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MITHRIDATES I's CONQUEST OF WESTERN GREEK-BACTRIA

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The article suggests the possible route taken by Mithridates I when he invaded Greek-Bactria, based on the earlier campaigns of Alexander the Great and Antiochus III. This allows the author to identify which regions of the country were seized and from whom. The result leads to a new reconstruction of Parthian-Bactrian relations in the second century BC.

Key words: Mithridates I, Greek-Bactria, Eucratides I, Alexander the Great, Antiochus III

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A BEARDED TYCHE FOR PHRAATES II

Борода, наложенная на лицо Тюхе на троне на тетрадрахмах парфянского царя Фраата II — это знак высокого ранга богини, которая в восточных терминах может быть уподоблена парфянской Нане/Нанайе. Изображение относится к концепции андрогинности Божества в «допотопные» времена, которое известно в религиях Ближнего Востока и Египта с древнейших времен. На Западе оно имеет значимые фигурные прецеденты поклонения образу бородатой Афродиты на Кипре и в Греции в архаическое время. Самая поздняя по времени бородатая богиня изображена на миниатюре из Раджастана XVIII века.

Ключевые слова: парфянская иконография, парфянские монеты, парфянская религия, андрогинные богини, Тюхе, Нана

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Mithridates I introduced fundamental changes in Parthian coin iconography, that were to last for centuries. One of the measures taken to affirm the newly attained imperial dignity was replacing the seated archer, who had been the icon of the dynasty in the early Arsacid issues in Parthia, with Greek gods as the main subject of the reverse of the tetradrachms. The presence of Zeus and Hercules on the reverse of the coins struck in the conquered Seleucia-on-the-Tigris, celebrated the military and political achievements of the king. Also, placing Greek gods on the coins intended to promote an image of political-economic continuity with the past Seleucid rule, while in some way legitimating the acquisition of Seleucid Mesopotamia and Iran. This propaganda-display assured the new sovereign's special consideration for the Greek communities of the new empire within a general situation of, at least proclaimed, *concordia*.

However, Arsacid coinage was to reserve a main role to a different Greek deity, Tyche, who appeared on the coins of the highest price in most representative scenes. Of the subjects of Hellenistic origins adopted by Parthian iconography, Tyche is one of the most meaningful for Arsacid kingship. Her choice for the reverse of the royal issues qualified the new direction impressed to the style of the king's presentation. The Seleucia-on-the-Tigris mint became responsible for the definition of the symbols and images the Arsacid rulers intended to spread through coins circulation. The city was to play for a long time a political, economic and cultural role of first rank within the inner affairs of the Parthian empire.



Fig. 1. Bearded Tyche on the tetradrachms of Phraates II

Tyche was deemed particularly attractive in virtue of her main qualities, which were particularly appropriate to the celebration of kingship. On the Arsacid tetradrachms, she holds a number of attributes variously expressing her principal prerogatives¹. Tyche is introduced into the coin repertoire in a pose worth of her highest rank: she seats in majesty in throne with the cornucopia that reveals her most important quality of donor of favours and wealth (fig. 1). The subject grants divine protection, so acquiring an emblematic value for Arsacid kingship. Later, the goddess stands beside the king in throne and offers him a palm or crown/diadem, a sign of homage that will be the most common and durable motif of the tetradrachms' reverses. This homage, often improperly

¹ The individual iconographic patterns, the nuances of their different meaning and ideological weight are discussed in detail by Sinisi 2008. Ellerbrock 2013 discusses the evolution of the iconography and meaning of Tyche on the coins from Mithridates I until the end of the Parthian empire.

defined an investiture scene, was confirmed until Late-Parthian times. The adoption of Tyche was particularly suitable for illustrating the close relation between the King and the Greek communities of the empire, because she is the goddess of fortune and at the same time the goddess of the cities, while the Greek communities were especially based in the major cities of the state.

With the rapid affirmation of the former Mesopotamian capital of the Seleucids as the major seat for Arsacid coinage, this tie is strengthened by the specific representation of the Tyche of Seleucia, though the relations of the city with the central government underwent complex and not always peaceful vicissitudes. When the goddess who pays her homage to the king on the Seleucia coins wears the mural crown on her head, she is certainly the Tyche of Seleucia. But a general reference to the entire ensemble of Greek communities and subjects of the empire is implied, when a crown/diadem or a palm is offered to the king by a Tyche who does not have a mural crown but a polos on her head.

The latter image of Greek Tyche, with her headgear perhaps more Oriental than Mediterranean, naturally suggests the existence of a proper Parthian reading of the subject and invites to search for the equivalent Oriental goddess whose personality could be compared to that of Greek Tyche, *in toto* or in part. Different names have been proposed for her identity, and on the other hand different proposals have been put forward for the identity of the Greek goddess herself lending her appearance to the Oriental colleague².

As for the identification of the Greek goddess, the extraordinary favour enjoyed by Tyche in Hellenistic Mesopotamia, which is widely documented in Seleucia-on-the-Tigris by the considerable quantity and iconographic variety of her representations on the sealings of the local Archives³, is a particularly strong argument in support of the Tyche nomination, also when the goddess shows without the mural crown or cornucopia.

