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EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

We are delighted to present the eighth volume of the *CERES Graduate Journal for Classics and Archaeology*. *CERES* has had its stops and starts. The journal was first published in 1989 and continued into 1990 with volume two, after which there was a twenty-seven-year gap until volume three and four in 2017 and 2018 respectively. Volume five came out in 2023 and *CERES* has been published annually ever since–volume six in 2024, seven in 2025, and now volume eight in 2026.

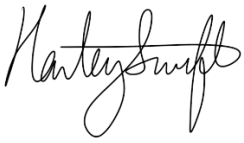
CERES implements a multidisciplinary approach to Classics and Archaeology, inviting graduate students from a variety of fields across Canada to share their research on antiquity. The authors featured in this volume are enrolled in Ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern Studies, Art History and Art Conservation, Anthropology, Classics and Archaeology, Classical Studies, and English.

This year's volume includes eight articles with content spanning chronologically from the 6th century BCE to the 17th century CE and geographically encompasses regions around the Mediterranean such as Carthage, Egypt, Greece, Italy, and beyond. The topics explored are equally diverse: slavery, the decoration of domestic interiors, the representation of women in poetry, magic and curse tablets, death and healing, philosophical inquiry, and places of association. Despite the large scope, these articles share several related themes: the ways in which remnants of the ancient world (architectural ruins, textiles, literature, and more) reflect lived experiences and belief systems, the vulnerability and exploitation of those at the margins of society, and the exchange and blending of cultures. Each article is accompanied by original artwork created through collaboration between artist and author to capture the essence of the research.

It has been our absolute pleasure to have spent the past year assembling a team and guiding this journal to its eighth volume and fourth consecutive year of publication. We know that great things are to come for *CERES* in the future.

Joshua Holmes A Court

Hailey Swift



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This journal was made possible by the hard work and dedication of our publication team. Thank you to our peer-reviewers, Alexander Baillie, Laura Bernier, Noah Denis-Gordon, Paige Kelly, Neil Patterson, Aydn Quinn, Melinda Robinson, Leslie Rodriguez, and Anna Smythe, for working and communicating with authors to refine their articles and make the journal the best that it can be. Thank you to our copy editors, Emily Croft and Neil Patterson, who produced the final edits of each journal and passionately worked to make the journal aesthetically pleasing. Thank you to our wonderful artists, Kaitlyn O'Leary, Anna Storms, and Julia Wysotski, who collaborated to design the cover illustration and produced individual pieces for each article. We would also like to thank the work of our social media team, Laura Bernier and Kaitlyn O'Leary, who did an excellent job advertising the journal and updating the *CERES* social media. We are very thankful to the authors who submitted their fascinating articles to this year's edition of *CERES*.

We would like to express our deepest gratitude to the generous supporters of this volume of the journal, the Classics and Archaeology Department, the Principal's Student Initiative Fund, and the SGSPA initiative fund. Thanks to our treasurer, Dante Campanella, who was instrumental in securing funding for the journal this year.

We would also like to give our thanks to the Classics Department and the Classics and Archaeology Graduate Council (CAGC) as a whole for their contribution to the success of this journal. In particular, we would like to extend our gratitude to the Program Administrator of the Classics Department, Shannon Day, who patiently answered our questions, shared resources, and assisted us in navigating the bureaucracy of Queen's University.

It is also important that we acknowledge the contributions of previous publication teams, whose roots extend back from 1989 to 2025. The predecessors to this eighth volume of *CERES* fundamentally shaped the journal into what it is today.

Nos, Iosue et Hailia, omnibus lectricibus lectoribusque nostris plurimas et profundas gratias agimus profundas.

We hope you all enjoy the eighth volume of CERES!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAPERS

SLAVERY, CELIBACY, AND SEXUAL EXPLOITATION: LATE ANTIQUE PERSPECTIVES ON ENSLAVEMENT IN SALVIAN'S *GOVERNANCE OF GOD*

Robert Carrusca
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Art by Kaitlyn O'Leary

In his monograph, *Slavery in the Late Roman World: AD 275-425,* Kyle Harper summarizes historiographic discussions of the so-called "amelioration" of slavery in Roman Late Antiquity. Harper describes how amelioration, the supposed Late Antique trend of the increasingly less brutal treatment of slaves, "was so entrenched [in scholarship]... that the debate was not whether amelioration happened, but whether Stoicism, Christianity, or economic change was to be credited."[1] Although the idea of amelioration has "quietly faded from respectability," there remains discourse on whether or not Christianity made slavery less cruel.[2] During the fourth and fifth centuries, Christian leaders were under increasing pressure to determine how Roman institutions, like the wholesale practice of slavery, fit into their systems of belief. It was not a question of *if*, but rather *how* slavery would function under Christianity. Both literary and archaeological evidence of the fourth and fifth centuries attests that enslavement remained persistent well after the widespread adoption of Christianity across the Roman Empire, with distinct efforts made to map pre-existing social stratifications onto a Christian system. Perhaps most persistent within the minds of Late Antique polemicists was the uncomfortable issue of sexual relations with the enslaved, with Christian dogma advocating for a universal chastity that challenged pre-existing sexual conventions that allowed male liaisons with social inferiors. Ultimately, the Christian principles that emerged "represented neither a critique of, nor a challenge to, the Roman ideology of slavery," but instead, as Harper succinctly quips, "a baptized version of it," with stipulations of treatment for those in servitude largely unchanged from the centuries prior.[3]

It was within the context of a "baptized" version of slavery in a newly emergent Christian society that Salvian of Marseilles wrote. Salvian of Marseilles was a Christian polemicist of the fifth century, writing from Gaul, during a time of imperial anxiety. During his life, he faced frequent 'barbarian' incursions, foreshadowing the diminishment of imperial power outside of the Italian peninsula. Such concern also features predominantly in the works of other late fourth- and early fifth-century writers, like Orosius and Augustine, who attempt to find reason for the collapse of a newly Christian empire within the ideological framework of the new religion.[4] At its heart, Salvian's magnum opus *The Governance of God* seeks to admonish the populace of the Roman Empire for causing its corruption, which, in his theological view, is collectively encouraging disdain from the Christian god.[5] His criticisms, however, fall short of slavery, instead focusing upon ideological concerns over acts deemed transgressive according to prevailing Christian dogma.

Within Salvian's *Governance of God*, book seven, chapter four serves as a fascinating text indicative of

[1] Kyle Harper, *Slavery in the Late Roman World: AD 275-425* (Cambridge University Press, 2011), 209.
[2] Harper, *Slavery,* 210.
[3] Harper, *Slavery,* 212.
[4] Jonathan Stutz, "'When God sees us in the circuses': Salvian of Marseilles' *De Gubernatione Dei* and the Critique of Roman Society," *Early Medieval Europe* 31, no. 1 (2023): 21-22.
[5] Stutz, "When God sees us," 4.

the ideological shift from Roman polytheism to Christianity, with all the social and legal ramifications that so occupied the minds of Late Antique authors. Salvian's chapter is primarily concerned over perceived sexual immorality between masters and their slaves, and offers criticism of such practice for, in Salvian's view, the betterment of society. Through an examination of this passage, along with evidence from other Christian authors and archaeological evidence, I argue that while Salvian views the sexual exploitation of slaves with disdain, he holds few qualms about the actual practice of human enslavement, an attitude reflective of broader perspectives prevalent during the Late Roman Empire. The reason Salvian's primary concern was not slavery was because under the Christian worldview of the fifth century, sexual exploitation of the enslaved was viewed as an ideological peril on moral, hierarchical, and religious observational grounds, whereas the general practice of slavery—however brutal—was not.[6]

Salvian's primary concern towards the ideological detriment of extramarital sexuality illustrates his acceptance of the broader practice, as his concern over the moral wellbeing of the men enacting such abuse takes priority over the injustice of enslavement itself. Religious scholar Jonathan Stutz writes that Salvian proposes a collectivist stance throughout his work, wherein the individual sinner is not only liable for their own actions, but also for the effects of their behavior upon the community as a whole.[7] This materializes in the micro scale in Salvian's criticism of sexual exploitation. While Salvian critiques the actions of the enslaver, he expresses anxiety over how the actions of the individual reflect the household. The "master's position within his household is like that of the head to the body," he writes, "his own lifestyle sets a standard of behaviour for everyone."[8] He continues, contending "how corrupted will the slaves have been, when their masters were so utterly corrupt…"[9] This corruption, though, is not general disdain for the exploitation of slaves. A general criticism of slave exploitation is inapplicable to his words in this clause. While Salvian does not describe explicitly that it is extramarital sex he is concerned about, it is the only logical variable that applies to his criticism: an excessive abuse of power in hitting or beating does not *morally* corrupt the enslaved under Christian ideology, instead only affecting them physically and psychologically.

Salvian expresses particular concern on sexual immorality as a source of contagion. Under emerging Christian ideology, extramarital sex was envisioned as a moral detriment—a corrupting force—affecting all parties involved, with particular responsibility falling on the family patriarch for allowing the corruption to occur. Under Salvian's Christian perspective, extramarital sex was a moral pathogen: "what the morals of slaves will have been like under these circumstances," he writes, "when the morals of the head of the household had sunk as low as that."[10] Here, the ambiguous "that" obliquely indicates extramarital sexual engagements. While extramarital sexual expressions were seen as especially corrupting for women given the social value of virginity within Roman Late Antiquity, Salvian nonetheless underscores that the sexual licentiousness of the male master is the primary moral contagion. He ascribes responsibility to the "head of the household" for moral upkeep, but also places culpability on the enslaved for their sexual participation, and hence moral corruption.[11] The fact the master is taking advantage of a slave is not the issue for Salvian; the power dynamic is only mentioned insofar as the moral influence of the master to their human property, and

[6] Within this work I focus on the conversation forwarded by Salvian in book seven, chapter four of his *Governance of God*, which exclusively centres on the sexual exploitation of female slaves by male enslavers. This is not to say that the sexual exploitation of men and boys did not occur: as Kyle Harper writes, this was a frequent occurrence well into Late Antiquity (Harper, 296). As my essay will explore, sex was becoming a topic highly governed by emerging Christian dogmas in the fourth and fifth centuries. Extramarital male-female sex was advocated as problematic by church authorities on account of it being extramarital, whereas homosexual intercourse (mainly male-male, focused on by polemicists) was advocated against on the grounds of homosexuality. For more information on the nuances of illicit intercourse in heterosexual versus homosexual contexts, see Kathy L. Gaca, *The Making of Fornication: Eros, Ethics, and Political Reform in Greek Philosophy and Early Christianity* (University of California Press, 2003), 142-143; A similarly pertinent caveat worth noting is that while not every sexual union between a master and his slave was nonconsensual, because of master-slave power dynamics, the possibility of true consent, given free of duress, was impossible. Recognizing this, I include all sexual unions of the enslaved and masters under the category of sexual exploitation or the near-synonymous term sexual abuse, for although some may not have been nonconsensual, *all* slaves had little recourse to avoid such advances. See Harper, 284, for more discussion on terminology.

[7] Stutz, "When God sees us," 5.

[8] Salvian, *Governance of God* 7.4, in *Greek and Roman Slavery*, ed. Thomas Wiedemann (Routledge, 1980), 172.

[9] Salvian, *Governance of God* 7.4.

[10] Salvian, *Governance of God* 7.4.

[11] Salvian, *Governance of God* 7.4.

his responsibility in maintaining chaste moral actions. Salvian's primary concern is merely that extramarital sexuality is occurring: to have sex outside the bounds of marriage, Salvian conceives, contaminates the spiritual wellbeing of all those under his patriarchal domain, with special notice paid to those perceived to be complicit in such sexual unions. As such, Salvian extends guilt upon the enslaved for such sexual unions positing them as equally at fault in the transgression through writing of their decreased morals, and yet, legally, no such agency existed. The enslaved had no autonomy as the property of their master, and thus no legal right to object to unwanted sexual participation.

To understand why Salvian sees extramarital sexual expression as detrimental, one must understand the shift in moral attitudes that occurred with the Roman adoption of Christianity in the fourth and fifth centuries. Under polytheism, prominent Roman attitudes entailed an accepted sexual double standard, whereby the sexuality of respectable women was confined to marriage, but for men it was not. Men could engage in sexual unions outside marriage so long as the individual with whom they engaged was hierarchically inferior.[12] However, following the widespread establishment of Christianity across the Roman Empire, both women *and* men were expected to keep fidelity. This expression of the importance of marital sexual fidelity originates with the earliest of Christian writings. In the mid first century CE, Paul of Tarsus writes "I wish that all were as I myself am" (i.e., abstinent) but, "because of cases of sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband."[13] While advocating for celibacy, Paul allows for heterosexual marriage to ensure an acceptable context for sex. Paul's writings were adopted and reiterated by Christian theologians and philosophers, like Salvian, over the next four centuries of the Roman Empire, and reflect a distinct shift from pre-Christian moral attitudes concerning appropriate settings for sexual expression.

This view is recapitulated by writers like John Chrysostom, writing just under a century earlier than Salvian, who follows in Paul's footsteps in deconstructing the polytheistic Roman framework of sexual immorality as Christianity was adopted. Chrysostom writes, "do not show me the laws of the outside world, which say a woman committing adultery is to be brought to a trial, but that men with wives who do it with slave-girls are not considered guilty." Chrysostom continues, stating that, "even a man commits adultery, if he has a wife but fulfills his lascivious desires with a slave-girl or any public whore."[14] The "even" reflects that many fourth century beliefs held otherwise, whereas his view, the emerging Christian view, put forth a perspective that saw male infidelity as equally as abhorrent as that of women. To Chrysostom, like Salvian a century later, it was not the sexual violation of slaves that proved the issue, but a sexual sin: an affront to the Christian god, and a neglect of the male enslaver's own conscience and salvation. A male had an equal responsibility to remain chaste and thus morally pure as women were previously required, and hence had a moral obligation to not sacrifice sanctity for sexual pleasure. It is precisely this concern that is manifested in Salvian's criticism of the sexual engagement with the enslaved. By the time of the fourth and fifth century, extramarital sexual unions were still occurring with the enslaved, as Cam Grey writes using the example of Paulinus of Pellas, however they were now "sheepish" in their "admission of paternity" given the "awkward place in legal and social thought" that such relationships now occupied.[15] This ideological shift is crucial in understanding why Salvian asserts the sexual exploitation of the enslaved is a detriment: it is negative for the reason of its propensity to morally lessen the male enslaver and those around him through the violation of proposed religious behaviour, not on account of any abuse of power over the vulnerable.

Secondly, the Salvian's preoccupation over the hierarchical standing of free women within the social stratigraphy of Roman Late Antiquity demonstrates his acceptance of the wholesale practice of slavery, for it is women of high social station rather than the exploited enslaved upon whom Salvian places utmost concern. Salvian's concern focusses on the threatened social standing of the *wives* of men enacting sexual abuse rather than those enduring it, indicating the motivation for his criticism is ideologically grounded in perceived social ramifications of extramarital sexuality activity. The wives of slave-owning men require the most consideration because of the perceived threat to social hierarchy stemming from what Salvian conceives of as pseudo-marriages

[12] Harper, *Slavery,* 288-289.
[13] 1 Cor 7:7, 7:2 NRSV.
[14] Chrysostom, *Propter Fornicationes* 1.4, in Harper, 282.
[15] Cam Grey, "Slavery in the late Roman world," in *The Cambridge World History of Slavery,* ed. Keith Bradley and Paul Cartledge (Cambridge University Press, 2011), 497.

between the master and their enslaved victims. Through the concern over these de-facto marriages, Salvian's concern is conceptually drawn from emergent Christian values on hierarchy rather than over discomfort over slavery.

The nature of extramarital sexual exploitation of the enslaved, according to Salvian, threatens the status of the wife. As described above, Salvian subscribes to the ideas of Paul surrounding the detrimental religious effects of sex outside of heterosexual marriage. Uniquely, Paul's view asserts that such rules applied to husbands also, something reiterated by later authors. As discussed, this contrasts pre-Christian, polytheistic Roman views, where although respectable women were confined to sex exclusively in marriage under the ideal of *pudicitia*, men could engage in multiple sexual expressions. This could include concubines, prostitutes, and the enslaved of either sex so long as he took a penetrative role. As a result of the writings of authors of the early Jesus movement and Christ groups, like Paul of Tarsus, later Christian writers of the fourth and fifth centuries saw strict sexual fidelity as applicable to *both* male and female parties. As a consequence of this new vision of sex and marriage as one and the same, extramarital sexual relations were frequently treated *as if* it were an expression of marriage.

When men have sex with their slaves, Salvian articulates, they impose an image of marriage upon such unions as under his view marriage and sex were conflated. Salvian writes that the sexual exploitation of the enslaved threatened wives and their domestic status, saying "the lady of the household certainly [does] not maintain her power" when her "rights as a wife have not been kept safe and unchallenged."[16] As a consequence, he writes, "when the head of the household behaves like the husband of the slave girls, his wife is not far removed from the status of a slave."[17] To Salvian, the concern is class: the slave girl, through sex, is usurping her inferiority as a slave to the position as head mistress of the household, a partner in a morganatic marriage. This, as with the moral concerns over the male head of the household, again imposes culpability upon the enslaved, while recognizing a wife's position to decrease through association with exploited slaves. Extramarital sex, according to Salvian, is not only a disease that eats away the propriety of the Christian household, it also serves to the detriment of the *status* of it by affecting the matron. Salvian reiterates his point, blaming the female slave for her own exploitation, asking, "was there any wealthy Aquitanian [male] whose promiscuous slave girls didn't have a right to look on him as their lover—or their husband?"[18]

As a result of the conflation of sex and marriage in early Christianity, in tandem with these class discrepancies, the slave is brought up to the level of wife, and the wife is brought down to the level of slave. This view of sexual immorality and hierarchy is advocated by Paul in his letter to the Corinthians, writing "not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother or sister who is sexually immoral or greedy, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or robber," emphasizing their social inferiority, and to "not even eat with such a one."[19] Paul even goes so far as to insist to Jesus followers they must "drive out the wicked person from among you."[20] It is this logic that manifests in Salvian's *Governance of God*, wherein the concern for moral contagion combines with the concern for hierarchy, with the status of wife of concern through the effects of the corrupting nature of extramarital sexual activity.

While marriage with enslaved or formerly enslaved women presented social stigma, in many cases, it was also illegal. As Judith Evans Grubbs writes, Constantine extended Augustan prohibitions on marriage between elites and freedwomen to include local and provincial dignitaries as well.[21] It is not surprising then why the confusion of class distinctions through the sexual exploitation of the enslaved presents such an issue to Salvian in his criticism of the behaviour of the Gallic provincial elite. Ironically, it was the same class discrepancies that *allowed* the extramarital sexual unions under pre-Christian Rome that in the fourth and fifth centuries now presented a problem. For husbands five centuries prior, non-citizen or enslaved status is what *enabled* extramarital sexual gratification. By the fifth century, however, Savian's writings indicate that new Christian marriage and sexual fidelity requirements for men presented

[16] Salvian, *Governance of God* 7.4.
[17] Salvian, *Governance of God* 7.4.
[18] Salvian, *Governance of God* 7.4.
[19] 1 Cor 5:11, NRSV.
[20] 1 Cor 5:13, NRSV. This verse references Deuteronomy 13.5 and 17.7.
[21] Judith Evans Grubbs, "Constantine and Imperial Legislation on the Family," in *The Theodosian Code: Studies in the Imperial Law of Late Antiquity,* ed. Jill Harries and Ian Wood (Duckworth, 1993), 131.

complications that lead to a confusion class, to the detriment of wives. Salvian's concern for wives indicates that his objection to slave sexual exploitation is primarily focused on the detriments of sex as an ideological construct, through posited hierarchical consequences that stem from new spiritual conceptions of marriage, rather than an awareness of the malignant effects of enslavement.

Lastly, Salvian's criticism of the sexual exploitation of the enslaved is cemented as derivative of ideological concerns through his consternation over the improper religious observances of the sexually exploited party. Salvian's preoccupation with sexual relations between master and slave disrupting the spiritual observance of the enslaved illustrates how his objection is on the grounds of the prevention of religious observance, with an apathetic response on the negative effects in disregarding human autonomy and choice when subject to exploitation. While portions of book seven, chapter four of Salvian's *The Governance of God* appear to advocate for the bodily autonomy of slaves, his primary concern is how sexual exploitation prohibits expression of faith. Other examples from the fourth and fifth centuries corroborate Salvian's perspective, showing that the use of the bodies and labour of the enslaved remained acceptable both legally and socially, so long as it did not impede Christian doctrine.

Kyle Harper writes that, pre-Christianity, "the Roman state had a policy of protecting the chastity of honorable females while deliberately exposing dishonored females," namely, slaves and prostitutes.[22] This two-handed treatment of women persisted, until the increasingly dominant Christian expectations in the fourth and fifth centuries asserted that chastity, for all women, presented an opportunity to express faith. With time, this idea morphed from chastity being one of *many* ways to express faith to chastity being *central* to a woman's expression of faith. This aligned with the rise of Christian asceticism.[23] As sex and marriage were conflated, so too was chastity with faith. Kathy L. Gaca writes that while Paul wanted the proliferation of a new generation of Christians, his expressions of the importance of abstinence "suggest[ed] that perpetual virginity [was] an ideal for Christians to adopt," and that specifically, "devoted female virgins fit [his] imagery perfectly."[24] In a sense, Christianity democratized chastity, with the ideal of sexual asceticism appreciated not just for the elite, but for all women regardless of class.

The chaste ideal is present in accounts of Christian martyrdom and conversion narratives, undoubtedly most popularly with the second century *Acts of Thecla.* Historian of Christian Late Antiquity James Corke-Webster writes that by the fourth century, "tales of Thecla were in wide circulation," and that "she had become a model for female study and emulation."[25] It is known that such accounts, by the time of Salvian, occupied a prominent space in Christian imagination. The *Passion of Eugenia,* dated between the fourth and sixth centuries, describes how 16-year old Eugenia, "having discovered Christian ascetic literature…refuses her marriage, cuts her hair, dresses like a boy, and ventures out into the wider Mediterranean as a Christian."[26] What spurs her faith, and subsequent chastity, is reading *Acts of Thecla*. Regardless of the historical veracity of the *Passion of Eugenia,* it reflects the reality wherein chastity presented a means for Late Antique women to exert autonomy by achieving reverence in their faith. Virginity, for women of both elite and poor status, served as the primary means to show religious virtue.

As the faith of free women became measured by her chastity, so too was the faith of enslaved women. Accordingly, by violating slave women sexually, a slave master was also violating her spiritually, preventing normative Christian religious observance. This warranted criticism by Christian theologians. Salvian expresses this, saying that, "masters didn't just provide a provocation to behave wickedly, but an unavoidable necessity, since slave women were forced to obey their immoral owners against their will."[27] In a rare awareness of the vulnerability for the enslaved, Salvian writes that female slaves are placed in an impossible position in regard to faith through chastity, for "the lust of those in a position of authority left

[22] Harper, *Slavery,* 291.
[23] See Caroline T. Schroeder, *Monastic Bodies: Discipline and Salvation in Shenoute of Atripe* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), esp. "Bodily Discipline and Monastic Authority: Shenoute's Earliest Letters to the Monastery," 24-53.
[24] Kathy L. Gaca, *The Making of Fornication: Eros, Ethics, and Political Reform in Greek Philosophy and Early Christianity* (University of California Press, 2003), 181-182.
[25] James Corke-Webster, "Reading Thecla in Fourth-Century Pontus," in *Social Control in Late Antiquity,* ed. Kate Cooper and Jamie Wood (Cambridge University Press, 2020), 284.
[26] Corke-Webster, "Reading Thecla," 277.
[27] Salvian, *Governance of God* 7.4.

those subjected to them with no alternative."[28] It is wrong, according to Salvian, because "women were not permitted by their shameless owners to be chaste, even if they had wanted to."[29] Not only was the master making himself "utterly corrupt," the master also was preventing the proper religious expression of the slave.[30] As a result, the sexual use of enslaved women is condemned. It is not the individual autonomy of enslaved women that was sought to be protected, but rather their ability to express normative *Christian* faith. Sexual unmarried women, slaves or not, could not be as faithful or virtuous as a chaste virgin under the mindset of the Late Roman Empire.

Salvian's concern over religious expression is contingent upon abstinence from sexual relations and appears synonymous with concern for individual bodily autonomy. While bodily violations viewed as impeding Christian observance were criticized and forbidden, many other kinds of bodily abuse were accepted. While it is unknown what Salvian himself believed regarding corporal punishment of the enslaved for perceived improper conduct, many others of the same time frame wholeheartedly condoned it. For many of the fourth and fifth centuries, including Salvian in conversations of extramarital sexual expression, it was the proper observation of Christianity and *not* a distaste for slavery that motivated disapproval. As such, slave treatment was governed by Christian ideology. Adherence to Christian logic did not entail refutations of the legitimacy of the institution of slavery, nor did it result in a decline in its brutality.

The belief systems of Christ-following slave owners presented no qualms of slave mistreatment, with Christian iconography linked to methods of enslavement. For instance, in a section of the Theodosian Code attributed to Constantine in the year 315 or 316, an edict decrees that branding a slave on the face shall be forbidden, as the face was made in the image of the Christian god. The text writes that instead, branding shall be done on the hands and legs.[31]

In another example, Christian imagery is included on instruments of forcible confinement by way of shackles. Two slave collars, dated to the fourth or fifth centuries, recite the reward for the return of a runaway slave. One writes "I have run away: hold me. You will get a gold solidus if you return me to my master Zoninus," and the other reads "I am called Januarius. I am the slave of Dexter, Recorder of the Senate, who lives in the Fifth Region, at the field of Macarius."[32] Each collar is embossed with a cross. While Salvian criticizes the sexual exploitation of the enslaved on the grounds of its obstruction of proper Christian reverence, he in no way criticizes the institution of slavery. As these other examples corroborate, Salvian's criticism of sexual exploitation of the enslaved is motivated by proper Christian practice, and not by intentions to reduce their suffering.

Salvian's *The Governance of God* is a fascinating text, representative of the massive shift that occurred in the Late Roman Empire as societal expectations and legal systems shifted from polytheism to Christianity. Book seven, chapter four, in its criticism of sexual exploitation, especially indicates this shift, as author Salvian criticizes sexual misconduct but unquestioningly accepts the legitimacy of the institution of slavery. Rather than contesting the institution of slavery itself, Salvian is shown to be primarily concerned with its ideological detriments in relation to emergent Christian doctrine. Salvian asserts that sexual misconduct must be prevented as it results in immoral extramarital sexual activity by male enslavers, disruption to hierarchy through the Christian conflation of sex and marriage, and impacts to religious observance in preventing women from espousing Christian sexual asceticism. All of Salvian's objections to the sexual exploitation of the enslaved focus on how the abuse of power goes against his specific ideological perceptions under a Christian framework, rather than any disdain for the practice of human enslavement itself, nor concern over the wellbeing of individual slaves.

At its core, Salvian's criticism of sexual exploitation of the enslaved can be firmly entrenched within fifth century Roman society, newly Christian, but still wholly Roman. For those living in Late Antiquity, questioning the practice of slavery was inconceivable; despite its frequent brutality and flagrant disregard for human autonomy, it persisted as the norm. While Salvian's reasoning may seem downright bizarre to scholars of the modern era, his criticisms of the ideological perils of sexual exploitation of the enslaved illustrate the ways in

[28] Salvian, *Governance of God*, 7.4.
[29] Salvian, *Governance of God*, 7.4.
[30] Salvian, *Governance of God*, 7.4..
[31] *Thuc.* 9, 40.2, in Wiedemann, 186.
[32] ILS 8731 (Slave Collar inscription) in Wiedemann, 186; ILS 8726 (Slave Collar inscription) in Wiedemann, 187.

which slavery practices did not disappear with the advent of a Christian Roman Empire but merely changed form.

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BEYOND THE WALL: AN ANALYSIS OF THE SIDE-EYE GIRL TEXTILE AND ITS IMPACT ON COPTIC DOMESTIC INTERIORS

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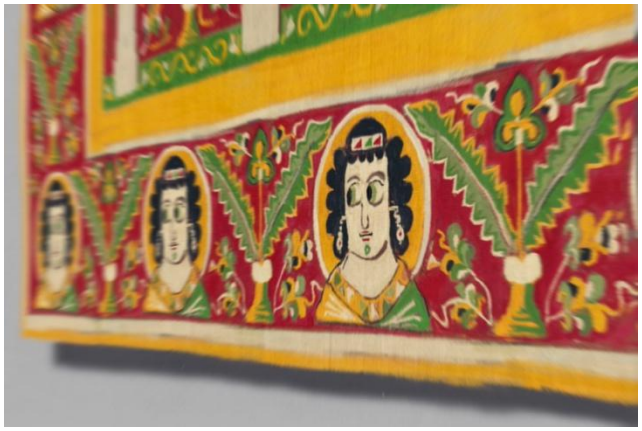

Art by Anna Storms

During Late Antiquity, decorative textiles featuring both ancient Greek or Roman figures, and the bright styles, patterning, and colours associated with Middle Eastern and Asian art were greatly appreciated by the Egyptian elites. From the 1st century until the Muslim conquest of 639 CE, Egyptian Christians, known as Copts, were ruled by the Byzantine Empire, bridging the gap between the West and the East.[1] Various surviving textile fragments from this period display ancient figures as repeat patterns with ornamental frames as boarders along the sides of tapestries, vegetal motifs between the bust images, prominent outlines, and a schematic and reduced modelling of the individuals.[2] These extant textiles provide insight into the domestic environments of early Egyptian Christian elites, where interior decorations reflected familial values. One such fragment from a domestic wall hanging is held at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts as their only Coptic textile currently on display.[3] Known as The Side-Eye Girl for the purpose of this essay (fig. 1), it depicts a female bust with wide and expressive eyes and dark hair. The figure wears a mantle, lavish jewelled earrings, and a hair ornament. Directly behind her is a halo, while to her left are green and white acanthus and lotus plants. The colour scheme is simple yet bold. The background is bright red, while black outlines the upper torso of the female figure. White outlines the acanthus plant and forms borders for the halo and the top and bottom frames. Measuring 25.8 × 17.6 centimetres in dimension, this textile fragment would have existed as a part of a large tapestry that covered a significant surface area of the wall. By comparing it to a group of similar fragments found in several museums in North-Eastern United States and Canada, scholars have attributed The Side-Eye Girl to the 5th or 6th centuries.[4] Beyond this information, there is limited knowledge regarding The Side-Eye Girl fragment, and even less published on the subject. Nevertheless, these skilfully woven fragments are a testament to the importance placed on the artworks displayed in elite homes during the Coptic world of Late Antiquity.

In its original form, The Side-Eye Girl would likely have been part of a repetitive motif as part of a larger tapestry. An example of what this might have looked

Figure 1, Fragment of a Woven Cloth with Decorations of a Female Bust and Vegetal Repeat Patterns "Side-Eye Girl" (Wool with natural dyes, 25.8 cm × 17.6 cm, ca. 5th-6th century: Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal, 1952.Dt.38).

[1] Phyllis Ackerman, *Tapestry: The Mirror of Civilization* (Gorgias Press, 2011), 19-20.

[2] Elizabeth Dospěl Williams, "Private Spectacle," in *Woven Interiors: Furnishing Early Medieval Egypt*, exh. cat., eds. Elizabeth Dospěl Williams, Sumru Belger Krody, and Gudrun Bühl (The George Washington University Museum and The Textile Museum, 2019), 41.

[3] This essay was originally written in March of 2024 when the textile was still on display. For a comprehensive overview of the collection, see: Wendy Landry *et al*., *Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Collection of Mediterranean Antiquities*, vol. 4, *The Coptic Textiles* (Brill, 2019), https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004415393.

[4] Landry *et al*., *The Coptic Textiles*, 162.

like in repeat pattern form can be found in the fragment *Heads Framed by Acanthus* from the 5th or 6th centuries (fig. 2). In textile design, repeat patterns were used as tools for dynamic space-making, transforming symbols of mythology and the divine into means of casting spells. Henry Maguire states that textile patterns such as these conveyed messages beyond the seen world and were used in domestic interior displays at all social levels.[5] The repeat pattern which comprises The Side-Eye Girl textile depicts a female figure with an acanthus plant, and is recognised as a common image in Coptic textiles and serves as a symbol of membership within the culture.[6] In this way, the textile's owners were identifying themselves as Christian nobles. These qualities, including the use of repeat patterns, elevated the atmosphere of the space. The design conveyed a sense of success and prosperity for the homeowners through spiritual engagement that moved beyond the space.[7] In the realm of Byzantine art, female figures often served as allegorical messengers, prompting viewers to reflect on concepts such as affluence and religious values.[8] The Side-Eye Girl textile presents a figure adorned with gold and jewelled earrings, a hair accessory, and an ornate costume, elements which portray the woman as affluence, likely a member of the elite class.[9] Depictions of wealth in textile design served to embellish domestic spaces, transmitting an allegorical message of wealth and prosperity that homeowners could contemplate. This practice elevated the space where the tapestry was displayed, transcending aesthetics to create environments that evoked the allegorical themes depicted in the tapestry. Additionally, members of the educated elite could be either men or women,[10] and, as suggested by Thelma K. Thomas, The Side-Eye Girl's use of a female figure may indicate that this tapestry was hung in a female-designated space.[11] As an allegorical figure, The Side-Eye Girl communicates information about the person who owned and occupied the space where the tapestry would have been displayed.

