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***Reconsidering the identification of the Female Figure of the Sinopean Coins*****Abstract**

Sinope was the first Milesian colony at the south coast of Euxinus Pontus that evolved into the biggest economic, political, and cultural center of the region. The polis minted its first coinage as early as the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC. At the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC, or slightly later, the second type of the Sinopean coins started circulating, replacing the first one. In these new coins, a female head turned to the right was depicted on the reverse. The figure has been identified as the Nymph Sinope. In the present paper we shall attempt, through the comparative and syncretic study of the ancient written sources, the archaeological evidence, and the iconography of the female portrait of the Sinopean coins, to suggest a new identification of the depicted figure.

**Key words:** Sinope, coinage, Nymph Sinope, Aphrodite

**Introduction**

Fig. 1: Sinopean coin, 410-350 π.X.

Sinope was the first Milesian colony at the south coast of Euxinus Pontus that evolved into the biggest economic, political and cultural center of the region<sup>1</sup>. The polis mints its first coinage as early as the 5<sup>th</sup> c. B.C.<sup>2</sup>. On the reverse side of the coin, it was depicted an eagle on a dolphin, whilst on the obverse side quadripartite incuse square<sup>3</sup>. The coin circulated until the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> c. B.C. At the same period, or slightly later, the second type of the sinopean coins started circulating replacing the first one. The eagle-dolphin symbol was still preserved on the sides of the sinopean coins. However, it was moved at the obverse, since its place on the reverse has been replaced from a female head to the left (fig. 1)<sup>4</sup>. The female figure has been recognized as the Nymph Sinope. At the present paper we will try, through the comparative and syncretic study of the ancient written sources, the archaeological evidence and the iconography of the

<sup>1</sup> For the colony of Sinope see Doonan, 2003, where the related bibliography is gathered.

<sup>2</sup> For Sinope coinage see, Hind, 1976. Casey, 2010: 117-119. Callatay, 2011: 457, 460-461.

<sup>3</sup> For the eagle-head coins of Sinope see, Hind, 1976.

<sup>4</sup> Six 1885, 21-49. Rec.Gén., Sinope, 179, 181-183, n. 17-21. BMS Pontus, Sinope, 95. n. 6-7. Head, 1991: 508.

female portrait of the sinopean coins to suggest a new identification of the depicted figure.

The figure on the reverse of the second type of the sinopean coins is a beautiful young woman. Her forehead is small, her almond-shaped eyes are big and heavy-lidded, the nose is sharp and the small mouth is full-lipped. Curled lock of hair is brought over the forehead, rotated around the face, held back, bound over the nape and gathered into a *sphendone*. At some cuts the hair is formal while at others wiry curls flow over the forehead and the temples or emerge through the *sphendone*. In the majority of the known examples, wrinkles are shown on the figure's neck. At the early cuts the young woman was depicted without jewelry. However, through the passage of time a necklace and earrings adorn her beautiful face<sup>5</sup>.

The depiction of the figure's characteristics portrays a beautiful young woman of divine beauty. The woman's idealistic rendition remained unchanged through the long circulation period of the second type of the sinopean coinage. The alterations are minimal and concentrate on the rendition of her hair and her jewelry. The absence of characteristic symbols, that would identify the young woman's identity, make her identification even more challenging.

The absence of any identifying symbol led to the figure's recognition on the basis of the ancient written sources, where the existence of Nymph Sinope was attested<sup>6</sup>. The woman's youthfulness and her beauty correspond to Nymph Sinope's image as it is being depicted at the Eumelus' myth. Consequently, the visual correspondence of Nymph Sinope with the female figure of the sinopean coins led to the latter's identification with the homonymous Nymph. Apart from the fact that the above proposal has been questioned, it remains as a dominant theory in modern research on the sinopean coins<sup>7</sup>. However, the study of Sinope's mythology, suggest, in our opinion, the reconsideration of the female figure's identification with the Nymph Sinope.

### The myth of Nymph Sinope

The myth of Nymph Sinope that refers to the Greek colony's appellation, has been commended by the Commentator of Apollonius of Rhodes, who uses as sources Eumelus, the Orphics, Aristotle and Philostephanus Cyrenaeus<sup>8</sup>. The myth was formulated from the "propagandist" poet Eumelus of Corinth in the Archaic period. In *Corinthiaca*, Eumelus' poem that has been characterized as deeply patriotic, the poet gathered mythic narrations that synthesized Corinth's mythology<sup>9</sup>. According to Eumelus, Sinope is the daughter of Asopos, who had been abducted by Apollo and she was transferred to Euxinus Pontus. The river-god Asopos had many daughters. Among

<sup>5</sup> Rec.Gén., Sinope, 179. The figure is depicted frontally on small value coins of the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> c. B.C. (Rec.Gén., Sinope, 190 n. 40. t. 25.24. BMS Pontus, Sinope, 97, n. 22, t. 12.10, Callatay 2004, 17, 13-Inv II 58636).

<sup>6</sup> Six 1885, 22. BMC Pontus, Sinope, xv, 95. Rec.Gén, Sinope, 181. Head 1991, 508. Robinson, 1906:, 246.

<sup>7</sup> Callatay, 2004. Hind, 2007, 17. Callatay, 2011: 460, fig. 4. Casey, 2010: 118.

<sup>8</sup> Com. Apoll.Rod., II.946-954c.

<sup>9</sup> Lesky, 2003: 169. Eumelus' poem *Corinthiaca*, composed at the 8<sup>th</sup> c. B.C. According to Pausanias, Eumelus, a descendant of the Bacchiadic family, was an epic poet who lived in the late 8<sup>th</sup> c. B.C. (Paus., *Hell.Per.* II.1). M. L. West suggests that the poet lived later, around 600 B.C. (West 2002, 109-133). For the dating of Eumelus' work see, Langella, 1997: 135-139, with relative bibliography. For the authenticity of the passage of Eumelus that refers to Nymph Sinope see, Ivantchik, 1997: 35-36, with relative bibliography.

them are listed Corcyra, Salamis, Aegina, Thebes, Tanagra, Thespieae and Chalkis<sup>10</sup>. The myth of Nymph Sinope follows the pattern of the abduction of a young daughter from a god, her transportation to a remote land, the naming of the land after the daughter and the birth of a boy that will become the homonymous primogenitor of the people that dwells the land and their leader<sup>11</sup>. The same pattern follows the abductions of the rest of the *Asopides*, Sinope's sisters<sup>12</sup>.

The name Asopos refers to six rivers. Two of them are frequently utilized in Greek mythology. Those are Asopos of Boeotia and Asopos of Sykeon<sup>13</sup>. Writing the myth of Nymph Sinope, Eumelus is referring to Sykeon's river that had a dominant role at Corinth's mythology<sup>14</sup>. It seems that the poet was seeking to associate Corinth with Sinope by connecting genealogically Sinope with the river-god Asopos of Sykeon.