As for the identification of the corresponding Oriental goddess, she must obviously be a deity in close association with the royal institution and functions. In consideration of this specific property, the Tyche of the early Arsacid tetradrachms has been convincingly identified with Nana/Nanaia⁴, who in Parthian times acquired the rank of supreme divinity through the fusion of her personality with Ishtar and, depending on the quality considered, could be identified with other great Greek goddesses. The name of Hekate, too, has recently been added to the more common identifications with Athena and Artemis⁵.

Wide interconnections like these do not surprise in the religion and religious iconography of the Parthian world, which were largely composite. The active co-presence in the cities as well as in the country of beliefs often very distinct one from another, as the Iranian, Semitic Syro-Mesopotamian, and Greek traditions are, is evidently the

² See Sinisi 2008, 235-236.

³ Bollati 2003, 77-95; 2004a, 121-141, pls. 53-69.

⁴ Sinisi 2008, 236; 2012a, 44-48. By contrast, Ellerbrock 2013 argues that the Tyche of the early coin issues is a purely Hellenistic goddess, and that she becomes a basically Parthian goddess only in Late-Parthian times, as the personification of Anahita or Ashi. He rejects the interpretation of Phraates II's Bearded Tyche as Nana, and considers the existence of syncretic divine representations unlikely in the second half of the II century BC. However, he does not mention the clear syncretic image of an Athena with various unrelated attributes on a sealing from the Seleucid Archives of Seleucia-on-the-Tigris, which is a very strong argument in favour of the contrary (Invernizzi 1998, 91-94, figs. 1-2; 2009b, 374, add. 1; Bollati 2004b, 33-34.k).

⁵ Invernizzi 2009a, 43-70, pls. IX-XII.

result of a situation of substantially good, possibly pacific or non-conflicting relations between the different religious communities. Ideal conditions of co-existence may have occurred that favoured the formation of trends of influences and movements of mutual interchanges of various type and degree. The general situation seems at any rate to be characterized by a considerable fluidity of the theological frames and an especially wide iconographic interexchange of attributes between the principal subjects, either substantial or merely formal.

These features of plurality and polyvalence in the complex divine world of the age permitted and favoured the occurrence of widespread syncretism — especially in the case of images — that sometimes acted on a prevalent iconographic level, and consequently had superficial effects, and sometimes occasioned more pregnant interconnections and more punctual theological implications, however difficult to define in the absence of written sources. The addition of another name, that of Tyche, to the possible correspondences or identifications of Nana/Nanaia is supported by the specific analogy of determinant functions of the two goddesses in respect to the royal institution. In virtue of these functions Nana/Nanaia can take the appearance of Tyche on the Arsacid coins in a time when the goddess is celebrated, though episodically, also by Seleucid coinage (fig. 2).



Fig. 2. Tyche on a tetradrachm of Demetrius I

The equivalence or identification of Tyche with Nana is strongly supported by the motif of the tetradrachms of the series S17 struck by Phraates II (138-127 BC) at Seleucia-on-the-Tigris: Tyche seats on the throne with the cornucopia in the left hand and a high polos on the head, and is crowned by a small Nike standing on her extended right hand⁶. The occasion for this issue could not be more significant: the *Victrix* goddess celebrates properly the victory obtained in 129 BC by the Parthian king on the Seleucid Antiochus VII⁷. However, whereas the motif is exquisitely Hellenistic in style, the image of the goddess, in spite of her matronly feminine aspect, is absolutely exceptional for the long beard surrounding her male face (fig. 1).

This composite androgynous image, female in the body and dress, male for the beard, has of course a profound symbolic significance. It is a creation of Hellenistic art of Mesopotamia, the country where Nana had been the object of a millenary cult, and where her late fusion with Inanna/Ishtar involved the acquisition of two fundamental qualities of the latter, i.e. a close association with the royal function and the coexistence

⁶ Sellwood 1980, 52; Sinisi 2008, 235, fig. 2; 2012a, 46; 2012b, 282, fig. 15.4; Ellerbrock 2013, 268, fig. 4.

⁷ Assar 2006, 101, 130, fig. 5 p. 102.

in her primordial nature of both genders, female and male⁸. It is not only question of the virile warlike aspect expressed in the most common representations of Ishtar, but of an explicit reference to her primeval bipolarity of genders. In the cuneiform texts Inanna herself affirms: *Though I am a woman, I am a noble young man*⁹. In the Neo-Assyrian period, Assurbanipal's *Hymn to Ishtar of Nineveh* (7.6) describes her with these words: *Like Aššur, she wears a beard and is clothed in brilliance*¹⁰. And it is even more significant that Ishtar presides expressly to the royal institute: *Her coming forth is that of a hero ... lordship and kingship he placed in her hand*¹¹.



