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## *Bust Thymiateria from Olbia Pontike*

Tetiana M. Shevchenko

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- 1 Terracotta female busts supporting cup-thymiateria on their heads are best known in south Italian examples of the Hellenistic period. A cup in the shape of a flower, such as a lotus, was attached to the heads of these busts and was used for burning incense, or *thymiam*, during religious practices. While some bust thymiateria appeared at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. in Olynthus and Halicarnassos,<sup>1</sup> the greatest number have been found in Italy, where they occurred first at Posdeidonia in the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. and subsequently spread throughout southern Italy. They also were taken up by Alexandrian and East Greek coroplasts, who produced them from the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries,<sup>2</sup> while several similar “terracottas with cups” are known from Myrmekion in the Crimea.<sup>3</sup> It is worth noting that in many ancient Greek centers bust thymiateria acquire their most particular form and iconography in the Hellenistic period, as we can see in examples from Gordion and Amisos in Asia Minor.<sup>4</sup> However, the presence of bust thymiateria at Black Sea sites has been questioned by some scholars, who contend that such terracotta types were never produced outside of Italy at all.<sup>5</sup>
- 2 This contention has encouraged me to present to the archaeological community a series of female terracotta busts from Olbia Pontike that served as cup-thymiateria, unfortunately preserved only in fragments. Some 20 fragments of possibly 17 examples were brought to light during excavations directed by L. M. Slavin at Olbia from the 1940s to the 1960s, while two more were found at the beginning of the 1970s by A. S. Rusiayeva; they now are housed in the Scientific Funds of the Institute of Archaeology NAS of Ukraine. Only two of them have ever been illustrated,<sup>6</sup> and not any that are represented by these fragments have ever been described or discussed in the archaeological literature. Most of these fragments pertain to thymiateria that are about 19 cm in height. Mouldmade, they depict either a female dressed in a sleeveless chiton, a stephane, and earrings, or a female member of Dionysos’ cult wearing a chiton, tainia, wreath, and corymbs (Fig. 2).

Fig. 2. Female member of Dionysos' cult wearing a chiton, tainia, wreath, and corymbs.



- 3 This lack of interest in the Olbian bust thymiateria is the result of infrequent scientific interaction between Ukrainian and foreign scholars, but also of an inaccurate interpretation of these half-figures in the archaeological literature, since the cup-thymiaterion is often interpreted as a headdress. Because of this, the generally accepted identification of the two best-preserved bust thymiateria with corymbs has been that they depict Demeter, since the thymiaterion cup on the female's head has been referred to as a kernos.<sup>7</sup> This interpretation has been questioned by Irene Romano<sup>8</sup> and later criticized by Pia Bilde,<sup>9</sup> who noted that tainia and corymbs on a female head can only refer to the cult of Dionysos, and therefore Ariadne must be the personage represented. Although the Ariadne interpretation is doubtful, because the woman could be any female involved with the cult of Dionysos, the tainia and corymbs, on the other hand, could indeed refer to the cult of this god. However, it has become obvious today that the roughly made and added details on the heads of these female busts are not headdresses or attributes at all, but rather the functional parts of thymiateria.
- 4 That this has not been suggested by scholars in the past is due to the fact that the cups do not show traces of burning, such as soot. However, bust thymiateria from Capua also lack traces of burning,<sup>10</sup> even though in some examples from Poseidonia soot can be observed inside the cups. It must be asked what could be the motivation behind the application of these small containers on the heads of female busts, if the busts were used solely as votives. In fact, even certain terracotta images that are atypical for thymiateria were altered by hand in order to have a thymiaterion cup on the head (Fig. 7a). The need for such a form as a figurative terracotta had to be driven by corresponding religious requirements, in which the depiction of a female could serve as a vessel for a small amount of some substance used during cult practice. Taking into consideration the Greek parallels, the suggestion arises that if the Olbian busts were not used for incense burning, then they could have had another cultic function, such as a receptacle for scented oil that could have been poured into the open cup of a bust thymiaterion to perfume the air for an extended period.

Fig. 7a.



