

The background of the top half of the cover is a photograph of an ancient stone building. It features a row of columns supporting an upper level with intricate carvings and statues. The foreground shows a cobblestone-paved area.

OXFORD

Edited by BEATE DIGNAS & R. R. R. SMITH

HISTORICAL &
RELIGIOUS MEMORY
in the Ancient World

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IN THE ANCIENT WORLD

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Historical and Religious Memory in the Ancient World

EDITED BY
BEATE DIGNAS AND R.R.R. SMITH

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Preface

Shifting kinds of memory stand at the centre of the contemporary study of the history and religion of the ancient world—the preservation of the past, its selection and manipulation for new purposes, the creation of false histories, the obliteration of old belief, the manufacture of new belief against all the odds. The study of memory, like that of representation or cultural interaction, has become one of the powerful alternatives to earlier concerns with what might really be true and what really happened, without yielding to uninteresting subjectivism. This book has a twofold purpose: it gathers varied research papers by a group of scholars who share this broad methodological and epistemological outlook, and at the same time it celebrates the work of a remarkable historian, Simon Price, whose publications and teaching did so much to show a generation how this different kind of history can be written—how a bone-crushing command of ancient texts, things, and ‘facts’ can be allied to a broad interpretive culture history of phenomena such as dreams, cities, sacrifice, and the worship of emperors.

The book grew from papers given at ‘A day in honour of Simon Price’ at the Ioannou Centre of Classical and Byzantine Studies in Oxford on 22 September 2008 on the occasion of Simon’s retirement from his position as Fellow and Tutor in Ancient History at Lady Margaret Hall. The day symposium was generously funded by Oxford University’s Faculty of Classics. Some papers were added by colleagues who were not able to be present then. Since Price had earlier written a characteristically wide-ranging and hard-hitting paper on the role of memory in ancient Greece that encompasses much of our chosen theme, we decided with his permission to include this paper near the start of the volume (Chapter 2), to set the scene. The other papers were all written for this volume and intersect inside the broad theme of constructing the past in order to negotiate better the present, in different periods, places, and contexts. Its basic idea was formed by the editors in close collaboration with Price. We would like to thank Henry Dicks and Alexandre Mitchell for translations of the French

texts of Chapters 5 and 8 (Van Andringa and Scheid) and Olympia Bobou for making the bibliographies consistent. We would also like to thank Hilary O'Shea and the Delegates of Oxford University Press warmly for their immediate consent to publish this volume.

B.D.

R.R.R.S.

August 2011

Simon Price 1954–2011

Simon Price was one of the foremost ancient historians of his generation, pioneering a distinctive approach to the ancient Greek and Roman world that takes big themes and ideas—such as religious practice, imperial power, dream literature, comparative city-sizes—and studies their written and material remains in an even-handed integrated manner. His ideas are fresh, modern, and stimulating, and his rich body of published results will last not least because they are well-judged and accessibly written.

Price was a student at Queen's College, Oxford, then W.H.D. Rouse Research Fellow at Christ's College, Cambridge, and from 1981 to 2008 he was a Lecturer at the University of Oxford, where he taught Greek and Roman History at Lady Margaret Hall and St Hugh's College. The subject of his doctoral thesis, the worship of the Roman emperor in Asia Minor, became *Rituals and Power* (1984), a book that still inspires discussion and that has permanently changed our understanding of the cult of rulers. He wrote or co-wrote books on a wide range of topics for ancient religion and ancient history, including: *Religions of Rome* (1998), *Religions of the Ancient Greeks* (1999), and *The Birth of Classical Europe: A History from Troy to Augustine* (2010). He was one of the first ancient historians to use archaeology and art history effectively in his work, and he became a major shaping force in an important archaeological field project, the Sphakia Survey, which covers 5000 years of settlement history in western Crete. He collaborated closely in this project with Lucia Nixon, whose contribution to this book gives a glimpse of the range of themes and challenges involved.

Price had a big and beneficial influence on the direction of ancient history in the UK and many here and abroad will remember his editorial impact in the *Journal of Roman Studies* from 1989 to 2008 (first as Review Editor, then as Editor, then as Chairman of the Editorial Committee). In his university Price was well known as a meticulous, kind, and generous colleague. His former research students remember him as the best supervisor they could have had.

Many cohorts of undergraduates studying Classics, Ancient and Modern History, and Classical Archaeology and Ancient History benefited from a caring teacher and lecturer who was always able to see and explain the bigger picture and to make complicated things clear and interesting. He ran memorable seminars with a tight focus on the matter and the ideas. And he set up and organized for several years a fruitful Oxford exchange with Princeton University that continues today and would not exist without his original initiative.

The range of Price's published work is impressive, from Bronze Age settlement patterns to Christian apologetics, from the meaning of pagan sacrifice to the theme of historical and religious memory, the subject of this book. His writing is marked by an enviable clarity and sharpness and is driven by ideas that open up large and important new perspectives. When he was forced by ill-health to step down from his teaching position in the university, Price was still hard at work, completing projects and embarking on new ones. He recently published (with John North), *The Religious History of the Roman Empire: Pagans, Jews, and Christians* (2011).

Publications of Simon Price

Books

- 2011 *The Religious History of the Roman Empire: Pagans, Jews, and Christians*, Oxford Readings in Classical Studies, ed. with John North. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- 2010 *The Birth of Classical Europe: A History from Troy to Augustine*, The Penguin History of Europe 1, with Peter Thonemann. London: Allen Lane. [Dutch translation 2011.]
- 2003 *Oxford Dictionary of Classical Myth and Religion*, ed. with E. Kearns. Oxford: Oxford University Press. [Oxford Selection and re-edition of entries from *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, with some new material; pb edn 2004; Japanese translation forthcoming.]
- 2002 *Representations of Empire: Rome and the Mediterranean World*, ed. with A.K. Bowman, H.M. Cotton and M. Goodman. Oxford: The British Academy.
- 1999a *Religions of the Ancient Greeks*. Cambridge: University Press. [Italian translation (2002): *Le religioni dei greci*. Bologna: Il Mulino.]
- 1999b *Apologetics in the Roman Empire*, ed. with M. Edwards and M. Goodman. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- 1998 *Religions of Rome* (2 vols), with Mary Beard and John North. Cambridge: University Press. [French translation of Vol. 1, 2006: *Religions de Rome*. Paris: Picard.]
- 1990 *The Greek City: From Homer to Alexander*, ed. with O. Murray. Oxford: Clarendon Press. [French translation 1992: *La cité grecque d'Homère à Alexandre*. Paris: La Découverte; Greek translation 2007: *Η αρχαία ελληνική πόλις*. Athens: Patakis.]
- 1987 *Rituals of Royalty: Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies*, ed. with D. Cannadine. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- 1984 *Rituals and Power: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor*. Cambridge: University Press. [Turkish translation 2004: *Ritüel ve İktidar*. Ankara: Imge Kitabevi.]

Websites

- 2002 'The Archaeology of Crete', with L. Nixon. This site was commissioned by the Oxford–Stanford–Yale Alliance for alumni of the three universities; a version is available at <http://crete.classics.ox.ac.uk>.

- 2000 'The Sphakia Survey: Internet Edition', with L. Nixon, J. Moody, and O. Rackham. <http://sphakia.classics.ox.ac.uk>, accessed 21 June 2011.

Video

- 1995 *The Sphakia Survey (Greece)*, with Lucia Nixon and Charles Beesley [a 50-minute educational videotape, also shown twice on Greek national TV, with subtitles. Now available also as DVD: <http://sphakia.classics.ox.ac.uk/video.html>]

Series

- 2000– Joint editor (with R.R.R. Smith, Oliver Taplin, Tim Whitmarsh, and Peter Thonemann) of series of books for OUP entitled 'Ancient Culture and Representation'. The first volumes appeared in 2003.

Articles

- 2011 'Estimating Ancient Greek Populations: The Evidence of Field Survey', in A.K. Bowman and A. Wilson (eds.), *Settlement, Urbanization and Population*, Oxford Studies in the Roman Economy 2. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- 2010a 'The Road to *Conversion*: The Life and Work of A.D. Nock', *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, 105: 319–39.
- 2010b with O. Rackham, J. Moody, and L. Nixon, 'Some field systems in Crete', in O. Krzyszkowska (ed.), *Cretan Offerings. Studies in Honour of Peter Warren*, BSA Studies 18. London: British School at Athens, 269–84.
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- 2008a 'Memory and ancient Greece', in A. Holm Rasmussen and Susanne William Rasmussen (eds.), *Religion and Society. Rituals, Resources and Identity in the Ancient Graeco-Roman World. The BOMOS-Conferences 2002–2005* (Analecta Romana Instituti Danici, Supplementum 40). Rome: Quasar, 2008, 165–76. [Version at <http://ora.ouls.ox.ac.uk>, accessed 21 June 2011.]
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- 2005c 'Roman religion: The imperial period', in L. Jones (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd edn, vol. 10. Detroit and London: Macmillan.
- 2004a 'The future of dreams: From Freud to Artemidorus', in R. Osborne (ed.), *Studies in Ancient Greek and Roman Society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 226–59 [revised version of 1986b, also incorporating some material from 1992].
- 2004b Entries (Religious Personnel: Greece; Religion and Politics: Greece; Sacrifice, Offerings and Votives: Rome), in S. Iles Johnston (ed.), *Religions of the Ancient World*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- 2004c 'Response', in R. A. Horsley (ed.), *Paul and the Roman Imperial Order*. Harrisburg: Trinity Press, 175–83.
- 2004d with Lucia Nixon, 'Paper, video, internet: New technologies for research and teaching in archaeology: the Sphakia Survey', in S. Lee (ed.), *Designing and Developing for the Disciplines (Special Issue)*, *Journal of Interactive Media in Education* 2004 (11). ISSN: 1365–893X [<http://jime.open.ac.uk/jime/issue/view/32>, accessed 21 June 2011.]
- 2003a 'Religions of Rome: homogeneity and diversity', *Pegasus* 46, 5–16.
- 2003b 'Homogénéité et diversité dans les religions à Rome', *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* 5, 180–97 [available at <http://ora.ouls.ox.ac.uk>]; English translation in *The Religious History of the Roman Empire: Pagans, Jews, and Christians*, ed. with John North. Oxford: Oxford University Press (2011), 253–75.]
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- 2001b with L. Nixon, 'The Sphakia Survey website: research, teaching and the wider public', *Archaeological Computing Newsletter* 57: 11–17.

- 2001c Entries for *Der Neue Pauly* (Processions (Greek and Roman); Ptolemaia; Rhomaea; Roma; Taurobolium).
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- 1999 'Latin Christian apologists: Minucius Felix, Tertullian, Cyprian', in M. Edwards, M. Goodman, and S. Price (eds.), *Apologetics in the Roman Empire: Pagans, Jews and Christians*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 105–29.
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- 1982 ‘Aphrodite’s city in Turkey’, *Omnibus* 4, 1–3.
- 1980 ‘Between man and god: sacrifice in the Roman imperial cult’, *Journal of Roman Studies* 70, 28–43.

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Contributors

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Beate Dignas is Fellow and Tutor in Ancient History at Somerville College, Oxford. Her research has focused on Greek religion and epigraphy, in particular in the Hellenistic period. She is also interested in relations between the Roman empire and its eastern neighbours in late antiquity. Her most recent book, which she co-edited with Kai Trampedach, is *Practitioners of the Divine: Greek Priests and Religious Officials from Homer to Heliodorus* (HUP 2008).

Martin Goodman is Professor of Jewish Studies at Oxford, Fellow of Wolfson College and Fellow of the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies. He has written widely on both Jewish and Roman history. Among his recent books are *Rome and Jerusalem* (2007), *Judaism in the Roman World* (2007), and (edited with George H. van Kooten and Jacques T.A.G.M. van Ruiten) *Abraham, the Nations, and the Hagarites: Jewish, Christian, and Islamic perspectives on kinship with Abraham* (2010).

Richard Gordon studied Classics at Jesus College, Cambridge (1962–6), and was then able as a doctoral student to attend classes by Louis Robert, Georg Pflaum, J.-P. Vernant, and P. Vidal-Naquet at the École Pratique in Paris in 1967–8. He spent a year as Research Fellow at Downing College, and then became a lecturer, later senior lecturer in Ancient Civilization at the University of East Anglia, Norwich (1970–87). He then became a private scholar in Germany, and since 2007 has been Honorary Professor of the History of Religions in Antiquity at the University of Erfurt. He has published mainly in the field of Graeco-Roman religion and magical practice.

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R.R.R. Smith is Lincoln Professor of Classical Archaeology and Art at Oxford University and Director of the New York University Excavations at Aphrodisias in Turkey. His research interests are the art and visual cultures of the ancient Mediterranean world and their relationship with the social and political culture of Greek and Roman cities. Recent books include: *Roman Portrait Sculpture from Aphrodisias* (Mainz, Philipp von Zabern 2006) and *Aphrodisias Papers 4: New Research on the City and its Monuments* (JRA Supplement 70; Providence, RI 2008), edited with C. Ratté. He is currently completing a catalogue of the casts of Greek and Roman sculpture in the Cast Gallery of the Ashmolean Museum and a publication of the reliefs from the Sebasteion at Aphrodisias.

Peter Thonemann teaches Ancient History at Wadham College, Oxford. Recent publications include *The Birth of Classical Europe* (2010, with Simon Price) and *The Maeander Valley* (2011).

William Van Andringa is Professor of Ancient History at the University of Lille 3 (France). He is especially interested in the evolution of provincial religions in the western part of the Roman empire. Works in this field include *La religion en Gaule romaine* (2002), the edition of *Archéologie des sanctuaires en Gaule romaine* (2000), and *Sacrifices, marché de la viande et pratiques alimentaires dans les cités du monde romain* (2007). Another major interest is the religions in Roman Pompeii, as seen in *Quotidien des dieux et des hommes: La vie religieuse dans les cités du Vésuve à l'époque romaine* (2009) and the recent excavations conducted at the necropolis of Porta Nocera and in the sanctuary of Fortuna Augusta.

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Introduction

Beate Dignas and R.R.R. Smith

The origin and texture of this book do not need many words of explanation. It is inspired by and celebrates the work of Simon Price, and his wide-ranging interest in the role of religious and historical memory in ancient societies has shaped its theme. Our approach is interdisciplinary: this is in the spirit of Price's sophisticated body of research, and serves to explore fully the possibilities of a challenging subject.

Ancient history—social, religious, and cultural—is made up of a dense web of 'memory layers', or 'networks of memories', as Price calls them. The papers presented here investigate how such layers are represented and refracted in different contexts of the written and material remains of antiquity. Moreover—and this is where much of the fascination of the topic lies—the processes of creating memory and of forgetting are continuous: with beginnings in the distant pasts of ancient communities they continue in the richly documented later times in which our most articulate ancient evidence lies. In another way, they continue in contemporary scholarship that draws on selected evidence and a variety of contrasting representations.

Before we can ask how memory is fashioned, distorted, preserved, or erased—and with what consequences for the historical process—and how memory intersects with and shapes religious traditions and cultural identities, we need to think about the relationship between 'memory' and 'history' as such. This task is undertaken in Price's stimulating paper on 'Memory in Ancient Greece' (Chapter 2).¹ It

¹ A version of this paper was published in A.H. Rasmussen and S. William Rasmussen (eds.), *Religion and Society. Rituals, Resources and Identity in the Ancient Greco-Roman World. The BOMOS-Conferences 2002–2005* (2008), 165–76.

presides over and links the contributions. Price sees the relationship between memory and history as a productive one, not least because memory of the past is about the self-understanding of past peoples, which brings a much closer understanding of their world. The key, however, to understanding the relationship is to establish the contexts in which memories are constructed. Price distinguishes four such contexts: (a) objects and representations, (b) places, (c) ritual behaviour and associated myths, and (d) textual narratives. Underlying all four is a long-standing Greek desire to link the present to the remote past. Objects from the past, such as dedications, monuments, or the iconography of temple decoration, are of high significance in this task. Likewise, location and close physical proximity to signifiers of the past establish the link; thirdly, associating a panhellenic past and its protagonists with the self through local versions of myths became a standard way of raising the profile of places small and large. And, finally, textual narratives offer themselves as the framework for and articulation of memories of the past, and here genealogies in the widest sense, from Hesiod's *Theogony* to the Parian Chronicle, are shown to provide telling material.

The themes of the papers in this volume represent examples of Price's four contexts. At the same time, they also illustrate their overlap and simultaneous operation. Price reminds us that thinking about processes of memory needs to include the process of forgetting. This theme is also evident in the papers and forms the specific focus of Part III, 'Commemorating and erasing the past'.

Part I, 'Religious pasts and religious present', studies the varied roles of memory in the expression of the self. These can be active or passive, or rather conscious or unconscious, and careful investigation is needed to illuminate aspects of self-representation in a constantly evolving process. John North's 'Sappho Underground' (Chapter 3) illustrates this point well. The paradoxical combination of a building that has the appearance of a Christian basilica with a pagan set of symbols, above all the fact that the ceiling of the apse is dominated by Sappho's Leap from the White Rocks of Leucas, has provoked a wide range of interpretations. Regardless of their differences, however, many interpretations reflect a rather simplified notion of cultural memory. North argues that the scenes represented cannot be summarized as an expression of ideas about the afterlife; the figures and scenes and their subtle inter-relations are complicated and deeply reflected upon. The language of visual myth and its literary correlatives are employed in a sophisticated and

multi-layered network of cultural memories. What on first sight appears as iconographic decoration that highlights *one* idea, upon closer study becomes a narrative employed to show a past relevant to the present in *more* than one dimension.

While the owners and potential users of the Underground Basilica were not consciously concerned with the shaping of memory, Martin Goodman's study of memory and its uses in Judaism and Christianity focuses on the manipulation of memory (Chapter 4). While John North reminds us of the complexity and specificity of the memories at stake, we see here, in contrast, how 'vague memories' could deliberately be filled with specificity in order to use a religious past for the needs of a religious present. When we consider that Jews and Christians referred to the biblical past as one of divine authority that was not to be changed—very different from a pagan context in which the reworking of myths was an accepted part of literary and local ambitions—it is surprising to see such extensive innovation. Changes were disguised by reinterpreting the past and by selective forgetting. To put this in Simon Price's words, 'forgetting prevents social paralysis', and 'serves social needs'. Goodman exemplifies some interesting general ideas on these techniques of dealing with the past by looking at the portrayal of Abraham in sources of the early imperial period. In portraying Abraham as the ancestor to the gentile Christian community, Paul's letter to the Galatians worked from a vague memory of Abraham as a wise man of olden times but created a powerful vehicle for the Christian mission and for a celebrated part of the Christian past: if Christians are the children of Abraham, god's call to seek and appropriate the holy land becomes their own.

William Van Andringa's contribution explores *civic* memory and brings us back to the relationship between 'memory' and 'history' (Chapter 5). Indeed, although the two are not the same thing, they both involve heavily constructed narratives shaped by coincidence, conscious decision and selection, and the passing of time. It may be a matter of perspective rather than substance that distinguishes the study of the past from the study of memory. Van Andringa looks at a fascinating medium through which memories of the past can be traced: the statues of gods and their ensembles in the temples of Pompeii. He shows (in a way similar to John North) that the present is a web of singular memories—here historical rather than cultural, communal rather than individual—which taken all together form new identities and reinterpret the religious choices of the past. Van

Andringa also shows what students of Greco-Roman religion should be aware of but tend to forget: statues of gods and their relationships, in Pompeii and elsewhere, make sense only if one adopts and accepts an entirely local perspective. In this way, the communal memory of the city is brought to life, and sense is given to the religious infrastructure of places. The importance of local context, underlined here by Van Andringa, is also a theme in Simon Price's 'Memory and Ancient Greece' (and in Price's work in general), and it is something to be considered especially in relation to memories in the mythical and religious spheres.

Part II addresses religious and ethnic identities, and the difficulties in discerning between actual memory and the creation of memory for specific, often political, purposes. There is often a temptation to favour the one over the other. Beate Dignas challenges a familiar showcase example of memory creation in Attalid cultural policies (Chapter 6). While acknowledging that the Attalid kings worked hard at matching their rivals' claims to divine descent and a long cultural tradition, the paper questions the idea that the identities and religious infrastructure of Attalid Pergamon were void of any genuine historical and religious memory. Indeed, many initiatives of the Attalid kings can be well explained through the four contexts set out by Simon Price: the represented antiquity of Pergamene monuments, the highlighting of a Mysian past, the close mythical link of the ruling dynasty with Telephos and his Arcadian origins, and the associated textual accounts of this myth. It is too easy to label these phenomena as the creation of 'false' memory that lacks any historical background. The manipulation of memory can actually be based on and go hand in hand with historical memory. With regard to the modern scholar's task, we must neither deny the area a past nor try to reconstruct a Pergamene past on the basis of mythological narratives but expect and try to reconstruct both elements. Indeed, the point made by Price that Greeks had a desire to link the present to the remote past applies not only to Attalid rulers but also to those who governed the area before them. If, and it does look that way, the construction of memory at Pergamon has a lot to do with a *Greek* identity, it should be rewarding to explore the interests and self-representation of earlier local dynasts in the region, the Demaratids and the Gongylids, and we certainly have to expect the same complexity and dynamics as when looking at the Attalid period. Moreover, while the construction of memory must have strongly shaped the historical process, the specific

cultural and ethnic make-up of the area also mattered. History and memory are indeed not the same.

Richard Gordon looks at very different agents and a specific body of evidence, magical papyri from Egypt (Chapter 7). He shares Dignas's interest however in the question of 'genuine' or 'false' memory, and warns against always suspecting (deliberate) manipulation of the truth. It is remarkable how much the authors of recipes in the magical papyri attempted to enforce the authority of their texts by appealing to what they claimed to be ancient Egyptian practice. As a strategy, it sounds plausible and has many parallels, and we might be tempted again to point to the fact that cultural memory is a highly reconstructive affair in which specific events, claims, and practices were constantly renegotiated and revalued. Gordon suggests, however, that in the case of the magical papyri more particular reasons for the selective evocation of ancient practice apply, and that these are linked to significant changes in the history of magic in Egypt. Traditionally, magic was closely linked to the activities of the priestly caste and in this context associated with knowledge, correct procedures, and skills customarily taught in the temple (the sources certainly do not share the negative attitudes to magic that were so widespread in Greco-Roman culture). In the late Hellenistic period, however, the active and passive uses of magic changed. New kinds of magic, in many cases used to secure personal success and attractiveness, assumed a dominant role. The practitioner of magic gained a new profile because magical services were more and more sought and offered outside the temple context. This process was not necessarily linked to a decline of the Egyptian temple structures and authority but rather reflected changes in demand. The Greek and Hellenized inhabitants of Alexandria and other *metropoleis* represented a new market that inevitably changed the crucial media of script and language: there was a shift from hieroglyphic or demotic to Greek that brought the need to assert a close link with older, original languages. This is indeed spelled out in our texts, and in the case of hieroglyphics the authority of this original was self-evident. The reference to an Egyptian original is often paired with references to named individuals as authorities.

Gordon explains the reasoning behind this as 'establishing identity through memory of an indigenous tradition now fixed in an ideal past'. When, to take Gordon's final example, Theban priests re-translated Greek magical texts into demotic in order to express

their 'true' Egyptian quality was this the creation of 'false' memory? Price is right in postulating that a historical study of memory should not obsess about drawing a line (and certainly not a simple line) between the 'true' and 'false' memory claims of the past. An interpretation of *functional* aspects of commemoration can be postponed until the modes in which memory was shaped have been analysed. The historical analysis of the magical papyri and the investigation into the historical background of Attalid memory construction provide strong and differently coloured exemplification of the undoubtedly 'functional memory' involved in each case.

At first sight surprising efforts at 'commemoration' are at the core of John Scheid's paper on epigraphy and ritual (Chapter 8). The prayer and vow of a legionary soldier from Sulmo are discussed and restored. We are dealing with more than a graffito because the inscription, as Scheid shows, reflects the ritual and formulae used at the announcement and fulfilment of a vow. The act of commemorating the deal struck between a worshipper and a deity thus forms part of the payment offered and attests to the power of the god as much as to the gratitude and correct behaviour of the legionary. Both the worshipper's gratitude and the god's power thus enter local memory, and the physical context provides for its long functional duration.

Lucia Nixon takes us to one of Simon Price's favourite places of interest: Crete (Chapter 9). Her paper also comprehensively widens the diachronic perspective that is immanent in the subject. Nixon discusses the different numbers of permanent sacred structures at Sphakia in three discrete periods, the Greek–Early Roman, the Late Roman, and the Byzantine–Venetian–Turkish periods. She introduces the interesting term 'scale of memory' that is something like the 'catchment area of a sacred structure', which can be regional or large and transregional, and can be rural or urban. She observes that the number of permanent sacred structures correlates inversely with this scale of memory. Far from being a simple demographic exercise or question of resources relating to the different phases in the history of Sphakia (or just the passing of time), the axiom is the result of different motivations or memory types involved in the decision to build a permanent sacred structure in a certain place. To capture the essence of the contributing factors, Nixon uses the term 'chronology of desire' which emphasizes the subjective and emotional character of such memory construction.

Part III looks at the counterpart to the process of constructing memory, namely ways of forgetting. Price argues in 'Memory in Ancient Greece' that forgetting has to be seen in relation to *social* memory where it serves social needs—with which modern commentators will not always be comfortable. For Price 'forgetting' has its own contexts and dynamics, ranging from an Athenian amnesty in 403 BC to the phenomenon of *damnatio memoriae* of some Roman emperors. In this perspective, communal forgetting was often successfully achieved through a process of 'overlay'—that is, a new meaning was attached to and thereby replaced any of the four contexts relevant for the construction of memory. Examples that concern religious memory often stem from rivalry—for example, that between Christians and pagans. The four papers in Part III provide four different and strong examples of the dynamics of forgetting.

Historiography has an important part to play in a study of 'memory' and 'forgetting', and when reading Greek and Roman historical narratives we tend to be critically aware that the *hidden* process of selection and highlighting has a major impact on how we perceive the past as represented by these texts. David Levene focuses here on those paradoxical instances when Roman historians explicitly comment on the fact that forgetting has taken place or was intended to take place (Chapter 10). This can be compared to the erasing of names from inscriptions of emperors whose memory had been officially condemned: the practice of course, as was intended, drew close attention to what had been erased, as well as to the fact that it had been erased. Particularly interesting cases that provoked the reaction of Roman historians are those of deliberate 'memory sanction' when forgetting did not take place by accident but when a concerted attempt was made to wipe certain things from public memory. The most famous example is Tacitus' account of the punishment of the historian Cremutius Cordus, who had praised Brutus and Cassius in his work. The senate voted to have his books burned by the aediles but hidden copies remained in circulation. Tacitus endorses the failure to suppress Cremutius' memory and, as Levene demonstrates, in doing so emphatically registers his historian's concern for the preservation of historical memory. Another case is that of Fabricius Veiento, whose writing had insulted senators. The emperor Nero ordered his books to be burned. Here it was precisely the attempt to suppress the work that brought it and the offending remarks to wider attention. While Tacitus does not celebrate the failure of this memory sanction,

as he does in the case of Cremutius Cordus, he points to a universal problem for authority, then and now, that what is forbidden is interesting and attractive. Levene adds another layer to his investigation in his discussion of the different ways in which the Roman historian could react to memory sanctions: avoidance of their implications (in the case of Fabricius Veiento), celebration of their failure (in the case of Cremutius Cordus), and acceptance of their success (in the case of the suppression of Messalina's memory). The different choices lead to different paths in the further construction and afterlife of those concerned. All examples of forgetting, and especially deliberate official suppression of the truth, allow the historian to comment in a differentiated way on his subject and to illustrate wider themes and striking historical lessons.

Aude Busine takes us to Christian and pagan negotiation of the past, in a process that might be seen as the opposite of 'memory sanction' (Chapter 11). It is an interesting variation on the process of 'overlay' described by Price as an important technique to achieve communal forgetting. Busine observes that throughout Greco-Roman antiquity there are examples of cults that were founded following the discovery of an (old) inscription that contributed towards legitimizing the new cult. In this context the discovery of oracular instructions carried particular authority, and there seems to have been little hesitation in producing fake oracular inscriptions that would bolster a new cult-foundation. The case of Alexander of Abonoteichos recounted satirically by Lucian is a famous example. Busine is able to show something surprising, namely that Christians in their attempt to take over pagan sanctuaries as churches drew on the same procedure, and referred to pagan oracles for legitimizing authority. As their pagan counterparts had done before them, they gave much weight to the significance of timely epigraphic discovery, not only to the content of the revelation. Christian apologetic literature comes to mind, and in particular the Tübingen *Theosophy*, the most important Christian collection of pagan oracles, which claims that the pagan gods and prophets had predicted the main doctrines of Christianity. Busine shows, however, that most of the examples in the Tübingen *Theosophy* need not be literary forgeries: the increasing number of genuine inscriptions identical to those recorded in the *Theosophy* supports the idea that invented oracles had been carved, buried, and rediscovered to legitimize the new Christian churches to be built at or near pagan temples. Moreover, once we accept that the pagan model

is followed and that even the authority of pagan oracular institutions is employed, these Christian texts can be used in the study of pagan practice because they are more explicit in describing the concepts and procedures involved.

Here we see that the desire to link the present to the past was so strong that, as Price remarks, 'historical memories should extend back to the most remote periods'. In Christian justification for the appropriation of pagan temples we might have expected *limits* to what is possible in new memory construction. However, it *was* possible to assign tradition to what was surely a disturbing innovation to many who witnessed pagan temples being converted into Christian churches. Instead of trying to achieve oblivion for the pagan life of the site and its valuable buildings (as often in other contexts, not possible), this strategy built a new identity firmly onto memories of the past. The continuity of past and present was affirmed and this conveyed comfort and authority.

Peter Thonemann's paper has strong links with Busine's contribution, and this not only because it is also about the reading and use of old inscriptions. It explores the late fourth-century *Life of St Abercius*, bishop of Hierapolis in the late second century AD (Chapter 12). Thonemann reads the *Life* not so much as evidence for the bishop's vita but as testimony to the social history of inner Anatolia in the late fourth century AD, focusing on the ways in which Christians there understood their pagan past. In search for the motives of its anonymous author, the paper scrutinizes the *Life* for its sources and brings to light how the author offers creative misreadings of surviving second-century inscriptions and monuments which are strung together with observations on the physical geography of the region and combined with episodes from the life of the bishop. The textual product can only be understood in the way Thonemann interprets it, and the construction of memory is at the heart of this interpretation: the cities of the Greek East in the mid-fourth century underwent something like a crisis of civic identity, and the dilemma was deepest for those with a Christian identity. While pagan communities continued their strategies of enhancing their identity through connections to panhellenic gods and heroes, this was not a possibility for a Christian community. Neither Christ's historical locality nor the apostolic itineraries could be changed to include Hierapolis as a meaningful place. A local figure such as Abercius, however, could be used to refashion the pagan Roman past in a Christian image. In

order to achieve this, the author employed an interesting combination of pure invention, wilful misinterpretation of real documents, and plausible elaboration of known details of Abercius' life and activities in which semi-conscientious historical methods were applied.

Bert Smith also addresses the theme of Christian–pagan negotiation discussed by Busine and Thonemann and describes how, in spite of the desire to link the present to the past, it was not always possible to make new identities compatible with old ones (Chapter 13). All three papers explore the question of what could be done when local memory or the identity of the past was so far from the present that embracing its signifiers as they stood was intolerable. More specifically, Smith asks, 'How did ascendant Christian communities respond to pagan cultural monuments that were bearers of their own local history and identity as well as by-products of detested polytheist cult?' His case-study of the Christian adjustments made to the great display of marble reliefs in the Julio-Claudian Sebasteion at Aphrodisias shows that this response was characterized more by careful thought than by impulse. The monument itself represented a repository of the city's collective memory, from its beginning in the first century as a testament to the integration of the Roman imperial household into a Greek and local tradition. It framed the distant mythological past and the imperial present. By the fifth century, some parts of this frame were felt to conflict with Christian sensibility and identity, and nine reliefs were systematically defaced. Smith analyses the character and specific targets of the defacing and emphasizes that the great majority of the reliefs, more than seventy, were left intact. While in some cases the threat posed by particular Olympian gods or aspects of pagan cult explains the 'hard' response, we also see fascinating instances where uncertainty entered the process of local decision-making, and Smith shows in each case how figures could or could not be rebranded and associated with imperial virtue. At times, pragmatic decisions placed respect for Roman imperial power above the criterion of theological purity. What becomes clear is that the acts of defacing and genital mutilation took place in the Sebasteion in a very controlled and careful manner, and that they were surely the result of publicly authorized decisions, of a consensus reached through civic negotiation. What also becomes clear is that these negotiations were of tremendous significance. Like the careful and conscious crafting of the *Life of St Abercius*, the careful and

conscious alterations to the Sebasteion show how the Aphrodisians, like the Hierapolitans, needed to be reconciled with their own city, past and present.

Does the past acquire as many forms as present interests require (Gordon)? Are historical and religious memories like a kaleidoscope, that is, unstable and ever-changing, depending on how they are approached and by whom? Does memory, and in particular historical memory, exist only as images in the mind? Any one or a combination of papers in this volume will not shrink the range of questions that can be brought to bear on this wide topic. We hope only that they provoke further inquiry in the rich landscapes of ancient memory, and bring a fitting return to our sharp-minded honorand.

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Part I

Religious Pasts and Religious Present

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Memory and Ancient Greece

Simon Price

All history is an act of remembrance, an attempt by the historian to preserve the memory of the past by putting it on record (as Herodotus says in his opening sentence). There are many other possible rationales for the study of history (intellectual gymnastics; learning lessons for the future), but this one is surely basic, our moral duty to recall the past, and to oppose those who rewrite the past for unsavoury ends.¹

But one should not set up the historian as the simple guardian of objective truth (in opposition to dubious cultural memories). The last generation's work on the writing of history has emphasized the extent to which history is a constructed artefact, the product of intellectual, social and political pressures. This post-modern view of history makes a difference to how we think of memory.² Both memory and history now look like heavily constructed narratives, both weave their stories of the past, both are products of their own time. This is not to suggest (in extreme post-modern mode) that memory and history are the same thing: it is certainly possible for history to make truth claims. Such truth claims are defensible because of the disciplines and self-reflexivity of history. The narratives of history are differently constructed from those of memory. But there are also similarities between memory and history, and it is interesting to explore the productive relationship between them. One way of doing this is through a historical study of memory, which does not draw a simple line between the 'true' and the 'false' memory claims of the past.

¹ An earlier version of this paper appeared in Rasmussen and William Rasmussen 2008, 165–76. On unsavoury ends: Vidal-Naquet 2002.

² On 'postmodernity and the crisis in memory' see Climo and Cattell 2002, 5–7.

The interest in studying memory in the past is that it places centre stage the self-understandings of particular peoples, and so gets us closer to understanding their world. As has been well said by the art historian Marius Kwint, 'For a truer understanding of the significance and causality of the past we should reckon more with memory, embracing all its subjective viewpoints, since awareness of the past depends on it.' (Kwint in Kwint et al. 1999: 1) Study of memory will place us closer to the mind-sets of particular peoples, it will help to prevent us from creating anachronistic interpretations of the period, and will make it possible for us to see how the choices they make relate to their own understandings of the past.

One implication of this point concerns periodization. Historians of Greece generally start with the Rise of the Polis (in some sense), the emergence of Greece out of the Dark Age that followed the fall of Mycenaean civilization. Even Robin Osborne's fine book *Greece in the Making: 1200–479 BC* follows essentially that periodization, beginning with the collapse of Mycenae and 'the onset of the Dark Age'. Of course, all histories have to start somewhere, and this particular starting point of course has many merits, but the costs of our modern periodization are perhaps not always sufficiently clear. As will become clear in what follows, Greeks of the classical and later periods had a very different sense of the past. They did not know of a Dark Age (let alone Geometric and Orientalizing periods). Instead, they believed in a continuous link between the present day and the remote past. As Lucia Nixon (2004) puts it, the common Greek 'chronology of desire' sought 'to encompass the whole of history in one chronological system'.

The sort of memory just mentioned is of course not individual, but social memory, which has its roots in the work of the French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs (1925). Obviously, social memory is an aspect of social and political power, one of the ways that the dominant order is sustained. But before one can think about the relationship of social memory and political power one needs to understand how social memory actually works. The workings of memory have been the subject of much recent work. The key issue with social memory is to think about how it operates, how it is constructed and transmitted, and by which social groups.³ For example, the work by the

³ This is the question underlying the excellent book, Connerton 1989.

medievalist Mary Carruthers has explored the ways that memory was articulated through monastic education (itself rooted in the rhetorical education of antiquity) (1990, 1998). She suggests that places in memory should be conceived not as references to literal places, 'but to *location within a network*, "memory" *distributed* through a web of associations, some of which may involve physical space . . . , many of which are socially constructed and maintained conventions . . . , and all of which only become active in the minds of people making such webs of association' (1998: 54). The formation and transmission of a memory network is not something that is crucially affected by whether the society is 'literate' or 'non-literate'. The debates of the previous generation about the importance (and indeed definition) of literacy are not really relevant here. What matters is the context. This article will therefore sidestep the oral/literate distinction and instead think about different contexts and different categories of evidence of memory.⁴

There are four crucial contexts in which networks of memories were constructed: first, objects and representations; second, places; third, ritual behaviour (and associated myths); and fourth, textual narratives. This article will illustrate with a few brief examples the ways that memory was constructed through each of those contexts. The four contexts involve both what one might call Inscribed Memory (objects and texts), and also performative Embodied Memory (ritual and other formalized behaviour). They are of course somewhat overlapping. Ancient objects may be known to us through texts that form a sort of narrative; rituals and myths are also generally attested via texts. The article will then proceed to some consideration also of the contexts of forgetting.

First, objects. The best example is the inscription put up in 99 BC at Lindos in the sanctuary of Lindian Athena.⁵ This inscription, known as the 'Lindian Chronicle', illustrates wonderfully the main theme of this article. The man behind the creation of the text claimed in his speech to the assembly (Text A) that the sanctuary of Lindian Athena, 'the most ancient and the most venerable in existence', used to be

⁴ 'It seems more interesting to show how these different modes of cultural transmission fit with different forms of legitimation and political strategies and with different forms of religious life' (Rowlands 1993, 150).

⁵ Higbie 2003 includes a text, and commentary. I have drawn on, but modified her translation. Cf. corrections in Bresson 2006, and in general on such dedications Boardman 2002.

‘adorned with many beautiful offerings dating to the earliest of times on account of the visible presence of the goddess’. Unfortunately, ‘most of the offerings together with their inscriptions have been destroyed in the passage of time’. Therefore, a committee of two men should be appointed to draw up a record ‘from the letters, from the public records and from other testimonies whatever may be fitting about the offerings and the visible presence of the goddess’.

There follows a list of forty-two objects dedicated to Athena. The list cites in each case the evidence for the object: the letters of priests; public records (in the case of the later dedications); and local scholarly treatises (in the case of the earlier dedications). As John Boardman showed (2002: 115–17), the descriptions of all of the objects in the *Chronicle* are plausible in relation to their alleged antiquity, and none need be mere scholarly fictions. What is particularly interesting is that the list is arranged very carefully in chronological order of the donation, and that the time covered encompasses the whole of the past. The first dedication recorded was by Lindos himself (Lindos being the grandson of Helios and the founder of the city). This is followed by a dedication by the Telchines, by Kadmos, by Minos, and by Herakles. We then get down to the period of the Trojan wars with a cluster of dedications: by Tlapolemos, by Rhesos, by Telephos, by the nine who fought with Tlapolemos against Ilion, by Menelaos, and by Helen, by Kanopos (helmsman of Menelaos), by Meriones, and by Teucer. A new period is marked by dedications by each of the three tribes, by Aretakritos, by the co-colonizers of Cyrene, by those who fought with Kleoboulos against Lycia, by the Phaselitai, by the Geloians, by Amphinomos from Sybaris, by Phalaris, by Deinomenes, by Amasis of Egypt, by the Akragantines, by the uncle of Hippokrates, tyrant in Gela, by a Persian general (perhaps Artaphernes), and so on down to King Philip V of Macedon.

The most recent study of this text comments ‘The Lindians do not distinguish between mythical and real history as we might . . .’ (Higbie 2003: 163). This is obviously true. Indeed, as Higbie subsequently notes (206–8), the whole interest of the text is precisely that they do not, that there is as far as the text is concerned a seamless list of dedications. There are differences in the types of evidence adduced for the objects of different dates, but that is only to be expected. The compilers of the document had a very strong sense of chronology and evidence. It is completely unhelpful to raise, let alone impose on this text, the ordinary modern distinction between myth and real history,

between the dedications by Lindos, Menelaos or Helen on the one hand, and those by Artaphernes or Philip V of Macedon on the other.

One might wonder whether the perspective and evidence of this particular document is peculiar, perhaps a product of a relatively late stage in the evolution of Greek attitudes to the past. In fact it is not. Of course, that the text can cite so many works of antiquarian scholarship shows that the text dates to at least the late Hellenistic period. But from rather earlier, other Greek sanctuaries displayed comparable donations of extreme antiquity. For example, according to a Delian temple inventory there was displayed from at least the third century BC the quiver and bow of Herakles.⁶ This is exactly comparable to the two shields dedicated by Herakles at Lindos, even if the Lindian Chronicle is different in the way that it meticulously lists scholarly sources for the offerings.

The existence of such objects goes back much further than the Hellenistic period. Herodotus already saw in the temple of Ismenian Apollo at Thebes three cauldrons inscribed with ancient Kadmean letters (which Herodotus takes to be evidence for the derivation via Kadmos of the alphabet from Phoenicia) (5.58–61). The first cauldron was dedicated by Amphitryon, and is dated by Herodotus to the time of Laios, great-grandson of Kadmos; the second he thinks may be dedicated by the Scaios who was contemporary with Laios' son Oidipous; the third was dedicated by Laodamas, son of Eteokles, and so grandson of Oidipous. These three cauldrons are not evidence of Herodotus' credulity (let alone deceptiveness), but of a long-standing Greek desire to link the present to the remote past. Such objects were just the sort of items that the Lindians claimed with great regret to have lost: 'Kadmos, a bronze cauldron. Inscribed in Phoenician letters, as Polykalos reports in the Fourth Book of his *Investigations*' (Lindian Chronicle B, iii, 15–17).⁷

⁶ IG 11.2.287B.71, 250 BC: *φάρετρα ἡρακλεωτικὴ χρυσοποίκιλτος τόξον ἔχουσα καὶ ταινίδιον χρυσοῦν ἔχουσα ἐφ' οἷς ἐπιγραφὴ* (this is to assume that *ἡρακλεωτικὴ* refers to Herakles and not Herakleia). Arms of Herakles at Thebes (Xenophon, *Hellenica* 6.4.7); Boardman 2002: 83. The other very full list of dedications by Trojan War and other heroes comes in Ampelius, *Liber Memorialis* 8.5 (Sicyon); Pausanias 2.7.8–9 also refers to some of these offerings, though noting that they had been destroyed by fire. Cf. Higbie 2003, 75 for other examples.

⁷ However, the Athenians, if they ever had such items, lost them in 480 BC; they are not recorded in the later inventories: Harris 1995.

In addition to individual dedications, we might also consider under this heading individual monuments. The actual sanctuary of Athena at Lindos is the obvious first case to examine. According to tradition, the sanctuary was founded by Danaos, who was fleeing with his daughters from Aigyptos.⁸ Modern scholars are happy to point out that there is no evidence in support of the claim, the first archaeological evidence from the area being some Geometric period votive offerings. In the sixth century, a new tetrastyle temple was built on the site; according to tradition, it was by Kleoboulos, the local 'tyrant', also regarded as one of the Seven Wise men.⁹ It may have been decorated on the front and rear epistyle with the eight shields later listed in the Lindian Chronicle as dedicated by associates of Kleoboulos. Sadly, the temple was badly damaged by fire, probably in 392/1 BC; according to the Lindian Chronicle, 'most of the dedications were destroyed by fire' in the same event (lines D 41–2). A hundred years later, c. 300 BC, a new, and more elaborate, temple was built on the foundations of the older temple. The history of the building goes to amplify the picture from the text of the way that the sanctuary embodied markers of the whole history of the community.

A different type of link to the past was expressed through the iconography of the decoration of public buildings. Imagery could offer not a single chain linking present and past, but pointers that claimed privileged ties between the monument and the past. One might think here of familiar monuments like the sculptural group on the east pediment of the temple at Olympia showing the contest between Oinomaos and Pelops, the founder of the Olympic games. This representation of the myth, often seen simply as a masterpiece of classical art (which it no doubt is), can also be seen as the local representation of a tale, for obvious local reasons.¹⁰ Or there is the pedimental sculpture on the west end of the Parthenon at Athens, which depicted the contest between Athena and Poseidon for the control of Attica. In this case, the contest and its outcome left numerous traces on the Akropolis. The unique design of the Erekhtheion was due to the need to preserve, and highlight, those traces. It included both the mark that Poseidon's trident made and the salt spring that he created, and the olive tree that Athena planted.¹¹

⁸ Diogenes Laertius 1.89.

¹⁰ Cf. now Barringer 2005.

⁹ Diogenes Laertius 1.89.

¹¹ Price 1999, 19–20.

In later periods, when pedimental sculpture was out of fashion, the sculpture in theatres performed the same function. A good example of a local story that a famous event happened right *here* comes from the theatrical frieze of Severan date and also the coins of the small town of Nysa in western Asia Minor.¹² The city's foundation dates to the Seleucid period, and it was probably named after a daughter of Antiochos IV. But it was sited 5 km east of an earlier sanctuary marking the entry to the underworld. Even if the name of the city was chosen for dynastic reasons, joining a dozen and more other Nysas in the Greek world, the city certainly came to capitalize on the mythological associations of the name. We all 'know' that the Rape of Persephone, which occurred in the Nysian plain according to the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (l. 17), happened at Eleusis. But this claim was contested, and we should not denigrate competing claims. The Sicilians had long claimed that the Rape happened on Sicily.¹³ Why shouldn't it have happened at our Nysa? As it happens, Nysa was also famous in another mythic cycle, that of Dionysos. According to the common story, the baby Dionysos was rescued from mortal danger and placed in the care of the nymphs of Mount Nysa, who duly reared him. The city made much of both of these associations (both cycles appear on the theatrical frieze). Nysa, competing with places like the neighbouring Hierapolis, embodied the memory of the occurrence of these great events at Nysa in monuments (and also festivals). The articulation of local identity through the iconography of local mythologies is a form of memory, linking the community to privileged moments of the past.

This reference to local identity leads on to our second category of evidence, places. Here one might think of the ways that individual places were reused in later periods, but reused in order to articulate some ties of memory with the past. For example, there was the offering of cult at Bronze Age tholos tombs in parts of the Greek mainland, especially in the eighth century BC. It was surely designed to express links between the present and the past, to embody memories of past glories. In the Argolid and Messenia, where there were complex struggles for social and ethnic supremacy, the cult may have

¹² Lindner 1994 for the altar. See in general Price 2005.

¹³ Diodorus Siculus 5.3–4 (probably from Timaeus of Tauromenium: *FGrH* 566F164). Compare Cicero, *In Verrem* 4.107; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 5.346–571.

served to legitimate problematic authority, while in Attica, known for its stability, the cult may have helped to define the relationship of a whole community to the past.¹⁴

Crete was different in some respects. There was no such cult at Bronze Age tombs (despite their ubiquity and visibility). Instead, sanctuaries were placed in significant relation to the visible remains of Minoan settlements.¹⁵ It was quite common for early Greek sanctuaries to be built on or in Minoan remains; there are secure examples from eight places: Amnisos; Axos; Gortyn; Knossos; Kommos; Palaikastro; Phaistos; and Prinias (with possible examples from another four places). For example, at Kommos, the first temple was built c. 1000 BC, close to the then visible remains of the massive ashlar complex and palatial court, and incorporated part of the ashlar walls of a ruined Bronze Age building; visitors to the temple were able to reuse some of the galleries of the ashlar complex (whose roof may have survived to this time). Or at Palaikastro, where house and street walls of the Bronze Age were still standing in the Early Iron Age, a sanctuary for Diktaian Zeus was built on part of the site. What is striking is that the visible (and very grand) ruins of the Bronze Age were not used for later settlement. Instead, sanctuaries were located on or near them. Their building seems to be making a claim to a relationship with the past, presumably as part of the emerging civic identities of the Iron Age. For example, the Kommos temples must be the responsibility of the polis of Phaistos to the east, laying claim to the harbour (with its important overseas connections). The location of such temples is thus not evidence for 'religious continuity' (an inappropriate category), but for imagined links to the past.

Links to the past were also articulated in the third of our contexts: rituals and their associated stories. To take a familiar example, on the 16th of Hekatombaion (the first month of the Athenian year) the Athenians celebrated the festival of the Synoikia. This was organized through the four Ionic (i.e. pre-Kleisthenic) tribes, and so was of considerable antiquity. Indeed the festival was deemed to be extremely ancient. According to Thucydides, 'Ever since the time of Theseus, even today the Athenians still hold the Synoikia as a publicly funded festival for the goddess.'¹⁶ That is, Theseus, who was believed

¹⁴ Cf. Osborne 1996, 103–4. See further Antonaccio 1995.

¹⁵ Nixon 1991; cf. Prent 2003.

¹⁶ Thucydides 2.15.2. Hornblower, *Comm. on Thuc.* wonders if this is a commentator's gloss, but see Parker 2005, 480–1.

to have synoecized Attica, was also believed to have founded the festival which commemorated this great event.

This is a good example of a local story which roots the community in stories about the wider Greek world. Theseus was an Athenian hero who intersects with the wider world in some elements of his life, for example in his killing of the Cretan Minotaur and rescuing of Ariadne. Studies of Greek mythology tend to operate much too much on the panhellenic level. Handbooks of the subject have at best a short chapter on local myths.¹⁷ But in fact the interplay between panhellenic and local myths is absolutely basic (as was noted briefly above).

We need to think about the telling of local versions of myths, which situate a community in common narratives of the past. There were two main ways of so situating a community: 1. By asserting that particular events of common Greek mythology happened right *here*, and not somewhere else. We all 'know' that Apollo and Artemis were born on Delos, but that claim was strongly contested by the Ephesians, who believed that the birth happened at Ephesos, the precise place being marked by the great sanctuary of Artemis. At a lower level, we might recall that the Attic deme of Thorikos made the most of the claim that the story of Kephalos and Prokris happened right *here* at Thorikos).¹⁸ All such stories are competitive (*our* city was founded by Theseus), but the claim that a particular, famous event happened right *here* is particularly strong (a zero-sum claim). These variants on panhellenic myths in some cases, as Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood showed in 1978 in relation to Locri, can also express sets of values of particular local importance. 2. By claiming that the place was founded by a figure known to general Greek mythology (e.g. Corinth was founded by Sisyphos); we should perhaps distinguish between founders who are merely eponyms and founders who are also ancestors, though this distinction is often blurred by the Greeks themselves; a variant of this is when wandering figures made their way to a particular place, and in some cases founded it (e.g. Perseus and Tarsos; Herakles at the site of Rome).¹⁹

¹⁷ For example, Rose 1953, 254–85; Morford and Lenardon 1999, 480–99.

¹⁸ Price 1999, 29. Cf. Humphreys 2004, 140, 155–6, 158, 162–4, 188. Not that all such claims fitted easily into the civic context: the Dekeleians helped Spartan invaders, because of Theseus' *hybris* (Herodotus 9.73).

¹⁹ Beard, North and Price 1998, i. 173–4.

The *first* type of claim (to local events) we have already seen in relation to the decoration of the theatre at Nysa. I am therefore now going to illustrate the *second* type of local myth, the founding of the community by a figure known to general Greek mythology, from Pindar's *Seventh Olympian*. The poem, in praise of Diagoras of Rhodes, who had won the boxing competition at Olympia in 464 BC, after an account of the victor, offers three local myths, in reverse chronological order. Pindar talks first of Tlepolemos, who founded the land of Rhodes. Tlepolemos was already in the *Iliad* known as a son of Herakles, who founded the three cities on Rhodes and led their forces to Troy, where he was killed by Sarpedon (2.653–70, 5.628–59). Pindar then goes back in time to a particular local story about the origin of the fireless sacrifices to Athena (presumably in her temple at Lindos), and then back again to the raising of the island from the deep as a gift to Helios, whose grandchildren Kamiros, Ialysos, and Lindos founded the three cities on the island. It was this Lindos who was listed in the Lindian Chronicle as the first donor to the sanctuary of Athena. It is also fitting that the poem was, according to Gorgon, a local chronicler, much cited in the Lindian Chronicle, inscribed in gold letters in the sanctuary of Athena.²⁰

The founding of cities, or the relocation of myths from Eleusis to Nysa, raises the question of the limits of the possible in mythological elaborations. The answer will vary, depending on the logic of the particular myth. Wandering heroes could be associated with almost anywhere, and claims to association with Perseus or Herakles were not zero-sum claims. But there were limits: Perseus could not be claimed to have gone to Spain, while Herakles' return journey from Spain could not be said to have been via North Africa. Claims like the claim to be the birthplace of Dionysos or Artemis, however, were zero-sum claims (if it was true for Nysa it could not also be true for Eleusis). Here the constraints were the need to offer evidence in support of the claim: the name of the place (Nysa); the nature of the place (the Plutonium at Hierapolis); the antiquity of the cult (Ephesos, with her special image of Artemis that had fallen from heaven); surviving evidence (the skin of Marsyas; the lithic form of Niobe; the fertility of the soil, for Demeter and Persephone).²¹

²⁰ Gorgon, *FGrH* 515F18. On *Olympian* 7, see commentary by Willcock 1995.

²¹ Marsyas: Herodotus 7.26; Xenophon, *Anabasis* 1.2.8; cf. Pausanias 10.30.9. Niobe: Pausanias 1.21.3; cf. Quintus Smyrnaeus, 1.291–306.

Competing claims had to be plausible within the logic of the myths (otherwise they would carry no weight with other Greek communities), and they had to rest on evidence (such as physical remains, old oracles, decrees and the writings of poets and historians), but there was no external authority (oracular or other) that could adjudicate between such claims.²² Only under Roman rule were claims like that to ancestral possession of proper asylum rights adjudicated centrally (in Rome), with the full parade of testimonies.²³

The stories of the founding of particular places were also told in panhellenic narratives (our fourth and last context). One thinks here particularly of genealogies as the key mode that offered a framework for memories of the past. Genealogies, discussed by some in relation to oral traditions and by others in relation to ethnic identity, have their force only because of their success as articulations of memory.²⁴ There are two sorts of genealogy, collective and familial. Collective genealogies explained the origins of particular peoples: the Peloponnesians from Pelops, or the population of the Troad from Dardanos. Hesiod's *Theogony* gives the first stage in the story: the creation of the world and the human race (it is strikingly untied to particular places: even Mekone, where gods and mortals were first divided, was not a recognizable toponym, though the Sikyonians claimed that it was the previous name of their city).²⁵ Hesiod alludes to the next stages in the narrative, and seems to have composed something on heroic genealogies, but it was only in the sixth century that a successor wrote the first comprehensive account of heroic genealogies (the *Catalogue of Women*, ascribed, not surprisingly, to Hesiod himself).²⁶ This work ran from the descendants of Deukalion down to the suitors of Helen, the Trojan War, and the ending of the age of heroes.

Prose authors of the fifth century onwards continued to develop such genealogies. Akusilaos of Argos and Pherekydes of Athens, like

²² Pausanias includes many examples of the transfer of the bones of heroes (for example, 8.9.3, 8.36.8 (Arkas); 2.22.2–3 (Tantalos, a contested claim between Argos and Mount Sipylus, which Pausanias reconciles in terms of two Tantaloses). Cf. in general Pfister 1909–12.

²³ Tacitus, *Annales* 3.60–3. Cf. Dignas 2002, 288–99.

²⁴ Thomas 1989, 155–95; Hall 1997; Fowler 1998; Cameron 2004: 224–8. Sourvinou-Inwood 2003, 141 argues that mythologically constructed ancestry was not *the* defining criterion of ethnicity.

²⁵ *Theogony* 536, with West ad loc.

²⁶ West 1985; cf. Fowler 1998; Hunter 2005.

the author of the *Catalogue of Women*, seem to treat the Trojan War and the Nostoi, the Return of the Heroes to their homelands, as their terminal points, each with particular local slants.²⁷ The chroniclers of Athens, the Atthidographers, of the fifth and fourth centuries, are rather different in their chronological perspectives. Their accounts begin with the genealogy of the kings of Athens, starting with the first king Kekrops and including Theseus, but turned this into a text linking past and present in a continuous narrative.²⁸ The outcome of this sort of scholarship is visible in the Parian Chronicle. Its heading runs: 'From all sorts of records and general histories I have recorded the times from the beginning, starting with Kekrops, the first king of Athens, down to the archonship in Paros of [. . .]yanax, and at Athens of Diognetos' (264/3 BC).²⁹ The first entry, immediately following the preamble, reads: 'From the time when Kekrops was king of Athens, and the land previously called Aktike (from the indigenous Aktaios) was called Kekropia, 1318 years' (i.e. 1581/0 BC!).

It is often said that communal genealogies do not link to the present, but rather float uncomfortably (or perhaps comfortably) in a remote void.³⁰ While it may be true that the earlier works (*Catalogue of Women*, Hecataeus) do not link to the present, such links were always implicit (and they certainly had an implicit relevance to the present). By the end of the fifth century, some scholars had made them explicit. Memory of the past was continuous.

Interlocking with these collective genealogies were the genealogies of individual families. Those in Homer do not explicitly link down to the present, though it is striking that within his world Aeneas proudly lists his genealogy, in seven generations from Zeus (*Il.* 20.213–41). The linking back to this period is most fully attested in the genealogy of the Philaids (as recorded in Pherekydes of Athens, mid-fifth century): this went back in fourteen generations from the Miltiades

²⁷ Akusilaos: *FGrH* 2 = Fowler 2000, 1–28; Pherekydes: *FGrH* 3 = Fowler 2000, 272–364.

²⁸ Jacoby 1949, 105–7, 111–17; for example, Androtion, *FGrH* 324, with Harding 1994.

²⁹ *IG* 12.5.444 and p. 315 with 12 Supp. p. 110; *FGrH* 239. The portion of the text quoted above is partially restored.

³⁰ Despite Herodotus' point about Hecataeus' claim to divine descent in 16 generations (2.143), Hecataeus' *Genealogies* does not seem to give generations down to the present (Jacoby, *FGrH* 1a, p. 317, on T4). Cf. West 1985, 9 on the genealogical poets.

who colonized the Chersonnese to Philais, son of Ajax, who settled in Athens.³¹ Mostly, of course, genealogies telescoped the generations between the heroic ancestor and the more immediate past. The creation of such genealogies was presumably the product of competition between aristocratic families in the Archaic period.

Analysis of the process of constructing memories needs to be accompanied by analysis of its counterpart, forgetting. Sometimes historians get so hooked on memory that they forget to think also about forgetting. Paul Ricoeur's 600-page work *Memory, History, Forgetting* is promising in its title, but 'forgetting' is the subject only of the last, short, chapter. That chapter considers forgetting as 'the disturbing threat that lurks in the background of the phenomenology of memory and of the epistemology of history' (2004: 412), and goes on to consider forgetting mostly from the point of the view of the historian, which means in relation to forgiveness. But before we think about forgetting in relation to the modern historian, we need first to think about forgetting in relation to social memory.

Every individual needs to forget. Otherwise, we face the onset of paralysis, even madness. Societies too need to forget. Forgetting prevents social paralysis. It also serves pressing social needs. As the anthropologist Evans-Pritchard showed long ago, forgetting can have benign social functions.³² Among the Nuer, rights to inheritance were justified in terms of claims to descent from remote ancestors. With the passage of time, the remote ancestors remained fixed, but intervening generations were elided, on a rolling basis. If this had not happened, the entire system of inheritance would have collapsed with increasing layers of complexity.

Forgetting also serves other social needs. It permits the negotiation of political or religious change. What we think about such processes

³¹ *FGrH* 3F2 (= Fowler 2000, F2). For similar lists see Pherekydes, 3F59 = Fowler 2000, F59 (Hippokrates), 3F167 = Fowler 2000, F167 (Homer from Musaeus; cf. Hellanikos, 4F5 = Fowler 2000, F5, Damastes, 5F11 = Fowler 2000, F11); Hellanikos 4F22 = Fowler 2000, F22 (Philais again); Hellanikos, 323aF24 (Andocides from Odysseus). Cf. Thomas 1989, 161–73. Plato, *Theaetetus* 175a gives 25 generations back to Herakles as a specious claim made for tyrants. The fourteen generations of Heropythus of Chios (Collitz et al. 1884–1915, 5657, fifth century BC) are often said to go back only to the eighth century, but this calculation is based on a modern, false measure of time. The Philaid family genealogy showed that it was possible to claim links to the Trojan War in fourteen generations. This was surely true also for Heropythus.

³² Evans-Pritchard 1940, 199.

of oblivion will depend on our own points of view. We might be sympathetic to a social refusal to rake over the ashes after civil strife, while we might be horrified about the Taliban destruction of Buddhist monuments in Afghanistan in the interests of purifying the past of non-Islamic religions.³³ There are also lower-level and less dramatic processes of changes in social memories, which entail modifications to claims about the past.

Forgetting has its own contexts and dynamics. First there is the issue of 'generosity' on the part of the restored Athenian democracy in 403 BC: the agreement not to permit prosecutions for participation in the previous narrow oligarchy (excepting certain specified oligarchic officials, and even they were exempt if they gave satisfactory *euthynai*, that is submitted to an investigation, before a jury which was designed to be favourable to them). This decision to draw an instant line under the changed constitution, later represented as an act of unilateral generosity by the democracy, was probably part of the settlement brought about by the Spartan negotiators.³⁴ But the decision certainly helped to strengthen the new regime, by not permitting personal enmities to be played out in the guise of political correctness.³⁵ This episode stands out in the ancient world, but is nonetheless interesting.³⁶ The converse of this amnesty is the deliberate erasure of names or of images. Such erasure is often called *damnatio memoriae*, even though this phrase is never found in antiquity, and falsely implies that there was a single social practice.³⁷ In the Greek world, erasure of names of emperors or ill-fated members of the imperial family is found quite widely, as cities sought to keep in step with political changes in Rome. But erasure of this sort is a poor means of creating oblivion: the vacant gap in the inscription or the damaged head on a frieze stands out as a memorial to the person that should have been forgotten.

Communal forgetting is better done (in the words of Mary Carruthers) by applying 'the mnemotechnical principles of blocking one pattern of memories by another, through "crowding" or overlay, and by intentional mnemonic replacement.'³⁸ One of the major

³³ The subject of Nixon 2004.

³⁴ Krentz 1982, 102–8; cf. Rhodes 1981, 462–72.

³⁵ Cf. Loraux 2002, which consists of reflections on strife and forgetting.

³⁶ For some parallels see Plutarch, *Solon* 19; Ptolemy VIII (118 BC), *P Teb.* 5.1–9 (= Hunt and Edgar 1934, no. 210.1–9).

³⁷ Cf. Price 1984, 194 for this point.

³⁸ Carruthers 1998, 54.

cultural processes of the ancient world is the fate of local cultures in the western parts of the Roman empire: Spain, Gaul, Germany, and Britain. It is very striking that (in contrast to the fate of local cultures in the eastern half of the empire, and to some extent in north Africa) in the west there is no institutionalized memory of the pre-Roman past (no local genealogies tied local elites to pre-Roman figures), and local cultures (and languages) were consigned to cultural oblivion through the process of 'crowding' or overlay.³⁹ Even when a local Spanish author, Pomponius Mela, made Spain central to his description of the world, and talked quite often of its Phoenician heritage, his central mythological figure was the familiar figure of Hercules.⁴⁰ In general, local gods were reinterpreted in relation to the Roman pantheon, and gained validity through association with that pantheon.⁴¹ Here the process may not have been intentional, but it was sometimes so.

Conflicts between Christians and pagans in the fourth-century Greek world were certainly on this plane. For example, the temple and oracle of Apollo at Daphne outside Syrian Antioch was a major locus of contention.⁴² The local story about the origins of this shrine was that king Seleukos I (ruled 308–281 BC), out hunting one day, came upon a tree, which he believed was the one into which Daphne, daughter of the local river god, had transformed herself in order to escape the clutches of Apollo. The unearthing by the hoof of Seleukos' horse of a golden arrowhead with Apollo's name on it confirmed that the god continued to frequent the place. The story of Apollo and Daphne, known all over Greece and beyond, was still being told in Antioch in the third and fourth centuries AD. Here it was made to relate to a local cult, as had long been done in Greece with other stories about the gods and heroes. In the mid-third century AD, one Babylas was martyred at Antioch, and was buried there. But in AD 353 Gallus, Caesar to the emperor Constantius and then living at Antioch, transferred the remains of Babylas the nine kilometres from Antioch to Daphne. Here he built a mausoleum for Babylas, which became a centre for Christian worship.

³⁹ Millar 1968; Price 1984, 91–2; Woolf 1996.

⁴⁰ Cf. Batty 2000 for local emphases of Pomponius Mela.

⁴¹ Beard, North, and Price 1998, i. 344–7; Van Andringa 2002, 131–58.

⁴² Soler 2006; Sandwell 2007. Cf. also Carruthers 1998, 46–54. Texts translated in Lieu 1989.

In AD 362, Julian, Gallus' brother, now emperor, was horrified at the lack of piety at Antioch, blaming the city for neglecting the festival of Apollo. He took it upon himself to restore the temple and statue of Apollo at Daphne, and attempted to revive the oracle and to cleanse the sacred spring, which had long since ceased to flow. The spring did not restart. When he was told that this was because of pollution caused by the presence of the body of Babylas, he had the remains taken back to their original burial spot in the city. However, as soon as the body re-entered the city, the temple roof mysteriously caught fire, and the ancient statue of Apollo was destroyed. Julian was furious. When a tribunal failed to identify the culprits, he punished the Christians collectively, shutting their principal church and confiscating its goods.

This whole story was much contested between pagans and Christians: the pagan Libanius and the Christian John Chrysostom, both locals of Antioch, had very different takes on it. Libanius, immediately after the events, wrote a dirge-like lament on the destruction of the temple, and its dreadful consequences for traditional religion. John Chrysostom, twenty years later, took the burning of the temple as divine retribution on Julian and his pro-pagan policies, but also talked about how the presence of Babylas improved the moral climate of the place, the dissolute and depraved becoming restrained, as under the gaze of their teacher. The case of Babylas and Daphne is a wonderful example of conflicting attempts to memorialize religious places, and hence to emphasize different pasts.

In conclusion, this article has looked at the contexts in which memories of the past were articulated: not just the ones familiar to historians (genealogies and histories), but also objects, places, and rituals along with local myths. It has alluded occasionally to the advantages for individual families and for communities of claiming illustrious descent or privileged location (the socio-political function of memory mentioned in the opening remarks). One of the implications of this article is that such functional commentary is best done after analysis of the modes in which memory was shaped.