Fig. 3. Mellissu/Ishtar bearded in the supreme divine triad

Figural references to these concepts are rare in the art of Pre-Hellenistic Mesopotamia, and images of Ishtar avoid the explicit representation of a co-presence of genders. So, she appears on a Neo-Assyrian seal (fig. 3) as the female member of the supreme divine triad of the time, and as the mother, named Mullissu/Ishtar, she blesses Ninurta/Nabu, the son, besides Enlil/Marduk, the father¹². However, only the torsos of the three gods are represented, emerging from the winged ring of Assur above the sacred tree, and the goddess has a totally male aspect, with the face half-covered by a long beard. Mullissu/Ishtar is specifically the queen of sky, consort to Assur, the

⁸ The androgynous character of the Divine refers specifically to the context of the creation of the universe. Tiamat, who is vanquished by Marduk at the moment of the creation is *homme jusqu'à la ceinture, et femme au-dessous* (Sauneron 1961, 244, quoted in Ebeling 1931, 28). The co-presence of the opposed genders is a substantial feature of the complex personality of Inanna/Ishtar, who is characterized by an ensemble of paradoxes, so that it can be said, in short, that she represented both order and disorder, structure and antistructure (Harris 1991, 263). See also Groneberg 1986.

⁹ The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of Chicago 1977. M.2, 306.

¹⁰ Parpola 2000, 194; Lapinkivi 2004, 156-157.

¹¹ This passage of a Neosumerian royal hymn is quoted by Harris 1991, 269.

¹² The cylinder seal, Parpola 2000, 194, 203-204, fig. 6, is in the collections of the British Museum. I am especially indebted to Paola Piacentini for the bibliographical and iconographical research connected with the argument of the present paper. To her I would like to express my most sincere gratitude.



Fig. 4. Hatra: Nanaia with a polos and a short sceptre

creator of the gods and the universe¹³. The context of the representation is also that of the primordial cosmogony.

The centrality of the Great Goddess Nana/Nanaia is especially clear in the pantheon of regions farther to the East, in Central Asia, where the historic-archaeological research on Hellenized Asia has been more intense¹⁴. The brilliant career of the ancient Sumerian goddess there is the result of the Ancient-Oriental and especially Mesopotamian heritage still flourishing in Parthian times, while the contribution of Hellenistic culture is particularly perceptible in the variety of the images¹⁵.

The figure of Tyche-Nana on Phraates II's coins is exquisitely Hellenistic for her general aspect and attributes, Nike and the cornucopia in addition to the polos on the head, although these are not specific and exclusive of the goddess. The polos, in particular, is a headgear common to several major deities, but familiar to Mesopotamian Nana, who wears it on the Hatra statuette that represents her standing with a short sceptre in her hand¹⁶ (fig. 4). A short inscription incised on the back assures her identity. The short sceptre of the statuette differs from the long one of the Arsacid coins, but has a significant precedent in the Hellenistic sealings of Seleucia-on-the-Tigris, where the goddess holds the short sceptre more frequently than the long one¹⁷. The short sceptre is also in the hands of Tyche seated on the tetradrachms of Demetrius I (162-150 a.C.) (fig. 2) and Demetrius II¹⁸, which are certainly among the models that inspired Phraates II's die engraver.

Ishtar's precedent prepared the ground to the affirmation of the androgynous conception of Nana in Parthian Mesopotamia, which persisted until late Parthian times, when another attestation is known. A drawing traced on a pithos sherd from Assur represents a complex sacrifice probably offered to the divine triad worshipped in Hatra and North Mesopotamia (fig. 5). The female member of this triad is Nana, who is portrayed in her natural feminine aspect, seated frontally in throne, with a tiara of her head and a dress interwoven with lunar crescents. However, the accompanying inscription designates her with the male title "king", in a clear continuity of the title once proper to Ishtar¹⁹.

¹³ Parpola 2000, 194.

¹⁴ See for example Grenet, Maršak 1998; Ghose 2006.

¹⁵ Ambos 2003 is fundamental for the definition of the character, fortune and representations of Nana. See also Invernizzi 2009b; 2010.

¹⁶ Safar, Mustafa 1974, 183, no. 176; Ambos 2003, 240, fig. 3; Invernizzi 2009b, add. 5; 2009a, 64, fig. 2.21.

¹⁷ Bollati 2003, 83-84, 93; 2004a, Tyche stante con scettro corto, 126-128.

¹⁸ Houghton 1983, nos. 143-154, 158, 160, 164, 168, pls. 8-10. Cf. Villard, Rausa 1997, 119, no. 18; Sinisi 2008, 232, figs. 1a, 1b.

¹⁹ Ambos 2003, 238-240, fig. 2; Invernizzi 2009b, 374, add. 4; 2009a, 64-65, fig. 2.22.



Fig. 5. Assur: sacrifice to Nana “king” and other gods

From a certain point of view, the idea of expressing the genders’ co-presence in the supreme Divine Being with the application of the beard to a goddess’ face, follows a principle common in Ancient Oriental art for expressing the natural as well as the social status of the figure portrayed: bearded face = elder person / person of superior social condition — smooth face = young person / person of lower social condition. In the present case, the beard emphasizes the majestic sense of the royal rank. Ancient Oriental art has regularly portrayed the king, the person at the vertex of the social scale or divine person himself, with a thick beard conveying a sense of maturity and majesty, and deified female rulers of Pharaonic Egypt are not exception, as the Osiric images of Hatshepsut in her funerary temple at Deir el-Bahari show.

