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Claire Barat

Cults in Ancient Sinope: Originality and Standardisation

Introduction

The religious life of Ancient Sinope must be understood in the context of the rich past of the city, founded in the middle of the 7th century BC[1] by Milesian colonists[2] on the southern shore of the Black Sea. The ancient history of the city can be summarised briefly. Sinope was under the domination of the Persian Empire since the conquest of Anatolia in the middle of the 6th century BC, and was included in the satrapy of Hellespontine Phrygia.[3] During the time of the Athenian *archè*, an Athenian cleruchy was settled in Sinope through Pericles' expedition[4] in about 437 BC. At the end of the 5th century BC, the city took advantage of internal instability in the Persian Empire, and built a small empire on the southern shore of the Black Sea: Sinope controlled Trapezus, Kerasous and Kotyora, and received tribute from them.[5] In 370 BC, Sinope was besieged by Datames, a rebel Persian satrap,[6] and between 353/2 and 346/7, the city organised its defence through an alliance with the tyrants of Herakleia Pontike.[7]

At the time of Alexander's conquest of the Persian Empire, from 334, the region of Sinope was spared: no fighting took place there, and the city was used as a withdrawal-base by the surviving Persian generals after their defeat at the Granicus. They struck coins there.[8] During all Alexander's expedition,[9] Sinope was under the Cappadocian satrap, Ariarathes.[10] After his death in 322,[11] and despite the Diadochi divisions, the region of Sinope was never conquered.

Throughout the 3rd century BC, Sinope was an independent and prosperous city, and maintained good relations with the Rhodians,[12] who helped the city when Mi-

1 In 631 BC, according to Jerome's chronology: Jer. *Chron*. Ol. 37.2.
2 Xen. *An*. 6.1.15; Ps.-Scymn. 992–997; Strab. 12.3.11; Cass. Dio 14.31.2; Arr. *Peripl. M. Eux*. 14; Eust. *Il*. 772; Ivantchik 1997; 1998; 2005.
3 Hdt. 3.90.
4 Plut. *Per*. 20.1–2; Oliver 1957; Angelescu 1992; Avram 1995; Mattingly 1996; Surikov 2001; Braund 2005; Pébarthe 2009.
5 Xen. *An*. 4.8.22; 5.3.2; 5.5.3, 7–12.
6 Aen. Tact. 40.4–5; Polyaenus, *Strat*. 7.21.2–5.
7 I.Sinope 1; Barat 2012, 226–228 and 243 (French translation of the decree).
8 Harrison 1982a, 163–168, 255–290; 1982b, 181–194; Debord 1999, 114–115.
9 Barat 2012, 228–230.
10 Harrison 1982a, 282–290; 1982b, 181–182; Debord 1999, 109, 162.
11 Arr. *Anab*. 2.4.2; Curt. 3.1.22–24.
12 Barat 2012, 237–238.

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thridates II of Pontus attacked it in 220 BC.[13] Finally, the city was conquered by Pharnaces I, the grand-son of Mithridates II, in 183,[14] and the protestation of Rhodian ambassadors in the Roman Senate could not change the situation.[15] Sinope stayed under the Pontic kings, and replaced Amaseia as capital of the kingdom of Pontus at a date between 183 and 120 BC.[16] After that, Sinope is known as the birthplace of Mithridates VI Eupator,[17] and, in this respect, was an important target for the Romans during the Mithridatic Wars. Sinope was taken by the Roman general Lucullus in 70 BC,[18] and was declared free.[19] The city was located in the Roman province of Pontus-Bithynia, created by Pompey in 64–62 BC.[20] However, it was taken in 48 BC by Pharnaces II of Pontus,[21] son of Mithridates VI Eupator, when he invaded the northern part of Anatolia, and, after Pharnaces was defeated by Caesar at Zela in 47,[22] Caesar settled a Roman colony in Sinope in 45,[23] the *Colonia Iulia Felix Sinope*.[24] After that, Sinope remained under Roman rule.

