The cult of Dionysos in the Black Sea region

A thesis submitted for the degree of
MA in Black Sea Cultural Studies
School of Humanities

Katerina Amanatidou

January 2016
Thessaloniki – Greece
I hereby declare that the work submitted by me is mine and that where I have made use of another’s work, I have attributed the source(s) according to the Regulations set in the Student’s Handbook.

© January 2016, Katerina Amanatidou, 2201130029

No part of this dissertation may be copied, reproduced or transmitted without prior permission of the author.

January 2016
Thessaloniki – Greece
Acknowledgements

I would like to express my profound gratitude and my sincere thanks to my supervisor Professor, Dr. Manolis Manoledakis, who is also a professor in the MA in Black Sea Cultural Studies at the International Hellenic University, for his guidance, for his observations and suggestions and his overall assistance during the writing of the present thesis.

I would like to express my appreciation to all the professors and to the academic faculty of the MA in Black Sea Cultural Studies and to Dr. G. Aristodemou, for the knowledge they offered me and for their passion that inspired me to learn and enjoy my journey to the unknown region of the Black Sea.

To the librarians of the Library and Information Center of the International Hellenic University I owe my warm thanks for the assistance that they provided during my research in the library.

I would also like to thank the friend who suggested to me to apply for the MA programme, as well as my fellow students with whom I shared remarkable moments in our journey of knowledge.

To him, the one and only, to my sisters M. and M., to my brothers A. and A. and above all to the little ones Panagiotis and Philippos who inspire me to transform the world into a better place for them.
Abstract

In the ancient Greek world the religion was an integral part and an essential element in people’s both private and public life. Dionysos, the god of wine and of theatrical performances, was a significant god of the Hellenic pantheon and his cult was popular and widespread among the Greeks. Moreover, he was being worshiped as a chthonic deity that was related with the fertility of nature and with mystic rituals often under the epithet Bacchus.

The aim of the present thesis is to provide a detailed presentation and a substantive overview of all the aspects in people’s life that express their religious conception and preference to the cult of Dionysos in the Greek colonies of the Black Sea region at different historical periods. In researching such a complicated phenomenon as the religion of a community that encompass various beliefs and rituals, the actual facts, the ancient written records, the cult implements and monuments are being considered along with the seeds from which they arose. That is, in a first level, the connection between the Greek mythology and the religion, while in a second level that is specified by the actual needs of the inhabitants of a colony in conjunction with the character of its economy and the overall necessities that led to the invocation of Dionysos for help and support.

The core of the inquiry contains an enumeration and a thorough examination of all the immobile and mobile findings, discovered so far, such as the architectural remains of temples and theatres, the inscriptions, the statues, the coins, the pottery, the terracotta figurines and other artefacts, which reflect the predilection of a colony towards the cult of Dionysos. Some general historical information of the cities, from which our evidence originate, are also provided. Finally, the political aspect of Dionysos’ cult is being approached through the analysis of the religious policy of Mithridates VI the Eupator in the Pontic and Bosporan Kingdom.

The key tool for accomplishing the present thesis was the combined research and the correlation of the relatively limited ancient written sources with the archaeological evidence. Even though several ancient sites are beneath modern cities or in other cases submerged by the rise of the sea level, numerous excavations
and surveys had been conducted throughout the whole Black Sea littoral. Despite the significant archaeological material derived from the excavations, especially from the western, northwestern area and the Kerch Straits, their publications is, at least yet, far from being adequate for the academic scholarship.
## Contents

- **Acknowledgements** ................................................................. 3
- **Abstract** .................................................................................. 4
- **Contents** ................................................................................ 6
- **Introduction** ........................................................................ 8
- **Theoretical context** ............................................................... 10
  - **A. The Greek colonies in the Black Sea region and the religion** ...... 10
    - A. 1.1. The Greek colonisation of the Black Sea region .................. 10
    - A. 1.2. The religion in the Black Sea colonies .............................. 13
  - **B. Dionysos in Greek religion and culture** ................................. 15
    - B. 1.1. Attributes, iconography, origin and functions of the god Dionysos ........ 15
    - B. 1.2. Dionysos’ mythology and presence in ancient Greek literature ........... 18
    - B. 1.3. Ancient theatre and festivals in honour of Dionysos ................ 20
  - **C. Archaeological evidence** .................................................. 22
    - **1. The cult of Dionysos in the Western Black Sea region** .......... 22
      - 1.1. Apollonia Pontica .......................................................... 23
      - 1.2. Mesambria .................................................................. 25
      - 1.3. Odessos ...................................................................... 27
      - 1.4. Dionysopolis ................................................................. 28
      - 1.5. Kallatis ........................................................................ 32
      - 1.6. Tomis ......................................................................... 35
      - 1.7. Histria ......................................................................... 36
    - **2. The cult of Dionysos in the Northern Black Sea region** ......... 37
      - 2.1. Tyras .......................................................................... 37
      - 2.2. Nikonion ................................................................. 38
2.3. Borysthenes and Olbia ................................................................. 40

Northwestern Crimea ................................................................. 43

2.4. Chersonesos Taurike ................................................................. 43

Cimmerian Bosporus ................................................................. 44

European part of Bosporus .......................................................... 45

2.5. Kerch peninsula and the Crimean Azov Coast ......................... 45

2.6. Porthmion ........................................................................... 46

2.7. Panticapaion .......................................................................... 46

2.8. Nymphaion ........................................................................... 48

2.9. Kytaia ..................................................................................... 49

3. The cult of Dionysos in the Eastern Black Sea region ............... 51

3.1. Vani ...................................................................................... 51

4. The cult of Dionysos in the Southern Black Sea region .......... 53

4.1. Amisos ................................................................................... 53

4.2. Sinope .................................................................................... 55

4.3. Tios ....................................................................................... 56

D. The cult of Dionysos in the Pontic and Bosporan Kingdom during the reign of Mithridates VI the Eupator .......................................................... 58

D.1.1 The Pontic Kingdom under the reign of Mithridates VI the Eupator .......... 58

D.1.2 The Mithridates’ policy and the propaganda connected to Dionysos’ cult ...... 59

Conclusions .................................................................................. 63

Figures ....................................................................................... 67

Abbreviations ............................................................................... 92

Bibliography .................................................................................. 93
Introduction

The study of the religious life and beliefs in the Greek colonies of the Black Sea region is overall a rather difficult and demanding task, albeit compelling and intriguing, due to the lack of ancient written sources. Nevertheless, the understanding of the nature and practices of the cults of the ancient Greek religion can be attained by the examination of its both public and private character, which is closely intertwined with the function of a city-state, a polis. That knowledge is being achieved by the combined research of the information deriving from the ancient sources along with the interpretation of the material obtained from the excavations and the surveys.

During the 7th century BC, or even from the 8th century, Ionian Greeks mainly from Miletus penetrated to Euæinos Pontos and began to establish a significant number of colonies throughout the whole Black Sea littoral. The Dorian city of Megara founded also some colonies in the region. The relationships of the colonists with the numerous tribes that inhabited the area at that time were in general rather peaceful and amicable, although without being excluding some instances of hostile and violent encounters of both sides. The colonies, within the years, developed their economies and flourished by exploiting the natural resources of the region. Several cities expanded their territory into the hinterland for the cultivation of the agricultural lands and a lot of them constructed secure and adequate harbors for the needs of trade.

The colonies, irrespectively of the ties with their metropoleis, developed and functioned as independent poleis. However, the colonists shared with all the Greeks a common origin and language, the same customs and traditions as well as religion and cults. Thus, they continue to worship deities from the familiar Hellenic pantheon. Dionysos the god of wine and of ancient theater was an important deity of the Greek pantheon and his worship was very popular and widespread in the Black Sea region. The mentioning of city theaters on inscriptions testifies their existence on several colonies. The immediate connection of Dionysos with the viticulture, which includes the annual revival of the nature and the fertility of land
was being appreciated and venerated by the colonies, whose economy was based on agriculture. In addition, in the northern Black Sea were discovered evidence regarding the practicing of mystic Dionysiac rituals that consists an important aspect of the god’s worship as a chthonic deity. Generally, traces of his cult are evident and recognizable in a significant number of Greek colonies throughout the Black Sea.

As it was mentioned above, within the context of the polis the religious activities receives a formal legitimacy and the mediation for every individual’s participation to them even if they are exercised in home sanctuaries. Therefore, the architectural remains of cult buildings and of theatres, the statues, the altars, the testimonies derived from the inscriptions and the use of Dionysiac images on coins’ iconography acquire a special meaning, since they are providing the crucial evidence regarding the existence and the function of Dionysos’ cult. Furthermore, other mobile findings such as the pottery and the votive offerings especially the terracotta figurines and masks offers the additional, valuable and necessary data for the study of the ritual practices connected to his cult at the Black Sea colonies.

The significance of Dionysos’ cult in the Black Sea region can also be attested in the Mithridates’ VI the Eupator religious policy. The powerful king of the Pontic kingdom in the context of his political propaganda chose to proclaim the cult of Dionysos as the royal and official cult of his realm and adopted the epithet Dionysos for himself. Those actions along with the extensive use of Dionysiac attributes and symbols in the coinage gave an impulsion to the cult in the area at that period of time.

The present thesis is divided in four parts. The first two parts that is composed of five chapters consist the theoretical context of the paper. Firstly, are being presented, in two chapters, the general facts of the Greek colonization of the Black Sea region and the role of the religion in that process. Afterwards, there is an overview, in three chapters, of Dionysos’ role in the Greek religion and culture. The third part refers to the archaeological evidence regarding Dionysos that have been discovered, so far, in the excavations conducted throughout the whole Black Sea. Finally, to the Dionysos’ cult under the reign of Mithridates VI the Eupator is dedicated the fourth and last part of the present paper. It consists of two distinct chapters in which is analyzed the Mithridates’ VI religious policy that was connected
with the worship of Dionysos, since it had significantly affected the Pontic and the Bosporan kingdom.

Theoretical context.

A. 1.1. The Greek colonisation of the Black Sea region.

The Greeks, a seafaring people in general, when they first encountered the Black Sea named it inhospitable sea\(^1\). That initial name derived from the difficulty of navigation due to the harsh climate of the region, the dangerous storms, the absence of islands and the hostile tribes that dwelled at the coasts. Later on and after the beginning of the colonisation it was renamed Euxeinos Pontos, which means the hospitable sea\(^2\).

After the middle of the 7\(^{th}\) century BC Greek colonies, mainly Milesian\(^3\) and in a secondary limited level Dorian\(^4\) began to emerge in the Black Sea basin\(^5\). However, in the academic discussion has been expressed by several scholars the point of view that the first Greek colonies were established in Pontic area during the 8\(^{th}\) century BC in accordance with the data derived from the ancient written sources. On the contrary, the obtained so far archaeological material is dated not earlier than the 7\(^{th}\) century BC. Either way, it is generally accepted that before the actual period of the colonization the Greeks had proceeded to several visits and contacts in order to identify the region and get acquainted with it\(^6\).

The colonisation activity and the related processes were triggered by a variety of reasons and interests of the metropoleis. The causes were of economic

---

\(^1\) Axeinos Pontos in ancient Greek.
\(^2\) Strabo 7.3.6.
\(^3\) Pliny 5.112. According to Strabo 14.1.6 the whole Black Sea was colonized by the Milesians.
\(^4\) The Doric city of Megara established, in the southern shore of the Black Sea, the colony of Herakleia Pontica, who at its turn established the colonies of Chersonesos Taurike on Crimean peninsula and of Kallatis on the west Black Sea coast. The Megarians colonized also Mesambria. Kacharava 2005, 11.
\(^5\) Tsetskhladze 1998, 19.
\(^6\) Manoledakis 2013, 19.
character such as the need for new trade markets and routes and agricultural lands, as well as of social nature like the political upheavals and the overpopulation. Black Sea basin seemed ideal in offering wheat, vineyards, fisheries, minerals, metals and timber along with safe harborage.\textsuperscript{7} Hence, the colonies appeared in the fertile coastal plains, while their establishment was followed by the exploitation of the adjacent rural hinterlands, the so-called \textit{chorai}.\textsuperscript{8} The \textit{apoikia} of Histria and Orgame and the afterwards Olbia, along with Nikonion and Tyras on the lower Dniester region\textsuperscript{10}, were located in the vicinity of rivers and their estuaries and thus acquire access to broad inland trade routes.\textsuperscript{11}

The Milesians, after the early foundation of Apollonia Pontica, colonized in the first half of the 6\textsuperscript{th} century BC the city of Tomis at the west coast of the Black Sea and the area of the Cimmerian Bosporus.\textsuperscript{12} Panticapaion, Theodosia and Nymphaeum\textsuperscript{13} were the significant cities, while others such as the Mirmekion, Tyritate, Porthmion, Akra and Kytaia were smaller settlements founded on the European side, meaning the Kerch peninsula. On the opposite Asian side, the Taman peninsula, Hermonassa, Kepoi and later on Phanagoria were the major colonies from which only Kepoi was a Milesian foundation. Hermonassa was established by Ionians and Aeolians settlers and Phanagoria was founded in the second half of the 6\textsuperscript{th} century BC by the city of Teos.\textsuperscript{14} At the same period in the eastern coast of the Black Sea, Miletus founded the \textit{apoikiai} of Dioscurias, Gyenos, Phasis and Vani in the hinterland. Finally, on the south Black Sea shore during the 7\textsuperscript{th} century BC was founded Sinope, which was also a Milesian colony.\textsuperscript{15} Later on, Sinope established the

\begin{itemize}
\item [8] Doonan 2006, 54.
\item [9] The Greek word for colonies.
\item [10] Histria and Orgame founded at the end of the 7\textsuperscript{th} century are located in the western (northwestern) coast of the Black Sea and on the Danube (ancient Histros) river Delta. Olbia, Tyras and Nikonion are located in the northwestern Black Sea with the first one founded at the middle of the 6\textsuperscript{th} century on the estuaries of Boug (ancient Hypanis) river and the others two at the second half of the 6\textsuperscript{th} century on the estuaries of the Dniester (ancient Tyras) river. Kacharava 2005, 12-14.
\item [12] Doonan 2006, 54.
\item [15] For the “double” foundation of Sinope see also p.55 of the present paper.
\end{itemize}
colonies of Trapezous, Cotyora, and Kerasus scattered on the eastern part of the same coast, thus acquiring a double status as both a colony and a metropolis.\textsuperscript{16}

The Greek colonists encountered a variety of tribes that inhabited the region of the Black Sea, both the coastline and the hinterland, before their arrival (Fig.1). Most specific, Thracians and Getae occupied the western part, while the Scythian tribes a vast area in the north that extended from the Danube to the Caucasus including Crimea, in which also lived the tribe of Tauri. The Maiotians dwelled in the eastern part of the Azov Sea\textsuperscript{17}, the Colchians in the east area of the Black Sea and the tribes of Chalybes, Tibarenoi, Mossynoeci, Mariandynoi and the Syrioi or Leukosyrioi\textsuperscript{18} in the south. In most of the cases the Greeks developed peaceful and amicable relationships and trade contacts with the native populations some of which usually formed a part of the colonies. On the other hand, some cities such as the Herakleia Pontica and the Chersonesos Taurike subdued the tribes of Mariandynoi\textsuperscript{20} and Tauri respectively. The same also applied for the local populations, meaning that they were sometimes friendly and others hostile towards the Greeks.\textsuperscript{21}

Most of the colonies were politically independent of their mother-cities, albeit they had strong religious and cultural links among them. Colonies, shortly after their establishment, acquired the administrative institutions and the socio-political structures of a \textit{polis}.\textsuperscript{22} Their state organization was designed to function completely as autonomous and independent cities. Furthermore, in order to be secure the initial settlements were located, in several instances, on the top of hills that provided natural protection. Below the fortified acropolis, the city as it was growing was articulated in terraces. Many colonies, during the years, in order to be further protected had constructed fortifications that encircled the whole city.\textsuperscript{23}

\textsuperscript{16} Erciyas 2007, 1196. Apart from the above mentioned colonies there are many others, but it is not the aim of the present paper to refer to all of them. Besides, the colonies connected with Dionysos’ cult will be discussed thoroughly later on.
\textsuperscript{17} The ancient lake Maeotis.
\textsuperscript{18} The Leukosyrioi that means the White Syrians were most probably of Cappadocian or Paphlagonian origin. Hdt. 1.7.2.
\textsuperscript{19} Tsetskhladze 1998, 47-50.
\textsuperscript{20} Strabo 12.3.4.
\textsuperscript{21} Avram et al., 2004, 927.
\textsuperscript{22} Most of them towards the end of the 6\textsuperscript{th} century BC. Tsetskhladze 1998, 16.
\textsuperscript{23} Tsetskhladze 2009, 151-156.
The primary consideration of each colony was the exploitation of its potentials in order to gain viability and sustainability. Therefore, every city tried to develop a stable and profitable economy that could endowed them with prosperity. The base of their economy was mainly agriculture, fishery, trade, pottery and metal production or a combination of them. Eventually, the political maturity and the economic flourishing of the colonies was demonstrated by their public, social, and religious infrastructure and, hence, it is detectable in their above ground houses, in public buildings, in agoras, fortifications and temples.²⁴

A.1.2 The religion in the Black Sea colonies.