Apart from Sinope, Eumelus is referring to another Greek colony of the Euxinus Pontus, Vorysthenitis<sup>15</sup>. The poet's reference to Sinope and Vorysthenitis denotes Corinth's interest for the region and the Greek colonies. Therefore, it seems that Eumelus by composing Corinth's mythology aims to create links and references that attend on the polis' policy in Euxinus Pontus. Apparently, one of the goals of *Corinthiaka* propaganda was the creation of a mythological context appropriate for the formulation of Corinth's aspirations in Euxinus Pontus<sup>16</sup>. The distribution of the corinthian myth, concerning Nymph Sinope's origin, and the creation of mythological references among Corinth and Sinope, would have some impact, in the situation that Sinope hadn't been found yet. Consequently, the formulation of Nymph Sinope's myth from Eumelus should be dated in the first stages of the colony's establishment<sup>17</sup>.

The bad relationships between Miletus and Corinth were known since the Lelantine War, when the Ionian polis allied with Eretria<sup>18</sup> and Corinth allied with Chalkis<sup>19</sup>. It seems that the conflict between the two polis was transferred at Euxinus Pontus, where Miletus expanded its power by founding new colonies<sup>20</sup>. However, Miletus colonial activity contradicted Corinth's interests in expanding its sphere of influence in the region.

Apart from Eumelus, the myth of Nymph Sinope is attested in Corinna, an early poet from Tanagra, who, most probably, has lived between the 6<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> c. B.C.<sup>21</sup>. According to her testimony, Asopos asked from Acraepheus, a seer and priest of

<sup>10</sup> For Asopos daughters see, Bowra, 1938.

<sup>11</sup> Ivantchik, 1997: 36.

<sup>12</sup> Diod.Sic., *Bibl.Hist.* IV.72.

<sup>13</sup> Stillwell, MacDonald, & Holland-McAllister, 1976: I. *Σικυών, Τανάγρα*.

<sup>14</sup> Langella, 1997: 12-13. Bowra, 1938: 216-219.

<sup>15</sup> Bernabé F 17.

<sup>16</sup> Langella, 1997: 13-14. Summerer 2007, 28.

<sup>17</sup> Langella, 1997: 14. For the foundation of Sinope from Miletus see, Doonan, 2003: 1380-1382. Doonan, 2004: 69-71, where the related bibliography and the ancient texts are gathered.

<sup>18</sup> Her., *Hist.* V, 99.

<sup>19</sup> Thuc., *Hist.* I.13.3. Plout., *Q.* 11.

<sup>20</sup> For Miletus' colonial activity in Euxinus Pontus see, Greaves, 2007.

<sup>21</sup> The dating of Corinna's activity is problematic. Some scholars place it, according to the style and content of the poet's work in the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. B.C. The ancient references to the poet's work date back to the 1<sup>st</sup> c. B.C. while the oldest surviving papyrus with fragments from Corinna's poems dates back to the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. B.C. The poet, however, is associated with Pindar, who won in *Agones*, once (Paus., *Hell.Per.* IX.22.3) or five times (Ael., *VH* XIII.25). According to some ancient texts, Corinna was Pindar's teacher (Pl. *Mor.*, 347F-348A). For the dating of Corinna's work see, Langella 1997, 14 foot. 51. Ivantchik 1997, 36. For Corinna's poem see, Bowra, 1938: 15.

Apollo, to reveal where his daughters were<sup>22</sup>. The seer told to the river-god that his daughters had been kidnapped by Zeus, Apollo, Poseidon and Hermes. Sinope, in particular, had been abducted by Apollo.

The pattern of the abduction of a young daughter from a god and her transportation to a foreign and remote land is repeated in Corinna's testimony. However, in her text an expanded variation of Eumelus's myth is described. Asopos is now seeking for his daughters asking for the help of Acraepheus. Furthermore, Corinna's myth is taking place in Boeotia, as Acraepheus was the seer and priest of Apollo Ptoios<sup>23</sup>. Besides that, Corinna herself was originated from Tanagra. Thus, it is most probable, that Asopos of Corinna was the personification of the boeotian river<sup>24</sup>. Consequently, according to Corinna the Nymph Sinope was originated from Boeotia.

The Boeotians, as the Corinthians, were interested in expanding their activity in Euxinus Pontus and found colonies on its shores. Indeed, it seems the Boeotians co-founded Heraclea Pontica<sup>25</sup> with the Megarians. The information, however, from the ancient written sources is conflicting<sup>26</sup>. According to Strabo Heraclea, Pontica was founded by Miletus<sup>27</sup>. The ambiguity that characterizes the ancient sources concerning the provenance of Heraclea's colonists affirms, for once more, the antagonism between the Greek metropolises over the domination at Euxinus Pontus. In that context, the Boeotians' goals were conflicting to Miletus' colonial activity and Corinth's aspirations. Thus, the myth of Corinna concerning the origin of Nymph Sinope, integrated in that antagonistic scene, aimed to attend to the boeotian policy in Euxinus Pontus<sup>28</sup>.

Corinna's variant of Nymph Sinope's myth is not the only one. By the time, Eumelus's original myth was enriched, more variants arose. One of the elements that added at the initial core of the myth is Sinope's denial to her abductor's love<sup>29</sup>. Aristotle numbers three variants, in each of which a different god, Apollo, Zeus or the river-god Halys seizes Sinope. The Nymph, indicating brilliance, is taking advantage of god's passion, who promises to give her whatever she asks. Then, the Nymph asks to retain her virginity. The god bound to fulfil her wish, shows respect to Sinope and lets her free<sup>30</sup>.

Apollo is the god at Eumelus's original myth, whereas Zeus emerges sometime later. The two gods' appearance to Nymph Sinope's myth has been interpreted as the

<sup>22</sup> Edmonds, 1972: Fr. 33.

<sup>23</sup> Apollon Ptoios was also called Akraiphios. According to the mythological tradition Apollon had two sons from Zeusippe, Ptoos and Akraipheas. The first was named after the mountain and the temple of Apollo, while the second one gave its name to the city of Akraiphia (Paus., *Hell.Per.* IX. 23.6).

<sup>24</sup> Langella, 1997: 15. According to Bowra, Corinna didn't separate the rivers, which carried the name Asopos or thought that they were referring to the same river-god (Bowra 1938, 220).

<sup>25</sup> Burstein, 1976: 17.

<sup>26</sup> Xen., *An.* VI.2.2. Pseudo-Scymnus, *Periplous* 972. Paus., *Hell.Per.* V.24.7. Ioust., XVI.3. Com. Apoll.Rod., 155 ad 2.351-352a. For the foundation of Heraclea Pontica see, Erçiyas, 2003: 1403-1405.