- 5 Even though the female bust was made in a mould, the thymiaterion cup was always a simple structure added by hand, a feature that contrasts with the plastically-elaborated female figure. This distinguishes the Olbian thymiateria from their south Italian counterparts, whose receptacle is always a flower that was produced in a mould. Quite different also are the depictions of the females themselves. Those wearing a stephane (cat. nos. 4–12) repeat the iconographic scheme of the large, (29 cm high) locally-produced, terracotta half figures (figs. 1 and 2),<sup>11</sup> as well as marble sculpture of this period.<sup>12</sup> The female depicted in these large terracottas has been interpreted as Kore/Persephone.<sup>13</sup> Due to the lack of attributes that could associate her with any other mythological female, she has been viewed as emerging from the ground because of her abbreviated representation.<sup>14</sup> However, many other female busts from the Hellenistic period with undisputed attributes have no relation to Kore/Persephone.<sup>15</sup> In my view, the impetus for creating only half of a figure was more of an issue of function and convenience. During the course of the iconographic development of Hellenistic period, terracottas in the Hellenistic period, there was an increasing interest in large-scale imagery, and a corresponding greater attention to decoration and detail. Figures became larger, the walls thicker, and the decorative elements heavier. Consequently, full-sized depictions of a human figure that could be mass-produced by means of a mold would have been too heavy and unwieldy for a purchaser to acquire and use. Half figures, having larger depictions of faces, and occasionally hands, as well as attributes, would have been more valued, as well as more convenient for the offering table, or any other horizontal surface. Their walls are thick at the base and smoothly cut below, technical features that facilitate stability. Considering all these observations, we can say that there is no direct evidence testifying to the fact that the large, Olbian half figures depicted Kore/Persephone, since their clothing and headdress were usual for any female representation. Perhaps their identification can be indirectly defined by their co-finds.
- 6 Certain peculiarities of half figures that are so close to the fragmented bust thymiateria from Olbia suggest that the smaller versions imitated the larger half figures. The author of the fragmented thymiateria copied every detail: the hairstyle, clothing, figural proportions, and pose. Different are only those elements that required more effort in workmanship. The half-figure concept was abbreviated to a bust to avoid protruding hands with its necessity for four more moulds, and these busts were not ornamented with thin ribbons hanging from stephanai, or with cone-shaped, pendant earrings. Finally, a

wide hole in the top of the head of the half figures that is framed by separately moulded decoration is replaced by a handmade cup. In this way, a series of busts was produced, of which fragments at least nine examples have been brought to light. After casting, the coroplast added only a low stephane and globular earrings.

- 7 The purpose of the hole in the top of the head of the half figures has escaped discussion in the literature. A comparison of the terracotta half figure (fig. 1) with the busts being discussed gives rise to a consideration of its structure within the context of its function during religious practice.

Fig. 1. Terracotta half figure.



It may be that a high support could have been placed through the wide opening at the bottom of the half figure, while a thymiaterion cup could have been placed on its head. Then, the turn to simpler thymiateria with added cups, having a morphology popular in Greece of that period, seems to have been a logical step forward. Two forms were used to produce a series of busts-thymiateria depicting a woman in stephane (fig. 3).

At least two forms can be traced in production of busts depicting a woman from thiasus of Dionysus (fig. 4). In addition to these serial terracottas, there are single depictions of other personages with thymiateria on their heads. They are, first of all, fragments of two identical heads with broken cups found at the area of temenos

Fig. 4. Woman from thiasus of Dionysus.



- 8 Two moulds were used to produce a series of busts-thymiateria depicting a woman in stephane (fig. 3). At least two moulds can be traced in production of busts depicting a woman from thiasus of Dionysus (fig. 4). In addition to these serial terracottas, there are single depictions of other personages with thymiateria on their heads. They are, first of all, fragments of two identical heads with broken cups found at the area of temenos<sup>16</sup> (fig. 6). These bust thymiateria are imported and depict a woman wearing a polos. Also found were heads broken from busts representing the Mother of the Gods,<sup>17</sup> on which the polos is transformed into a thymiam container. In one case, its rims are widened by hand after moulding<sup>18</sup> (fig. 7a). Another bust (fig. 7b), like the aforementioned large, half figure, has a wide hole through the top of its head. It is close in size to the serial thymiateria cat. nos. 4-12. Additionally, there are two small holes in the opposite walls of the polos.



Fig. 7b.