The beard on the other hand is a most convenient means to convey authority and respect also in Greek art, and is a most appropriate feature for the philosopher, a person considered by Greek culture to be at the uppermost level of society. In Hellenistic times, a fluent beard recalling this superior sphere strongly influenced idealized representations of excellent personages²⁰. A good example of this concept in Hellenized Asia in years close to Phraates II’s coin is a royal Arsacid clay portrait head from the Round Hall in Nisa, whose fierce physical features are tempered by the long locks of a fluent thick beard worth of a philosopher²¹.

The choice of the beard for Tyche totally differs from the case of the androgynous beings more often represented in Greek and Roman art, like Hermaphrodite. The sensual suggestions emanating from these creatures of classical mythology are entirely absent in the image on the Arsacid coin, which is deprived of any specific mark of physical sensuality. Coherently with the aulic function of the subject, the bipolarity of gender is not revealed through the anatomy of the body. The relevant context is theogony, and the symbol refers to ancestral forms of religious thought that conceive the highest rank

²⁰ Zanker 1995.

²¹ Invernizzi 2001, 143-147.

and primeval nature of the Divine in its original state of existence as a Being superior to earthly perception, for it indissolubly unites the opposites, the duality in the totality.

The idea of a long beard masking the face of Tyche in connection with similar concepts does not surprise in a composite culture like that of Seleucia, which responded to conceptual demands of different traditions through new ways of representation²². Theological heritage and ancestral forms of thought are here melting in figural conventions that re-emerge suddenly from a very far past, through ways of continuity that are no better documented.

The androgynous conception of the Primordial Divine is not limited to Ancient Oriental and Parthian Mesopotamia. Other civilizations and cultures of the Eastern Mediterranean — including Greece proper — conceived and represented androgynous female deities in connection with the times of the creation of the world. The bipolar state of the Demiurge is always referred to the beginnings of the existence and the dawn of creation of the divine world itself, when the exceptional inseparable complementarity of sexes was a feature of the supreme rank of the Creator, before and above any human and divine element. In this context, the beard applied to a female face is only one of the possible symbols of the totality that reunites the opposites in the original cosmogony.

In another country of complex civilization, Egypt²³, Neith and Mut played a major active role as androgynous goddesses at the dawn of the world formation and the creation of the gods. Neith of Sais, in particular, is strictly associated to kingship in the Texts of the Pyramids²⁴, and with Isis, Nephtys and Serket is the guardian of the royal throne. She is until late antiquity *celle de qui dépend l'intronisation du roi*²⁵. As the primordial Being, *the Being who was eternal and infinite*²⁶, she is the Demiurge in a cosmological construction described in detail in the late Roman inscriptions of her main temple at Esna. In the Esna cosmogony Neith emerges from the primeval waters to create the world and the gods themselves, at a time predating the existence, the creation and the division of genders: *Le Père des Pères, la Mère des Mères, l'être divin qui commença d'être au commencement se trouvait au sein des eaux initiales, apparue d'elle-même, tandis que la terre était (encore) dans les ténèbres, que nulle terre n'avait (encore) paru, que nulle plante ne poussait*²⁷. Even the percentages of her two genders are described: two thirds male, one third female²⁸. In contrast to Mesopotamia, her androgyny is revealed by the explicit bisexual characterization of her body, in the way that much later will be chosen for Greek Hermaphrodite. The images of Neith have

²² The creation of a totally new Hellenistic image of Nana on the Arsacid coin has a parallel in sealings of Seleucia-on-the-Tigris representing a goddess that the helm would describe as Athena, though other attributes - the thunderbolt and crescent — are unrelated to the Olympian goddess. This syncretic image, too, is likely to represent Nana, who is sometimes identified with Athena. See Invernizzi 1998, 91-94, figs. 1-2; 2009b, 374, add. 1.

²³ Zandee 1988; Winter, Winter 1996. Cf. the discussion of the classical and Oriental sources in Krappe 1945.

²⁴ Mercer 1952, spell 362.

²⁵ Esna 252.25, Sauneron 1962, 112.

²⁶ Budge 1904/I, 459.

²⁷ Esna 206, Sauneron 1962, chap. II, in particular 253-257; von Lieven 2014, 20 (*the father of the fathers, the mother of the mothers, the one god who became two gods*), 23. Cf. Neith's Litanies, Sauneron 1982, 37, no. 216.

²⁸ Esna 252.25, Sauneron 1962, 110; 1961, 243-244; von Lieven 2014, 21.

slender female forms, while the bow and arrows that are her attribute and especially the hieroglyph of her name that includes a phallus describe her male side²⁹.

Androgynous is the Great Mother Mut, too, who has equally strict connections with Egyptian kingship. Hatshepsut openly proclaims herself *born of Mut and Amun*³⁰. Mut, goddess specifically of Thebes, acquired the rank of supreme divinity in the New Kingdom and was tightly related to other royal goddesses like Hathor and Isis. She is variously said androgynous until later times, always in contexts referring to the beginnings of the existence. According to the early traditions, the birth of Mut, ancient goddess of fertility, mother par excellence, primeval creator of the cosmic waters, was through parthenogenesis: *Mut who giveth birth, but was herself not born of any*³¹.

