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Divine Configurations and “Panthéons”: Some Assemblages of *Theoi* in North-Western Greece

Abstract: The documentary dossiers discussed in this chapter concern north-western Greece. The reflection revolves around two singular divine configurations: the first, based on the “couple” composed of Zeus Naios and Dione, is formulated in an apparently conjugal mode and allows us to question divine individuation; the second, formalised by the brotherhood composed of Apollo and Artemis, allows us to examine the notion of poliad divinity in the context of colonial divine configurations.

In the cases of Zeus/Dione, Poseidon/Ποσειδῶν, Pan/Pasa, onomastics seem to theoretically establish a parity, or at least a pairing, but the historical reality is quite different. Apollo and Artemis do not in fact evolve in the same space. One circulates in society, logically diversifying and meeting other deities; her more-static-than-hieratic representations should not be misleading: the goddess is mobile, accompanying and motivating a religious dynamic.

In their own way, these themes raise the difficult question of mirror effects between human and divine societies, but it seems that they are above all an opportunity to observe two constructions of divine assemblages that share the articulation of two pairs of deities associating the masculine and the feminine. These pairs of *theoi* do not constitute simple pairings of opposite genders, nor are they an attempt to express the divine in an asexual manner, but they establish an onomastic and cultic formulation of the divine power that is declined in the feminine and the masculine, within the framework of a complementary assembly that guarantees the effectiveness of the cultic address.

In order to test the statics and intelligibility of the pantheons of ancient Greek societies, but also the lines of force that scholars willingly attribute to them – the distribution of *timai* (honours) and functions, the process of hierarchisation, often to the benefit of a poliad deity and more rarely within the framework of establishing a local and singular relationship with the gods –, an approach similar to the one used in the restitution of artefacts in archaeology seems to be advisable: it is a question of testing the articulation between the cultic infrastructure and religion, a term which, as we know, is problematic and refers to the superstructure of the domain we are studying.¹ Beyond the great theological questions, the importance of which should not be ne-

¹ Pirenne-Delforge 2020, chapter 1, “Religion et polythéisme : des mots aux concepts”, 25–57, esp. 54–57.

glected – but which it seems more legitimate to approach from works such as those of Plotinus or Porphyry –,² historical archaeology – or *archaeology as cultural history*, in the words of Ian Morris – remains attached to analyses nourished by the field, a documentary exploration of ancient polytheisms, the finesse of the establishment and the introductory commentary of the sources,³ in the image of the database created by the *Mapping Ancient Polytheisms* programme. There is no question here of defending the existence – occasionally considered an essence – of raw data, sometimes defended in archaeology in particular under the influence of digital requirement and archaeometry, reputed to be “true”. The documentary fact, eminently in the field of religion, is from the outset the fruit of a scientific construction. At the same time, it is not efficient to consider that the study of polytheisms should be confined to establishing materials that we recover by creating a dividing line between religion and cults or cultic practices, a separation that partly reports on the disciplinary gap between historians and archaeologists, or between specialists of monotheisms on the one hand and polytheisms on the other, and of which no confirmation can be found in the ancient sources. The concept of “orthopraxis” is salutary here:⁴ the Greek religious system does not aim to establish a *doxa*, a *dogma*, but rather is a constantly renewed reflection on customary practices, the conscious and codified elaboration of a specific field of action. The centre of gravity of polytheistic systems, embedded in time or in the thickness of singular community histories, accessible in space thanks to the archaeology of sanctuaries,⁵ seems to be a matter of cultic practice, addressing the gods, the abundance of divine onomastic formulations, the effectiveness obtained by conformity to traditions (*nomoi*) or inventiveness, and not, in fact, of orthodoxy.⁶

The documentary dossiers that will be briefly discussed here concern north-western Greece up to the northern limits of the great Epirus of Pyrrhos. This region is a meeting place between civic and “ethnic” religious systems, in the institutional sense.⁷ The reflection concerns two singular divine configurations that can be observed in the north-western Greek field. The first, based on the “couple” composed of Zeus Naïos and Dione, is formulated in an apparently conjugal mode and allows us to

2 Cf. recently Bouretz 2021, or Sylvain Roux’s works on Neoplatonism, and Eidinow/Kindt/Osborne 2016, with the critical reading of Corinne Bonnet (<https://bmcr.brynmawr.edu/2017/2017.06.13/>).

3 For example, the exemplary investigations of Graf 1985; Jost 1985; Osanna 1996.

4 Cf. in particular the works of Nicole Belayche, John Scheid and Corinne Bonnet. On the archaeological extension of this reflection on the reconstruction of practices, cf. Van Andringa 2021. According to this fundamental book, the very idea of orthopraxis needs further work to be better defined.

5 This approach is, for example, at the heart of the CIRCE programme (<https://circe-antique.humanum.fr/blog/fr/>) directed by Sonia Darthou, François de Polignac and Jean-Sébastien Gros.

6 Borgeaud 2021, 180: “La religion doit être comprise comme un retour de la coutume sur elle-même. En choisissant d’accomplir avec scrupule et respect certaines cérémonies répétables et ressenties comme nécessaires [. . .], le sujet réfléchit, d’une manière rituelle et non simplement intellectuelle, sur l’abîme des gestes et des paroles.” See also the conclusion in Bonnet 2021.

7 On *ethne* and *koina*, cf. the fundamental contribution by Cabanes 1989.

question the divine individuation, the forging of divine configurations, or even, if we follow Herodotus, the Greek theogenesis. The second, formalised by the brotherhood composed of Apollo and Artemis in Apollonia of Illyria, allows us to examine the distribution of honours and the notion of poliadic divinity in the context of colonial divine configurations.

1 The Assemblage of *Theoi* of Dodona

The historiographical fortune of Dodona is singular. Alternately the last sanctuary of the Aegean religion to be found in the north, and the first place of northern worship of Indo-European or pre-Indo-European, Illyrian, Hyperborean or even Pelasgic tradition, Dodona finally became an ethnic, religious and cosmogonic melting pot, in which complementary or contradictory elements, however composite, were associated or confronted. It is as if a properly Dodonean theogony had been composed in the Epirote sanctuary, whereas the text of Herodotus discussed below rather testifies to a theonymy.