The first settlers in the colonies were inhabitants of mother-cities who, after the reception of a favorable omen from the Delphic Oracle, sailed away and through a pioneering venture succeeded to acquire a new homeland. Those pioneers under the leadership of an oikist²⁵ and the protection of Apollo brought along the sacred fire from the metropolis and set up the new community in the foreign land. With that particular rite the colonists continued to think of themselves as being placed under the protection of the same gods they had worshiped all their lives and now has accompanied them to their new city. In a very short course of time their internal life encompassed all of the customs and traditions to whom they were familiar with, including the religion.²⁶

A specific type of religious and social connection linked the colony with its mother city. However, even though the colony’s religious system it had originated from its metropolis’, the colony was autonomous and developed its own religious identity in which the first new cult was that of the oikist. The other deities were chosen by the colonists in correlation with the conditions and the needs that

²⁴ Doonan 2006, 55.
²⁵ The founder of a colony.
emanated from their new homeland. This identity was culturally expressed in and reinforced through various ritual activities both private and public.\textsuperscript{27}

Religion is one significant aspect in peoples’ lives that can serve as a factor of reinforcement of their sense of community, cohesion and unity. Such an element was essential for the new established colonies and their inhabitants in order to face the challenges and control their fears of the unknown foreign land. The religion for the colonists, that was undoubtedly part of their moral and cultural tradition, was of great importance since it manifested, along with the language, in the most immediate and profound way their Greekness. A Greekness that they wanted to be emphasized not only to the local population and indigenous tribes of the Black Sea, but to other Greeks as well in order to maintain their connections and ties with the main Greece and to preserve their ethnic identity in a “barbarian” environment. Thus, they erected altars and temples dedicated to divinities from the familiar Hellenic pantheon and in some cases they chose to promote and venerate functions of the worshiped deity in accordance with their new necessities. Likewise, although the gods who were worshipped in the various colonies were the same, more or less, the aspect of each deity each city chose to emphasize differed. Finally, in some other instances some of their attributes and characteristics were assimilated with those of the local divinities of the indigenous population.\textsuperscript{28}

Each colony, owing to its function as a polis, constituted the institutional authority that constructed a specific religious system with particular configurations and characteristics of its patron deity and established the cults, the certain rituals, a sacred calendar and the analogues sanctuaries and temples. For the colonists the reciprocal and interactive relationship with their city’s pantheon comprised the decisive factor for the assuring of their survival, continuance and well-being. The divine protection and support was of vital importance for the newly established settlements in order to cope with an unfamiliar and sometimes hostile natural and human environment.\textsuperscript{29} Furthermore, the various religious festivals organized by the city-state defined and expressed a concept and a feeling of a common new

\textsuperscript{27} Inwood 2000b, 48.
\textsuperscript{28} Buxton 2013, 18.
\textsuperscript{29} Inwood 2000a, 19.
citizenship for the colonists. The participation of the inhabitants of a colony to the celebrations in honour of a god created a unity among the community and strengthened its cohesion.  

Apart from the official character of the religion that was organized and practiced by the authorities of the city, the colonists exercise also private worship in home sanctuaries, especially in the archaic time. The designation home sanctuary refers to each house that had a stone or terracotta altar, which was the essential element for any ancient Greek cult. Moreover, the hearth was the central sacred area of the home, whilst inside the rooms were fixed especial niches for the installation of the votive gifts for the worshiped deity, such as terracotta or marble figurines and various vessels.

B. Dionysos in Greek religion and culture.

B.1.1 Attributes, iconography, origin and the functions of the god Dionysos.

Dionysos was worshiped as the god of wine, of vineyards, of grape harvest and viticulture generally. Moreover, as a god of a vegetative vital plant he was connected with fertility and the revival of nature and thus his cult had also a chthonic character and a close connection with the female deities of farming, such as Demeter and Persephone. Dionysos was also the patron deity of the theatrical-dramatic performances that, initially, accompanied his festivals. The attributes and symbols of Dionysos were related with his functions. The vine and ivy wreaths, the particular and distinctive wooden wand with a bundle of ivy leaves or pine cones tied

---

30 Garland 2014, 47.
31 Of small size.
32 Krapivina 2010, 127-128.
33 Sekerskaya 2007, 501.
34 Burkert 1985, 160.
35 Known mainly from his iconography in the Attic vase painting, produced by the artists’ religious conception of the deity in conjunction with their knowledge derived from the mythology. Farnell 1909, 245.
to its top, the so-called thrysos and the kantharos, a specific wine drinking vessel illustrates and emphasizes his affinity with the wine (Fig.2).³⁶

Additionally, an essential feature of his iconography was his thiasos. Thiasos was Dionysos’ retinue consisted of female Maenads, frequently dressed with a fawn-skin, and their male counterparts the Satyrs and the Silens. Their prevailing image was a disguise that resulted from a combination of animal and human elements like the half-goat body for the Satyrs and the half-horse body for the Silens. Their identity was further concealed by a face mask with beard, flat nose and animal ears. Moreover, the use of the mask was an outward tool and an apparent symbol of the element of transformation in Dionysos’ cult. In this respect the god’s devotees that acted as the members of his companionship in his festivals were dressed correspondingly.³⁷ The same also applied for the actors of the chorus in the satyr plays. At last, the symbol of phallos was used in Dionysiac ritual in order to denote the god’s productive powers and at the same time the extraordinary character of his cult.³⁸

During the 6th century BC Dionysos’ iconography in Attic vase painting attained a typical and ordinary form that also reflected the development of his festivals. Hence, Dionysos was depicted as a bearded, adult or sometimes elderly man clothed in a long tunic.³⁹ At the middle of the 5th century, that particular convention in his iconographic tradition undergone a remarkable shift. Around 425 BC Dionysos’ image was subjected to a rejuvenation and thenceforth he was being represented as a beardless adolescent and frequently naked. This change in the Dionysian imagery it was interpreted as an effort to combine Dionysos’ masculine and feminine nature, since his essence embodied also feminine aspects and facets.⁴⁰

Different views have been expressed by the scholars during the past years regarding Dionysos’s descent. A lot of them considered Dionysos as a foreigner, an outlander exotic god who had emigrated in Greece at some point during the

³⁶ Mikalson 2010, 87.
³⁷ Burkert 1985, 166.
³⁸ Farnell 1909, 97.
³⁹ Burkert 1985, 166.
⁴⁰ Buxton 2013, 231.
⁴¹ Thrace and Phrygia are among the alleged origin areas. Radcliffe 2013, 61.
archaic period. Their view was based mainly on ancient narratives that depicted Dionysos as a foreign deity and on his minor presence in the epic poems of Homer. On the other hand, there were a variety of myths locating his birth places in Greek towns. The long lasting debate came to an end with the discovery of the Linear B tablets, which contained references to Dionysos that proved the god’s existence in the Greek pantheon since at least the Mycenaean period. Although, there is no unanimity among scholars regarding the etymology of Dionysos’ name, the most prevailing hypothesis supports that it means the son of Zeus or young Zeus.

A very significant aspect of Dionysos cult was the Dionysian intoxicated ecstasy. The process of the religious ecstasy in which the devotee experiences the enthusiasm signifies that its normal mental status is being transformed beyond the limits of its ordinary consciousness and accomplishes to reach the union with the divine nature. This ecstasy is not something achieved by an individual on its own, but rather a phenomenon that is rapidly widespread among the worshippers. In this regard and as it is demonstrated by the myths, the god always is being followed by his frenzied males and females votaries and all together are called Bacchus, Bacchoi and Bacchae respectively. Another basic element in Dionysos’ cult was his transformations, a fundamental quality especially in the mystic Dionysiac ritual. His certain incarnations and embodiments as a bull or a goat, within the context of symbolism, along with the use of mask is denoting of the transformation of identity, which is a precondition of drama and inherent in mystery cults.

---

42 Farnell 1909, 86-87.
43 Larson 2007, 126.
44 The tablets discovered in the Mycenaean (Pylos and Mycenae) and Minoan palaces (Knossos) were a kind of lists mentioning, among others, the names of a variety of gods. Burkert 1985, 43.
45 Burkert 1985, 45.
46 Kretschmer’s point of view is based on the assumption that the name was influenced by the Thracian dialect. Farnell 1909, 203.
47 Enthusiasm derives from the Greek word ἐνθεος that means that a person has the god inside it that is full of the god.
48 Farnell 1909, 161.
49 Burkert 1985, 162.
50 Those were secret rites, which probably promised a blessed afterlife to devotees and required rituals of initiation (telei). Guthrie 2000, 61.
B.1.2. Dionysos’ mythology and presence in ancient Greek literature.

The mythology of ancient Greeks is actually a part of their cultural tradition, since it contains facets of their religious concerns and ritual practices, of their morals and ethics and of their perception of the world. In addition, the tales about male and female deities and about the life and the accomplishments of a variety of mortal heroes sometimes contain a certain degree of truth that can be attested in real historical events. Homer’s epic poems, the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and the Homeric hymns\(^{52}\), the *Theogony* and the Work and Days by Hesiod, the *Argonautica*\(^{53}\) by Apollonius of Rhodes, as well as the comedies and tragedies of the ancient playwrights are some of the literary sources interlinked with Greek mythology. Nevertheless, the motif that belongs to ritual should be distinguished from that belonging only to the myth.

The birth myth of Dionysos was placed in Thebes in the region of Boeotia during the reign of king Kadmos.\(^{54}\) Dionysos was the son of Zeus and the mortal Semele, Kadmus’ daughter, who was incinerated by a thunderbolt of Zeus after her request to see him during her pregnancy. Zeus rescued the prematurely born embryo by sheltering it, as he sewed it up in his own thigh and when the period of gestation was completed Dionysos was reborn.\(^{55}\) According to a myth from the orphic tradition, Persephone and Zeus that was transformed into a serpent, were the parents of Dionysos-Zagreus, who as a child was dismembered and eaten by the Titans. Nevertheless he came back to life as Dionysos in the womb of Semele.\(^{56}\) Zeus, in order to prevent Hera, his jealous wife, from harming the infant ordered Hermes to hide it. Hermes, in turn, delivered the newborn deity to the nymphs, which took care of him in a faraway place to the east, in a cave of the mountain called Nyssa.

---

\(^{52}\)The Homeric hymns, that were alike epic poems but of short length, were used as a kind of *prooimia*, as an introduction to the epic recitation at festivals. Each one refers to a specific god and introduces him to the audience by narrating his history, his birth and epiphany. Burkert 1985, 123.

\(^{53}\) *Argonautica* contains a lot of data about the Black Sea area, as it is a narration of the myth of Jason who along with the Argonauts sailed to Colchis in order to steal the Golden Fleece.

\(^{54}\) The myth is very old as it was mentioned in both Homer, Iliad 14.323-25 and in Hesiod, Theogony 940-42.

\(^{55}\) This is the symbolism of the notion of rebirth and revival that is connected with Dionysos’ cult.

\(^{56}\) Kerényi 1951, 257.

\(^{56}\) Larson 2007, 142.
After a long time Dionysos filled with divine power and with a companionship of women returned in his homeland of Thebes to assert his status as a god.\(^{57}\)

The myth that illustrates in the most immediate way Dionysos’ connection with the wine occurs in a rural demos of Attica. The god reveals for the first time to a farmer named Ikaros the secrets of viniculture and of wine making. But Ikaros’ fellow villagers kill him, because they thought that he tried to poison them when he gave them wine. His daughter Erigone cannot withstand the death of her father and commits suicide.\(^{58}\) Apparently, there are several mythological narrations related to Dionysos' different forms and concern his life and relations with other gods or with the mortals, such as the one about his relationship with Ariadne. Dionysos, according to the myth, found Ariadne, the daughter of the Cretan king Minoas and of Pasiphae, at the island of Naxos where Theseus had left her. They fell in love, married and had a lot of sons. Some of the names of their various sons were Oinopion, Euanthes and Staphyllos.\(^{59}\)

Euripides in his Bacchae dramatized the aetiological\(^{60}\) myth of Dionysos’ cult which was one of the most characteristic and widely popular throughout antiquity myths of him.\(^{61}\) The scenery of the myth is the city of Thebes during the reign of king Pentheus, the successor of Kadmos. The Thebans had discard Semele’s claims that she had been pregnant by Zeus and that, consequently, gave birth to a god, named Dionysos. Therefore, Dionysos returned to his mythological birthplace in order to establish his own authority and his cult and to restore the reputation of his mother. While Pentheus refuses to recognize the god and opposes to the arrival and establishment of the new cult, Dionysos exercises his divine powers that maddens the women\(^{62}\) of Thebes to abandon their homes and to live in the wilds of the nearby mountain Kithairon.\(^{63}\) Pentheus’ difficult situation of handling the women frenzied by the worship of Dionysus became more complicated by the appearance of a mysterious strange androgynous figure, who is Dionysos himself, followed by an

\(^{57}\) Mikalson 2010, 86.

\(^{58}\) Burkert 1985, 164.

\(^{59}\) Oinopion in Greek means the one who produces wine, Euanthes means the nice blossom and Staphyllos the grape. Kerényi 1951, 272.

\(^{60}\) Aetiological is the myth, which narrates and explains the foundation and the practices of a cult.

\(^{61}\) The play was staged in 405 BC at the Great Dionysia and won the first prize. Mikalson 2010, 89.

\(^{62}\) Those mad women are the archetypical Maenads, Dionysos’ female followers.

