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STUDIA ARCHAEOLOGICA

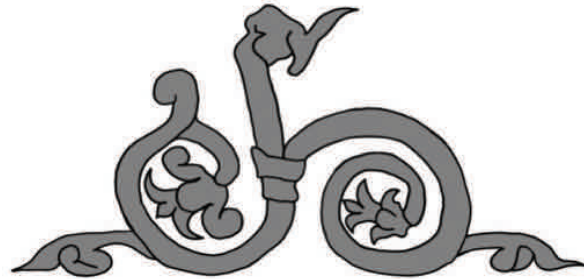
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# “I am Horus the Savior”. Representations of Horus-Harpokrates in Roman Dacia\*

Ștefana Cristea

**Abstract:** As part of a phenomenon spread throughout the Roman Empire, the Egyptian divinities also made their way into Roman Dacia. They were introduced by the most mobile social categories, by soldiers, merchants, but also by representatives of the administration and by slaves. The Egyptian gods can be found in Potaissa, Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa, Apulum, Micia, Romula etc. Together with Isis and Serapis, Harpokrates, Bes, Ammon, and Apis also reached Dacia, but the present article only deals with the child-god Harpokrates (the child Horus). He is only encountered in Dacia under the form of small-size figurative representations and no public cult is known, though it is possible it was associated to the cult of Isida. The use of the representations of the god Harpokrates in a more intimate and personal environment creates a social dimensions that can be followed starting with Ptolemaic Egypt, throughout the Roman Empire, including the province of Dacia. People addressed this god in order to have some of their wishes fulfilled, either through the mediation of religion, or through that of magic.

I find it necessary to include a small catalogue that reunites the discoveries connected to this god in Roman Dacia, as well as gems preserved in the collections of several museum from Romania, but with unknown places of discovery. The catalogue was structured according to the categories of objects and is followed by discussions regarding this discoveries.

**Keywords:** Harpokrates, Roman Dacia, Egyptian divinities, statuettes, terracotta, gems.

Harpokrates is the Egyptian god represented as a nude boy who raises the index finger of his right hand towards his lips. He is, in fact, the child Horus, son of Isida and Osiris, and after the introduction of Serapis during the Hellenistic period, he becomes part of a “holy family” together with Serapis and Isis. One encounters the god under various forms: Harpokrates (the child Horus), Harsiesis<sup>1</sup> (Horus the son of Isida), Harendotes (Horus avenger of his father Osiris), and Harsomtus or Harsomtours (Horus the one who has united the two countries)<sup>2</sup>.

There are several characteristic elements to the depictions of Harpokrates: the nude child, the braided hair lock on the right side of the head, and, especially, the gesture of the right hand index finger raised to the mouth. He also wears different characteristic crowns<sup>3</sup>: the *hemhem* crown<sup>4</sup>, the *atef* crown<sup>5</sup>, the double crown (*pschent*)<sup>6</sup>, the crown of Amun<sup>7</sup>, the red crown of the Lower Egypt<sup>8</sup>, the blue crown<sup>9</sup>, or the *nemes*<sup>10</sup>. In his hands he sometimes holds a scepter (*heka*) and a whip (*nekhakha*) or an *ankh*<sup>11</sup>.

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\* English translation: Ana M. Gruia.

<sup>1</sup> Hart 1986, 71.

<sup>2</sup> Dunand, Zivie-Coche 1991, 40–41.

<sup>3</sup> Bunson 202, 109.

<sup>4</sup> An elaborated form of the *atef* crown, sometimes called a triple *atef* crown (for all the crowns see Bunson 2002, 90).

<sup>5</sup> This sacral crown is white, flanked by two ostrich feathers and surmounted by a gold disk. It is often worn by Osiris.

<sup>6</sup> This crown is a combination of the two: the white crown of the Upper Egypt and the red one of the Lower Egypt.

<sup>7</sup> The crown worn by the god Amun (Ammon), consisting of two tall feathers.

<sup>8</sup> It is also known as the *deshret* crown. It was typical to goddess Neith, patron of the city of Sais in the Lower Egypt.

<sup>9</sup> It is also known as the “war crown” or the *khepresh* crown. The pharaohs are often depicted wearing it in battle, but could be worn during ceremonies as well. As in the case of the majority of royal crowns, it has an *uraeus* fixed on it.

<sup>10</sup> It is the head cover worn by the pharos. It is stripped, has an *uraeus* fixed on it, and could be combined with the double crown.

<sup>11</sup> It represents the symbol of eternal life in ancient Egypt and when it is held by a divinity it represent eternity. It was used during rituals connected to the royal cult and acquired special meaning when used during various ceremonies inside the temples (see Bunson 2002, 38).



Fig. 1. Harpocrates Muzeul Capitolin (photo Ștefana Cristea).

The iconography of Harpocrates includes the same types of representations throughout the Greek-Roman world<sup>12</sup>. On the one hand there is the iconographic type of the god standing, nude or wearing a *himation* on his left arm, that also holds the horn of abundance, while the index finger of the right hand is raised to the lips. On his head he initially wore the *pschent* crown, but in time it was downsized and ended up transformed either into a lotus flower or in a hair lock (in the case of bronze statuettes dated to the second-third centuries A.D.) On the other hand, there is the iconographic type of *Isis lactans*, where Harpocrates is depicted in the arms of his mother who is breastfeeding him. Still nude, but sitting on a lotus flower, he represents the sun being born. In Roman iconography he sometimes features in syncretism with other child divinities (Amor – when he has wings, Dionysos – when he wears leaves and grape bunches in his hair or holds them in his hands, Hercules – when he holds the club and is, occasionally, accompanied by snakes) or is even assimilated by these divinities. Starting with the Hellenistic period, his general look ceases to be Egyptian and becomes Greek. His head is no longer shaved, with just a braid typical to youngsters in Egypt (surmounted by various crowns and signs of power), but is covered with wavy hair; his face is no longer hieratic but he becomes a chubby child, according to the Greek artistic canon, or an adolescent with slightly effeminate traits. It seems, though, that his success was minor in the Roman world than in the Greek one<sup>13</sup> where one finds more numerous epigraphic mentions of him and more numerous figurative depictions of Harpocrates alone (Fig. 1).

In the Roman provinces, the divinities of Egyptian origin mainly spread between the first and the third century A.D., less during the fourth century A.D. Besides Isis, who holds supremacy, we also find Serapis, Anubis, Osiris, and Harpocrates, but just on figurative monuments<sup>14</sup>. On bronze statuettes, gems, terracottas, or clay medallions, he is still depicted as a nude boy (or draped in a *chiton* or a mantle) who raises the index finger of the right hand towards the mouth (a gesture that receives a new interpretation, as an advice to be silent, possibly related to the mysteries of his mother, Isis), wearing a *pschent* crown on his head, smaller and more stylized, sometimes with an added crown of rays. The type of hieratic and frontal depiction, typical to Egyptian art is replaced by a more graceful type, with rounded volumes, typical to Greek-Roman art. Here he is also depicted holding *cornucopia* in his left hand as a symbol of his creative and renewing force inherited from his father Osiris (later replaced by Serapis)<sup>15</sup>.

Harpocrates is depicted either alone, or in the company of other gods.

<sup>12</sup> Tran Tam Thin 1984, 1731–1732; Cartwright 1929, 184–185.

<sup>13</sup> Malaise 1972, 1637.

<sup>14</sup> Selem 1980, 58. See also E. Harris, J. Harris 1965, 81.

<sup>15</sup> Selem 1980, 59–60, 65.



It is possible that many of the statuettes and statues that depict him alone were part of groups that included other gods as well.

On terracotta<sup>16</sup>, the way in which this god appears is slightly different, being developed certain iconographic types that are less often encountered in statuettes, reliefs, and frescoes: Harpokrates while resting in a papyrus bush, while riding a goose, an elephant, a horse, as an ithyphallic character (which can be identified with Harpokrates by the thin braided lock of hair; this type of representations is also found on statuettes and can be accompanied by a vessel for water or wine libations or by a tambourine). On few of the terracotta, Harpokrates' crowns are depicted at their conventional size, in this case cult statues were chosen as model<sup>17</sup>. From the Ptolemaic period Harpokrates starts being depicted not only nude, but also wearing a *chiton*, especially when he is holding a *cornucopia* in his left hand. This manner of depiction tends to become general and becomes one of the accepted postures of the god starting with the third century A.D., probably due to his Hellenization<sup>18</sup>.

A particular case of terracotta are the lamps used for religious purposes (ceremonies performed in sanctuaries, homes, tombs), with depictions of the divinities. Some of the models decorated with images of Isis and of the other divinities that accompany her (Serapis, Harpokrates, and Anubis) were created in Italy and the Orient, while others were produced in African workshops. Lamps with Harpokrates alone are a type distributed throughout the Roman Empire (for example those discovered in Carthage, in Tunisia, in El-Djem etc.)<sup>19</sup>.

