



SCHOOL OF ADVANCED STUDIES OF THE ROMANIAN ACADEMY

Romanian Academy – Institute of Archaeology Iași

## **PHD THESIS SUMMARY**

### **The Cult of the Kabeiroi in Relation to the Thracian World: Interferences and Filial-Sanctuaries dedicated to the Great Gods**

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Keywords:

Ancient Greece, Kabeiroi, Great Gods, Samothrace, Lemnos, Thebes,  
Thrace, Phrygia, cult, Mysteries, sanctuaries

## PhD thesis summary

### Part I

#### 1. Introduction. State of research

##### 1.1. Introduction

In Chapter 1, I described the general context of the cult of the Kabeiroi (gr. *Κάβειροι*), which spread in the islands of the Northern Aegean, as well as in other areas as Boeotia, Asia Minor, Thrace, Macedonia, etc. The age of the cult is considerable, as the oldest identified structures date to the 7th century B.C. in Lemnos and Thebes in Boeotia, while other discoveries such as the Theban votive figures date back to the 10th century B.C. While literary sources of the 5th century identify the sanctuary of the Kabeiroi in Samothrace, all inscriptions on the island use the designation of the Great Gods (gr. *Μεγάλοι Θεοί*). Nevertheless, the kinship seems obvious, since in both cases we are discussing a Mystery cult. The Kabeiroi are, for that matter, adapted to regional differences, thus the cultic particularities are very diverse in each place where they have been worshipped.

##### 1.2. Motivation for choosing the subject

This sub-chapter offers details regarding the choice for the topic of research, which consists in the first place in the intention of deepening the relation between the Greek population and the elements of Non-Greek culture that lay at the origin of the cult. The presence of Filial-Sanctuaries of the cult of Samothrace in numerous cities in the Northern Aegean, as well as the Black Sea areas, makes this subject deserve even more attention. In the contents of the thesis I maintained, distinctively from previous research, that the origin of the cult of the Kabeiroi was in the cultural interference space between Phrygia and Thrace. Additionally, I have discussed the introduction of the designation of the “Great Gods” as a consequence of the expansion of Macedonian rule, beginning with Philip II, as well as adopting the cult of Samothrace by its kings. Here I have also shown the rejection of hypothesis of Eliade (1939) and Blakely (2006) according to which the Kabeiroi are metallurgical gods.

### 1.3. State of research

In the chapter on the state of research, I discussed the most important contributions on the subject of the paper, among which are mentioned: the two volumes of Conze (1875; 1880) that describe the state of research in Samothrace, which began in the second half of the 19th century. Hemberg (1950) introduces a new distinction between the *Kabeiroi*, *Megaloi Theoi*, and *Samothrakes Theoi*, and considers the main characteristic of the Kabeiroi their undefined character. Walter Burkert (1977; 2nd edition 2011) refers mostly to the cult of the Kabeirion of Lemnos, showing it can be attributed to a metallurgical guild. Cole (1984) publishes a monograph of the sanctuary of Samothrace, in which she discusses the building of the sanctuary by Macedonian rulers, as well as the found lists of initiates and *theoroi*. Schachter (1986) describes the evolution of the Theban sanctuary, beginning with the archaic period, then the successive phases and the constructions that were built in each time. Blakely (2006) develops a theory regarding the fact that the types of *daimones* in Ancient Greece, as well as the ritual elements of the metal work in the recent history of Africa, are both dimensions of metallurgical activity. Nora Dimitrova (2008) analyses the lists of *theoroi* and initiates, arguing that there was an annual festival where *theoroi* were sent, probably during the Dionysia. Ficuciello (2013) writes a monograph of the excavations on Lemnos Island, in which she offers plenty of space to the evolution of the Kabeirion of Chloi. Cruccas (2014) writes a volume with abundant information on the cult of the Kabeiroi, in which the regional variation is considered the main characteristic of the cult in each site. Bremmer (2014) dedicates a chapter of his work to the initiation in the Mysteries of Samothrace, the Kabeiroi and the Korybantes, where he notes the fact that we encounter triads of divinities, both in the cult of the Island of Samothrace, as well as in the Mysteries celebrated on Lemnos Island.