The aim of my paper is to study the religious life of Sinope in the centuries, from the Classical period to the Early Roman Empire, in order to trace continuity and change, and also the standardisation and originality of its cults. The main sources for the study of religious life in Sinope are inscriptions, published by David French in 2004, in the *Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien* collection,[25] and also coins.[26] A doctoral dissertation about the Roman coins of Sinope was recently presented.[27] Literary sources will also be used, because they give basic accounts,[28]

13 Polyb. 4.56.
14 Strab. 12.3.11.
15 Polyb. 23.9.1–4; Livy 40.2.6.
16 Reinach 1890, 42 thinks that this transfer took place under Mithridates IV, but Rostovtzeff 1951, 218 and McGing 1986, 39 n. 127 think it took place under Pharnaces I.
17 Strab. 12.3.11.
18 Memnon, FGrHist 434 F 37; Strab. 12.3.11; Plut. *Luc*. 23.1–6; App. *Mith*. 83; Reinach 1890, 348–356; Will 1982 [2003], 492–494; McGing 1986, 132–167; Sartre 1995, 128–133; Ballesteros Pastor 1996, 233–245; Callataÿ 1997, 341–388; Sartre 2003, 230–232.
19 App. *Mith*. 83.
20 Fletcher 1939, 21–23; Jones 1971, 159; Mitchell 1993, 32; Barat 2011, 150–153.
21 App. *Mith*. 120.
22 Livy, *Per*. 113; Cass. Dio 42.47; App. *B Civ*. 2.91, *Mith*. 120; Suet. *Iul*. 35.2; Plut. *Caes*. 50.2; Flor. 2.13.63; Oros. 6.16.3; Eutr. 6.22.3.
23 Leschhorn 1993, 150–162.
24 Barat 2011, 156–161.
25 I.Sinope.
26 Recueil I.1; Traité II.2; RPC; SNG BM Black Sea and SNG v.Aulock 1–3.
27 Manisse 2015.
28 Ap. Rhod. 2.948; Dionys. Per. 775; Eust. *Il*. 772; Diod. 4.72; Plut. *Luc*. 23.5; Andron of Teos, FGrHist 802 F 3; Hecataeus of Miletos, FGrHist 1 F 4; Ps.-Scymn. 941–942; Anon. *PPE* 22; Ivantchik 1997, 33–45; 1998, 297–330; 2005, 135–168.

and information about cults in Sinope, especially the oracular sanctuary of Autolykos,[29] and the sanctuary of Sarapis.[30]

This paper will be divided in three parts: first, we will see the cults of Sinope in a colonial environment; secondly, we will question the idea of cults in a royal Pontic context; and finally, we will study the originality of the cults during the Roman period, with a reconfiguration of the religious landscape there.

1 Cults in a colonial environment

1.1 Milesian cults

As Sinope was a Milesian colony,[31] we may expect to find the same principal cults as in its metropolis. Two of them, Apollo Delphinios and Poseidon Helikonios are to be found in Sinope for the Classical period and for the beginning of the Hellenistic period. Apollo Delphinios was the principal divinity of Miletos,[32] where the cult is attested in the *Delphinion*.[33] It would seem normal to find Apollo's cult in a Milesian colony like Sinope, as in other Milesian colonies (Olbia, Pantikapaion, Kepoi, Hermonassa, Gorgippia).[34] However, we must be clear that the cult of Apollo Delphinios is not directly attested in Sinope, but is an inference from theophoric names (like Delphinios, son of Orgiales, attested in a funerary inscription on a Doric columnar altar of the 5th – 4th centuries BC).[35] The name Orgiales comes from *orgia*, in the sense of 'sacred rites', and this is the term that is used for the activities of the *Molpoi*, the officiants of Apollo Delphinos in Miletos.[36] The theophoric name Delphinios[37] is also associated with the name Molpagoras in the amphora stamps of Sinope.[38] In the corpus of Sinopean amphora stamps from Istros and in Sinope, we find the name Delphinios,[39] and the name Molpagores, father of an *astynomos*.[40]