Harpokrates' entrance into the Greek-Roman world is helped, on the one hand, by his close connection to Isis<sup>20</sup> (especially through the *Isis lactans* iconographic type) and, on the other hand, by his aspect of apotropaic and savior divinity, with magical powers. The latter aspect manifests itself in the case of a special type of small-size items that can be worn as amulets, i.e. in the case of gems<sup>21</sup>. On such items, like in the case of terracotta, one encounters several specific iconographic types: the most frequent is Harpokrates as a nude child, crouching on a lotus flower – a type that has several variants<sup>22</sup>. In this case Harpokrates symbolizes the sun being born from inside the first lotus flower that grew from the primordial waters. On some gems he is depicted crouching on a lotus flower (that can be flanked by two or four flower buds), with the right hand raised towards the lips, in the left holding a *flagellum*, a *cornucopia*, or a lotus bud. On his head he sometimes wears the *pschent* crown, other times a solar disk or a crown of rays.

There are also gems decorated with more complicated models – their surface features not only Harpokrates crouching on the lotus flower, but also several groups of three dangerous animals each (crocodiles, snakes, antelopes, or birds)<sup>23</sup>. There are variants with three scarabs depicted above Harpokrates' head. Their usual function is to provide protection and their presence in this context can have several explanations: either, due to their position above the god's head, they still play an apotropaic role, or, due to their shape, they were confused with tortoises that often feature on *cippi*<sup>24</sup> but not on gems, and thus have acquired a negative connotation. This iconographic type makes reference to the episode in the myth of the goddess Isis and of Osiris<sup>25</sup> when he is bitten by a snake or a scorpion sent by Seth and is found almost dead by his mother, Isis. She asks for Ra's help and forces him to help her since, as a great magician, she knew Ra's real name. Thoth is sent to rescue and save Horus/Harpokrates, and gives him the power to dominate this dangerous animals. On these monuments Harpokrates is depicted as a nude child who steps on crocodiles and tortoises and holds in his hands scorpions, snakes, antelopes, donkeys, and lions. The usual gesture or raising the right hand

<sup>16</sup> Ballet 2000, 99–101.

<sup>17</sup> Török 1995, 58, no. 56.

<sup>18</sup> Török 1995, 59–60, no. 58.

<sup>19</sup> Podvin 2008, 2197–2212.

<sup>20</sup> Budischovsky 2004.

<sup>21</sup> Sfameni 2004.

<sup>22</sup> Delatte, Derchain 1964, 106–125; Teșosu-David 1965, 97–99.

<sup>23</sup> There is a series of gems related to this one on the basis of their representation. They depict the Egyptian god Bes, with four wings and four arms (that may symbolize the four cardinal points), with knee guards in the shape of lion heads, the legs ending in jackal heads or snakes and stepping / holding in his hands similar animals. The entire scene can be surrounded by an *ouroboros*, symbol of renewal, cyclical repetition, and never-ending time (see Delatte, Derchain 1964, 126–141).

<sup>24</sup> Pinch 2004, 16–21, 100–103.

<sup>25</sup> Alvar 2008, 39–52.

to the lips is missing here, but on his head, on the right side, we can see the typical braided hair lock, characteristic to the representations of the god. Above his head is represented the head of the god Bes (maybe a mask that represents the god and was worn during certain ceremonies), the protector of families, pregnant women, and children; a series of other divinities involved in this episode of the myth can feature besides him: Isis, Ra, Osiris, Anubis, and Thoth. Images on these magical *stelae* can include stories from the myth, such as spells and incantations. The protective magical power that *cippi* were endowed with could be exerted either upon a place, an individual, or a social group. Besides, the same type of priests who performed the religious rituals were also involved in acts of private magic, and Egyptian magic was largely prophylactic, used to prevent the problems by creating a defensive system<sup>26</sup>. The Egyptians were convinced of the creative power of words and images. This is how is possible to explain the fact that they avoided to represent Seth, and when he was depicted, he was shown much smaller than the positive character he accompanied. In the same way, Harpokrates is depicted on these *stelae* much larger than the animals he dominated. It was believed that by rendering the negative elements smaller in size, their power was also diminished<sup>27</sup>. The same type of image can be encountered on magical gems, the persons who wore them wishing to be protected against the bites or actions of the animals deemed as manifestations of the god Seth.

On gems, the lotus flower is sometimes depicted on a boat, either by itself, or besides a series of characters (an ithyphallic cynocephalus or an ibiocephal in the act of adoration), referring to the solar boat. Under the boat, supporting it, we may find the depiction of Nun (the divinity who embodies the primordial waters) and an *ouroboros* was sometimes represented around the entire scene. The origin of the depiction of the lotus on which Harpokrates is seen in a boat, just like the presence of the male character that supports the boat with the arms raised and one knee leaning on the ground, is found in the pharaonic iconography.

Another frequently encountered iconographic type on gems as well is that in which Harpokrates features in the arms of his mother Isis, who is feeding him from her breast; in several cases, the god Bes occupies the reverse<sup>28</sup>. Isis herself was recognized as a goddess of magic even since the pharaonic period, invoked as a protective divinity of familie and children. These were most probably amulets worn for the protection of children or breastfeeding mothers.

Other divinities that feature besides Harpokrates are Hathor (in some Egyptian texts Horus is considered the son of goddess Hathor, the one who feeds him with divine milk<sup>29</sup>), Bastet, Neith, Maat, Thoth etc. He may be depicted sitting on a throne, kneeling or crouching on the lotus flower. In more numerous cases though he is depicted walking / taking a step.

The language used by the stone carvers for the inscriptions on these engraved stones is in the absolute majority of cases Greek, but the fact that they transcribed Semitic or Egyptian words with Greek letters make their deciphering often impossible. The analysis of the stones used for the creation of the gems has led to the conclusion that almost all are made of semi-precious stones, thus accessible to the people from the poorer social classes<sup>30</sup>.

Depictions of the Egyptian gods were also used in zodiacs from the Greek-Roman period. They were not only used as embodiments of the zodiac signs, but also as decans of each sign and as some of the planets<sup>31</sup>. We encounter them with this role in the temple of goddess Hathor in Dendera or on the astrological tablets from Grand<sup>32</sup> (where Horus/Harpokrates is the third decan from Pisces).

## Roman Dacia

The discoveries connected to these divinities from the territory of Roman Dacia<sup>33</sup> are mainly concentrated in several centers<sup>34</sup>. The most important center seems to be Potaisa where two inscrip-

<sup>26</sup> Pinch 1994, 14.

<sup>27</sup> Pinch 1994, 18–19.

<sup>28</sup> Frankfurter 1998, 124–131.

<sup>29</sup> Tran Tam Tinh, Labrecque 1973, 2–3.

<sup>30</sup> Delatte, Derchain 1964, 15–18.

<sup>31</sup> Clagett 1995, 126–127, 471–488.

<sup>32</sup> Abry 1993, 77–112.

<sup>33</sup> Budischovsky 2006.

<sup>34</sup> Bricault 2001, 28–29, 34–35.

tions were found<sup>35</sup> (one mentions the college of those who adored Isis<sup>36</sup>), two heads from cult statues that depicted Serapis<sup>37</sup>, nine statuettes<sup>38</sup>, one relief that presumably depicts a priestess of Isida<sup>39</sup>, another relief depicting Apis<sup>40</sup> and one terracotta (Isis *anasyrmene*)<sup>41</sup>. One gem<sup>42</sup> and a special object<sup>43</sup> were also found in Potaissa (the tip of a standard or a scepter with the representation of a sphinx and a Greek inscription).

The next site, according to the number of artifacts and their importance, is Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa, where have been found: six inscriptions<sup>44</sup>, five statuettes<sup>45</sup>, one capital fragment decorated with the face of the god Ammon<sup>46</sup>, a funerary monument<sup>47</sup>, and two gems<sup>48</sup>.

Apulum is also very important from the perspective of these divinities, as the following artifacts were found there: six inscriptions<sup>49</sup> that mention the gods Isis and Serapis, together with other three inscriptions that feature two personal names with Egyptian resonance (Sarapio<sup>50</sup> and Isidora<sup>51</sup>), as well as three funerary monuments that include depictions of god Ammon<sup>52</sup>, two terracotta (one mould of goddess Isis<sup>53</sup> and one medallion<sup>54</sup>) and a fragmentarily preserved statuette<sup>55</sup>.

The Egyptian divinities are more poorly represented in Micia<sup>56</sup>, Napoca (Cluj-Napoca), Drobeta (Drobeta Turnu-Severin), Romula (Reșca), Porolissum (Moigrad), Sucidava (Celei), and Alburnus Maior (Roșia Montană). A series of artifacts were discovered as stray finds in Bădăcin (Sălaj County), Valea Seacă (Covasna County), Cozia (Vâlcea County), Chinteni (Cluj County), Ozd (Mureș County), Perișori (Dolj County), without any trace of habitation present.