<sup>27</sup> Str., *Geogr.* XII.3.4.

<sup>28</sup> Corinna attributed Boeotian origin to the other *Asopides* as well. Giving the paternity of other Nymphs to Asopos of Boeotia, she tried to link famous heroines of Peloponnesian poleis with her homeland. It seems that in this way, the poet expressed the general, anti-Corinthian policy of Boeotia (Langella, 1997: 17).

<sup>29</sup> It is possible, however, that the element of Sinope's persistence on maintaining her virginity also existed in the original myth (Langella, 1997: 18).

<sup>30</sup> Similar variant is attested in Apollonius Rodius (*Bibl.*, II.946) and Dionysius Periegetes (*Orbis Terrae Descriptio* 773-779).

expression of the need the myth to be incorporated to the Greek mythological tradition<sup>31</sup>. Furthermore, the element of the Nymph's denial has been assigned to the Sinopeans willingness for independence, autonomy and domination at the south coast of Euxinus Pontus. Thus, it has been proposed that the denial element was integrated into the myth after Sinope's foundation. In particular, it has been proposed that the variant had been formulated between the 5<sup>th</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> c. B.C. in Sinope<sup>32</sup>.

Indeed, Sinope experienced in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. B.C. a period of great wealth and prosperity thanks to the financial exploitation of its colonies at the east part of the south coast of Euxinus Pontus and the freedom acquired as one of the most important poleis of the Satrapy of Paphlagonia. Sinope's coinage mirrors the polis's affluence. Specifically, in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. B.C. Sinope cuts for the first-time coins that bare the polis' name<sup>33</sup>. The introduction of Sinope's name at the polis' coinage constitutes a clear declaration of the Sinopeans' confidence and willingness for independence and self-determination. The variant of Sinope's myth, according to which the Nymph expresses her intelligence, dynamism and eagerness to manage herself and be released by her abductor, is integrated in the same context.

The variant with the river-god Halys is integrated in a slightly different context. The river flows into Euxinus Pontus east of Sinope. The river's personification corresponds, according to A. Langella who has studied in depth the myths of Sinope, to the local population that inhabit the area in the vicinity of the ancient Greek colony. Langella believes that the Halys variant aims to highlight the differences between the local population and the Greek colonists. Halys represents the indigenous people of the south coast of the Euxinus Pontus, while Nymph Sinope depicts the Greek colonists. Therefore, the variant is referring to the cultural differences between the Greeks as the Greek culture and civilization carriers and the locals as barbarians<sup>34</sup>. In that context, Sinope's intelligence and resistance to the river-god's love has been considered parallel to the polis's dynamism, dominance over the local population and eagerness for autonomy. Therefore, Langella concludes that the variant with Halys served the Sinopeans' policy, who, by using the myth, was trying to underline their Greekness and explain their dominance over the local population. Consequently, this variant should also be attributed to the Sinopeans<sup>35</sup>.

Finally, in Philostephanus Cyrenaicus the last variant of Sinope's myth is attested according to which the homonymous Nymph gave birth to Apollo's son, Syros, who became the primogenitor of the Syrians<sup>36</sup>. The variant belongs to the mythological tradition of the Genealogies<sup>37</sup>. The birth of Syros by Sinope attached Greek origin to the primogenitor and accordingly to its people.

The Syrians, people of Anatolian origin, inhabited the land of Sinope, before the founding of the Greek colony<sup>38</sup>. In Philostephanus variant though, the people acquire Greek origin. Therefore, it seems that the incorporation of the element of the birth of Syros in the myth of Nymph Sinope, aims to the mythological Hellenization of

<sup>31</sup> Langella, 1997: 18-19. Ivantchik, 2005: 142.

<sup>32</sup> Langella, 1997: 19, 23.

<sup>33</sup> Six 1885, 21-49. Rec.Gén., Sinope, 179, 181-183, n. 17-21. BMS Pontus, Sinope, 95. n. 6-7. Head, 1991: 507.

<sup>34</sup> Langella, 1997: 17-19.

<sup>35</sup> Langella, 1997: 19.

<sup>36</sup> Müller FHG III, F3.

<sup>37</sup> Ivantchik, 1997: 37.

<sup>38</sup> For the Syrians, Leukosyrians, Assyrians or Cappadocians see, Manoledakis, 2018:, 154-156, with the related bibliography.

the local population and consequently to its submission to the colony's dominance<sup>39</sup>. Consequently, the introduction of the episode of Syros' birth at the myth of Nymph Sinope underlined the predominance of the Sinopeans over the local population. According to Langella, the Sinopeans they were aiming to support their political strategies and aspiration to expand their land into the hinterland around the ground of mythology by incorporating into the myth the birth element.

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. B.C., when Philostephanus wrote down the last variant of the myth of Nymph Sinope, the Greek polis, having lost the economic and political control of its colonies at the east part of the south coast of Euxinus Pontus, was compelled to turn its interest to the hinterland. Furthermore, the continuous attacks from the Persian Satraps and later on from the Mithridatids, endangered Sinope's autonomy and created the need of finding raw materials in order for the polis to maintain its self-sufficiency. Thus, it is possible that Sinope was seizing the expansion of its land into the region of the Syrians, where fertile lands and forests, capable to supply the polis with raw materials, were extended. Consequently, the last variant of Nymph Sinope's myth meets with the historical context of the Hellenistic period and therefore it should be dated in the same period, slightly earlier its writing down from Philostephanus<sup>40</sup>.

To conclude, it has been observed that the Nymph Sinope's myth was formulated and transmuted in order to serve, through the employment of symbolisms and associations, different political interests each time. The myth was initially composed in Corinth from Eumelus, who was seeking to create the grounds to his polis' aspirations in expanding its colonial activity in Euxinus Pontus. Later on, the Boeotians, trying to fulfill their political dreams in the region, through Corinna's variant coopted Sinope's figure in order to create mythological connections with the Greek colony. It is understood that Sinope's geographical position in Euxinus Pontus and its vicinity to natural resources constitute the new-found colony point of contention between the Greek traditional metropolises that wanted to invent mythological connections with the colony<sup>41</sup>.

Moreover, it seems that the myths' evolvement follows Sinope's history from the colony's foundation to the Hellenistic period. Eumelus' and Corinna's myths correspond to the period when Sinope was under foundation. Later on, Sinope, as an independent polis expresses its policy through contemporary variants that demonstrate its self-confidence and dynamism. Finally, in the Hellenistic period, the introduction of the element of Syros' birth denotes the polis's effort to impose its dominance on the local population through its mythological Hellenization. Consequently, the expropriation of the Corinthian myth from Sinope in the Classical and Hellenistic periods, when the antagonism of Miletus, Corinth and Boeotia over the domination in Euxinus Pontus had lost edge, serves the colony's own policy in the region.