29 Plut. *Luc*. 23.3 – 6; App. *Mith*. 83.
30 Tac. *Hist*. 4.83; Plut. *De Is. et Os*. 28; Eust. *Il*. 254.
31 Xen. *An*. 6.1.15; Ps.-Scymn. 992 – 997; Strab. 12.3.11; Cass. Dio 14.31.2; Arr. *Peripl. M. Eux*. 14; Eust. *Il*. 772; Ivantchik 1997; 1998; 2005.
32 Ehrhardt 1983, 130.
33 Gorman 1993, 136 – 139.
34 Ehrhardt 1983, 133 – 142.
35 I.Sinope 14; commentary in Jones 1988.
36 Sokolowski 1955, 129 – 135, no. 50; Jones 1988, 193; Georgoudi 2001, 157.
37 Ehrhardt 1983, 431 nn. 442 – 443 (association of the theophoric name Delphinos with the name of Molpagoras). For Delphinios on amphora stamps of Sinope, see Conovici 1998, 153, nos. 587, and 190 (finds from Istros); Garlan 2004, 239 – 240, nos. 564 – 570, and 283 (finds from Sinope). For Molpagores on amphora stamps of Sinope, see Conovici 1998, 124, nos. 420, and 191 (Istros); Garlan 2004, 197, nos. 382 – 384 and 286 (Sinope).
38 Ehrhardt 1983, 431, nn. 442 – 443.
39 Conovici 1998, 153, nos. 587, 190; Garlan 2004, 239 – 240, nos. 564 – 570; 283.
40 Conovici 1998, 124, nos. 420, 191; Garlan 2004, 197, nos. 382 – 384; 286.

Meanwhile, Poseidon Helikonios was the principal divinity of the Ionian League, worshipped on Mt Mycale during the Panionia,[41] and in the Milesian colonies of Tomis and Pantikapaion.[42] The cult of Poseidon Helikonios is also directly attested in Sinope by a religious regulation of the 4th century AD, about rights and duties of the priest of Poseidon Helikonios.[43] This is a wholly exceptional document, because it is the only religious regulation from Sinope, and it is much more complete than the religious law about Poseidon Helikonios from Miletos.[44] The cult of Poseidon Helikonios is also attested in Sinope on silver didrachms of Attic weight, struck in the first half of the 3rd century BC,[45] during the period of civic independence. On these coins, the god sits, with a dolphin and a trident.

1.2 Cults of the mythical founders

In a colonial context, it is also normal to find cults of mythical founders, the Thessalian Autolykos in the case of Sinope. His name is first known in Sinope's mythical foundation quite late, in Pseudo-Scymnus' poem for King Nicomedes of Bithynia, around the end of the first century BC.[46] The Thessalians Autolykos and Phlogios, with Deïleion who took part in the expedition against the Amazons, are said to have settled in Sinope. In his articles about Sinope foundation accounts, A. Ivantchik argues that Autolykos and his companions are local heroes, only mentioned in mythology in relation to Sinope, and may express the desire of the city to be linked with the Panhellenic myths of the Black Sea—Jason and the Argonauts, and/or Heracles against the Amazons. In fact, in the literary sources Autolykos and his companions were Argonauts,[47] or companions of Heracles,[48] or both.[49] This is an indigenous tradition, and expression of local civic identity and patriotism.

Autolykos' cult in Sinope is attested quite late: the literary sources about the taking of Sinope by Lucullus in 70 BC mention his oracular sanctuary, as oikistes,[50] with a cult statue. It was the work of the sculptor Sthennis of Olynthos.[51] In Plutarch[52] and Appian,[53] this statue of Autolykos appears to Lucullus in a dream before the taking of