In Coptic society, textile art differs from other forms of interior decoration because it functions both as a physical object and as a meditative medium. The Side-Eye Girl was created using a dovetail weaving technique, which interweaves two to four threads of

Figure 2, Heads Framed by Acanthus (Wool and natural dyes, 19.7 cm x 64.1 cm, 5th-6th century: Brooklyn Art Museum, Brooklyn, 38.684).

[5] Henry Maguire, "Garments Pleasing to God: The Significance of Domestic Textile Designs in the Early Byzantine Period," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 44 (1990): 215, https://doi.org/10.2307/1291630.

[6] Jennifer L. Ball, "Rich Interiors: The Remnant of a Hanging from Late Antique Egypt in the Collection of Dumbarton Oaks," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 73 (2019): 276.

[7] Maguire, "Garments Pleasing to God," 215.

[8] Rainer Warland, "Defining Space: Abstraction, Symbolism and Allegory on Display in Early Byzantine Art," in *Envisioning Worlds in Late Antique Art: New Perspectives on Abstraction and Symbolism in Late-Roman and Early-Byzantine Visual Culture (c. 300-600)*, ed. Cecilia Olovsdotter (De Gruyter, 2019), 120-121.

[9] Landry *et al*., *The Coptic Textiles*, 162.

[10] Helen C. Evans *et al*., "The Arts of Byzantium," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 58, no. 4 (2001): 19, https://doi.org/10.2307/3269176.

[11] Thelma K. Thomas, "Material Meaning in Late Antiquity," in *Designing Identity: The Power of Textiles in Late Antiquity,* ed. Thelma K. Thomas (Princeton University Press, 2016), 21.

different colours around a common warp thread.[12] This technique results in a more durable and three-dimensional textile, as evidenced by the protruding sections in the fragment, the delicate lines and curves, and the vertical colour changes. The Side-Eye Girl also features a black outline surrounding the female figure, as well as parts of the acanthus leaves, suggesting this concept of meditative materiality.[13] Thomas claims that the use of black for the underlying warp threads not only adds depth to the textile but also creates a psychedelic experience for the weavers who had to work with small dots of transitioning colours that would blend to form shaded areas.[14] The level of depth achieved from this technique within the textile also allows both the female figure and the leaves of the acanthus plant to be easily distinguished. Despite the centrality of the female figure in the fragment, it is her gaze that directs the viewer's attention towards the acanthus plant. This captivating experience would have led viewers' eyes across the tapestry as they became enamored with the plant motif and thus wrapped into the charm that the main figure was directing viewers towards. The physical permeability of the textiles allowed for a meditative experience as viewers followed her gaze and the repeat pattern with their fingers.[15] Mueller notes that "the use of the motif in a magical context indicates that it was well-established in the minds of the people as a symbol of power."[16] This suggests that viewers would have knowingly engaged with the tapestry in a meditative manner, with the understanding that the charm's effect was taking place. Byzantine textiles were not merely decorative objects, but played a crucial role in creating dynamic, spiritually charged environments within domestic spaces. The Side-Eye Girl fragment exemplifies this function through its strategic use of colour, pattern, and symbolism. This facilitated personal connections with God and allowed individuals to enter states of religious contemplation with greater ease.

During Late Antiquity, frequent trade between China, South Asia, the Middle East, and the Mediterranean worlds is evident through extant textiles which depict imagery from across Eurasia.[17] The international exchange of such textiles along the Silk Road and beyond facilitated the emergence of locally woven variations; weavers operating in Egypt during its period under Byzantine rule were undoubtedly familiar with both Eastern and Western luxury styles and likely drew inspiration from them both.[18] Indeed, the intersection of these cultures culminated in the complex production of domestic furnishings for the elite populations. The Coptic people of Late Antiquity created an intersection of contemporary styles while simultaneously fostering their own designs. These designs provided upper-class homes with the means to communicate their status and their family values to visitors and family alike. Although our understanding of this visual language has since been lost, an analysis of The Side-Eye Girl can open our eyes to Coptic domestic life. This paper seeks to illustrate that figures such as The Side-Eye Girl helped elevate the status and atmosphere of the home through the use of common visual elements which created dynamic domestic spaces. These elements include the connection to the ancient worlds as well as early Christian ideology, and its use of manifested charms for wealth, prosperity, and divinity.

The use of an educated aesthetic in tapestry art played a significant role in creating a more dynamic space for upper-class homes. By incorporating imagery that only the educated elite could understand, these tapestries transformed a space into an area for academic discussion and contemplation. Those who were less educated were therefore visibly distinct within this defined space. Figures of Antiquity were used to showcase one's education to guests, providing

[12] Landry *et al*., *The Coptic Textiles*, 163.
[13] Thelma K. Thomas, "The Medium Matters: Reading the Remains of a Late Antique Textile," in *Reading Medieval Images: The Art Historian and the Object*, eds. Elizabeth Spears and Thelma K. Thomas (University of Michigan Press, 2002), 40.
[14] Thomas, "The Medium Matters," 40-41.
[15] Maria Evangelatou, "Textile Mediation in Late Byzantine Visual Culture: Unveiling Layers of Meaning through the Fabrics of the Chora Monastery," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 73 (2019): 299.
[16] Maya Mueller, "Mythological Scenes, Their Roman and Pharaonic Roots, and the Role of Symmetry on Byzantine Textiles," in *Drawing the Threads Together: Textiles and Footwear of the 1st millennium AD from Egypt*, eds. by Antoine De Moor, Cäcilia Fluck, and Petra Linscheid (Lannoo, 2013), 198.
[17] Denise-Marie Teece, "25. Textile Fragment," in *Masterpieces from the Department of Islamic Art in The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, eds. Maryam Ekhtiar *et al*. (Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2011), 47.
[18] Han Jungim, "A Study on the Characteristics of the Designs on Coptic Textiles of Ancient Egypt," *Journal of Fashion Business* 15, no. 3 (2011): 114.

Figure 3, Hanging with Dionysian Figures (Tapestry weave, polychrome wool and undyed linen, 64.8 × 147.3 cm, 5th to 6th century: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Accession Number: 31.9.3).

the interior with a more sophisticated presence that elevated the overall status of the home. The Side-Eye Girl textile contains several elements that allude to a representation of Antiquity and the versatile space-making tools that this provided for the Byzantine domestic environment. Rainer Warland writes that after the fall of the Western Roman Empire, the Eastern Empire and its culture looked to the ancient worlds of Greece and Rome to strengthen their connection with their ancestors.[1] During the 5th and 6th centuries, Byzantine people used symbols from Antiquity to display both academic distinctions and funerary portraiture. The Side-Eye Girl's generic features demonstrate that it was designed as an academic image, which grants its owner the elevated status associated with being well educated and knowledgeable about the ancient world. Furthermore, Elizabeth Dospěl Williams claims that figures representing Antiquity allowed patrons to showcase their elite level of sophistication and expertise in classical learnings.[2] As an "ancient" woman, The Side-Eye Girl brought knowledge and respect for the ancient world into the home. The incorporation of learnt elements that the lower classes could neither afford nor understand gave The Side-Eye Girl tapestry an aesthetic that only the rich could fully comprehend.

Even after Christianity became the official religion of the New Roman Empire, educated members of the elite continued to rely on the ancient world as a cultural benchmark and a defining concept for academia and state organisation.[3] Consequently, nobles wished to surround themselves with classical knowledge, which inevitably influenced the art of upper-class homes. In particular, they also wanted to show their understanding of the links between pagan and Christian figures. For example, the Greco-Roman god of wine, Dionysos, was frequently portrayed in early Byzantine art because of his association with Christ.[4] In *Hanging with Dionysian figures* (5th or 6th centuries; fig. 3), female figures shown alongside Dionysos share similarities with The Side-Eye Girl's imagery, including jeweled earrings, hair accessories, dark hair, and ornate collars. If the complete Side-Eye Girl textile included images of Dionysos, then it also reflects a higher understanding of Christ, which elevated the sophisticated meaning of The Side-Eye Girl tapestry. As a Coptic textile, The Side-Eye Girl displays the religious influences of the weaver and patron on the overall design through the incorporation of ancient figures as learnt representations of Christian ideology. This elevated way of representing Christian values created an overall more dynamic space for Byzantine viewers. Vine scroll patterns were also popular in the late antique and early Christian periods and were featured in many textile and sculptural artworks. During Antiquity, vines and grapes were connected to Dionysos for their connotation with wine and were frequently used in funerary portraiture as early as the 1st century CE.[5] Through its connection to Dionysos, early Christians also adopted vines scroll motifs as a symbol of Christ's blood through its elite understanding as academic imagery. The Side-Eye Girl features plant motifs with curves similar to vine scrolls, connecting this textile fragment to elite academic understandings of ancient imagery. It is for these reasons that The Side-Eye Girl fragment would have created a dynamic atmosphere for a domestic space, as the characteristics that associated it with education proved the patron to be someone of elite-level knowledge and sophistication as well.

As the Western Roman Empire fell in the 5th century, Byzantine identity became synonymous with ancient culture. Egypt adopted many of these new

[1] Warland, "Defining Space," 125.
[2] Dospěl Williams, "Private Spectacle," 41.
[3] Evans *et al*., "The Arts of Byzantium," 5.
[4] Mueller, "Mythological Scenes," 195.
[5] Talila Michaeli, "A Painted Tomb in the Upper galilee and the Meaning of its Pictorial Program," in *Context and Meaning: Proceedings of the Twelfth International Conference of the Association Internationale pour la Peinture Murale Antique, Athens, September 16-20, 2013. Bulletin antieke beschaving* 31, eds. Maria Mols Stephanus Theodorus Adrianus and Eric M. Moormann (Peeters Publishers, 2017), 237.

ideas and blended them with their preexisting aesthetics.[6] For example, the Roman sculpture *Marble Bust of a Woman* from the 3rd century (fig. 4), features a female figure with curly hair and a facial expression similar to that of The Side-Eye Girl. In addition, this woman also gazes over her shoulder and away from the viewer, a symbol of a pensive woman in Antiquity.[7] This comparison with The Side-Eye Girl helps to further solidify our understanding of the Coptic textile as a representation of a generic, wealthy and ancient woman, which undoubtedly engaged with ancient aesthetics for its elite value.

Female figures in repeat pattern designs were frequently associated with mythology and spirituality, serving as academic, cultural, and divine symbols in Byzantine domestic spaces. These multifaceted representations contributed to a more dynamic atmosphere by utilising ceremony and the viewers' personal relationship with the divine. Images of mythological female characters could be used for both religious and non-religious means,[8] and the simplistic, antiquarian style of The Side-Eye Girl suggests that she likely served a similar purpose. Additionally, in Egypt, a mirrored symmetrical pattern was a popular motif from the 5th to 8th centuries.[9] It is possible that The Side-Eye Girl would have been designed this way, similar to how the figures in *Heads Framed by Acanthus* and *Polychrome Tapestry Band with a Human Head with Curly Hair Between Stylised Acanthus* (6th century; fig. 5) look towards opposite directions and could form a mirrored symmetrical pattern together. Maya Mueller posits that the use of mirrored symmetry in these designs reflects Egyptian imitations of Mediterranean mythological scenes, as this style merged Western characteristics with traditional Egyptian ones to create an intersectional design that catered to the needs of the Coptic population. The Side-Eye Girl textile features lotus plants that shoot out of the acanthus. This pattern resembles waves of the Nile, a motif inherited from ancient Egyptian religious thought, where the lotus was a symbol of the life-giving river and of life after death since the plant closes at night and opens again in the morning. In Greek art, the lotus was often depicted alongside a female figure personifying prosperity, such as Euthenia, the Greek goddess of abundance.[10] Although The Side-Eye Girl does not depict Euthenia, the mythological connotations connect it with similar ideas of antiquity, education, and contemporary cultural preferences. The ceremonial or religious uses, as discussed by Williams, further associates the textile with the spiritual world.[11] The combination of mythology and life within a single textile fragment shows the extent of blended symbolism and the benefits of combining Western and Eastern cultures to create a dynamic viewing experience for the

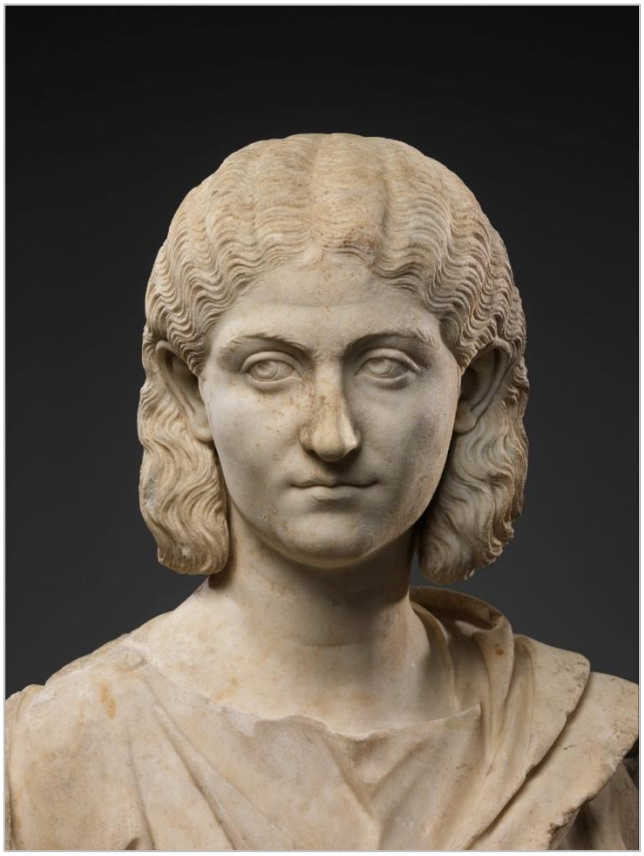

Figure 4, Marble Bust of a Woman (Marble, 65.1 cm tall, 3rd century CE: Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Accession Number: 18.145.39).

[6] Helen Saradi, "The Antiquities in Constructing Byzantine Identity: Literary Tradition versus Aesthetic Appreciation," *Hortus Artium Medievalium* 17, no. 1 (2011): 98, https://doi.org/10.1484/J.HAM.1.102274.

[7] Evans *et al*., "The Arts of Byzantium," 18.

[8] Elizabeth Dospěl Williams, "Sacred Imagery," in *Woven Interiors: Furnishing Early Medieval Egypt*, exh. cat., eds. Elizabeth Dospěl Williams, Sumru Belger Krody, and Gudrun Bühl (The George Washington University Museum and The Textile Museum, 2019), 76; Paul Friedländer, *Documents of Dying Paganism; Textiles of Late Antiquity in Washington, New York, and Leningrad*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1945), 1-26.

[9] Mueller, "Mythological Scenes," 201.

[10] Maguire, "Garments Pleasing to God," 218.

[11] Dospěl Williams, "Sacred Imagery," 76.

Byzantine-Egyptian elites. The incorporation of ancient traits in The Side-Eye Girl textile may also be interpreted as a gesture of reverence for the ancient world, thereby fostering a multifaceted academic atmosphere. According to Karel C. Innemée, this is similar to the use of textile figures as tools to remember deceased relatives.[12] However, unlike depictions of known individuals who have passed away, these depictions are limited in detail, much like other representations of ancient figures. This implies that viewers contemplated Antiquity rather than a specific ancestor. Fayum funeral portraits, which were popular between the 1st and 8th centuries in Egypt, clearly show a difference between portraits of known individuals and generalised ancient figures, such as The Side-Eye Girl.[13] For instance, *Portrait of a Young Woman in Red* (90-120 CE century; fig. 6) portrays an intricate and detailed shaped figure with a more pronounced face, and wide eyes looking directly at the viewer, thereby establishing a connection between the two individuals. To contrast this, these characteristics are not present in the representation of The Side-Eye Girl figure, as its simpler design signifies an idea of a generalised ancient woman rather than a specific person. In this case, the connection is established between the viewer and the concept of Antiquity, rather than connecting them directly with the person being depicted. Warland argues that in the Byzantine Empire, "the focus [of people] was no longer on the deeds of any particular emperor and his military success, but rather on the concept of imperial rulership… [where] triumph becomes a perpetual attribute of rulership granted by the gods, later God."[14] This perpetual triumph connected the contemporary nobles to the ancient elite—respecting Antiquity was a way of respecting the triumph of the past. Furthermore, the image of a noble woman could have been used as a tool to convey certain ideas within specific spaces, including the concept of the loss of the Western Empire.[15] The use of ancient styles and patterns enables the contemporary viewer to recognize this elite understanding of cultural mixture. The Side-Eye Girl was created in a society that was synthesised with Greek, Roman, Christian, and Egyptian cultures, as is evident in the use of imagery associated with Antique, Christian, and Fayum portraits.[16] Together, these characteristics create a symbol of intersectionality that represents the multiple facets of identity that its owners held, including their association with the ancient world and the dynamic space-making practices they employed in their home.

Figure 5, Polychrome Tapestry Band with a Human Head with Curly Hair Between Stylised Acanthus (Wool and linen with natural dyes, 16.5 cm x 25 cm, 6th century: University of Toronto Art Museum, Toronto, M82.044).

The Side-Eye Girl was able to create a dynamic atmosphere by using repeat patterns as charms for protection during the space-making process. Typically, repeat patterns in domestic textiles were used to protect the family or attract good fortune.[17] The use of bold colours in textiles motifs, as noted by Anna Muthesius, would have further elevated this idea as well as the overall atmosphere of the room, since Byzantines attached symbolic meaning to the brightness of colours in textiles.[18] Figures depicted in brighter colours and in silk were associated with youth, beauty, and prowess.[19] While the acanthus plant serves as a charm for protection, the female figure allegorically represents what is being protected: strength, beauty, and youth within the home. Coptic tapestries were highly regarded for their vividly

[12] Karel C. Innemée, "Veneration of Portraits, Icons, and Relics in Christian Egypt," *Visual Resources* 19, no. 1 (2003): 58, https://doi.org/10.1080/0197376031000078521.
[13] Innemée, "Veneration of Portraits," 59.
[14] Warland, "Defining Space," 120.
[15] Evangelatou, "Textile Mediation," 303.
[16] Irina-Andreea Stoleriu and Adrian Stoleriu, "A Brief Introduction to the Byzantine Portrait Art," *SEA-Practical Application of Science* 11 (2016), 411.
[17] Maguire, "Garments Pleasing to God," 216.
[18] Anna Muthesius, "Cloth, Colour, Symbolism and Meaning in Byzantium (4th-15th Centuries)," *ελτίον της Χριστιανικής Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας* 37 (2016): 187, https://doi.org/10.12681/dchae.10695.
[19] Muthesius, "Cloth, Colour, Symbolism," 190.

coloured weaves that featured contrasting hues.[20] The Side-Eye Girl exemplifies this striking contrast of colours with its use of a bold red background and the striking green acanthus plant. By employing the principles of contrast colour theory and using vibrant dyes, the decorative elements become more visible to viewers from a distance. When considering the contrast of colour in the fragment, it becomes even clearer that the acanthus plant was used as a protective symbol, since it stands out for viewers compared to other vegetal elements in the design. The use of the acanthus plant and the female figure as a repeat pattern indicates the overall connection to a divine motif. At the same time, the combination of colour and repeat pattern shows the extent that The Side-Eye Girl was able to draw attention and facilitate the spellcasting process to protect the home, which inevitably created a more dynamic space for viewers.

Tapestries that were able to evoke ideas of wealth for viewers inevitably created a dynamic atmosphere overall by setting up a space to be both an area to exist in and a place for identifying the wealth and social status of the owner. The Side-Eye Girl is visually striking due to its large scale and decorative elements, which associated it with ideas of richness. The figure is adorned with jeweled earrings resembling inlet pearls similar to those found in depictions of female Dionysian figures. Despite its simple design, The Side-Eye Girl figure exudes affluence through her opulent accessories. For instance, she is depicted with loop-chain earrings that were popular among the 6th century Byzantine elites.[21] Furthermore, the shawl draped over her shoulders is likely meant to depict a luxurious fabric, as the three lighter coloured lines running across each shoulder resemble the reflection of the light off the material. This fabric could have been embroidered with metallic threads or made from a silky and sericeous material, both of which would have been costly, therefore symbolising the wealth of the figure. The acanthus plant, which is native to Egypt and associated with Coptic lands,[22] can also be seen as a symbol of prosperity, given that Egyptian land was a major source of wealth for the Byzantine Empire at this time.[23] These various symbols of affluence allowed The Side-Eye Girl fragment to serve as a representation of the homeowner's abundance and social status. The presence of a wealthy figure in a tapestry would have conveyed ideas of prosperity and nobility to the home it hung in. By presenting viewers with symbols of success, the tapestry would have prompted contemplation of these ideas, which could also serve to manifest and reinforce them within the home. The use of an allegorical figure as a symbol of wealth thus creates a more dynamic space that speaks to the homeowner's desires for prosperity and success.

Figure 6, Portrait of a Young Woman in Red (Encaustic on limewood with gold leaf, 38.1 x 18.4 cm, 90-120 CE Egypt: Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Accession Number: 09.181.6).

Byzantine society attached significant importance to the symbolic associations of colour in textiles, which were believed to facilitate meditative states for viewers.[24] Specifically, the saturated and bright colours employed in The Side-Eye Girl fragment would have been associated with the concept of light,

[20] Jungim, "A Study on the Characteristics," 114.
[21] Jeffrey Spier, *Byzantine and the West: Jewelry in the First Millenium* (Paul Holberton Publishing, 2012), 97-99.
[22] Ball, "Rich Interiors," 276.
[23] Evans et al, "The Arts of Byzantium," 9.
[24] Muthesius, "Cloth, Colour, Symbolism," 187, 194.

because of their highly pigmented and vibrant nature. This light was affiliated with the guiding light of God and necessitated a meditative and religious viewing practice for individuals. Colours, including those observed in The Side-Eye Girl, could "breath the spirit of magic" due to their repetition and vibrancy.[25] Therefore, the colours enhanced the magical properties of the textile motif and connected it to the engagement with spiritual magic. To create a dynamic atmosphere, motif-charms also require continuous visual engagement with the viewer and the space they occupy, in order to facilitate the connection with the divine. The vibrant colours in the textile fragment would have achieved this objective, as the eye naturally gravitates towards more luminous colours in an image or within a space. Maguire asserts that examples of red backgrounds and plant motifs often signified a spiritual connection within the design.[26] The spiritual qualities of the colours were combined with the spiritual imagery to foster a meditative experience for viewers in the domestic space. This is further substantiated by the fact that spiritual connections created through imagery at this time necessitated a relationship with God that existed outside of church spaces.[27] The personal relationship with God demonstrates how the meditative experience of The Side-Eye Girl was intended for a secular home and was dependent on personal relationships with members of the household. These elements associate the visual characteristics of the textile with the spiritual and meditative practices that contributed to the overall dynamic atmosphere created by the tapestry.

The Side-Eye Girl is a textile piece that embodies both affluence and the Christian values that were integral to Coptic society during the 5th and 6th centuries. As Christianity gained prominence in the Byzantine world, noble figures depicted in textiles, mosaics, or paintings were sometimes equated with God or the Virgin Mary.[28] This association reached its peak during the 7th and 8th centuries when the Iconoclasm period occurred, prior to that, the nobility, especially the emperor or empress, were associated with Christianity. The luxurious and jeweled nature of these figures were intertwined with their connection to God, rendering their images as symbols of religious prosperity. Allegorical figures were used to represent the divine, so viewers would react and contemplate God in many types of images.[29] Therefore, the wealth depicted in The Side-Eye Girl textile helps elevate the status of the home it was in through religious means. Moreover, the acanthus plant depicted on the left side of the textile fragment held symbolic significance in ancient Christian traditions, representing rebirth or death, and eternal life for Dionysiac worshippers and therefore for Christians.[30] This connection further emphasises the association with religious prosperity through the fragment's use of wealth symbolism. Although The Side-Eye Girl is not an actual icon, she symbolises and resembles those from the same period. The most revealing difference between the two subjects lies in the eyes of the figure. Byzantine icons, like the Fayum funeral portraits, look directly at the viewers, engaging them in spiritual contemplation of the religious lives led by the figures. The Side-Eye Girl is not a figure for veneration or prayer, like icons and funerary portraits, respectively,[31] but rather an allegorical representation that reminds viewers of Christianity. Her gaze towards the acanthus plant rather than the viewer suggests that she is lost in thought, a technique also seen in depictions of ancient figures. Here, the main purpose of the artwork is to engage viewers through complex thought rather than a direct relationship with the person represented. While the tapestry fragment represents a woman from Antiquity, it was created in a Christian culture which inevitably influenced its visual production. The Side-Eye Girl thus embodies both the ancient world and contemporary Christian ideology through allegorical symbolism. This multifaceted understanding of the textile contributes to its dynamic space-making practices within a Byzantine domestic interior.

Deep inside the Arts of One World exhibit at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, a fragment known here as The Side-Eye Girl can be found amidst Egyptian sarcophagi and ancient Greek sculptures. At first glance, this textile fragment appears to be a simple depiction of a female bust figure next to an acanthus plant. However, in the Byzantine and Coptic worlds, such images held much greater significance. The Side-

[25] Maguire, "Garments Pleasing to God," 221.
[26] Henry Maguire, "Magic and the Christian Image," in *Byzantine Magic*, ed. Henry Maguire (Havard University Press, 1995), 55.
[27] Maguire, "Magic and the Christian Image," 51.
[28] Warland, "Defining Space," 126.
[29] Warland, "Defining Space," 127.
[30] Mofida El Weshahy and Esraa Ellabban "Highlights on the Use of Acanthus as an Ornamental motif from Greco-Roman to Islamic period." *Journal of Association of Arab Universities for Tourism and Hospitality* 22, no. 3 (2022): 2, https://doi.org/10.21608/jaauth.2022.124958.1312.
[31] Innemée, "Veneration of Portraits," 57.

Eye Girl can be interpreted on various levels, with each layer of symbolism contributing to its dynamic and multifaceted nature. The connection to Antiquity served to define class and convey academic knowledge and respect for the ancient world. As an allegorical figure, the female character speaks to the viewers and their desire for manifestation through its association with wealth and religious prosperity. Additionally, The Side-Eye Girl was once a repeat pattern and its imagery connects back to Coptic culture and spiritual charms, which protected the domestic space. Finally, the colours, design, and physical permeability of the weave transformed the space into an atmosphere for ceremonial meditation. Despite the lack of scholarship on The Side-Eye Girl textile, its design can still reveal much about the Coptic society in which it was made. By representing multiple forms of engagement, defined through its visual, technical, and social qualities, The Side-Eye Girl becomes a multifaceted and dynamic design that would have elevated the status of any domestic space during the 5th and 6th centuries of Egypt's Byzantine rule.

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A SIGHT FOR SORE EYES: OVID'S VISUALIZATION OF CORINNA AND THE USE OF MILITIA AMORIS IN *AMORES 1.5*

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Introduction

The phrase 'a sight for sore eyes' immediately comes to mind when reading Ovid's *Amores* 1.5. The undertone of the phrase suggests that the eyes of the beholder have been in a state of pain, long deprived of the beautiful sight that now stands before them. The nuance conveys a sense of relief and healing. In Ovid's *Amores* 1.5, the poet-lover is not only struck by the perfected sight of Corinna, but the reader is also first introduced to her name through a detailed account, which calls attention to her physicality and sexual availability. Ovid's visualization of Corinna as both a willing participant in the act of sex and a victim to her own desires interconnects the symbols of love and war (*militia amoris*) as a display of triumph over his beloved. The most visible use of this trope appears in his juxtaposition of Corinna with the historical figures of Lais, a courtesan, and Semiramis, an Assyrian queen. While some scholars have given this comparison a direct reading–Lais as emblematic of erotic love, and Semiramis of queenship–I argue that Semiramis's identity as a courtesan-combatant invokes themes of war and provides a more natural understanding of Ovid's allusions to soldiery love. It is through Ovid's construction of Corinna's identity, and her association with Semiramis, that he stages his own struggles with love. As a result, Ovid frames the sexual conquest of Corinna in *Amores* 1.5 through the trope of *militia amoris* and turns his poetry into a metaphorical battlefield.

Amores 1.5: Ovid's Puella: Who is 'Corinna'

Our first introduction to Corinna as a named *puella* (girl, girlfriend) occurs within *Amores* 1.5, in which the lover-poet depicts himself as having sexually triumphed over his beloved.[1] At the height of noon (*Aestus erat mediamque dies exegerat horam*), Naso is interrupted by the arrival of a half-dressed Corinna (*tunica uelata recincta*), ready to succumb to her desires.[2] The poet recounts his removal of her clothes (*deripui tunicam*) and her portrayal emerges as a composite figure of dissected images; her body has been fetishized and any aspect that would individualize her is purposefully left out, namely her face and voice.[3] She has been stripped both physically

[1] This paper notes the distinction between Ovid as the elegiac poet and Naso the character and will be used independently from one another to discuss the relationship with Corinna in *Amores* 1.5. All translations have been used from the Loeb Classical Library unless stated otherwise.

[2] Ov. *Am*. 1.5.1-13.

[3] Ellen Greene, *The Erotics of Domination: Male Desire and the Mistress in Latin Love Poetry* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 82. See also James C. McKeown, *Ovid: Amores. Text, Prolegomena and Commentary in four volumes* (Francis Cairns (Publications) Ltd, 1989), 103-105. For scholarship on elegiac voyeurism and visual mediums of the nude female body, see also Molly Myerowitz, "The Domestication of Desire: Ovid's Parva

and through Ovid's gaze.[4] The chapter presents a clear depiction of sexual intercourse, heightened by the suggestiveness of the *puella's* clothing tempting the *amator* (lover) to lie with her.[5] In contrast to the previous chapter (1.4), where the unnamed Corinna was in a long-term relationship with her *vir* (man) and therefore unreachable, *Amores* 1.5 represents the cultivation of his earlier attempts: he finally succeeded in his desire to engage in sex and display to his audience his victory in possessing the *puella*.

What has caught the attention of scholarship since the 1980s is the direct function of the *puellae* in Augustan elegy. Elegiac poets, such as Propertius, Gallus, and Tibullus, frequently portrayed their *puella's* social status as highly ambiguous, teetering the line between a *matrona* and *meretrix*. In antiquity, *matronae* (married woman, wife) traditionally referred to married, respectable women, whereas *meretrices* (courtesan, sexual-laborer) was used to refer to women who exchanged sexual services for money.[6] Gallus's *puella* Cytheris, written under the pseudonym of Lycoris, is the first example of a *puella's* deliberate social rank presented by her author as a freewoman.[7] However, as Strong argues, *meretrix* became a term to publicly criticize women's sexual and economic transgressions, whether they were in a long-term and respectable relationship, or not. This showcases the complexity of using binary terms to categorize Roman woman as either "good" or "bad".[8] For the Augustan elegists, the nuance of the *puellae* lied in how they were constructed by their author and often the qualities that indicated a *matrona* or *meretrix*, overlapped. But what did the *puellae* truly represent and what function did they serve for their elegiac authors? It has generally been agreed by scholars such as Wyke, Veyne, and Strong that *puellae* were merely poetic constructs, not real women.[9] According to Wyke, Ovid's Corinna, similar to Propertius's Cynthia and Tibullus' Nemesis, acted as a "textual body that incarnates her author's aesthetic and ideological ambitions", and functioned as a condition of metapoetry.[10] Corinna's lack of defining features allowed Ovid to construct his mistress at will while intentionally teasing his audience about her precise identity.[11] For example, Keith observed that the term *menda* (fault, blemish), which Ovid used to describe Corinna's body in *Amores* 1.5, had been used in literature exclusively to denote the faults of literacy, not physical traits.[12] Further, the quality of her dress described as *rara* (rare, thin, loose-textured), is a common literary term in Roman elegy, such a Propertius's description of Cynthia, drawing upon the tradition through allusions to other poets.[13] Ovid was thus able to construct an identity of his mistress that is not only ambiguous, but parallels her physical body to his textual work. [14] Keith's observation that Corinna is

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Tabella and the Theater of Love," in *Pornography and Representation in Greece and Rome*, ed. Amy Richlin (Oxford University Press, 1992), and John Pollini, "The Warren Cup: Homoerotic Love and Symposial Rhetoric in Silver*," The Art Bulletin* 81, no. 1 (1999): 21–52.

[4] Ov. *Am.* 1.5.20-25.

[5] Ov. *Am*. 1.5.9.

[6] For recent discourse on *matronae* and *meretrices*, see Anise K Strong, *Prostitutes and matrons in the Roman World* (Cambridge University Press, 2016); Sharon, L. James, "The Life Course of the Roman Courtesan," in *The Roman Courtesan: Archaeological Reflections of a Literary topos*. Institutum Romanum Finlandiae (2018); Ria Berg, and Richard Neudecker, *The Roman Courtesan Archaeological Reflections of a Literary Topos* (Institutum Romanum Finlandia, 2018).

