

IPHIS, FROM AMPHORA STAMP TO SINOPEAN MYTH

Iphis is a rare male name that is present for the moment only in two cities: in Sinope with five occurrences during the Hellenistic period (*LGPN* V.A 233) and in Cos with one occurrence during the imperial period².

In Cos, the name is mentioned on a funerary stele for Iphis son of Apollonius, dated to the 1st century BC or to the imperial period (*IG* XII 4, 3, 2653). Iphis is also attested as a female name, that of an Amazon (Weicker 1916: 2024–2025). This hypothesis is to be excluded for the Sinopean occurrences, since the bearers of this name are all magistrates. The first occurrence seems to be a monetary magistrate whose name appears on coins (fig. 1) dated between 410 and 350 BC (Stancomb 2000: no. 752–758) or between 400 and 370 BC (Waddington *et al.* 1925: 198). It is unlikely that this is an abbreviated name, since the only occurrence of a name beginning in this way is Iphisteidas at Messene in the 3rd century BC (*SEG* XLI, 342, 2). Given the rarity of the name, and the presence of other men named Iphis in Sinope, Iphis was probably the name of the monetary magistrate. Iphis is indeed the name of three *astynomoi* and the patronymic of a fourth mentioned on the amphora stamps (Garlan 2004: 95–98). Iphis 1 is dated by Garlan to group III A (323–312 BC). His devices are a bunch of grapes and an ear of wheat. With the fabricant Philokrates, his name is also spelled Eiphis (Garlan 2004: no. 82), which is probably an orthographic variant, testifying to the evolutions of the writing of sounds with the change from I to EI. Iphis 2 son of Zopyros is dated to group VI A (260–256 BC). His name is also spelled Eiphis with the fabricants Stephanos (Придик 1917: 67, no. 118) and Meniskos (Sztetyło 1983: no. 237). His device is a bunch of grapes. Iphis 3 son of Hestiaios is dated to group VI D (221–212 BC) (fig. 2). He is associated with a mask of Silenus and is spelled Eiphis with the fabricant Agathokles (Garlan 2004: no. 520). This is probably an engraving error. The name of the father of *astynomos* Aischines 5, dated to group V C (265–263 BC), is Iphis. His device is a bunch of grapes. Because of the small number of inscriptions published in Sinope, compared to other cities, it is not surprising that this name is not found in Sinopean epigraphy.

The popularity of the name in Sinope may be surprising at first. But a search among the different occurrences of the name Iphis in mythology (Weicker 1916: 2023–2024) allows us to make a hypothesis. Indeed, Iphis is a companion of Jason, who died in Colchis according to Valerius Flaccus (*Argonautica*, 1.441–443 and 7.423–425). Diodorus of Sicily mentions the Argive Iphitus, son of Sthene-

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lus, brother of Eurystheus, who is killed in Colchis by Aeëtes (4.48.4) during the Argonauts' expedition. The Scholia on Apollonius of Rhodes (*Argonautica*, 4.223 and 228) identifies the two characters. Jason and his men stopped at Sinope, where they were joined by three brothers: Autolycus, Phlogius and Deileon. They are the founding heroes of Sinope and join the Argonauts in their search for the Golden Fleece (Apollonius of Rhodes, *Argonautica*, 2.946–961; Strabo 12.3.11; Valerius Flaccus, *Argonautica*, 5.113–119). Hyginus also mentions this integration in the Argonauts band, but without mentioning Sinope (*Fabulae*, 10.14.30). Even if this meeting between the Argonauts and these brothers belongs to the realm of myth, it has echoes in the local history of Sinope since Strabo attests to the cult of Autolycus, his oracle, and the existence of his statue made by Sthenis of Olynthus who was active during the second half of the 4th century. His statue was removed by Lucius Licinius Lucullus in 70 BC (Plutarch, *Lucullus*, 23.3–5; Appian, *The Mithridatic wars*, 83). A dedication to Phlogius, dated to the 5th or 4th century BC, has been discovered in Sinope (Dana 2007: 511–520; Manoledakis 2010: 566). There even seems to be a civic will to include Sinope in the great myths of the region (the quest for the Golden Fleece, the fight of Heracles against the Amazons) with the creation of the legend linking Autolycus and his brothers on the one hand and the Argonauts on the other hand during the 4th century BC (Barat 2007: 41–42), even if the legend is only known to us through Apollonius of Rhodes in the 3rd century BC. It is likely that a local tradition mentions an important action of Iphis at Sinope on the occasion of the *Argo's* stopover in that city. The name Iphis thus acquired a certain prestige locally which allowed it to spread among the civic elites of the city. Given the chronology of the attestations of the name Iphis in Sinope, it is likely that this legend spread during the end of the 5th century or the beginning of the 4th century BC, which would also have been marked by the development of the legend of Autolycus.