41 Hdt. 1.148; Jessen 1912, 9–10; Prinz 1979, 343–345; Ehrhardt 1983, 171; Lohmann 2004, 33–34.
42 Ehrhardt 1983, 171.
43 I.Sinope 8.
44 Herrmann 1970, 163–173.
45 Recueil I.1, no. 47.
46 Ps.-Scymn. 989–991.
47 Strab. 12.3.11; Apollod. *Bibl.* 1.9.16.
48 Ps.-Scymn. 989–991; Plut. *Luc.* 23.5; App. *Mith.* 83.
49 Ap. Rhod. 2.955–957; Val. Flacc. 5.113–115; Hyg. *Fab.* 14.30.
50 Strab. 12.3.11; Plut. *Luc.* 23; App. *Mith.* 83.
51 Strab. 12.3.11.
52 Plut. *Luc.* 23.
53 App. *Mith.* 83.

the city. Meanwhile, there is a religious dedication to Phlogios, companion of Autolykos, in the epigraphy of Sinope,[54] if we accept the reading of D. M. Robinson,[55] A. Ivantchik,[56] and M. Dana.[57] This dedication to Phlogios by Leomedon, son of Aristonax, is dated to the 5th – 4th centuries BC by D. French, and shows that the cult of the mythical founders was in the city already by that time.

The mythical tradition of foundation of Sinope by the Thessalian Autolykos must have been well-known in the Hellenistic period, because an honorific decree of the city of Histiaia in Euboea (around 220 BC) talks of mythological kinship with Sinope, in regard to Thessaly.[58]

As we have seen, the colonial cults in Sinope had a very long life, from the foundation (as we can guess) until the Roman conquest (as seen for Autolykos' cult), with some attestation during the Classical and Hellenistic periods (Apollo Delphinios, Poseidon Helikonios, and Phlogios). Unfortunately, the evidence for each cult is sparse, obstructing any sense of their development across time.

2 Cults in a royal Pontic context?

As Sinope became the capital of the Pontic kingdom between 183 and 120 BC, and was the birthplace of Mithridates Eupator,[59] we might expect to find evidence of royal cult or tutelary cults in the city, beyond Autolykos and the rest. In the reign of Mithridates VI Eupator, Sinope was a mint for the Pontic kingdom, and struck bronze coins,[60] where divinities can be found: Artemis,[61] Perseus,[62] Eros,[63] Apollo,[64] Zeus,[65] Ares,[66] Athena,[67] Nike,[68] and Dionysus.[69] These can be found also on other

54 I.Sinope 62.
55 Robinson 1905, 306, no. 31; I.Sinope 62: D. French reads Φλογίων while A. Ivantchik and M. Dana follow the reading of D.M. Robinson (a dative, Φλογίῳ): Robinson 1905, 306, no. 31; Ivantchik 1997, 40; 1998, 305; 2005, 142; Firicel-Dana 2007, 511 – 513; Dana 2007, 182 – 185; 2011, 361.
56 Ivantchik 1997, 40; 1998, 305; 2005, 142.
57 Firicel-Dana 2007, 511 – 513; Dana 2007, 182 – 185; 2011, 361.
58 IG XII, 9, 1186; Asheri 1973, 71 – 76; Rigsby 1980, 245; Curty 1992, 247.
59 Strab. 12.3.11.
60 Imhoof-Blumer 1912; Callataÿ 2007.
61 BMC Pontus, no. 51, pl. XXIII.5; Recueil I.1, no. 72, pl. XXVI.21; Imhoof-Blumer 1912, no. 12, pl. I.16; SNG BM Black Sea 1524, pl. LVI.
62 BMC Pontus, nos. 45 – 46; Recueil I.1, nos. 62 – 63, pl. XXVI.10 – 11; Imhoof-Blumer 1912, nos. 3 and 56.
63 Recueil I.1, no. 70, pl. XXVI.19; Imhoof-Blumer 1912, no. 14, pl. I.16.
64 Recueil I.1, no. 71, pl. XXVI.20.
65 BMC Pontus, nos. 37 – 41, pl. XXIII.1 – 2; Recueil I.1, nos. 58 – 60, pl. XXVI.5 – 8; Imhoof-Blumer 1912, nos. 23 and 76, pl. I.24; SNG BM Black Sea 1526 – 1527 and 1543 – 1549, pls. LVI–LVII.
66 BMC Pontus, no. 50, pl. XXIII.4; Recueil I.1, nos. 67 – 69, pl. XXVI.16 – 18; Imhoof-Blumer 1912, no. 34, pl. I.28; SNG BM Black Sea 1528 – 1530, pl. LVI.