Various considerations complicate the picture a little. There were some questions about the past that were not (could not be?) pursued. The belief in continuity with Heroic times might be thought to entail belief that forms of life had been more or less unchanged since those times. Homer, after all, had held that the past was very different (his heroes could lift rocks, or drinking-cups, that no one man of his day

could lift: *Iliad* 11.628–37, 20.285–7), but he had also recorded (as normal) a temple and cult statue to Athena in Troy (*Iliad* 6.297–304). People might have asked why there were not more surviving early temples (as against olive trees or trident marks). One answer, perhaps, was that things had changed, and that early temples had simply been rebuilt. For example, a fifth-century story recounted the sequence of temples at Delphi: laurel; wax and feathers (built by bees); bronze (built by Hephaistos and Athena); stone (built by the heroes Trophonios and Agamedes), burnt down in 548 BC.⁴³ Equally, everyone knew that the panhellenic games were innovations, of various dates from 776 BC onwards. We take them as evidence for our picture of the emergence of Greece from the Dark Ages. The ancient Greeks just saw them as evidence for enhanced religious activity in an essentially continuous narrative. We might want to emphasize the role of the East in the development of Greece. They took things differently, giving ‘foreigners’ good Greek genealogies. Already in the continuation of Hesiod’s *Theogony*, Latinos appears as the son of Odysseus and Circe (ll. 1011–13), and fifth-century authors make Andromedes, the founder of the Persian race, a son of Perseus.⁴⁴ The practice, of course, continued for centuries.

There were some dissenters to the picture just presented. Herodotus, very oddly, privileges Egypt in the development of Greek religious thought and practice, and claims (as do others) that Kadmos was a Phoenician who migrated to Thebes (hence the ‘Phoenician letters’ there).⁴⁵ In addition, the possibility of a continuous narrative, from stories about the gods and heroes down to the present was debated, from the fifth century onwards. Herodotus mentions Minos as a precedent for the sea-power of Polykrates, but contrasts him to the ‘human’ history that forms the bulk of his work (3.122). Thucydides, on the other hand, in his excursus explaining why the Peloponnesian War was necessarily the greatest war to date, has no problem with the historicity of Minos (1.4, 8), he treats Homer as straightforward evidence for the Trojan War, and displays no sense of a ‘Dark Age’ following that war. Subsequently, the debates about the limits of

⁴³ Cf. Price 1999, 9–10.

⁴⁴ Herodotus 6.54, 7.61, Hellanikos *FGH* 4F59–60. Cf. Bickerman 1952.

⁴⁵ Herodotus 2.58, 2.123, 5.57. Kadmos also founded a Phoenician settlement on Rhodes (Diodorus Siculus 5.58.2), hence the dedication recorded in the Lindian Chronicle (and Diodorus Siculus).

history continued. In the first century BC, Diodorus Siculus, writing his *Universal History*, noted that earlier historians had excluded mythology on the grounds that it contained self-contradictions and confusions (so on evidential, not ontological grounds); he himself proposed to include the deeds of gods and heroes, such as Dionysos and Herakles, who were benefactors of the human race.⁴⁶ Such inclusiveness, however, was controversial: Polybius had treated genealogies as a form of mere entertainment (9.1.4–6), and Dionysius of Halicarnassus commended Thucydides' exclusion of the mythical from his narrative, while noting that local historians did not live up to Thucydidean standards.⁴⁷ Scholars tend to privilege such ancient critics of 'mythology' (welcoming their sharp distinction between myth and history), but it is quite wrong to do so (or to assume that their distinction maps onto our historical periodization). The normal view was that historical memories could extend back to the most remote periods.

Abbreviations

<i>FGrH</i>	Jacoby, F. 1923–58. <i>Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker</i> , Berlin: Weidmann
<i>IG</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae</i>
Hornblower, <i>Comm. on Thuc.</i>	Hornblower, S. 1991–2008. <i>A commentary on Thucydides</i> . Oxford: Oxford University Press
<i>P. Teb.</i>	Grenfell, B.P. et al. (eds.) 1902–76. <i>The Teb-tunis Papyri</i> . London and New York: H. Frowde, Oxford University Press, Cambridge University Press, Egypt Exploration Society, British Academy

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⁴⁶ 1.3.2, 4.8.5. Cf. in general Graf 1993, 121–41.

⁴⁷ Thucydides 6–7. Cf. Thomas 1989, 173–5.

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Sappho Underground

J.A. North

O poet-woman! none foregoes
The leap, attaining the repose.
Elizabeth Barrett Browning,
'A vision of poets' (1844)

THE UNDERGROUND BASILICA¹

Browning's evocation of Sappho's leap from the White Rocks of Leucas would have been based on Ovid's version of the story in the *Heroides*. The first visual representation of what must be the same episode only came to light in Rome three-quarters of a century later. It was in 1917 that the ground beneath the Rome–Naples railway near the Porta Maggiore gave way, leading to the discovery of an underground Basilica in which Sappho's Leap dominates the ceiling of the apse. The Basilica was to become the subject of continued debate, but has proved too problematic to become an established point of reference, at least for historians of religion. It lies outside the walls of the ancient city, by the road that led to Praeneste (Fig. 3.1). It was

¹ An earlier version of this paper was published in Japanese in 2006 in the Papers of the Tokyo University Research Programme on Death and Life Studies. I am grateful for helpful comments both in Tokyo and by the participants at the 'Day in honour of Simon Price'. With Simon, I discussed this monument longer ago than I could now reckon. In addition to Simon, I am particularly grateful to Dirk Obbink, Bert Smith, and Robert Coates-Stephens for advice. The illustrations from the Basilica all appear here by kind permission of the Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali—Soprintendenza Speciali per i Beni Archeologici di Roma.

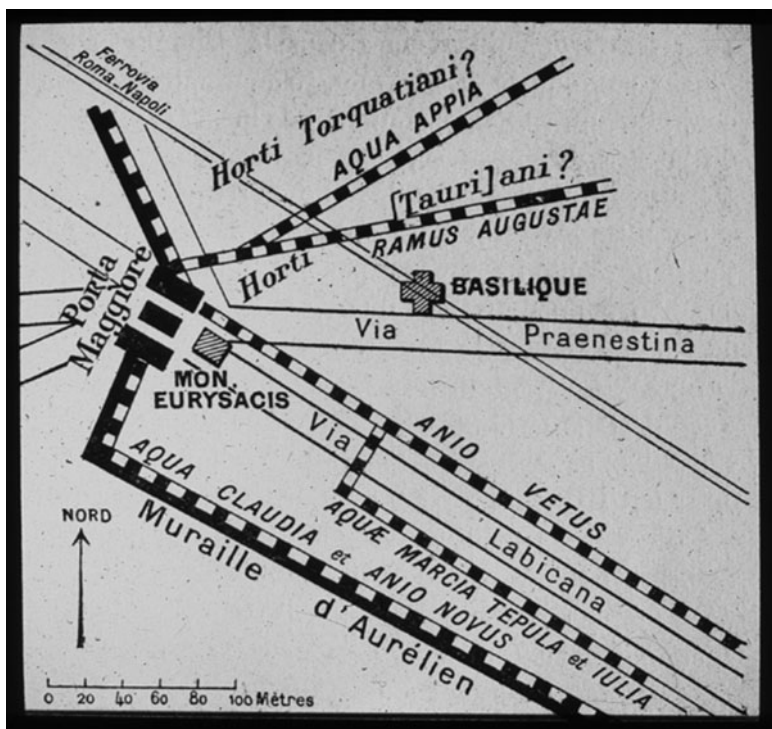


Fig. 3.1. The location of the Basilica near the Porta Maggiore.

constructed in an excavated pit hollowed out of the tufa and reinforced with concrete. The floor-level in antiquity would have been about 10 m below street level. The structure consists of a near-rectangular hall with three aisles or, in other words, a central nave and two side aisles (Fig. 3.2). At the east end, there is an apse, whose ceiling decoration is discussed below;² at the west end there is a vestibule into which a shaft would have sent light and air. There is no source of light into the rest of the Basilica, which must have been lit artificially. The overall dimensions are approximately 11.5×9.0 m. The vaults are 7.5 m high. There are six central piers which support the barrel vaults. There is no serious dispute about the approximate date of the stucco decorations, which belong to the first half of the

² See below, at 54–62.

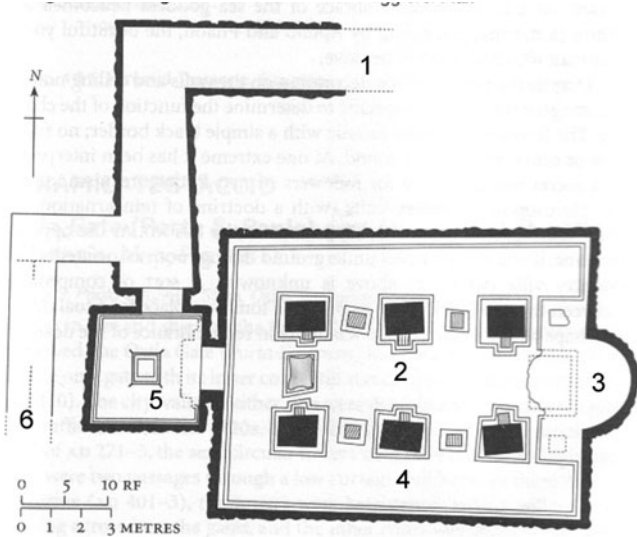


Fig. 3.2. Plan of the Basilica (after Claridge 1998, 361). 1: Ancient Entrance. 2: Nave. 3: Apse. 4: South Aisle. 5: Vestibule. 6: Modern Entrance.

first century AD, perhaps around the time of Claudius.³ The early reports imply that almost nothing was found inside the building when it was opened and there seems no reason to doubt those reports.⁴

The monument was close to a busy gate and to two busy thoroughfares. Its construction must have been prolonged, difficult, and expensive, so there is no reason to think that access to it was in any way secret, though the access ramp might have been private and closed to all but those in the know. On the other hand, there might have been a tomb above the ground, subsequently levelled, of which only an underground room has survived. The high-quality white stucco decoration covered the vaults, ceiling, walls, and piers. These were not in perfect condition when found and certainly deteriorated later (Figs. 3.3 and 3.4). The illustrations I offer here date from the early

³ For descriptions: Bendinelli 1922; 1926; Carcopino 1926; Aurigemma 1961; Bastet 1970; Claridge 1998; Coarelli 2008.

⁴ See for instance Gatti 1918, who, in a preliminary report, mentions no finds within the Basilica except for the skeletons of a dog and a pig buried in a *loculus* by the apse.

period of study, and were used in the early publications, for example, in G. Bendinelli's splendidly illustrated publication of 1926.⁵

Certainty is unattainable about the function of this building, but the likeliest assumption must be that it was a large family tomb. Despite its appearance and plan, it is not safe to argue that it was a religious meeting-place, though it could have been used to hold celebratory feasts, for example, on the occasion of funerals and anniversaries. A possibility, recently canvassed again,⁶ is that the family in question was that of the Statilii Tauri, highly distinguished

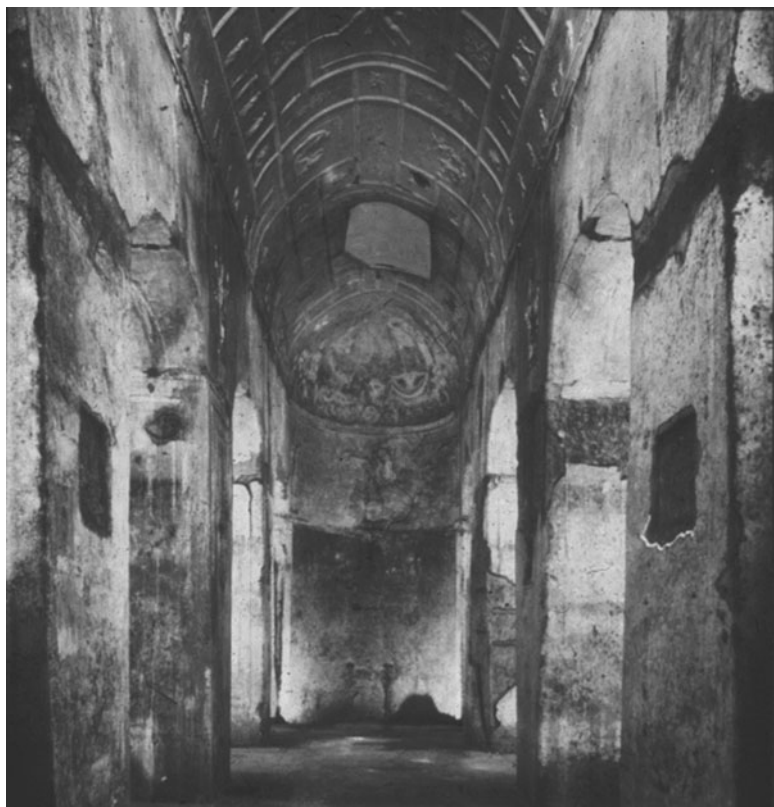


Fig. 3.3. General view taken from the entrance, looking towards the apse.

⁵ Bendinelli 1926; cf. Strong and Jolliffe 1924.

⁶ By Sauron 1994, 612–13, whose ideas are discussed further below, at 50–3.



Fig. 3.4. General view of the ceiling of the nave, including both the kidnappings (see Figs. 3.8 and 3.9) (after Bendinelli 1926, pl. XVI).

in the period, who certainly owned land in the vicinity.⁷ When it was first discovered it was hailed as a group meeting-place, and this position can still be maintained. There has been much less confidence recently,⁸ but caution should not be taken too far. Assuming that the building had a funerary function does not imply that its decoration was devoid of directed thought and planning. It seems unlikely that this was simply one man's folly, and a plausible hypothesis is that the imagery was developed by a group linked by commitment to some religious position. Can that possibility be further explored?

The problem set by the discovery was its paradoxical character, combining the appearance of a Christian basilica with an early date and a pagan set of symbols. One theory held that the Basilica was constructed by a group of Roman followers of Pythagoras, the philosopher and sage of sixth century BC Croton in South Italy: the theory

⁷ Coates-Stephens 2004, 31–4.

⁸ Good discussion of the theories in Dörrie 1975, 191–201; Sauron 1994, 605–11.

was developed by the great Franz Cumont⁹ and above all, in two elaborate studies, by Jerome Carcopino.¹⁰ But there have always been rival views: that it was nothing more than a burial chamber; or that it was simply a hall for dining in state, perhaps belonging to a club.¹¹ It is interesting how quickly scholars turned the decorative scheme towards their own preoccupations and interests. The chapel could not be Christian, for reasons of date, but it could have been the work of a group of pagans anticipating the concern with life after death, often supposed to be introduced by the Christians. The assumption was that the pagans were ripe for some salvationist doctrine, and the 'Neo-Pythagoreans' were those in the vanguard of the movement.¹² In the event, such theories proved flimsy. Carcopino built heavily on one text of Pliny the Elder which suggested to him that a particular plant of the genus *Eryngium* could be linked with Pythagorean speculations; but the text proved more tricky than he thought.¹³ He had, however, suggested connections between Pythagorean ideas and the myths represented in the decorative scheme and raised important questions still needing answers.

THE ICONOGRAPHY OF THE STUCCO DECORATIONS

(a) The general scheme

The range of representations in the Basilica is wide: there are scenes of ritual and of magical proceedings;¹⁴ of everyday life,¹⁵ and scenes very probably taken from drama or other forms of literature (Figs. 3.5–3.7).¹⁶ There are scenes that might seem comic, including

⁹ Cumont 1918.

¹⁰ Carcopino 1926 and 1956.

¹¹ For the extreme view that it was a *specus aestivalis*, with no religious significance whatsoever, Mingazzini 1964; for recent speculative discussion of the religious issues, see Lanzetta 2007.

¹² For the ideas of Roman Pythagoreanism: Carcopino 1926; Ferrero 1955; D'Anna 2008, 25–37.

¹³ See below, 54 and n. 47.

¹⁴ Bendinelli 1926 XXI.1; Carcopino 1926, Pl. X.

¹⁵ Bendinelli 1926 XVII–XVIII; Carcopino 1926, Pl. XII.

¹⁶ See below, 56–60.

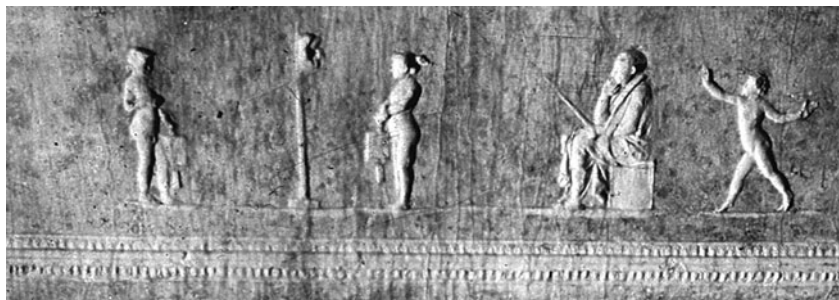


Fig. 3.5. School scene (ceiling of nave) (after Bendinelli 1926, pl. XVII.2).

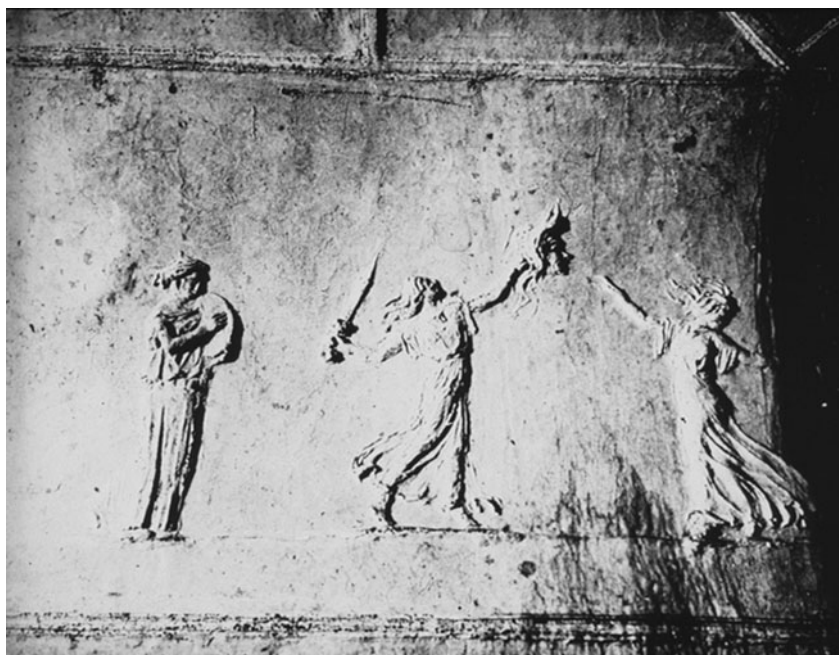


Fig. 3.6. Dance of the Bacchae (ceiling of north aisle) (after Bendinelli 1926, pl. XXIX.2).

the life of pygmies. There are also Medusa Heads,¹⁷ victories,¹⁸ candelabras, and *erotes*. It is a rich and varied scheme, for much of which we have no compelling explanation.¹⁹ Much might be purely

¹⁷ Carcopino 1926, Pl. XX.

¹⁸ Carcopino 1926, Pl. II.

¹⁹ The fullest publication remains that of Bendinelli 1926.



Fig. 3.7. Hermes leading Alcestis(?) to Hades (ceiling of south aisle) (after Bendinelli 1926, pl. XXXVII).

decorative fantasy. However, it is possible to see an overall structure at least in the decoration of the nave, where the lower bands represent scenes of human life, with references to death,²⁰ whereas the topmost band shows mythical or historic figures in phases of transition from one state of being to another.²¹ It is important to see what follows in this context: are we justified in plucking out certain elements of the scheme and looking there for a deeper significance?

Three scenes in particular seem to offer a network of associations that suggest a clue, at least, to the Basilica's meaning. The identification of the three scenes has not been contentious, though their meaning still is. At the centre of the nave's ceiling is a large panel in which a

²⁰ For the offering tables, probably funerary, at lower levels of the scheme, see Bendinelli 1926, cols. 724–6; Goudineau 1967. See also, on the issue of structure, Bastet 1970; Mielsch 1975. For an image of death, see also Fig. 3.7.

²¹ For acute analysis of the general organization of the scheme, see Goudineau 1967, 124–9; Sauron 1994, 607–9.

naked youth holding a jug is whisked away by a winged figure, seemingly upwards through the ceiling (Fig. 3.9). On the ceiling of the apse, a woman represented as a poetess stands poised on the edge of a rocky cliff; opposite her, Apollo holds out a protective arm (Figs. 3.12 and 3.14). Midway between the two, in a separate panel, a figure runs looking backwards with a woman, holding herself rigid, gripped in his arms (Fig. 3.8). The identification of all three seems certain: the kidnapping of Ganymede; Sappho's Leap from the White Rocks of Leucas; the kidnapping of one of the daughters of Leucippus by one of the Dioskouroi. The scenes are connected by the violence of their themes and by the dramatic nature of their representation; but they are also deliberately connected and contrasted by the direction of their movement. Sappho plunges downward; the Dioskouros runs across the ceiling and looks back; Ganymede is being wafted upwards and heavenwards. In the position where one might have looked for a fourth element of the scheme, the whole panel is lost, but it seems a virtual certainty that the missing figure would have been the corresponding scene of the other Dioskouros and the other Leucippid, very probably running across the ceiling in the opposite direction. The following sections—(b) to (e)—will consider in turn the various myths that are here represented or evoked: first, the image of the Dioskouros and the Leucippid; secondly, the figure of 'Ganymede'; thirdly, the figure of Phaon of Lesbos, whose identification is far more contested; and finally, the image of Sappho's Leap, whose identification is more or less certain, but whose significance is far from agreed.

(b) The Dioskouroi and the Leucippids (Fig. 3.8)

The story of the Dioskouroi that lies behind this image is itself a puzzle. They are as their name implies, the sons of Zeus or, in the Roman version, of Iuppiter. But this divine identity is not secure: they have a mortal father too, called Tyndareus and their identities are explored in different ways: sometimes one of them is divine, the other human; sometimes they alternate statuses or share the element of divinity. In this intermediate or ambivalent condition they are famous as the bringers of help to mortals in battle, in peril at sea, or in other dangerous situations.

Their kidnapping of the daughters of Leucippus is one of the famous and much represented incidents of their lives: the two

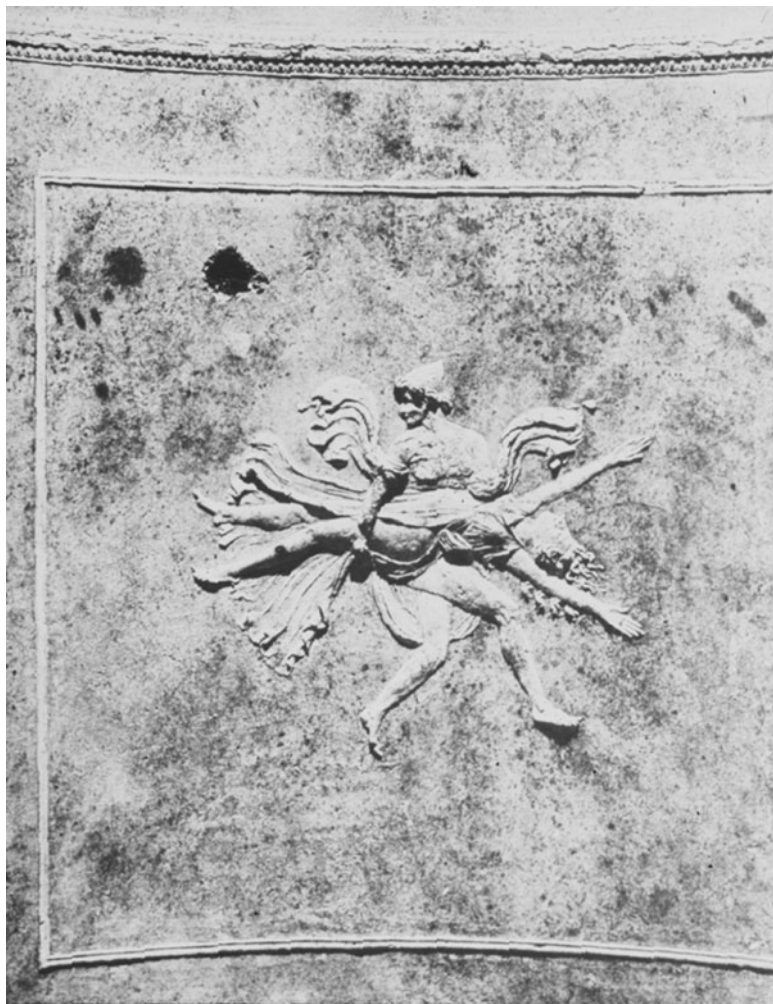


Fig. 3.8. The kidnapping of Leucippus' daughter by one of the Dioskouroi (ceiling of nave) (after Bendinelli 1926, pl. XXI.2).

daughters, Phoebe and Hilaeira, were betrothed to their cousins, Idas and Lynceus. Before the marriages could take place, they were snatched away by the Dioskouroi; fighting followed as the frustrated bridegrooms sought to recover their brides. The twin-ness of the kidnappers and the doubling of the incident make it overwhelmingly probable that a depiction of the second kidnapping has been lost from

the corresponding point on the ceiling. Surviving ancient accounts of the myth vary in their degree of defensiveness about the incident,²² but basically this is an act of power typical of the gods and similar to the Ganymede scene. It leaves us with the question why an apparently unedifying tale should be such a popular theme for art, especially the art of the sarcophagus.²³ At least this indicates kidnapping as one of the main themes of the series. Kidnapping may symbolize the passing of the soul into some other state; most obviously the transmission from life to death, but not necessarily so. We should remember that the names of the characters carry their own significance: Hilaeira means 'mildly shining' and is used of the moon; while Phoebe is (at least originally) connected with Phoebus, the shining light of the sun. So you could say they are moonbeam and sunbeam while the Dioskouroi themselves sometimes appear as the Morning Star and the Evening Star. The theme of kidnapping might be interpreted in terms of cosmic symbolism.

(c) Ganymede (Fig. 3.9)

The more familiar myth of Ganymede continues the theme of kidnapping. In the earliest versions, Ganymede is the astonishingly beautiful son of a Trojan king who is kidnapped either by Zeus himself or by the eagle that represents him. He is carried off to Mount Olympus to serve Zeus, in these very early versions, as his cupbearer. Later, but by the sixth century BC at the latest, the story took on a homosexual aspect.²⁴ The story of a beautiful mortal snatched away by a deity occurs again in the parallel myth of Tithonus, again a beautiful Trojan prince, but this time snatched by the goddess of the dawn, Eos. With Tithonus, but not with Ganymede, there is a tragic outcome because while Zeus allows Tithonus to have immortality, Eos forgets to ask at the same time for agelessness.²⁵ So

²² The main ancient accounts are in Pindar, *Nemean* 10 and in Theocritus, *Idylls* 22.137; Pindar leaves the reason for the gods' actions unexplained, but Theocritus is frankly critical.

²³ See for instance Zanker and Ewald 2004, 332–36 (sarcophagus in Baltimore, c. AD 170); Sichtermann and Koch 1975, 39, pls. 75.1; 79–81.

²⁴ For Ganymede, see Sichtermann 1952; 1988; Nagy 1990, 243–5; *OCD*³ 624 (Griffiths).

²⁵ For Tithonus, see Nagy 1990, 242–8; *OCD*³ 526–7 s.v. Eos (Griffiths).



Fig. 3.9. The kidnapping of Ganymede (ceiling of nave) (after Bendinelli 1926, pl. XXI.1).

Tithonus (like the Sibyl in Petronius)²⁶ lives forever, but forever ageing and eventually shrivelling away into almost nothing.²⁷ Eos, in fact, locks him up and throws away the key. This part of the story does not apply to Ganymede.

Representations of Ganymede being snatched away by the eagle of Zeus are not uncommon and appear, again for instance on sarcophagi, where they may very well seem to symbolize the transition

²⁶ Petronius, *Satyricon* 48.8: '... vidi in ampulla pendere'.

²⁷ Tithonus is locked away in a cupboard, as the Sibyl was left hanging in a bottle.



Fig. 3.10. Paris (wearing the *anaxyrides*) with Helen (ceiling of nave) (after Bendinelli 1926, pl. XXIII.2).

from this world to another.²⁸ Our version here must be referring to the standard type, but normally Ganymede is seen as a boy, sometimes as a shepherd-boy either taken by Iuppiter himself or by the eagle. This version is quite clearly different, the unresisting boy is

²⁸ Sichtermann 1988.

naked and apparently pouring from the jar he carries; and (as is evident from Fig. 3.9) while the wings of what should be an eagle are clearly visible, the birds' legs have been replaced by human legs, clothed in a form of leggings known as *anaxyrides*. In the Roman conception, these are characteristic of Eastern deities or mythical figures, particularly shepherd boys in the area of the Troad.²⁹ So the mystery becomes: who in this representation snatched Ganymede?

A possible candidate here, as was pointed out by Bastet and Vermaseren,³⁰ is the man, or god, Attis, who was beginning in the early imperial period to receive recognition in Rome. Attis is represented at the four corners of the Ganymede group (Fig. 3.11);³¹ he is sometimes represented with wings and he is regularly shown wearing the *anaxyrides*.³² In some versions at least he was a beautiful shepherd-boy on the slopes of Mount Ida.³³ And he, too, was the beloved of a goddess, Cybele, known in Rome, where she had a cult from the early second century BC onwards, as the Mater Idaea, the Mother from Mount Ida.³⁴ So a possible solution to the problem is that we have here a particular version of the Ganymede story in which Attis acts as the agent of Iuppiter in whisking away the beautiful shepherd-boy. It may even be a Roman variant of the myth or one peculiar to this particular site.

Gilles Sauron has developed a more complex theory.³⁵ He accepts the identification of the figure as being, at one level, Ganymede, but not as Iuppiter's cupbearer: there is an alternative tradition identifying Ganymede with the zodiacal sign Aquarius. The scene would therefore show the catasterism of some person, identified with Ganymede, being carried off to be the star sign Aquarius. For Sauron, this figure should be identified as the great man whose tomb this was. As we have seen, the Basilica was constructed on the edge of the family property of the Statilii Tauri,³⁶ whose most distinguished

²⁹ For an example in the Basilica, see Fig. 3.10.

³⁰ Bastet 1970; Vermaseren 1977a, 55–7.

³¹ Two are also visible in Fig. 3.4.

³² For the wings: Vermaseren 1966, 46–7, pls. IV.1, 3; XXIV; XXVI.2, 3. For the *anaxyrides*: Vermaseren 1966, 27 and pl. XVI (altar from Rome); *id.*, 1977b, cat. 305, pls. CLXX and CLXXI (statuette).

³³ He appears already in Theocritus, *Idyll* 20.40, as one of a list of shepherd-boys beloved of goddesses: see, Roller 1999, 180–2.

³⁴ Wiseman 1984; Roller 1999, 299–304.

³⁵ Sauron 1994, 605–30.

³⁶ Above, 40–41.



Fig. 3.11. Mourning Attis, carrying crook; one of four at the corners of the Ganymede scene (detail of Fig. 3.9).

member was T. Statilius Taurus, Augustus' general and second only to Agrippa. He commanded the land army at the battle of Actium, fought not far from Cape Leucas.

Sauron makes a real contribution by introducing a fragment of the *Sphaera* of Nigidius Figulus, who should be the best guide to Pythagorean speculations in the late Republic³⁷ and whose views on the signs of the zodiac are reported by the commentator on Germanicus' *Phaenomena*.³⁸ Sauron emphasizes the story that Aquarius was Aristaeus, the son of Apollo and the nymph Cyrene, the inventor of many benefits to the human race.³⁹ In particular, he assisted mankind by persuading the gods to modify the terrible conditions for men and crops that followed the annual rising of the dog-star; and he won relief through the cooling Etesian Winds. As we shall see below,⁴⁰ this interpretation fits Sauron's theory well, since he emphasizes the connection of Aristaeus with Apollo and takes the story as part of his argument that the whole monument is both an expression of Pythagorean ideas, and also turned to the elevation of Apollo. In Sauron's view, Apollo is the god of Leucas and hence of Sappho's Leap, but simultaneously the Apollo who oversaw the Battle of Actium and became one of the prime deities of the Augustan regime.⁴¹

The commentator's text, however, only reports the identification of Aquarius with Aristaeus as an older view, mentioned, but not endorsed, by Nigidius, whose own view (*Nigidius . . . existimat*) (shared by Germanicus) was that Aquarius was actually Deukalion, of the pair Deukalion and Pyrrha, the only human survivors of the Great Flood, who restored the human race. These two, instructed by Iuppiter, threw stones that all became new humans.⁴² The fragment (perhaps rather précis) goes on to say *ab antiquis quidem dici Aristaeum*. The reporter throughout is presumably still Nigidius:

³⁷ On Nigidius: Ferrero 1955, 287–310; Rawson 1985, 309–12; D'Anna 2008.

³⁸ *Phaenomena* 561–2; at this point in the poem, Germanicus is not following the text of Aratus; for discussion, see Possanza 2004, 169–79; 184–5. See also D'Anna 2008, 99–101.

³⁹ For Aristaeus, see Cook 1984; Sauron 1994, 622–5. There is a single dedication from Pithecusae to Aristaeus as a god: SEG XIV.603; cf. REG 66 (1953), 210; *Bull.épig.* no. 272.

⁴⁰ Below, 53.

⁴¹ Sauron emphasizes (in my view, exaggerates) the significance of Ovid's calling the sea off Cape Leucas, from which Sappho is about to leap, Actiacum as well as Leucadium: Ovid, *Heroides* 15.166. See below p. 58.

⁴² Sauron 1994, 622, n. 355, notes the possibility, but rejects it.

Nigidius Hydrochoea sive Aquarium existimat esse Deucalionem Thessalum, qui maximo cataclysmo fertur relictus cum uxore Pyrrha. Et posteaquam se et uxorem suam in terra relictos sensit, et orbitatis vastitatisque miseratus ab immortalibus precari coepit ut aut et ipsi interirent aut hominum genus restitueretur. Iuppiter responsum ei per sortem indicavit, uti lapides quos ante se repperissent, post se iactarent. Reversi itaque quosquos Deucalion misit, viri fiebant, quot Pyrrha, feminae. Quo pacto rursus hominum genus esse natum, ex quo Graece *λaoί* homines vocarentur. Ab antiquis quidem dici Aristaeum, Apollinis filium, Aquarii nobilitatem possidere . . .

Nigidius thinks that Hydrochoes or Aquarius (that is, the sign of the Zodiac) was the Thessalian Deukalion, who is said to have survived after the great flood together with Pyrrha his wife. When Deukalion realized that he and his wife were abandoned on the earth and was grieved by the loss and desolation, he began to pray to the gods that either they too should perish or the human race be restored. Iuppiter, through the casting of lots, gave him a response: they should throw behind them the stones that they would find in front of them. They turned round, and whichever stones Deukalion threw turned into men and however many stones Pyrrha threw turned into women. In this way, the human race was reborn and that is why the word for people in Greek is *λaoί*. It is asserted by earlier writers (he said) that it was Aristaeus, the son of Apollo, who achieved the distinction of (becoming) Aquarius . . .

Nigidius Figulus, from the *Sphaera*, frg. 99 Swoboda = Frg. 15 Liuzzi
= Schol. Germ. p. 85, 13ff; p. 154, 1ff.

Three points need to be emphasized here: first, that Deukalion as the forefather of the Age after the Flood would provide a very appropriate, if somewhat erudite, metaphor for the New Augustan Age;⁴³ secondly, that Nigidius might well have offered a Pythagorean exegesis of the myth, which we do not know; and, thirdly, that the observer standing on the floor of the Basilica would have needed to know the exegesis in order to interpret the symbolism. The casual observer from below would surely only have been able to identify the kidnapping of Ganymede, nor been able to read the crucial details, which show that a more complex message was intended. Sauron's theory that the figure is simultaneously referring to Apolline myth and to the Battle of Actium seems to me over-loaded and implausible; but the making of the Pythagorean connection may be a real break-through.

⁴³ Not that Nigidius, as a Pompeian, would have approved that idea.

(d) Phaon the ferryman

The figure of Phaon first appears in stories where he is given the quality of becoming supremely attractive to women as a result of the favour of Aphrodite. Either she transforms an old man into a beautiful young one, or she gives him a jar of mysterious perfume to transform him into a creature of irresistible charm.⁴⁴ As Marcel Detienne noted in the *Gardens of Adonis*, Phaon echoes the story of Adonis, also irresistibly beautiful, also connected with perfumes or spices, also the object of the passion of a goddess. In one version of the story, known to Cratinus, who wrote a comedy on the subject, Phaon like Adonis is the goddess's lover whom she hides among the lettuces.⁴⁵ In both cases, if you follow Detienne, the lettuce appears here as a symbol of sexual impotence.⁴⁶ So Phaon is the symbol of beauty and seductiveness, but also of the transformation from old to young and the dangers of doing so, even under the protection of a goddess. In some versions of his story, he is killed by a jealous husband.

Carcopino, as mentioned above, drew attention to a passage of the elder Pliny writing on the subject of the power of plants, in particular the plant *Eryngium* or sea holly.⁴⁷ According to Pliny the plant had roots that took the form of male or female genitals and functioned as an aphrodisiac. This was the magic that caused Sappho to fall so passionately in love with the ferryman.

Ob hoc et Phaonem Lesbium dilectum a Sappho multa circa hoc non Magorum solum vanitate, sed etiam Pythagoricorum.⁴⁸

One problem here is that the repeated word *hoc* (this) implies that it was the plant itself, not the story of Sappho and Phaon, that attracted speculations.⁴⁹ Also, the particular plant does not have white flowers and does not fit the rest of the story as well as Carcopino supposed.⁵⁰

⁴⁴ Berger-Doer 1994.

⁴⁵ Detienne 1977, 68–71.

⁴⁶ Detienne 1977, 59–71.

⁴⁷ Carcopino 1926, 382–3; 1956, 14–23.

⁴⁸ Pliny, *Natural History* 22.20: 'It was because of this (plant) that Phaon of Lesbos was loved by Sappho and much was written about this, not just through the vain speculations of the Magi, but also those of the Pythagoreans'.

⁴⁹ As was pointed out by Latte 1960, 341, n.1.

⁵⁰ André 1958.

It is, of course, still possible that the Pythagoreans were interested both in the plant and the story: but, to put the point at its weakest, Carcopino's argument is now caught in a vicious circle: we cannot both use the evidence of Pliny to explain the religious character of the Sappho scene and the evidence of the Sappho scene to establish the meaning of Pliny's sentence.

A problem from any point of view is the identification and significance of the figure opposite Sappho and behind Apollo in the great stucco of the apse, often identified as Phaon (Figs. 3.12–3.13). In an article published twenty years before the *Gardens of Adonis*, Marcel Detienne offered a new interpretation:⁵¹ he thought of Odysseus, gazing across to Ithaca; there is indeed a Homeric connection for the White Rocks,⁵² and Odysseus himself is described as gazing out to sea while



Fig. 3.12. General view of the apse (after Bendinelli 1926, pl. XI).

⁵¹ Detienne 1958.

⁵² See *Odyssey* 24.11: where *Λευκάδα πέτρην* is one of the points passed by the shades of the suitors on their way to Hades.



Fig. 3.13. The outline of the mourning figure (detail of Fig. 3.12).

trapped by the love of Calypso.⁵³ The implication is that there was no narrative link between the figures, only a connection of signification, through their longing for an altered state. But this separation of the mourning figure from the action of the rest of the scene seems to create an intolerable rupture: the other figures are all dramatically grouped around the leap. It seems an inescapable consequence that the mourning figure must be related, and therefore be the lover for whom the leap is taking place. But if Sappho's grief is caused by Phaon's indifference, why should he be shown as grieving? A possible answer is that in this version of the myth, the passion from which Sappho is escaping transfers itself to Phaon.⁵⁴ If Sappho is here, as elsewhere, to be identified with Aphrodite, then her lover should be destined to suffer the fate of Adonis—or indeed that of Phaon himself.⁵⁵

(e) Sappho's Leap (Figs. 3.12 and 3.14)

The remedy for Sappho involved leaping from the White Rocks of Leucas.⁵⁶ In this case we have, in Ovid's *Heroides*, an account, written

⁵³ At *Odyssey* 5.81–3.

⁵⁴ For this possibility, see also the alternative reading of Ovid, *Heroides* 15, 169–70, on which, see below n. 61.

⁵⁵ Stehle 1996, for the theme of goddesses and their young men.

⁵⁶ For recent discussions of Sappho and the tradition about her, see Williamson 1995; Most 1996; Reynolds 2000 and 2003.



Fig. 3.14. Sappho's leap (detail of Fig. 3.12).

as a letter from Sappho to Phaon, of her feelings at the time of the leap. This poem has been, and still is, doubted as genuinely Ovid's,⁵⁷ but there is not much doubt that it could be a poem of the period and therefore might have been known at the time of the construction of the Basilica. I shall assume it is by Ovid in what follows, though this seems uncertain. At any rate, the story of Sappho as the despised lover of Phaon was not an invention of this poem, but goes back at least to the fourth century BC, where it certainly occurred in Athenian comic plays, including Menander's *Leukadia*.⁵⁸

Where they say that Sappho was the first
Chasing after the proud Phaon
To throw herself through the goading of desire from the rock
That shines from afar.⁵⁹

The basis of the story is that Sappho the great poetess fell in love with Phaon a Lesbian ferryman and, finding him uncaring and unresponsive, attempted the leap from the White Rocks of Leucas for love of him. One puzzle about the story (among many) is that both characters are firmly located (Sappho in reality, Phaon in myth) on Lesbos. Why did the scene of the leap migrate to the other end of the Greek world? The narrative answer in Ovid is that Phaon has abandoned Sappho and gone to Sicily and she is praying for his return. Another puzzle is

⁵⁷ See Fulkerson 2005, 152–8.

⁵⁸ For which, see Menander frg. 258 (Koerte).

⁵⁹ Quoted by Strabo 10.2.9, during his discussion of the island of Leucas.

why Sappho, clearly perceived as a human mortal, should be connected with a mythical figure, as Phaon is elsewhere.

Ovid makes great play in his poem with Sappho's past as a great poet. Her despair at her condition, which drives the poem, is the result of the failure of her art in this great crisis. The power to sing ought to be there to help her persuade Phaon to turn back to her; but her powers have failed and she has no resource in her desperation.⁶⁰ There is not a great deal in the poem that specifically relates to her final leap, but at 163 ff. she is given prophetic advice by a Naiad:

Constitit et dixit: Quoniam non ignibus aequis
 ureris, Ambracia est terra petenda tibi.
 Phoebus ab excelso, quantum patet, aspicit aequor:
 Actiacum populi Leucadiumque vocant.
 hinc se Deucalion Pyrrhae succensus amore
 misit, et illaeso corpore pressit aquas.
 nec mora, versus amor fugit lentissima mersi
 pectora; Deucalion igne levatus erat.⁶¹
 hanc legem locus ille tenet. pete protinus altam
 Leucada nec saxo desiluisse time.

Since you are being burned with unrequited love, you should go to the land of Ambracia; Phoebus Apollo gazes down from on high over the broad waters of the sea known either as the sea of Actium or of Leucas. That was where Deukalion, being consumed with love for Pyrrha, hurled himself down and struck the waters without his body suffering harm. At once, love turned around and fled from the reluctant heart of the man beneath the waters; Deukalion had been set free of his passion. This is the law of that place. So go seek the Leucadian heights and do not fear to leap from the cliffs.

Ovid, *Heroides* 15.163 ff.

So on Ovid's view, the Rocks of Leucas are to serve as a cure for Sappho's passion for the ferryman. Lovers who have made the leap

⁶⁰ Ovid, *Heroides* 15.1–24; cf. Verducci 1985, 136–48.

⁶¹ The alternative version of the text here would read as follows:

nec mora, versus amor figit lentissima Pyrrhae
 pectora; Deucalion igne levatus erat.

'At once love turned around and transfigured the reluctant heart of Pyrrha:
 Deucalion had been set free from his passion'.

But the readings *figit* and *pyrrhae* depend on a second hand in the MS. which seems most likely to be a gloss; so, Dörrie 1975, 159–60.

either die in the attempt or forget their passions and return to their normal state. The precedent for the success of the leap offered by the Naiad is Deukalion and Pyrrha; the story of Deukalion's leap is not known from elsewhere and seems a startling choice of example, if there were other possibilities to choose from.⁶²

At first sight, as Wilamowitz saw, it is tempting to treat the appearance of Deukalion here as no more or less than a typical—indeed very witty—Ovidian joke, as the only remaining man risks death so as to fall out of love with the only woman still left alive.⁶³ It would certainly be quite absurd to try to fit this episode into the myth of Deukalion and Pyrrha as the fore-parents of the human race.⁶⁴ On the other hand, the reappearance here of the very myth evoked by Nigidius and the Ganymede/Aquarius figure can hardly be a coincidence. Ovid's whimsy must imply awareness at least of Nigidius' theories; here, as elsewhere in the poem, it is plausible to think that Ovid knows of the Pythagorean exegesis, and is making fun of it.⁶⁵ The Nigidius fragment very much strengthens this possibility.

To return to Ovid's story: for a time, Sappho seems to be persuaded to adopt the suggestions of the Naiad and even to hope for salvation. She prays for an easy descent from the White Rocks; she appeals to the breezes and to Eros; and she promises that she will dedicate her lyre to Apollo. At this point, she shows some pride in her past achievements: the lyre is worthy of herself and of Apollo; but soon her mood changes and she returns to her theme of Phaon's dominance over her. Phaon, not Apollo, is the god she recognizes.⁶⁶ Bitterly, she laments her fate. So the whole last section of the poem is driven by a sense of failure and doom. Only the last line of the poem suggests a more hopeful attitude towards her forthcoming leap:

⁶² Verducci 1985, 174–7. Photius, drawing on Ptolemaios Chennos, (on whom, *RE* Ptolemaios 88 (A. Dihle)) has a long, if fantastical, list of leapers, some surviving the leap, some not: Cameron (2004, 134–59; on Sappho: 153–4) convincingly treats the whole list as 'bogus'.

⁶³ Wilamowitz 1913: 'Es ist doch genau dasselbe, also hätte Adam die Reise nach Leucas gemacht, weil ihm die Liebe zu Eva, die er doch (aus guten Gründen) nicht lassen konnte, unerträglich geworden war'.

⁶⁴ For similar jokes, but from the ever-inventive Ptolemaios Chennos, see Cameron 2004, 154.

⁶⁵ For this idea, see Sauron 1994, 615; the connection with Deukalion must give it added weight.

⁶⁶ Ovid, *cit.* 187.

Ut mihi Leucadiae fata petantur aquae.⁶⁷

The crucial word here is *fata* (fates): she means that the leap onto rocks and sea will decide her fate one way or the other.

When we turn from the poem to the image in the apse, the difference is very striking (Fig. 3.14). It is true that one or two details might be echoed from the poem: the *amor* that will protect her is flying behind her; and, arguably, the breeze that is swirling the mantle round her head will smooth her fall. But the atmosphere of the scene seems remote from the despair and recrimination of the poem. She is leaping in safety. Her support team include not only the sea god waiting to catch her as soon as her foot steps off the cliff; but Apollo whose gesture is surely one of favour and protection. It is also noticeable that she has not dedicated her lyre to Apollo, after all, but holds it tightly in her hand. The images in the apse cannot simply be a visual representation of Ovid's story. They might have been inspired by the poem or by some similar work at some remove. But these images have their own purposes and they are not Ovid's purposes.

Sappho's position is analogous to the other 'victim' figures of the scheme. She is not being kidnapped like the Leucippids or Ganymede, but she is similarly in transition across a boundary. That could be the boundary between her passion and its resolution; or it could be between life and death; or she could be passing from dream to reality; or from ordinary life into mystical trance. There is even a story that Aphrodite (a goddess to whom Sappho was, of course, much devoted) also leaped from the White Rocks, though for love of Adonis not Phaon; if so, Sappho would in some sense be replaying the part of Aphrodite herself in seeking release from her passion.⁶⁸ She might even, in a poem now lost, have referred to this herself.

It is very tempting here to make a connection between the poem of Sappho herself that has recently been fully restored, so becoming the fourth of her poems to be known to us in full.⁶⁹ Sappho laments her old age and her loss of the qualities she had had when young. But then she takes Tithonus as the decisive mythical image of her poem; he was the man, as mentioned above, loved by a goddess, the Dawn, who

⁶⁷ '... so that the fates of the sea of Leucas should be tested out'.

⁶⁸ Nagy 1990, 229–31; 257–62; but this story too, taken from Ptolemaios Chennos, must itself be very suspect. See Cameron 2004, 154.

⁶⁹ The text below is taken from West 2005, 8 (cf. *TLS* June 24, 2005); the translation here is mine.

sought from Zeus the gift of immortality for him, but forgot to ask for youthfulness. So he lived on, but withered away into nothingness.

You young girls, [devote yourselves] to the lovely gifts
Of the fragrant [Muses] and to the lyre, so clear and tuneful.
[As for me,] old age has already attacked my skin
Once soft; and my hair's turned [white] from black.
My heart's grown heavy, my knees will not support me
That once on a time were fleet for the dance as fawns.
I often grieve for the state I'm in; but what can be done?
That a person should not grow old—that cannot ever be.
For once, it is said, Dawn, the rose-tinted goddess,
Carried Tithonus off to the ends of the earth,
The beautiful youth Tithonus; but soon old age
Seized him too, for all the love of a goddess.⁷⁰

This poem belongs to the set of themes we have been noticing: ageing and youthfulness; mortality and immortality; passion and its death; gods and mortals; the kidnapping of beauty and consequent ugliness.

Sappho's theme here is precisely the impossibility of perpetual youth and the grief associated with inevitable ageing; and concern with ageing and death is certainly a recurrent theme in what survives of her work.⁷¹ Recent papyrus discoveries have led to a lively debate on the question of whether she always accepts a sharp distinction

⁷⁰ [ὑμμες πεδὰ Μοίσαν ἰοκ[ό]λπων κάλα δώρα, παῖδες,
[σπουδάσδετε καὶ τὰ]ν φιλάοιδον λιγύραν χελύνναν·
[ἔμοι δ' ἄπαλον πρίν] ποτ' [ἔ]οντα χροῖα γῆρας ἤδη
[ἐπέλλαβε, λεῦκαι δ' ἐγ] ένοντο τρίχες ἐκ μελαίναν·
βάρυς δέ μ' ὁ [θ]ῦμος πεπότηται, γόνα δ' [ο]ὐ φέροισι,
τὰ δὴ ποτα λαΐψηρ' έον ὄπχησθ' Ἰ'σα νεβρίοισι.
αμέως· ἀλλὰ τί
τὰ <μὲν> στεναχίσδω θαμέως· ἀλλὰ τί κεν ποείην;
ἀγήραον ἄνθρωπον έοντ' οὐ δύνατον γένεσθαι.
καὶ γάρ ποτα Τίθωνον έφαντο βροδόπαχυν Αὔων
ἔρωι φ .. αθεισαν βάμεν' εἰς έσχατα γᾶς φέροισι[ν],
έοντα [κ]άλον καὶ νέον, ἀλλ' αὔτον ὕμωυς έμαρψε
χρόνῳ πόλιον γῆρας, έχ[ο]ντ' ἀθανάταν ἀκοιτιν.

⁷¹ See especially frgs. 55 V; 58, 23–6 V; 94.1 V; 95, 11–13 V, in all of which posthumous fame seems to be the issue; see Bettarini 2008, 27–8.

between life and death, seeing immortality as achieved only through the survival of poetry and music; or whether she is referring to a literal life after death. Even if those who argue for the latter are right (and I am not at all persuaded),⁷² the line between different conceptions of immortality is always a delicate one and we would only be guessing about the view Romans might have taken from her poetry in the early principate. Horace does indeed echo something of the same theme in *Odes* 2.13, where he narrowly misses meeting Sappho in the kingdom of dark Proserpina, still ‘... moaning on about the girls of her people ...’.⁷³ But it is hard to believe that too much can be inferred from this surely light-hearted over-reaction to his narrow escape from the falling tree.⁷⁴

CONCLUSIONS

It will be obvious that there can be no basis for any simple conclusion as to the meaning of the Basilica’s scheme; but that should not lead to the conclusion that there is no meaning to be found; still less that further research would be pointless. The designers were evidently using a network of mythical allusions to explore their ideas. The various myths evoked either directly by the images or indirectly by association have produced for us a cast of intricately related mythical characters:

- Ganymede the boy cupbearer of Zeus/Iuppiter, to be identified as Aquarius and perhaps also as Deukalion
- The Dioskouroi, sons of Zeus/Iuppiter who snatch away the daughters of Leucippus
- Phaon the young/old ferryman, beloved of Sappho, perhaps seen mourning on the White Rocks
- Tithonus the beloved of Dawn, who lives forever, forever ageing
- Adonis, another beloved of Aphrodite, who like Phaon was hidden in the lettuces

⁷² For the possibility that Sappho in another of the new fragments, P. Köln 21351, 1–8, is explicitly referring to personal survival after death, see A. Hardie 2005, 13–32; *contra* West 2005, 1–3; Burzacchini 2007; Bettarini 2008.

⁷³ 2.13.24–5: ‘... querentem Sappho puellis de popularibus’.

⁷⁴ Though the contrast between love-poetry and war-poetry in the following stanza (2.13.29–33) must be echoing Sappho’s frg. 16 V.

- Attis, the beloved of Cybele and apparently the kidnapper of Ganymede

Another possible addition to this list, though not seemingly referred to in the Basilica is Phaethon, yet another beautiful youth snatched away by a goddess and doomed to perish.⁷⁵

We can display the themes evoked as series of oppositions:

Light	Dark
Beauty	Ugliness
Power	Impotence
Perpetual youth	Ageing
Deity	Humanity
Immortality	Mortality
Remembering	Forgetting

All these oppositions were explored and tested in the myths we have looked at. The images at the centre of the Basilica show moments of transition between these poles. They do so strongly in terms of sexuality and violence—the violence of the kidnappings and of Sappho's leap from the rocks; the sexuality of Sappho's love and of the destiny of Ganymede and of the Leucippids. It has been argued that underlying these stories is an archetypal Indo-European myth, in which the love of the goddess, whether as mother or as lover or both at once, is needed to restore the power of the sun-god, who has died when he plunges into the sea and must be restored next day so the new day can begin.⁷⁶ Whatever the truth of that, it is not fanciful to think that we have here a set of complex interlocking meanings that must have been selected in order to express some view of life and death, men and women, gods and goddesses. It cannot be an accident either that three of these myths, involving goddesses and young lovers, are mentioned even in the limited surviving remains of Sappho's own poetry.⁷⁷ There are too many of these inter-connections to be any kind of accident.

What do we learn about the makers of our monument? Clearly the early commentators were taking a simple-minded view when they tried to reduce the debate to a matter of the afterlife. While some of

⁷⁵ For whom, see Nagy 1990.

⁷⁶ So, Nagy 1990; but see above, n. 65.

⁷⁷ For Tithonus, see above, at n. 25. For Adonis, frg. 140 V. For Phaon, frg. 211 V and above, at n. 44.

the myths imply that there can be crossing of the boundary between mortals and gods (Ganymede, the Dioskouroi themselves, Herakles) others have a different message altogether. The lovers of the goddess do not prosper: Tithonus is condemned to eternal decay and diminution; Adonis and Phaon are condemned to impotence, and Attis to actual self-castration. Even when goddesses do beg for the intervention of Zeus on their behalf, things do not always go well. The moral can as easily be that aims such as the defeat of death cannot be achieved even by the gods. Attis, in one version of his story, was killed; Cybele pleaded with the gods that he should return from death, and Zeus to please her did all he could do. The result was that Attis' body remained on earth, free from decay; but he was a nothing but a beautiful corpse, incapable of movement, except that he could *just* move his little finger.⁷⁸ That was the most that even Zeus could do against the fate of mortal man. The story is one of a set in which it is shown that aspirations to defeating death are doomed to failure.

It seems to me inadequate to say either that the scheme could be merely one man's monument with no wider significance, or that it could be only a game played with literary and mythical allusions. There must have been some group of people developing religious ideas on human life and its relationship to the gods, to time, and to futurity. They had money and power at their disposal and their reflections were subtle and veiled. What is most important is the extent to which they were travelling away from the traditional patterns of pagan religious expression in their conceptions of death, life, and the future, while using the language of pagan myth and literature to express their ideas. Whoever they were, they deserve to be taken seriously.

Abbreviations

<i>Bull.épig.</i>	<i>Bulletin épigraphique</i> (annually in <i>Revue des études grecques</i>)
OCD3	Hornblower, S., Spawforth, A. 1996. <i>The Oxford Classical Dictionary</i> , third edn. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
RE	<i>Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i>
REG	<i>Revue des études grecques</i>
SEG	<i>Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum</i>

⁷⁸ For the texts, Pausanias 7.17.10–12; Arnobius, *Adversus nationes* 5.5–7 (both quoted in Hepding 1903, 37–41). For discussion, Hepding 1903, 103–10; Sfameni Gasparro 1985.

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Memory and Its Uses in Judaism and Christianity in the Early Roman Empire: The Portrayal of Abraham

Martin Goodman

For Jews and Christians, as for everyone else in antiquity, shared memories of the distant past played an important role in shaping present identities. Josephus asserted that his work *Contra Apionem*, the earliest unequivocally apologetic Jewish treatise known from antiquity,¹ was composed precisely to counter the alleged slander in the gentile world that Jews had no ancient history.² And the necessity for Christians to claim distant origins in a Mediterranean society that saw longevity as at least partial justification for even the most peculiar behaviour led to their adoption of the pre-Christian history of Israel as their own.³ Only occasionally did a Christian author state defiantly, as did Melito of Sardis, that his religion had begun in the time of Augustus,⁴ and that such recent origins were a good thing because the more distant past is without value.⁵ For the most part, memories were treasured—and then manipulated.

¹ See Goodman 1999, which was my contribution to the volume on apologetics which Simon Price and I edited with Mark Edwards and Chris Rowland. The volume and the seminar on which it was based are testimony to Simon's enthusiasm for interdisciplinary research and his effectiveness at seeing projects through to completion.

² Josephus, *Contra Apionem* 1.2–5.

³ See, in general, Simon 1986.

⁴ Melito, in Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiae* 4.26.7.

⁵ Melito, *Peri Pascha* 292–3.

The methods of preservation of memory had much in common with those of other communities and religions in the early Roman empire. Some stories were encapsulated in traditional behaviour, in the form of liturgy—the narration of the Exodus in the Passover seder and the drama of the crucifixion and resurrection in the celebration of Easter.⁶ The oral transmission of the sayings of wise men can be traced (albeit only tentatively) in the literary sources, in the rabbinic dicta preserved in a tradition which placed high value on the citation of a saying ‘in the name of its teacher’,⁷ and in the collection of the sayings of Jesus (the so-called ‘Q’ source) that were apparently used by the authors of the gospels of Matthew and Luke in their expansion of the narrative in the gospel of Mark.⁸ Both Jews and Christians encapsulated biblical stories in artistic representation. The lack of clearly identifiable Christian art of any kind in the first two centuries, however, should instil caution in taking the images chosen by artists as testimony to the parts of the tradition of most significance to the community which used those images—as opposed to those easiest to portray because of a tradition of such portrayal.⁹ And it is unknowable how many of the (clearly significant) details in the wall paintings of the Dura Europos synagogue, such as the depiction of the salamander apparently shown to Moses by God during the Exodus,¹⁰ would have been appreciated by members of the congregation not assisted (like modern scholars) by knowledge of the contents of contemporary and later rabbinic interpretation of the story.¹¹

None of this differed much from the preservation of memories in other communities. It is likely enough, after all, that many variations of mythical scenes depicted in classical art reflected varied versions of those myths found in literary texts (which we may not happen any more to possess). Where Jews and Christians differed from others was in their belief that their memories of the distant past—that is, the biblical past—had divine authority and therefore could not and

⁶ On the Passover Seder, see Bokser 1984. On the issues involved in analysing trends in the celebration of Easter by Christians in the first centuries, see Bradshaw 2002.

⁷ See Stern 1994.

⁸ On Q, see Tuckett 1996.

⁹ On early Christian art, see Snyder 2003.

¹⁰ Kraeling 1979, 76

¹¹ Exodus Rabbah XV, 28 on Exodus 12:2; cf. Kraeling 1979, 353.

must not be changed. Josephus was explicit in this claim in *Contra Apionem*:

‘It therefore naturally, or rather necessarily, follows (seeing that with us it is not open to everybody to write the records, and that there is no discrepancy in what is written; seeing that, on the contrary, the prophets alone had this privilege, obtaining their knowledge of the most remote and ancient history through the inspiration which they owed to God, and committing to writing a clear account of the events of their own time just as they occurred)—it follows, I say, that we do not possess myriads of inconsistent books, conflicting with each other. Our books, those which are justly accredited, are but two and twenty, and contain the record of all time . . . We have given practical proof of our reverence for our own scriptures. For, although such long ages have now passed, no one has ventured either to add, or remove, or to alter a syllable; and it is an instinct with every Jew, from the day of his birth, to regard them as the decrees of God, to abide by them, and, if need be, cheerfully to die for them. Time and again ere now the sight has been witnessed of prisoners enduring tortures and death in every form in the theatres, rather than utter a single word against the laws and the allied documents.’¹²

And Philo’s account of the divine origin of the Septuagint translation, guaranteed by the miracle that the translators all independently came up with precisely the same wording as they sat in their separate cells on the island of Pharos,¹³ was preserved by Christians,¹⁴ for whom the Septuagint text played a crucial role as the text of the prophecies which had been fulfilled in Jesus.¹⁵ Hence it is possible to compare and contrast different uses of the same memories of the past over quite a brief period by what were to become two different traditions.

Before examining Christian uses of biblical memories in contrast with those of Jews, it is important to recognise the extent and variety of such uses within Judaism.¹⁶ Josephus claimed in his retelling of biblical history in his *Antiquitates Judaicae* that he had changed nothing from the meaning of the original text—‘all is written here as he [Moses] left it; nothing have we added for the sake of embellishment, nothing that has not been bequeathed by Moses,’¹⁷ which was

¹² Josephus, *Contra Apionem* 1. 37–38, 42–43.

¹³ Philo, *De Vita Mosi* 2.37–40.

¹⁴ On the preservation of Philo’s writings, see Sandmel 1979.

¹⁵ On Christian use of the Septuagint, see Hengel 2002.

¹⁶ On the extent of variety within Judaism, see Goodman 2007.

¹⁷ Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae* 4.196.

an outright lie, given the amount of change he incorporated (some of it discussed below), but an interesting lie in the sense that Josephus was evidently unaware to what extent his version of the national myth was an interpretation which moved a long way from the written text.¹⁸ To some extent such changes were part of a well-established Jewish historiographical tradition of interpreting the Jewish past in Greek terms, as Artapanus had written in the second century BCE that Moses 'was called Mousaios by the Greeks' and that 'this Moses became the teacher of Orpheus',¹⁹ and Thallus, whose history, composed at or after the time of Tiberius, was mentioned by Christian authors from Theophilus to Eusebius,²⁰ related Moses to the traditions about Bel, Kronos and Ogygos.²¹ But at times they mask or justify changes within Jewish tradition itself.

The extent of such changes in the late Hellenistic period and the early Roman empire should not be underestimated. New religious practices (such as in the avoidance of pollution and the observance of Sabbath restrictions), new religious ideas (notions about life after death, the names and roles of angels, the transmission of Jewishness through the maternal rather than the paternal line), the cessation of rituals (such as the procedure for testing a suspected adulteress) were introduced into Judaism all the more readily because of the belief that nothing was really being altered.²² Innovation was disguised by selective forgetting of inconvenient parts of the tradition, such as the institution of the redistribution of land at the Jubilee, which seems never to have been put into practice despite an enthusiastic description of its excellence by Josephus,²³ or by the redefining of terms, as in the claim by R. Joshua, as recorded in the Mishnah, that the biblical injunction that 'an Ammonite or a Moabite shall not enter into the assembly of the Lord' no longer applies because 'long ago Sennacherib, King of Assyria, came up and put all the nations in confusion', so that we no longer know who Ammonites and Moabites are.²⁴ And just as the past could be deemed irrelevant to the present if

¹⁸ On Josephus' historiographical aims, see Sterling 1997.

¹⁹ Artapanus, ap. Eusebius *Præparatio evangelica* 9.27.3–4 (see Holladay 1983, 208, 231–2).

²⁰ Schürer 1973–87, vol. 3, pp. 543–5.

²¹ Thallus, ap. Theophilus, *Ad Autolyicum* 3.29 (see Holladay 1983, pp. 356–7, 366–7).

²² Goodman 2008.

²³ On the Jubilee, see Leviticus 25: 8–17; Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae* 3.280–285.

²⁴ m. Yadaim 4:4, interpreting Deuteronomy 23:3.

desired, so it could be called in aid of new customs. So, for instance, the requirement laid by Moses upon the Israelites in the desert of Sinai to pay half a shekel as 'a ransom for their lives to the Lord'²⁵ was understood by most Jews in the late Second Temple period, including Philo, as the justification for the annual tax on which the finances of the sanctuary relied.²⁶ It seems likely that at least some Jews were well aware that this interpretation of the significance of the past for the present was by no means obvious, for a fragmentary text from Qumran questions its validity directly: 'Concerning the ransom: the money of valuation which one gives as ransom for his own person will be half a shekel; only once will he give it in all his days'.²⁷

Early Christians were thus following well established Jewish practice in manipulating the history of the ancient past in order to reflect present concerns. We have already seen that a few Christians occasionally denied altogether the value of traditions about anything before the coming of Christ,²⁸ but far more common was appropriation of the history of Israel as the story of the Church. Already at the end of the first century CE the gentile Christian Clement of Rome wrote to his gentile co-religionists about 'our father Jacob' and 'our fathers' Elijah, Ezekiel, Abraham, Moses and David'.²⁹ Justin Martyr attempted, as Artapanus had done, to combine Greek traditions with those of the Jews, arguing that in human history before the birth of Christ 'they who lived with the *logos* are Christians, even though they have been thought atheists; as, among the Greeks, Socrates and Heraclitus, and people like them; and among the barbarians, Abraham, and Ananias, and Asarias, and Elias'.³⁰ Christians not only preserved the Jewish pseudepigrapha composed in the names of Enoch, Baruch, Ezra and others (which in itself attests to the value they assigned to these texts), but they interpolated Christian material in order to increase their relevance, to the extent that it is now uncertain whether compositions like the Odes of Solomon or the Greek Apocalypse of Baruch were originally produced by Jews or by Christians.³¹ To an outsider like the pagan Celsus in the second

²⁵ Exod. 30:12.

²⁶ Philo, *De Specialibus Legibus* 1.76–8.

²⁷ 4Q 159, Frag. 1.1–6.

²⁸ Above, n.5.

²⁹ 1 Clement 4; 62.2, discussed by Lieu 2004, 78.

³⁰ Justin Martyr, *1 Apologia* 46.