In Egypt, as in Mesopotamia, the androgynous nature of the Primordial Demiurge has rarely been the concern of figural art. Egyptian monumental art, which has no rivals in antiquity for the variety of its repertoire before the Greek-Roman one, reserved a wide space to composite creatures of any sort, but as a rule Neith and Mut are portrayed in their natural female forms. The figural implications of the theological concept of androgyny are apparently less convenient to the forms of royal celebration that cover the monuments and are unrelated to the daily life scenes decorating the private graves. By contrast, the theological traditions of the gender duplicity in a unique body are suitable to texts of priestly regulations.



Fig. 6. Mut ithyphallic in Horemheb's book of the deads

So, explicit bisexual images, although rare, do exist. Sheet 21 of the hieratic papyrus of the British Museum containing the text of the Book of the Dead of Horemheb has a vignette that illustrates a magical spell to utter in front of the simulacrum of the three-headed Mut. The goddess, who is portrayed between two dwarves³² (fig. 6), has a female head with the double crown between two animal heads, also crowned, one of a vulture and one of a lion, leonine feet, and long winged arms extended. Her tight dress leaves in full evidence an erected phallus protruding from the silhouette of the female body.

²⁹ El-Sayed 1982/I, 16, 58-60; Griffis-Greenberg 1999, in particular note 15.

³⁰ Te Velde 1979-80, 5.

³¹ Budge 1904/II, 30.

³² See Faulkner, Andrews 1985, 160 for the text of the magical spell no. 164, and 163 for the vignette; Stadler 2004, 11, fig. 5. Cf. von Römer 1903, 735 and figs. 10-13 for the representations of the three-headed and ithyphallic goddess in other papyri.

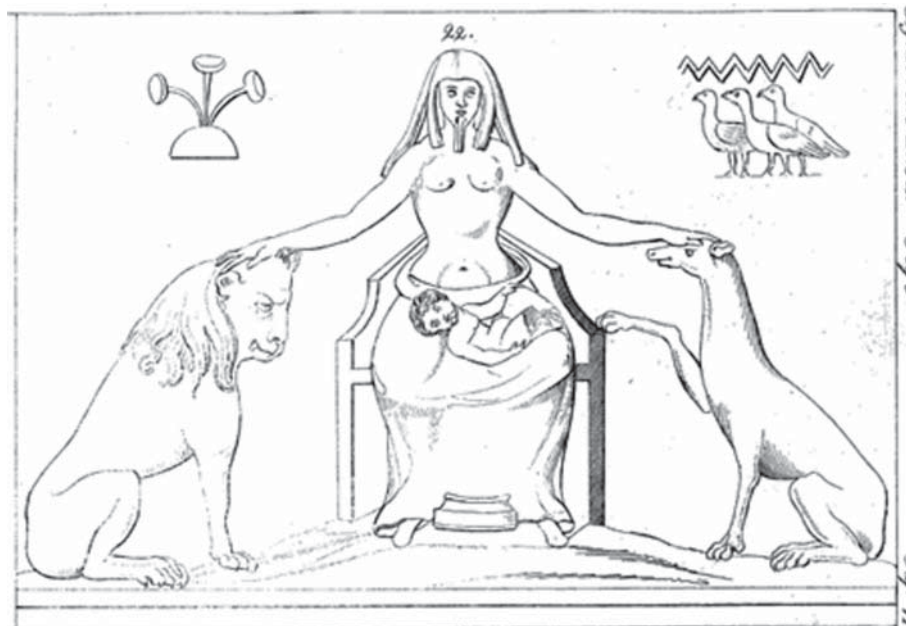


Fig. 7. Bearded Isis on a modern relief

Conceptual forms of androgyny also apply to Hathor and Isis, who were identified with Mut. The double nature of Isis is known to Plutarch³³, and in the grave of Ramses VI it is also question of a bearded Isis, though the image of the goddess is here male and bearded³⁴. In presence of these sources it is not totally surprising that the exceptional androgynous nature of a Bearded Isis could have been illustrated in the unique composition of a marble relief of undoubtedly modern manufacture³⁵ (fig. 7). The goddess is portrayed in her correct function of *kourotrophos*, seated, with a putto in her lap. Her torso is naked and her arms extended to caress two animals, a lion and a jackal (?) resting at her sides in heraldic position. Her hair/headress is almost framing a beard tied at the chin, a detail probably inspired by the divine and royal figures, and in particular the Osiric images of Hatshepsut³⁶.

³³ De Iside et Osiride, 43.

³⁴ Piankoff 1954, 371, note 37.

³⁵ The relief and the drawing here reproduced have often been published: Schorn 1822; Creuzer 1840, 319-320, no. 22, pl. VI; von Römer 1903, 732. The object was acquired by the Berlin Museums in 1841 together with other works of the Grimani Collections, and was recognized as a modern forgery by Conze 1891, 526, no. 1359, though it was apparently still considered authentic by KRAPPE 1945, who pointed to a series of parallels of bearded Venus until Christian times. For the Grimani Collections see Favaretto 1984, 238, note 59.