### Discoveries from Roman Dacia

The catalogue of discoveries from the province of Dacia that bear the image of the Egyptian god Harpokrates was organized according to the types of artifacts: statuettes, reliefs, terracotta, and gems. The third member of the Alexandrine triad, Harpokrates, is known in Dacia through seven certain

<sup>35</sup> Neigebaur 1851, 202, no. 14; CIL III, 881; Popescu 1927, 200; Popa 1979, 28–29, no. 39; I. Nemeti 2005, 350, no. 2; Pribac 2006, 263, no. 344.

<sup>36</sup> Neigebaur 1851, 202; CIL III, 882; Popescu 1927, 199; Popa 1979, 21–22, no. 39; Ardevan 1998, 426, no. 428; I. Nemeti 2005, 350, no. 1; Pribac 2006, 261, no. 313.

<sup>37</sup> Isac 1970, 549–553, fig. 1; Popa 1979, 13–14; Bărbulescu 2006, 351–354, 355.

<sup>38</sup> Neigebaur 1851, 209, 211, no. 73, 78, 135, 136; Drexler 1890, 53; Buday 1909, 146–153; Popescu 1927, 201, 202, footnote 7; Popa 1979, 13, 22–23, 34, 42, 47, no. 26, 47, 61, 72; Bărbulescu 1994, 161, 164, pl. XIV/2; Țeposu-Marinescu-Pop 2000, 159, 161, no. 281, 283, pl. 91; Alföldy-Găzdac 2003, 174–175, no. 7, no. 8, pl. 5/1, 2, 3, 4, 5; I. Nemeti 2005, 251, 349–355; Bărbulescu 2006, 355; Sălășan 2008, 164, no. 71.

<sup>39</sup> Neigebaur 1851, 40, no. 127; Popa 1979, 32–33, no. 45.

<sup>40</sup> Popa 1979, 46, no. 70.

<sup>41</sup> Cătinaș 2005, 157, pl. 3/8.

<sup>42</sup> Bărbulescu 2006, 351–360.

<sup>43</sup> Bărbulescu 1994, 165, fig. 35.

<sup>44</sup> Neigebaur 1851, 25, no. 27; Popescu 1927, 199; Daicoviciu 1928–1932, 83–84, no. 1; Tudor 1957, 251, no. 49; Popa 1979, 14–15, 17, 23–24, no. 12, 16, 28; Russu 1979, 437–438; Daicoviciu, Alicu 1981, 179; Petolescu 1986, 349, no. 332; Piso 1998, 255–258, 263, no. 1, 2, 9; Ardevan 1998, 379, no. 147; Petolescu 1999, 191–192, no. 781, 782, 787; Bulzan 2005, 309, 314, no. 89, 127; ILD, 130, 132–133, no. 265, 266, 273; CIL III, 1428, 7995; IDR III/2, 68, 227, 228, 331.

<sup>45</sup> Neigebaur 1851, 15, no. 8; Andrițoiu-Mărghitan 1972, fig. 62; Alicu *et al.* 1979, 116, no. 254, 255, 256, pl. XLI, CXX; Popa 1979, 16, 24–27, no. 35, pl. I/3; Russu 1979, 174, no. 4, pl. I, 4a-b; Țeposu-Marinescu – Pop 2000, 103, no. 122, plate 63; CIL III, 1558; IDR III/1, 69.

<sup>46</sup> Mărghitan-Andrițoiu 1976, 49, fig. 2/6; Popa 1979, 42–43, no. 62.

<sup>47</sup> Popa 1979, 43, no. 63.

<sup>48</sup> Neigebaur 1851, 42, no. 169; Drexler 1890, 56; Popescu 1927, 201; Popa 1979, 25.

<sup>49</sup> Neigebaur 1851, 147, no. 165; Popescu 1927, 199–200, 204; Floca 1935, 239; Isac 1970, 551; Bărbulescu 1972, 204, no. 13; Popa 1965, 147–150; Popa 1979, 9–10, 18–19, 27–28, no. 2, 3, 4, 19, 37, 38; Piso 1993, 77, 105, no. 19, 23, 2; Ardevan 1998, 405, no. 309; Bulzan 2005, 328, no. 226; Pribac 2006, 249, 254, no. 100, 192, 193, 194; Carbó García 2008, no. 286; CIL III, 973, 7768, 7769, 7770, 7771; IDR III/5, 104, 315, 316, 317, 318.

<sup>50</sup> Can be a shortened form of the name Σαραπίουος (Mora 1990, 69, 423, 871, 989, 1052, 1053).

<sup>51</sup> IDR III/3, no. 394; Ruscu 1998, 152.

<sup>52</sup> Popa 1979, 36–38, no. 50, 51, 52.

<sup>53</sup> Moga 1878, 161–167; Ungurean 2008, 146.

<sup>54</sup> Popa 1959, 469–471; Popa 1979, 27, no. 36; Ungurean 2008, 155.

<sup>55</sup> Popa 1979, 31, no. 43, pl. I/6.

<sup>56</sup> Alicu 1998.

representations, plus seven gems preserved in museum collections from Romania, the places of discoveries of which remain unknown. Despite the fact that one cannot know for certain the fact that these seven gems, with unknown place of discovery, circulated on the territory of Roman Dacia, I deemed their inclusion in this short catalogue useful. I believe it is possible that they came from the areas of the Pannonias, Moesias, and Roman Dacia and that they, or similar gems, circulated on the territory of the province of Dacia.

1. *Sarmizegetusa – Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa* (Hunedoara County). Bronze statuette depicting Isis, Serapis and Harpokrates together. It is preserved in the collection of the National Museum from Budapest (Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum), but was found in Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa. The statuette is fragmentarily preserved and shows strong traces of corrosion. It was made through full casting and the patina is almost faded due to restoration works. The three Egyptian divinities stand on a simple base. In the lower part of the base one finds two modern rivets that have been set to replace the ancient, broken ones. The item shows a casting defect, i.e. Harpokrates' head is connected through a bar to Isida's shoulder. It is dated to the second century A.D. Dimensions: 3.17 × 3.17 cm. Bibliography: Alföldy-Găzdac 2003, 175–176, no. 9, Pl. 4/ 4 and 5.

2. *Turda – Potaissa* (Cluj County). Bronze statuette depicting Harpokrates. It was mentioned by J. F. Neugebauer and W. Drexler. It was probably discovered in Potaissa and became part of the Kemény collection. The depicted god raises one hand, with the raised finger, towards the lips, leading to his identification with Harpokrates. Information on this artifact can no longer be checked because it has been lost. Cannot be dated. Bibliography: Neugebauer 1851, 209, no. 73; Drexler 1890, 53; Popa 1979, 34, no. 47; Bărbulescu 1994, 164; I. Nemeti 2005, 251, no. 8; Sălășan 2008, 164, no. 71.

3. *Corabia-Celei – Sucidava* (Olt County). Marble relief depicting the Alexandrine triad: Isis, Serapis, and Harpokrates. It is fragmentarily preserved in the collection of the Institute of Archaeology in Bucharest, inv. no. L.768. Initially, G. Bordenache believed that the relief originated in Scythia Minor (Tomis or Durostorum), as it was found in the Papazoglu collection. Specialists later believed that it might have been found in Sucidava. Dimensions: 82 × 105 × 10 cm. Bibliography: Bordenache 1969, 87, no. 171, pl. LXXV; Petolescu 1973, 159–161; Berciu, Petolescu 1976, 32, no. 15, Pl. X; Popa 1979, 230, no. 4

4. *Moigrad – Porolissum* (Sălaj County). Light brick-red terracotta, fragmentarily preserved (the head is missing). Discovered in Porolissum. It is preserved in the Prof. Al. Culcer collection. The item depicts Isis holding Harpokrates in her arms; two braided tails can be noted on both sides of his head. In the lower part of the terracotta one notices vegetal motifs, i.e. the acanthus leaves out of which the goddess seems to appear. The workmanship is schematic. Can be dated, approximately, to the second-third centuries A.D. Dimensions: 10 × 4.8 cm. Bibliography: Gudea 1989, 221–223; Ungurean 2008, 179, fig. 30.

5. *Reșca – Romula* (Olt County). Terracotta discovered somewhere in southern Dacia, probably in Romula, preserved in the collection of the Museum of Oltenia in Craiova, inv. no. I 7508. The item is cast, hollow inside, made of fine red fabric, painted in red. The lower part is broken and on the back side, in the center, there is a circular orifice. Dimensions: 17.6 × 5.6 × 3.5 cm. The statuette was published as depicting a child, a genius with the *cornucopia* as attribute, raising the index finger of the right hand towards the mouth<sup>57</sup>, but in fact it depicts Harpokrates. Can be dated to the second-third centuries A. D. Bibliography: I. Nemeti 2011.