Zeus and Dione are the main deities of the sanctuary. The other deities who receive offerings, whose cult is attested at Dodona,⁸ or who are occasionally part of the *theoi* questioned by the consultants, are Themis,⁹ Aphrodite,¹⁰ Apollo¹¹ and Acheloos.¹² Other divinities or heroes whose cult is evoked by the archaeological literature remain inconspicuous, even evanescent or present through representations: Herakles,¹³ Artemis,¹⁴ Athena, Dionysos,¹⁵ Poseidon and Hermes. Because of this composite

8 Dieterle 2007, 198–209; Chapinal-Heras 2021, 107–113.

9 Themis, another consort of Zeus according to Hesiod (*Th.* 901), is questioned by four consultants (*I.Dodone Evangelidi* 128A, 3055A, 1006B and 2524B = *DB MAP S#16084*, #17413, #16257 and #16736) and she is *Naia* only once (*I.Dodone Lhôte* 94 = *DB MAP S#17312*). The onomastic sequences are as follows: Zeus Naïos, Themis, Dione; Zeus Naïos, Dione, Themis; Zeus Naïos, Dione, Themis; Zeus Naïos, Themis.

10 Cf. a dedication on a bronze votive wheel found in a portico (Carapanos 1878, 47, no. 19, pl. 26–1, building 7, cf. pl. 61); Tzouvara-Souli 1979, 55. The presence of Aphrodite at Dodona must be analysed together with that of Dione, as can be seen in a Cretan inscription from the second half of the 2nd century BCE (*DB MAP S#11517*); Guarducci 1935, XVI, 24, l. 1: Διὸς ὑψίστοιο καὶ εὐπλοκάμοιο Διώνης in which Zeus and Dione are mentioned as parents of Aphrodite.

11 The god is mentioned in several oracular texts (*I.Dodone Evangelidi* 224A, 565A, 1045A, 1299B, 2203B, 2726A, 2964B, 3671A). His presence is also suggested by the discovery of an archaic statuette engraved with a dedication to Zeus (cf. Lamb 1969, 88, pl. 34 d; Walter-Karydi 1981, 33; Alroth 1989, 76, no. 3, n. 450).

12 A fragment of Ephorus indicates that the Dodonean oracle advised its consultants to sacrifice to Acheloos (*FGrH* 70 F 20; cf. Parke 1967, 153–156).

13 According to Dakaris 1986, 53–54, Pyrrhos introduced the cult of Herakles in Dodona to honour the Argeades. *Contra* Alroth 1989, 74, n. 444.

14 Gartzou-Tatti 2020, 89–90 believes that priestesses of Artemis officiated at Dodona.

15 Pherecydes of Athens reports a tradition according to which Dionysos was raised by the Nymphs (Hyades) of Dodona who protected him from the wrath of Hera and taught him to cultivate the vine,

divine college, S.I. Dakaris proposed to attribute the *oikoi* of the sanctuary to many of these deities. This interpretation of the naomorph buildings as true dwellings of the deities should not be dismissed out of hand, but it is by no means self-evident, since the *oikoi* may just as well be consecrations offered by regional or international Greek states.¹⁶ The only building that is unquestionably a temple is the holy house (*hiera oikia*) mentioned in the literary sources,¹⁷ whose identification by S.I. Dakaris on the field is well-founded.¹⁸

1.1 Herodotus and the Pelasgic Melting Pot

In discussing Egyptian religion and detailing the gods that the Greeks adopted, Herodotus grants the Epirote sanctuary a fundamental role in his history or archaeology, in the Thucydidean sense, of Greek religion, based on a testimony collected at Dodona:¹⁹

Autrefois, à ce que j'ai entendu dire à Dodone, les Pélasges offraient tous les sacrifices en invoquant « des dieux », sans désigner aucun d'entre eux par un surnom ou par un nom ; car ils n'avaient encore entendu rien de pareil. Ils les avaient appelés ainsi [θεοὺς] en partant de cette considération que c'est pour avoir établi [θέντες] l'ordre dans l'univers que les dieux présidaient à la répartition de toutes les choses. Plus tard, au bout de beaucoup de temps, les Pélasges apprirent à connaître, venus d'Égypte, les noms des dieux autres que Dionysos (ils apprirent bien plus tard celui de Dionysos) ; un temps passa encore, et ils consultèrent sur ces noms à Dodone ; l'oracle de Dodone est regardé en effet comme le plus ancien qu'il y ait chez les Grecs, et il était le seul à cette époque. Les Pélasges demandèrent donc à Dodone s'ils adopteraient les noms qui venaient de chez les Barbares ; et l'oracle leur répondit d'en faire usage. À partir de là, ils sacrificèrent en utilisant les noms des dieux. Et les Grecs, ensuite, les reçurent d'eux.

It is thus to Dodona that the Greeks owe the break with an anonymous polytheism – a difficult expression if ever there was one, since the very notion of polytheism requires that *theoi* be named in order to be operative –, and the progression to a pantheon formed of divinities differentiated by gender, worship and onomastic interpellation. The transition is remarkable because it is not a new theogony, but rather a stratified

which he passed on to the Thebans on his arrival in Boeotia (*FGrH* 3 F 90; Parke 1967, 151). Dione is sometimes considered the mother of Dionysos (Scholia to Pi., P., 3, fr. 177).

¹⁶ Quantin 2008. *Contra* Mancini 2013.

¹⁷ Polybius is very precise on the Aetolian destruction of 219, which destroyed, among other things, the holy or sacred house of Zeus; but he does not mention other temples (4.67.3–4; one of the other passages that alludes to the Aetolian raid mentions the temples and *temenos* of Dodona and the sanctuary of Dion, but the wording of the sentence does not allow one to conclude on the number of temples at Dodona: 9.35.6). A set of six temples therefore seems incongruous.

¹⁸ Evangelidis/Dakaris, 1959.

¹⁹ 2.52. translation by Ph.-E. Legrand (CUF, 1930), revised by Pirenne-Delforge 2020, 77–78. In 2.53, Herodotus indicates the origin of his information: the priestesses of Dodona (αἱ Δωδωνίδες ἱρεῖαι λέγουσι), whose names he gives in 2.55: Προμένεια, Τιμαρέτη, and Νικάνδρη.

onomastic history of Greek religion, the first term of which would be delivered to us.²⁰ Dodona would thus bear witness to an ancient Pelasgic conception of the divine,²¹ undifferentiated, and would assume the onomastic “hellenization” of the Egyptian gods and found the validation by the gods themselves of their names. Following this text, Herodotus even shows how the oracle of Dodona is in actual fact an Egyptian oracle.²²