It is not known what could have been affixed to these openings, although it is clear that they could not have been for suspension since the figure would have been too heavy for hanging.<sup>19</sup> It can only be assumed that such elements were a part of the thymiaterion and were intended as supports for elements made of organic materials. The headdress of this Mother of the Gods thymiaterion is also known in Hellenistic Troy, as well as at other

Hellenistic sites.<sup>20</sup> Busts with a thymiaterion cup in the form of a polos are common for this goddess, as we see in Apulia, so the Olbia finds are not exclusive.

- 9 Nevertheless, the more traditional bust thymiateria types from Olbia represent a female wearing a stephane (cat. nos. 4–12), while a second one shows a female associated with a Dionysiac cult (cat. nos. 1–3). It is interesting that in south Italy, where bust thymiateria were widely used, one finds examples interpreted as participants in the thiasos of Dionysos, or Aphrodite.<sup>21</sup> In Myrina and Agros in Asia Minor these have been viewed as fertility goddesses, such as Demeter,<sup>22</sup> or Isis in Amisos.<sup>23</sup> It is likely that the tradition of bust thymiateria usage and production came to Olbia from Asia Minor's Greek centers, whose products influenced Olbian coroplasts in the Hellenistic period. While the concept of the bust thymiaterion was borrowed, it also was changed by local taste and religious practice, so that a new form of sculptural expression came into being. Most of the busts-thymiateria fragments come from the excavations at dwelling houses. In two cases they are found two in one context. They are often discovered together with other terracottas, with relief cups, and in three cases with a lamp. Terracottas accompanying these thymiateria are depicting females, in two cases related with Dionysus cult, in two other they are depicting the Mother of the gods. Thus, we receive the same circle of cults in which the thymiateria were used.
- 10 A suggestion comes into focus that the busts with cup thymiateria from Olbia Pontike were used in household cults for the worship of Dionysos and the Mother of the Gods, and very possibly for other goddesses as well. I would suggest that aromatic oils were placed in the cups on the heads of these divinities, oils that were intended for a less active, and less intense, circulation of scents than occurs with help of burning. Such terracotta bust thymiateria were most widely used in Olbia in the first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C.E., with the latest example, that of a female from the Dionysiac thiasos, dated to the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C.E. (fig. 2). The example interpreted as representing the Mother of the Gods wearing a polos reshaped as a thymiaterion cup is earlier and is placed in the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E.

## Catalogue

### Females with corymbs

1. *Inv. no. O-48/2079. Fig. 4a. Section of forehead and hair.*

Hollow. Preserves a section of the head from below the brows to the headdress; wears a wide taenia across the forehead, above which are two corymbs and a wreath wound with ribbons.

Preserved height 6.5 cm; preserved width 6.9 cm.

Clay is beige with small particles of limestone and mica.

Found in 1948 at the west of Area И, north-eastern part of the upper city, arbitrary level 10, cinder-loamy soil, depth 1.75 m, together with hand-made and red clay pottery. A fragment of a figurine of the Mother of the Gods (archaeological campaign of 1947, inv. 2119) was found at the same site, although in the grid 352, arbitrary level 8 or 9.

Parallels: Almost intact bust thymiaterion from Olbia, now at the National Museum of the History of Ukraine (Fig. 2).

This example has clear, legible features with details of hair and wreath retouched after casting; parallel lines are also cut into the wreath to show that it is decorated with twisted ribbons. The handmade cup was attached to the head at the center

with the joins neatly smoothed out. A wide tainia encircles the head above which is a wreath wound with ribbons; corymbs decorate the forehead.

Fig. 4a. Section of forehead and hair.



1. *Inv. no. O-67/631. Fig. 4b. Bust fragment.*

Hollow. Preserves the left shoulder and breast with the lower finished edge of the bust; two locks of hair on shoulder; double folds of inner edge of the chiton and a wide band at its outer edge. Broken around three sides.

Preserved height 5.6 cm; preserved width 6.9 cm.

Clay is rick-red, with small particles of limestone and mica. The surface is covered with a white slip; traces of dark pink pigment on the himation and red on a wide band coming down from the neck.

Found in 1967 at the Area E7, near agora, house 14 at the grid 615, depth 2.30–2.50 m, where almost all finds are dated from the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries B.C.E. (Slavin 1967, 21).