³⁶ Androgyny concerns also male gods of the Egyptian pantheon. The androgynous character of Hapi, the Nile, is controversial, for his fleshy forms and pendent breasts could simply embody a sense of fertility and abundance suitable for the country (Donadoni 1960). An amulet of the 6th century BC in the Kestner Museum, Hannover, representing a female figure with an ibis head, is thought to refer to Thot, always in connection with a primordial cosmogonic context, for this bird is his attribute (Stadler 2004, figs. 1-2). Nephtys, consort of the god, is also exceptionally said androgynous, for she appears with a head of ibis in



Fig. 8. Bearded goddess from Ayia Irini, Cyprus (a), and detail of the torso retouched (b)

Other civilizations, in addition to Mesopotamia and Egypt, have developed similar conceptions of a Primeval Androgynous Demiurge. Archaic images of bearded goddesses were created in the Eastern Mediterranean and Greece during the first half of the 1st millennium BC. Cyprus was a crucial creative centre of this *imagerie*, as shown by a terracotta figurine of the 7th century BC from the deposit of the great sanctuary of Ayia Irini. The figurine clearly represents an androgynous goddess, for small female breasts are modelled on her tubular body while her face has a short beard³⁷ (fig. 8a). Scanty traces of black paint allow reconstructing the original description of the main features of the face. The retouched illustration points out and integrates these traces (fig. 8b). The snake applied to the back of the goddess, and emerging with its now missing head from behind her left shoulder, confirms the divine condition of the figure³⁸.

The figurine is obviously a representation of Aphrodite, the Great Goddess of Cyprus, which is praised as one of her birth places. The cult practice of this primeval Aphrodite, antedating that of the Olympian goddess, included also rites in which the male and female genders of the performers were exchanged. Numerous sources mention

the Hathor temple at Dendera together with the eight primeval deities (Stadler 2004, fig. 10). The complex iconography of other pantheistic deities is discussed by Cooney 2007.

³⁷ The figurine is preserved in the Medelhavsmuseet of Stockholm. See also Winbladh 2012. Cf. Hill 1940 (rep. 2010), I, 79-80; Skinner 2013, 30-32; and especially Sophocleous 1985, pl. XVI:9. In the absence of traces of paint, the slightly pointed form of the chin might be mistaken, for pointed faces are a common feature in the choreplastik art of the geometric and archaic periods from Cyprus (cf. for ex. the goddess with uplifted arms and tubular body of 950-750 BC, Karageorghis 2000, 141, no. 212) to the Aegean and Greece (see for ex. Böhm 1990, pl. 11:d-e, etc.).

³⁸ A similar figurine, with uplifted arms and beard, but broken breasts was found among the votive offerings of Ayia Irini (Gjerstad et al. 1935, pl. CCXXXII:6; Sophocleous 1985, 91).



Fig. 9. Amathus:
androgynous
goddess, terracotta

the existence in the island of cult statues of the goddess with features at the same time male and female³⁹. Macrobius, in particular, informs about a statue of this kind, tall as a man but in female dress, with a beard and a sceptre (*Saturnales*, III.8.1-3). The Ayia Irini figurine uplifts her arms in a ritual pose common in the choroplastic art of the time. It may not be a reproduction of a specific statue, but models of a larger size can well have inspired its main features⁴⁰.

Another iconographic version of the Androgynous Divine is attested in Cyprus. A figurine from Amathus⁴¹ (fig. 9) represents the same goddess in a standing attitude, the legs united, the arms extended along the sides. Red colour draws attention to the thick mass of hair and the pointed beard, both being modelled in relief. This pose repeats with exactitude the pose that in the Ancient Orient, and especially in Syro-Mesopotamia, was very common for naked female terracotta figurines connected with fertility concepts, from the earliest ages until the end of the Parthian period⁴². The Cypriote goddess differs from the Syro-Mesopotamian types for not being naked, but the difference appears minimal to the eye, because only the lower edge of the dress is described in relief. For the rest, the garment adheres so perfectly to the body to be almost invisible, though it reveals a male torso and a female sex.

Cyprus was undoubtedly a major cultural crossroad where Eastern and Western patterns met and the Levant encountered the Aegean. The island and its cult of androgynous Aphrodite played an important role as a halting stage for the further diffusion of Oriental patterns towards Greece proper, including the exceptional nature of the Divine Demiurge and the Oriental features that characterize the Amathus figurine. Specifically to Cyprus points the subject of a small terracotta relief of Corinthian production (second quarter of the 7th century BC) found in the Perachora sanctuary, not far from Corinth, which represents the primordial Aphrodite in the mythological context of her birth⁴³ (fig. 10).

The attitudes of both goddesses, the arms bent onto the breasts in the case of the Perachora relief, and the arms extended along the sides in the case of the Amathus figurine, are typical of the group of Oriental terracotta figurines connected with principles

³⁹ Sophocleous 1985, 79-80.