My thesis is based, in the same time, on the series of works for each of the sanctuaries, published by Princeton University and the *American School of Classical Studies at Athens* (Samothrace), by *Deutsches Archäologisches Institut* (Thebes), and in the *Annuary of the Scuola Archeologica Italiana di Atene* (Lemnos).

### 1.4. Methodological remarks

In the contents of the methodological remarks, I started with the premise of examining the Mystery cults in the wider context of ancient religiosity. Pakannen (1996) gives the following definition of religiosity: “*Religiosity is a human being’s self regulating response to*

*the pressures generated by particular situations within his social, historical, political and economic conditions.*” At the same time, religious rituals function in order to create the possibility for certain individuals who take part in them, to represent the group on a higher level in the ritual process. Also, I addressed the problem of cultic mythography, which is a persistent presence in the philosophical debates and in literary works of Ancient history. Morgan (2001) discusses another concept which is useful for this study, that of ethnicity, showing that it is important especially in the early political situation of ancient Greece. In this thesis, I dealt with the cult of the Kabeiroi by taking into account an ethnic perspective – of the Phrygian and Thracian connections.

### 1.5. Structure of the paper

The PhD thesis consists of two parts. The first part deals with the state of research and the main archaeological findings. The second part discusses the cult of the Kabeiroi, and of the Great Gods of Samothrace respectively, in geographical context, and in relation to other Mystery cults. Also in part II the ritual content of the cults in Samothrace, Thebes, Lemnos, was addressed, as well as the relation of the Kabeiroi to other daimonic types. In the following I have also described in a brief way the problems which were addressed in each of the chapters of the paper.

## 2. The Sanctuary of the Great Gods at Samothrace

### 2.1. History of findings

Chapter 2 discusses the sanctuary of the Great Gods at Samothrace, beginning with the first archaeological discoveries of Conze and Champoiseau, until the current state of the excavations under the leadership of Bonna D. Wescoat. The conclusions of Karl Lehmann regarding the existence of preliminary structures to the buildings in the sanctuary, as early as the 7th century B.C., have been rejected by McCredie (1968), who shows that there are no identified structures that are older than the 4th century B.C. The oldest building is the Hall of Choral Dancers, dated between 340-330 B.C., thus named after the frieze of dancers which was discovered inside. Around 325 B.C. the construction of the Hieron began – the central temple of the sanctuary that was finished a century and a half later. Also, in the 3rd century B.C. the Rotonda of Queen Arsinoe II was discovered, as well as the Propylon of Ptolemy II Philadelphos.

## 2.2. Inscriptions on stone and ceramics

Most of the inscriptions that were found are lists of initiates and *theoroi*, dating to the Hellenistic and Roman times. They indicate the presence of numerous sacred ambassadors in the sanctuary, as well as the diverse social status of those who were initiated: the slaves are occasionally mentioned together with their owners. Two marble blocks, expressing interdictions for non-initiates to enter the Hieron or Anaktoron, were found. A great number of ceramic inscribed fragments were also discovered, including a bowl with the inscription Παι̃ (which may be associated with Pais of the Theban sanctuary). The fact that bilingual inscriptions, or Latin ones, were also found, denotes the international character of the sanctuary.

## 2.3. The necropolis

The necropolis of the sanctuary was published by Dusenbery (1998), consisting of the North Necropolis and the South Necropolis, the latter comprised of the cemeteries H, R, K, W. I presented a selection of recipients used for funerary ash, coming from incineration burials dated in the 6th and 5th centuries B.C. These show the habitation in the area of the sanctuary, even though cult constructions can't be dated prior to the 4th century B.C. As the graves, beginning in the 4th century B.C., are predominantly inhumation burials, the discovery of funerary ceramics prove significant to document the type of burial in the first phase of the existence of the sanctuary.