Peculiarities of the coiffure and clothing precisely parallel the bust thymiaterion with corymbs (Fig. 2).<sup>24</sup>



Fig. 4b. Bust fragment.



1. *Inv. no. O-60/357. Fig. 4c. Bust fragment.*

Hollow. Recomposed from two parts; broken around three sides. Preserves the shoulder, double folds of the edge of a chiton, a section of a lock of hair, and a part of a wide ribbon presumably from a wreath on the head.

Preserved height 6.8 cm; preserved width 2.9 cm.

Local dark pink clay with small particles of quartz and mica.

Found in 1960 at the Area E7, grid 537 north, depth 1.5–1.95 m. Found in the same context are a terracotta fragment (archaeological campaign of 1947, inv. no. 356) depicting an actor sitting on an altar, a head from a stone statuette, fragments of relief cups, black glazed pottery, luteria, and an oinochoe.

All the details testify to the fragment's belonging to the type of the bust thymiaterion of a female with corymbs on her head. Unlike the bust thymiateria with stephane, the details of the dress in the bust thymiateria with corymbs are represented less clearly. The dress is a sleeveless chiton pinned at the shoulders with round fibulae, but its edges and folds are much more plastic, elaborated, and shown in greater detail. The indication of clothing on a fragment O-47/800 (cat. no. 12), as well as on the large half figure (Fig. 1), is sketchier, with its edges indicated by coarse rolls and the folds by parallel grooves. Terracottas with corymbs seem to have been produced earlier than those represented wearing a stephane.

Fig. 4c. Bust fragment.



### Females wearing a stephane, tainia, and globular earrings

- 11 Parallels: Large, half figure, Museum of Archaeology, Kiev,<sup>25</sup> (fig. 1).
- 12 There are 9 fragments of bust thymiateria wearing a stephane, of which two (cat. nos. 4 and 6) have only the face preserved. They were all cast in the same mould as that of the almost wholly preserved head (cat. no. 5), so they can be grouped together with confidence. Three other fragments also may relate to the same group, although only the upper left part of a face is preserved in one, and in the other it is only a fragment of the headdress. Females wearing a stephane made from a second mould series differ from the first one in some details. As these fragments show, there was no tainia at the bottom of the stephane, as it is seen on the first three fragments. Also the heads with tainia are decorated with larger earrings than those without. Moreover, it can not be excluded that on some examples stephanai with pendants could have been added by hand, as was done on the large, half figures. Additionally, there are fragments with stephanai that cannot be grouped with either of these two mould series because one of them contains only the right part of the head and therefore lacks relevant parts for comparisons, and the other preserves an unusually high stephane.

1. *Inv. no. O-56/279. Fig. 3a. Face fragment.*

Hollow. Broken all around. Preserves the face from brow to chin.

Preserved height 5.1 cm; preserved width 4.0 cm.

Clay is beige to light grey with quartz inclusions and traces of mica and oxidized ceramic particles.

Same mould series as cat. nos. 5 and 6 below.

Found in 1956 at the Area E6, houses near agora, grid 405, depth 1.03–1.35 m with fragments of black glazed and lots of relief pottery, coal, and copper and bone objects. A terracotta fragment (archaeological campaign of 1947, inv. no. 230) was found at the same spot at the depth 0.60–1.03 m. A plastic vase fragment depicting a horse's head (inv. no. 329) and a lower part of a figure (archaeological campaign of 1947, inv. no. 359) were found at the same spot at the depth 1.70–2.00 m.

The clay was put into the mould in successive layers to obtain the best cast. The face is a long oval with long, tapering cheeks. Eyes are vaguely indicated; upper lid is sharper with hollows at the inner corners of the eyes. Nose is short, narrow, and straight. Mouth is set close to the nose and has very full lips with depressions at the corners. The area below the nose was retouched with an instrument with a rounded edge. There is a mould defect below the lower lip caused by a crack in the mould; this defect is also paralleled in cat. no. 5 below (Fig. 3b). Another example from the same mould series, cat. no. 6 below, lacks this mould defect.

Fig. 3a. Face fragment.



