

A Dated Inscription from Beth Shean and the Cult of Dionysos Ktistes in Roman Scythopolis

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A limestone altar was discovered by the Hebrew University team in the 1987 season of excavations at Beth Shean, among the ruins of a Roman basilica, which was in use from the first to the mid-fourth century CE and was probably destroyed in the earthquake of 363. The altar is hexagonal, 83 cm high, and with its crowning element, now missing, would have reached a height of about one meter. Its faces are decorated with masks of Dionysos, Pan and Silenus, on the front, and with dionysiac attributes — thirsoi, syrinx and pedum — on the back. The altar was found in pieces, but its basis was still *in situ*, set in the stone pavement of the basilica in front of the apse. Several architectural changes were made in the building in the second century CE. One of them was the erection of a *bema* in the centre of the apse at the north-eastern end of the basilica: it was apparently at that time that the altar was put in place. An inscription engraved under the mask of Dionysos dates the dedication of the altar to 141/2 CE.¹

The inscription reads as follows:

ΑΓΑΘΗΤΥΧΗ
ΘΕΩΔΙΟΝΥCWI
ΚΤΙCΤΗΤWΙΚΥ
4 ΠΙWICEΛΕΥΚΟC
ΑΡΙCΤWΝΟCΧΑ
ΠΙCΤΗΠΙΟΝΕΤΕΙΕC
haedera

Ἀγαθὴ τύχη.
Θεῷ Διονύσῳ
κτίστη τῷ κυ-
ρίῳ Cέλευκος
Ἀρίστωνος χα-
ριστήριον, ἔτει εC'.

With good luck! Seleucus (son) of Ariston (made this altar)
as a thanksgiving offering to the Lord Dionysos the Founder.
Year 205.

¹ For a detailed report on the basilica and its history and for a description of the altar, see L. Di Segni, G. Foerster and Y. Tsafir, 'A Decorated Altar Dedicated to Dionysos the "Founder" from Beth-Shean (Nysa-Scythopolis)', *Eretz Israel* 25 (1996), 336-50. See also G. Foerster and Y. Tsafir, 'The Bet Shean Project: Center of Ancient Bet Shean — North', *ESI* 6 (1987-1988), 31-2; id., 'Bet Shean Project — 1988', *ESI* 7-8 (1988/1989), 19-20; id., 'Bet Shean Project — 1988/1989', *ESI* 9 (1989/1990), 125-6; id., 'The Bet Shean Excavation Project (1989-1991): City Center (North)', *ESI* 11 (1992), 3-7.

The dedication opens with the usual formula Ἀγαθῆ τύχῃ, found in inscriptions of the Roman period — and even in some Byzantine inscriptions² — in Beth Shean and elsewhere. The *iota adscriptum*, rare in the imperial period, is also a not unusual feature in second-century dedicatory inscriptions in Beth Shean: this old-fashioned spelling may have been meant to give a more dignified air to solemn inscriptions.³

The reading of the date caused some difficulty. At first, the letters serving as numerals were read $\overline{\text{E}\overline{\text{O}}}$, and the date was believed to be 75 of the city era, i.e. 11/12 CE.⁴ A further cleaning of the altar later revealed that the letters were really $\overline{\text{E}\overline{\text{C}}}$, year 205 of the city era, i.e. 141/2 CE, in the days of Antoninus Pius.

The names Seleucus and Ariston are not very common, but neither are they rare in Roman Palestine.⁵ Both are purely Greek, and it is reasonable to suppose

² E.g. a building inscription in the bath-house, dated 534/5: G. Mazor, 'The Beth Shean Project: City Center of Ancient Beth Shean — South', *ESI* 6 (1987-1988), 17.

³ For the progressive disappearance of the *iota adscriptum* — beginning already in the Hellenistic period — see H. Seyrig, 'Antiquités de Beth Maré', *Syria* 28 (1951), 109-10, n.5 (= *Antiquités syriennes* IV, Paris, 1953, 155-6, no.47); W. Clarysse, 'Notes on the Use of the Iota Adscript in the Third Century BC', *Chronique d'Égypte* 51 (1976), 150-66. The *iota adscriptum* appears for example in an inscription from Beth Shean (*Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* [SEG] XX, no. 457), dated AU 93 or 193, i.e. AD 29/30 or 129/30, and in a dedication to Zeus Akraios by Theogene, daughter of Tobias (Y. Tsafirir, 'Further Evidence of the Cult of Zeus Akraios at Beth Shean', *IEJ* 39 [1989], 76-8: in the copy the *iota adscriptum* has been omitted by mistake, but see the Hebrew version in *Eretz Israel* 19 [1987], 282-3), now tentatively dated to mid-second century by the discovery of a second dedication, seemingly by the same woman, dated AU 208 = AD 144/5 (Y. Tsafirir and G. Foerster, 'Beth Shean Excavation Project — 1988/1989', *ESI* 9 [1989-1990], 126).

⁴ So in G. Foerster and Y. Tsafirir, *ESI* 6 (1987-1988), 31, and in Y.E. Meimaris, *Chronological Systems in Roman-Byzantine Palestine and Arabia. The Evidence of the Dated Greek Inscriptions*, Athens, 1992 (MELETHMATA 17), 84, no.12.

⁵ Besides Beth Shean, on which later, Seleucus appears on a funeral bust of the Roman period from Shechem (B. Lifshitz, *ZDPV* 79 [1963], 91; *SEG* XX, no. 461), in an early Roman dedication on a column at Caesarea (Varius Seleucus, harbour-master: B. Burrell, *ZPE* 99 [1993], 291), on the bust of a robed personage, possibly a *consularis*, from Bostra (M. Sartre, *Inscriptions Grecques et Latines de la Syrie* XIII, 1, Paris, 1982, no. 9092), and in a building inscription at Suweida in Hauran, dated ca. 261/2 by the mention of the governor of Arabia Cocceius Rufinus (Antiochus son of Seleucus πρόεδρος: R. Savignac, *RB* 14 [1905], 95, no.8; for the date see M. Sartre, 'Les gouverneurs de l'Arabie romaine', *Trois études sur l'Arabie romaine et byzantine*, Brussels, 1982 [*Coll. Latomus* 178], 93, no.41). All these men were apparently Gentiles: the only Jewish example comes from the catacombs of Beth-Shearim, from a family tomb in which all the deceased bear Latin and

that at least the first became popular as a result of the region coming under Seleucid rule, at the beginning of the second century BCE.⁶ A survey of the examples known in inscriptions shows that Seleucus and Ariston were upper-class names, often occurring in conjunction with other Seleucid or Macedonian dynastic names. Seemingly this type of names passed from a forefather to grandchildren within a locally influential family, possibly one that owed its position to

Greek names: M. Schwabe and B. Lifshitz, *Beth She'arim* II, Jerusalem, 1974, 36, no. 60. Ariston appears in Jaffa (early Roman epitaph: C. Clermont-Ganneau, *Archaeological Researches in Palestine* II, London, 1896 [Jerusalem, 1971], 150; Roman stone stamp: J. Kaplan, *IEJ* 12 [1962], 150), in a rock-cut tomb at Dibl in Upper Galilee (*SWP* I, 221-222: the other names in the tomb are Greek, one of them being the Macedonian Demetrius), at Gerasa (C.B. Welles, *apud* C.H. Kraeling, *Gerasa, City of the Decapolis*, New Haven, 1938: Demetrius son of Ariston, *AD* 150/1, *ibid.*, 391, no.32; Antiochus son of Ariston, ἄρχων of the city in *AD* 66/7, *ibid.*, 395-6, nos. 45-6; Ariston son of Demetrius, 2nd-3rd cents., *ibid.*, 403, no. 61; Ariston, treasury official in *AD* 259, *ibid.*, 409, no. 74; Zenon son of Ariston, founder of a religious college of the fullers' guild before *AD* 207: P.L. Gatier, *Syria* 62 [1985], 308-10, no. 2; Ariston son of Xerxes, possibly a member of the city council in mid-second century: M.L. Lazzarini, *Syria* 66 [1989], 41, no.1); at a temple site near Philadelphia-Amman (Ariston son of Clemens son of Ariston, dedicator of a memorial columbarium in 139/40: P.L. Gatier and A.M. Vêrilhac, *Syria* 66 [1989], 337-48; for Macedonian names at Amman, see Gatier, *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Jordanie* 2, Paris, 1986, no. 33). All the examples refer to Gentiles. The only Jewish examples appear on ossuaries found in the family tomb of a Jewish proselyte in Jerusalem: T. Ilan, *SCI* 11 [1991/1992], 149-59. Ilan adds to the list a friend of King Agrippa I (Jos., *Ant.* XIX, 353), a landowner of 'En Gedi mentioned in the Babatha archive (N. Lewis, *The Documents from the Bar Kokhba Period in the Cave of Letters, Judean Desert Studies* II, Jerusalem, 1989, 90, no. 20), both not necessarily Jewish, and the father of a Jew mentioned in one of the Bar Kokhba letters (P. Benoit et al., *Discoveries in the Judean Desert* II. *Les grottes de Murabba'at*, Oxford, 1961, 156, no.42). There are also the second-century writer Ariston of Pella (*Pauly-Wissowa Realencyclopädie* [= *PWRE*] II, 1 [1895], col. 959) and the rhetor Ariston of Gerasa (Stephanus of Byzantium, *Ethnika*, ed. A. Meineke, Berlin, 1849 [Graz, 1958], 203).