## 2.4. Arts in the sanctuary of the Great Gods

Inside the sanctuary fragments of a frieze were found, that was reproducing about 800 women dancing, some of which were also playing different instruments. This frieze was used to designate the Temenos where it was found, thus named the Hall of Choral Dancers. Hypotheses about its function varied from a place for the sacred wedding festivities of Kadmos and Harmonia, hall for banquets, or even cult building where initiations took place. I also reproduced a reconstruction of the pediment of the Hieron, a series of reliefs and statues, as well as the well-known statue of Nike. At the same time, the Theatrical Complex – the function of which during the initiation rituals can't be disputed, being right at the beginning of

the Sacred Way – indicates the presence of theatrical elements or ritual dances in the ceremonies.

### 3. The Theban sanctuary

#### 3.1. History of findings

Chapter 3 addresses the sanctuary of Kabiros and Pais, near Thebes in Boeotia. Starting from the synthesis of Schachter (1986), I emphasized the evolutions of structures in the sanctuary, as the Tholos which was reconstructed in the 5th century B.C., while under the floor a huge ceramic vessel inscribed *TOΘAMAKO* has been found. Following this, a building of the same type, two Stoai and an Anaktoron, dated in the 2nd century B.C., have been built. But none of these buildings was sufficiently large, in order to accommodate ceremonies with numerous participants, thus it is very possible that initiations took place in the natural amphitheatre, which was later modified by extending its Cavea.

#### 3.2. Votive figures

The DAI excavations have produced numerous votive figures of bulls, from bronze and lead, the oldest dating to the 10th century B.C. Schmaltz (1980) divides the statues into 28 groups, consisting of 345 figures, and an additional 6 individual figures, as well as another 48 with dedications. Over 200 bull figures are to be found in the Archaeological Museum in Athens or in other locations. Besides these, figures of a disk thrower, young men with rooster, with ram or lira have been discovered in the sanctuary. There is also a series of terracotta figures, including Silens and other deformed characters, that was also published by Schmaltz (1974).

#### 3.3. Inscriptions and graffiti

In the sanctuary an inscription was found, mentioning four *Kabiriarchai* names, as well as twelve *Paragogeies*, the first being most likely the priests, while the latter having the role of introducing participants in the Mysteries, according to Wolters (1940). I also referred to the dedication of a non-Greek person to the Kabeiroi, as well as numerous ceramic fragments inscribed with the names of Kabiros and Pais. Dedications on ceramic cups show a

rich cultic activity beginning in the 4th century, proving that votive offerings were usual, while the numerous *kantharos* fragments indicate ritual wine consumption.

### 3.4. Iconographic representations on Theban ceramics

The most unusual discoveries are the ceramic fragments with representations of distorted characters. Some of these illustrate an ithyphallic Hermes, before whom offerings are brought, while all the characters are portrayed in a grotesque way. In the same way, many images from *kantharoi* reproduce various scenes related to daily life, creating a comic appearance, sometimes decorated with grapes or showing Satirs holding cups or dancing. All these raise numerous questions regarding the context in which the cups were used, which I addressed in Chapter 8.

## 4. The sanctuary of Lemnos

### 4.1. History of findings

The Kabeirion of Lemnos was an important cultic centre, researched by the Italian School of Archaeology in two excavation campaigns, under the guidance of Bernabò Brea and Beschi. The excavations of 1937-1939, as well as the ones of 1982-1992, have led to the discovery of the main architectural structures, but an important part of the sanctuary perimeter remains unexplored. An archaic Telesterion has been identified, built in the second half of the 7th century B.C. on a steep promontory. This building had a life of about one century, but later in the classical period no structure is known, with the exception of some late classical walls which confirm the existence of an unknown cult building. In the Hellenistic period, around 200 B.C. the great Hellenistic Telesterion is built, comprising of three naves. It has functioned for about 400 years, and in the late Roman period a new Telesterion has been erected on the spot of the archaic one.