1. *Inv. no. O-72/ΑΓΔ/103. Fig. 3b. Head fragment.*

Hollow. Preserves a female head and section of the neck on the right side. Wears stephane, tainia, and globular earrings; preserves the lower part of the thymiaterion cup on the head. The stephane is chipped, and the tip of the nose and left nostril is fractured; broken across the neck. Rectangular opening (2.5 cm wide) at the back.

Preserved height 10.3 cm; preserved width 7.6 cm.

Clay is local, from light brown to dark pink, with small black and white inclusions and traces of mica. There are traces of white slip on the surface and some traces of pink pigment on face and stephane. Incised lines are found on the inner surface of the cup on the head. They can be the lower part of three letters, while their upper part is broken off with the body of the cup. Legible are the first two letters: Π and Κ. They could be part of a craftsman's signature.

Found in 1972 at the Western Temenos.

Taking into consideration the hairstyle, headdress, and jewelry, this type is analogous to the completely preserved female half figure<sup>26</sup> (Fig. 1). The main difference between the two is the smaller size of the thymiaterion cup and the lack of a tainia and pendants. Also, while on the half figure the thymiaterion cup was cast in the shape of a flower, what remains of the cup on the bust suggests that it was plain and handmade. The last detail distinguishing our bust from the half figure is the fragmented depiction of the border of a himation that falls from the back to the front of the female's left shoulder, details that are missing on the half figure. The facial features correspond to those of cat. no. 4 above (Fig. 3a), since this belongs to the same mould series; this is attested by the mould defect under the lower lip. In addition, this fragment preserves a high triangular forehead and massive, long neck. The lips were retouched and the nose was distorted. Based on

the characteristics of features and the technique, this bust can be dated from the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> to the first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C.E.

Fig. 3b. Head fragment.



1. Inv. no. O-47/5086. Fig. 3c. Face *fragment*.

Hollow. Broken all around.

Face as in cat. nos. 4 and 5 above, but from a later stage in serial production. No trace of mould defect under the lip.

Preserved height 6.3 cm; preserved width 4.1 cm.

Clay is burnt grey, calcined by fire. Inclusions of quartz and a few tiny flakes of mica.

Found in 1947 at the Area E, near agora, grids 92 or 91 south, in ashy layer, at 1,80–2,45 m depth, together with 5 repurposed amphora handles, fragments of black glazed pottery with white paint, graffiti, coins, wall plaster painted red, yellow paint, egg shells, and seeds. Fragments of a plastic vase and two terracottas were found at the same place at the depth 1.0–2.10 m.

Fig. 3c. Face fragment.



1. *Inv. no. O-60/583. Fig. 3d. Head fragment.*

Hollow. Preserved are part of the back, part of the upper left side with hair and stephane, and the section of the right side with part of hair, base of stephane, and a round earring. The thymiaterion cup was high with its maximum preserved height 3.2 cm; rim is broken. Rectangular opening 2.9 cm wide at the back.

Preserved height 8.0 cm; preserved width 7.1 cm. In two fragments.

Clay is local, beige, with small black and white particles, inclusions of organic materials and mica; the surface is covered with a lime encrustation.

Found in 1960 at the Area E7, near agora, grid 517, depth 0.4–0.65 m, together with black glazed pottery.

The head has center-parted hair with locks combed back over the temples. Wears a high stephane and a globular earring. Behind the stephane is a thymiaterion cup. The stephane and cup were made by hand and securely attached to the head. The cup is placed at the center but slightly bent toward the left temple. The crisp details of the hair suggest that this came from an early phase in serial production.

Fig. 3d. Head fragment. Bust Thymiateria with



### Stephane, Globular Earrings, But No Tainia

- 13 The following three bust thymiateria belong to the same mould family. The iconographic elements are analogous to the first group, but there is no tainia at the base of the stephane.

1. *Inv. no. O-63/1488. Fig. 3g. Head fragment.*

Hollow. Preserved is the upper part of the right side of the face to below the lower lip; broken vertically along left side of the nose and across the cheek; stephane chipped. Only a part of base of a hand-modeled thymiaterion cup is preserved, which which affixed to the head adjacent to the back side of stephane. Iconographic scheme similar to that of cat. nos. 5, 6, and 7 above, but head lacks a tainia. Facial features are more distinct. Globular earring is attached through a hole in the side of the head with a tenon.

