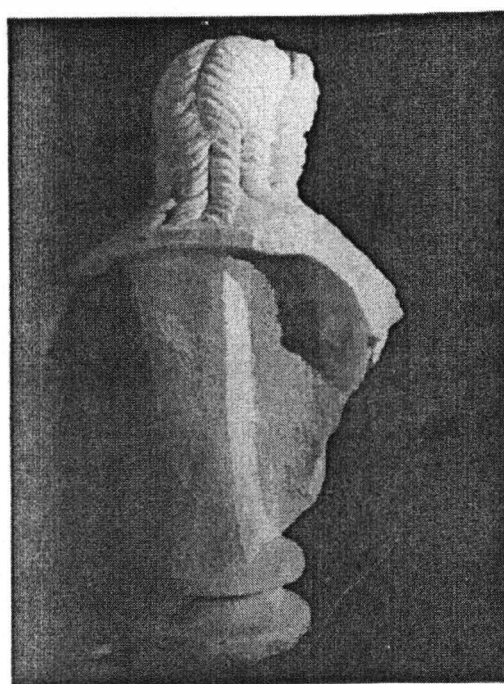
Fig. 8. Chtonian deity.



Fig. 9. Selene.



a



b

Fig. 10 a-b. Isis.

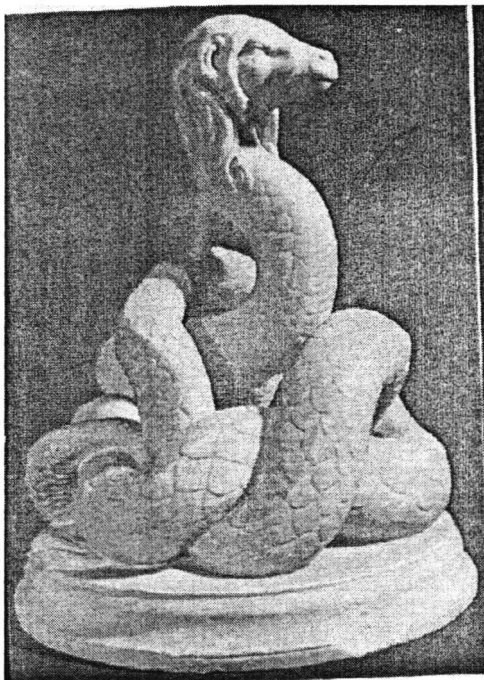


Fig. 11. Glykon.



Fig. 12. Coin of Ionopolis.



Fig. 13. Asclepios.



a



c



b

Fig. 14. Tyche.



Fig. 15. Dionysos Kathagemon.



Fig. 16. Dionysos.

Fig. 17. Cybele.

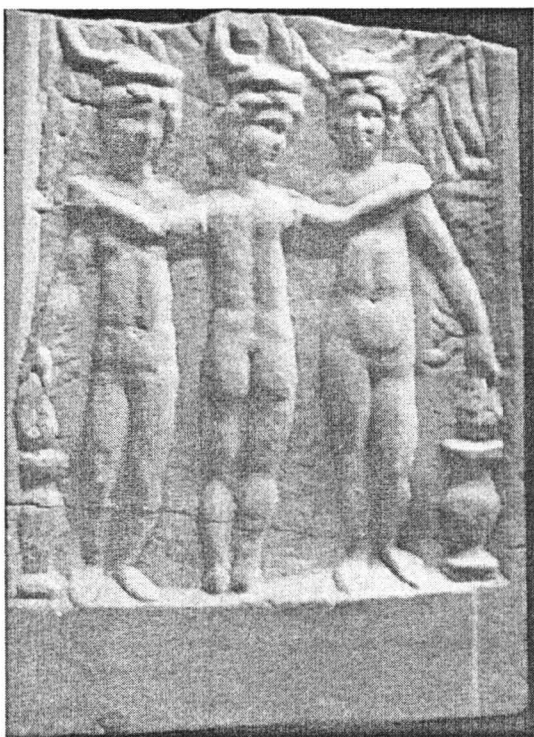


Fig. 18. The three graces.



Fig. 19. Mithras.