⁶ Admittedly none of the examples cited above comes from the Hellenistic period: (although a feminine form of Ariston, Arista or Aristeia, appears at Marisa: J.P. Peters and H. Thiersch, *Painted Tombs in the Necropolis of Marissa*, London, 1905, 70-1, nos. 51, 55), but this is due only to chance and to the scarcity of Hellenistic inscriptions in Palestine. The two commonest Seleucid names, Antiochus and Demetrius, do appear in Hellenistic inscriptions in Palestine, e.g. at Gezer (H. Vincent, *RB* 18 [1909], 111) and Marisa (Peters-Thiersch, 41, no. 4; 51-2, nos. 21, 23; 71, no. 58; F.M. Abel, *RB* 34 [1925], 274, no.8). The influence of political events on the choice of upper-class names is illustrated by the Marisa tombs, where the Ptolemaic names (Ptolemy, Cleopatra) occur only in the earliest burials; later they are superseded by Seleucid names (Peters-Thiersch, 42-3, nos.6-7; 64, no. 36).

a benefit granted by the Seleucid royal house. This at least is the picture that stands out from the epigraphic material of Gerasa, the only one of the places where these names occur to have a rich onomastic and prosopographical documentation. According to a local tradition persisting into Roman times, Gerasa had been founded by Alexander the Great,⁷ and probably some at least of the city aristocracy originated with land grants in the Hellenistic period.

This may be true of Scythopolis too.⁸ The name Seleucus son of Ariston appears several times in inscriptions found in the city that attest to the existence of at least two men of the same name, both of some socio-economic standing, and probably belonging to the same important family. The dedicator of the monument dealt with in these pages lived, as we have seen, in the mid-second century. Another man of the same name is mentioned in a metrical inscription incised on an altar incorporated in secondary use in one of the walls of the basilica.⁹ This Seleucus son of Ariston, who dedicated an altar to Sarapis, bore the title of ἀλ(ε)ίπτης, the meaning of which is unclear.¹⁰ Two additional dedications by Seleucus son of Ariston the ἀλίπτης were discovered by the Antiquities Authority team: one on a statue base bearing the date 303 of the city era, namely,

⁷ E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ* II, Revised edition, Edinburgh, 1979, 150.

⁸ The Hellenistic inscription discovered at Hefzibah, for instance, attests to the existence of a large estate, belonging to Ptolemy son of Thraseas, a general of Ptolemy IV king of Egypt who went over to Antiochus III during the fifth Syrian war, following which Palestine passed from Ptolemaic to Seleucid rule: Y.H. Landau, 'A Greek Inscription Found near Hefzibah', *IEJ* 16 (1966), 54-70; J. and L. Robert, 'Bulletin épigraphique', *REG* 83 (1970), 469-73, no. 627; 84 (1971), 407, no. 73; 87 (1974), 314, nos. 642-642a; 92 (1979), 530-1, no. 619; 96 (1983), 176-7, no. 455a; T. Fischer, 'Zur Seleukideninschrift von Hefzibah', *ZPE* 33 (1979), 131-8; J.M. Bertrand, 'Sur l'inscription de Hefzibah', *ZPE* 46 (1982), 167-74; *SEG* XXIX, no. 1613. The estate included several villages in the Beth Shean area, and its owner was granted privileges and exemptions by Antiochus III. Presumably his descendants, if any, discarded the dynastic name of the royal house their ancestor had betrayed, possibly in favour of Seleucid names. Our Seleucus might even be a scion of this family.

⁹ Unpublished. Mentioned by Foerster and Tsafir, *ESI* 6 (1987/1988), 32; English text in id., *ESI* 11 (1992), 8.

¹⁰ Normally ἀλείπτης means 'one that anoints', referring to a trainer of athletes in the gymnasium, or even to a humble bath-attendant, but possibly in this case the term applies to some honourable task connected with athletic games: however L. Robert (*Études Anatoliennes*, Paris, 1937 [Amsterdam, 1970], 139, n. 1), citing numerous examples of ἀλείπτης in agonistic inscriptions, rejects the suggestion that he may have been an official charged with the supervision of the games. Ἀλείπτης can also refer to a medical man, 'one who cures with ointments', properly called ἰατραλείπτης. On the other hand, ἀλείπτης may perhaps be compared with ἀλίπτωρ, which is explained by the lexicographer Hesychius as ἱερεὺς, 'priest'.

239/40 CE, the other on an altar dedicated to several deities and bearing the date 299, corresponding to 235/6 CE.¹¹ It seems likely that these three inscriptions referred to one and the same man,¹² possibly a grandchild of the second-century Seleucus son of Ariston: the number and beauty of the monuments dedicated by him shows this late Seleucus as a man of conspicuous position.

The attributes κύριος and κτίστης, given to Dionysos in our inscription, indicate that the god held a special position in the city pantheon. Κύριος designates a city god (the Semitic Ba'al) or goddess (κυρία πατρίς), or the 'Great god' of pagan monotheism, while the attribute κτίστης shows that Dionysos was regarded as the city founder. Until the discovery of this inscription, however, there was no documentary evidence of a cult of Dionysos as founder of Scythopolis: indeed, except for the prominent appearance of this god on the city coinage,¹³ the evidence of a cult of Dionysos at Beth Shean was scanty, being restricted to just two dedications, one of which was most doubtful.¹⁴ On the other hand, a cult of Dionysos as city founder is certainly justified by the literary tradition. In the first century, Pliny (*Naturalis Historia* V, 74) listed among the

¹¹ Neither has been published: we owe the above information to the kindness of the excavators of the IAA team. The inscription on the statue base is mentioned in Foerster and Tsafir, *ESI* 11 (1992), 8.

¹² A fourth dedication may perhaps be ascribed to the same man. It is engraved on an altar which may come from Beth Shean. The altar was dedicated by a Seleucus, without patronymic, to Ares 'the bearer of arms', and was convincingly dated by Abel to Gordian's reign (238-44): F.M. Abel, 'Chronique', *RB* 32 (1923), 116-20. Abel saw the altar at Tul Karem, where it had been brought during World War I, but A. Alt had already copied it at Zemah in 1916 (*PJb* 15 [1919], 27-30): see also *SEG VIII*, no. 32.

¹³ Dionysos on city coins of Nysa-Scythopolis: A. Spijkerman, *The Coins of the Decapolis and Provincia Arabia*, Jerusalem, 1978 (Studium Biblicum Franciscanum, Collectio maior 25), 188-209, nos. 3, 5, 6-7, 12, 14, 17, 21, 23, 32, 40-48, 57-60; cf. H. Seyrig, 'Note sur les cultes de Scythopolis à l'époque romaine', *Syria* 39 (1962), 207-11 (= *Antiquités Syriennes VI*, Paris, 1966, 115-9, no. 81). On the coinage of the city see now R. Barkay, *The Greek Imperial Coins of Beth Shean (Nysa-Scythopolis)*, PhD Diss., Jerusalem 1995. Other deities appear beside Dionysos, the most prominent being Zeus and the city Tyche.

¹⁴ An altar dedicated to Dionysos was discovered in the theatre: B. Lifshitz, 'Notes d'épigraphie grecque', *ZPE* 6 (1970), 62. A fragmentary votive inscription on a base was restored by Lifshitz ('Der Kult des Zeus Akraios und des Zeus Bakchos in Beisan (Skythopolis)', *ZDPV* 77 [1961], 189-90, no. 2, Pl. 8B) as containing a dedication to Ζεύς Βάκχ[ος], but this reading was rejected by J. and L. Robert ('Bulletin épigraphique', *REG* 75 [1962], 207, no. 316) and Seyrig, 'Note' (n. 13). A squeeze made by E. Frézouls and published by Seyrig (p. 209, fig. 1) shows that the reading of line 2 cannot be Δὲ Βάκχ[ω], as maintained by Lifshitz, but is ΒΑΚΑ.. or ΒΑΚΑ..., perhaps the beginning of the dedicator's name (Seyrig) or of a geographical attribute of Zeus (Robert).

cities of the Decapolis 'Scythopolis, previously called Nysa, as Liber Pater buried his nurse there, having settled Scythians (in the site)'. The legend summarized in these words is told more diffusely by the third-century writer Solinus.¹⁵ Clearly the story was so formulated as to justify the double name of the city, and especially the reference to the Scythians, a wild tribe of south-eastern Europe that had no connection with in the Hellenic world, and whose mention with reference to a Hellenic city was very odd. Dionysos in his eastern expedition had collected a retinue of strange figures from remote lands, and could easily be credited with Scythian companions, tamed and Hellenized by the god's civilizing influence. Pliny's story, therefore, is a learned aetiological tale and not just a record of a local myth.¹⁶

Two questions must thus be asked. First: do the name Nysa and the related myth attest to a local tradition rooted in an ancient cult of Dionysos, or is the story of Dionysos' nurse an aetiological tale made up to explain the toponym? And second, even if we concede the antiquity of the cult of Dionysos, does it appear from the beginning as a founder's cult, or is the *kistes* element a later

¹⁵ *Collectanea rerum memorabilium* XXXVI, ed. Th. Mommsen, Berlin, 1895, 156. Solinus clearly depends on Pliny, but enlarges on his source. On Solinus and his treatment of sources see H. Walter, *Die 'Collectanea Rerum Memorabilium' des Iulius Solinus*, Wiesbaden, 1969 (*Hermes* 22). It is worth noting that the Byzantine poet Nonnus in his poem *Dionysiaca* mentions Nysa several times, but makes her one of the nymphs in Dionysos' cortege, completely ignoring the nurse's legend.