### 4.2. Ceramics and other findings

The oldest discoveries of ceramics are of the sub-geometric G 2-3 type, which dates them to the last part of the 8th or beginning of the 7th century B.C: Ficuciello (2013) also describes the inscriptions on ceramic fragments with similar characters to those present on the Kaminian stele, dated to the second half of the 6th century B.C. Also, a *chytra* type recipient

was found for the preparation of meat offerings. Some of the discovered ceramics contain graffiti dedications: inside or on the bottom of several bowls we find inscriptions such as *ἱερά*, *ἱερόν* or *ἱερός*.

In addition, fragments of *auloi* were discovered and show the importance of ritual music, while iron rings were found in the entire area and represent, as their counterparts in Samothrace, tangible signs of initiation.

#### 4.3. Epigraphy

Numerous inscriptions, the earliest dating in the 3rd century B.C., have been found in the excavation campaign of 1937-1938. Among these, a honorary decree for *theoroi* from Myrina mentioning the *Horaia* festival. Another notable inscription is the letter of Philip V to the Athenians from Hephaistia, which is linked based on its content to the Telesterion of the late Hellenistic period. Very remarkable are the 31 manumission acts, dated between the 2nd century B.C. and the 1st-2nd centuries A.D., through which slaves are being freed, mostly by Athenian citizens. Despite the numerous indications that prove the importance of the Mysteries celebrated at Lemnos, these do not equal the international fame of the sanctuary of Samothrace, but gain from the acknowledgment of Athenian colonists.

## Part II

### 5. Geographical context of the Northern Aegean Sea

#### 5.1. The cultural space of Phrygia and Thrace in contact with the Greek world

The second part of this thesis approaches, in Chapter 5, the cultural space of Phrygia and Thrace, as well as cultural exchanges with the Greek world, starting with the colonization of the Northern Aegean Sea. Thonemann (2013) shows that Phrygia in the iron age was superior from the point of view of every social index – such as use of writing, crafts specialization, the concentration of authority, level of urbanism, social stratification – to the contemporary Greek societies of the Aegean, but this advantage was not maintained after the conquest of the Persians. On Thracian land, on the other side, we encounter three distinct groups of inhabitants: the Thracian tribes, the Greek colonists, and later the Romans. Ilieva (2010) states that, on Samothrace Island, manually shaped ceramics has been found, spanning

chronologically between the 11th and the 8th/7th centuries B.C., a fact which normally is used to indicate the appearance of Thracian elements on the island.

## 5.2. Metallurgical practice in Thrace and Northern Greece in relation to the cult of the Kabeiroi

As Kostoglou (2008) shows, in Thrace a rich industrial landscape existed, including such activities as mining and metallurgy, in particular between the rivers Strymon and Evros. These occupations are common in Northern Aegean Islands, and on the Island of Lemnos the adoration of the Kabeiroi is an attribute of some professional segments as the metal workers. Besides, the close city of Hephaestia, named in honour of the God Hephaestus, can only confirm this. But metallurgical practice is not encountered in Samothrace. In the imperial period, however, in Thessalonike there are numerous coins with the representation of Kabeiros, wearing a *pilos* and having in his hand a hammer, which is characteristic of Hephaestus, while in the other hand he holds, usually, a *rhyton*.

## 5.3. Navigation on the Aegean Sea

Morton (2001) shows that the Northern Aegean Sea is dangerous for navigation, taking into account the steep promontories as well as the absence of natural ports. In addition, the straits which allow access to the Black Sea produce dangerous sea currents, therefore carefully piloting a ship along the coast line was extremely important. Thus, navigators could resort to religion as an expression of their fears, hopes and concerns. I have here argued that the increased danger of navigation in the Northern Aegean must have been remarked also in ancient times and, as such, saving from perils at sea was not at all an accidental quality of the Great Gods of Samothrace.