6. *Reșca – Romula* (Olt County). Gem depicting Harpokrates. It is preserved in the Museum in Caracal. The gem was illustrated in C. M. Tătulea's book only through a drawing, without a description and without the presentation of its technical details. The entirely preserved gem depicts Harpokrates as a nude young man, with the right hand making the characteristic gesture of raising it to the lips, while in the left hand he is holding the horn of abundance. On his head, that is covered in curls, one notes something that might be much the downsized representation of a crown or a flower, also typical to the Roman mode of depiction. A scepter, rendered in three segments, seems to start from under his left hand. Bibliography: Tătulea 1994, fig. 37/18.

7. *Veșel – Micia* (Hunedoara County). Gem made of green jasper, oval, decorated with the depiction of Harpokrates sitting of a lotus flower. It was preserved in the National History Museum of

<sup>57</sup> Bondoc 2005, 62, no. 50.

Transylvania from Cluj-Napoca, inv. no. 4623 (now lost). Can be dated to the second-third centuries A.D. Dimensions: 16 × 12 × 2.5 mm. Bibliography: Țeposu-Marinescu 1964, 257–264, fig. 1/1; Popa 1979, 33–34, no. 46.

8. *Unknown place of discovery*. Gem made of red jasper, oval, with a depiction of Harpokrates. It is preserved in the Numismatic Cabinet of the Romanian Academy, inv. no. 120. Harpokrates is rendered in a boat, floating on the Nile, turned to the right, holding the horn of abundance in the right hand and raising his left towards his lips, in a gesture asking for silence. He wears a *calathos* on his head. The prow of the boat is in the shape of a cock's head while the stern has the shape of a lion's head supporting a krater full of fruit. In front of the god, on the boat's deck, one sees an altar. The entire image is surrounded by a pearled line. It can be dated during the Hellenistic period. If this item originates on the territory of Dacia, then it circulated there after its production, during the Roman period. Dimensions: 22 × 16 × 2.5 mm. Bibliography: Gramatopol 1974, 43, no. 57, pl. III.

9. *Unknown place of discovery*. Gem made of red jasper, oval, set in a modern gold ring. It is preserved in the Numismatic Cabinet of the Romanian Academy, inv. no. B.P.G. 6. It depicts Harpokrates in bust, towards the right, draped, with the right hand making the ritual gesture through which he is asking for silence. A braided hair lock falls on his back, behind his hear. His thick lips are slightly open, the nose is straight. On his head he wears a crescent moon and behind him one can identify an eagle or a hawk resting on a club. It is of good artistic quality, carefully work, detailed. Dimensions: 15 × 12 mm. Bibliography: Gramatopol 1974, 67, no. 370, pl. XVIII.

10. *Unknown place of discovery*. Gem made of green glass, oval, set in an ancient gold frame. It is preserved in the Numismatic Cabinet of the Romanian Academy, inv. no. 61/O. Harpokrates is depicted crouching on a lotus flower, turned to the right. In his right hand he seems to hold the whip (*flagellum*), while the left is raised towards his lips, in the gesture so typical to him. The body, as the entire image, is rendered schematically, with no insistence upon the details. Harpokrates is flanked by vultures with closed wings. There is an inscription on the reverse ΣΑ / ΒΑ / W. Dimensions: 23 × 19 × 2 mm. Bibliography: Gramatopol 1974, 67, no. 371, Pl. XVIII, 371a, 371b.

11. *Unknown place of discovery*. Gem made of onyx, oval, with flat surface. It is preserved in the collection of the Brukenthal Museum in Sibiu, inv. no. 1105. It depicts Isis with the bare bust, sitting on several overlapping stones. She holds Harpokrates in her arms and the child touches her chest with his right hand. Dimensions: 13 × 11 × 3.7 mm. Bibliography: Țeposu-Marinescu 1965, 98, no. 33, pl. IV, fig. 6.

12. *Unknown place of discovery*. Gem made of red carnelian, oval, with the surface slightly convex. It is preserved in the collection of the Brukenthal Museum in Sibiu, inv. no. 1123. The gem depicts Harpokrates nude, kneeling on a lotus flower and looking to the left. In his left hand he holds the horn of abundance and the right is raised towards his lips in the characteristic gesture of asking for silence. It is dated to the second-third centuries A.D. Dimensions: 11 × 7.5 × 2.7 mm. Bibliography: Țeposu-Marinescu 1965, 97, no. 29, Pl. IV, fig. 3; Popa 1979, 34, no. 47a.

13. *Unknown place of discovery*. Gem made of red carnelian, oval, with flat surface. It is preserved in the collection of the Brukenthal Museum in Sibiu, inv. no. 1083. According to his characteristic attributes, one can say that Harpokrates is the god depicted on this gem. He is render frontally, with the head turned to the left, nude, holding the horn of abundance in the left hand and raising the right to his lips, through his typical gesture. It is dated to the second-third centuries A.D. Dimensions: 18.5 × 15 × 4.7 mm. Bibliography: Țeposu-Marinescu 1965, 98, no. 30, pl. IV, fig. 4; Popa 1979, 34–35, no. 47b.

14. *Unknown place of discovery*. Gem made of red carnelian, oval, with the surface slightly convex. It is preserved in the collection of the Brukenthal Museum in Sibiu, inv. no. 1186. L. Țeposu-Marinescu believes it is depiction of Harpokrates, but it rather seems to be that of a genius. It is dated to the second-third centuries A.D. Dimensions: 13.9 × 10.3 × 2.8 mm. Bibliography: Țeposu-Marinescu 1965, 98, no. 31, Pl. IV, fig. 2; Popa 1979, 35, no. 47c.

## Discussions

The spread of the cults of oriental origin in Roman Dacia is part a wider current at the level of the entire Empire, started when the classical Greek-Roman divinities no longer met the intimate needs

of the people. They tended to appreciate the oriental gods increasingly, due to their soteriological character and to the much more personal relation that they cultivated with their believers. People needed more and more to believe in salvation beyond death, salvation that the classical Greek-Roman gods, inaccessible and cold, could not deliver. The oriental gods were more capable of understanding the believers because they themselves have suffered and lost dear ones, some of them have died and then resurrected. If these gods were able to transcend death, then the believers initiated in their cults, who have gone through several stages of purification, could hope to do the same. The spectacular ceremonies and festivities, some public, others secret, contributed to the success of the cults of oriental origin; they promised religious experiences that the traditional Roman cults were foreign to<sup>58</sup>. These gods no longer addressed communities alone, but, to the same degree, they spoke to communities and individuals. Belief in them practically erased social barriers, as the poor, the slaves, representatives of the senatorial and equestrian orders could all be initiated<sup>59</sup>. On the other hand, as the organization form of the state evolved, the new leaders needed religions that could provide and strengthen their divine nature that would transform the earthly representatives into divinities.

The Egyptian gods entered in Roman Dacia through the mediation of the military<sup>60</sup>, of merchants, representatives of the imperial administration and slaves. The spread of the divinities from Egypt through the army was favored by the fact that the soldiers formed an extremely mobile social group inside the borders of the Empire. The penetration and the spread of these gods in the province of Dacia must not be necessarily related to the presence of an ethnic group of Egyptians. Egyptians have not been yet attested archaeologically and epigraphically; at the time Dacia was conquered, the cults of the Alexandrine gods had already penetrated the Roman Empire.

It is obvious that Harpokrates did not received an individual public cult, due to the absence of epigraphic attestations on the territory of Roman Dacia and due to the absence of cult statues or statuettes. Still, his depiction of smaller artifacts, such as statuettes, terracotta, and gems, justifies my belief that Harpokrates had his supporters thanks to his character of protector and savior god. He received a great popularity among domestic images ever since in Egypt, as expression of an everyday belief<sup>61</sup>. The phenomenon is not restricted to the province of Dacia. The same situation is found throughout the Roman Empire. He is the god whose life started through a magical act. He is the god who was very close from loosing his life because of Seth, but who was saved by Ra himself and invested with magical powers. He is the one who rise and avenge his father and reclaim the throne, overcoming his opponent. What other god could be more appropriately to be called for helping in situations similar to those he has experienced himself?

Either deposited in niches inside temples or in houses or on the altars from houses or tombs, images of the child-god Harpokrates were meant to protect and procure certain qualities and benefits. These aspects can be also observed in the case of artifacts discovered in the province of Dacia.