¹⁶ Another learned explanation attempting to account for the double name of the city is offered by the sixth-century historian John Malalas, *Chronographia*, ed. L. Dindorf, Bonn, 1831, 139-40. Malalas tells a completely different story. Orestes and Pylades came to Tricomia in Palestine bringing with them Iphigenia, whom they had rescued from the hands of the Scythian king Thoas. The local inhabitants were so impressed by the lady that they built a temple of her patron goddess, Artemis, and asked Iphigenia to sacrifice a maiden there. The place was then renamed after the sacrificed girl, and the fugitives raised a monument to the divinized victim, inscribing it: 'Receive the refugees of Scythia, goddess Nysa'. This aetiological tale is not preserved in any earlier source. On Malalas' use of mythological sources for the reconstruction of the past, see S. Reinart, *Greek Myth in Johannes Malalas' Account of Ancient History before the Trojan War*, University Microfilms International, Ann Arbor, 1981. On a possible visit to Scythopolis by Malalas — or by his source for this story — see B. Croke, 'Malalas, the Man and His Work', in E. Jeffreys (ed.), *Studies in John Malalas*, Sydney, 1990, 1-25, esp. p. 5; see also E. Jeffreys, 'Malalas' Sources', *ibid.*, 167-216. Modern scholars made their own attempts to rationalize the origin of the name Scythopolis by invoking an ancient Cimmerian (Scythian) invasion (on which Herodotus I, 105), or a settlement of Scythians in Ptolemaic service: for a bibliography of these views, see B. Lifshitz, 'Scythopolis', in H. Temporini (ed.), *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, II. 8, Berlin-New York, 1978, 262-8; Schürer (n. 7), 142-4.

addition, whose historical significance must be seen in the light of a different period?

As for the first question, K.J. Rigsby has argued that, in spite of Pliny's statement, the name Scythopolis must be older than Nysa, in view of the order of appearance of the two names in official inscriptions.¹⁷ We may add that Σκυθῶν πόλις appears already in the Book of Judith, composed in the 4th century BCE, while Νύσα first occurs on the city coins of the early Roman period.¹⁸ Moreover, the city was always called Scythopolis in common parlance and by outsiders (e.g. by Polybius and in the Books of Maccabees),¹⁹ while Nysa only appears in a learned or poetic context,²⁰ or as Nysa-Scythopolis in official inscriptions: therefore it can hardly reflect a popular tradition.

No satisfactory explanation has been offered for the name Scythopolis, but Nysa has been explained by Rigsby as a dynastic name of the Seleucid family, borne by the eldest daughter of Antiochus IV: the town would thus have been re-founded by this king after the girl's birth, in ca. 174 BCE.²¹ Given this name, and the legend of the foundation of Nysa in India by Dionysos, in honour of his

¹⁷ K.J. Rigsby, 'Seleucid Notes', *TAPhA* 110 (1980), 238-42. Pliny's statement, by the way, is self-contradictory: on the one hand, he says that the name Nysa preceded that of Scythopolis, on the other, the circumstances as he tells them link both names to the same event, namely, Dionysos' passage through Beth Shean.

¹⁸ Judith 3, 10. The earliest city coins known to Spijkerman (n. 13: 188, no. 1) were issued under Caligula. However, Rachel Barkay (*Coins of Beth Shean* above, n. 13) has shown that the city coinage began under Gabinius. The earliest emissions bear the name of the city, Gabinia Nysa: *ibid.* 24-5, nos. 1-6. Nysa Scythopolis appears in the coins issued under Caligula: *ibid.* 26, no. 7. I wish to thank Rachel Barkay for her willingness to discuss with me the subject of this article.

¹⁹ Polybius V, 70, 4-5; I Macc. 5, 52; 12, 40; II Macc. 12, 30.

²⁰ E.g. in a Byzantine metrical inscription from Hammath Gader: L. Di Segni and Y. Hirschfeld, 'Four Greek Inscriptions from Hammat Gader from the Reign of Anastasius', *IEJ* 36 (1986), 253.

²¹ 'Seleucid Notes' (n. 17), 241. The same suggestion was made also by A.H.M. Jones, *Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces*, 2nd ed., Oxford, 1971, 250. Refoundation, as an act aimed to ensure a city's loyalty to a new ruler, is common enough in the reigns of the diadochi. See below for the similar case of Nicaea. Rigsby is wrong in stating that the Ptolemies 'made little of Dionysus outside the court and nothing of his nurse': Dionysos, assimilated to Sarapis and to Ammon, was most popular in the religion of Ptolemaic Egypt, and his nurse appeared in the processions in honour of the god: see Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* V, 198, and *PWRE* XVII, 2 (1937), col. 1628. See also J. Tondriau, 'La Dynastie Ptolémaïque et la Religion Dionysiaque', *Chronique d'Égypte* 25 (1950), 283-316. However, it seems that the personal name Nysa was not used in the Ptolemaic house: see entries 'Nysa' in *PWRE* XVII, 2 (1937) 1627-54.

nurse,²² an aetiological tale could easily arise, even with no pre-existing Dionysiac cult to help its growth. Actually, since Hellenistic Beth Shean was founded by the Ptolemies, who had Dionysos as their family founder (ἀρχηγέτης), it is quite likely that such a cult did exist, and once the Nysa-factor had been introduced, it might even have helped a Nysa cult to take root. However, it is hardly likely that the Seleucid rulers would have encouraged a cult of Dionysos *ktistes*, especially if they had refounded Beth Shean as Nysa, since this would have emphasized the role of the Ptolemies in the Hellenization of the city and its links to the rival dynasty. The Seleucids' own god was Zeus Olympius, and a Hellenistic inscription found in Beth Shean attests to the cult of this deity as a dynastic god together with the ancestors of the royal house.²³ In other words, the antiquity of the cult of Dionysos at Beth Shean can be conceded, but, in spite of the city being called Nysa, there is absolutely no evidence that the nurse's myth was included in the cult in its Hellenistic stage;²⁴ therefore the god's rôle as city founder, insofar as it is anchored to the nurse's myth, does not necessarily go back to the origins. Even if Dionysos was worshipped as *archegetes* in Beth Shean under the Ptolemies, this cult was probably discontinued under the Seleucids.

In examining the documentation of the Roman period, it is necessary to distinguish between the different elements of Dionysos' cult. This cult was certainly well established in the mid-first century CE, and even earlier, when Dionysos first appears on coins.²⁵ The *ktistes* element is attested by the first-century testimony of Pliny, but only as a learned aetiological story: it is not confirmed by numismatic or epigraphical finds. The dedication on Seleucus' altar calling Dionysos κτίστης is about a century later. The nurse element does not appear for another half century at least: the earliest coins featuring a turretted

²² Arrian, *Anabasis Alexandri* V, 1-3. Arrian wrote his History of Alexander in the second century CE, after Pliny, but he used early and undoubtedly well-known sources. After having told the legend and Alexander's reaction to it, Arrian states that Eratosthenes disbelieved this story: therefore the tale itself must be earlier than Eratosthenes, a philosopher and scholar of the third century BCE. Cf. A.D. Nock, 'Notes on Ruler-cult', *JHS* 48 (1928), 24. The story of the nurse's death and the re-naming of her burial place is topical: cf. Virgil, *Aen.* VII, 78 and even Genesis 35:8.

²³ *SEG* VIII, no. 33; cf. M. Rostovtzeff, 'ΤΙΠΟΦΟΝΟΙ' *JHS* 55 (1935), 60.

²⁴ It is worth noting that at Nysa on the Meander, a Seleucid foundation in Lydia (cf. L. Robert, *Laodicée du Lykos*, Québec-Paris, 1969, 296-8), there was no particular cult of Dionysos (although the god occasionally appears on coins of the Hellenistic and the Roman imperial periods: B.V. Head, *Historia Numorum*, Oxford, 1911 [= *HN*], 654), much less a cult of the nymph Nysa. The city gods were Pluto and Kore: L. Robert, 'Documents d'Asie Mineure', *BCH* 101 (1977), 64-77.

²⁵ Dionysos appears in the first emissions of Scythopolis, minted under Gabinius: R. Barkay, *Coins of Beth Shean* (n. 13), 25, no. 4. Of four types coined under Gabinius, three (nos. 1-3) feature Nike, one Dionysos.

goddess nursing the infant Dionysos — i.e. Tyche as Nysa — are issued under Septimius Severus.²⁶ Can we unify the different threads of evidence, and establish that the god was worshipped as *ktistes* at Beth Shean, against the background of Nysa's legend, at least since the early Roman period?

Many cities were said to have been founded by gods. A list of them²⁷ includes two different kinds of evidence: literary sources, and documentary evidence. A survey of the evidence shows that the two categories often do not coincide. For some cities we have learned notices of a founder's myth — sometimes in ancient sources, like Pindar or Herodotus, sometimes dating from the early Roman period, like Diodorus Siculus or Strabo, sometimes even later, like Plutarch and Stephanus of Byzantium — but no historical information on an actual cult existing at a specific time, or concrete proof based on finds, like coins or inscriptions. For other cities documentary evidence bears witness to the cult of a founder god or divinized hero, but no ancient source has spelled out the legend.²⁸ Literary evidence of the poetic or aetiological kind cannot be taken as proof of a cult, if this is not confirmed by contemporary information based on documentary evidence.²⁹

²⁶ Spijkerman, 194-5, no. 23. This coin features Tyche as Nysa nursing the infant god, and Zeus with a child's head and shoulders issuing from his right thigh, a reference to the myth of Dionysos' birth. Seyrig, 'Note' (n. 13), 211, views the three main deities of Scythopolis — Zeus, Tyche-nurse and young Dionysos — as a familiar group, corresponding to a Semitic triad, which he compares to the Heliopolitan triad. It is worth mentioning that all three appear independently on earlier coins of Scythopolis, and since Severan times — as a 'familiar group'. This interpretation would introduce a further complication, for we are confronted with the possibility that the nurse element was not implicit in the founder's cult, but left the realm of learned aetiology (Pliny) and came to life in urban religion (as attested by coinage) only under the influence of the syncretistic Heliopolitan cult.