³¹ On this problem, see Kraft 2001; Davila 2005.

century CE it was painfully obvious that for Christians to claim the heritage of the Jews would appear fraudulent to Jews: as Origen reports in his response to Celsus, 'His Jew then says to believers from the Jewish people, 'Quite recently, when we punished this fellow who cheated you, you abandoned the law of your fathers'.³² But Christians did not see it that way. They preferred, like the Jews, to remember the past selectively: Barnabas' history of Israel jumped straight from the episode of the Golden Calf to the coming of Jesus.³³

Such was the background of the central role of Abraham as an imagined figure in the parting of the ways of Pauline gentile Christianity and Judaism. In a passage which was to have a long and important history in Christian self-understanding, Paul wrote to the gentile Christian community in Galatia that they were descendants of Abraham:

'Just as Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness, so, you see, those who believe are the descendants of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, declared the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, 'All the Gentiles shall be blessed in you'. For this reason, those who believe are blessed with Abraham who believed . . . And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.'³⁴

This remarkable claim constitutes Paul's understanding of the beginning of Abraham's call as described in Genesis:

'Now the Lord said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'³⁵

Would any of his fellow Jews have recognised Paul's understanding of the Lord's blessing of Abram? And what would it have meant to gentiles who had not been instructed in the history of the Jews as it was enshrined in scripture to be told that Abraham was their ancestor?³⁶

In later antiquity, from at least the third century CE, rabbinic Jews in Palestine were to understand the story in chapter 12 of Genesis as

³² Origen, *Contra Celsum* 2.4.

³³ Lieu 2004, 80, on *Barnabas* 4.8.

³⁴ Galatians 3:6–9, 29.

³⁵ Genesis 12:1–3.

³⁶ See, in general, Goodman, van Kooten and van Ruiten 2010.

evidence that Abraham was a missionary who made it his business to bring the people of the world 'under the wings of the divine presence',³⁷ but it seems likely that this exegesis, along with the assumption that a mission to convert gentiles is desirable, was formed in reaction to Christian interpretation rather than reflecting Jewish teaching at the time of Paul.³⁸ Certainly Paul's contemporary Philo, despite his concern to emphasise the universal significance of Judaism, made no such claims in the treatise *De Migratione Abrahami*, which was devoted to uncovering the hidden significance of precisely this passage of Genesis: for Philo, this symbolic meaning was the cleansing of man's soul by its removal out of three localities, namely, body, sense-perception, and speech: "land' or 'country' is a symbol of body, 'kindred' of sense-perception, 'father's house' of 'speech'.³⁹ Philo's *De Abrahamo* (which, unlike *De Migratione Abrahami*, would at least have been comprehensible to gentile readers who did not already know the biblical text) described Abraham as a living example of the law of nature which was itself perfectly copied in the law of Moses,⁴⁰ leaving ambiguous, as in the rest of his writings, the relationship of his universal message to the special role of Israel as the people chosen by God.⁴¹

It is uncertain whether any of Philo's works, including the *Expositio* of which *De Abrahamo* was a part, was intended, like Paul's letter, for gentile readers.⁴² A better parallel to the passage in *Galatians* might be expected in the writings of a much younger contemporary, Josephus, who presented all his surviving works as attempts to explain aspects of Jewish history and Judaism to non-Jews.⁴³ It is all the more striking that in *Contra Apionem*, in which Josephus sought to demonstrate to gentiles the antiquity and excellence of the Jewish tradition, the figure of Abraham played no part, unlike that of Moses, about whose perfection as a lawgiver Josephus had much to say.⁴⁴ Josephus had less choice when composing the *Antiquities*, which sought to trace all Jewish history from the origins of the world to 66

³⁷ Sifre Deut. 32; cf. Goodman 1994, 144–5.

³⁸ Goodman 1994, 152.

³⁹ Philo, *De Migratione Abrahami* 1–2.

⁴⁰ Sandmel 1956, 107.

⁴¹ See Birnbaum 1996.

⁴² On Philo's intended audience, see Schürer 1973–87, vol. 3, 817, 888–9.

⁴³ See (for example) Mason 1998.

⁴⁴ For Josephus on Moses, see Feldman 1998, 374–442.

CE.⁴⁵ It was hardly possible to miss out Abraham altogether, and indeed the narrative of his life is given considerable space.⁴⁶ In light of the apologetic strand which runs through the whole historiographical enterprise of the *Antiquities*,⁴⁷ it is worth asking what Josephus chose to emphasise for his gentile readers, and what he chose to omit.⁴⁸

From the start of his account, Josephus portrayed Abraham, 'a man of ready intelligence on all matters, persuasive with his hearers and not mistaken in his inferences',⁴⁹ as a philosopher in the Greek mould, who would be persuaded by the best argument wherever he found it: when he went down to Egypt, he had an open mind—he wanted to hear what the Egyptian priests said about the gods, 'intending, if he found their doctrine more excellent than his own, to conform to it, or else to convert them to a better mind should his own belief prove superior'.⁵⁰ Such willingness to be persuaded comes as a surprise when the reader has been told a little earlier in the narrative that Abraham was the first man to be vouchsafed the insight that 'God, the creator of the universe, is one' and that as a result he had 'determined to reform and change the ideas universally current concerning God'.⁵¹ It comes even more as a surprise that when Abraham decides that the arguments of all the warring parties among the Egyptians 'were idle and contained nothing true', and the Egyptians recognise that he has 'power to convince his hearers on any subject which he undertook to teach', he introduced to Egypt not the revolutionary notion of monotheism but (mundanely) arithmetic and astronomy.⁵²

It seems that Abraham as teacher of monotheism was simply not known among pagan gentiles in Josephus' time. Indeed, he was not much known to gentiles at all. When Josephus tried, in a fashion typical of the *Antiquities*, to demonstrate that ancient non-Jewish writers had mentioned Abraham, he found little to cite. He asserted that the Babylonian historian Berossus referred to 'our father'

⁴⁵ On the structure of the *Antiquities*, see Bilde 1988, 89–91; Mason 2000, xx–xxxvi.

⁴⁶ Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae* 1.150–256.

⁴⁷ Sterling 1997.

⁴⁸ See now the very full and useful commentary by L.H. Feldman in Mason 2000 and my comments in Goodman 2010.

⁴⁹ Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae* 1.154.

⁵⁰ Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae* 1.161.

⁵¹ Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae* 1.155.

⁵² Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae* 1.167–8.

Abraham, but he had to admit that Abraham was not named in the sentence quoted: 'In the tenth generation after the flood, there lived among the Chaldaeans a just man and great and versed in celestial lore'.⁵³ He noted that Hecataeus had written a whole book about Abraham, but he forbore to cite any of it—probably wisely, since the book was almost certainly the Jewish forgery of which Josephus was later to cite excerpts in *Contra Apionem*.⁵⁴ He cited rather more from the fourth book of the *Histories* of Herod's court historian, Nicolaus of Damascus, who had still been alive not so long ago, at the beginning of the first century, but the passage quoted is remarkable less for its confirmation of the Jewish tradition that Abraham left the land of the Chaldees and in due course came with his people to 'the land then called Canaan but now Judaea, where he settled, he and his numerous descendants' than for its information that Abraham on the way from Chaldaea became king in Damascus, which he invaded with an army, before he went to Canaan, and that 'the name of Abram is still celebrated in the region of Damascus, and a village is shown that is called after him 'Abram's abode'.⁵⁵ The Damascus connection was known also to the Romanized Vocontian from Gallia Narbonensis, Pompeius Trogus, a contemporary of Nicolaus, who might be expected to lack Nicolaus' local patriotism. According to Pompeius Trogus, 'the origin of the Jews was from Damascus . . . The name of the city was given by King Damascus . . . After Damascus, Azelus, and then Adores, Abraham, and Israhel were their kings'.⁵⁶ But, Pompeius noted, 'a felicitous progeny of ten sons made Israhel more famous than any of his ancestors'.⁵⁷

Jewish sources available to Josephus assumed that the fame of Abraham was more widely spread in the wider world than his meagre citation of Berossus, Hecataeus and Nicolaus might suggest. Elsewhere in his narrative of Abraham's life he referred to Alexander Polyhistor, who had cited in the mid first century BCE a certain Cleodemus, 'also called Malchus', who had written about Abraham in his history of the Jews⁵⁸—Alexander, who was not called

⁵³ Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae* 1.158.

⁵⁴ Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae* 1.159.

⁵⁵ Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae* 1.159–60.

⁵⁶ Pompeius Trogus, ap. Justin, *Historiae Philippicae* 36. Epitome 2.1, 3.

⁵⁷ *ibid*, *Epitome* 2.4.

⁵⁸ Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae* 1.240.

‘Polyhistor’ for nothing,⁵⁹ was aware that some of what Cleodemus wrote about the Jews was ‘in conformity with the narrative of their lawgiver Moses’,⁶⁰ which suggests that (unlike almost all the rest of the non-Jewish Greek world) Alexander had some acquaintance with the account of Abraham in the Septuagint.⁶¹ Josephus seems to think of Cleodemus as himself having been a gentile historian, but modern scholars have generally (although not unanimously) found this implausible.⁶² According to Josephus, the name of Abraham was sufficiently resonant in Pergamum in the century before Alexander Polyhistor for the Pergamenes to have claimed on a public inscription concerning relations between Pergamum and the Jews under their High Priest John Hyrcanus that ‘in the time of Abraham, who was the father of all Hebrews, our ancestors were their friends, as we find in the public records’,⁶³ although whether any Pergamene contemporaries of Josephus would have recognised as genuine the decree he cited may be doubted.⁶⁴ Similarly dubious would be gentile reactions to the Jewish claim that Jews and Spartans had in Abraham a common ancestor, a claim first found in I Maccabees,⁶⁵ composed probably in the 120s BCE,⁶⁶ and repeated in more elaborate form by Josephus, with additional phrases to demonstrate authenticity: ‘Demoteles, the courier, is bringing this letter to you. The writing is square. The seal is an eagle holding fast a serpent’.⁶⁷

Stories about Abraham which can with more certainty be claimed as circulating among non-Jews by the time of Paul are those which claimed Abraham as ancestor not just of the Jews but also of the Arabs. Josephus himself said a surprising amount about Abraham as ancestor of the Arabs through Ishmael—surprising in the sense that the *Antiquities* was a history specifically of the Jews—noting that the Arabs defer circumcision to the thirteenth year because Ishmael, ‘the founder of their race, born of Abraham’s concubine’, was circumcised

⁵⁹ On Alexander Polyhistor, see Schürer 1973–87, vol. 3, pp. 510–12.

⁶⁰ Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae* 1.240.

⁶¹ On Alexander Polyhistor’s knowledge of Jewish traditions, see Stern 1974–84, vol. 1, pp. 157–64.

⁶² On Cleodemus, see Schürer 1973–87, vol. 3, pp. 526–8; Holladay 1983, 245–7.

⁶³ Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae* 14. 255.

⁶⁴ On this decree, see Pucci Ben Zeev 1998, 400–1, with bibliography ad loc.

⁶⁵ I Maccabees 12:19–23.

⁶⁶ Schwartz 1991.

⁶⁷ Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae* 12.226–7.

at that age,⁶⁸ and that the sons of Ishmael 'occupied the whole country extending from the Euphrates to the Red Sea and called it Nabatene, and it is these who conferred their names on the Arabian nation and its tribes in honour both of their own prowess and of the fame of Abraham'.⁶⁹ But this was no purely Jewish myth, for Apollonius Molon of Alabanda had written in the first century BCE, in what Eusebius called 'the invective against the Jews',⁷⁰ that three generations after the flood

'Abraam was born . . . This man was wise and eagerly went to the desert. He took two wives, one a local one and a relative of his, and the other an Egyptian handmaid. The Egyptian woman bore him twelve sons, who emigrated to Arabia and divided the country between themselves; they were the first to be kings over the inhabitants of that country. Consequently, till our time there are twelve kings among the Arabs who are namesakes of the sons of Abraam.'⁷¹

The connection between Abraham and Arabs was evidently known in the wider world and not just among Jews. Less certain is how many non-Jews would have recognised the territorial assertions implicit in the passage of Cleodemus whose citation by Alexander Polyhistor has already been mentioned. Cleodemus made much of the later careers of the children of Abraham by his wife Keturah, whom, according to the biblical account, Abraham married after the death of Sarah.⁷² Alexander Polyhistor will therefore have been aware of Cleodemus' claim that, of Keturah's sons, 'Sures gave his name to Assyria, and the two others, Japhras and Aphas, gave their names to the city of Aphra and the country of Africa',⁷³ but how many other non-Jews knew such stories or the alleged participation of these two last of Abraham's sons in the campaigns of Heracles against Libya and Antaeus,⁷⁴ is unknown.

What all this suggests is that when Paul spoke to the Galatians about Abraham, he was operating with a more or less blank slate. Pagans knew of Abraham as a wise figure from the distant past and as

⁶⁸ Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae* 1.214.

⁶⁹ Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae* 1.221.

⁷⁰ Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* 9.19.1.

⁷¹ Apollonius Molon, ap. Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* 9.19.2. See Millar 1993.

⁷² Genesis 25:1–4.

⁷³ Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae* 1.241.

⁷⁴ Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae* 1.241.

an ancestor of Jews and Arabs, but that was more or less all they knew.⁷⁵ It is a curious fact that the monumental buildings erected, apparently by Herod, at the sites in Hebron and Mamre associated with the patriarchs, and especially Abraham, do not seem to have been recalled as significant memorials to Abraham by non-Jews—perhaps for lack of appropriate inscriptions to indicate their function.⁷⁶ It is worth comparing this lack of information in the gentile world about Abraham to the plentiful information which circulated about Moses, the lawgiver of the Jews.⁷⁷ When it came to Abraham, Paul could make what he liked for his gentile congregation of the biblical story, which was exactly what he proceeded to do in the epistle to the Galatians, with his assertion that Abraham's sons by Sarah and Hagar were an allegory of the two covenants, of which one, the offspring of Hagar, was 'the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the other woman corresponds to the Jerusalem above; she is free, and she is our mother'.⁷⁸ By the time of Justin Martyr in the mid second century, the openly allegorical interpretation presented here by Paul had given way to a new interpretation of history in which the call to Abraham to leave the land where he dwelt has become the same call which Christ has made to all Christians, so that 'we shall inherit the Holy Land together with Abraham, receiving our inheritance for all eternity, because by our similar faith we have become children of Abraham'.⁷⁹ The memory of Abraham's call was to be much used as part of the remembered past of the Church.⁸⁰

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⁷⁵ Siker 1987.

⁷⁶ On the buildings at these sites, apparently erected by Herod, see Roller 1998, 162–4, 186–7.

⁷⁷ Gager 1972.

⁷⁸ Galatians 4:24–6.

⁷⁹ Justin, *Dialogus cum Tryphone* 119.5.

⁸⁰ On Abraham in later Christianity, see Goodman, van Kooten and Ruiten 2010, pp. 291–474.

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Statues in the Temples of Pompeii

*Combinations of Gods, Local Definition of Cults, and the Memory of the City*¹

William Van Andringa

According to Cicero (*In Verrem* IV, 48–52), in the temple of Ceres at Enna in Sicily, there stood a marble statue of the goddess. It was evidently the cult statue and was accompanied by another, older effigy in bronze. Two other images of Ceres, situated in front of the temple, completed this display: they were works of art offered to the goddess of the sanctuary. Cicero further notes that when Verres' actions damaged the integrity of this statuary ensemble—he stole one of the bronze statues and the Victory carried by one of the figures located in the courtyard—his act provoked the anger of the city's inhabitants. They complained that by interfering with the statues, Verres had harmed Ceres' power of action (*numen*), the venerability of her rituals (*sacra*), and the sacred character (*religio*) of her sanctuary. This episode reveals the extent to which the images found in such sanctuaries, whose various combinations were particular to each place of worship (and participated in the very definition of the cult), are rich in meaning. The statue types, as well as their attributes, symbolized the divinity's powers of action. The age of the images exhibited in the

¹ I will never forget Simon Price's hospitality during my two stays in Oxford. His teaching cleared away many of the obstacles that were preventing me from properly understanding the ancient city and its gods.

place of worship was an indicator of the age of the cult, and thus of its venerable character. And the degree of variety present in each group of statues undoubtedly testified to the renown of the god, though it was also a clear demonstration of the specificity of each cult—forged by the complicated histories of the gods (myths) and by the men who oversaw the ceremonies and made offerings.² There were thousands of statues of Ceres, of Apollo, of Venus, but these gods were presented differently from one city to another, from one place to another. And this was done not only through the organization of specific rituals or through distinctive spatial configurations,³ but also through the positioning of the statues, and, more generally, through the *ornamenta* which were part of the cult's local history.

In trying to reconstruct the meaning of such combinations of divine representations in sanctuaries, we do face, however, important methodological problems. Firstly, very few texts describe the interior of places of worship (even Pausanias, when describing statues, rarely gives specific details of their location within the sanctuaries). Secondly, archaeology only rarely allows us to reconstruct the exact nature of the statuary groups in temples.⁴ Most sites were looted and damaged at the time of their closure. One should add that such acts also occurred when the sanctuaries were still in use. The record of Verres' lootings illustrates the latter point well.

At Pompeii, however, the conditions are fulfilled—at least in certain sanctuaries—which allow us to reflect on the meaning of the statuary groups which were discovered, as well as on their role in defining a cult.⁵ This is true in spite of the very incomplete character of the evidence, caused by intensive and organized looting of materials which took place at the site after the eruption of Vesuvius.⁶ We are not yet able to date precisely when this looting occurred, but the ruins

² One could dedicate one's own image to the divinity, as well as statues of other gods; hence, for example, the offering made by a private individual of statues of Minerva, Apollo, Spes, and Isityche to Fortuna Primigenia at Praeneste: *CIL* XIV, 2867.

³ See the reflections of Scheid 1995.

⁴ On this point, Asia Minor provides an exceptional case study, for it was here that Simon Price was able to define precisely the place of the emperors in the temples of the gods: see Price 1984.

⁵ For a brief overview of the statues discovered in the different sanctuaries at Pompeii, see Döhl and Zanker 1979.

⁶ See Van Andringa 2009, XX–XXII.

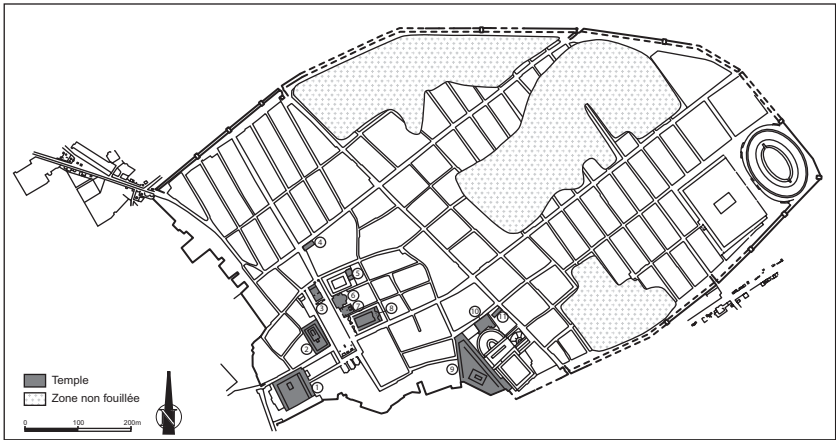


Fig. 5.1. Map of Pompeii and location of public sanctuaries (DAO: Carole Chevalier): 1. Temple of Venus, 2. Temple of Apollo, 3. Capitol, 4. Temple of Fortuna Augusta, 5. Market chapels, 6. Sanctuary of the *domus divina?* (or *Augusteum?*), 7. *Templum Augusti*, 8. Porticos of Concordia Augusta and Pietas, 9. Temple of Minerva/Hercules, 10. Temple of Isis, 11. Temple of Aesculapius.

of the forum give us an idea of its magnitude and its systematic character. There is however no doubt that it began after the catastrophe, particularly at the highest points of the site, where the tops of buildings would have protruded through the surface after the pyroclastic flows had swept through the city. This was certainly true of the Capitol building, which overlooked the entire forum, as well as of the temple of Minerva/Hercules, also positioned in an elevated part of the town (Fig. 5.1). This is something that the written records of the excavations have sometimes also clearly highlighted, as they indicate that only a small amount of earth covered the remains:

Si sono trovate alcune vestigia dello stesso tempio nella sommità della gradazione, ma così distrutte che poco o nulla se ne può ricavare, non essendo restata in piedi che la sola ara per motivo che essendo coperto tal luogo da pochissima terra, è stato distrutto dai paesani nel piantare gli alberi sopra.

Some remains of the same temple have been found at the top of the slope [the temple in question is the Doric temple of the ‘Triangular Forum’], but so badly destroyed that little or nothing of it can be recovered. The only thing which remained standing was an altar—the reason for this being that the whole place was covered with so little earth

that it was destroyed by peasants when they planted trees on it. (*PAH* I, 1, 211)

Despite this looting, some sanctuaries were only partially pillaged, and this enables us to reconstruct part of their arrangement at the time of the eruption and to reflect on the nature of the statuary groups on display.

COLLAPSED GODS: THE DISCOVERY OF THE STATUES

Discovered in 1764, the sanctuary of Isis has yielded a number of statuary elements whose original position can be reconstructed thanks to excavation notebooks (Fig. 5.2). A marble herm with a bronze portrait head of Caius Norbanus Sorex (Fig. 5.3) was discovered in the south-west corner of the portico (16 February 1765, *PAH* I, 1, 165–6). He is described as a supporting actor and *magister* of the *pagus Augustus Felix Suburbanus* (MNN 4991, Ruesch 929, *CIL* X, 814). A white marble female head, almost life-size, as well as her hands and fragments of her arms (MNN 6285, Ruesch 313) were found at the site called the ‘sacrarium’ (16 November 1765, *PAH* I, 1, 180). Two additional heads (19 July 1766, *PAH* I, 1, 190) were also discovered at the same site (MNN 6284, 6289; Ruesch 311, 306). In the open niche in the temple’s back wall (8 February 1766, *PAH* I, 1, 184) stood a statue of Bacchus (MNN 6312, Ruesch 927). The plinth on which it rested indicated that the effigy had been set up *p(ecunia) s(ua)* by *N(umerius) Popidius Ampliatus* (*CIL* X, 847), who restored the temple for his six-year-old son. In the north-east corner of the portico (4 March 1766, *PAH* I, 1, 186) was located a marble statue of Isis holding a sistrum (MNN 976, Ruesch 928, Fig. 5.4). The base bears an inscription stating that the statue was erected by Lucius Caecilius Phoebus on a site conceded to him by decurial decree (*CIL* X, 849). Nearby, in the middle of the northern arch of the arcade separating the *ekklesiasterion* from the portico, the marble head, hands, and feet of a woman can be identified as an acrolith of Isis (MNN 6290, Ruesch 911).

In the same district, behind the theatre, was uncovered the temple said to be of ‘Zeus Melichios’, but which is now convincingly

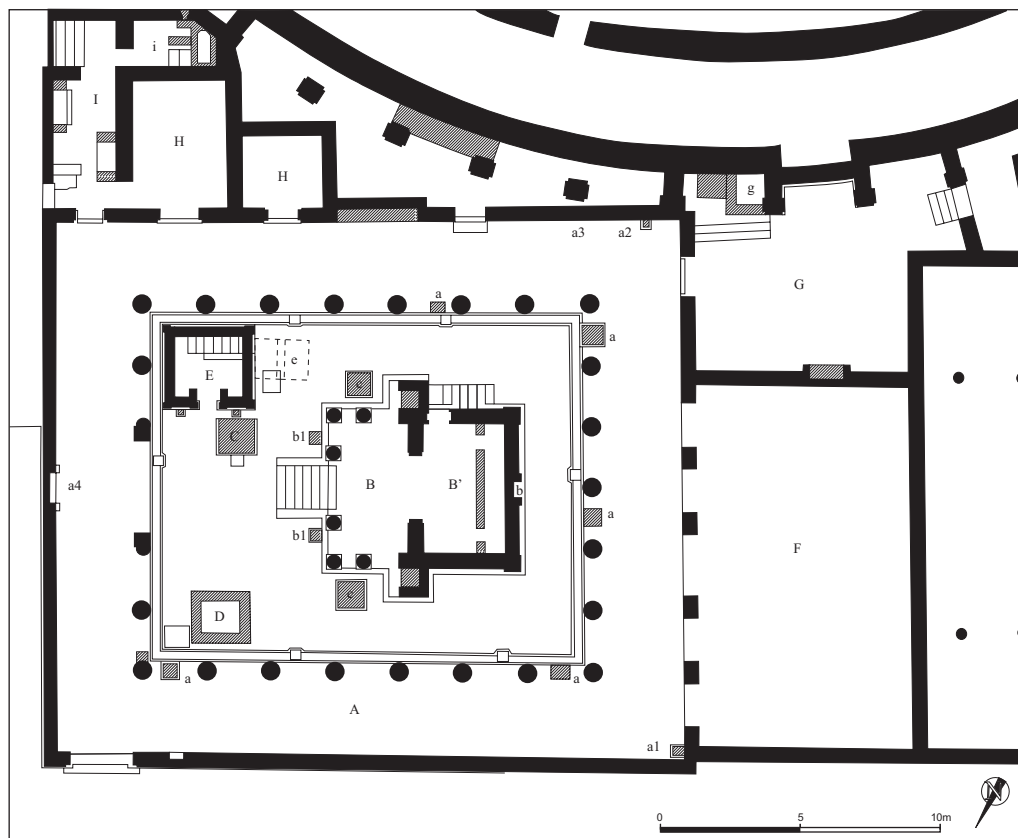


Fig. 5.2. Map of the sanctuary of Isis and the location of its constitutive parts (DAO: Carole Chevalier): A. porticos, a. bases of statues, a1. statue of Isis, a2. statue of Venus, a3. bust of Norbanus Sorex, a4. niche featuring painting of Harpokrates, B. temple, B'. *cella* with podium for the cult statue, b. niche with statue of Bacchus, b1. pillars inscribed with hieroglyphics, C. main altar, c. secondary altars, D. pit used for offerings, E. ablutions room, e. underground pool, F. meeting room (*ekklesiasterion*), G. initiation room, g. pool, H. *Isiaki* room, I. kitchen.

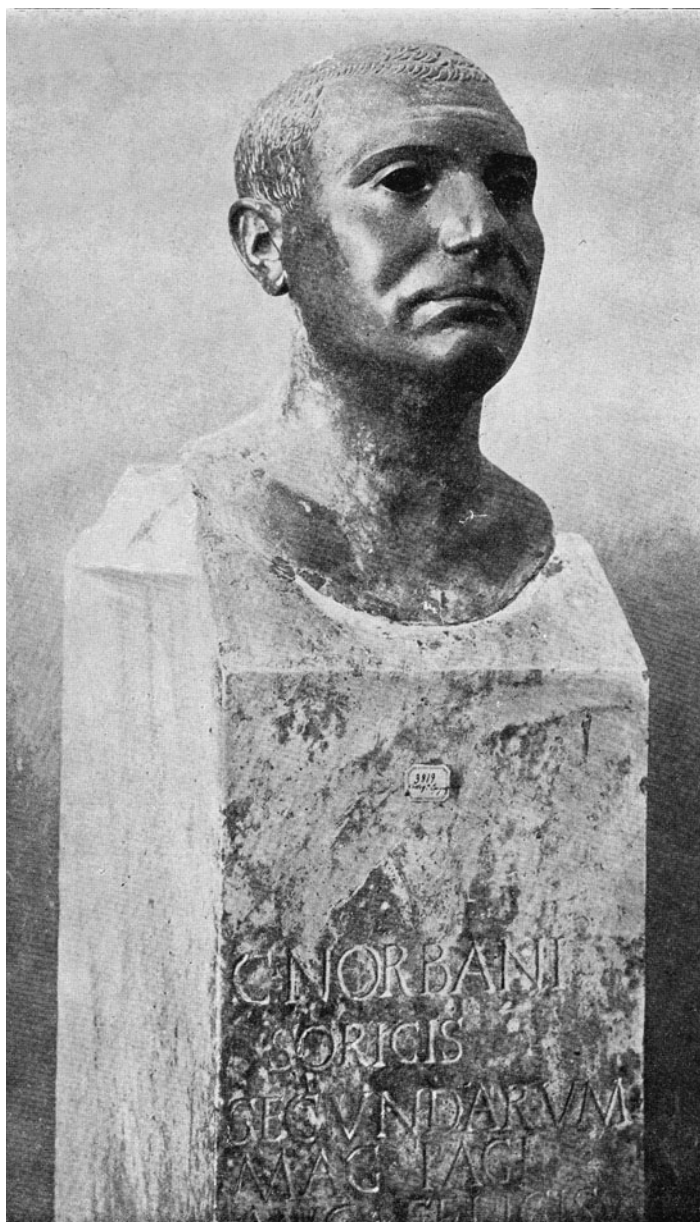


Fig. 5.3. Portrait of C. Norbanus Sorex discovered in the temple of Isis (from Weichardt 1897, p. 112, fig. 145).



Fig. 5.4. Statue of Isis (from De Caro 2006, p. 113).

attributed to Aesculapius.⁷ On the podium of the *cella*, excavations have revealed three terracotta effigies representing Aesculapius, probably Hygieia,⁸ and a helmeted female bust wearing a shield (an *imago*?) identified as Minerva and more recently, by Marcattili, as Mâ-Bellona (MNN 22573, 22574, 22575; Ruesch 943–5; here Figs. 5.5–5.7). Below (16 June 1798, *PAH* I, 2, 71), in the room looking out onto the small courtyard where the altar was located, a small statue of Mercury was found, holding a bag and a caduceus and standing on a base (MNN 5209).

The Capitol, towering above the forum, was first excavated in 1817 (11 January, *PAH* I, 3, 188). An inventory lists the wide assortment of sculptures found in the temple's *cella*. We find mentioned at the top of the list due grandi piedi ed un braccio colla mano destra staccato [two large feet and an arm with the right hand detached]. According to the report, the feet are clad in imperial sandals and the hand holds a sceptre (or another object): la scoltora di tali frammenti è ottima e di un carattere robusto per le sue grandiose e benintese parti. [The sculptural quality of these fragments is excellent and suitably robust for its grandiose and well-conceived parts.] Found in the same place (18 January 1817, *PAH* I, 3, 190; III, 8) were the fragmented base of a statue bearing a dedication to Jupiter (*CIL* X, 797) and a marble pedestal for a statue dedicated by one Sp(urius) Turranius Proculus Gellianus (*CIL* X, 797). We also find in this catalogue (21 January) a huge marble bust, without a head, but with a figure sketched in relief on its back (MNN 6260, Ruesch 941),⁹ a huge, bearded 'alabaster head' of 'Jupiter' (MNN 6266, Ruesch 939), a huge marble 'mask' (belonging to a head of Juno?, MNN 6264, Ruesch 942), an

⁷ For a comprehensive study of the literature, see Marcattili 2006.

⁸ Despite the attempt of Marcattili 2006, 50 ff., to identify the effigy as Venus/Mater Magna, it seems to me more probable and above all simpler to say that it represents Hygieia—especially if it is admitted that this Pompeian example is very close to existing examples of Hygieia: compare *LIMC* V, 2, 383 (nos. 24, 28, and 29), and 386 (no. 69, for the head). The goddess certainly does not have her traditional attributes, the drinking cup and the serpent (the object that she holds in her left hand has disappeared), but it is well known that the iconography of this goddess, who was absent from mythology, fluctuated; see the commentaries of F. Croissant, *LIMC* V, 1, 568 ff.

⁹ The colossal nature of the bust might make one think that it was the cult statue of Jupiter, though this interpretation has been called into question by P. Zanker, in Döhl and Zanker 1979, 182.



Fig. 5.5. Terracotta statue of Aesculapius (from Weichardt 1897, p. 118, fig. 151).



Fig. 5.6. Terracotta statue of Hygieia (from Weichardt 1897, p. 119, fig. 152).



Fig. 5.7. Terracotta bust of Minerva or Virtus (from Weichardt 1897, p. 120, fig. 153).

unidentified female head, a small male head, and various fragments of hands, arms, heads, and togati.¹⁰

On 25 January (*PAH* I, 3, 191; III, 9), a huge marble head representing an ‘old man’ (MNN 6260, Ruesch 296), other fragments of statues, and a bronze group composed ‘of an old man, a woman with

¹⁰ In the absence of any comprehensive study of these fragments, the present text simply follows the listing of the excavators.

a putto in her arms, and the legs of a third figure' (MNN 5371, Ruesch 1497) were removed from one of the three rooms excavated under the podium of the cult statues.

Other marble fragments ('a great storehouse of marble') were discovered in the underground rooms of the temple's podium, in particular three hands (two life-size, the other bigger). One of these hands, carrying ears of wheat, should have belonged to a figure of Ceres (4 March 1818, *PAH* I, 3, 199; III, 13).

On 26 February (*PAH* III, 9), a marble statue standing on its base was discovered in the temple of Apollo, which was at the time identified as a sanctuary of Venus (Ruesch 950). Two bronze arms belonging to a woman firing an arrow were recovered from the same building. The following items were catalogued in the southern portico (25 March 1817, *PAH* III, 1):

- A marble base with putti sculpted in bas-relief bearing the inscription: *T(. . .) D(. . .) ? / v(otum) s(olvit) / M(arcus) Fabius Secundus / permissu aedil(ium) / A(uli) Hordioni Proculi / Ti(beri) Iuli Rufi* (CIL X, 801).
- A bronze bust of Diana (MNN 4895, Ruesch 947; here Fig. 5.8).¹¹
- Two fragmentary marble statues representing Venus and Hermaphroditus (MNN 6294, 6352; Ruesch 948, 949; here Figs. 5.9–5.10).

Finally, herms of Mercury and Maia (MNN 187, Ruesch 950, Figs. 5.12–5.13) were discovered in the eastern portico. The bronze statue of Apollo (Fig. 5.11) was found outside the temple but the original location is probably the Sanctuary of Apollo.¹²

On 6 August (*PAH* I, 3, 210), the excavators found an incomplete, acephalous female statue in marble in another building overlooking the forum, the building of Eumachia: its head and right hand were missing, and its left hand was detached. The figure carried an attribute, a horn of plenty, that enabled the excavators to identify it as the goddess Concordia (MNN 6362, Ruesch 1002).¹³ A marble herm was also discovered (17 March 1820, *PAH* II, 18–19; III, 23) inscribed

¹¹ Was there a single bronze statue of Diana now in several fragments (the arms holding the bow and the bust), or are the fragments from two statues of Diana, as suggested by Döhl and Zanker 1979, 182? It seems to me that the first solution is more likely.

¹² An identical work to the Mercury was displayed in the palaestra of the thermal baths at Stabiae. For the location of the bronze statue of Apollo see Grimaldi 2009.

¹³ Grimaldi 2003.



Fig. 5.8. Bronze bust of Diana (from Weichardt 1897, p. 42, fig. 50).

with the name of C. Norbanus Sorex again, but here without its bronze portrait (MNN 3850, *CIL* X, 814).

Two beautiful marble statues were discovered (identified at the time of their discovery as Livius and Drusus) in the central chapel

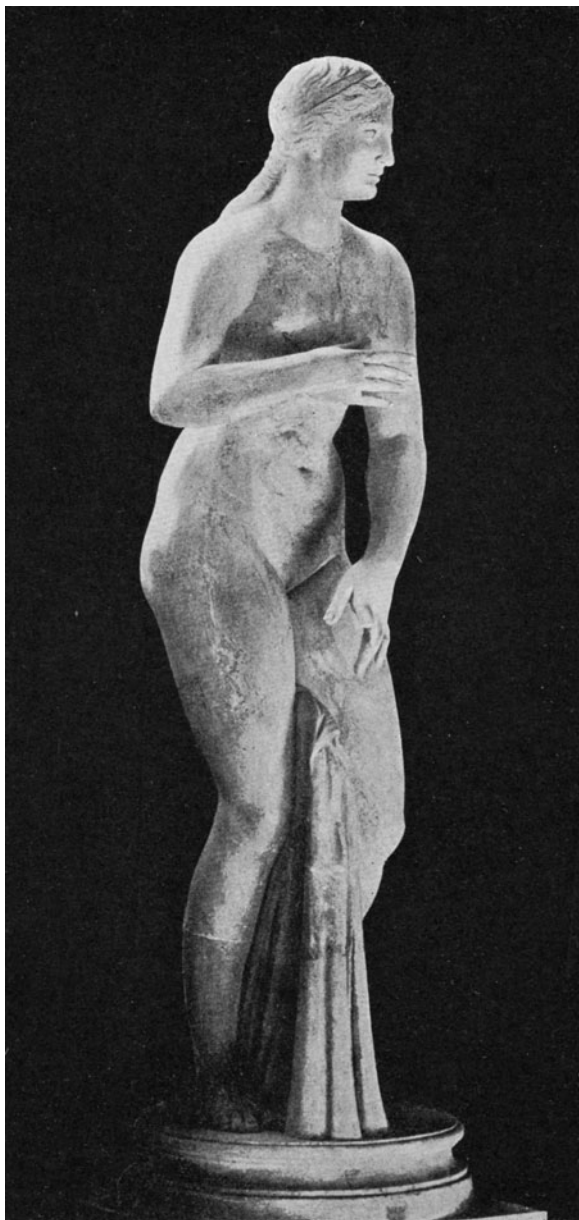


Fig. 5.9. Marble statue of Venus (from Weichardt 1897, p. 43, fig. 52).

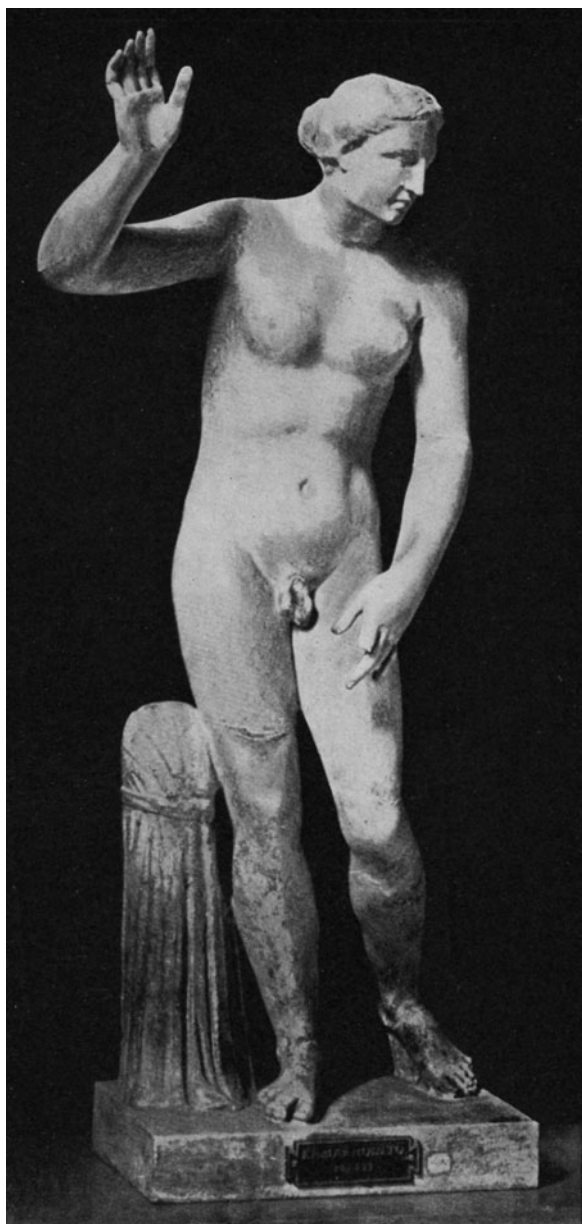


Fig. 5.10. Marble statue of Hermaphroditus (from Weichardt 1897, p. 44, fig. 53).

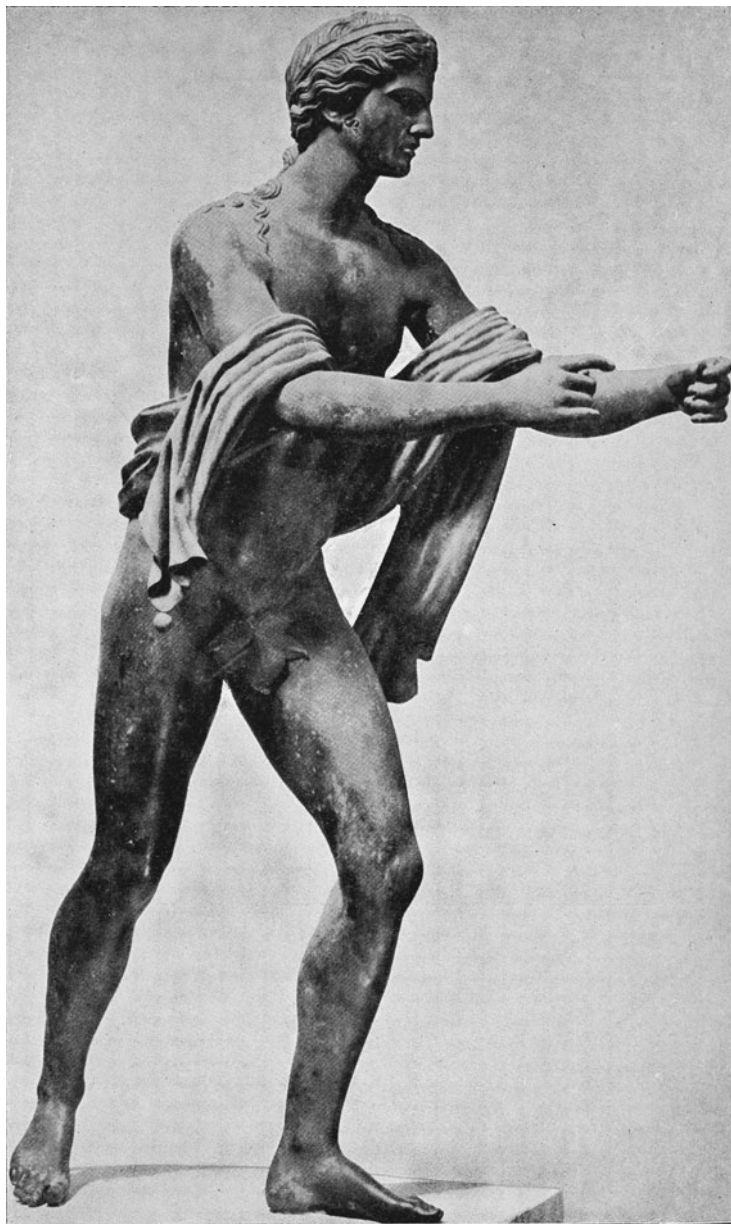


Fig. 5.11. Bronze statue of Apollo (from Weichardt 1897, p. 41, fig. 48).

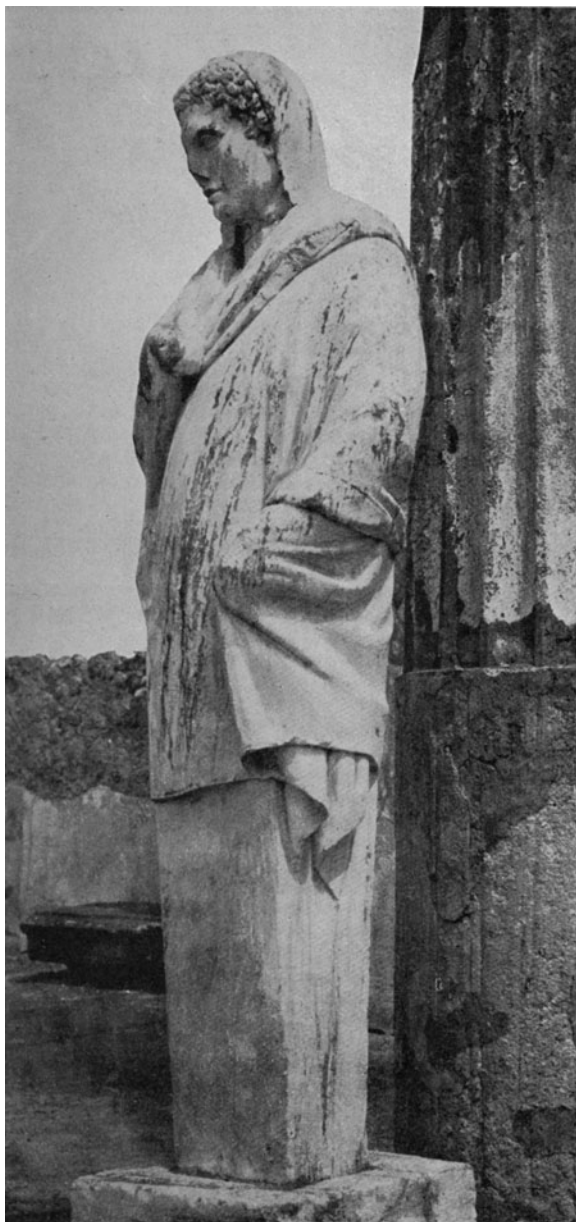


Fig. 5.12. Herm of Mercury (from Weichardt 1897, p. 40, fig. 46).

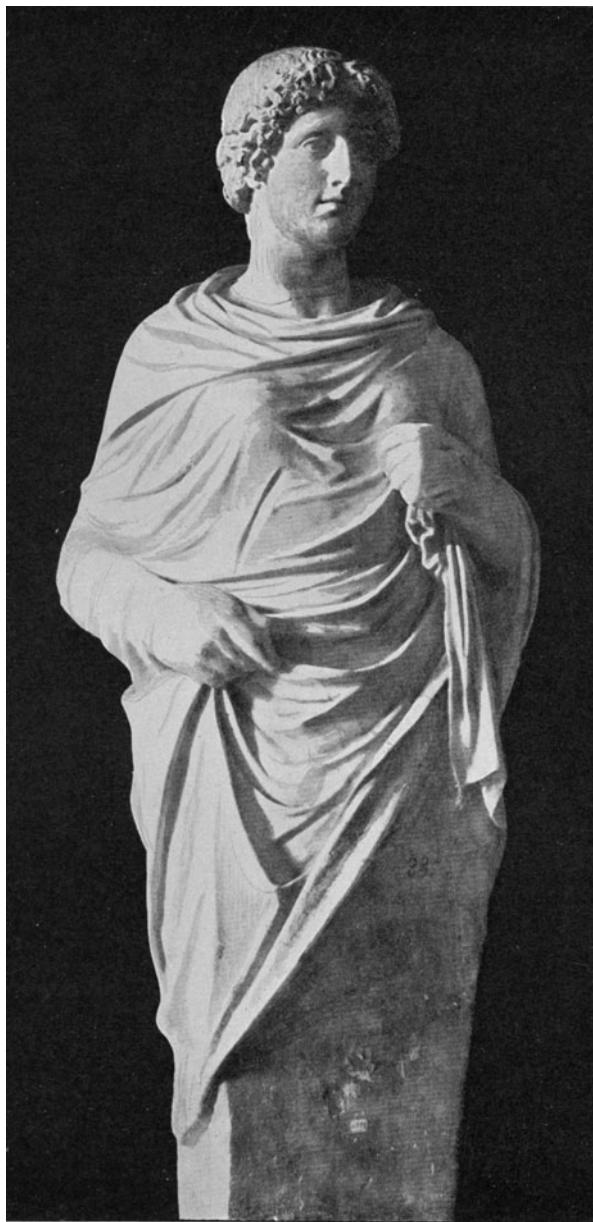


Fig. 5.13. Herm of Maia (from Weichardt 1897, p. 40, fig. 47).

of the *macellum*. The female statue shows a crowned priestess carrying incense and a *patera*; the male statue, armless, wears a Greek cloak¹⁴ (MNN 6041, 6044; Ruesch 998, 997). Finally, according to the inventory, there also was an arm holding a globe, probably belonging to an emperor.

On 20 February 1824 (PAH II, 95; III, 48), the *cella* of the temple of Fortuna Augusta was cleared and this led to the discovery of a life-size marble statue which had fallen from the second niche on the left. The female statue was dressed in a sacerdotal cloak and wore sandals. Her face was missing, also a hand and the end of her left foot. On 23 February a range of statuary fragments were inventoried here, along with four inscriptions:

- Two statue bases erected by the ministers of the goddess (CIL X, 824 and 825),
- A marble architrave bearing the dedication of the temple (CIL X, 820),
- The right fragment of a dedication to Augustus *parens patriae* (CIL X, 823),
- A fragment of a marble plaque bearing the name of the benefactor (CIL X, 822).

On 5 March (PAH II, 97) a statue 'of a consul' was found (Fig. 5.14). It was a togatus probably representing the temple's benefactor, M. Tullius. Its right hand was found detached.

Two conclusions can be drawn from this short inventory. Firstly, there is a great deal of variety in the artistic quality, the condition of preservation, and the age of the statues which were discovered. Whereas in the temple of Aesculapius the old statues of the third and second centuries BC were still in place in AD 79, the statuary of the temple of Isis had been partly renovated during both the imperial era and the later restoration of AD 62. At the Capitol, the fragments of *ornamenta* which were piled up in the underground passages probably date from the sanctuary's former display. The building's display was destroyed by the earthquake of AD 62 and later replaced at the time of the building's reconstruction. The fragments were stored in the underground rooms of the podium because they were considered

¹⁴ See Stefani 2006 and Cristelli 2008.



Fig. 5.14. Marble statue attributed to M. Tullius (photograph by the author, FORTUNA archaeological mission).

to be the property of the divinity.¹⁵ A likely explanation for the broken statues and fragments of marble found in the *cella* is that they belonged to some sort of construction site occupied by looters who camped out in the temple after the eruption. The second conclusion concerns the very incomplete character of the observations: except in some rare cases (the temple of Isis, for example), the exact location of the statues and fragments is never recorded, and this makes any attempt to reconstruct the statuary groups which were excavated in various temples all the more complicated.

PLACING THE GODS BACK ON THEIR PEDESTALS: THE STATUES IN THE SANCTUARIES

Despite the scarcity of the available information, it is possible to identify the original positions of some of the images. Two spaces, which do not have the same status—the *cella* of the temple, a domain reserved for the divinity and the cult statue,¹⁶ and the porticos, reserved for humans—were privileged areas for the display of statues.¹⁷ Altars were mainly found in courtyards.

The position of the statues in the *cella* of the temples of Aesculapius and Fortuna Augusta can be reconstructed with some degree of precision. The temple said to be of Zeus Meilichios is now better attributed to Aesculapius, and the two full-size statues found on the podium of the *cella* (Figs. 5.5–5.6) can in fact be identified as Aesculapius and Hygieia¹⁸ (this was already proposed by Winckelmann in the eighteenth century). There is no longer any reason to imagine that the Capitoline Triad stood inside the temple. It was thought to have been displayed there after the earthquake of AD 62.¹⁹ Whatever was

¹⁵ On storage of *signa vetera* in underground passages of the Capitol of Rome, see Aulus Gellius 2.10.3.

¹⁶ Servius, on Vergil, *Georgics* 3.16, distinguishes the statue *in medio* (the principal statue which in some sense participates in the definition of the sacred space) from the *ornamenta*; cf. Estienne 2001, 190.

¹⁷ See the remarks of Scheid 1995.

¹⁸ Cf. Marcattili 2006.

¹⁹ This hypothesis was proposed by Maiuri 1942, at a time when it was believed that on the eve of the eruption the town had not yet recovered from the ruins caused by the earthquake of 62.

the true state of the Capitol—whether it was reconstructed wholly or only in part in 79—the Capitoline gods continued to reside in their temple at the forum. In the sanctuary of Aesculapius, the terracotta cult statues stood as intended on the raised podium in the temple's *cella*. These statues were, moreover, very old, which *de facto* reinforced the cult's venerability. The sanctuary's titular couple, Aesculapius and Hygieia, were accompanied by a third divinity, a goddess represented through the intermediary of a bust, an *imago*, also in terracotta. The goddess's attributes, a helmet and a shield, enable us to identify her as Minerva (Fig. 5.7). The reason for this goddess's presence is linked to the sanctuary of Aesculapius being located near to the theatres and in the neighbourhood of the great temple of Minerva/Hercules, which looked over the entire district since the sixth century BC.²⁰ Minerva was both a neighbour and the great tutelary goddess of this part of town.²¹ Marcattili however has hypothesized that this bust was in fact a representation of Mâ-Bellona, who would have been placed next to the sanctuary's titular couple after the foundation of the colony by Sulla.²² Whatever the true identity of the goddess, the position of the three statues on the podium of the *cella* gives a precise meaning to the cult of Aesculapius established at Pompeii. The presence of Minerva would indicate that the god of medicine inhabited a district patronized by the goddess of the arts; the presence of Mâ-Bellona would account for the modernization of the cult after the foundation of the colony.

Another place of worship gives some indication of the arrangement of a *cella*. It is the temple of Fortuna Augusta, built sometime in the last decade of the first century BC at a crossroads situated to the north of Pompeii's forum. The aedicula built in the apse of the *cella*—contained a statue of Fortuna, which is now lost (Fig. 5.15).²³ The cult statue, as it should be, occupied an axial position, raised above the floor. On each

²⁰ De Waele 2001.

²¹ It is for this reason that the Gorgon of Minerva is present on a fountain situated at the Stabiae gate.

²² Marcattili 2006.

²³ Some work currently being carried out on this temple has brought to light the principal phases of both the installation and the occupation of the sanctuary, from the construction of the temple at the beginning of the first century AD on the rubble of Marcus Tullius's house, to the restoration of the temple after 62: see Van Andringa, forthcoming.



Fig. 5.15. Interior view of the *cella* of the temple of Fortuna Augusta (photograph by A. Gailliot, FORTUNA archaeological mission).

side, two niches contained life-sized images, one of which was probably that of the temple's benefactor M. Tullius (Fig. 5.14). The togatus discovered in the *cella* does not correspond to any emperor or known person. Moreover one can attribute to this togatus an inscription also discovered in the *cella*, its wording identical to that of the temple's dedication (*CIL* X, 822). But how should we understand the presence of the statue of the temple benefactor inside the *cella*, a domain reserved for the specific divinity of the sanctuary and its associated gods? Usually, human statues were located—and this conforms to their status—in the porticos of the sanctuary. A first explanation for this situation could be the absence of a courtyard portico in this sanctuary, which looked directly out onto the street. The statue of Marcus Tullius, therefore, could only have been displayed in the *pronaos* or in the *cella*. The choice of the *cella* expressed his desire to get closer to the goddess and was consequently a way of expressing the piety of a benefactor who was also an *augur* of his city.²⁴ The

²⁴ On the erection of statues in the *cella* of temples, see, for example, the decree of Hierapolis in Phrygia, *AE* 2001, 1902.



Fig. 5.16. Dedication to Augustus discovered in the temple of Fortuna (photograph by A. Gailliot, FORTUNA archaeological mission).

same explanation works for the statue of Augustus, which was also displayed in the temple's *cella*. A dedication states that a statue of the reigning emperor, described as *parens patriae*, stood in one of the lateral niches (Fig. 5.16). These are not cult statues of course; but rather manifestations of piety towards the goddess Fortuna. These statues were also a form of homage rendered to the two men, as P. Veyne showed in his discussion of a statue of Flavia Domitilla.²⁵ We also know that the second niche on the left side of the *cella* contained a female statue, although the fact that she was defaced makes her impossible to identify: was she the wife of the emperor or of Marcus Tullius? Whatever the case may be, and even though these statues were displayed in the temple's *cella*, they can all be considered to be *ornamenta*—ornaments of the sanctuary—regardless of the meaning conveyed by their presence inside the temple.²⁶

All that remains of the acrolithic cult statue in the temple of Isis is a marble hand, discovered in the *cella*. Two other statues must have occupied the now empty lateral niches of the pronaos, probably the two divinities typically associated with Isis, Anubis, and Harpokrates

²⁵ Veyne 1962 insists on the importance of local initiatives in the processes described.

²⁶ The distinction noted by Servius, on Vergil, *Georgics* 3.16 and Suetonius, *Tiberius* 26, between cult statues and statues destined simply to decorate sanctuaries should be retained. On the importance of the cult statue in the definition of a sanctuary, see Estienne 2001.

(or Serapis). (These divinities are indeed found together in the private chapel of the House of the Golden Cupids, where the owner had restored the divine group of the public Iseum on his own private property.²⁷) Two 'secondary' altars were positioned at the foot of the temple's podium, directly below these statues (see Fig. 5.2). The back of the temple was occupied by a fourth statue representing Bacchus, whose association with the cult of Isis is explained by his proximity to Osiris. The dedication indicates that this statue was donated by the benefactor responsible for the restoration of the temple after the earthquake of AD 62. The statue was thus one of the cult's non-permanent objects installed for the inauguration of the temple. This explains why it is not mentioned in the municipal *ordo*.

The statues offered to Isis were located in the western portico. The dedications indicate that the erection of these *ornamenta* was subject to the authorization of the city council which had authority over the management of offerings in public sanctuaries. The nature of the statues offered to Isis is particularly evocative. Isis was first of all offered her own image, hence the statue of the goddess in Pentelic marble donated by L. Caecilius Phoebus (Fig. 5.4). This statue was placed in the north-east angle of the colonnade, and was thus clearly visible to visitors passing the sanctuary's entrance.²⁸ This choice of location would have enabled Isis to welcome her visitors. It is possible that a second statue of Isis completed this display (one thinks of the two statues of Ceres of Henna, which Cicero says were erected in the courtyard of the sanctuary). Indeed, the excavation notebooks mention the discovery of the remains of an acrolith of Isis (only the hand, feet, and head remain) under the last arcade separating the portico from the *ekklēsiasterion*.²⁹

In the south-west corner of the portico, two other offerings were found. The first was a small marble statue of Venus emerging from her bath;³⁰ the second represents a mortal, Caius Norbanus Sorex (Fig. 5.3), whom the inscription describes as a supporting actor specializing in mime.³¹ The fact that his name is given in the genitive probably

²⁷ See Van Andringa 2009, 161 ff.

²⁸ De Caro 2006a, 113.

²⁹ The base which would have supported this statue is, however, missing. According to De Caro, 114–15, it may perhaps have been the cult statue.

³⁰ De Caro 2006a, 114. The statue measures 70 cm.

³¹ De Caro 2006a, 113 and *CIL* X, 814. A second bust of the same figure, featuring the same inscription, was displayed in the building of Eumachia. C. Norbanus Sorex has also been found at the sanctuary of Diana at Nemi, where he is described as

indicates that the portrait was offered to the divinity, hence confirms its sacrosanct status and its preservation after the redevelopments which followed the earthquake. But why would one offer the portrait of a mortal to Isis? The person in question, who has also been found in the sanctuary of Diana at Nemi (see n. 31), was linked to the cult of Isis and above all to the *ludi* she was associated with. It is possible that he had a role in the upkeep of her cult or the sanctuary. What is certain, however, is that the exhibition of his portrait and its location in the portico were both a form of homage and a manifestation of piety. Six bases arranged on the portico's stylobate were likely to have been destined for other statues, though none of these statues has been preserved. Were these bases unoccupied before the eruption? It is probable that, as with the temple's statues, these statues were stolen after the eruption. Thus we have an incomplete vision of the group of statues populating the Iseum. Other effigies were preserved in the *sacrarium*, a small room which was clearly used for initiations. These effigies consisted of three portraits of women, who have been identified as priestesses,³² and belonged probably to acroliths whose identity and function remain unknown: was this a storage space for items belonging to the goddess, or did they have a liturgical function?

The sanctuary of Apollo offers another case study. Some of the statues, which originally stood on the bases at the top of the steps overlooking the courtyard and in front of the columns of the portico, have been found. The discovery, in the southern portico of the temple, of two marble statues representing Venus and Hermaphroditus (Figs. 5.9–5.10) invites us to place these figures on the two bases preserved in this part of the building (Fig. 5.17). The presence of an altar in front of the western base suggests that it could have supported the statue of Venus, a choice which was also favoured during the nineteenth-century restorations. This base, which was plastered, originally bore a statue looted from a Greek sanctuary that had been offered to Apollo of Pompeii by Lucius Mummius.³³ It has been suggested that the statue of Hermaphroditus should be placed on

secundarum (partium), parasites: AE 1990, 125 ; cf. M.G. Granino-Cecere, *Rend. Pont. Accad. Rom. di Archeol.*, 61, 1988–9, 131–51. According to Torelli 1998, 257–8, he was an archimime and friend of Sulla; he would thus have received from Sulla a property in the *pagus Augustus Felix*, hence his appointment as *magister* of the *pagus*.

³² De Caro 2006a, 114.

³³ Martelli 2002.

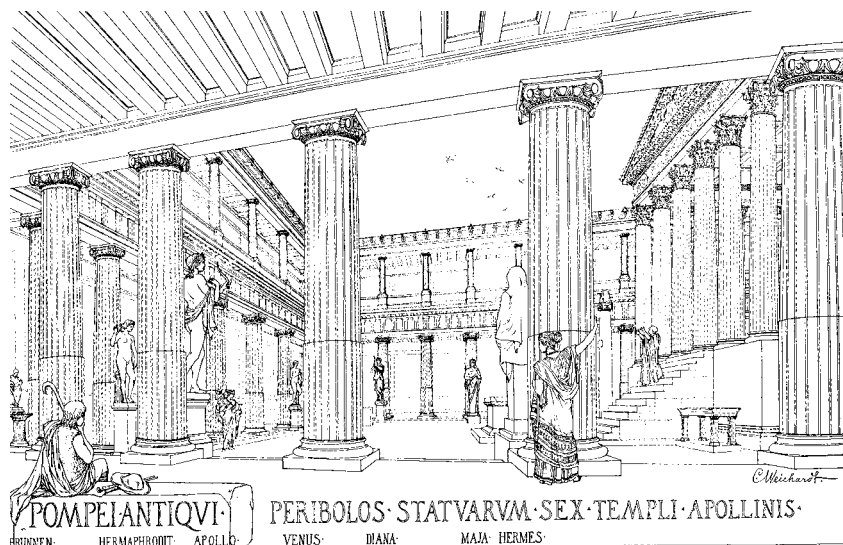


Fig. 5.17. Restoration of the statuary group in the temple of Apollo, by Weichardt 1897, p. 39, fig. 45.

the pedestal situated in the south-east corner. The two bronze statues of Diana and Apollo are generally placed on the bases found in the east and west porticos, although it should also be pointed out that these figures were discovered in separate pieces. If the provenance of these monuments is not in doubt, their original location is far from certain. The presence of a second altar, in front of the base located in the southern part of the west portico, implies that a statue of Diana, Apollo's sister, may also have been present. These altars, positioned in front of the statues which stood under the portico, further indicate that rituals were dedicated to gods other than Apollo, in Apollo's very own domain.³⁴ The herms of Mercury and of Maia (Figs. 5.12–5.13), the recipients of a public cult at Pompeii, complete the display.

Based on these various restoration proposals, was there a precise meaning to the way different gods were combined at Pompeii?

³⁴ Cicero, *In Verrem* IV, 4–7. Verres stole a marble Cupid by Praxiteles and a bronze Herakles by Myron from the private sanctuary of C. Heius at Messina. Each of these statues, Cicero makes clear, had a small altar in front of it, which proves the sanctity of the place.

COMBINATIONS OF GODS: LOCAL DEFINITION OF CULTS AND THE MEMORY OF THE CITY

It would be a mistake to search for the precise meaning of the combinations we have observed solely in literary sources concerning Rome or Greece. The significance of statue displays in sanctuaries has to be sought locally: in fact, the *synnaoi theoi* were primarily divinities of the local pantheon. It is on these grounds that one can explain the presence of Bacchus in the temple of Isis, the presence of Venus in the temples of Isis and Apollo, and the presence of Minerva in the temple of Aesculapius. The presence of some gods of the city in each sanctuary thus added a layer, on a case by case basis, to the local dimension of the cult and of course also contributed to the composition of local mythologies.³⁵

Let us take the example of Venus, a goddess portrayed under the porticos of the temples of Apollo and Isis.³⁶ Venus was many things, but she was not directly implicated in the 'international' mythology of these cults. In Pompeii, however, her presence carried a very precise meaning, for she was the great tutelary goddess of the city, sung by Martial, who referred to the city as *Veneris sedes*.³⁷ She was also, in Pompeii, a direct neighbour of Apollo (the two temples are very close to one another). Her specific and local status undoubtedly explains her presence in the sanctuary of Apollo. Although the temple of Venus was in the process of being restored, it makes no sense to imagine that her cult was transferred to another sanctuary. Venus looked after the interests of the city and in this respect she had a precise role to play alongside Apollo, participating in his local mythology. The same conclusion can also be drawn regarding the statue of Venus emerging from the sea displayed in the portico of Isis'

³⁵ On the custom of dedicating the statue of one god to another, see Veyne 1962 and 1983. Though epigraphic instances are numerous, they never explain the choice of the effigies offered: see, for example, *CIL* XII 2526; *CIL* VIII 6962, 16440; and *IRT* 316.

³⁶ This situation can be compared with that of Athena at Athens: 'the whole city and the totality of its territories are dedicated to Athena', notes Pausanias, I, 26.6. Athena certainly had many statues on the Acropolis, her domain, but she also had statues in other buildings of the city, such as the porticos of the Kerameikos district, the sanctuaries of Ares and Hephaistos, and the Academy.

³⁷ Martial, *Epig.* 4.44.3–6. On the Pompeian Venus, see Schilling 1982, 288, and 384 ff.

sanctuary. Standing in a secondary position, under the porticos, she would have evoked for Pompeians visiting the temple the goddess who watched over the city and who in some way associated Isis with the public affairs of the city (the Egyptian goddess received a public cult in Pompeii).³⁸

Other reasons for the combination, based for example on the bonds of kinship between the gods can also be sketched. This would explain Diana's presence in Apollo's temple, as well as the presence of Hermaphroditus alongside Venus and Mercury.³⁹ It is also in this way that the probable (but, in the absence of statues, not provable) combination of Isis, Anubis, and Harpocrates (and Serapis?) in the temple of Isis can be explained. The local mythologies were evidently extensions of 'official' or 'international' mythology,⁴⁰ and the articulation of these different stories was shaped by the decorations and statue displays inside the sanctuaries. The story of Hercules' victory over Geryon at Gibraltar is well known; but who knows the story set in Herculaneum and Pompeii of Hercules leading the bulls taken from Geryon (a story which the inhabitants of both cities believed whole-heartedly). This story says a lot about the local mythological exegeses from which the identities of each city were forged.⁴¹

By displaying statuary groups it was also possible to modernize a cult, that is, to bring a divinity into step with its time. During the imperial era, this involved primarily the ratification, on a religious level, of the relations established with Rome and the imperial power. The statue dedications recently discovered in the sanctuary of Venus shed additional light on this matter.⁴² The effigies corresponding to the inscriptions may have disappeared, but the marble plaques, written in the nominative, bear witness to the presence of statues that were jettisoned at the time of the complete reconstruction of the sanctuary a short while before the eruption of Vesuvius. This statuary group was set up sometime between the end of the reign of Augustus and the beginning of the reign of Claudius. But what did the display

³⁸ It should be noted that the attributes of Isis figure in the procession of Hercules visiting Venus in the painting in the House of the Wedding of Hercules and Hebe.

³⁹ Ovid, *Met.* 4, 285–388.

⁴⁰ On myths as 'malleable stories constantly recreated', see Price 2005, 116.

⁴¹ Servius, on Vergil, *Aeneid* 7.662; Solin 2.5; Isid., *Orig.* 5.5 According to the etymologies spread by the authors of antiquity, the name of the city, Pompeii, came from Hercules' *pompa*. See Corralini 2001, 25 ff.