### **Reconsidering the identification of the female figure of the Sinopean coins**

The myth of the Nymph Sinope creating grounds on Corinth's and later on Boeotia's aspirations in expanding their colonization activity in Euxinus Pontus, was opposite to Miletus' colonial activity in the region. That is one of the reasons why the metropolis formulated the myth of Amazon Sanape that constitutes the Milesians' perspective

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<sup>39</sup> Langella, 1997: 23.

<sup>40</sup> Langella, 1997: 20-23.

<sup>41</sup> For Sinope's geographical position and vicinity to natural resources see, Doonan, 2004:, 1-22.

considering Sinope's appellation<sup>42</sup>. Thus, the Amazon Sanape was presented from the metropolis's cultural tradition as the homonymous heroine of Sinope.

The ancient Greek poleis draw upon their mythological and religious tradition the themes of their coinage. Consequently, the symbols that were presented on their coins were mainly referring to the polis' gods and heroes. In that context, the identification of the female figure on the sinopean coins with the Nymph Sinope is problematic. The Nymph refers to a myth that was created from Miletus's competitors regarding Sinope's appellation. Therefore, its presentation on the sinopean coins was stirring up metropolises and colony's interests, while on the contrary reinforced Corinth's and Boeotia's political propaganda and enabled the revival of their ambition to expand their sphere of power and influence at the south coast of Euxinus Pontus.

At the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> c. B.C., when the numismatic type that bears the female figure circulates, the Sinopeans were just exempted from the Athenian Cleruches<sup>43</sup>. Consequently, it would have been considered as oxymoron the fact that the Sinopeans chose as the main subject of their second numismatic type the Nymph Sinope while at the same time Sinope should have declared its freedom and independency. In this way, they were disregarding the Milesian myth concerning the polis' appellation and the other figures of their cultural and religious tradition. The use of Nymph Sinope's figure in the sinopean coinage would mean the prevalence of the Corinthian influence in the polis at the south coast of Euxinus Pontus, which is not confirmed by the archaeological evidence nor the written sources. As a consequence, it would have been contradictory to be chosen as the main subject of the sinopean coinage a mythological figure that originates from Corinth's tradition and the propagandist's Eumelus myth.

Even though the Sinopeans appropriated Eumelus' myth in the Classical period, as it has been demonstrated above, it seems that they never used it instead of the Milesian myth of Amazon Sanape. The Milesian myth was, actually, still very popular in the 4<sup>th</sup> c. B.C., as it is being demonstrated by a passage of Aeneas Tacticus. According to Aeneas, when Sinope was under attack by the Persian Satrap Datames and was lacking soldiers, the women of the polis dressed up as soldiers and using weapons, came to the aid of the men walking around the polis' wall. As the women were armed, the Persians misunderstood them and considered them as men<sup>44</sup>.

The episode, that constitutes the sole known to us expression of the Sinopeans' relation with their mythological tradition, reveals the dynamic of the Sanape myth, that links the women of Sinope with their mythological tradition<sup>45</sup>. The women of Sinope as pseudo-Amazons were dressed up like soldiers in order to defend their polis that was under attack. The women disguise does not come only as an aid to the polis' army. On the contrary, it constitutes a reflection of their mythical past through a process of reminding of the mythological links with the Amazons. Therefore, in Aeneas Tacticus text, an incident of Sinope's past is recorded which reflects Sinopeans relation with their cultural tradition and the myth about their polis appellation.

The embracing of Eumelus myth enabled Sinope's political propaganda in the Classical and Hellenistic periods. However, that is not enough to justify the selection

<sup>42</sup> The myth of Amazon Sanape is known from the Commentator of Apollonius Rodious, who refers to the earlier texts of Hecataeus of Miletus and Andron of Teos (Com. Apoll.Rod., II.953-954). For the myth of Amazon Sanape see Mentesisidou 2020, 30-39. Langela, 1997: 25-41, where the related bibliography and the ancient texts are gathered.

<sup>43</sup> Xen., An. VI 1. 15

<sup>44</sup> Aen.Tac., 40. 4-5.

<sup>45</sup> Braund, 2010: 21.

of Nymph Sinope as the main symbol of the sinopean coins, overlooking Amazon Sanape, the other heroes of Sinope's mythology and the polis' principal gods.

The identification of the female figure of the second type of the sinopean coins has been already questioned in modern literature, while some scholars recognize her as the Amazon Sanape<sup>46</sup>. The iconography, though, of the beautiful young woman does not fit to an Amazon. Moreover, apart from the fact that the myth was very popular in Sinope, the image of the drunk (*μέθυσος*) Amazon, was not the ideal choice in order to be promoted as polis' symbol<sup>47</sup>. Being an Amazon, Sanape, did not meet the prototypes of the Greek culture and civilization. Moreover, her image was associated to the non-Greek, barbarian people that inhabited the region of Sinope<sup>48</sup>. Thus, being a barbarian and attached to the local population, Sanape could not evolve to Sinope's emblem.

Apart from the Nymph Sinope and the Amazon Sanape the female figure of the sinopean coins has been identified as the personification of the polis<sup>49</sup>. According to that theory, the depiction of the figure falls into the general iconographical tradition of the personifications, as it had been formulated since the 5<sup>th</sup> c. B.C. The poleis and the regions personifications emerge in the Greek art during the Archaic period. They are depicted as beautiful women who just watch the action that unfolds at the scene in front of them unresponsively<sup>50</sup>. In the majority of the examples, their identity is not clearly identified, while in some cases their iconography is complemented by symbols or, rarely, is accompanied by inscriptions<sup>51</sup>. Female busts, that depict personifications of homonymous heroines emerge in the coinage of Greek poleis since the 5<sup>th</sup> c. B.C.<sup>52</sup>. The lack of identifying symbols, however, is often confusing and makes their recognition doubtful<sup>53</sup>.

Although the depiction of the female figure of the sinopean coins follows the iconography of the personifications and allows its identification with the personification of Sinope, a better examination of the symbols that accompany it, along with the study of the archeological evidence and the religious tradition of the Greek colony suggests a new identification.

### **A new identification proposal regarding the female figure of the sinopean coins.**

In the mid-4<sup>th</sup> c. B.C. or slightly earlier on the obverse of the sinopean coins a symbol was introduced, which even though it was being mentioned in modern literature, it has

<sup>46</sup> Hind, 2007: 17.

<sup>47</sup> However, in the Roman period, the figure of the homonymous Amazon is printed on coins from Smyrna (BMC Ionia, 154).