Between Homer and Herodotus, something new seems to appear at Dodona: doves and female cult operators. The relationship between these two novelties is a problem tackled by many scholars. H. W. Parke noted first of all that doves are linked with Zeus in Homer, and that the legend of the woodcutter Hellos, obviously the eponymous ancestor of the *Selloi/Helloi*, illustrates a close relationship between the oak and the birds that address the hero to dissuade him from felling the tree of Zeus.²³ R. Martin and H. Metzger’s answer to the same problem is as follows: “there was ultimately a confusion of the two traditions (oak-Zeus-*Selloi*, and doves-prophetesses) around the sacred tree and the association of the two representative deities of these two currents, Zeus and Dione”.²⁴ This briefly polarised history of the oracle is not admissible, because Herodotus does not testify to the presence of Dione at Dodona. Should we retain a chronological difference between the interpreters (*hypophetes*, Homer) and the doves (*peleiai*, Herodotus)? Or a functional difference? Could the *hypophetes* be the priests who ensure the cult and manage the oracle, and the *peleiai* the intermediaries necessary for the formulation of an oracular word? According to Herodotus, it is a woman who founds the oracle, but she is at first incomprehensible because she cannot speak Greek. H. W. Parke showed that doves become the oracular source in the literary evidence.²⁵ At the same time, Herodotus’ text is at the origin of a tradition that considers the *peleiai* to be the prophetesses of Zeus and therefore the term to designate a priestly reality.²⁶ Strabo even states that the word designates an elderly woman in the language of the Thesprotians and the Molossians.²⁷ It is therefore reasonable to think that the *peleiai* are the prophetesses of Zeus, then those of Zeus and Dione, and that the doves are the sacred animals of the god. The recent discovery of an epigraphic mention of a female *mantis* at Apollonia of Illyria in a list of ritual prescriptions, which is probably a response from the oracle of Dodona, pleads

20 For the whole passage, see Pirenne-Delforge 2020, 74–86.

21 “Antediluvian” in a way. Some mentions, the oldest of which dates from the 4th century BCE, attribute the foundation of Dodona to Deucalion. As at Delphi, the aim is to age the history of the oracle (cf. Parke 1967, 41–42, n. 16; 44).

22 Hdt, 2.54–56.

23 Parke 1967, 34–35.

24 Martin/Metzger 1992, 22.

25 Parke 1967, 64. Cf. for instance, D.H., 1.14.5.

26 Cf. Gartzziou-Tatti 2020.

27 7, fr. Ia.

in favour of the existence of a seeress.²⁸ In any case, reflections on the oracular staff, which, without clearly formulating it, often assign a genre to mythical-cultic concatenations (oak-*hypophetes*-Zeus, doves-*peleiai*-Dione) cannot directly determine the historical understanding of Dodona.

1.2 The Equivocal Sharing of Sovereignty: From Homonymy to Cohabitation and the Status of “Divinity Sitting Beside” (*Paredros*)

Naios is not the only *epiklesis* of Zeus at Dodona. Hesychius reports that the god is also called Tmarios, after the mountain that dominates the sanctuary to the east²⁹ and for Strabo the priests of Zeus are the *Tomouroi*.³⁰ The link between Zeus and the mountain may be ancient, but it is not precisely datable. In the bouleuterion, S. I. Dakaris discovered a rectangular altar engraved with the dedication of Charops son of Machatas, Thesprotian Opatos, to Zeus Na(i)os, Dione and Zeus Bouleus (Διὶ Νάωι καὶ Διώναι καὶ Διὶ Βουλεῖ).³¹ The second *epiklesis* of Zeus is appropriate to the location, and perhaps also to the difficulties of Epirus in the late third century. The religious interest of this inscription is the double mention of Zeus, Naïos and Bouleus. It shows that in Epirus, Zeus is Naïos, the resident etymologically,³² only in his sanctuary, or even in his temple, which makes it possible to measure to what extent the *epiklesis* is not only local but also topical. The consultants often ask the god for advice, help in making a decision, rather than a revelation of the future.³³ This inscription makes it possible to establish an articulate association between the Zeus of Dodona and the god Bouleus or Soter who appears on the Epirote agoras in the 3rd century BCE.

The bronze figurines from Dodona represent a Zeus Keraunobolos, a god of lightning and more broadly of atmospheric phenomena. The eagle is associated with the fire of the sun and the thunderbolt of Zeus, but also has a kourotrophic value for the young Zeus, and, according to A. Gartziou-Tatti, facilitates communication between

28 CGRN 40, side A and Gartziou-Tatti 2020, 91. For Strabo, the priests of Dodona were exclusively men until the introduction of the cult of Dione: prophetesses then replaced the *hypophetes* mentioned by Homer (7.7.12; cf. Delcourt 1947, 54). The reconstruction comes up against the testimony of Herodotus, who ignores Dione, while his interlocutors are priestesses.

29 S.v. Τμᾱριος; Ζεὺς ἐν Δωδώνῃ.

30 7.7.11. Cf. Parke 1967, 15–16 for the analysis of the passage.

31 Cabanes 1976 (no. 18), 548, and 258–259 for the political role of Charops the Elder and the dating of the inscription between 215 and 210. Cf. *IMolossie* 64. The Thesprotian Charops belongs to the *ethnos* of the *Opatoi* or *Opatai*.

32 Lhôte 2006, 407–420.

33 “An aid to decision making”, as the late Georges Rougemont humorously put it during his seminars on Greek oracles at the Maison de l’Orient et de la Méditerranée, taking up an expression that flourishes on the flyers distributed by magi or marabouts.

heaven and earth, between gods and men.³⁴ The author also shows that doves play the same role for the adult Zeus by bringing him *ambrosia*. The bronze snake offerings reveal, rather than a chthonic value of Zeus, a domestic competence of the god; he would then be close to the god Ktesios and Herkeios who protects the home and the family;³⁵ like Homer's Achilles, Pindar indeed calls the Zeus of Dodona *pater*.³⁶ Nevertheless, the main *epiklesis* of the god, in the internal economy of the sanctuary, as well as outside, is Naïos, or Dodonaïos, attested about twenty times in the oracular questions. Despite the uncertainties linked to the large number of incomplete texts, some trends emerge. On the one hand, Zeus Naïos may be the sole recipient of the questions, but, more often, Dione is associated with him in an onomastic sequence of the type τὸν Δία τὸν Νάϊον καὶ τὸν Διώναν. On the other hand, Dione is very rarely Naia,³⁷ and she does not necessarily and formerly belong to the group of divinities sharing the same temple (θεοὶ σύνναοι) mentioned by an oracular text.³⁸ But it is certain that she is welcomed later in the *naos* of Zeus Naïos as shown in a text by Strabo.³⁹ Nevertheless, it cannot be excluded that a temple was dedicated to her in the 1st century BCE.⁴⁰ Another epigraphic testimony discovered in Dodona recalls the donation of cultivated plots to Dione by Symmachos.⁴¹

As W. Pötscher notes, the etymological relationship between Zeus and Dione – the name of the goddess is formed on the genitive of the male theonym – forms a divine pairing that is unfamiliar to the Greek religion.⁴² But 'Dione' could be an ancient feminine nominative that has fallen into disuse. Nevertheless, it is very likely that Zeus

34 Gartziou-Tatti 1990, 178–179 (doves participate in the same role as the eagle); according to the author, “l'aigle symbolise également la transition du stade de la nourriture sauvage au stade marqué par la présence et l'emploi du feu”.