Preserved height 7.6 cm; preserved width 5.9.

Clay is light orange, yellow on the surface, with black and white inclusions and mica.

Found in 1963 at Area E6-7, grid 596 east and 607 east, at the depth 0-0.4 m, together with a relief cup fragment, copper coins.

The style and workmanship suggest a date perhaps in the first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C.E. This and the following two examples were imported from a single center.

Fig. 3g. Head fragment.



1. *Inv. no. O-49/194. Fig. 3f. Hair fragment.*

Hollow. Broken all around. Preserves hair, stephane and the base of the cup on the left side. Hairstyle analogous to that of cat. no. 5 above.

Preserved height 5.9 cm; preserved width 5.2 cm.

Clay is light orange with coarse streaks of pyroxene and insignificant inclusions of quartz and mica.

Found in 1949 at the Area E, near agora, grid 55, cistern «Л», depth 1.75–2.05 m, together with loom weights, fragments of relief cups, black glazed pottery, red-figure and black glazed stamped pottery, an amphoriskos, a red clay lamp, graffiti, astragaloi. Also in this cistern was found a fragment of another bust thymiaterion from the same mould (cat. no. 10)

Fig. 3f. Hair fragment.



1. *Inv. no. OЛ-49/128. Fig. 10. Face fragment.*

Hollow. Preserves left section of face with forehead, eye, and cheek. Broken all around. Traces of white slip on the face and dark color on the stephane and an eye. Iconographic scheme as in cat. nos. 8 and 9 above.

Preserved height 7.1 cm; preserved width 6.1 cm.

Clay is local, light brown, grey in the core, with small particles of mica.

Found in 1949 at the Area E, near agora, from cistern «Л», which is referred to as a cultic assemblage.<sup>27</sup> It is found at the same level with fragments of relief vessels, a luterion, a piece of marble with graffiti, and two terracottas, a wreath from a figure of Dionysos or a member of his thiasos (archaeological campaign of 1947, inv. no. 127), and a lion cub on the lap of the Mother of the Gods (archaeological campaign of 1947, inv. no. 126).

The thymiaterion cup has thick walls and is crudely attached to the head.

Fig. 10. Face fragment.



1. *Inv. no. O-52/2329. Fig. 3e. Head fragment.*

Hollow. Preserved is the back of the head, broken along the join at the level of the stephane. Oval vent at the back of the skull. Broken all around; thymiaterion cup is missing.

Preserved height 9.3 cm; preserved width 8.2 cm.

Clay is light brown, grey in the core, with small limestone particles.



Fig. 3e. Head fragment.



1. *Inv. no. O-47/800. Shoulder fragment.*

Hollow. Preserves a section of the right shoulder and the lower edge of the bust. Wears a chiton fastened on the shoulder with a spherical fibula, attached after casting. Broken diagonally along the shoulder and the across neck. Traces of white slip and pink pigment on the chiton.

Preserved height 7.1 cm; preserved width 3.5 cm.

Clay is dark orange with large inclusions of quartz and small flakes of mica.

Found in 1947 in the area of the lower city (НГФ), in a room in a house, in an ash and humus layer, at the depth of 0.95–1.25 m, together with a red clay amphoriskos, a weight, a red clay lamp, and two fragments of terracottas (archaeological campaign of 1947, inv. nos. 801 and 802).

All details of this fragment are paralleled in the intact female half figure wearing a stephane.<sup>28</sup> Its size corresponds to that of the group of thymiateria discussed above.

1. *S.n. Fig. 5a. Cup from a bust thymiaterion.*

Hand modeled cup has flaring profile. Traces of thick, white slip on the surface.

Preserved height 4.9 cm; preserved width 6.1 cm.

Clay is coarse and porous, from dark orange to red on the surface, grey at the core, with quartz and organic inclusions. This fabric is probably from the southern Black region.

The thymiaterion cup is broken from the head of a bust. At the level of the break on the front side is a small hole 1.5 mm in diameter apparently from a pin made of an organic material for attaching the stephane to the head. The cup perhaps belonged to a bust of the same size as the ones discussed above, although the join is wider in this example. There are fingerprints over the join from smoothing it.