<sup>48</sup> For the analysis of the myth of the Amazon Sanape see, Mentessidou, 2020:, 30-37. Langela, 1997: 25-41.

<sup>49</sup> Papageorgiou, 1997: 198-199. Braund, 2010: 17.

<sup>50</sup> For the personifications of abstract concepts in the Greek art see, Shapiro, 1993.

<sup>51</sup> For instance, in a Painter of Astea's angiography the inscription ΘΗΒΗ identifies the personification of the polis of Thebes (Trendall, 1986: 23. t. 5a).

<sup>52</sup> Hamdorf, 1964: 27-28.

<sup>53</sup> The female figure on the reverse of Amisus coins of the 4<sup>th</sup> c. B.C. has been identified as Hera or the personification of the polis (Malloy, 1970: 3; Papageorgiou, 1997: 107-110). Similarly, the female figure on the obverse of olbian coins of the 4<sup>th</sup> c. B.C. has been recognized as Demeter or Persephone and as the personification of the polis (Hind, 2007: 18-21). On the contrary, the female figure of the coins of Syracuse is definitely identified with the Nymph Arethousa, as on the coins of the minter Kimon the figure is named after a graffiti (HN<sup>2</sup> 1 77).



not received much attention from modern scholars<sup>54</sup>. This is the aplustre (ἄφλαστον), which is printed in front of the female figure of the obverse (fig. 2)

The aplustre is a naval symbol, which was placed at the stern of ships<sup>55</sup>. It is an abstract rendering of the shape of a bird, which is turning its head inwards, towards to the ship<sup>56</sup>. The aplustre was attributed with magical functions as it was considered the protector of ships and sailors. The symbol is often printed on coins accompanying figures and symbols related to the sea, shipping and seafaring. It is often being depicted on coins next to the figures of Poseidon<sup>57</sup>, Artemis<sup>58</sup>, Aphrodite<sup>59</sup>, Nike<sup>60</sup>, Aeolus<sup>61</sup>, the personification of polis<sup>62</sup> and dolphins<sup>63</sup>. The connection of the symbol with the shipping and the sea is clear and indisputable.



Fig. 2: Sinopean coin, 333-330 B.C.

Therefore, its depiction on the coins of Sinope associates the figure, which accompanies, with the sea. Thus, the search for the identity of the figure, which is printed on the sinopean coins should focus on mythological figures and gods that are linked to the maritime world.

The type of the sinopean coin where the female figure is printed on the obverse and the symbol of an eagle on a dolphin is printed on the reverse appears to be parallel to the respective coins of Olbia and Istria<sup>64</sup>. More specifically, on the obverse of the olbian coin it was printed the head of Athena. The figure of the goddess on the olbian coins is accompanied by a dolphin, a symbol, which refers to the maritime character of Athena and the maritime orientation of the Greek polis in the northern shores of the Black Sea. Therefore, the olbian coins follow the same iconographic schema, which also responds on the sinopean coins: obverse, goddess head and symbol that refers to her maritime functions - reverse, eagle on dolphin. Even though the existence of the corresponding olbian coin did not last long, the choice of the obverse as a theme referring to the religion and the cult of Athena is also retained in the next numismatic type in which a Medusa head is printed.

The identity of the *tête-bêche* faces, printed on the obverse of the respective coins of Istria, has not been confirmed with certainty. According to the prevailing

<sup>54</sup> Six 1885, 29. Rec.Gén., Sinope, 179. BMS Pontus, Sinope, 97. Hind, 2007: 17. Callatay, 2004: 22.

<sup>55</sup> Liddell & Scott, 2007: 230β.

<sup>56</sup> Wachsmann, 1998: 190-191.

<sup>57</sup> BMC Sicily, 7. SNG BM Black Sea 0300.1178.

<sup>58</sup> SNGvA 1448.

<sup>59</sup> Akarnania Leukas SG 2283.

<sup>60</sup> SNG Cop. 882. SNG BM Black Sea 0300.3212.

<sup>61</sup> SNG Cop. 1084.

<sup>62</sup> BMC 10 Duyrat, Serie 4, 141.

<sup>63</sup> SNG ANS 882. SNG BM Black Sea 0300.0155.

<sup>64</sup> The symbol of a flying predator, which holds its prey with its feet, is found in the coinage of several Greek poleis, such as Chalkis, Elis of Akragas and Lokroi (BMC Central Greece, Chalkis 110, 53. BMC Peloponnesus, Elis, 420. BMC Sicily, 61. HN Italy 2324). For the eagle-dolphin symbol on the coinage of Sinope, Olbia and Istria see, Karyshkovsky, 1982 and Hind, 2007.

proposals, however, the symbol is either attributed to Dioscuri, Kaviros, Apollo Didymaios, the personifications of the opposite currents, which flow in Euxinus Pontus, the two tributaries of river Istros or the Istrian faces (*Ιστριανὰ πρόσωπα*)<sup>65</sup>. It is therefore possible that in the case of Istria as well, a divine figure was printed on the obverse of the coins, which bears the eagle on a dolphin symbol on the reverse.

Summarizing all the above, we assume that the Sinopeans, as the Olbians and, most probably, the Istrians chose to promote on the obverse of their standard monetary type, where the symbol of the eagle on a dolphin was printed on the reverse, a divine figure, whose cult was important for the polis and his functions were referring to the maritime world.

The iconography of the female figure of the sinopean coins reminds of Aphrodite, as she was depicted at the coinage of other Greek poleis during the same period. For instance, the figure of the sinopean coins refers to the rendering of the characteristics of the face, the hair and the jewelry of Aphrodite as she was depicted on the obverse of the coins of Knidos of the 5<sup>th</sup> c. B.C.<sup>66</sup>. Aphrodite of the knidian coins has her hair gathered loosely in sphendone over the neck (fig. 3). Her eyes are big with thick eyelids, her nose is big but elegant and her mouth is small with fat lips.

Her cheeks are also corpulent. In some cuts, wrinkles can be seen on the goddess' neck. In addition, in some examples the goddess is adorned with earrings and a necklace. Aphrodite of the cnidian coins is not accompanied by any characteristic symbol. Her identification, however, is unquestionable as it is based on the confirmed cult of Aphrodite in Cnidus, of which Aphrodite was the patron deity.

Aphrodite was worshiped in Cnidus under the epiclesis Euploia (*Εὐπλοία*-Smooth Sailing). In some cuts during the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> c. B.C. a ship bow was printed behind her neck<sup>67</sup>. The appearance of the bow next to the goddess in Cnidus coins refers to the qualities of Aphrodite Euploia as a maritime deity. The bow of the ship is also accompanying Aphrodite's figure in a rare coin type of Leukas, on the reverse of which is printed a statue of Aphrodite holding aplustre<sup>68</sup>. The symbol is also printed in front of a ship bow



Fig. 3: Knidian coin,  
390-340 B.C.