⁴² Curti 2008.

of these statues in the great temple of the city bring, if not the possibility of redefining the nature of the cult of *Venus Pompeiana*? The following statues were displayed in the sanctuary under the porticos in the pronaos: *Virtus Veneris*, [*Honos V*]eneris?, *Ops*, *Mater Magn[a]*, [*Cu*]pido, and *Liber P[ater]*. These divinities had undoubtedly a precise link with the religious restoration of cults in Rome by Augustus. This explains the presence of the goddesses *Ops* and *Mater Magna*. Similarly, Emmanuelle Curti (n. 42) has cleverly drawn our attention to the relation between the qualities attributed to *Venus*, *Honos*, and *Virtus*, and the ceremonies of *Venus Victrix* presented in the calendar of Amiternum. But this enrichment of the goddess's world applies equally well to the Pompeian *Venus*. Indeed, it is very likely that the presence of *Mater Magna* and *Liber Pater* also had a local dimension. *Bacchus* had a temple 500 m to the south of the town, in what is today the district of Sant'Abbondio, and was very much one of the historical divinities of Pompeii.⁴³ A scene painted on the wall of a workshop on the Via dell'Abbondanza recalls how the local procession of *Mater Magna* used to stop in front of *Bacchus*' temple. Likewise, a painting which is today preserved in the museum of Naples shows *Liber Pater* coming to pay tribute to *Venus* on the construction site of the temple a short while before the eruption. The statues displayed in the Pompeian sanctuary—probably since the Augustan era—thus form a combination specific to a given era, to a historical context when what was most important was the relationship between the imperial power and the colony of Pompeii, established through its own gods. The presence of imperial portraits completed such displays. The statue of Augustus in the temple of *Fortuna Augusta* testifies to this; and at Herculaneum two portraits (*imagines*) of the caesars Domitian and Titus were displayed on the podium of one of the two temples dedicated to *Venus*. The gods of Herculaneum thus protected the members of the imperial family in a communion of interests typical of this era.

These various pieces of evidence show that the erection of statues in temples—which was monitored by the *ordo* or its representatives (the aediles for instance) who controlled the disposition of statues—participated in an important way in writing the city's memory. *Apollo*, *Minerva*, and *Hercules* had been present in Pompeii since

⁴³ The cult was already public during the Samnite era: Elia, Pugliese Carratelli 1979. On this sanctuary and the cult of *Bacchus* at Pompeii, see Van Andringa 2009.

the city's origins; and while these venerable gods, who together made up Pompeii's divine heritage, were still there at the time of the eruption, they were henceforth surrounded by other divinities and mortals who defined the local identity of the cults in question: Venus and C. Norbanus Sorex in the temple of Isis; Venus again, Hermaphroditus, Diana, Mercury, and Maia in the temple of Apollo; Augustus and M. Tullius in the temple of Fortuna; and the Virtus of Venus, the Honos of Venus(?), Ops, Mater Magna, Cupid, and Bacchus in the temple of Venus. In summary, and to the extent that one can draw conclusions from the example of Pompeii, the presence of gods in sanctuaries, and their positioning around the principal divinity at the centre of the *cella*, played an essential role in the organization of cults and contributed to shaping the personality of each temple's divinities. It is in this way that local cult identities and the memory of cities were constructed.

Abbreviations

MNN = Museo Nazionale di Napoli

PAH = G. Fiorelli, *Pompeianarum Antiquitatum Historia*, I–III, Naples, 1860–4.

Ruesch = A. Ruesch, *Guida illustrata del Museo Nazionale di Napoli*, Napoli: Richter 1908.

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Part II

Defining Religious Identity

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Rituals and the Construction of Identity in Attalid Pergamon

Beate Dignas

Within his account of the Altis at Olympia, Pausanias includes a brief description of the sacred enclosure consecrated to Pelops, whom, as the author adds, the Eleans prefer as much in honour above the heroes of Olympia as they prefer Zeus over the other gods.¹ One of the ritual peculiarities regarding the Pelopium is that,

If anybody, whether Elean or stranger, eat of the meat of the victim sacrificed to Pelops, he may not enter the temple of Zeus.

Pausanias continues,

The same rule applies to those who sacrifice to Telephos at Pergamon on the river Caïcus; these too may not go up to the temple of Asklepios before they have bathed.²

A ritual opposition between Pelops and Olympian Zeus may or may not surprise us, and although Pausanias does not set this out we might find explanation in either the savage meal served to the gods by Tantalus or the fact that Zeus later accused Pelops' father of having stolen the food of the gods and therefore threw Pelops out of Olympus.

But why the Pergamene parallel—here of a ritual opposition between Telephos and Asklepios? Pausanias likes to draw connections between Asia Minor and the mainland, and it is possible that he simply uses the opportunity to compare observances regarding the

¹ Pausanias 5.13.1.

² Pausanias 5.13.3.

worship of heroes and that of gods, that is he may point to a general rule that, after the worship of heroes, purification is required before the worship of gods is allowed.³ He may, however, refer to this particular example because he is aware that the Pergamenes found it exceptionally problematic to join the worship of Telephos with that of Asklepios. Such awareness is revealed in a different passage by the same author. In Book 3 Pausanias talks about Gerenia in Laconia where there is a tomb as well as a sanctuary of Machaon, the son of Asklepios. Pausanias informs his readers on the fate of Machaon.

The author of the epic *The Little Iliad* says that Machaon was killed by Eurypylos, son of Telephos. I myself know that to be the reason of the practice at the temple of Asklepios at Pergamon, where they begin their hymns with Telephos but make no reference to Eurypylos, or care to mention his name in the temple at all, as they know that he was the slayer of Machaon.⁴

Even if we do not take the two problematic aspects of combined worship of Telephos/his son and Asklepios as a package (after all, there seems to be no problem with starting the hymns from Telephos himself), Pausanias' statements raise important questions about the genesis of the Pergamene pantheon and its ritual practices.

We know very little about the origins of Pergamon itself, let alone its cults. The first Greeks (Aeolians) should have come to the area in the early first millennium and settled in the immediate vicinity of Pergamon (the coastal regions such as Cyme, Larisa, Neonteichos, Pitane, Myrina, Gryneion), possibly also on the small acropolis of Teuthrania from which these immigrants may later have moved to the acropolis of Pergamon. While archaeological and linguistic observations do not forbid this interpretation, it is, however, largely inferred from myth. In his commentary on Vergil's sixth eclogue, for example, Servius offers an explanation for the naming of the city and reveals an eponymous founder: Telephos' grandson Grynus and his friend Pergamos, son of Andromache and Neoptolemos, overcame the king of Teuthrania and became the founders of two cities, which were named Pergamon and Gryneion respectively.⁵ The first

³ Scheer 1993, 134 n. 379, explains that the difference in status entailed heroic, that is chthonic sacrifices for Telephos after which purification was necessary before the sanctuary of an Olympian deity could be approached.

⁴ Pausanias 3.26.9.

⁵ Servius on Vergil, *Eclogues* 6. 72.

historical testimony comes from Xenophon, who tells us that the Persian king had awarded a place called Pergamon to his supporter Gongylos, who was originally from Eretria in Euboeia. Xenophon's 10,000 met the hospitality of the widow of this Gongylos in 399 BC.⁶

...they came to the plain of the Kaikos and so reached Pergamon, in Mysia. Here Xenophon was entertained by Hellas, the wife of Gongylos the Eretrian and mother of Gorgion and Gongylos. [9] She told him that there was a Persian in the plain named Asidates, and said that if he should go by night with three hundred troops, he could capture this man, along with his wife and children and property, of which he had a great deal. And she sent as guides for this enterprise not only her own cousin, but also Daphnagoras, whom she regarded very highly. [10] Xenophon, accordingly, proceeded to sacrifice, keeping these two by his side. And Basias, the Elean seer who was present, said that the omens were extremely favourable for him and that the man was easy to capture. [11] So after dinner he set forth. . . [17] But as soon as Gongylos saw that the Greeks were few and those who were attacking them many, he sallied forth himself, in spite of his mother, at the head of his own force, desiring to take part in the action; and Prokles also came to the rescue, from Halisarna and Teuthrania, the descendant of Demaratos.

Teuthrania and another neighbouring place were also ruled by a Greek dynast, the former Spartan king Demaratos.⁷

...he [Thibron] would draw up his troops against Tissaphernes even on the plains, and he got possession of cities, Pergamon by voluntary surrender, and likewise Teuthrania and Halisarna, two cities which were under the rule of Eurysthenes and Prokles, the descendants of Demaratos the Lacedaemonian; and this territory had been given to Demaratos by the Persian king as a reward for accompanying him on his expedition to Greece. Furthermore, Gorgion and Gongylos gave their allegiance to Thibron, they being brothers, one of them the ruler of Gambreion and Palaigambreion, the other of Myrina and Gryneion; and these cities also were a gift from the Persian king to the earlier Gongylos, because he espoused the Persian cause—the only man among the Eretrians who did so—and was therefore banished. On the other hand, there were some weak cities. . .

Overall, we can assume that there was both a Greek and a Persian ruling class in the area, governing a mixed Hittite, Phrygian, and

⁶ Xenophon, *Anabasis* 7.8.8–17.

⁷ Id., *Hellenica* 3.1.6.

Lydian population.⁸ After the Peace of Antalcidas in 386 the local Greek dynasts were probably punished for their resistance to Persia, but by the middle of the fourth century the Persian satrap Orontes allowed the Pergamenes to settle on the acropolis again.⁹ After the Battle of Granicus, Pergamon came under Macedonian rule, and after the death of Alexander the Great it was ultimately Lysimachos whose territorial rule extended to Mysia. He appointed one of his officers, Philetairos, who had previously served Antigonos, as guardian of the acropolis of Pergamon, above all of 9000 talents of silver derived from booty. In 282 BC Philetairos revolted against Lysimachos and sided with his enemy Seleukos, whose death a year later gave him the opportunity to emancipate himself from the Seleukids and to set the stage for his successor Eumenes I to gain formal independence and establish his own rule in the area. The Pergamene dynasty was born, and thanks to a wealth of archaeological and epigraphic material as well as authors such as Polybios and Strabo we are quite well informed about the following period.

In order to assess the premises of an Attalid construction of Pergamon's new identity, we need to go back in time—and this is difficult. Facing the lack of historical evidence for pre-Attalid Pergamon, earlier scholarship gave in to the temptation to reconstruct a Pergamene past on the basis of mythological narratives. Prior to the eponymous founder Pergamos, the most important of these narratives is the birth and heroic deeds of Telephos, who became king of Mysia during the search for his Arcadian mother Auge, a priestess of Athena at Tegea. Recent scholarship has correctly shown that it is highly suspect to infer from this story an early Arcadian or even Tegean immigration to Pergamon and, in the religious realm, to claim, for example, that the cult of Athena has to be the oldest Pergamene cult.¹⁰ Tanja Scheer, in particular, has examined the history of the transmission of the myth of Telephos and has come to the conclusion that the mythical past of the city is entirely a creation of the Attalid dynasty, who transformed it into a religious and political present in order to match their rivals' claims to divine descent and as heirs to a long cultural tradition.¹¹ One glance at the

⁸ For a short summary of the early history of the city see Radt 1999, 23–5.

⁹ *Inscripfen von Pergamon* 613, ll. 4–8.

¹⁰ See for example Hesselmeier 1885, 31.

¹¹ Scheer 1993, 71–152.

marvellous Smaller Frieze on the Great Altar makes it clear that the Attalids strongly promoted their identity as descendants of the Mysian hero, and any examination of Attalid benefactions shows that the religious policies of the dynasty were as carefully calculated as they were successful.¹² Eric Gruen has summarized this Attalid 'cultural policy' very eloquently in his contribution to N. De Grummond's and B. Ridgway's volume *From Pergamon to Sperlonga. Sculpture and Context*.¹³

In what follows, I do not want to question this overall assessment of Attalid policy but rather to insert a few notes of caution and to point to elements of the Pergamene past that may have been overlooked. The tremendous scepticism against the idea that any genuine historical or religious memory could be reflected in the mythological narrative has led scholars to deny Pergamon a past, whether non-Greek or Greek. If not credited with inventing the past altogether, the kings are perceived as claiming Mysian myths for a Pergamon that itself sought connections with the Greek cultural past.¹⁴ While this approach is valid to some extent and certainly reveals the power of myth as part of a royal agenda, there are some aspects that it does not take account of. Attalid ambitions must have stemmed from and built on the religious memory of a society whose special cultural make-up, Greek *and* non-Greek, facilitated and steered the religious policies of its new rulers. The fact that these policies were spectacularly successful should not tempt us to neglect the study of the multiple factors and the gradual evolution that shaped Pergamon's religious identity in the Hellenistic period.¹⁵

One of these factors is certainly the influence of non-Greek precursors in both the mythical and cultic realms. There are studies of the Hittite component in the Homeric tradition and of Anatolian traditions themselves, but while scholars plead for an 'oriental perspective' when it comes to the study of the Homeric epos, those who

¹² For example Schalles 1985; Hintzen-Bohlen 1992.

¹³ Gruen 2000, 17–31, for example, at 22: 'The ingenuity of the Attalids is perhaps best exemplified in another sphere: the creation of a mythology. The dynasts fabricated a genealogy and fashioned legendary connections not only to give themselves an illustrious pedigree but to claim links with tradition and history that associated them with a range of Greek states and principalities.'

¹⁴ Scheer 1993, 122.

¹⁵ Scheer 2003, 224 states, 'It is superfluous to give as the reason for the choice of the Telephos legend the need to turn to authentic local figures of the remote past...'

emphasize the creative ingenuity of the Attalids tend to dismiss this perspective.¹⁶ It is true that our knowledge of what happened between the Hittite and the classical period is scarce and that it is almost impossible to establish a cultural profile of the Mysians in this period. However, the study of themes in Hittite texts does reveal that the Greeks in this area in particular were familiar with elements of Anatolian myths. With regard to Telephos, there is the possibility of a Hittite precursor in the hero Telepinu, whose stories, rituals, and cultic geography may well be crucial, and whose name may well have been transformed in Aeolic into Telephos.¹⁷ What is relevant here, is not necessarily corresponding characteristics or biographies of the two heroes—in Anatolian myths, Telepinu, son of the weather-god, is a vegetation deity who is angry, hides, and stops the crops from growing but is then appeased by the bee of the mother of the gods—but rather a kind of continuity in cult and receptive association. Another example would be the background and continuity of the cult of the Mother of the Gods, who had two sanctuaries in the vicinity of Pergamon, which have been investigated but again mainly from an Attalid perspective. Ann Kuttner, who insists on the necessity of examining Anatolian identities, proposes ‘Asianism at Pergamon’ as opposed to the deliberate forging of a *Greek* identity for which the Attalids are so famous. She focuses on the Asian character of many of the cults that were furthered by the new dynasts, in particular those of Cybele and Aphrodite, but also the worship of Apollo, Dionysos, and Herakles in their regional forms.¹⁸ This is a fascinating and, I think, very fruitful approach. Kuttner makes it clear how problematic a distinction between a supposedly and a genuinely Greek tradition can be. Nevertheless, my focus here is on the *Greek* world of Pergamene religion and history *prior to Attalid rule*. Overlap with and direct influence by the non-Greek past were certainly always present.

Lack of ‘hard’ historical evidence makes it difficult, indeed, to counter the impressive and very coherent scholarly interpretation of Attalid building activities, visual self-representation, euergetic strategies, and religious propaganda as proposed by Scheer and others. It is

¹⁶ Schuol 2002, 331–62.

¹⁷ Barnett 1956, 212–38; Stewart 1997, 113; very sceptical Scheer 1993, 135 and 2003, 224; see also Ünal 1991.

¹⁸ Kuttner 2005, 137–206.

precisely the intensive building and radical changes that came about with and after Alexander the Great's conquest that obscure Pergamene life before these events. Many parts of Pergamon are hardly known to us, and as many again are permanently destroyed. Scholars agree that the Attalid and subsequent building projects may be responsible for our lack of evidence, and the German excavations on the acropolis have yielded potsherds (among them there are sherds of Greek pottery) and parts of an earlier city wall that go back to the geometric and archaic periods.

Xenophon's statements and experience are thus very important and one should make an effort to get at the character of Pergamene life in the late archaic and classical periods. Already before and also during the Persian wars, the Great Kings followed a policy of attracting *Greeks* to their service, and they rewarded supportive individuals with territories to rule in western Asia Minor, primarily in the Troad, a dependency of the satrapy of Hellespontic Phrygia and a region of utmost strategic and economic importance.¹⁹ Themistocles is the most famous example, but he was certainly not the only one. Around 545, the Chians received collectively the region of Atarnaeus in Mysia (see map, Fig. 6.1) after they had handed over the revolting Lydian, Pactyes, to Kyros.²⁰ The former Spartan king Demaratos, whom *Xenophon* mentions, had arrived at the Persian court already during the reign of Darios I and been rewarded with 'land and cities' by this king,²¹ but it was probably Xerxes who granted him the places in Mysia listed by *Xenophon* after he had participated in the King's expedition against Greece. He had not left Sparta in the first place because of medizing ambitions but because he was falsely judged not to be the legitimate successor to the throne.²² Herodotus claims that Demaratos warned Sparta of Xerxes' intentions in advance.²³ According to Athenaeus, the Great King stipulated that Themistocles, as well as Demaratos, should never again wear Greek clothes, and that he gave Demaratos Gambreion specifically for his raiment, in addition to the towns he already had.²⁴

Thucydides describes Gongylos of Eretria as intermediary between Pausanias and the Great King in 478.²⁵ Given that Pausanias was able to plausibly entrust him with controlling Byzantium and the Persian

¹⁹ Briant 2002, 561–3.

²⁰ Herodotus 1.161.

²¹ Herodotus 6.70.

²² Herodotus 6.63, 69.

²³ Herodotus 7.239.

²⁴ Athenaeus 1.29f–30b.

²⁵ Thucydides 1.128.6.

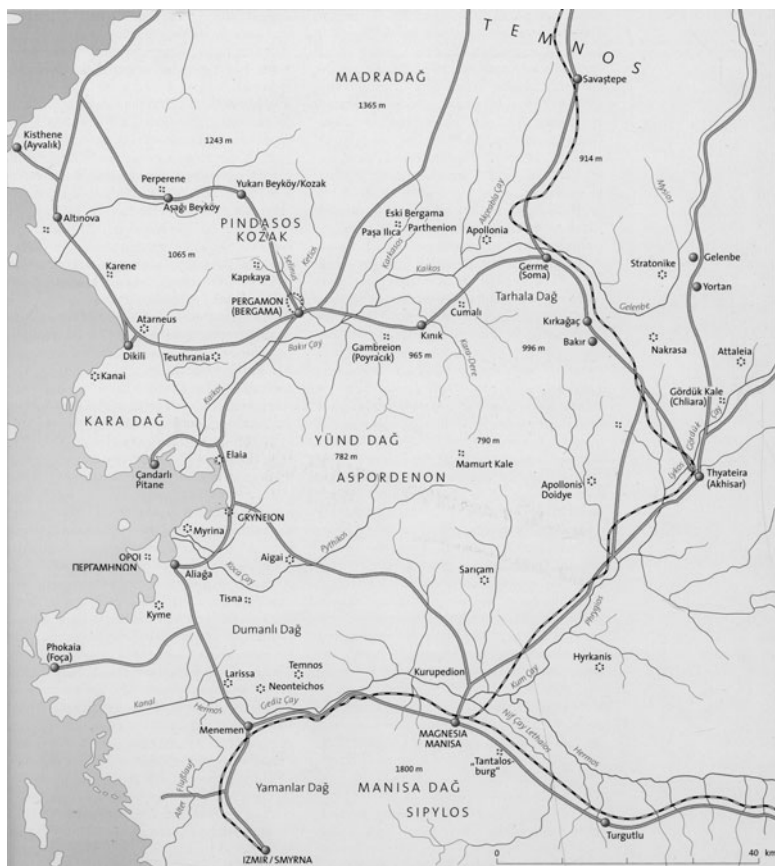


Fig. 6. 1. Map of the Pergamene landscape. From Radt 1999, 19, fig. 4.

captives, that is, without raising Greek suspicions, it seems unlikely that Gongylos had been a medizer since 490.²⁶ Of the places he was awarded, Myrina and Gryneion are mentioned by Herodotus among the early Aeolic colonies along the coastline,²⁷ and they also became members of the Delian League a few years after Gongylos had received his grant. This prompted Gomme to talk about an 'empty gift' to Gongylos,²⁸ but it may instead reveal the tremendous independence these dynasts enjoyed once they had received their fief. It

²⁶ Stronk 1995, 292.

²⁷ Herodotus 1.149.

²⁸ Gomme 1945, 292, 445; see Miller 1997, 98–100.

definitely shows that they were given predominantly Greek and non-Greek places alike. It is difficult to infer from our snippets of information what impact the Greekness of the new rulers may have had on the places under their control (whether these were primarily inhabited by Greek or non-Greek settlers) and how practical or principled their loyalty to the Persian kings may have been. However, what the passages in Xenophon clearly indicate is that Pergamon itself and a number of places in its vicinity *a century later* were still among the possessions of Gongylos' and Demaratos' descendants, which means that the Greek dynasts and their families would surely have left their mark on the culture and infrastructure of these places, albeit under Persian control.

It is noteworthy that Athenaeus mentions Gambreion among Demaratos' possessions, whereas Xenophon claims that Gongylos had received the place.²⁹ Xenophon is probably mistaken and may have been confused by the fact that it came into the possession of Gongylos' son or grandson through marriage with Hellas, whom scholars believe to have been Demaratos' or Themistocles' (grand) daughter.³⁰ Inter-marriage between the two families is clearly attested in an inscription from Delos, which honours Demaratos, the son of Gorgion, during the reign of Lysimachos, that is during the first two decades of the third century, for his benefactions to the sanctuary.³¹ The close association of the Greek families in the area suggests that their Greek background mattered to them. It would appear from Xenophon's account that, almost naturally, these places sided with Xenophon's Greeks in the confrontations of 399 BC. This may have been because they knew, having fought for Kyros, that they had nothing to gain from Artaxerxes. However, Xenophon's earlier description of the reaction to Kyros' death,³² which also mentions Prokles, illustrates their 'Greek' identity just as much as do the names Eurysthenes and Prokles, the mythical founders of the Eurypontid dynasty of the Kings of Sparta. We do not know what happened to Gorgion and Gongylos, or Prokles and Eurysthenes when the Persian king regained control over the area, but even if their rule was suspended, the resettlement of the acropolis a few

²⁹ *Hellenica* 3.1.6, see above.

³⁰ Stronk 1978, 291–2; see also Hofstetter 1978, 71–2.

³¹ *Syll.*³ 381; cf. Lewis 1977, 54 n. 29.

³² Xenophon, *Anabasis* 2.1.3; 2.1.

decades later would have brought back a population that had been shaped by the Gongylid and Demaratid period. As the Delian inscription confirms, the family of Demaratos certainly survived in Mysia until the reign of Lysimachos. Sextus Empiricus tells us that a member of the family married Aristotle's daughter.³³

Apart from outstanding and highly rewarded individuals, Greek mercenaries also worked for the Persians in this area. While mercenaries were a common phenomenon and came more or less from every part of the Greek world in the fourth century, it is remarkable that Arcadia tended to be the main producer of mercenaries in the fifth.³⁴ Moreover, Greek merchants traded and settled in Pergamon, which already at the time of Xenophon's visit appears to have been a relatively important centre in the region.

Given the overall parameters of life in and around Pergamon during the fifth and most of the fourth century, as I have sketched them, why should the special importance and attraction of Greek myths and certain Greek cults, and in particular the story of Telephos, have appealed to the Attalids for the first time and not have been relevant identity-building factors at a much earlier time? Scholars go to great lengths in pointing out that the earliest testimony for the wounding and healing of Telephos by Achilles does not talk about a Peloponnesian descent of the hero but portrays him entirely as the brave protector of Mysia.³⁵ This may be true,³⁶ but it hardly excludes the circulation of myths surrounding the Mysian hero³⁷ or actual hero cult in the area, by which Pergamon would have been affected, or even in Pergamon itself. When, in the fifth century, Attic drama heightened awareness of and admiration for the hero and added Telephos' descent from Herakles,³⁸ and when Hecataeus included the Auge story,³⁹ local pride and the furthering of related cults

³³ Sextus Empiricus 1.158.

³⁴ See Parke 1933, 14–15; Trundle 2004, 53–9; cf. Thucydides 3.34 and 7.57.

³⁵ See for example Proclus' summary of the *Cypria*, fr. 1 Bernabe/Davies; Pindar, *Olympian Odes* 9.70–2.

³⁶ But note Hesiod's *Catalogue of Women* (*Cat.* fr. 165, l. 8 Merkelbach and West), in which Telephos is called 'Arkasides'.

³⁷ In fact, the new Archilochos elegy (*The Oxyrhynchus Papyri* vol. LXIX, London 2005, *P. Oxy.* 4708 fr. 1, l. 5) attests this circulation, at least in the northern Aegean, already in the seventh century.

³⁸ For references see Scheer 1993, 71–2.

³⁹ *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* I F 29, Hecataeus.

would have been only inevitable. Pausanias claims that the tomb of Auge at Pergamon still existed in his times:

Hecataeus says that this Auge used to have intercourse with Herakles when he came to Tegea. At last it was discovered that she had born a child to Herakles, and Aleus, putting her with her infant son in a chest, sent them out to sea. She came to Teuthras, lord of the plain of Kaikos, who fell in love with her and married her. The tomb of Auge still exists at Pergamon above the Kaikos; it is a mound of earth surrounded by a basement of stone and surmounted by a figure of a naked woman in bronze.⁴⁰

Elsewhere, the author states,

The Pergamenes want to be Arcadian descendants from those who came down to Asia together with Telephos.⁴¹

The scepticism expressed in the verb *thelein* ('want') may well mean that Pausanias doubts actual Arcadian descent, but he does not say how far back in time their 'wanting to be of Arcadian descent' goes.

Creating a mythical past is in general seen as a phenomenon of the Hellenistic period, but this is not entirely true. With regard to the Pergamene dynasty, there were a number of certain as well as of plausible models, both outside the actual 'Pergamene world' and among those who ruled the city and its vicinity before them. Already the Hekatomnids in Caria revered Tegea and propagated the story of Telephos iconographically.⁴² Most likely, they supported the construction of the temple of Athena Alea significantly and were involved in the decoration of the new sanctuary with images that included Telephos and his story. It is perhaps no coincidence that it was above all the Hekatomnids who made use of Greek and thus, no doubt, many Arcadian mercenaries. They may well have provided the example either for pre-Attalid rulers of Pergamon or for Philetairos and his successors themselves. In either case the product would not have been an *Attalid* brainchild.

More difficult to pinpoint in time is another model. At some point, Philetairos' home city Tieion, a settlement of mixed population on the Black Sea, identified itself so much with an Arcadian heritage that

⁴⁰ Pausanias 8.4.8–9.

⁴¹ Pausanias 1.4.6.

⁴² Kuttner 2005, 145 and n. 15, with the claim that 'Pergamon's Arcadian mythos had a strong Asian model'.

the river linking Tieion to Bithynium that ran through the territory called 'Mantineia' was called the Ladon, after Arcadia's main river. In contrast to the Arcadian origins of Greeks in the western Mediterranean, we know very little about the East in this respect. Geopolitical naming or renaming is a phenomenon that goes back to the archaic and classical expansion, and its triggers are fascinating and multi-dimensional. In Hesiod's *Theogony* the river Ladon appears as part of a list of the descendants of Okeanos and Thetis.⁴³ It is uncertain whether Hesiod has the Arcadian river in mind or the one in Asia Minor. In the former case, the epos could have been the trigger for the naming of the Paphlagonian river, and the question 'when' remains unanswered; in the latter, more likely case,⁴⁴ one wonders about the point in time when this passage in the Hesiodic text came into existence. Was it already in the seventh century, that is, when the work was composed? Or did the rivers make their way into the text much later—which would undoubtedly illustrate how keen this region was to be part of the early Greek epos and of Greek culture in general. Regardless of this, even if Philetairos was the first to initiate this process in a demonstrative way, he surely took his cues from a certain local predisposition.⁴⁵

The possible models of Pergamon's own past have become clear already from the short survey of the history of the region presented above. There is not much evidence that reflects Attalid attitudes towards the earlier Greek dynasts in the area. In Pliny the Elder's *Natural History*, however, we read about a sculpture representing Demaratos offering sacrifice together with his mother, and Pliny attributes the work to the Attic sculptor Nikeratos, who often worked for the Attalids.⁴⁶ One wonders who commissioned the work. Nikeratos can be dated roughly to the early Attalid period, most likely to the reign of Attalos I. It is also possible that Demaratos' descendants

⁴³ Hesiod, *Theogony* 344–5.

⁴⁴ Hesiod's list places the river between the Sangarios and the Parthenios between which the Paphlagonian Ladon lies geographically.

⁴⁵ Cf. Kuttner 2005, 145; Mitchell 1993, 207–8; see also id. 2010; Robert 1937, 262–6; id. 1980, 411–14.

⁴⁶ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 34.88; see Stewart 1990, 2.5.4 T 115; the text is problematic; Pollitt 1990, 114 reads the passage differently and therefore assumes a work that shows Alcibiades offering sacrifice together with his mother Demarate; 'Niceratus...repraesentavit Alcibiaden lampadumque accensu matrem eius Demaraten sacrificantem'; in this case, however, the name of Alcibiades' mother would be wrong (it was Deinomache).

commissioned the work, in which case the family would still have played an important role after the new dynasty was established.⁴⁷ In either case, Demaratos would be honoured strikingly in early Attalid Pergamon.

But how did Demaratos and Gongylos and their descendants feel about the *myths* that were to become so important for the Attalids? M. Strauss argues that representations of Telephos dating to the period around and after 480 BC, and the simultaneous growing literary interest in the life of Telephos can be explained by the parallel between the lives of Demaratos and Telephos—that is, the myth was understood as a metaphor for the fate of Demaratos.⁴⁸ Strauss sees the following parallels: not only did both become rulers of Teuthrania but they shared further similarities. They were descendants of Herakles;⁴⁹ Demaratos had been told by a false Delphic oracular response that he was not the son of his father Ariston⁵⁰ and was therefore deposed as king, just as Telephos was exposed; after some time Demaratos went to King Darios who entrusted to him rule over Teuthrania, just as Telephos came to Mysia and became heir to Teuthras' kingdom; Telephos fought against the Achaeans, Demaratos took part in Xerxes' expedition against the Greeks. In his analysis of Herodotus' detailed account of Demaratos, in which the king is the son of the Spartan hero Astrabakos, Burkert suggests that this story was a form of mythical propaganda, designed to precede Demaratos' return to Greece—in a way an annunciation by the government in exile.⁵¹ Likewise, Strauss is convinced that Demaratos participated in Xerxes' expedition because he wanted to regain the royal title in Sparta. He sees the Telephos parallel as the interpretation of Demaratos' fate by observers in mainland Greece. This, in turn, raises the possibility that Demaratos himself furthered the association of his own rule with that of Telephos. Arcadia and also Tegea, or rather the sanctuary of

⁴⁷ Stewart 1990, 2.4.5 T 115.

⁴⁸ Strauss 1990, 79–100; S. points out that Friedländer 1907, 161, had already raised the possibility that the version of Hecataeus, which gives Telephos a childhood in the Peloponnese, stemmed from the time when Darios rewarded the Spartan Demaratos with Teuthrania; cf. also Jacoby, *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* I, comm. p. 326.

⁴⁹ Cf. Herodotus 8.131 and Pausanias 3.7.2, explaining that the Eurypontids were descendants of the hero.

⁵⁰ Herodotus 6.66.

⁵¹ Burkert 1965, 166–77.

Athena Alea, were important places of refuge for Spartan kings⁵²—yet another connection that could have inspired the Demaratids to identify with Telephos and his fate.

One may be reluctant to accept the parallels and suggested motivations, and to see Demaratos as the force behind a propagation of the myth in and outside of Mysia, but there can be no doubt that the construction of a religious identity that is generally ascribed to the Attalids may have taken place during the Gongylid and Demaratid period or even earlier. Can we grasp the influence of this early period, which must have shaped the character of the Pergamene pantheon, in the city's cultic landscape? On first sight, the answer to this question is negative, for the reasons I have indicated above. However, the following observations can give support to my overall argument.

In the classical period, Apollo was the main deity in the city. His image appeared on the first Pergamene coins, which, showing the satrap's head on the reverse, also illustrate Persian rule. It is probably no coincidence that the sanctuary of Apollo was the most important religious centre in Gongylos' home polis Eretria. Apollo's role in Pergamon possibly continued into the early third century, but already by this time other cults had gained more prominence. One of the Pergamene tribes, Apollonis, was named after the god. This reveals that at least some of the Pergamene tribes go back to an early period, which in turn attests to early Greek organizational forms at Pergamon. This however is a contested aspect of Pergamene history. Whereas Habicht assumes that the tribes were a new creation of the Attalids, dating to the late third or early second century, Robert finds this very unlikely and argues for 'un système sans doute antérieur aux Attalides'.⁵³ Accordingly, the existence of a tribe named 'Telephis' would be a strong argument in favour of an early, pre-Attalid 'Arcadian identity'. As some of the tribal names, such as Philetairis and Attalis are *evidently* creations of the Attalid period though, we can at best assume that at different points in time tribes were added to already existing older ones—my inclination would be to place 'Telephis', along with Aiolis, Pelopis, Makaris, as one of the earlier tribes, but this cannot be proven. As with those tribes named after pre-Attalid deities (Apollonis, Asklepias), Euboia, Thebais, Kadmeis must

⁵² Leotychides in 469; Pausanias in 394; Leonidas in 242.

⁵³ Habicht 1969, 2; Robert 1984, 13.

have come to Pergamon early, in these cases most likely with the Gongylids and from Eretria.

The decline of the cult of Apollo by the third century may on first sight confirm the 'new world' of Attalid Pergamon. However, studies of the Pergamene pantheon reveal that a number of cults whose genesis is often linked with Attalid ambitions can be traced back at least to the fourth century, certainly to a time prior to Attalid control of the city. It seems attractive, for example, to see the introduction of the cult of Athena linked to Philetairos' attempt to model the city on Athens,⁵⁴ but this has been challenged successfully by Schalles' proposal that Barsine, the Persian mother of Alexander the Great's child Herakles, initiated the building of Athena's temple.⁵⁵ Here, we see yet another factor of pre-Attalid influence, namely Alexander the Great's preferences and the situation immediately after his death, and in this case it is Athena Ilias rather than Athena Polias who served as the model.

The years during which Barsine's child was raised in Pergamon also coincide with the appearance of representations of Herakles on Pergamene coins, which one may admittedly see as an argument against a long tradition of worship of the hero linked to an early identity as descendants of Herakles.⁵⁶ During the Attalid period, Herakles was honoured in a festival called the *Herakleia*, which were celebrated together with Asklepios' *Soteria* and were most likely introduced during the reign of Eumenes II. The context of the festival's foundation was a time of crisis, probably the war with Prusias II, the king of Bithynia, who besieged the Pergamenes on the acropolis at some point between 156 and 154 BC.⁵⁷ As Athena's sanctuary had been ravaged by Prusias, rescue had to come from elsewhere, and Herakles, the father of Pergamon's mythical founder Telephos was a very plausible choice.⁵⁸ An epigram has been preserved in the Palatine Anthology (XVI.91) in which Herakles is addressed and requested to 'descend to the acropolis and save the great descendants of Telephos, the "Telephidai"'.⁵⁹ If, indeed, the worship of Herakles was recent and derived momentum from the

⁵⁴ Ohlemuetz 1940, followed by most scholars.

⁵⁵ Schalles 1985, 20.

⁵⁶ See Scheer 1993, 110.

⁵⁷ Polybius 33.7; Diodorus 31.35.

⁵⁸ See Robert 1984, 1–18; *IGR* IV 300 and *AvPerg* 8.3, no. 3.

⁵⁹ See Robert 1984, 1–18.

episode for the first time, it is not an example of the creation of a mythical past but the remembrance of a mythical past that created a new religious infrastructure.

The worship of Dionysos Kathegemon is yet another example that illustrates the difficulties in assessing the genesis of the Pergamene pantheon. Ohlemuetz, whose 1940 study of the cults and sanctuaries in the city is still the most important work on the subject, states, 'über kaum einem anderen Götterkult der Stadt und des Staates liegt soviel Dunkel' and 'nahezu unerforschlich. . . ist vor allem der Zeitpunkt, in dem man in Pergamon beginnt, ihm kultische Verehrung darzubringen.'⁶⁰ Until recently, no evidence could be dated to the third century with certainty and the institution of a public cult was generally attributed to Eumenes II, but the dedicatory epigram published by H. Müller in *Chiron* in 1989 reveals a well established cult already during the first fifteen to twenty years of the reign of Attalos I and also illustrates the close relation between this cult and the royal family already at this time.⁶¹ The new inscription and the famous letters of Attalos II and Attalos III⁶² relating to the appointment of lifetime priests for the god, by the kings themselves, and the appointment of members of their own family, leave no doubt of the immense attention the Attalids paid to the cult. Scholars, however, no longer follow von Prott's theory that Dionysos Kathegemon was perceived as the ancestor of the royal family and that the epithet 'Kathegemon' was synonymous with the title *archegos* or *archegetes tou genous*.⁶³ In any case, if the cult was a new creation of the Attalid period, why did the Attalids choose the god as their patron and promote his worship so much? Was it the rivalry with the Ptolemies, who traced their descent back to Herakles and Dionysos? Was, again, the mythical narrative a trigger for the establishment of the cult?

Dionysos' role in the fate of Telephos is ambivalent to say the least. While fighting Achilles, the hero tripped over a vine shoot created by the god, who was thus responsible for his wound. Scheer, who wants to find reasons for an Attalid introduction of Dionysos, draws on intriguing material that illustrates an attempt to erase any hostility

⁶⁰ Ohlemuetz 1940, 90; see also Radt 1999, 188, 'Die Anfänge seines Kultes sind nicht fassbar.'

⁶¹ Müller 1989, 499–553.

⁶² *AvPerg* 8.1, no. 248 = Welles, *Royal Correspondence in the Hellenistic Period*, nos. 65–7.

⁶³ Von Prott 1902, 161–88.

between Telephos and the god. The third-century poem *Alexandra* by Lycophron of Chalcis furnishes the explanation that Dionysos did not let the vine shoot grow because of his anger against Telephos but out of gratitude towards Agamemnon, who had offered sacrifice to him in Delphi before his expedition.⁶⁴ Moreover, an inscription from Delphi dating to the later second century marks the dedication of a stoa to Dionysos Sphaleotas ('the god who causes staggering') in memory of an old oracle that was addressed to Agamemnon: he could be protected from a Greek speaking the language of the barbarians by offering sacrifice to the lord Sphaleotas, the Mysian.⁶⁵ Such explanations surely suited the Attalids but could also stem from an intellectual interest in ritual consistency that came from elsewhere; we do not know who commissioned the *Alexandra*, and even if it came from Mysia, the conflict between myth and cultic preferences could have existed for any length of time before it was noticed and addressed.

The demand for ritual consistency or rather for congruence between myth and religious practice in Pergamon finally takes me back to my initial Pausanias passages and the problems in worshipping Telephos and Asklepios in immediate sequence without certain ritual caveats. Evidently, both cults were paramount in Pergamon, in Pausanias' time as well as in the Pergamene past. It looks as if worshippers proceeded on a regular basis from the sanctuary of Telephos to that of Asklepios. Nothing indicates that Pausanias had anything but the main sanctuary of the god in mind, which was situated, typically at a distance, south-west of the city and connected with it by a sacred way (see Fig. 6.2). The cult had been introduced in Pergamon by the first half of the fourth century at the latest. Finds dating from this and also earlier periods, even prehistoric, have been found at the site, which suggest cult activity and worship of an earlier god or hero.⁶⁶ It is again Pausanias who knows that a certain Archias, the son of Aristaichmos of Pergamon, brought the cult from Epidauros to Pergamon and probably became its first priest.

There is other evidence that the god was born in Epidauros; for I find that the most famous sanctuaries of Asklepios had their origin from

⁶⁴ Lycophron, *Alexandra* 206–15.

⁶⁵ Suspecting a much older tradition, Stewart 1997, 111; Scheer 1993, 131f; *SEG* 19 (1963), no. 399; Daux and Bousquet 1942, 113–25; 1942/3, 19–40; see also Peek 1942, 232–70.

⁶⁶ Cf. Ziegenaus and De Luca, *AvPerg* 11.2, 145, who see the roots of the sanctuary in an early pre-Greek cult that received a Greek interpretation in the historical period.

Epidauros. In the first place, the Athenians, who say that they gave a share of their mystic rites to Asklepios, call this day of the festival Epidauria, and they allege that their worship of Asklepios dates from then. Again, when Archias, son of Aristaichmos, was healed in Epidauria after spraining himself while hunting about Pindasus, he brought the cult to Pergamus. From the one at Pergamus has been built in our own day the sanctuary of Asklepios by the sea at Smyrna. Further, at Balagrae of the Cyrenaeans there is an Asklepios called Healer, who like the others came from Epidauros.⁶⁷

The so-called Pergamene chronicle reveals—with some likelihood—that the same Archias established and held the annual prytany, which became the eponymous office at Pergamon from this time to the second century AD.⁶⁸ Later, prytany and priesthood of Asklepios were often held by the same person. A Pergamene decree from the end of the second century BC confirms the right of the family of a certain Asklepiades, the son of an Archias, to hold the priesthood of Asklepios for all times.⁶⁹ These features and, of course, the immense building activities and expansion of the sanctuary attest to the popularity of the cult from its beginnings through the Attalid period. In an honorary decree from Epidauros, dated to 191 BC, another Archias of Pergamon, the son of Asklepiades, is granted proxeny and further honours because it was his ancestors who exported the cult from Epidauros to Pergamon.⁷⁰ Scholars have drawn on this text when expressing doubts regarding an Epidaurian export of the cult by Archias in the fourth century with an eye to a general truth that the Attalids liked linking local cults to important places in the Greek mainland.⁷¹ Asklepios would then be another example of the creation of the past for political purposes. However, the cult of Asklepios, the origins of which are fairly well documented, definitely dates to the fourth century, and there are parallels for the ‘export from Epidauros’ (the most famous of which, and a wonderfully documented one, is the Athenian cult). In my opinion, a priori and Attalid-focused interpretations are misleading.

Unfortunately, excavations have not yet securely located the sanctuary of Telephos, which should have been close by. Pausanias’ term *anabēnai* is somewhat surprising because the sacred way to the

⁶⁷ Pausanias 2.26.8. ⁶⁸ *AvPerg* 8.2, no. 613, ll. 1–4.

⁶⁹ *AvPerg* 8.2, no. 251 = *Syll*³ 1007, ll. 3–23.

⁷⁰ *IG* IV² 160. ⁷¹ Cf. Scheer 1993, 130.

sanctuary does not slope upwards. The word may simply reflect the terminology used for the procession along the sacred way towards the Asklepieion. Among the many dedications and grave monuments built along the sacred way, one of the most remarkable tombs is a round structure built on top of a marble base and containing a marble grave chamber. Scholars assume that it belonged to an important and much honoured deceased citizen or even a hero, who was symbolically buried here, and have suggested Telephos or his mother Auge.⁷² A late Hellenistic votive relief found just outside the entrance to the Asklepieion can also be linked to a Heroon of Telephos within or close to the sanctuary. We see a chariot driver whose horses are frightened by a snake rising straight up before them; another male figure approaches the first one with his hand raised in a gesture of prayer. Below, there is a well-cut inscription that gives the name of the dedicant. Another, short inscription above the relief is fragmentary and of mediocre quality but clearly states Telephos' name in the dative.⁷³ If the illustration does indeed depict Telephos, it could refer to his being warned by an enormous snake not to enter into an oedipal relationship with his mother, which would be derived from a version of the life of Telephos that was probably told in Sophocles' *Mysoi*. While the Pausanias passage is a strong argument in favour of a location outside the city and in proximity of the sanctuary of Asklepios, it has also been proposed that the Great Altar on the acropolis was in fact the Heroon of Telephos.⁷⁴ I would agree with Andrew Stewart's rejection of this hypothesis, because it is hardly possible to misinterpret Pausanias on the proximity between the two cults and because the apsidal building under the altar may not be a Heroon at all.⁷⁵

How to explain the hymns in the Asklepieion beginning from Telephos? A prior owner of the sacred site may be addressed here, be this Telephos or a non-Greek deity or hero—the hymns would then represent an account of the history of the cult site. It is also possible that hymns recalled the mythical past of the city as a whole, from its foundation to the present. Although, strictly speaking, Telephos' grandson 'Pergamos' was the eponymous founder of the city

⁷² Cf. Radt, 1999, 225.

⁷³ Cf. Ziegenaus and De Luca, *AvPerg* 11.2, 129; Bauchhenss-Thüriedl 1971, 69–70.

⁷⁴ Cf. Stähler 1978, 838–67; see also Webb 1998, 241–54.

⁷⁵ Stewart 2000, 32–57; also Scheer 1993, 137.

(and the hymns could have praised him after Telephos), Telephos was ultimately Pergamon's founder, and the Pergamenes called themselves and others called them 'Telephidai'.⁷⁶ Pausanias and other visitors apparently expected that the praise of Telephos would then be followed by that of his son, Eurypylos, which was not the case because Asklepios would have been offended that the slayer of his own son was mentioned in his temple. Knowledge of the mythical past and a direct link to ritual practice thus mattered. This is confirmed, for example by the Salmacis epigram or so-called 'Pride of Halicarnassus', in which (though not a hymn) we see episodes of foundation consistently represented as the *aitia* of ritual events.⁷⁷ Apart from the fact that we can assume the hymns sung in the sanctuary of Asklepios to be traditional and possibly going back to the foundation of the cult, Pausanias' statements do not suggest that the cult of Asklepios preceded that of Telephos. If the Attalids suddenly promoted a cult of Telephos that had not existed before, they would not have placed it next to the sanctuary of Asklepios at a time when awareness of any story surrounding the hero would have been at its peak. Rather, it looks as if both cults had their own history and background, and only at a time when most of the religious geography of the city already existed, cult regulations synchronized myth and cult.

To sum up: there is no doubt that the Attalids pursued a comprehensive religious policy, both for their own capital and aimed at the outside world, that included the creative display of mythical narratives advantageous to their dynastic and political ambitions. However, I hope to have shown that access to and reasons for similar behaviour existed in Pergamon before the Attalid period. Merely because our knowledge of the pre-Attalid city is poor, we should not deny Pergamon a past that created religious memory and a religious infrastructure with which the Attalids had to live and on the basis of which they could undertake their own identity-building strategies.

⁷⁶ Compare an epigram from Miletos, by a Milesian victor in the Pergamene Herakleia, which opens with the word 'Telephidai' (G. Kawerau, and A. Rehm 1914. *Das Delphinion in Milet*, no. 164, l. 1); the long oracle from Klaros gives them the label 'Telephidai' (*IGR* IV 360, l. 11).

⁷⁷ Lloyd-Jones, 1999, 1–14 and id. 2002, 63–5 ('Corrigenda and Addenda'); Gagné 2006, 1–33.

Abbreviations

<i>AvPerg</i>	<i>Altertümer von Pergamon</i>
<i>IG</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae</i>
<i>IGR</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae ad Res Romanas Pertinentes</i>
<i>SEG</i>	<i>Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum</i>
<i>Syll.</i> ³	W. Dittenberger, <i>Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum</i> , (3rd edn) Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1915–24.

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Memory and Authority in the Magical Papyri¹

Richard Gordon

It is a commonplace that the religious systems of ancient Greece and Rome had nothing comparable to the Book, as institutionalized in the Judeo-Christian-Islamic world religions. Their identity as practices was not significantly formed by the ‘adoption, the interpretation, and the expansion of received Scriptures’, such as the Torah, the Septuagint, and the emergent canon of New Testament writings.² The impact of writing is nevertheless everywhere perceptible in the construction of Greek and Roman religious systems, in the composition of hymns, odes, prayers, epic poetry, stage dramas, novels, in the *commentarii* of the Roman priestly colleges and of individual experts among their members, the formulation of ‘sacred laws’, in the textualization of oracles such as Delphi and Dodona, the Sibyllines, and later the revelations of Clarian Apollo or the ‘Chaldaean Oracles’, and their crowds of anonymous imitators, in the creation of aretalogies, in the massive efflorescence of mythography and local histories, in the role of written cosmogonies and commentaries in diversifying religious options, for example, the Derveni papyrus, the Orphic *Rhapsodies*, the Hermetica, and the creation of natural magic by

¹ A rather different version of this paper was read at the Classical Association meeting in Glasgow in April 2009, in the section ‘To Play by the Book’, organized by Dr F. Naerebout. I am most grateful to the editors of this volume in honour of Simon Price for inviting me to contribute a paper, which I offer as a token of our long-standing friendship, dating back to Simon’s Research Fellowship at Christ’s, and my admiration for his work on Greek and Roman religion.

² Lieu 2004, 37.

pseudo-Democritus.³ Inscribed public and private votive offering neatly fused the memorialization of a successful 'vertical' exchange with the 'horizontal' need of political elites and other self-conscious groups for moral display and self-representation.⁴ The genre of curses now called prayers for justice presupposes the power of writing to alert deities to particular, immediate, instrumental needs.⁵ Neither may have had a Book, but we cannot conceive of either Greek or Roman religion *sans* Text.

Directly or indirectly, these literary forms derive their authority from the wider institutions of which they are part, in Foucauldian terms, the *dispositif*, that is, the interplay of talking, thinking, and acting on the basis of a body of culturally recognized knowledge, a complex of multiply interconnected discursive and non-discursive practices.⁶ Strange as they may sometimes be, we can engage with them insofar as we apprehend the genre-rules. We do, however, possess other types of religious texts that do not fit so neatly into our mental docking-apparatus, namely magical texts, whose declared aim is to do something we consider rationally impossible: directly to alter the world by symbolic means.⁷

As soon as we look at the category 'ancient magic', it dissolves into myriad subcategories with little in common, except that the direct evidence for them is now largely lost. What we mainly 'know' is the fearful, fascinated, jocular social discourse *about* magic. As for primary texts, apart from documents such as curse-tablets, amulets, and phylacteries, there survive a few compilations: the *Cyranides*, the Lithic tradition of powerful stones, 'Antonius Musa', *De herba vettonica*, Marcellus Empiricus' *De medicina*, and one or two others, such as the *Geoponica*, pseudo-Apuleius' *Herbarius*, the *Medicina Plinii*, and so on. The great exception is the group of ritual texts from

³ Cf. Rüpke 2005, 191–204; Cancik 2008, 15–26; Finkelberg and Stroumsa 2003; specifically in Rome and its empire, Barchiesi, Rüpke, and Stephens 2004; Elm von der Osten, Rüpke, and Waldner 2006.

⁴ 'Das Einmeißeln auf Stein... ist eine Publizität, die nicht nur alle betrifft... sondern auch dauerhaft sein soll': Robert 1970, 16. On the link between inscription and Textträger as mutually supporting elements of cultural memory, cf. Schörner 2003, 211–24.

⁵ Tomlin 2002, 165–79. For the term judicial prayer, now called prayers for justice, see Versnel 1991, 60–106; Versnel 2010, 275–82.

⁶ For example, Foucault 2001, 1059–62.

⁷ On the specific intentionality of magical ritual, see still Tambiah 1973, 199–229, repr. in Tambiah 1985, 60–86.

Roman Egypt nowadays known, rather misleadingly, as the Greek Magical Papyri.⁸ These are sacred texts of a completely different kind from the 'received scriptures' in the Judeo-Christian-Islamic world religions, since they invoke theological knowledge not as a life-model but as a means of achieving privileged, direct access to the Other World. I want in this paper to say something about the way these texts use selected aspects of cultural memory to validate their claim to authority.

THE 'MAGICAL PAPYRI'

Some preliminary remarks about the magical papyri are in order. As a group, they should in fact be known as 'Late Egyptian Ritual Texts mainly in Greek and Demotic', but such a name could only find favour in the Circumlocution Office. Their basis is essentially Egyptian, combined with eclectic but limited borrowings from Greek and Near Eastern traditions, particularly Jewish.⁹ They may conveniently be divided into two groups. (1) There are the formularies, which are collections of ritual prescriptions, here called 'recipes' because they employ the imperative singular. Some of them are compendious (the longest in Greek contains fifty-three recipes), some very brief, containing only one or two. They purport to be instructions for rituals whose correct performance will enable the practitioner to obtain a specific end, say a revelation from a god, a prophetic dream, protection from fever, attraction of a sexual partner, the death of an enemy, or a whole bundle of such aims. Individual recipes vary greatly in the extent and style of their specialist knowledge. (2) And there are individual 'activated' texts, almost none of which, as it happens, bears any close relation to the surviving formulary recipes.

⁸ On the inadequacy of this term see Smith 1995, 13–27 at 21 n.15 (repr. in Smith 2004, 215–29). Other related documents are the Byzantine magical texts collected by Delatte 1927, the Coptic materials assembled by Kropp 1930–3, and the phylacteries on (precious) metals. Another large group of closely connected material is the magical amulets.

⁹ For brief accounts, see Preisendanz 1926, 104–67; Preisendanz 1964, 203–17; Brashear 1995, 3380–684 at 3398–422. On the Jewish elements in the magical papyri, see Fernández Marcos 1985, 101–27; Betz 1997, 45–64 = Betz 1998, 187–205; Bohak 2008, 196–214 (includes a discussion of the amulets). I here ignore the fairly numerous Christian texts.

Unlike the *Hermetica*, of which there are at least eleven manuscripts dated to the fourteenth or fifteenth century, and which were already translated or paraphrased into Latin by Marsilio Ficino (1433–99), these texts were virtually unknown until the late nineteenth century. Their discovery was made possible by Napoleon's expedition to Egypt in 1798, which was a military and political fiasco but a cultural-historical triumph, producing both the Rosetta Stone and the monumental *Description de l'Égypte*, a massive compendium of the antiquities, ethnography, topography, and natural history of the country (1809–28).¹⁰ It was the early reports of Napoleon's cultural adviser, Vivant Denon,¹¹ that prompted the grand-scale looting of Egyptian antiquities associated with swashbuckling figures such as Bernadino Drovetti, the 'Paduan giant' Giambattista Belzoni, and his sometime employer, the English adventurer and dealer Henry Salt. All were issued with firmans by the regime of the nominal Turkish governor Mohammed Ali after the British left in 1803, which allowed them to do more or less what they liked. The prominent older European collections of Egyptian monuments, in Turin, the Louvre, the British Museum, the Rijksmuseum in Leyden, later the Ägyptisches Museum in Berlin, owe their existence to this flurry of archaeological private enterprise.

Among the tribe of lesser dealers in Egyptian antiquities during this period was an Armenian merchant originally from Damascus, who called himself Giovanni Anastasi (1780–1857), and served among other things as Consul-General of Sweden and its possession Norway.¹² Some time before 1828 Anastasi acquired through his agents from fellahin in Luxor (Thebes) in Upper Egypt a collection of papyri, mainly magical, in four scripts/languages: hieratic, demotic, Old Coptic (that is, Egyptian represented in Greek characters), and Greek, allegedly found together in a tomb.¹³ Four of them, including

¹⁰ Vercoutter 1986; the images from the five vols. of the *Description* devoted to antiquities (and from two of the modern vols.) have been republished in a single volume by Taschen.

¹¹ Cf. Denant 1802 and 1990.

¹² This man is not to be confused with the Greek assistant to Henry Salt, Giovanni d'Athanasī (1798–1854), author of *A Brief Account of the Researches and Discoveries in Upper Egypt* (London, 1836), who also worked at Luxor/Thebes. See, for example, Richards 2005, 126–8. I am not sure on what authority Dieleman 2005, 12, n.30, claims that Anastasi also used the name d'Athanasī.

¹³ The most reliable information is provided by Reuvers 1830, summarized by Müller 1831, 545–54. It is now generally agreed that the vocalized glosses to the *voces*

P.Leid. J.384 verso = *PGrMag* XII (partly in Demotic = *PDem* xii), the codex *P.Leid.* J.395 = XIII, and a fragment of the London–Leyden demotic text, *P.Leid.* J.383, were sold in a lot of 126 papyri to the Rijksmuseum in Leyden by Anastasi's agents Tossizza and de Castiglione in 1828,¹⁴ an alchemical text given to the Swedish Kungliga Vitterhetsakademie before August 1832,¹⁵ and a fourth century AD magical codex sold to the British Museum in 1839 (*PGrMag* V). When, after his death, Anastasi's remaining collections of antiquities were auctioned in Paris in 1857, the British Museum bought two Demotic magical papyri, one of first-rate importance (*P.BritMus* 10070), which many years later was recognized by Willem Pleyte to join exactly to *P.Leid.* J.383 (= *PDem* xiv);¹⁶ the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris bought the most famous Greek magical book, the codex now known as *PGrMag* IV; and the Louvre bought another demotic text partly written in hieratic and Old Coptic (*PLouvre* E3229 = *PDem Suppl.*).¹⁷

In addition to this group from around Luxor (Thebes), Anastasi also came into possession of several other magical papyri. One was bought from him by M.J.F. Mimaout in 1837 (*PGrMag* III); two others (*PGrMag* I, II) were sold to Karl Richard Lepsius for the Staatliche Museen in Berlin at the Paris auction in 1857. At least one further text was acquired under unknown circumstances by the British Museum in 1888 (*PGrMag* VII).¹⁸ Whether these too were part of the supposed 'Theban Library' cannot now be established. All that can be said is that *PGrMag* I, II, and III at any rate are closely similar to the Greek

magicae in the London and Leyden text are influenced by Coptic dialect P, associated with Thebes: Johnson 1976, 105–32.

¹⁴ The papyri formed just a small part of the transaction: the Rijksmuseum bought 5675 Egyptological items from Anastasi on this occasion.

¹⁵ Published by Lagerkrantz 1913.

¹⁶ The other was *P.BritMus* 10588, a late third-century AD demotic text with some Greek content in the first two columns of the verso, published by Bell, Nock, and Thompson 1933 = *PDem* lxi.

¹⁷ Ritner 1995, 3333–75 at 3336 urges that all the demotic formularies came from the region of Luxor (Thebes). If true, this would indicate that some at least of the material offered for sale in 1857 came from the Luxor region, in all probability from the same source as the 'Library' texts. Brashear 1991, 71–3 at 71, thought that *PLouvre* E3229 was part of the 'Library'; Dieleman 2005, 13 n.38, denies it.

¹⁸ Most of this information can be gathered from Preisendanz 1926 and his introductions to the various texts; also Fowden 1986, 168–72; Brashear 1995, 3401–8; Dieleman 2005, 11–16, 25–9, 40–1.

texts of that group in style and choice of recipe.¹⁹ The Greek hands are generally dated by the papyrologists to the late third/early fourth century AD, though shorter 'activated' versions of at least the *philtro-katadesmos* of *PGrMag* IV 296–466 have been dated to the second–third century AD.²⁰ The London–Leyden Demotic text, however, which, like all the other long formularies, is a compilation from earlier manuscripts, is now tentatively dated to the late second/early third century AD, the individual recipes having been written over the previous century or so; the same scribe wrote out *P.Leid* J 384 verso.²¹ The two other demotic formularies seem to be somewhat later and by different scribes—two different individuals indeed may have been responsible for the recto and verso of *P.Louvre* E3229 (*PDem Suppl.*).²² The contents of the 'Library' itself, whatever they were exactly, are thus likely to have been concealed or buried c. 350 AD.²³ Scattered as they were between different museums, and generally regarded as barbaric, the texts in Greek were slowly published during the course of the nineteenth century, though often in defective transcripts and in poorly distributed periodicals; in that respect Preisendanz' edition of 1928–31, which was based on fresh autopsy, represented a genuine advance. Preisendanz however was a Greek papyrologist, for whom the demotic texts belonged to another specialism. Their omission from his edition has led to persistent misapprehension among historians of Greco-Roman religion of the Sitz im

¹⁹ Brashear 1995, 3403–4 stresses that these items in Greek were never claimed to come from the 'Library'; but in method and spirit they all belong together as a group (this must have been Richard Wünsch's instinct when he was compiling the order of the texts in *PGrMag*, even if putting the Berlin papyri first and second was a piece of misplaced chauvinism; under any view *PGrMag* IV—in Paris—is the outstanding ancient book of magic and should have been placed first). I judge *P.gr. BritMus.* CXXI = *PGrMag* VII to be somewhat different in character both from the texts that certainly belonged to the 'Theban Library' and from *PGrMag* I–III. Frederick Kenyon too evidently thought it inferior: '... the longest of the magical papyri in the BM but not the most interesting': Kenyon 1893, 83. It is however certain that Anastasi claimed that another of his papyri (*P.BritMus* XLVII = *PGrMag* VI), which he sold to the British Museum in 1839, came from Memphis; Kenyon dated it to the second century AD (ibid. 81). It is strikingly different in conception from the others, and written in a literary hand.

²⁰ *SupplMag* nos. 46, 47, 48. The original editors however dated them later.

²¹ Dieleman 2005, 41–4.

²² See Johnson in Betz, *GMP in Translation*, lvi–lvii; Ritner 1995, 3336–42.

²³ Dieleman 2005, 22, points out that the Nag Hammadi texts, translated from Greek into Coptic, and surely part of a temple library, were buried not far away from Luxor in the hills of Nag Hammadi perhaps a half century later.

Leben of these texts.²⁴ It was the decision to include all the demotic sections in the English translation organized by Hans-Dieter Betz, and the commentaries on them by R.K. Ritner, that has contributed most to the appreciation of the Egyptian background of these texts among non-Egyptologists.

AUTHORIZING MAGICAL PRACTICE

These magical texts make a generic claim to achieve changes in the world, though surprisingly often these actually involve subjective experiences such as dreams, visions, and hallucinations.²⁵ It hardly needs saying that the broader meaningfulness of such claims is underwritten or protected by a whole series of implicit assumptions about the nature of the divine world, its possible modes of intervention in human life, the prestige and efficacy of theological knowledge, the rhetoric of conjuration, the power of certain words and names, and so on—the underpinning that, at least within the world of this *dispositif*, makes appeal to magic a rational and plausible step.

Despite such underpinning, claims of this sort have a special need of authority.²⁶ Some of them emphasize their exceptional status to the implied reader by claiming to be able to deliver an astonishing range of results. One asserts that it works

for every thing and every rite . . . It attracts in the same hour, it sends dreams, it causes sickness, produces dream visions, removes enemies when you reverse the spell, however you wish.²⁷

PGrMag. IV 2622–6, tr. E.N. O’Neil

Another, ascribed to Pachrates, the *prophêtes* (*ḥm-nṯr* priest) of Heliopolis, presents itself as a

²⁴ Preisendanz simply omitted to register the locations of the demotic sections of the bilingual papyri: Ritner 1995, 3358–9; Dieleman 2005, 16–17. The Demotic London–Leyden papyrus had been published in exemplary manner in 3 vols., with a complete facsimile, by F.Ll. Griffiths and H. Thompson: Griffiths and Thompson 1904–9, but they presented it for its *philological* interest. The Demotic sections of *PDem* xli were not published until 1933 (see n.16); so far as I can discover; those of *PGM* XII = *PDem* xii not until 1975: Johnson 1975, 29–64.

²⁵ Gordon 1997, 65–92.

²⁶ Betz 1982, 161–70, repr. in Betz 1990, 173–83; Dieleman 2005, 254–80.

²⁷ ποιούσα πρὸς πάντα καὶ πρὸς πᾶσαν πράξιν· ἄγει γὰρ μονοώρους, ὄνειροπομπεῖ, κατακλίνει, ὄνειροθαυπτεῖ, ἀναιρεῖ ἐχθροὺς μεταστρέφοντός σου τὸν λόγον, ὥς ἐὰν θέλῃς.

spell of attraction . . . It inflicts sickness excellently and destroys powerfully, sends dreams beautifully, accomplishes dream revelations marvellously and in its many demonstrations has been marvelled at for having no failure in these matters.²⁸

PGrMag IV 2441–6, tr. E.N. O’Neil

A third claims *τούτου μείζον οὐδὲν ἔσχευ ὁ κόσμος*, ‘the world has nothing greater’ (*PGrMag* XII 277). Another way of claiming universal or general efficacy was to appeal to famous Greek, Jewish, Persian, or other ‘masters’, such as Pythagoras, Moses, Ostanes, or Apollonios.²⁹ The majority, however, deliberately evoke aspects of earlier Egyptian temple-practice. We might see such evocation as the inverse of the defacing of images of ancient gods by Christians at Aphrodisias, Athens, and in Egypt itself discussed elsewhere in this volume by R.R.R. Smith (Ch. 13).³⁰ Whereas the intention there was evidently to dissipate the power felt still to inhere in ‘scandalous’ images, the authors of the recipes in the magical papyri attempted to enforce the authority of their texts by appeal to what they claimed to be ancient Egyptian practice.

This need not be seen as cynical or even as particularly self-conscious. Rather it links the magical papyri to a variety of moves aimed at registering the uniqueness and antiquity of Egypt in changing political and religious situations, for example, prophetic or apocalyptic texts such as the Oracle of the Potter or Nectanebo’s Dream, the aretologies of Isis, Sarapis, and Amenouthis (Asklepios), and the Hermetic texts, in particular the *Asclepius* which are now known to have emerged in the late Ptolemaic period from an Egyptian priestly milieu influenced by Greek philosophical categories.³¹

The ideological nature of such strategies is well established. Cultural memory is a highly reconstructive affair, in which specific

²⁸ ἀγωγή . . . ἄγουσα ἀσχετοὺς καὶ ἀνουσιάστους μονοημέρους, κατακλίνει γενναίως καὶ ἀναίρει ἰσχυρῶς ὀνειροπομπὴ καλλίστως, ὀνειραιτητὴ θαυμαστῶς καὶ ἐν πλείστοις ἀποδείξεσιν ἐθαυμάσθη οὐδεμίαν ἔγκλισιν ἔχουσα τούτων. Although the recipes are unrelated, this frame text is evidently a variation on the first, with the additional reassurance that it has never been known to fail.

²⁹ Dieleman 2005, 263–75.

³⁰ Hahn 2004; for the Latin West, with reservations, Sauer 2003.

³¹ Prophetic texts: Podemann Sørensen 1992, 164–81. Aretologies: Harder 1944; Bergman 1968; the most important contrary view by an Egyptologist is Müller 1961; also his review of Bergman’s book, Müller 1972, 117–30; cf. Dousa 2002, 149–84; for the other aretologies, see Longo 1969 with the review by K.J. Rigsby: Rigsby 1971, 741–3. Hermetica: Fowden 1986; Jasnow and Zauzich 1998, 607–18.

events, claims, and practices are appropriated, renegotiated and revalued in the service of particular, historically variable interests and aims.³² The past acquires as many forms as present interests require. Neither the group nor its memories are stable: '[La mémoire d'une société] ne cesse pas de se transformer, et le groupe lui-même change sans cesse.'³³ The larger the 'archive' of preserved memories, as in the case of Egypt, where a written culture had already been created between palace and temple c. 3000 BC, the greater the scope for selective memorialization.³⁴ But in the case of the magical papyri there are, I think, more particular reasons for the selective evocation of ancient practice.

CHANGING DEMANDS

It is familiar that one of the major institutional differences between the religious systems of the Fertile Crescent and the Greco-Roman world is the absence from the latter of full-time temple-priests and temple functionaries; this absence is in turn linked to the absence of kingship and of the redistributive palace and temple economy. In these centralized royal economies, magic typically had a regular place in the activities of the priestly caste, being used to protect the king and the palace, but also individuals, from danger.³⁵ In Egypt, the main word for magic, *heka*, defined as what the demiurge 'has given to men as a defence against the effects of events', was also the name of a divinity, and indeed conceived as part of the creator's person, an essential element of the divine power.³⁶ Magic was thus conceived as a morally neutral 'force' capable of effecting changes in the Other World and/or in this by means of symbolic manipulation, and its correct procedures could be learned. The negative attitudes towards

³² Assmann 1999, 15–19. On the role of structural amnesia, see her remarks on p. 61; on history and memory as two forms of remembering, interlinked but not in opposition, p. 134.

³³ Halbwachs 1950 repr. 1997, 135.

³⁴ Assmann 1999, 130–42, terms these respectively *Speichergedächtnis* and *Funktionsgedächtnis*.

³⁵ Borghouts 1972–86, vol. 3, 1137–51. For Babylonia, see for example Bottéro 2000, 63–76; the Hittite kingdom: Haas 1994, 876–911.

³⁶ Étienne 2000, 13–15; Ritner 1995, 3353–5. The other Egyptian word for magic is *akhu*, 'spells' (basic meaning 'bright', 'effective'), and the two often occur together: Ritner 1993, 30–5; Koenig 1994, 298–303.

magic typical of peasant societies, and certainly of Greek and Roman culture, were thus not prominent in Dynastic Egypt, or at least not in the sources available to us—peasant attitudes may have been quite different—and the skills required to perform it were customarily taught in the temple. Indeed the most important magical practitioners in each major temple were the lector-priests, those most skilled in sacred knowledge (*ḥry-ḥb ḥry-tp*). Numerous written recipes survive, though it is often difficult to distinguish them on the one hand from religious texts and on the other from medical ones.³⁷ Some take the form of a hymn, litany, or prayer, but most consist of chains of magical formulae alluding to mythical events (*historiolae*), which seem often to be made up ad hoc since they are never heard of elsewhere.³⁸ As we would expect in a priestly tradition, great emphasis is laid on knowing the true names of demons and spirits against whom protection is sought. At the same time, however, there seem always to have been other providers of magical services, defensive, healing, and aggressive, outside the temple, such as the ‘scorpion charmer’ (*ḥrp srkt*) and the ‘women who know’, of whom little is known except that they existed.³⁹

To judge from the surviving magical texts of Ptolemaic date, such as the Brooklyn and the Jumilhac papyri, much of this traditional order survived well into the period of Macedonian rule.⁴⁰ But something of a shift seems to have occurred in the late Hellenistic period and especially the first two centuries of Roman rule. The most obvious signs of change is that dominant genres of ‘everyday’ temple-magic, particularly protective magic against demons, crocodiles, snakes, and scorpions, are much less attested, and new, or hitherto

³⁷ ‘General agreement over the parameters of “magic” [in Egypt] has proved elusive’: Ritner 1995, 3334. In general on Egyptian magic: Sauneron 1966, 27–65; Borghouts 1974, 7–19; Kákosy 1985, repr. 1991, 7–101 at 28–30. In medicine, there was a saying, ‘Magic with a remedy is powerful; a remedy with magic is powerful!’ (*P. Ebers* 3): Westendorf 1999, 91. A selection of ‘everyday’ texts in Borghouts 1978. The importance of writing in magical practice can be gauged from the fact that the ideograph ‘book’ often appears in hieroglyphic spellings of the word *heka*.

³⁸ Podemann Sørensen 1984, 5–19; Frankfurter 1995, 457–76.

³⁹ ‘Sembrebbe che i maghi non sacerdoti appartenessero allo strato della popolazione umile; i loro scopi erano di tipo quotidiano, il più delle volte dovevano creare una difesa dagli animali pericolosi’: Kákosy 1985, repr. 1991, 25; Koenig 1994, 34–5; cf. Gardiner 1917, 31–44; 139f. However Ritner 1993, 222, claims that the ‘scorpion-charmers’ were also trained in the temple.

⁴⁰ Sauneron 1970; Vandier 1962; cf. Johnson 1986, 76–84.

less common, genres become dominant: for private malign and aggressive (mainly erotic) magic; for personal success and attractiveness; written phylacteries.⁴¹ Techniques of miniaturization (of rituals, of ritual paraphernalia), of do-it-yourself, and individual action by the practitioner, become typical.⁴² The implication of this evidence is that the practitioner is imagined as having only a loose connection with an institution, to be more like the ‘scorpion-charmers’ of the street and the village, who lived from the magical services they could sell.⁴³ On the other hand, the practitioner is assumed to be competent in ritual, to know how to apply ‘eye-paint’, conduct a bowl-divination with or without medium, recite a fixed prayer, compose a letter to the dead, write *charaktêres*, be able to obtain ‘hieratic papyrus’, natron, and other requisite ingredients.⁴⁴ A training in temple-magic is thus taken for granted.

How are we to reconcile these two apparently contradictory representations? It is true that the temple did slowly decline as an institution during the Roman period. On the other hand, despite the restrictions on priests’ privileges and income (the *syntaxis*) imposed by the Roman administration, they continued in many parts of Egypt, especially in rural areas, to maintain their fabric, put on festivals, and encourage pilgrimages. Native Egyptian religious life went on—it was after all part of Roman policy to require native Egyptian priests to be able to read and write hieratic and Demotic.⁴⁵

⁴¹ Though they are not new, the sheer number of divination procedures, the face-to-face vision (*ph-ntr*, ‘petition [to] god’), visions of god in a bowl, with or without medium, lamp-divination, dreams, as a proportion of the whole set, must draw our attention. In this connection, Homer-oracles are clearly a Greek import.

⁴² Moyer and Dieleman 2003, 47–71.

⁴³ Smith 1993, 172–207; Smith 1995, 23–7. Examples are *PGrMag* I 84–5: *καὶ (τὸν θεὸν) εἰς στεῖνὸν τόπον ἐνεγκών, ὅπου κατοικεῖς, καθ[ίστη]. π]ρώτον δὲ τὸν οἶκον στρώσας, καθὼς πρέπει*, ‘take (the god) into a small room, where you live, and sit him down. But first clean the room, as is fitting...’; III 193; 302; IV 1859–61 ~ 2187–9; VII 540–1; 727; 875 XII 164; XIII 5–7; 1034 XXXVIII 5–6. In all these cases *oikos* means a room in a house, but occasionally it seems to denote a workshop or place of business, for example XII 104: *ἐν ᾧ οἴκῳ πραγματεύομαι ἐγὼ <ὁ>δε...* Ritner 1995, 3354, rightly suggests that it had always been customary for priests to offer magical services outside the temple in their free time; but he insists that virtually nothing changed in Egyptian magic, not merely in the types of procedures followed but in the range of ‘products’, which seems to me one-sided.

⁴⁴ This last was surely not as difficult as has been made out: there were shops or dealers for such requisites, as in the modern Sahel.

⁴⁵ Bowman 1986, 166–90; Frankfurter 1998, 37–144. Internal changes, for example Ciampini 2002, 27–40.

Part of the explanation seems to lie in changes in demand. We know that Egyptian temple personnel were historically open to change.⁴⁶ From the fourth century BC, they had borrowed and adapted Babylonian mathematical astronomy in order to predict the movements of the heavenly bodies, and then adapted Greek astrology when it became modish.⁴⁷ The transformation of Isis and her 'circle' into a family goddess is further evidence of a readiness to absorb Hellenic influence.⁴⁸ The case of protective and healing amulets is yet another. By the first or second century AD traditional Egyptian amulets (Fig. 7.1), except for scarabs, had ceased to be manufactured in favour of new types, with new iconography, made from semi-precious stones placed in a ring or other setting, following a wholly Greek or Greco-Roman fashion (Fig. 7.2a, b).⁴⁹ The manufacture of such amulets required new types of technical skills, as well as interest in new types of semi-precious stones; both were presumably common in Greek craft communities, say in Alexandria, or the numerous Greek settlements along the Nile.⁵⁰ Such readiness to meet new demands combined with a specialized knowledge of Egyptian religious traditions offers, I suggest, a quite precise parallel to the emergence of the magical papyri.

Who might have been the customers in Egypt for new types of magical services? The obvious possibility is the Greek and Hellenized inhabitants of the *polis* of Alexandria, and the increasingly Hellenized inhabitants of the larger *metropoleis*, including the relatively wealthy gymnasial class (nominally Egyptians of peregrine status), whose members had profited from the large-scale privatization of land that took place under Roman rule, especially in the Fayum, and who

⁴⁶ Adaptation in Egyptian religion during the Hellenistic and Roman periods is one of the themes of Kákosy 1995, 2894–3048.

⁴⁷ Jones 1995, 25–51 at 36. The use of zodiacs in Egyptian astronomical astrology begins in the third century BC: Derchein 1966, 153–5.

⁴⁸ Dunand 1979. I have already mentioned the case of the *Hermetica* (n.31), which owe their survival to their adaptation into Greek.

⁴⁹ Philipp 1986, 13–26; Nagy 1995, 153–79.

⁵⁰ These stones came largely from India, via the well-established aromatics trade-route, which used the Red Sea ports of Berenike and Myos Hormos (Quseir al Qadim), and transported both aromatics and stones on a large scale across the desert to the Nile, and so to Alexandria; see Begley and De Puma 1991; Peacock and Williams 2007. Jean de Thévenot (1633–67), who visited Alexandria in 1652, reports that magical amulets were constantly being found by the inhabitants and sold to Europeans: Kákosy 1995, 3032. Egypt was thus probably the source of most of such gems in modern museum collections.



Fig. 7.1. A selection of traditional Dynastic Egyptian amulets representing hieroglyphs, made from semi-precious stones. From l. to r.: an *ankh* (sign of life), a *nefer* (denoting 'heart and lung' = 'good'), a *tit* (knot of Isis, usually made of a red stone), a *djed*-pillar (as an ideograph, 'enduring', associated primarily with Osiris, but also other gods), a *wad*-column, in the shape of a young papyrus-plant, meaning 'be green' (usually made of a light green stone). For the rich, such amulets were made of precious stones or gold; for the less-well-off, of ceramics, semi-precious stones, or even bronze; they were normally hung round the neck of the person (dead or alive) to be protected or cured. Museo Egizio, Turin. Photo: A. Roccati (ed.), *La magia in Egitto ai tempi dei Faraoni* (exhibition catalogue, Milan 1985) (Modena, 1985) 80 fig.18 (Foto Lovera).

supplied the *bouleutai* after the introduction of town councils early in the third century.⁵¹ We know that both catarchic and genethliacal astrology were much in demand in Egypt during the same period to provide specific advice about business and family decisions in one's own locality;⁵² the central role of divination-recipes in the magical papyri is likely to be connected with the same sort of demand, whether we imagine replies mediated by reputed local specialists or direct do-it-yourself (or a mixture of both). It was with the needs of these Hellenized groups that practitioners of magic, whether inside or

⁵¹ Bowman and Rathbone 1992, 107–27; Tacoma 2006.

⁵² Neugebauer and Van Hoesen 1959; Jones 1995.



Fig. 7.2a. Haematite ring-amulet (obverse), showing a dog- and an ass-headed figure (that is, Anubis and Seth) holding the *sa*-hieroglyph ('protection') and supporting Aphrodite on their joined hands, with three stars below. Below this scene, an Osiris-mummy and a lion, walking left. Round the edge, a variant of the Bakaxichych-*logos* (another variant of the same *logos* on the reverse). Interpretation uncertain, no parallels. Skoluda Collection, M070. Photo: S. Michel, *Bunte Steine - Dunkle Bilder* (Munich 2001), pl. 22 no. 134.



Fig. 7.2b. Green jasper in a nineteenth-century ring, showing a pantheistic Bes with double wings, the *atef*-crown flanked by two cobras, a crocodile tail. In three of his hands he holds *was*-sceptres; possibly a *nefer*-sign in the fourth. Several parallels. Royal Albert Museum, Exeter, inv. no. 5/1946.356, from the Montague collection, perhaps from Alexandria. Photo: S. Hoey Middleton, *Seals, Finger-rings, Engraved Gems and Amulets in the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter* (Exeter 1998) 65 no. 53 (size: 4:1).

outside the temple, needed to communicate if they were to gain access to this relatively wealthy potential market.⁵³

Another consideration is that these texts display a wide range of competence, learning and ability. A hierarchy both of aims and abilities is indeed implied by Kalasiris, the Egyptian priest (προφήτης) in Heliodorus' *Ethiopian Story*, a novel now generally dated to the first half of the third century, if not a little earlier:

⁵³ Whether such Hellenized Egyptians had specifically Greek models of magical practice I rather doubt. Though there are some (early) texts with plainly Greek content, such as *SupplMag* 72 (Augustan), *PGrMag* XX (first century AD) and VI (see n.19), the great bulk of the content of the magical papyri in Greek is plainly Egyptian. Ritner 1995, 3368–71, suggests that even the 'hymns', usually taken as clear evidence of the splicing of traditions, may have been written by Egyptian priests, on the model of the Isis-hymns of Medinet Mâdi. I incline therefore to think that Faraone 2000, 195–214; cf. Faraone 2008, 224, exaggerates the impact of specifically Greek models on the content.

One kind (of Egyptian wisdom) is popular, we might say creeping along the ground, ministrant to images and wallowing among corpses, addicted to simples, and relying on incantations. It neither attains any good end itself, nor brings any good to those who use it; most often it finds itself at fault, such successes as it achieves being painful and meagre . . . But the other knowledge, . . . the true wisdom, of which this other has spuriously assumed the name, and in which we priests of prophetic line are trained from our youth, looks upwards to the heavenly region: companion of the gods, partaker of the nature of the higher powers, it traces the motions of the stars and gleans foreknowledge of the future.

Aithiop. 3.16.3–4 tr. J.R. Morgan (adapted)

Although the detail here does not quite fit, since a formulary such as the Great Paris codex (*PGrMag* IV) contains a substantial amount of ‘creeping magic’ as well as elevated divinatory rituals, and deploys its learning, albeit unevenly, to both ends, Kalasiris’ distinction seems to apply at any rate roughly to the surviving texts. His radicalization and moralization of the division between low and high magic, which is foreign to the Anastasi formularies, must however owe something to the Roman view of magic, which has been seen as responsible for the secrecy attending the practice of ritual magic in Roman Egypt, and evidently also lies behind the dispute between Porphyry and Iamblichus over ‘controlling the gods’ (*goeteia*).⁵⁴ The hierarchy of knowledge and prowess was also of course heavily inflected by financial considerations, that is how much the client was prepared to pay for a given service, and thus the effort worth investing in the contract.

With the exception of *POslo* 1 = *PGrMag* XXXVI, an illustrated papyrus of twelve columns bought by Sam Eitrem in the Fayum in 1920, the books collected by Anastasi, mainly in their known form late and, it seems, from Upper Egypt, represent the longest and most sophisticated formularies that survive. Rather more than half (54) of the 103 non-Christian magical documents from other sites in Egypt, scattered among numerous papyrological collections, and republished by Preisendanz as *PGrMag* nos. VIII–XI, XV–XXXV, XXXVII–LX, LXII–LXXXI, are individual ‘activated’ texts, phylacteries for protection,

⁵⁴ Ritner 1995, 3355–8; Betz 1995, 153–75, repr. in Betz 1998, 152–74. Theurgy: Iamblichus, *Myst. Aegypt.* 194.2–7 condemns magic, i.e. ‘creeping magic’, in strongly moral terms, cf. Shaw 1995, 85–7, 168–9.

aggressive (erotic), or malign magic.⁵⁵ The rest are copies of individual recipes, mainly amulets or phylacteries, but also erotic; only ten are formulary collections.⁵⁶ Among the seventy-nine non-Christian texts published since 1941 and collected by Daniel and Maltomini in *SupplMag*, there are thirty-one formularies, only one of which, of Augustan date and untypical (no. 72), is longer than a few lines; none is remotely comparable to a text such as the Great Paris codex (*PGrMag* IV), *P.gr. BritMus* CXXI (*PGrMag* VII) or even *P. gr. BritMus* XLVI (*PGrMag* V). Moreover, apart from *PGrMag* LXII 24–46 and LXXVII, virtually none of the non-Anastasi texts concerns direct-vision (*pḥ-ntr*), bowl-divination, or dream-vision, which is a main emphasis of the Anastasi texts.⁵⁷ Although they do contain ‘low’ magic, it is thus tempting to think that the latter represent a type of relatively elevated, self-conscious temple-magic, otherwise lost, focused especially on divination and on the display of theological erudition. Such a profile was surely designed to be attractive to relatively sophisticated customers mainly wanting divine help in decision-making.⁵⁸

QUESTIONS OF LANGUAGE

The most striking innovation in this area, however, is the very fact that these texts are, with the exception of the Demotic texts I return to later, all in Greek.⁵⁹ Historically, ritual texts in Egypt show great conservatism in the choice of medium: the Egyptian language in its various forms was considered uniquely appropriate to religious ends. Although one can see the advantage in the magical market-place of selling protective phylacteries in a language intelligible to Greek-

⁵⁵ I use Preisendanz’ own figures at *PGrMag* vol. 2 p. ix. The total is actually considerably smaller, since he included many questionable texts, for example XXIII, XXVI, XXIX, XXX, XXXI, XXXIV, LVI–LVII, LXI, LXXIII–LXXVI, rightly omitted by Betz from the translation.

⁵⁶ I count only *PGrMag* VIII, X, XX, XXIIa and b, LII, LVIII, LXII, LXIII, LXX. None contains more than five recipes.

⁵⁷ *PGrMag* LVII seems to be for acquiring a *paredros*, a mystic assistant. On the central place of high-level divination texts in the major demotic (and indeed Greek) formularies, see Ritner, ‘Magical Practice’ (n.17) 3346–8.

⁵⁸ I make no comment here on Thessalus of Tralleis, on whom see for example Ritner 1995, 3356–8; Frankfurter 1998, 168–9, 219–20.

⁵⁹ The oddity of accepting Greek into a ritual domain is remarked on by Dieleman 2005, 63.

speakers, what was it that impelled priests, or at any rate practitioners on the periphery of the temple, to create, translate, or transpose entire formularies, most of whose recipes were never intended to be seen by non-experts? It is this process of translation or transposition of magical materials into Greek that remains baffling if we try to maintain, with R.K. Ritner, that nothing much changed in the area of magical practice from Late Dynastic times. For it is not that the texts in Greek exist alongside a mass of Demotic material: with the exception of the four Anastasi demotic texts and the earliest Coptic ones, which date to the second century AD but are mostly (much) later, virtually all the surviving magical texts of the Roman period are in Greek.⁶⁰

We need again, I think, to invoke the market envisaged. It is instructive that the 'distinctively' Egyptian astrological books of 'Nechepso' and 'Petosiris' were also written in Greek even though demotic astrological texts are known.⁶¹ The desire to supply the Hellenized strata of the population with 'applied' or 'activated' texts must have opened up a niche for bilingual entrepreneurs (whatever their nominal religious status). Insofar as divinatory sessions were conducted with Greek-speaking clients, divinatory texts in Greek were required. The best explanation for the existence of texts consisting of single recipes is that there was a trade in such items, or exchanges of them within the scribal class. Moreover, where clients' own information had to be included, for example in erotic magic, it was easier for the model likewise to be in that language.⁶²

At the same time, the pragmatic shift to a language that was empty of religious merit and significance had a cost, a cost that impelled a search for new ways of registering the Egyptian authenticity of the

⁶⁰ See Depauw 1997, 109–11. It must be said however that demoticists are both few in number and little interested in this type of text; Prof. J.-F. Quack (Heidelberg) tells me there are indeed numbers of as yet unpublished items.

⁶¹ The astronomical texts (second half of second century AD) of the cache of ostraka found in 1938 by A. Vogliano in the temenos of a temple in Medinet Mâdi (and subsequently destroyed thanks to the ineptitude of the authorities of the Cairo Museum) were likewise in Greek: Baccani 1989, 66–77. For the demotic astrological texts, see Depauw 1997, 106–7.

⁶² Ritner 2005, 3362, thinks it 'highly possible that few of the preserved Greek magical papyri were ever intended for a Greek audience'. This is surely to take the continuity thesis to absurd lengths; and anyway 'papyri' is not the issue—we need a distinction here, which we do not get, between longer formularies and individual recipes.

recipes in their new, blank format. The 'true' identity of magical practice behind its new guise needed to be reaffirmed. This involved recourse to Aleida Assmann's *Funktionsgedächtnis*, selective, interested modes of memorialization.⁶³ Such selective retrospection was a long-familiar practice in Egypt, the Late Egyptian temple being itself a representation of the past, an expression of a specific historical consciousness: 'Der ägyptische Spätzeittempel ist gebaute Erinnerung'.⁶⁴ The practices, the use of specific plants and empowered liquids, *historiolae*, threats, letters to the dead, modelled figurines, divination by dreams, subjection-strategies, and the rest, remained no doubt largely constant. But such continuity is not the point. What was needed were strategies that reaffirmed the 'true' identity of the enterprise as a whole.

In this connection, I want briefly to look at three important types of memorialization-strategies in the magical papyri: referring back to the institution of the temple, attempts to reproduce older magical modes in new forms, and 'reverse' translation.

1. Evoking the world of the temple

One of the traditional magical modes in Egypt was the inscribed stone stela, such as the Horus stele (Fig. 7.3).⁶⁵ Stelae of this type comprised three types of communication: the primary 'epiphanic' appearance of Horus; above him a narrative evoking aspects of the divine world, which continues onto the reverse; and finally the text itself.⁶⁶ Typically water was poured over such stelae, thus absorbing the power of the words and pictures, and given to the patient to drink.⁶⁷ Originally therefore a stele was an inscribed magical object. In the Anastasi formularies, however, the Greek word *στήλη* is consistently (though not quite invariably) used to mean a set of instructions with the

⁶³ Assmann 1999, 134.

⁶⁴ Assmann 1992, 181.

⁶⁵ Koenig 1994, 100–30; Kákosy 1985, repr. 1991, 59–66, 130–1. The Egyptian word was *oba*, 'offering-stone'.

⁶⁶ The text in this case consists of a *historiola*, a mythical anecdote, in which Horus is stung by a scorpion; his mother Isis receives advice from the scorpion goddess Salket, and the god Thoth appears with an antidote. The text ends with a threat against the gods if the magic should fail.

⁶⁷ Sist 1983, 253–60.



Fig. 7.3. Miniature basalt stela showing Horus-the-child standing on a crocodile (h: 8.7 cm, w: 5.1 cm, d: 2.3 cm). In his right hand, Horus holds a snake, a scorpion, and an oryx (sacred to Seth); in his left, a snake, a scorpion, and a lion. A Bes-mask above his head. Such stelae were intended as amulets against attacks by creatures such as snakes, scorpions, and crocodiles. Egyptian, XXX Dynasty (fourth century BC). Museo Archeologico, Milan. Publ.: L. Sist, 'Una stela di "Horo sui crocodrilli"', *Oriens Antiquus* 22 (1983), 253–60.

appropriate words, that is a 'recipe' for a ritual procedure.⁶⁸ What had been a complex magical object for ritual use has become a word for a text, a set of explicit instructions.

The significance of this shift is made clear by numerous references to the discovery of claimed originals in temples, for example:

A copy of recipes from the <book?> found in Heliopolis, in the holy book called 'of Hermes', in the inner shrine, (written) in Egyptian letters and translated into Greek.

P.Berol. inv. 21243 = SupplMag 72.1–5

⁶⁸ *PGrMag* III 424 (which also provides an 'Egyptian' word for the hoopoe); IV 1115–66; 1167–1226; 2572; 3249 and 3252; V 96–172; 423; VII 215; 863–5; 941; termed 'sacred': XIII 61, 54; 568. There are only three instances of the word *stela* in a magical context outside the Anastasi texts; two are Christian (*SupplMag* 23.11; 60.1), the third is found in a fifth-century AD erotic spell now in Cologne (45.18).

Copy of a sacred book found in the treasury of Hermes.

PGrMag XXIVa2–4

I utter the names that Hermes Trismegistus has inscribed in hieroglyphic writing at Heliopolis.

PGrMag IV 884–7

Your true name is inscribed on the sacred stela in the inner shrine at Hermopolis.

PGrMag VIII 41–2

The transcript is claimed to enjoy the same authority as the original, whose power is itself guaranteed by its location, its script, or its truthfulness.⁶⁹ Only in the first case (of Augustan date) is the book claimed to be in hieroglyphics, which could at that time still be read; thereafter the ‘original’ is cited to underwrite the pronunciation of the name.⁷⁰ There are also references to the editor or author having been given a recipe by a person of authority, for example, a ‘[doctor] in Oxyrhynchus’, such men being in fact practitioners of iatromagic.⁷¹ Or the practitioner may himself claim to be a senior priest: ‘For I am a *prophêtes* (that is: *hm-ntr* priest), and since I am about to call a terrible, fearful name . . . open [the holy temple], the world [built on the earth] and welcome Osiris, because I am . . .’.⁷²

Closely related to appeals to the temple, in some cases identical, is the claim that a given recipe was devised by a named authority. Thus Pnouthis, the alleged author of a recipe for the difficult task of acquiring a personal daemonic factotum, is said to have been a senior temple priest, a *hierogrammateus* (that is: *hry-hb hry-tp*); Pachrates,

⁶⁹ For other examples, see the commentary of Daniel and Maltomini, *SupplMag* 72 on col. i.1–5 (pp. 111–12); Brashear 1979, 261–78 at 266. Daniel and Maltomini point out (p. 113) that in an actual Egyptian temple such books would not have been kept in the *adyton* but in the library; *adyton* is actually a Hellenism; indeed, we might take it that the device as a whole is Graeco-Roman. Unsurprisingly, the same formulae are also found in astrological contexts, for example *Cod. Berol.* 173 f.177 verso = CCAG 7 p.62; cf. *Cod. phil. gr.Vindob.* 108 f.263 verso = CCAG 6 p.10, ‘The table there in the Egyptian language . . .’.

⁷⁰ Claims to be able to ‘utter’ hieroglyphics appear at *PGrMag* XIII 81, 149, 599 (‘hieratic’ and ‘Egyptian’ too); a name to be written in hieroglyphs ‘as the *prophetai* call them’: XII 276. *PGrMag* IV 96–172 is plausibly supposed to be ascribed to Ieu, a ‘writer of hieroglyphics’.

⁷¹ *PDem* xiv.1–92 (?); 528–53; cf. Westendorf 1999, 65–76; 360–88; 524–35. The implied author of *PGM* I 42–195 claims to be ‘an expert’ (43).

⁷² *PGrMag* VII 323–6; cf. XII 229. The ‘prophetic dress’ of I 262–347 seems however to be Apolline.

the alleged author of a multi-purpose recipe, a *prophêtes* at Heliopolis.⁷³ Another text opens in the form of a letter from the alleged author, Nephotes (which is usually a divine name), to Psammetichus, presumably the famous Pharaoh of the XXVI Dynasty (664–610 BC), recommending its amazing powers. Yet another claims to be by King Pitys, who elsewhere addresses a recipe to King Ostanes, and may in fact be an Egyptian alchemist, Bitys.⁷⁴ The land of Egypt is mentioned several times, not merely as a source of ingredients but also as the focus of divine blessing and protection.⁷⁵

Although the process of collecting and editing recipes from different sources led to the citation of many other names from the ‘Occultic International’, among them Greek and Persian names, I see the devices that refer specifically to Egypt as part of a wider strategy of establishing identity through memory of an indigenous tradition now fixed in an ideal past. Indeed, it picks up on a device occasionally used in much earlier magical practice to legitimate recipes, but reworks it to serve as functional memory.⁷⁶

2. Reproduction

In Egypt, the special status of hieroglyphic script was marked by its rank as the speech of the gods. By the second century AD, however, hieroglyphs could no longer be read even within the temple; their ‘force’ continued to be evoked by various means, notably in the creation of commentaries, such as Horapollo’s *Hieroglyphica*, which

⁷³ *PGrMag* I 42–195; IV 2447–8. We also hear of books or recipes by Manetho (*PGrMag* III 440; XIII 440), Khonsu (*PDem* xiv 239–95), and Paysakh, a priest (232–8).

⁷⁴ *PGrMag* IV 1928, 2006. Pibechis is claimed to be another Egyptian magician: *PGrMag* IV 3007–86 with Preisendanz 1941, 1310–12. Various deities, such as Osiris, the healer Imhotep, and Thoth/Hermes appear as authors of recipes (*PDem* xiv 627–35; 93–114; *PGrMag* V 213–303; VII 919–24; etc.).

⁷⁵ *PGrMag* IV 2967–3006; XIII 34, XII 98; IV 1341, 2371; protection: IV 1640. Allusions to Memphis, the grave of Osiris at Abydos, the Nile, crocodiles, apes, and so on all tend in the same direction, the establishment of the specific identity of Egypt.

⁷⁶ For example: ‘This magic was found in the night, in the great hall of the temple at Coptos, by its lector-priest, a secret (belonging) to Isis. The earth was plunged in darkness, but the moon lighted the book all the way to Cheops . . . to whom it was brought as a wonder’: *P. BritMus.* 10059 (*P. med. Lond.*, c. 1350 BC) V 274; other examples in Kákosy 1985, repr. 1991, 26–8.

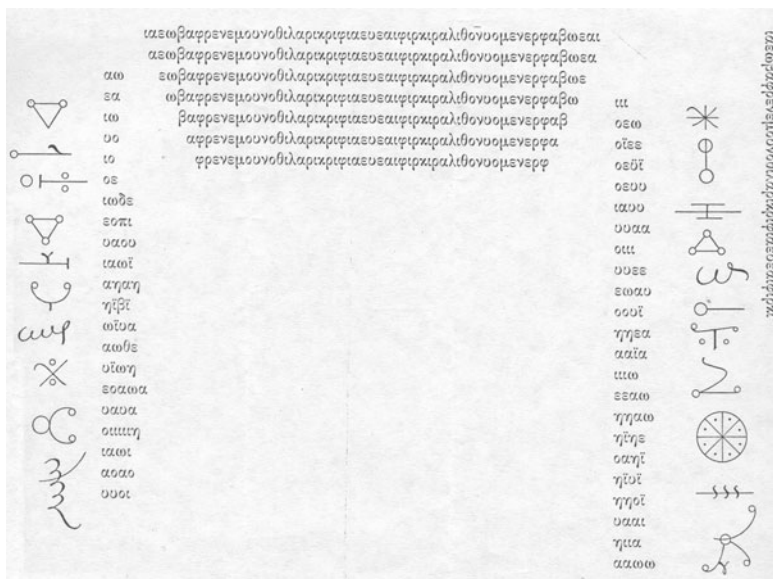


Fig. 7.4. *Charaktères* from PGrMag IV 409–34 = Bibl. Nat. suppl. gr. 574 p.6, as represented in the edition by C. Wessely, *Denkschriften der Akad. der Wiss. in Wien* 36 (1888) 27–208 at 55. The *charaktères* are aligned with two ‘bricks’, that is, columns of vowel sequences, and a large ‘heart’, composed of the *Iaeobaphrenemoun*-palindrome. The codex is dated early fourth century AD, though individual recipes are certainly older (the Old Coptic sections are generally dated second–third century AD on linguistic grounds).

purported to reveal their inner or true significance.⁷⁷ The shift of sacred writings into Greek created a double distance from this divine language. It is therefore not surprising that some effort went into imagining means of representing this lost system of ‘vertical’ communication.

One is the development of *charaktères* (Fig. 7.4), invented pseudo-letters that were addressed as though they were sentient and full of force, and claimed to be a form of instant communication with the other world.⁷⁸ They were evidently considered condensed symbols of

⁷⁷ This was already beginning to be the case in Chaeremon’s day: van der Horst 1986; cf. Sternberg-El Hotabi 1994, 218–45. For Horapollo, see Thissen 2001.

⁷⁸ I know of no satisfactory account of *charaktères*, though see Hopfner 1924, 1183–8 on theurgic use. The most important passages are PGrMag I 263–76 and LVII 20–36.

divine power to be used in a variety of ways. About thirteen of these signs occur often, hundreds of others only once. It is likely that they were taught, or the ability to invent convincing examples was taught, as part of late temple education. Pirating or inventing bizarre signs is of course a simple method of generating an apparently authoritative magical 'language', and to my mind their values were underdetermined; but it is clear enough from the (rather original) examples in Fig. 7.4 that *charaktères* were deliberately intended to be immediately distinguishable from Greek signs. They do not exist in earlier Egyptian magic, and the idea was surely to evoke the way in which hieroglyphics stand out in a hieratic text. They thus acted as an analogy to the now lost system of hieroglyphic writing.⁷⁹

A striking feature of Graeco-Egyptian magic is another form of 'vertical' communication, the use of *voces magicae* (the 'names' used to invoke divinity). Such 'names' or 'words' occur in quite small numbers in earlier Egyptian magic,⁸⁰ but become very much more common in the Greek texts, where they number literally hundreds.⁸¹ Because such names were unintelligible (often in 'sunken' Egyptian), they were extremely liable to distortion; yet the power of the text to gain its ends was considered to reside largely in the reproduction of the supposedly correct sound of each. To meet this difficulty, a technique was evolved of 'fixing' the words to preserve their separate identities by means of a line drawn over them, as in Fig. 7.5.⁸² Admittedly this effort occurs only sporadically; other recipes in the same book do not carry them; and we know from the so-called fixed expressions, termed *logoi*, which constantly show quite radical variation, that it was impossible to maintain the integrity of such items in a primarily oral, albeit text-assisted, culture. The invention of a standard device reveals a determination among some practitioners to resist the erosion of time by preserving 'authentic' sounds. But once this device became a mere memento, transcribed into a new context, the formulary, where the same effort was not consistently made, their value changed and they became mere functional memories.

⁷⁹ Pseudo-hieroglyphs are actually found in the London-Leyden text, at col. V l.8–10 (cf. Dieleman 2005, 100–1), and on magical amulets, cf. for example Michel 2001, nos. 51, 102, 274, etc.—sometimes actually authentic ones, for example no. 20.

⁸⁰ For example the entire page of such 'words' in *P BritMus* 10042 (*P.mag. Harris*) col. XII.1–5 (p. 98 Lange).

⁸¹ Preisendanz made an effort to list them in *PGrMag* vol. 3 (never published), Index XII, 'Zauberworte'.

⁸² Cf. Brashear 1995, 3429–38. Daniel 1991, consistently gives the overlinings in *PGrMag* XII and XIII; Preisendanz equally consistently omitted them.

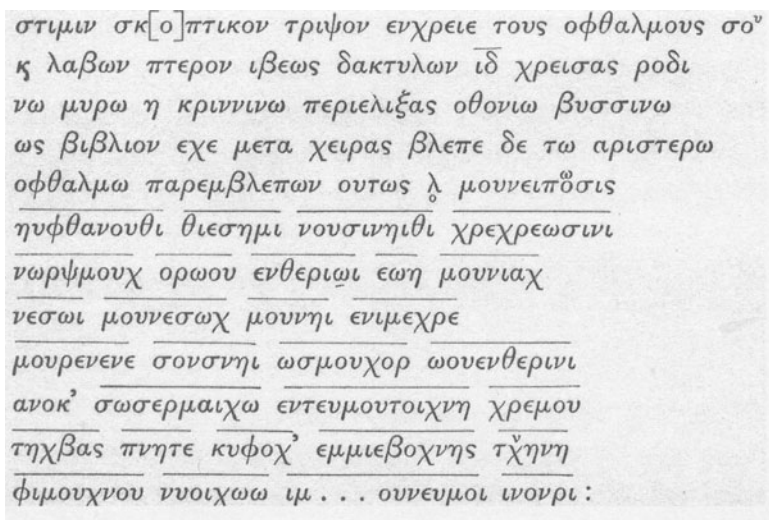


Fig. 7.5. A section of *P.BritMus. gr. CXXI col. 10* = *PGrMag VII 336–47* as printed by F. Kenyon, *Greek Papyri in the British Museum, 1: Catalogue* (London 1893) 95, showing the lines drawn over the *voces magicae* to ensure their correct transmission. Script: fourth century AD.

A third technique intended to evoke ancient magic is the prescription in formularies of images to be used in rites; sometimes actual drawings of deities are included. In Dynastic practice, the image of the deity was believed itself to possess invocative power; as we saw in the case of the Horus stele, image, script, and text constituted a sort of *Gesamtwerk* designed for maximum effectiveness.⁸³ The Greek formularies, and some activated texts, carry a range of divine images to be employed during the rite; in one case, an image of Bes with a sword and sceptre is prescribed, and illustrated immediately below the recipe (Fig. 7.6a). This image, like other such images in the papyri, is from the standard iconographic repertoire (Fig. 7.6b shows an analogous terracotta statuette).⁸⁴ In such cases, the image alludes to an epiphanic or mythical moment at which the god's power is made

⁸³ Tefnin 1984, 55–72; Koenig 1994, 79–82.

⁸⁴ In many cases, for example *PGrMag III 707–9* (Harpokrates), *V 242* (Isis), *VII 629–30* (Imhotep), the recipe assumes knowledge of the iconography.



Fig. 7.6a. The image of Bes, with feather-crown, sword, and sceptre, to be drawn on one's palm to obtain a dream-vision of the god: *P. BritMus* CXXII col. iii = *PGrMag* VIII after l.110. Script: fourth–fifth century AD.

manifest, and thus hints at an interpretation of how the incantation is to take effect.⁸⁵ The presence of such drawings in the Anastasi papyri signals once again their claim to be continuing an ancient tradition.

⁸⁵ Cf. Grumach 1970, 169–76.



Fig. 7.6b. Terracotta statuette of Bes (h. 11.3 cm), with the feather-crown broken off. Perhaps Fayum, probably third century AD. Ägyptisches Museum, Berlin inv. no. 11630. Photo: W. Weber, *Die ägyptisch-griechischen Terrakottas* (Berlin 1914) 163 no. 261.

Yet things are not in fact quite the same as ‘before’, for alongside these ‘ancient’ drawings we find numerous drawings of a quite different, indicative or performative, kind.

3. Translation

My final area of memorialization is the phenomenon of ‘reverse’ translation. Already in 1904 Griffiths and Thompson suspected that the ninety-three recipes in the London–Leyden demotic text might be a collection of translations of earlier recipes written in Greek.⁸⁶ Dieleman has recently suggested that *PDem* xii (*P.Leid.* J 384) and xiv (London–Leyden) are rather the product of a process of reaction by members of the Theban priestly elite in the late second to early third century AD to the success in Lower Egypt of the magical texts in Greek.⁸⁷ It is certain that such translations can only have been undertaken in the House of Life (the Egyptian name for the temple), since by this date the only people still fluent in Demotic as a written and spoken language were temple-priests. A close analysis of the rhetoric and theology of the two texts suggests that earlier hieratic and demotic texts were taken over largely complete or curtailed, edited, and spliced into Greek texts, perhaps through a whole series of re-writings in a variety of scripts and languages, ultimately producing a new type of ‘Graeco-Demotic’ magical text.⁸⁸ In some cases, it can be shown that items have been translated from Greek into Demotic; occasionally a Greek sequence is retained untranslated.⁸⁹

What is going on here? Some years ago John Ray pointed out that demotic Egyptian in the Hellenistic and Roman periods is a highly selective linguistic mode, which deliberately screens out not only dialect but also the changes—Greek and Aramaic lexical borrowings, and grammatical shifts—that were taking place in the spoken language.⁹⁰ Ray plausibly compared it to modern Greek *καθαρεύουσα*. Dieleman is right to stress that the two Leyden texts have a relatively high incidence of Greek loan-words, but they are still almost insignificant by comparison with the number of Egyptian words (62 against 1121), and are anyway due to the scissors-and-paste method of composing the texts.⁹¹ The clear implication is that the Theban priests were attempting to represent the Greek magical texts in the

⁸⁶ Griffiths and Thompson 1904–9: 1: 10–12.

⁸⁷ Dieleman 2005, 185–284.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.* 103–83.

⁸⁹ Greek and Coptic glosses sometimes provide the ‘correct’ pronunciation of *voces*.

⁹⁰ Ray 1994, 251–64.

⁹¹ Dieleman 2005, 110.

medium of a genuinely sacred language not so much to mark their legitimacy as a means of registering their 'true' Egyptian quality. Only in a pure language could they truly make contact with the Egyptian gods. Such reverse translation represents functional memory in its most resolute mode: the creation of spurious 'originals'.

Abbreviations

- ANRW *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*
 Betz, GMP Betz, H.-D. (ed.) 1986, 1992². *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
 Description *Description de l'Égypte*. Hong Kong and Cologne: Taschen, 1995, repr. 2007.
 PDem *Demotic papyri* (re-)translated by J.H. Johnson in Betz, GMP in translation.
 PGrMag K. Preisendanz (ed.) 1928–31, *Papyri Graecae Magicae*. Leipzig: Teubner; cited from 2nd edn by A. Henrichs 1973–4, Stuttgart: Teubner.
 RE *Realencyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft*
 SupplMag Daniel, R. W. and Maltomini, F. (eds.) 1990–2, *Supplementum Magicum*. Papyrologica Coloniensia, 16.1–2. Opladen: West-deutscher Verlag.

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Epigraphy and Ritual

The Vow of a Legionary from Sulmo

John Scheid

In an age in which revisiting ancient sources seems often unnecessary and in which religious practices are more likely to be defined according to modern theories, historians can be at risk of arriving at major misinterpretations. In the field of ancient religion, one of the practices most blatantly misunderstood is the vow. It shows the degree to which Roman religious history is still seen through the prism of anachronistic concepts. Eight years ago, during a wonderful Lent term residence at Brasenose College as a visiting fellow, I presented some of the elements of this case to my friend Simon Price, other colleagues, and Oxford graduate students. It is in memory of that stay and of our discussions, that I would like to develop this theme somewhat further. I will focus mainly on a graffito discovered in a temple.

The presence of religious graffiti in the porticos or rooms of places of worship should not come as a surprise. An inscription from the Villa Bonelli, in Trastevere, states that one C. Julius Anicetus, who restored in AD 102 a sanctuary of Sol Divinus, asks *ex imperio Solis, ne quis velit parietes aut trichias inscribere aut scariphare*.¹ This warning is a precious testimony of the behaviour of the users of religious spaces. We learn that the *cultores* had the bad habit of scratching graffiti on the walls and furniture. This regrettable habit is also

¹ ILS 4335.

mentioned by Pliny the Younger in his description of the Clitumnus sanctuary.² According to him, the walls and columns of the religious buildings were covered with graffiti by those worshipping the god and the spring.³

Until recently, this behaviour was known only from Pliny's text or the warning I quoted above. A graffito clearly identifiable as a religious act was not known until the first unquestionable confirmation of this behaviour was discovered at the temple of Hercules Curinus in Sulmo. These graffiti, studied and published by M. Guarducci, L. Gasperini, and M. Buonocore, have revealed to us the main content of these sorts of messages inscribed by visitors and allow us to pair them with other epigraphic testimonials left by *cultores*.⁴ They are mainly acknowledgements or votive receipts, which could have been inscribed on stone or wood.

Another series of religious graffiti was found in Châteauneuf (Savoy), in a temple of Mercury.⁵ Not only does this series provide valuable information on the degree of Romanization of the authors of these graffiti, it also offers an interesting example of the use of the term *profanare*.⁶

We know we are dealing with vows in all these cases, as we usually find the very simple formula *VSLM* (*votum solvit libens merito*). But, it has been suggested that this formula had become rather mechanical and that its users no longer understood its real meaning.⁷ I am not convinced by this. I have already suggested elsewhere, regarding some of the trilingual inscriptions discovered in the temple of the Palmyrene gods, in Traverstere in the temple restored by Julius Anicetus, that the authors of the votive inscriptions dedicated to the gods Aglibol and Melegbel understood perfectly the implications of the formulas they were using. Indeed, they did not translate the vow into Aramaic, although it was found in Latin and Greek texts. Evidently, this type of

² Pliny, *Letters* 9, 39.

³ Pliny, *Letters* 9, 39, 7: In summa nihil erit, ex quo non capias voluptatem. nam studebis quoque: leges multa multorum omnibus columnis, omnibus parietibus inscripta, quibus fons ille deusque celebratur. plura laudabis, non nulla ridebis; quamquam tu vero, quae tua humanitas, nulla ridebis.

⁴ Guarducci 1981, 234–6, no. 2; *Année épigraphique* 1981, 282; 1983, 328; Buonocore 1988, 43–4, no. 7; Gasperini 1988, no. 62.

⁵ Mermet 1993; *Inscriptions de Narbonaise* Vol. 2. Vienna, Paris 2004, no. 462–511.

⁶ Mermet 1993, 107–8; *Inscriptions de Narbonaise* Vol. 2, no. 466.

⁷ For example, Kiernan 2004, 104–14.

votive contract was not applicable to their national gods.⁸ Some may say that these inscriptions were found in Rome, not in Italy or the provinces. This can be admitted, but the accuracy of some of the texts is such that no doubts can be raised. It is interesting that those who have difficulties with the Roman vow are actually modern scholars. It is undoubtedly one of the most distinctive Roman religious rituals. The Roman vow had its own vocabulary and specific phases, which were quite different, for example, from the Christian vow. Votive receipts, whether they are humble as those from the temple at Sulmo, or ostentatious as those inscribed on metal or marble offerings, recall various phases of the ritual.

Generally, the text indicates that the vow has been fulfilled; sometimes it also stipulates the reasons for making the vow, but otherwise it does not usually mention much more. The Sulmo graffito is one of the rare private votive texts which outlines the two main stages of the vow, the formulation and the fulfilment, hence the importance of this particular graffito. It is restored as follows:⁹

C(aius) Nonius, L(ucii) f(ilius), Ser(gia) [(tribu) – – –] /
 e municipi[p]io Sulmone p[romisit], /
 miles Herc[u]li Curino, sei salv[us e] /
 castris redis<s>et, vot[a – – –] /
 ver<r>em et vitulu[m], et votis dam[natus] /
 [a]dest.¹⁰

There is however a problem with this reading, in line 2: the verb *promittere* does not belong to the language of votive dedications. Indeed, one does not ‘promise’ in a votive dedication, but fulfil what was promised.¹¹ A term such as *p(rofectus)* would fit much better in this context, especially as it also develops the previous indication *e/a municipio Sulmone*.¹² Regarding the second lacuna, after *vot(a . . .)*, the editors have left it empty. M. Guarducci proposed *ferre* in her commentary: *p(romisit) . . . vot(a ferre)*. However, this reading, where *ferre* is dependent on *promisit*, corresponds to a Christian notion of the vow and is unsuitable in this context. By comparison to some votive

⁸ Scheid 2005.

⁹ *Année épigraphique* 1981, 283.

¹⁰ The reading of the last line should be re-checked.

¹¹ For the logic of vows, see Scheid 1989–90.

¹² *De* is excluded by the graffito; *a*, which would be preferable to *e*, remains possible.

formulations of the Arval Brothers, I suggest we simply read *vot(a feci, or nuncupau)*. Indeed, the Arval Brothers construct *vota nuncupare Iovi etc.* with the sacrificial victims in the accusative.¹³

Restored in this way, the graffito now reads as follows:

C(aius) Nonius, L(ucii) f(ilius) Ser(gia) [(tribu) – – –] /
 e (a ?) munici[p]io Sulmone p[ro]fectus], /
 miles Herc[u]li Curino, sei salv[us] e] /
 castris redis<s>et, vot[a nuncupavit ?] /
 ver<r>em et vitulu[m], et votis dam[natus] /
 [a]dest.

This reading of the text corresponds better to Roman practices and delivers the two phases of the vow, the enunciation or taking up of the vow (*nuncupavit*) and its fulfilment (*damnatus adest*). M. Guarducci's restoration introduced a Christian perspective into the Roman vow; the reading proposed here is better suited to Sulmo's religious identity.

Abbreviations

ILS *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*

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¹³ For example, Scheid 1998, no. 44 (AD 78), at lines 8–11: *...et in proximum annum nun/cupavit, (...) / Iovi opt(imo) max(imo) bovem marem, lunoni reginae vaccam etc.*

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Building Memory

The Role of Sacred Structures in Sphakia and Crete¹

Lucia Nixon

INTRODUCTION

Sacred structures are a key part of the materiality of memory, especially when they are built to last. Sacred structures can and usually do incorporate several functions and meanings, which can relate to memory on various scales and levels. My starting-point for this paper was the very different numbers of permanent sacred structures in Sphakia, south-west Crete in three different periods, as shown in Table 9.1. The table shows that in Greek–Early Roman Sphakia, there

¹ This paper draws in part on the work of the Sphakia Survey. As always for work involving Sphakia, I thank the people of Sphakia for their help, especially with information about recent sacred landscapes. I thank also the Greek Archaeological Service and in particular the staff of Khania Ephoreia for granting the necessary permits; the Canadian Institute in Greece; the various agencies which funded our work, including the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the Institute for Aegean Prehistory, the Arts and Humanities Research Council, and the Craven Fund, Oxford; and the other senior members of the Sphakia Survey: Drs Jennifer Moody (co-director), Oliver Rackham (botany and historical ecology), and Simon Price (history). For more information about the project please consult the Sphakia Survey website at <http://sphakia.classics.ox.ac.uk>. Dr Marlia Mango helped with information about church-building in Syria for which I am most grateful. The Sackler Library and its staff have been as always helpful and patient. And I must acknowledge a special debt to Simon, with whom I built memories of various kinds over thirty years, and who helped me with this paper as with so many others.

Table 1. Numbers of permanent sacred structures for three periods in Sphakia.

Greek–Early Roman (Ancient Greek religion)	3
Late Roman (Imperial Christianity)	At least 12
Byzantine–Venetian–Turkish (Orthodox Christianity)	At least 100

**Fig. 9.1.** Simon Price building memory at Ag. Niketas, Sphakia, September 2008 (Photo: Author).

were perhaps three permanent sacred structures; in Late Roman Sphakia, there were at least twelve; and in Byzantine–Venetian–Turkish (abbreviated in what follows as BVT) Sphakia, there were more than one hundred.

I wondered what the relationship might be between the number of permanent sacred structures in a given period, and the scale of memory in that particular sacred landscape. By scale of memory I mean how many people over what area know about the monument and feel some degree of attachment or involvement with it. The scale of memory can range from large—institutional and regional, to small—personal and local. My hypothesis was that the greater the number of permanent sacred structures in a given period, the smaller the scale of memory in that sacred landscape. This hypothesis was

worth testing for at least two reasons: to know if there is a direct relationship between numbers of permanent sacred structures and scales of memory; and second, because knowing the scale of memory in a given landscape enables us to ask (and sometimes answer) further questions about it.

The structure of this paper is as follows. I shall summarize some useful approaches for investigating sacred landscapes. Then I shall discuss examples of sacred structures in Sphakia for each of the three periods already mentioned, while making some suggestions about the scale of memory involved in each. Next, I shall give examples of sacred structures elsewhere in Crete, to demonstrate that Sphakia is not necessarily exceptional. In the conclusions I shall return to my original hypothesis, hoping to have shown that there is indeed a direct relationship between numbers of permanent sacred structures and scales of memory.

INVESTIGATING SACRED LANDSCAPES

De Polignac established the importance of knowing and understanding the exact placement and location of sacred structures, including extramural sanctuaries such as that of Demeter and Kore on the slopes of Acrocorinth (de Polignac 1984, 1994; Bookidis and Stroud 1987, 1997). Alcock introduced the notion that zones or theatres of memory can be and were deliberately constructed. The transformation of the Agora at Athens in second century AD is particularly revealing. Older structures, including one fifth century BC temple, and two others drawing on classical material, were brought to the Agora; existing monuments were renovated, and in some cases made over for imperial use; and new buildings were constructed, including the Roman Agora 150 m to the east. The result was an emphatically Roman imperial environment which evoked carefully selected memories of the classical Greek past (Alcock 2002, 51–73).

Building memory involves choices—what needs to be remembered, and how? And who is it—individuals, groups—who determines all this? Where there is commemoration, there is usually also forgetting. Thus there can be theatres of oblivion as well as theatres of memory. The result of selective memory and forgetting is a chronology of desire, that is, a culturally produced/adjusted timeline based on what must be remembered and what must be forgotten. Permanent

structures, monumental or otherwise, often reflect changing chronologies of desire very accurately (Nixon 2004: 429–32).

One example is the Buddhas of Bamiyan destroyed by the Taliban in 2001, before 9/11 and the destruction of other monuments in the US. Buddhism had arrived in what is now Afghanistan in the third century BC. The Buddhas at Bamiyan, constructed in the fifth–sixth century AD, were the most conspicuous remaining evidence for Buddhism in Afghanistan, predating the advent of Islam in the seventh–eighth centuries AD. Since their construction, the Buddhas had had a complex history, directly reflecting religious and other changes in Afghanistan. The destruction of the Buddhas at Bamiyan was an attempt by the Taliban to create a theatre of oblivion. Thus although the intention of the Taliban was to suggest a chronology of desire in which Buddhism was absent from Afghanistan by creating a theatre of oblivion at Bamiyan, their actions have instead resulted in a triple backfire. First, many more people now know that Afghanistan had indeed had an important Buddhist phase; second, the scale of the memory network of this particular Buddhist monument has been extended worldwide; and third, international efforts to reconstruct the Buddhas are under way, so that their destruction is effectively being reversed (Nixon 2004: 439–42; Buddhas of Bamiyan 2009).

My second example of linking permanent structures with specific chronologies of desire is closer to home. The Martyrs' Memorial in Oxford was built in 1841, in a conspicuous location at the northern entry of the older part of the city (specifically on St Giles', near the junction of the two major roads from Woodstock and Banbury leading south into Oxford). This memorial commemorates the execution of Bishops Ridley, Latimer, and Cranmer, who were burnt at the stake for refusing to return to Roman Catholicism in the reign of Mary Tudor—not in this location, but on Broad Street, and not in 1841, but in 1555 and 1556. There is no monument on Broad Street itself, merely a commemorative yet undated inscription on the outer wall of Balliol, and a cross of cobblestones in the middle of the road. Clearly no one in the sixteenth century felt the need for any kind of permanent memorial, but people in the mid-nineteenth century did: apparently the Martyrs' Memorial was built 'as a conscious gesture of Anglican self-assertion amid fierce nineteenth-century religious disputes'. The points of interest here are the use of a conspicuous permanent structure to highlight a specific event as part of a particular

chronology of desire, and the double dislocation in time and space of the actual memorial.²

As will already be clear, this paper covers a long time-span. A diachronic perspective is part of archaeological survey work, and along with diachrony come, at least we hope, comparison and consistency across epochs covered by the Sphakia Survey. In other words, a long time-span, broken into several shorter periods, provides opportunities to ask questions about each one, and then to compare the answers. Very different answers then require further investigation. For example, given a more or less stable environment and a continually agrarian society, why do choices in settlement location in Sphakia vary from epoch to epoch (which they do)? Or, to consider the opening paragraphs of this paper, why do the numbers of permanent sacred structures in Sphakia vary so much from the Greek–Early Roman, to Late Roman, to BVT? Comparisons of different periods thus ensure consistency of approach, both in the actual Sphakia Survey, and in this more focused paper.

The work of this paper began some time ago when I made a study of the later sacred landscape of Sphakia from AD 1000–2000. This study was a kind of ‘archaeological ethnography’ (Hamish Forbes’ useful phrase and part of the title of his 2007 book), with implications and, I hope, applications for antiquity. It combined my own long-term interest in ancient sacred landscapes with an area which I understood, thanks to the work of the Sphakia Survey team, and particularly the work of the team on the BVT period (Nixon 2006).

One of the things I was able to do was to compare the physical *locations* of BVT and twentieth-century sacred structures in Sphakia with *explanations* from reliable sources for their placement. ‘Location’ here includes information which can be observed or deduced by

² Most recently, an inscription commemorating both Protestant and Catholic martyrs of the Reformation associated with Oxford and Oxfordshire was put up in the University Church, as a memorial of reconciliation, ‘designed to create common memory’—another double dislocation in time and space, and connected with current fears of growing religious hatred by Christians and others for Muslims within the UK, MacCullough 2008. Both the Martyrs’ Memorial and the new inscription were erected centuries after the original martyrdoms, because of later feelings towards the past in the nineteenth and twenty-first centuries. Both are part of specific chronologies of desire, the one emphasizing divisions within Christianity, the other suggesting that unity is preferable to separation.

Table 2. Location and explanation: Spatial and social factors in sacred landscapes.

LOCATION (spatial)	EXPLANATION (social)
1. important resources and new activity	1. human boundaries
2. visibility by land and sea	2. supernatural contact
3. liminal area	3. specific events and places
4. earlier significant structure(s)	4. vow

looking only at the physical placement of sacred structures, while ‘explanation’ refers to information from oral or documentary sources, including maps. To put it another way, ‘location’ is spatial, and ‘explanation’ is social. By being spatially rigorous about the investigation of the placement of sacred structures, I could attempt to reconstruct the grammar of location—the logic or ‘grammar’ that underlies the nature and placement of religious and other sites—relevant to these particular sacred structures. Table 9.2 shows the main categories of location and explanation. I found that there were four basic types of location, and four basic types of explanation for outlying churches and icon stands over the millennium-long study period. I found, too, that these locations and explanations were useful in looking diachronically at other sacred landscapes (Nixon 2006: 19–31).

Looking at the four categories of explanation reveals that memory is embedded in these reasons for building sacred structures. Indeed, there are several overlapping types of memory, such as commemorating, summarizing, and legitimating. Some examples will illustrate these different memory types.

The North Porch of the Erekhtheion at Athens has deliberate gaps in its roof and floor. Why? So that the mark of a god on the rock of the Akropolis remained open to the sun.³ The floor and roof gaps *commemorate* a particular encounter with the sacred.

Multiple sacred structures in a particular area serve to *summarize* the local landscape. An example is the set of churches in Khora Sphakion in central Sphakia (Fig. 9.2). One of the Khora churches is the church of Ag. Apostoloi, mentioned in a treaty of 1435, which resolved a dispute over pasturage between two families [the present

³ The mark is either from Poseidon’s trident (Pansanias 1.26.5) or from Zeus’ thunderbolt; Dinsmoor 1975, 187–90; Travlos 1971, figs. 281, 285; Hurwit 1999, fig. 176.



Fig. 9.2. View of the temple, basilica, and church at Tarrha (Photo: Author).

structure is sixteenth century]. The treaty mentions several other churches in the area. Since then still other churches have been built in Khora Sphakion. The *Song of Dhaskalogianni*, which tells the story of Dhaskalogianni's revolt against the Turks in 1770, laments the loss of Khora's 100 churches in the revolt. Dalidakis has catalogued thirty-seven churches in the immediate area of the village, plus five others in the surrounding area. The position of these churches, their continuing use (or not), and their condition all help to summarize this particular landscape in terms of its resources and its history.⁴

The Heroon at Toumba near Lefkandi, built in the mid-tenth century BC is a possible example of *legitimizing* memory. The Heroon

⁴ Dalidakis 2008, with catalogue of the forty-two churches, and maps, 107–9; Nixon 2006, 55 n. 61 for the relevant lines of the *Song of Dhaskalogianni* (Barba-Pantzelios 1947, ll. 951–2); see also pp. 69, 84, 107. The *Song's* figure of 100 churches was perhaps intended to give a coded view of Khora Sphakion as a well-resourced area, rather than an accurate count. Cf. Deffner n.d. (?1928), 132, who says that there were forty-five Venetian churches in Khora, not 'more than sixty', as incorrectly quoted by Nixon 2006, 55 n. 61.

is a large and conspicuous structure (50×14 m) overlying two burials with lavish grave goods, surrounded by other smaller graves dating from 900 BC (Popham et al. 1993). Part of the Heroon's function may have been to make visible and legitimate a particular claim to the immediate area.

SACRED STRUCTURES AND MEMORY IN SPHAKIA

In this part of the paper I will provide examples of sacred structures in Sphakia for each of the three major periods (Greek–Early Roman, Late Roman, and BVT). Fig. 9.3 shows the location of Sphakia within Crete, along with some of the other areas and sites discussed.

The example for the Greek–Early Roman period is the temple (possibly dating to the classical period) at Tarrha (15.20×7.60 m), with its later Late Roman basilica and BVT church (Fig. 9.4). The temple's construction of cut stone blocks indicates major investment in terms of time and expense. The site was chosen because of its visibility by land and by sea, near the mouth of the Samaria Gorge. The temple marks the presence of significant resources, both of the coast, and of the inland area invisible from the sea. It may have been dedicated to Apollo—certainly there was a major cult of Apollo at Tarrha, and, like other poleis on Crete, Tarrha received a theoros from Delphi in 220–210 BC. More importantly, however, here was also a local story involving the nymph Akakallis who mated with Apollo. This story is a good example of a well-known type of myth that related a particular locality to the wider Greek world by claiming that a particular deity did something in this very place. Thus the temple at Tarrha is an example of a large scale of memory in its time, with a large area, including the Panhellenic sanctuary at Delphi, and a large amount of visibility.⁵

The plan in Fig. 9.5 shows how subsequent sacred structures have used the site. It is important to note that the temple site was not used continuously; as so often, this is not a case of true cult continuity. The Late Roman basilica made use of the main lines of the temple, but the BVT church (as is usually the case for BVT churches built over

⁵ Price 1999, 19–25 and 2005; theoros from Delphi, Faure 1969, 327–32 and Perlman 1995, 128–31.

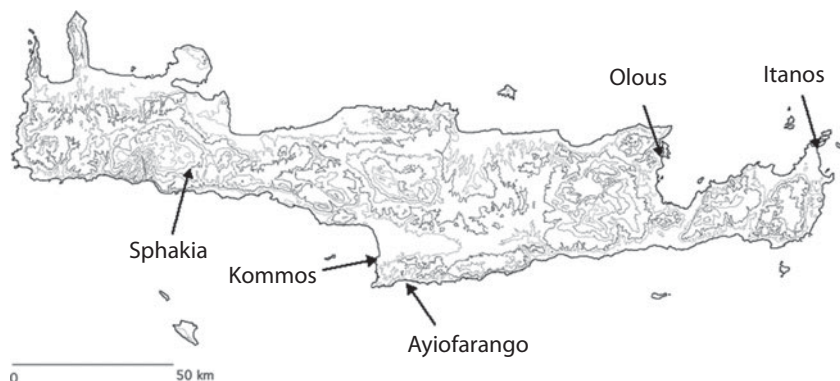


Fig. 9.3. Map of Crete showing areas and sites discussed (Sphakia Archive).

Late Roman basilicas) is much smaller. These variations in size are important and will be discussed later on.

Our Late Roman example comes from another coastal site, that of Loutro, the ancient Phoinix. Fig. 9.6 shows that there were no fewer than five Late Roman basilicas on the east side of the Loutro



Fig. 9.4. Four churches in Khora Sphakion. Ag. Apostoloi is above the road at the top right (Photo: Author).

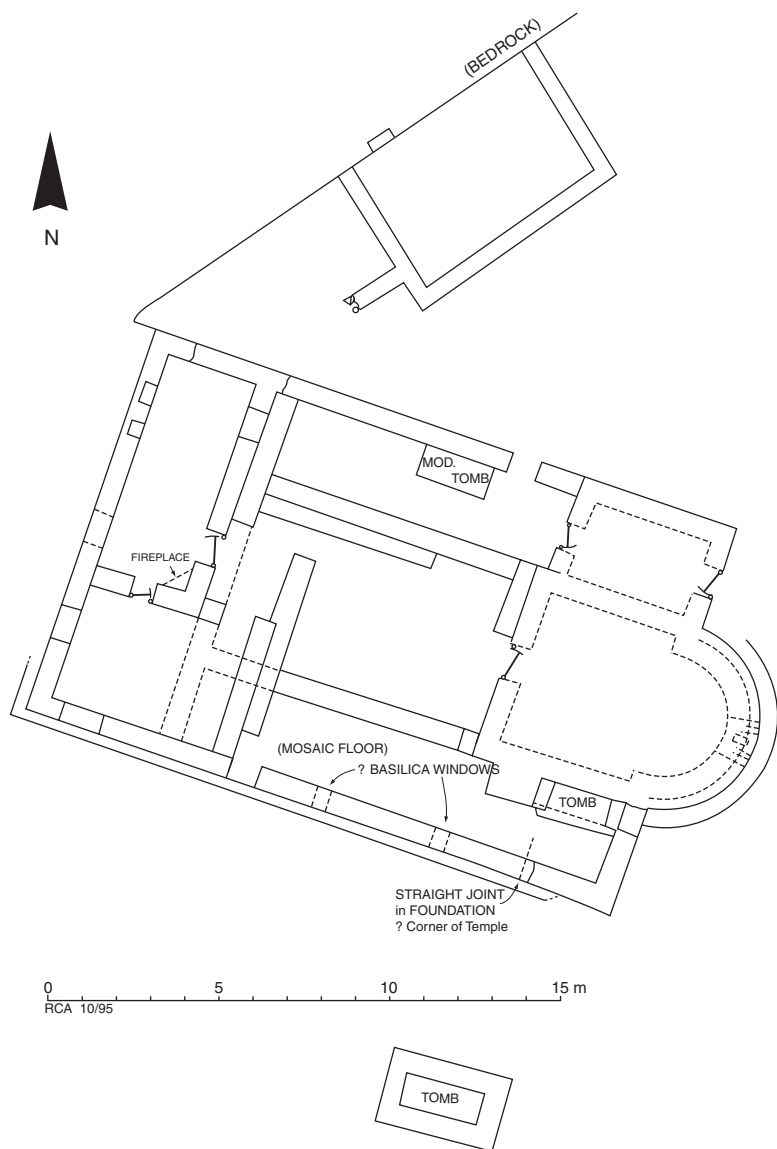


Fig. 9.5. Plan of the temple, basilica, and church at Tarrha (Sphakia Archive).

peninsula, all built in the sixth–seventh century AD, and all placed so that you could see them as you arrived in Phoinix by sea. The other harbour on the west side of the peninsula was out of use by this time because of a major geological event known as the Great Uplift. These sacred structures are built, not out of cut stone, but out of mortared rubble, sometimes with brick. The two best preserved examples are the North basilica, 11.7 m wide \times 25 m long including narthex; and the East basilica, 14 m wide \times 30 m maximum. The Phoinix basilicas are an example of competitive basilica-building. They made Late Roman Phoinix memorable for its conspicuous display

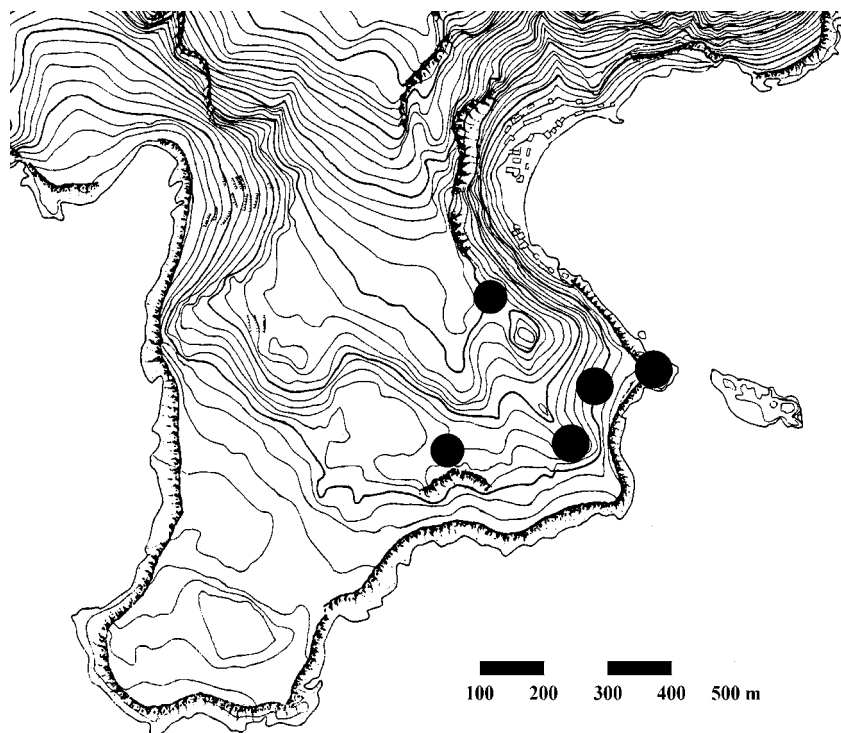


Fig. 9.6. Partial plan of Loutro–Phoinix, showing five Late Roman basilicas (Sphakia Archive).

of both wealth and Christianity.⁶ The scale of memory here is regional and urban.

For the BVT period, there are three examples: Ag. Pavlos, Timios Stavros, and Ag. Ioannis sto Lakko. Ag. Pavlos (Figs. 9.7 and 9.8) is a small (6.5×8.30 m) cruciform stone-built structure built on the shore in the tenth–eleventh century AD, below the later village of Ag. Ioannis. The local story is that St Paul baptized the first Christians on Crete here, because there is fresh water. The church was established by Ag. Ioannis Xenos who founded seven other religious establishments on Crete. This church is different in form and in size from the temple and basilicas considered earlier. The church lies on a major coastal route, and there is still fresh water here (you dig for it in the gravel at the shore).



Fig. 9.7. Ag. Pavlos, close-up with sea in background (Photo: Author).

⁶ Richard Anderson drew the plan of Phoinix–Loutro, part of which is shown in Fig. 9.6. I am indebted to Jennifer Moody for the suggestion that all five basilicas would have been visible to sailors approaching from the east. Cf. also Nixon 2006, 61.



Fig. 9.8. Ag. Pavlos, view from the sea (Photo: Author).

The position of the church on the coast—the outermost edge of Crete—marks the most external boundary of the island. The story of the first baptisms has large claims for Christianity on Crete, made not through a Late *Roman* basilica, but through an Orthodox building. Ag. Pavlos makes early Orthodoxy both visible and memorable. The scale of memory here was once Cretan, and is now local. Note that there is a long and therefore interesting gap between the time of St Paul and the date of the construction of this church, as in the case of the Martyrs' Memorial. Clearly it had become very important in the tenth–eleventh centuries to make a strong and visible statement about Christianity in general and Orthodox Christianity in particular—to add to an existing chronology of desire. The reason for this statement is obvious when we recall that the Arab occupation of Crete, lasting a little longer than a century, had come to an end in AD 961. And indeed, the *Life* of the saint tells us that St John Xenos was effectively re-evangelizing the island of Crete after the short, but clearly perceived as dangerous, occupation of the Arabs (Nixon 2006, 62–5 and n. 70).

The Venetian church of Timios Stavros (Fig. 9.9), below the inland village of Mouri (now deserted), is located near the junction of two gullies in a sea of gravel in the Ilingas Gorge. There is a spring in a cave on the opposite side of the gorge. The church is in fact threatened by the predictable annual deposits of gravel, which are now higher than the entrance to the church, so that new protection around the church has had to be added. Given the obvious problem of the gravel, why did people build Timios Stavros here? The answer is that the church lies on a local boundary within Sphakia—the line separating the two communes of Anopoli and Khora Sphakion. Communes (*koinotites*) varied in size according to the resources they contained; those in Sphakia were on average 52 km² in area. In addition to, and probably because of, the church's position on this humanly constructed boundary, Timios Stavros was also a place for *xekatharisma* ('out-cleaning'). If you were a shepherd falsely accused of animal theft, you had to come and swear your innocence in the relevant church (Nixon 2006, 81–3, 132–3). The scale of memory here lies at the commune level, and is therefore smaller than that for Ag. Pavlos.

The scale of memory at the third and final BVT church discussed here is smaller still. Ag. Ioannis sto Lakko (Fig. 9.10) is a Venetian church on the Frangokastello Plain in east Sphakia. A lakkos is a dip



Fig. 9.9a. View of Timios Stavros (Photos: Author).



Fig. 9.9b. View 2 of Timios Stavros.

or hollow where there is good soil and some moisture. Ag. Ioannis sto Lakko (St John in the Hollow) is small and architecturally undistinguished (6.50×3.75 m), except for one feature: the earlier Christian spolia placed in conspicuous parts of the church, such as the corner to the right of the doorway. Such spolia can be used as a reminder that Crete was Christian long before it was occupied by the Venetians (1211–1669); in other words they are a visual expression of a particular chronology of desire. Ag. Ioannis sto Lakko is only one of many BVT churches to incorporate Late Roman spolia. The church is visible from one of the local villages, and does not have a commanding view of its own. It is therefore the epitome of a local outlying church, positioned to recall local resources and visible only over a short distance (Nixon 2006, 70–3, 154–5, Plates 3, 4, 21. For a larger church using many more spolia in a similar way, compare the ninth-century Church of the Panagia at Skripou near Orkhomenos; Papalexandrou 2003, 63–77). The scale of memory at Ag. Ioannis sto Lakko, however, is very small and focused on a particular locality.



Fig. 9.10. Ag. Ioannis sto Lakko, with capital built into south-west corner of church (Photo: Author).

SACRED STRUCTURES AND MEMORY ELSEWHERE IN CRETE

Table 1 showed that in Sphakia there were relatively few Greek–Early Roman temples, rather more Late Roman basilicas, and a great many more BVT churches. This numerical pattern is similar for the rest of Crete as well, so it is not that Sphakia is aberrant.⁷ The purpose of this section is to provide examples showing that other features of the sacred landscapes suggested for Sphakia might also occur elsewhere in Crete: two examples for the Greek–Early Roman period, and one each for the Late Roman and BVT periods.

The site of Kommos on the coast of south central Crete has both a Minoan and an Iron Age phase. Within the Iron Age comes a series of three temples. Temple C (11.44 × 8.85 m) is the third and latest of these. It was built after 400 BC of cut stone (once again indicating a major investment of time and expense). Its architectural form is Cretan, with a bench, a rectangular hearth, and two internal columns. A banqueting room was attached to Temple C along its north wall during the Late Hellenistic period.

Temple C lies immediately above two earlier sacred structures. The earliest sacred structure here, Temple A, was a small, simple rectangular shrine constructed around 1025 BC. The north wall of Temple A partly reused the façade of the large palatial structure Building T, built in the Late Minoan I period but by then ruined and deserted. Temple A was succeeded by Temple B (8.08 × 6.40 m), which was built around 800 BC and went out of use at the end of the seventh century. Temple B included a tripillar shrine of Phoenician type, testifying to the prime position of Kommos for maritime connections. Part of Temple B's west wall can be seen running at an angle under Temple C. We have here a succession of three sacred structures, the first of which (A) was certainly deliberately positioned on top of a monumental Minoan wall. The second (B) directly overlies the first,

⁷ Estimated number of Greek–Early Roman temples in Crete: c. twenty-four (three in Sphakia, plus twenty-one elsewhere in Sporn 2002, with maps, pls. 2–4); estimated number of Late Roman basilicas in Crete: c. 100 (Volanakis 1987 catalogues 87, plus 12+ in Sphakia); Rackham and Moody (1996, 181, with map p. 183) estimate 3000 BVT churches in Crete, including those within settlements, though cf. Nixon 2006, 53 n. 60 and see also the end-paper maps in Gallas et al. 1983.

and, after a gap of more than 200 years, the third (C) was built over the second.⁸

All three temples were very deliberately positioned, temple over temple over shrine over monumental Minoan building. The use of earlier significant structures is a recurring feature in the construction of sacred landscapes, and in this case it is combined with a location which is highly visible by land and by sea. The scale of memory for Temple C is major and Cretan.

The second example for the Greek–Early Roman period comes from east Crete, in the area of two *poleis*, Olous on the coast and Lato inland. The temple at Dera is on the ancient boundary separating Olous on the north and Lato on the south. The map devised by Chaniotis on the basis of epigraphic evidence shows two versions of this boundary. These hypothetical boundaries are based on ancient toponyms, many of which are still in use. Indeed, the overall boundary line follows lines only recently superseded in Greece by the new system adopted in the late 1990s—the system of communes (*koinotites*), already mentioned above, grouped into eparchies and then nomos. Much of the suggested boundary between Hierapytna (modern Ierapetra) and Lato follows the later boundary between two eparchies, Mirabello and Ierapetra. Along the north the suggested boundary follows the line of communes lying east-south-east of modern Neapolis. The temple at Dera sat on or very near the latter line, highlighting the boundary between Olous and Lato.⁹ The scale of memory represented here is at least at the *polis* level, and therefore highly important in this part of Crete.

The examples for Late Roman Crete lie on either side of the Olous–Lato area. At Itanos in extreme eastern Crete, there was

⁸ Shaw 2006, 30–35 and 41–50 gives a clear account of all these structures; the back end-paper has the Kommos Southern Area Period Plan in colour, showing very clearly the superposition of the temples over the monumental Minoan structures below. See also Figs. 30 (the Greek sanctuary from the north-west); 39 Temple C (left) and Banquet Room A1 (right) after clearing; 41 (restored plan of Temple C). Cf. also Nixon 1991.

⁹ Chaniotis 1996, 318–32, nos. 54–6, treaties between Lato and Olous, c. 118/115 BC; 338–51, no. 59, treaty between Lato and Hierapytna on the south coast, c. 111/110 BC; 358–6, no. 61, treaty between Lato and Olous, c. 110/109 or 109/108 BC; map with commune boundaries, plate 6; map with hypothetical ancient boundaries between Lato and Hierapytna, plate 7. Cf. also Chaniotis 2006. For a discussion of sanctuaries and the boundaries of Praisos see Whitley 2008, 244–6.

an incidence of competitive basilica-building similar to that at Loutro–Phoinix. Two basilicas on either side of the harbour area would have been conspicuously visible to anyone sailing into Itanos.¹⁰ And west of modern Herakleion, the two sixth-century Late Roman basilicas at Chersonesos, both with mosaics, also on either side of the harbour, suggest a similar pattern of competition.¹¹ At Itanos and Chersonesos, the scale of memory here is similar to that at Loutro–Phoinix, that is to say regional and urban.

For the BVT period we move back to central Crete. Down in the middle of the Ayiofarango, a gorge running down to the south coast, is the church of Ag. Kyriaki, which lies in a relatively open (and arable) area, with a nearby spring. In other words the church is a reminder or summary of this small area and its resources. The biggest resource package in the Ayiofarango lies at the north end of the gorge, conspicuously marked by a monastery. Moni Odigitria is a large establishment, visible from a distance, and much closer to the major resources of the Mesara Plain (in which lies the site of Kommos discussed above). By contrast the resource package in the area around Ag. Kyriaki is so much smaller that this area is effectively below village level in settlement terms. Even so, this local resource package was significant enough to attract people in other epochs as well as the BVT period, as shown by the presence of Early Minoan tholos tombs, and a Greek–Early Roman sanctuary. The area is marked by a conspicuous purple outcrop. But this large natural feature was not enough to mark the area properly, so there still had to be a church. The scale of memory here is small and local (Blackman et al., 1977: 71–4; Nixon 2006: 123–6).

¹⁰ Itanos: Greco et al. 1998, 586, plan 587; 2000: plan 548. Sanders 1982, 89–90, notes that Basilica A (probably early sixth century) is on top of, or converted from, an earlier temple, and that Basilica B is built of ‘very rough reused stone’. *IC III*. Iv. Praef. pp. 75–6 speculates that there was a temple on the small hill at the site, and that a ‘Byzantine’ chapel was built over it (said by locals to be dedicated to Ag. Katerini); this chapel is said to be distinct from the church and two baptisteries elsewhere on the site.

¹¹ Chersonesos: Basilica A, which may have replaced an earlier temple, has high quality mosaics which are very similar to those of Basilica B. Basilica A could ‘date to anywhere in the first half of the sixth century’. Basilica B can be more precisely dated to the early sixth century; Sanders 1982, 95–101; cf. also Volanakis 1987, 257–8.

PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

By comparing information for three periods—Greek–Early Roman, Late Roman, and BVT—both in Sphakia and in the rest of Crete, I hope to have shown that the *number* of permanent sacred structures may well correlate inversely with the scale of memory built into them, and accruing to them, depending on successive chronologies of desire. I would venture to suggest, too, that this inverse correlation has a general application to the study of sacred landscapes of whatever time and place. A single sacred structure may well involve more than one of these memory types. In terms of the scale of memory, there will always be a balance between wider claims—links to Delphi or to Constantinople—and the actual reach of memory—the size of the memory theatres, and the size of the theatre of oblivion.

Thus in general, if the number of permanent sacred structures is low, then the scale and extent of the memory network associated with each one will be large, as in the case of the Greek–Early Roman examples, which functioned at the level of larger sectors of Crete such as major *polis* territories. But if the number of permanent sacred structures is high, then the scale and extent of those memory networks will be far smaller, as for the BVT outlying churches, whose significance is usually local (typically no greater than commune/*koinotis* level).

In focusing on permanent sacred structures we have to remember that there will almost always be other, less permanent, sacred structures. While memory will also be attached to those less permanent structures, it does mean that those memories are neither so visible, nor so permanent.

Building permanent sacred structures is a *choice*. For example, the BVT churches considered in this paper are architecturally very simple. Similar structures could have been built in the Greek–Early Roman period, and in the Late Roman period—the raw material was literally almost everywhere and the actual construction techniques were and are very simple—and yet they were not.

And finally, to add the all-important variable of *time* to the development of sacred landscapes: it does seem true that within a given period earlier sacred structures in a particular landscape will mark sites of greater importance and wider memory. Over time, other permanent sacred structures may be added, often marking smaller spaces with a shorter ‘reach’ of memory. This is certainly the pattern

within the BVT period. The question remains as to why it did not happen in the two earlier periods examined here.

Chronologies of desire, and therefore of memory and forgetting, will always exist, and will always keep changing. I turn now to three other specific examples, all with well-studied contexts. Stonehenge, an example from a very different time and place, has had long periods of oblivion, as well as very focused periods of memory—but mainly within the UK. Because of its size and location on a major route, Stonehenge has ‘always’ been known about, but often very differently explained—Geoffrey of Monmouth in the eleventh century says Merlin dismantled a Giant’s Round in Ireland and rebuilt it in Wiltshire, a nice chronology of desire linking Stonehenge with both Aeneas and King Arthur (thereby accommodating important both pagan and Christian elements). But the cover page for the 1610 edition of Camden’s *Britannia* shows a map of Roman Britain with cameos around the edge, one of which includes Stonehenge, thus making some kind of connection between the monument and the advent of Roman civilization. More recently Stonehenge has been described as a contested landscape where at least two other chronologies of desire converge: on the one hand, the notion that Stonehenge represents an aspect of national identity to be preserved and protected (government agencies such as English Heritage); and on the other, the belief that Stonehenge is a living spiritual site to be used (modern festival-goers). Stonehenge has thus been an important part of chronologies of desire linked with various aspects of English identity. When feeling about this identity is strong, powerful institutions become directly involved, resulting in a large-scale, *national* memory network, and indeed national control. Only in 1986, however, did Stonehenge, Avebury, and associated sites become a UNESCO *World Heritage Site*.¹²

The Parthenon, on the other hand, has attracted wide attention—both inside and outside the Greek world, however defined—and often controversy, more or less continuously since its construction in the

¹² General source for stone circles: Burl 2000. Geoffrey of Monmouth, and fourteenth-century MS. depiction of Merlin (Egerton 3028 fol. 40v, British Library), Bender 1998, 402–4, fig. 19; Chippindale 2004, 20–7. Stonehenge on the 1610 cover page of *Britannia*: Hingley 2008, 40–1, fig. 1.5; I am grateful to Peter Thonemann for telling me about the Hingley book. Stonehenge as modern contested landscape, Bender 1998, especially chs. 3–8; Chippindale 2004, ch. 16. Stonehenge as part of a World Heritage Site: UNESCO World Heritage 2009.

fifth century BC. Anyone visiting the Akropolis at Athens today sees the Parthenon in its restored fifth-century glory—minus the Frankish Tower nearby and the mosque inside it. This nineteenth-century restoration, sanctioned and paid for by the newly independent Greek state, makes vivid a chronology of desire involving a great deal of forgetting, and it says more about the importance of nineteenth-century Greek yearnings for direct links with the fifth century BC (while forgetting the presence of foreigners, both Franks and Ottoman Turks), than about the total history of this unique monument (Nixon 2004, and see now Hamilakis 2007: 243–6). So the Parthenon has commanded a very large scale of memory, and for a very long period of time, some 2500 years.

The small church of Ag. Spyridon on the edge of the village of Ag. Ioannis in Sphakia provides a strong contrast. It is only one of several churches in this village, which was almost deserted by the late 1980s when the car road first reached it. The scale of memory for Ag. Spyridon was always very small and very local. But there is a twist in the tale of Ag. Spyridon, because it too involves a restoration. It had fallen into ruins, and was rebuilt in the 1990s, soon after the arrival of the car road. Inside the restored church is a photograph of the ruin. There is also a plaque giving a more permanent record of the individual donors who paid for the restoration. These women and men are all ‘expatriates’ of the village of Ag. Ioannis, now living in other Sphakiote villages, in the city of Khania on the north coast of Crete, and in Montreal. A sacred structure in ruins, in this case a church, sends a powerful message: it represents the visible disintegration of a particular landscape, and a break in the continued communication of memory. Each church in the sacred landscape of Sphakia (as elsewhere in BVT world) is a particular node in a public memory network. If a church ‘dies’, then part of that network is gone: it is not just the church that will be forgotten, but the landscape as well. This restored and now re-functioning church has therefore been brought back to life, and the surrounding landscape has also in some sense been resuscitated. But although the geographic spread of the expatriate donors who paid for the restoration is wide in spatial terms, the overall scale of memory still involves relatively few people and focuses on a very local monument (Nixon 2006, 85–7, 102).

This paper ends with two suggestions for future work on permanent sacred structures and their role in consolidating memory on various scales. It is clearly useful to know at least roughly how many

permanent sacred structures there are in the period or periods under scrutiny, as this number correlates inversely with the scale(s) of memory, and can often provide the key to understanding the chronologies of desire built into each set of structures.

First, in periods where there is sufficient information, it might also be useful to explore the relationship between the social standing of the people responsible for commissioning, if not always building, permanent sacred structures, the number of those sacred structures. Thus in the case of the Sphakiote and other Cretan examples discussed, further research could explore the possibility that temples were the product of urban elites, and that Late Roman basilicas may have been a more bourgeois phenomenon, while small BVT churches were built by free peasant families who owned their own land—in other words, to suggest that fewer high status people built a low number of Greek–Early Roman temples, while a high number of low-status peasants built a high number of BVT churches. Work on this topic would be valuable only as long as the notion that the decision to erect *permanent* sacred structures is always a choice, but not always directly linked to the social standing of the builders.¹³

Second, it would certainly be useful to pick up on Ober's recent point about the importance of social networks for collecting useful information (2008: ch. 4, especially pp. 134–51). Sanctuaries of whatever type have always been places of interaction with an important role in the exchange of useful information. Permanent sacred structures declare themselves as visible and memorable places in their respective landscapes, with an important role in social networks, as well as their own scales of memory. Border sanctuaries (of whatever scale) make the area of the relevant boundary not only visible and memorable, but also potentially negotiable.

The sanctuary of Delian Apollo between Dystos and Zarex on the island of Euboia almost certainly marks the boundary between these

¹³ Greek–Early Roman temples and Late Roman basilicas could be financed by multiple donors as well as by large-scale donors; Burford 1969, 35–39, 81–7; Dignas 2002, 23–4, 149–50, 212–13; Mango 1985, 61–4 (for example, 'subscription funding' made it possible for smaller scale donors to pay for one or more sections of mosaic pavements). But it might be possible to tell which kind of donation predominated in which periods. Small BVT churches were put up by the people who owned the land on which they stood. They were traditionally built of local materials, and the vast majority of them do not have wall-paintings (which would have involved the payment of a non-local artisan).

two ancient settlements—a line which is similar, at least in part, to the more recent commune boundary between the *koinotites* of Dystos and Zarakes. Although the scale of memory for this sanctuary was small, and of local relevance to this part of Euboia, the sanctuary will have been a focus for local social networks. Such border sanctuaries can often be further contextualized with reference to their local resource packages, using (where appropriate) modern commune boundaries as a starting-point.¹⁴ On a somewhat larger scale, Kato Symi, back in Crete, may in some periods have had an important role as the regional focus of converging social networks in a mountainous area, possibly linked with multi-*polis* initiation ceremonies for ephebes (Erickson 2002; Chaniotis 2006: 200–2). And finally, Kilian-Dirlmeier has shown that the four major sanctuaries at Pherai, Perachora, Olympia, and Samos had very different social networks (however these were constructed, and by whom) in the eighth century BC, to judge from the widely varying numbers and origins of dedications made at each of them, with many from areas well beyond the core of the Greek world at the time.¹⁵

In conclusion, this paper began with the widely varying numbers of permanent sacred structures in three different periods in one part of Crete. I hope to have established that these numbers correlate inversely with the scale of memory associated with the temples, basilicas, and churches in the three periods considered. Permanent sacred structures may also be important as places for the transmission of useful information through social networks. Permanent sacred structures are certainly a visible way of building memory on local, regional, and international scales, and their treatment over time provides an accurate reflection of changing chronologies of desire.

¹⁴ Chatzidimitriou 1997, 1999; Fachard forthcoming 2009. The location of this sanctuary and its relevance for the ancient boundary was already known. The more recent *koinotis* boundary between the communes of Dystos and Zarakes lies on or near the sanctuary—in other words this boundary relates to local resource packages both in antiquity and in more recent times. Simon Price and I would like to thank Sylvian Fachard for a memorable visit to Euboia in spring 2008, when he took us to this and other sites on Euboia, and shared his extensive knowledge of the area with us.

¹⁵ Kilian-Dirlmeier 1985 analysed the Greek and non-Greek offerings at these four sanctuaries and found widely different patterns of dedication origins, both within the Greek world and outside it. For example, Pherai had the smallest total number of dedications for this period (77) with 2.6% from Phoenicia, while Perachora had a total of 438 dedications, with 74% from Phoenicia.

Abbreviations

IC *Inscriptiones Creticae*

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Part III

Commemorating and Erasing the Past

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‘You shall blot out the memory of Amalek’:
Roman Historians on Remembering
to Forget

D. S. Levene

The importance of ‘public memory’, the collective image that a society has of its own past, in shaping national identity is a major theme of modern historical scholarship. The ‘memory’ in question may well be invented or distorted, but it is central to a society’s self-image. Simon Price’s recent work has laid particular stress on the way in which such memories were generated and constructed in antiquity, above all in his major synoptic study of the construction of memory in Greek culture through objects, places, rituals, and writings: my article takes this as its starting-point.¹

As Price emphasizes, the issue of what is forgotten is no less important than memory itself.² It would naturally be impossible for any society, however well-documented, to retain a record of every event that took place within it. Public memory of events is more selective still, since even if documentation survives in some form, documentation is rarely the primary means through which the public consciousness of the past is formed. Instead societies shape stories about their history through selectivity, a process of forgetting as well as one of remembering: for without such forgetfulness, no story could be shaped at all. That process of forgetting is usually inadvertent rather than self-conscious. Even if which things are forgotten is in

¹ Above, Chapter 2 (= Price 2008). It is a particular pleasure to be able once again to express my profound intellectual debt to my former doctoral supervisor.

² Compare also Lowenthal 1985, 204–6, and esp. Flaig 1999.

part ideologically determined (for example, details that might embarrassingly conflict with a society's image of its own virtues), no conscious decision is usually made that particular things are to be forgotten. But on certain revealing occasions, the forgetting is overt: a more or less deliberate decision is made that certain things are to be wiped from the public memory, not to be recorded or spoken of again.³

Harriet Flower has termed such decisions 'memory sanctions'.⁴ Admittedly that phrase is much broader than the phenomena that I will be discussing here, since it covers not only official acts of forgetting, but also direct actions taken to preserve the memory of a person or event in a discreditable fashion. But the lines between active forgetting and discreditable remembering are often blurred, as the decision to forget someone can itself be one of the things that one wishes to be remembered to their discredit. The most famous example from the ancient world is biblical, not from Rome: the Hebrews in Deuteronomy 25:17–19 are commanded to remember what Amalek did to them, but in virtually the same breath are ordered to 'blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven'. The paradox became a famous crux in later Jewish interpretation, with commentators seeking some way in which the apparently contradictory commands could be reconciled. For our purposes it is enough to note that only by remembering the Amalekites' crimes can the command to blot out their memory be given its full force: for without the memory of the crimes, the decision to forget them has no context or explanation. Nor is this paradox unique to the biblical world-view. In Rome, some blottings out of memory clearly were (or were intended to be) complete—indeed, names are often chiselled from inscriptions so thoroughly that we can no longer identify the person whose memory is being punished. But in other cases the act of forgetting goes hand in hand with a reminder of the person against whom the sanctions are taken.⁵ Inscriptions are mutilated in such a way that the offending

³ For this important distinction, see, for example, Assmann 1995, who calls this sort of deliberate forgetting 'cultural repression', to be distinguished from the unselfconscious 'structural amnesia'.

⁴ Flower 2006.

⁵ See above all Hedrick 2000, esp. 89–130; cf. also Flaig 1999, 66–7. Hedrick however overstates the case in arguing that this paradox is intrinsic to Roman acts of memory suppression, since there are manifestly epigraphic and other examples where a complete erasure was intended. Moreover narrative accounts of memory

name can still be read;⁶ statues are defaced while leaving the identity of the honorand recognizable. Families preserve the memory of a recalcitrant forebear by forbidding his name ever again to be used.⁷

The possible paradoxes raised in deliberately forgetting the past, however, are particularly pointed in historiography. History is the genre that intrinsically centres on memory: the *raison d'être* of the historian is to actively preserve things that might otherwise be forgotten. A decision to forbid memory works to the opposite end. If successful, not only the thing ordered to be forgotten, but also the fact that it was ordered, would vanish altogether from the record leaving no trace. It is effectively a challenge to the historian's own mission, and if an historian refers to the sanction existing at all, he is to a greater or lesser extent attesting its failure. The question I shall be addressing in the paper is how historians in practice handle this. As I shall show, there is (unsurprisingly) no one approach that historians adopt (even within a single work), but instead the issue is treated differently at different times. But a common thread does run through most of the examples, for more often than not historians handle their narrative of memory sanctions in a way that self-consciously explores the ramifications of memory for their own work and more broadly for Rome as a whole.

The issue can of course be avoided rather than addressed. One simple way of doing so is to play down any sense that the sanction

suppression such as those I shall discuss below often assume that the person or events are to be forgotten totally, suggesting that Romans at least understood the aim to be their disappearance from the record, even if in practice they are aware that no such disappearance has taken place. Hedrick is however right to emphasize the practical inability of the Romans to control memory to the degree that a modern totalitarian state can (Hedrick 2000, 92, 110–12).

⁶ So, for example, *CIL* VI 38417a (in the collection of New York University): the name of the wife who dedicated the tombstone has been 'removed', but is still legible. Moreover, even when it is no longer possible to read the name, in some cases the missing name can readily be supplied from the context, unless more elaborate recarvings have taken place. In such cases the inference that the person is intended to be tacitly recalled as well as suppressed is less secure, since there was often no practical way of defacing the inscription more thoroughly without removing it altogether, which may have been undesirable for other reasons; but at least we can say that an informed Roman reader would be able to see from such inscriptions that active memory suppression could paradoxically recall as well as suppressing its object.

⁷ Flower 2006, 49. That in certain contexts a refusal to name someone after something can be an act of honorific memorial as well as of forgetting is demonstrated by an intriguing parallel: the modern sporting practice of 'retiring' the numbers of outstanding stars.

was directed against memory in the first place. For example, in stories from the early Republic the revolutionary leaders Sp. Cassius, Sp. Maelius, and Manlius Capitolinus are depicted as being punished with actions taken not only against their person but also against their house: the house is demolished, and the site is preserved.⁸ It is easy to understand this as an action taken against someone's memory, even if, as with some of the memory sanctions I considered above, it appears to work through the paradoxical method of preserving a visible record of the person's misdeeds.⁹ But Livy, at least with the first two of these, does not primarily interpret the punishments in terms of the destruction of memory: hence there is no sense that the historian is challenging these ancient decisions by preserving a record of them. Indeed, in the case of Maelius the aim of the destruction is explicitly said to be 'so that the area should be a monument to the crushing of the evil hope' (Livy 4.16.1 *ut monumento area esset oppressae nefariae spei*), and the area accordingly preserves a record in its name, Aequimaelium.¹⁰ Hence Livy's history—itsself, of course, famously described by him as a *monumentum* (*Praef.* 10)¹¹—works not to undermine the punishment, but to reinforce it. Maelius (like Cassius before him) remains in the historical record, to be cited as an admittedly double-edged example in the case of Manlius Capitolinus (6.17.2, 6.18.9).¹²

Livy's handling of the punishment of Manlius Capitolinus is however more complicated. Here too, as with Cassius and Maelius, he gives no direct indication that the posthumous sanctions taken against him are particularly aimed at blotting out all or part of his

⁸ Cassius: Livy 2.41.11; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 8.79.3–4; Valerius Maximus 6.3.1b. Maelius: Varro, *LL* 5.157; Livy 4.15.8–16.1; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 12.4.6; Valerius Maximus 6.3.1c. Manlius: Livy 6.20.13; Ovid, *Fasti* 6.183–90; Valerius Maximus 6.3.1a; Plutarch, *Camillus* 36.7; Dio fr. 26.1. A similar punishment is recorded for the treacherous enemy commander Vitruvius Vaccus (Livy 8.19.4, 8.20.8). See Flower 2006, 45–51. The four punishments are linked together by Cicero, *Dom.* 101, who in the case of Vaccus, like Livy with Maelius (see below), specifically says that it was aimed at preserving rather than wiping out the memory of what he had done (*ut illius facinus memoria et nomine loci notaretur*).

⁹ Cf. Flower 2006, 19–22.

¹⁰ Valerius Maximus 6.3.1c makes a similar point: the site is named *quo iustitia supplicii notior ad posteris perveniret*.

¹¹ On this image, see Jaeger 1997, 15–29.

¹² See Chaplin 2000, 83–4.

memory.¹³ Yet memory is a key theme in Livy's account, and one with intricate ramifications.¹⁴ At his trial, Manlius makes an appeal to the site of the Capitol where he had performed his most heroic deed, and the tribunes therefore move the trial to a place from which it would no longer be visible, since the people would be unwilling to convict him 'unless [the tribunes] freed people's eyes too from the memory of such great glory' (6.20.10 *nisi oculos quoque hominum liberassent tanti memoria decoris*). Here removing the memory of Manlius' heroism is a key feature in obtaining his conviction. Admittedly this is overtly presented as a temporary expedient, and hence not something with any direct implications for the historian's own role. But immediately after narrating the posthumous sanctions, Livy continues (6.20.14–15):

hunc exitum habuit vir, nisi in libera civitate natus esset, memorabilis. populum brevi, postquam periculum ab eo nullum erat, per se ipsas recordantem virtutes desiderium eius tenuit.

Such was the end of a man who, had he not been born in a free state, was worthy of remembering. Soon the people, after there was no danger from him, recalled his virtues for their own sake and were filled with longing for him.

The counterfactual in the first sentence is noteworthy: since Manlius *was* born in a free state, it would appear to follow that he was *not* worthy of remembering. The direct juxtaposition of this with the sanctions, and appearing as it does shortly after the efforts by the tribunes to remove the public's consciousness of Manlius' heroism at his trial, would seem to imply that all of these are part of the same project—a project which Livy directly endorses. Manlius' heroic deeds are rightly wiped from the public record.

However, this immediately runs into the paradox that Livy's own narrative in Book 5 provided the record of Manlius' heroism—and indeed, since a person can be *memorabilis* for negative qualities as well as positive ones, even the lengthy narrative of his (alleged) attempts at revolution in Book 6 disproves Livy's own

¹³ Contrast Dio fr. 26.1, who claims (as Livy does not) that not only Manlius' house, but his name and image were removed wherever they were found, and directly relates this to the punishments carried out in the imperial period.

¹⁴ Compare the account of Kraus 1994, 146–219 on Livy's representation of Manlius as an 'alternative historian'; also Jaeger 1997, 74–93, esp. 85–8.

counterfactual.¹⁵ Manlius, even in a free state, was memorable, since Livy himself makes him so. And other aspects of the passage work to the same end. While the site of Manlius' house, unlike Maelius', is not described as a *monumentum*, another place associated with his punishment is. He is executed by being thrown from the Tarpeian rock, the very spot from which he had defended the Capitol against the Gauls, 'and the same place for one man was a monument both to outstanding glory and ultimate punishment' (6.20.12 *locusque idem in uno homine et eximiae gloriae monumentum et poenae ultimae fuit*).¹⁶ Here, as with Maelius, the role of the place as a monument aligns it with Livy's own history, both of which preserve the record of the past. But with Manlius, unlike Maelius, the monument—also like Livy's history—is a double record, preserving Manlius' heroism no less than his punishment. The second sentence in the passage above similarly gives the lie to Livy's apparent endorsement of the attack on Manlius' memory, since the people too remember his heroism and miss him. It is true that Livy's comment is tinged with irony, since the people are said to miss Manlius only from a safe distance; but even that irony is undercut by the sequel, where Rome is immediately struck by a plague which is plausibly—though not certainly—to be understood as the gods expressing their anger over Manlius' execution.¹⁷ Moreover, the people are adopting a perspective which is essentially that of the readers of history, who almost invariably view the past while remaining personally unaffected by it; but this need not imply that the judgements of history are mistaken.

So with Manlius, Livy does not directly treat the sanctions against him as directed at his memory, but he constructs his account so as to imply it, and indeed to endorse the attempt to remove his deeds from the public record. But the nature of his own history does not allow his endorsement to be stable or complete, and he constantly undercuts himself by showing how the memory of Manlius' heroism shines through all attempts to damn it.

A second simple expedient an historian can use to avoid the paradox of recording memory sanctions is to celebrate the manifest failure of those sanctions, and thus, by implication, the success of

¹⁵ Cf. Kraus 1994, 218.

¹⁶ Cf. Plutarch, *Camillus* 36.7, who similarly refers to it as a *mnemeion*.

¹⁷ Cf. Levene 1993, 206–8; Kraus 1994, 218–19.

historians in recording them.¹⁸ By far the most famous example of the failure of memory suppression in Latin historiography is Tacitus' account of the punishment of Cremutius Cordus (*Annales* 4.35.4–5):

libros per aedilis cremandos censuere patres: set mansuerunt, occultati et editi. quo magis socordiam eorum inridere libet qui praesenti potentia credunt extingui posse etiam sequentis aevi memoriam. nam contra punitis ingeniis gliscit auctoritas, neque aliud externi reges aut qui eadem saevitia usi sunt nisi dedecus sibi atque illis gloriam peperere.

The Senators voted for his books to be burned by the aediles: but they have remained, hidden and published. It is all the greater pleasure to mock the stupidity of those people who believe that even the memory of the future can be extinguished through present power. Quite the contrary: punished intellects gain increased authority, and foreign kings and those who have made use of the same savagery have achieved nothing except disgrace for themselves and glory for their victims.

It matters, of course, that Cremutius is an historian. Anyone's books could be condemned yet survive, but Cremutius is someone whose work specifically preserves the memory of other people, and the attack on him was partly an attack on the memory of those about whom he wrote. The charge against him was that he had praised Brutus and Cassius in his work (*Annales* 4.34.1), and in the speech that Tacitus puts into his mouth he refers to numerous other historians who had, like him, praised the anti-Caesarians, but had done so with impunity. He concludes by associating himself with Brutus and Cassius as people whose memory will survive all attempts to crush it (*Annales* 4.35.3). And Tacitus here endorses that in his own voice, thus linking his own mission to Cremutius' and more broadly to the tradition of the preservation of historical memory on which Cremutius draws in his speech.

¹⁸ Cf. Hedrick 2000, 94. Though it is not strictly speaking an account of memory sanctions, it is worth comparing Livy 3.41.6, where the patricians hope that once the consulate is restored (following the rule of the decemvirate), the populace can be induced to forget the tribunate (*in oblivionem tribunorum plebem adduci*). Livy's own narrative of course demonstrates that the memory of the tribunate survived, as does his readers' awareness of the institution's survival into their own day. The patricians' hope is accordingly almost immediately shown to be a vain one: the people's very first demand once the decemvirate has fallen is the restoration of the tribunate (3.53.4).

However, Tacitus' celebration of the failure of memory suppression may be argued to be in part ironically undercut.¹⁹ In the previous chapters he discussed his own work not as a cause of celebration but as a place of gloom and danger.²⁰ His reason for this is not only that he lacked the grand themes of his predecessors, but also that, unlike historians dealing with earlier periods, he was constantly open to criticism by those who are descended from his characters, or merely see themselves in them (*Annales* 4.33.4)—something that Cordus disingenuously denies in his speech, when he claims that Brutus and Cassius are figures of the past, and hence that his praise of them will not be read as a call to arms against Tiberius (*Annales* 4.35.2).²¹ The complex of ideas in the two passages, both political and historiographical, is admittedly extremely intricate, and there is far more going on here than simply an undercutting of Cordus by the narrator. But if we simply focus on the question of memory and preservation of the past, we can certainly see that, contrary to what Cordus has indicated, the historian cannot uncomplicatedly preserve memory, since he and his work are under constant threat, and the past itself is contested.

This point moreover is repeatedly reinforced in the episodes that follow. Tiberius himself immediately expresses doubts about how his own memory will be preserved, when he rejects the offer of divine worship as something which can turn to his disfavour: he prefers that he be remembered for proper conduct, the only monument that truly endures (*Annales* 4.38.1–3). But Tacitus' text itself bears witness that Tiberius will not be remembered as he wished, nor will his actions be interpreted at his own estimation.²² The objections of his anonymous

¹⁹ In this context it is worth observing that Cordus' work did not in fact survive intact; according to Quintilian 10.1.104 the version in his—and, presumably, Tacitus'—day had been stripped of its offensive passages. Assuming that this was known to Tacitus himself, and that at least some of his readers knew it too, then his celebration of Cremutius' posthumous victory has a hollow ring. See Sailor 2008, 253.

²⁰ The significant juxtaposition of the apparently pessimistic digression on historiography in 4.32–3 and the genre's apparent celebration in the trial of Cremutius Cordus has often been discussed: for different interpretations, see, for example, Moles 1998; O'Gorman 2000, 98–103; McHugh 2004; Sailor 2008, 250–313.

²¹ See Martin and Woodman 1989, 182–3; cf. also Moles 1998 for a detailed analysis of the respects in which Cordus' arguments do and do not conform to Tacitus' own.

²² For readings of Tiberius' rejection of worship in the light of the Cremutius Cordus episode, see, for example, Luce 1991, 2922–6; Moles 1998; Meier 2003, 104–10; Sailor 2008, 299–305.

critics to this extent at least²³ seem sound (*Annales* 4.38.4–5): whatever one thinks of deification as a way to secure one's memory, the route that Tiberius chooses instead, eschewing worship but instead relying on people's interpretations of his deeds, is a fragile hope. And the theme resumes when the Spartans and the Messenians bring a dispute to Tiberius over the rights to the temple of Diana Limnas (*Annales* 4.43). This proves to be a dispute about history, and each side brings histories to support its case; the Messenians also claim to have monuments to back up their claim (*Annales* 4.43.2). The Messenians by their own account have a larger number of histories on their side, and they accordingly win (*Annales* 4.43.3), but Tacitus does not endorse their claim in his own voice, and the very fact of the duelling historical accounts demonstrate that at least some histories have suppressed the truth of the past to the point that no record can be held incontrovertibly reliable.

Another example of the failure of memory suppression—but once again a very double-edged one—is at Tacitus, *Annales* 14.50:

haud dispari crimine Fabricius Veiento conflictatus est, quod multa et probrosa in patres et sacerdotes composuisset iis libris quibus nomen codicillorum dederat... convictumque Veintonem Italia depulit et libros exuri iussit, conquisitos lectitatosque donec cum periculo parabantur: mox licentia habendi oblivionem attulit.

Fabricius Veiento was attacked by a not dissimilar charge, because he had written numerous insults against senators and priests in the books he called 'codicils'... [Nero] expelled Veiento from Italy on his conviction and ordered his books to be burned, but they were sought after and constantly read as long as they were dangerously acquired. Later the liberty to possess them brought them to oblivion.

The paradox Tacitus refers to here is one that has become a commonplace in our own day: that the very attempt to suppress a work brings it to people's attention in a way that ensures the failure of the censorship.²⁴ But unlike the case of Cremutius Cordus, Veiento's work had

²³ See however Martin and Woodman 1989, 191–3 for other respects in which Tacitus undercuts these criticisms.

²⁴ We may compare *Annales* 3.76.2, where at Junia's funeral 'prae-fulgebant Cassius atque Brutus eo ipso quod effigies eorum non visebantur' ('Cassius and Brutus shone out for the very reason that their images were not on view': cf. Woodman and Martin 1996, 497–8, Hedrick 2000, 126). Also note Dio 57.24.4, who makes a similar point about the posthumous popularity of the writings of Cremutius Cordus: Tacitus himself did not raise this issue in the context of Cremutius, since his focus there is

no qualities to ensure its survival beyond the dangerous attractiveness of the forbidden. Once it was legally permitted to own it, and its survival depended upon on its own merits, it perished. In this case the historian himself has no role to play: the apparently anti-historical suppression of memory contained the seeds of its own destruction, itself ensuring the continuation of memory as long as the ban lasts. Without that the work is deservedly forgotten. Tacitus' barbed comment, even while showing the difficulties posed by active suppression of memory, simultaneously challenges the usual assumption of historians about the fundamental centrality of their own genre for the preservation of memory, much as he had with the Spartan–Messenian dispute in Book 4.²⁵

So far we have looked at two straightforward ways in which memory sanctions can be handled in history: avoidance of their implications and celebration of their failure. However, both of these can, as we have seen, be given overtones which reflect ironically on the historian's own work. A third method is the opposite: to accept—at least on the surface—the success of the suppression of memory. One example is *Annales* 11.38.3, describing the aftermath of the execution of Messalina:

ne secutis quidem diebus odii gaudii, irae tristitiae, ullius denique humani adfectus signa dedit, non cum laetantis accusatores aspiceret, non cum filios maerentis. iuvitque oblivionem eius senatus censendo nomen et effigies privatis ac publicis locis demovendas.

Not even in the following days did he [Claudius] give a sign of hatred, joy, anger, or grief, or in fact any human emotion, not when he saw her accusers rejoicing, or their children grieving. And the Senate assisted her effacement by voting that her name and images should be removed from private and public places.

Here the sanction is clearly directed against Messalina's memory, but might, as before, be felt to be undermined by Tacitus' own record of Messalina in his history—indeed, she is mentioned many times even

more on the intrinsic ability of the historian to overcome censorship, rather than on the fame and increased readership that censorship provides the censored.

²⁵ Contrast, for example, Livy 6.1.2: *litterae...una custodia fidelis memoriae rerum gestarum* ('writing... the one secure guardian of the memory of past events'); cf. Kraus 1994, 85–6 on the self-referentiality of Livy's claim here.

after her death and the posthumous condemnation here.²⁶ But Tacitus' wording contains a crucial ambiguity which points the reader's attention in another direction. The pronoun *eius* could, as translated above, be an objective genitive referring to Messalina as the person forgotten, and focusing on the general effect that this decision has on the preservation of Messalina's memory. However, it could also be a subjective genitive, referring to Claudius himself ('his forgetfulness'), and his own oblivious reaction to her death as described in the previous sentence.²⁷ On this reading, whether the Senate is successful in removing Messalina's memory from the Roman consciousness is less pertinent than the fact that Claudius—an historian himself, of course²⁸—appeared to have completely forgotten her even before the Senate took action; the chief effect of the Senate's decree is to reinforce his inability to remember his own wife.²⁹ Whatever it may have done to Messalina's reputation among the Romans at large, the Senate's vote can in a narrower sense succeed, precisely because of Claudius' own failures not only as a husband, but also as an historian.

Another case where memory is suppressed with apparent success is in Livy 43.2. The context is a series of complaints by the Spaniards against depredations by Roman officials. Livy in his own voice suggests that the complaints were justified (43.2.3); the Senate accordingly orders the praetor L. Canuleius to establish a system to judge the offenders, with both official senatorial *recuperatores* appointed and leading senators chosen by the Spaniards to represent them (43.2.3–5). But of the three people directly accused, one is acquitted after two postponements, while the other two escape their trial by

²⁶ The survival of Messalina's memory in Tacitus may be set against the fact that the sanctions taken against her images and inscriptions appear to have been unusually comprehensive and effective (Flower 2006, 182–9).

²⁷ Neither Furneaux nor Koestermann comments on the pronoun. The ambiguity cannot readily be reproduced in English, and so translators, forced to choose, generally refer it to Claudius (so, for example, Church and Brodribb, Jackson, and Woodman).

²⁸ This does not emerge directly from Tacitus' account, but he had recently placed Claudius' historical interests firmly on view in his famous speech on the Gauls (*Annales* 11.24). On Tacitus' attitude towards Claudius' scholarship, see Griffin 1990.

²⁹ That inability to remember is itself revealing of Claudius' weakness. Earlier it had been suggested that given the opportunity she could have swayed him back to her favour (*Annales* 11.37.2; cf. 11.34.2), which is why Narcissus keeps her away and actively blocks her from speaking to the emperor. Without her physical presence, her power over Claudius vanishes completely; cf. O'Gorman 2000, 117–21. On Tacitus' image of Messalina's sexual power over Claudius and its limitations, see Joshel 1997.

going voluntarily into exile to the comfortable nearby towns of Praeneste and Tibur (43.2.6–10). Livy then continues (43.2.11–12):

fama erat prohiberi a patronis nobiles ac potentes compellare; auxitque eam suspicionem Canuleius praetor, quod omissa ea re dilectum habere instituit, dein repente in provinciam abiit, ne plures ab Hispanis vexarentur. ita praeteritis silentio oblitteratis, in futurum tamen consultum ab senatu Hispanis, quod impetrarunt, ne frumenti aestimationem magistratus Romanus haberet, neve cogeret vicensumas vendere Hispanos quanti ipse vellet, et ne praefecti in oppida sua ad pecunias cogendas imponerentur.

The rumour was that the advocates blocked charges from being brought against powerful and well-known men; and the praetor Canuleius increased that suspicion, because he paid no attention to that question, but began to hold a levy and then suddenly departed for his province, in order that no more people should be harassed by the Spaniards. So the past was wiped out by silence, but for the future the Senate voted to meet the Spaniards' demands: that no Roman magistrate should assess the harvest, and that the Spaniards should not be compelled to sell twentieth shares at the price of the magistrate's choice, and that officials should not be placed in their towns to extract money.

The Spaniards succeed in protecting themselves for the future, but not in punishing their past oppressors. This ability of the guilty to evade punishment is not something that would automatically be connected with suppression of memory; but Livy's phrase *praeteritis silentio oblitteratis* transforms the question into one of exactly this sort. While it is not identical with the official memory sanctions against individuals that have been our focus so far, it is structurally analogous to them, in as much as it involves the deliberate suppression of the truth by a group of people acting in an official capacity. And in this case it appears to have been successful. Livy admittedly attributes the claim that the powerful were being protected only to *fama*, but *fama* in Livy is often surprisingly reliable,³⁰ and in this case Livy's straightforward statement that the past has been suppressed is premised on the rumour being correct. And his own narrative bears this out: for he gives no indication about the identities of the criminals being protected here, thus showing that the historical record has successfully been erased, and to that extent the historian has failed.

³⁰ See, for example, Doblhofer 1983, 143–4; Levene 2006, 77–87.

Only in one respect has Livy been able to overcome that silence: he can at least point to the evidence that some form of suppression has taken place. And that is itself not insignificant, because the fact of suppression may itself be as revealing as knowledge of the criminals' identity would have proved. Whoever is being protected here is unlikely to have been as prominent as those protecting them, since the latter—the advocates for the Spaniards who are here accused of subverting the case—include two of Livy's major characters, Cato the Censor and Aemilius Paullus (43.2.5). Cato and Aemilius thus are in the unfamiliar and unappealing position of defending vice and corruption, which in turn has a far broader historical significance. The complaints of the Spaniards do not stand in isolation, but are the first of a lengthy series of such complaints by various provincials in the surviving portions of the book, a book which shows Rome at the nadir of both her moral behaviour and military accomplishment in the Third Macedonian War.³¹ Attempts by the Romans to rectify the consequences of their misbehaviour are patchy and inadequate—as is demonstrated not least by the leading Romans here, who cover up the misdeeds of their colleagues. Only with the appointment of Aemilius Paullus to the command in Book 44 will the situation be reversed, but, as this passage shows, Aemilius himself has not been immune, and even he is caught up in Rome's moral difficulties.

This passage thus illustrates another important aspect of memory suppression in historiography. Not only does it have self-referential implications for the success or otherwise of the historian in overcoming his characters' attempts to suppress the record of the past; the fact of the memory suppression, whether or not successful, can be used to illustrate wider themes. In some cases those themes are obvious: it is not difficult to relate Tiberius' attack on Cremutius Cordus or Nero's on Fabricius Veiento with the wider image of tyranny and repression on which Tacitus focuses much of his narrative of their reigns; it is also relevant that the account of Fabricius is premised on the inferiority of his writing, which mirrors the theme of artistic corruption that is prominent in Tacitus' account of Nero.³² But sometimes, particularly in Livy, the historical lessons are more subtle and far-reaching than this.

³¹ Compare Levene 1993, 113–16.

³² Cf. Woodman 1993.

One such episode appears in Livy's narrative of the last years of the Second Punic War. In 209 BC a number of Italian towns protested against the heavy burden of conscription being imposed on them, partly because of the dire straits they claimed to be in as a result, but also partly in order to push the Romans into making peace with Hannibal (27.9.1–10.10). Twelve colonies in particular refused to continue to allow conscription, despite the desperate attempts of the consuls to persuade them; however, eighteen others remained loyal. Livy concludes his account as follows (27.10.6–10):

senatus quam poterat honoratissimo decreto adlocutus eos, mandat consulibus ut ad populum quoque eos producerent et inter multa alia praeclara quae ipsis maioribusque suis praestitissent recens etiam meritum eorum in rem publicam commemorarent. ne nunc quidem post tot saecula sileantur fraudenturque laude sua: Signini fuere et Norbani Saticulanique et Fregellani et Lucerini et Venusini et Brundisini et Hadriani et Firmani et Ariminenses, et ab altero mari Pontiani et Paestani et Cosani, et mediterranei Beneventani et Aesernini et Spoletini et Placentini et Cremonenses. harum coloniarum subsidio tum imperium populi Romani stetit, iisque gratiae in senatu et apud populum actae. duodecim aliarum coloniarum quae detraxerunt imperium mentionem fieri patres vetuerunt, neque illos dimitti neque retineri neque appellari a consulibus; ea tacita castigatio maxime ex dignitate populi Romani visa est.

The Senate addressed them [sc. the representatives of the loyal colonies] with a most honourable decree, and instructed the consuls to take them before the people too and recount, along with the many distinctions bestowed on them and their ancestors, their recent service to the state as well. Let them not, even now, after so many centuries, be passed over in silence and cheated of their praise. They were the peoples of Signia and Norba and Saticula and Fregellae and Luceria and Venusia and Brundisium and Hadria and Firmum and Ariminum, and from the other coast Pontia and Paestum and Cosa, and inland, Beneventum and Aesernia and Spoletium and Placentia and Cremona. At that time the power of the Roman people stood with these colonies' support, and they were thanked in the Senate and by the people. The senators forbade any mention to be made of the twelve other colonies which rejected the empire, and they were neither to be sent away nor kept back nor addressed by the consuls. That silent reprimand seemed most suited to the dignity of the Roman people.

Here Livy not only records the suppression of the names of the offenders, but sets that suppression against the long list of the loyal

colonies, which he gives in full rather than allowing their names to be passed over in silence. By listing them himself in such detail he effectively unites his own mission as historian with the official actions of the Senate, re-enacting the honour that Rome's loyal supporters received from the state. But he diverges from the Senate more sharply when it comes to the offending colonies, because he records the entire debate and their arguments, and indeed, near the start of the episode, has given an equally comprehensive list of them too (27.9.7).

Here, as in our earlier examples, Livy implicitly attests to the failure of the sanction, although the point is more muted than in the cases I discussed above, since he does not state explicitly whether the senators' decree of silence was meant only to apply to the immediate time or whether it was intended to be more far-reaching. But either way, the 'punishment' has something of a hollow tone, because the very fact of this sanction being applied does more to demonstrate the Romans' weakness than the colonies' misbehaviour. The fundamental issue is that Rome is still engaged in a desperate war on her home territory, and needs the support of all of her allies. The consuls' appeal to their loyalty (27.9.8–12) is intentionally couched as harshly as possible, 'in the belief that they would accomplish more through *reprimands* and reproaches than through gentle treatment' (27.9.8: '*castigando increpandoque plus quam leniter agendo profecturos rati*'); but it is completely ineffective. The response of the Roman senators to the news is one of panic (27.9.14), until the consuls reassure them that the other colonies are remaining loyal; as for the recalcitrant ones, they promise that 'if they send legates around those colonies to reprimand rather than to plead with them, they will have respect for Roman power' (27.10.1: '*si legati circa eas colonias mitantur qui castigent non qui precentur, verecundiam imperii habituras esse*'). But this is manifestly an empty and indeed deceitful claim, since the consuls have already attempted 'reprimands' which have failed to sway the colonists. The 'silent reprimand' of not mentioning their names is no less hollow, as the repetition of *castigatio* underlines: this is the third time that the colonies have been 'reprimanded' without success. Memory sanctions here are not merely ineffective in terms of rewriting the historical record; they are also a sign of a broader weakness.

This is not to say, however, that blotting the colonies from the record has had no effect. When the Romans return to the issue a few

years later, it turns out that it has indeed had an effect—but a quite unexpected one (29.15.1–5):

cum de supplemento legionum quae in provinciis erant ageretur, tempus esse a quibusdam senatoribus subiectum est, quae dubiis in rebus utcumque tolerata essent, ea dempto iam tandem deum benignitate metu non ultra pati. erectis expectatione patribus subiecerunt colonias Latinas duodecim quae Q. Fabio et Q. Fulvio consulibus abnuissent milites dare, eas annum iam ferme sextum vacationem militiae quasi honoris et beneficii causa habere, cum interim boni obedientesque socii pro fide atque obsequio in populum Romanum continuis omnium annorum dilectibus exhausti essent. sub hanc vocem non memoria magis patribus renovata rei prope iam oblitteratae quam ira inritata est. itaque nihil prius referre consules passi, decreverunt ut consules magistratus denosque principes Nepete Sutrio Ardea Calibus Alba Carseolis Sora Suessa Setia Circeis Narnia Interamna—hae namque coloniae in ea causa erant—Romam excirent.

When they were discussing filling up the legions which were in the provinces, some senators suggested that it was time that certain things, no matter how much they had been tolerated in times of trouble, could not be allowed to continue now that (by the kindness of the gods) fear had finally been removed. The senators were keenly expectant. The proposers suggested that the twelve Latin colonies which in the consulship of Q. Fabius and Q. Fulvius had refused to supply soldiers were now almost in the sixth year of their exemption from military service, treating it as if it were an honour and benefit. And in the meantime good and faithful allies, acting out of loyalty and obedience to the Roman people, had worn themselves out with constant levies every year. When this was mentioned, the senators' anger was provoked no less than their memory renewed of a matter now almost wiped out. So they allowed the consuls to bring up no other matter first, but decreed that the consuls should summon to Rome the magistrates and ten leading men from each colony: Nepete, Sutrium, Ardea, Cales, Alba, Carseoli, Sora, Suessa, Setia, Circeii, Narnia, and Interamna (for these were the ones in question).

The colonists are accordingly summoned, and exceptionally stringent demands are made on them: they are to double their highest previous number of soldiers, and supply cavalry in addition; the conscripts should specifically be drawn from the wealthy classes, and will be compelled to serve outside Italy (29.15.6–7). In addition an annual tax is imposed—admittedly only at the level of 0.1% (29.15.9), but

the very fact of taxation at all is significant, especially when seen from the perspective of Livy's own day, when Italy was generally totally exempt from taxation. The leading citizens are also threatened with arrest in the event of their community's non-compliance (29.15.8). The leaders of colonists are adamant that they cannot possibly supply such numbers of troops, even on pain of their own punishment; they beg to address the Senate (29.15.11–13). But this request is denied, and they are forced to conduct the levy as ordered—a levy which, 'since the number of younger men had increased through the long period of exemption, was completed without difficulty' (29.15.15: 'per longam vacationem numero iuniorum aucto, haud difficulter est perfectus').

This episode has a number of implications. The first point to note is that the issue is raised precisely in terms of memory and forgetting. The recalcitrant colonies have indeed been wiped from recorded memory, exactly as the Senate had wanted, but it is less from the national historical memory than the memory of the senators themselves, since most of them appear to have forgotten the issue altogether, though once reminded of it they are suitably furious. Livy once again lists the colonies in full, exactly as he had in Book 27 (27.9.7). But this time his doing so does not challenge the Senate's decision, but reinforces it by bringing the offenders back to public view: indeed, his repetition implies that his own preservation of the record, which at the time had appeared to undermine the Romans' decree, actually worked in its favour, because it aligns him with the minority of senators who had remembered the offence, and who thus now are able to bring it to the Senate's attention at a time when they are better able to deal with it.

But the ramifications of the episode extend beyond mere self-referentiality. As I noted above, the attempt to punish the colonists with silence revealed not least Rome's inability to compel them by more forceful means; and the same point emerges here by contrast, since the restoration of memory about the colonies goes hand in hand with the Romans' bringing them directly to heel. This is a consequence of Rome's success in the war, as Livy notes: whereas in Book 27 there was still a real possibility of Hannibal's victory, that is no longer the case, especially since the defeat of Hasdrubal at the Metaurus at the end of that book.

Of course, one consequence of the delay in restoring the levy in those colonies is that Rome was deprived of their support at the time

when they greatly needed it, and receive it now at a time when it would appear to matter less. The Romans themselves—albeit not always enthusiastically—made vast contributions from their own resources, but those are no longer needed, as we are alerted immediately after the episode here, when the Senate votes to repay to the people the private contributions they had made to the war effort (29.16.1–3; cf. 26.35–6). And the other eighteen colonies, as we were told, were able to step up and support Rome even when these twelve did not. But Livy, even while presenting their failure in a poor light, does not entirely dismiss their position. The irony with which he treats them is admittedly clear: their leaders' extravagant complaints about the impossibility of meeting Rome's demands are shown up as mere windy rhetoric by the bathetic ease with which the levy is actually performed once they have no chance of pleading otherwise. It might have been thought that Livy would want to show the equal hollowness of their identical claim back in Book 27 that the demands on them then were impossible (27.9.13), but he actually slants his account in a different direction, by observing that the ease with which the levy was performed now was precisely the consequence of the length of time that no troops had been levied from them previously. Hence the decision simply to dismiss the colonies silently, while it was not the preferred option, and certainly revealed Rome's weakness at the time, in the longer term had beneficial consequences for their ability to serve Rome. But it could only have that effect through being temporary: the return to memory was a necessary precondition for achieving the benefits of Rome's control of her allies.

A final example of memory-suppression, once again in the context of Roman–Italian relations, and one with even more striking political implications, is Livy 23.22.4–9, describing the Senate's debate about renewing their numbers in the aftermath of the disaster at Cannae:³³

cum de ea re M. Aemilius praetor . . . exposcentibus cunctis rettulisset, tum Sp. Carvilius, cum longa oratione non patrum solum inopiam sed paucitatem etiam civium, ex quibus in patres legerentur, conquestus esset, explendi senatus causa et iungendi artius Latini nominis cum populo Romano magnopere se suadere dixit, ut ex singulis populis Latinorum binis senatoribus, quibus patres Romani censuissent, civitas daretur atque inde in demortuorum locum in senatum legerentur.

³³ For further discussion of this passage in its broader context, see my account in Levene 2010, 38–43.

eam sententiam haud aequioribus animis quam ipsorum quondam postulatam Latinorum patres audierunt; et cum fremitus indignantium tota curia esset, et praecipue T. Manlius esse etiam nunc eius stirpis virum diceret, ex qua quondam in Capitolio consul minatus esset, quem Latinum in curia vidisset, eum sua manu se interfecturum, Q. Fabius Maximus numquam rei ullius alieniore tempore mentionem factam in senatu dicit, quam inter tam suspensos sociorum animos incertamque fidem id iactum, quod insuper sollicitaret eos. eam unius hominis temerariam vocem silentio omnium exstinguendam esse et, si quid umquam arcani sanctive ad silendum in curia fuerit, id omnium maxime tegendum, occulendum, obliviscendum, pro indicto habendum esse. ita eius rei oppressa mentio est.

When the praetor M. Aemilius raised the question by universal demand, Sp. Carvilius complained about not only the lack of senators but also how few citizens there were from whom senators might be co-opted. He said that, so as to fill up the Senate and join more closely those of Latin name with the Roman people, he strongly urged that citizenship should be granted to two senators from each of the Latin peoples, chosen by the Roman senators; out of these people should be co-opted into the Senate in place of those who were dead.

The senators heard this advice no more favourably than they had once heard the demand of the Latins themselves. The whole Senate house was filled with indignant grumbling; in particular T. Manlius said that there was still a man of that race from whom a consul had once threatened on the Capitol that he would kill with his own hands any Latin he saw in the Senate house. Q. Fabius Maximus said that nothing had ever been mentioned in the Senate at a more inappropriate time: when their allies' minds were so hesitant and their loyalty so uncertain, to throw out an idea which would bother them still further. That rash voice of one man should be wiped out by the silence of everyone and, if there had ever been anything in the Senate house secret and holy enough to warrant silence, this thing most of all should be concealed, covered over, forgotten, treated as never spoken. In this way mention of this issue was suppressed.

The first thing to observe here is that, as we have repeatedly seen, the mere fact that Livy is recording the debate at all highlights the failure of the attempt to suppress all memory of it. This irony is all the more apparent because of the extravagant terms in which Fabius Maximus' advice is couched: the quasi-religious reference to the secrets of the Senate house, along with the rhetorical amplification of *tegendum*, *occulendum*, *obliviscendum*, *pro indicto habendum esse*, is hard to take entirely seriously when the truth has manifestly emerged in

Livy's own text. But more important still is that the issue that prompts Fabius' overblown rhetoric is not merely one that is relevant to the particular moment, but represents a running sore through much of the Republic. Livy directly relates the proposal here to the episode of 340 BC, more than a century before, when the Latins sought full political equality with Rome (8.3.8–6.7), an episode which he had already cited a few chapters earlier in the book, when the Capuans (on one version—admittedly a version which Livy expresses scepticism about) demand that one consul each year be a Capuan (23.6.6–8). And Manlius Torquatus, a descendant of the chief opponent of Latin demands in 340, endorses his ancestor's violent rejection of the earlier proposal.

Yet the issue's future ramifications are even more troubling than the past ones. At the time when Livy was writing, the Social War, the bloody revolt of Rome's Italian allies over their unequal legal status, was still within living memory. Livy had indeed directly modelled his account of the Latin demands in 340 BC on the debates at the time of the Social War,³⁴ and the Social War likewise stands in the background of his account here. Fabius' attempt not only to suppress all discussion, but even to suppress the fact that any discussion has taken place, is successful in the short term—in the immediate crisis there is no further consideration of supplementing the Senate from the ranks of the Italian allies, and the shortage in Senate numbers is dealt with in a different way. But in the broader sense Fabius' reaction is not a solution, but a manifestation of deeper problems. To a Roman of Livy's day the extreme hostility of the Senate to having Italian—let alone Latin—senators would have appeared grossly overblown: the Italian peninsula was fully enfranchised, and even before the general enfranchisement many Italians, both as communities and individuals, had been awarded citizenship and had acceded to the highest offices. Torquatus' ancestor had actually claimed that the mere existence of Latin consuls and senators would be sacrilegious (8.5.8), something that is clearly disproved by the subsequent history of Italian enfranchisement.³⁵ While no one in the debate in Book 23 goes quite as far as

³⁴ See Dipersia 1975.

³⁵ Cf. Levene 1993, 219–20. Feldherr 1998, 82–5 argues that even in this Livy is justifying Manlius' attack on Latin enfranchisement; but Feldherr does not take into account that the enfranchised Italy of Livy's own day suggests that his readers would have a very different perspective on the episode.

that, the religious-sounding language that Fabius uses in proposing that the issue should no longer be spoken of likewise gives his position too an air of ludicrous anachronism.³⁶ But even if ludicrous, the anachronism is in another sense deadly serious, for its consequences for Rome will be very severe. Instead of conceding equality peacefully at a time of mutual need, the Romans will allow it to fester for more than a century and then emerge in bitter violence. The suppression of memory in this case is not only ineffective in the longer term, but part of a centuries-long pattern of Roman repression of and denial of rights to their Italian neighbours. Livy's historical memory, as he builds it into his own history, extends over the widest scale, covering the whole seven centuries and more of the history of Rome to his own day. It is no surprise that for him, more than any other Roman historian, the suppression of memory can likewise be something which has the widest historical ramifications. In such cases the deliberate loss of memory does not merely affect the people of the time, or those against whom the sanction is applied: it reaches out deep into the past and future, and carries with it a significance for the entire meaning of what it is to be a Roman.

Abbreviations

CIL *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*

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³⁶ On Livy's ambivalent treatment of Fabius and Torquatus in this passage cf. Pelling 1989, 204–5.

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The Discovery of Inscriptions and the Legitimation of New Cults

Aude Busine

The practice of inscribing texts on permanent media such as stone or bronze was probably one of the most characteristic and enduring practices in the Greco-Roman world. Today, these inscriptions constitute elements essential to our understanding and knowledge of ancient society. On the one hand, the everyday, ordinary aspect of these texts gives us a less idealized picture of the classical world; on the other hand, the materiality of the medium makes distant antiquity more real, more accessible. The discovery of new epigraphic evidence is always exciting, and gives scholars an opportunity to display their skill in deciphering.

In antiquity, finding and re-using inscriptions, whether genuine or forged, played an important role in shaping and understanding the world: then as today, the reinterpretation of ancient inscribed texts allowed a reconstruction of the past, which was then employed as a way to manage the present. Poets, historians, and antiquarians quoted and discussed inscriptions, in both Greek and Latin, with a whole range of motives.¹ This paper examines the circumstances in which inscriptions were discovered both in pagan and Christian antiquity and focuses on the ways they were used in the legitimation of new cults.

¹ See the contributions of Higbie 1999; Tronson 2000; Boardman 2002 (index *sv* 'inscriptions'); Haake 2004; Zizza 2006; Pownall 2008. For the uses of archaeological sources in Graeco-Roman antiquity in general, see Schnapp 1993, 57–73; Boardman 2002.

In the Greco-Roman world, religious practice was so conservative that it relied mainly on oral tradition, with the exception of a few marginal areas where writing was used:² for example, inscribed sacred calendars, cult regulations, records of divine epiphanies, and sales of priesthoods. As shown by Baumgarten, however, the written texts were often used to feign antiquity, and thus to invent a tradition in order to legitimate invention.³

Among these inscribed documents of ancient religion, oracles played a prominent role in justifying past events or seeking approval of present situations. The practice of publicly inscribing oracular questions and/or answers, both genuine and bogus, is attested throughout antiquity, from the sixth century BC to at least the fourth century AD.⁴

Moreover, divine prescriptions on stone were re-used long after their production, often in a context totally different from that of their original use. Accounts of the discovery of inscribed oracles are to be understood within the broader context of the well-attested theme of the discovery of books for purposes of political or religious propaganda.⁵ It is enough to mention here the text which Agesilaus claims to have found in the tomb of Alcmena (Plutarch, *On Socrates' Daemon* 5) or the bronze tablets about Caesar's fate excavated in Capua (Suetonius, *Iulius Caesar* 81.1–2).

We shall see that discovering oracles on stone was not only a literary *topos*. On the contrary, there is good evidence that shows how the discovery of old prophecies was used to stage the reappearance of oracles announcing or demanding the introduction of a cult. As the classical world lived in and for the past, the introduction of something new was felt to be fearsome and disturbing. The (re) foundation of cults, therefore, needed to be justified by recourse to a traditional authority.

Pausanias (4.26) records, for example, the Messenian legend about the restoration of the mysteries of the Great Gods in Andania during the fourth century BC. The reintroduction of the cult, together with the re-establishment of Messene, was legitimized by the discovery of sacred texts contained in a bronze *hydria*. It was claimed that this

² See Beard 1991; Henrichs 2003, 207–66.

³ Baumgarten 1998, 122–43.

⁴ See Somolinos 1991; Athanassiadi 1989–90; Busine 2005a.

⁵ See Speyer 1970.

vessel had been dug up on Mount Ithome by one Epiteles from Argos, thus instructed by a dream. Inside the hydria Epaminondas is reported to have found some rolled-up tin on which 'was inscribed the initiation to the Great Gods'.

If this roll had ever existed, it is difficult to decide whether it preserved an early oral tradition or whether its contents were a late reconstruction put together to legitimate the resumption of the Andanian mysteries after an interval. What can be stated with certainty is that the detailed account of the circumstances in which the sacred texts were discovered appears to be a significant component in the process of validating the restoration of the mysteries.

In the following cases, written divine prescriptions, discovered in private and public spheres, were employed to validate the building of a new place of worship. In Thessalonike, a worshipper of Sarapis is said to have found a text placed under his pillow while he was asleep. This letter (ἐπιστολά) was the confirmation of a dream about a divine recommendation to found a Sarapeion in Opous.⁶ The material on which the letter was written is not specified. The inscription, however, clearly established the authority and pre-eminence of the physical document over the oral story given in the dream (lines 16–17: ἰδὼν τὰ γεγραμμένα σύμφωνα τοῖς [vac. ὑπὸ Ξεναυέτ]ου ἐρηγμένοις). According to L. Bricault, the inscription, which dates from the first century AD, was most probably located somewhere in the sanctuary dedicated to Sarapis and might be a copy of an earlier text dating from the third–second century BC.⁷

At Praeneste, Cicero cites the town's local 'annals of Praeneste' to explain how the oracular complex of Fortuna there was founded after the discovery in a rock of pieces of wood inscribed with old characters (*perfracto saxo sortis erupisse in robore insculptas priscarum litterarum notis: De Divinatione* 2. 85–86). Again, it was a dream that led to the excavation of the tablets.

In both cases, the decision to build a new sanctuary could theoretically have been taken on the basis of written texts discovered after a genuine dream. However, we can reasonably presume that these prophecies were pseudo-epigraphical and produced for the purpose of the foundation.

⁶ IG X 2. 255 = RICIS 586.

⁷ Bricault 2005, 150.

The following case serves to illustrate that people did not hesitate to produce fake oracular inscriptions at the occasion both of a cult innovation and of the creation of a new sanctuary.⁸ According to Lucian's *Alexander or The False Prophet*, forgeries explicitly contributed to justifying the foundation of the Asklepios–Glykon cult by Alexander at Abonoteichos. In chapter 10, Alexander is said to have come to the temple of Apollo in Chalcedon, the oldest in the city. There, they 'would have buried bronze tablets (κατορύττουσι δέλτους χαλκᾶς) telling that very soon Asklepios would move to Pontos with his father Apollo and take up his residence at Abonoteichos. The tablets were discovered at an opportune time (αὐται αἱ δέλτοι ἐξεπίτηδες εὗρεθίσαι), and this story spread quickly to all Bithynia and Pontos, but to Abonoteichos before anywhere else. As a result, the people of that city immediately voted to build a temple, and began to dig for the foundations'.

Despite its satirical character, this account of the excavation of oracular forgeries constitutes very interesting evidence about the institution of a new cult together with the building of a new place of worship.⁹

Surprisingly, this pagan practice was taken over by Christians seeking to justify re-use of pagan temples. Indeed, the miraculous discovery of allegedly old oracles was integrated into the staging of the foundation of churches as well.

This re-use of oracular texts generated the idea, developed by Christian authors, that their God had inspired some pagan prophets to prepare gentiles for the coming of Christ. As a result, they considered pagan gods as one of the sources of their doctrine.¹⁰ In the fourth century AD, Lactantius and Eusebius initiated recourse to genuine pagan prophecies as a *praeparatio evangelica*. Eusebius and Gregory of Nazianzus were the first to comment on oracles in order to present Apollo as a prophet who predicted the end of polytheism and the victory of Christianity.¹¹ At the very end of the fifth century AD, the *prooimion* of the so-called Tübingen *Theosophy*, the most

⁸ For other ancient epigraphical forgeries, see Chaniotis 1988, 265–72.

⁹ On the historical feature of the work, see Weinreich 1921; Sfameni-Gasparro 1999; Chaniotis 2002.

¹⁰ Busine 2005a, 362–73 (with previous bibliography).

¹¹ Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* 5.15.6: περὶ τοῦ ἐκλειπέναι αὐτῶν τὰ βοώμενα χρηστήρια; Gregory of Nazianzus, *Carmina* 2.2.7, PG 37, col. 1571: Φοῖβος μαντεύοιτο θεῶν μόνον οὐκετ' ἔόντων.

important Christian collection of pagan oracles, clearly aimed to impart antique status, and so a properly sacred authority to the Christian religion.¹² In the first book, its anonymous author quotes both genuine pagan oracles and pseudo-epigraphical prophecies in order to demonstrate that the pagan gods and prophets had predicted the main doctrines of Christianity, such as the existence of one God and the Holy Trinity.¹³

In this way, some Christian forgers also produced *ex eventu* prophecies about the future precedence of Christianity, allegedly uttered in oracular sanctuaries dedicated to Apollo.¹⁴ In doing so, they might have been reacting against oracles about the end of Christianity produced in pagan circles.¹⁵ Be that as it may, John Malalas (sixth century AD), for example, records that the emperor Augustus came to the Pythia seeking to know who would be the ruler of the Roman empire after him (τίς μετ' ἐμὲ βασιλεύσει τῆς Ῥωμαϊκῆς). The emperor was then given notice of the coming of Jesus.¹⁶

Similarly, some oracles attributed to Apollo by Christian sources concern the future extinction of Apollo's own cult and the admission of his own impotence in the face of the new religion. Philostorgius (fourth–fifth century AD) writes that Oribasios, the emperor Julian's physician, came to the oracle at Delphi where Apollo allegedly prophesied that his own 'cabin' would cease to exist.¹⁷ The same prophecy as that delivered to Augustus about the arrival of the Christ is also attributed in the *Theosophy* to Artemis, who started moaning when asked about the fate of her sacred precinct.¹⁸

In some cases, prophecies tackle more precisely the construction of a church over pagan ruins. According to *Theosophy* 1.5, Apollo tragically laments the destruction of his temple by fire. The twenty-

¹² See now the reconstruction of the original text by Beatrice 2001. On earlier oracles collections, see Busine 2005b.

¹³ *Theosophy, Epitome* 1 (ed. Beatrice) = 1 (ed. Erbse).

¹⁴ On the role of Christian forgeries from a general point of view, see Gray 1988; Beatrice 2002a.

¹⁵ Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 18.53–4. See Chadwick 1984.

¹⁶ Malalas, *Chronographia* 5.5 (ed. Thurn). Similar versions in *Theosophorum Graecorum Fragmenta. Thesauri Minores* χ₁₀ (ed. Erbse); Cedrenos, *Compendium Historiarum*, CSHB 1. 320; Souda, s.v. Αὔγουστος.

¹⁷ Philostorgius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 7 F 1c (ed. Bidez): οὐκέτι Φοῖβος ἔχει καλύβαν. See Parke and Wormell 1956, 194–5.

¹⁸ *Theosophy* 1. 52 (ed. Beatrice) = 51 (ed. Erbse): πρὸς τὸν ἐαυτῆς . . . τεμενίτην.

nine-verse oracle explains in a Christological perspective how a mortal and heavenly man (line 11: *βροτὸς... οὐράνιος φῶς*) has chased him away from his tripods.

As in the tale of the foundation of the temple at Abonoteichos, the Christian compiler begins by explaining the miraculous discovery of the sacred text, said to have been found 'at Delphi, during the fifth year of Anastasius' reign, on 18 August, that is, the first day of the fourth indiction, on a Sunday, after a great flood'.¹⁹ The author recalls that the oracle was 'inscribed on a stone near the foundations of the *cella* of the temple'.²⁰ It is important to point out that the account displaying these chronological and topographical details suggests the significance of the discovery itself, and not only of the content of the revelation.

A comparable story here bears closer attention. Several Christian authors report that an old inscribed oracle was found, in which Apollo foretells the transformation of his temple into a church. With minor variations, they all record that, when asked about the future of his place of worship (*τίνος ἔσται δόμος οὗτος*), Apollo prophesied: 'Do whatever leads to virtue and order, I prophesy a single triune God ruling on high whose imperishable Logos will be conceived in a virgin (*οὗ λόγος ἀφθιτος ἐν ἀδαεὶ κόρῃ ἔγκυος ἔσται*). Like a fiery arrow he will course through the middle of the world, gather up everything and bring it as a gift to the Father. This house will be hers. Her name is Maria (*αὐτῆς ἔσται δόμος, Μαρία δὲ τοῦνομα αὐτῆς*).'²¹

All the quotations of this prophecy about the transformation of the pagan temple into a church clearly aimed at showing that the devotion to the Virgin Mary had been foretold by the Greek deity. It should be stressed that most accounts of this oracle specify its material form as well as its miraculous discovery.

¹⁹ *Theosophy* 1.5 (ed. Beatrice) = 16 (ed. Erbse) : ἐν Δελφοῖς εἰκὸς τῷ πέμπτῳ ἔτει τῆς βασιλείας Ἀναστασίου, μηνὶ ἀγούστῳ 17, ἡνδικτιῶνος δ' ἡμέρα α', γενομένης ἐπομβρίας μεγάλης κατακλυσμοῦ δυνάμιν ἐχούσης.

²⁰ *Theosophy* 1.5 (ed. Beatrice) = 16 (ed. Erbse): ἐγγεγραμμένος ἐν πλακὶ καὶ ἀποκείμενος εἰς τὰ θεμέλια τοῦ ναοῦ αὐτοῦ εἰδωλείου.

²¹ *Theosophy* 1.54–55 (ed. Beatrice) = 53–54 (ed. Erbse), and the sources discussed below, cited in nn. 22, 24, 26, and 27.

The first reference to this oracle is found in the *Oratio in Sanctam Mariam Dei Genitricem* of Theodotus of Ancyra (first half of the fifth century AD). This anti-Nestorian bishop states that the oracle was addressed by Apollo to the Athenians overcome by a plague. The text is said to have been ‘carved in Athens on the altar of the Unknown God, the same as the one mentioned by the Apostle Paul’,²² but nothing indicates whether Theodotus saw it personally or if he depends on another source. The passage is in line with subsequent Christian interpretations of Paul’s mention of the altar of the Unknown God in Acts 17.23.²³ Later, the same prophecy in prose was again to be connected with the Athenian altar in a work falsely attributed to Athanasios of Alexandria.²⁴

Malalas also quotes the text, perhaps based on the lost *Chronicle* of Eustathios of Epiphaneia.²⁵ However that may be, the Antiochene chronicler relates that the oracle was given to Jason and the Argonauts when they were attacked by Kyzikos, king of Hellespont. They had come to a place called Pythia Therma, where they made sacrifices and questioned the deity.²⁶ As regards the prophecy about the Virgin Mary, we are told that ‘they inscribed the oracle in bronze letters on a marble stone, and placed it over the door of the temple, calling it “House of Rhea, mother of the gods”’. According to this *interpretatio christiana* of the legend of Kyzikos’ meeting with Jason, the disastrous destiny of the pagan place of worship became true when ‘many years later, this house was turned into a church of the Holy Maria Theotokos by Emperor Zeno’.²⁷ The association of Rhea/Kybele and Theotokos clearly aimed at showing the continuity of cult between the old temple of the Kyzicene mother of the gods and the newly built church of the Mother of God. John of Antioch (seventh century AD) also links the legend of the foundation of Rhea’s temple

²² Theodotus of Ancyra, *Oratio in Sanctam Mariam Dei Genitricem*, PO 19. 3, no. 93, 333–4.

²³ See Kaldellis 2009, 51 n. 87.

²⁴ Pseudo-Athanasios of Alexandria, *Interpretatio of the Temple in Athens*, PG 28, 1428c–1429a.

²⁵ Treadgold 2007, 4–9; Kaldellis 2009, 49–50.

²⁶ Malalas, *Chronographia* 4.8 (ed. Thurn). A similar version will also be recorded by Cedrenos (eleventh–twelfth cent.), *Compendium Historiarum*, CSHB 1.209.

²⁷ Malalas, *Chronographia* 4.8 (ed. Thurn): καὶ γράψαντες τὸν χρησμόν . . . ἐν λίθῳ, ἥτοι μαρμάρῳ, χαλκείοις γράμμασιν, ἔθηκαν εἰς τὸ ὑπέρθυρον τοῦ ναοῦ, καλέσαντες τὸν οἶκον Πέας μητρὸς θεῶν. ὅστις οἶκος μετὰ χρόνους πολλοὺς ἐγένετο ἐκκλησία τῆς ἀγίας καὶ θεοτόκου Μαρίας ὑπὸ Ζήνωνος βασιλέως.

by Jason and the Argonauts with its future conversion into a church of Theotokos.²⁸

In the *Theosophy*, the prophecy is similarly connected with the cities of Kyzikos and Athens. The introduction to the bogus oracle provides more details about the circumstances in which the inscription reappeared: 'in the years of the emperor Leo, an idol's temple of the same age as the city of Kyzikos was on the point of being transformed by the citizens into the chapel of our most glorious mistress the Theotokos. An oracle was found incised on a great stone along the temple wall'.²⁹

The text of the *Theosophy*, or more probably a later marginal note,³⁰ adds that 'the same inscription was found in Athens on the left side of the temple, at the gate, being indistinguishably identical to the other',³¹ but it does not state the time of the discovery.

Christians thus provide information about the medium on which the oracle was inscribed; about the circumstances and the purpose of its being put into writing; and about its location and the date of its later reappearance. They also describe the consequences of the miraculous discovery: the pagan cult was supplanted by a Marian one, and the temple was transformed into a Christian church.

Would it be unreasonable or too bold to imagine that the invented oracle had really been carved, then buried, and finally rediscovered when the Christians decided to build a church near a pagan temple, just as Alexander reportedly did when he founded the Glykon cult? We should remember that other oracular pieces of the *Theosophy* are recorded on stone elsewhere. The most spectacular example is certainly an oracle quoted in *Theosophy* 1.2, which L. Robert was able to identify with an inscription on the city gate of Oinoanda in Lycia.³² In this respect, P.F. Beatrice has also proposed considering as genuine five oracles which are said in *Theosophy* 1.41–5 to have been inscribed

²⁸ John of Antioch, *FHG* 4.548 (ed. Müller). Note that the oracle quoted here is slightly different, probably corrupted.

²⁹ *Theosophy* 1.54 (ed. Beatrice) = 53 (ed. Erbse): ἐν τοῖς χρόνοις τοῦ βασιλέως Λέοντος ναὸς εἰδώλου, ὁμῆλιξ τῆς Κυζικηνῶν πόλεως, ἐμελλε παρὰ τῶν πολιτῶν εἰς εὐκτήριον μετασκευασθῆναι οἶκον τῆς ὑπερενδόξου δεσποίνης ἡμῶν θεοτόκου, καὶ εὐρέθη ἐν λίθῳ μεγάλῳ κατὰ τὸ πλευρὸν τοῦ νεῶ χρησμός ἐγκεκολαμμένος.

³⁰ Kaldellis 2009, 49.

³¹ *Theosophy* 1.54 (ed. Beatrice) = 53 (ed. Erbse): ὁ δὲ αὐτὸς εὐρέθη καὶ ἐν Ἀθῆναις ἐν τῷ ἀριστερῷ μέρει τοῦ νεῶ κατὰ τὴν πύλιν, ἀπαράλλακτως ὁμοῖος ὡς ἐκεῖνον.

³² Robert 1971.

in Egypt at Ombos, Koptos, and Elephantine.³³ Therefore, one may wonder why, despite L. Robert's irrefutable demonstrations, scholars have so far been reluctant to admit the documentary value of these oracular excerpts.

In the midst of scholars' indifference or scepticism, C. Mango suggested as early as 1995 that the inscription mentioned in *Theosophy* 1.54 about Maria's church had probably existed in Athens, and argued that this would provide evidence that the Parthenon was turned into a church dedicated to the Theotokos.³⁴

New epigraphical evidence in the Aegean islands now confirms Mango's intuition: indeed, a unique inscription recording the oracle about the new church dedicated to the Virgin Mary was found in 2002 on the island of Ikaria.³⁵ As G. Deligiannakis stresses, the archaeological context seems to coincide with the stories of the miraculous discovery of the inscription in (or near) a pagan temple. The Ikaria stone can be associated with a large basilica (ninth century) most probably built over an earlier building, and itself now located beneath the church of Aghia Eirene at Oinoe.³⁶

A. Kaldellis has recently reassessed and discussed in detail the implications of this find in the context of archaeological evidence in Athens. Indeed, remains of the Christian Parthenon enable one to date the conversion of Athena's temple in the second half of the fifth century AD.³⁷ According to Kaldellis, the oracle must have come from Athens; and he speculates that it might even have been inscribed on the Altar of the Unknown God as stated by Theodotus of Ancyra. In this perspective, the text would have confirmed the Apostle Paul's attempt to convert the Athenians through recourse to the authority of their ancient poets.³⁸

Be that as it may, literary evidence shows that the emperors Leo (457–74) and Zeno (474–491) made use of the oracle in order to promote the cult of the Theotokos. Recent studies on monasteries in Constantinople have highlighted that Leo and Verina were the first to promote actively the Marian cult, and not Pulcheria as usually stated.³⁹ This new religious policy was a result of the Council of

³³ Beatrice 2002b, 260–4.

³⁴ Mango 1995.

³⁵ *IG XII* 6.2, 1265; Kaldellis 2009, 51–2, fig. 12.

³⁶ Deligiannakis 2011.

³⁷ Kaldellis 2009, 47–53.

³⁸ Kaldellis 2009, 51–2.

³⁹ James 2005, 145–52.

Chalcedon, which modified the status of the city of Constantinople.⁴⁰ Although never quoted in this context,⁴¹ the Kyzikos examples are obvious witnesses of Leo's and Zeno's undertaking of the foundation of places of worship dedicated to Theotokos outside the capital. As such, the shaping of imperial ideology was reinforced by the discovery of pseudo-pagan oracles announcing Marian worship through the Byzantine world.

The undeniable physical nature of the Ikaria stone shows once and for all that fake oracles about the introduction of the cult of Theotokos had in effect been inscribed and placed near a place of worship. In consequence, Christians not only adopted the idea that founding a new cult should be validated by a traditional authority, but they also undertook the production of inscriptions and their narratives and the performance of the excavation and rediscovery of the oracular texts.

Apollo's dire prediction on stone shows that his prophetic power was recognized by Christians to such a degree that his cult building could immediately be accepted as a proper residence for the Mother of God.⁴² This runs counter to a commonly assumed scenario in which temples were converted only after a period of abandonment.⁴³

It should be stressed that Christian authorities appear to have chosen to build these churches of the Virgin Mary near or over temples dedicated to female deities—here namely Athena, Rhea, and Artemis. Epigraphic evidence as well as literary texts indicate that the cults of Athena Parthenos at Athens, of Rhea/Kybele at Kyzikos, and of Artemis Tauropolos at Ikaria survived at least until the fourth or even the fifth century.⁴⁴ Continuity between pagan and Christian worship was preserved. As an instrument of conversion, the oracle provided pagans with the religious sanction that would allow them to identify the Virgin Mary with their ancestral goddess.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Pentcheva 2006, 189.

⁴¹ But see Deligiannakis 2011.

⁴² On Christian adherence to pagan gods' prophetic power, see Potter 1994.

⁴³ On the various types of temple conversion, see, for example, Ward-Perkins 1999; Foschia 2000; Bayliss 2004; Hahn et al. 2008; Kaldellis 2009, 31–40.

⁴⁴ For Athens, see Kaldellis 2009, 19–23. For Kyzikos, Zosimos (2.31.2) recounts that Constantine admired Kybele's cult statue so much that he had it brought from Kyzikos to Constantinople: see Roller 1999, 334. For Ikaria, see Deligiannakis 2011.

⁴⁵ On the prefiguration of the Virgin Mary in Kybele, see Borgeaud 1996.

In addition, the creation of the false oracle goes to show that Christian authorities adopted and adapted the former role of the oracular sanctuaries in regulating cult activity, such as the introduction of new cults. At the same time, they took over the religious authority of the cities, which was henceforth underpinned by a centralized power.

The large-scale diffusion of identical copies of Apollo's pseudo-prophecy at least in Kyzikos, Ikaria, and Athens also finds a parallel in the pagan world. These inscriptions can be compared with dedications 'To the gods and goddesses according to the interpretation of the Apollo from Claros' disseminated in the empire in the second century AD.⁴⁶ The ten or so inscribed texts, reproduced exactly, were clearly issued by officials at Apollo's shrine at Claros in Ionia. Likewise, fifth-century emperors presumably took the initiative in propagating the same oracle in different places in order to support their promotion of the cult of the Theotokos. Afterwards, imperial initiatives to build Marian churches were probably taken over at the local level by ecclesiastical circles. In this respect, G. Deligiannakis has proposed that the Ikaria inscription could be linked to a 'mopping-up operation' by the bishop of Samos for the conversion of the people in the region.⁴⁷

We have already mentioned that later, during Anastasius' reign (491–518), a similar performance of an oracular discovery was again used in the debates over monophysite orthodoxy.⁴⁸ As P.F. Beatrice argues, the oracle sets moderate monophysite Christology as supported by Anastasius himself against pro-Chalcedon partisans.⁴⁹ On this occasion, the discovery in Delphi of an oracle about the future of Apollo's temple contributed to justifying the ideology of imperial policy. Given this, it is reasonable to assume that this oracle too could have actually been engraved in the sanctuary at Delphi.

In conclusion, this paper has reviewed the manner in which old inscriptions were purported to have been discovered long after they had been written, and how they contributed to the introduction of new cults and the construction of new places of worship. It is worthy

⁴⁶ See Jones 2005; Busine 2005, 184–9.

⁴⁷ Deligiannakis 2011.

⁴⁸ *Theosophy* 1.5 (ed. Beatrice) = 16 (ed. Erbse). See above, at n. 19.

⁴⁹ Beatrice 1997; Beatrice (2001) xxxvii, 10–12. For other interpretations of the Christological tendencies of the pseudo-oracle, see Daley 1995.

of note that the tangible nature of the artefacts increased the effectiveness of the divine prescriptions.

I hope to have shown that, despite lack of details about each stage in the process, earlier examples of oracular inscriptions about cult foundations can now be better understood—thanks in general to the more explicit Christian evidence for this practice, and in particular thanks to the recent discovery of the inscription justifying the introduction of the cult of the Virgin Mary on the island of Ikaria. Literary accounts (for example, those of Lucian) should now be given more credit when they relate how oracles were created, inscribed, and later discovered for the purpose of founding new cults. In this regard, scholars, previously convinced by L. Robert's seminal demonstrations of the genuine origin of some pagan oracles quoted in the *Theosophy*, should now also acknowledge the documentary value of its pseudo-epigraphical material.

In spite of the dramatic decline of inscriptions all around the Roman empire from the third century AD onwards, Christians undertook in the second half of the fifth century AD to inscribe oracles, just as they had been since the archaic period. The resumption of this old religious practice underlines their attachment to the past.

In addition, the diachronic analysis of pagan and Christian narratives allows us to understand better the common fear of novelty, especially in religious matters. In this respect, references to inscribed oracles, though mostly fake, aimed at sanctioning a suspicious change within the tradition.

We may find it paradoxical that Christians tried to legitimize their faith and religion by constantly referring to the classical past. Since the eschatological conception of time was oriented towards the future rather than towards the past, frequent Christian recourse to what happened long before seems to contradict their expectation of an imminent parousia and its subsequent eschatological events.⁵⁰

This apparent contradiction can however be explained by the fact that Greeks and Romans, among whom Christians tended to be accepted, considered anything new with great suspicion. That is precisely why one of the most severe charges repeatedly levelled at the Christians was that they were a new nation with a new religion.⁵¹

⁵⁰ See Inglebert 2001, 307–15.

⁵¹ See Pépin 1958, 466–70; Kofsky 2000, 77–8. This accusation still needed to be refuted in the fifth century AD, see Malley 1978, 239–44.

Christianity could therefore not spread in a Greco-Roman world without claiming deep-seated roots in the history of both Hebrews and Greeks.⁵² Creating an acceptable past for the new religion was an unavoidable stage in the wider Christianizing process. And with this end in view, what could be more spectacular and convincing than the miraculous discovery of a beautiful inscription?

Abbreviations

- CSHB *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae*
 FHG *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, ed. Müller
 IG *Inscriptiones Graecae*
 PG *Patrologia Graeca*
 PO *Patrologia Orientalis*
 RICIS Bricault, L. 2005. *Recueil des Inscriptions concernant les Cultes Isiaques (RICIS)*. Paris: Académie des inscriptions et belles lettres.

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⁵² See, for example, Gardner et al. 2008.

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Abercius of Hierapolis

Christianization and Social Memory in Late Antique Asia Minor

Peter Thonemann

The verse epitaph of Abercius of Hierapolis, ‘the queen of Christian inscriptions’, is one of the best known and most thoroughly studied of all early Christian monuments. Among the tiny handful of Christian inscriptions dating to the latter half of the second century AD, the epigram of Abercius holds a privileged place. Not only is it by far the longest and most explicit profession of Christian faith known to us from documentary sources of the period, the epitaph throws a remarkable light on proto-Christian language and symbolism, the early history of the Eucharist, and the development of the church in Phrygia in the late second century AD.¹

Abercius’ funerary epigram has a complex textual history. The text has long been known to students of hagiography, thanks to its incorporation in the apocryphal *Life of St Abercius*, the earliest version of which was composed by an anonymous native of Hierapolis in

¹ The bibliography on the Abercius inscription is vast; particularly valuable are the complementary studies of Dölger 1922, 454–507, and Wischmeyer 1980. Despite the doubts of Guarducci 1971, 181, Abercius himself is almost certainly to be identified with Avircius Marcellus, the dedicatee of an anonymous anti-Montanist tract dating to around AD 193: Eusebius, *HE* 5.16.3, with Wischmeyer 1980, 26–7. The name Avircius is of uncertain origin. The correct Latin orthography is certainly *Avircius*, but the spelling *Abercius* (phonetically identical in second century Anatolian Greek) is canonized in modern usage.

the late fourth century AD.² However, the epigram attracted little scholarly attention until the last decades of the nineteenth century. In November 1881, at Kilandiras in the northern Sandıklı ovası, Sir William Ramsay discovered the funerary inscription of a certain Alexander son of Antonius, native of Hierapolis, dated precisely to AD 215/16. It was swiftly recognized that Alexander's tombstone incorporated *verbatim* quotations of the first three and last three verses of the Abercius epitaph, as transmitted in the *Life of Abercius*.³ Two years later, in June 1883, on a second visit to the Sandıklı ovası in the company of J.R.S. Sterrett, Ramsay was rewarded with the spectacular discovery of two large fragments of the tombstone of Abercius itself, built into a bath-house at the hot springs near Koçhisar, the site of the ancient Hierapolis.⁴ By combining these three sources, the Koçhisar fragments, the tombstone of Alexander from Kilandiras, and the manuscript text in the *Vita Abercii*, the funerary epigram of Abercius can be reconstructed as follows:⁵

- [ἐ]κλεκτῆς πόλεως ὁ πολεῖ[της] τοῦτ' ἐποίη[σα]
 [ζών, ἴ]ν' ἔχω φανερ[ήν] σώματος ἔνθα θέσιν·
 οὐνομ' <Ἀβέρκιος ὃν ὁ> μαθητῆς ποιμένος ἀγνοῦ,
 [ὃς βόσκει προβάτων ἀγέλας ὄρεσι πεδίοις τε,]
 5 [ὀφθαλμοὺς ὃς ἔχει μεγάλους πάντη καθορώντας:]
 [οὗτος γὰρ μ' ἐδίδαξε - - γράμματα πιστά,]
 εἰς Ῥώμην [ὃς ἔπεμψεν] ἐμὲν βασιλ[ῆ]δ' ἀθροῆσαι]⁶

² The earliest extant recension of the *Vita Abercii* was edited by Nissen 1912, 3–55. An early resumé of this version was published by Halkin 1963, 23–9, the only original aspect of which is its curious identification of the Παῦλος of the Abercius inscription with Paul of Samosata. The two later paraphrases of the *Life* edited by Nissen 1912, 57–123, need not concern us.

³ Ramsay 1882a, 518–20. The imitation of the Abercius epigram was instantly and independently recognized by L. Duchesne and G.B. de Rossi: De Rossi 1882.

⁴ Reported by Reinach 1883, 194–5; published by Ramsay 1883, 424–8. The two fragments were presented to Pope Leo XIII in 1892, and are currently in the Vatican Museum. Ramsay always used the form Hieropolis for Abercius' native city; see Dupont-Sommer and Robert 1964, 20–2.

⁵ I reproduce the text of Wischmeyer 1980, 24–6 (with one exception: see next note), which helpfully distinguishes those parts of the epigram preserved in the Alexander inscription (lines 1–3, 20–2) and the surviving fragments of the Abercius inscription (lines 7–15) from the parts only known from the *Vita* (in square brackets).

⁶ βασιλ[ῆ]δ' ἀθροῆσαι Thonemann; βασιλ[ῆ]δ' ἀναθροῆσαι Wischmeyer; βασιλείαν ἀθροῆσαι *Vita*. I find Wischmeyer's argument (37–8) that we have here a synonym for Ῥώμην ('zu bestehen die Hauptstadt') entirely convincing. However, in Anatolian verse-inscriptions the usual form of the adjective in this metrical position is not βασιλῆς but βασιληῖς: TAM V, 1, 208, Ῥωμαίων ἰκόμην δάπεδον βασιληῖδος αὐλάς;

- καὶ βασιλίσσ[αν ἰδεῖν χρυσό]στολον χρυ[σοπέδιλον.]
 λαὸν δ'εἶδον ἐ[κεί] λαμπράν] σφραγεῖδαν ἐ[χοντα],
 10 καὶ Συρίης πέ[δον εἶδα] καὶ ἄστυα πάν[τα, Νισίβιν]
 Εὐφράτην διαβ[ί]ας· πάν]τη δ' ἔσχον συνρ[μαίμους,]
 Παῦλον ἔχων ἐπ' ὅ[χ]ω· Πίστις π[άντη] δὲ προήγε]
 καὶ παρέθηκε [τροφήν] πάντη ἰχθύν ἀ[πὸ] πηγῆς]
 15 πανμεγέθη καθ[αρόν, οὐ] ἐδράξατο παρθένος ἀγνή,]
 καὶ τοῦτον ἐπέ[δωκε φι]λίρις ἐσθ[ε]ίν δια παντός,]
 [οἶνον χρηστὸν ἔχουσα, κέρασμα διδοῦσα μετ' ἄρτου.]
 [ταῦτα παρεστὼς εἶπον Ἀβέρκιος ὧδε γραφήναι,]
 [ἐβδομηκοστὸν ἔτος καὶ δεύτερον ἦγον ἀληθῶς.]
 [ταὐθ' ὁ νοῶν εὐξαιτο ὑπὲρ Ἀβερκίου πᾶς ὁ συνωδός.]
 20 οὐ μέντοι τύμβῳ τις ἐμῷ ἑτερόν τινα θήσει.
 εἰ δ' οὖν, Ῥωμαίων ταμείῳ θήσε[ι] δισχέιλια [χ]ρῦσα
 καὶ χρηστῇ πατρίδι Ἱεροπόλει χεῖλια χρυσά.

Citizen of a chosen city, I constructed this tomb while still living, in order that I might have here a splendid resting-place for my body. My name is Abercius, disciple of the holy shepherd, who pastures his flocks of sheep on the mountains and plains, (5) and whose eyes are great and all-seeing. It was he who taught me trustworthy knowledge, and it was he who sent me to Rome, to see the queen of cities, and to see a Queen with golden robes and golden shoes. And I saw there a people with a shining seal; (10) I saw, too, the plain of Syria and all its cities, even Nisibis, beyond the Euphrates. I found brothers everywhere, with Paul beside me on my wagon. Everywhere Faith led the way; everywhere it nourished me with the fish from the spring, great and pure, caught by a holy maiden. (15) Everywhere she gave the fish to her dear ones to eat, with good wine, handing it to us mixed with bread. I, Abercius, stood by and dictated this, having reached my seventy-second year in all truth. Let all who understand and approve these words pray for Abercius. (20) No one shall bury another in my grave; if he does, he shall pay 2000 *denarii* in gold to the Roman fisc and 1000 *denarii* in gold to my good homeland of Hierapolis.

As the author of the *Life of Abercius* rightly says, the epigram is so written as to be 'comprehensible and useful to those worthy of Christ,

I.Milet 343, βασιληῖδα μορφήν; I.Hadrianoi 61, Ῥώμης βασιληῖδος, and compare Robert, OMS V, 596–7 (Didyma oracles). Unfortunately, Ramsay's claim (1897, 725) to have read an eta after the lambda in this line is not to be relied on: Calder 1939.

but obscure to those without faith'.⁷ Almost every phrase of the epigram is so chosen as to carry symbolic meaning for a Christian reader: the 'holy shepherd', the 'people with a shining seal', the 'fish from the spring'.

In the deluge of modern scholarship on Abercius of Hierapolis, the *Life of St Abercius* has attracted little attention in its own right. Aside from its obvious practical importance as a source for the missing parts of the inscription, the *Life* has generally been dismissed as a fantastic elaboration on the Abercius epitaph, with no independent value as a source for the life and career of the historical Abercius.⁸ Apart from anything else, two substantial parts of the *Life* (chapters 12–16, 24–30) can be shown to be a close imitation of a lost *Acts of Peter*, probably dating to the late third century AD.⁹ As it happens, I agree with this assessment, so far as it goes: it seems to me highly unlikely that the author of the *Life* possessed any authentic sources for Abercius' career other than his tombstone. In the course of the first of the two great journeys described in Abercius' funerary epigram, Abercius claims to have seen at Rome 'a Queen (*basilissa*) with golden robes and golden shoes'. Beyond doubt the phrase is a metaphorical description of the ecumenical Christian church. However, the author of the *Life* understood the noun *basilissa* in its literal sense of 'queen', that is to say, the emperor's wife.¹⁰ *hinc illae lacrimae*. The reader of the *Life* is thus offered a lengthy account of a visit to the court of the emperor Marcus Aurelius, an exorcism of the emperor's daughter Lucilla, and a sequence of gifts lavished on Abercius by the empress Faustina. None of this, one need hardly say, has the slightest factual basis.

⁷ τοῖς μὲν ἁγίοις τοῦ Χριστοῦ νοούμενον καὶ ὠφέλιμον, τοῖς δὲ ἀπίστοις μὴ γνωσκόμενον: *Vita Abercii* 76. The most detailed study of the symbolism of the Abercius inscription remains Dölger 1922, 454–507.

⁸ Lightfoot 1885, I 476–85 (still valuable); Halkin 1963, 23 ('ce n'est qu'un roman hagiographique: son auteur ne disposait, en dehors de l'inscription, d'aucune autre source documentaire'); Mango 1984, 57.

⁹ Baldwin 2005, 197–241.

¹⁰ βασίλισσα = the church: Dölger 1922, 473–6; Guarducci 1971, 182–5. τῆς βασιλίσσης Φαυστίνης: *Vita Abercii* 46; cf. 59–66, *passim*. In ch. 59 we are told that Marcus Aurelius was not in Rome at the time of Abercius' visit; the author of the *Life* has clearly noted the absence of a βασιλεύς from the list of people and places seen by the historical Abercius.

But of course this is only one way of approaching the text of the *Life*. As a source for the social history of inner Anatolia in the late fourth century AD, and in particular for the ways in which the Christians of Late Antique Asia Minor understood their pagan past, the *Life of Abercius* is a text of quite extraordinary importance and interest.

Since to my knowledge the *Life* has never been translated into any modern language, a brief summary of its contents may be of use.

(1) In the days when St Abercius was bishop of the city of Hierapolis, the emperors Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus promulgated an edict throughout the entire Roman empire that public sacrifices and libations were to be offered to the gods. The *hegemon* of Phrygia Salutaris, Publius Dolabella, duly passed on the instructions to all the cities in his province, and the *boule* and *demos* of Hierapolis complied.

(2–6) In the dead of night, the bishop Abercius, impelled by a dream, took the largest wooden staff he could carry, and went to the temple of Apollo, where most of the sacrifices were taking place. Breaking into the temple, he struck down the cult statue of Apollo, followed by the statues of Heracles, Artemis, Aphrodite, and the other gods. Before dawn, the temple-personnel reported Abercius' actions to the leading men of the *boule*. An angry mob assembled, and marched on Abercius' house with firebrands, determined to burn it to the ground and kill the bishop.

(7–19) Abercius reassured his disciples, and took them from his house to the agora, where he sat down at the centre of the city at a spot called Phrougin, where he continued preaching. The mob was on the point of tearing the bishop apart, when the situation was saved by the fortuitous appearance of three epileptics, whom Abercius promptly healed. The entire crowd professed their desire to convert to Christianity, and the following day no fewer than 500 Hieropolitans presented themselves for baptism. Over the subsequent days and weeks Abercius greeted a steady stream of pilgrims, not only from Greater Phrygia, but also from the neighbouring provinces of Asia, Lydia, and Caria.

(20–30) A few days later, a wealthy blind woman came to hear Abercius preaching. This was Phrygella, mother of Euxeinianus Pollio, 'the greatest man in the city, and possessing great influence, since he was respected and highly honoured by the emperor, to the extent that emperors used frequently to write to him concerning significant matters'.¹¹ On professing her Christian faith, Phrygella is promptly healed;

¹¹ Εὐξείνιανου τοῦ Πολλίωνος τοῦ μεγίστου ὄντος ἐν τῇ πόλει καὶ δυναστεύοντος ὡς παρὰ τοῦ αὐτοκράτορος γνωρίμου καὶ τιμωτάτου ὄντος, ὥστε διαφόρως περὶ ἀναγκαίων πραγμάτων γράφειν αὐτῷ τοὺς βασιλεῖς: *Vita Abercii* 20.

this particular act wins Abercius great popularity with the urban masses, on account of their goodwill towards Euxeinianus. Three more old women also have their sight restored to them.

(31–8) Euxeinianus himself comes to visit Abercius at home one night, and the two men engage in a lengthy debate on divine justice and free-will.

(39–40) Abercius and his companions make a circuit of the villages and farms in the immediate vicinity of Hierapolis. The health of the villagers was in a lamentable state, due to the lack of a bath-house. Coming to a place called Agros, near one of the affluents of the river Cludrus, Abercius knelt and prayed for the creation of a thermal spring; with a clap of thunder a hot-water spring burst out of the ground at the very spot where he had been kneeling. The locals are then instructed to build deep pools which might serve as a bathing-place.

(41–3) The devil appears to Abercius in the form of a beautiful woman. After briefly taking possession of one of Abercius' young companions, the devil disappears, telling Abercius that he will see him in Rome.

(44–5) The devil flies to Rome and occupies the daughter of Marcus Aurelius, Lucilla, then sixteen years of age, driving her into a frenzy. Lucilla was then engaged to be married to Marcus' co-emperor, Lucius Verus, whom Marcus had recently sent to the east to fight the Parthians. It had been agreed that at a fixed date Marcus and Lucilla would meet Verus at Ephesos, to celebrate the marriage in the temple of Artemis. This being impossible, Marcus writes to Verus to the effect that the Germans had crossed the Rhone and were sacking Roman cities and villages, and hence it was impossible for him to travel east for the time being; the marriage would have to wait until next year. The message reached Verus when he was already at sea, sailing for Ephesos; in some anger, he returned to Antioch for the winter.

(46–9) Marcus and Faustina employ doctors from all over Italy, to no avail. Finally the devil cries out that he will never leave Lucilla until Marcus summons Abercius, the bishop of Hierapolis in Lesser Phrygia, to Rome. Marcus consults the prefect (ἐπαρχος) Cornelianus, who reminds the emperor that he is in regular correspondence with Euxeinianus Pollio of Hierapolis. The emperor promptly writes a letter to Euxeinianus summoning Abercius to Rome, and orders two of his *agentes in rebus* (μαγιστρικοί), Valerius and Bassianus, to convey it to Hierapolis.

(50–1) Valerius and Bassianus sail from Italy to Byzantium, whence they cross the gulf to Nicomedia, and after a two days' journey arrive at

Synnada, metropolis of Lesser Phrygia. Here they deliver the letter of the eparch Cornelianus to the *hegemon* Spinther (Dolabella having left office by this point). Obtaining guides from the governor, they ride on to Hierapolis, arriving later the same day.

(52–8) The *magistrianoi* arrive at Hierapolis, and persuade Abercius to travel to Rome. They agree to meet Abercius at Portus in forty days' time. Valerius and Bassianus return *via* Byzantium; Abercius travels by land to Attalia in Pamphylia, whence he catches a ship bound for Rome. They meet, as agreed, at Portus, and the *magistrianoi* bring Abercius to the eparch Cornelianus at Rome.

(59–66) Marcus turns out to be away from the city, fighting the Germans in the north, who have taken the opportunity of Verus' absence in the east to cross the Rhine and pillage Roman territory. On being introduced to Lucilla by her mother Faustina, Abercius successfully expels the demon, and in return for his trouble in travelling to Rome, he orders the demon to pick up a nearby marble altar, carry it to Hierapolis, and set it up by the south gate of the city. In return for Abercius' services, Faustina promises to send an architect to build a bath-house over Abercius' hot springs at Agros, and to establish a grain-dole (*frumentatio*) of 3000 *modioi* of grain for the beggars of Hierapolis. Faustina's bath-house was constructed, and the site (previously called 'Agros by the river') was renamed 'Agros of the hot springs'; the *frumentatio* continued until the time of Julian the Apostate, who abolished it out of hatred of the Christians.

(67–72) Abercius travels to the Near East, where he visits the cities of Syria (then suffering from the Marcionite schism) and Mesopotamia. Eventually he travels back to Synnada, via the two Cilicias, Lycaonia, and Pisidia. From Synnada, he takes a dusty road back to Hierapolis through the village of Aulon, where the antisocial behaviour of the local peasants impels him to lay a permanent blight on their crops.

(73–80) Having returned to Hierapolis, Abercius resumes his pastoral duties. One day, finding himself thirsty on a high mountain opposite the city of Lysias, the saint knelt and prayed for water; a spring of pure water burst out of the earth, and the spot was thereafter known as Gonyklisia ('Kneeling-spot'). Not long after, the saint realized that his death was approaching. He built himself a tomb, on which he set up the altar which the demon had carried from Rome, and inscribed on it a riddling epigram, intended to be understood only by those worthy of Christ. The *Life* ends with a full quotation of the epigram on the tombstone, and a short account of the saint's death.

On internal evidence, the most likely date for the composition of the earliest version of the *Life* is the later fourth century AD; at least, there is nothing which requires a date after AD 400. The *Life* frequently assumes the administrative division of Phrygia into *Pacatiana* (*Prima, Maior*) and *Salutaris* (*Secunda, Minor*), which does not antedate the provincial reforms of Diocletian.¹² The two *agentes in rebus* (μαγιστριανοί, βερηδάριοι), sent to deliver Marcus' letter to Euxeinianus Pollio, hold an office which did not exist before AD 326.¹³ Most explicitly, Faustina's *frumentatio* at Hierapolis is said in chapter 66 to have continued 'until the time of Julian the Apostate' (AD 363).

However, certain elements in the *Life* have long been recognized to show a curiously precise knowledge of events and persons of the second century AD.¹⁴ The wedding of Lucius Verus and Lucilla is accurately situated at Ephesos, although Lucilla is made at least two years older than she in fact was.¹⁵ It has been suggested that the edict of Marcus and Verus prescribing sacrifices throughout the empire, with which the *Life* opens, may have some historical basis in the lavish public sacrifices performed during the great plague in AD 167, although independent evidence is hardly overwhelming.¹⁶ One modern scholar has gone so far as to infer the existence of a lost contemporary *Life of Abercius* dating to the late second century AD, which served as the basis for the extant fourth-century

¹² Phrygia Pacatiana and Salutaris: Belke and Mersich 1990, 48–9; Mitchell 1993, II 161.

¹³ Delmaire 1995, 97–118. The *Life* uses the terms μαγιστριανοί (τῶν θείων δόφικίων) and βερηδάριοι as synonyms: Clauss 1980, 24. Giardina 2002, 395–9, argues (indecisively) that the term *magistriani* implies a fifth-century date. Ramsay 1882b, 345–7, ingeniously argued that the couriers' route to Hierapolis, along a fast imperial post-road running south-east across the fringe of the Anatolian plateau from Byzantium to Synnada, assumes the existence of Constantinople; in earlier periods, couriers from the west would have travelled inland to Phrygia via Ephesos and the Maeander valley. However, the Byzantium–Synnada–Philomelium road seems already to have been the major courier route across Anatolia in the second and third centuries: Mitchell 1993, I 129–32. See further Avramea 2002, 58–64, 74–7.

¹⁴ For methodology, compare Robert 1994, 6–7, 96–8 (anticipated in most particulars by Cadoux 1938, 172, 296 n.2, 373–401).

¹⁵ *Vita Abercii* 45; cf. *HA Verus* 7.7. The marriage ought to date to 163, when Lucilla was fourteen years old: Halfmann 1986, 210–12.

¹⁶ Dismissed as ahistorical by Barnes 1968, 39 (parody of the tax-edict of Luke 2:1); defended by Keresztes 1968, 327–32, reprised in *ANRW* II, 23, 1, 300–1.

recension.¹⁷ The case for an 'early' first recension ought not to be overstated. Aside from the numerous institutional anachronisms (which could easily have been introduced by a later redactor), the extant narrative is founded on a major chronological inconsistency. The central episode of the *Life* is Abercius' successful exorcism of the sixteen-year-old Lucilla (born in 149 or 150), for which he and his home city are rewarded by the empress Faustina.¹⁸ However, the letter in which Marcus summons Abercius to Rome contains a reference to the great Smyrna earthquake of 177, by which point Lucilla was in her late twenties, and Faustina was dead.¹⁹ This inconsistency, which would have been unthinkable for a second-century author, undermines the entire structure of the *Life*. The whole architecture of the text clearly dates many generations after the events described. But the same need not be true of the individual architectural members. If the redactor could use one contemporary document (the tombstone of Abercius) at first hand, he could have used others.

As already indicated, the *Life* incorporates the full text of a letter of Marcus Aurelius to a certain Euxeinianus Pollio of Hierapolis. This extraordinary document deserves to be quoted in full. The text falls naturally into two parts, reflected in the chapter numeration (chapters 48 and 49).

(48) Αὐτοκράτωρ Καίσαρ Μάρκος Αὐρήλιος Ἀντωνίνος Σεβαστὸς
Γερμανικὸς Σαρματικὸς Εὐξείνιανῳ Πολλίῳ χαίρειν. ἔργῳ
πειραθέντες τῆς ἀγχινοίας περὶ ὧν κατ' ἐπιτροπὴν ἡμετέραν ἔναγχος
διεπράξω κατὰ τὴν Σμυρνέων πόλιν ὡς ἐπικουφίσαι τοῖς ἐκέϊσε οἰκοῦσιν

¹⁷ Merkelbach 1997, 125: 'a precious piece of evidence for the position of Christianity in the age of the emperor Marcus'. See the pertinent criticisms of Wirbelauer 2002, 375–6.

¹⁸ The *Martyrium S. Tryphonis* (Franchi de' Cavalieri 1908, 45–74) begins with a curious description of how the daughter of the emperor Gordian was possessed by a demon, who repeatedly cried out the name of Tryphon the goose-herd; after a lengthy search, Tryphon was eventually found in a village near Phrygian Apamea, and brought to Rome to exorcize the girl. The story makes a curious preface to the main narrative of the saint's martyrdom; one wonders whether the Phrygian author of the *Martyrium Tryphonis* was reworking the better-known Hieropolitan story of Abercius and Lucilla.

¹⁹ The Smyrna earthquake of 165 referred to in RAC V s.v. Erdbeben, col. 1105, derives from a misunderstanding of the sources (Zonaras and Syncellus), who are clearly referring to the earthquake of 177. For the date (177 not 178), Behr 1968, 112 n. 68.

τὴν συμβάσαν αὐτοῖς συμφορὰν ἐκ τοῦ κλόνου τῆς γῆς τὴν σὴν ἀγρυπνίαν καὶ ἐπιμέλειαν ἐθαυμάσαμεν, μάλιστα καὶ Καικιλίου τοῦ ἡμετέρου ἐπιτρόπου σαφῶς ἀπαγγείλαντος ἡμῖν τὰ περὶ τούτου, δι' οὗ καὶ τὴν ἀναφορὰν τῶν ἐκείσε ἐποπτευθέντων παρὰ σου ἀπέστειλας ἡμῖν, δι' ὃ καὶ συνομολογοῦμεν ὑπὲρ τούτου τὰ μέγιστα σοι εὐχαριστεῖν.

Imperator Caesar Marcus Aurelius Antoninus Augustus Germanicus Sarmaticus, to Euxeinianus Pollio, greetings. Having practical experience of the sagacity with which you recently acted on our behalf at the city of Smyrna, so as to lighten for the city's inhabitants the disaster which had befallen them through the earthquake, we marvelled at your vigilance and care, especially when our *procurator* Caecilius, through whom you had sent us the report of the things which you had seen at Smyrna, provided us with a clear report of the circumstances. Because of this, we acknowledge the greatest possible debt of gratitude to you.

(49) ἐπὶ δὲ τοῦ παρόντος ἐγνώσθη ἡμῖν Ἀβέρκιον ἐπίσκοπον τῆς τῶν Χριστιανῶν θρησκείας τῆς κατὰ σέ 'Ιεραπολιτῶν πόλεως, ἄνδρα θεοσεβῆ ὑπάρχοντα ὡς καὶ δαιμόνια ἀπελαύνειν καὶ ἄλλας ἰάσεις ποιεῖν, τούτου κατὰ τὸ ἀναγκαῖον χρήζοντες κελεύομεν τῇ σῇ στερρότητι προτρέψαι τὸν ἄνδρα γενέσθαι παρ' ἡμῖν. διὰ γὰρ ταύτην τὴν αἰτίαν καὶ Οὐαλέριον καὶ Βασιανὸν μαγιστριανοὺς τῶν θείων ἡμῶν ὀφφικίων ἐστείλαμεν ὀφείλοντας μετὰ πάσης τιμῆς τὸν ἄνδρα διασῶσαι. πάντως οὖν τοῦτο πράξεις εἰδὼς ὅτι καὶ ὑπὲρ τούτου οὐ μετρίαν σοι καθομολογήσομεν χάριν. ἔρρωσο, Εὐξείνιανὲ ἡμέτερε.

As to the present time, a certain Abercius, bishop of the Christian faith in your city of Hierapolis, has become known to us, a pious man with the ability both to drive out demons and perform other acts of healing. Since we require this man with the greatest urgency, we order Your Fortitude to instruct the man to attend us. For this reason we have also sent to you Valerius and Basianus, *magistriani sacrorum officiorum*, with instructions to bring the man safely at any cost. At all events, you will perform this duty in the knowledge that we shall owe you no small debt of gratitude on this account. Farewell, our Euxeinianus.

In general terms, there is nothing improbable about an imperial *epistula* being directed to a provincial civic notable. Imperial *epistulae* addressed to individuals, both Roman magistrates and private citizens, were regularly inscribed on stone in the Greek East. The formal structure of Marcus' letter finds close parallels in genuine imperial documents of the high imperial period. The opening *inscriptio* (Εὐξείνιανῶ Πολλίῳνι χαίρειν) and the concluding *salutatio* (ἔρρωσο, Εὐξείνιανὲ ἡμέτερε) precisely reflect the standard form of second- and third-century imperial *epistulae*. The usual form of the *inscriptio*

employs the addressee's name alone, without further titles.²⁰ When an adjective was employed in this context, the most common epithet was *τιμιώτατος* (=Lat. *carissimus*). An *epistula* of Caracalla to the city of Philadelphia in Lydia (AD 214) begins with the *inscriptio* *Αὐρηλίῳ [Μ... ..]ωι τῷ τιμιωτάτῳ χαίρειν*, and concludes with the *salutatio* *ἔρρωσο, Μ[... ..]ε, τιμιώτατέ μοι καὶ φίλτατε*.²¹ Similarly, in the bilingual *epistula* of Valerian to Julius Apellas of Smyrna (AD 258), the *inscriptio* reads *Τουλίῳ Ἀπελλᾷ ἰδίῳ χαίρειν*; the Latin version of the concluding *salutatio* reads *uale Apel<l>a carissime nobis*, from which the Greek *salutatio* may be restored as *ἔρρωσο Ἀπελλᾷ [τιμιώτατε ἡμῖν]*.²² The term *ἡμέτερος*, too, occasionally appears in this context, as in a letter of Valerian to Philadelphia, which concludes with the *salutatio* *εὐτυχεῖτε, Φιλαδελεφεῖς ἡμέτεροι*, and in a letter of Hadrian to the Epicurean philosopher Heliodorus at Athens (AD 125), where Heliodorus appears to be addressed in the *inscriptio* as *[τῷ ἡμετέρῳ]ρωι Ἡλιοδώρῳ*.²³

Still more striking is Marcus' titulature at the head of the epistle, in which he holds the titles *Germanicus* and *Sarmaticus*. This titulature is correct only for the years 175–8; at some point in 178, with the renewed military crisis on the Danube, the titles were quietly dropped. The first part of the letter thanks Pollio for his assistance in providing relief for the inhabitants of Smyrna after the catastrophic earthquake of AD 177.²⁴ Marcus' titulature, therefore, perfectly matches the supposed date of the letter. It is hard to regard this as coincidental.

Four Roman officials are associated with Marcus' epistle. First, in chapter 47, we are told that Marcus' letter is written on the instigation

²⁰ Thus, for example, OGIS 475 (Aizani, Nero), *Μηνοφίλῳ χαίρειν*; Oliver 1989, no. 170 (Ephesos, AD 163/4: Marcus and Verus), *Ὀὐλίῳ Εὐρυκλεῖ χαίρειν*; Reynolds 1982, no. 22 (Aphrodisias, Gordian III), *Αὐρηλίῳ Επαφρᾷ χαίρειν*.

²¹ TAM V, 3, 1420. In ch. 20, Euxeinianus Pollio is described as *παρὰ τοῦ αὐτοκράτορος . . . τιμιωτάτου*; it is possible that the redactor found the adjective in the *salutatio* of Marcus' genuine epistle to Pollio (see further below).

²² *I.Smyrna* 604; new edition by Feissel 2004. For the use of *ἴδιος*, compare the letter of an Antonine emperor to the proconsul Claudius Eteoneus, Milner 1998, no. 49 (*Κλ. Ἐτεωνεῖ τῷ ἰδίῳ χαίρειν*).

²³ Philadelphia: TAM V, 3, 1421. Athens: Follet 1994, line 8. The alternative restoration of van Bremen 2005 (on which see BE 2007, 231) seems to me far less plausible.

²⁴ One might perhaps compare the letter of the proconsul Fl. Maximillianus to the asiarch Domitius Rufus (AD 253/4), which begins with an enumeration of Rufus' various moral qualities: Nollé 1982, 59–86.

of 'the eparch Cornelianus'. The vague title of eparch ('prefect') is presumably a stop-gap by the author of the *Life*. Significantly, a man by the name of Cornelianus is known to have held the office of *ab epistulis Graecis* in the last years of Marcus' reign (AD 177–80), the precise date of Marcus' (Greek) letter to Pollio.²⁵ It is likely enough that Cornelianus' name could have appeared in a genuine imperial epistle; men with the office of *ab epistulis Graecis* are named as members of the emperor's *consilium* in letters of Commodus to Athens and Caracalla to Ephesos.²⁶ Second, Pollio's actions at Smyrna are said to have been reported to Marcus by 'Caecilius, our procurator'. A *procurator Augusti* by the name of Caecilius is attested on the Ionian coast at precisely this period (latter half of second century AD): a certain M. Caecilius Numa, who was responsible for the construction of the heavily engineered highway through the mountains between Ephesos and Magnesia, known as the *Trachon*.²⁷ Third (and fourth), the two *agentes in rebus* instructed to deliver the letter, Valerius and Bassianus, collectively share a name with a consul of the last quarter of the second century AD, Valerius Bassianus, executed late in the reign of Commodus.²⁸ It is conceivable that this consul's name could have appeared in the original letter, and that his division into two individuals is the result of a misunderstanding by the redactor of the *Life*.²⁹

Finally, we come to Marcus' correspondent, Euxeinianus Pollio. There is no suggestion in the letter that Pollio is a Roman magistrate. Rather, the man is a member of the native provincial elite, of sufficient wealth and prestige to have assisted one of the largest cities of Asia at a time of crisis. The civic bronze coinage of Hierapolis is not particularly abundant. Only a single magistrate's name appears on the

²⁵ The *rapprochement* is due to Merkelbach 1997, 135–6. For the date of Cornelianus' tenure of the office *ab epistulis Graecis*, see Bowersock 1969, 54–5; for his identity, Eck 1992, 239–41.

²⁶ Oliver 1989, no. 209 (Aurelius Larichus, AD 186/7); no. 244 (Aelius Antipater, AD 201).

²⁷ Καικιλίου τοῦ ἡμετέρου ἐπιτρόπου: *Vita Abercii* 48. The identification proposed by Merkelbach 1997, 136 (Caelius Felix: *PIR*² C 131) has nothing to recommend it; for that adopted here, see Franco 2005, 503. M. Caecilius Numa: *I.Ephesos* 3157, with Robert and Robert 1983, 30–2; *I.Ephesos* 1799. His office cannot be dated precisely, but ought to fall in the latter half of the second century.

²⁸ *HA Commodus* 7.7, with Merkelbach 1997, 136.

²⁹ Compare the successive deformations of a consular date discussed by Delehay 1955, 74.



Fig. 12.1. a–b: Hierapolis, Faustina II. Cybele enthroned with patera. Claudius Pollio, asiarch (BM 1921–4–12–96).



Fig. 12.2. MAMA XI 1955/ 97: Acmonia (Ahat). Partial squeeze (Oxford).

imperial bronze: a certain Claudius Pollio, asiarch, who minted coins with the effigies of Marcus Aurelius, Lucius Verus, and Faustina

(Fig. 12.1).³⁰ This Claudius Pollio, the only Hieropolitan known to have financed a prestigious issue of bronze coinage for his home-city, was clearly a man of means. Presumably all five of his types were minted on a single occasion, to commemorate Pollio's asiarchate, which ought thus to fall between AD 161 and 169.³¹ Claudius Pollio's tenure of the asiarchate shows that he was a man of provincial stature and corresponding wealth, without which the *Life's* Euxeinianus Pollio could hardly have intervened with such munificence at Smyrna in 177. Both on grounds of chronology and of social standing, identification of the two figures, the local dynast Euxeinianus Pollio of the *Life*, and the Hieropolitan mint-magistrate Claudius Pollio, is highly tempting.³²

Some confirmation of this hypothesis is now provided by an unpublished inscription from nearby Acmonia (modern Ahat), copied by Michael Ballance in 1955.³³

Ahat

In the wall of the school garden, by the main gate. Whitish marble block re-used as a water-pipe. Dowel-hole in top, bored through from left to right. Broken below, sunk in concrete right, chipped above. (Ballance archive, 1955/97.)

Ht. 0.53 broken; width 0.40; thickness 0.39; letters 0.017–0.022. Partial squeeze (left hand side only) in Oxford (Fig. 12.2).

Date: II AD (nomenclature; letter forms).

ἀγαθῇ τ[ύχῃ]
ἡ βουλὴ καὶ ὁ [δῆμος]
ἐτείμυσαν Κυ[ντον]

With good fortune.
The council and the [people]
honoured Qu[intus]

³⁰ Five issues are known to me. The types for Marcus and Verus carry the reverse legend ἐπιμεληθέντος Κλ. Παλλίωνος ἀσιάρχου Ἱεροπολεϊτῶν; the other types have an abbreviated version. (1) SNG Von Aulock 8386 (M. Aurelius/Zeus); (2) BMC Phrygia 267, 14; Imhoof-Blumer, KM I 244, 4 (L. Verus/Zeus); (3) BMC Phrygia 268, 15; BM 1921–4–12–96 (here, Fig. 12.1); Coll. Wadd. 6189; KM I 244, 3 (Faustina II/Cybele); (4) BMC Phrygia 265, 1; Coll. Wadd. 6186; KM I 244, 1; Münzen u. Medaillen Deutschland Auction 16 (2005) 515 (Herakles/bucranium with crescent moon and stars); (5) BMC Phrygia 265, 4; Coll. Wadd. 6187; KM I 244, 2 (Demos/Men).

³¹ Campanile 1994, 90. On the asiarchate, see in particular Rossner 1974; Weiss 2002.

³² The link with the Hieropolitan mint-magistrate is noted already by Franco 2005, 500–3.

³³ The inscriptions collected in inland Asia Minor by Michael Ballance and Sir William Calder in 1954–6 are currently being prepared for publication as *Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua XI*: see <http://mama.csad.ox.ac.uk>.

	Κλαύδιον Πωλίω[α]	Claudius Pollio,
5	Τιβερίου Κλα[υδ]ίου Εὐ- ξένου υἱόν, [τ]ὸν ἀνδ[ρι]- άντα στησάντ[ων] ἐκ τῶ[ν] ιδίω[ν] Ζηνοδότ[ο]υ καὶ [Ῥ]ο- ρέστου τῶν Ὀρέσ[του]	son of Tiberius Cla[ud]ius Euxenos; the statue was set up from their own funds by Zenodotos and Orestes, the sons of Orestes . . .
10	[. . . c.6 . . .] . . ἀϋτόν . [- -]	
	

The full name and patronym given here (Q. Claudius Pollio, son of Ti. Claudius Euxenos) provides the missing link between the Claudius Pollio of the Hierapolitan coinage and the Euxeinianus Pollio of the *Life*. The form Euxeinianus is simply a patronymic adjective or *signum* representing ‘son of Euxe(i)nos’, a common onomastic phenomenon in Roman Asia Minor.³⁴ The name Euxenos is a sufficiently rare one that identification of the two individuals seems absolutely certain.³⁵

The consequences of the preceding analysis for the historical value of Marcus’ *epistula* are clear enough. That the fourth-century redactor of the *Life* could have correctly identified Marcus’ ephemeral titulature in the year of the Smyrna earthquake, despite showing himself unaware which members of Marcus’ family were alive at this point, is vanishingly unlikely. That he could have accidentally hit upon the names of all the historical figures associated with the letter—the *ab epistulis Graecis* Cornelianus, the Hieropolitan magnate Euxeinianus Pollio, the procurator Caecilius, and perhaps the consul Valerius Bassianus—is simply unimaginable. I conclude that the letter preserved in the *Life* is an interpolated version of a genuine imperial *epistula* of AD 177 or 178, inscribed on stone, and still visible at Hierapolis in the late fourth century AD.

Distinguishing the original parts of Marcus’ letter from those fabricated by the fourth-century redactor is not especially difficult.

³⁴ Lambertz 1914, 149–51. In Phrygia, compare, for example, Τιβέριος Κλαύδιος Τιβερίου Κλαυδίου Μιθριδάτου υἱὸς Κυρεῖνα Πείσων Μιθριδατιανός (‘Ti. Claudius Piso, son of Ti. Claudius Mithridates, of the tribe Quirina, also known as Mithridatianus’), a civic notable of nearby Apamea–Celaenae, and a near-contemporary of Pollio: *MAMA* VI 180; *IGR* IV 790.

³⁵ The name was, however, certainly current in the plain of Sandıklı during the second century AD: *SEG* 15, 810 (from Eumeneia): Πατροκλῆς Πατροκλέους τοῦ Εὐξένο[υ] π[ρ]ό[φ]η[το]ς Εὐκαρπεύς; at nearby Sebaste, Ramsay 1897, no. 472.

The first part of the epistle (chapter 48), concerning Pollio's benefactions at Smyrna, contains no obvious anachronisms in either content or style; the same is true, as we have seen, of the closing *salutatio*. By contrast, the second half of the epistle (chapter 49), in which Pollio is urged to send his Christian wonder-worker to Rome, contains several glaring anachronisms. As we have seen, the imperial couriers would not have been called *magistrianoi* until the reign of Constantine. Equally telling is the title *τῇ σῇ στερρότητι* ('your fortitude') as applied to Pollio in chapter 49, since the use of abstract nouns as a mode of address does not appear until the late third century, and does not become standard until the fourth.³⁶ The entire second half of the letter (with the exception of the *salutatio*) is a fabrication of the fourth century AD, stitched on to a genuine second-century imperial epistle in order to explain the visit to Rome attested in Abercius' epitaph.