35 Cf. Pirenne-Delforge 2020, 202–203. See also Brulé 2007, chapter 18.

36 This aspect of Zeus is far from the one that É. Lhôte assigns to the god (Lhôte 2006, XI: “Zeus était un dieu infernal”; 429: Zeus Naïos and Dione are “dieux d'en bas”).

37 No occurrence in the *LDodone Evangelidi*. In *LDodone Lhôte*, the only occurrences are a very restored inscription by S.I. Dakaris (no. 24: [Ζεῦ Νάϊε καὶ Διώνᾳ Να]ία κτλ) and a vocative address (no. 94: ὦ Ζεῦ καὶ Θέμι καὶ Διώνᾳ Ναῖοι κτλ in a very singular text; cf. Cabanes 1976, 333). Note that in both cases other deities are part of the college of oracular powers, a rare fact in the Dodonean tablets. One cannot infer from these facts that Dione is officially Naia at Dodona.

38 Cabanes 1976, 550, no. 24: the text mentions Zeus, Dione and the *theoi sunnaoi*.

39 Str., 7.7.12 (R. Baladié, *CUF*, 1989, 150): after her arrival at the sanctuary, Dione becomes *sunnaos* of Zeus: “Plus tard furent désignées pour cette tâche [*prophétiser*] trois vieilles femmes en même temps que Dionè était désignée pour être associée à Zeus et partager son temple”.

40 Cf. the dedication of “king” Zeniketes engraved on a strigil: Peek 1978 and Lhôte 2006, 418. The use of the word *naos* at Dodona is remarkable, but this text cannot be exploited for ancient times.

41 Cabanes 1976, 492, and 592, no. 77.

42 Pötscher 1966, 136. See now Lhôte 2006, 420. For Bouché-Leclercq 1880, 291, the name of Zeus' pare-dra at Dodona is formed on the name of the god, but also on his *epiklesis*, i.e. on the sequence Zeus Naïos, which gives *Dia Naia*, Diona, which linguists do not confirm.

precedes Dione in Dodona,⁴³ and that she therefore “proceeds” from Zeus. The scholars who define her as a “goddess of fertility, mistress of the waters and of life”⁴⁴ compensate for a lack of information with the hypothesis of the ancient pre-eminence of a primitive feminine divinity at the origin of the great sanctuaries; they also draw on the more or less clearly asserted identity between the Earth of Pausanias’ hymn and Dione.⁴⁵ The Zeus/Dione couple surely took on a paredric and matrimonial meaning; but is this an ancient interpretation of the couple? The etymological relationship between Zeus and Dione first gives the impression of a duplication of the divine function, of the differentiation by gender of a primitive divine power. The proponents of a high antiquity of Dione may be right, but they rely on the cult of the goddess at Dodona to prove it: the evidence for the antiquity of the cult of Dione in Greece will probably have to be sought elsewhere.

From the prayer of the *Pythia* of Delphi in the prologue of Aeschylus’ *Eumenides* to the present day, a certain historiography places a primordial female divinity at the origin of the great Greek sanctuaries, according to various historical reconstructions. The most recent one is the postulate of a matriarchy at the origin of Mediterranean or European societies, which establishes a link between Dione, her daughter Aphrodite and the *peleiai*. In fact, it is not at all certain that Dione belongs to the ancient phase of the sanctuary, whatever her possible association with the doves may be. Absent or not mentioned at Dodona by Homer and Herodotus, she does not appear in the oldest oracular lead tablets. She is the consort of Zeus at Dodona, as shown by a fragment by Apollodorus found in a *scholium* to the *Odyssey* III, 91 that affirms the identity of Dione and Hera for the Dodonians. But she is not an ancient deity of the sanctuary, and it remains unprovable that she was preceded by an earth-goddess, just as it is impossible to demonstrate that the *peleiai* are her animals, *a fortiori* when one invokes iconographic testimonies of the Bronze Age and of Aegean origin in this regard. Dione, at Dodona, is not a goddess of birds, which were hosted in the sanctuary long before her, and most probably owe her nothing, and she can be considered a sort of female Zeus.

1.3 A Misunderstood Dione in the Imperial Era

In 1987, Pierre Cabanes made known several dedications in Greek engraved on altars in Nikopolis which attest to the assimilation of the emperor Hadrian, August (*Sebastos*) and Olympian (Olympios), to Zeus Dodonaios,⁴⁶ and of Sabina, *Sebaste* from 128,

⁴³ Quantin 2008, 40.

⁴⁴ Gartzou-Tatti 1990, 183, who chooses the Oceanid.

⁴⁵ 10.12.10. This text is often exploited, wrongly, to equate Dione with Earth, and to age the presence of Dione in Dodona.

⁴⁶ Cabanes 1987. Cf. now *I.Molossie* 271: Αὐτοκρ[άτορι Τραῖα]-|νῶι Ἀδρια[νῶι Σε]βαστ[ῶι] | Ὀλυμπίωι Διὶ Δωδωναί[ωι]; no. 272: [—] | [—] | [—] | [Σ]εβαστ[ῶι] | [Ο]λυμπίωι Διὶ | Δωδωναίωι; no. 273: Αὐ-

to Artemis Kelkaia.⁴⁷ There is probably a local reasoning behind this enigmatic *epiklesis* since the epithet, attested in Arrian, seems to be built on a toponym from the region.⁴⁸ In any case, in the first half of the second century AD, the two great deities in the nikopolitan union of the surrounding populations into one city-state (*sunioikismos*) are Zeus Dodonaïos – it should be noted that it is not the Dodonean *epiklesis* of Zeus, Naïos, that is being invoked here – and Artemis Kelkaia, i.e. two Pan-Hellenic deities, whose *epikleseis* marks in this case the regional (Dodonaïos), in the broad sense, and undoubtedly the very local (Kelkaia) anchorage. These documents are of religious and cultic interest on a local scale – they specifically attest to the existence of sanctuaries of Zeus Dodonaïos and Artemis Kelkaia in Nikopolis in the second century – as well as, more generally, to the imperial religious ideology of that period.⁴⁹

The epithet Dodonaïos insists on the venerable, regional and Homeric character of the god, better than the *epiklesis* Naïos, whose topical value assigns the god to residence in his sacred house.⁵⁰ What is remarkable, as Pierre Cabanes notes, is that Sabine is not assimilated to Dione, as she can be in Athens to Hera Panhellenia: we observe the construction of a complementary opposition between a sovereign and universal masculine divinity – these qualities come to amplify in some way that of Olympios acquired by Hadrian⁵¹ –, and a feminine divinity, certainly Panhellenic, but here qualified by a local *epiklesis* which refers directly to the Nikopolitan *sunioikismos*. Artemis is frequently present on the reverse of Nikopolitan coins in Hadrian's time. This historical perspective shows, however, that Dione no longer has the capacity to emancipate herself from the Epirote *hieron*, and is no longer considered the unquestionable goddess of Dodonean Zeus.