Besides other objects found in Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa, the collection of the National Museum in Budapest (Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum) includes a statuette<sup>62</sup> depicting the Alexandrine triad: Isis, Serapis, and Harpokrates (no. 1). Isis wears a long *chiton* that touches the ground and over it a *himation* passed over the left arm. Her dress is suggested through rich and realistically render drapes. Her hair is long, flowing on her shoulders, and on her head she wears a crescent moon. Her left arm touches the hip and in her hand she holds a palm branch. Her right arm is bent at the elbow and raised to the shoulders, holding a lock of hair in the hand, a gesture encountered in the case of depictions of goddess Venus. This is therefore a representation of goddess Isis in syncretism with Venus-Aphrodite. Serapis is shown under the usual figure of a mature man, with a rich beard and the hair touching his shoulders, wearing the usual *calathos* on his head. He wears a *chiton* with short sleeves, extending down to the ankles and a *himation* on top of it, passing over the left shoulder and with wide, though schematically rendered folds. In his left hand he holds a *patera* that makes common body with the figure of Harpokrates. The left arm is broken. Harpokrates is represented nude, with rounded, child-like shapes. With the left arm he holds a snake coiling on a tree. His left arm is bent at the elbow and

<sup>58</sup> Macrea 1969, 313–314; Bărbulescu 2006, 77; Turcan 1998, 124–142.

<sup>59</sup> Carcopino 1979, 167.

<sup>60</sup> Popescu 2004, 152–155.

<sup>61</sup> Frankfurter 1998, 133–134.

<sup>62</sup> Alföldy-Găzdac 2003, 175–176, no. 9, pl. 4/ 4 and 5.

the index finger is raised to the lips, in the gesture so typical to him. His hair is of average length and on his head he wears the double crown of Egypt. A piece of textile falls on his right shoulder.

If the right hand of god Harpokrates is empty while making the gesture of raising it towards the lips, the left hand is usually holding one of his specific attributes. In the case of this statuette, the god's left hand is placed in the close proximity of a snake. This type of representation makes us think of the discussions caused by the image of the child-god on a fresco found in Herculaneum.

The above mentioned fresco<sup>63</sup> depicts Harpokrates in the characteristic gesture of raising his finger towards his mouth, this time though of the left hand, not the right, nude, wearing on top of his reddish curls a vegetal crown, probably made of ivy leaves, decorated with a flower reminding of the lotus flower, above the forehead. In his right hand he holds a branch lance-head-shaped leaves. The central part of the fresco depicts a very large snake, coiled on an altar, ready to devour the offerings placed on it. On the right side of the fresco there was once a graffito that can no longer be read: "GENIVS/HVIVS LOCI/MONTIS." The divinities of Egyptian origin (Isis, Serapis, Harpokrates, and Anubis) held a special role in the religion of Herculaneum and Pompeii, therefore their presence in the *lararii* from there is not surprising. Still, this fresco seems to be a unique case in the Roman Empire. The discussion on the origin of the artist who created the work is still open to debate (if he was Greek or local). The model that stood at the basis of this image is believed not to have been of Alexandrine origin since, besides the fact that the god depicted is of Egyptian origin, there is no other element typical to the Greek-Egyptian art (specialists have invoked the association between Harpokrates and a very large snake, especially on Alexandrine terracotta, but the manner in which the god is depicted and the presence of the altar, not to mention the text that completes the image, are different). F. De Salvia believes, as far the god is concerned, that the case illustrates the syncretism between Harpokrates and Apollo, a conclusion towards which he is drawn on the basis of its teenage look and of the branch he holds, symbol of the healing and prophetic power proper to Apollo. I nevertheless tend to give more credit to K. G. Boyce's interpretation<sup>64</sup>. He analyzes several painted *lararii* discovered in Pompeii (in both public and private spaces) and the ancient literature on snakes in the close proximity of people. His conclusion is that snakes depicted on the walls of houses and in public spaces do not represent *genii* of people, but *genii* of places (*genius loci*). Presuming that the author of the fresco from Herculaneum did not make a mistake when noting the few words, the only mountain he could have made reference to is the Vesuvius. K. G. Boyce even found a parallel, in a fresco from a *lararium* in Pompeii, which includes no inscription but depicts, in the background, Mount Vesuvius. This image also includes a male character and a large-size snake that rises towards the altar on the right side. The idea of snakes as guardians of places belongs to Greek thinking. After their introduction in the Roman civilization, in the beginning they fulfilled the role of guardians of the house walls, together with everything between those walls and just later the role of guardians of altars. What K. G. Boyce's article does not clarify is the connection between the snakes depicted on these altars and the characters besides which they appear. If the snake is the *genius*, what is the role played by Harpokrates? And why are other *genii* anthropomorphous? On some altars, the snake is accompanied by an anthropomorphous *genius* (that one recognizes due to the attributes that accompany him and due to its outlook). It is obvious that the same *genius* cannot be depicted both as an animal and as a human, just as there cannot be two different *genii* fulfilling the same function. Al. Dudău hypothesizes that the *genius*, as a god, is the anthropomorphous representation, while the snake is his companion, his emanation. Only when it is depicted alone can the snake stand for of the *genius*, just like the attributes of a god, if depicted alone, can stand for the god in question. According to this logical line of thought, Harpokrates could be a *genius loci* in the fresco from Herculaneum, as well as in the case of the statuette from Dacia, and the snake that accompanies him is his emanation, the symbol of his power, his companion.

The bronze statuette from Potaissa (no. 2) represents Harpokrates alone; it was mentioned by J. F. Neugebauer in his work, and by W. Drexler as well, and was part of the Kemény collection<sup>65</sup>. The character depicted by the statuette raises one of his hands, with the raised finger, probably towards the

<sup>63</sup> De Salvia 1994, 145–151.

<sup>64</sup> Boyce 1942, 13–22.

<sup>65</sup> Neugebauer 1851, 209, no. 73; Drexler 1890, 53; Popa 1979, 34, no. 47; Bărbulescu 1994, 164; I. Nemeti 2005, 251, no. 8; Sălășan 2008, 164, no. 71.

lips, whence his identification with Harpokrates. Information connected to this item, anyway insufficient, can no longer be verified since it has been lost.

On the relief<sup>66</sup> presumably found in Sucidava (no. 3) Harpokrates is accompanied by Isis and Serapis. The image of Harpokrates, placed in the center of the relief, is the best one preserved. He is depicted as a nude child, with a lotus flower on his head, holding in his left hand the horn of abundance, while with the right, bent at the elbow, he makes the characteristic gesture of asking for silence. His feet are missing. Serapis, seated on a throne, is placed to the right of Harpokrates, but has been fragmentarily preserved. The arms, head, and partially the legs of Serapis are missing. The rest of his body is preserved, covered with a long tunic, almost touching the ground, with one end brought over his waist and falling on the left leg. None of his attributes are preserved. Isis, seated on a throne, is depicted to Harpokrates' left. She is fragmentarily preserved, being strongly deteriorated; the lower part of her torso and the legs down to the ankles are preserved, but none of the attributes typical to her. She wears a long tunic. This relief can be included among the type of representations usual for the Greek-Roman period that depict the Alexandrine triad. The Egyptian gods are represented according to the Greek iconographic standards, most often losing their initial attributes as well (Fig. 2).

The social dimension of this divinity, that it reaches in the Roman environment, can be observed especially in the case of terracotta, where the image of Harpokrates acquires strong domestic value. He becomes a support in procuring the abundance and the fertility of the fields, of the animals, and of the family.



Fig. 2. Isis, Harpokrates, Serapis, Sucidava (after Berciu, Petolescu 1976).

Together only with Isis, Harpokrates is depicted on a terracotta<sup>67</sup>, headless, of the *Isis lactans* type<sup>68</sup>, discovered in Porolissum (no. 4). The artifact shows Isis holding Harpokrates in her arms; two braided tails flank the goddess' head. In the lower part of the terracotta one notes vegetal motifs and can clearly distinguish acanthus leaves out of which the goddess springs. It is possible that the terracotta was used as a lamp's handle (Fig. 3). For this terracotta I found a very good analogy preserved in the Egyptian Museum in Turin. It is dated to the end of the first century and the second century A.D.<sup>69</sup>, while the item found in Dacia can be dated to, approximately, the second-third centuries A.D. It consists of two elements tied to each other. The first part represents goddess Isis, in a way very similar to the item from Dacia (Isis seated in a kind of basket placed inside of some acanthus leaves, holds Harpokrates in her arms and breastfeeds him), with the difference that the item from Turin preserves the head of the goddess as well, with the hair parted in the middle and a *basileion* on top of it. On the shoulders we can see the twisted locks of hair. The other part of the terracotta is a syncretic depiction of Isis-Demeter, standing. She wears a *chiton* with a *himation* on top, placed transversally,

<sup>66</sup> Bordenache 1969, 87, no. 171, Pl. LXXV; Petolescu 1973, 159–161; Berciu, Petolescu 1976, 32, no. 15, Pl. X; Popa 1979, 230, no. 4.

<sup>67</sup> Gudea 1989, 221–223; Ungurean 2008, 179, fig. 30.

<sup>68</sup> LIMC V/I 1990, 777–779; Cartwright 1929, 183–184; Hermann 1940; Le Corsu 1977, 15; Tran Tam Tinh 1971, 18–21; Tran Tam Tinh 1973, 1–52.