## 5.4. The rescue from sea dangers as motif of the cult of the Great Gods

The mythography of the cult of the Kabeiroi includes the expedition of the Argonauts in search of the golden fleece. Struck by a storm, they appeal to Orpheus, who was an initiate of Samothrace and, by addressing to the divinities, stops the winds with his prayers (Diod. IV, 43.1-2). Also, leaving the Troad, the Argonauts head for Samothrace where they dedicate the cups about which Diodorus Siculus states that they were still there in his time (Diod. IV,

49.8). From another account we find out that, during his adventures, Odysseus, who was an initiate of Samothrace, used the veil of Leucothea in place of a fillet in order to save his crew. In the same narration we learn that Agamemnon was also an initiate and used a purple cape in order to avert the arguments between Greeks (Scol. par. ad Apollonios Rhodios I, 918). Thus, the danger of the Northern Aegean Sea is reflected in such legends and is, without doubt, cause for the specialization of the cult of the Great Gods as saviours from perils at sea.

## 6. Contextualisation of the Mysteries of the Kabeiroi

### 6.1. Mysteries in Ancient times

As standard for the Mysteries in ancient Greece, the Eleusinian rituals were comprised of lower and greater mysteries, together designated as τελετή; the first stage, μύησις or initiation was generally needed to advance to the second stage, ἐποπτεία. A reconstruction of the mysteries' rituals is very difficult to accomplish, since ancient initiates, either from devotion, from fear or other considerations, have refused to reveal their content. No doubt that individual attraction was one of the most important factors, which assured the continuity of mysteries, causing them to last so long in Ancient times.

### 6.2. Mysteries of the mother goddess

In this sub-chapter I have approached a cult often associated with that of the Kabeiroi, the cult of the mother goddess, represented by Kybele or Demeter, and for the Roman period the cult of the goddess Isis. According to Diodorus Siculus (Diod. V, 47-55), in Samothrace there were older cults, before introducing the cult of the Kabeiroi, such as the one of the Great Mother – probably related to the Phrygian Kybele. Munn (2006) indicates that, in Athens, a statue of the mother of the gods was installed in the hall where law texts and important Athenian documents were kept in the archive, and at the end of the 5th century B.C., the state archives became known as the Metroon, after the mother goddess. Very well-known is the novel *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius, in which Lucius repents his behaviour, thus obtaining initiation in the Mysteries of Isis.

### 6.3. Orphism

Due to the Thracian origin attributed to Orpheus, the Orphic mysteries refer to a neighbouring space with that of the mysteries of the Kabeiroi, and of the Samothracian Gods respectively. The mythography of the Argonauts indicates Orpheus as an initiate of Samothrace (Diod. IV, 43.1). The Orphic Mysteries include a chthonic symbolism found also in Thracian mythology, as is the case of caves and rock-cut graves. Some of these graves, in particular the ones near Eleutherna, contain an inventory which can indicate an Orphic initiation: golden lamellae placed over the mouth of the deceased. At the same time, *Hypsipyle* tragedy (after the Queen of Lemnos who had intimate relations with Jason in the mythology of the Argonauts) was one of the most innovative works in musical matters, written by Euripides. This play presented Orpheus teaching the founder of the musician clan, Euneus (son of Hypsipyle), “the music of Asian kithara”.

## 7. Mysteries of the Kabeiroi and the Great Gods in mythographical context

### 7.1. Written sources. Cult mythography

In this chapter, I analysed the main myths regarding the cult of the Kabeiroi, establishing three categories: I. Foundation myths, II. Heroic myths, III. Myths that show relations and association of cults. The first type of myth is used in order to legitimate cults: for instance, Iasion (Aetion) is regarded as the founder of the sanctuary of Samothrace (Diod. V 48.2-4). Akousilaos of Argos, cited by Strabo (Strab. X, 3.21), has upheld that the son of nymph Kabeiro and Hephaestus, Kamillos, is the father of the three Kabeiroi, and these are in turn parents of the Kabeirides nymphs.