Fig. 5a. Cup from a bust thymiaterion.



1. *Inv. no. O-60/521. Fig. 8. Bust fragment.*

Hollow. Preserves the left section of a bust with three folds of a chiton around the neck and two thicker folds of a himation that fall down the shoulder. Broken all around. Made of the same clay is an insignificant terracotta fragment, possibly of a bust.

Preserved height 5.5 cm; preserved width 4.5 cm.

Clay is porous, from dark pink to brown, with coarse inclusions of quartz and organic materials; the surface is covered with a lime encrustation.

Found in 1960 at the Area E6, grids 418 west or 423 west, at the depth 0–0.45 cm, together with a fragment of the base of a terracotta figurine (archaeological campaign of 1947, inv. no. 520), graffiti on pottery, fragments of black figured and stamped, black glazed ceramics, Hellenistic relief cups, and a miniature vessel.

This fragment perhaps belonged to the bust thymiateria of which only the cup is preserved (cat. no. 13). This can be placed in the Hellenistic period.

Fig. 8. Bust fragment.



1. *Inv. no. O-67/126. Fig. 5b. Cup fragment.*

Preserves a section of a thymiaterion cup and a section of a high stephane. The cup and stephane were hand modeled.

Preserved height 4.6 cm; preserved width, 5.4 cm.

Clay is dark orange, beige on the surface, with small mica and coarse quartz inclusions. There are traces of white slip on the right side and inside the cup, and of red and pink pigments on the stem of the cup.

Found in 1967 at the Area E6-7 south, near the agora, in the house 14 (grids 615 west and 730 west, at the depth 1.20–1.70 m, together with loom weight fragments, spindle whorls, fragments of a luterion, red plaster, a plastic vase in the form of a women's head (archaeological campaign of 1947, inv. no. 128), and of a terracotta figurine of the Mother of the Gods (archaeological campaign of 1947, inv. no. 127).

Atypical are the thin stem of the cup and the height of stephane. Nevertheless, this fragment, according to its form and size, can be classed with the same series of bust thymiateria discussed above. Hellenistic period.

Fig. 5b. Cup fragment



## Bust Thymiateria Representing the Mother of the Gods

- 14 Two similar head fragments (cat. nos. 16 and 17) found in 1974 at the Western Temenos stand apart because of their differing fabric, technique, and iconography. They were imported, as is evidenced by their fabric, and their cups, in the form of a high headdress, differ from the ones listed above. These were not made separately by hand and attached, but rather they were an integral part of the mould for the entire bust. Rusiayeva correctly refers to them as representations of the Mother of the Gods.<sup>29</sup> It should be noted that these fragments could not have belonged to the class of the well-known terracotta figurines of the Mother of the Gods sitting on a throne since they are too big for the these figurines of the goddess as she is known in Olbia. Apparently, these heads also belonged to busts.

1. *Inv. no. O-74/ΑΓΔ/477. Fig. 6. Face fragment.*

Hollow. Preserves the face of a female wearing a low crown. Broken around the face and sides of the hair; nose and lips are fractured. Hair and mouth retouched. Tenon from a thymiaterion cup is inserted into a hole in the top of the crown, but the thymiaterion cup itself is missing.

Preserved height 7.9 cm; preserved width 4.3 cm.

Clay is buff with a dark pink core and with mica and quartz inclusions. Surface encrusted, black stains.

The face is a long oval with a high, lunette-shaped forehead framed by hair pulled forward and drawn into a knot above the center of the forehead. The eyes are large with thick lids; the nose is long, and the mouth is small but has very full lips with dimples at the corners. The chin is round and prominent in profile. The missing thymiaterion cup appears to have differed from the handmade cups known from other bust thymiateria at Olbia. In this example it was made separately, but apparently was cast in a mould and inserted into the top of the crown by means of a long tenon. A question of its probable flower shape, like its Italian counterparts, unfortunately remains to be answered. This is dated, as well as the next terracotta, to the early Hellenistic period, or the first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century.

Fig. 6. Face fragment.



1. *Inv. no. O-74/ΑΓΔ/476. Fig. 9. Head fragment.*

Hollow. Preserves that right side of a face, neck and a part of a top of the head. Wears a polos, himation over the polos, and disk and cone pendant earrings. Broken all around.