<sup>69</sup> Arslan 1997, 279, IV/318.



and raised over her head. There is a *calathos* on her head, with a crescent moon above her forehead. In her hands she holds a torch and grain ears (Fig. 4). This type of representation makes reference to the agrarian side of goddess Isis, who has the power to make the ground bear fruit, with her divine power, symbol of birth and rebirth. At the same time, the acanthus leaves she sits upon, as in a basket, can make reference to *cista mystica*, that was introduced to the Hellenized cult of the goddess<sup>70</sup>. Apuleius mentions this "basket" while referring to the mysteries of Isida<sup>71</sup>.



Fig. 3. Isis lactans – Terracotta, Porrolissum (after Ungurean 2008).



Fig. 4. Isis lactans – Terracotta, Egyptian Museum Turin (after Arslan 1997).

The lot of representations of Harpokrates in Roman Dacia has been recently enriched with an item that I. Nemeti<sup>72</sup> has republished. It was discovered somewhere in southern Dacia, probably in Romula (no. 5) and is preserved at the Museum of Oltenia in Craiova. The object is cast, hollow inside, made of fine red fabric and painted in red. The lower part is broken and on the back, in the central area, it has a circular orifice. The statuette has been initially published as depicting a child, a *genius*, with a *cornucopia* as

<sup>70</sup> Tran Tam Tinh 1973, 24.

<sup>71</sup> Tran Tam Tinh 1973, 25.

<sup>72</sup> I. Nemeti 2011.

attribute, who raises the index finger of the right hand to the mouth<sup>73</sup>, but in fact it depicts Harpokrates. The child-god is represented standing, in a relaxed posture, a contraposto on the right leg. With his left hand he is leaning on a base and the same arm holds the horn of abundance. He raises his right hand to the mouth, with the index finger raised, in his characteristic gesture. His head is slightly tilted to the right. His hair is arranged in rich curls, surrounded by flower buds that frame his face, and on his head he is wearing the double crown – *pschent*. He is clad in a long, slightly draped tunic. The thin cloth betrays the full volumes of his body and his navel. It lacks the god's naked feet and the base on which he stood. The orifice behind the statuette indicates the fact that it was used as the handle of a lucerna<sup>74</sup>. The Greek-Roman influence can be felt in the case of this terracotta as well. The only iconographic elements that still remind of the Egyptian Harpokrates are the finger to the lips gesture of the child-god and the double Egyptian crown that has nevertheless lost its initial size and meaning (Fig. 5, 6).

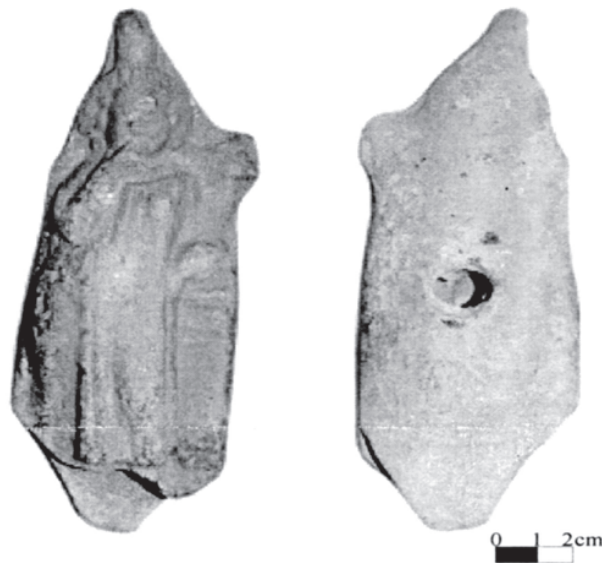


Fig. 5. Harpokrates – Terracotta, Romula (after I. Nemeti 2011).



Fig. 6. Harpokrates – Terracotta, Lyon  
([http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Harpocrates\\_altar\\_MBA\\_Lyon\\_H2399.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Harpocrates_altar_MBA_Lyon_H2399.jpg)).

<sup>73</sup> Bondoc 2005, 62, no. 50

<sup>74</sup> For images of the Isis-Harpokrates-Anubis triad see Podvin 2003.

Terracottas were made of a material accessible to all social classes and could have been owned even by slaves and people of modest origin. They could represent images of the gods used either in private homes, or in temples. If they are not discovered in clear archaeological contexts, we can only speculate about their belonging and use.

Just like religion, through magic people addressed the gods using images, rituals, and specific formulae in order to obtain a certain effect. But unlike religion, the one who practiced magic aimed at manipulating the divine forces that resided in these images, gestures, and spoken formulae. The practitioners of magic wished to change the micro-cosmos in which they lived by acting with the aid of the divine forces that existed around them (the forces of the invoked gods, the forces of certain materials, of certain images, of certain moments of the day, of the dead etc.).

*Heka*<sup>75</sup> was the force through which the Egyptian gods had created the world. The force that could be, in ancient Egypt, identified with the maker himself. The force that resides in each magical act, since every act of magic is in its turn an act of creation. All Egyptian divinities possessed *heka*. All the pharaohs, all people who were special in some way, all the dead had it. This force was neither good, nor bad in itself. It depended on who used it and to what purpose.

Both for the Egyptians and for the Greeks and Romans, magical power could be exerted by the same people who dealt with religion in the temples<sup>76</sup>. There were not two rival groups, as in Christianity, but it was usually the priests who acted on several levels, in temples and in the private environment. The Egyptians wanted to make sure that they did everything possible to prevent or to resolve situations of crisis, by tackling them in multiple ways. It seems that this approach resonated in Roman society, whose members took all means of precaution. They were not content with just preparing their travels minutely or to invoking the help of certain gods, but they also turned to magical powers by wearing amulets. In case of disease, they resorted not only to the medical knowledge available at the time or to invoking the gods specialized in such a field, but they completed the array of means employed with amulets and magical formulae specialized in the treatment of the various diseases. Either they prayed in temples or outside them, or turned to magical rituals, people of Antiquity followed the same goal: the fulfillment of their wishes<sup>77</sup>.

The gems I wish to introduce to the present discussion have been included in the category of Roman gems, and were thus worn by people less likely to know the older Egyptian beliefs. But, these gems feature gods of Egyptian origin. It is thus possible that those who wore them knew the fields of action of these gods and were among the believers who worshiped them, just as they could be just following a fashion. As mentioned previously, temples where gods of Egyptian origin were worshiped have been found, including on the territory of Roman Dacia, just as the function of certain religious colleges patronized by Egyptian gods has been documented.

Magic could have acted both through the mediation of words and images and the gems could contain either just one of these paths to the power of magic, or both. Magic worked according to the principle of "sympathy" and the right material to use was the appropriate one, that could happily complete the message, amplifying its effect. In the case of gems, one had to harmonize the stone used as support, the color of the stone, the image featuring on its surface, and the possible inscription. The images depicted on the Greek-Roman gems that are preserved in the collections of museums from Romania are very diverse. Among those featuring the image of the god Harpokrates, the place of discovery of just two is known (*Romula* – no. 6; *Micia* – no. 7), while the others (nos. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14) were probably acquired from the commerce in antiquities.

Not much data is available on the gem discovered in *Romula*<sup>78</sup> (no. 6). On the surface of the gem we can observe god Harpokrates as a nude young man who makes the characteristic gestures of raising the right hand to the lips, while in his left hand he holds the horn of abundance. On his head, covered in curls, one sees something that seems to be the representation of a much downsized crown or a flower, also typical to the Greek-Roman type of representation. A scepter, fragmented into three segments,

<sup>75</sup> Pinch 1994, 9–17; Mastocinque 2005, 143.

<sup>76</sup> Frankfurter 1997, 119–121.

<sup>77</sup> Versnel 1981, 8–17.

<sup>78</sup> Tătulea 1994, fig. 37/18.

seems to start from under the left hand. In the case of this image, the Greek-Roman influence is as clear as possible. The *cornucopia* is the god's attribute, his crown is rendered much smaller or even replaced with the flower bud, the god's head is no longer shaved, with the traditional braided hair lock, but covered with curls.

The gem discovered in Micia<sup>79</sup> (no. 7) is the one that depicts Harpokrates nude, having the body of a child, crouching on a lotus flower, flanked by a flower bud on each side. With the right hand raised towards the lips he makes the characteristic gesture of asking for silence, while in the left hand he holds the whip (*flagellum*), symbol of royal power in Egypt. On the god's head L. Țeposu-Marinescu sees a solar disk, while on his left temple seems to hang a braided lock of hair. If the mentioned elements have been identified correctly, then the representation is still under the influence of Egyptian iconography.

The god preserves one of the attributes that symbolize his royal power (*flagellum*), the braided hair lock, but the Egyptian crowns he was usually wearing are replaced with a solar disk. This is an image that shows Harpokrates under his guise of child-god, solar god, heir of his father's power. We can only presume that the image was modeled after an object created in Egypt. There is no indication available on the person who wore this gem; one cannot know if he/she was a worshiper of the god or if the reasons behind wearing it were related to fashion or other considerations. This gem is not accompanied by any inscription or symbol that could support its attribution to the category of magical gems.