\(^{63}\) Mikalson 2010, 87, 89.
entourage of Asian women. The disguised god, after the attempts of the king to imprison and interrogate him, convinces Pentheus to spy on the women who, possessed by frenzy and led by his own mother Agave, unknowingly tear him limb from limb in an act of a sacrificial ritual.\textsuperscript{64}

Dionysos is the main character of the Aristophanes’ comedy the “Frogs”.\textsuperscript{65} The storyline is about the god’s journey to Hades in order to find the playwright Euripides and bring him back to life. The description of the god’s unheroic adventures aimed to satirize the persistence and the tenacity of the Dionysiac pleasures and well-being even in a place like the underworld.\textsuperscript{66} In another Aristophanes’ play the “Acharnians” the protagonist Dikaiopolis who is a supporter of peace and a reveler, sung a hymn to Phalles that was a personification of \textit{phallos}. That act was part of a small rural procession celebrated in honour of Dionysos.\textsuperscript{67}

\textbf{B.1.3. Ancient theatre and festivals in honor of Dionysos.}

The birth of Dionysos and more specific his first epiphany was celebrated in the \textit{dithyramb}, a characteristic processional hymn, sung by a chorus, originally in his honour.\textsuperscript{68} The dithyramb was performed by the Dionysos’ thiasos that consisted by his votaries, who were disguised as Satyrs and played the flutes.\textsuperscript{69} According to Aristotle the ancient drama that is the tragedy, the comedy and the satyr play, derived and developed from the improvisations of the leaders of the dithyramb.\textsuperscript{70} Furthermore, the dramatic performances in ancient Athens were part and an essential element of the festivals in honour of Dionysos. Over the course of time,

\textsuperscript{64} In this incident, even though Pentheus was not brought back to life, is implied the dismemberment, the \textit{sparagmos} “σπαραγμός” that happened to Dionysos by the Titans. Seaford 2006, 85. Burkert 1985, 165.
\textsuperscript{65} It was staged in 405 BC at Lenaia festival. Seaford 2006, 92.
\textsuperscript{66} Seaford 2006, 84.
\textsuperscript{67} Larson 2007, 133.
\textsuperscript{68} Some researchers argue that the name of the hymn derives from the epithet Dithyrambos that means the one who entered life from a double door, implying the womb of his mother and the thigh of his father and was indicative and descriptive of the way the god was born. Buxton 2013, 224.
\textsuperscript{69} Burkert 1985, 165.
\textsuperscript{70} “ἀπὸ τῶν ἔξωρχόντων τον διθύραμβον”, Aristotle Poetics 1249a11.
drama that was originated from the Dionysiac cult as well as the *dithyramb* extended beyond the performance of the ritual and of themes connected exclusively with Dionysos.\textsuperscript{71}

One aspect of the living religious practice of the Greeks was the celebrations in honour of their gods. The attic festivals related with the Dionysos’ cult were the Great or city Dionysia “τά μεγάλα ἢ ἐν ἀδιπτή Διονύσια”, the rural Dionysia “τά κατ’ αγρούς Διονύσια”, the *Lenaea* “τά Λήναια” and the *Antheia* “τά Ἀνθεστήρια”.\textsuperscript{72} At those festivals even slaves could also participate in the celebrations. Additionally, it is noteworthy that during the City Dionysia, prisoners were released in order to take part in the rituals.\textsuperscript{73}

*Antheia*\textsuperscript{74} that was connected with the production of wine and renewal of the fertility was the oldest feast and extended over three days. The core of the ritual was the myth of Ariadne and Dionysos that was dramatized into a theatrical performance. The women drunk wine and dance in front of a Dionysos’ mask and the wife of the king *archon* was given, in a symbolic manner, as wife to Dionysos.\textsuperscript{75} The feast included also a wine competition in which every male participant should drink first three liters of wine in order to win.\textsuperscript{76}

The rural Dionysia were the celebrations for Dionysos, as an agricultural deity, in the agrarian demes of Attica by the farmers during the winter month of *Poseideon*. Apart from the various drama productions the ritual included goat sacrifices and a procession of the villagers carrying images of *phalli* in an atmosphere of indecent teasing and coarse manner.\textsuperscript{77} The City Dionysia, established during the 6\textsuperscript{th} century BC, had similar content with the rural ones, but it was held under the jurisdiction of the Athenian city-state as its basic dramatic festival. It was a spectacular celebration with a magnificent procession through the *agora* and various altars that ended to the theater where the dramatic plays were presented to the

\textsuperscript{71} Seaford 2006, 89.
\textsuperscript{72} Farnell 1909, 205.
\textsuperscript{73} Seaford 2006, 29.
\textsuperscript{74} *Antheia* means blossoming and the feast occurred in the spring month called *Antheion*. Burkert 1985, 237.
\textsuperscript{75} Burkert 1985, 45, 164.
\textsuperscript{76} Larson 2007, 139.
\textsuperscript{77} Mikalson 2010, 128.
Finally, for the Lenaia festival only few information are known. Some scholars argue that its name derives from the Greek word “ληνός”, which means the vat in which the grapes are pressed for wine, while others that the Lenai were the frenzied women celebrating the Dionysiac rituals as Bacchic maenads. There is also a suggestion that at Lenaia was practiced a type of mystical ritual for some initiates. Apart from the above mentioned festivals that were organized by the city or by a rural demos there were also some unofficial rituals. Those Dionysiac mystic rites, known as Bacchic mysteries, were being practiced by small groups of cult associations and unions that were called thiasoi. The participants in the mysteries followed a ritual of initiation in order to become members of the unions.

C. ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE.

1. The cult of Dionysos in the Western Black Sea region.

The existence of contemporary constructions above the positions of the ancient settlements on the Bulgarian and Romanian coasts along with the rise of the sea level, hinders and in some cases excludes the conduction of excavations. However, the obtained material regarding Dionysos’ cult, despite the fact that is scattered and in a lot of cases fragmentary is significant and valuable. The evidence will be presented according to the geographical location of the colonies in a clockwise order (Fig.3.) and starting from the nearest to the Bosporus Straits that is the entrance to the Black Sea, which is the city of Apollonia Pontica.

---

78 Larson 2007, 132-133.
79 Radcliffe 2013, 347.
80 Burkert 1985, 162.
1.1. Apollonia Pontica.

Apollonia Pontica\(^{81}\), which was established towards the end of the 7\(^{th}\) century BC by Milesian settlers is the earliest Greek colony on the Bulgarian coast of the Black Sea littoral.\(^{82}\) The cult of Dionysos is corroborated in the city mainly by the discovery of relevant epigraphic finds dated to the Roman period and by several vessels who bear depictions of Dionysos and his companions.

More specifically, there is an inscription that enumerates the members of a Dionysian “thiasos”, which is most probably a religious association, as well as their duties and assignments.\(^{83}\)

\[\ldots \ldots \text{Καρνεάδης Ἡρα} \ldots \ldots \text{Δωρόπους} \ldots \ldots \text{ΔΟΝΟΚΟΡΟ Βούκόλος, ΦΑ} \ldots \ldots \text{ΔΗΜΟΣ Βουκόλως}, \ldots \ldots \text{ΝΙΚΗΦΟΡΟΣ Αλέξανδρος Αρισταϊνέτου κρατηρία<ρχ>ος, Τέρτιος ΧΡΙΣΣΟΥ} \]

The other inscription\(^{85}\) is a decree in honour of Hugesagorases, who was an admiral in the colony of Histria.

\[\text{[έδ]οξε} \text{τῇ} \text{βουλῆι καὶ} \text{τώι δήμωι} \text{τῶν} \text{συνεδρῶν} \text{[γ]νώμηι ἐπειδή} \text{συμβέβηκεν} \text{τήν} \text{τε} \text{πέραν} \text{[χό-} \text{ραν}} \text{<—} \text{—} \text{Μεσημβριαγών} \text{πόλεμον} \text{ἀνεπάγγελτον} \text{ἡμῖν}\]

---

81 It is the modern city of Sozopol. Nedev-Panayotova 2003, 95.
82 Isaac 1986, 244. Strabo 7.6.1.
84 IGBulg I\(^{1}\), no 401.
85 It was found in Histria and dated at ca. 200-150 BC. Nedev-Panayotova 2003, 103.

According to the text, Egesagoras that was a member of the official authority of another Greek colony and due to the great assistance and services he offered to the Apollonia Pontica, was awarded by the archon of the city with a golden wreath. The fact that this exceptional honor took place during a Dionysian festival, “ἐν τοῖς Διονυσίοις”, is an indication of the great significance of Dionysos’ cult in the city. 87

86 IGulg I 2, no 388, bis.
87 Nede-Panayotova 2003, 103.
Apart from the epigraphic testimonies the excavations in the site yielded numerous pottery sherds of different vases with decoration belonging to the Dionysian iconography. In a lot of them is depicted Dionysos himself, while in others Satyrs and Maenads. Additionally, in the necropolis of Apollonia Pontica were discovered red-figured craters decorated with scenes of the Dionysian thiasos. It is not clear for the researchers, if the vases were grave goods or functioned as urns.\textsuperscript{88} Finally, the finds of tokens made of lead were assumed to be connected with the cult of Dionysos Zagreus, which is correlated with mystic cults the notion of eschatological thinking.\textsuperscript{89}

### 1.2. Mesambria.

Mesambria\textsuperscript{90} was a Dorian colony as it was founded by the Megarians on an older Thracian coastal fort at the end of the 6th or at the early 5th century BC.\textsuperscript{91} As far as the religious preferences of the city’s residents is concerned, Dionysos was among the deities that were being venerated in Mesambria and most probable it had a temple, although its remains have not been discovered so far. Nevertheless, the existence of the temple as well as a theater is evidenced and confirmed by a number of inscripational testimonies.

During the Hellenistic period it was customary for the assembly of the citizens of Mesambria to ratify constitutive decrees of honour, which were offered to city’s benefactors, both locals and foreigners, in appreciation of their assistance. Those collective resolutions, carved in stone plates, were given to the polis’ treasurers in order to place them in the temple of Dionysos or Apollo, so that everybody could be able to see them.\textsuperscript{92}

\textsuperscript{88} Nedev-Panayotova 2003, 132.  
\textsuperscript{89} Bilde 2008, 32.  
\textsuperscript{90} It is the modern town of Nesebar, situated near to the city of Burgas.  
\textsuperscript{92} Preshlenov 2003, 175.
Moreover, the various awarding ceremonies, where the prominent persons were granted with benefits and being crowned with golden wreaths, occurred in the course of the celebrations of City-Dionysia inside the city’s theater. For instance, that was the case with the renewal of the treaty between the colony of Mesambria and the Thracian dynast Sadalas (Fig.4).

Even though, the theater has not been found yet, the excavators assume that it was located to the southern part of the city. Their assumption is reinforced by the discovery of a clay theater mask at that area (Fig.5).

In Mesambria Dionysos was also worshiped under the epithet Ἑλευθερεύς, which means the Liberator, as it is documented once again from an inscription.

στραταγοί: Κόνων Αθανασίωνος Ζώπυρος Ἑλλανος Βοσπόριχος Ἀντ [φ]ίλου Αντίανδρος Πυθοδώρο [υ] Ἀντιφίλος Καλλιγείτον [ος] Θεότιμος Ἀρακλείδα και

---

93 IGBulg I, no 308, ter. The inscription is dated to the 3rd century BC.
94 Preshlenov 2003, 176.
95 IGBulg I, no 307. The inscription is dated to the 3rd century BC (281-277).
96 Gotcheva 2007, 71.
In the middle of the 1st century BC Mesambria along with the other Greek colonies of the northwestern Black Sea, from Apollonia Pontica up to Olbia, faced the danger of being subjugated under the Getaen king Burebista. At that time the citizens chose to invoke Dionysos Ἐλευθερεύς in order to protect and assist them to win the battles against the Getaen troops. The inscription is a dedication of several generals to the god who supported them to finish the conflicts successfully.  

1.3. Odessos.

The Milesian colony of Odessos was founded at the beginning of the 6th century BC on a high ground level overlooking a well sheltered bay. The ancient site was stretched out on the slopes and the terraces of the northwestern part of the bay. The excavations brought to light a variety of findings that are closely intertwined with the Dionysiac cult. First of all, in the text of an inscription, which was discovered in Agathopolis, was mentioned a theater in Odessos and thus the researchers argue that at least in the 4th century BC there should have been a theater operating in the city till the 1st century BC. Possibly, it was located on the eastern slope of a terrace. This assumption it is strengthened by the fact that theater masks and terracotta figurines depicting comic actors were found at that area.

In the area of city’s necropolis it was unearthed the remains of a coroplastic workshop, dated from the 3rd century BC, which produced a variety of terracotta statuettes intended for the decoration of sarcophagi. Among the produced types were the representations of Dionysos, of Satyrs and Maenads. A miniature mask of a

---

97 IGBulg I², no 324. Dated at ca. 55BC.
98 Preshlenov 2003, 168,182.
99 Its remains lies under the modern city of Varna.
100 Boardman 1999, 247.
102 Minchev 2003, 245, 260.
smiling Silen wreathed with ivy leaves was found in the debris of the building.\textsuperscript{103} Furthermore, clay figurines of Dionysos and his wife Ariadne were came to light at the excavations in other parts of the city. Likewise, votive reliefs made of lead and shaped as bull heads were found at the site. Those reliefs that were encircled with a decoration of grapes functioned, probably, as offerings to the god. An imported amphora neck of the Hellenistic period bearing the relief image of a Satyrs’ head was also discovered (Fig.6). Finally, the excavations yielded an almost life-size marble statue of a Satyr and two attic red figure bell craters bearing Dionysian scenes with Satyrs and Maenads (Fig.7).\textsuperscript{104}

1.4. Dionysopolis.

The ancient town of Dionysopolis\textsuperscript{105}, established in the end of the 6\textsuperscript{th} century BC was located on the northern coast of a well sheltered cove.\textsuperscript{106} It was consecrated to Dionysos, since its name “Διονύσου πόλις” means the city of the god Dionysos.\textsuperscript{107} The Ionian, most probably Milesian colony was previously called Krounoi\textsuperscript{108} but was later renamed as Dionysopolis.\textsuperscript{109} According to some of the ancient authors,\textsuperscript{110} in the context of aetiological myth and not as a historical reality, the alteration of the city’s name was a consequence of a statue of the god Dionysos being washed up on its shore.\textsuperscript{111} For the contemporary scholars the change of the name was due to the fact that the cult of Dionysos gained major significance at the beginning of the Hellenistic period. Besides, in the very beginning of the 3\textsuperscript{rd} century BC it is attested the earliest, known, epigraphic monument where the ethnic name Dionysiopolitai\textsuperscript{112} appears.\textsuperscript{113}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{103} Minchev 2003, 252, 260.
\textsuperscript{104} Minchev 2003, 248.
\textsuperscript{105} Modern town of Balchik. Damyanov 2007, 1.
\textsuperscript{106} Isaac 1986, 258.
\textsuperscript{107} Farnell 1909, 136.
\textsuperscript{108} The Greek word “κρουνοί” means sources and the area had several water sources.
\textsuperscript{109} Pliny, 4.11.44.
\textsuperscript{110} Pseudo Skymnus, Periegesis.
\textsuperscript{111} Lazarenko et all 2010, 13.
\textsuperscript{112} Dionysiopolitai means the citizens of Dionysopolis.
\textsuperscript{113} Damyanov 2007, 3-4.
\end{flushleft}
The role of the Dionysos as the divine protector of Dionysopolis is testified by the archaeological material that consists of inscriptions, statues and coins related to the god. Beginning with the testimonies deriving from the inscriptions, there is a list with the names of the priests of Dionysos in which the name of the god himself is mentioned.


The researchers argue that the administrative structure of Dionysopolis was related with the cult of Dionysos because his priests possessed the office and the title of the eponymous magistrate in the city.\(^\text{115}\)

An inscription from the Roman period referred to a priest of the god Dionysos, who was the founder of the city.

άγαθηι τύχηι. την ἐκ προγόνων φιλότειμων καὶ ιερέα τοῦ κτίσιος τοῦ τῆς πόλεως [ὡς] θεοῦ Διονύσου καὶ ΠΗΦΟΣ [— — — —] Ω γυμνα<σι>άρχην, δόντα καὶ δ [ἰανο]-μά<χ>τήτεκρατί<σι> τη βουλή<ν> [καὶ] τι<δ>ο<ι>ς<παρε>-παρε<μη>νήσιος<παρε>ν τῇ [ς Πεν]-τ<α>τ<πόλ>ε<σι> το<υ> βουλή<ν> τε<ι>τι<σι>, ἄ<γ>ραφ<σι>ς<ι>ς<παρε>ν<τειμ>ήσιος<παρε>ν τῇ[ς] Λαμπρονίκου Αὐρ(ηλίου) — — — κωρο<ν> Ἄντιά<σι>ος ή πατρι[ς]<τειμ>ήσιος<τειμ>ήσιος<τειμ>ήσις ήπιον<επόκεν.<\(^\text{116}\)>

Furthermore, in another one from the same period the Dionysos’ priest holds also the title of ἀρχιερεύς and πόνταρχος.\(^\text{117}\)

άγαθηι τύχηι ἑπί ἀρχιερεύς καὶ ποντάρχου τῆς ἱδίας πατρίδος Μ(άρκον) Αὐρ(ηλίου) ἄντιπατρος Παπα, ἰ-ερέων δὲ Διοινύσου Αὐρ(ηλίου) Γλαυκία

\(^{114}\) IGBulg 17, no 22. The inscription is dated to the 2nd century BC.