[7] Alison Keith, "Historical Roman Courtesans," in *The Roman Courtesan: Archaeological Reflections of a Literary topo* (Institutum Romanum Finlandiae, 2018): 74. See *Vir*. 1.82.

[8] Strong, *Prostitutes and matrons*, 4.

[9] Paul Veyne*, Roman Erotic Elegy: Love, Poetry, and the West* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988); Maria Wyke, *The Roman Mistress: Ancient and Modern Representations* (Oxford University Press, 2002); Strong, *Prostitutes and matrons*.

[10] Wyke, *The Roman Mistress,* 156.

[11] John Heath, "Why Corinna?" *Hermes* 141, no. 2 (2013): 155-156.

[12] Alison Keith, "Corpus Eroticum: Elegiac Poetics and Elegiac Puellae in Ovid's *Amores," The Classical World* 88, no. 1 (1994): 31, also noted various examples of *menda* and *mendum* denoting literary faults and errors in writing; See Cic. *Orat.* 13.23.2, Livy, 38.55.8; For examples of *emdendo* see Ov. *Tr.* 5.1.71; *Pont.* 1.5.17, and Hor. *Sat.* 2.3.64. References to *mendum* in Latin poetry have only been found in Late Antiquity relating to moral 'wrongs', see Prudent. *Apoth*. 976 and Cypr. *Gall*. Gen. 667; leu. 143.

[13] Keith, "Historical Roman Courtesans," 29-30; Ov. *Am*. 1.5.13: *nec multum rāra nocēbat*. See also Prop. 1.8.42 and Ovid's triumph as an author in Elegy noted in *Am*. 2.17.25-29.

[14] Trevor Fear, "The Poet as Pimp: elegiac seduction in the time of Augustus," *Arethusa* 33, no. 2 (2000): 217-218, noted that poetic courtesans had the power to allure clients (i.e., readers). See also the study of metapoetry and elegiac sexuality in Anne Carson, "Your Money or Your Life," in *The Yale Journal of*

"both a literary and physical body", is strengthened by the way Ovid quickly shifts in *Amores* 1.5 to focus on her physique and treat her inanimately.[15] He settles the conflict of her refusal in *Amores* 1.4 and uses 1.5 to make his poetic goal to dominate her explicit.

However, there remains truth to the identity and condition of the *puella* whose function as a recognized person in real life cannot be simplified to mere metapoetry. The elegiac mistresses possessed gendered elements present within Roman society, and this allowed the *puella* to exist within both textual and tangible realities.[16] While Corinna is an embodied figure of Ovid's poetry, he simultaneously plays within the polarities of *matronae* and *meretrices*–and their range of social behaviors–that would have been meaningful to a Roman audience. This leaves open the question of her exact identity. Corinna certainly resembled a *meretrix*, as Ovid referred to her as a courtesan and declared her to be far worse than a prostitute for arbitrarily pricing her services.[17] Elite male discourse on women's financial activities were often merged with sexual behaviors and portrayed courtesans and other sexual laborers as greedy.[18] Roman women who could secure financial independence were perceived in elegy as more obscene than those of married women due to the lack of control men could exercise upon them, such as the treatment of Nemesis by Tibullus.[19] Ovid offers an idealized version of a highly desirable and sexually available woman, a probable courtesan with *matrona* qualities, while keeping her identity ambiguous for his own literary amusement.[20] This paper does not seek to address the issue of Corinna's identity as a real Roman woman but rather seeks to analyze how her identity was constructed by Ovid through similes and the trope of *militia amoris*. The identity of Corinna serves as an embodied figure of his poetry and Ovid's own battle with love and war, and the sexual conquest of his *puella*.

Militia Amoris in 1.5

Following the works of his predecessors Propertius and Tibullus, Ovid interlaced the themes of love and war throughout the *Amores* to display his triumph over his mistress, Corinna.[21] The trope of *militia amoris* was a common feature in Augustan poetry. Elegiac poets frequently used imperial imagery to parallel the militaristic pursuits of soldiers to that of an *amator*.[22] For example, Tibullus's extensive use of the trope in his elegies is seen in his first poem, where he describes himself as a soldier breaking down the doors to battle and taking the spoils of war (i.e. riches of love).[23] The trope shifts soldierly virtues to the lovers, and cautions against monetary wealth, such as the tension described by Virgil in the precursor of Camilla's death: her

Criticism 6, (1993): 75-92, and Ellen Oliensis, "The Erotics of Amicitia: Readings in Tibullus, Propertius, and Horace," in *Roman Sexualities*, ed. Judith P. Hallett and Marilyn B. Skinner (Princeton University Press, 1997), 151-71.

[15] Keith, "Historical Roman Courtesans," 31-32.

[16] Paul Allen Miller, "The Puella: Accept no substitutions!" in *The Cambridge Companion to Latin Love Elegy,* ed. Thea Thorsen (Cambridge university Press, 2013):167.

[17] Ov. *Am*. 1.10-20-21. For the status of the courtesans and their identification, see also Sharon L. James, *Learned Girls and Male Persuasion: Gender and Reading in Roman Love Elegy* (University of Carolina Press, 2003), and Keith, "Historical Roman Courtesans," 73-86.

[18] For example, see Ov. *Am.* 1.8.69-73 where Corinna is given advice from Dipsas, a *lena*.

[19] Keith, "Historical Roman Courtesans," 74; See also Tib. 2.3.51-62 who categorized Nemesis as a courtesan for her greed and desire of luxury items.

[20] See Alison Waters, "The Ideal of Lucretia in Augustan Latin Poetry," (PhD diss., University of Calgary, 2013), 4, 43-46, who suggests that Corinna's appearance in Ov. *Am.* 1.5 demonstrated Ovid's rejection of Corinna as either a meretrix or matrona common to Augustan elegy, but likely constructed his own 'third' version of the *puella's* identity.

[21] For recent discourse on *militia amoris*, see Leslie Cahoon, "The Bed as Battlefield: Erotic Conquest and Military Metaphor in Ovid's *Amores*," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 118 (1988): 293–308; Megan Drinkwater, "Militia Amoris," in *The Cambridge Companion to Latin Love Elegy*, ed. Thea Thorsen (Cambridge University Press, 2013): 195-196; Donncha O'Rourke, "Make War Not Love: Militia Amoris and Domestic Violence in Roman Elegy," in *Texts and Violence in the Roman World*, ed. M. Gale and D. Scourfield (Cambridge University Press, 2018): 110–139; Katherine K. De Boer, "Violence and Vulnerability in Ovid's *Amores* 1.5–8," *American Journal of Philology* 142, no. 2 (2021): 259-286.

[22] Paul Allen Miller, *Subjecting Verses: Latin Love Elegy and the Emergence of the Real* (Princeton University Press, 2004), 163-164.

[23] Tib. 1.1.72-76.

desires for riches.[24] Gale noted that the Augustan elegists, notably Propertius, explored the virtues of warfare and love, and their ambiguities, describing the prowess of a lover like a soldier, but preferred *otium* (leisure) over public life.[25] Propertius utilized the trope in Book 2 to declare that the conquest of love (and battle) itself is better than the spoils that come from it, recentering the goal of triumph.[26]

In the *Amores*, Ovid similarly uses military imagery to frame themes of sexual violence and the consummation of desire. Ovid appropriates the language of battle as a part of a scheme to display his struggles with love, evident in *Amores* 1.5 in the repetition of martial words such as *pugnare* (to fight, wrestle), *deripere* (to snatch), *proditio* (betrayal) and *vincere* (to defeat, conquer):

> *Deripui tunicam; nec multum rara nocebat,*
> *Pugnabat tunica sed tamen illa tegi;*
> *cumque ita pugnaret tamquam quae vincere nollet,*
> *Victa est non aegre proditione sua.*[27]
>
> I tore away the tunic—and yet 'twas fine and scarcely marred her charms; but still she struggled to have the tunic shelter her. Even while thus, she struggled, as one who would not overcome, was she overcome—and 'twas not hard—by her own betrayal.

Ovid employed the trope of *milita amoris* by casting himself as a rival to love and situating Corinna as an enemy combatant.[28] De Boer has noted that Ovid constructs a picture of Corinna as the enemy, and his comparison of Corinna to foreign, non-Roman figures sets the tone for the lover's conquest of his mistress.[29] Corinna's subtle identity as an enemy and subject of violence is further seen through the inclusion of *thalamos* (bed-chamber, marriage-bed).[30] The visualization of Ovid's quest for love is situated within a spatial context where the *puella* is threatened in the bedroom.[31] Similarly, Propertius threatened any mistress who enters the *thalamos* clothed, aligning them with naked courtesans rather than dressed *matronae,* and further juxtaposed Cynthia with Helen as an emblem of violent love and adultery.[32] Propertius aligned these violent erotic pursuits with the battles on behalf of Helen (*ille Helenae in gremio maxima bella gerit*), while in *Am*.2.12.9-10, Ovid emphasized his erotic achievements over Corinna by comparing it to the battle of Troy itself (*sanguine praeda caret, non humiles muri*).[33]

Militaristic allusions to mythical battles allowed Ovid to situate himself as a conqueror of love and sex.[34] Ovid's most explicit articulation of *militia amoris* occurs within *Amores* 1.9, where he asserted every lover resembled a soldier (*Mīlitat omnis amāns*).[35] In this poem, Ovid developed his infamous list of comparisons between love and warfare, including additional references to figures from Homeric tradition in *Am*ores 2.12, as proof that lovers were active opponents; love is the cure to laziness (*quī nōlet fierī dēsidiōsus, amet*).[36] Given the potency of Ovid's conception of lovers as soldiers, I propose that

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[24] Verg. *Aen*. 11.778-80. See also Duncan Kennedy, "Love's Tropes and Figures," In A Companion to Roman Love Elegy, ed. Barbara K. Gold (Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 277.

[25] Monica R. Gale, "Propertius 2.7: Militia Amoris and the Ironies of Elegy," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 87 (1997): 79

[26] Prop. 2.14.10. See also Alison R. Sharrock, "Ovid". In A Companion to Roman Love Elegy, ed. Barbara K. Gold. (Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 121.

[27] Ov. *Am.* 1.5.13-16.

[28] O'Rourke, 110-139, observed that a reading of Ovid's use of the theme of *militia amoris* helps provide historical context of the changing state of Roman society following the military and marital reforms of Augustus.

[29] De Boer, "Violence and Vulnerability in Ovid's *Amores* 1.5–8," 268, also observed the visualization of the *puella's* house as the "enemy's house" under attack in *Am*.1.9.19-20.

[30] Ov. *Am*. 1.5.11; McKeown, *Ovid: Amores*, 111, has noted the use of *thalamos* to describe the bedroom has been often used with references to infamous heroines and goddesses.

[31] Cahoon, "The Bed as Battlefield," 297-298.

[32] Prop. 2.15.13-18: *ipse Paris nuda fertur periisse Lacaena,cum Menelaëo surgeret e thalamo; nudus et Endymion Phoebi cepisse sororemdicitur et nudus concubuisse deae.quod si pertendens animo vestita cubaris,scissa veste meas experiere manus.* See Catull. 68.87 and Thomas K. Hubbard, "Art and Vision in Propertius 2.31/32," *Transactions of the American Philological Association (1974-)* 114, (1984): 295 for allusions to Helen and Paris' adultery. Helen represents a symbol of soldiery love on account of her abduction and affair with Paris.

[33] Prop. 3.8.33 and Ov. *Am*. 2.12.9-10.

[34] Cahoon, "The Bed as Battlefield," 296.

[35] Ov. *Am*. 1.9.1

[36] McKeown, *Ovid: Amores,* 258-261. See Ov. *Am*.1.9.46.

Amores 1.5 is best read through the comparison of Corinna to Lais and Semiramis as figures of varying identity in historical legend. By invoking these historical figures and their associations with warfare, Ovid was able to conquer his puella, sexually and poetically.

Corinna, the 'Courtesan-Combatant'

> *Candida dividua colla tegente coma—*
> *qualiter in thalamos famosa Semiramis isse*
> *dicitur, et multis Lais amata viris.*[37]
>
> See, Corinna comes, clothed in a loosened tunic, with her parted hair falling on her white neck. Just as famous Semiramis is said to have entered the bedroom, and Lais loved by many a man.[38]

Ovid's introduction of Corinna in *Amores* 1.5.10-12 was enhanced by her comparison to two celebrated mytho-historical figures, Lais and Semiramis. The juxtaposition of Lais, a renowned courtesan, with Semiramis, an Assyrian queen, offers a vantage point for analyzing how Ovid constructed his *puella's* multifaceted identity. Given the clear focus on *militia amoris* in 1.5, it is surprising that there is little comprehensive treatment of Lais and Semiramis as similes representing love and war in scholarship. Speculation concerning Corinna's social status through these two similes has often been at the forefront of scholarship, while a deeper reading of these renowned figures for their militaristic imagery has been overlooked. Prior discussions of these two similes have divided Corinna into two personas, one as the courtesan (Lais) and the other as a regal queen (Semiramis).[39] A basic reading of Lais as a symbol of erotic love is plausible, given the name's allusion to the famous fifth century BCE Corinthian courtesan and her abundant presence in ancient literature.[40] The characterization of courtesans (*meretrices*) in Latin elegy was a long-standing literary tradition originally adapted from Greek New Comedy.[41] Ovid's comparison of Corinna to Greek courtesans echoes Propertius' own contrast of Cynthia in poem 2.6 to famous courtesans, Lais, Thais and Phryne, and their admiration by many men.[42] Propertius's fixation with describing courtesans as receiving immense wealth (*beata)* could further serve to categorize them as greedy. Interestingly, Ovid omits the inclusion of *beata* and instead refers to Corinna as being loved by *multis viris* (many men). This may be a way for him to uplift her status beyond a sexual laborer, while simultaneously boosting her infamy: to be loved by many men suggests wide recognition and his sexual conquest of a well-regarded courtesan enhances his triumph in 'battle' or perhaps, over the genre of elegy itself.

The prevalence of famous courtesans, such as Lais, has also been well attested in both literary and epigraphic evidence. McGinn observed that the frequent reference to female courtesans with Greek names stemmed from the mass immigration of enslaved people from the Eastern Empire, and was a phenomenon that drew the attention of many Latin authors who made connections between the recruitment of sexual labor and influx of foreign

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[37] Ov. *Am.* 1.5.10-12.

[38] See Fear, "The Poet as Pimp," 225, for translation.

[39] Stephan Hinds, "Generalising About Ovid," *Ramus* 16, no. 1–2 (1987): 4–31; and McKeown, 111-112.

[40] Alison Keith, "Naming the Elegiac Mistress: Elegiac Onomastics in Roman Inscriptions," *Roman Literary Cultures: Domestic Politics, Revolutionary Poetics, Civic Spectacle* (2016): 61-62. The reference of Lais may refer to two courtesans dating between the fifth and fourth century BCE. One being a Corinthian courtesan who was employed by the Athenian General Nicias in Paus. 2.2.5: "Λαΐδος φάμενον μνῆμα εἶναι." See Ath. 13.570b–589c for the reference of another famous Lais noted as a Sicilian namesake in the fourth century BCE.

[41] Anne Duncan, "Infamous performers: Comic actors and female prostitutes in Rome." in *Prostitutes and courtesans in the ancient world*, ed. Christopher A. Faraone and Laura McClure (The University of Wisconsin Press, 2006): 257-258); See also Keith, "Historical Roman Courtesans," 73, who noted famous Greek courtesans, such as Terence's Thais in *Eunuchus*, served as onomastic inspiration for Roman literary characters in both Comedy and Elegy. See also Hallett, Judith P. "Ballio's Brothel, Phoenicium's Letter, and the Literary Education of Greco-Roman Prostitutes: The Evidence of Plautus's Pseudolus," in *Greek Prostitutes in the Ancient Mediterranean 800 BCE–200 CE,* ed. Allison Glazebrook and Madeleine M. Henry (University of Wisconsin Press, 2011), 172-196 for other references of well-known Greek courtesans in both Greek and Latin literature.

[42] McKeown, *Ovid: Amores*, 112; Note the similarity of *Am*. 1.5.12: "*multis Lais amata viris*" and Prop. 2.6: "*Laidos aedes, ad cuius iacuit… nec Thaidos olimtanta … Phryne tam multis facta beata viris.".* See also Mart. *Epi*. 10.68.11-12: "*Non tamen omnino, Laelia, Lais eris."*

luxury goods.[43] The name Lais has been discovered in a total of 175 inscriptions of freedwomen in the Roman record, with 52 dated to the Augustan period.[44] Although the identity of freedwomen named Lais does not necessarily suggest a sexual occupation, Ovid likely invoked the popularity of courtesans well-regarded in literature, and commonality in epigraphic text familiar to the Augustan age. Based on Lais's associations with famous courtesans, Ovid is able to position Corinna within a wider category of freeborn and sexually available women as a figure of erotic love.[45]

As we have seen in this surface reading of the two similes, the position of Lais as a metaphor of love, insinuates that Semiramis is the symbol of war. Semiramis has been well documented for her ruthlessness and active role in military campaigns of the Assyrian Empire. Scholarship has only recently begun to assess these historical women beyond their social function.[46] Scholars, such as McKeown, Keith, and Miller focused largely on their connections to adultery and roles as a courtesans, using these traits to label Corinna as the *matrona-meretrix* archetype.[47] Only recently have scholars, such as Campbell, explored the literary identities of these historical figures in greater depth, such as Semiramis' connection to divinity.[48] However, I propose that Ovid's use of Semiramis in *Amores* 1.5 was further intended to represent Corinna as an active combatant of love, and her juxtaposition with Lais formed the two sides of the same *militia amoris* coin. It would be remiss to neglect Semiramis's full identity in historical myths, as she may simultaneously be read as a figure of both erotic love and warfare, a "courtesan-combatant." A more comprehensive analysis of Lais as a courtesan is beyond the scope of this paper but would prove fruitful for future studies of Corinna in *Amores* 1.5.

The Tradition of Semiramis

The basis of our knowledge of Semiramis's origins is built on the conflation of several Assyrian queens that spanned generations between the ninth to the seventh century BCE.[49] Scholars have generally agreed she was likely inspired by Sammu-ramat, first noted by Herodotus, who was the historical queen and wife of Shamshi-Adad and exercised power as queen consort for over five years.[50] Stronk has argued that Semiramis ought to be understood as a syncretistic figure of Greek and Assyrian myth, who later became an archetype of a powerful ruler following the seventh century BCE.[51] Most accounts of Semiramis derive from Diodorus Siculus who drew inspiration from Ctesias of Cnidus, a physician from the fifth century BCE thought to have had access to historical Mesopotamian records.[52] Semiramis was depicted as

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[43] Thomas A. McGinn, *The Economy of Prostitution in the Roman World: A Study of Social History & the Brothel* (University of Michigan Press, 2004), 55-62 also noted the decrease of Greek names for courtesans fell out of favor in Late Antiquity.

[44] Heikki Solin, *Die griechischen personennamen in Rom: ein namenbuch* (De Gruyter, 2003), 275); Keith, "Naming the Elegiac Mistress: Elegiac Onomastics in Roman Inscriptions," 60. For five examples of Lais inscribed as a freedwoman during the Augustan period, see *CIL VI* 11038, *VI* 5891, *VI* 6038, *VI* 23822, and *VI* 926. The name Thais is also attested for 57 times in the Roman record, 31 which were inscribed as freedwomen from the first century BCE to CE (e.g., see *AE* 1992, 00109 for the reference to both Lais and Thais).

[45] Patricia Watson, "Puella and Virgo," in *Glotta* 61 (1983): 123-125.

[46] McKeown, 105, 110; Miller, "The Puella: Accept no Substitutions!" 177; and Celia Campbell, "Corinna Duplex, Duplex Corinna: The Simile Optics of *Amores* 1.5," *TAPA* 149, no. 1 (2019): 47-76. See also Jörg Rüpke, "Veneration of Venus in Augustan love poetry as a metaphor of total devotion," *Religion* 53, no. 1 (2023): 78, who noted importance of "religious legitimatization" in Graeco-Roman literary traditions and its role in Augustan Elegy, especially the inclusion of Venus.

[47] Keith, *Naming the Elegiac Mistress*; Miller, *Subjecting Verses,* 163; McKeown, *Ovid: Amores*, 105-110.

[48] Campbell, *Corinna Duplex, Duplex Corinna*.

[49] Stephanie Dalley, "Semiramis in History and Legend," in *Cultural Borrowings and Ethnic Appropriations*, ed. Gruen, Erich S. F. Steiner, 2005, 13.

[50] Dalley, 13-14; See also Michael Anderson, "The silence of Semiramis: Shame and desire in the Ninus romance and other Greek novels,"in *Ancient Narrative* 7 (2009): 1-3, and Campbell, "Corinna Duplex, Duplex Corinna", 52; See Hero.1.184-185 who noted Nitocris, a later Assyrian queen, who ruled alongside Ninus and has been conflated with Semiramis (Sammu-ramat) during the Hellenistic period (… τῇ οὔνομα ἦν Σεμίραμις…τῇ οὔνομα ἦν Νίτωκρις…).

[51] Jan Stronk, *Semiramis' Legacy: The History of Persia According to Diodorus of Sicily* (Edinburgh University Press, 2017), 527.

[52] Dalley, "Semiramis in History and Legend," 13-14, noted that Diodorus likely conflated the two Semiramis' together as one central figure. We also have the surviving fragment of a Greek

intelligent and beautiful, rising from humble beginnings to capture the affections of King Ninus.[53] In Diodorus's accounts, Semiramis appeared as two personas: one as a cunning militaristic ruler who led successful campaigns in the Near East and was credited with building programs in Babylon, and the second as a beautiful queen of divine birth.[54] While the legitimacy of Semiramis's historical origins is debated, her various personas were widespread by the time of the Augustan period and Ovid's authorship.[55] Scholars have increasingly noted that Ovid's association of Corinna with Venus subtly evokes the figure of Semiramis, who was repeatedly described by ancient authors as divine and connected to doves, such as the tradition that she herself was born from them.[56] Corinna's own dove imagery and associations with Venus strengthens this parallel. Diodorus was first to link Semiramis's strong connection to Venus, accrediting it to both the meaning of her name and to the traditions that she was nurtured by doves in infancy and transformed into them at her death. [57] Campbell has highlighted that this imagery of Semiramis as a dove was further enhanced by Ovid's portrayal of Corinna as a *candida diuidua* (shining goddess) emerging at the threshold of his bedroom, mimicking an epiphanic entrance.[58] McKeowen has suggested this description of Corinna as 'shining' was likely influenced by his predecessor Catullus, who portrayed his *puella* Lesbia to a shining goddess (*mea se molli candida diva*).[59] Interestingly, Ovid replaced the expected *diva with dividua* to emphasis Corinna's long, divided hair rather than her body as a whole (*candida dividua colla tegente coma*).[60]

This shift in focus accentuates her arrival as a divine epiphany while simultaneously recalling the imagery of undone hair typical in love making scenes and imparting a stronger erotic tone.[61] Hinds has observed that Ovid's gaze upon Corinna's perfect physique (… *papillarum quam fuit apta premi*) further reflected this sensual idealisation of the *puellae*.[62] Ovid inverts Corinna's first introduction to present her not only as divine epiphany signalled by *ecce*, but an erotic encounter.[63] Campbell offered a deeper analysis of Semiramis's divinity, who noted the deification of Corinna through her shining neck and symbolic associations with doves whose necks shifted in

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novel on papyri (A and B) dating to the first century CE which details the romance between Ninus and Semiramis as both lovers and their campaign accounts. See Fragment P. 6926 R within Anderson, "The silence of Semiramis," 1-3, for a complete overview.

[53] Diod. 2.4: "… where he married Semiramis, the most renowned of all women of whom we have any record, it is necessary first of all to tell how she rose from a lowly fortune to such fame".

[54] Hdt.1.184: *ἡ μὲν πρότερον ἄρξασα, τῆς ὕστερον γενεῇσι πέντε πρότερον γενομένη, τῇ οὔνομα ἦν Σεμίραμις, αὕτη μὲν ἀπεδέξατο χώματα ἀνὰ τὸ πεδίον ἐόντα ἀξιοθέητα*, and Prop. 3.11.1-72.

[55] Diod. 2.4; Keith, "Naming the Elegiac Mistress: Elegiac Onomastics in Roman Inscriptions," 76, no. 16, noted there has been a total of three inscribed names of Semiramis among slave and freedwomen have been recorded in the Roman epigraphic record.

[56] Diod. 2.4: "Since after the founding of this city Ninus made a campaign against Bactriana, where he married Semiramis, the most renowned of all women of whom we have any record…", and 2.20.2: "…say that she turned into a dove and flew off in the company of many birds which alighted on her dwelling, and this, they say, is the reason why the Assyrians worship the dove as a god, thus deifying Semiramis". See Auson. *Epig*. 65 who noted Lais's connection to love through her interactions with Venus where she gave the goddess her mirror upon losing her own beauty with age. See also Maria Ypsilanti, "Lais and her Mirror," *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies*, no. 49 (2006): 194-195) and Campbell, "Corinna Duplex, Duplex Corinna."

[57] McKeown, *Ovid: Amores*, 111; Fear, "The Poet as Pimp," 225. See also Campbell, "Corinna Duplex, Duplex Corinna," 52 no. 16, noted Semiramis name likely came from the Akkadian term for dove "*summu/summatu"*. See also the direct reference of Semiramis as a goddess in Diod. 2.4: "Semiramis … means "doves," birds which since that time all the inhabitants of Syria have continued to honour as goddesses".

[58] Campbell, "Corinna Duplex, Duplex Corinna," 49; Miller, "The Puella: Accept no substitutions!" 177, observed Ovid's allusion to Catullus 68 when Lesbia is described as a *candida diva.* See *Catull*. 68.70.

[59] McKeown, *Ovid: Amores,* 109-110; *Catul.* 68.72.

[60] Ov. *Am*. 1.5.10. Note one of the earliest survived depictions of Semiramis is found in Antioch depicting Semiramis serving King Ninus a drinking vessel dated to 200 CE. No depictions of Semiramis have survived prior to the first century CE. See also Niklas, Holzberg, *Ovid: The Poet and His Work* (Cornell University Press, 2002) for further discussion of Corinna's hair in the *Amores* as a metaphor for Ovid's poetry.

[61] McKeown, *Ovid: Amores,* 110.

[62] Ov. *Am*.1.5.20; Hinds, "Generalising About Ovid," 4-31; Keith, "Corpus Eroticum," 31.

[63] Ov. *Am*. 1.5.9: *ecce, Corinna venit tunicā vēlāta recīnctā*. McKeown, *Ovid: Amores*, 105; 110; See also Plaut. *Poen*. 850 for the association of courtesans with rituals to Venus: "*nam meretrices nostrae primis hostiis Venerem placauere extemplo*".

colour.[64] She further noted that Cicero, Lucretius, and Seneca referenced similar shifting colours in the sunlight as examples of illusions and deception.[65] The attention drawn to Corinna's neck, and her association with doves, may symbolize the threat the *puella* serves towards Ovid and his poetic vocation. Strong observed that women who achieved power and fame were often characterized as sexually loose and dangerous for their ability to deceive men.[66] During the late Republic, it became common for elite male authors to label prominent women, such as Semiramis, as shameful adulterers who threatened society through their supposed sexual obscenity and deception. During the period of Virgil, Horace and Propertius, Roman authors frequently directed their attention to famous foreign women, notably Cleopatra.[67] As Wyke noted, such renowned women stood against the new *libertas* (freedom, liberty) established by Augustus and poetic or rhetorical violence towards women was an acceptable tool.[68] Cicero, for instance, publicly smeared his rival Aulus Gabinius, a Roman general, by calling him 'Semiramis' in order to criticize his failures in Near East battle campaigns.[69] Ovid followed this similar tradition, resonating with Propertius who similarly placed Semiramis alongside figures like Cleopatra, to cast her as a worthy opponent and insert his own humorous tone within the intertext.[70] By categorizing Corinna's sexual availability through her divine associations with Venus, Ovid was further able to elevate the fame of his collection within the tradition of his predecessors, rather than elevating his *puella,* and compared her to historical-mythological figures whose fame may have been seen as threatening. Miller categorized Ovid as "para-Augustan" in that he worked within the elegiac tradition while simultaneously moved away from Republican virtues of men to explore new tropes around sexual desires.[71] As Ovid worked within the climate of Augustan Rome, his use of *militia amoris* served his own poetic needs as an ally to Love. While Corinna and Semiramis's associations with divinity offers a convincing example of Ovid's view of his poetry and her symbolic role, it is all the more surprising that her reputation as a warrior and prominence in Roman cultural memory has remained overlooked.

Semiramis in the Amores

A deeper reading of Semiramis's personas demonstrates a clear allusion to Ovid's *militia amoris* in 1.5. As we recall the opening lines of *Amores* 1.1, Ovid declares:

> *Quid, sī praeripiat flāvae Venus arma Minervae,*
> *ventilet accēnsās flāva Minerva facēs?*[72]
>
> What if Venus should seize away the arms of golden-haired Minerva, if golden-haired Minerva should fan into flame the kindled torch of love?

Here, Ovid outlines his usage of the *militia amoris* tradition by associating a war-like goddess Minerva with Venus, and we first see the interplay between love and war. Semiramis's role as a symbol of erotic love was further intensified by her reputation as a courtesan.[73] Several authors present her as a concubine, who recount how she lured young soldiers with her beauty only to have them killed, such as in

[64] Campbell, "Corinna Duplex, Duplex Corinna," 56; See also Apul. *Met*. 6.6.7: "*… hilaris incessibus picta colla torquentes",* and Isid. *Etym*. 12.7.61: "*earum colla ad singulas conuersiones colores mutant."*

[65] Ibid, 56-57 no. 28; See also Cic. *Luc*. 19.79.5–7.

[66] Strong, *Prostitutes and matrons in the Roman World*, 98.

[67] Kerstin Droß-Krüpe, "Changing Identities at the Turn of the Common Era: The Case of Semiramis," Studia Orientalia Electronica 11, no. 2 (2023), 124.

[68] Wyke, *The Roman Mistress*, 108.

[69] See Cic. *Cael*. 2.9: "Then Syria: is this new Semiramis [*Gabinus*] to be retained any longer there?" Semiramis was also noted to have lost a few battles with the Near East during her campaigns. See also Sara Myers, "The poet and the procuress: the *lena* in Latin love elegy," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 86 (1996): 5-6, who observed the danger in Latin elegy for women to receive fame, such as Cynthia's bad reputation at the cost of Propertius's fame as a poet; See also Prop. 3. 11. 32.

[70] See Prop. 3. 11.

[71] Miller, *Subjecting Verses*, 162

[72] Ov. *Am*. 1.1.7-8.

[73] See Diod. 2.20.3-4: "… certain other historians say that she was a comely courtesan".

Euphorion's *Thrax*.[74] Other accounts claim Semiramis had her husband Ninus killed, for both he, and her former husband Onnes, were enslaved by her beauty.[75] Ovid, by viewing Corinna as Semiramis, a courtesan and erotic lover, reverses his original position as a captive to Cupid's triumph, noted in *Amores* 1.2.27-30 and portrays himself instead as the conqueror of Corinna, recalling lines 13-16 in 1.5.[76]

Semiramis's reputation as a combatant is referenced within Strabo's *Geography*, which recorded her continual participation in campaigns (e.g., her expedition with Cyrus in India).[77] An element of her persona which originated in Diodorus and became widely popularized in Late Antiquity was Semiramis's tactic of disguising herself as a man in order to join military campaigns during the earlier years of her regency.[78] Semiramis's gendered ambiguity serves as another example of Ovid assigning 'masculine' and martial traits to the perfected feminine body of his *puella*. *Amores* 1.5 may therefore be read as an episode which Ovid looked beyond her beauty to imagine her as a worthy opponent in battle. This reversal of gender roles in Latin elegy is often depicted through the imagery of amatory "battle" wounds given to the *puella*, as seen later in *Amores* 1.7, where Naso expressed his remorse for hitting Corinna (e.g., scratches on her face and the pulling of her hair). Baroin observed that soldiers' scars could not be excessive otherwise their victory would not be memorialized as valiant.[79] Facial wounds received in battle, as opposed to those to the chest, were regarded as morally debasing because of their associations with punishment inflicted on enslaved people.[80]

While Ovid has presented Corinna, figured as Semiramis, as a valiant opponent to his erotic battle, he carefully reminded the reader of her continued subjugation by invoking her well-known myth. Propertius listed Semiramis among other powerful figures, including Cleopatra, Omphale, and Penthesilea, and her association with these foreign women reinforced not only her martial qualities, but her ultimate defeat.[81] Semiramis was remembered for her failed campaign in India, just as Penthesilea was famously defeated at the hands of Achilles.[82] From *Amores* 1.1 onward, Ovid endured suffering in the pursuit of Corinna as a *servus amoris* (slave of love), and by *Amores* 1.5, the climax of his sexual victory over Corinna functions as a metaphorical 'healing' of his amatory wounds. Beyond the basic reading of Lais as erotic love (a courtesan) and Semiramis as soldiery love (a combatant), a deeper reading of Semiramis' identity offers a more comprehensive understanding of how Ovid constructed Corinna's ambiguous identity and a visualization of his own poetry, using *militia amoris* to unite the lover and solider in equivalence.

Conclusion

Given the clear use of militaristic language and imagery in *Amores* 1.5, the comparison of Corinna to

[74] Euphor. *Thrax*. 9-11; See also Diod. (13.4): "… but choosing out the most handsome of the soldiers she consorted with them and then made away with all who had lain with her".

[75] See Diod. 2.6.10.

[76] See Ov. *Am*. 1.2.27-30: … "*ducentur capti iuvenes captaeque puellae; haec tibi magnificus pompa triumphus erit. ipse ego, praeda recens…*" and *Am*. 1.5.13-16: "*dēripuī tunicam; nec multum rāra nocēbat, pugnābat tunicā sed tamen illa tegī; cumque ita pugnāret tamquam quae vincere nōllet, victa est nōn aegrē prōditiōne suā".*

See also McKeown, *Ovid: Amores*, 32-33, on how Ovid parodies triumphal-poetry that was very popular during the Augustan period.

[77] Strab. *Geo*. 15.1.5; 16.1.2.

[78] See Diod. 2.6: "… she devised a garb which made it impossible to distinguish whether the wearer of it was a man or a woman". See also Claudianus (*Euro*. 1.339): "… her hairless cheeks that clever Semiramis, to disguise her sex from the Assyrians, first surrounded herself with beings like her", and Anth. Lat. (847): *Corporis ambiguus; sum clara Semiramis, alto Non minor ipsa uiro, belli pacisque probatis, Artibus insignis, nato miserabilis uno.*

[79] Catherine Baroin, "Les Cicatrices ou La Memoire Du Corps," In *Corps Romains*, ed. Philippe Moreau (Jérôme Millon, 2002); See also Miller, *Subjecting Verses,* 26-27, for more on amatory wounds in elegy.

[80] Baroin "Les Cicatrices ou La Memoire Du Corps," observed that scarring on their faces were seen as a negative model for soldier in combat. See also Wise Wise, Jessica. "Subaltern women, sexual violence, and trauma in Ovid's Amores." In *Emotional Trauma in Greece and Rome: Representations and Reactions*, ed. Andromache Karanika, and Vassiliki Panoussi (Routledge, 2020), 80, for discussion of Ovid's treatment of Cypassis and inflicted wounds to a slave in poems 27 and 2.8. See also Plin. *HN*. 35.78 for his reference of Semiramis as a slave within a famous painting by Aetion titled "Semiramis the Slave Girl Rising to a Throne".

[81] Prop. 3.11: … *vicit victorem candida forma virum.*

[82] Diod. 2.19.7

Semiramis as a courtesan-combatant appears more natural. The juxtaposition of two renowned mytho-historical figures, Lais and Semiramis, in lines 10-12 act as a continual reminder of how Ovid weaponized the trope of *militia amoris* to sexually conquer his ambiguous *puella*. A deeper analysis of Semiramis's identity as an archetype for a soldier and ruler reveals her position within the poem as a symbol of love and war. Ovid eroticized the conquest of sex within the boundaries of his bedroom and demonstrated his triumph in the struggle to dominate his *puella*, and love itself, by tearing off Corinna's tunic and the constraints of his desires. The only sight pleasing to Ovid's eyes is the perfection of his own poetic work within the tradition of elegy and his ability to view her in different capacities, as both a courtesan and a soldier of love.

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THE CLOSE CONTRIVER OF ALL HARMS: SENECA'S MEDEA AS THE EMBODIED AGENT OF ROMAN MAGIC

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Art by Julia Wysotski

Introduction

Gods and the world of the supernatural played sometimes perfunctory roles in daily Roman society; however, when it comes to revenge, they were deeply involved. There is perhaps no better tale of revenge than that of Medea, with Seneca's *Medea* serving as a visceral example of the story which includes a feature of revenge, now mostly lost, but common in the ancient world: the curse. Not just limited to use by mythic minor goddesses, curses were something that the common Roman had access to in the form of curse tablets. As Erica Bexley discusses, unlike Euripides' Medea, her Senecan counterpart incants her spells on stage.[1] The words, actions, and ingredients for her curse are described in explicit detail. From this fact, the questions naturally arise: where did Seneca, in writing his tragedy, find his inspiration for such a powerful and specific incantation, and is there any relation between that everyday practice and the incantations of a figure imported from Greek myth? As is so common in many aspects of Roman religion, there is a formula for the creation of curses and for the invocation of dark goddesses as seen in the Roman people's regular use of *defixiones*, or curse tablets.[2] Seneca was certainly aware of literary curses and the real curses produced by Romans. Indeed, as John Gager suggests, due to the prolific number of extant tablets which have been found, it is likely that everyone in Rome would have been familiar with *defixiones*.[3]

I argue that there exist direct similarities between the curses of Medea and of everyday Romans, similarities which Seneca intentionally drew upon in order to ground his work in reality. I first provide context for the social history of curses in Greece and Rome. I then examine the archaeological evidence for real-life curse tablets and the scholarship surrounding them. Finally, I compare Medea's opening invocation and her 100-line spell against Creon and Creusa to those curse tablets and to contemporary literary curses, thereby showing the throughline of continuity between them.

Context

Seneca wrote *Medea* sometime before 54 CE, likely after his exile from Rome, though the exact timing remains uncertain.[4] Most importantly, he wrote

[1] Scholars still debate whether Medea—and indeed all of Seneca's tragedies—were written to be performed or to be recited, and that question may never be answered conclusively due primarily to a lack of evidence (Erica Bexley, "What Is Dramatic Recitation?" *Mnemosyne* 68, no. 5 (2015): 774). I do not seek to argue for either option in these pages, but, for the sake of consistency, I will use the conventions of theatrical language to describe the actions within the text. Characters who are speaking will be described as "on-stage", and characters and events they refer to will be described as "off-stage".

[2] "Dark goddesses" is a term not typically *de rigueur*, but which here refers to literal darkness as seen below.

[3] John G. Gager, *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World* (Oxford University Press, 1992), 3.

[4] C. W. Marshall, "The Works of Seneca the Younger and Their Dates," in *Brill's Companion to Seneca*, edited by Gregor Damschen and Andreas Heil (Brill, 2014), 38.

Medea several decades after Virgil's *Aeneid* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and *Heroides* were published. Ovid wrote three notable appearances of Medea through his works:[5] she takes a leading role in the first half of *Metamorphoses* VII, in *Heroides* XII, and in his—tragically lost—*Medea*.[6] While Medea casts a long spell in *Metamorphoses* VII (ll. 192-219), Virgil's curse of Dido is the most directly comparable to the curses in Seneca's *Medea*. When Dido sees Aeneas leave the shores of Carthage, she calls down a terrible curse upon him,[7] punctuated by her sacrificing her own life. Although Dido and Aeneas did not formally marry and they had no children together, both she and Medea are inspired to perform a curse because the man they love has betrayed them. The similarities and differences in wording between the curses are described in the sections on Medea's first and second invocations which follow the examination of curse tablets.

Curse Tablets

In order to compare Seneca's *Medea* to Greco-Roman curse tablets, the characteristics of this mystic medium must be understood. According to Sarah Iles Johnston, archaeological evidence for curse tablets appears first in Sicily in the late 6th century BCE, in Athens in the early 5th, and in the rest of Greece by the 4th century.[8] Unfortunately for the modern scholar or would-be *defigens*, nailing down the exact methodology for the formulation of a Greek κατάδεσμος or a Latin *defixio* proves a challenging task. As a form of folk-magic, curse tablets are inherently changeable—there were no curse-police to tell a young Roman he was doing it wrong.[9] One can, however, derive regular qualities and characteristics from examination of epigraphic evidence. Thankfully, a great deal of that work—first brought into English by Christoipher A. Faraone[10]—has been done by scholars to produce standard elements and formulaic classifications. Invocations can be broadly sorted into three categories based on Eugen Kagarow's 1929 research: 1. The direct binding formula, 2. The prayer formula, and 3. The *similia similibus* formula. Faraone additionally lists a fourth category, the wish formula, but himself admits that while it is most similar to the prayer formula, it most often appears as a sort of *apodosis* to a *similia similibus* formula.[11] Later scholars have proposed various minor modifications to the names and definitions of these categories, but they by and large remain the same.[12]

The direct binding formula uses first-person verbs of binding such as *deligo, obligo*, or *defigo*, often in the formula "I bind X person." These *defixiones* are often short, Kropp provides examples of this type: *Quicumque levavit anulum. Immergo* "Whoever stole my ring. I submerge (him)."[13] Curse tablets, upon completion, were often deposited into bodies of water.[14] Type 1 tablets also sometimes provide a list of specific parts the *defigens* wishes to be bound. *ligo, obligo linguas illorum…* "I bind their tongues, I bind them up [. . .]."[15] Curse tablets also appear in the format "I bind X person before/to Y deity," such as *omnes inferis deis deligo* "I bind all (of them down) to the gods of the underworld."[16]

The second type, which Kropp calls the 'committal formula',[17] most closely resembles the type of cursing Medea performs. It usually involves one or more imperatives, and almost always calls upon some power to act against the target,[18] as below.[19]

[5] Stephen Hinds, "Medea in Ovid: Scenes from the Life of an Intertextual Heroine," *Materiali e discussioni per l'analisi dei testi classici*, no. 30 (1993): 9.
[6] The *Heroides* were a series of letters Ovid imagined to be written by various heroines. *Heroides* XII is Medea's letter to Jason.
[7] Verg. *Aen.* 4.607-29.
[8] Sarah Iles Johnston, *Restless Dead: Encounters between the Living and the Dead in Ancient Greece* (University of California Press, 2013), 91.
[9] Unlike with regular Roman religious rituals, where a keen sense of tradition and a need to do things according to the *mos maiorum* meant that in some cases one *could* find one's wording policed.
[10] Christopher A. Farone, "The Agonistic Context of Early Greek Binding Spells," In *Magika Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic and Religion*, eds. Christopher A. Faraone and Dirk Obbink (Oxford University Press, 1991).
[11] Faraone, "Agonistic Context," 6.
[12] Specifically relevant to this paper are Gager (1992), Kropp (2010), Urbanová (2018), and Natalías (2022).
[13] Amina Kropp, "How Does Magical Language Work? The Spells and Formulae of The Latin Defixionum Tabellae," in *Magical Practice in the Latin West: Papers from the International Conference Held at the University of Zaragoza, 30 Sept.–1st Oct. 2005*, eds. Francisco Marco Simón and Richard Gordon. (Brill, 2010), 361.
[14] Gager, *Curse Tablets*, 18
[15] Kropp, "Magical Language," 361.
[16] Kropp, "Magical Language," 363.
[17] Kropp, "Magical Language," 363.
[18] Kropp, "Magical Language," 387.
[19] Daniela Urbanová found that 5 out of 6 Type 2 Roman curse tablets refer to at least one deity (*"*Latin Curse Tablets of the Roman Empire*," Innsbrucker Beiträge zur Kulturwissenschaft 17.* trans. Natália Gachallová (Institut für Sprachen und Literaturen der Universität Innsbruck, 2018), 130).

Pluton sive{m}
Iovem infernum dici opor{no-}
tet Eracura Iuno
inferna acciet<e> ia<m> c<e>lerius
infra scribtum e<t> tradite {i}
Manibus.

Pluto, or perhaps I should say Jupiter of the Underworld, Aeracura, Juno of the Underworld, summon now quickly the one inscribed below and hand him over to the *Manes*.

The third type takes the form of an optative simile such as "as this stone is heavy, may too his bones be heavy." Kropp gives the following example of a *simila similibus* tablet.[20]

Sic Silvia inversu<m>
maritu<m> c{e}ernis quom
{m}odi nomen il<l>ius
scribtum est.

Thus, Silvia, you see your husband upside-down, just as his name is written.

In addition to these categories, general features are commonly found in the formulation of prayers, seen in invocations of gods which ask more generally for aid. Those features are naming and praising the god in question, the actual request one has for the god, and, reminiscent of the Roman legal and religious concept of *do ut des*, the argument for why they should help you, either due to services or sacrifices you have rendered in the past or will render in the future.

The usual first step in crafting a Roman curse is the same as the first step of many invocations to the supernatural: the naming of the beings invoked. Kagarow makes an exhaustive list of deities and spirits to whom *defixiones* were addressed which Gager helpfully sorts through.[21] According to Gager, the most common addressees on Greek κατάδεσμοι were—adjusting for variations on names—Hermes, followed by Hecate, Persephone, Hades, Gaia, Demeter, Zeus, "all the gods and goddesses," Kronos, and the Furies; with Latin *defixiones* addressed most often to the *Manes*, Jupiter, Pluto, Nemesis, and then Mercury. He points out that if the cache of *defixiones*, recently found in Bath, were included, *Sulis* Minerva would overtake all the others.[22]

While it may seem strange for the messenger of the gods to be the most common power invoked in enacting curses, Johnston points out that in Greek magical tradition, the spirits of the dead were often the ones actually enacting curses, with the deities merely passing on the message. In that context, Hermes as *psychopomp*/messenger makes an extremely logical choice.[23] Seneca's *Medea*, while certainly a Roman Tragedy composed in Latin, is a *fabula crepidata* and can therefore be expected to lean somewhat more Grecian than a *fabula praetexta* might.[24] Interestingly, in the creation of physical Roman *defixiones,* the combination of Latin and Greek elements was relatively common and thought to increase the power of the spell.[25] While Seneca does not use an unusual number of Greek forms in Medea's incantations, his audience would have been familiar with the Greek context of Medea. Seneca himself certainly was.

Invocatio Prima

Recalling the traditional epic invocation to the Muses, the play opens with Medea's invocation of the gods. Her prayer makes up the first fifty-five lines of the play, during which she calls upon all of the conjugal gods—and specifically Lucina,[26] whom C. D. N. Costa connects as an aspect of Juno,[27] though Boyle refers the interpretation of Lucina as an aspect of Diana,[28] who, in the Greek tradition, is traditionally associated with childbirth. Medea also invokes Minerva and Neptune without explicitly naming

[20] Kropp, "Magical Language," 388.
[21] Eugen G. Kagarow, *Griechische Fluchtafeln*. (Societas Philologorum Polonorum, 1929), 67-76.
[22] Gager*, Curse Tablets,* 12-13. *Sulis* Minerva, invoked on curse tablets in no other location, seems to be an outlier and should not be counted as normal.
[23] Johnston, *Restless Dead*, 93-94.
[24] Sometimes called *fabula cothurnata*.
[25] Celia Sánchez Natalías, *Sylloge of Defixiones from the Roman West: A Comprehensive Collection of Curse Tablets from the Fourth Century BCE to the Fifth Century CE* (BAR Publishing, 2022), 19-20.
[26] Eur. *Med.* 1-2.
[27] C. D. N. Costa, *Seneca's Medea with Commentary* (Oxford University Press, 2015), 62.
[28] A. J. Boyle, ed., *Seneca: Medea. Edited with Introduction, Translation, and Commentary,* First edition, (Oxford University Press, 2014), 102-3.

them,[29] her grandfather the Titan Helios,[30] and *Hecate triformis*,[31] the goddess of magic from whom we will hear regularly. She calls "the gods by whom Jason swore to me."[32]

Costa points out that Ovid, in his *Heroides,*[33] has Jason call upon Helios and Diana *triplicis vultus* as the gods of Medea's family, and upon Juno, as is proper for wedding vows,[34] with Boyle adding that *Metamorphoses*[35] also includes Hecate in that list.[36] Hecate is the goddess of witchcraft, and though she is not herself evil, Medea's request for divine aid takes an evil turn immediately after naming Hecate. Her invocation seemingly begins as the benign prayer of a scorned woman asking for aid. What follows, however, leaves no room for doubt as to Medea's intentions:[37]

> *... quosque Medeae magis*
> *fas est precari: noctis aeternae chaos,*
> *aversa superis regna manesque impios*[38]
> *dominumque regni tristis et dominam fide*
> *meliore raptam, voce non fausta precor.*[39]
>
> And [to those] to whom it is more right for Medea to pray: chaos of eternal night, realms turned away from the gods above and to the impious spirits and the master of the gloomy kingdom and the mistress abducted in better faith, I beg with a voice not auspicious.[40]

Medea invokes, at the opening of the play, the chaos of eternal night, the spirits of the dead—specifically the impious ones—and the master and mistress of the gloomy kingdom: Pluto and Proserpina. She sneaks in a bitter jab at Jason; Proserpina was abducted in "better faith" than Medea herself was because Pluto at least had the decency to marry her when he snatched her away from her family, and, unlike Jason, to *stay* married to her. She continues, not only invoking the Furies, as Dido does,[41] but commanding *adeste*,[42] the presence of the avengers of wickedness, whom she describes in frightening terms:[43]

> *crinem solutis squalidae serpentibus,*
> *atram cruentis manibus amplexae facem,*
> *adeste, thalamis horridae quondam meis*
> *quales stesistis…*
>
> With foul hair like loosened snakes, having held the dark torch with bloody hands, be present, the way you once stood, terrifying, in my wedding chamber.

Medea imagines the Furies as torch-bearing *pronubae*. She commands them—with her third imperative directed at the dread goddesses in six lines—to "give death to the new bride and death to the father-in-law and to the regal lineage."[44] For Jason's punishment, her requests become more specific:[45]

> *vivat. per urbes erret ignotas egens*
> *exul pavens invisus incerti laris,*
> *iam notus hospes limen alienum expetat;*
> *me coniugem optet, quoque non aliud queam*
> *peius precari, liberos similes patri*
> *similesque matri…*
>
> Let him live. Let him wander, needy, through unknown cities, an exile, fearing, hated, of uncertain home, as a guest already known, let him seek out a foreign threshold; let him hope for me as a wife, and no other thing worse than which I am able to pray for, that his sons be like their father, and like their mother.

Then she says something curious, an oracle that foreshadows the fate of her children in a way that she herself does not yet realize: *parta iam, parta ultio est:*

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[29] Eur. *Med.* 2-4.
[30] Eur. *Med.* 5.
[31] Eur. *Med.* 6-7.
[32] Eur. *Med.* 7-8.
[33] Ov. *Her.* 12.78ff.
[34] Costa, *Seneca's Medea*, 63.
[35] Ov. *Met*. 7.94-7.
[36] Boyle, *Seneca: Medea*, 107.
[37] Eur. *Med.* 8-12
[38] This is a curious invocation of Chaos and the realms of the underworld, though not unprecedented. Dido's priestess makes a similar invocation to *Erebumque Chaosque* (Virg. *Aen*. IV. 510).
[39] I print the Latin text as it appears in Costa, *Seneca's Medea with Commentary*. All translations are my own.
[40] Phrased this way to distinguish it from *infausta*. Costa notes that while *infaustus* is relatively common, *faustus* appears only here in Latin tragedy (*Seneca's Medea with Commentary*, 63).
[41] Verg. *Aen*. 4.469-73, 610.
[42] Eur. *Med.* 13.
[43] Eur. *Med.* 14-17.
[44] Eur. *Med.* 17-18.
[45] Eur. *Med.* 20-5.

/ peperi.[46] "Already born, my vengeance has already been born: I gave birth to it." Her children are the means by which she will deliver her vengeance, though she has not yet decided what form it will take. Only a few lines later, she says that she must, after the sacrificial prayers, slaughter the victims on consecrated altars, that she must seek the way to punishments through their guts.[47] Thinking for her own advantage, she requests her grandfather Helios' solar chariot. Medea intends to ride the chariot to safety while simultaneously landing a final blow by scorching the city in a manner reminiscent of her uncle Phaethon.[48] She wishes less specific, but no less violent, curses upon Corinth:[49]

> *... effera ignota horrida.*
> *tremenda caelo pariter ac terris mala*
> *mens intus agitat: vulnera et caedem et vagum*
> *funus per artus…*
>
> Wild, horrid, unknown evils, equally to be feared in heaven and on earth, my mind stirs within. Wounds and slaughter and death, wandering limb by limb.

She reminds her audience, both the gods she is invoking and those watching the play, that these things are all within her capacity—in fact, *haec virgo feci*,[50] she did them as a girl. Now, *post partus*, she is a *mother*: greater crimes befit her now.[51]

How then does Medea's first invocation compare to the formulae required to make a proper curse? In her first invocation Medea calls, by name or epithet, Juno, Helios, and Hecate. Her epithet for Helios, Titan, though not an epithet exclusive to him, is not inappropriate for the child of Hyperion and Theia. While Boyle points out that Titan is often used to refer to solar deities like Sol and Apollo in the Latin tradition,[52] the rest of line 5, *clarumque Titan dividens orbi diem,* leave absolutely no question as to who the Titan in question may be. Interestingly, these are the three gods upon whom Dido first calls at the opening of her curse, although she uses a slightly different order. [53]

> *Sol, qui terrarum flammis opera omnia lustras,*
> *tuque harum interpres curarum et conscia Iuno,*
> *nocturnisque Hecate triviis ululata per urbes,*
> *et Dirae ultrices…*
> Oh Sun, who illuminates all deeds of the earth with your flames; and you, knowing Juno, mediator of these concerns; and Hecate, wailed through cities at nightly crossroads; and avenging Furies.

Medea calls somewhat more tacitly upon Minerva, Neptune, Pluto, and Proserpina; and she summons collectively the "gods of marriage," the force of Chaos, the impious *Manes*, and the Furies. Her selection is mostly in line with Kagarow's standard cast of invoked powers, though the Sun, as both the god who sees all and as her grandfather, makes a logical addition. She includes a specific target and lists exactly what she wants to happen. She reminds the gods invoked that she has done it before, and she'll do it again; harder, this time. This invocation generally follows the expectations for a Formula 2 curse.

Invocatio Secunda

Medea's second invocation begins clearly and definitively with *Comprecor*.[54] She states her intention to ask for something and immediately lists those to whom she prays.[55]

> *Comprecor vulgus silentum vosque ferales deos*
> *et Chaos caecum atque opacam Ditis umbrosi domum,*
> *Tartari tripis ligatos squalidae Mortis specus.*
>
> I pray to the throng of the silent and to all of you, oh gods of the dead, and to blind Chaos and to the dark house of shadowy Dis, and to the caves of filthy Death, bound by the banks of Tartarus.

To those embodied concepts, she adds the *house* of Dis, and calls forth by name the spirits of Ixion, Tantalus, and the Danaides.[56] Medea offers them

[46] Eur. *Med.* 25-6.
[47] Eur. *Med.* 38-40. For the *preces sacrificae* in question, see Medea's Second Invocation.
[48] Eur. *Med.* 32-6.
[49] Eur. *Med.* 45-8.
[50] Eur. *Med.* 49.
[51] Eur. *Med.* 50.
[52] Boyle, *Seneca: Medea*, 105.
[53] Verg. *Aen*. 4.607-10.
[54] Eur. *Med.* 740.
[55] Eur. *Med.* 740-2.
[56] Eur. *Med.* 744-9.

forgiveness from their punishments[57] in exchange for their aid. She never stops to question whether she has the power to forgive their mythical crimes, but Medea receives the help she asks for. Curiously, though specifically naming Sisyphus alongside two other members of what Boyle calls the "canon of sinners alluded to regularly in the Senecan tragic *corpus*,"[58] Medea does not wish for the removal of his punishment.[59]

> gravior uni poena sedeat coniugis socero mei:
> lubricus per saxa retro Sisyphum volvat lapis.
>
> Let a heavier punishment sit on the father-in-law of my husband alone: let the slippery boulder roll Sisyphus backwards through the craigs.

Costa points out the link connecting Sisyphus to Corinth and to Creon himself,[60] perhaps explaining why Medea chooses not to free him from his punishment. Next, she calls for the attendance of Hecate, the star of night, and asks her to bring her three evilest faces.[61] From lines 752 to 769, is a long and impressive list of supernatural feats Medea has, with Hecate's aid, accomplished. This is followed by Medea's description of the noxious ingredients of her potion from lines 771 to 811 which begins with 16 lines of alternating iambic trimeter and dimeter, a rare metrical combination in Latin—and one seen nowhere else in Senecan tragedy—which Boyle shows to hold deep associations with magic.[62] She follows her poisonous recipe with an almost contrite acknowledgement, "But if you lament to be called by my vows too often, pardon me, I beg you: the reason for summoning your bows, Perseis, too often is one and the same, always Jason".[63] Next, from lines 817 to 839, Medea states her objective. Finally, at line 840, her prayers are granted. Her spell concluded; the exhausted sorceress passes off the gifts to her sons so that they might deliver them.[64]

Although longer and significantly more detailed than a typical *defixio*, Medea's second invocation closely follows the curse formula. She names the powers she wishes to invoke, calling on the spirits directly as well as a whole team of chthonic deities. She states her résumé and provides an offering to Hecate, both as her personal patron goddess and as the mistress of spellcasting in general.[65] Finally, she makes a clear and specific request for what divine actions she would like in exchange, naming her victim, *tu nunc vestes tinge Creusae,* "now, dye the robes for Creusa".[66]

Medea's invocation bears closest resemblance to one of Faraone's Formula 2 curses, though it lacks a dependent subjunctive clause, which Daniela Urbanová points out as being the norm for Formula 2 curses.[67] Medea uses the subjunctive mood in her invocation, of course, but the norm for *defixiones* is a verb of asking, commanding, or cursing, followed by a purpose or result clause introduced by *ut* (or *ut non, ne,* or *ut ne*). Medea, when she describes her punishments for Creusa, uses the optative subjunctive in a manner similar to what Faraone called the wish formula.[68]

> *fallant visus tactusque ferant,*
> *meet in pectus venasque calor,*
> *stillent artus ossaque foment*
> *vincatque suas flagrante coma*
> *nova nupta faces.*
>
> May them deceive sight and endure touch,
> may the heat pass into her chest and veins,
> may her limbs melt and her bones smoke,
> may the new bride outshine her own torches
> with her burning hair.

Six desires—almost commands—in rapid succession. Four lines in a row, two alternating lines which start and end with a verb, and two lines which only start with one. This formula, though not entirely

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[57] Eur. *Med.* 744.
[58] Boyle, *Seneca: Medea*, 315-6.
[59] Eur. *Med.* 746-7.
[60] Costa, *Seneca's Medea*, 138-9.
[61] Eur. *Med.* 750-1.
[62] Boyle, *Seneca: Medea*, 323-4.
[63] Eur. *Med.* 812-6. The name 'Perseis', meaning "daughter of Perses" comes from Hesiod's *Theogony*, where Hecate is described as the daughter of Perses and Asteria (Hes. *Theog*. 409-12). Boyle, *Seneca: Medea*, 331, suggests the use of the epithet may be a reference to Medea's prayer for Jason's welfare in *Argonautica* when she invoked the name Περσηί for assistance.
[64] Eur. *Med.* 843-8.
[65] The invocation of Hecate was standard practice in producing poisons (Costa, 139), in addition to her being Medea's patron goddess.
[66] Eur. *Med.* 817.
[67] Urbanová, "Latin Curse Tablets," 130.
[68] Eur. *Med.* 835-9.

unknown, differs from the standard formula. This deviation from the norm, however, can be easily explained: unlike the average user of a *defixio*, Medea is an incredibly powerful sorceress. Where a spurned Roman woman would have to ask for the intervention of the gods or, likely, her *Manes*, Medea is not asking here for intercession, but assistance. It stands to reason that many Romans believed in the power of *defixiones*, but when they issued curses, they asked for *Manes* and gods to act on their behalf. Unlike Medea, they do not phrase their curses as if the power were within them all along. Medea, meanwhile, is fully confident that her magic will work, as she is fully confident that she *has* the assistance of her Goddess.[69]

> *sonuistis, arae, tripodas agnosco meos*
> *favente commotos dea*
> *...*
> *vota tenentur: ter latratus*
> *audax Hecate dedit et sacros*
> *edidit ignes face lucifera*
>
> You've resounded, oh altars, I recognize my tripods have been stirred by a favouring goddess. … My prayers are granted: bold Hecate has given howls thrice and has produced sacred flames from her light-bearing torch.

Conclusion

Undeniable consistencies exist between the curses of Medea and those of *defixiones*, and the differences which can be found are explainable by one fact: Medea is a witch. Curse tablets call upon the dead or the gods for help because they are written, very often, by people who do not have the power to help themselves without supernatural intervention. By contrast, Medea does ask for intervention, but she does so in a way which would be utterly inconceivable for anyone else. She asks for use of the dragon-drawn chariot of the sun in the way one might ask for the family car. Medea is similar when she is listing her goals: she wants dreadful things to happen to someone, she invokes the names of the same gods, and she calls upon the spirits of the dead. But when she summons Hecate, the goddess makes her presence known, and when she calls upon the spirits of the dead, she releases Tantalus from his eternal torment. Seneca heightens the horror of his bloody work by depicting magic in a way very much grounded in the real-world curses available to Romans. This tradition can be traced back centuries before Seneca was born by examining the evidence left behind in the *defixiones* his ancestors used to invoke the gods.

[69] Eur. *Med.* 785-6, 840-2.

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A REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF *TOPHETS* AND INFANTICIDE IN THE PUNIC WORLD

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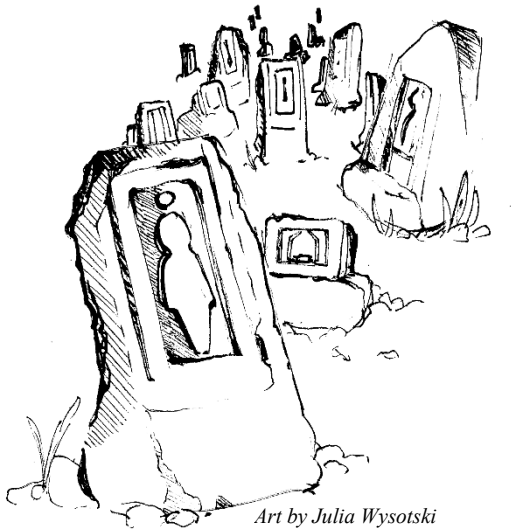

Art by Julia Wysotski

Tophet is a term used to refer to open air sanctuaries in the Punic world,[1] places that house urns containing the remains of cremated infants and young children.[2] In the early 1920s, the first *tophets* were uncovered by archaeologists and subsequently excavated, one in Motya (Mozia),[3] Sicily and one near Carthage, Tunisia.[4] Since then, more *tophets* have been discovered across the Punic world, in modern day Tunisia and the rest of North Africa,[5] as well as in Sicily, Sardinia and Malta.[6] Opinions about the exact nature of *tophets* continue to be a source of great debate. Certain scholars are adamant that the *tophets* are repositories of ritually sacrificed children, while others argue that the Punics did not perform human sacrifice, and that the belief they did is based in biased literary sources and continued prejudices within the discipline of Classical Studies. Without over-reliance on Greek and Roman literary sources, I will examine both sides of the argument using scholarship discussing the archaeological remains of the *tophets*, primarily those at Carthage, Zitha and Motya. I will also look at studies of the demographic viability of widespread infanticide on top of already high infant mortality rates. My analysis will show that the evidence points to child sacrifice being more likely than not at *tophets.*

The first explicit mention of Punic child sacrifice appears in the fifth century BCE, in the works of Sophocles and pseudo-Plato, though these were more passing comments than actual descriptions or attempts to understand the custom.[7] In the following centuries, many other Greek and Roman authors would refer to this practice with varying degrees of detail and judgement. Kleitarchos was the first to describe the rite, writing how Carthaginians would sacrifice children to Kronos *via* immolation. [8] It should be noted, especially with the coming discussion, that many ancient sources, such as Diodorus Siculus in his histories, reference the sacrifice of older children—children able to walk and talk—which is incongruous with the fact that *tophets* contain primarily infants.[9] Being that, until the

[1] Punic here refers to people living in Phoenician colonies in the central and western Mediterranean that were under the control of the Carthaginian empire during its hegemony around the 4th century BCE.
[2] Matthew M. McCarty, "The Tophet and Infant Sacrifice," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Phoenician and Punic Mediterranean*, eds. Brian R. Doak and Carolina López-Ruiz (Oxford University Press, 2019), 313.
[3] Both are valid ways of referring to the same Sicilian settlement, however I have elected to use only the name "Motya" within this paper for the sake of consistency and comprehension.
[4] Lawrence E. Stager, "The Rite of Child Sacrifice at Carthage," in *New Light on Ancient Carthage: Papers of a Symposium*, ed. John Griffiths Pedley (University of Michigan Press, 1980), 1; Jeffrey H. Schwartz *et al*., "Two Tales of One City: Data, Inference and Carthaginian Infant Sacrifice," *Antiquity* 91, no. 356 (2017): 443.
[5] McCarty, "The Tophet," 312.
[6] Paolo Xella, "The Levantine Roots of the *Tophet* Sanctuary," *Journal of Ancient History* 11, no. 2 (2023): 291.
[7] Earlier writers, such as Herodotus, make mention of events that likely refer to human sacrifice of some kind, but are not clear enough to discern what is actually happening, and if these sacrifices involved children specifically.
[8] McCarty, "The Tophet," 316; For those interested in reading more of these ancient accounts, see Herodotus, *Histories* 7.167, Sophocles, *Andromeda* fr. 122; Ps.-Plato, *Minos* 315b–c, Kleitarchos *FGrH* 137fr9, Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca Historica,* 13.86.4 and 20.14.5, Silius Italicus, *Punica* 4.760-4.770, Justinus *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus* 19.1.10-13.
[9] Nathan L. Pilkington, "Forbidden to Sacrifice Humans or Eat Dogs: Revisiting the Tophet Debate through a Demographic Lens," *Cartagine. Studi e Ricerche* 8 (2023): 9-10.