One of the gems preserved in the collection of the Numismatic Cabinet of the Romanian Academy (no. 10)<sup>80</sup> was made out of green glass paste. Harpokrates is schematically represented, sitting crouched on a lotus flower placed on the solar boat. Two hawks are depicted resting on each of the boat's ends, rather rudimentarily<sup>81</sup>. The god holds in his left hand the whip (*nekhakha*), one of the symbols of his power, while raising his right to the lips. He wears no crown, but the two hawks seem to wear such Egyptian crowns, one each, but one cannot clearly identify which type of crowns they are. On the reverse we can see an inscription, with Greek letters: ΣΑΒΑΩ. The type of representation of Harpokrates sitting on a lotus flower makes reference to the Hermopolitan myth of the sun's birth from a lotus flower, the first thing that appeared from the primordial waters<sup>82</sup>. The elements of this amulet suggest the fact that it is a magical amulet. In the case of this image, the Hellenistic influence is very shallow, both in representation and meaning, reminding of images created since the pharaonic Egypt. I believe that the image depicts the sun in full power in his daily trip (case in which the boat is identified with the solar boat in which the sun-god travels every night through the underworld where it faces a series of obstacles, where it has to fight against the powers of evil and chaos that it defeats, reappearing every morning), his cosmic cycle. The magical power of the gem is amplified by the inscription on its reverse. It betrays the Judaic influence on amulets<sup>83</sup> through the presence of a *nomina sacra* of Judaic origin<sup>84</sup>, but transcribed with Greek letters: ΣΑΒΑΩ, that underlines the idea of supreme authority and power. But this is not the only god associated with diverse variants of *nomina sacra* of Judaic origin<sup>85</sup>. There is a possibility that Harpokrates, undergoing a syncretistic process, became the god Iao Sabaoth itself of the Judeans, even if he preserved the traditional aspect of a child-god who raises the index finger of his right hand and sits on a lotus flower. Invocations to the child-god who sits on a lotus flower, the sun-god who rises from the primordial waters, can also be found on magic papyri<sup>86</sup> where he is identified with the supreme ruler, the one who commands the entire nature and holds all wisdom. He is invoked under different names: Zas, Sabaoth, Adonai, Kommes, Iarmioth, Apollo etc. On some magical gems, the reverse is decorated with the depiction of the god with a cock's head and feet turned into snakes, together with the inscription 'Ιάω 'Αδωνάι Ταβαν<sup>87</sup> or other *nomina sacra* of Judaic origin.

<sup>79</sup> Țeposu-Marinescu 1964, 257–264, fig. 1/1; Popa 1979, 33–34, no. 46.

<sup>80</sup> Gramatopol 1974, 67, no. 371, pl. XXVIII, 371a, 371b, inv. no. 61/O; dimensions: 23 × 19 × 2 mm; oval. On the reverse one can read the inscription ΣΑ / ΒΑ / Ω; S. Nemeti 2013, 154–155.

<sup>81</sup> Analogy with Bonner 1950, no. 2, 210.

<sup>82</sup> Mastrocinque 2003, 150.

<sup>83</sup> Mastrocinque 2003, 145.

<sup>84</sup> Sanzi, Sfameni 2009, 65–68.

<sup>85</sup> Mastrocinque 2003, 158.

<sup>86</sup> Betz 1986, 16–17.

<sup>87</sup> Delatte, Derchaine 1964, 110, no. 134.



Fig. 7. Harpokrates, Numismatic Cabinet of the Romanian Academy (photo E. Petac).

Another gem preserved in the collection of the Numismatic Cabinet of the Romanian Academy, that depicts Harpokrates (no. 8)<sup>88</sup>, includes the Greek-type image of the god standing in a solar boat, rendered much more carefully and of better artistic quality than on the previously discussed gem<sup>89</sup>. The god is depicted as a nude boy, rather chubby, stepping to the right (Gramatopol describes it thus, despite the fact that the image is flipped horizontally), holding the horn of abundance in the left hand, while the right hand is raised towards the lips, with the index finger extended. He wears a *modius* on his head. The boat on which he stands has the prow decorated with a cock's head, while the stern is decorated with the head of a lion that supports a vessel in the shape of a krater in which one can note fruit. Before the god, in the boat, there is an altar, much diminished in size. Behind the god, Gramatopol discerns the bust of a bearded, ithyphallic character. An *ouroboros*, represented as a pearly line, surrounds the entire image. The Greek dimension of the image of a god of fertility is obvious (the *modius*, the horn of abundance, the fruit vessel, and the ithyphallic character). Elements of Egyptian iconography (the solar boat) coexist with those of Greek origin. In this case, the boat<sup>90</sup> has a cock's head at the prow, the bird that announces the morning and that, with its crow, repels the evil spirits, and a lion's head at the stern, that symbolizes the sun at noon, in full power. The *ouroboros* that encloses the image symbolizes the periodical cycles, the periodic regeneration, eternity. The artifact is a magical gem in which Harpokrates plays the role of the god of fertility of nature, of human fecundity, ruling solar god and creator, savior god that protects and heals, he who ensures the perpetual regeneration of the world (Fig. 7). One finds Harpokrates associated to a magical invocation meant to bring the love of a certain person. The invocation names the gods Isis, Helios (as the equivalent of Horus), Osiris, and Toth and requires that the one performing the ritual and reciting the invocation wears an iron finger ring with the engraved image of Harpokrates seated on a lotus, in this case bearing the magic name *Abrasax*<sup>91</sup>. In case the agent wanted the spell to end, the ring was to pass to the one who was the target of the spell.

An oval gem made of red jasper is preserved in the Numismatic Collection of the Romanian Academy (no. 9); it has been set in a modern god ring. Harpokrates is represented in bust on its

<sup>88</sup> Gramatopol 1974, 43, no. 57, pl. III, 57; Cristea 2013, 137–138.

<sup>89</sup> The Numismatic Cabinet of the Romanian Academy, inv. no. 120/ O.8924; dimensions: 22 × 16 × 2.5 mm; oval in shape. Made of red jasper, with the edges flattened at an acute angle.

<sup>90</sup> Mastrocinque 2003, 151.

<sup>91</sup> Betz 1986, 291.

surface; the image is artistically, carefully created; the god is turned to the right, his body is draped, and with the right hand he makes the ritual gesture of asking for silence. A braided hair lock falls on his back, passing behind his ear. His thick lips are slightly parted and his nose is straight. On his head he has a crescent moon and behind him one can distinguish a hawk or an eagle resting on a club. This depiction of the god Harpokrates contains both elements specific to Egyptian iconography (the braided hair lock, the hawk as symbol of god Horus), and elements of Greek-Roman iconography (the full traits of the face, the draped body). The crescent moon that he wears on his head can make reference to his status as the son of goddess Isis, beside which one can also find depiction of the crescent moon horn. Elements that make us attribute this gem to the category of magical gems are absent, though one cannot be certain neither of the function it fulfilled, nor of the orientation or ethnic origin of the person who wore this gem. It seems that, in this case as well, Harpokrates was represented as a divinity of the sky, alluding to the crescent moon on his head and the gesture of raising his right hand to the lips asking for silence alludes to the mysteries of his mother, Isis.

A gem made of onyx, oval in shape, preserved in the collection of the Brukenthal Museum in Sibiu (no. 11) has the flat surface decorated with image of goddess Isis, bare breasted, sitting on several superposed rocks. She holds Harpokrates in her arms and he touches her breast with his right hand. The iconographic type is that of *Isis lactans*. The gesture through which Isis breastfeeds Horus-child is symbolic due to the fact that the milk produced by the goddess has, in Egyptian, but also in Greek-Roman religion, the power to give life, to prolong life, to heal, or to turn into a divinity whomever feeds on it. The goddess that nourishes is often depicted as the divine cow Hathor or as a woman with a cow's head (Hesat)<sup>92</sup>. In pharaonic Egyptian religion and art, the pharaoh is identified, in the case of this type of image, with Harpokrates, his divine essence thus originating in the very divine milk of the goddess. The birth houses (*mammisi*) were placed under the patronage of these goddesses that breastfeed and of their divine sons, as one can see in the case of Dendera or Philae<sup>93</sup>. In the Greek-Roman world one encounters the *Isis lactans* type of representation even on coins dated to the time of Trajan, from the Antonines until Commodus and the first Severans<sup>94</sup>. The Hellenized image of the goddess breastfeeding young Horus spread to the Roman world starting with the first century A.D. It is often found on statuettes, lamps, terracotta offered as *ex-voto* in the temples of the goddess, in order to receive in return her protection over the family, over women giving birth, but especially over children who were the most vulnerable against the action of the evil spirits<sup>95</sup>. To the same end people wore the gems with the surface decorated with the image of the nourishing goddess. These gems spread in the Roman world between the first and the fourth century A.D. and can be, sometimes, associated to the image of the god Bes, god-demon protector especially of children, and can be accompanied by inscriptions meant to increase the magical power that they supposedly held. The type of representation encountered in the case of this gem no longer contains the usual attributes of these gods (the crowns, the symbols of power that Harpokrates held in his hands), being an image of Hellenistic type. The person who wore the gem probably turned to the protective power of the goddess, as she could endow upon her believers, through the mediation of her mysteries, long and plentiful life.

