Aegyptus et Pannonia V.

Acta Symposii anno 2008

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Plates ............................................................................................................. 1
Aegyptiaca in the Hungarian National Museum

Exhibition in chamber gallery for the honour of the Vth. Aegyptus et Pannonia symposium


In 2008 the Hungarian National Museum hosted the Vth. Aegyptus et Pannonia symposium. This honourable international conference was greeted by a chamber exhibition, in which the Museum displayed the aegyptiaca housed in its Roman Collection. They originate mainly from Pannonian and Dacian provinces. The presentation took place in the so called Mithras-cave of the Lapidarium, the space of which recall the feeling of a Mithras-sanctuary, thus gave a sacral impact to the place, which displayed the religious objects of the once rival Isis cult. The chamber exhibition consisted of two showcases displaying ancient monuments and four explanatory panels. In between the showcases the head of an unpublished, at least double life-size limestone Serapis statue (Cat. 8) was installed, although its exact provenance is unknown, the Pannonian origin is indubitable.

This was the first occasion, that the rich collection of the Roman objects connected to the Alexandrian religious cults in the Hungarian National Museum were shown together, in a separate unit (Pl. 29). Earlier namely, only some of the most significant works could be seen in the permanent exhibitions – in the companion of other monuments of the „oriental cults” –, and in the exhibition „On the border of East and West”, open from 2002, only the two aes
corinthium vessels from Egyed\textsuperscript{1} were shown concerning this topic.

The Hungarian National Museum collected ancient archaeological objects also from Egypt until 1934, when the Egyptian Collection of the Museum of Fine Arts was established by Ede Mahler\textsuperscript{2}. Until the change in the collection’s profile and the transfer of the Egyptian objects to the Museum of Fine Arts, the Egyptian Collection of the Antiquities Department in the National Museum was held among the most important collections of Hungary in this respect. After the transfer of the objects originating from Egypt, only the Egyptian objects found in the Carpathian Basin, mostly from the Roman period, stayed in the Museum. Their number and quality, however, is still outstanding in Middle-Europe (see below the catalogue of the objects).

All the objects, exhibited in 2008 in the Hungarian National Museum’s chamber exhibition are displayed now in Szombathely, in the permanent exhibition of the Iseum Savariense, opened in 2013, March\textsuperscript{3}.

PANELS

I. THE GRAECO-EGYPTIAN GODS OF ALEXANDRIA (PI. 39)

The members of the ancient Egyptian divine world were grouped into various families in different regions, determined by the local theological conception of the priesthood. Their ceremonies were worshiped in the temple districts. The genealogy of the gods was synchronised with the process of the creation and the order of the given world. As a consequence of the Greek-Macedonian conquest (332 B.C.), the Hellenistic period started in Egypt, and Alexandria became the capital and the cultic centre of the land. In the new religious system, the central role was given to the syncretistic and omnipotent Serapis, to Isis with her general sphere of authority and to their son, Harpocrates. The Hellenised population of the Mediterranean world learnt these gods through Alexandria. During the 1st century B. C. cult centres were

\textsuperscript{1} Latest with further literature: Giumlia-Mair/Mrav 2014, 73-102
\textsuperscript{2} Rezsabek 2010
\textsuperscript{3} See the catalogue of the exhibition: SOSZTARITS/BALÁZS/CSAPLÁROS (eds) 2013
established for their worship in Italy and Rome. Parallel with the Romanization, which moved from the centre to the periphery, Serapis, Isis and Harpocrates became well known and popular in almost all provinces of the Roman Empire. It was one of the last extinct religions of the disintegrating Roman Empire.

FIGURES
I/1. Statue of Isis from the palace of Emperor Hadrian, Tivoli
I/2. Roman copy of the cult statue of Serapis from the Serapeum at Alexandria
I/3. Statue of Harpocrates from Thessaloniki

II. THE CULT PRACTICE (Pl. 40)

During the Roman imperial period, the Alexandrian gods were worshiped in organized form in Rome, Italy and in all the provinces. Anybody could take part in the public cultic practices, but the mystery cult was known only for the initiated members. They were both priests and civil people. The centre of the local religious life was always the temple. The daily cultic activities and the liturgical ceremonies in the temples followed the same rituals all over the empire. The main feast of the religion, the embarking of Isis (ploiaphesia or navigium Isidis) was celebrated at the beginning of spring, more exactly the 5th March. It culminated in the great public procession and the embarking of her ship. The initiated members were convinced to possess the knowledge of secrets by which they could gain an eternal life among the gods.

FIGURES:
II/1. Vespasian’s coin representing the temple of Isis in Rome
II/2. Statue of an Isis priestess from Palermo, Sicily (2nd century A.D.)
II/3. Wall painting representing a ceremony of the cult of Isis from Herculaneum

III. THE GRAECO-EGYPTIAN GODS OF ALEXANDRIA IN PANNONIA (Pl. 41)

The cult of the Alexandrian gods was mediated in Pannonia by Italy. It spread first along the towns of the Amber Road. Its adherents were recruited from the citizens of these towns. In the centre of the Egyptian cults stood at
that time still the benevolent goddess Isis, who helped them in their daily life and dominated the fate. By the 3rd century, however, following the stimulating model of the imperial family, Serapis came into prominence, and ruled the whole world and guaranteed the richness and victory of the Empire. High ranking army officers and state clerks offered him altars already for official reasons, applying official formulas. The monuments of his cult were mostly found at the border zones. During the 3rd century, their cult was more and more overshadowed by various other mystery religions and the Christianity. Their renaissance returned in the symbol-system of the Freemason boxes.

Figures:
III/1. Relief representing Isis-Sothis from the frieze of the Isis sanctuary at Savaria
III/2. Map of Roman Pannonia with the cult relics of the Alexandrian gods

IV. The Relics of the Graeco-Egyptian Gods of Alexandrian Pannonia (Pl. 42)

The most characteristic monuments of the religious adherents of the Alexandrian gods are the statuettes representing Isis, Serapis, Harpocrates and Apis. They are known in large number also from Pannonia. The altars offered to the Egyptian gods, stood originally in temples, which were built in each significant town. The most famous and biggest Iseum in Pannonia stood in Savaria (Szombathely). Its facade with the six columns was decorated by marble reliefs representing the Alexandrian gods. Originally, the bronze vessels found at Egyed (county Vas) might belong to the accessories of this Iseum. The ewer is decorated with the figures of the Alexandrian gods, inlaid in gold. In the Serapis temples in North-Pannonia, there stood monumental cult statues. The double life-sized Serapis statue, exhibited here, or the huge Apis bull statue, found in Esztergom, could be examples of them. The exotic Nile scenes and the Egyptianising objects decorated with hieroglyphic signs were also popular.

Figures:
IV/1. Bronze alloy ewer with gold and silver inlaid decoration, Egyed
IV/2. The reconstructed facade of the Isis sanctuary at Savaria
CATALOGUE OF THE OBJECTS EXHIBITED

1. BRONZE UREI IN PAIR (Pl. 30b.)
Size: H: 3.25 cm, W: 2.4 cm.
Provenience: Komárom-Szőny (Brigetio)
Date: 1-2nd c. AD., or earlier (pharaonic / Hellenistic Egypt)
Inv. No.: MNM RR 113/1884.1.
Description: Two raising cobras in the same height and the same iconography, which probably belonged originally to a fries consisting of raising ureus snakes. On top of their head is the sun disc. The widening hoods of the urei are divided into boxes, which were probably filled with coloured glass.
Publ.: WESZETZKY 1961, 54; WESZETZKY 1989, 57, MRÁV 2013, 106 Kat. 8.34.

2. BRONZE STATUETTE OF OSIRIS (Pl. 30a.)
Size: H: 14.5 cm, W: 4.1 cm.
Provenience: Tevel
Date: 1-3rd c. AD.
Inv. No.: MNM RR 14/1934.1.
Description: Osiris is represented as usual dead, in the form of a mummy. He is manufactured the same way in the case of the Tevel bronze statuette. His divine character is given by the mummy form which hints at his dominium in the Netherworld, while the power symbols, the atef crown on the head, the sceptre and the flagellum in the hands, hint at his royal power.
Publ.: WESZETZKY 1961, pl. XVI (with wrong caption); WESZETZKY 1989, 60, MRÁV/GABRIELI 2011, 222; MRÁV 2013, 101 Kat. 8. 20.

3. SMALL BRONZE STATUETTE OF OSIRIS (Pl. 30c.)
Size: H: 6.5 cm, W: 1.8 cm.
Provenience: Komárom-Szőny (Brigetio)
Date: 2-3rd c. AD.
Inv. No.: MNM RR 113/1884.3.
Description: It is a rough representation of the mummy form Osiris, but the atef crown and the royal emblems – sceptre and flagellum – are still identifiable.
4. BRONZE STATUETTE OF ISIS-FORTUNA (Pl. 31.)  
Size: H: 8,9 cm, W: 5,2 cm.  
Provenience: found in 1820, on the Castle-hill in Esztergom (Solva)  
Date: 2-3rd c. AD.  
Inv. No.: MNM RR 10/1951.109.  
Description: The small bronze statuette of Isis Fortuna is represented in a long chiton knotted below the chest, leaving free her left breast and shoulder. Her back is supplied by two outstretched wings; the right has been broken. She is wearing on her head, turned mildly right, a crown, which consists of a sun disc between the cow horns and lotus flowers. A band of ribbon is falling on both shoulders. She is holding a steering-oar in her right hand, a cornucopia in her left, semi lifted and supported from below. Both are the attributes of Fortuna, as also the wings.  

5. BRONZE BUST OF ISIS-FORTUNA (Pl. 32a.)  
Size: H: 10,1 cm; W: 6,9 cm.  
Provenience: Komárom-Szőny (Brigetio), arrived to the Hungarian National Museum with the Tussla Collection  
Date: 2-3rd c. AD.  
Inv. No.: MNM RR 53.22.115.  
Description: On the top of the head of Isis-Fortuna, one of her attributes with incised palmettes and ornamental foliage-spirals: diadem decorated with a series of balls, and topped by the sun disc placed between the two horns. They are surrounded at both sides by the rearing urei-snakes. The top of the headdress with the feathers is broken. From below the headdress bands of ribbons are undulating onto the shoulders. The face mildly turned left, is framed by wavy hair, divided in the middle. The eyes are stressed by silver inlay. Her cloth is organised in parallel pleats, and knotted in Isis-knot in front of the chest.  
Publ.: PAULOVICS 1942, 219, pl. XXVII.4; WESSETZKY 1961, 53; LAKATOS 1961, 6;
6. BRONZE RING DECORATED WITH THE BUSTS OF ISIS AND SERAPIS (Pl. 32b.)
Size: 12.6 x 2.2 cm.
Provenience: Borcsa (former Torontál County). It is situated today in Belgrade (Beograd-Borča).
Date: 2-3rd c. AD.
Inv. No.: MNM RR 81/1882.1 (Gift of J. Baksa).
Description: The negatives of Isis and Serapis turning toward each other are seen on the oval shaped disc of the signet-ring. Left Serapis in profile, with a modius on the top of his head, right Isis with bunched hair and moon-sickle (?) above her forehead.
Publ.: VEYMIERS 2009, 309 cat. n. V.AAB 4, Pl. XVII/V.AAB 4; MRÁV 2013, 120, Kat. 8.70.

7. CRUSTULUM WITH THE SHAPE OF ISIS FORTUNA (Pl. 32c.)
Size: Diam. 17 cm.
Provenience: Szávaszentdemeter (Sirmium), today Sremska Mitrovica, Serbia
Date: 2-3rd c. AD
Inv. No.: MNM RR 17/1901.2.
Description: The central person of the terracotta negative is a Graeco-Egyptian goddess, just pouring offering into the flame of the fire. She might be identified with Isis-Fortuna, who is holding in her hand the cornucopia and the libation cup. Above the altar is a garland. She is wearing on her head a modius, and a long cloth with decorative golden border. Behind her is a river (perhaps the Sava?), with at least three arched bridges and fence. On the breastwork of the bridges, above the pillars, columns topped with statues are standing. The columns are decorated under the capitals by floating draperies for a feast.
Publ.: ALFÖLDI 1938, 339, pl. LXVIII 3a-b; ALFÖLDI., 1965-1966, 65-66, pl. 12, 1; ARP pl. CXXII; FITZ 1998, 111 n. 221.

8. HEAD OF A DOUBLE LIFE-SIZE LIMESTONE SERAPIS STATUE (Pl. 33.)
Size: H: 34 cm, W: 28 cm.
Provenience: unknown, probably from Pannonia
Date: 2nd half of the 2nd c. – first half of the 3rd c. AD.
Inv. No.: MNM RR 62.282.1.
Description: The face of the god is framed by his wavy hair, and five locks of hair are combed into his forehead. His nose and the modius from the top of his head are broken, his right eye and face are seriously injured.
Publ.: Mráv 2013, 39 Kat. 3.2, Mráv in preparation.

9. BRONZE STATUETTE OF PLUTO-SERAPIS (Pl. 34a.)
Size: H: 12,4 cm, W: 6,5 cm.
Provenience: Torda (Potaissa), today Turda, Romania
Date: 2-3rd c. AD.
Inv. No.: MNM RR 96/1902.2.
Description: Serapis is sitting with the feet standing on the stool in front of the lost throne. His semi-lifted right arm was resting on the head of an already lost Cerberus dog, which had three heads, and guarded the Netherworld. It was separately moulded, but belonged to the composition. The god was holding a sceptre in his left, which is also lost, but the vertical hole going through his hand hints at it, and was wearing a chiton; he had richly undulating beard, hair locks combed into his forehead, and a modius on the top of his head.
Publ.: Hekler 1910, 309-310; Paulovics 1915, 49; Bărbulescu 1994, 164; Ţeposu Marinescu 2000, 159 no 281; Alföldy/Găzdac 2005, 41-42 no. 8 Pl. 5/1-2; Mráv 2013, 102 Kat. 8.25.

10. BRONZE STATUETTE OF PLUTO-SERAPIS (Pl. 34b.)
Size: H: 9,5 cm, W: 3,9 cm.
Provenience: Torda (Potaissa), today Turda, Romania
Date: 2nd c. AD.
Inv. No.: MNM RR 16/1927.1.
Description: The Serapis statuette, moulded separately, is sitting with feet standing on a stool in front of the throne. Once the composition contained also the separately moulded statuette of the three headed, terrible Cerberos dog, the guardian of the Netherworld. Thus the right of Serapis resting on its heads expressed his power over the Netherworld. He was holding originally a sceptre by his lifted left hand. Both of his forearms are broken.
11. BRONZE BUST OF IUPPITER-SERAPIS (Pl. 35a.)
Size: H: 9.6 cm; W: 6.5 cm, Th: 2.8 cm.
Provenience: probably from Italy
Date: 2nd c. to beginning of 3rd c. AD.
Inv. No.: MNM RR 10/1951.110.
Description: The bust represents the merged shape of two gods dominating over the whole word, luppiter and Serapis. The portrait follows the canon of the representation of Serapis in Alexandria. He is topped by a modius decorated with olive tree branches. The locks of hair, contrary to the representations of Iuppiter, fall in the forehead. This syncretistic statuette shows below the bust also the attribute of Iuppiter, the eagle with outstretched wings.

12. BRONZE RING DECORATED WITH THE RAISED BUST OF SERAPIS (Pl. 35b.)
Size: outer diam. 2 cm, at the bust 2.4 cm.
Provenience: unknown, probably Pannonia or Dacia
Date: 2-3rd c. AD.
Inv. No.: MNM RR 54.33.111.
Description: The miniature bust of Serapis is modelled on the disc of the incomplete ring. It follows the usual Hellenistic iconography of the god. He is wearing a chiton, the pleats of which are running into a wedge above the chest. On top of the head is the modius surrounded by a wreath. His forehead is modelled with the five separate locks of hair. Characteristic is the round eye socket and the round modelling of the lips in the field bordered by the moustache and the beard – on the excellently fashioned trapezoidal face. The ring was probably a souvenir manufactured for the pilgrims in his city, Alexandria.

13. BRONZE STATUETTE OF THE APIS BULL (Pl. 35c.)
Size: H: 8.35 cm, W: 7.8 cm.
Provenience: Pusztaszabolcs
Date: 2-3rd c. AD.
Inv. No.: MNM RR 6/1873.80.
Description: The bull is striding with his left fore-leg, lifting his head high and turned a bit. Below his chin, the flap is stressed. The tail is curling back on his back. The aim of the round hole on his side is unknown.

14. BRONZE BULL STATUETTE (Pl. 36a)
Size: H: 15,4 cm, W: 12,5 cm.
Provenience: Orsova (Mehedinți County, Romania)
Date: 1-2nd c. AD.
Inv. No.: MNM RR 4/1937.
Description: The animal is represented as a typical Roman bull with high lifted, mildly turned head, and richly rippled flap under the chin. The tail is curling onto the right side. His right fore-leg is modelled in striding position. All four legs are broken in various degrees.
Publ.: MIHÁLIK 1908, 15-16, picture 36; PAULOVICS 1916, 193, picture 3; KATTER-SIBBES 1975, 42 no. 366; ALFÖLDY/GÁZDAC 2005, 44-45 no. 11, pl. 9/3-4, MRÁV 2013, 105 Kat. 8.31.

15. BRONZE STATUETTE OF APIS (Pl. 36b)
Size: H: 9,6 cm, W: 7 cm.
Provenience: Szombathely or its neighbourhood
Date: 2-3rd c. AD.
Inv. No.: MNM RR 4/1926.
Description: Striding bull statuette with high lifted, mildly turned head. The richly pleated flap is falling on both sides from the neck edge. This phenomenon is characteristic for the Roman bull representations. On the top of his head, between the two horns a drill can be discerned, in which the attribute of Apis, the moon sickle could be fitted. A smaller, round hole was also drilled toward the right ear, which served to prevent the emblem of turning away. Its tail is curved high and turning onto his back. The horns are broken as well as the legs under the knee.
Publ.: HEKLER 1909, 202; PAULOVICS 1927, 89-90, picture 26; WESSETZKY 1961,
16. Egyptian faience statuette of Harpocrates sitting on lotus bundle (Pl. 37a)

Size: H: 5.1 cm, W: 2.3 cm.
Provenience: unknown
Date: Hellenistic or Roman imperial
Inv. No.: MNM RR 79.3.1.
Description: A nude Harpocrates is crouching on a stylised bundle of lotus. The right arm is broken. Below a hole, which made probably possible the fastening onto a rod.
Publ.: Mráv 2013, 210 Kat. 17.8.

17. Bust of a Boy with Egyptian hairdress (Pl. 37b)

Size: H: 9.9 cm; W: 6.8 cm.
Provenience: Dunaújváros (Intercisa)
Date: 2-3rd c. AD.
Inv. No.: MNM RR 97/1909.120.
Description: Bust of a youth or a child with Egyptian or Egyptianizing hairdress. The shape of the lips recall to the smile of the timeless archaic sculptures of Apollon. The incarnat of the upper body is characterised by the complete lack of any anatomical detail. No trace of clothes can be detected on the statuette. The bulging button of the neck and the amorf shape of the bust make the impression that the whole figure originally might be in use as a marionette with fully covered body. The figure was possibly used during a liturgical event, maybe a mysterium. It is impossible to identify it as the figure of a god, at the very most a priest-apprentice. Similar statuettes are known in the province without provenience and from Aquincum respectively. On the bottom of the statuette found in the latter site a piece of console or base was also attached.
Publ.: Barkóczi et alii 1954, 67 Pl. XXIV/13; Szabó 2013, 208 Kat. 17.2.

18. Bronze statuette of a Horus-falcon (Pl. 39c)

Size: H: 3.7 cm, L: cm, W: 1.4 cm.
Provenience: Dunaújváros (Intercisa)
Date: probably Roman imperial
Inv. No.: MNM RR 41/1920.7.
Description: Small falcon statuette of Horus with traces of the broken crown on top of the head. The feathers of the bird were rendered by incisions into the wax model. The falcon is standing with closed wings, on a low and arched base.
Publ.: Mráv 2013, 104 Kat. 8.28.

19. ALEXANDRIAN TRIAD ON A BRONZE MOUNTING (Pl. 38a.)
Size: H: 3,7 cm; W: 3,7 cm.
Provenience: Várhe (Colonia Ulpia Sarmizegetusa), today Sarmizegetusa, Romania
Date: 2nd c. AD.
Inv. No.: MNM RR 1/1926 (arrived from the Mauthner Collection to the Museum).
Description: The three members of the Alexandrian divine family are standing on a simple base, and have the same height. Isis is holding in her hand a palm-branch, while the child Harpocrates, wearing the double crown of Egypt, is leaning against a tree trunk, on which a snake is winding. He is holding a cornucopia. Serapis has in his right a patera, and he was holding a sceptre in his lifted left, which has been broken.
Publ.: Paulovics 1927, 90; Katter-Sibbes/Vermaseren 1973, 344 no. 916; Tran Tam Tinh 1983, 106 no. IB. 1 fig. 29; LIMC VII, 1, 682 no. 160; Alföldy/Găzdac 2005, 43-44 no. 9 pl. 4/4-5, Mráv 2013, 106 Kat. 8.33.

20. STANDING STATUETTE OF HARPOCRATES (Pl. 38b.)
Size: H: 4,7 cm, W: 2 cm.
Provenience: supposedly Gyomaendrőd
Date: 2-3rd c. AD
Inv. No.: MNM RR 5/1926.
Description: Harpocrates child represented without any cloth is standing on a low, rectangular base. He is holding in his left hand a cornucopia, supported from below by a tree trunk. On top of his small, mildly rightward leaned head is a pointed crown. His lock of hair is winding beside the right ear onto the shoulder. A bird is modelled beside his right leg.
21. **Sitting statuette of Harpocrates (Pl. 38c)**
Size: H: 5,5 cm, W: 4,1 cm.
Provenience: unknown
Date: 1-2nd c. AD
Inv. No.: MNM RR 54.18.18.
Description: Harpocrates child is sitting in a long and loose shirt, holding with his right arm a cornucopia, and lifting his left forefinger to his lips. His head is shaven, but one long braided lock of hair, which is falling on his left shoulder.
Publ.: HOFFMANN 1914, 276, MRÁV 2013, 104 Kat. 8.27.

22. **Standing statuette of Harpocrates (Pl. 38d)**
Size: H: 5,3 cm, W: 2 cm.
Provenience: unknown
Date: 1-3rd c. AD
Inv. No.: MNM RR 54.18.19.
Description: Harpocrates child is standing nude, having short legs but elongated body. He is holding a cornucopia in his left hand, and lifting his right forefinger to the front of his lips. His wavy hair reaches his shoulders. The characteristic braid of his hairdress is, however, here missing. The right foot is broken.

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ABBREVIATIONS and BIBLIOGRAPHY


MILLER 1825 = Miller F., Cimeliotheca Musei Nationalis Hungarici, Pestini 1825.


MRÁV in preparation = Mráv Zs., Monumentális szobrászati alkotások az alexandiai istenek pannoniai szentélyeiben (Monumental statues in the sanctuaries of the Alexandrian gods in Pannonian provinces).


PAULOVICS 1917 = Paulovics I., Hellenisztikus egyiptomi emlékek Magyarországon. Budapest 1917.