bronze coins struck in other mints of the kingdom (Amaseia, Amisos, Kabeira, Chabakta, Komana, Gaziura, Laodikeia, Pharnakeia, Taulara, Amastris, Pimolisa, and Dia). For these divinities are linked with the ideology and propaganda of Mithridates Eupartor. The case of Sinope is not original in this context. Nevertheless, Zeus was present in the religious landscape of Sinope elsewhere too, away from the coins, a cult which can be seen as original. A religious dedication to Zeus Dikaiosynos,[70] dated to the 2nd–1st centuries BC, was found in ancient Karousa (modern Gerze), 40 km east of Sinope. In the mountainous hinterland of Gerze, an archaeological survey located the site of Asar Tepesi,[71] with remains of a temple and many fragments of bull and bull-horned figurines. The place has been used for a cult, during a sacred day called *Hızır İlyas*, from the name of an immortal being who helped people in distress. During this day, people of the area cooked rice and sacrificed animals. It is very tempting to link this place with the cult of Zeus Stratios, well known in the Pontic kingdom during the reign of Mithridates VI.[72] F. Cumont proposed a localisation of the cult of Zeus Stratios east of Amaseia,[73] in Ebimi village, in the mountains. At the end of the 19th century, people there had a superstitious respect for the place, which was considered as sacred and called *Buyuk-Evlia*, 'the big saint', for the local population held that a Muslim saint was buried there. Every year in May, locals gathered there, cut the throats of hens and sheep, and feasted. F. Cumont analysed this practice as a remnant of paganism.[74] A link to Asar Tepesi site is tempting. The cult of Zeus Stratios, as at Amaseia, may have been brought also to the new capital at Sinope. Unfortunately, we can make little progress with royal cults at Sinope for lack of evidence.[75] Instead we must proceed to the Roman period, when our fullest evidence becomes available on religion in the city.

67 BMC Pontus, nos. 42–44, pl. XXIII.3; Recueil I.1, no. 61, pl. XXVI.9; Imhoof-Blumer 1912, no. 39; SNG BM Black Sea 1531–1535, pl. LVI.
68 BMC Pontus, nos. 47–49; Recueil I.1, no. 64, pl. XXVI.12–13; Imhoof-Blumer 1912, no. 46, pl. II.6; SNG BM Black Sea 1536–1540, pl. LVI.
69 Recueil I.1, no. 73; Imhoof-Blumer 1912, no. 53; SNG BM Black Sea 1541, pl. LVI.
70 I.Sinope 75.
71 Işin 1998, 109.
72 App. *Mith.* 67, 70; Reinach 1890, 289.
73 Cumont 1901, 50–51.
74 Cumont 1901, 51.
75 Barat 2017.

3 Originality during the Roman period: reconfiguration of the religious landscape

3.1 Disappearance of Greek local cults

Sinope's religious landscape was modified by the Roman conquest and Roman settlement there. Three of the four literary sources (Strabo,[76] Plutarch,[77] Appian[78]) on the taking of Sinope by Lucullus in 70 BC, mention Autolykos and his cult, and the statue. Interestingly, the most local source and the closest in time (Strabo[79]), discusses the transfer of the statue to Rome, as part of the spoils, like the sphere of Billaros. The others, also Greek, are later (Plutarch[80] and Appian[81]), and focus not so much on pillaging as on the miraculous apparition of Autolykos in Lucullus dream. The story of the dream is supposed to demonstrate that the taking of Sinope was a liberation for the Greek people, and that even the *oikistes* changed his camp.[82] In this way, all the violence of the city's capture, present in Memnon's account,[83] is set aside. However, the looting of Autolykos' sanctuary was a reality. And, if we follow the hypothesis of A. Mastrocinque on the Antikythera sphipwreck,[84] we can suppose that some of the statues therein had come from Sinope. In fact, he identifies an astronomic instrument from the wreck as the Billaros globe mentioned by Strabo,[85] sent to Rome by Lucullus. In the Antikythera shipwreck, we find a big bronze athlete, three ephebes, one young female, and the head of a philosopher, as well as statues of Aphrodite, two statues and one head of Hermes, two statues of Heracles, four statues of Apollo, one statue of Zeus, one statue of Philokteros, two statues of Odysseus, one statue of Achilles, and the remains of four horses and a quadriga, plus a lot of fragments of other statues.