Fig. 4: Sinopean coin,  
306-290 B.C.

<sup>65</sup> For the istrian coin see, Lungu & Poenaru Bordea, 2000: 291. Hind, 2007: 17. Avram, 2003: 295, with related bibliography.

<sup>66</sup> SNG Keckman 163. Moreover, the depiction of the female figure of the sinopean coins is similar to the representation of Aphrodite in the coins of Mallus (SNG Levante 150-2), of Nagidos (SNGvA 5750) and Corinth (BMC Corinth, 381). For the representation of Aphrodite in the coinage of Greek poleis see, Tsagari, 2011.

<sup>67</sup> SNG Keckman 170-1. BMC Caria, Knidos, 39A. Imhoof KM 2.

<sup>68</sup> BMC Thessaly, Leukas, 180: 99. For Leukas coins see, Callatay, 2015.

on the obverse of certain cuts of the sinopean coins of the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. B.C. (Fig. 4)<sup>69</sup>. The introduction of symbols such as the aplustre and the bow of a ship on the sinopean coins, which clearly refers to the sea, is associated with the maritime orientation of the Greek colony and, most probably, refers to the cult of a maritime deity. The synchronous iconographic resemblance of the female figure of the sinopean coins to Aphrodite suggests, in our view, her identification with the goddess, who retains characteristics that connect her to the sea.

In accordance to the philological and epigraphical evidence and as the cultic epithets Euploia, Pontia (*Ποντία* - Of the Sea) or Limenia (*Λιμενία* - Of the Port) state, the worship of Aphrodite under those epicleses was inextricably linked to the sea. That is why the shrines of Aphrodite as a maritime deity were located by the sea, close to ports<sup>70</sup>. The goddess' patronage on the sea that had an important role at her cult since the Archaic period refers to her birth, which according to some scholars explain Aphrodite's various functions and among them her power over the sea<sup>71</sup>. According to the myth, Aphrodite was not born instantaneously from Ouranos' severed genitals. Rather than that, the gods' genitals which have fallen into the sea, floated on the sea foam for a while before the goddess arose. Therefore, Ourania (*Ούρανία*- She who Came from Ouranos) and Aphrogenia (*Αφρογενείη*- She who was Born by the Foam) deity was venerated as the protector of the sailors and the provider of a safe sailing. However, she was also honored for the profits that traders earned through her protection<sup>72</sup>.

Aphrodite was one of the deities that was worshiped in Sinope's metropolis, Miletus. In 1990 an extramural archaic shrine of the goddess was discovered in Miletus, the remains of which have been dated back to the first half of the 7<sup>th</sup> c. B.C.<sup>73</sup>. Furthermore, the epigraphical evidence attests that Aphrodite was venerated in Miletus and Didyma under the epiclesis of *Ourania* and *Aphrogenia*<sup>74</sup>. Moreover, archaeological findings from Miletus' colonies in Euxinus Pontus confirm the transfer of Aphrodite's cult in the region as a maritime deity. The study of the goddess' cult in the Greek poleis of Euxinus Pontus has proven its early transmission to the region and the association of the goddess with the sea, which is indicated in the use of the epicleses *Nauarchis* (*Ναυαρχίς* - The Mistress of the Fleet), *Euploia* and *Pontike* (*Ποτικὴ* - Of the Sea)<sup>75</sup>.

The maritime orientation of Miletus is owed to its geographical position and affected the economy and the trade, and most probably suggested Aphrodite's worship as a maritime deity<sup>76</sup>. The colonists venturing sailing to Euxinus Pontus, probably chose as the patrons of their voyage, deities who are worshiped for the protection they

<sup>69</sup> The female figure is depicted on the reverse of the coins (SNG BMC Black Sea 1508).

<sup>70</sup> The cult of Aphrodite Euploia is attested in Knidos and Piraeus *Αφροδίτης ναός ἐστὶν ἐπὶ κλησὶν Ποντίας καὶ Λιμενίας τῆς αὐτῆς* (Paus., *Hell.Per.* II.34.11), in the port of Kos (Rocco 2009, 608-611), most probably next to the port of Rhodes (Machaira 2013, 149). For the placement of the shrines of Aphrodite with maritime functions see, Demetriou, 2010.

<sup>71</sup> Pirenne-Delforge, 2007:, 318. Demetriou, 2010: 70.

<sup>72</sup> For Aphrodite's functions as a maritime deity, see Demetriou, 2010.

<sup>73</sup> The temple was most probably destroyed in 494 B.C. from the Persians. For the Archaic temple of Aphrodite in Miletus see, Greaves, 2002: 82-84. Senff, 2003: 201. Panteleon et al., 2008.

<sup>74</sup> Didyma 191. Didyma 571. Miletos 206. Miletos 484.

<sup>75</sup> Greaves, 2004: 30-32. In an inscription from Olbia the name of the goddess is accompanied from the cultic epithet *Euploia* (IosPE P 168). The epiclesis *Nauarchis* is attested in Gorgippia (CIRB 1115) and Panticapaeum, where Aphrodite was co-venerated with Poseidon (CIRB 30). Aphrodite was also co-venerated with Poseidon at Cyzicus (Hasluck, 1910: 235-36).

<sup>76</sup> Greaves, 2004: 31.

offered in sea travels. Among these deities there should be Aphrodite too, who was the patron of the navigation and sailing. The close and enduring relation of the colonists with the sea is most probably contributed to the preservation of the ancestral cult of Aphrodite as a maritime deity. Thus, they transferred the goddess' cult in Euxinus Pontus and continued venerating her according to their religious tradition.

The use of the symbol of the eagle on the dolphin in the coinage of Sinope, Itria and Olbia reflects, among others, the close relationship between the three colonies of Miletus and the bond that was maintained with each other and with the metropolis<sup>77</sup>. In that context, the existence of Aphrodite's cult in Itria and Aphrodite's Euploia in Olbia suggests the diffusion of the cult in the third important colony of Miletus in Euxinus Pontus, Sinope. Aphrodite's qualities as a maritime deity correspond to the maritime orientation of the polis whose economy is exclusively depended on the exploitation of its double harbor that became the most important transit center in the southern shore of Euxinus Pontus<sup>78</sup>. Therefore, the maritime orientation of Sinope along with the well attested cult of Aphrodite as a maritime deity in Miletus and its colonies in Euxinus Pontus suggest the worship of the goddess under the same qualities in Sinope as well. Indeed, the archaeological material from Sinope, although scanty, attest Aphrodite's worship in the polis, while their relatively large number, in relation to findings associated to other deities, indicates the prominence of the goddess in the religious life of the polis<sup>79</sup>.