⁴⁰ The Swedish excavations in the sanctuary of Ayia Irini have proved the centrality of the androgynous concept in the theological thought and cult of the Cypriote goddess. Very many archaic figurines of various subjects and sizes, including the one under discussion, were found in a favissa in which the votive offerings had been deposited around a spheroidal baetylus, the shape of which, according to religious eschatology, symbolizes the coincidence of the opposites in the epiphany of the primeval deity. Sophocleous 1985, 91-96.

⁴¹ The figurine was found in a grave with an analogous one, and is preserved in the Metropolitan Museum of Art of New York. Cf. Myres 1914, no. 2159; Sophocleous 1985, 86-87, pl. XV:4. The possibility of a male gender is left open for the figurine Karageorghis 2000, 144-145, no. 219.

⁴² Adopting the technical terminology in use for the Syro-Mesopotamian figurines, the one from Amathus can be classed among the tongue-reliefs.

⁴³ Payne 1940, 231-232, no. 183, pl. 102.

of fertility, and are simple iconographic variants of the same subject. The Perachora goddess, too, has a beard, painted in black like the hair, and is dressed. Her peplos is covered with a thick series of black dots and spots.

The ties with Cyprus of the Perachora goddess go far beyond the Oriental origin of the attitude of the arms, and concern the specific context of the representation. On the small relief, Aphrodite emerges from an object interpreted as the testicular sack of Uranus. The reference is to the mythological episode of the god's selfcastration, an event that Hesiod in his *Theogony* places not by chance in Cyprus. Also, the relief represents the birth of Aphrodite in Cyprus in consequence of Uranus's eviration⁴⁴. The subject refers to the primordial times of the origin of the earliest Greek pantheon, and has been interpreted as a possible image of Aphrodite in her aspect of Urania, obviously a primeval Aphrodite Urania very different from the Phidian naturalistic creation.

Aspects of sexual ambiguity mark other figurines of the same period as the Perachora relief, in other places of Peloponnese, more precisely in Laconia. The typically Oriental female pose of the arms bent at the breasts returns in two figurines in some way defined as androgynous, one of terracotta, one of lead. The publication of the first one, which was found at Sparta in the Menelaion, is scarcely informative⁴⁵ (fig. 11), but in spite of the summary modelling and the uncertain features of the face, the naked body is certainly male, the attitude of the arms, however, female. The second figurine, of lead, was also found in Sparta, but in the temple of Artemis Orthia⁴⁶. All iconographic features correspond exactly to those of the terracotta figurine: nude male torso and arms bent at the breasts in the Oriental female pose (fig. 12).

The androgynous nature was typical of the primordial conception of Aphrodite. The cult and rites in honour of the androgynous goddess, a male version of whom is known with the name of Ἀφροδίτης⁴⁷, were performed in different places of Cyprus, and literary mentions suggest that this cult flourished until late antiquity, although figural attestations seems to cease. The final orientation of Greek art towards full naturalism in the classical period did certainly not favour figural expressions of similar symbolic concepts. So, when the centrality of the ideal beauty of the human body was being confirmed, and the love for the eternal juvenile of the human forms transformed



Fig. 10. Perachora:
birth of Bearded
Aphrodite, terracotta



Fig. 11. Sparta,
Menelaion:
androgynous figurine,
terracotta

⁴⁴ Sale 1961, 515; Skinner 2013, 31-32.

⁴⁵ Dawkins, Wace, Thompson, Droop 1909, 120-121, fig. 3, no. 34.

⁴⁶ Dawkins 1929, 271, pl. 193:5.

⁴⁷ Pauly-Wissowa, RE, I, "Aphroditos".



Fig. 12. Sparta, temple of Artemis Orthia: androgynous figurine, lead

mature and bearded archaic gods like Dionysus and Hermes in handsome nude youths, adding, when necessary, an effeminate touch, the sexual representation of androgyny was substantially limited to characters like Hermaphrodite. A not exaggeratedly feminine breast could easily coexist with Hermaphrodite's young male body, producing a much more harmonious result than the application of a beard to a female face.

Considering the wide and lasting diffusion all over the ancient world of beliefs in primeval bearded goddesses, the creation of Phraates II's Bearded Tyche can not surprise in an Oriental city like Seleucia-on-the-Tigris, certainly very sensible to the needs of symbolic expression of ancestral concepts and respectful of tradition. This attitude of mind sensible to continuity through adaptation and innovation was so strong in the Syro-Mesopotamian regions that around the turn to the vulgar era the naturalistic principles of the figural scenes were finally upset at the point that the paratactic rules of the new "Parthian frontality" replaced the realistic relations between the figures⁴⁸.

In the case of Phraates II's Tyche, designed as a highest primordial goddess by the beard, it must be said that her innermost Oriental identity as Nana can have represented the beginning of a new course in the iconography of the goddess, whose cult enjoyed a great fortune reaching Central Asia and Kushan India⁴⁹. Although other images of Bearded Tyche are

⁴⁸ Gawlikowski 1979.