\(^{115}\) Damyanov 2007, 5.

\(^{116}\) IGBulg 17, no 15, bis. The inscription is dated to the 3rd century AD.

\(^{117}\) Damyanov 2007, 6.
Διογένους καὶ Ἅυρ(ηλίου) Δημοφώντος Νουμηνίου, υἱοῦ δὲ τῆς πόλεως Αύρ(ηλίου) Αττα Αντιπατροῦ, .........................>. 

Finally, the religious life of the Dionysopolis can be traced in the honorific decree for the distinguished citizen named Akomion. He, apart from being the city’s foreign political envoy, was additionally the high priest of Dionysos, the Great God and Serapis in 49/48 BC.

Moreover, in the text it is mentioned the celebration of Dionysia that was held every year in the city.

118] have not quoted the whole inscription because only the first lines are necessary to my argument, the rest are more names. 1GBulg 12, no 15. The inscription is dated to the 3rd century AD.

119 Tacheva 1983, 56.
that the statue was placed in the god's sanctuary. According to the inscription, which also refers to a group of Dionysos' worshipers, the scholars suggest it is a very reasonable and justified. The inscription to the god Dionysos. According to the text, which also refers to a group of Dionysos’ worshipers, the scholars suggest that the statue was placed in the god’s sanctuary.

All the above mentioned references to the priests of Dionysos indicate a temple dedicated to his worship. Even though the temple is not attested archaeologically, its presence in the city must be considered unquestionable. Besides, the existence of a sanctuary of Dionysos in a city bearing his name seems reasonable and justified. That argument is reinforced by another one epigraphical testimony found on a marble statue. The statue of the god Pan (Fig.8), who is seated on a rock and playing a syrinx, discovered in the vicinity of the ancient agora, bears on its base a dedicatory inscription to the god Dionysos. According to the text, which also refers to a group of Dionysos’ worshipers, the scholars suggest that the statue was placed in the god’s sanctuary.

Ἀπολλώνιος Δημοφύντος ἱερῶ-μενος Διονύσου ὑπὲρ τῶν βασιλείων τῶν περὶ Ἐράτων Δημοφίλου Διονύσωι χαριστήριον.

---

120 IGBulg 17, no 13.
121 Damyanov 2007, 6, 10.
122 IGBulg 17, no 20. The inscription is dated to the 3rd century BC.
Furthermore, the excavations in the site revealed two more marble statues, which, as it is stated by the researchers, depict the god Dionysos and possibly were displayed in his temple. Both statues, although are not intact, are sculptures of very high quality and are dated, due to their style, to the 3rd-2nd centuries BC. In the first one the god is dressed in a chiton and seated on a rock, most probably holding a thyrsos in his hand (Fig.9). From the second one is preserved only the torso that depicts the god standing and naked (Fig.10).123

The role of the god Dionysos as the patron deity of Dionysopolis is evidenced also in its coinage.124 His head depictions along with his attributes, such as the vine and bunches of grapes that are connected with viticulture and in general with the fertility of nature were used as images on the obverse and the reverse side of the coins. The main obverse type of the bronze coins of Dionysopolis is the head of a wreathed Dionysos turned to the right. On the reverse are depicted his variety of symbols and the legend with the name of the city in abbreviations (Fig.11, 12).125 Most of those coins are dated to the 3rd-2nd centuries BC.126

1.5. Kallatis.

Kallatis127 established at the end of the 6th century, was a Dorian colony as it was founded from settlers of Herakleia Pontica.128 Although, the city was not situated in a bay or a cove its position functioned as a passage between the Black Sea and the Danube. Additionally, as it was located on a low hill surrounded by fertile lands the colony had the essential preconditions to flourish and prosper.129

The numerous epigraphic evidence of Kallatis reveal that Dionysos was a significant member of the city’s pantheon and the presence of a theatre dated, at least, to the 3rd century BC. More specific the god was being worshiped by the

---

123 Damyanov 2007, 7.
124 During the Hellenistic period the city had an autonomous coinage.
125 ΔΙΟ, ΔΙΟΝΥΣΟ, ΔΙΟΝΥΣΟΠ, ΔΙΟΝΥΣΟΠΟΛΕΙ, ΔΙΟΝΥΣΟΠΟΛΙ.
126 Damyanov 2007, 7, 8.
129 Isaac 1986, 261.
citizens of Kallatis as Dionysos Patroos Πατρώος, Dionysos Dasyllos Δασύλλιος and Dionysos Bacchus Βακχεύς. The cults of Dionysos under the epithets Patroos and Dasyllos were usual and popular in the city of Megara that was the metropolis of Kallatis.\textsuperscript{130}

\[— — — — — — — [Διόν] ύσος Πα [τρφός] [Δι] όνυσος Βακ [χεύς], Αφροδίτα Πά [νδήμος], Πειθώ, Δασύ [άλλιος], Άρτεμις, ΧΘ [ονία (?)] Κρόνο[ς — — — — — — ]......>\textsuperscript{131}

The text of the inscription, must possibly of oracular character, refers also to the other cults of the city such as Artemis and Aphrodite.

To the cult of Dionysos Dasyllos was dedicated a sanctuary, the so-called Δασυλλεῖον that was connected with mystic rituals performed by a Dionysiac thiasos, as it is deduced from the epigraphic data.


The decree was defining the erection of a new temple venerated to the patron deity of the thiasos. In addition, it provided information regarding the hierarchy in the thiasos and the rewards for its members. Furthermore, another inscription recorded the regulations for the operation of the sanctuary.\textsuperscript{133}


\textsuperscript{130} Prauscello 2013, 78.
\textsuperscript{131} ISCM III, no 48A. The inscription is dated in the 4\textsuperscript{th} c. BC.
\textsuperscript{132} ISCM III, no 35. The inscription is dated in the late 3\textsuperscript{rd} c. BC.
\textsuperscript{133} Gotcheva 2007, 71.
δ’ ἄλλα κρέα τ[ὰς πόλιος· τοῦ δὲ αἰγός(? δέρ]- μα σὺν ταῖς κεφαλαὶ καὶ τ[οῖς ποσίν. .....

ἐν τοῖς Δασυλλείωι τῶν [δὲ παρόντων θιασείται οὐ]-τε νεόβακχος οὐτε

ὸς μ[ῦστας ἕων τελεσθεῖς ὁ]- δουπορεὶ εἰς τὸ Δασυλλεῖ[τον .....

ταῖς γυναιξὶ τ[αῖς αὐτῶν θέμις οὐκ ἔστι οὕδ[έ τοῖς [τε αὐτῶν παιὸ καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις]

ἐπηλέος [τοις] ‘Διονύσωι τ[jράγον πρ[ατή]- [νιὸν’……>.

Finally, in Kallatis were found two dedicatory inscriptions to Dionysos Bacchus. The first one was inscribed on the base of a statue dedicated to the god.135

[— — — — —]ος τὸ ἀγαλμα [ἀνέθηκε Δι]ονύσωι Βακχεί.136


Διονύσωι [Βακχεί] καὶ τοῖς Θία- [σείται].137

In an honorific decree it is attested the existence of a theatre in the colony of Kallatis.138

λέοντος· δεδόσ[θαι δὲ αὐτῶι καὶ ἐκ]- [γόνοις πολιτείαν προξενίαν εὐεργεσίαν ἰσο[τέ]- [λεια]ν εἰσπλουν καὶ ἐκπλουν καὶ πολέμου καὶ εἰρ[ά]-[νας] ἀσυλεί καὶ

ἀσπουνδεῖ’ στεφανώσασθα δὲ αὐτῶν το[ις [Διον]υσίοις τοίς ξενικοῖς ἐν τοῖς θεάτρωι

τοὺς προ- [βούλ]ους [χρ]εσίῳ στεφάνωι ἀνδραγαθίας ἕνεκεν κα[i] [ἀνα]γγεῖλαι

διόστι ἐστὶ καλὸς καὶ ἀγαθὸς καὶ πρόθυμος [καὶ εὐνοῦς] περὶ τὰμ πόλιν’ ἐπιμελήθημεν δὲ τούς ἄρ-[χοντας ὅπως ὁ τελαιμὼν αὐτοῦ ἀνατεθῆ ἐις τὸ ἱα-[ρόν
toῦ Ἦρακλε]ος· καλέσαι δὲ αὐτῶν καὶ εἰς προτανείον [ν] [τὸν βασιλέα]’ ἀποστεῖλαι δὲ αὐτῶι καὶ ἔννια τοὺς με-[ριστάς· τὸ δὲ ἀνάλωμα ύποτελέσαί τὸν ταμιαν.139

In the excavations in the site of Kallatis was also discovered a ceramic altar with reliefs depicting Dionysos, Poseidon, Nike, and Apollo. The altar is dated to the beginning of the 3rd century BC.140

134 IScM III, no 47. The inscription is dated in the 2nd c. BC.
135 Avram 2007, 254-255.
136 IScM III, no 79. The inscription is dated in the 1st c. BC.
137 IScM III, no 80. The inscription is dated in ca 50-100 AD.
139 IScM III, no 3. The inscription is dated in the early 3rd c. BC.
140 Avram 2006, 68.
1.6. Tomis.

Tomis was founded at the beginning of the 6th century BC by the Milesians. The city, which occupied a rather limited in extent area, was situated on a small promontory that had a well-protected harbour. Tomis prospered during the Roman period.

The inhabitants of Tomis venerated some peculiar functions and aspects of the god Dionysos that were not ordinary and frequent. More specific, he was being worshiped, according to the texts discovered in the site, as the “leader” καθηγεμίων, as the “brilliant” πυρίβρομος and “that who has bull horns” ταυρόκερως.

Διονύσων ἀγαθῆ τύχη καθηγεμονεῖ Ἀκυλείνος Ἀρτεμιδώρου κατ᾿ εὐ-χήν εὐτυχῶς ἐπ᾿ ἀγαθῶν.

ἀγνὸν ὑπὲρ θιάσου πυρίβρομέ σοι τὸ [δ’ ἀγαλμα] δώρον ἀπὸ σφετέρας ὠπασεν ἐργασίας [μυστικόν ἐμ παικτοῖα λαχῶν στέφος [— — —] Πάρμιδος, ἀρχαιν δεικνύμενος τελετήν]. ἄλλα σύ, ταυρόκερως, ὠρμαγένεος χεροῦς ἐργο[ν] [δ]έξαι καὶ Πασοῦς σώζει ἱερὸν θίασον.

Furthermore, in the second epigraphical testimony is mentioned the presence of the holy Dionysiac thiasos in Tomis. The researchers assume that the text refers to a statue of the god that was produced by local craftsmen in the city.

---

141 Modern port of Constanţa in Romania.
142 According to some scholars it was colonized by settlers from Histria, which was a Milesian colony situated to the north of Tomis. Buzoianu-Bărbulescu 2007, 289.
143 Boardman 1999, 247.
144 Buzoianu-Bărbulescu 2007, 313.
145 IScM II, no 121. The inscription is dated in ca 200-250 AD.
146 IScM II, no 120. The inscription is dated in 1st c. BC.
147 Buzoianu - Bărbulescu 2007, 313.
1.7. Histria.

The Milesian colony of Histria\(^{148}\) was among the earliest Greek colonies of the Black Sea littoral as it was established towards the end of the 7\(^{th}\) century BC.\(^{149}\) Histria that was a significant port for the trade with the native population, due to its position on the shore of the Black Sea and in the vicinity of fertile arable lands had an economy based, also, at fishing and agriculture.\(^{150}\)

As far as Dionysos’ cult is concerned, the available archaeological data is rather scanty and inadequate and are deriving mostly from epigraphical texts. First of all an inscription testifies the existence of a theater in Histria that was operating, at least, during the Hellenistic period.\(^{151}\)


Moreover, the cult of Dionysos in the colony of Histria became more active during the Roman imperial period. A sanctuary dedicated to Dionysos Karpophoros, Καρποφόρος, was functioning in the city, most probably, at the course of the 2\(^{nd}\) century AD, while a lot of dedicatory inscriptions to the god that were found are dated from that time onwards.\(^{153}\)

ἀγαθὴ τύχη. ἱερωμένου Διογ[έ]- νου Ἀθηνάδου β’ (..) Διονύσου (..) Καρποφό-ρου ἱερεῖς. Ἡρόφαν-τος Αἰαχρίωνος # Ηράκλων Ἀριστομά-χου, Διονύσιος [Ἀ]θηνάδου, Ἀριστομένης Ἀρτεμᾶ.\(^{154}\)

---

\(^{148}\) Or Istros, it was named after the ancient name of Danube River that was Istros, is situated near the modern village of Istria in Romania. Avram 2004, 933.

\(^{149}\) Kacharava 2005, 12.

\(^{150}\) Boardman 1999, 248.

\(^{151}\) Gotcheva 2007, 68.

\(^{152}\) IScM I, no 25. The inscription is dated in 3\(^{rd}\) - 2\(^{nd}\) c. BC.


\(^{154}\) IScM I, no 198. The inscription is dated in ca 150-200 AD.
2. The cult of Dionysos in the Northern Black Sea region.

The mentioning of the country of the “Hyperboreans” by the ancient authors reflects the connections of Greeks with the northern coast of the Black Sea as early as the beginning of the 1st millennium BC. Evidence for this can be found in ancient Greek myths and in the poems of Homer and Hesiod. In some areas of the northern Black Sea and of the Kerch peninsula an abundance of excavations have detected, spotted and brought to light a great number of minor and major settlements and cities. Accordingly, a lot of research have been done and articles published regarding the relevant archaeological discoveries.

2.1. Tyras.

Tyras156 was founded at the second half of the 6th century BC by Miletus, as it is proved by some recent archaeological findings.157 The colony that was located near the mouth of the Dniester River was named after the ancient name of the river which was Tyras, although the first name of the settlement was Ophiussa. Our knowledge about the religious beliefs of the dwellers of Tyras are rather inadequate and meagre. Cult buildings or sanctuaries have not been discovered yet and there is no sufficient epigraphic data.158

However, in the city of Tyras, since its economy was based on agriculture, deities affiliated with fertility were being worshiped. Thus, Dionysos’ cult is traceable in several dedicatory graffiti bearing his name, while some Tyras’ coins have images of his symbols. Moreover, in the context of private worship, a marble head of

\[\text{\scriptsize 155} \text{ ISCM I, no 142. The inscription is dated in ca 200-250 AD.}\]
\[\text{\scriptsize 156} \text{ Near the modern city of Belgorod-Dnestrovskij in the Ukraine. Samoylova 2007, 435.}\]
\[\text{\scriptsize 157} \text{ Kacharava 2005, 11, 14.}\]
\[\text{\scriptsize 158} \text{ Samoylova 2007, 439.}\]
Dionysos (Fig.13), dated at the Roman period, was discovered near the altar of a home sanctuary.\textsuperscript{159} Lastly, among the terracotta figurines that were found in the excavations of the site there are some depictions of the god of wine and of Satyrs.\textsuperscript{160}

2.2 Nikonion.

The ancient city of Nikonion\textsuperscript{161} is situated on the lower reaches of Dniester River. It was established in the second half of the 6\textsuperscript{th} century by Milesian settlers.\textsuperscript{162} Although the ancient written sources offers limited and inadequate information about the colony, the conducting of large scale excavations on the site revealed cultural layers and finds of Classical, Early Hellenistic and Roman periods.\textsuperscript{163}

The position of Nikonion on an extremely fertile area led inevitably to land exploitation and cultivation. Therefore agriculture was the main element of city’s economy that shaped and affected the religious life and the beliefs of its inhabitants towards the worship of deities, such as Demeter, Kore-Persephone and Dionysos that were connected with fertility and bear chthonic aspects.\textsuperscript{164} In Nikonion have been discovered cult implements and mobile findings that confidently can be attributed to the cult of Dionysos.