If our hypothesis is valid, the standard numismatic type of Sinope, on the obverse of which was printed an eagle on a dolphin and on the reverse a female figure, it harmonizes with the choices of the olbian and istrian coinage, where at the same time there were circulated coins, on which an eagle on a dolphin and the head of Athena and the *tête-bêche* faces were depicted, respectively. Thus, it is observed, that the homogeneity that characterizes the choice of the theme of the reverse side of the coins of Sinope, Olbia and Itria does not continue in the reverse, where, however, themes from the pantheon of each polis are chosen.

Consequently, the common monetary policy which resolved to the printing of the symbol of the eagle on the dolphin on the coins of Olbia, Itria and Sinope, possibly indicated the depiction of a different theme on the obverse of the coins, which, however, referred to each polis' deities. Therefore, a common iconographic diptych was completed, the principle of adherence to the choices of a common policy was served, while at the same time the autonomy, the independence and the freedom of each colony were maintained in order to formulate their own identities.

### **The introduction of the mural crown to the iconography of the female figure of the sinopean coins**

At the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> c. B.C. - beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. B.C. in the iconography of the female figure on the obverse of the sinopean coins the symbol of the mural crown was introduced<sup>80</sup>. The figure's characteristics remain unchanged. The hair is brought over the forehead, rotated around the face and held back. In most cuts the figure does not wear any jewelry, apart from her turreted crown (Fig. 5). On the reverse it was printed the bow of a ship and in front of it an aplustre<sup>81</sup>.

<sup>77</sup> Avram et. al., 2004: 962-963. Hind, 2007: 9.

<sup>78</sup> For the economy of Sinope see, Doonan, 2003: 1385-1392.

<sup>79</sup> For Aphrodite cult in Sinope see, Mentessidou, 2020: 101-135.

<sup>80</sup> Rec.Gén., Sinope, 179, 190. Head 1991, 508.

<sup>81</sup> Rec.Gén., Sinope, 190, 42, t. 25.29.

The mural crown was introduced in the Greek art as a symbol of female deities at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> c. B.C. - beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> c. B.C. under the influence of anatolian prototypes<sup>82</sup>. Its appearance is connected with the systematization of the construction of fortifications in the Greek poleis of Asia Minor and Euxinus Pontus in fear of military attacks, within the turbulent period following the Satraps' Revolt in the 4<sup>th</sup> c. B.C.<sup>83</sup>. The diffusion of the symbol in Greek art during the Hellenistic period is associated with the development of the siege machines and the conflicts between the Hellenistic kingdoms<sup>84</sup>. Despite the unstable political context, the Greek poleis of Asia Minor and Euxinus Pontus experienced a period of growth and an economic and political prosperity during the 4<sup>th</sup> B.C. Under these historical circumstances of poleis increasing their dynamics, the polis walls were transformed from simply fortification buildings into prestige symbols. The confidence and the feeling of pride and autonomy of the Greek poleis were expressed in art using the symbol of the mural crown<sup>85</sup>.

The crown with the turreted form was a characteristic of female deities, who were associated with the fertility of the ground and, at the same time, were worshiped as patrons of the polis. The crown was the symbol, which clearly was connected the polis with the bearing figure, in order to give to the first, the characteristics of the second, its beauty, grandeur, power and glory<sup>86</sup>. The goddesses, who mainly attested bearing the mural crown, are Aphrodite and Cybele.

The mural crown of the female figure of the sinopean coins belongs to the type of the Propontis-Pontus turreted crown. The crown consists of a horizontal element, the *stephane*, and protrusions that are projected above *stephane* in the form of towers<sup>87</sup>. In the majority of the surviving coins the crown is plain while in some examples is adorned with relief friezes and disks.

The majority of the monuments that depict female figures bearing a mural crown come from Cyprus. The bearing figure has been identified with the most important goddess of the island, Aphrodite<sup>88</sup>. The archaeological evidence, primarily the coins of Salamis confirm the introduction of the mural crown in the iconography of Aphrodite from the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> c. B.C even though it was established around the 4<sup>th</sup> c. B.C.<sup>89</sup>. In Cyprus, Aphrodite gathered functions that refer to the fertility of the earth,



Fig. 5: Sinopean coin, 306-290 B.C.

<sup>82</sup> For the origin of the wall-shaped crown see, Papageorgiou, 1997: 71-79. The oldest depiction of the wall-shaped crown is attested on coins of Hebryzelmis of Odryssa (Peter, 1997: 107).

<sup>83</sup> For the Satraps' Revolt see, Weiskopf, 1989.

<sup>84</sup> For the evolution of the siege practices and their effects on the construction of the fortifications during the Hellenistic period see, McNicoll, 1997: 1-14.

<sup>85</sup> Papageorgiou, 1997: 81-93.

<sup>86</sup> Deonna, 1940: 159-165. Papageorgiou, 1997: 46, 175-178.

<sup>87</sup> For the Propontis-Pontus wall-shaped crown type see, Papageorgiou, 1997: 77-79.

<sup>88</sup> Papageorgiou, 1997: 94.

<sup>89</sup> For figurines and statuettes of Aphrodite with wall-shaped crown from Cyprus see, Hermary 1981, n. 36. Hermary, 1982, type D, n. 5. Karageorghis, 1974, n. 82. The oldest depiction of Aphrodite with wall-shaped crown is a figurine from Cyprus (Dikaios, 1953: 178 ap. 81).

to the sea, to love and to war, while at the same time she was worshiped as the protector of poleis<sup>90</sup>. The main epiclesis of the goddess, which declares the omnipotence and the dominant position she held in the religious life of the Cypriots, was *Φάνασσα*. Aphrodite was also called in Cyprus *Ourania* as the queen of heavens<sup>91</sup>. As an almighty goddess and queen, Aphrodite wore a crown, the mural form of which reflected her theological qualities as protector of poleis<sup>92</sup>.

On Salamis coins, Aphrodite initially appears without a mural crown. The introduction of the symbol in the goddess' iconography has been associated with Evagoras, who took power in the late 5<sup>th</sup> c. B.C.<sup>93</sup>. Evagoras ousted the last Phoenician usurper from the royal throne and restored the Greek rule. His reign coincides with the effort of Salamis to gain its autonomy and the flowering of Greek culture throughout the island. The king, who had intense military activity, took care of fortifying his city and reorganizing its army and fleet. The introduction of the mural crown in the iconography of Aphrodite in Salamis is therefore interrelated with the self-confidence and the military successes of Evagoras as well as with the political choice of projecting Aphrodite as the protector of the walls, the polis and its autonomy and independence<sup>94</sup>.