²⁷ For an extensive survey of cities whose foundation by gods is mentioned in epigraphic finds and coins see L. Robert, 'Les conquêtes du dynaste lycien Arbinas', *Journal des Savants* 1978, 38-45. A list appears in appendix to W. Leschhorn, *Gründer der Stadt*, Stuttgart, 1984, 360-73.

²⁸ For instance, nine bases of statues were discovered at Perge in Pamphylia: *SEG* XXXIV, no. 1305, and cf. Leschhorn, *Gründer*, 383-5, nos. 190, 195, 197, 198, 203, 204, 215. They were erected in Hadrian's time and identified nine *ktistai*: two were contemporary personages, acclaimed as patrons of the city, seven were mythical heroes, like Mopsos, Calchas, and others otherwise unknown. Although some tales of the *νόστοι* literature do connect Achean heroes returning from Troy to Cilicia, no recorded legend explicitly mentions Perge in this connexion. The patron goddess of Perge was Artemis: *PWRE* XIX, 1 (1937), 699-701.

²⁹ Pausanias, the second-century geographer, is an exception, for he recounts foundation tales in connection with monuments actually existing in the several cities: see F. Imhoof-Blumer and P. Gardner, 'Numismatic Commentary on Pausanias', *JHS* 6 (1885), 55-101; 7 (1886), 57-113; 8 (1887), 6-63.

Caution is all the more necessary as it has been observed that cities, especially in Asia Minor, begin to show an interest in their founders in the early second century. This has been explained as a result of the panhellenic policy promoted by Hadrian in the Greek East, in an effort to unify Asia Minor in face of the Parthian threat.³⁰ A connection between *ktistes* cults and Hadrian's reign may also be rooted in the fact that, while several emperors were acclaimed as *ktistai*, Hadrian was the *ktistes* par excellence, hailed as such in scores of inscriptions. His building policy encouraged at one and the same time a fervid climate of refoundation, the acclamation of the emperor as divine *ktistes*, and the erection of structures where new cults could be practised.³¹

This theory may be relevant in our case, for traces of the panhellenic trend can be observed also at Beth Shean not long after Hadrian's time. I refer to the coins and the official inscription in which Scythopolis is called 'one of the Greek cities of Coele Syria'.³² Was the *ktistes* cult in the city a result of policy? The location of the altar, not within a religious structure but in the focal point of a public building, can be seen as a clue in this direction.

Another possible explanation can be offered, that would also locate the growth of the *ktistes* cult in the soil of the imperial period. While, as was said above, most local *ktistes* cults appear in the second century, some are earlier, but still of the imperial period. In most such cases it can be observed that the cult of a specific god as *ktistes* made its appearance in the reign of an emperor who identified himself with the same god. For instance, the cult of Apollo *ktistes* ap-

³⁰ L. Robert, *Études Anatoliennes* (n. 10), 248; J.H.M. Strubbe, 'Gründer Kleinasiatischer Städte — Fiktion und Realität', *Ancient Society* 15-7 (1984-1986), 280-4. For a discussion of the cultural and/or political meaning of the *ktistes* myth, see also P. Weiss, 'Lebendiger Mythos. Gründerheroen und Städtische Gründungstraditionen im griechisch-römischen Osten', *Würzburger Jahrbücher für die Altertumswissenschaft* 10 (1984), 179-208; B. Nadel, 'Aspects of Emperor Hadrian's Policy in the Northern Black Sea Area', *Rivista storica di Antichità* 12 (1982), 175-215.

³¹ For a selected list of emperors hailed as *ktistai* in the Greek East, see Nadel, 'Aspects of Emperor Hadrian's Policy' (n. 30), 213; for the meaning of *ktistes* — not necessarily connected with construction work, but often referring to the granting of privileges or to the recognition by the emperor of the Hellenic character of a city — see *ibid.*, 201-2, with bibliography. For the activity of emperors, especially Hadrian, as *ktistai* in the concrete sense, see S. Mitchell, 'Imperial Building in the Eastern Roman Provinces', *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 91 (1987), 333-65.

³² G. Foerster and Y. Tsafir, 'Nysa-Scythopolis — A New Inscription and the Title of the City on its Coins', *INJ* 9 (1986-1987), 53-8. The inscription is dedicated to Marcus Aurelius Antoninus Augustus, probably the emperor Marcus Aurelius (161-180), and the title πόλις ἑλληνίς appears on coins between 175/6 and 185/6.

pears at Kyrene under Augustus,³³ at Apollonia in Epirus under Nero,³⁴ and that of Herakles *ktistes* at Kyzikos, Nicaea and Prusias ad Hypium under Domitian.³⁵ Might not the addition of the *ktistes* epithet to the city god be a response of the provincial cities to the demands of the emperor's cult?

The emperor's cult could be introduced by erecting a temple and creating a liturgy and a priesthood, but both practical and theological reasons often suggested that a city should perform this duty towards the ruler without disturbing the equilibrium of its pantheon, by either associating or assimilating the deified emperor with a city god.³⁶ In the former case, the emperor was worshipped as *σύνναος*, *σύμβωμος* or *σύνθρονος* of a specific god,³⁷ in the latter, he was fully identified with the god. The identification could require some theological adjustment, particularly the extrapolation of a particular aspect of the god that

³³ Leschhorn, *Gründer* (n. 27), 362, no. 14. For the identification of Augustus with Apollo, see J. Beaujeu, *La religion romaine à l'apogée de l'Empire*, I. *La politique religieuse des Antonins (96-192)*, Paris, 1955, 41-2.

³⁴ In coins inscribed 'Nero Apollo *ktistes*': Leschhorn, *Gründer* (n. 27), 360, no. 4. For the identification of Nero with Apollo, see Beaujeu, *La religion romaine*, 45-7.

³⁵ Leschhorn, *Gründer* (n. 27), 369, nos. 62, 65; 371, no. 69. For the identification of Domitian with Herakles, see Beaujeu, *La religion romaine*, 49.

³⁶ Smyrne, for instance, first erected a Tiberieum in honour of Tiberius, Livia and the Senate, for which it received a first neocorate under Trajan; then an Adrianeum was built in honour of Hadrian and the city received a second neocorate (The title *νεωκόρος*, 'warden of the temple', was assumed by Asiatic cities in the imperial period when they had erected a temple in honour of their patron god or of the emperor. It was granted as a honorific title and as such is often mentioned on the city coins). Adrianeia games were also introduced (Robert, *Études Anatoliennes* [n. 10], 123-4). A third neocorate was assumed when the city erected a temple for Severus and his family: Head, *HN* (n. 24), 593-4. An inscription from the late second-early third centuries (*IGRom* IV, no. 1433) mentions a 'warden of the temple of the Augusti and of the god Bacchus' (*νεωκόρος τῶν Σεβαστῶν καὶ τοῦ θεοῦ Βάκχου*), showing that the imperial family was associated to this god in the cult. It is worth noting that the form Bacchus instead of Dionysos is uncommon in inscriptions of Asia Minor. Bacchus and Hercules — under their Latin names — were the *dii patrii* of the African Septimius Severus. Caracalla, who loved to imitate Alexander the Great, was very devoted to Dionysos: Dio Cassius LXXVII, 7, 4; A. Bruhl, *Liber Pater*, Paris, 1953, 191-2.

³⁷ For instance, at Miletus an inscription mentions the Augusti enthroned with Apollo Didymus (Robert, *Études Anatoliennes* [n. 10], 27), although later, after Elagabalus, coins indicate that the city was *νεωκόρος τῶν Σεβαστῶν*, i.e. it had erected a temple specifically dedicated to the emperor's cult (Head, *HN*, 586). At Teos, an association of the cult of Tiberius with that of the chief city god, Dionysos, is attested by the participation of Tiberius Caesar's priest in Dionysos' liturgy and by the name of the god's games being changed from *Διονύσεια* to *Διονύσεια Καισάρεια* (Robert, *Études Anatoliennes*, 34-5).

might be most suitable to the deified ruler. Such adjustments are sometimes identifiable through epithets added to the name of the god.³⁸

Usually the deity chosen for this rôle was the one most venerated in the city, who, in the cities of Asia Minor, was often characterized as ἀρχηγέτης (founder), καθηγεμών or προκαθηγεμών (leader): examples are not lacking.³⁹ But this was not always the case. For example, the most important god of Pergamum was Asklepios Soter: already in the Hellenistic period King Attalus III had been deified as σύνναος of Asklepios. The Roman emperors were also associated with this cult: Hadrian was hailed as νέος Ἀσκληπίος; under Commodus the Asklepieia games were renamed Asklepieia Kommodeia; and Caracalla, who visited the temple of the god, is represented on coins in the act of adoring the Asklepiian snake.⁴⁰ But Trajan and Hadrian were worshipped also as Zeus, and a cult of the emperors hailed as νέοι Διόνυσοι — Trajan, Hadrian and the Antonini — was celebrated in the temple of Dionysos Καθηγεμών; Augustus and his adoptive sons, C. and L. Caesares, were also associated with this cult.⁴¹ Antoninus Pius was probably worshipped as Ζεὺς Βάκχος, seemingly a hypostasis of Dionysos upgraded by identification with the father of the gods.⁴² At Erythrae a priest of Dionysos erected a temple Διονυσίῳ προπάτορι καὶ... Ἀντωνείνῳ: due to the bad preservation of the inscription, it cannot be as-

³⁸ For instance, at Pergamum the cult of Zeus Kronides was ancient: cf. *IGRom* IV, nos. 285-7, 292-4; Head, *HN*, 536 (Zeus as a sky-god on coins). Zeus Φίλιος represented Trajan in the Traianeum (Beaujeu, *La religion romaine*, 73, n. 1), and according to L. Robert, Zeus Olympius was introduced in the imperial period, probably under Hadrian and because of his identification with the panhellenic god (Robert, *Études Anatoliennes*, 69). Likewise, Zeus Βάκχος, an otherwise unknown hypostasis, appears in an inscription dated 166 (*IGRom* IV, no. 360) that attests to this cult at Pergamum under Marcus Aurelius: possibly this cult was introduced in honour of Antoninus Pius, who was worshipped in several cities of the Greek East as various hypostases of Zeus, and in whose time the identification of the emperor with Dionysos reached a peak: Beaujeu, *La religion romaine*, 307-1, 325-7. For various hypostases of Zeus assimilated to Roman emperors, see A.B. Cook, *Zeus* II, Cambridge 1925, 1179-80.