Another regional paredra is remarkable. In Butrint, the ancient Bouthrotos, Kassianos, addresses Pan, founder or driver of mysteries (*Teletarches*), on the one hand, and Pasa on the other.⁵² We can find some parallels of *teletai* driven by some deity, but Pasa, a theonym well established by the reading of the inscription, does not seem

τοκράτο|ρι Καίσαρι | Ἀδριανῶι | Σεβαστῶι | Ὀλυμπίῳι | Διὶ Δωδωναίῳι; no. 274: Αὐτοκράτορι | Καίσαρι Τραϊανῶι Ἀδριανῶι | Σεβαστῶι Ὀλυμπίῳι Διὶ | Δωδωναίῳι.

47 Cabanes 1987, 156–158, on these texts, which are not dedications by Sabina to Artemis, but honours paid at the dative to Sabina Augusta Artemis Kelkaia (four altars bearing the same text, perfectly legible on two copies: Σαβείνῃ | Σεβαστῇ | Ἀρτέμιδι | Κελκαίᾳ).

48 Cabanes 1987, 161 (epigraphic evidence of a place called *Kelkaion* in the region of Nikopolis, or in Nikopolis, seat of a sanctuary of a goddess served by a priestess).

49 It is common for emperors to be associated with the main deities of a city (Camia 2018, 116–117), as evidenced by the inscriptions from Nikopolis.

50 Quantin 2008, 30.

51 Hadrian's Olympian and Dodonean epithets also bring together two mountains dedicated to Zeus on either side of the Balkan isthmus, *Olympus* and *Tomaros*.

52 Cabanes 1988; Quantin 2005.

to be otherwise attested and could constitute a strangeness, a play on divine words⁵³ or even a graceful joke.⁵⁴ This unprecedented onomastic paredria nevertheless takes on a consistency through two channels: the onomastic and cultic pairings of Italic religious culture,⁵⁵ but also the Greek examples of Dione and Ποσιδαῖα⁵⁶ and the iconographic existence of a singular Paniske, which can rightly and henceforth be called Pasa.⁵⁷

These religious configurations composed of onomastic paredria, well known to linguists, have probably not been studied enough by historians and archaeologists.⁵⁸ They have the formal characteristics of conjugality, and were interpreted or misinterpreted as such, without any systemic spirit by the Ancients, but their creation, whether ancient or recent, evokes above all the idea of an onomastic formulation in mirror form, in the feminine and masculine, of a divine power. It is not, therefore, a gendered duplication of a primitively neutral or anonymous expression of *theoi*, but a pairing aimed at a completeness that formulates, above all, the extent of divine sovereignty. In the case of Zeus and Dione, jovian omnipotence probably played an important role. Still, let us note that in the Greek cases under consideration – Zeus/Dione, Poseidon/Ποσιδαῖα, Pan/Pasa – onomastics seem to theoretically establish a parity, or at least a pairing, but the historical reality is quite different, since Dione is introduced in Dodona as the wife of Zeus, as Ποσιδαῖα falls into disuse after the erasure of the Mycenaean culture, and Pasa existed but without somehow managing to truly exist.

These gendered geminations,⁵⁹ which are not very frequent in ancient Greece and are better attested in the Roman world,⁶⁰ are manifested in divine onomastics, of which they constitute singular patterns. Inherited from a theonymic practice that goes back to the Bronze Age, they are re-semantised by the incessant modelling of divine figures. The Illyro-Epirotic confines also allow for a reflection on another gendered divine gemination, which, if not a true gemellity, is genealogical: that of Artemis and Apollo, children of the gemelliparous Leto.

53 Pl., *Cra.*, 408 c-d. The “All”, as it were, must be formulated in both the feminine and the masculine.

54 Cf. Bonnet (ed.) 2021, 367–368.

55 Petersmann 1986, 81, believes that the duplication of names, or the use of double names, one feminine, the other masculine, is an Indo-European practice.

56 Doyen 2011, 240–241 which establishes that the feminine theonym means “She who belongs to Poseidon”, as Δῖψα is “She of Zeus” (256). The status of these two female deities as goddesses would therefore not date back to the Bronze Age.

57 Quantin 2005; cf. Montbel 2020 for a similar survey about centauresses.

58 With the exception of Pironti 2013. See also Bettini 2017.

59 Formulation proposed by Gabriella Pironti in Toulouse.

60 A thesis currently being written by Éléonore Montbel will soon offer a synthesis on the subject.

2 Colonial Divine Configurations: Artemis and Apollo in a Mirror

In a certain number of Greek cities,⁶¹ including Athens of course, the hierarchy between the *theoi* is formulated by a mythical discourse relating a competition, the outcome of which is inscribed in the cult topography. This competition can take the form of a contest, an agonistic *drama*, the winner of which acquires what we call the quality of poliad deity. A Panhellenic sanctuary like Delphi is no exception, this test being held between Apollo and Dionysus. In the cities of colonial origin in north-western Greece – as probably elsewhere in the Greek world, for I do not believe that this is a regional singularity – the situation is different, because the sources do not testify to the promotion of a main deity, but rather to a thorough reflection on two different kinds of deities, Artemis and Apollo, associated in mirror image.⁶²

2.1 Apollonian Artemis

Artemis is the first deity of the Apollonians. She appears to be versatile and present everywhere from the very beginning of the civic community. While she is not eponymous like her brother Apollo, she could be considered here, like her brother, a poliad deity – according to the traditional use of the expression –, the one who is honoured more than others by the community whose piety she seems to mark deeply, even if no *logos* supports this idea, and even if she does not bear the *epikleseis* Polias or Poliouchos⁶³ in Apollonia or anywhere else, for that matter.

The Apollonian epithets of Artemis are Agrota, Soteira, Adrastea, Limnatis and Proskopa.⁶⁴ Four dedicators address the goddess as Agrota, the most frequent epithet. The form of the *epiklesis* is peculiar, but its meaning is of course close to that of the epithet Agrotera, which is commonly used to describe Artemis in the Greek world.⁶⁵ We are used to translating the *epiklesis* as ‘huntress’, *Jagdgöttin*, a meaning which the word indeed gradually takes on in post-Homeric literature, but ἀγρότερος, derived in *-teros* from *agros*, refers more directly to the wild animals that live in *agros* and to

⁶¹ The following reflections were proposed in my *Habilitation* dossier, entitled *Investigations into Greco-Roman Polytheism and Ancient Societies in the Central Mediterranean (Greece, Albania and Italy)*, directed by Corinne Bonnet, and defended in 2014.