If we accept the hypothesis that all the content of the shipwreck is from Sinope, that means that after the fall of the city many local cult objects disappeared. First, the cult of the *oikistes* Autolykos and the statue attested by Strabo. Secondly, the statue of Heracles and the statue of his companion Philokteros, possibly from the cult of Autolykos too, because in some literary sources, the legendary *oikistes* and his asso-

76 Strab. 12.3.11.
77 Plut. *Luc*. 23.1–6.
78 App. *Mith*. 83.
79 Strab. 12.3.11.
80 Plut. *Luc*. 23.1–6.
81 App. *Mith*. 83.
82 Barat 2009, 215–217.
83 Memnon, FGrHist 434 F 37.
84 Svoronos 1903, 1–85; 1908, pls. I–XX; Mastrocinque 2009, 313–319.
85 Strab. 12.3.11.

ciates are companions of Heracles against the Amazons.[86] If we follow this hypothesis, we can also suggest that cult of Milesian origin disappeared with the Roman conquest: the statues found in the Antikythera shipwreck may have come from the temple of Apollo Delphinios in Sinope. It is interesting to note that there were two statues of Aphrodite in the Antikythera shipwreck: she was an important divinity in Miletos, where her cult is attested from archaic times,[87] and in many Milesian colonies.[88] We can thus propose the likelihood of an Aphrodite temple in Sinope that was despoiled upon the fall of the city in 70. In the same way, the statue of Hermes in the Antikythera shipwreck, a deity attested in Miletos and in the Milesian colonies of Trapezus and Olbia,[89] could be a testimony to a temple of Hermes in Sinope.

Finally, the statue of Zeus in the Antikythera shipwreck may be related to the suggested cult of Zeus Stratios, tutelary deity of Mithridates VI Eupator. On that large hypothesis, if we also consider these losses to mark the end of their respective cults, we might come to the view that the religious landscape of Sinope totally changed after the Roman conquest.[90] The fact that we do indeed seem to find a real rupture in the religious history of the city at this time might be taken to support Mastrocinque's bold hypothesis.

3.2 Reactivation of Greek cults in standardised forms

All the Greek cults did not disappear with the Roman conquest, but they were standardised and their local identity (Milesian or Pontic) was erased. Under the Roman Empire, we can find many Greek gods in the pantheon of Sinope. Our sources are imperial bronze coins and inscriptions. However, these cults are not a reactivation of previous local cults, but traditional Greek cults in more standardised form. For instance, we can find Poseidon on coins from the time of Antoninus Pius[91] and Caracalla,[92] but he is no longer Poseidon Helikonios. Apollo is also present on coins of Titus (AD 72/4)[93] and Sabine,[94] in a distyle temple, but he is not Apollo Delphinios. This is an archaising representation of the god, which might have suggested reactivation of the previous cult, but we have no evidence of a Roman temple of Apollo

86 Plut. *Luc.* 23; App. *Mith.* 83; *Tabula Albana*, IG XIV 1293 = FGrHist 40, 97–104. For the other sources, Autolykos and his companions are Argonauts and companions of Heracles: Ap. Rhod. 2.955–957; Val. Flacc. 5.113–115; Hyg. *Fab.* 14.30.