Preserved height 8.4 cm; preserved width 5.1 cm.

Clay is buff with a dark pink core and with mica and quartz inclusions.

The face conforms to a long oval framed by center-parted hair that describes a high, triangular forehead. The hair is loosely combed back to cover the ears and then has locks that fall over the shoulders in a manner similar to the hair of representations of the Mother of the Gods.<sup>30</sup> Large eyes with thick lids and lowered outer corners are set in hollows, as are the full lips that are placed close to the nose. The bust thymiaterion to which this fragment belonged is similar to cat. no. 16, although it is better preserved. The earrings in the form of a disk and cone pendant calls to mind the earrings of the large half figure wearing a stephane (Fig. 1).

The headdress here is also similar to that of the Mother of the Gods. It is not as high as a traditional polos, but higher than the stephane of similar busts, and more cylindrical. Unlike the headdress of cat. no. 16 just discussed, a wide tainia encircles the head at the base of the crown. This feature can be compared to that on busts where the stephane is the headdress, with or without the tainia.

Fig. 9. Head fragment.




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## NOTES

1. ROMANO 1995, 17–18.
2. BEDELLO TATA 1990, 4, 39; cf. D'AMBROSIO, BORRIELLO 1990, 76, nos. 191, 196, 198, pl. 31
3. DENISOVA 1981, 35, nos. M-50–M-52, M-110, pl. 7, z,i,l,m.
4. ROMANO 1995, pl. 11–14; SUMMERER 1999, pl. 18–19.
5. BEDELLO TATA 1990, 37.
6. RUSJAEVA 1979, fig. 53:1,3.
7. HUDJAK 1940, nos. 6–8, figs. 66–68; LEVI, SLAVIN 1970, 41, no. 22, pl. 13:2; RUSJAEVA 1979, fig. 29.
8. ROMANO 1995, 17–18.
9. BILDE 2007, 119–126; BILDE 2010, 458–460.
10. BEDELLO TATA 1990, 38.
11. RUSJAEVA 1982, 56, fig. 32 and an unpublished fragment of a similar half figure (inv. no. O-59/1924, housed in the Scientific Funds of the Institute of Archaeology, NAS of Ukraine).
12. KRYŽICKIJ, S.D. et al. 1999, fig. 170; as well as unpublished fragments housed in the Scientific Funds of the Institute of Archaeology, NAS of Ukraine.
13. RUSJAEVA 1979, 56; RUSJAEVA 1982, 57.
14. RUSJAEVA 1982, 56.
15. For instance, Olbian half figures with wreathes of ivy leaves and fruits (Levi, Slavin 1970, pl. 14:3), later interpreted as Demeter (RUSJAEVA 1979, 53, fig. 29,2,4), as well as the Bosporan nude Aphrodites with high elaborate headdresses (DENISOVA 1981, pl. II, Л–П).
16. RUSJAEVA 1979, fig. 53,1,3.
17. The name the Mother of the Gods is used in this article, instead of the more commonly found name of Cybele, because the name Cybele is not attested in Olbia Pontike. The epigraphic evidence is limited to the name Mater, or the Mother of the Gods.
18. Published in LEVI 1970, c. 44, pl. 17,1, no.17; RUSJAEVA 1979, fig. 52; RUSJAEVA 1982, fig. 34,4; VERMASEREN, M.J. 1989, no. 502, pl. 121.

19. ŠEVČENKO 2010, p. 97–98.
  20. THOMPSON 1963, 78.
  21. BEDELLO TATA 1990, 36.
  22. ROMANO 1995, 17–18.
  23. SUMMERER 1999, no. B II 1,3,7, pl. 18.
  24. LEVI, SLAVIN 1970, pl. 13:2.
  25. *Ibid.*
  26. RUSJAEVA 1979, fig. 32.
  27. SLAVIN 1949, leaves 12–14.
  28. RUSJAEVA 1979, fig. 32.
  29. RUSJAEVA 1979, fig. 53,1,3.
  30. LEVI 1970, pl. 16,1–3, 18,1,2,4; RUSJAEVA 1982, fig. 49–53; KRYŽICKIJ *et al.* 1999, fig. 180.
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## INDEX

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