Regarding Heroic myths, here I have referred to Kadmos of Tyr, who marries Harmonia of Samothrace. The search for Harmonia is indicated by Ephoros (FGrHist 70F120) as one of the customs in the festivals of the sanctuary. After Iasion, the founder of the Mysteries, is killed as a consequence of his sin against Demeter, his brother Dardanos leaves Samothrace and goes to the foot of Mount Ida, where he teaches the Trojans the Mysteries of Samothrace (Strab. VII, 49). From the last category of myths, that indicate connections to other cults, I specify a reference of Herodotus (Hdt. III, 37.3), who relates how, after Cambyses has jeered at the image of Hephaestus, which resembled the Phoenician *Pataikoi*, similar to the pygmies, then he entered the temple of the Kabeiroi, where he burned certain images resembling Hephaestus, which are said to be his sons. From this account, some scholars have supposed that there was a similarity between the Kabeiroi and Phoenician gods, although this connection is not implied by Herodotus.

## 7.2. The origin of the cult in mythographical context

Here I have discussed the hypotheses on the origin of the cult of the Kabeiroi, rejecting the thesis of Scaliger on the Phoenician origin of the cult. At first hand, the cult is mentioned in numerous cities in Phrygia and Thrace, but nowhere in Phoenicia. Even in Ancient times the main hypothesis was that of the Phrygian origin (Strab. X, 3.20, scol. par. ad Apollonios Rhodios I, 916), and the cult of the Kabeiroi or the Great Gods was often associated with that of the mother goddess (Kybele in Samothrace, Demeter in Thebes). Starting from the data collected by several linguists, I proposed an etymology based on the Paleo-Phrygian term *kavar*, meaning “altar”, “sacrificial place”, or “sacred place” – a term that, through the Aegean deities Kabarnoi, can indicate the origin of the cult of the Kabeiroi.

## 7.3. The sacred language of the sanctuary of the Great Gods

Based on the evidence regarding the Thracian sacred language and the presence of the cult in the Thracian-Phrygian contact zone, I have argued that the origin of the cult has been in this cultural space. Bonfante (1955) shows that the inscriptions discovered in Samothrace (about 75 inscriptions on ceramics, as well as an inscription on a stele, which are categorically non-Greek) can be compared to the Thracian discovery of Ezerovo in Bulgaria. Lehmann (1960) considers that the term *din* or *den*, which is to be found in non-Greek inscriptions, could be the designation of divinity, equivalent to the Greek Θεῶν. In addition, in Zone, colony of Samothrace on the Thracian coast of the Aegean, numerous graffiti-inscribed ceramic fragments have been found similar to the ones discovered in the sanctuary.

## 7.4. The cult of the Samothracian Gods

Hemberg (1950) indicates that the epic poet Arktinos has been preoccupied with the cultic settlement in Samothrace, which shows that in the 7th century B.C. the island had a famous history and an ancient cult (Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* I, 68.2). We can argue that hieratic dances have played an important role in the sanctuary of Samothrace, based on the evidence of the frieze of the dancers. An inscription in Latin and Greek prohibited the entrance of the uninitiated in the Anaktoron. I have here contested the interpretation of Lehmann-Hartleben (1939), according to which the adjacent symbol to the

inscription would have represented the caduceus of Hermes-Kadmilos. I argued that, as the issue was granting access into the building, the two circles would indicate the magnetized iron rings that initiates wore on their fingers, and which served as recognizing means.

I have disputed the hypothesis of Lewis (1958), which stated that in the 3rd century B.C. the initiation was realized on demand. The author's argument is based on the literary work *Argonautica* (Apollon. I, 915-21), and we cannot assume that it would express in a precise manner the process of initiation. I have also rejected the idea according to which the ritual of Samothrace would be similar in content to that of Eleusis, as in the organization of mystery cults the possibility to offer participants a particular experience was quite important. It needed to be different from other initiation rites, and in this matter the entire mythographic and natural environment was used, as is the case with the local myth of the abduction of Harmonia, and saving sailors from the perils at sea, respectively.

## 8. Representations of the Kabeiroi and the specificity of the sanctuaries

### 8.1. Aspects of the cult in the Theban sanctuary

The discovery of the *lekane* with the inscription *TOΘAMAKO* under the floor of a Tholos, dated in the 5th century B.C., has raised numerous questions. Schachter (1986) considers, on the base of the term *thamakos*, that it was attributed to a divinity signifying “the husband”, which would make necessary, according to the author, the presence of another divinity called “the wife”. There is however no need to make this supposition that is not sustained by other evidence, as the name of Thamakos is to be found in the region, and could be the name of the person who dedicated the large bowl. I have also emphasized that a building in a rural space could have benefitted offerings which would show gratitude for the abundant harvest.