³⁹ For the association or assimilation of a deified ruler — the Hellenistic kings and later the Roman emperor — to the chief city god, see Robert, *Études Anatoliennes*, 17-8, 27, 33-4, 63-4. For the epithets of the chief god, see *ibid.* 26-7.

⁴⁰ Robert, *Études Anatoliennes*, 63-4; Head, *HN*, 536.

⁴¹ *IGRom* IV, nos. 317, 367; J. van Prott, 'Dionysos Kathegemon', *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Athenische Abteilung* 27 (1902), 183-4, and see above, n. 38.

⁴² See above, n. 38. Zeus Bacchos is otherwise unknown. Zeus Dionysos appears in an Orphic hymn, as well as in three third-century dedications in Thracia: see Seyrig, 'Note' (n. 13), 209-10, n. 5. In this article Seyrig rejects the reading Διὶ Βάκχῳ in an inscription from Beth Shean.

certained which Antoninus is meant (Pius? Caracalla?).⁴³ Dionysos was not the chief god of Erythrae, nor was he the founder or ancestor (προπάτωρ) of the city: the most important deities were Apollo (who had here a famous Sibylla) and Herakles, and the city even boasted an eponymous *ktistes*, Erythros, in no way connected with Dionysos.⁴⁴ In this case too the god was 'promoted' to the rôle of founder in connection with the imperial cult. At Edessa, Dionysos is hailed as θεὸς πάτριος in a dedication by a priestess of the Augusti, dated ca. 200: again, the god had no particular place in the city pantheon and no claim to the epithet 'ancestral'.⁴⁵ In Smyrne, Maeonia, Termessos, Akmonia, Minoa in the island of Amorgos, emperors from Hadrian to Severus Alexander are associated in cult to Dionysos, although he was not the principal deity in any of those cities.⁴⁶

Dionysos was the god most frequently associated with the imperial cult. The reason is probably twofold: first, the Dionysiac religion was very widespread and most popular in the imperial period, and second, several emperors of the second and third centuries either identified themselves with Dionysos or were hailed as νέος Διόνυσος, in spite of their identification with another deity.⁴⁷ Was Dionysos associated to the imperial cult also in Beth Shean? Was Dionysos the principal god of Scythopolis at all, as Pliny would have us believe, or did he become so under the Roman empire, in function of his association with the imperial cult?⁴⁸ And even if we concede that his was the main cult, was the *ktistes*

⁴³ *IGRom* IV, no. 1533.

⁴⁴ *PWRE* XVI, 1 (1909), cols. 575-90, esp. cols. 580, 584, 588; Head, *HN*, 579.

⁴⁵ *SEG* XXXVI, no. 616 and cf. Head, *HN*, 814-5. For the similarity of the concepts of θεὸς πάτριος and θεὸς κτίστης see the case of Side described below.

⁴⁶ *IGRom* III, no. 448; IV, nos. 640, 641, 1011, 1374, 1433; cf. Head, *HN*, 481, 593-4, 652, 663-4, 698.

⁴⁷ Marcus Aurelius is identified with Dionysos and his marriage to Faustina is represented on coins and medallions as the nuptials of Dionysos and Ariadne: Beaujeu, *La religion romaine*, 308. Among the emperors acclaimed as νέος Διόνυσος are Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, Lucius Verus, Commodus and Caracalla. Hadrian's main identification was with Zeus Olympius, that of Commodus with Heracles. See Beaujeu, *ibid.*, 172-3, 299-300, 307-11, 362, 409; *IGRom* IV, nos. 367, 468, 1374; *SEG* XXXV, no. 1450. For the Dionysiac cult of the emperors in the second and third centuries, see Bruhl, *Liber Paier* (n. 36), 182-211. The third-century emperors who were followers of the Sun god were also devotees of Dionysos, viewed as son of Helios: *ibid.*, 254-6, and cf. L. Robert, *A travers l'Asie Mineure*, Paris, 1980, 400.

⁴⁸ For the cult of Zeus as a dynastic god in the Hellenistic period see above, n. 38. Zeus in the second century CE: B. Lifshitz, 'Der Kult des Zeus Akraios und des Zeus Bakchos in Beisan (Skythopolis)', *ZDPV* 77 (1961), 189-90; Y. Tsafirir, 'Further Evidence of the Cult of Zeus Akraios at Beth Shean', *IEJ* 39 (1989), 76-8. The epithet 'Akraios' may refer to a cult place on the top of the mound of Beth

motif implicit in it from the beginning, or was it added as Dionysos became identified with the imperial cult, as we have suggested for similar epithets?

For the time being, Beth Shean does not offer sufficient evidence to clarify the history and significance of the *ktistes* cult. In order to explore the question, it may be useful to examine the dossiers of some cities that have gods for *ktistai*, with a view to fix a precise chronology for the appearance of the *ktistes* motif, if this is feasible. Much of the information comes from coins, and it must be stressed that the relatively small number of types bearing evidence of a *ktistes* cult comes from a wealth of city coins minted in many cities over a long period. The same is true of the epigraphic evidence, though in lesser degree.

It is worth noting that Syria and Palestine provide us with almost no examples of the *ktistes* cult. Beside the Beth Shean inscription and one from Suweida in Hauran (see below), we have only a coin of Gerasa of the time of Commodus, which bears the legend ΑΛΕΞ(ανδρος) ΜΑΚ(εδώ) ΚΤΙ(στης) ΓΕΡΑΣΩΝ. But this is just a case of archaeological interest in the city past: there is no question of a local cult of Alexander.⁴⁹ A cult of Apollo ἀρχηγέτης is documented in inscriptions at Apamea, Dura Europos and in other Seleucid foundations, but he is the Seleucid god of colonization, not a *ktistes* in the accepted sense of the imperial period.⁵⁰ Foundation myths and founding gods were not lacking in the region (e.g. Derketo at Ascalon), and Greek inscriptions and coins are available: so why is the evidence so poor? Or is it a question of evidence? It is worth recalling that in the Septuagint, in the Gospels and in the early Church fathers κτίζειν, κτίστης meant 'to create' and 'Creator', בורא — an epithet of God.⁵¹ In the second and third centuries Syria, not to speak of Palestine, was very strongly imbued with Jewish, Christian and pagan-monotheistic beliefs, and it is conceivable that the imperial theology of the divine *ktistes*, enthusiastically embraced in Asia Minor, was unacceptable to the Semitic peoples of the Near East.

Shean, where an imposing temple rose in the Hellenistic and Roman periods. Zeus also has a prominent place in the city coins of the imperial period.

⁴⁹ H. Seyrig, 'Alexandre le Grand, fondateur de Gerasa', *Syria* 42 (1965), 25-8. A legend of the foundation of Gerasa by Perdiccas on Alexander's order possibly existed in the Hellenistic period: see Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People* (n. 7), II, 150, but its growth or revival may be connected with the aetiological tale recounted by Iamblichus, according to which the name Gerasa derived from the veterans (γέροντες) of Alexander's army who are supposed to have settled there: *ibid.*, n. 342.

⁵⁰ *SEG* VII, no. 352; J.P. Rey-Coquais, 'Inscriptions grecques d'Apamée', *Annales arch. Arabes Syriennes* 23 (1973), 47-8, no. 10 (= *Année Épigraphique* 1976, no. 686) and cf. L. Robert, 'Bulletin épigraphique', *REG* 89 (1976), 566-7, no. 721.

⁵¹ See concordances of the Bible (especially sapiential books) and New Testament, and G.W.H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, Oxford, 1961, s. vv. κτίζω, κτίσις, κτίστης.