⁶² Cf. Aurigny/Durvy 2021 whose contributions and conclusions renew the subject.

⁶³ In Bonnet (ed.) 2021, 356–361, Pierre Brulé (“Athéna-Artémis. Tentative d’esquisse de deux sœurs par leurs épicleses mêmes”) entitles his concluding remarks: “Pourquoi n’existe-t-il aucune Artémis Polias ?” Is this an invariant of Greek polytheism?

⁶⁴ Quantin 2004.

⁶⁵ In the MAP database there are 40 entries for *Agrotera* (the search in the MAP Database was carried out the 19th June 2023). See Giuseppetti 2022.

that space itself, and is thus different from both *agreus* – hunter, according to an erroneous etymology but attested in antiquity from capture, *agra* – and from *agrotès/agrotis* (countryman).⁶⁶ Since Homer, Artemis Agrotera has been armed with a bow and slaughters wild animals but also women whom she kills like a lioness. The dedication to Artemis Proskopa was engraved during the imperial period when a building dedicated to the goddess was restored, and it is the only objective evidence of the existence of a temple to Artemis in Apollonia. Artemis is a watchwoman, the guardian of Apollonia, located on a hill in the city or its immediate surroundings. The surveillance exercised by the goddess is also a protection, one of the important functions of the “Poliad/tutelary deity”.

The numerous representations of the goddess compose a complex and abundant portrait that can be cross-referenced with epigraphic evidence. No dedication has been preserved on an iconographically complete stele, except that of Artemis Adrastea, which is atypical since the goddess adopts the posture of Cybele. Nevertheless, the collection of data reveals associations between the various iconographic features and the inscriptions. The presence of a dog, the wearing of the tunic (*chiton*), the frontal and standing position are not discriminating criteria because they are frequent. As a matter of fact, these features make up the iconographic background of the Apollonian Artemis. The three dedications to Artemis Agrota show the goddess with a kind of spear or stake and the dog, but without the bun (*crobylos*). These trends allow us to distinguish two iconographic patterns that emerge from the common hunting iconography:

- a. Artemis armed with a stake, accompanied by a greyhound and most often with her left hand on her hip. This type is attested on coins from the Roman period in Apollonia and it is reasonable to think that it corresponds to an Apollonian cult statue that dates back at least to the Hellenistic period. It is most likely the type of the goddess Agrota (Fig. 1).
- b. Artemis equipped with a torch and armed with a bow and quiver, occasionally accompanied by a dog and almost always wearing a *crobylos*. Her weapons show that she kills from afar, unlike the Agrota who uses thrusting weapons. According to numerous parallels, the combination of the torch and the hunting outfit makes it possible to identify Artemis Soteira, if we agree with the idea of a correspondence between iconographic and onomastic type (Fig. 2).

These two Artemis, or rather these two iconographic polarities that distinguish the Soteira from the Agrota-Agrotera without mechanical rigour – for it goes without saying that some stelae disturb this fragile construction and compose intermediate types – do not constitute two different aspects of the goddess, but two complementary cynegetic attitudes that participate in a very ancient aspect of Artemis. Along with the hunting and torch-bearing (*dadophoros*) dimensions, another element common to the whole series is the frontal position of divinity “standing before” (*theos prostaterios*).

⁶⁶ Mauduit 1994, in particular 62–67.

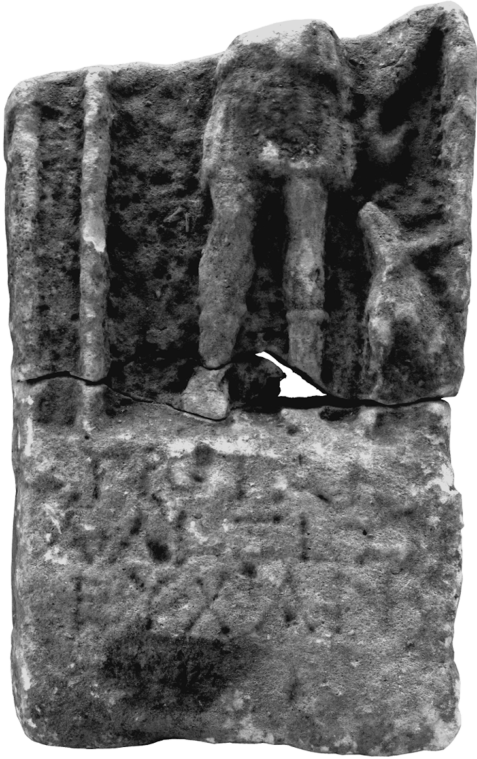


Fig. 1: Dedication of Alexiôn to [Artemis] Agrota (*I.Apollonia Illyrie* 13).



Fig. 2: Dedication to Artemis (Bonjakët shrine in the vicinity of Apollonia : now, J. L. Davis, Sh. R. Stocker, I. Pojani, V. Dimo (eds), *A Sanctuary in the Hora of Illyrian Apollonia. Excavations at the Bonjakët Site (2004–2006)*, University of Cincinnati, 2022, p. 447–448).

2.2 Apollo of Apollonia

Phoibos Apollo is the founder of the *polis* (*oikistes*), the eponymous and the great god of the Apollonian state. The epigraphic mention of the god with unshorn hair (*akersekomas*),⁶⁷ a literary commonplace dating back to Homer, is consistent with the iconography of the *crobulos* god on coins and statuary and evokes the cultic horizon of Apollo Delphinios, the god who protects youths in Athens during the Apatouries festival in *Pyanopsion*. The omnipresence of Apollo on coins is remarkable. When Apollonia started to mint coins at the beginning of the second half of the 4th century BCE, it issued Pegasus coins of Corinthian type, then staters of Corcyraean type at the beginning of the 3rd century, but also bronzes, including a series with the name of Apollo in the genitive, followed by a series with the name of the Apollonians in the plural genitive, as is usual.⁶⁸ The presence of the name of the god in the genitive on the first bronzes issued by the city illustrates the importance of the cult of Apollo in Apollonia in an exemplary way thanks to the official character of the source and, in a way, rebalances the documentary situation that quantitatively privileges the honours paid to Artemis. It should also be noted that the three epigraphic sources concerning Apollo, like the monetary issue quoted above, emanate from the Apollonian state and that no testimony of private or individual piety is attested for Apollo.