⁴⁹ Sinisi 2008, 236-237, notes 28-31, differentiates distinctly a Mesopotamian Ishtar/Nana from a Zoroastrian Parthian-Central Asian Ishtar/Nana. However, defining the precise individuality of gods sharing their names in the complex religious conditions of the Near East and Central Asia in Parthian and Sasanian times, which we could define with a modern expression globalized, is a task of difficult solution.

On the one hand, inscriptions rarely assure the identity of the images. On the other, that a temple of Nana is mentioned in Parthian Central Asia at Nisa (Bader 1996, 271), and that references to the goddess are common in Parthian onomastics, does not inform us more precisely on the specific character of the Parthian-Mesopotamian Nana, compared to the Bactrian-Kushan Nana or the Sogdian-Central Asian Nana. Divine identifications, their assimilations or correspondences remain general and hypothetical, and the representations could show different aspects of the same deity, or analogous regional goddesses. In the absence of more precise information of theological nature, we register the same names in far-off countries or note the existence of iconographic analogies or peculiarities in vast space-temporal territories extending from Mesopotamia to Central Asia and NW India, but are not in the position of reconstructing the individual personality of the gods and their setting.

In any case, the specific visual forms are obviously depending on the local styles of representation. So, very different images deprived of epigraphs can be compared as possible representations of Nana/Nanaia: for example the goddess of the small relief from Susa of the 1st-2nd century A.D. (Invernizzi 2010), and that of the Chorasmian silver bowl of the 7th century in the British Museum (Dalton 1964, 57-58, no. 203, pl. XXXII; Azarpay 1969, pl. 2; 1976, 539-540, fig. 6). The two goddesses share the same attribute, the lion, which had been the attribute of Ishtar, who was used to stand onto it since Old Babylonian times. However, the first deity is seated on the lion following the rules of Parthian frontality, wearing a dress and making a gesture that are typical for Parthian Mesopotamia. The second one has the four arms of an Indian goddess and sits on the crouching lion, whereas a large throne is her seat on a contemporary bowl of the Ermitage Museum (Marschak 1986, fig. 87). Also, she has a mural crown on her head which revives that of Hellenistic

apparently not known today, the concept of a Bearded Nana featured as Tyche can have had unsuspected consequences in that melting pot of fusions of symbols and symbioses of characters, whether theological or figural, that characterizes the religions of the Hellenized Orient.

It is particularly astonishing that this summary survey of ancient bearded androgynous Divine Beings can be concluded with a last image of a goddess explicitly defined androgynous by the beard, an image, however, created in modern times in a totally different Orient, so confirming the great importance of the ancestral symbolism and its enduring continuity. Once again bearded is in fact the goddess portrayed on a miniature in the Pratapanditya and Chitra Pal Collection donated to the Museum of Art of Santa Barbara, which was painted at Bikaner in Rajasthan in the 18th century⁵⁰ (fig. 13).

The goddess here is Durga, Shiva's spouse, represented standing, the face in left profile, with three pairs of arms and different attributes in each hand. These attributes refer to Shiva himself, and illustrate the qualities of the androgynous goddess who seems to be almost identified with the god. Behind the goddess lies the lion, her animal attribute and in previous times attribute also of Nana⁵¹. Several other images of Durga have been identified with Nana or related to her⁵², and it is likely that Durga owes her beard precisely to Nana. It could seem extraordinary that images of a Great Bearded Goddess of the Eastern Mediterranean and Aegean archaic times reappear unexpectedly modernized on Phraates II's coin in Parthian Mesopotamia, after an apparently long gap that does not really interrupt the continuity of ancestral symbolism. It is even more extraordinary, however, that after a much longer silence a far-off country like Hindu Rajasthan recreates perhaps the last figural expression of the genders co-presence and the duality of the Divine within the totality, by means of a symbol — the beard — remained for millennia unchanged.



Fig. 13. Bearded Durga, miniature, Bikaner, 18th century

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and Parthian Tyche, though this attribute does hardly qualify her as a city goddess, and might even raise the doubt whether the Tyche with mural crown on the Arsacid coins should always be understood solely as a City Tyche. And yet, in spite of the strong contrast between the two images, in Elymais and Chorasmia, it seems to me still suitable the definition of Nana as the "Sumero-Accadian goddess of Transoxiana", which was chosen as the title of the study that drew attention onto the Central Asian goddess (Azarpay 1976).

⁵⁰ From India and Beyond 2010.

⁵¹ Invernizzi 2010.

⁵² Ghose 2006.

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A BEARDED TYCHE FOR PHRAATES II

A. Invernizzi

The beard applied to the face of enthroned Tyche on the tetradrachms of the Parthian King Phraates II is a mark of the supreme rank of the goddess, which in Oriental terms can be assimilated to Parthian Nana/Nanaia. The image refers to a concept of androgyny of the Divine in the primordial times of creation, which is known in the religions of the Near East and Egypt since the earliest times. In the West, it has significant figural precedents in the Bearded Aphrodite worshipped in Cyprus and Greece in Archaic times. The latest bearded goddess is still portrayed in a Rajasthan miniature of the 18th century.

Key words: Parthian iconography, Parthian coins, Parthian Religion, androgynous Goddesses, Tyche, Nana