A cult of Dionysos *ktistes* is documented at Soada, today Suweida, by the Greek name of the town, Dionysias,⁵² and in a building inscription dated 231/2 in which the city commemorates the building of workshops (ἐργαστήρια), under the supervision of the councilmen belonging to one of the tribes that formed the citizen body, and 'by the providence of the Lord founder Dionysos' (προνοία κυρίου κτίστου Διονύσου).⁵³ This phrase is interesting, not only because it duplicates the κύριος κτίστης of the Dionysos inscription from Beth Shean, but also because the name and epithets of the god are introduced by the formula προνοία, normally indicating the 'foresight' of a citizen, generally a councilman or another personage of considerable social standing, who undertook the erection of a specific monument on behalf of the city. The mention of Dionysos in this rôle means one of two things: either the god had arranged for the erection of the workshops by revealing his will through an oracle or a dream, or he fulfilled a public function, through which he could provide for the construction. The former explanation, suggested by Waddington, seems unlikely: such a prosaic building surely did not rate a supernatural intervention of the god. Besides, if an oracle or a dream were involved, we should expect a mention of the person who received the revelation and passed it on, so that the god's wish might be realized.⁵⁴ On the other hand, several cases are known in which the god himself, or one of the main deities in a city pantheon, fulfilled the rôle of priest of the patron god, and sometimes even the chief magistrature of the city.⁵⁵ Possibly in this case Dionysos, obviously represented by a human being, held a priestly or administrative office in Dionysias that gave him the power to intervene in the city development, by planning or by financing buildings erected in the interest of the city. Dionysos of Suweida was the Nabataean god Dusares, whose cult in the city was undoubtedly as ancient as in the rest of Nabataea,⁵⁶ but we have no evi-

⁵² Suweida is called by the Semitic name Soada in inscriptions (W.H. Waddington and P. Le Bas, *Voyage archéologique en Grèce et en Asie Mineure. Inscriptions et explications* III, Paris, 1870, no.2307, dated AD 149, and no. 2370, undated, which mentions the annual festival of the god), Διονυσιάς in the inscription discussed in these lines (see below, n. 53), in another, dated 516 (Waddington, no. 2299) and in all the literary sources: M. Avi-Yonah, *Gazetteer of Roman Palestine*, Jerusalem 1976 (*Qedem* 5), 52. For the identification of Dionysias with Soada-Suweida cf. R. Dussaud, *Mission dans les régions désertiques de la Syrie moyenne*, Paris, 1903, 247-8.

⁵³ Waddington (n. 52), no. 2309; also in *IGRom* III, no. 1277, and cf. Robert, 'Les conquêtes' (n. 27), 39.

⁵⁴ On the erection of a statue following a dream, see Waddington, no. 1894, from Caesarea-Paneas, dated AD 221/2.

⁵⁵ Cf. L. Robert, 'Les inscriptions grecques de Bulgarie', *Revue de Philologie* 33 (1959), 202-3, with numerous examples.

⁵⁶ D. Sourdel, *Les cultes du Hauran à l'époque romaine*, Paris, 1952, 12, 63; R. Dussaud, *La pénétration des Arabes en Syrie avant l'Islam*, Paris, 1955, 55-61.

dence of the leading rôle of Dionysos *ktistes* in Dionysias prior to the date of this inscription. The name of the city was changed at some time in the second half of the second century or in the early third.

Krounoi, on the Bulgarian coast of the Black Sea, was renamed Dionysopolis at some time between the late first century BCE and the early first century CE.⁵⁷ A cult of Dionysos is attested on imperial coins that depict the god, sometimes within his temple,⁵⁸ and in inscriptions: however, the attribute *ktistes* appears only in an inscription honouring a priest of Διόνυσος κτίστης whose name, Marcus Aurelius ...koros son of Antiochos, indicates that the inscription cannot be earlier than the late second century.⁵⁹

Tium, in Bithynia, issued imperial coins from Vespasian's to Gallienus' reign. The principal god, Dionysos, is called *ktistes* on coins of Domitian, Trajan and Marcus Aurelius.⁶⁰

Perinthos in Thracia, on the northern coast of Bosphorus, had been founded by Herakles, as is attested by a votive relief representing the hero and calling him κτίστης of Perinthos, dated to the late second-early third century.⁶¹ In the relief, Herakles is coupled with Dionysos: the two had in common the function of gods who bring civilization and together were patrons of Leptis and of the Severan house.⁶² Herakles *ktistes* appears on coins from the end of the second century to the reign of Severus Alexander.⁶³ The city received the neocorate for the first time under Severus, who founded Σευήρεια games, and for the second

⁵⁷ Strabo VII, 319 calls the town Krounoi, Pliny, *NH* IV, 44, 'Dionysopolim, Crunon antea dictum'. The refoundation of the city and its consecration to Dionysos may perhaps be ascribed to the influence of Marcus Antonius, whose self-identification with Dionysos is well known. For Marcus Antonius in the Balkans see Robert, 'Les inscriptions grecques de Bulgarie' (n. 55), 192-3, n. 10.

⁵⁸ The city imperial coinage is attested from Antoninus Pius to Gordian: Head, *HN*, 274: it may have been Antoninus Pius who granted the city the right to issue coins. This emperor also showed favour to another Dionysiopolis, in Phrygia, where a new era was introduced in 152/3, perhaps on the occasion of the inauguration of a new festival: *ibid.*, 671; Beaujeu, *La religion romaine*, 306-11.

⁵⁹ Robert, 'Les inscriptions grecques de Bulgarie', 193-208; the inscription mentioning Dionysos *ktistes*, deciphered but not dated by Robert, is at pp. 206-7.

⁶⁰ E. Babelon and Th. Reinach, *Recueil général des monnaies grecques d'Asie Mineure*, T. I, fasc. 4, Paris, 1912: Tium, 615-6 and nos. 24, 28, 67; Robert, *Études Anatoliennes* (n. 10), 285-6; Leschhorn, *Gründer* (n. 27), 366, no. 42.

⁶¹ *SEG* XXVIII, no. 602; XXXV, no. 842.

⁶² Herakles and Dionysos as civilizing gods in Stoicism, in Virgil, *Aen.* VI, 789-805, and Horace, *Od.* III, iii, 9-15: cf. Bruhl, *Liber Pater* (n. 36), 134, 136. On the two as *dii patrii* of the Severi, *ibid.*, 167, 191, 199, 224, 229. They are associated at Philippi, in Thracia and Macedonia and on an altar in Köln (*ibid.*, 214, 244).

⁶³ Head, *HN* (n. 24), 270-1; Leschhorn, *Gründer* (n. 27), 370, no. 67. Cf. *PWRE* XIX, 1 (1937), col. 807; Robert, 'Les conquêtes' (n. 27), 39-40.

time under Elagabalos.⁶⁴ Thus it seems likely that the cult began under the Severi. Soon after Aurelian's death in 275 the city was renamed Heraklea. The coins generically explain Herakles' rôle as *ktistes* by calling him 'founder of the Perinthian Ionians', an allusion to the Ionian origin of city, as a colony of Samos; but there is no recorded legend earlier than the Byzantine period to explain the specific connection of Herakles to Perinthos.⁶⁵

Herakles appears on coins of Heracleia Pontica in Bithynia from the Hellenistic period, but he is called *ktistes* only on imperial coins. The city issued imperial coins from Claudius to Macrianus (260/1). Some of the types representing Herakles and inscribed ΤΟΝ ΚΤΙΣΤΗΝ are not dated, but one bears also the legend ΗΡΑΚΛΗΑΣ ΝΕΟΚΟΡΩ, which dates it in mid-third century at the earliest, since the city is first called νεωκόρος on coins of Philip senior (244-249).⁶⁶ In a honorary inscription set up at Tomis by the city council of Heracleia under Antoninus Pius, the city bears the title θεόκτιστος.⁶⁷

Cius, in Bithynia, was destroyed by Philip V in 202 BCE and the site given to his brother-in-law, Prusias, king of Bithynia, who rebuilt the city as Prusias *ad mare* (πρὸς θάλασσαν). Coins of the third century BCE already feature Herakles, but do not call him founder.⁶⁸ The city began to issue autonomous coins again in 79 BCE, after having come under Roman rule, still under the name of Prusias. Under Claudius, Cius regained its old name and issued coins representing Herakles and bearing the legend ΤΟΝ ΚΤΙΣΤΗΝ: the two facts are probably connected.⁶⁹ Imperial coins continue under Claudius and Nero, then from Trajan to Saloninus (260/1 CE), but it seems that the *ktistes* epithet does not appear again for more than a century. Cius voted a cult to Hadrian and the inhabitants are called Ἰαδριανοὶ Κιανοὶ on coins of the times of Hadrian, Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus.⁷⁰ Herakles *ktistes* appears on coins of Marcus Aurelius and Caracalla, as well as in an undated inscription.⁷¹ Under Severus

⁶⁴ Head, *HN*, 271.

⁶⁵ *PWRE* XIX, 1 (1937), cols. 802-13.

⁶⁶ F. Imhoof-Blumer, *Kleinasiatische Münzen*, Vienna, 1901 (Hildesheim, 1974), 8; Head, *HN*, 514-6; Babelon-Reinach, *Recueil général* (n. 60), I, 2 (1908): Héraclée, 356-7 and nos. 69, 70, 74, 77. No. 74 has the inscription ΝΕΟΚΟΡΩ. For the first evidence of neocorate cf. no. 231.

⁶⁷ Robert, *Études Anatoliennes* (n. 10), 249-51. The inscription honours T. Flavius Longinus Q. Marcius Turbo, governor of Moesia inferior in 155: cf. E. Groag and A. Stein (eds.), *Prosopographia Imperii Romani Saec. I, II, III*, 2nd ed. (= *PIR*²), III, Berlin-Leipzig, 1943, 157-8, no.305.

⁶⁸ Head, *HN*, 512; Babelon-Reinach, *Recueil général* (n. 60), I, 2 (1908): Cius, 310 and nos. 17-20. On the history of Cius-Prusias see *PWRE* XI, 1 (1921), 486-8.

⁶⁹ Babelon-Reinach, *Recueil général*, nos. 31-2 and cf. nos. 28-30, undated.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, nos. 34-7, 42, 47, 53; for Hadrian's cult, see *IGRom* III, no. 20.