87 Greaves 2004, 28: temple of Aphrodite on the hill of Zeytintepe, outside the Archaic walls of Miletos.

88 Greaves 2004, 28–30: sanctuaries of Aphrodite.

89 Ehrhardt 1983, 171 and 471 nn. 859–860.

90 Barat 2017.

91 Recueil I.1, no. 112.

92 Recueil I.1, no. 166.

93 Recueil I.1, no. 101, pl. XXVII.13.

94 Recueil I.1, no. 107, pl. XVII.19.

in Sinope. Zeus is present in Roman Sinope, but he has become a new Zeus, more complex and syncretic. He is not the Mithridatic Zeus Stratios. On a coin of the time of Hadrian, we find Zeus Serapis.[95] On a little rectangular altar of the early empire (1st – 2nd centuries or 3rd century AD), discovered in the region of Gerze 40 km east of Sinope, there is a dedication to Zeus Helios.[96] Another inscription, dated from the 1st–2nd centuries AD, is a dedication to Zeus Helios Sarapis and Isis Myrionyme.[97]

The cult of Athena is attested in Sinope during the Roman period: there is a dedication of the 1st–2nd centuries AD, to Athena Polias and Soteira.[98] We can also find this cult in Miletos and Kyzikos[99] in the late period, as in Sinope. On a coin from the time of Hadrian,[100] Athena is shown with spear and round shield, and a little altar or an owl. In this case we must recall the special relation between Hadrian, Athens and its principal divinity, so that the coin is uncertain testimony to a particular cult of Athena in Sinope in the Roman period. The figure of Dionysus is also present on late bronze coins, from the middle of the 3rd century AD, under Valerian[101] and Gallienus,[102] with his usual attributes. It is possible to understand the figure of Dionysus as the expression of the personal propaganda of the two emperors, so that this too is uncertain evidence of the presence of a civic cult. The cult of Dionysus is not attested in Sinope for the Classical period, and the figure of the god only appeared on the Mithridatic bronze coins. However, we may also observe a figurine,[103] found in the 1950s during excavation of the so-called 'Sarapis temple' in Sinope.[104] A statue of Dionysus from Roman period was also discovered in Sinope.[105] The figure of Hermes appears on bronze coins from the time of Caracalla,[106] and on Diadumenian coins,[107] with his traditional attributes. The name of the god is also present in the epigraphy in a list of names, whose purpose is unknown: it seems linked to astrology,[108] and is dated by D. French to the 1st – 2nd centuries AD (with hesitation).

In sum, we see a standardised religious landscape in Sinope during the Roman Empire, with a classical Greek pantheon, but without particular local identity.

95 Recueil I.1, no. 109.
96 IK Sinope 120.
97 IK Sinope 115.
98 IK Sinope 111.
99 Ehrhardt 1983, 164 and 461 n. 762.
100 Recueil I.1, no. 108.
101 Recueil I.1, no. 164.
102 Recueil I.1, nos. 167 – 168, 170.
103 Akurgal and Budde 1956, pl. XIII.b.
104 In fact, a necropolis zone: see Barat 2010b, 55 – 60.
105 Işin, Tatlıcan and Işin 1989, 35.
106 Recueil I.1, no. 132.
107 Recueil I.1, no. 144.
108 I.Sinope 116.

3.3 Creation of the new 'old' cult of Sarapis

Sarapis is very important for Sinope, not least because the only cultic building now displayed in Sinope (in the archaeological museum garden) is the so-called 'Sarapis temple', dated by its excavators of the 1950s (E. Akurgal and L. Budde) to the Hellenistic period. For there was an abundance of Hellenistic and Roman ceramics there.[109] E. Akurgal and L. Budde used the story of the cultic statue of Sarapis, miraculously brought from Sinope to Alexandria in the time of Ptolemy I,[110] to identify the archaeological remains. An inscription mentioning the cult of Sarapis was also found in Sinope,[111] and bull-shaped terracottas were excavated in this zone.[112]