The Theban sanctuary is known for the adoration of Kabiros and Pais, who are represented on one of the ceramic fragments (96.K1). There is no need to consider, following Blakely's argument (2006), that the appearance of Pratolaos on this cup would signify the birth of the “first man”, as all the names inscribed on the pot (Mitos, Krateia, Pratolaos) were sufficiently common, as to represent of family of worshippers. In the same time, the representation of Kabiros with the appearance of Dionysus indicates that, in the classical period, a syncretism between the Kabeirian cult near Thebes and a Dionysian cult has taken place.

## 8.2. The comic effect of Theban painted ceramics

The discovered fragments of *kantharoi* and *skyphoi*, dated to the 5th-4th centuries B.C., are illustrated with current activities from Greek society, such as processions, athletic contests, hunting, satiric dance, trade, etc. In contrast to Blakely's opinion (2006), I do not believe that in this case there we face representations of "Theban pygmoid Kabeiroi", as the characters that are often represented in a grotesque way have nothing in common with the images of Kabiros and Pais from the ceramic fragment 96.K1. These scenes can be however easily associated with ancient comedy, which is inspired from common life, and ridicules the outfit, the body language, offerings and so on. The images on the Kabeirian cups have often a provocative sexual character, and taking into account the ceramics which they illustrate, it is probable that it way used for wine consumption in the time of festivities such as the Dionysia festivals.

## 8.3. The problem of the presence of pygmies in the cult of the Kabeiroi

Anca Dan (2014) indicates that the term Πυγμαῖοι comes from πύγμα, the distance between the elbow and the fingers, and it refers to the size that these creatures would have had. Pygmies are in conflict with cranes, and this conflict has dominated humanity at its beginnings. Obviously, this comic motif has often been exploited and one of the representations on the Kabeirian cups illustrates such a fight. Nevertheless, the diversity of iconographic subjects does not support the theory according to which the illustrated characters would be pygmies. At the same time, the grotesque figures discovered in the sanctuary are an argument for the fact that we cannot simply identify them with pygmies, as they express a wide variety of deformed features and rudimentary appearances. I have also maintained that, in contrast to the primitive life, the sacred elements of the cult must have indicated to participants in the initiation the nobility of the status that they aspired to, a fact that is also emphasized in the *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius.

## 8.4. The cult in relation to the myth. The case of the sanctuary in Lemnos

In Lemnos, ritual wine consumption is well represented, as ceramics used for drinking represents the only constant discovery inside the sanctuary. The connection with the cult of Hephaestus indicates, without doubt, the close association of the cult of Lemnos to

metallurgical activity. At the same time, while the island is colonized by Athenians, we encounter an “Eleusinisation” of the local cult, by introducing night festivities, under the light of torches (Bremmer 2014). The myth of killing of the men of Lemnos by their wives was associated by Philostratos in the 3rd century A.D. with the motive of the purification ritual by putting off all fires on the island. Nevertheless, I consider this explanation to be of a literary type, as the Roman poet Accius (2nd-1st centuries B.C.) described in *Philoctetes* the shore of Lemnos, the Kabeirian altar, the sacred rituals and the forests in where Prometheus was supposed to have brought fire to mortals. Therefore, in my opinion, it is more probable that the role of purifications by putting off fires was to honour the deed of Prometheus, rather than the hypothesis of purifying the crime committed by women.