Aphrodite bearing a mural crown is also printed on coins from Kassope of Epirus (4<sup>th</sup> c. B.C. - 3<sup>rd</sup> c. B.C.), where the goddess was venerated in her own shrine<sup>95</sup>. The appearance of the goddess' figure on the obverse of the coin wearing a mural crown declares the importance of her cult as the protector of Kassope<sup>96</sup>.

The introduction of the mural crown in the iconography of the female figure of the sinopean coins at the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> c. B.C. and the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. B.C. coincides with the conflicts of the Hellenistic kingdoms and the expansion of the newly established Kingdom of Pontus. It is not known if Sinope took part in the conflicts between the Hellenistic kingdoms. Nonetheless, it seems that the geographical barring of the south coast of the Euxinus Pontus contributed to the polis' exclusion from the antagonism. Therefore, although Sinope seems to have lost control of its colonies, the polis continued to be the most important economic center and port of the region. However, the expansion of the Mithridatic kingdom of Pontus into the polis' neighborhood posed an immediate threat to its independence and autonomy. Indeed, in 220 BC., Mithridates II attempted to invade Sinope. The polis, however, repulsed the attack successfully with the assistance of its ally, Rhodes<sup>97</sup>. The aggressive policy of the Mithridatids probably forced the improvement of the polis' fortification.

The introduction of the mural crown in the iconography of the female figure of the sinopean coins follows the establishment of the symbol in Greek art in the 4<sup>th</sup> c. B.C. At the end of the same century and at the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. B.C., Sinope maintained its dynamics as the most important polis on the southern shores of the Euxinus Pontus, while at the same time was experiencing economic and cultural

<sup>90</sup> For Aphrodite theological functions in Cyprus see, Bennett 1980. Karageorghis, 2005.

<sup>91</sup> Bennett, 1980: 317-319.

<sup>92</sup> Papageorgiou, 1997: 97-99.

<sup>93</sup> Hill, 1949: 125. In the 4<sup>th</sup> c. B.C., the wall-shaped crown was established in the iconography of Aphrodite as she was depicted on the coinage of Evagoras II and Pnytagoras (SNG Cyprus 59, 62). For Salamis coinage under Evagoras II see, Markou, 2015.

<sup>94</sup> Papageorgiou, 1997:, 99.

<sup>95</sup> Head, 1991: 320. For the coins of Kassope with the towered Aphrodite see, Franke, 1961: 69, t. 5V1.3, R1-43. 70, t. 5-7, V4-36. 76, t. 7V38, R63.

<sup>96</sup> Tzouvara-Souli, 1994: 110.

<sup>97</sup> Polyaeus, *Hist.* IV.56

prosperity. Nevertheless, the maintenance of its autonomy and affluence was threatened by the expansion of the Kingdom of Pontus. In this context, the Sinopeans probably wanted to promote indirectly their strength and will to maintain their autonomy and independence through the image of the turreted female head of their coins. The figure, probably, evolved to the Sinopeans' symbol of self-confidence and their disposition for self-determination and independence. In this context, the introduction of the mural crown in the iconography of the female figure of the coins of Sinope, is integrated into the turbulent environment of the Hellenistic period and follows the establishment of the symbol as an emblem of confidence and dynamics of the Greek poleis.

The introduction of the mural crown in the iconography of the female figure of the sinopean coins does not contradict the proposal of her identification with the goddess Aphrodite. On the contrary, the introduction of the crown in the iconography of the female figure finds parallels in the coinage of other Greek poleis, where the symbol was introduced in the iconography of the goddess at a subsequent time and is in accordance with the qualities of Aphrodite, as a queen, patron and protector of poleis.

The appearance of the figure of Aphrodite in the coins of Sinope, indicates, in our view, the importance of her cult for the Sinopeans. Furthermore, the introduction of the mural crown at the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> c. B.C.-the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. B.C. in the goddess' iconography suggests her veneration as the patron deity of the polis. As we have argued above, Aphrodite should have been venerated in Sinope as a maritime deity. Even as a deity venerated for her power over the sea, the goddess was never stripped of her other theological characteristics and functions<sup>98</sup>. Besides, the qualities of the goddess, who was worshiped as a queen, protector of the polis and at the same time maintained maritime theological qualities, meet the religious needs of the Sinopeans.

Sinope is located on a peninsula that looks more like an island as it is connected to the inland with a narrow isthmus. The formation of the peninsula that is surrounded by rocks coupled with the often-stormy sea, causes intense waves, which create the impression that Sinope emerges from the waves of Euxinus Pontus. The beauty of the coastal city and its projection in the landscape could be personified in the figure of Aphrodite. Moreover, the inseparable link of Sinope with the sea, to which the polis owed its existence, independence and affluence, refers to the birth of Aphrodite and the maritime character of the goddess. Therefore, in our view, Sinope could not have chosen a more suitable deity as its patron deity than *Ἀφρογενεΐη* Aphrodite.

## Conclusions

The identification of the female figures, which are printed on the coins, is often hypothetical. Even when their images are accompanied by symbols, their recognition is not certain as a symbol can be related to more than one figure. Similarly, in the case of the female figure of the sinopean coins, this figure is not accompanied by the characteristic symbols that could suggest its secure identification. Thus, her image could equally be corresponded to a Nymph, the personification of the polis or the goddess Aphrodite. However, the iconographic resemblance of the female figure with Aphrodite, as printed on other Greek poleis coins coupled with the appearance of the

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<sup>98</sup> Demetriou, 2010: 85-86.

aplustre, undoubtedly, makes, in our view, possible her identification with the goddess of love. Moreover, the popularity of Aphrodite's cult in Sinope, as attested by the archaeological evidence, in combination with her maritime theological qualities, makes possible the veneration of the goddess as the protector of the sea-oriented polis. The following introduction of the mural crown in the iconography of Aphrodite finds parallels in the coinage of other Greek poleis, which patron deity was the goddess, who gathers a multitude of theological functions, and is in accordance with the historical context of the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. B.C. and Sinope's desire to declare its independence and self-confidence through the use of the symbol.

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### Abbreviations

ASAtene	Annuario della Scuola archeologica di Atene e delle Missioni italiane in Oriente
BMC Pontus	Wroth, W. (1981). Catalogue of Greek Coins. Pontus, Paphlagonia, Bithynia and the Kingdom of Bosphorus. A Catalogue of Greek Coins in the British Museum XIII. Bologna.
BSS	Black Sea Studies
CIRB	Corpus Inscriptionum Regni Bosporani
HN	Historia Numorum
IosPE	Inscriptiones antiquae Orae Septentrionalis Ponti Euxini
Rec. Gén.	Waddington, W. H., Babelon, E., & Reinach, T. (1925). Recueil General des Monnaies Grecques d'Asie Mineure. Paris.
SNG	Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum