Gad

I. Introduction. Semitic goddess, epithet, →DDD. G. is the name of an old Semitic goddess or an epithet in the sense of “good fortune” (for a summary on the differing views see CHRISTOF 2001: 109–115). The term gd is attested as early as the 19th cent. as part of the name of Yaggid–Lim, the Amorite founder of the Lim dynasty at Mari (DOSSIN 1950: 3, 9ff). AHLSTRÖM (1983) has suggested the first possible use as a divine name as occurring in an inscription on a rim fragment of a pottery bowl from Lachish Level VI (1200–1150). Through the Phoenician colonization the term G. traveled to the Western world; we thus find it in an inscription from Sardinia (Capo di Pula, Nora) dating to the end of the 4th century/early 3rd century where it is mentioned together with Tanit (tnt pn b'l wgd, “Tanit Face–of–Baal and G.”; AMA-DASI 1967: Sardegna 25, 104). Later an early 2nd century dedication from Ibiza uses the formula: tnt 'dr whgd “Mighty Tanit and the Fortune” (KAI no. 72). G. was particularly equated with Greek Tyche, which is epigraphically attested by a bilingual inscription from Palmyra dating to 140 CE (CIS II, 3927).

II. Iconography. At the present time we can identify G. only through the mural crown, which later becomes one of Tyche’s attributes. The mural crown is of eastern origin; the oldest examples in Mesopotamia date to the late third mill. It particularly flourished in the Neo–Assyrian and Achaemenid periods (METZLER 1994: 77–85; HÖRIG 1979: 182–197). The oldest iconographic evidence of a deity with a mural crown in the West Semitic region, probably of Persian influence, is shown on a late 5th/4th century. amethyst scarab from the necropolis of Sidon: a goddess, most probably of the →Astarte type performing as G.–Tyche (1*), seated on a sphinx throne is facing a female worshippers. Other examples of a mural-crowned goddess stem from Cyprus: a marble female head, probably from Idalion, dating to the second quarter of the 4th century (2*); several limestone and terracotta statuettes from other Cypriot sites dating to the second half of the 4th century (BEER 2003: 373); and a female portrait shown on the obverse of a silver didrachm of Euagoras II of Salamis (361–351) (3*). This type prevailed for some time, passing in the mid–3rd century. under Seleucid domination to the Phoenician coast, and is interpreted as a possible representation of Aphrodite–Astarte (CHRISTOF 2001: 56–58). Indications that this iconographic scheme was used in Phoenicia is also suggested by echoes from the Carthaginian sphere of influence. In connection with the Sardinian inscription mentioned above, the thymiateria from Tharros (4) shaped as a female head with mural crown can possibly be interpreted as a representation of Tanit G. Later important examples dating to the 2nd century. come from Ibiza (MARÍN CEBÁL-LOS 2007: 109–119; FERNÁNDEZ et al. 2007).

III. Conclusion. The iconography confirms the conclusions drawn from the study of written sources: the term G. basically refers to the role of a deity as a protector or benefactor of individuals, tribes, villages, or towns (DDD 340), therefore functioning as an epithet. The only iconographic trace which points to G. as specific deity is the mural crown. It is of eastern origin, and eventually turned into one of Tyche’s attributes. Pre–Hellenistic testimonies are scarce, but are nevertheless significant fore-runners, especially of numismatic representations in the Hellenistic and Roman periods (PROTTUNG 1995; CHRISTOF 2001).

IV. Catalogue

1* Scarab, amethyst, 34 x 27 mm, c. 420–300, Sidon. GUBEL 1987: no. 11; BOARDMAN 2003: 20/X2. Beirut, National Museum of Beirut, 16157
4 Thymiatereion, terracotta, Tharros, 400–200. MOSCATI 1988: pl. 10:38

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