## 9. Administration of Samothrace and Filial-Sanctuaries

### 9.1. The regional importance of the city and the international reputation of the sanctuary of Samothrace

In Ancient times the origin of the Samothracian population was considered to be from Samos Island. Belonging to the Ionian civilization, it had a democratic government, but maintained the function of *basileus* in the city. Until the 5th century B.C., Samothrace owned, on the Thracian shore, a territory which stretched between the city of Maroneia and the Thracian Peninsula. Burkert (2011) acknowledges that, in the Hellenistic era, the island of Samothrace has become an outpost of the Ptolemaic Kingdom. I argued also that introducing the designation of *Megaloi Theoi* was closely linked to the imperial aspirations and the will of spiritual affirmation of Macedonian rule. Samothrace remains, at the same time, an important spiritual centre in the Roman period, and this is proven by a series of officials who participate in the initiation.

### 9.2. Filial-Sanctuaries of the Great Gods

At the end of the classical period and beginning of the Hellenistic age, numerous Filial-Sanctuaries and associations of worshippers appear suddenly in the Aegean Sea area, as well as at the Black Sea. This is undoubtedly not an accident. I argued that the spreading of the cult was determined by its appropriation from the Macedonian royalty, which after monumentalizing the sanctuary used it as an ensign of its influence. The oldest mention of a temple of the Great Gods is in Seuthopolis, in the middle of the 4th century B.C., but we have

other mentions on Imbros Island, then at the Black Sea, in Thera (where the *Samothrakes Theoi* were venerated among other divinities), but also in several places in Asia Minor.

### 9.3. The cult of Andania and local cults of the Kabeiroi

In the next sub-chapter, I approached some local particularities, as the cult of the Great Goddesses (*Megalai Theai*) of Andania, mentioned by Pausanias and confirmed by an inscription that indicates the clothing of initiates. We can only question a possible kinship between this cult and that of the Great Gods. Delos Island is one of the few places where there is a mention of the Kabeiroi and the Great Gods inside the same inscription. We can also find an interesting epitaph from Kavala, mentioning a certain Isidoros, who has seen the sacred light of Kabiros at Samothrace and of Demeter at Eleusis. Also, in Thessalonike the main divinity in Roman times was Kabeiros, indicated by numismatic iconography, although no temple dedicated to him has been found. Due to a statement of Servius, the hypothesis was introduced that there would be an overlapping of the Kabeiroi and the Roman Penates, but we have no convincing argument in this direction.

### 10. The Kabeiroi and types of *daimones*

In chapter 10, I discussed the hypothesis stating that several types of *daimones* from Ancient Greece – the Dactyls, Curetes, Telchines, Korybantes, and Kabeiroi – had their origin in a metallurgical cult. I argued that these typologies had different social functions. I also identified some recurrent motifs in the case of each type and I determined differences to the other groups, in particular for the Kabeiroi as caretakers of the mystery cult.

In contrast to Eliade (1939) and Blakely (2006), I reached the conclusion that we cannot consider the *daimones* as a “cultural discussion of metallurgy”, as Blakely states. On the contrary, their specific roles in Greek imagery do not allow a global approach. Thus, ecstatic dancers such as the Curetes and the Korybantes show an artistic dimension, rather than an inclination towards crafts, as it is the case of the Idaian Dactyls. The Telchines are also represented as sorcerers who oppose the order in the world. But these groups are not the expression of a single thoughtful organized mystery cult, as in the case of the Kabeiroi, the only group for which we can prove the existence of an autonomous cult.

### 11. Conclusions

From the analysis provided in this thesis I reached a series of conclusions, among which I mention: the new conception about the origin of the cult of Kabeiroi, as a result of the interference between Phrygia and Thrace; introducing the designation of *Megaloi Theoi* in order to satisfy the imperial aspirations of Macedonia, at the same time with rebuilding the sanctuary of Samothrace; reconsidering the meaning of the purification ritual by putting off fires specific in the Island of Lemnos, with an alternative to Burkert's opinion (1970). I have also discussed the role of the grotesque in the Theban painted ceramics and votive figures, showing characters with a pronounced comic appearance. I have also rejected the hypothesis that the Kabeiroi would be metallurgical divinities, in a comparative study with other groups of *daimones* that are present in the Ancient Greek imagery.

## 12. Bibliography

In the last part of the paper I included the bibliographical list, as well as a list of the editions of literary sources which were cited inside this thesis.

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