⁷¹ Babelon-Reinach, *Recueil général* I, 2: Cius, nos. 40, 68; Th. Reinach, 'Bulletin épigraphique', *REG* 7 (1894), 390-1.

Alexander for the first time a coin depicts Hylas, a companion of Herakles whose figure is strictly connected with the foundation tale of Cius; in this and in successive types, Hylas holds an amphora or another object alluding to the Dionysiac character of his festival.⁷² In fact, it seems that the foundation myth gained strength under the Antonini, and under the Severi developed into a more complex cult that included additional personages (Hylas) and a connection with the other patron of the ruling family, Dionysos.

Another Prusias in Bithynia, Prusias *ad Hypium*, was visited by Hadrian who was hailed as *ktistes* in a dedication Διὶ Ὀλυμπίῳ καὶ τῷ κτίστῃ αὐτοκράτορι Τραϊανῷ Ἀδριανῷ; later it was visited by Septimius Severus and Caracalla at the head of their army during the campaign against Pescennius Niger.⁷³ The main cult in the city was that of Zeus Olympius, documented by several inscriptions that mention games in honour of the god. Another competition was held every five years in honour of the Antonini, who had their own cult and priests. Asklepius Soter was also worshipped.⁷⁴ Strangely enough, Zeus Olympius does not appear on the city coins. Autonomous and imperial coins were issued from Vespasian to Gallienus and feature Asklepios, Dionysos, Hermes and other gods. Herakles, a popular deity in Bithynia, and worshipped as *ktistes* in several nearby cities, does not seem to have had a special cult in Prusias ad Hypium, and appears only on a small number of emissions under Domitian, Lucius Verus and Commodus: however, on one isolated type, the only one issued under Domitian, the god is designated as *ktistes*.⁷⁵

Sebastopolis in Pontus, so called by Pliny and on coins of Trajan's time, changed its name to Herakleopolis, probably in the early second century: the name first occurs in an inscription of 137 CE.⁷⁶ Coins were issued under Trajan, Septimius Severus and his dynasty, and Gallienus. A cult of Herakles, probably replacing the cult of some local god, is indicated by a club and a lion's skin that feature on a coin of Trajan dated 107/8.⁷⁷ From the time of Septimius Severus the city name on the coins is either Sebastopolis or Herakleopolis or both, and Herakles appears on several types, one bearing the legend ΤΟΝ ΚΤΙΣΤΗΝ ΣΕΒΑΣΤΟΠΟΛΙΣ.⁷⁸

⁷² Babelon-Reinach, *Recueil général* I, 2: Cius, nos. 87, 97, 110, 128. On the legend of Hylas see *PWRE* IX, 1 (1914), 110-5, esp. col. 114; XI, 1 (1921), 486.

⁷³ *IGRom* III, nos. 52, 53-4, 61; Herodian III, 3.

⁷⁴ Cult and games of Zeus Olympius: *IGRom* III, nos. 61, 62, 64-8; cult and games of the Antonini: *ibid.*, nos. 60-3, 66, 69, 1422, 1423. Cult and games of Asklepios Soter: *ibid.*, nos. 62, 69.

⁷⁵ For the coins of Prusias ad Hypium see Babelon-Reinach, *Recueil général* I, 4 (1912), 602-3 and nos. 8 (Herakles *ktistes*), 42-3, 49-50, 69.

⁷⁶ Pliny, *NH* VI, 8; *IGRom* III, no. 111; Babelon-Reinach, *Recueil général* (n. 60), I, 1 (1904): Sebastopolis, 102.

⁷⁷ Babelon-Reinach, *Recueil général* I, 1: Sebastopolis, no. 2.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.* no. 7.

Tarsus boasted Herakles as its founder (ἀρχηγός), according to the first-second century rhetor Dio of Prusa: apparently this was an adaptation of an earlier tradition that ascribed the foundation of Tarsus to Herakles' grandfather, Perseus.⁷⁹ According to the legend, Perseus brought to Tarsus the *xoanon* of Apollo Lykios which had been consecrated in Argos by his grandfather, Cadmus. Perseus' figure and adventures often appear on the city coins, from Hadrian's to Valerian's times, and on coins of Septimius Severus, Severus Alexander and Gordian the hero is depicted in the act of adoring the statue of Apollo: a clear allusion to the foundation myth, but Perseus himself never bears the title *ktistes*.⁸⁰ Tarsus assumed a first neocorate with Antinous, Hadrian's favourite who was deified as νέος Ἰάκχος (Dionysos) after his death, and a second under Commodus, who identified himself with Herakles.⁸¹ Herakles often appears on coins of Tarsus: a clue to his rôle in the imperial cult is given by a coin of Caracalla that pictures Perseus and Herakles together (thus linking Herakles to the foundation myth), in the act of presenting a bust of Caracalla, namely, fulfilling the function of Sebastofants in the imperial mysteries.⁸² Herakles is explicitly called *ktistes* only on coins issued under Macrinus (217-218).⁸³ It is perhaps not by chance that Herakles, Phoenician Melqart, was the principal god of Macrinus' home city, Cirta in Mauretania.

Apollo is the patron of Side, whose coins he adorns even in the Persian period (fifth century BCE). The type of Apollo Sides, with a chlamys on his shoulders, appears on fourth-century coins.⁸⁴ A great athletic competition in honour of the god was established by Gordian (238-244), who was associated with Apollo in the festival; other games, the μυστικὸς ἀγών, were established under Valerian (253-260).⁸⁵ Side was νεωκόρος for the first time under Galienus (253-268), and for a third time under Aurelian (270-275).⁸⁶ The epithets

⁷⁹ Dio Chrysostom (born ca. 40 AD, died at the beginning of Hadrian's reign), *Or.* 33, 47. Perseus is called 'founder of Tarsus' by the epigrammatist Antipater of Thessalonica (1st century BCE: *Anthologia Palatina* IX, 557) and by the Latin poet Lucan (*Pharsalia* III, 225, written under Nero), as well as by later authors: L. Robert, 'Documents d'Asie Mineure', *BCH* 101 (1977), 88-132, esp. pp. 98-116; cf. L. Robert, 'Les conquêtes' (n. 27), 40, n. 107.

⁸⁰ Head, *HN*, 733; Robert, 'Documents', 102-6, 109, n. 104.

⁸¹ For the neocorates of Tarsus see Head, *HN*, 733. For the cult paid to Antinous see *PIR*² (n. 67), I (1933), 137, no. 737. For Commodus as Herakles, see Beaujeu, *La religion romaine* (n. 33), 401-6.

⁸² *BMC Cilicia*: Tarsus, no. 183. For the function of the emperor's εἰκὼν in the imperial cult, and the various priests involved in it, see L. Robert, *Opera Minora Selecta* II, Amsterdam, 1969, 832-40.

⁸³ Leschhorn, *Gründer* (n. 27), 371, no. 94.

⁸⁴ Head, *HN*, 703.

⁸⁵ J. and L. Robert, 'Bulletin épigraphique', *REG* 95 (1982), 417-22.

⁸⁶ Head, *HN*, 704.

θεὸς πάτριος or πατρῶος and κτίστης appear in inscriptions subsequent to the first neocate, one of which is a dedication of a statue of Gallienus to Apollo the founder (τῷ πατρῷ θεῷ κτίστη Ἀπόλλωνι).⁸⁷

A coin of Amasia in Pontus, minted under Septimius Severus, features Hermes with the legend ΚΤΙΣΑΣ ΤΗΝ ΠΟΛΙΝ. This god, however, appears nowhere else in the abundant emissions of Amasia in the imperial period, from Augustus to Severus Alexander. The principal god of the city was the Persian Ahura Mazda, Zeus Stratios of the Greeks, who was connected with the cult of Mithridates the Great, a native of Amasia.⁸⁸ There is no trace of Hermes' cult in the region before Hadrian's reign, but the god appears on silver pieces minted at Amisos, capital of Pontus, under Hadrian, and on a coin of Trapezus (Trebizond) under Elagabalus.⁸⁹ The origin of Hermes' cult as *ktistes* can perhaps be traced to the foundation of a temple of Hermes by Hadrian at Trapezus on the Black Sea, where the emperor also built a harbour. In 130/1 the historian Arrian, Hadrian's friend and governor of Cappadocia at the time, was charged by the emperor to prepare a report on the coast of Pontus Euxinus. In inspecting Trapezus, he found that the new temple did not attract many visitors; therefore he suggested the addition of a local hero, Philesios, as σύνναος and σύμβωμος to Hermes, so that the two deities could profit each from the clients of the other.⁹⁰ It seems clear enough that Hermes was adopted by Hadrian, for motives

⁸⁷ A.W. Van Buren, *JHS* 28 (1908), 190-2, no. 20; G.E. Bean, *JHS* 69 (1949), 73-5; P. Weiss, *Chiron* 11 (1981), 317-46 and cf. J. and L. Robert, *REG* 95 (1982), 418-9, 422, no. 450; G.E. Bean, *The Inscriptions of Side*, Ankara, 1965, 165, no. 183; *Année Épigraphique* 1966, no. 460 and cf. J. and L. Robert, 'Bulletin épigraphique', *REG* 81 (1968), 530, no. 545. See now a new edition of the inscriptions of Side: J. Nollé, *Side im Altertum: Geschichte und Zeugnisse*. Band I, Bonn, 1993.

⁸⁸ Head, *HN*, 496; Babelon-Reinach, *Recueil général* I, 1 (1904): Amasia, 26-7 and no. 53. Amasia is νεωκόρος under Commodus: nos. 31-8.