Inside a room in the western section of the city it was discovered a rather sizeable semi-dugout, which after losing its initial purpose was being used as a storage pit-bothros for keeping the utensils from the house that was burnt down. The material of its filling, dated the end of the 6\textsuperscript{th} century BC up to the second half of the 4\textsuperscript{th} century BC, contained among other objects and pottery, the fragments of two craters decorated with Dionysian themes.\textsuperscript{165} On the one side of the first crater a bearded and wreathed with ivy Dionysos is depicted in the center of the scene dressed in a long chiton and a cloak. In his hand holds his thyrsos and a kantharos,

\textsuperscript{159} Krapivina 2010, 138.  
\textsuperscript{160} Samoylova 2007, 446-447.  
\textsuperscript{161} Near the current village of Roksolany in the Odessa region.  
\textsuperscript{162} Kacharava 2005, 14.  
\textsuperscript{163} Sekerskaya 2007, 471.  
\textsuperscript{164} Sekerskaya 2001, 70.  
\textsuperscript{165} Sekerskaya 2001, 79. The conservation of the fragments resulted to the reconstruct of the craters.
while the other hand is hidden under the cloak. Dionysos is followed by a Maenad that holds a torch and a thrysos and in front of him there is a Satyr who is playing a double flute (Fig.14).\textsuperscript{166} The other crater bears a multi-figured composition among which there are the representations of Dionysos and Nike, which according to the scholars reveal connotations related with the Orphic doctrines and the mystic rituals (Fig.15). Most probably both craters that are dated to the second half of the 5\textsuperscript{th} century BC due to their style, were used for ritual purposes.\textsuperscript{167}

In the filling of a “\textit{thaviss}”\textsuperscript{168} were found two statuettes that represents two Silens on a squatting posture dated to the end of the 6\textsuperscript{th} century B.C. The scholars correlate those finds with analogues found in the sanctuaries of Demeter and Kabeiroi which are also chthonic deities and gods functioning as protectors of farming. Finally in the same pit was discovered, beside the statuettes of various female deities, a skyphos who had on his outer surface inscribed the phrase “\textit{ΕΚΠΙΝΩΣΤΑΧΟ}”, which means “drink it fast”. That phrase and the fact that the particular drinking vessel had about 2.5 liters capacity allude to the existence of the Dionysian feast of \textit{Anthesteria} in which was held a wine drinking contest.\textsuperscript{169} All the above mentioned findings testifies the worship of Dionysos in the city of Nikonion.

Moreover, another source of evidence regarding the popularity of Dionysos’ cult among the inhabitants of Nikonion is the several pottery seals bearing either images of Dionysos or of his companions that have been discovered in the site. For instance Thasian amphorae were sealed with the effigy of a Satyr’s head encircled with the name of the craftsman or with the effigy of the head of young Dionysos and the name of the magistrate Megon. Noteworthy is the fragment of a handle from a Mende amphora with an oval seal, surrounded by a belt of pearls, in which Dionysos is depicted lying on a donkey holding a \textit{kantharos}.\textsuperscript{170}

\textsuperscript{166} Sekerskaya 2007, 496.
\textsuperscript{167} Sekerskaya 2007, 496, 497.
\textsuperscript{168} “\textit{Thaviss}” is a special pit where the worn out utensils of a sacred premises were kept instead of being discarded. Sekerskaya 2007, 498.
\textsuperscript{169} Sekerskaya 2007, 498, 501. See also p. 21 of the present paper.
\textsuperscript{170} Sekerskaya 2007, 482-483.
2.3. Borysthenes and Olbia.

There is a long lasting discussion among the scholars regarding the relationship and the connections among the two colonies, Borysthenes and Olbia. Several scholars assume that settlers from the metropolis Miletus along with inhabitants from Borysthenes founded the city of Olbia. Others, albeit without excluding the previous assumption, argue that the dwellers of the settlement of Borysthenes had been incorporated into the community of Olbia that had become, soon after its establishment, the major political and economic center of the region. None the less, the fine distinction between Borysthenes and Olbia remains subject to dispute. However, the cultural as well the religious life of the two cities was interlinked and therefore the related archaeological data will be discussed overall jointly.

The Milesian colony of Borysthenes, as it was established at the second half of the 7th century BC, it was the earliest Greek settlement in the northern Black Sea coast. It was situated on the shore of the Sea and near the estuaries of the Dnieper and the Bug rivers.

Olbia was a Greek colony founded by Milesians at the middle of the 6th century BC on the west bank of the river Bug. Olbia consisted of three terraces, the upper city, the lower and the terraced city located in between. Over the course of the time Olbia’s chor a with its rural settlements was established along both sides of the Bug and Dnieper estuaries.

Olbia is the best archaeologically searched site in the northern Black Sea area. Dionysos was among the deities that were venerated in the city of Olbia as well.

---

173 Modern Berezan Island, but most probably was a peninsula site in antiquity. Avram et all 2004, 937.
174 Ancient Borysthenes River.
175 Ancient Hypanis River.
176 Solovyov 2001, 117, 120.
177 Olbia, which means the happy and the fortunate, is situated near the modern village of Parutino in Ukraine. Maslennikov 2010, 173.
178 Pseudo-Scy whole 804-809, Hdt 4.78.3.
179 Avram et all 2004, 938.
180 Kryzhitsk 1997, 105.
as in its rural territory. Taking into account the epigraphic data it is assumed that a theatre functioned in Olbia despite the fact it is not yet been discovered.\textsuperscript{182}


According to the text a person name \textit{Antheasterios} is rewarded by the \textit{polis} of Olbia with a golden wreath annually, during the celebrations of “Dionysia” festival held in the city’s theatre. That fact corroborates the existence of the theatre and the significance of the fests in honour of Dionysos.\textsuperscript{184}

Moreover as the pottery comprises one of the sources illustrating, to some extent and in a certain context, the religious practices of a community the relevant findings function as testimonials. In particular, the excavations in Olbia and in its \textit{chora} brought to light two remarkable figured vessels. The first one is shaped in the form of a bust of Dionysos and the other one as an actor or a Silen (Fig.16, 17).\textsuperscript{185} Moreover, in the site were found attic small sized kylces of black-figured technique that bear Dionysian subjects with the images of the god along with his Maenads and Silens and terracotta statuettes of actors and Silens.\textsuperscript{186}

In the religious life of Olbia, from the 5\textsuperscript{th} century BC, had been formed and functioning a sacred union that experienced and practiced mystical rituals, most possibly the Orphics.\textsuperscript{187} Orphism, according to the scholars, is a religious movement

\textsuperscript{182} Rousyaeva 2010, 64. Kryzhitskij et all 2003, 453.
\textsuperscript{183} SEG 34:758. The inscription is dated in ca. 250-225 BC and is not quoted here in its totality.
\textsuperscript{184} Braund – Hall 2014, 380.
\textsuperscript{185} Kryzhitskij – Krapivina 2003, 542.
\textsuperscript{186} Kryzhitskij et all 2003, 463.
\textsuperscript{187} Onyshkevych 2002, 168.
that cannot be identified by social structures, such as a temple for instance, but is rather a set of doctrines about the origin and fate of the soul and general on the subject of eschatological thinking. The name derived from Orpheus that was a mythological figure to whom were ascribed sacred texts, hymns and poems of different authors. The Orphic mysteries does not consist a separate and distinct cult, but they are types of esoteric and ecstatic rituals related with the cults of Demeter, Persephone, Apollo and Dionysos.

In the Borysthenes settlement was unearthed a small animal bone, which bear on both of its sides an illegible inscribed text that mentions the god Apollo, Miletus and the oracle of Apollo at Didyma (Fig.18). This “inscription” has received different interpretations in academic literature. Some scholars argue that it was an oracle from the sanctuary of Didyma, while the most prevailing supposition is that it was a hymn or a pray with Orphic connotations. Furthermore, the find from Borysthenes shares a resemblance in shape, appearance and size with other three tiny bone plates that were discovered in Olbia and are dated at the 5th century BC. The plates bear incised texts that mentions the name of Dionysos along with other words such as life, death and truth (Fig.19). According to the researchers they were tokens of people which have been initiated into mysteries, probably the Orphics. In addition, in the excavations of Olbia was found a bronze mirror dated around 500 BC that was possibly a grave good (Fig.20). In the mirror, which is decorated with bucranium and labrys, is engraved an inscription that contains the Bacchic exclamation “euai”. Both the decoration and the inscription are elements denoting of a mystic aspect of Dionysos’ cult in the context of a blessed afterlife.

---

188 Orpheus, the son of a Thracian king and of a Muse, was a poet and a member of the Argonauts. Radcliffe 2013, 4.
189 Dionysos Zagreus and Dionysos Bacchus.
190 Radcliffe 2013, 15, 297.
191 Burkert, Rousyaeva.
193 Although in the text on the bone there is not any specific reference to Orpheus, in contrast with the Olbian ones, Apollo was also connected, to a lesser degree, with Orphic worship as it is deduced from the Orphic fragments concerning the story of Dionysos' death and rebirth. Radcliffe 2013, 177.
196 Bilde 2008, 32.
The existence of Dionysiac-Bacchic mystic rituals in Olbia is also attested in the ancient written sources. More specific in Herodotus' narration about the Scythian king Scyles, who was initiated into the Bacchic mysteries. Scythians did not approve his participation in cult processions that were characterized by frenzy due to the influence of wine. That disapproval led them, eventually, to kill Scyles.

Northwestern Crimea.

2.4. Chersonesos Taurike.

The ancient city of Chersonesos was situated on the northern shore of the Herakleian peninsula that is the south-western corner of the Crimea peninsula (Fig. 21). It was founded by Dorian Greeks from Herakleia Pontica along with settlers from Delos in the late 5th century BC. Its advantageous position on a sheltered bay made the port of the city to become the main connection point between the two economic and cultural centers of the northern Black Sea coast, meaning the north-western area and the north-eastern Black Sea littoral with eastern Taurica and the Taman peninsula.

Dionysos' cult in the colony of Chersonesos is attested by the presence of a theatre (Fig. 22) and possibly by a sanctuary dedicated to his worship. Besides, since the wine production played a significant role in the economy of Chersonesos the veneration of Dionysos by its citizens must be considered certain. The theatre, dated to the end of the 4th century BC, was unearthed on the southern slope of the city in an area that was not occupied by residential buildings.

---

198 Hdt 4 78-80.
199 Scyles, the son of a woman from Histria and of the Scythian king Ariapethis, when he visited Olbia was dressed like Greeks and made sacrifices to the Greek gods. Burkert 1985, 299.
200 West 2007, 80.
201 It is located in the suburbs of the contemporary city of Sevastopol in Crimea. Trofimova 2007, 117.
202 Zolotarev 2003, 603.
204 Saprykin 1998, 229.
205 The theatre is fully excavated.
206 Zolotarev 2003, 620.
Towards the end of the 4th century BC constructive works of defensive purposes were conducted in the city. A fort with fortification walls was erected along with residential buildings aligned in blocks, separated by parallel streets and attached to the inner side of the fortification. At that specific area was unearthed a small temple, presumably dedicated to Dionysos that was affixed to the internal surface of the western defensive wall.  

Cimmerian Bosporus.

The Greek colonies of the Kerch and Taman peninsulas, at the course of the 5th century BC, formed a military and religious league and established the Kingdom of Bosporus in order to confront the constantly increasing Scythian expansion and danger. In the kingdom that was under the leadership of Panticapaion some cities such as Tyritake and Mirmekion were incorporated peaceful, while others such as Nymphaeum, Theodosia and Phanagoria by force. Later on, Mithridates VI the Eupator annexed the Bosporan Kingdom in his realm, a fact that strengthened his military and economic power. In addition, Mithridates improved further the agricultural production of the area by establishing estates and erecting fortresses to protect the arable land, for instance the Polyanka settlement, especially in the Taman peninsula in which the soil was extremely fertile. Furthermore, under the auspices and the orders of Mithridates Panticapaion, Phanagoria and Gorgippia, at the beginning of the 1st century BC, minted silver coins with a variety of Dionysos’ images and themes.

---

208 Saprykin 2006, 276.
210 The last Spartocid king, Paerisades V (109BC) who ruled the Bosporan Kingdom bestowed it to the Mithridates VI Eupator. Strabo, 7. 4. 4.
211 Kacharava 2005, 17.
212 Erciyas 2006, 164-165, see also p. 61 of the present paper.
European part of Bosporus.

2.5. Kerch Peninsula and the Crimean Azov coast.

During the last fifty years a great number of ancient sites were traced and excavated in the Bosporan region and more specifically on the narrow strip of Azov sea coast of the Crimea and on the territory of Kerch Peninsula. One of them, situated in the northeast corner of the peninsula and to the west of Cape Zyuk is the small Poljanka rural settlement.

The Poljanka site, located on the coast of the Lake Maeotis, was one of the agricultural military settlements that were established during the reign of Mithridates VI. The cultural layers of the site are dated from the middle of the 3rd till the end of the 1st century BC. The excavations unearthed, among others, a building in which a room was identified as a sanctuary, due to its different layout and its findings, dated to the last quarter of the 1st century BC. Some of the terracotta figurines and miniature clay masks that were discovered in this domestic sanctuary are connected with Dionysos’ worship. The figurines of a bearded bull (Fig.23), a Silen on a goat (Fig. 24), a Satyr with goat hooves wearing a cloak and a round hat (Fig.25) and the masks of a bearded, most probably, Dionysos (Fig.26) and those of young Dionysos or of Satyrs (Fig.27) display a certain association with the cult of the god.

To the west of the Polyanka settlement is located the General’skoye fortified site in which was excavated a sacred complex consisting of two structures with two rooms each. The complex, as it is assumed by the excavator, functioned as a sanctuary or even a “rural” modest temple. Among the terracotta finds that were unearthed in the rooms belong two fragments of masks depicting, with high possibility, young Dionysos. The first one, which was found near an altar, preserves

213 Gavrilov 2009, 74.
214 The figurines assemblages, the two ceramic censers and a supposed eschara altar in a pit found inside the building and the hoard of nearly one thousand mainly Bosporan copper coins in its vicinity. Maslennikov 2010, 173, 177, 180.
215 According to researchers similar figurines of the North Pontic coroplastics are often correlated with Dionysos, due to the myth that he was initially born as a bull, or with Mithridates VI Eupator being worshipped as Dionysos the bull. Maslennikov 2010, 174.
216 Maslennikov 2010, 176.
217 Maslennikov 2010, 211.
the lower part of the face. The other one, found in a different room, preserves the upper part of the face with lush hair and small horns, probably depicting Dionysos “the bull”. 218 This fragment has, also, an aperture for suspension. The researchers are dating the series of the so-called votive masks of Dionysos in his youth found in the Cimmerian Bosporus from the 1st century BC to the 2nd century AD. 219

2.6. Porthmion.

Porthmion220 was a small city situated near the shore of the Kerch Straits. Its existence is attested in the ancient written sources. 221 Although the sanctuary of the Porthmion is not found, at least not yet, a monumental altar was discovered possibly related with chthonic deities. Furthermore, excavations yielded, among a variety of figurines representing mainly female deities, a head222 of great artistry portraying Dionysos in his youth. He is adorned with a wreath of vine leaves and bears an imperceptible smile (Fig. 28). 223

2.7. Panticapaion

Panticapaion224 was the oldest Greek colony on the shores of the Kerch Straits225 as it was established in the beginning of the 6th century BC by Miletus. 226 Panticapaion that was also the capital city of the Bosporan Kingdom was extended on the slopes and the top of the Mount Mithridates and was formed in three

218 Maslennikov 2010, 207.
219 Maslennikov 2010, 203.
220 The word Porthmion means the ferry passage and crossing and possibly the city took that name by its location on the straits that served as the connection point between the Kerch and Taman peninsulas.
221 Vakhtina-Vinogradov-Gorocharovskiy 2010, 367.
222 That was the only part from the figurine that was preserved.
224 It is situated in the modern city of Kerch.
226 Balena 2013, 68.
terraces, dated to the 3rd-4th centuries BC and on a lower terrace near the sea dated to the 1st-2nd centuries AD.227

The excavations in the second terrace of the city unearthed a cult building of the 3rd century BC, which was interpreted by the excavators as a temple of Dionysos, albeit without excluding the possibility of being worshiped there other deities, such Aphrodite.228 Owing to its proximity with the central edifice of the Panticapaion rulers’ palace complex the building under discussion was identified as temple that served the residents of the palace. Although the state of its preservation is very poor, the layout and the configuration of its foundations along with the remains of the capitals, the columns and the cornice, which is of Doric order, allowed the researchers to conclude that it was a small Doric temple in antis consisting of a pronaos and of a square-shaped naos (Fig. 29).229 The temple had a roof of tiles, its floor was covered by mortar in which were embedded black polished pebbles and the internal surface of the walls was coated with plaster and painted with a variety of colours. Most probably it was destroyed due to an earthquake in 63 BC.230

The fact that the bulk of the terracotta figurines that was discovered in the destruction layer of the sanctuary’s area is connected with the Dionysian iconography, for instance bunches of grapes, reinforce the assumption expressed by the scholars regarding the predominance of Dionysos’ cult. The most remarkable is a mask of Dionysos wreathed with a band of ivy and others flowers leaves dated to the 2nd century BC.231 Furthermore, on the floor level of the temple it was found a ring with a bronze seal bearing the depiction of a man that presents a resemblance with Dionysos’ image on Bosporan coins of the early 1st century BC, at the era of Mithridates’ VI Eupator. The ring in conjunction with the finding of a golden stater with the representation of Mithridates (Fig.30) implies that the temple was particular revered and functioned most actively during his reign. Besides,
Mithridates after his proclamation as the “New Dionysos” had placed himself and his kingdom under the god’s divine protection.\textsuperscript{232}

\textbf{2.8. Nymphaion.}

The Ionian colony of Nymphaeum\textsuperscript{233} was established at around 580-560 BC by settlers probably of Miletus or Samos.\textsuperscript{234} Nymphaeum was stretched out on a high plateau near the sea dominating the whole fertile surrounding area as well as an excellent harbour.\textsuperscript{235} The agricultural exploitation of the lands adjacent to the city had determine, to a great extent, its economy. That fact is traceable in the religious life of inhabitants of Nymphaion. Hence, in Nymphaion existed, apart from a temple dedicated to Demeter, a sacred area with a sanctuary complex connected with Dionysos’ cult.