A final question is whether these different individuals called Iphis belong to the same family. Because of the loose chronology of the coins, it is impossible to say whether Iphis 1 and the monetary magistrate are the same. About 60 years separate Iphis 1 and Iphis 2, i.e. two complete generations. They also share a common device, the bunch of grapes, which is common on Sinopean stamps. It is therefore possible that it is a grandfather and grandson. The hypothesis of a filiation link between Aischines 5 son of Iphis and Iphis 1 is difficult to support. Indeed, even if their device is similar, there is a gap of nearly 50 years between the exercise of *astynomia* by the two characters, which is important even if Aischines 5 was the youngest son of Iphis 1. Iphis 3 son of Hestiaios may be a grandson or a grand-cousin of Iphis 2 because of the chronological gap (about 40 years). Even if Silenus is part of the retinue of Dionysus and the mask also refers to Dionysus, it is difficult to be certain about a family link between the two characters. In the present state of the sources, a family relationship between these different characters is possible, but far from certain.

The use of a herophoric name, Iphis, by these members of the civic elite can be understood as a strategy for the use of a locally prestigious name by different families, but also possibly by a single family. In this case, it would be a claim to a mythical ancestor in order to support the family's political strategy. A similar case is present in Mesambria, which, according to a local legend, owes its name to a man named Melsas (Robu 2014: 317–319; Nawotcka 2021: 366–372). However, its hellenised form, Melseon, is attested only in Mesambria with three occurrences: a 3rd century BC benefactor (*IGBulg I²*, 308 *sexies*), a contemporary amphoric magistrate (Stoyanov 2019: 117) and the father of a late 2nd- or early 1st-century BC *strategos*, Polyxenos son of Melseon (*IGBulg V*, 5103), who also settled in Dionysopolis, where he was thanked for his actions (*SEG LX*, 761–762). In Mesambria, this epichoric name is probably used within the same family, in order to claim a link with the founding legend of the city (Nawotcka 2021: 371).

The same situation is probably found in Sinope for these men named Iphis. The analysis of onomastics, based on amphora stamps, has allowed us to highlight the deployment of family strategies to mobilise political capital, linked to a great myth of the Southern Black Sea. The hero Iphis is thus mobilised in the service of a civic, or even family identity construction.

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Fig. 1. Drachm of Iphis, Münzkabinett, Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin, 18279938, Photographs by Bernhard Weisser.
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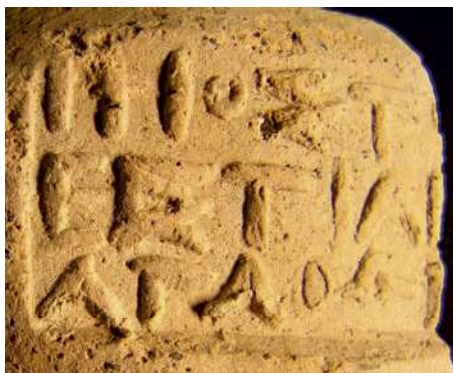


Fig. 2. Stamp of Iphis 3 son of Hestiaios and Agathon, kept in Odessa archaeological museum (Ukraine)
(Матеевич, Самойлова 2017: 58, no. 79)