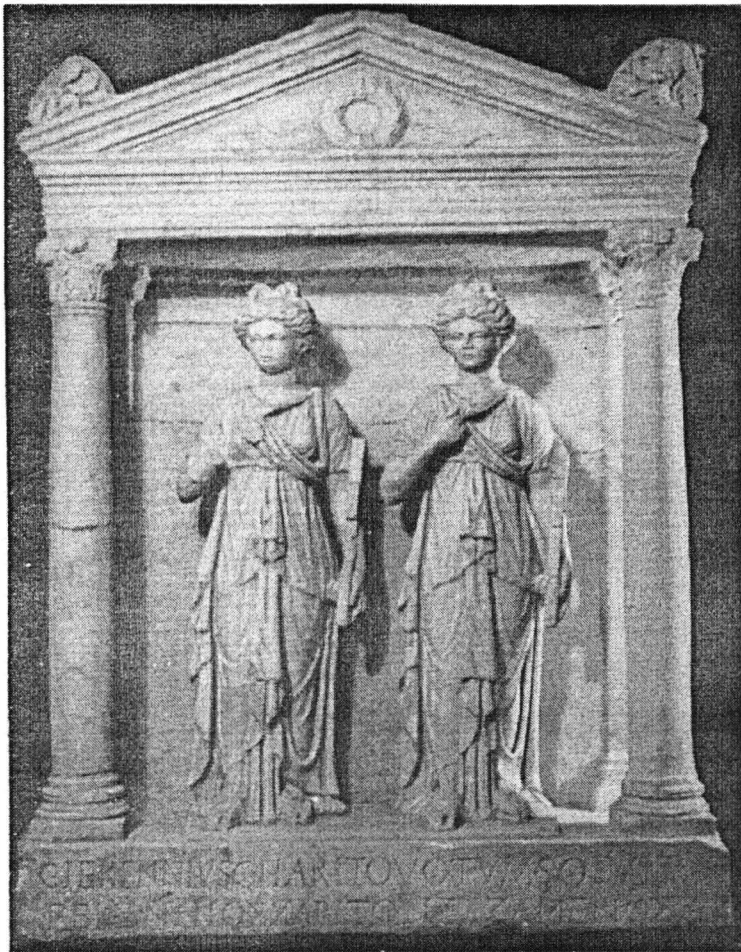


Fig. 20. Nemesis.

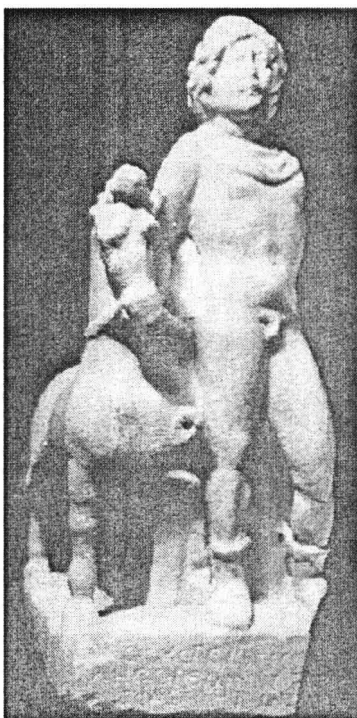


Fig. 21a-b. Dioscuri.



Fig. 22. Relief of the Thracian Rider.



Fig. 23. Relief of the Thracian Rider.



Fig. 24. Relief of the Thracian Rider.



Fig. 25. Relief of the Thracian Rider.

The esoteric character of the divinities from the Tomis group is their common denominator. The pieces belong to different periods, from the Antonine period to the middle of the 3rd century, in particular to the period of Severus Alexander – Gordian III, the period when mystic cults widespread. There is also a reflexion of this situation in the iconography of coins from Tomis, when divinities from this treasury are found at a place of honour on the coins of the city. The peak moments of the presence of Dionysus on coins is during the period of Marcus Aurelius. It remains present and knows a new ascent during the reigns of Caracalla – Geta. Hecate appears on coins in the same period as Hades, during the reign of Severus Alexander and Hades alone, during the reign of Gordian III. Nemesis is relatively constantly present on coins during Septimius Severus, grows under Caracalla and remains constant to know a new growth under Gordian III. The snake Glycon appears on coins under Severus Alexander. The statue of Tyche with Pontus is present on coins during Severus Alexander – Gordian III. This brief list of maximum rate of attestation of the divinities from the treasury shows that it is well circumscribed to the period of Marcus Aurelius – Gordian III.

We discussed in the beginning of this study that the group of statues was discovered outside the Roman wall of the city. The burial of the statues can be explained by the hidden deposition, out of the sight of unwanted guests of the precious statues, but also by the closeness of their burial from the temple which had housed them. This explanation takes into account the relatively secret character of the cults celebrated in that temple, away from the eyes of the entire community. We know that mysteries usually took place outside the cities. This temple seems to be situated next to one of the entrance gate of the city, next to the remains of a monumental building, of which we know only from the observations of P. Polonic⁸⁹ and M. Sutzou.

The burial of the treasury must have coincided with the period when temple inventories were buried throughout the empire. We have precise data about mithrea, buried to protect them from Christians. In Dobrogea the 4th century is dominated by many religious turbulences and these depositions of statues and religious inventory must take place in that context. I am relating to the Mithraic monuments from the cave from Gura Dobrogei, a parallel already made by D. M. Pippidi⁹⁰.

⁸⁹ See note 4.

⁹⁰ Pippidi, *op. cit.*, p. 367-368.