The remarkable architectural complex of religious character and function was built during the 4\textsuperscript{th} century BC at the terraces of the south slope of the city. The entrance to that temenos was formed by a propylon of which the excavators discovered a lot of architectural fragments (Fig.31). Those fragments, all of the Ionic order, in which are included the capital, the base and the segments of a column, as well as parts of the entablature, enable the reconstruction of the facade of the propylon (Fig.32). The entablature and the cornice were decorated with impressive ornaments such as large dentils, palmettes, a painted cyma and simai in the shape of lion masks.\textsuperscript{236} The architrave bears a unique and very rare inscription, whose interpretation identified the sanctuary complex as being dedicated to Dionysos.

\begin{quote}
Θεοπροπίδης Μεγακλέος τὴν ἔσοδον ἀνέθηκεν Διονύσῳ ἄγωνοθετέων, Λεόκωνος ἀρχοντος Βοσπόρο καὶ Θεοδοσίης καὶ τῆς Σινδικῆς πάσης καὶ Τορετῶν καὶ Δανδαρίων καὶ Ψησσῶν.\textsuperscript{237}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{232} Zinko 2001, 311. 
\textsuperscript{233} It is located on the village of Eltigen to the south west of the contemporary city of Kerch. 
\textsuperscript{234} Zinko 2006, 290. 
\textsuperscript{235} Zhizhinia 2001, 252. 
\textsuperscript{236} Sokolova 2007, 114. 
\textsuperscript{237} SEG 52:741.
“Theoprides son of Megakles, consecrated this propylon to Dionysos, being *agonothetes*\(^{238}\), under Leucon archon of Bosporus and Theodosia and of all the Syndike and Torets and Dandaries and Pseses”\(^{239}\).

The researchers based on the shape of the letters and on the name of the Leucon, who was a certain king of Bosporus and Theodosia, dated the propylon at the first half of the 4th century BC and more specifically in the years from 389 to 349 BC\(^{240}\). The various structures that consist the complex were stretched out in three different levels, which were connected by a high staircase that was centrally located. The temple was situated in the western part of the sacred area and was articulated in two levels. Apart from the altars and the pavements the excavations revealed two constructions that were interpreted as tanks for supplying the sanctuary with water\(^{241}\).

In the area of the sanctuary complex was recently discovered several rows of seating that were, most possibly, belonging to a theatre. Some researchers assume that the rows can be related with the *propylon* and that the latter functioned as a spectacular entrance to the area of the theatre. They argue that the inscription on the architrave implies the existence of the Dionysia festival\(^{242}\) in the city and subsequently the presence of a theatre.\(^{243}\) Their supposition is reinforced by the discovery of some theatrical clay masks of the Attic New comedy type\(^{244}\) in the excavations of the site (Fig.33).\(^{245}\)

### 2.9. Kytaia.

On the Kerch Peninsula and in the southeast corner of it is situated the ancient city of Kytaia.\(^{246}\) The name of the city and its location in the Cimmerian

---

\(^{238}\) The supervisor of the contests.
\(^{239}\) Sokolova 2003, 771.
\(^{240}\) Sokolova 2007, 116.
\(^{241}\) Sokolova 2003, 772-773.
\(^{242}\) Since Theoprides was the supervisor of the contests held during the celebrations.
\(^{243}\) Braund-Hall 2014, 384.
\(^{244}\) They are dated in the 3rd century BC.
\(^{245}\) Trofimova 2007, 178.
\(^{246}\) Lat. Cytaea. The site lies about 40 km to the south of modern Kerch. Molev – Moleva 2010, 295.
Bosporus can be traced in the works of many ancient authors such as the *Periplus of Pseudo-Skylax*, the *Geography* of Ptolemy and the *Natural Historia* of Pliny the elder.\textsuperscript{247}

The excavations in the ash hill, which covers the continental rock landscape in the center of the city, unearthed the religious area and the sanctuary of Kytaia. In the remains of a building with an altar, in a sacrificial pit *bothros* and in the natural and artificial clefts of the hill a great number of objects were discovered and identified as religious offerings. Those “votive” findings consist of pottery fragments, a lot of them bear incised dedications to Dionysos, terracotta statuettes depicting him and his companions and clay models of bead and *phalli* along with animal bones of pigs, sheep and goat.\textsuperscript{248} The ceramic dates the sanctuary as well as the appearance of the city in the first half of the 5\textsuperscript{th} – the beginning of the 4\textsuperscript{th} centuries BC.\textsuperscript{249}

The researchers assume that, initially, the sanctuary was devoted more generally to deities of chthonic nature that were associated with fertility, which was also a basic characteristic of the god Dionysos.\textsuperscript{250} A group of terracotta figurines and small votive clay masks representing Dionysos and Silenoi (Fig.34), Maenads and Satyrs, the members of his entourage, testifies its worship in the sanctuary. Most notable are a small mask portraying Dionysos with beard and a diadem in his head and a figurine of an actor wearing a Silens’ mask (Fig.35, 36).\textsuperscript{251}

Another sacred area and probably a sanctuary was uncovered near the south side of the city fortress walls. Potsherds of amphorae, dated mostly in the 2\textsuperscript{nd} – 1\textsuperscript{st} centuries BC, were abundant within the layer of the area. Nevertheless, the most prevailing finding is two fragments of a terracotta figurine of Dionysos of excellent craftsmanship (Fig.37). The scholars claim that the sanctuary might have been dedicated to Dionysos, since the Mithridates VI Eupator was hallowed as Dionysos at that period and the Cimmerian Bosporus had become part of the Pontic kingdom.\textsuperscript{252}

\textsuperscript{248} Molev 2003, 849.  
\textsuperscript{249} Molev – Moleva 2010, 296, 300.  
\textsuperscript{250} Molev 2003, 862.  
\textsuperscript{251} Molev – Moleva 2010, 302.  
\textsuperscript{252} Molev 2003, 866.
As witnessed by the above mentioned archaeological data discovered in different Bosporan settlements, namely the terracotta figurines and the masks representing Dionysos and his companions rituals in honor of Dionysos were being practiced from the 2nd - 1st century BC to the 2nd century AD in the Kerch peninsula and at the northeastern part of the Crimean Azov coast. From the 2nd – 1st centuries BC Dionysos’ chthonic functions and connection with mysteries made his cult become popular in the Bosporus region. People, who were facing difficult conditions and situations, at that period, due to the natural disasters, war and economic crisis had pinned their hopes to the god’s assistance for overcoming their problems.\textsuperscript{253}

3. The cult of Dionysos in the Eastern Black Sea region.

The ancient written sources refer to the existence and provide information about the location of three Greek colonies on the east Black Sea littoral. However, the cities of Phasis, Gyenos and Dioscurias has not been spotted archaeologically so far.

3.1. Vani.

The eastern Black Sea coast, that is the ancient Colchis, is a region where the obtained, so far, archaeological evidence and data is rather meagre, scanty and insufficient due to the limited number of excavated sites, in opposition to the relatively abundant ancient written sources.\textsuperscript{254} Nevertheless, the inland site of Vani\textsuperscript{255} situated on three terraces on the slopes of a hill to the south of Rioni river\textsuperscript{256},

\textsuperscript{253} Molev – Moleva 2010, 303.
\textsuperscript{254} Tsetskhladze 1998, 14.
\textsuperscript{255} The site is about 60 miles from the sea. Boardman 1999, 254. The ancient name of the colony, most possibly was Šuriun/ Σούριον, according to Pliny 6.11.13 and Ptolemy 5.9.6, but there is no unanimity among the scholars about its identification. Kacharava – Kvirvelia 2009, 55.
\textsuperscript{256} That is the ancient Phasis River. Vickers 2009, 33.
is one of the most intensively researched and studied settlements of the Colchian coast (Fig. 38).

In the Hellenistic period Dionysos’ cult was especially popular and widespread among the inhabitants of Vani. That popularity is attributed by the researchers to the fact that the city and the whole region was closely linked with the cultivation of vine and the wine production. Their supposition is based on the grounds that at that period began the local production of fairly sizable amphorae for wine transportation that have been discovered to the north of the Black Sea area. In addition, they assume that the introduction during the early Hellenistic time in Vani of a new burial practice, which was the inhumation inside a large storage vessel, mainly for wine, the so-called pithos, could be interpreted as a reflection of the wine’s great significance in the life of the inhabitants.

A temple, dated to the middle of the 2nd century BC, where the god Dionysos was worshipped was unearthed in the southwestern part of the Vani’s middle terrace. The sanctuary, which is partially preserved, was a complex consisted of three rooms connected with each other and of an altar of two levels with a colonnade in its northeastern side (Fig. 39). Inside the larger room were found about forty Colchian amphorae that, presumably, were devotional offerings. Most notable are the bronze plastically representations of head of a Satyr, a Maenad, Ariadne and Pan that are members of the Dionysian iconographic circle (Fig. 40). Those heads were decorative elements attached to the surface or to the handle of vessels. In the third room were found the fragments of a clay mask depicting an elderly bearded Dionysos wearing an ivy wreath (Fig. 41) and in the area surrounding the cult complex a clay mold for the casting of a Satyrs’ head (Fig. 42). In accordance with the findings the researchers proposed the possible identification of the premises as a sanctuary dedicated to Dionysos and viticulture.

257 Vickers 2009, 45.
258 Kacharava – Kvirkvelia 2009b, 117.
259 Saprykin 2009, 250.
260 Kacharava – Kvirkvelia 2009b, 119, 123.
261 Kacharava – Kvirkvelia 2009b, 128.
4. The cult of Dionysos in the Southern Black Sea region.

The whole of the southern Black Sea area, that is the northern coast of Turkey, which extends from the mouth of the Bosporus to the frontier of Georgia, still remains a virgin archaeological territory. Many ancient Greek settlements are mentioned in written sources, but most of them are impossible to be spotted, while the ones that have been located archaeologically have not been systematically excavated and researched to their full potential. The available archaeological material comes from the poorly documented early excavations, some chance finds from rescue excavations and surveys and a small amount of ongoing excavations in major colonies like Sinope.

4.1. Amisos.

The Milesian colony of Amisos\textsuperscript{262} was founded in the beginning of the 6\textsuperscript{th} century BC. It was located on a small hill near the shore and possessed fertile lands that were extended among the Halys and Iris\textsuperscript{263} Rivers.\textsuperscript{264} The colony, from the 4\textsuperscript{th} century BC, became a significant commercial center due to its position that linked the littoral of the southern Black Sea with an inland trade route to central Anatolia. Moreover, in the Hellenistic period the city was a major production center, since it had several coroplastic workshops that produced ceramics, roof tiles and terracotta figurines.\textsuperscript{265} Amisos became part of the Pontic Kingdom probably during the reign of Mithridates II\textsuperscript{266}, but flourished in the time of Mithridates VI the Eupator.\textsuperscript{267}

The cult of Dionysos was very popular in Amisos especially due to the fact that viticulture was widespread among its inhabitants. Thereby, the god of wine was being invoked as Dionysos \textit{Botrys}, which means the Grape, and as Dionysos

\textsuperscript{262} It is located near the modern city of Samsun.
\textsuperscript{263} The ancient Greek names of the modern Kızılirmak and Kelkit Rivers respectively.
\textsuperscript{264} Avram et al. 2004, 954.
\textsuperscript{265} Atasoy 2003, 1331, 1339, 1365.
\textsuperscript{266} At 255-220 BC.
\textsuperscript{267} At 120-63 BC.
Tauromorphos\textsuperscript{268}, since he was correlated with chthonic functions and the revival of nature.\textsuperscript{269} The existence of those two worships is testified initially by Amisos’ toreutics. A bronze plaque in high relief with the depiction of Dionysos Tauromorphos was found in a grave. The plaque, which is dated in the late 2\textsuperscript{nd} century BC, presumably functioned as a decoration of a wooden sarcophagus.\textsuperscript{270} Furthermore, among the grave goods from another burial was discovered a bronze bust depicting Dionysos Botrys. Dionysos is rendered with long hair and a beard while is wreathed with grape leaves and corymb.\textsuperscript{271}

Noteworthy in the case of Amisos is the abundance of terracotta statuettes\textsuperscript{272} and clay masks of Dionysos Botrys and Tauromorphos along with that of Silens, Satyrs and actors that were found in the excavations in various contexts (Fig.43). As it is claimed by the researchers the figurines, which are of fine craftsmanship and quality, were being manufactured in local coroplastic workshops. The same also applies for the rather unique large sized\textsuperscript{273} tragedy and comedy masks, the masks representing Satyrs and that of Dionysos.\textsuperscript{274} In particular, the characteristic elements of Dionysos Tauromorphos type of mask was two bull horns protruding out of the forehead (Fig.44), while in the Botrys type, the hair and the beard are rendered as bunches of grape (Fig.45). In both of the types the god is depicted either young or elderly.\textsuperscript{275}

Regarding the dating of these findings, the scholars have concluded that the workshops had been producing the statuettes and the masks since the 2\textsuperscript{nd} century BC, but after the proclamation of Dionysus’ cult as royal by the Mithridates VI the production boosted, increased and was distributed all over the southern and northern Pontic region.\textsuperscript{276} On the other hand, the existence of a large quantity of theatrical masks and figurines of actors in the city of Amisos corroborate the

\textsuperscript{268} Βότρυς is the Greek word for the grape, while Tauromorphos means that he has the form of a bull.
\textsuperscript{269} In the context of the Dionysiac Bacchic cult.
\textsuperscript{270} Saprykin 2010, 480.
\textsuperscript{271} Summerer 1999, 33, 81.
\textsuperscript{272} A lot of those statuettes are exhibited in various museums not only in Turkey, but also in famous museums in Europe, Russia and New York.
\textsuperscript{273} Approximately up to 20cm height.
\textsuperscript{274} All the masks had in their backside suspension holes.
\textsuperscript{275} Atasoy 2003, 1362-1363.
\textsuperscript{276} Summerer 1999, 148-151.
occurrence of theatrical celebrations and performances directly connected with Dionysos’ cult.