However, I have argued[113] that the legend of the miraculous moving of the Sarapis statue to Alexandria[114] through a dream of Ptolemy was a creation of the Roman period, invented by Tacitus' sources[115] as part of Vespasianic propaganda.[116] If that is right, the 'old' cult of Sarapis in Sinope need be no more than a creation of the Roman period. And, in fact, there is no evidence of the cult of Sarapis in Sinope before the Roman conquest. However, the cult of Sarapis spread very widely across the Roman Empire during the Principate,[117] when we find it near Sinope, in Paphlagonia.[118] The cult of Sarapis is attested in Sinope itself in epigraphic and numismatic sources. Under the Principate, we have three inscriptions attesting the cult of Sarapis in the city,[119] namely a dedication to Heliosarapis,[120] another to Zeus Helios Sarapis and Isis Myrionyme,[121] and a metrical inscription which mentions a certain Reipane, buried in the neighbourhood of Sarapis.[122] Sarapis is also well attested on Sinope coinage from the time of Vespasian,[123] Hadrian,[124] Antoninus Pius,[125] Marcus Aurelius,[126] Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus,[127] Caracalla,[128] Geta,[129] Macrinus,[130]

109 Akurgal and Budde 1956, 27–32, pls. VIII–XV.
110 Tac. *Hist.* 4.83–84.
111 I.Sinope 172. L. Budde locates the discovery of this inscription next to the zone of the so-called 'Sarapis temple' (Akurgal and Budde 1956, 31).
112 Akurgal and Budde 1956, 31.
113 Barat 2009, 217–220; 2010a, 127–142.
114 Tac. *Hist.* 4.83–84; Plut. *De Is. et Os.* 28.
115 Clem. Alex. *Protr.* 4.42; Eust. *Dionys. Per.* 255, 1115–1196; see Bouché-Leclerc 1902 and Borgeaud and Volokhine 2001 for the formation of the legend of Sarapis.
116 Barat 2009, 218–219; 2010a, 134.
117 Bricault 2001.
118 Podvin 2012, 207–211.
119 I.Sinope 114, 115, 172.
120 I.Sinope 114.
121 I.Sinope 115.
122 I.Sinope 172.
123 RPC II 720.
124 Recueil I.1, no. 109.
125 Recueil I.1, no. 113, pl. XXVII.23.
126 Recueil I.1, no. 115.

Alexander Severus,[131] Maximinus,[132] Maximus,[133] Gordian,[134] Philip the Arab,[135] Valerian,[136] and Gallienus.[137] In sum, the cult of Sarapis in Sinope is not a pre-Roman cult, as far as the evidence shows, despite Vespasianic propaganda, which the Roman colony at Sinope had no reason to dispute.

Conclusion

Clearly, the city of Sinope had a rich religious life in Antiquity, with traditional cults imported from its metropolis, augmented by the cult of the mythical founder Autolykos, which may well have been augmented further by a Mithridatic Zeus Stratios, not least in the mountainous hinterland. However, the Roman conquest brought a step-change, no doubt driven by Caesar's establishment of a Roman colony there and the damage inflicted during the sack of the city. The Roman period is a time of religious standardisation in Sinope (with the imperial cult in a local and colonial context).[138] The older identity of the city in religious practice becomes invisible to us, while we see instead more commonplace Greek cults and the development of a syncretic cult of Sarapis. The Flavian tale of its key link to Sarapis in Alexandria brought a new kind of fame to the city, however empty it may have been in terms of simple historical reality.

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127 Recueil I.1, no. 117, pl. XXVII.25.
128 Recueil I.1, nos. 128–129, 133, pl. XXVIII.1, 3; BMC Pontus, no. 57.
129 Recueil I.1, nos. 136–138, pl. XXVIII.6–7; BMC Pontus, no. 58.
130 Recueil I.1, no. 143, pl. XXVIII.11; BMC Pontus, no. 59.
131 Recueil I.1, nos. 146–147, pl. XXVIII.14–15.
132 Recueil I.1, nos. 151–152, pl. XXVIII.17.
133 Recueil I.1, no. 154, pl. XXVIII.19.
134 Recueil I.1, nos. 155–158, pl. XXVIII.20–21; BMC Pontus, no. 60.
135 Recueil I.1, no. 160, pl. XXVIII.23.
136 Recueil I.1, no. 163, pl. XXVIII.25.
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