On the other hand, Apollo is the eponymous god of the city. He expresses the collective memory of the community, built by a singular society – the Apollonians who live on the shores of the Ionian Sea – inscribed in a vast cultural and cultic Corinthian and Hellenic ensemble.⁶⁹ Finally, on the coins, whether the genitive indicates provenance or belonging, the link between the issue in question and the god is strong and not only passes through the political or legal dimension: the coins belong to the god or were minted thanks to the metal owned by the god. We should understand the coins to be “of Apollo” or “of the Apollonians” ([νόμισμα] Ἀπόλλωνος, or [νόμισμα] Ἀπολλωνιατᾶν) and not a dedication ([ἀνάθημα] Ἀπόλλωνος): the coins are not offerings dedicated to Apollo, but goods from the god’s treasury, and they illustrate, much later in the history of Greek coinage, the link that is observed elsewhere and often earlier between the deity or sanctuary and the first development of coinage.

The iconography of Apollo is common and marked by continuity. The representation of his indisputable symbols must be added to the figurations of Apollo on coins, which are the Delphic tripod, one or three obelisks, the zither, the quiver and arrows, and of course the laurel. The god *akersekomas*, conqueror and founder according to his frequent function of *archegetes* perhaps evoked by the Severian coins in the form

⁶⁷ *I.Apollonia Illyrie* 303.

⁶⁸ Regarding coins, where Apollo and his attributes or symbols are frequent, and where the very name of the god appears on bronze issues from the early 3rd century BCE, (Ἀπόλλωνος), read Gjongej/Picard 2007.

⁶⁹ Quantin 2012.

of an episode of foundation myth, eponymous, guarantor of the publicity given to the decrees of the city, is the true emblematic deity of the Apollonian state.⁷⁰

Apollo is thus essentially a founding and colonial god who evolves in a historical and organised space, which (re)determines both the past of the colony (*apoikia*) by reformulating the story of the origins of the city founded earlier by the human Gylax and the urban geometry by inspiring its orthogonal town planning.⁷¹ It is therefore not surprising that, unlike his sister, he did not take possession of the geographical and topographical space: he probably has fewer places of worship than Artemis. There is no dedication to Apollo, a fact that can be interpreted in two ways: the area of the *Apollonion* was not explored or was methodically destroyed; Apollo probably acts at another level of religious reality, not more abstract, but more political and emblematic, which his functions as founder and eponymous deity affirm in another way.

2.3 The Question of the Poliad Deity

At first glance, there is a family resemblance in the Corinthian and Corinthian-Corcyrean colonies, due in part to the unexpected preponderance of Artemis. Her brother Apollo is not absent of course, but better installed from now on in his archaic temple in Corinth,⁷² perfectly housed in Syracuse where a large doric *naos* is dedicated to him in Ortygia, in Ambrakia where the late archaic temple of Pyrrhos Street most probably belongs to him as Soter,⁷³ and well off in Apollonia of Illyria, where the cult of the eponymous god is attested by epigraphy and coins.⁷⁴ The conical column of the god (*aguieus*) is also well known in Corcyra from the archaic period, in Apollonia, in Ambrakia and in other communities of north-western Greece (Fig. 3).⁷⁵ The Apollo *akersekomas* of the Delian part of the *Homeric Hymn* and of the dedication of the Apollonians in Olympia after their victory over the city of Thronion around the middle of the 5th century BCE,⁷⁶ could be the same as that of Ortygia-Syracuse, close to Artemis, that is, a young and conquering god.

⁷⁰ The Apollonian contribution to the reconstruction of the temple of the god at Delphi in the fourth century also testifies to the favour of the god in his eponymous city (*I.Apollonia Illyrie* 305; Bousquet 1988, 123–124).

⁷¹ Quantin 2011a.

⁷² A fragment of a terracotta *pinax*, discovered in 1902 but since then unpublished, is painted with a text in which the name of Apollo has been reasonably restored (Bookidis/Stroud 2004).

⁷³ Cf. *Kernos* 20, 2007, 337–338. On the deities of Ambrakia, analysed in a full historical context, see Fantasia 2011.

⁷⁴ A decree of the Apollonians discovered at Magnesia of the Meander states that the inscription must be displayed in the *ἱερὸν τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος* (cf. *I.Apollonia Illyrie* 315, l. 51).

⁷⁵ Cf. Fehrentz 1993 and Quantin 2011a.

⁷⁶ Cf. Castiglioni 2003; Antonetti 2010.



Fig. 3: The discovery of an *aguius* of Apollo in the Roman monumental centre of Apollonia (archaeological archives of Léon Rey).

Like Syracuse, each of the great western Corinthian colonies, Corcyra, Epidamnos, Apollonia and in its own way Ambrakia, is a bed of the goddess (δέμνιον Ἀρτέμιδος) to use Pindar's word,⁷⁷ irrespective of the history of relations between the daughter cities and Corinth. A soteriological legend in Ambrakia gives her a clear hegemonic and tutelary dimension. In Athanadas, she puts an end to the tyrant's savagery and helps Apollo in his work of pacifying the city, killing Phalaikos in a forest: from Agrotera, causing panic and terror, she becomes Hegemone, leading and protecting the city and the civic community.⁷⁸ Artemis, especially as Agrotera, is a warrior goddess and often inspires cunningness in combatants to win.⁷⁹ This aspect of the kourotrophic goddess is linked to ephebic activities.⁸⁰ This evolution from accompanying the education of young girls or female life to social life and the protection of the integrity of the city's territory is not surprising.⁸¹ In Ambrakia, Artemis kills the tyrant on the borders of the territory (*eschatiai*) by means of an animal ruse and contributes to re-establishing the traditional good order (*eunomia*) in the heart of the city; the goddess is thus concerned with the activities of the political agora, especially when they are linked to the theme of the community's survival. Here, Artemis is not the goddess of

⁷⁷ Pi., N., 1.3.

⁷⁸ Ant.Lib., Met., 4.

⁷⁹ Ellinger 1984, 63–67, who reminds us that the Athenian victories at Marathon and Salamis were dedicated to Artemis.

⁸⁰ Pelekidis 1962, 219–220.

⁸¹ To be analysed in the context of the regional status of women in the Hellenistic period, cf. Cabanes 2010.

the outside world, nor is she only or very anciently a deity of the margins. She is one of the first deities to be given a plot in the heart of the colonial city.