Finally, the popularity of Dionysos’ worship in Amisos is also attested in its coinage. Images of the god along with his attributes such as the cista mystica and the thyrsos were frequently depicted on the coins of the city mainly at the Mithridatic period (Fig. 46, 47).

4.2 Sinope.

Regarding the colony of Sinope is generally proposed that it was established in the 7th century BC by the Milesians. However, according to recent arguments expressed by the scholars, the Milesians rebuilt the city in the place of a pre-existed Greek settlement, which was initially established by the Thessalians in the 8th century BC.

Sinope which was situated on a promontory that formed the best harbour of the whole southern Black Sea shore became a prosperous trade port. Moreover, during the Hellenistic and Roman periods the city was a significant exporter of wine and olive oil as well as a major center of amphora production in the Black Sea region. The Sinopean amphorae were being distributed apart from the southern Black Sea also in the western and northwestern Pontic region.

In Sinope was unearthed a temple dedicated to the worship of Serapis dated to the Hellenistic period. Inside the sanctuary were discovered several votive terracotta figurines and masks of Serapis, Herakles, Kora-Isis, Dionysos, Satyrs and bulls. The findings related to Dionysos denote the association of Dionysos’ and

---

277 The Cista mystica, is the image which epitomizes the mysteries and thus connected with this aspect of Dionysos’ cult, as it is a basket closed with a lid implying that only the initiate is the one who knows what this basket-cista conceals. Guthrie 2000, 200.
278 Saprykin 2010, 479.
279 Modern Sinop town in the province of Sinop in Turkey.
280 Kacharava 2005, 12; Doonan 2003, 1380-1381; Avram et all 2004, 960, albeit it is mentioned that Sinope had a complicated foundation story.
281 After its possible destruction by the Cimmerians during their occupation of the area.
282 Manoledakis 2010, 572.
283 Doonan 2003, 1379.
284 This is confirmed archaeologically by the amphorae with Sinopean seals, which were found in large quantities in the cities, for instance, of Histria or Olbia. Stoyanov 2012, 410.
Serapis’ cults as both gods were connected with fertility and had chthonic functions.\textsuperscript{285} Besides Dionysos in the Greek colonies of the southern Pontos was syncretized with the popular local divinities that had chthonic aspects and were correlated with the notion of regeneration and rebirth.\textsuperscript{286}

Regarding the mobile findings, apart from the terracotta figurines, the excavations brought to light a marble statue of Dionysos and coins bearing his image. The statue, which is based on an altar is dated at the Roman period and depicts the god naked, but not barefoot, crowned with garland made of ivy leaves and flowers buds and accompanied most probably by a panther.\textsuperscript{287} Additionally, in some figurines Dionysos is depicted wearing a diadem of ivy leafs and flowers and a band, \textit{tainia}, in his forehead (Fig.48).\textsuperscript{288} Lastly, his function as the patron deity, especially, of viticulture and of fertility of nature generally is also evident in Sinopean numismatics. In several coins is represented the head of Dionysos in his youth along with some of his attributes such as the \textit{thrysos} and the cista mystica.\textsuperscript{289}

\subsection*{4.3. Tios.}

Tios\textsuperscript{290} was situated near the mouth of the River Billaios at the western end of the southern Black Sea, between the colonies of Herakleia Pontica and Amastris (Fig.49). The colony was founded by a Milesian priest who was named Tios in the 7\textsuperscript{th} century BC. During antiquity the city’s name had various spellings in the written sources, such as Tieion, Tion and in Latin as Tium and Tieium.\textsuperscript{291} The city of Tios, extended on three artificial terraces on a small promontory with a good harbor that

\begin{footnotes}
\item\textsuperscript{285} Saprykin 2010, 482.
\item\textsuperscript{286} Saprykin 2009, 264.
\item\textsuperscript{287} Saprykin 2010, 480.
\item\textsuperscript{288} Summerer 1999, 47-48.
\item\textsuperscript{289} Saprykin 2010, 479.
\item\textsuperscript{290} It is the modern town of Filyos, which is also the contemporary name of the River Billaios, in the province of Zonguldak.
\item\textsuperscript{291} Strabo 12.3.5. Avram et all 2004, 963-964.
\end{footnotes}
functioned as a trading and fishing port. Furthermore, in the fertile agricultural area that surrounded the city, vines and cereals were being cultivated.292

Regarding Dionysos’ cult in the colony the only archaeological evidence that were discovered so far is the existence of a theatre and of coins which bear his depictions. The excavations in the southwestern slope of the city revealed part of a theatre, which is dated in the Roman imperial period (Fig.50).293 Its ruins consist of several rows of seats, while the scene and its other segments have not been unearthed yet.294 As far as the numismatic material is concerned, Tios during the 3rd century BC minted coins with its name and the representations of several major Greek deities including that of Dionysos. Noteworthy is a coin, dated at the Roman period295, in which Dionysos is presented officially as the founder “κτίστης” of Tios. On the obverse is depicted the bust of the Roman emperor Traianos and on the reverse a standing Dionysos that holds a thrysos and a kantharos encircled by the legend “Dionysos founder of the Tians” (Fig.51).296 In addition, another coin from the Roman period bears the personification of River God Billaios along with the image of a Nymph, while between them stands the god Dionysos, who is holding grapes (Fig.52).297

293 Öztürk 2013, 149.
294 Atasoy 2012, 32.
295 At 98-117 AD.
296 ΔΙΟΝΥΣΟΣ Κ - Τ - ΙΟΤ ΤΙΑΝΩΝ. Farnell 1909, 134.
297 Öztürk 2013, 150.
D. The cult of Dionysos in the Pontic and Bosporan Kingdom during the reign of Mithridates VI the Eupator.

D. 1. The Pontic kingdom under the reign of Mithridates VI the Eupator.

Mithridates VI the Eupator Dionysos was born in 135 BC in Sinope. Although, the ancient sources provide limited biographical information about him, they mention that he was claiming and projecting a dual descent, both Greek and Persian, by tracing his father’s bloodline to the Persian kings Cyrus and Darius and his mother’s family to Alexander the Great. The reign of Mithridates lasted from 120/115 BC till the 63 BC.

Shortly after Mithridates ascending to the throne, Crimea and Bosporos was annexed to the Pontic kingdom. In both of the cases the reason for the incorporation was the inability of the inhabitants of the Tauric Chersoneso and of the Bosporans to protect, by themselves, their territories from the constant confrontations and threats by the Scythians. As a result, they asked for and received military assistance from Mithridates. Thereby, under his rule the whole northern Pontic area was converted into one administrative unit that functioned as a province of Pontus, governed by a political friend of the ruler, with the city of Panticapaion, possibly, as its center. Noteworthy is the fact that Mithridates had bestowed some privileges to the Greek cities of Bosporos, like those already existed in the Greek cities of Pontus that reveals his philhellenism and his determination to form and reinforce a unity in his realm.

Moreover, as Antipater had ceded to Mithridates the territory of Lesser Armenia the coastline from Trapezus up to Colchis became, also, part of his Pontic kingdom. Finally and after the conquests of the First Mithridatic war, the realm of

---

298 The capital of Pontus at that period, while the first capital was Amaseia.
300 Erciyas 2006, 18-19.
301 Molev 2009, 321-322.
Mithridates in the beginning of the 1st century BC, had been expanded to a great part of the Black Sea basin that was under his direct or indirect control.  

D. 2. The Mithridates’ policy and the propaganda connected to Dionysos’ cult.

The religion in Pontos had political aspects due to its handling by the Pontic royal family as a mean for propaganda. Certainly, the gods favored by the Mithridatids kings combined Greek, Anatolian and Persian elements and were perceived differently by the various ethnic groups living in the kingdom area. But as most scholars argue the Greek element was the strongest and even though the Mithridatids were of Persian descent there is little evidence of Persian religious beliefs and practices and on the contrary an abundant of Greek ones. The religious life in the Pontic kingdom was characterized by the Hellenic cults as well as some local deities and by the ideological propaganda closely connected with the royal dynastic policy.

The widespread ideology of regeneration and recovery, existing in different Greek and Anatolian cults, was the basis for the creation of an idealized image of Mithridates Eupator. Mithridates choose to personify himself as the god Dionysos, the son of Zeus that had close ties with other significant gods in Pontus such as Perseus, Mên – Pharmakou, Apollo-Helios-Mithras and Herakles. Moreover, those were the deities associated with the victory against evil and darkness and winning over death. Therefore, Mithridates with the adoption of the epithet Dionysos wanted to promote and propagate that he would function as the protector and liberator of his kingdom, which included several Greek cities and a considerable Greek population.

302 Erciyas 2006, 19.
303 Zeus was the protector of the royal house and its cult became official. Saprykin 2009, 256.
304 The cult of Mên – Pharmakou had been introduced by the Parnakes I and stayed active also during the reign of Mithridates VI. Saprykin 2009, 259.
305 Saprykin 2009, 260-262.
An important aspect of the Mithridates’ policy during his reign was the efforts to win the trust of the Greek colonies and subsequently their support in his struggle against Rome. Mithridates was brilliant at presenting himself as the savior of the Greeks of the northern Black Sea from the Scythians oppressors and accordingly, later on, from the Romans. In this context and by exploiting the religious faith of the population the Mithridates’ royal self-representation on coins was used, in a way, to shape a certain perception of his kingship, basically, to the Greek population of his kingdom.

First and foremost he was imitating features and characteristics of Alexander’s the Great representations on coins in order to emphasize and underline his relation to his great predecessor (Fig.53). The message implied by this resemblance was that the Mithridates as a new Alexander could liberate the Greeks from the Rome’s tyranny. Accordingly, the same applied for the use of the image of the god Dionysos, who functioned also as a savior and protector and was interlinked with Zeus, Perseus and Apollo that had analogous qualities and their cults were also popular in the Pontic kingdom.

The propagandistic process of the deification and identification of Mithridates with Dionysos lasted several years and resulted to his proclamation as the “New Dionysos” by adding the name of the god next to his own. That fact is attested in a dedicatory inscription on a marble monument of Mithridates, dated around 102/101 BC, in the sanctuary of the Great Gods of Samothrace in Delos.

Ἡλίανας Ἀσκληπιοδότου Ἀθηναίος ὁ δία βίου ἱερεύς Ποσειδώνος Αἰσιοῦ, γενόμενος καὶ Θεῶν Μεγάλων Σαμιοθράκων Διοσκούρων Καβείρων ὑπέρ τοῦ δήμου τοῦ Ἀθηναίων καὶ τοῦ Ἐλευθερεύς, ἐκ τῶν ἱδίων ἀνέθηκεν ἐπὶ τῆς νήσου Θεοδότου τοῦ Διοδώρου Σουνιέως.

---

306 Højte 2009, 146.
307 Dionysos with the epithets Lysios or Eleuthereus, Ελευθερεύς, is the one who sets free, the liberator from any kind of oppression. Mikalson 2010, 85.
308 Saprykin 2009, 260-262.
309 Saprykin 2009, 251.
310 IDélos, 562.
“The Athenian Helianax, the priest of Poseidion Aisios and Dioscuri-Cabeiroi, dedicated the temple, cult statues and equipment to his gods and to Mithridates Eupator Dionysos on behalf of the Greek and Roman people.\textsuperscript{311}

After the adoption by the king of the epithet Dionysos the cult became officially a royal one within the territory of the Pontic kingdom. Indisputably, Mithridates VI the Eupator used the coins as the basic, comprehensible and diffusible medium in order to disseminate his, already, proclaimed association with the god Dionysos to his subjects throughout his realm. Therefore, the image of Dionysos and the Dionysiac themes as the \textit{cista mystica} and the \textit{thyrsos} acquired a prominent role on Pontic coinage from the 100 BC onwards.\textsuperscript{312}

Dionysos and his features were depicted on the royal silver and city bronze coins\textsuperscript{313}, while the decoration of an ivy wreath encircling the reverse side of coins minted after 95 BC certifies the royal character of his cult in Pontic region.\textsuperscript{314} Besides, a whole sequence of coins minted in the Pontic cities of Sinope, Amisos, Comana, Laodikeia, and Kabeira bear the representation of a young Dionysos crowned with an ivy garland. Researchers date those coins from the 100 to 85 BC.\textsuperscript{315}

Since Mithridates VI had granted to the Greek cities of Bosporos the right to struck coins the several Dionysos type images on coins was transferred by the monetary officials in the Bosporos coinage after its annexation into the Pontic kingdom. In the beginning of the 1\textsuperscript{st} century BC Dionysos image appeared for the first time on the Bosporan coinage.\textsuperscript{316} More specific, Panticapaion, Phanagoria and Gorgippia minted silver coins of the type “head of Dionysos/stag running” (Fig.54). Later on, about 95 BC the same cities issued drachms made of poor quality silver of the type “Dionysos/wreath and bunch of grapes” (Fig.55) and of “Dionysos/thyrsos”. Those mints were also produced obols of the type “head of man/standing Dionysos” and tetrachalkoi of the “Dionysos/tripod”.\textsuperscript{317}

\textsuperscript{311} Erciyas 2006, 135.
\textsuperscript{312} Højte 2009, 149.
\textsuperscript{313} The royal coins bearing the name and the portrait of the king were struck on gold and silver, while the city coins on bronze with the civil name of the population in the genitive form e.g. ΠΑΝΤΙΚΑΠΑΙΤΩΝ on the reverse side. Erciyas 2006, 7.
\textsuperscript{314} Højte 2009, 149.
\textsuperscript{315} Saprykin 2009, 251.
\textsuperscript{316} Erciyas 2006, 165.
\textsuperscript{317} Smekalova 2009, 242.
Lastly, there was a series of the so-called anonymous obols, of which the Pontic ones bears the type of “head of Dionysos/cista”, while the Bosporan the type of “head of Dionysos/bow case” (Fig.56). The monograms, possibly, were a reference to the names of the annual magistrates or to the names of the royal officials that were appointed to issue the coins.\textsuperscript{318} Those obols were, most likely, overvalued coins struck on copper and are dated around 90-70 BC. The coins were issued in Pontus as supplementary funds for covering the growing military expenses of Mithridates VI and were circulated throughout its kingdom.\textsuperscript{319} The supposition that those strikes were intended for the payment of the soldiers of the numerous garrisons, which is expressed by some scholars, could be attested in the numismatic finds of the Kuru Baš fortified settlement located to the northeast of the city of Theodosia.\textsuperscript{320} The three hundred anonymous obols of the type “Dionysos/bow-case, monogram” (Fig.57), which were discovered within the area of the site were, most probably, part of the garrison’s treasury.\textsuperscript{321} In the settlement were also found tetrachalks of the type “Dionysos/tripod with thrysos” minted by Gorgippia and obols of “Men/standing Dionysos” minted by Panticapaion.\textsuperscript{322}

On the whole, the association of Mithridates with the god Dionysos gave an impetus on the cult in the entire Black Sea area, which was under the control of the Pontic kingdom in the turn of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} and 1\textsuperscript{st} centuries BC. For instance, a shrine devoted to Dionysos in Panticapaion become more celebrated and active during the reign of Mithridates and especially from the 80’s BC. Furthermore, at the end of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} century BC a temple dedicated to the worship of Dionysos was erected in the city of Vani on the territory of Colchis.\textsuperscript{323} That impulse in the Dionysos’ cult is further evidenced by the abundance of terracottae figurines and masks of Dionysos, Satyrs and Silenoi that were being created in the coroplastic workshops, mainly of Amisos,

\textsuperscript{318} Gavrilov 2009, 339.
\textsuperscript{319} Smekalova 2009, 236, 240.
\textsuperscript{320} Callataÿ 2009, 88.
\textsuperscript{321} Gavrilov 2009, 340. “The obols were concentrated at the top and on the western slope of the hill”. Gavrilov 2009, 333.
\textsuperscript{322} Gavrilov 2009, 339.
\textsuperscript{323} Saprykin 2009, 250. At that period Colchis was annexed to the Pontic kingdom, see also p.58 of the present paper.
at that period. Those figurines were distributed all over Pontic kingdom as well as in the North Pontic region.324

Conclusions

Religion is one of the most interesting elements of the ancient Greek world, because it consist a reflection of various aspects of people’s life, of their needs, thoughts and beliefs. The cultures as well as the collective and individual identities are shaped through religion, hence its role in the colonies was of extreme significance for the creation of a new cultural heritage, which could ensure and maintain the cohesion of the newly founded community. In addition, the concept of an autonomous colony that establish its cults by erecting its own shrines and temples was very crucial for the colonists in their new beginning in a foreign and unknown land.