⁸⁹ Head, *HN*, 497, 499; Babelon-Reinach, *Recueil général*, I, 1 (1904): Amisos, 44 and nos. 87-8; Trapezus, 107 and no. 27. Beaujeu (*La religion romaine*, 188) believes that Hadrian dedicated the temple to Hermes because of a local cult: as evidence he cites the coins of Amasia (of the time of Severus) and a coin of Amisos minted under Claudius and featuring a caduceus (Babelon-Reinach, *Recueil général* I, 1: Amisos, no. 72). But the caduceus appears at Amisos as a symbol of Asklepius: cf. Imhoof-Blumer, *Kleinasiatische Münzen*, 2, no. 5.

⁹⁰ Arrian, *Periplus Ponti Euxini* 1, 2 (ed. G. Wirth, Leipzig, 1968, 103-4). On Trapezus, its harbour and its temple, see *PWRE* Zweite Reihe VI A 2 (1937), 2214-21. The name of Philesios was probably derived from the attribute of Apollo Didymus, called Φιλήσιος in Miletus. Trapezus was a colony of Sinope, which in its turn was a colony of Miletus (Arrian, *Periplus* 1, 21) and had inherited the cult of Apollo Didymus from the mother-city. However, Philesios at Trapezus was not the god, but a hero, since Arrian calls him a descendant of Hermes: cf. *PWRE* XIX, 2 (1938), 2156-7 and VI A 2 (1937), 2219.

of his own, as sponsor of his building activity in the region, and owed his short-lived status of city-god and *ktistes* to the emperor's policy.⁹¹ Arrian also refers to the altars and Hadrian's statue that stood at Trapezus, near the sea;⁹² thus it seems possible that a cult of Hadrian, *ktistes* of the city, was associated to the cult of Hermes in the new temple.

The second-century fashion of focusing on the origins was not limited to divine founders but included also heroes, especially eponyms of cities. Locally they enjoyed some veneration, centred on a herōon or on some public place, as we have seen at Perge and Pergamum, but their status was not exclusive. In any case, such founders were not connected with the imperial cult.⁹³ But even this rule has its exception. In Erythraea a legend of an eponymous *ktistes*, Erythros, son of the Cretan Rhadamanthys, son of Zeus, is recounted by Diodorus Siculus (*Bibliotheca historica* V, 79) in the first century BCE, and repeated by Pausanias in 173 CE (*Periegesis* VII, 3,4). In 162, Lucius Verus is hailed as νέος Ἐρύθρος. The hero appears on third-century coins with the inscription ΕΡΥΘΡΟΣ ΚΤΙΣΤΗΣ.⁹⁴

The documentary evidence surveyed above presents a rather consistent picture, as follows: I. in several cases, no early foundation myth is attested that can justify the cult of a specific deity as *ktistes*; II. in most cases, even when such

⁹¹ Why then did Hadrian dedicate the temple to Hermes, if he was not worshipped in the area? Hermes had been honoured also by Trajan (*CIL* VI, no. 957; Beaujeu, *La religion romaine*, 87, n. 3, 110); on the other hand, it has been suggested that Hermes on Amisos' silver coins was the deified Antinous (Beaujeu, *ibid.*, 192-3, n. 4); or possibly Hermes-Mercurius, god of commerce and one of the twelve main Roman gods, was chosen as a likely patron for the new harbour. Trapezus issued imperial coins from Trajan to Philip junior, but we have no emissions of Hadrian's time: thus it is possible that the Hermes type was first minted to celebrate the foundation of the temple under Hadrian, though it is documented only under Elagabalus.

⁹² *Periplus* 1, 1. The dedications inscribed on the altar were misspelt 'in the way of barbarians', according to Arrian, and Hadrian's statue, as well as that of Hermes, was badly sculpted; therefore he suggested to the emperor that he send new and worthy ones.

⁹³ At Perge, no fewer than seven heroes, whose statues stood in front of the city gate in Hadrian's time, shared in the rôle of *ktistai*. At Pergamum the eponym Pergamos appeared on coins from Domitian's to Hadrian's time with the epithet *ktistes* (*BMC Mysia*, Pergamum, nos. 224-6; Head, *HN*, 464; cf. *PWRE* XIX [1938], 691-2). The myth of the foundation of the city by Pergamos is told by Pausanias, who mentions an herōon of his mother, Andromache, still existing in Pergamum in his time (*Periegesis* I, 11, 1-2). But Dionysos καθηγεμών received also founder's honour in his own temple: see above, n. 41.

⁹⁴ For Lucius Verus see *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Athenische Abteilung* 17 (1892), 20. For the foundation story see *PWRE* XVI (1909), 584; for coins see Head, *HN*, 579, and Leschhorn, *Gründer* (n. 27), 375, no. 113.

tradition did exist, the *ktistes* motif was introduced in the city cult not earlier than the second century CE; III. the cult of the *ktistes* god appears to be connected with the emperor's cult; IV. if we should judge by the principle of *post hoc, ergo propter hoc*, the neorate and the inauguration of athletic games would seem to be two possible vehicles of the introduction of the *ktistes* element; V. sometimes, e.g. in the case of Amasia, the direct touch of the emperor is distinctly discernible.

The case of Nicaea is rather different. The city was refounded first by Antigonos as Antigonía, then by Lysimachus who named it after his wife. The queen was soon forgotten and a legend, first told by the historian Memnon of Heraklea (first century BCE-first century CE), explained that the city owed its name to a nymph, Nikaia, a virgin huntress who, having rejected Dionysos' wooing, was tricked into drunkenness by the god, then raped while in a drunken stupor; she bore him Satyrus and other children. The city was built by soldiers of Alexander, natives of Nicaea in Phokis, after the conqueror's death.⁹⁵ The tale is retold at length by the Byzantine poet Nonnus, with two main changes: Nicaea bore just one child, a daughter named Telete, and the city was built by Dionysos himself.⁹⁶ Neither source mentions a memorial of the nymph at the site. Although the story is first recorded in the first century, it may well date back to the Hellenistic period, when the literary genre of the ἐρωτικά παθήματα was in fashion.

Dio Chrysostom, in a discourse dating probably from the beginning of the reign of Nerva, calls Dionysos προπάτωρ and Herakles κτίσας of Nicaea.⁹⁷ An inscription in honour of Hadrian on the city gate mentions Dionysos and Herakles as ancestral gods of Nicaea.⁹⁸ Herakles is designed as ΤΟΝ ΚΤΙΣΤΗΝ or ΚΤΙΣΤΗΣ on coins of Nicaea minted under Domitian, Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius;⁹⁹ Dionysos appears on many coins, and is explicitly styled ΤΟΝ ΚΤΙΣΤΗΝ on coins of Domitian, Antoninus Pius, Lucius Verus, Com-

⁹⁵ F. Jacoby, *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* III B, Leiden, 1950, no. 434, 28, 9-11. Lysimachus (ca. 355-282 BCE) was a Macedonian general of Alexander; after the conqueror's death he received the satrapy of Thracia, to which he later added Macedonia, Thessaly and Asia Minor. At Lysimachus' death his dominion passed to Seleucus I.

⁹⁶ Nonnus, *Dionysiaca*, Book XVI. The whole of Book XV is also dedicated to the nymph. For Dionysos as founder of Nicaea, see esp. Book XVI, 403-5.

⁹⁷ Dio, *Or.* 39, 8, and see L. Robert, 'La titulature de Nicée et de Nicomédie: la gloire et la haine', *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 81 (1977), 1-39, esp. pp. 10-1. For the date of this and an earlier discourse on the same subject, *Or.* 38, see *ibid.*, 4, n. 15.

⁹⁸ *IGRom* III, no. 37 and cf. Robert, 'La titulature', 6-11.

⁹⁹ Babelon-Reinach, *Recueil général*, I, 3 (1910): Nicée, nos. 56-8, 108, 159, 161, 162.

modus, Gordian, Valerian and Gallienus.¹⁰⁰ The nymph herself appears on coins of Marcus Aurelius, Caracalla, Valerian and Gallienus: on the last type Nicaea and Dionysos are represented together, accompanied by the legend ΟΙ ΚΤΙΣΤΑΙ.¹⁰¹ So the evidence of the founder's cult is earlier, more explicit and more complete than in the cases illustrated above. But most importantly: the starting point of this cult is probably pinpointed by two coins minted under Nero and representing a wreathed altar encircled by the inscription ΔΙΟΝΥΣΟΥ ΚΤΙΣΤΟΥ ΝΕΙΚΑΙΑ.¹⁰²

In conclusion, two different lines of development of the *ktistes* cult are discernible. One shows the appearance of the *ktistes* motif in the second-third centuries — even if sometimes the cult is rooted in an earlier tradition — often in connection with some kind of imperial intervention, but sometimes as a result of plain fashion. In the second line of development, as we have seen at Nicaea, the tradition, perhaps of Hellenistic origin, is followed by an actual cult by the mid-first century CE. Also in this case an imperial intervention cannot be excluded, but its political implications, if any, are quite different. Fashion does not come into it, but the process is probably related to the cultural sophistication of the city. Which line of development is represented in Scythopolis? *Prima facie*, its case resembles that of Nicaea, but the available documentation is neither rich nor explicit, and the first-century link is missing, or at least uncertain, for Pliny's testimony cannot be taken as evidence. The question must therefore remain open until new evidence can be obtained.

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¹⁰⁰ Ibid., nos. 54-5, 78, 80, 219, 269, 696, 819-20.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., nos. 176-8, 438-41, 819-20; cf. Robert, 'La titulature', 13-5.

¹⁰² Babelon-Reinach, *Recueil général*, nos. 44, 44 bis; for the interpretation of this type, see Robert, 'La titulature', 14.