2a. Bronze urei in pair, Cat. No. 1. (MNM RR 113.1884.1)

2b. Bronze statuette of Osiris from Tevel, Cat. No. 2. (MNM RR 14.1934.1)

2c. Bronze statuette of Osiris from Brigetio, Cat. No. 3. (MNM RR 113.1884.3)

3. Bronze statuette of Isis-Fortuna, Cat. No. 4. MNM RR 10.1951.109
4a. Bronze bust of Isis-Fortuna, Cat. No. 5. (NM RR 53.22.115)

4b. Bronze ring decorated with the busts of Isis and Sarapis, Cat. No. 6. (NM RR 81.1882.1)

4c. Crustulum with the shape of Isis Fortuna, Cat. No. 7. (NM RR 81.1882.1)

5. Head of a double life-size limestone Sarapis statue, Cat. No. 8. (NM RR 62.282.1)
6a. Bronze statuette of Pluto-Sarapis, Cat. No. 9. (MNM RR 96.1902.2)

6b. Bronze statuette of Pluto-Sarapis, Cat. No. 10. (MNM RR 16.1927.1)

7a. Bronze bust of Iuppiter-Sarapis, Cat. No. 11. (MNM RR 10.1951.110)

7b. Bronze ring decorated with the raised bust of Sarapis, Cat. No. 12. (MNM RR 54.33.111)

7c. Bronze statuette of the Apis bull, Cat. No. 13. (MNM RR 6.1873.80)

8b. Cat. No. 15. (MNM RR 4.1926)

9a. Egyptian faience statuette of Harpocrates sitting on lotus bundle, Cat. No. 16. (MNM RR 79.3.1_72)

9b. Cat. No. 17. (MNM RR 97.1909.120)

9c. Bronze statuette of a Horus-falcon Cat. No. 18. (MNM RR 41.1920.7)
10a. Alexandrian triad on a bronze mounting, Cat. No. 19. (MNM RR 1.1926)  
10b. Standing statuette of Harpocrates, Cat. No. 20. (MNM RR 5.1926)  
10c. Sitting statuette of Harpocrates, Cat. No. 21. (MNM RR 54.18.18)  
10d. Standing statuette of Harpocrates, Cat. No. 22. (MNM RR 54.18.19)  

12. Panel II: The cult practice

During the Roman imperial period, the Alexandrian gods were worshipped in an organized form in Rome, Italy, and in all the provinces. Anyone could take part in the public cultic practices, but the mystery cult was known only for the initiated members. They were both priests and civil people. The center of the local religious life was always the temple. The daily cultic activities and the liturgical ceremonies in the temples followed the same rituals all over the empire. The main feast of the religion, the embarking of Isis (flood season or naosium Isis), was celebrated at the beginning of spring, more exactly the 5th March. It culminated in the great public procession and the embarking of Isis ship. The initiated members were convinced to possess a knowledge of such secrets by which they could gain an eternal life among the gods.


The cult of the Alexandrian gods was established in Pannonia by Italy. It spread first along the towns of the Amber Road. Its adherents were recruited from the citizens of these towns. In the center of the Egyptian cult stood at that time still the benevolent goddess Isis, who helped them in their daily life and dominated the fate. For the 3rd century, however, following the stimulating model of the imperial family, Serapis came into prominence, who ruled the whole world and guaranteed the richness and victory of the Empire. High ranking army officers and state clerks offered him altars already for official reasons, applying official formulas. The monuments of his cult were mostly found at the border zones. During the 3rd century, their cult was more and more overshadowed by various other mystery religions and the Christianity. Their renaissance returned in the symbol-system of the Freemason boxes.
Panels of the chamber exhibition, HNM 2008


The most characteristic monuments of the religious adherents of the Alexandrian gods are the statues representing Isis, Sarapis, Harpoocrates and Apis. They are known in large number also from Pannonia. The altars offered to the Egyptian gods, st owed originally in temples, which were built in each significant town. The most famous and biggest Is isum in Pannonia stood in Sarania (Somogyhely). Its six columned façade was decorated by marble reliefs representing the Alexandrian gods. Originally, the bronze vessels found at Egerd (County Vas) decorated with the figures of the Alexandrian gods, inlaid in gold. In the Sarapis temples in North-Pannonia, there stood monumental cult statues. The double life-sized Sarapis statue, exhibited here, or the huge Apis bull statue, which was found in Esztergom, could be examples of them. The Nile scenes and the egyptianising objects decorated with hieroglyphic signs were also popular.