As it was analyzed Dionysos was an important god of the Hellenic pantheon with a substantial presence in ancient Greek literature, whose worship was transported by the colonists into their new homelands and became very popular and widespread. Dionysos in the region of the Black Sea apart from being worshiped as Bacchus, which was usually related with mystic rituals, was also venerated under the epithets Patroos, Dasyllios, Karpophoros and Botrys that were correlated with his functions. Likewise, his devotees invoked him as liberator, leader and brilliant, while in some colonies he was called Dionysos with bull horns325 or with bull form326 that was associated with his capability of being transformed and with his aspects as a chthonic deity.

The first point that should be stressed out in relation with his presence in a considerable number of colonies of the Black Sea is his connection with wine that

324 Saprykin 2009, 250.
325 Ταυρόκερος.
326 Ταυρόμορφος.
reveals a god whose divine nature could be reachable by the humans, of course, to some extent and under certain conditions and circumstances. For instance by the intoxicated ecstasy and the enthusiasm resulting through the participation of the devotees in the processions in his honour or even more in his mystic rituals. Furthermore, Dionysos, the patron deity of the theatre, was being appreciated because the theatrical performances offered to the colonists the intellectual recreation and pleasure along with the “κάθαρσις” that was an essential element in Greeks’ life and inherent in their mentality.

Another point that should be emphasized is that the communal feeling, which the festivals in honour of the god promoted, through the participation of the inhabitants of the entire colony in them, was fundamental for its unity and cohesion. That feeling of a shared experience, which also strengthened their visibility, was crucial for the colonies especially at the initial stage of their existence. The Dionysiac rural and civic festivals that offered an opportunity to the colonists to express their common Greek identity and reinforce their sense of an inherited tradition, were also ideal in displaying the magnificence and coherence of the whole polis both to itself and to outsiders. Finally, the connection of Dionysos’ cult with the fertility and the revival of nature along with its chthonic aspects was suitable and appropriate for a lot of colonies who evolved and flourished by the cultivation of the agricultural lands.

In discussing the worship of Dionysos in the Greek colonies of the Black Sea region the archaeological data are of essential and primary importance, in the sense that in the ancient remains can be detected various aspects of peoples’ lives as well as the practices of certain cults. The excavations brought to light a variety of archaeological findings of different types related to Dionysos in a lot of colonies (Fig.58, 59, 60, 61). Every finding despite how small and humble it may seem sometimes can reveal a critical meaning especially through its interpretation within a broader context. That is, for instance, the case with the tiny inscribed bone plates found in Borysthenes and Olbia and were correlated with the mystic aspect of Dionysos’ cult.

327 I am referring to the category other artifacts that I have include in the tables.
The architectural remains of theatres, temples and sanctuaries that are attributed with certainty to the worship of Dionysos and his statues, although it may be considered as the most magnificent discoveries, are rather rare in the Black Sea region, at least yet. Most of the Dionysos’ temples were found in the Kerch peninsula in small settlements as well as at the major colonies of Panticapaion and Nymphaion and to the smaller Kytaia. This fact, most possibly, corresponds to the religious propagandistic policy of Mithridates VI the Eupator that promoted the worship of Dionysos in the region. In addition, a theatre and a sanctuary dedicated to Dionysos was unearthed in Chersonesos Taurike, while another theatre at the city of Tios and a temple in Vani.

Noteworthy are the inscriptions, which consists evidence of great importance due to their authentic and objective character. The epigraphic material that is abundant in the western part of the Black Sea (Fig.58), provides information about the existence of temples and theatres as well of Dionysiac festivals that corroborates to the presence and the significance of Dionysos’ cult in several colonies. However, the archaeological research in the region has not been able to locate their architectural remains. In a considerable number of colonies were found terracotta figurines and masks of Dionysos and of his mythological companions namely the Satyrs, the Silenoi and the Maenads as well as theatrical masks. Those figurines and masks are not only interesting in terms of Greek art, but also evidence of religious public and private practices. The same applies to the fragments of painted pottery that bear themes of the Dionysiac iconography. Lastly, as far as the coins with Dionysian images is concerned a few have been found in the colonies of the western and northern part of the Black Sea, more in the southern, while the bulk of the material derived from the Bosporan region and represents the Bosporan coinage under the reign of Mithridates the VI.

The reign of Mithridates VI Eupator Dionysos was a great boost to Dionysos’ cult in the Black Sea region. Since the last decade of the 2nd century BC the Pontic royalty utilized the cults and the religious beliefs of the population in order to strengthen the domestic power of its kingship. Therefore, one main facet of their political ideology was the philhellenism. More specific, in the official royal religious policy Greek cults were the prevailing ones. In addition, by the proclamation of
Mithridates VI as the “New” Dionysos the king was presented as the ruler who would protect and liberate the Greeks from the “barbarians” in which were included both the Scythians and the Romans. Dionysos was a god that could be associated with other Greek but also Anatolian or Iranian deities with apotropaic functions and qualities linked with the revival and recovery of life.

Furthermore, Mithridates employed the coinage for the purposes of his political propaganda. The several type coins bearing Dionysos’ image and his symbols transmitted the relationship and the association between the ruler and the god to all the population of his kingdom in the most effective way. In this regard the coins, existing in every economic transaction, functioned as a reminder of the king’s divine epithet and his message, that he was the liberator, could been immediately recognized by everyone.

One of the main problems in researching the cult of Dionysos in the Greek colonies of the Black Sea region, apart from the limited information deriving from the ancient written sources, is the fact that a great number of colonies or some parts of them lies beneath modern cities or in other cases are submerged. Thus and even though there is a confined underwater research, significant archaeological material is almost impossible to be brought to light and their data are probably lost forever. On the other hand, in the recent years there is a growing interest of the scholars for the region of the Black Sea, as along with the ongoing excavations some new ones appeared and the related bibliography has slightly increased. Moreover, a lot of articles are no longer being published only in Slavic languages but, as well, in English. However, the available bibliography is far from being sufficient, due also to the fact that several archaeological researches are not yet published. In any case, it is very possible that our knowledge of the Black Sea region will be enriched in the years to come.
Figures

Fig. 1. Map of the major Greek colonies of the Black Sea and of the local tribes. (Tsetskhadze 1998, 23).

Fig. 2. Dionysos alone and with member of his thiasos, a Maenad and a Satyr. (Sekerskaya 2001, 80).
Fig. 3. Map of the Black Sea region with the major Greek colonies.
(Bilde et al. 2007-2008, 116).

Fig. 4. The inscription in honour of Sadalas.
(Preshlenov 2003, 205).

Fig. 5. Clay theatre mask.
(Preshlenov 2003, 205).
Fig. 6. Relief of a Satyrs’ head on an amphora neck. Fig. 7. Attic red figured bell crater with Dionysian scene. (Minchev 2003, 275, 277).

Fig. 8. Marble Statue of the god Pan. (Damyanov 2007, 34).

Fig. 9. Marble Statue of a dressed Dionysos. (Damyanov 2007, 34).
Fig. 10. Marble torso of a naked Dionysos.
(Damyanov 2007, 34).

Fig. 11. Obv. Wreathed Dionysos’ head to the right. Rev. Thrysos below the abbreviation ΔΙΩΝ.

Fig. 12. Obv. Wreathed Dionysos’ head to the right. Rev. Bunch of grapes and the abbreviation ΔΙΟΝΥΣ.
(http://www.wildwinds.com/moushmov/dionysopolis/html)
Fig. 13. A marble head of Dionysos dated at the Roman period. (Krapivina 2010, 162).

Fig. 14, 15. Red figure calyx craters with Dionysian themes. (Sekerskaya 2001, 80, 81).
Fig. 16, 17. Two “figured” vessels. A bust of Dionysos and a seated actor of Silen. (Kryzhitskij – Krapivina 2003, 561).

Fig. 18. Drawing of the front and reverse side of the inscribed bone found at Borysthenes. (Onyshkevych 2002, 178, 179).
Fig. 19. Drawing of the inscribed bone found at Olbia.
(Radcliffe 2013, 199).

Fig. 20. Bronze mirror bearing an inscription found at Olbia.
(Alexieva 2007, 11).
Fig. 21. Map of the Crimean Peninsula and of the Cimmerian Bosporus. (Grammenos – Petropoulos 2007, iv).

Fig. 22. Plan of the theatre of Chersonesos Taurike. (Zolotarev 2003, 643.)
Fig. 23. A figurine of a bearded bull. 
(Maslennikov 2010, 247).

Fig. 24. A figurine of a Silen on a goat.

Fig. 25. A figurine of a Satyr with goat hooves wearing a cloak and a round hat. 
(Maslennikov 2010, 247).
Fig. 26. Clay mask of an elderly Dionysos or of a Satyr. (Maslennikov 2010, 248).

Fig. 27. Clay mask of a young Dionysos

Fig. 28. Head of a figurine portraying Dionysos. (Vakhtina-Vinogradov-Goroncharovskiy 2010, 387).
Fig. 29. Plan of the Doric temple that is attributed to Dionysos’ cult. (Zinko 2001, 308).

Fig. 30. Drawing of the obverse and the reverse side of a golden stater of Mithridates. (Zinko 2001, 308).
Fig. 31. Architectural fragments of the Ionic order propylon.
(Sokolova 2007, 114).

Fig. 32. Plan of the front and side façade of the propylon. (Sokolova 2003, 801-802.)
Fig. 33. Theatrical mask of the 3rd century BC found at Nymphaion. (Trofimova 2007, 178).

Fig. 34. Clay votive mask of a Silen. (Molev-Moleva 2010, 330).

Fig. 35. Clay votive mask of Dionysos (Molev-Moleva 2010, 330).
Fig. 36. Terracotta figurine of an actor wearing a Silens’ mask. (Molev-Moleva 2010, 330).

Fig. 37. Fragments of a clay figurine depicting Dionysos. (Molev-Moleva 2010, 332).
Fig. 38. Map of Colchis with the location of the inland site of Vani. (Tsetskhladze 1998, 34).

Fig. 39. Plan of the sanctuary of Dionysos in Vani. (Kacharava – Kvirkvelia 2009a, 56).
Fig. 40. Bronze heads portraying a Maenad and the god Pan. (Kacharava – Kvirkvelia 2009b, 123, 124).

Fig. 41. Terracotta mask of Dionysos. (Kacharava – Kvirkvelia 2009b, 116).
Fig. 42. A clay mold for the casting of a Satyrs’ head. (Kacharava – Kvirkvelia 2009b, 128).

Fig. 43. Terracotta figurine of Dionysos Botrys from Amisos. (Summerer 1999, Pl 9).
Fig. 44. Clay mask depicting Dionysos *Tauromorphos*. Fig. 45. Clay mask depicting Dionysos *Botrys*. (Summerer 1999, Pl. 1, Pl. 6).

Fig. 46. Bronze coin. Obv. Head of Dionysos, rev. *cista mystica* abbreviation ΑΜΙΣΟ. (Smekalova 2009, 236).

Fig. 47. Bronze coin of Amisos, dated at the early 1st century BC, with Dionysos’ head on the obverse side. (Saprykin 2010, 509).
Fig. 48. Fragment of a terracotta figurine of Dionysos. (Summerer 1999, PIII 10).

Fig. 49. Map of part of the southern Black Sea coast with the location of Tios. (Atasoy 2012, 30).
Fig. 50. The excavation of the theatre of Tios. (Atasoy 2012, 32).


Fig. 52. Coin of Tios depicting Dionysos among the River God Billaios and a Nymph. (Öztürk 2013, 156).
Fig. 53. Mithridates’ idealized portrait on a coin, similar to Great Alexander’s. (Mayor 2010, 189).

Fig. 54. Coin of Panticapaion. Obv. Dionysos’ head, rev. stag running. (Smekalova 2009, 242).

Fig. 55. Coin of Phanagoria. Obv. Dionysos’ head, rev. wreath and bunch of grapes. (Smekalova 2009, 244).
Fig. 56. Bosporan anonymous obol. Obv. Dionysos’ head, rev. bow-case, monogram. (Smekalova 2009, 240).

Fig. 57. Part of the anonymous obols’ treasure found in the Kuru Baš settlement. (Gavrilov 2009, 338).
**WESTERN BLACK SEA REGION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Architectural remains of temples/theatres</th>
<th>Inscriptions</th>
<th>Figurines</th>
<th>Statues</th>
<th>Coins</th>
<th>Pottery</th>
<th>Dionysos’/Theater clay masks</th>
<th>Other artifacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apollonia Pontica</td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mesambria</td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Odessos</td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dionysopolis</td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kallatis</td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tomis</td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Histria</td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 58. Table with the types of the archaeological material related to Dionysos’ cult in the colonies of the western Black Sea region.
### NORTHERN BLACK SEA REGION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Architectural remains of temples/theatres</th>
<th>Inscriptions</th>
<th>Figurines</th>
<th>Statues</th>
<th>Coins</th>
<th>Pottery</th>
<th>Dionysos’/Theater clay masks</th>
<th>Other artifacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tyras</td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nikonion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borysthenes and Olbia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chersonesos Taurike</td>
<td>●● temple/theatre</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerch peninsula/Crimean Azov Coast</td>
<td>● temples</td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Porthmion</td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panticapaion</td>
<td>● temple</td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nymphaion</td>
<td>● temple</td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kytaia</td>
<td>● temple</td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 59. Table with the types of the archaeological material related to Dionysos’ cult in the colonies of the northern Black Sea region.
## EASTERN BLACK SEA REGION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Architectural remains of temples/theatres</th>
<th>Inscriptions</th>
<th>Figurines</th>
<th>Statues</th>
<th>Coins</th>
<th>Pottery</th>
<th>Dionysos’/Theater clay masks</th>
<th>Other artifacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vani</td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>temple</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 60. Table with the types of the archaeological material related to Dionysos’ cult in the colony of Vani on the eastern Black Sea region.

## SOUTHERN BLACK SEA REGION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Architectural remains of temples/theatres</th>
<th>Inscriptions</th>
<th>Figurines</th>
<th>Statues</th>
<th>Coins</th>
<th>Pottery</th>
<th>Dionysos’/Theater clay masks</th>
<th>Other artifacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amisos</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sinope</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>temple</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tios</td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>theatre</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 61. Table with the types of the archaeological material related to Dionysos’ cult in the colonies of the southern Black Sea region.
### Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AR</td>
<td>Archeological Reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAR</td>
<td>British Archaeological Reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSS</td>
<td>Black Sea Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hdt</td>
<td>Herodotus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IGBulg I²</td>
<td>Inscriptiones Graecae in Bulgaria repertae. Ora Ponti Euxini.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDélos</td>
<td>Inscriptions de Délos.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IScM I</td>
<td>Inscriptiones Scythiae Minoris Graecae et latinae. Histriae et vicinia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IScM II</td>
<td>Inscriptiones Scythiae Minoris Graecae et latinae. Tomis et territorium.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IScM III</td>
<td>Inscriptiones Scythiae Minoris Graecae et latinae. Callatis et territorium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEG</td>
<td>Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bibliography


**Ancient Written Sources**

- Aristotle *Poetics*
- Herodotus *Histories*
- Hesiod *Theogony*
- Homer *Iliad*
- Pseudo Scylax *Periplus*
- Pseudo Scymnus *Periegesis*
- Pliny *Naturalis Historia*
- Strabo *Geography*
Internet Sources

http://ciegl.classics.ox.ac.uk/html/webposters/1_Alexieva.pdf, 1–11

http://epigraphy.packhum.org/inscriptions/main