The collection of the Brukenthal Museum in Sibiu also includes two gems that depict Harpokrates in two of his usual postures. On one of the gems (no. 12)<sup>96</sup>, made of red carnelian, oval, with the surface slightly convex, one can see the depiction of Harpokrates naked, kneeling on a lotus flower, and looking to his left. In his left hand he holds the horn of abundance and he raises his right hand to the lips, in his typical gesture, asking for silence. The gem is dated to the second-third centuries A.D. As previously mentioned, this type of representation of god Harpokrates is connected to the Hermopolitan creation myth<sup>97</sup> and illustrates his aspect of solar, creator god. But, as no other elements or inscriptions decorate the gem's field, one cannot bring other details on the role it had, the goal to which it was made, or the origin of the person who wore it.

<sup>92</sup> Tran Tam Tinh 1973, 1–3.

<sup>93</sup> Tran Tam Tinh 1973, 4–7.

<sup>94</sup> Tran Tam Tinh 1973, 17.

<sup>95</sup> Tran Tam Tinh 1973, 20.

<sup>96</sup> Țeposu-Marinescu 1965, 97, no. 29, pl. IV, fig. 3; Popa 1979, 34, no. 47a.

<sup>97</sup> Delatte, Derchain 1964, 106–109.

The other gem (no. 13)<sup>98</sup> preserved in the collection of the Brukenthal Museum in Sibiu, made of red carnelian, oval, with a flat surface, depicts Harpokrates frontally, with the head turned to the left, nude, in the left hand holding the horn of abundance and raising the right hand to the lips, through the gesture characteristic to him. It is dated to the second-third centuries A.D.

L. Țeposu-Marinescu reminds in her article dedicated to the gem collection of the Brukenthal Museum in Sibiu one such item (no. 14)<sup>99</sup>, made of red carnelian, oval, with the surface slightly convex, that she believes to depict Harpokrates. He is nude, holding the horn of abundance in the left hand and two fish and two grain ears in the right. The entire attitude of the divinity seems rather that of a genius than that of Harpokrates, rather a teenager than a child, and the fact that he holds the horn of abundance in the right hand is not a very certain element of identification since it is also one of the attributes of genii. The gem is dated to the second-third centuries A.D.

In the case of gems it is difficult to state the aim to which they were made. They could be protective gems or items involved in some ritual of aggressive magic. The same image, placed in different contexts, probably fulfilled different functions. One cannot even distinguish clearly between Egyptian, Greek, Roman, or Judaic gems, since in most cases symbols and inscriptions taken from all these environments coexisted in a mix that is hard to decipher.

The image of the child-god Harpokrates on the territory of the province of Dacia is not encountered on many artifacts. The ones that do represent him are, in the great majority of cases, small-size objects (statuettes, terracotta, gems) that were cheap and thus accessible to all social categories. In these images, Harpokrates follows the iconographic types spread at the level of the entire Empire; he is represented either alone (standing or sitting on a lotus flower), or together with his divine parents, Isis and Serapis, or just beside his mother, Isis (the *Isis lactans* type). In Dacia there are no *cippi* or gems represented, near the god, groups of dangerous animals placed under his power. In some cases the god preserves the attributes specific to Egyptian art (the braided hair lock, the *pshent* crown, the whip), but, in general, his image is Hellenized. Due to the absence of cult statues and inscriptions one can conclude that on the territory of Roman Dacia Harpokrates did not enjoy a proper cult and his presence must be sought in the private environment. The extension of archaeological excavations in this direction will certainly enrich the repertory of objects that contain the image of god Harpokrates.

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<sup>98</sup> Țeposu-Marinescu 1965, 98, no. 30, pl. IV, fig. 4; Popa 1979, 34–35, no. 47b.

<sup>99</sup> Țeposu-Marinescu 1965, 98, no. 31, pl. IV, fig. 2; Popa 1979, 35, no. 47c.

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# Abbreviations

ActaArchHung	Acta Archaeologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae. Budapest.
ActaHist	Acta Historica. Szeged.
Acta Siculica	Acta Siculica. Sfântu Gheorghe.
Aluta	Aluta. Revista Muzeului Național Secuiesc Sfântu Gheorghe.
Alba Regia	Alba Regia. Annales Musei Stephani Regis. Székesfehérvár.
AMN	Acta Musei Napocensis. Cluj-Napoca.
AMP	Acta Musei Porolissensis. Muzeul Județean de Istorie și Artă Zalău. Zalău.
ATS	Acta Terrae Septemcastrensis. Sibiu.
AISC	Anuarul Institutului de studii clasice Cluj Napoca. Cluj-Napoca.
AnB S.N.	Analele Banatului – serie nouă. Timișoara.
Apulum	Apulum. Alba-Iulia.
AÉ	Archaeologiai Értesítő. Budapest.
Areopolisz	Areopolisz. Történelmi- és társadalomtudományi tanulmányok Odorheiu Secuiesc / Székelyudvarhely.
ArhMed	Arheologia Medievală. Iași.
ArchRozhl	Archeologické Rozhledy. Praga.
ArhVest	Arheološki Vestnik. Ljubljana.
Banatica	Banatica. Muzeul Banatului Montan. Reșița.
BHAUT	Bibliotheca Historica et Archaeologica Universitatis Timisiensis.
BAR International Series	British Archaeological Reports, International Series. Oxford.
BAM	Brukenthal Acta Musei. Sibiu.
BMMK	A Békés Megyei múzeumok közleményei, Békéscsába.
CAH	Communicationes Archaeologicae Hungariae. Budapest.
Cerc. Arh.	Cercetări Arheologice. București.
CIL	Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum.
CIMRM	Corpus Inscriptionum et Monumentorum Religionis Mithriacae.
CCA	Cronica Cercetărilor arheologice din România. București.
Crisia	Crisia, Muzeul Țării Crișurilor. Oradea.
Dacia N.S.	Dacia. Recherches et Découvertes Archéologiques en Roumanie, București; seria nouă (N.S.): Dacia. Revue d'Archéologie et d'Histoire Ancienne. București.
DissArch	Dissertationis Archaeologicae (Budapest).
Dolg	Dolgozatok. Szeged.
EphNap	Ephemeris Napocensis. Cluj-Napoca.
EL	Erdővidéki Lapok. Barót/Baraolt.
EM	Erdélyi Múzeum. Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca.
Isis	Isis. Erdélyi Magyar Restaurátor Füzetek. Cluj-Napoca / Kolozsvár.
JbRGZM	Jahrbuch des Römisch- Germanischen Zentralmuseums Mainz. Mainz.
Marisia	Marisia. Studii și materiale. Arheologie – Istorie – Etnografie. Târgu-Mureș.
MCA	Materiale și Cercetări Arheologice. București.

MFMÉ StudArch	A Móra Ferenc Múzeum Évkönyve. <i>Studia Archaeologica</i> . Szeged.
MFMÉ MonArch	A Móra Ferenc Múzeum Évkönyve. <i>Monumenta Archeologica</i> . Szeged.
OpArch	<i>Opuscula Archaeologica</i> . Zagreb.
OpHung	<i>Opuscula Hungarica</i> . Budapest.
Pontica	<i>Pontica</i> , Constanța.
PZ	<i>Prähistorische Zeitschrift</i> . Berlin.
RMM-MIA	<i>Revista Muzeelor și Monumentelor – seria Monumente Istorice și de Artă</i> . București.
Sargeția NS	<i>Sargeția NS. Deva</i> .
SlovArch	<i>Slovenská Archeológia. Nitra</i> .
Soproni Szemle	Soproni Szemle kulturtörténeti folyóirat. Sopron.
StudCom	<i>Studia Comitatus</i> . Tanulmányok Pest megye múzeumaiból. Szentendre.
ŠtudZvesti	<i>Študijne Zvesti Arheologického Ústavu Slovenskej Akademie Vied</i> . Nitra.
Stud. și Cerc. Num.	<i>Studii și Cercetări de Istorie Veche și Arheologie</i> . București.
SCIVA	<i>Studii și Cercetări de Istorie Veche (și Arheologie)</i> . București.
StComSatuMare	<i>Studii și Comunicări. Satu Mare</i> .
Thrac-Dacica	<i>Thrac-Dacica</i> . București.
VMMK	<i>A Veszprém megyei Múzeumok Közleményei. Veszprém</i> .
VTT	<i>Veszprémi Történelmi Tár. Veszprém</i> .
Ziridava	<i>Ziridava, Complexul Muzeal Arad. Arad</i> .