In Marcus' letter to Euxeinianus, we are dealing with a genuine second-century monument reinterpreted by the author of the *Life* as part of the biography of Abercius. It is worth considering whether we can identify any other second-century 'sources' of this kind. One's attention is immediately attracted by the supposed donation of the baths at Agros Thermôn by the empress Faustina, on the site of a hot spring miraculously brought forth by the prayers of Abercius. These hot springs are not apocryphal; indeed, they are still exploited today. The site of Agros Thermôn, a little way to the south of Hierapolis, is now occupied by a profitable health spa, the Hüdai Kaplıcası.³⁷ The redactor was clearly an inhabitant of Hierapolis; if Faustina did indeed dedicate a bath-house at Agros Thermôn, the dedicatory inscription could perfectly well still have been visible in the later fourth century AD.³⁸ Of course, as with the *epistula* of Marcus to Euxeinianus Pollio, there is not the least reason to connect this bath-house with Abercius or his visit to Rome. The entire story of the miraculous spring brought forth by the prayers of Abercius, and

³⁶ Zilliacus 1949, 39–50; for the title *στερρότης*, *ib.* 74–5, and see, for example, Eusebius, *HE* 10.6.1 (Constantine to Caecilian, bishop of Carthage); Athanasius, *Apologia contra Arianos* 68.1 (Constantine to Athanasius).

³⁷ *Vita Abercii*, chapters 39–40, 65–6; Belke and Mersich 1990, 172–3, *s.v.* Agros Thermôn. The modern spa is 4km south-south-west of Koçhisar, the site of Hierapolis. There is no trace today of the Ottoman bath-house at which Ramsay found the inscription of Abercius.

³⁸ Faustina is known to have dedicated a bath-house at Miletos: *I. Didyma* 84; *I. Milet* 339–40, 343; Kleiner 1970, 125–33.

Faustina's gratitude for Abercius' services to Lucilla, can quite easily be interpreted as pious elaborations on an historical but entirely routine imperial gift of a bath-house to the city of Hierapolis, totally unconnected with the historical bishop Abercius.

A more problematic case is that of the *hegemon* of Phrygia Salutaris, Publius Dolabella (chapter 1), and his successor Spinther (chapter 51). These are not especially obvious names for an author of the fourth century AD to have invented; both names are exceedingly rare in the Roman imperial period, and effectively unknown by the fourth century. The year 43 BC saw P. Cornelius Dolabella immediately succeeded as effective master of the province of Asia by P. Cornelius Lentulus Spinther.³⁹ It is not impossible that the author of the *Life* had access to an inscription of the year 43 BC recording this fact.

If this interpretation of the *Life of Abercius* is along the right lines, then the methods of the fourth-century redactor may be seen as remarkably sophisticated and unscrupulous. His reconstruction of the early Christian history of Hierapolis is based on creative misreadings of surviving second-century inscriptions and monuments, strung together with observations of the physical geography of the region (the hot springs at Agros Thermôn, the spring at Gonyklisia, the proverbial infertility of Aulon), all of which are, however spuriously, brought into relation with the life of the great bishop Abercius. The *Life* resembles a late antique city-wall, pieced together from carefully selected bits and pieces of high imperial masonry.⁴⁰ This procedure can occasionally be inferred elsewhere in hagiographical texts. Another Phrygian hagiography of the late fourth century (or perhaps later), the *Martyrdom of St Ariadne of Prymnessos*, can be shown to have incorporated a long verbatim quotation from an honorific inscription of the high imperial period, still on display at Prymnessos at the time of the composition of the text.⁴¹ The basic components of the *Life of Abercius*, I propose, can be reconstructed as follows:

³⁹ P. Cornelius Dolabella (cos 44 BC) seized Asia from the proconsul Trebonius late in 44 or early in 43 BC and adopted the title *imperator* (by 24 January 43 at the latest). After Dolabella's departure for Syria, P. Cornelius Lentulus Spinther, Trebonius' quaestor, briefly became the effective governor of Asia as *pro quaestore pro praetore* in the spring of 43 BC before the arrival of Brutus in the east. Cic., *ad Fam.* 12.14–15; Magie 1950, I 419–21, II 1272–4; for Dolabella's title, Robert 1937, 325–6.

⁴⁰ On architectural spolia as a vehicle of social memory, see Papalexandrou 2003.

⁴¹ Franchi de' Cavalieri 1901, 110–12; Robert 1980, 244–56. For hagiographical use and misuse of epigraphical documents, see further Delehaye 1955, 74–82.

- (1) The epitaph of Abercius, at the south gate of the city of Hierapolis;
- (2) A Greek text of the third-century *Acts of Peter*;
- (3) An *epistula* of Marcus Aurelius to Euxenianus Pollio, incorporating chapter 48 and the end of chapter 49 of the *Life*, which probably also mentioned the *ab epistulis graecis* Cornelianus and the consul Valerius Bassianus;
- (4) A dedicatory inscription of Faustina on a second-century bath-house at Agros Thermôn, a little way to the south of Hierapolis;
- (5) ?—An inscription of 43 BC recording the names of both Publius Dolabella and Lentulus Spinther.

If this reconstruction is accepted, an unexpected shaft of light is thrown on late antique attitudes towards the relatively recent, pre-Christian past. At the time when the *Life* was being written, the cities of the Greek East were passing through a full-blown crisis of civic identity. In political terms, Constantine and his successors showed little interest in the maintenance of cities as autonomous, self-governing bodies.⁴² The physical transformation of urban centres was, for the most part, still to come; it was not until the last decade of the fourth century that large public buildings began to be converted into churches. To what extent did the city-dwellers of the mid-fourth century retain a sense of civic pride and collective identity, and on what was that identity based?

The geography of Greco-Roman myth was notoriously fluid. In the absence of any single canonical version of the mythological past, any given city could argue that they were at the heart of the action: this was the 'real' site of the birth of Zeus, or the Rape of Persephone, or at least a flying visit by Herakles or Perseus.⁴³ No city was too small or too modern to carve out a place for itself in the common mythic traditions of the Greek East. Even a Hellenistic foundation such as Philadelphia in Lydia, founded by Attalos II Philadelphus in the 160s BC, could effectively argue that the city was originally settled in the generation after the Trojan wars, and that its name signified the

⁴² Mitchell 1998, 52–7.

⁴³ Price 2005. At least six cities in western Asia Minor alone laid claim to the birthplace of Zeus: Robert 1987, 265–70.

‘sibling-love’ shared by its mythological founders, Orestes and Iphigeneia.⁴⁴

Christian mythology, by contrast, allowed no room for claims of this kind. The historical geography of the primitive church was not open to dispute: Christ could not simply be transplanted from Palestine to Phrygia. Various different strategies were available for the reshaping of civic identity to meet these new conditions. A few cities were lucky enough to boast a clear association with the apostolic age. In the late fifth century AD, Christian Tarsus is said to be ‘a city priding itself on its beauty and size . . . and what is most important and glorious of all, the fact of being the native city of the most great and holy apostle Paul’.⁴⁵ But Paul’s itineraries were well established, and the overwhelming majority of Anatolian cities had not received a visit.

For a small town like Hierapolis, this caused problems. There was no getting around the fact that, from a Christian perspective, the Hieropolitans were of no significance whatsoever. One solution to this problem was for a city to put its corporate muscle behind a martyr. In the AD 370s, the inhabitants of Caesarea in Cappadocia flocked to the shrine of St Gordius (martyred at Caesarea in the early fourth century), ‘for he was a native of this very city, whence we love him all the more, since he is our own private ornament (*oikeios* . . . *kosmos*)’.⁴⁶ A locally meaningful figure like Gordius could provide an attractive alternative focus for civic identity. Little Hierapolis had no such glamorous figures to boast of. Instead, the city opted for sanctification of the sole local Christian with a name and a tangible identity who could plausibly be placed in the proto-Christian era, Abercius.⁴⁷ The process had probably begun well before the fourth century. Within a generation of Abercius’ death, the first three and last three verses of his funerary epigram had been imitated by another native of Hierapolis, Alexander son of Antonius, for his own tombstone.⁴⁸ The unusual name Abercius became common among the Christians of the

⁴⁴ Burrell 2005; Nollé 2005, 73–83; Thonemann 2009.

⁴⁵ Dagron 1978, *Mir.* 29.

⁴⁶ Basil, *In Gordium* 2 (PG 31, 493B): οὗτος ἔφυ μὲν ἀπὸ τῆς πόλεως ταύτης, ὅθεν καὶ μᾶλλον αὐτὸν ἀγαπῶμεν, διότι οἰκεῖος ἡμῖν ὁ κόσμος ἐστίν. See further Leemans 2005.

⁴⁷ It seems likely that Abercius’ tombstone itself, a monument of numinous significance (having been carried by the devil from Rome to Hierapolis: *Vita Abercii* 63), was a cult object in the fourth century. Compare Hasluck 1929, I 202–20, on miraculous inscriptions in folk Christianity and Islam.

⁴⁸ Ramsay 1897, 720–2 no. 656 (AD 215/16).

region; a deacon of the late third or early fourth century from nearby Prymnessus was named Abircius son of Porphyrius, and the Hieropolitan bishop who attended the council of Chalcedon in AD 451 also carried the name Abercius.⁴⁹

The *Life of Abercius* should be understood as a biography, not of a man, but of a city. It aspires to provide a Christian history for a city whose *real* history was insistently, inconveniently, and all too visibly pagan. The newly Christianized cities of Asia Minor in the fourth century AD were littered with the monumental debris of the high Roman imperial period: baths, theatres, inscriptions, statues. Much of this stuff was useful. For understandable reasons, the Christian inhabitants of late fourth-century Hierapolis wished to continue using the hot springs and bath-house at Agros Thermôn.⁵⁰ However, it was patently clear that the bath-house was the product of a pre-Christian era; there was, most probably, a large inscription saying as much. This was ideologically problematic. Even to have a complimentary letter from the pagan emperor Marcus on public display at Hierapolis was a somewhat double-edged claim to fame. One of the functions of the *Life of Abercius* is to provide Christian aetiologies for these monuments. The hot springs themselves were the result of a miracle performed by a local bishop; Marcus' letter to Euxeinianus was inspired by a desire to employ the local Christian thaumaturge; the bath-house of Faustina was a gift in return for Abercius' wondrous exorcism of her daughter.

The *Life of St Abercius*, then, is a uniquely valuable document of the processes by which the Christians of late antique Asia Minor re-fashioned their (pagan) Roman past in their own image. Through creative readings of those second-century epigraphical monuments which survived in the urban landscape of the fourth century, the author of the *Life* offers an 'archaeology of desire', a reconstruction of Hieropolitan history in a form designed to be palatable to a Christian audience. The *Life* should be read as an attempt to reconcile the Hieropolitans with their own city, past and present.

⁴⁹ Abircius of Prymnessus: Ramsay 1897, 736–7, no. 672. Bishop of Hierapolis: Belke and Mersich 1990, 273. A tombstone from Afyon of the fourth century AD carries the name Aurelius Dorotheus, son of Abircius and Marcellina (Ramsay 1897, 737–40, no. 673). The name is also attested at late antique Pisidian Antioch (*SEG* 52, 1383). The *Life* (ch. 80) claims that Abercius' successor as bishop of Hierapolis was also called Abercius.

⁵⁰ Baths were one of the few categories of Roman public buildings which continued to be built and/or restored as late as the sixth century AD: Saradi 2006, 325–43.

Abbreviations

ANRW	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i>
BE	<i>Bulletin épigraphique</i> (annually in <i>Revue des études grecques</i>)
BM	British Museum: post-BMC acquisitions
BMC Phrygia	B.V. Head, <i>A Catalogue of the Greek Coins in the British Museum: Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Phrygia</i> . London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1906.
Coll. Wadd.	E. Babelon, <i>Inventaire sommaire de la collection Waddington</i> . Paris: C. Rollin & Feuardent, 1898.
I.Didyma	A. Rehm, <i>Didyma II. Die Inschriften</i> . Berlin: Mann, 1958.
I.Ephesos	H. Wankel and R. Merkelbach, <i>Die Inschriften von Ephesos. I – VII. IGSK 11–17</i> . Bonn: Habelt, 1979–81.
I.Hadrianoi	E. Schwertheim, <i>Die Inschriften von Hadrianoi und Hadrianeia. IGSK 33</i> . Bonn: Habelt, 1987.
I.Milet	<i>Milet: Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen und Untersuchungen, Band VI: Inschriften von Milet. 1–3</i> . Berlin: de Gruyter, 1996–2007.
I.Smyrna	G. Petzl, <i>Die Inschriften von Smyrna. I–II. IGSK 23–4</i> . Bonn: Habelt, 1982–90.
IGR	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae ad Res Romanas Pertinentes</i>
Imhoof-Blumer, KM	F. Imhoof-Blumer, <i>Kleinasiatische Münzen I–II</i> . Vienna: A. Hölder, 1901–2.
MAMA	<i>Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua</i>
OGIS	W. Dittenberger, <i>Orientis Graecae Inscriptiones Selectae</i> . Leipzig: Hirzel, 1903–5.
PG	<i>Patrologia Graeca</i>
PIR ²	<i>Prosopographia Imperii Romani</i> , 2nd edn.
RAC	<i>Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum</i>
Robert, OMS	L. Robert, <i>Opera Minora Selecta. Épigraphie et antiquités grecques. I–VII</i> . Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1969–90.
SEG	<i>Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum</i>
SNG Von Aulock	<i>Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum, Sammlung Hans Von Aulock</i> . Berlin: Mann, 1957–68.
TAM	<i>Tituli Asiae Minoris</i>

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Defacing the Gods at Aphrodisias

R.R.R. Smith

The cities of the late antique Mediterranean were full of monumental images of the Olympian gods. They were often works of great beauty and power, the accumulated results of several centuries of refined craft tradition. On the one hand, they were bearers of local history, memory, and identity and were protected as public ornaments by imperial edicts. On the other hand, they were representatives and by-products of polytheist cult whose active practice was outlawed by other imperial edicts. The responses of ascendant Christian communities were varied and locally determined: they range from peaceful incorporation to frontal assault—depending on place, context, category, and date. Different strands of recent scholarship have emphasized now the ‘softer’ side, now the ‘harder’ side.¹

This paper is a case study of the late antique adjustments made to the great display of marble reliefs in the Julio-Claudian Sebasteion at Aphrodisias, where the context and local thinking behind the adjustments can be described in unusual detail. The Sebasteion was first made widely known in the UK through an article by Simon Price in one of the early issues of *Omnibus*,² and it is a monument that allows us to visualize most clearly the central argument of Price’s *Rituals and Power*: the accommodation and negotiation of Roman imperial power in local forms.³ Price returned to the Sebasteion’s use

¹ Softer, for example: Hjort 1993, Jacobs 2010. Harder, for example: Sauer 2003, Pollini 2007. For the contradictory imperial laws on the subject: Lepelley 1994 and forthcoming.

² Price 1982.

³ Price 1984.

of local myth in a splendid article in 2005, 'Local Mythologies in the Greek East'.⁴

The Sebasteion complex was built in the first century, became a retail and craft centre in the fourth–fifth century, remained largely intact to the seventh century, and is remarkably well preserved. The process of negotiation and decision-making about what iconography in contemporary late antique thinking constituted a provocation or a danger that required action can be followed here closely. The reliefs remained on display through late antiquity: they were a repository of local memory, but at the same time they contained elements that were felt by some to be too offensive to be left untouched. The solution chosen was to leave as much as possible intact (soft response) and to deface some parts in a highly selective, and targeted manner (hard response). Two kinds of adjustment were undertaken—(1) the defacing of whole reliefs, and (2) the mutilation of exposed genitals—and they belonged in different spheres of thought and probably periods. Defacing was to do with cult, required scaffolding, and was more aggressive, more invasive. Genital mutilation was to do with the body, needed only a ladder, and has the appearance, from one perspective, more of tidying up. Which came first is an interesting question. Both kinds of adjustment represent strange cultural behaviour, and it is not easy on practical rational grounds to intuit sensible answers. In the late antique reception and handling of the Sebasteion reliefs we can follow a differential calculus of cultural memory, theological practice, and moral propriety.

APHRODISIAS AND THE SEBASTEION

Aphrodisias was an autonomous Greek city in the Roman province of Asia. It had been founded as a political community only in the second century BC and was still a relative newcomer to the urban life represented by columned architecture in the later first century BC, when its built urban life really started.⁵

The Sebasteion was a grandiose complex dedicated to Aphrodite and the Julio-Claudian emperors and was designed to give monumental

⁴ Price 2005.

⁵ Ratté 2002 and 2008.

form to the city's special relationship with the ruling family in Rome. The city had secured free status in 38 BC through Octavian, which was maintained by subsequent emperors. The complex was located to the east of the newly grid-planned city centre and consisted of an avenue flanked by two three-storey buildings (North and South Buildings) leading to an imperial-style temple (Figs. 13.1–13.3).

It was built in the mid-first century by two prominent local families, and its North and South Buildings were faced by engaged columnar orders that framed some 200 marble reliefs in their upper two storeys. These reliefs displayed a remarkable combination of Greek, local, and Roman subjects—mythological, allegorical, and imperial/historical.⁶ Many of the scenes of Roman emperors were formulated in a local Hellenistic manner: Claudius and Britannia (C 10), for example, are configured as a new Achilles and a new Penthesilea (Fig. 13.4).⁷ Two local families seized the opportunity of imperial favour to show their Roman rulers and patrons as classical heroes and Olympian gods—as part of a richly invented fabric of local visual myth in which the distant past and the immediate present were collapsed into a single frame. The upper, third storey of the South Building featured Roman emperors juxtaposed with Olympian deities and Victories, while the second, middle storey featured scenes from heroic mythology. The architecture has a 'triple' rhythm: each of the chambers behind the facade (Rooms 1–15) is three intercolumniations wide, and the central intercolumniation of each room is wider than those to either side. The reliefs above have a corresponding rhythm: they are arranged in threes, with a wider central relief above the doorways, flanked by two narrower side reliefs. In what follows, the position of the reliefs discussed will be referred to by their room number and their place in each triptych—left, centre, or right, seen from the viewer's point of view.

⁶ Smith 1987, 1988, 1990, 2008. The numbers prefixed by A, B, C, or D, used here to refer to the reliefs, are the catalogue numbers of their publication in Smith forthcoming. A and B refer to the two series from the North Building, C and D to those from the South Building. This study is concerned with reliefs from the South Building (with one possible exception, A 6, none of the fewer preserved reliefs of the North Building was defaced).

⁷ Smith 1987, 115–17, no. 6, pls. 14–15.

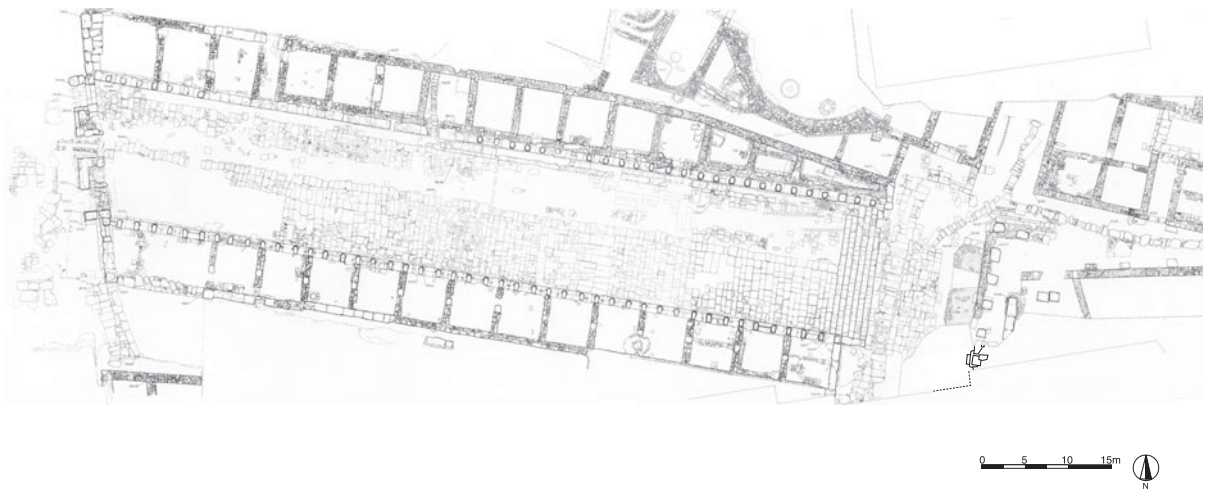


Fig. 13.1. Aphrodisias. Sebasteion. State plan.



Fig. 13.2. Sebasteion. View of South Building (after *anastylosis*, 2008).

Much of the North Building collapsed before the mid-fourth century, and was cleared away, leaving the ends of the North Building and the whole of the South Building standing until the seventh century. The rooms behind were used as shops, workshops, and offices by Jews, Christians, and others. The functions we know from the archaeology of the chambers;⁸ the presence of Jews, Christians, and others we know from the rich late antique graffiti on the complex (Fig. 13.5).⁹ The temple proper, at the east end of the avenue, was mostly dismantled, at an unknown date in late antiquity but before the final collapse. The roof, cornice, and cella were removed, leaving the hexastyle Corinthian order standing alone at the front of the temple platform, like a columnar screen alluding to its former identity without performing any of its function. It was a negotiated ruin, an

⁸ Smith and Ratté 1998, 238–9, and 2000, 231–3.

⁹ Graffiti: Chaniotis 2008a, 212–13, fig. 13; Chaniotis 2008b, 248, figs. 7 and 10: ‘Most of the Jewish symbols are found in the Sebasteion . . . in most cases, the drawings were carefully carved and conspicuous’. Jews in late antique Aphrodisias: Chaniotis 2002.

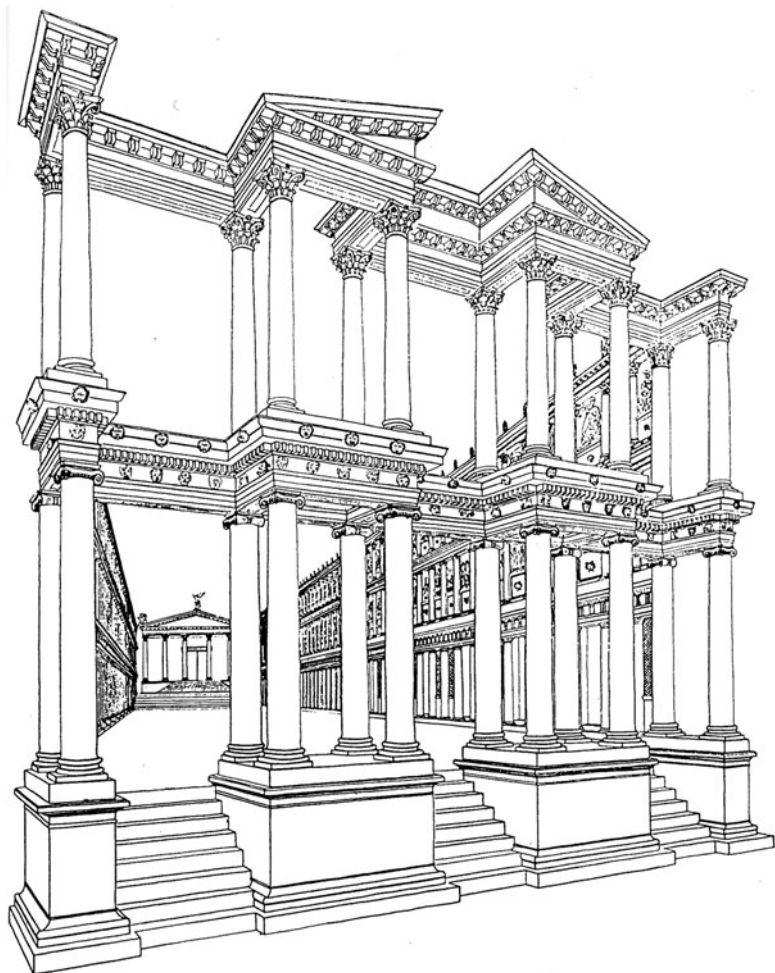


Fig. 13.3. Sebasteion. Reconstruction, looking through Propylon, from west, towards temple.

acceptable monument preserving a civic landmark and some memory of its polytheist past.¹⁰

¹⁰ Compare the similar ‘preservation’ of the columnar facade of the temple with rounded cella at Skythopolis, which remained standing, after the temple had gone out of use, until AD 749: Tsafirir and Foerster 1997, 109–11 and 127; Tsafirir, 2003, 279.

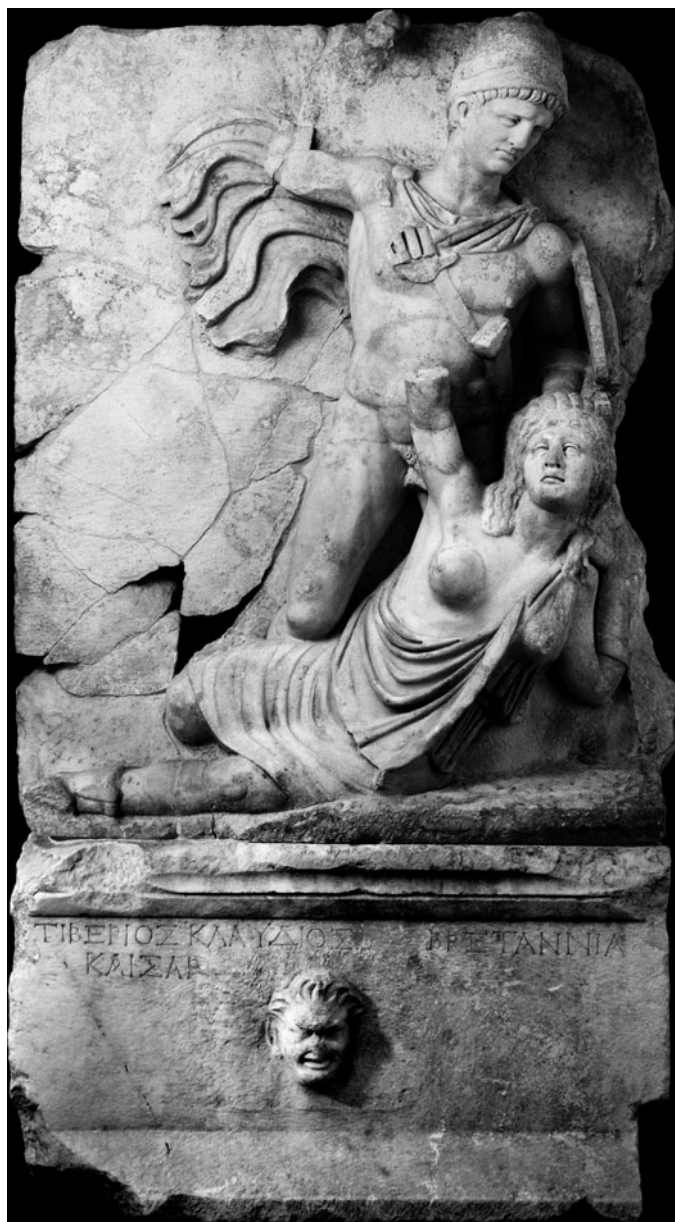


Fig. 13.4. Sebasteion. Claudius and Britannia (C 10).



Fig. 13.5a. Sebasteion. Menorah inscribed on column of North Building (at Room 13).



Fig. 13.5b. Detail.

The reliefs of the South Building were mostly left where they fell. They are well preserved and their relative sequence can be reconstructed with some precision. The reliefs are now displayed (since 2008) in a new museum hall at Aphrodisias in their correct archaeological sequence, and an anastylosis project has reconstructed part of

the east end of the South Building in its original position (Fig. 13.2). The anastylosis helps us to understand the impact and legibility of the reliefs in their ancient setting. We may note here that the reliefs continued around the angle of the South Building onto its short east end. What adjustments then were made to the reliefs in late antiquity?

DEFACING

Nine reliefs along the South Building, from both storeys, had their relief figures hacked off with a rough quarry pick while the building was still standing and in use (Fig. 13.6). That is, nine out of eighty surviving reliefs: so, about 10% were defaced. When this took place is of course an interesting question. We may note here that the building is known to have collapsed in the seventh century, burying the surviving reliefs in the complex, so that the defacing was certainly carried out in the late antique period, and not in the medieval or Islamic period.

The full defacing was carried out with considerable care and great selectivity. There was clearly a desire to deface the great picture-walls of the complex only where it was absolutely necessary, and even then with some technical attention. A light scaffolding platform would have been necessary. The figures are defaced so that their outlines remain, so that they attest to having been defaced, and so that the plain panel of the relief background is untouched. The very lowest parts of the figures, the feet and drapery, were left undefaced as well, probably because they were not visible from below. The decorated bases on which the reliefs stood were not touched.

Which reliefs were selected for this treatment, on what basis? What was the 'rationale' for the selection? Which reliefs were so offensive, so challenging and provocative to late antique thinking, that they had to be dealt with in such a drastic and highly visible manner? It should be stated first that most of the reliefs posed no problems—obviously not the emperors; not the ethnic personifications, representations of empire; nor the many imperial victory compositions (personified victory remained an important companion of contemporary, late antique emperors: they were *daimones* working only for good); nor even most mythological scenes featuring Greek heroes of old and

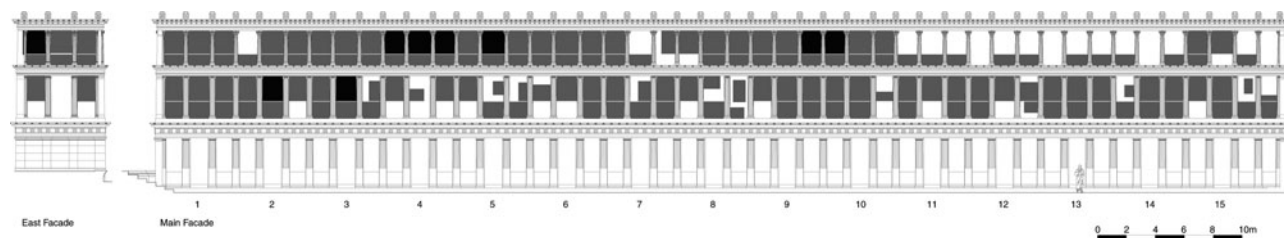


Fig. 13.6. Sebasteion. South Building elevation, showing positions of defaced reliefs (black). Grey = other surviving reliefs, undefaced.

even Olympian gods in action. Such mythological representations remained welcome as cultural decoration from the glorious classical past in a wide variety of late antique media deployed in both private and public settings.¹¹ These reliefs were, from a Christian point of view, either for the most part positive or at least harmless.

The problematic panels featured supernatural figures represented in such a way that they could be seen as a threat to Christians. They show pagan *daimones* in such a way that they could be appealed to for malevolent action. Several defaced reliefs from different parts of the facade showed single standing or seated Olympian gods, now still recognizable. A group of three together, in the third storey over Room 4, consisted of an enthroned Zeus flanked by standing goddesses, Athena and probably Hera (C 11–13, Fig. 13.7). Engaged in no action and with no other figures, these gods could be taken as real, present *daimones* who could do harm, especially if activated by prayer. They were petitionable.

Another defaced relief, situated in the third storey in the centre position above Room 5, featured two gods seated under the canopy-cloak of a third, sky god (probably Ouranos), and is a striking Olympian composition (C 15, Fig. 13.8). It is different from the single-figure panels, but falls in the same category of ‘petitionable’ image. The two seated gods are turned to the front and presented in a stately iconography of epiphany. All three divinities were so thoroughly erased that it is now difficult to identify them.

ALTARS

A ‘cult’ aspect appears more emphatically in another defaced relief, a relief from the short, east end of the South Building facing the Temple (C 1), in the third storey (Fig. 13.9).¹² It featured the local Aphrodite, standing frontally, but not on a base, so not as a statue, but as a real, present figure standing on the panel’s ground line, like any other real actor in these reliefs. The goddess is flanked on one side by a ‘narrative’ worshipper in profile, on the other by a large, round altar. From a Christian citizen’s perspective, this could be argued to

¹¹ See recently, for example: Liebeschuetz 1995/6; Al. Cameron 2004.

¹² Brody 2007, 23–4, no. 12, pl. 9.



Fig. 13.7a–c. (a) Hera(?), (b) Zeus, (c) Athena (C 11–C 13): three defaced reliefs from third storey above Room 4.



Fig. 13.8. Ouranos(?) above two seated deities (C15): defaced relief from central position in third storey, above door of Room 5.

be an objectionable relief, one that had to be dealt with. Aphrodite was a powerful pagan presence who pervaded the city, its monuments, its past, and who once constituted its sacred identity. In a way, in such a prominent position on the end of the South Building, she marked the whole structure as hers. She was presented as a real, easily petitionable figure together with a shorthand sign for the enlivening sacrifice and worship that gave her life.

This relief was further treated by the engraving of a cross low down on the (viewer's) left side of the round altar (Fig. 13.9b). We are dealing then, if it was in doubt, with interventions informed by Christian thinking. The application of crosses to old statues and



Fig. 13.9a–b. Aphrodite of City, with detail of cross on altar (C 1): defaced relief from in third storey on short, east end of South Building.

monuments takes a variety of forms and can be variously interpreted—whether, for example, as aggressive decontamination or consensual protection and decoration. The reason in this case is probably counter-intuitive. The cross on the altar is barely visible, most likely not visible from the ground, and so was not intended as a loud statement—as such crosses often were (for example, on the Tetrapylon at Aphrodisias: below, n. 43)—but nor is it very consensual,

bringing the image into a happy Christian orbit. The relief has been hacked off. The cross is then better taken (in my opinion) as part of the defacing process itself. Altars were, from a Christian perspective, dangerous, polluting things—even representations of them. The cross was then a ‘temporary’ measure to guard against any noxious effects the altar might spring on the Christian craftsman during the defacing process. It was precisely the demonstration that ‘empty’ pagan deities had not resisted their destruction that was at the heart of Christian image mutilation. Once an image was erased, of course confidence could be felt that this was so. But who could quite be sure beforehand? If the images were so obviously empty and powerless, what need was there to attack them? Everyone knew there were *daimones* inside pagan images,¹³ and the craftsman about to strike the first blow with his quarry pick against the city’s powerful old goddess probably thought it worth his while to take the precautionary measure of defusing the altar, the instrument through which the goddess was activated, by engraving the symbol of the cross on it.

The case is similar to that of statues with crosses on their faces. Images thus mutilated may not have been intended (as now often assumed) for further display. A high-quality marble bust or statue with a rough cross hacked into its forehead was not well suited to pagan or Christian aesthetic sensibilities. For fearful Christian workers, charged with removing such figures, however, a forcefully and roughly engraved cross could usefully defuse or scare off the dangerous *daimones* lurking within. That is, the crosses may not have been for display (to protect the statue with a Christian *sphragis*, a kind of seal of approval), but part of the mutilation/destruction process; they would on this view be a necessary preliminary to statue destruction.¹⁴

Another defaced relief (third storey, Room 9, right) featured a different narrative of the worshipping of Aphrodite (C 27, Fig. 13.10).¹⁵ It shows the image of the goddess as a statue, standing frontally on a round base, in the process of being crowned by a dynamic divine figure who is almost certainly the real and present Aphrodite, contrasted in a familiar visual conceit with her motionless

¹³ For this and much else, see the classic study, Mango 1963.

¹⁴ The interpretation as a Christian *sphragis* is proposed in an interesting study of this phenomenon by Hjort 1993, with earlier literature. See also now the wide-ranging study of Jacobs 2010.

¹⁵ Smith 1994, 37, pl. 31; Brody 2007, 22–3, no. 11, pl. 9.



Fig. 13.10. Aphrodite crowns her own cult statue (C 27): defaced relief from right-hand position in third storey above Room 9, South Building.

archaic-looking idol. It might have been argued that the real goddess was engaged in a 'narrative' activity and so not strictly in these terms a 'petitionable' figure, or that the other figure was shown clearly as 'merely' a statue. These were conceptual and visual arguments that failed to convince the responsible authorities, and both figures were defaced. The narrative was clearly one of animating or empowering a dangerous image. Between them is an incense burner: the scene, it was no doubt pointed out, was one of cult and consecration.

SACRIFICE

Many of the defining battles of early Christianity had been fought around pagan sacrificial altars, and sacrifice was considered the most abhorrent as well as the most dangerous and powerful of pagan cult practices. Blood sacrifice was the most effective currency of communication with pagan gods; it could empower their images, and channel divine force in the worshipper's favour.¹⁶

It is in this context that we can explain the thorough defacing of two reliefs from among the mythological narratives of the second storey: both represent full-dress sacrificial narratives. In one (Room 2, centre, D 7), a young hero sacrifices to a statue of Zeus before which stands an altar and an altar-attendant (Fig. 13.11). In the other, more fragmentary (Room 3, centre, D 10), a heroic couple, again with a sacrificial attendant, stood beside an altar that is set before a cult statue on a base, perhaps of Aphrodite(?) (Fig. 13.12). These panels were both representations of activating pagan figures through blood sacrifice. This ostensible reasoning—to remove images of pagan sacrificial pollution—had force and justification any time after the Theodosian legislation on the subject, issued in the late fourth century.

This was one ostensible reason, but these reliefs probably had a further dimension in Christian calculation. Both scenes represented sacrifice in the context of an act of foundation, the foundation of a cult and so of a community. In the sacrifice to Zeus (D 7, Fig. 13.11), the eagle with the branch of a tree, to be dropped at the favoured site for a new city, was part of classic foundation iconography.¹⁷ The cults concerned are of Zeus and Aphrodite, the two main deities of Aphrodisias. Cities like Aphrodisias had woven their pagan cults into the fabric and identity of their communities. We can understand then a further impetus to the defacing of these reliefs, within the process of Christian appropriation of a pagan city—to undercut the pagan theology of the foundation stories in a period when precisely the name of the city as the city of Aphrodite was being contested. The

¹⁶ On sacrifice: Iamblichus, *De Mysteriis* Book 5 (most accessible now in Clarke, Dillon, and Hershbell 2004); Beard, North, and Price 1998, II, ch. 6; Petropoulou 2008; Stroumsa 2009.

¹⁷ Clearly shown by Weiss 1996.



Fig. 13.11. Founding hero (Ninos?) sacrifices to statue of Zeus (D 7): defaced relief from central position in second storey, above door of Room 2.

erasure of the name of Aphrodite from inscriptions of the city was part of the same process. It culminated in the renaming of the city as Stauropolis, attested for us in documents by the seventh century, but the process of contestation had surely begun earlier.¹⁸ So, while local mythological memory was for the most part preserved in the facade,

¹⁸ Roueché 1989, 149–51, only one epigraphic attestation at Aphrodisias (on north-east gate, *ibid.* no. 22), but many erasures. See also Roueché 1991, 107.

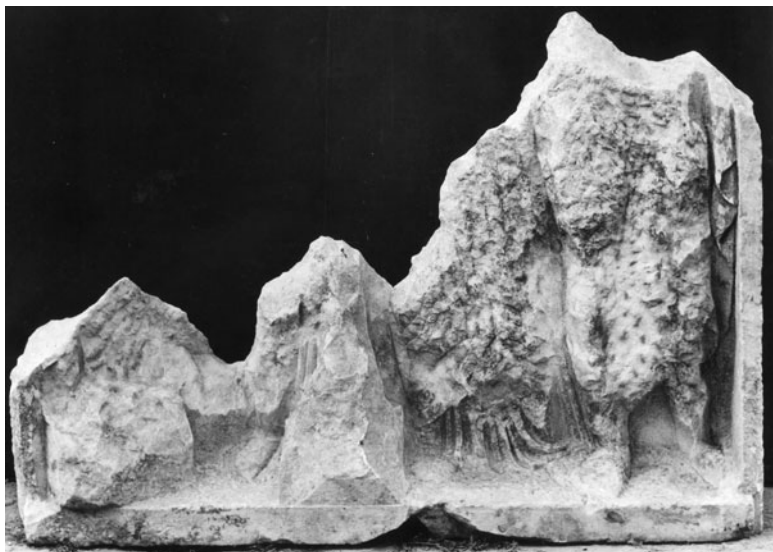


Fig. 13.12. Founding hero and wife sacrifice to statue of Aphrodite(?) (D 10): defaced relief from central position in second storey, above door of Room 3.

an attempt was made here to sever the old and important link between *city identity* and *pagan cult*.

These then were the common features of the relatively few reliefs selected for erasure. They were single, 'iconic', daemonic figures that might be petitioned, or they were narrative scenes of cult and blood sacrifice.

It is important to emphasize that these reliefs were defaced carefully, leaving the background and panels unharmed, and the outline of the figures visible. This was done not so much to preserve the fine appearance of the facade, more in order to demonstrate that the (still recognizable) daemonic figures there had been deactivated. After all, it would have been perfectly possible to chisel the reliefs back to a smooth clean surface, completely obliterating the Olympian presence once and for all. But that was not the point that was wanted. The careful defacing allows the old gods still to be identified as such. They and their supposedly potent animating rituals are thus seen to submit powerlessly to this indignity. Successful defacing demonstrated in a concrete, permanent manner an important Christian argument, that the Olympians were a bunch of malicious but powerless old *daimones*

who could not even protect their own images.¹⁹ Defacing *represented* and *memorialized* the incapacitation of the city's old gods.

CAUTION, REBRANDING, PRAGMATISM

It is very interesting that in making their selection, the Christian authorities in the city seem to have been a little unsure of themselves: to have erred on the side of caution, and amidst strange symbolic decisions to have shown pragmatic flexibility. They perhaps had a genuine desire to spoil as little as possible of an antique monument, but perhaps they were also afraid of making mistakes that would be difficult to rectify.

Caution is shown in a large relief from the third storey of the South Building (Room 15, centre, C 32) that has a single standing frontal figure of a naked young male warrior surrounded by weapons and wearing a helmet and ideal-divine features (Fig. 13.13). For an early imperial viewer, and in the logic of the third-storey series, he was surely the god Ares. The figure was left un-defaced probably because the responsible authorities in late antiquity thought it might or did represent an emperor. It was probably not the case that fifth–sixth century Aphrodisians had already lost that easy ability to read ancient styles of representation that distinguished so neatly and clearly between men and gods. They had however been raised among imperial images that had deliberately blurred this differentiating vocabulary, that had used ideal forms to convey the divine and sacred quality of the contemporary emperor's person. And it was a clear aim of early imperial representation, carried to unusual lengths in the Sebasteion, to assimilate the iconographies of the imperial and the divine. In the third storey of the South Building the naked warrior emperors merged seamlessly with the Olympian gods. The relief of Ares was visibly very close to those of Roman princes. The god was so like nearby figures of the young Nero that caution prevailed.²⁰

Another relief shows not ignorance or caution, but reinterpretation or rebranding. The goddess Hygieia (C 30), un-defaced, stands alone,

¹⁹ Scheer 2001 and Scheer-Bauer 2002 have much material.

²⁰ Compare the similar figure of the young Nero as conquering world ruler, C 26: Smith 1987, 110–12, no. 4, pls. 10–11.



Fig. 13.13. Ares (C 32): relief from central position in third storey at Room 15.

with her usual attributes of snake and phiale and a baby child beside her (Fig. 13.14c). She was part of a thoughtful triptych in the third storey of the South Building, above Room 10 (Fig. 13.14). The triptych shows the god Claudius as master of Land and Sea in the centre position (C 29),²¹ flanked by reliefs of Asklepios (left, C 28) and Hygieia (right, C 30), gods in support of a healthy Claudian empire. Probably the Christian authorities were still able to read and identify Hygieia, but felt her to be harmless. She was not a wilful, malicious Olympian with a wide portfolio of human spheres to intervene in, but a single-job figure, such as Victory was. She was a wholly positive, supporting force, an allegory, a personification. Who could be against Victory and Health? Hygieia had been closely

²¹ Smith 1987, 104–6, no. 2, pls. 6–7.



Fig. 13.14a–c. (a) Asklepios, defaced (C 28), (b) Claudius with Land and Sea figures (C 29), (c) Hygieia (C 30): three reliefs from third storey above Room 10.

connected to imperial virtue, as *Salus Augusta*,²² and remained untouched. Asklepios however had a real cult identity, and in Christian thinking he was an unwelcome competitor for the role of best divine doctor. We feel here that the emerging distinction between personification and cult identity now has force. Asklepios was defaced. Hygieia was rebranded.

Flexibility was shown in a genuinely difficult case. The relief that occupied a prominent position to the right of the defaced Aphrodite on the short east end of the South Building, we may imagine, posed a dilemma. It represents an unmistakable narrative of sacrifice, but one carried out by an empress (C 3, Fig. 13.15).²³ An imperial woman, recognizable by her portrait head (as Livia), stands at an altar and is attended by a long-haired boy carrying a sacrificial tray. This is a scene of cult but also an image of a sacred imperial family member. The relief was left untouched. Generalized fear or respect for the temporal power of the Roman emperor was probably stronger than a desire for theological purity. In the context of the east end of the building, the sacrifice conducted by the empress might have been interpreted as intended for the adjacent image of Aphrodite to its left, and it could have been argued that the ensemble had been sufficiently dealt with by the mutilation of the Aphrodite relief. The decision to leave the relief of an empress sacrificing was a pragmatic, thoughtful one.

OTHER ADJUSTMENTS: GENITALS

Finally and briefly: genital mutilation. This undertaking belongs in a different sphere: it was easier to do, more pervasive, but had a lower impact. We may wonder if it was not perhaps a later tidying up of the complex, after the heady theological discussion, confrontation, and negotiation represented by the defacing? The naked body, so purposefully displayed in ancient culture and art, was a particular locus of the early church's anxiety and discontent,²⁴ especially in a city such as Aphrodisias named after a supposedly licentious love goddess. Public nudity came to need attention, independent of cult and theology. The male genitalia were carefully chiselled off, with minimal damage to

²² Winkler 1995.

²³ Smith 1987, 125–7, no. 10, pls. 22–3.

²⁴ Brown 2008 is the classic study of this complicated subject.

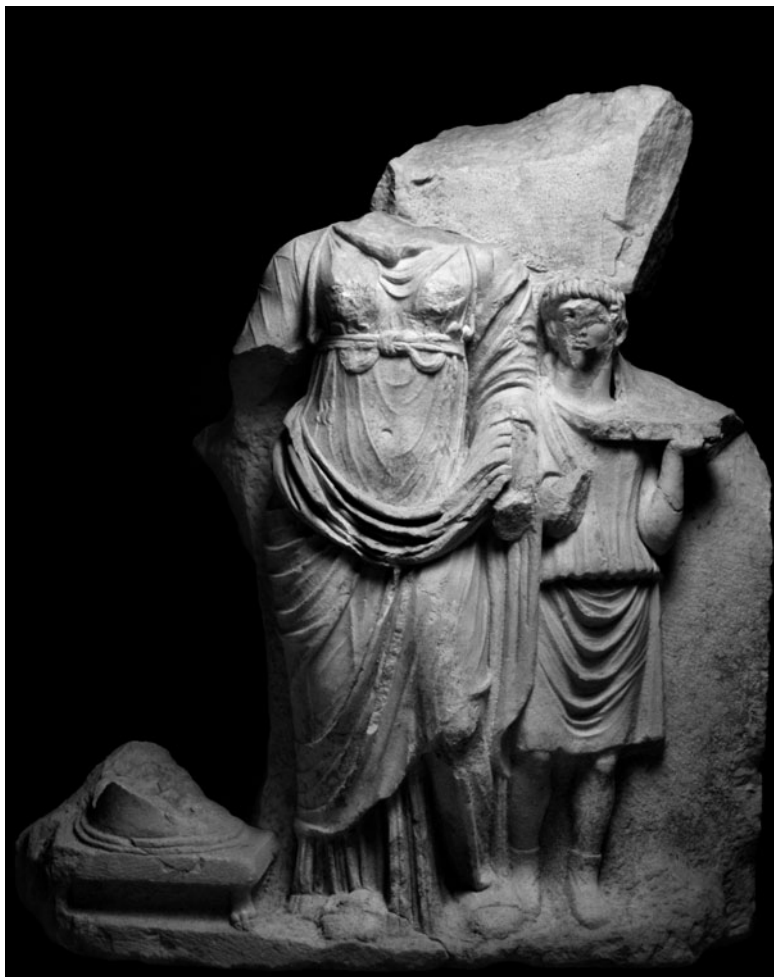


Fig. 13.15. Livia sacrifices at altar (C 3): relief from right-hand position in third storey on short, east end of South Building.

the surrounding marble surface of adjacent groin and body. Those of gods, heroes, and emperors were treated alike, and a full thirty surviving reliefs were so treated.²⁵ In fact *all* the visible exposed penises were removed on the surviving reliefs. In some reliefs, the

²⁵ Male genitals removed. Imperial figures: C 2 (Augustus), C 5 (Claudius), C 10 (Claudius), C 16 (Tiberius), C 18 (Prince), C 19 (Two princes), C 26 (Nero), C 29

genitals were removed by careful use of a small hammer (for example, the drunken Dionysos in D 24, Fig. 13.16); in most cases, however, they were removed with a well-placed chisel action that avoided collateral damage to thighs or groin (Fig. 13.17). Even genitals that were not readily visible—for example, the genitals of Claudius hidden behind the raised arm of Britannia in C 10—were sought out and carefully removed (Fig. 13.18). The work was also thoroughly and consistently carried out. In one relief (D 21), the inconspicuous genitals of no less than *four* male figures were thoughtfully removed—those of a boy divinity (Agon), a herm pillar, and two baby Erotes.

The few fully naked females also had their genital area visibly mutilated: both frontal figures in a relief of the Three Graces (D 6, Fig. 13.19), and Penthesilea in a classical composition with Achilles (D 45, Fig. 13.20). In each case the pudenda was hit sharply once or twice with a small hammer or chisel, causing a rough shallow visible gash in the marble surface. Since there was not much in the ‘classical’ rendering of the female pudenda to remove, the tool action in this area had more the effect of drawing attention both to the nudity and its supposed remedy. This was no doubt the intention. Naked female breasts seem also to have been deliberately mutilated: breasts were removed, or the nipples were chiselled off.²⁶ The latter action has a similar effect to that of placing red stickers on breasts on the front of modern top-shelf magazines.

In these adjustments, naked female figures are mutilated, and naked male figures are de-sexed. Their pervasive extent is represented in Fig. 13.21. This project was responding to a new set of interlocking Christian ideas about the body, sex, morals, licentious behaviour, and illicit reproduction. Genital removal was widespread in late antiquity for re-used naked pagan statues. Of course, many classical naked statues have also reached us with their private parts intact. The important factor

(Claudius). Heroes and gods: C 30 (child with Hygieia), C 32 (Ares). D 3 (Anchises), D 5 (Poseidon), D 9 (hero), D 12 (Herakles), D 19 (Triptolemos), D 20 (satyr), D 21 (Agon, all four figures), D 24 (Drunken Dionysos), D 28 (Polyphemos), D 29 (Argos with Io), D 30 (Achilles), D 36 (Bellerophon), D 37 (Antaios), D 38 (Heroic couple), D 43 (Prometheus), D 45 (Achilles with Penthesilea), D 46 (Telephos), D 47 (Dionysos), D 50 (Herakles with boar), D 51 (Dionysos with satyr).

²⁶ Breasts removed: Nike (C 20), Nymph with Drunk Dionysos (D 24), Thetis with Achilles (D 30), Heroine in heroic couple (D 38), Penthesilea with Achilles (D 45). Nipples removed: Left Grace (D 6), Deianira with Herakles and Nessos (D 12), Io with Argos (D 29).



Fig. 13.16a–b. Dionysos with nymph and satyr (D 24), with detail of hammered genitals (second storey, Room 8, left).



Fig. 13.17. Claudius' chiselled genitals (C 29), detail of Fig. 13.14b.

was probably the context in which the statues were displayed and used. Public baths, for example, a locus of much late antique statue display, were from a Christian perspective, potentially dangerous places, and in order to ease everyone's use and enjoyment of these magnificent cultural facilities, it was generally agreed that old statues in baths should normally be de-genitaled.²⁷ So too probably in the Sebasteion: for the continued

²⁷ Hannestad 2001 is an excellent study of this phenomenon.



Fig. 13.18. Claudius' genitals chiselled off behind arm of Britannia (C 10), detail of Fig. 13.4.

use of the complex by all interested parties, offensive genital-display was dealt with. Medieval Christian iconography that demands naked males (Adam, Jonah, Jesus at his baptism) usually either concealed or simply omitted their genitals.²⁸

²⁸ Two examples: (1) In the mosaics of Monreale in Sicily: Kitzynger 1995, fig. 23, Jesus' baptism; Kitzynger 1996, figs. 27–9, 32–4, 38 and 41, Adam. (2) In the reliefs of



Fig. 13.19a–c. Three Graces, with details of genital-defacing of two frontal figures (D 6: second storey, Room 2, left).



Fig. 13.20a–b. Achilles and Penthesilea, with genital-defacing of both figures (D 45: second storey, Room 15, left).

the church (tenth century) on the island of Ahtamar in Lake Van: Harada 2003, 77, Adam, with no genitals at all; 35, Jonah lying naked under his tree, with only vestigial genitals. But note that Christ has genitals still dimly visible in the water of the Jordan in the ceiling mosaics of the two famous fifth-century baptisteries in Ravenna.

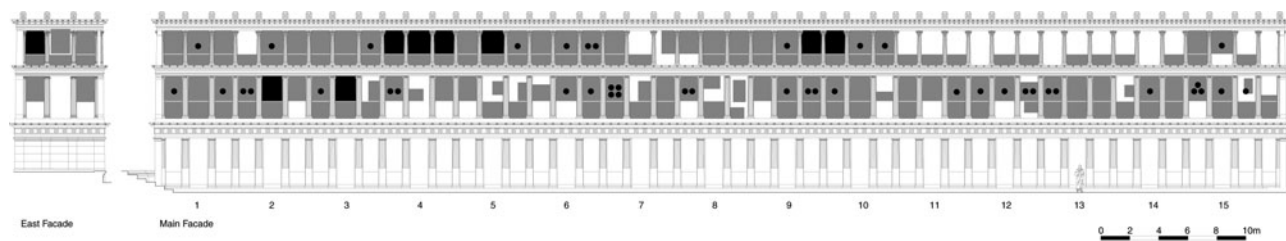


Fig. 13.21. Sebasteion, South Building. Defaced reliefs (black), as in Fig. 13.6, with genital mutilations added (black dots).

CONVERTING AND DEFACING: SEBASTEION AND PARTHENON

The careful defacing of the nine whole reliefs in the South Building that showed acts of sacrifice or petitionable images of the old gods was something rather different from the genital clean-up—different in kind, scale, and effect. It had to do with gods, daemons, cult, sacrifice, and theology, things that had been the big issues of late antique Christianity, from the period of the persecutions to the fifth century. Cult statues and cult images of the old gods were removed piecemeal from temples in the cities and sanctuaries around the empire, from probably the late fourth century and the Theodosian legislation onwards. They could be destroyed (smashed up, ground down, buried, disappeared) or moved, recuperated, and rebranded as art.²⁹ Votive reliefs showing acts of pagan worship could be defaced, for example, in the Asklepieion in Athens.³⁰ The pagan figured decoration of buildings, however, usually survived if the building did. The defacing of architectural reliefs of the kind we see in the Sebasteion was in fact rare. It was virtually unknown in the perhaps less theologically excitable western empire (no one thought to deface the sacrificial scenes so prominently displayed on monuments in Rome) and was not common in the eastern empire. It is attested in a few places, and is difficult to date: for example, in Egyptian temples, in the smaller of the two famous temples at Heliopolis–Baalbek (temple of Bacchus), in a Nabataean temple at Khirbet edh-Dharikh in Jordan, and perhaps most famously in the Parthenon in Athens.³¹

Sometime in late antiquity, the Parthenon was badly burned in a major fire in which it lost its roof. This roof-less ruin was converted into a church in the late fifth or early sixth century, and like those of the Sebasteion, its sculptures were treated in a highly thoughtful,

²⁹ On various aspects of pagan statues in late antiquity: Mango 1963, Brandenburg 1989, Donderer 1991/2, Hjort 1993, Lepelley 1994, Scheer 2001, Stewart 2003, 290–9, Sauer 2003, Bassett 2004, Bauer and Witschel 2007, Kaldellis 2007, Deligiannakis 2008, Jacobs 2010.

³⁰ Asklepieion reliefs defaced: Svoronos 1908–37, III, no. 372; Gregory 1986, 237–8; Melfi 2007, 407.

³¹ Egypt: Sauer 2003, 89–101; Kristiansen 2009. Heliopolis–Baalbek: Wiegand 1925. Jordan: Villeneuve and al-Muheisen 1994, 745 (seventh or eighth century) and 2003; McKenzie 2003. Parthenon: below.

selective, negotiated way, probably at the time of the conversion, though possibly later.³² The metopes of the east, west, and north sides of the temple were defaced in the same visible manner as the reliefs of the Sebasteion. They carried mythological narrative scenes of Amazons, Giants, and the Sack of Troy, without any particular aspects that could be thought offensive from a Christian point of view. Caution was exercised for the famous metope, last on the north side at the west end (no. 32), where two mysterious female figures were spared after discussion, perhaps by a brilliant ad hoc interpretation of the scene as a Christian annunciation.³³ The Centauromachy metopes of the south side were entirely spared. Probably it was argued there was no need to deface them, because they were out of the way, not on the main route round the building. The frieze, barely visible and mostly inoffensive, was also for the most part spared.³⁴ Most surprising, given the treatment of the metopes, is that one or both colossal pedimental groups, featuring great dynastic divine events, were preserved untouched.³⁵ The pediments represented founding events of the city (Athena's birth and her winning of Attica) and were argued forcefully by someone to be recuperable in a Christian setting—whether as inalienable badges of a city still called 'Athens', or reinterpreted in some Christian way. We might guess that the metopes, with much less pagan theological content than the pediments, were sacrificed in a canny deal that saved the pedimental sculptures. It was a good decision: the pediments, now sadly ruined, were *tours de force*.

Recently it has been stressed that the Parthenon was a temple like other temples,³⁶ and that its appearance as a pagan temple remained

³² Frantz 1965; Mango 1995; Ward-Perkins, 1999, 233–40; and now, in more detail, Kaldellis 2009, ch. 1, 11–53, 'Conversions of the Parthenon'. On temple–church conversions more generally, see Ward-Perkins 2003; Bayliss 2004; and Ward-Perkins 2011, as well as the papers collected in Brands and Severin 2003.

³³ See now Pollini 2007, 214–16.

³⁴ Pollini 2007 studies some intentional damage (removing and defacing heads) to the central part of the east frieze and part of the north frieze.

³⁵ The west pediment was certainly preserved untouched, as seen in its Carrey drawing of 1674; the east pediment *may* have remained until a larger east apse was constructed for the church in the twelfth century (so, cautiously, Ward-Perkins 1999, 236), or have been pulled down at the time of the late antique conversion (so Pollini 2007, 211–12).

³⁶ Kaldellis 2009, 12: 'There does not appear to have been anything special about the Parthenon, the building in particular'.

largely unchanged.³⁷ Both points have some force but can be modulated slightly. The two points are in fact connected: (1) the Parthenon was highly unusual for a classical Doric temple in having a very wide *cella* that in itself was able to meet the congregational needs of the new church, without using or including the pteron. (2) The new church consisted only of the re-roofed *cella*, while the pteron, the space between the outer colonnade and the *cella*, remained unroofed all round. In the church, therefore, it could have been argued, there was no longer an integral architectural connection between the old 'pagan' columnar peristasis and the new church (*cella*) inside. The colonnade was now a decorative columnar screen, that carried the old west pediment (certainly) and perhaps the old east pediment too, both rebranded or reinterpreted in some way, as well as the intact south metopes and defaced metopes on the other three sides. In other words, although it may not seem much to a modern viewer, there was *some* visual and conceptual distance placed between the pagan temple and the Christian church—a distance that in such a tightly metered negotiation about symbols was found sufficient and defensible.

There was of course no real need or logic to the defacing of either the Parthenon or the Sebasteion, and the lack of consistent reasoning in the adjustments to the Parthenon sculptures shows its arbitrary, symbolic nature. The common factor was that both buildings had been given new functions and continued to be intensively used by a wide range of citizens; both also displayed extensive and truly impressive programmes of lavishly carved marble sculpture of a more or less strong pagan flavour. The Parthenon became a church, the Sebasteion became a retail and manufacturing centre, visited and worked in by Jews, Christians, and others. They were state-of-the-art pagan cult places with new purposes but which could claim correctly to be parts of the monumental identity of their respective communities, repositories of long civic memory and history.

Once conversion to church (Parthenon) or public mall (Sebasteion) had been agreed, claims could be made on both pagan and Christian sides about what should be removed that was offensive to some part of the new user group, and what should be preserved that was dear to other parts of the user group. When it was agreed, in the light of strength of feeling, that *something* should be done to

³⁷ Ward-Perkins 1999, 235: 'the external appearance of the building was left almost entirely unchanged'; Kaldellis 2009, 39: 'never shed its pagan appearance'.

accommodate contemporary religious concerns, we may imagine that detailed public discussion and negotiation were required before any part of these great structures was touched. Whatever was done was the result of a consensus, and what was agreed was carried out in a controlled, careful, verifiable manner. Although sacrifice as a religious practice was already looked on by many late antique pagans as something old-fashioned and unnecessary,³⁸ few would have been in favour of defacing these old monuments. On the other side, given how highly selective the defacing was, we should think that a decent proportion of Christian citizens were either comfortable with or actively enjoyed and identified with the culture and memory represented by these sculptures. The big difference between the treatment of these two converted old monuments, was of course that the Parthenon had become a Christian cult building, while the Sebasteion had merely become part of a desacralized public space. In this perspective, the adjustments to the Parthenon look modest, those to the Sebasteion look much more confrontational. There is ample evidence for strong following of the old gods until at least the late fifth century at Aphrodisias, and serious conflict with Christians is well attested.³⁹ The defacing of the Sebasteion was unusual: we should imagine that it was publicly authorized but also surely contested.

LOCAL CONTEXT AND DATE

When did the defacing of the 'dangerous' reliefs at Aphrodisias take place? Obviously nothing datable can be attached to this undertaking, but it was part of the wider Christian engagement with the pagan presence in the city, some aspects of which have a broadly datable context, between outside limits of say AD 400–600. The fabric of the classical city was permeated with monuments, images, and inscriptions that attested to the continuing power and presence of the old gods, particularly of course of the city goddess, Aphrodite. To Christian citizens, depending on point of view, they were a source of cultivated delight, a mild irritation, a direct provocation, or a

³⁸ Stroumsa 2009, 58–62.

³⁹ Roueché 1989, 85–93; Athanassiadi 1999, 24–38; Trombley 2001, II. 4–15, 52–73; Chaniotis 2008b.

threatening danger. To pagan citizens, they constituted the soul, the identity, and the effective protection of the city.⁴⁰

A major turning point in this debate surely coincided with, indeed was marked by, the conversion of the temple of Aphrodite into a church. This happened sometime after the later fifth century, a date established by coin evidence found in recent investigation,⁴¹ so perhaps in the late fifth or early sixth century.

A long stand-off, truce, or *modus vivendi* between pagans and Christians at Aphrodisias had lasted through the fifth century: governors and local aristocrats aided in principal by imperial legislation had protected the classical monuments. Some pagan cult remained alive in private, but public monuments were now stripped of ritual and rebranded as harmless ornaments of city life. By the time the old temple-cum-museum was turned into a church, the local defenders of traditional ways had surely found their power relations with the bishop and his followers markedly changed. Where once there had been an elegant and open colonnaded temple of the city goddess, there was now a great closed, cubic mass of new cathedral masonry.⁴² This important symbolic victory marked an important step, we may guess, in a series of other Christian initiatives aimed at reducing the unimpeded visual presence of Aphrodite and her camp-followers in the city.

The Tetrapylon, restored in the early fifth century, had the central vegetal figure of Aphrodite in its west pediment decoration erased and replaced by a prominent cross (perhaps at the same time as the restoration).⁴³ Two large marble statues of the city goddess were removed and disposed of: one, probably from the Bouleuterion, was found built into and buried in a later wall between the Bouleuterion and the sanctuary of Aphrodite, and the other was found broken into small pieces around a late antique house (the so-called Bishop's Palace) to the west of the Bouleuterion. This residential-style complex may have replaced the city's prytaneion, which could be expected next to the Bouleuterion, and where there would undoubtedly have

⁴⁰ Useful general collection of mainly literary evidence on this subject: Saradi-Mendelovici 1990.

⁴¹ Smith and Ratté 1995, 44–6.

⁴² Ratté 2001, 130–33.

⁴³ Paul 1996, 3, fig. 2; Outschar 1996, fig. 18a; Brody 2007, 7, fig. 3.

been a statue of the city goddess.⁴⁴ Eventually a programme was begun, but not carried through systematically, to erase Aphrodite's name from the city's public inscribed documents. The inscriptions on the Archive Wall in the Theatre were extensively 'treated' in this way: the name 'Aphrodite' and 'Aphrodisian(s)' were carefully and visibly erased.⁴⁵

None of these radical Christian undertakings to deactivate the noxious powers of old gods and old images can be dated, but they form a helpful background against which the defacing of the Sebasteion reliefs can be assessed. The defacing was done carefully, selectively or minimally, and cautiously. Both full defacing and the 'lesser' genital and breast mutilation required planning, resources, and scaffolding. We should place this sanitizing activity probably in the later fifth or sixth century, after the great strengthening of the bishop's hand attested by the conversion of the temple of Aphrodite into a church and before the turmoil in city life and eventual collapse of what remained of the Sebasteion building in the seventh century. The knowledge, careful targeting, consistency, precise decision-making, and careful execution all might argue in favour of an earlier date within the available period. If everyone agreed, as they later seem to have, that pagan images were empty and sacrifice a redundant habit, then the defacing might have had more point earlier than later. These however are slender indications.

CONCLUSION

Nine out of eighty reliefs in the Sebasteion's South Building were systematically and visibly defaced. They are evidence of a 'hard' response: violent assault that is meticulously represented in the erased image. But set in the context of the whole monument and of some seventy other reliefs that were *not* defaced, the negotiation can be seen to have been more complex, the attitudes more nuanced than simply those of 'soft' assimilationists or 'hard' image-haters. In

⁴⁴ Brody 2007, 8–15, nos. 1–2, pls. 1–6; Berenfeld 2009, 219–20. Compare the burial of the high-quality marble Artemis of Ephesos statues in the Ephesos prytaneion: Scherrer 2000, 84–6.

⁴⁵ Roueché 1989, 148–50, and 1991, 107.

contemporary and local terms, at Aphrodisias around AD 500, as much as possible of a great city monument was left untouched (indeed was carefully maintained). From several perspectives—classical, pagan, or Christian humanist—nothing of course really needed to be done to the reliefs, and the defacing was at some level the result of vexatious theological conflict. It was surely discussed, contested, negotiated. In Christian thinking, however, the complex was not so much brutalized as made safe and good for its new function as a grand commercial mall. As a repository of the city's collective memory, the display of reliefs was in contemporary thinking cleaned, updated, and improved, for the spiritual health and safety of all.

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