1920s, there was no direct archaeological evidence of Punic infant sacrifice, early scholars and writers in the 19th and 20th centuries had nothing but this literary evidence to work with. Popular fiction novels such as *Salammbô* by Gustave Flaubert spread the idea of human sacrifice being practiced at Carthage and made it a tantalizing subject to discuss, though there were many detractors to this new mode of discussion who cautioned against being too inspired by Flaubert's work.[10] Upon the discovery of the *tophets,* some scholars assumed they had found the smoking gun proof of wide-scale child sacrifice by the Punics.[11] At the same time however, many early scholars and excavators, while well aware of the possibility of sacrifice, did not believe the evidence to be irrefutable, and criticized those who did, even as the thousands of urns they uncovered did in fact contain the remains of human infants.

Most scholars agree that *tophets* are Phoenician in origin, despite the fact that no *tophets* have been uncovered in the Phoenician homeland of the Levant—they are found exclusively within the Punic world of the central and western Mediterranean.[12] The Punics are the ones to have proliferated *tophets,* and the practice did not come from the indigenous populations of any of the spaces they colonized, though some amount of influence cannot be fully disproven. In areas colonized by the Phoenicians, *tophets* appeared near settlements within a short time of the initial foundation, typically after a few decades or even less, and their growth went hand in hand with that of the settlements.[13]

Tophets exist under the shadow of writings from the Levant which accuse the Phoenicians of what were then considered terrible crimes. The greatest shadow is cast by the term "*tophet"* itself*,* which originates as the term *Topheth* in the Hebrew Bible, referring to a valley where children are sacrificed *via* immolation by the Canaanites who are generally agreed to be Phoenicians.[14] The sanctuaries now known as *tophets* were thus named after this valley upon their rediscovery, from the assumption that the Biblical *Topheth* and the Punic infant necropoles were representative of the same custom. This thus signifies that regardless of whether or not child sacrifice happened at *tophets,* and their status as Punic, not Phoenecian, sanctuaries, their very name implicitly ties them to the idea of child sacrifice and to the Levant.[15] Furthermore, stelae at different *tophets* dating to both the pre- and post-fall of Carthage often contain non-Punic names, such as Libyan names, which confirms that while the practice of *tophets* may have begun as Punic, they were also adopted by others in the Punic sphere of influence.[16]

Perhaps one of the most interesting and partially polarizing aspects of *tophet* scholarship as of the last fifteen years is how two osteological analyses of the remains at the Carthage *tophet* have led to two opposite conclusions despite the same initial data set. Starting in 2010, two groups of scholars began a back and forth discussion about whether the infants from the Carthage *tophet* had passed away at an age consistent with natural child mortality or not. The aging of the infants was determine through the measuring of tooth length and the identification of the neonatal line, a line present on tooth enamel that appears after birth, which can be measured to approximate age, as it evolves as the infant ages.[17] Initially, Jeffrey Schwartz and his team determined that the infants were buried at ages consistent with death by natural causes, which happen primarily in the pre- and neo-natal stages.[18] In their work, they estimated that tooth shrinkage caused by cremation only caused a 5 to 12% reduction in size, which they used to modify their age assumptions.[19] With these conclusions, Schwartz discounted the idea of the *tophets* being repositories of sacrificial victims and rather claimed it was a sanctuary set aside for deceased infants, regardless of cause of death.[20] Meanwhile, Patricia Smith and her team asserted that Schwartz had underestimated the amount of shrinkage of cremated teeth by up to 6mm, meaning that about 4 weeks had to be added to initial age

[10] Gustave Flaubert, *Salammbô*, repr. (Louis Conard, 1910); Schwartz *et al*., "Two Tales of One City," 443.
[11] Schwartz *et al*., "Two Tales of One City," 443.
[12] Xella, "The Levantine Roots," 292.
[13] Xella, "The Levantine Roots," 293-294.
[14] Jeremiah 7:31-32; Brien Garnand *et al*., "Infants as Offerings: Palaeodemographic Patterns and Tophet Burial," *Studi Epigrafici e Linguistici* 29-30 (2012-2013): 195.
[15] Xella, "The Levantine Roots," 299-301.
[16] McCarty, "The Tophet," 321.
[17] Jeffrey H. Schwartz *et al*., "Skeletal Remains from Punic Carthage Do Not Support Systematic Sacrifice of Infants.," *PLoS ONE* 5, no. 2 (2010), 3.
[18] Schwartz *et al*., "Skeletal Remains," 9.
[19] Schwartz *et al*., "Skeletal Remains," 9.
[20] Schwartz *et al*., "Skeletal Remains," 11

estimates.[21] They instead found that the infants were all at ages outside normal ranges of infant mortality, where sudden deaths are unlikely, meaning that infanticide was the most plausible answer for how they had died.[22] Both disagreed not only regarding the age of the infants, but also had different numbers for what ages are normal for child mortality. A different study on infants from Zitha shows that the infants were in poor health prior to birth and that there was no perimortem trauma on the infants, which could hint at a natural death, and at Motya no cut marks were found on the remains.[23] The same Motya study suggested that only one to one and a half weeks of age needs to be added to cremated teeth to account for shrinkage, and concluded that remains from Hadrumentum, Sousse, Carthage, Sulci and Motya all predominantly held preterm, neo- and peri-natal individuals.[24]

Schwartz retorted with a debunking of Smith's claims and a defense of his own in two papers. In these, he asserted that his conclusion that most *tophet* infants were not sacrificed should not be seen as excluding the possibility of sacrifice at *tophets*, but rather excluding the possibility that all, or even most, of the remains were those of sacrificial victims.[25] He pointed out flaws in Smith's research, such as the fact that a 6mm shrinkage of teeth from cremation would leave no tooth to analyze in most circumstances.[26] Smith replied to Schwartz, including corrections on her team's work, such as explaining that the 6mm shrinkage was in fact meant to be 0.6mm of shrinkage, and finding flaws in Schwartz's own work, such as drawing attention to general issues in identifying the neo-natal line and questioning how reliable the standards Schwartz and his team were using actually were.[27]

It feels remiss not to mention a claim Schwartz makes about the whole affair that adds a certain layer of complexity to the issue and is relevant to discussions about *tophet* scholarship if not *tophets* themselves. Schwartz explains that his teams' initial analysis of *tophet* infants came about through a request by Lawrence Stager[28]. Stager was a key excavator of the Carthage *tophet* in the 1970s and 80s, and has very much been a proponent of the child sacrifice theory since he began working on *tophets,* though cognizant of the other side's points.[29] Schwartz claims that after he gave his results to Stager, which did not fit in with Stager's personal views, Stager took the remains and handed them off to Smith, who then worked together with Stager to produce results that support child sacrifice.[30] This accusation should, of course, raise some eyebrows about biases within the analysis of the remains, however, it should not immediately discredit Smith and Stager's work. Still, it does make the issue of biases ever more stark within this debate and makes it impossible not to look at any analysis without a heavily critical eye.

Recent scholarship has tackled the debate from a new angle: that of demography. Brien Garnand in 2013 and Nathan Pilkington in 2023 both use real and theoretical demographic growth to determine if widespread child sacrifice is even mathematically feasible with what we know about other aspects of Punic populations. After all, ritual infanticide on top of regular infant mortality and non-sanctioned infanticide could have a significant effect on population growth in a society with low life expectancies.[31]

Garnand divides his analysis between three different proposed types of sacrifices—that of "first fruits" with sacrifices being tied to the spring season, that of firstborn children or specifically firstborn sons or daughters, and that of generic sacrifices where time of year, birth order and gender are not central to the sacrifice. He also posits some potential ways the negative impacts of the first three types could be mitigated. For spring as a sacrificial season, he makes the argument that peak infant mortality happens

[21] Patricia Smith *et al*., "Aging Cremated Infants: The Problem of Sacrifice at the Tophet of Carthage," *Antiquity* 85, no. 329 (2011): 863.
[22] Smith *et al*., "Aging Cremated Infants," 871.
[23] Jessica I. Cerezo-Román *et al*., "Postmortem Care of Subadults from the Neo-Punic Tophet at Zitha, Tunisia," *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 32, no. 3 (2025): 16; Martina Trocchi *et al*., "Virtual Histology Based on 3D X-Ray Microscopy Imaging for Non-Destructive Age-at-Death Estimation of Incinerated Teeth from the Tophet of Motya (Sicily, 6th Century BC)," *Acta IMEKO* 13, no. 3 (2024): 3.
[24] Trocchi *et al*., "Virtual Histology," 3; 6-7.
[25] Schwartz *et al*., "Two Tales of One City," 451-452.
[26] Jeffrey Schwartz et al., "Bones, Teeth, and Estimating Age of Perinates: Carthaginian Infant Sacrifice Revisited," *Antiquity* 86, no. 333 (2012): 742.
[27] Patricia Smith et al., "Age Estimations Attest to Infant Sacrifice at the Carthage Tophet," *Antiquity* 87 (2013):
[28] Schwartz *et al*., "Two Tales of One City," 445.
[29] Stager, "The Rite of Child Sacrifice," 3.
[30] Schwartz *et al*., "Two Tales of One City," 446.
[31] That is to say, infanticide committed outside of any official framework, typically in private settings for personal reasons such as economic struggles or avoidance of social stigma.

within that part of the year, meaning that the odds that sacrificed infants would have died regardless are higher, and thus their loss is not as demographically significant as it may first appear.[32] For selective infant androcide, the loss of men could be mitigated by polygyny or concubinage while for selective infant feminicide, the gender ratio would balance itself somewhat by higher rates of death for men because of warfare, which does not take into consideration female deaths in childbirth, which would have similarly been elevated and had an effect on the gender ratio.[33] Garnand also asserts that a rate of feminicide of up to 33% within a population can be tolerated before causing a significant demographic downturn, based on studies done on Netsilik people of Pelly Bay, claiming that the cessation of lactation from infanticide would reduce the interval between pregnancies for mothers, and that infanticide would predominately lead to the death of infants with low viability.[34]

As for firstborn sacrifices regardless of gender, Garnand suggests that if Punic society had similarly low ages of first marriage for women as Greek and Roman society (he suggests fourteen as the earliest age), the sacrifice of a firstborn child would be a fairly negligible force on population growth, as the firstborn children of teenage mothers are more likely to suffer complications, creating the same kind of effect as spring sacrifices, wherein many of the sacrificial victims would have been lost anyways. He also asserts that sacrificing the firstborn of a teenage mother has the same demographic impact as postponing marriage for a single extra year, as she would be theoretically able to have another child within that timeframe. This idea fails to consider the potential emotional contexts of such a situation and makes no mention of how dangerous it would be for a teenage girl to go through two full term pregnancies within a time span of two years, both for her life, and for her continued fertility.

Ultimately, Garnand concludes that widespread infanticide would have been demographically feasible, which he justifies by population analyses and his discussion on the grave goods associated with *tophets.*[35] While Garnand makes some good arguments and opens up the space to think about the demographic viability of widespread infanticide, his conclusions push at the limits of what could have been happening, and it seems unlikely that if Punics did practice ritual infanticide, that they would have practiced it as such a high rate as Garnand suggests is possible. Garnand's conclusions allow scholars to consider infanticide at the high rates he suggests, but most importantly show that lower rates of infanticide would not have had as important of an impact on population as once though.

Pilkington uses the town of Motya, Sicily as a case study and analyzes different recreations of the town's population growth based on actual growth and potential growths with varying amounts of ritual infanticide. He uses this to determine how many sacrifices the town could support in a year, while keeping a growth rate in line with what had been estimated for the town by scholars. He bases his assumptions of Motya's population at different times in its history on other archaeological finds in the town, such as necropolises, as well as three different population models he creates and uses for his work.[36] He finds that over fifteen generations of population growth, even a single yearly sacrifice could have a significant effect on Motya's population.[37] The maximum number of infants that could be sacrificed in even the healthiest of infant populations, where infant mortality is lower than usual estimates for the time period, could be about 6.85% of all infants born in a year, before the population would cease growing and begin falling.[38] A more standard population, where infant mortality is similar to usual estimates for the time period, could only handle about 1.68% of all infants being sacrificed.[39] However, Pilkington points out that if the assumption is made that Motya's population grew not only through births but also through immigration, one sacrifice a year would be feasible, and two per year would be pushing into an implausible, but not impossible, scenario.[40] This conclusion is corroborated by the fact that Motya's *tophet* seems to have received one to two new internments a year—exactly what the population could have handled to maintain stable growth.[41]

[32] Garnand *et al.*, "Infants as Offerings," 198-199, 208.
[33] In terms of pure potential reproductive power, not in terms of manpower or anything else of the sort; Garnand *et al.*, "Infants as Offerings," 208-210.
[34] Garnand *et al.*, "Infants as Offerings," 210-211
[35] Garnand *et al.*, "Infants as Offerings," 215.
[36] Pilkington, "Forbidden to Sacrifice Humans," 2, 11.
[37] Pilkington, "Forbidden to Sacrifice Humans," 2.
[38] Pilkington, "Forbidden to Sacrifice Humans," 14.
[39] Pilkington, "Forbidden to Sacrifice Humans," 19.
[40] Pilkington, "Forbidden to Sacrifice Humans," 22-24.
[41] Pilkington, "Forbidden to Sacrifice Humans," 13

Scholars such as Paolo Xella have analyzed other aspects of *tophets,* such as the stelae, which provide inscriptions that give at least some context to the sanctuaries—the fact that they are dedicated to Ba'al Hammon (and sometimes his consort, Tanit) and that their contents are also dedicated to him, show that this was not a simple funerary rite, in part because the formula of the inscriptions make it clear the act was planned, a sort of deal made with the god. Combined with the continued practice of cremation for *tophet* burials when the majority of the Punic world practiced inhumation, the unusual status of the infants is clear.[42] Importantly, some of these inscriptions make reference to a specific rite that is known as *mlk. Mlk* seems to refer to sacrifice of some kind. Etymology suggests it might mean "to go forth," and when *mlk* is accompanied by words for animals, such as lambs, it is clear that some form of sacrificial offering is happening.[43] There is nothing inherent in the "going forth" that means it must refer to ritual infanticide, though the inverse is also true–there is nothing that inherently prevents it from revering to ritual infanticide. Xella makes the point that it would be strange to thank a god, as many stelae do, for the premature death of an infant, and that a stele would take a considerable amount of time to make, which would complicate the idea that this was not a planned event.[44] Regardless, it must be assumed that these children are being offered to Ba'al Hammon in some way—if that is as sacrifices, or in a sort of entrusting the god with the care of a child gone too soon, is unclear.

Urns, human remains and the accompanying stelae are not the only objects found in *tophets*. Other types of remains, both floral and faunal, and grave goods paint a very specific picture of what might have occurred. The animal remains are typically young sheep and goats, though in some there are also avian and even floral remains. In fact, certain *tophets* or phases of occupation within them will have predominantly faunal and floral deposits.[45] It is assumed that these are votive offerings for Ba'al Hammon and must be tied to the human remains in some way—the young age of all interred, regardless of species, makes that clear.[46] These offerings might have been given in the place of human offerings in circumstances where people were unable or unwilling to sacrifice their infants. Given that there exists only human, only animal, and mixed human-animal urns, the interpretation remains unclear. Other than these urns and remains, grave goods included things such as amulets and jewelry, and the urns were sometimes finely decorated. However, the fact that not *all* burials are equal in splendor makes it appear that these were not standard fare provided by the state or cult for all *tophet* infants but rather made in consequence of their family's wealth. This, if nothing else, confirms that whatever happened at the *tophet* was unlikely to be financially motivated, as the cost of these grave goods could outweigh the material benefits gained from having one less child to feed and educate.[47] The reason for infanticide being economic in general makes little sense with the evidence at hand—families with the wealth to afford lavish and expensive burials for infants clearly were not in such dire financial situations as to not be capable of supporting the child's needs. This lavishness for the burial of infants is unique in the Mediterranean world at this time and has no parallel in cultures similar to the Punic culture.[48] Other contemporary cultures, such as the Greeks and Romans also practiced infanticide at a rate that is, at the very least, worth mentioning. Yet these infants were rarely commemorated and certainly did not have such burials as Punic *tophet* infants did, meaning there was something "more" happening with these infants. This suggests that the *tophets* are unlikely to be purely funerary spaces.

The amount of care tied to *tophet* infants makes one wonder—how could Punic people have been so willing to sacrifice their own children, if that is truly what happened? It is easy to assume such an act shows a lack of care or love for the infant, but the evidence suggests that the Punics did care for *tophet* infants. The grave goods suggest a desire to commemorate the child, and the inscriptions can be read to suggest the gods will look after the child or receive them in some way. Greco-Roman and Hebrew writings often either imply or outright state that the mothers, at the very least, were distraught by the situation and would seek ways to avoid it, but there is no reason to believe that those accounts

[42] McCarty, "The Tophet," 317.
[43] Xella, "The Levantine Roots," 298; Paolo Xella, "Pourquoi Tous Ces Enfants? Quelques Réflexions Sur Les Sanctuaires Infantiles à Incinération de Tradition Phénicienne ("tophet")," *Pallas* 104 (2017): 3.
[44] Xella, "Pourquoi Tous Ces Enfants ?," 2.
[45] McCarty, "The Tophet," 321
[46] Garnand *et al.*, "Infants as Offerings," 214.
[47] Garnand *et al.*, "Infants as Offerings," 209-210.
[48] Garnand *et al.*, "Infants as Offerings," 213.

reflect the actual or only experiences of the women in question.[49] The fact of the matter is that the nuance and complexity of the human psyche allows for any of these situations to exist, but Mark Golden' 1988 work *Did the Ancients Care When Their Children Died?* seems poignant here. In this work, Golden warns against common pitfalls one might make when discussing the emotional repercussions of high infant and child mortality in the ancient world and makes two points relevant to *tophet* discussions. The first is that it has been proven anthropologically that infanticide can and often does exist alongside widespread care and affection for children, and that one does not preclude the other.[50] The second is that religious beliefs and ritualized grieving processes in the ancient world could have provided a certain relief and comfort to the parents of the deceased, and the more communal aspect of ancient child rearing would have spread the grief between a larger network of people.[51] Jessica Cerezo-Román and her team believe that the cremation fires of *tophet* infants would have been tended to, and there is indication of care with the burial of infants at Zitha.[52] With the idea that differing cultural and religious practiced might have assuaged grief related to the act in mind, it seems more plausible that Punic parents were willing to sacrifice their children—the dedications to Ba'al Hammon imply a certain expectation that the deity will receive the child, perhaps soothing worries and implying a better or good existence for the child after the sacrifice. Still, it should be noted that the contemporaries of the Punics during the time of *tophets* did find the ritual sacrifice of children to be morally wrong. While modern scholars should not base their moral judgements on the thoughts of ancient writers, it should be kept in mind in discussions on the potential emotional and mental repercussions of the actions taken at *tophets.*

Amongst all this discussion of the material remains of the *tophets*, both on their own and with the Greco-Roman literary evidence, it would be remiss to not discuss the colonialism, orientalism and racism that was and is woven deeply into disciplines such as archaeology, Classical Studies and Near Eastern studies.[53] The fact that harm to children is a topic that often incites strong emotional reactions and may lead to difficulty keeping as objective as possible in scholarship may negatively impact the discussion at hand.[54] There is also a concern about over-trusting ancient sources written by peoples with a highly negative opinion of their subject, and some have pushed to consider non-Phoenician sources, whether Greek, Roman, or Biblical, as entirely untrue or untrustworthy. While it is important to reconsider past scholarship with a more open and forward mind, it is also important to make sure not to over-correct in our attempts to challenge or rectify past conclusions—it is simply the case that previous scholars often came to highly plausible conclusions while still holding strong conscious or unconscious prejudices. There is also the fact that the odds of every ancient source being outright lying is rather low, and viewing them as potentially highly exaggerated but not based on *nothing* is a much more reasonable assumption.[55] Most recent publications have taken this more nuanced approach, recognizing past biases while not being overzealous in their corrections, and the disciplines of Classical Studies and Classical Archaeology as a whole have been making good progress in recent decades to detach themselves from their pasts.

The mystery of the *tophets* is liable to continue until more evidence is found. As it stands, there is still too much room for ambiguity for a wholly-satisfying conclusion; however, we have reached a point where the most plausible answer can be stated with some confidence. The stelae of the sanctuaries and what is known about *tophet* practices use words associated with sacrifice. Aging of remains, though highly contentious, cannot fully rule out the potential of infanticide, and demography shows that a certain degree of it could be tolerated by the population. The literary sources, however polemic, must have some basis for their claims. Ultimately, it must be concluded that *tophets* were tied to a sacrificial practice that involved human infants. To what extent, with what means, or with what repercussions should be the crux of the discussion moving forward within this debate.

[49] Garnand *et al.*, "Infants as Offerings," 207
[50] Mark Golden, "Did the Ancients Care When Their Children Died?," *Greece & Rome* 35, no. 2 (1988): 158.
[51] Golden, "Did the Ancients Care?," 156.
[52] Cerezo-Román *et al*., "Postmortem Care," 18-20.
[53] McCarty, "The Tophet," 317.
[54] Smith *et al*., "Aging Cremated Infants," 871.
[55] McCarty, "The Tophet," 317.

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PLAGUE, WAR, AND HEALING: THE INTRODUCTION AND ADAPTION OF THE CULT OF ASKLEPIOS IN LATE-FIFTH-CENTURY ATHENS

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Art by Kaitlyn O'Leary

The Physician That Became a God: The Lives of Asklepios

In Athens during the Peloponnesian War, which lasted from 431 to 404 BCE, an influx of foreign cults settled in areas of religious significance, such as the cult of Pan from Arcadia, taking up residence in the northwest slope of the Acropolis.[1] Around 420 BCE, one of these new deities was Asklepios, the god of medicine and patron deity of physicians, whose cult was sponsored by a private individual and established on the southern slope of the Acropolis (fig. 1). The cult had travelled from Epidauros to the Zea Harbour in Piraeus, where a sanctuary was also potentially established.[2] This journey was recorded by the late-fifth-century Telemachos stele, which provides a visual and written description of Asklepios' journey to Athens and dates for the construction of key features (figs. 2, 3, & 4).[3] The sanctuary was constructed around 418 BCE. The early shrine consisted of an enclosure wall, a *bothros*, an altar, and a sacred spring (fig. 5). Later additions to the sanctuary included a wooden gate and a sacred grove around 415 and 413 BCE, respectively. While Asklepios was certainly popular, his cult took several years to become established within the city, a process which involved multiple stages. [4] While one could certainly 'read between the lines' by only relying on the stele to understand the response to the cult by the Athenian *demos,* one should take into consideration the overall popularity of the cult of Asklepios and the effects of contemporary events on the religious atmosphere of the city-state.

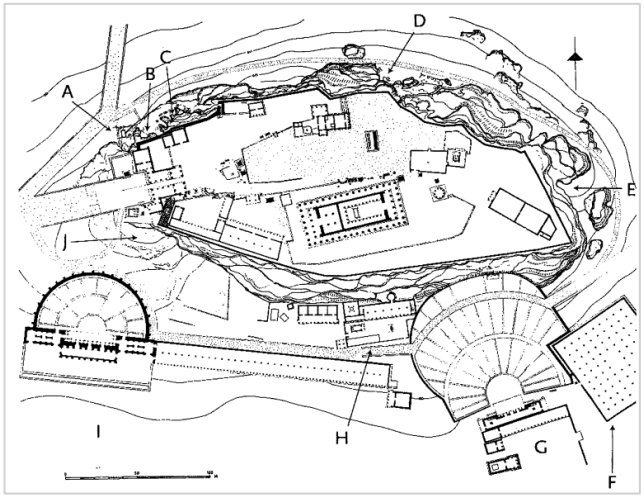

Figure 1, Map of the Acropolis during the second century CE. The Asklepieion is identified by the 'H.'

In Greek mythology, only a handful of mortals have ever ascended to godhood, and, while the most infamous may be Heracles, Asklepios was an exceptionally famous figure within the ancient world.[5] Asklepios' name was first mentioned in Homer's *Iliad*, which was believed to be composed in the mid-eighth century BCE. Within the text, he is described as the

[1] John M. Camp, *The Archaeology of Athens* (Yale University Press, 2001), 117-118.

[2] Arriving with her father, Hygieia, the goddess of health was also worshipped at the Asklepieion (Camp, *The Archaeology of Athens*, 122).

[3] The stele was discovered on the eastern terrace near the Asklepieion and was erected by the alleged sponsor and originator of the cult, Telemachos (Sara B. Aleshire, The Athenian Asklepieion: The People, Their Dedications, and the Inventories (J.C. Gieben, 1989), 24.

[4] Michaelis Lefantzis and Jesper Tae Jensen, "The Athenian Asklepieion on the South Slope of the Akropolis: Early Development, ca. 420-360 B.C," in *Aspects of Ancient Greek Cult: Context, Ritual and Iconography*, edited by Jesper Tae Jensen, George Hinge, Peter Schultz, and Bronwen Wickkiser (Aarhus University Press, 2009), 103.

[5] Camp, *The Archaeology of Athens*, 122.

"blameless physician" who had two sons, Machaon and Podalirius, who led the army of Trikka, Itheme, and Oechalia.[6] Asklepios had received medical training from the centaur Chiron.[7] From Homer's epic, Asklepios was identified as a mortal physician tied to mythological figures, but it was not until Hesiod, a contemporary of Homer, that Asklepios was recognized as a demigod. Hesiod claimed that Asklepios was born to a mortal woman, Coronis, and the god of light, music, and healing, Apollo. Asklepios, after the death of his mother at the hands of his father, was raised and trained in the medical arts by Chiron, becoming an expert in surgery and pharmacology.[8] He was widely renowned for his skills, even raising someone from the dead, but his necromantic hubris culminated in his death at the hands of Zeus. However, especially after the ire of Apollo, Zeus resurrected Asklepios, granting him immortality.[9] This story was reiterated throughout the centuries, but writers rarely deviated from the established pattern.[10] Asklepios' popularity was not restricted to ancient literary works; he also had a strong cultic following. In the second century BCE, the geographer Strabo claimed the oldest sanctuary of Asklepios was in Trikka, Thessaly.[11] While academics debate whether Asklepios would have been worshipped as a hero or a god at this sanctuary, there is no archaeological evidence to confirm Strabo's claims.[12] The earliest evidence of Asklepios' cult dates to the sixth century BCE in Epidauros. This archaeological material, which includes several bronze vessels, demonstrates he was worshipped alongside his father, as one of the vessels is dedicated to Apollo. Initially, Asklepios was commonly incorporated into the sanctuaries of Apollo. At Epidauros, the sanctuary of Apollo housed the cult of Asklepios and was located on Mount Kynortion, overlooking where one of the most prominent and famous of Asklepios' temples would reside.[13] The cult of Asklepios in Epidauros eventually moved out of the sanctuary of Apollo near the end of the sixth century or the early fifth century BCE.[14] The sanctuary at Epidauros brought in pilgrims from all over the Mediterranean, and, despite Asklepios initially being tied to Thessaly, Epidauros was then regarded as the birthplace of the god. Asklepios' origin was a heavily contended issue within the ancient world that was only later resolved by the Oracle of Delphi.[15] Regardless of the debate surrounding Asklepios' homeland, Epidauros was where his cult found its footing.

Figure 7, Side A of the Telemachos stele discovered within the vicinity of the Asklepieion and dating to the late fifth century.

The growth of the cult would reach its height in the fourth century BCE with more than two hundred estimated sanctuaries being established throughout Greece and the Mediterranean, reaching colonies like Tarentum in southern Italy and cities in Asia Minor like Erythrai.[16] However, its evolution, even if it is not on the same scale as the fourth-century expansion, had truly begun in the fifth century, as the cult slowly

[6] Hom. *Il*. 2.729-730, from Emma J. Edelstein and Ludwig Edelstein, *Asclepius: Collection and Interpretation of the Testimonies*, vol. 1, *Collection of the Testimonies* (John Hopkins University Press, 1998a), 17.

[7] Hes. *Fra*. 122, 123, & 125, from Edelstein and Edelstein, *Asclepius*, vol. 1, 20, 53.

[8] Emma J. Edelstein and Ludwig Edelstein, *Asclepius: Collection and Interpretation of the Testimonies*, vol. 2, *Interpretation of the Testimonies* (John Hopkins University Press, 1998b), 22.

[9] Robin Mitchell-Boyask, *Plague and the Athenian Imagination: Drama, History, and the Cult of Asclepius* (Cambridge University Press, 2008), 47.

[10] There was a substantial debate concerning the birthplace and mother of the god; however, his father, life as a demigod, and ascension remained consistent (Edelstein and Edelstein, *Asclepius*, vol. 2, 34).

[11] Str. 9.5.17, from Edelstein and Edelstein *Asclepius*, vol. 1, 373.

[12] Bronwen Lara Wickkiser, *Asklepios, Medicine, and the Politics of Healing in Fifth-Century Greece: Between Craft and Cult* (John Hopkins University Press, 2008), 35.

[13] Wickkiser, *Asklepios, Medicine, and the Politics of Healing*, 35.

[14] At Epidauros, the sanctuary's main buildings, including the temple and theatre, date to the fourth century BCE (Olympia Panagiotidou, *Healing, Disease and Placebo in Graeco-Roman Asclepius Temples: A Neurocognitive Approach* (Equinox Publishing, 2022), 77.

[15] The debate surrounded whether Asklepios' mother was Arsinoë of Messene or Coronis of Thessaly who had birthed Asklepios in Epidauros. The Oracle claimed it was Coronis. Paus. 2.26.7, from Edelstein and Edelstein, *Asclepius*, vol. 1, 26.

[16] Panagiotidou, *Healing, Disease and Placebo*, 71.

emerged from the Peloponnese. Asklepios had a presence in Olympia around 460 BCE; statues of the god and his daughter Hygieia, the goddess of health, were dedicated by Mikythos, the slave of the tyrant Anaxilas, in the mid-fifth century.[17] Other Peloponnesian city-states associated with a late-fifth-century or early-fourth-century *Asklepieion* include Corinth, Mantinea, Sikyon, and Kyllene. However, the first recorded instance of the cult of Asklepios outside of Epidauros is on the island of Aegina, possibly around or before 422 BCE. In Aristophanes' *Wasps*, produced around 422 BCE, Bdelykleon takes his father, Philokleon, to the sanctuary of Asklepios on the island.[18] While this may be one of the first datable instances of the establishment of the cult outside of the Peloponnese within the written record, this is not the most famous nor the most well-recorded case; that honour belongs to Athens.

The introduction of the cult into Athens during the Peloponnesian War was part of an established pattern in which there was a surge of religious activity due to contemporary events and people attempting to come to terms with them. However, what separates the cult of Asklepios from the others was the level of preservation of literary, epigraphic, and archaeological evidence, allowing historians and archaeologists to recreate the substantial fanfare from the *demos*.[19] When it was first introduced in Athens, there was a substantial interest in the cult of Asklepios from private citizens, the state, and other local cults. As a result, Asklepios was adopted into established and significant cultural and religious practices, including theatrical performances and the Eleusinian Mysteries, with the latter celebrating the arrival of Asklepios, demonstrating his overall importance to the *demos*. The reception of the god, which involved several stages during the late fifth century BCE, could be traced to an overwhelming desire for the healing of the state, a role he would later adopt within Athens.[20] While the cult brought its own traditions and practices to Athens, it was shaped to suit the needs, desires, and fears of the Athenian *demos*, having an immense effect on the physical and cultural topography of Athens.

Through examining the socio-political turmoil within fifth-century BCE Athens and the Athenian people's interest in the cult, the *Asklepieion*'s location and its relationship with the Theatre of Dionysos and Athenian dramas, and the influence of the cult on religious life within Athens, one can gain a stronger understanding of the unique response towards the cult by the Athenian *demos*. The interest in and reception of the cult of Asklepios was dependent on the socio-political atmosphere and anxieties of the Athenian people, which culminated in the god of medicine being incorporated into the established cultural and religious practices of the city-state and being transformed into a healer of the state to soothe the anxieties of the people. As a result, his cult maintained a distinct identity but also redefined late-fifth-century Athenian topography through the physical, cultural, and religious landscapes.

Public Health and Civic Concerns: The Athenian Plague

During the 420s in Athens, the socio-political atmosphere was tumultuous. During the Peloponnesian War, Athens was struck with a devastating plague in 430 BCE that lasted around four to five years with few residual cases.[21] The plague, which was theorized to have been typhoid, measles, smallpox, or the bubonic plague, was only further exasperated by the Periklean policy of fighting the war, which involved bringing the people from the countryside into the city, culminating in severe overcrowding.[22] As recorded by Thucydides, the Athenian Plague had both physical and psychological effects, including oral bleeding, painful vomiting, burning skin, insomnia, memory loss, and dysentery.[23]

There was a disintegration of civic and religious life, culminating in little to no escape from the plague. Traditional burial practices were abandoned as the bodies began to pile up in the streets.[24] Fountain houses were plagued with the sick and dying, who tried and failed to quench their thirst.[25] General lawlessness also overcame the city, as many doubted

[17] Wickkiser, *Asklepios, Medicine, and the Politics of Healing*, 36.
[18] Wickkiser, *Asklepios, Medicine, and the Politics of Healing*, 36.
[19] Ioannis Mylonopoulos, "Better late than never! Asklepios' arrival(s) in Athens," *Kernos* 36 (2023): 2.
[20] Aleshire, *The Athenian Asklepieion*, 8.
[21] A.J. Holladay and J.C.F. Poole, "Thucydides and the Plague of Athens," *The Classical Quarterly* 29, no. 2 (1979): 287-288.
[22] Holladay and Poole, "Thucydides and the Plague," 297.
[23] Vivian Nutton, *Ancient Medicine*, third edition (Routledge, 2022), 26.
[24] Thucydides, *The History of the Peloponnesian War,* trans. Richard Crawley (J.M. Dent and Sons, Ltd; E.P. Dutton and Company, Inc, 1950), 2.52.4.
[25] Thuc., 2.49.5.

they would live to see the next day, choosing their dark desires over honour.[26] It is estimated that one-third of the population succumbed to the plague, which even affected the soldiers on the frontlines and the *demes*.[27] Considering the war outside the city's walls, there was no escaping this epidemic, and the already tumultuous atmosphere of a city at war drastically worsened. Since its origin resulted from a political decision and it had numerous consequences for public life, the plague became a civic problem for the entire *demos*.

Despite the work on the Periclean building program coming to a halt with the war, religious monuments continued to be constructed, as the Athenian people, especially after experiencing the horrors of the plague, required and sought after divine assistance. In 421 BCE, the Peace of Nikias temporarily halted the war, a solution that would last until 415 BCE with the Sicilian Expedition.[28] This opened the gates of Athens for the god of medicine and his cult.

All Aspects of Society: The Popularity of the Cult of Asklepios in Athens and its Arrival

While the cult's origins may have been private, there was a marked interest in Asklepios, especially by other cults, private citizens, and the Athenian *demos*. The interest in the cult from outside parties is seen within the Telemachos stele (fig. 2). According to the stele, Asklepios, in the form of a snake or most likely a statue of the god, was brought to Athens by Telemachos and, after briefly taking up residence in the City *Eleusinion*, was transported to the Acropolis by chariot.[29] When Asklepios first arrived in Athens, it was on the seventeenth or the eighteenth of the *Boedromion* during the Eleusinian Mysteries, and the god was initiated upon his arrival.[30] The participation of another cult, especially a prominent one like Eleusinian Demeter and Kore, demonstrates the strong interest in and impact of Asklepios.

This was also not the only cult to participate in the arrival of Asklepios. It is believed that the cult of Asklepios was housed within the sanctuary of another unnamed healing hero, possibly indicated by the relief on Side B of the Telemachos stele, and the home of Sophokles, the playwright and another apparent founder (fig. 3).[31] Sophokles was tied to the *Asklepieion* due to the discovery of a *paean* in the temple and his posthumous heroic title of '*Dexion*,' which translates to 'he who welcomes.'[32] However, it is possible that his association with the god could have primarily been through Amynos, a healing hero whom Sophokles served as a priest. In the Areopagus and the Pnyx, there was a shrine of Amynos that became associated with Asklepios in the late fifth century and possibly hosted the cult of Asklepios upon its arrival; it is a possibility that Sophokles was associated with this sanctuary, and, due to a historical misinterpretation, he was confused with the founder of the City *Asklepieion*.[33] While there is a debate over the extent of Sophokles' involvement, the participation of a distinguished private citizen in the cult's founding, not to mention another cult, demonstrates the extent of the early interest in Asklepios.

The cult would have also received attention from the general population. The significance of the timing of the god's arrival, which was during the Eleusinian Mysteries, would most likely not have been lost on the Athenian *demos*. There might have also been a celebration in honour of this momentous occasion. The mention of a chariot in the Telemachos stele could point towards a procession; however, the existence of this celebration is merely speculation, but it could indicate that the general population was aware of the god's arrival.[34] Evidence of the people's interest in the cult is much more prevalent after its establishment. The expansion of the sanctuary primarily occurred in the late fourth century BCE, especially with the addition of a Doric stoa; however, the temple also underwent construction in the late fifth century, employing more permanent materials like poros (fig. 6).[35] The expansion of the structure in the late fifth century could point towards a growing popularity, culminating in increased funds.

Outside of private citizens and the general population, the city would have most likely been

[26] Thuc., 2.53.1-2.53.2
[27] Thuc., 2.48.2.
[28] Camp, *The Archaeology of Athens*, 117.
[29] *IG* II² 4960a, from Edelstein and Edelstein, *Asclepius*, vol. 1, 375.
[30] Mylonopoulos, "Better late than never!," 16.
[31] The horse bust and votive relief of the incubation process could point towards a hero cult (Mylonopoulos, "Better late than never!," 10-11).
[32] Wickkiser, *Asklepios, Medicine, and the Politics of Healing*, 66-67.
[33] Mylonopoulos, "Better late than never!," 14-15.
[34] Mylonopoulos, "Better late than never!," 9.
[35] Camp, *The Archaeology of Athens,* 155.

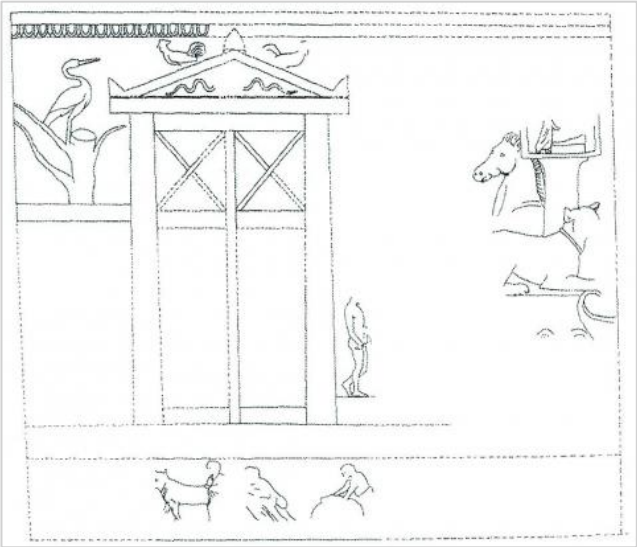

Figure 3, The large relief on Side B of the Telemachos stele.

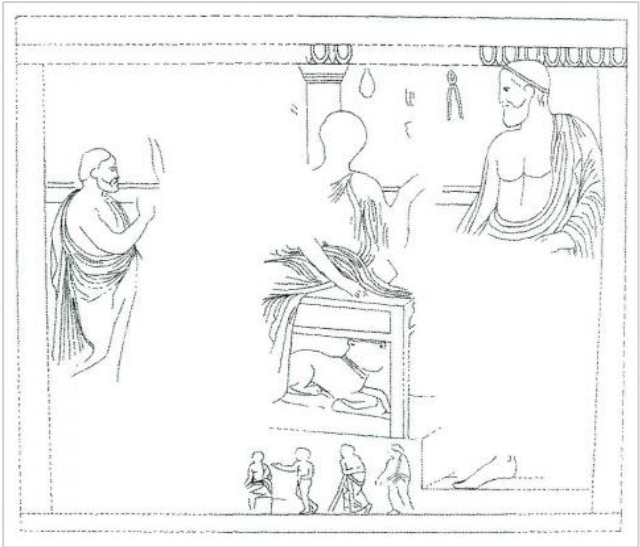

Figure 4, The large relief on Side A of the Telemachos stele with Asklepios on the right, his daughter, Hygieia, in the middle, and an unknown man, possibly Telemachos, to the left.

involved in the foundation of the cult of Asklepios. As demonstrated by the Athenian Plague, health was a civic concern. The first evidence of state control of the *Asklepieion* can be dated to the 340s, but interest and involvement in the cult began much earlier. Considering the cult was established on an eighty-metre strip of sacred land underneath some of Athens' most prolific cults, the founder would have most likely needed permission from the city-state (fig. 1).[36] The First-Fruits Decree of the second half of the fifth century declared that the construction of altars within the *Pelargikon* required the permission of the *demos* and the *boule*. On the Side B relief of the Telemachos stele, the presence of a stork by the doors of the temple has led some to conclude that the original structure could have been placed by the *Pelargikon*, also referred to as the 'stork' wall, but the exact boundaries of the wall and the placement of the original temple, especially the altar, remain an archaeological and historical uncertainty (fig. 3).[37] Officials from some of the most prolific state-regulated cults in Athens took an interest in the construction of the temple. After initially housing the cult, in 418 BCE, the Kerykes, the priestly family of the Eleusinian cult of Demeter and Kore who were employed in prominent roles as envoys and ambassadors, halted the construction over a land dispute.[38] While the reasoning behind this dispute has triggered much scholarly debate, it demonstrates an interest, albeit a concerned one, in the proceedings of the cult.[39] While the introduction of the cult of Asklepios was the work of a private individual, there was a strong interest from other parties, both private and state, in the proceedings of the cult.

Memories and Politics: The (Many) Reasons Behind the Interest in the Cult

The interest and acceptance of the cult can be connected to the contemporary socio-political climate within fifth-century Athens, especially relating to the plague. Several scholars, such as historian Vivian Nutton, believe that the plague had catalyzed the interest in Asklepios; this argument is logical since the people would most likely want a new healing deity after an epidemic that attacked at random and caused significant civic problems. However, as claimed by Nutton, the plague was undoubtedly not the only reason for this reception and celebration of the god.[40] This is especially prevalent when considering the type of illnesses and afflictions Asklepios cured. In Epidauros, Asklepios was commonly associated with the treatment of chronic conditions, fertility issues, and even debilitating wounds.[41] The god commonly associated with bringing and lifting miasma for a

[36] Wickkiser, *Asklepios, Medicine, and the Politics of Healing*, 72.
[37] Wickkiser, *Asklepios, Medicine, and the Politics of Healing*, 76-77.
[38] Aleshire, *The Athenian Asklepieion*, 59.
[39] One of the suggestions is that dispute could have revolved around the Kerykes' support of the cult of Amynos, and they were not pleased with the competition. Wickkiser 2008, 101.
[40] Nutton, *Ancient Medicine,* 108.
[41] Wickkiser, *Asklepios, Medicine, and the Politics of Healing*, 58.

community was his father, Apollo.[42] However, Asklepios had taken over the role of Athena *Hygieia*, and it was believed that he could protect an entire city.[43] Alternatively, according to historian Bronwen Lara Wickkiser, the interest in Asklepios could be related to general anxieties about health that were exacerbated by the memories of the plague and the Peloponnesian War, especially if the patient had a war wound, a treatment Asklepios and his priests commonly treated.[44] While the plague may not have been the sole reason behind the establishment of the cult of Asklepios, the epidemic continued to live in the people's minds, potentially leading them to the god of medicine.

In general, there were practical reasons behind the people's interest. Asklepios held enormous appeal, only requiring a small offering as thanks, meaning anyone could afford his services.[45] The cult in Epidauros also sparked interest; the *iamata*, which recorded and advertised healing stories at the sanctuary, mentioned that the ailing hailed from all over Greece. Before the Peloponnesian War, Athenians had even visited the sanctuary, demonstrating knowledge of the deity and his abilities.[46] While there were other gods and healing heroes, they did not have the same practical healing treatments or training as Asklepios, making him an appealing alternative.[47] The people could have also been intrigued by the convenience of the *Asklepieion*. By having a local *Asklepieion*, the sick and dying of Athens would not have to traverse to the Peloponnese to receive divine treatment from the god; Asklepios, especially considering his depiction with a walking stick, was a far more mobile healing deity than others and, in this case, would be travelling to the people through the spread of his cult.[48] Considering the previous limitations on travel due to the war, this was an especially appealing prospect. By having an *Asklepieion* within Athens, the sanctuary addressed the concerns of the people regarding their health while also providing the sick an affordable and local option.

Outside of general concerns over one's health, there could have been political motivations behind the reception and introduction of the cult. According to Thucydides, Athens, especially when stricken with plague, attempted and failed to take Epidauros.[49] Scholars have speculated that this could have been to obtain a firm footing within the Peloponnese and to gain access to the cult of Asklepios.[50] Despite the cult arriving during the Peace of Nikias, the halt to the war was recognized as a temporary solution, especially as tensions were still present. By opening their doors to the Epidaurian cult of Asklepios, the Athenians could have extended the proverbial olive branch, attempting to align themselves with the Peloponnesian city-state.[51] The Kerykes objection to the cult of Asklepios could be politically motivated as well. For example, in 418 BCE, Epidauros attacked an Athenian ally, Argos; therefore, the Kerykes' objection could have been the priestly order attempting to eject the cult out of the city in support of an ally.[52] However, this theory is speculative, primarily as the Telemachos stele provides no elaboration on this dispute. The reception of the cult by both private citizens and the state demonstrates that the initial interest by outside parties was influenced by the socio-political atmosphere of fifth-century Athens, demonstrating the ready acceptance of Asklepios, despite the Kerykes' objection.

Location is Everything: Asklepieions and the Theatre of Dionysos

When it was first constructed, the *Asklepieion* was most likely modest in size and materials. The description of a wooden gate on the Telemachos stele has led some archaeologists and historians to conclude that outside of the *bothros* and the altar, the structure could have been constructed from wood (fig. 5).[53]

[42] In the Agora, a statue was dedicated to Apollo Alexikakos for his role in stopping the plague (Camp, *The Archaeology of Athens*, 124).
[43] It is heavily debated as to what happened to Athena *Hygieia* after 420 BCE with one suggestion being that the goddess became Hygieia at the Asklepieion. Mitchell-Boyask, *Plague and the Athenian Imagination*, 116.
[44] Wickkiser, *Asklepios, Medicine, and the Politics of Healing*, 59.
[45] Panagiotidou, *Healing, Disease and Placebo*, 75.
[46] Wickkiser, *Asklepios, Medicine, and the Politics of Healing*, 40.
[47] Wickkiser, *Asklepios, Medicine, and the Politics of Healing*, 50-51.
[48] For example, hero cults were not mobile, as the sanctuaries were located where the hero died (Wickkiser, *Asklepios, Medicine, and the Politics of Healing*, 53).
[49] Thuc. 2.56.4 & 2.57.
[50] Mitchell-Boyask, *Plague and the Athenian Imagination,* 107.
[51] Wickkiser, *Asklepios, Medicine, and the Politics of Healing*, 93-94.
[52] Wickkiser, *Asklepios, Medicine, and the Politics of Healing*, 101.
[53] Mylonopoulos, "Better late than never!," 16.

Poros buildings were erected later in the fifth century, especially after the cult had gained more support, popularity, and donations from the people of Athens. By the end of the fourth century, it had expanded into a lavishly built marble sanctuary fitted with a Doric stoa (fig. 6).[54] Considering its initial modest appearance, this could call into question the cult's popularity and significance. However, the *Asklepieion*'s early importance to the people can be seen primarily in its location, especially the site's attributes that would be conducive for healing and the nearby structures.

Typically, the foundation of *Asklepieia* throughout Greece followed a similar pattern. The monuments were placed somewhere secluded from the city, near a grove, and near bodies of water like the sea or a spring. While water had ritualistic purposes for the treatments at an *Asklepieion*, such as baths, the primary emphasis was on a natural landscape, as clean air was deemed essential for proper healing and therapy. This could also be achieved through an elevated spot in the terrain.[55] The secluded nature of some of these sanctuaries was also thought to preserve their sanctity

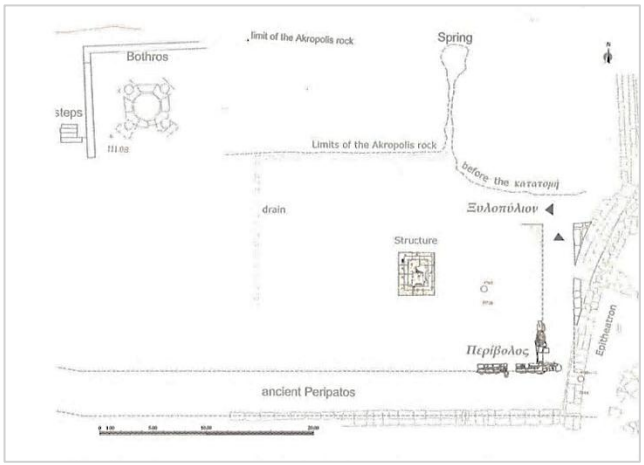

Figure 8, Plan of the early Asklepieion with the sacred pit in the upper left corner, the spring, and an unidentified foundation of a structure that is believed to have possibly been the original altar.

and enhance the healing benefits for the sick, as the greater the effort to reach the location, the greater the reward.[56] The placing of *Asklepieia* within a city was a Hellenistic trend and thus was rare in the fifth century.[57] While most of the *Asklepieia* within Greece followed a similar pattern, the Athenian *Asklepieion* is an anomaly.

The Athenian *Asklepieion* does follow specific trends from the other Epidaurian *Asklepieia*: the temple is located near a spring, the sanctuary is elevated, and a sacred grove was planted around 413 BCE when Kleokritos was archon.[58] Its location on the south slope of the Acropolis, especially below some of the most prolific cults of Athens, demonstrates that the *Asklepieion* was still located on sacred land.[59]

However, as mentioned previously, being within a city is uncommon for Classical *Asklepieion* and was possibly done in Athens due to a fear of not being able to reach the temple when the war resumed and convenience for the sick.[60] However, this decision could also reflect an alternative definition of what it means to heal. Theologian Olympia Panagiotidou claims that while nature was a key component for these sanctuaries, it was not always necessary, as there were different concepts of healing.[61] For example, the Greeks also believed in the therapeutic powers of verse and performance for physical ailments and the soul, which can be seen in early poetry and written works.[62] This transforms physical spaces, such as a theatre, into a place of healing for the *polis*. In general, the Theatre of Dionysos was not only a significant structure for religious practices within Athens, but it was also a civic centre where the people of Athens could gather to be entertained and reflect on current events, especially considering the intensely political nature of dramas and comedies.[63] The placement of the *Asklepieion* on the southern slope of the Acropolis put the sanctuary beside the Theatre of Dionysos, possibly pointing towards a connection between the two sanctuaries (fig. 1).

For both monuments, the placement of the *Asklepieion* could have had symbolic and mythological significance. Those who visited the City *Asklepieion* could enjoy the healing benefits of the nearby performances while they recuperated. For the Theatre of Dionysos, the dramas performed on stage

[54] Camp, *The Archaeology of Athens*, 155.
[55] Panagiotidou, *Healing, Disease and Placebo*, 79.
[56] Mitchell-Boyask, *Plague and the Athenian Imagination*, 115.
[57] Panagiotidou, *Healing, Disease and Placebo*, 76-77.
[58] Lefantzis and Jensen, "The Athenian Asklepieion," 103.
[59] Camp, *The Archaeology of Athens*, 118.
[60] This could also be the case for the Asklepieion in Piraeus, one of the believed starting points of the plague. Mitchell-Boyask, *Plague and the Athenian Imagination*, 115.
[61] Panagiotidou, *Healing, Disease and Placebo*, 79.
[62] For example, the sons of Autolycus healed Odysseus through song in Homer's *Odyssey* (19.455-88) (Mitchell-Boyask, *Plague and the Athenian Imagination*, 14).
[63] Mitchell-Boyask, *Plague and the Athenian Imagination*, 39.

were overseen by the god of medicine, who witnessed the 'healing' of the audience. As a result, the placement of the *Asklepieion* could have had symbolic meaning for the people of Athens, who relied on the god of medicine to supervise the healing of the spirits and bodies of the audience in the theatre and the sanctuary.[64] Outside of the relationship between the two sanctuaries, there is also a connection between the two deities, especially regarding the arts. While Asklepios was not consistently linked to the arts, as that was primarily within his father's sphere of influence, he was said to have granted some mortals knowledge and melodies, according to Libanius in the fourth century CE.[65] The placement of the *Asklepieion* beside the Theatre of Dionysos capitalized on the connection between the two gods and the similar healing qualities of their sanctuaries. While the location of the *Asklepieion* was most likely chosen for its attributes that would be conducive to healing and followed similar patterns of other *Asklepieia,* the cultural practices of the people of Athens, especially concerning the Theatre of Dionysos, were considered, culminating in the god of medicine overseeing the performances and healing of the captivated audience below and within the sanctuary.

Asklepios on Stage: An Examination of Late-Fifth-Century Dramas

In Athens, Asklepios was not only witnessing the performances in the Theatre of Dionysos, but, during these plays or readings, his name was also commonly invoked or his presence implied, especially concerning imagery relating to disease. Before the Athenian Plague, the theme of 'disease' was common and often transformed into a political metaphor, such as the 'sick city.' This metaphor of 'plague' could be used by poets and writers to demonstrate how disease, or *nosos*, can ravage a city both literally and figuratively, culminating in the disruption of civic structures and the disintegration of societal standards.[66] While *nosos* was a common theme within dramas, this metaphor became even more prevalent during and after the Athenian Plague, as the people desired the literal and figurative healing of the state.

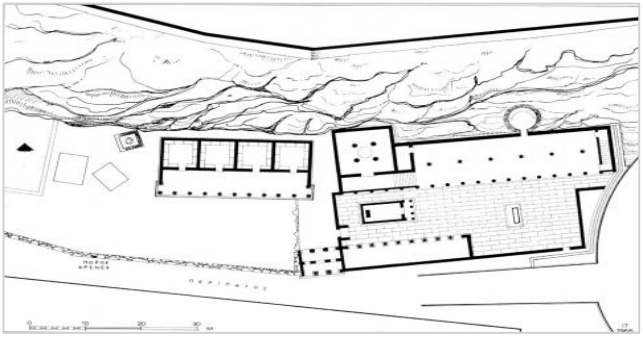

Figure 9, Plan of the Asklepieion from the fourth century BCE.

Considering Greek dramas frequently alluded to contemporary events, it is unsurprising that an epidemic that decimated the Athenian population would have been addressed. This was a topic that the audience could not only understand but relate to personally as they were living through the plague and its residual effects. The metaphor of the 'sick city' was especially prevalent regarding the tumultuous political atmosphere within Athens during the Peloponnesian War.[67] Outside of the theatre, this metaphor can even be seen in how Thucydides discusses the plague and the organization of his work; prior to his description of the crumbling of Athenian society as a result of disease, Thucydides recounts the funeral oration of Perikles in which the orator glorified the orderly and civilized nature of Athens.[68] This creates a striking parallel within his text and emphasizes Athens' literal and figurative 'sick' nature during this time. While writers and poets would call for a doctor to heal the 'sick city,' one of the commonly suggested names discussed or implied was Asklepios.[69]

In Euripides' *Hippolytus*, which was produced around 428 BCE, the writer employs medical language throughout his story and implies the presence of Asklepios. The play is set in Troezen, which would have had historical and contemporary significance to an Athenian audience; the Athenian women and children had fled to Troezen during the invasion of the Persians in 480 BCE, and Troezen had also been a victim of the Athenian Plague, possibly brought by

[64] The Athenians were not the only ones to construct an Asklepieion near a theatre; during the fourth century, the Messenians constructed their Asklepieion into the side of their theatre (Mitchell-Boyask, *Plague and the Athenian Imagination*, 116).

[65] Lib. *Ep.* 1342.1, from Edelstein and Edelstein, *Asclepius*, vol. 1, 340.

[66] Mitchell-Boyask, *Plague and the Athenian Imagination*, 26-27.

[67] Mitchell-Boyask, *Plague and the Athenian Imagination*, 41-42.

[68] Thuc., 2.46-2.47.

[69] Mitchell-Boyask, *Plague and the Athenian Imagination*, 35.

Athenian refugees fleeing from the epidemic.[70] The presence and inevitability of plague and war are alluded to throughout the play. Upon arriving in Troezen, Theseus is described as, "fleeing the miasma from the blood of the Pallantids." As well, *nosos* is used to describe Phaedra's curse. However, these two characters cannot outrun their respective sickness, and both, including their respective 'diseases,' contribute to the death of Hippolytus, the son of Theseus.[71] From the setting to the language, plague and disease are frequently alluded to throughout the play. After being banished by his father, Hippolytus journeys to Epidauros, and a large wave carrying a bull fatally frightens Hippolytus' horse and covers the "rock of Asklepios."[72] This small detail is rather specific, causing historian Robin Mitchell-Boyask to question its symbolism. Mitchell-Boyask theorizes that Hippolytus had caught Phaedra's disease, especially since Phaedra, in her final moments, declared that her revenge against her stepson would be making him share in her illness. The shadow upon the "rock of Asklepios" could then point towards the obliteration of salvation or hope, especially as Hippolytus is fatally wounded.[73] While in the original myth Asklepios resurrected Hippolytus, the play ends with Theseus' heartbreaking revelation that his son wrongfully died by his hand, preserving the tragic nature of the play. According to Mitchell-Boyask, this ending, not to mention the theme of disease, could have resonated with an Athenian audience, especially the implication that Asklepios remains hidden from them, similar to Hippolytus.[74] In Euripides' *Hippolytus*, the spirit of Asklepios represents the hopes of the Athenian people, who wanted the god to intervene and assist them with their *nosos*. During the time of the Athenian Plague, Asklepios was called upon by playwrights to save the city from its plight, acknowledging his role as a healer and the anxieties of Athens. After the establishment of the cult, he remained relevant for writers, especially considering his physical proximity (fig. 1).

After 420 BCE, Asklepios continued to have a lasting impact on the minds and culture of Athenians, mainly as he supervised the performances from on high. For example, Aristophanes' *Ploutos*, which was staged in 388 BCE, discusses the proceedings of an Attic *Asklepieion*. While this could have either been the temple in Piraeus or Athens, Aristophanes could be referring to the one in Athens, especially as it would be far more poignant for an Athenian audience.[75]

This continuation can also be seen in Sophokles' *Philoctetes*, which was staged in 409 BCE. At the end of the play, Heracles promises to send Asklepios to Troy to heal Philoctetes from his divine wound. This deviates from tradition; typically, the healer would have been Machaon, the son of Asklepios. This change could reflect the growing importance of Asklepios to the Athenian *polis* and the personal connection between Sophokles and the cult.[76] However, this did not mean the 'sick city' metaphor had fallen out of use. Health is intrinsically linked to freedom in *Philoctetes*. For example, Heracles' command to go to Troy ultimately frees Philoctetes from his isolation and *nosos*. The play could reflect the contemporary, tumultuous events within Athens, who had undergone an oligarchic coup in 411 BCE. *Philoctetes* could be alluding to the desires of the Athenians, who wanted a 'healthy' democratic city free of turmoil, especially considering their historical and contemporary concerns about the state of democracy.[77] The disease metaphor and Asklepios' name had been evoked by playwrights well before the Athenian Plague and the cult's introduction to the city; however, these themes continued and escalated after the establishment of the cult, highlighting the desires of the people for the healing of the state.

A Time to Celebrate: The Eleusinian Mysteries, City Dionysia, and Asklepios

During and after his introduction into the city-state, Asklepios dominated the cultural atmosphere of Athens, and he even had an impact on the religious landscape. While the cult of Asklepios was shaped by Athenian traditions, it also brought in its own religious practices, demonstrating that its identity did exist outside of Athens. The entire purpose of the sanctuary was to heal through the administration of drugs, surgical procedures, and spiritual healing rituals that

[70] Mitchell-Boyask, *Plague and the Athenian Imagination*, 45.
[71] Jacques Jouanna, *Greek Medicine from Hippocrates to Galen: Selected Papers*, edited by Philip van der Eijk, translated by Neil Allies (Brill, 2012), 62.
[72] Mitchell-Boyask, *Plague and the Athenian Imagination*, 46.
[73] Mitchell-Boyask, *Plague and the Athenian Imagination*, 46.
[74] Mitchell-Boyask, *Plague and the Athenian Imagination*, 47.
[75] Aristophanes' *Ploutos* was also possibly staged in 408 BCE, as a lost play of the same name was staged in that year (Mylonopoulos, "Better late than never!," 13-14.
[76] Jouanna, *Greek Medicine*, 67.
[77] Mitchell-Boyask, *Plague and the Athenian Imagination*, 179-180.

often involved the use of animals.[78] Primarily, Asklepios did his best work by visiting his patients in their dreams, who slept in the temple under the close watch of his attendants.[79] Patients or their families could also pray or leave votive offerings at the temple, often depicting the afflicted area.[80] Outside of general healing practices, the priests of the *Asklepieion* also frequently sacrificed to Asklepios; this included foods like figs, honey cakes, and bakemeats.[81] While the cult had its own rituals and religious practices, it was also adopted into the religious topography of the city-state, especially the Eleusinian Mysteries and City Dionysia.

Considering the cult entered Athens during the Eleusinian Mysteries and was even temporarily housed in the City *Eleusinion*, Asklepios, who was initiated upon his arrival, became an essential part of the Mysteries. The Epidauria, a festival on the seventeenth or eighteenth of *Boedromion* that honoured Asklepios, was incorporated into the Mysteries around 410 to 404 BCE; latecomers, similar to Asklepios, could still perform the preliminary rites and catch up to other attendees who had started on the fourteenth.[82] While this festival demonstrates how Asklepios was adopted into Athenian religious practices, the Epidauria also celebrated Asklepios' overall significance to Athens by emphasizing his arrival. The Epidauria consisted of a procession recreating Asklepios' journey through Athens, possibly from Piraeus to the *Asklepieion* with stops at the City *Eleusinion* and other significant locations, and an all-night festival with a banquet and sacrifice.[83] This emphasis on Asklepios' arrival demonstrates his importance to the Athenian population, especially if they were placing their hopes and anxieties on Asklepios for protecting the city and its inhabitants. As this was a time of turmoil for the Athenian population, especially after the 411 BCE oligarchic coup, this could have heightened the desire for the healing of the state, which could be encouraged by celebrating the god of medicine.[84] The Epidauria was a 'celebration within a celebration,' demonstrating how the cult of Asklepios was adopted into established practices while still being honoured separately.

Considering the *Asklepieion*'s physical, mythological, and literary connection to the Theatre of Dionysos, it is unsurprising that the cult of Asklepios was incorporated into the City Dionysia. The *Asklepieia* was a celebration that honoured Asklepios; according to epigraphic evidence, the festival was first recorded in 331 or 330 BCE, but it might have begun much earlier, possibly around 420 BCE during the foundation of the cult in Athens.[85] The *Asklepieia* took place on the eighth of *Elaphebolion* on the same day of the *proagon*.[86] While the incorporation of Asklepios into the Eleusinian Mysteries can be explained by his initiation and arrival, the reason behind the date and the content of the *Asklepieia* remains a mystery. Scholars have speculated that Asklepios' association with the City Dionysia could be a result of the proximity of the sanctuary, the similarities between the two gods, or even Asklepios' connection to the arts through his father.[87] The joint festival could also point towards the significance of poetry in terms of medicine and healing, especially as many poets saw themselves as having 'medical' roles.[88] Regardless, the incorporation of Asklepios into the City Dionysia demonstrates how the god became an essential figure within established Athenian religious practices.

Asklepios within Athens: The Impact of a Cult

The reception of the cult of Asklepios was determined by the socio-political atmosphere of late-fifth-century Athens, especially the concerns of the people regarding the 'sick' nature of the state; as a result, the god was adopted into the physical landscape and established cultural and religious practices of the city-state. The cult of Asklepios demonstrates how foreign cults were shaped to suit the needs of the *demos* while still having their own practices and traditions.

The initial interest in Asklepios by the *demos* was partially sparked by contemporary events, including

[78] For example, snakes would often lick or be placed on an infected area (Wickkiser, *Asklepios, Medicine, and the Politics of Healing*, 47).
[79] Ael. *NA*. 7.13, from Edelstein and Edelstein, *Asclepius*, vol. 1, 379.
[80] Wickkiser, *Asklepios, Medicine, and the Politics of Healing*, 60.
[81] Edelstein and Edelstein, *Asclepius*, vol. 2, 187.
[82] Mylonopoulos, "Better late than never!," 17.
[83] Philostr. *VA.* 4.18, from Edelstein and Edelstein, *Asclepius*, vol. 1, 316.
[84] Mitchell-Boyask, *Plague and the Athenian Imagination*, 180.
[85] Mylonopoulos, "Better late than never!," 16-17.
[86] Mitchell-Boyask, *Plague and the Athenian Imagination,* 111.
[87] Wickkiser, *Asklepios, Medicine, and the Politics of Healing*, 85.
[88] According to Aristophanes in his *Wasps*, the job of a poet was "to heal the ancient disease in the city" (651) (see Mitchell-Boyask, *Plague and the Athenian Imagination*, 14).

the war and plague, leading to many welcoming the god with open arms.[89] While the location of the *Asklepieion* was chosen due to established practices of the cult, especially the inclusion of a sacred grove, the decision to place the sanctuary within the city and the Theatre of Dionysos reflects the possible anxieties of the people, who likely wanted to ensure access to the sanctuary when the war resumed, and the cultural association between poetry and medicine.[90] Asklepios and disease had long been a subject of Athenian dramas, but these themes escalated with the Athenian Plague and Peloponnesian War, reflecting the desire to heal the 'sick city' and for the divine assistance of Asklepios.[91] While the cult of Asklepios had its own religious traditions, the god of medicine was incorporated into established celebrations shortly after his arrival into the city-state; however, Asklepios was not merely a background character in these festivals and his significance to the city and its people was thoroughly acknowledged.

While the Athenian *Asklepieion* may be exceptional due to the level of preservation of epigraphic, textual, and archaeological evidence, the reception of the cult of Asklepios in Athens can provide insight into the reasons behind the acceptance of Asklepios and how the cult was adopted into and redefined physical, cultural, and religious topography.[92] The cult would become far more popular and grow in prominence during the fourth century, but the spread of the cult of Asklepios during the late fifth century explains the high regard for the god of medicine, especially as he was a healer of both the people and the state.[93] As the cult rapidly expanded, more and more cities opened their doors for the itinerant god, desiring the salvation of their people and the *polis*.

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[89] Camp, *The Archaeology of Athens*, 122.
[90] Mitchell-Boyask, *Plague and the Athenian Imagination*, 110.
[91] Mitchell-Boyask, *Plague and the Athenian Imagination*, 122.
[92] Mylonopoulos, "Better late than never!," 2.
[93] Wickkiser, *Asklepios, Medicine, and the Politics of Healing*, 37.

THE ALLEGORY OF EDEN: AN ANALYSIS OF PLATONIC TRUTH AND REPRESENTATION IN *PARADISE LOST*

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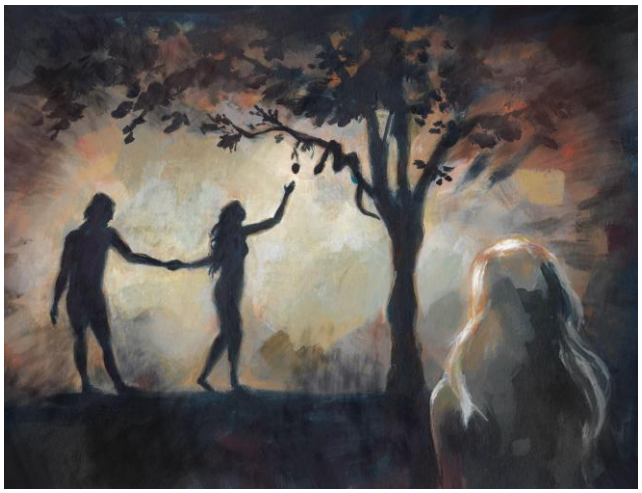

Art by Anna Storms

In his seminal Socratic dialogue, *The Republic*, Plato sifts his ideas on ethics and political philosophy through the fictional conversations of real learned Greek men. Socrates and various Athenians discuss issues surrounding man's goodness and justice in the city state, but within its walls of text rests another pressing issue—that of truth and representation in poetry. For Plato, real knowledge lies in the abstract and largely inaccessible world of forms, and material objects are merely imperfect imitations of their ideal forms. Thus, the process of education relies on an awareness that what one perceives and understands as "real" is merely a representation separated by various degrees from the Truth. The issue surrounding the movement from representation to knowledge is best described in Book 7 of *The Republic*, known for its *Allegory of the Cave*. Like *The Republic*, Milton's *Paradise Lost* is teeming with questions of truth and representation, and enters a similar conversation to Plato's dialogues, most notably in regard to the limited state of education and perception experienced by Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, which mirrors that of the prisoners trapped in the cave. Likewise, Milton can be read as depicting their partaking of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil as a movement away from the realm of representations and into the—initially painful—realm of Truth. However, given the discrepancy in degree of physical proximity to God the Creator experienced by Adam and Eve, as well as the capacity of the former to shape reality for the latter, it can be argued that the two proto-humans don't fulfill the roles of the equally restrained and uneducated prisoners. Rather, I argue that in *Paradise Lost*, Eve is situated at a lower mimetic register than Adam, and experiences representations while her other half has the privilege of some awareness of Truth. As a result, Eve's journey in Milton's epic is analogous to the prisoner's movement in *The Allegory of the Cave* from curated perceptions to acquisitions of painful knowledge and awareness of the world of representations.

A proper analysis of Adam and Eve's roles as indirect participants in this Platonic dialogue requires a more in depth description of the *Allegory's* timeline, as well as the hierarchy of mimetic representations in Plato's world of forms. Book 10 of *The Republic* delves into the degrees of separation from Truth that are established in the process of artistic representation. The εἶδος (*eîdos*) meaning 'type'—also known as the "form" or "reality"—is the ideal facsimile of an object, concept, or quality which exists free from change in the abstract world of forms[1]. For example, the form of "bedness" attached to a bed is the Type, which exists in an ideal realm separate from their physical manifestations. Once removed from the Type is the physical bed, a material imperfect imitation of its ideal form.[2] Twice removed from the Type is the representation—made by an artist or poet—who is representing one view of the manufactured bed. This point in the hierarchy constitutes a mimetic bed, representing one view of the manufacturing of the object.[3] Overall, from this Platonic viewpoint, everything in the world is an imperfect representation of a perfect form. Measuring what gets through the trickeries of representation is the job of the rational part of the mind and involves a process of reasonable education. Book 7's *Allegory of the Cave*, a dialogue between Socrates and Plato's brother Glaucon, takes

[1] Pl. *Resp.* 597c
[2] Pl. *Resp.* 597a-597b
[3] Pl. *Resp.* 597e-598c

on the issue of finding truth and reason in a world of representations, and immediately professes itself to "...thinking about the effect of education—or lack of it—on our nature."[4] This famous Socratic allegory follows the movement of prisoners forcibly chained in a dark cave since birth and shown only shadowy puppets depicting people and animals which the prisoners have no alternative but to perceive as true depictions of reality rather than manufactured objects. These are not freely moving representations, but rather an active puppet show put on by unnamed "people".[5] Supposing a prisoner is dragged out from the cave—their realm of representational reality—their vision must adjust to the bright sun and would begin to acclimate by looking at shadows and reflections in the water. Eventually, they'd be able to perceive the sun, that which changes the seasons, and governs all that is visible, which once backlit the shadowy puppet shows they had come to know as their only truth.[6]

This allegorical scenario of prisoners born into a curated reality with predicted perceptions and coerced into a realm of previously inconceivable knowledge can easily be placed in dialogue with *Paradise Lost*. From a simple point of view, one could easily frame Adam and Eve as the prisoners forcibly dragged out by a stranger—in this case, Satan—into a realm of knowledge of Good and Evil. Although, unlike Plato, *Paradise Lost* frames the move outward towards knowledge as an act against goodness. This is aside from any considerations of *felix culpa*, meaning 'blessed fault', the concept that man's first disobedience through the Original Sin was actually a boon given that it eventually resulted in man's salvation through Christ. It can be argued that Adam and Eve's relationships to Truth and representations reflects their authority as perceived by Satan: "Not equal, as their sex not equal seemed."[7] Just by virtue of his creation, Adam exists by fewer degrees of separation to the Miltonic God than Eve. By extension, I argue that this proximity makes him closer to the Platonic Throne of Truth.

As articulated by Raphael, "God on [Adam] / Abundantly his gifts hath also poured / Inward and outward both, his image fair."[8] Adam is made in God's image, while Eve is merely made in Adam's; being described as "Manlike, but different sex, so lovely fair."[9] In Platonic terms, while God is Adam's type as well as his manufacturer, Eve is presented merely as a mimetic Adam; a representation which He partially formed in His own likeness through Adam's rib. Eve is a representation twice removed from the truth, and despite both she and her husband's prelapsarian equal unawareness of Good and Evil, is already less privy to the ways of God. Unlike Adam, she lacks firsthand knowledge of their Maker, meaning the knowledge she acquires and takes for Truth has been disseminated through a representer. In this way, compared to Adam, Eve is "deeper in the cave", so to speak. Adam himself is a presentation of God, but Eve is a further degree of separation away from the ultimate Creator. When placing *Paradise Lost* in dialogue with Plato's *Allegory*, Eve can be framed as the prisoner chained up since birth; forced to watch and glean meaning from shadows on the wall. Adam may be reasonably placed as the shadowy puppeteer moving the shapes and providing their voices and noises. This frames him as having a clearer vision of what is and isn't representation, but he is still nonetheless situated in the dark cave. He has contact with the outside enlightening sun only insofar as it provides the backing light for shadows so that he may conceive of representations for himself and Eve. He has more knowledge of and contact with God's light, but not Good and Evil, which is only attainable through exiting the realm of representation. Plato's figure of the puppeteer is rather scarcely mentioned apart from its introduction, leaving gracious room for interpretation on its relationship to the prisoners and the representations it has been devoted to producing for presumably decades.

When framing the premise of the *Allegory of the Cave* to Glaucon, one of the first conditions of the cave that Socrates posits is the manner in which the representational reality being fed to the prisoners is affirmed through the mutual understanding and confirmation that the shadows on the wall in front of them are a truthful depiction of reality. The prisoners are framed as being able to talk to one another, and assign names and meanings to the shadows, sounds, and voices that make up their realm of perception.[10] Socrates' mention of the mutual assurance and lack of utter solitude that the prisoners experience follows the

[4] Pl. *Resp.* 514a
[5] Pl. *Resp.* 514b-515b
[6] Pl. *Resp.* 515d-516c
[7] John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. William Kerrigan et al. (The Modern Library, 2007), 4.296
[8] Milton, *Paradise Lost,* 8.219-221
[9] Milton, *Paradise Lost,* 8.471
[10] Pl. *Resp.* 515b-515c

collective process of meaning-making in reality. Adam and Eve don't quite have this luxury of learning on equal footing. Rather, Adam played a significant role in God's creation of the types of the creatures that populate Eden. God created the land and animals on the sixth day of creation prior to moulding man,[11] after which Adam "...named [the creatures], as they passed, and understood / Their nature, with such knowledge God endued."[12] Thus, even without eating from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, Adam has an inherent understanding of the true innermost natures of Eden's animals. He is privy to their ideal forms, and by naming them, he plays a role in how they will be represented in the future. Eve does not have this connection to the world of forms. Although she is granted the privilege of naming the flowers and plant life, she doesn't possess that immediate understanding of their nature granted directly by God due to her complete lack of direct contact with the Creator. Man has unquestioned dominion over animals, bequeathed to him by God with His declaration to Adam: "I bring them [the creatures of Earth] to receive / From thee their names, and pay thee fealty / With low subjection."[13] The creatures are submissive to Adam's authority which was granted to him through his direct interaction with God, which is demonstrated as Adam narrates his memory of the birds and beasts prostrating themselves before him immediately following His command: "...these cow'ring low / With blandishment, each bird stopped on his wing. / I named them, as they passed, and understood their nature, with such knowledge God endued."[14] Conversely, Eve evidently doesn't hold such authority or divinely endowed awareness over prelapsarian plant life as demonstrated by its unmanageable "wanton growth"[15] which leads the lovers to "divide [their] labours."[16] With this in mind, it is apparent that Adam and Eve would not be chained and facing the shadowy wall on equal footing.

Eve is the one who is fed the most representations, and she is ostensibly further away from the Truth. When she is reminiscing on her first moments of conscious existence in Book 4, Eve reveals that she initially found kinship with her own reflection in a lake, while fully unaware that the beauty she was captivated by was her own. This lake, quite fittingly being made up of "waters issued from a cave",[17] feeds her a presentation of her own image which she initially mistakes for a real companion until she is beckoned by Adam.[18] Her very first memories consist of her building a conception of reality based on false representations, which are in turn representations of Adam, out of whose image she was made. In his own account of his earliest memories, Adam recounts being present for the Edenic animals' naming process and involved in the creation of his feminine counterpart. But Eve is made to rely on representations that are multiple degrees of separation away from real knowledge to the point where that is what she prefers. In Book 8, Raphael relates the story of Creation to Adam, who in turn responds with his own very first memories and faces the angel's chidings on his subtle subservience to Eve, his lesser. Rather than partaking in this conversation—as she is perfectly capable of doing—Eve prefers to hear Adam's retelling of the event later, interspersed with kisses. As she leaves the men to their conversation, the narrator asserts "Her husband the relater she preferred / Before the angel."[19] At this moment, regardless of her degree of active choice in the matter of gleaning her information from her beloved Adam rather than Raphael himself, she is still learning through representations rather than reality. This exchange indicates the differences in prelapsarian acquisitions of knowledge experienced by Adam and Eve. The former is consistently addressed and educated by heavenly beings—akin to the true light of the sun shining in through the cave to illuminate his shadow-casting objects. The latter continues to be twice removed from the Truth, loyally facing the cave wall as her chaste lover translates his glimpses of light into two dimensional images for her consumption.

As Satan makes his serpentine attempt to lure Eve from the cave and into the forbidden realm of Truth, he appeals to any sense of vanity the mother of humanity may have in order to get her to pay more heed to his words, and praises her "Fairest resemblance of thy Maker fair".[20] Although this resemblance is evident to Satan who has seen both God and Eve, it is not something she can confirm for herself. Eve is aware of this resemblance through Adam's degree of separation only because she has been told by people who themselves have seen God.

[11] Milton, *Paradise Lost,* 7.504-518
[12] Milton, *Paradise Lost,* 8.352-353
[13] Milton, *Paradise Lost,* 8.343-345
[14] Milton, *Paradise Lost,* 8.350-353
[15] Milton, *Paradise Lost,* 9.211
[16] Milton, *Paradise Lost,* 9.214
[17] Milton, *Paradise Lost,* 4.454
[18] Milton, *Paradise Lost,* 4.481-491
[19] Milton, *Paradise Lost,* 8.52-53
[20] Milton, *Paradise Lost,* 9.538

Soon after her creation, she was "Led by her Heav'nly Maker, though unseen", but never laid eyes or exchanged words with the Creator to whom she supposedly bears resemblance. Adam can attest to his own similarity to God, having seen His face and spoken with Him firsthand. Once more, Adam—and even Satan, in this instance—must act as a representer, giving knowledge of God that is two degrees of separation away from the throne of Truth. Adam's representative function serves as a vessel through which Eve may know her own relation to the elusive Creator and reasonably conceive of herself as a mimetic Adam.

As in Plato's *Allegory*, Eve is forced from the confines of the figurative cave, slowly being pulled away from representation until she can see the difference between representation and Truth. Having partaken of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, she is granted the capacity to perceive representation rather than taking it for granted as reality. This is evidenced by the very first words she speaks after partaking of the forbidden fruit or metaphorically leaving the cave and gaining sentience of the world of representations. Eve immediately identifies the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil as an "...operation blessed / To sapience, hitherto obscured".[21] She then goes on to exclaim to the Tree: "...dieted by thee I grow mature / In knowledge, as the gods who all things know."[22] Only through partaking in the fruit and figuratively exiting the cave does Eve become conscious of the existence of insights that were previously unavailable to her. Similar to the *Allegory*, the newly enlightened Eve returns to the cave to share her discovery with Adam. Yet, instead of being temporarily blinded by the darkness and presumed injured,[23] she successfully recruits Adam into the educative light—that which is exalted by Plato and punished by Milton's God. At this point, the dialogue between Milton and Plato veers into disagreement.

The Platonic moral is that the educated philosophers must have the capacity to return to the cave after having found the Truth, and once having acclimated to the darkness around them, will be able to see one thousand times better than the prisoners do since they "have seen the truth of what is beautiful and just and good."[24] Those with the knowledge that representation is not reality may return to the prison dwelling in which the average citizen finds themselves and serve as a virtuous leader or enlightening force. Whereas the famed Miltonic moral promotes an unquestioning obedience and refusal to separate representation and Truth by which Plato would not abide. By reading Adam and Eve's movement towards Knowledge alongside its Platonic parallel in the *Allegory of the Cave*, we can generate a powerfully antithetical reading of the Fall in Eden. While Christian doctrine emphasizes the Fall's sinful disobedience, the Platonic parallel offers the reader a contrary way of perceiving the Fall as powerful, meaningful and essential, as leaving the cave would be in Plato's *Allegory*. After spending the majority of the epic playing the role of a Platonic prisoner, Eve is freed from Eden's representative regime, thus blurring the mimetic barrier between Adam and herself as they exit Paradise both disowned and hand in hand, rather than degrees of separation apart.

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[21] Milton, *Paradise Lost,* 9.796-797
[22] Milton, *Paradise Lost,* 9.803-804
[23] Pl. *Resp.* 516c-517a
[24] Pl. *Resp.* 520c

IDENTIFYING THE PERFUMERY: PLACES OF ASSOCIATION, THE STADIUM QUARTER, AND THE PERFUME INDUSTRY IN LATE HELLENISTIC DELOS

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Art by Kaitlyn O'Leary

After Rome placed Delos under Athenian dominion in 167/166 BCE and declared it a free port, the small island experienced a period of economic prosperity, which lasted until it was sacked in 88 BCE and 69 BCE.[1] During this time, its population increased dramatically with an influx of immigrants, especially from the eastern Mediterranean and the Italic peninsula, making Delos a cosmopolitan trade hub. Though the exact numbers are unknown, scholars estimate that the island's population increased from 1,500–2,000 people to roughly 17,000 or even upwards of 30,000 people during its peak.[2] This sudden prosperity and diverse population growth is reflected in the island's urban landscape. New domestic quarters were built, and old domestic quarters were refurbished (fig. 1), both now featuring large and opulently decorated Hellenistic peristyle courtyard buildings with greater frequency.[3] For the short period that Delos experienced this economic boom, its cosmopolitan nature led to its increasing architectural diversity and aggrandizement.

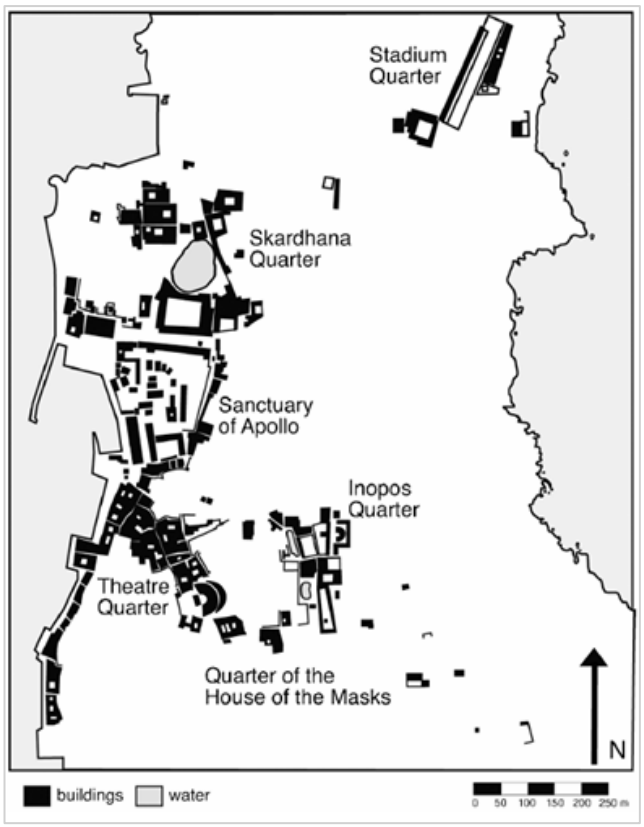

Figure 10, Plan of Delos showing its domestic quarters. After Nevett, Domestic Space (Cambridge University Press, 2010), fig. 4.2, 67.

With the island's increasing wealth, diversity, and economic importance during the late Hellenistic period came the appearance of places of association. Places of association were communal building spaces that provided a group of people—formed on the base of some combination of shared ethnic, religious, and/or professional connections—a "clubhouse" of sorts.[4] Like their multifaceted membership bases,

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[2] Mantha Zarmakoupi, "The Quartier du Stade on late Hellenistic Delos: A Case Study of Rapid Urbanization (Fieldwork Seasons 2009–2010)," *ISAW Papers* 6 (2013): 8, http://doi.org/2333.1/51c5b1dw.

[3] Lisa Nevett, *Domestic Space in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), 66–76.

[4] Monika Trümper, "Cult in Clubhouses of Delian Associations," in *Associations and Religion in Context*, ed. Anneilies Cazemier and Stella Skaltsa, *Kernos* Supplément 39 (Presses Universitaires de Liège, 2022)," 93–94, 123; Monika Trümper, "Where the non-Delians met in Delos. The meeting-places of foreign associations and ethnic communities in Late Hellenistic Delos," in *Political*

places of association were diverse in their architecture types, mixing sacred, domestic, and/or commercial architecture, primarily.[5] One such place of association built in the late Hellenistic period was the Clubhouse of the Berytian Poseidoniasts—the only securely identifiable place of association due to epigraphic evidence found within it.[6] This building mixed sacred, domestic, and commercial architecture in such a grandiose manner that the presence of these three architectural spheres has become the defining typology for the identification of other places of association (fig. 2).[7]

Delos' late Hellenistic architectural diversity and aggrandizement is emphasized by House IB, also called the Perfumery (fig. 3). The Perfumery is located within the contemporarily built Stadium Quarter, giving it a likely *terminus post quem* of 167/166 BCE.[8] It is one of the largest buildings in its *insula* with a 550m^2 plot and is characterized by its peristyle courtyard and, most significantly, the presence of perfume making equipment in its room f.[9] What functions this building had beyond perfume production is uncertain. Jean-Pierre Brun, its second and most recent excavator, argued that it was a private residence in addition to a perfumery during its third stage, which he dates around the end of the second or beginning of the first centuries BCE.[10] More recently, however, Monika Trümper has argued that the Perfumery was likely a place of association, not a private residence.[11] While this notion is enticing due to the building's uniqueness, Trümper's argument relies almost solely on its architecture. She does not sufficiently analyze the Perfumery's broader spatial and temporal contexts to convincingly argue that this building is unique because it was a place of association and not solely because it produced perfume.

This paper will critically analyze whether the Perfumery was indeed a place of association and not just a building that produced perfume. To do so, it will examine whether its architecture aligns with the Clubhouse of the Berytian Poseidoniasts, engaging critically with Trümper's own comparison of the two. Then, it will explore how the Perfumery fits within the

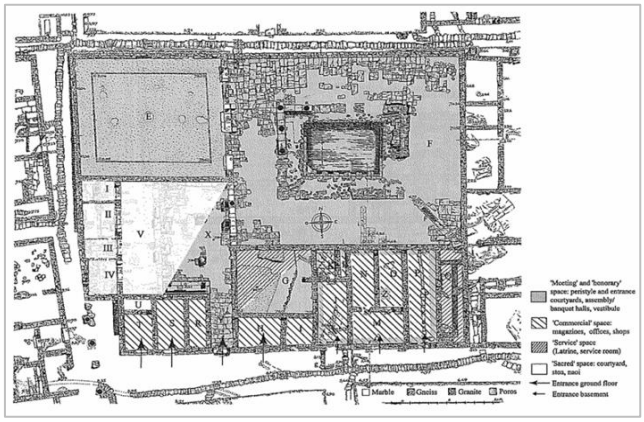

Figure 2, Plan of the Clubhouse of the Berytian Poseidoniasts with the different functions of spaces defined. After Trümper, "Where the non-Delians meet on Delos," (Peeters, 2011) fig. 4, 84.

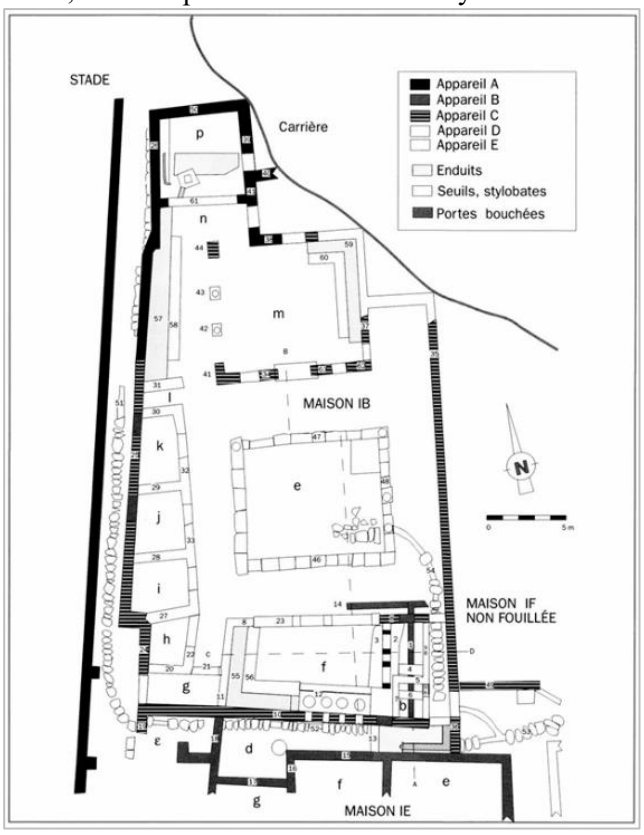

Figure 3, Plan of the Perfumery. After Brun, "Laudatissimum," Bulletin de correspondance hellénique *123, no. 1 (1999): fig. 6, 96.*

Culture in the Greek City after the Classical Age, ed. O. M. Van Nijf and R. Alston, (Peeters, 2011), 51–53.

[5] Trümper "Where non-Delians met in Delos," 51–52.

[6] Trümper, "Where non-Delians met in Delos," 53.

[7] Monika Trümper, "Negotiating Religious and Ethnic Identity: The Case of Clubhouses in Late Hellenistic Delos." in *Zwischen Kult und Gesellschaft*, ed. I. Nielsen, *Hephaistos* 24 (2006), 1; Trümper, "Cult in Clubhouses," 94; Trümper, "Where the non-Delians met in Delos," 53.

[8] Zarmakoupi, "The Quartier du Stade," 1; Jean-Pierre Brun, "Laudatissimum fuit antiquitus in Delo insula. La maison IB du Quartier du stade et la production des parfums à Délos," *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique* 123, no. 1 (1999): 101.

[9] Trümper, "Where the non-Delians met in Delos," 58.

[10] Brun, "Laudatissimum," 103.

[11] Trümper, "Where the non-Delians met in Delos," 58-60; Trümper, "Cult in Clubhouses," 104-109, 123.

context of its quarter and the perfume production at Delos during the late Hellenistic period to substantiate the Perfumery's identification as a place of association through an exclusive approach. Finally, it will situate the building into its specific spatial, economic, and archaeological context in the Stadium Quarter to assess whether its context supports its identification as a place of association centred around perfume production. Through the above, this paper will demonstrate that the Perfumery was likely a place of association during its third and fourth stages.

The Perfumery was excavated twice. First by André Plassart in 1912–1913, who identified the building as a restaurant within a private residence.[12] Brun re-excavated the site in 1997 and identified five stages of development (fig. 4).[13] Brun convincingly argued its identification as a perfumery based primarily on the presence of marble press beds, postholes to house supports for a wedge press, and the four furnaces all found in room f.[14] Unfortunately, this identification cannot be certain, due to the lack of supporting epigraphical evidence, any contemporary archaeological or literary sources on perfume production in the Hellenistic era, and the absence of find provenance recorded by Plassart.[15] Despite these gaps in knowledge, it is generally accepted that House IB produced perfume during at least the third stage of its use (from the end of the second to the early first centuries BCE),[16] but whether it was a private house or a place of association in addition to this function is uncertain.

Places of Association on Late Hellenistic Delos: The Clubhouse of the Poseidoniasts

The Clubhouse of the Berytian Poseidoniasts is located in the Skardhana Quarter near the Sacred Lake and occupying an enormous lot of 1,500m^2.[17] *IDelos* 1520, one of the 33 inscriptions written in flawless Greek found within the building,[18] provides a comprehensive image of this association. The inscription provides the building's construction with a *terminus post quem* of 153/152 or 149/148 BCE.[19] In addition, *IDelos* 1520 details how the association met monthly; it had a membership comprised of merchants, shippers, and warehouse-workers, who were originally from Beirytos in Phoenicia; it participated in the Hellenistic benefaction-honours system with locals and foreigners, such as Romans, who were included in their membership; it also participated in Delian religious ceremonies such as the procession for Apollo and its own religious rites to Poseidon. In other words, this association was well-integrated within the local and international communities of the island that its Clubhouse was situated within.

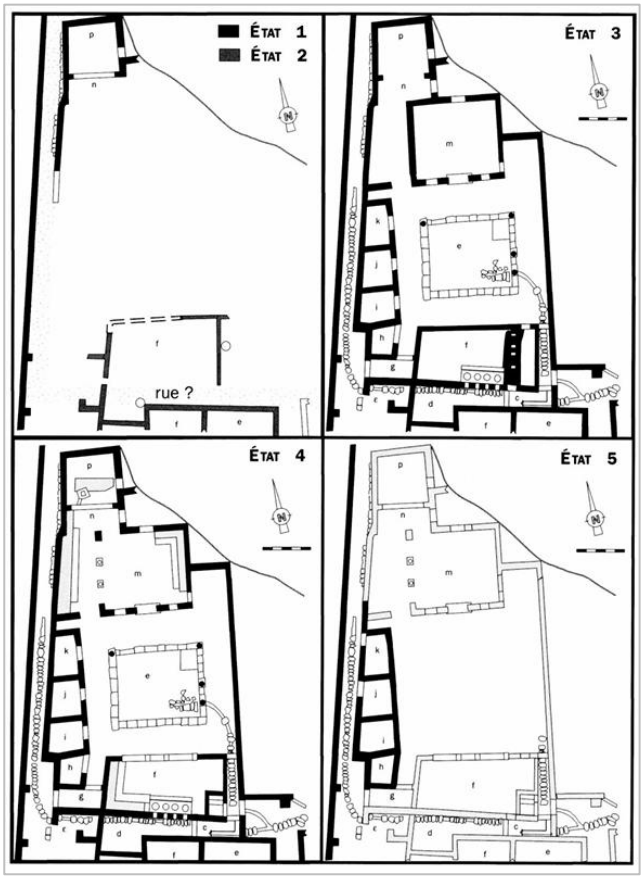

Figure 4, Brun's 5 stages of the Perfumery. After Brun, "Laudatissimum," Bulletin de correspondance hellénique *123, no. 1 (1999): fig. 9, 100.*

[12] André Plassart, "Fouilles de Délos, exécutées aux frais de M. le Duc de Loubat (1912-1913). Quartier d'habitations privées à l'est du stade," *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique* 40 (1916): 166-174, https://doi.org/10.3406/bch.1916.1477.
[13] Brun, "Laudatissimum," 100.
[14] Jean-Pierre Brun, "The Production of Perfumes in Antiquity: The Cases of Delos and Paestum," *American Journal of Archaeology* 104, no. 2 (2000): 282–290, https://doi.org/10.2307/507452.
[15] Plassart, "Fouilles de Délos," 166–174; Brun, "The Production of Perfumes," 285, 287–290.
[16] Brun, "Laudatissimum," 103.
[17] Trümper, "Negotiating Religious and Ethnic Identity," 5.
[18] Trümper, "Where the non-Delians meet in Delos," 56.
[19] Trümper, "Negotiating Religious and Ethnic Identity," 3.

This epigraphical evidence in conjunction with archaeological finds and architectural layouts of rooms provide compelling evidence towards the identification of some rooms' functions. The altars in courtyard X and cult statues with inscribed bases in exedrae I (Roma) and II (Poseidon), as Trümper convincingly argues, indicate that the courtyard, exedrae, and prostoa V form a sanctuary within the Clubhouse.[20] The bordered mosaic and relatively square shape of room E also suggests that it was a banquet room, reminiscent of a Classical house's *andron*.[21] The peristyle courtyard (F), although over-sized in comparison to similar rooms in domestic contexts, was typical of large peristyle houses in late Hellenistic Delos.[22] The rooms on the lower terrace on the south side of the building with access directly from the street were likely commercial in nature, either rented out as shops or used for storage. That the association sought funds is evidenced by their desire to gain benefactors, as detailed in *IDelos* 1521 and demonstrated by the honorific statues and inscriptions found throughout the building, but especially in the peristyle courtyard (F). Finally, the presence of a latrine, though a later addition, suggests that people who visited the association stayed for extended periods of time, though whether they lodged there is unknown.[23] These seemingly incongruent functions housed within one building are illuminated by *IDelos* 1520, which outlines the multifunctional use of the Clubhouse for its members, including as a congregational, commercial, and sacred place.

This unique multifunctionality in a private building is the defining characteristic of the Clubhouse of the Berytian Poseidoniasts, making it the main archeological typology that scholars use to comparatively determine the identity of places of association on Delos that are not identified by epigraphy.[24] Trümper argues that the Perfumery was a place of association based on this typology. She convincingly demonstrates that both the Perfumery and the Clubhouse of the Berytian Poseidoniasts include congregational spaces in large, paved banqueting rooms and peristyle courtyards (fig. 2 room E and fig. 3 room m, for example).[25] She also effectively illustrates that both have commercial spaces—the Perfumery through perfume production in room f and the Clubhouse through its rooms for rent.[26]

Figure 5, The Perfumery's room p. After Trümper, "Cult in Clubhouses," (Presses Universitaires de Liège, 2022), fig. 8, 106.

Where Trümper's argument becomes less convincing, however, is in the final of the three types of space that would comparatively identify the Perfumery as a place of association: the sacred space. There is no securely identifiable sacred space within the Perfumery. The presence of an altar with liturgical paintings, described by Plassart in 1916 but now lost, outside of the East entrance opening onto the Rue Orientale might have indicated that the owners of the Perfumery worshipped the *lares compitales*, a cult worshipped by Roman and Italian *liberti* and enslaved people.[27] But this altar is connected to the wall of a neighbouring building that has been destroyed by a modern quarry, meaning that it is uncertain whether it was part of the Perfumery.[28]

Even if this altar was a part of the Perfumery, it would not necessarily indicate that it was not a private house. Altars with liturgical paintings dedicated to the *lares compitales* are at the entrances of three of the five remaining buildings in the Perfumery's *insula*.[29] These three buildings, Houses IC, ID, and IE, were also investigated by Plassart and have not been excavated since, but are generally considered to have

[20] Trümper, "Negotiating Religious and Ethnic Identity," 6–7; Trümper, "Cult in Clubhouses," 101.
[21] R. C. Westgate, "Space and Decoration in Hellenistic Houses," *The Annual of the British School at Athens* 95 (2000): 391–392, 414, http://www.jstor.org/stable/30103442.
[22] Lisa Nevett, *Domestic Space in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), 75, 82–85; cf. Vit. 6.7.
[23] Trümper, "Where non-Delians met in Delos," 53–58.
[24] Trümper, "Where non-Delians met in Delos," 51–52.
[25] Trümper, "Where non-Delians met in Delos," 84.
[26] Trümper, "Where non-Delians met in Delos," 58–60.
[27] Plassart, "Fouilles de Délos," 166-167; Trümper "Where non-Delians met in Delos," 60; Zarmakoupi "The Quartier du Stade," 25.
[28] Trümper, "Cult in Clubhouses," 108.
[29] Zarmakoupi, "The Quartier du Stade," 25.

Figure 6, Insulae I and II within the Stadium Quarter. After Zarmakoupi, "The Quartier du Stade," ISAW Papers *6 (2013), fig. 2.*

been private domestic buildings.[30] Altars are also present in other houses across Delos during the late Hellenistic Period.[31] What distinguished the Clubhouse, however, was the altars' location in a markedly sacred space, identified as such by their presence in addition to the existence of cult statues.[32] There may have been another altar *within* the Perfumery, as there is what may be an altar base present within room p, but it is no longer *in situ* or complete, and its providence unknown, meaning it is not reliably identifiable and thus cannot dependably indicate sacred space.[33] The existence of the altar by the East entrance does not, then, distinguish the Perfumery from being a house; rather, it supports the interpretation that it is one.

What would separate the Perfumery from the houses in its *insula* would be the presence of a demarcated sacred space within its walls. This sacred space may exist, as Trümper argues it does, within room p (fig. 5).[34] Room p lies at the northernmost surviving area of the Perfumery and consists of an open reservoir and a platform. The open reservoir was "très irrégulièrement creusé dans le granit et complètement enduit de mortier de tuileau,"[35] fed from the roof by a channel system and, likely, by groundwater—both of which would fill the channel in the event of rainfall.[36] The platform has an unknown function and is only accessible by traversing the reservoir to its south. It now serves as the storage area for table supports and basins, found by Plassart "dans le bassin[…] en monceau,"[37] as well as the potential altar base. The north wall of room p has some surviving plaster, which Trümper notes likely indicates that the walls were stuccoed, but no further traces of its decoration are extant.[38] Trümper highlights how this room was "carefully staged;"[39] the inaccessible but still decorated platform and the reservoir are a focal point of the Perfumery's layout, situated at the top of its North-South central axis in a room only separated from 'room' n by 5 threshold blocks *in antis* forming stylobate 61 (fig. 3). But can this water feature identify it as a sacred space?

Since it is unreliable to rely on the identification of this space as sacred based on the potential altar base, defining room p as a sacred space is difficult and uncertain. Trümper relies on the presence of this altar base to argue its religious function, supporting her identification of room p as a grotto.[40] If room p is indeed a grotto—an artificial or natural space usually resembling a cave with a central water feature, this would greatly contribute to Trümper's argument that there is a clearly articulated sacred space within the Perfumery.[41]

Artificial grottos are the only extant non-literary evidence towards sacred natural spaces in the ancient

[30] Zarmakoupi, 36–62; Plassart, "Fouilles de Délos," 160–162, 175–234.
[31] Trümper, "Cult in Clubhouses," 101–103.
[32] Trümper, "Cult in Clubhouses," 101; Trümper, "Negotiating Religious Identity," 6–7.
[33] Trümper, "Cult in Clubhouses," 107.
[34] Trümper, "Cult in Clubhouses," 104–108.
[35] Brun, "Laudatissimum," 123.
[36] Trümper, "Cult in Clubhouses," 106.
[37] Plassart, "Fouilles de Délos," 174. Plassart makes no mention of the altar base.
[38] Trümper, "Cult in Clubhouses," 106.
[39] Trümper, "Cult in Clubhouses," 107.
[40] Trümper, "Cult in Clubhouses," 104–108.
[41] See: Sabine Neumann, "Rhodos: Die Rätselhaften Grotten Auf Der Akropolis," *Antike Welt*, no. 3 (2012): 73–83. http://www.jstor.org/stable/44476098.

Greek world.[42] They are also easily-identifiable sacred spaces due to their obvious boundaries and their usual presence within sanctuaries or other sacred rural areas.[43] That there was a concerted effort to maintain a source of water within this room aids this interpretation, as water was often an important part of religious grottos.[44] The construction of new urban grottos in the Hellenistic period and beyond, however, may not be religiously-motivated but aesthetically-motivated, as Katja Sporn reports, due to an increasing desire for urbanized nature.[45] Sabine Neumann also notes that on Rhodes, excavations have uncovered several grand late Hellenistic to early Roman residential buildings that contained gardens with artificial grottos, calling into question the assumed sacred nature of the grottos on the acropolis.[46] Nevertheless, grottos in ancient Greece were most commonly sacred spaces, meaning that if room p was a grotto, it would most likely have had a cultic function. Because the identification of this room as a grotto is not certain, however, the existence of demarcated sacred space within the Perfumery should not be relied upon to form the conclusion that it was a place of association.

The Stadium Quarter

The lack of a securely identifiable sacred space within the Perfumery makes its identification as a place of association by comparison with the Clubhouse less compelling. To make this identification more well-rounded, we must exclude it from other identifications, especially that of a private residence. Thus, it is necessary to situate the Perfumery within its residential quarter by comparing its architecture to that of the surrounding buildings (fig. 6). Of the excavated buildings within the Stadium Quarter, there is one building that has been identified as a Synagogue (GD 80), and two *insulae* of residential and commercial buildings: I and II.[47] The Perfumery (House IB), is the largest of the buildings within these two *insulae* and is the only building with stone furnaces and a potential grotto. In both scale and unique extant features, it stands out, much like the Clubhouse. Where it fails to distinguish itself, however, is in its inclusion of both commercial and domestic space.

Another factor that complicates the Perfumery's identification as a place of association is the commonality of the inclusion of commercial, especially craft, space within domestic spaces in the Stadium Quarter. The residential and commercial buildings within *insulae* I and II postdate the Stadium, which lies across the Rue du Stade from them (fig. 7).[48] Zamarkoupi, in her examination of the excavated buildings of the Stadium Quarter and Plassart's unpublished excavation notes, argues persuasively that many houses in the Stadium Quarter incorporate commercial space. Using comparative archaeological evidence, she argues that Delos' economic prosperity

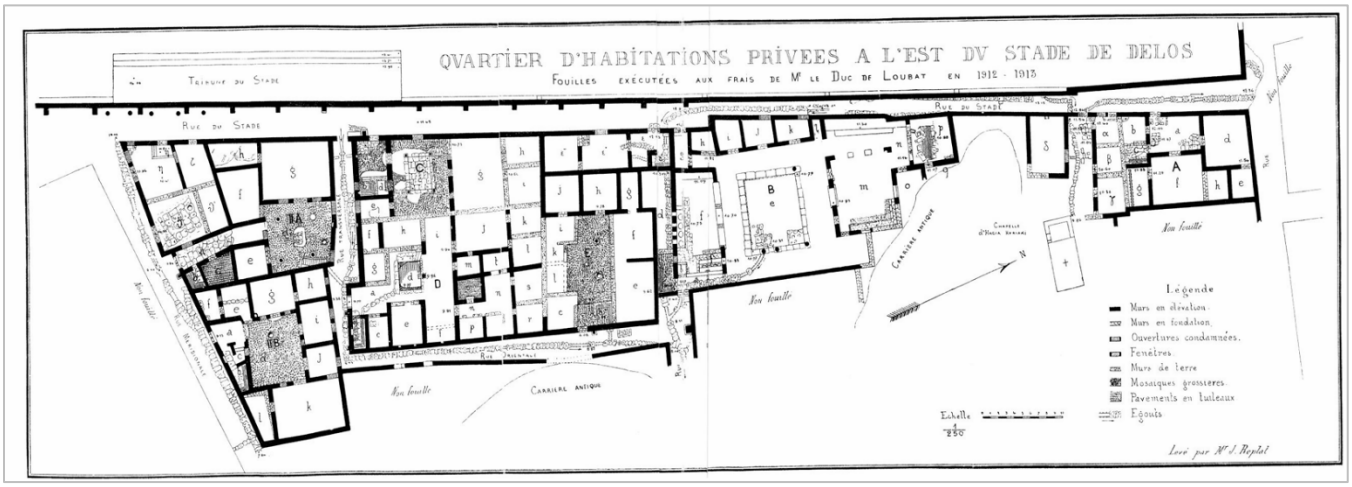

Figure 7, The Stadium Quarter. From Brun, "Laudatissimum," Bulletin de correspondance hellénique *123, no. 1 (1999): fig. 3, 92-93.*

[42] Katja Sporn, "Espace naturel et paysages religieux : les grottes dans le monde grec," *Revue de l'histoire Des Religions* 227, no. 4 (2010): 555, http://www.jstor.org/stable/23618839.
[43] Sporn, "Espace Naturel," 557–560.
[44] Trümper, "Cult in Clubhouses," 118.
[45] Sporn, "Espace Naturel," 566.
[46] Neumann, "Rhodos," 83.
[47] Zarmakoupi, "The Quartier du Stade," 21–24; Plassart, "Fouilles de Délos," 147–155.
[48] Zarmakoupi, "The Quartier du Stade," 22.

as a free port in conjunction with the *insulae*'s proximity to the Gymnasium complex and northeastern port significantly impacted the architectural development of the buildings in the quarter by promoting the demarcation of commercial space within private houses.[49] Especially in the case of House ID, Zamarkoupi notes that its second stage of development largely prioritized the division of undecorated rooms into clusters of smaller rooms. Drawing a compelling comparison to the *Maison des Sceaux* in the Skardhana quarter and referring to R.C. Westgate's theory of the Hellenistic decorative hierarchy, she determines that these room clusters served a commercial purpose.[50] What distinguishes the commercial spaces in the rest of the Stadium Quarter from those of the Perfumery, however, is that they appear to be either storage or shop space, not production space, or at least cannot be securely identified as such.[51]

The Perfumery is, then, not unique among the buildings in the Stadium Quarter in that it includes both commercial and domestic space. It is therefore insufficient to argue that the Perfumery was a place of association purely based on its architecture or on functions similar to those of the Clubhouse as this does not distinguish it from the other houses in the quarter. Where the Perfumery is unique, however, is in its *substantial* and *production-based* commercial function as a perfumery—its room f is far more opulent than the small, undecorated rooms of the surrounding houses. It is, then, necessary to examine the contexts of perfume production to assess whether this function alone is enough to support the identification of the Perfumery as a commercially focused place of association, in conjunction with its architectural comparison with the Clubhouse.

Perfume Production in the Ancient Mediterranean

The Perfumery is the only extant perfumery from the Hellenistic-period that has been identified with some level of certainty, meaning that its identification is not entirely unproblematic.[52] Brun has convincingly argued that the Perfumery's room f served a perfume-making function in the building's third stage based largely on comparative analysis with non-contemporary literature and archaeological finds. The most significant sources that he and other scholars use to identify the perfumery function of room f are Theophrastus' *Concerning Odours*, Pliny the Elder's *Natural History*, Heron of Alexandria's *Mechanika* 2.1.4, paintings from the Vettii House in Pompeii (fig. 8), and a similarly-constructed perfume shop in the forum at Paestum.[53] While none of these sources are coeval to the Perfumery, their combined archaeological and literary evidence provides a comprehensive image of perfume production around the late Hellenistic period.

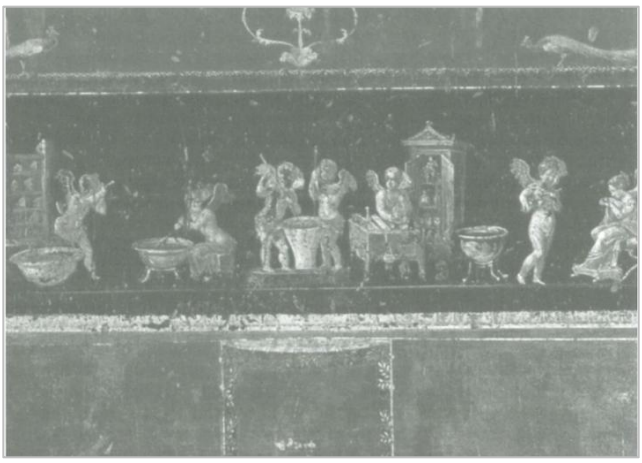

Figure 8, Fresco of the Vettii House depicting cupids making perfume. After Reger, "The Manufacture and Distribution of Perfume," (Oxbow Books, 2005), fig. 11.2, 266.

Theophrastus, an Athenian writing in the early third century BCE, described how the process of creating perfume involved the hot or cold enfleurage of oils and various aromatic fluids, both taken most often from plants, necessitating the use of furnaces and presses in the production process.[54] Pliny, a Roman writing in the first century CE, asserted that "[*unguentum*] *laudatissimum fuit antiquitus in Delo*

[49] Zarmakoupi, "The Quartier du Stade," 58–62.
[50] Zarmakoupi, "The Quartier du Stade," 37–62; Westgate, "Space and Decoration," 426.
[51] Zarmakoupi, "The Quartier du Stade," 55–57.
[52] Brun, "The Production of Perfumes in Antiquity," 282. Although Zarmakoupi has listed 5 buildings on Delos as potential perfumeries, this is based only on the presence of press beds and/or counterweights, which do not necessarily indicate perfume production ("The Quartier du Stade," 7). For example, they could indicate olive oil production or wineries, which are far more commonly found in the Hellenistic archaeological record.
[53] See also: Gary Reger, "The Manufacture and Distribution of Perfume," in *Making, Moving and Managing the New World of Ancient Economies, 323-31 BC*, ed. Zofia H. Archibald, John K. Davies, and Vincent Gabrielsen, (Oxbow Books, 2005).
[54] Theophr., *Concerning Odours* 3.8–4.14, in particular. For more information on Theophrastus' reliability in terms of the accuracy of his knowledge on perfume production, see: Reger, "The Manufacture and Distribution of Perfume," 257–259.

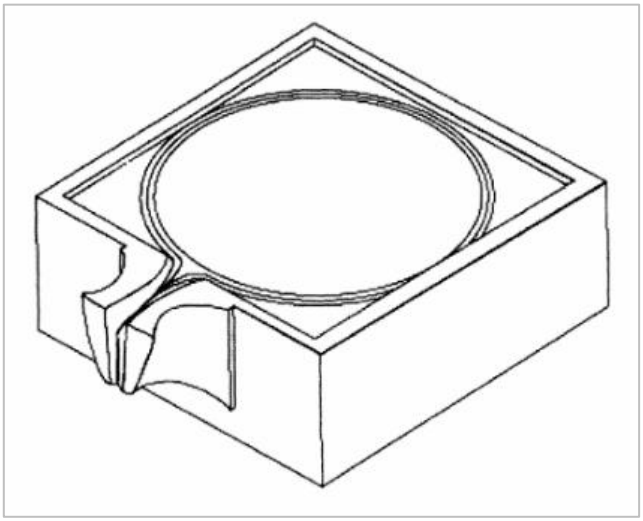

Figure 9, Plan of the perfume shop in the forum at Paestum. From Brun, "The Production of Perfumes in Antiquity," American Journal of Archaeology 104, no. 2 (2000): fig. 12, 292.

Figure 10, The two marble press beds from the Perfumery. After Brun, "Laudatissimum," figure 14 on page 107.

insula" ("in former times, perfume from the island of Delos was the most praised"),[55] situating late Hellenistic Delos, at the peak of its economic power, as a major force within the Mediterranean perfume industry. Heron of Alexandria, writing in the mid-first century CE,[56] described a wedge press as "sert dans quelques-unes des préparations des parfumeurs."[57] Paintings from the Vettii House in Pompeii depict this type of press in a scene where cupids are making a perfume that involves hot enfleurage (fig. 8), tying together Theophrastus' and Heron of Alexandria's depictions of perfume production. Finally, the perfume shop in Paestum, dating to the second quarter of the

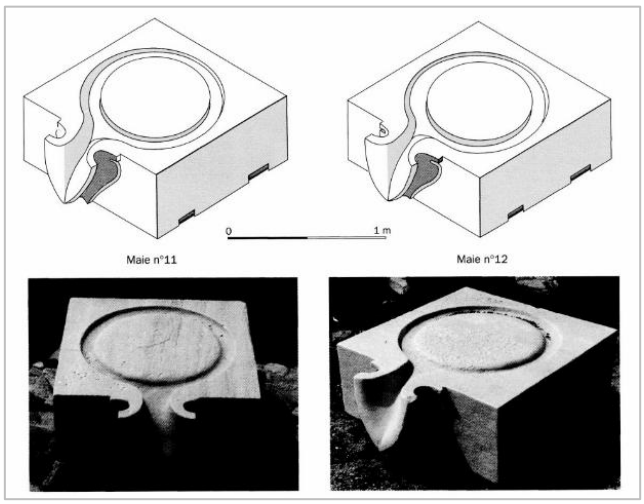

Figure 11, The marble press bed from the perfume shop in the forum at Paestum. After Brun, "The Production of Perfumes in Antiquity," figure 14 on page 294.

first century CE, offers a compelling archaeological comparison with the Perfumery that reinforce room f's identification as a centre of perfume production (fig. 9). Similar to the Perfumery on Delos, Brun identifies this building as a perfumery based on the presence of a strikingly similar marble press bed, *in-situ* between postholes to support the chassis of a vertical press (figures 10, 11, and 12).[58] All of the above reinforces the interpretation that the Perfumery functioned as such during its third stage.

The Perfumery's function within perfume production supports its identification as a place of association, owing to its grand scale relative to the context of the late Hellenistic perfume trade. The Perfumery's amount and quality of perfume-making equipment suggest that it was producing perfume on a large scale: in room f four permanent furnaces and two finely-carved marble press beds remain. These would have formed part of two wedge presses (figure 13), that produced very fine and luxurious oil.[59] In all, its equipment far surpasses that of the shop at Paestum and the depictions from the Vettii House, since both only have one wedge (or at least vertical) press and neither have any permanent furnaces (figs. 8 and 9). The opulence of the Perfumery's 550m^2 layout beyond its room f, along with Pliny's assertion that Delos was known for producing the *laudatissimum* perfume, strengthens this comparison with the 15.05m^2 shop at

[55] Plin., *NH* 13.2.4. Translation is my own, adapted from Loeb (see bibliography for more details).
[56] Brun, "The Production of Perfumes in Antiquity," 285 n.52.
[57] Heron, *Mechanika* 2.1.4. Translated by Baron Carra de Vaux (see bibliography for more details).
[58] Brun, "The Production of Perfumes in Antiquity," 292.
[59] Brun, "The Production of Perfumes in Antiquity," 295.

Paestum.[60] Therefore, the Perfumery was very likely a powerful and important economic establishment in the Mediterranean perfume industry during the late Hellenistic period, distinguishing it from the surrounding domestic and commercial buildings in the Stadium Quarter and, thus, making it more likely to be a place of association.

The Perfumery's significance within the perfume trade substantiates its identification as a place of association by indicating its international trade importance and ability to generate great wealth. Even

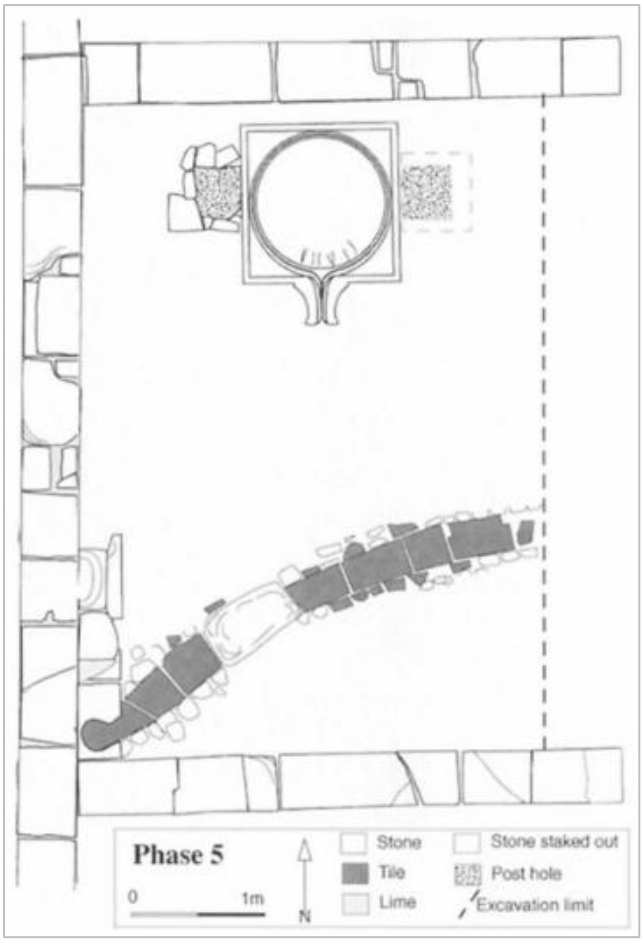

Figure 12, The marble press bed from the perfume shop in the forum at Paestum in situ. After Brun, "The Production of Perfumes in Antiquity," figure 15 on page 295.

the very common perfume, *rhodinon*, was made with exotic and perishable materials, including *schoinos* from Syria, which is attested by both Theophrastus and Dioscourides.[61] But the opulence of the Perfumery and its grand perfume-making capacity suggests that it would have made some of the even more luxurious perfumes described by Theophrastus and Dioscourides. For example, *kypros*, one of the more expensive perfumes that we know of today, was made with aromatics that were almost entirely imported, with only one exception, from places including the Arabian peninsula, East Africa, and India.[62] According to Dioscourides, its production would have been long and tedious, necessitating the right equipment, funds, and skilled labour to create.[63] That the Perfumery contains such grand perfume-making facilities suggests that it had access to the necessary wealth, skilled labour, and trade connections to engage in such luxurious perfume production at a significant scale, which further suggests that it was indeed a place of association.[64]

The Perfumery's involvement in the perfume trade may also provide insight into the ethnicity of the building's occupants, potentially demonstrating a shared ethnic bond between its members, thus making it more likely to have been a place of association. As Brun points out, textual and epigraphic evidence suggests that Roman-Italian *liberti* and enslaved people engaged predominantly within the perfume trade by the late Hellenistic period.[65] Enslaved people are also recorded to have been working in the perfume industry in Athens at least since c.330–326 BCE, when Hypereides wrote his first speech recounting how Athenogenes sold his perfumery and two enslaved people who ran the shop for 4,000 *drachma* to a man named Epikrates.[66] This documented precedent for enslaved people taking part in the Greek and Hellenistic perfume industries substantiates the argument that the Perfumery, situated within a quarter with many altars to the *lares compitales*, had a membership consisting of Roman-Italian *liberti* and/or enslaved people. In turn, this ethnic bond between the people using the Perfumery would strengthen its

[60] Plin. *NH* 13.2.4; Brun, "The Production of Perfumes in Antiquity," 292.
[61] Reger, "The Manufacture and Distribution of Perfume," 262.
[62] Reger, "The Manufacture and Distribution of Perfume," 257, 263.
[63] Dioscourides, *De Materia Medica*, 1.55.1–2.
[64] While there is little extant information on associations that were specifically formed around perfume-making, there is one surviving inscription from Rome (*CIL* 6.36819) that names two perfumer's guilds: the Thurarii and the Unguentarii (Brun, "The Production of Perfumes in Antiquity," 302).
[65] Brun "The Production of Perfumes in Antiquity," 289; *CIL* 6.21728, 21730, 5639, 5640.
[66] Reger, "The Manufacture and Distribution of Perfume," 264–265.

similarities with the Clubhouse, with its documented (original) multi-ethnic membership of Berytian Poseidoniasts.[67]

Strong engagement within the perfume industry would also lessen or completely negate the need for honorific space—one of the defining characteristics of the Clubhouse—due to the commercial demand for perfume in the Stadium district and on Delos in general. One bottle of *rhodinon* would have sold for around 3 dr. and 2 obol to 4 dr. and 2 ob. per *kotyle* (roughly 274 mm[68]) on Delos during the late Hellenistic period, according to the yearly accounts of the *hierophoioi* of the Sanctuary of Apollo and Gary Reger's convincing calculations.[69] And *kypros*, according to Teles, sold for one *mna* (100 drachma) per *kotyle* in Athens in the mid-third century BCE.[70] The high prices of these luxury goods, even *rhodinon*, would have generated significant revenue for the Perfumery, especially since perfume was commonly used in sacred and athletic contexts in Greece and Delos at this time.[71] There would have been great demand for perfume in Delos and the Stadium Quarter, in particular, especially after the construction of the *gymnasion* around 100 BCE, coinciding with the installation of the perfume-making equipment in room f.[72]

The Perfumery's location across the street from Delos' *gymnasia*-complex and within one of its new commercial-domestic quarters signifies that the incorporation of its perfume-making function during its third stage was likely in response to the increasing demand for perfume on Delos, especially from athletes visiting the newly created *gymnasion*. In essence, the Perfumery would not have needed to engage to the same extent with the Hellenistic honours-benefaction system to generate revenue as the Clubhouse did, due to its heavier focus on its commercial function as a perfumery within the Stadium Quarter. For this reason, and due to its opulent layout, potential ethnic membership, and strong position within the Hellenistic perfume industry, it seems likely that the Perfumery's spatial functions as a place of association differed from the Clubhouse mainly due to its heightened focus on commercial industry, over sacred or honorific space. But this begs the question: if the Perfumery was a place of association, why did it get rid of most of its perfume-making equipment after its third stage?

In his 1997 excavation, Brun convincingly argues that the two wedge presses in room f were destroyed before the renovations of the fourth stage. His arguments are primarily stratigraphical; the support holes for the presses' chassis were filled in before the addition of a stone bench to the southwest corner of the room. This new bench demonstrates the decreasing importance of any remaining perfume-production function of this room by blocking one of the furnaces' ventilation gaps, making it harder to control their temperatures.[73] It also indicates that room f takes on a more congregational function than it had in the previous stage. This trend is also apparent in the other renovations during the fourth stage, including the

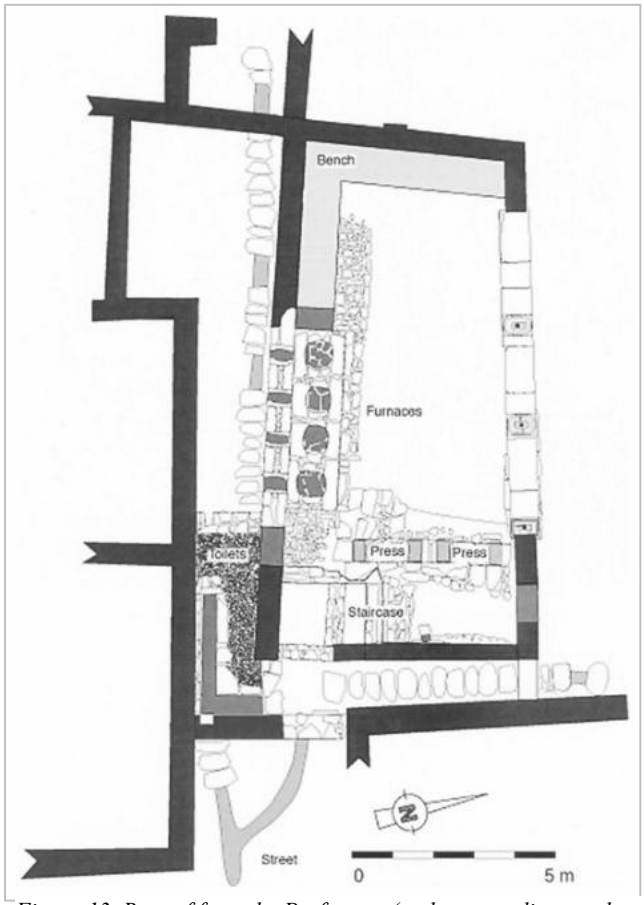

Figure 13, Room f from the Perfumery (and surrounding southern rooms). After Brun, "The Production of Perfumes in Antiquity," figure 7 on page 288.

[67] *IDelos* 1520.
[68] Reger, "The Manufacture and Distribution of Perfume," 274.
[69] Reger, "The Manufacture and Distribution of Perfume," 278.
[70] Reger, "The Manufacture and Distribution of Perfume," 263; Teles 2.2.106-9 [13H].
[71] Reger, "The Manufacture and Distribution of Perfume," 277; Brun, "The Production of Perfumes in Antiquity," 286.
[72] Zarmakoupi, "The Quartier du Stade," 22; Brun, "Laudatissimum," 103.
[73] Brun, "Laudatissimum," 103–123.

addition of a bench in banqueting room m. Room m was also opened up into 'room' n, which also received the addition of a stone bench, through the replacement of one of its walls with a Doric peristyle. Each bench is coated in plaster, with a small step leading up to it, making them reminiscent of the built *podia* for reclining found in Classical and Hellenistic dining architecture.[74] These renovations collectively demonstrate a dramatic shift in priority of function towards the congregational.

These renovations would make most sense if the Perfumery was a place of association with a membership consisting of perfume makers and/or sellers who moved their production outside the Perfumery. Perfumeries in Athens during the Classical period were the sites of "*symposia* without wine" due to their social function as a community space that blurred the line between the private and public sphere.[75] Lysias and Demosthenes echo this sentiment, claiming that it is the sign of a respectable Athenian citizen to spend time in perfumeries.[76] Perfumeries and perfumers were also highly mobile throughout and before the Hellenistic period due to the relatively uncomplicated and cumbersome nature of their equipment, hence why it is so difficult to identify the locations of their craft.[77] The Perfumery's stage 3 stands in opposition to this, and its transition away from its uniquely grand and permanent perfume-making facilities in favour of congregational space perhaps indicates its membership's shift in preference towards this mobile and likely more individualized craft, now done elsewhere on Delos.[78] This transition would also align with the conception that, although not as universal as previously believed, most professional associations did not do their business together within their place of association.[79] Therefore, it seems likely that the Roman-Italic perfumer membership base remained at the Perfumery during its fourth stage, keeping it as their 'clubhouse'.[80]

Conclusion

In conclusion, the architectural, spatial, and social contexts of the Perfumery within late Hellenistic Delos and, more specifically, the new Stadium Quarter, suggest that it could have been a place of association, at least during its better-documented third and fourth stages. To reach this conclusion, it is necessary to take both an inclusive and exclusive approach. The inclusive approach was argued thoroughly by Trümper, who compared the Perfumery's architectural layout and spatial functions to that of the Clubhouse of the Berytian Poseidoniasts.[81] Since the Perfumery lacks a securely identifiable sacred space, I situated it within its surrounding buildings to ascertain whether it could be identified as a place of association. Demonstrating that houses within the Stadium Quarter commonly incorporate commercial space within them,[82] I focused my examination on the two aspects of the Perfumery that made it stand out from the buildings around it: its grandeur and the presence of a perfume-making facility. The Perfumery's dominant position within the late Hellenistic perfume industry and its likely operation/ownership by Roman-Italian *liberti* and enslaved people strengthens its identification as a place of association, especially during its third stage, but likely during its fourth stage as well.

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[74] Trümper "Cult in Clubhouses," 109 n.42.

[75] Sian Lewis, "Barbers' Shops and Perfume Shops: 'Symposia without Wine'," in *The Greek World*, ed. Anton Powell (Taylor & Francis Group, 1995): 432–441. Accessed March 24, 2025. ProQuest Ebook Central.

[76] Lys. 20; Dem. 25 and 26.

[77] Reger, "The Manufacture and Distribution of Perfume," 256, 263; Brun, "The Production of Perfumes in Antiquity," 282.

[78] While the Perfumery is the only securely identifiable perfumery on Delos due to its large and more permanent infrastructure, there are other possible sites, mostly identified by the presence of press beds and counterweights. However, these locations may also be oil presses or wineries. See: Zamarkoupi, "The Quartier du Stade," 7.

[79] Trümper, "Where non-Delians Meet in Delos," 60.

[80] Because not much is known about them and due to spatial constraints, the first, second, or fifth stages of the Perfumery in-depth in this paper have not been discussed.

[81] Trümper, "Cult in Clubhouses," 104–110; Trümper, "Where non-Delians meet in Delos," 58–60.

[82] Zamarkoupi, "The Quartier du Stade," 37–62.

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Gratias agimus tibi pro legendo.