Artemis is a saving and communal divinity, rather than a strictly political one, deeply colonial – despite some vain attempts to make her an ancient assimilated “indigenous” divinity –, without being metropolitan. In the eighth century, as in the seventh century, under Bacchiades or Kypselides obedience, she of course left with the Corinthian colonists, since she belonged to the Pan-Hellenic pantheon from very early on, without nevertheless being an emblematic deity of the Corinthian cultic culture. As Artemis is not profoundly Corinthian, she more easily becomes a colonial deity, capable of protecting the community against the *stasis* and hostility of the “natives”, erected at the centre of the city as the topographic articulation between the urban space and the territory.⁸²

According to the traditional approach, who would be the poliad deity of Apollonia, Apollo or Artemis? The answer would vary according to the documentation: it is the eponym according to the monetary iconography, the public epigraphic sources, with the exception of an inscription from the late archaic period;⁸³ it is Artemis according to the epigraphy and votive iconographic sources, as well as the rare reliable data on the cult topography of Apollonia. Let us note that the question is probably not relevant here. Everything points to Apollo being the god of the state and the main actor of national history, turned towards the citizens and the foreigner, and Artemis being a power acting in society and the territory, attentive to the members and the rules of the community. A divine emblem that anchors the city in Hellenism – the Pythian and Corinthian god – and a powerful sovereign goddess, not, or not only, Ulrich von Wilamowitz Moellendorff's *Herrin des Draußen*, but a deity firmly established in the heart of the city. The two patron deities of Apollonia offer a very good example of the distinction made by Corinne Bonnet and Vinciane Pirenne-Delforge “entre ce qui se passait à l'intérieur de la communauté des citoyens et l'image qu'ils voulaient donner d'eux-mêmes à l'extérieur”.⁸⁴ The Apollonian data allows us to establish two ideas on this subject: the notion of poliad deity is imperfectly adapted to ancient reality and its heuristic value is limited to questioning, and it can therefore rightly be abandoned as a principle structuring Greek polytheism; the expression “tutelary deity” is, on the other hand, relevant on the condition that its uniqueness is excluded from its definition. This plurality of tutelary deities is twofold: one is chronological, because the group of tutelary deities is not static since it is composed by the local history of the deities and not by an authority fixing the important deities of the community by decree; the other is cultic, because several deities claim this religious quality in Apollonia, with Artemis and Apollo in the first rank. In the plural, the ex-

⁸² Quantin 2011b.

⁸³ *I.Apollonia Illyrie* 2 and 1, inscriptions that actually belong in this sequence to the same text, cf. Quantin 2017, 116.

⁸⁴ Bonnet/Pirenne-Delforge 2013, 214 and 224.

pression tutelary deities allows us to give new vigour to the notion of an epichoric pantheon⁸⁵ by identifying a small group of gods, goddesses or heroes and heroines who locally control the main lines of force of the divine society.⁸⁶

The two *theoi* do not in fact evolve in the same space.⁸⁷ One circulates in society, logically diversifying and meeting other deities; her more static than hieratic representations should not be misleading: the goddess is mobile, accompanying and motivating a religious dynamic that remains difficult to grasp. Apollo, essentially Pythian, is a *theos* in representation, an emblematic actor of history, linked to the collective and political memory of the Apollonians. From a methodological point of view, it seems interesting to observe the impact on the documentation of the difference between Artemis and Apollo in Apollonia: while it is futile to ask which the main or poliad divinity is, the difference in the level of intervention of the two divinities, added to the *fatum* of the discoveries, makes one of them apparently omnipresent and the other falsely culturally discreet. Ancient cities or peoples were not necessarily devoted to one main deity, an idea undoubtedly based on the exceptional case of Athens or Demeter in Sicily, and perhaps also on a surreptitious influence of the monotheistic model and the difficulties we have in understanding the polytheisms of the ancient Mediterranean.

In their own way, these themes raise the difficult question of mirror effects between human and divine societies,⁸⁸ but it seems to me that they are above all an opportunity to observe two constructions of divine assemblages that share the articulation of two pairs of deities associating the masculine and the feminine. On opposite sides of a sort of distorting mirror, in Dodona, these two products of polytheistic syntax and deployment are founded on a common onomastic root of Zeus and Dione, which establishes a *paredria* and a co-residence of the two divinities,⁸⁹ and in Apollonia, they exploit the acquired gemellity of Artemis and Apollo, who do not seem to share a sanctuary, but whose singular efficiencies complement each other in order to assume a common role of tutelary deity. The twin composition of a colonial Apollonian pantheon is in particular an opportunity to reflect on the structuring of divine

⁸⁵ See, for example, Labarre 2004.

⁸⁶ See the interesting reflections of Beck 2020, 121–160.

⁸⁷ I do not discuss here the astrological or astronomical aspects of the association of Apollo-sun and Artemis-moon, which are probably of importance, at least from the imperial period onwards. This is echoed at the beginning of Dante's Song XXIX of Paradise (verses 1–3), in which Beatrice discusses creation and the angels: "Quando ambedue li figli di Latona, coperti del Montone e de la Libra, fanno de l'orizzonte insieme zona", verses explained by Pasquale Porro thus: "il vient un court moment où le zénith (le point le plus élevé de la sphère céleste) les [Artémis et Apollon] tient en parfait équilibre" (Carlo Ossola ed., Paris, 2021, Gallimard, 1330–1331).

⁸⁸ Pironti 2013, 159–160 points out the discrepancies between the two societies, except for the subordination to a superior male power, Zeus.

⁸⁹ Pironti 2013, 166 considers that "par rapport à Zeus, Héra est l'autre et le plus proche"; one could similarly write here that Dione is the same as Zeus and the closest to the ruler of Olympus.

configurations whose dynamic seems neither to be hierarchical nor anarchic, but rather linked to a functional and topographical distribution of divine sovereignty. Beyond the anthropomorphic fiction of conjugality and twinship, it is clear that the divine ontology, which includes an ability to appear both masculine and feminine – Athena being the best example –, prevails over gender and the nature of the relationships between the associated deities. Let us add that Zeus and Hera illustrate both the conjugal model and the brotherhood. It should also be noted that the Dodonean and Apollonian cases discussed here are marked by the central and sovereign figure of Zeus.

In the case of Zeus and Dione, it seems to me that we observe a complementarity: Dione increases the jovian competences, as an onomastic equivalent of Zeus, which gives the false impression of a pairing or duplication, expressed in the anthropomorphic form of a couple. In the case of Artemis and Apollo, complementarity is also effective, but it is achieved by distributing the spaces of evolution, the fields of action, with the same objective: the survival and defence of the civic community. These pairs of *theoi* do not constitute simple pairings of masculine and feminine, nor are they an attempt to express the divine in an asexual manner, but they establish an onomastic and cultic formulation of the divine power that is declined in the feminine and the masculine, within the framework of a complementary assemblage that guarantees the effectiveness of the cultic address.

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